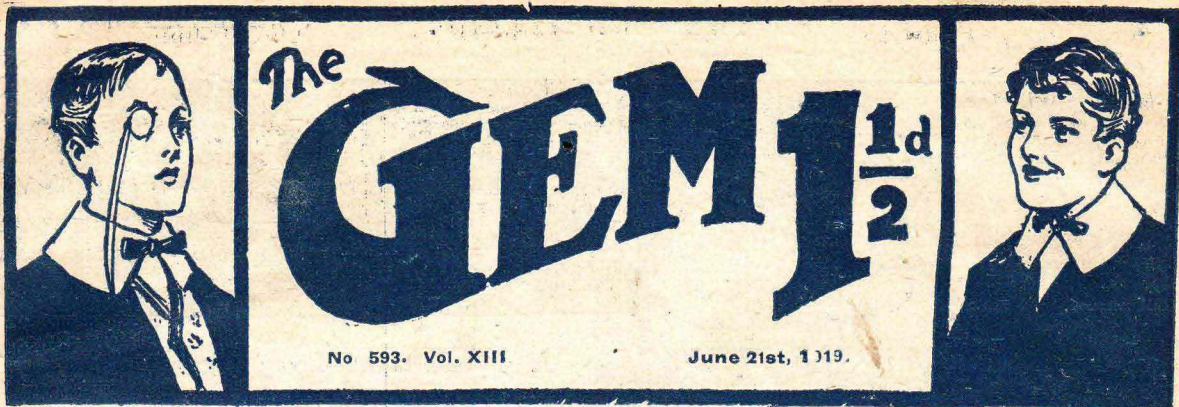
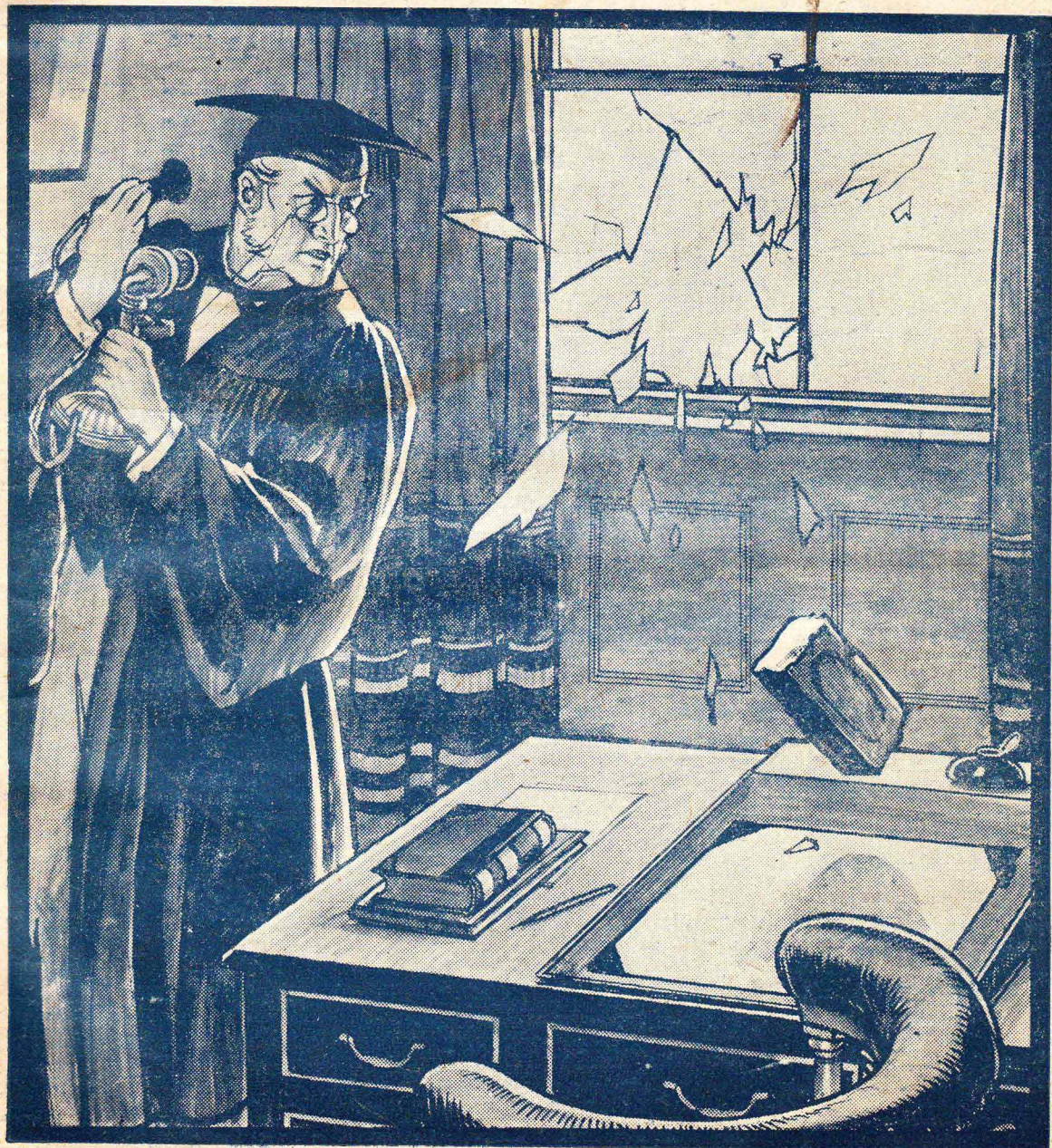


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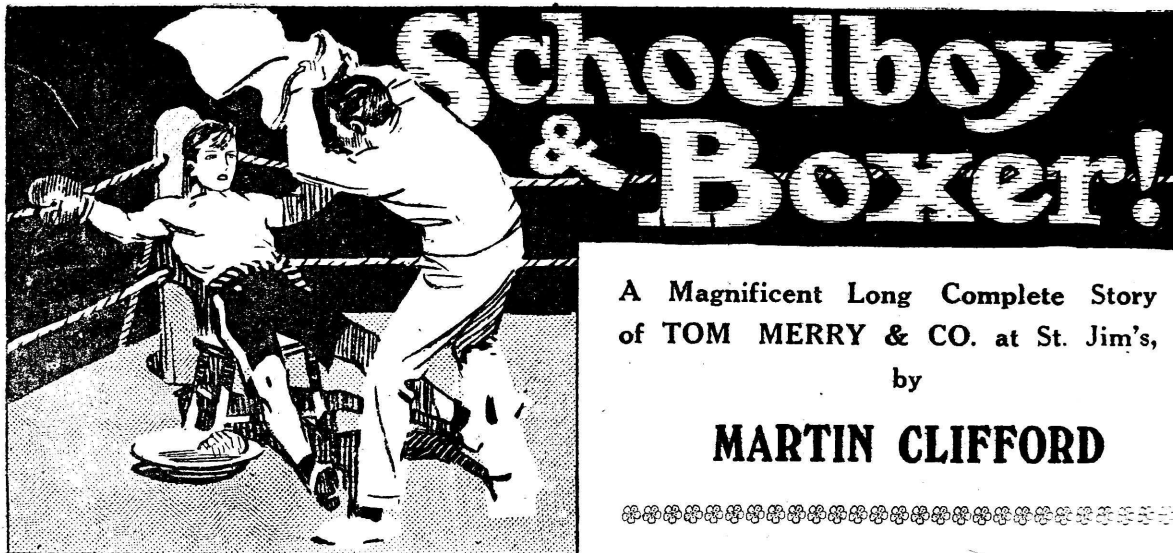


SCHOOLBOY AND BOXER!



WHOSE WAS THE HIDDEN HAND ?

(A Thrilling and Dramatic Scene in the Splendid Long Complete School Tale in this Issue.) 21-8-19



A Magnificent Long Complete Story
of TOM MERRY & CO. at St. Jim's,
by

MARTIN CLIFFORD

CHAPTER 1.

aming a Bully!

DROP that, you brute! Drop it, I tell you!"

Dick Redfern, of the New House at St. Jim's, uttered that exclamation in ringing tones.

Reddy was strolling through the quiet, old-fashioned High Street of Rycombe, when his attention was arrested by a sigh, which made his blood boil.

A coal-waggon was lumbering along the street, and the driver, a hefty, hulking fellow, was lashing the horse with merciless vigour.

The animal writhed as the whip rose and fell.

"Drop that! Do you hear me?"

Redfern's voice rang out along the village street.

The driver may have heard, but he did not heed. He continued to lash at the horse, muttering savage imprecations.

Reddy's eye, blazed.

Cruelty to a dumb, defenceless animal was a sight which always roused him.

He realised that it was a time for prompt action.

Without stopping to reflect that the driver of the waggon was almost twice his size, he darted into the roadway and came abreast of the vehicle.

The driver, astonished at Reddy's nerve, stopped ill-treating the horse. The vehicle jolted to a standstill.

Whip in hand, the man glared down at Redfern.

"My eye! Of all the cheek—" he began.

"You bullying cad!" panted Redfern. "Come down from your perch, and I'll jolly soon make you sit up for this."

"Wot?"

"I'm going to give you a hiding!" said Reddy fiercely.

An ugly expression came over the man's coarse face.

Raising his whip, he swung it savagely through the air.

The blow fell across Reddy's shoulders, and he gave a gasp of pain.

But he did not swerve from his purpose.

The next moment the driver of the coal-waggon found himself being hauled down from his seat. He took a short cut to earth and landed in a sprawling heap on the roadway.

Redfern, throwing himself in a fight-

ing attitude, waited for the fellow to rise.

He hadn't long to wait.

With a roar like an infuriated bull, the man struggled to his feet and rushed at the junior.

Not many fellows at St. Jim's, least of all juniors, would have cared to have come to loggerheads with such a hulking specimen.

For a moment it looked as if Redfern's remains would have to be sent home to his sorrowing parents in a matchbox.

But the New House fellow was well able to look after himself. He had faced tougher propositions than this.

Stopping swiftly to one side, he evaded the clumsy blow which his opponent launched at him.

And then, getting to close quarters, he proceeded to pommel the fellow's ribs.

Left and right, right and left, Reddy's fists shot out.

The hefty person, who had expected to make short work of a mere schoolboy, was both surprised and pained. He staggered back, with bellows to mend.

And then, pulling himself together, he came at Reddy with another bull-like rush.

There would have been no hope for the St. Jim's junior had he got in the way of one of those sledgehammer blows. He would have been smashed almost to a pulp.

Reddy, however, was nothing if not agile.

Again he darted to one side, and his opponent's heavy fist sailed harmlessly past his ear, meeting with no resistance.

The man lost his balance, but before he could fall, Reddy dashed in, and shot out his left, straight from the shoulder.

The memory of the man's brutality to his horse lent additional zest to the junior's blow. It took the man fairly under the chin, and he landed on the kerb with a crash and a roar.

The blow was a beauty, and had been timed to perfection.

Redfern stood over his antagonist, waiting for a renewal of the fight.

But the victim had had enough. He was a big man physically, but, like many bullies he could take very little punishment.

It went against the grain for him to have to admit defeat at the hands of a schoolboy, but he had no wish to continue the combat.

"I give you best!" he growled.

"You don't mean to say you've whacked?" said Reddy, with a curl of the lip. "You've not had one-tenth of the licking you deserve!"

"Ow!"

"Are you going on?"

"Strike me pink if I am!" growled the man. "But I'll have the lorry on yer fer this 'ere! Assault and battery—that's wot it is!"

"You deserved all you got," said Reddy, "and for two pints I'd give you a second dose. If I see you ill-treating that horse again you'll get the licking of your life! I won't stand that sort of thing at any price!"

"Well spoken, my lad—well spoken," said a quiet, approving voice.

Reddy spun round, expecting to see Mr. Railton or another of the St. Jim's masters.

But it was a stranger who had spoken. He was a middle-aged, cheery-faced individual, who might have been anything from a Sunday-school teacher to a burglar.

The fallen bully was endeavouring to sort himself out. The stranger watched him with a grim smile.

"A dangerous man that," he said to Reddy. "I'm awfully glad you pointed out to him the error of his ways. By the way, that straight left of yours was an education. Who taught you how to box?"

Reddy grinned.

"I'm self-taught," he said. "When a fellow comes to a public school on a scholarship he usually has plenty of fights on his hands."

The stranger nodded.

"I watched that little scrap with great interest," he said. "It was the neatest affair I've seen for a long time. My name is Chumley. Would you mind giving me yours—also the name of your school?"

Reddy wondered why this man, a total stranger, should want these particulars.

He was debating in his mind whether to reply, when a sudden mischievous impulse came to him.

"My school is St. Jim's," he said.

"And your name?"

"Trimble—Baggy Trimble!"

"H'm! You don't look very baggy!" said Mr. Chumley. "Still, you're in a class by yourself, so far as boxing is concerned. I shall hope to see more of you later. Good-afternoon, my lad!"

"Good-afternoon!" said Reddy.

CHAPTER 2.

The Tribulations of Trimble!

"MY hat!"

"What an awful row!"

The St. Jim's juniors stopped short in the quadrangle.

Through the open window of the Head's study floated howls of wild anguish, punctuated by a steady, swishing sound.

"Reminds you of pig-killing, doesn't it?" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Somebody's going through the hoop!" said Figgins. "The Head doesn't seem to be sparing the rod."

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yaroooooh!"

The juniors exchanged grim glances. The victim's yell clearly showed that he was not of the stuff of which heroes are made.

At the same time, Dr. Holmes was certainly going great guns.

The cane had descended at least a dozen times before he desisted.

And then, after a short interval, a fat figure rolled dismally out into the quadrangle, with the palms of his hands tucked into his waistcoat.

It was Baggy Trimble.

The juniors moved towards him.

"Had it hot?" asked Manners sympathetically.

Manners detested the fat and oily Trimble, but he could feel for him in his present plight.

The fat junior groaned.

"Ow! I've had an awful time! The Head's a beast! Yow!"

"I expect you deserved it!" growled Figgins, who was rather less sympathetic than Manners.

"I didn't! I haven't done anything! And even if I had, the Head's got no right to lam me like that! I shall write to my pater about it!"

"Don't disturb the tranquillity of Trimble Hall!" implored Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Head's a brute!" groaned Trimble. "He'd no right to come down heavy on me!"

"He'll come down heavier if he hears you talking like that!" said Tom Merry.

"What have you been up to?"

"Nothing, I tell you! I merely had a little snack in Ratty's study—"

"What?"

The juniors gasped—especially the New House juniors.

"You—you scooped Ratty's grub?" exclaimed Redfern.

"I was doing him a good turn, really," Trimble explained. "I happened to peep into his study, and I saw a tray on the table stacked with cakes and cream buns. I knew that Ratty suffered a frightful lot from indigestion, and that cakes would make him worse. So I stepped in and ate his tea."

"Oh, great Scott!"

The juniors stared blankly at Trimble.

The idea of a junior—and a fellow from an alien House at that—walking into Mr. Ratcliff's study and eating Mr. Ratcliff's tea, almost took their breath away.

It was not surprising that Ratty, and afterwards the Head, had come down heavy.

"I was just bolting the last cake," Trimble went on, "when old Ratty came in. I dived under the table, but he was too quick for me. He's got the eye of a blessed hawk! He wasn't a bit grateful to me for eating his tea. He took me along to the Head's study, and you know the rest!"

"Well, of all the cool cheek!" said Figgins.

"Of all the awful, astounding nerve!"

Trimble went on, "when old Ratty came in. I dived under the table, but he was too quick for me. He's got the eye of a blessed hawk! He wasn't a bit grateful to me for eating his tea. He took me along to the Head's study, and you know the rest!"

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"Of all the awful, astounding nerve!"

Mr. Chumley strode away, and Reddy chuckled.

"Wonder who the beggar is?" he murmured. "Says he hopes to see me later—but he won't! It's Baggy Trimble who'll run up against him next time. Poor old Baggy! Pr'aps I ought not to have let him in for this. Still, if the fellow's a Sunday-school teacher, Baggy will benefit. I may be doing him a good turn, for all I know!"

Reddy was about to proceed on his way, when he became aware of the fact that the coal-merchant's man, having resumed his seat on the waggon, was glaring at him with a look which would have done credit to a Hun.

Then he shouted his hymn of hate.

"You ain't 'eard the last of this 'ere," he growled. "I mean to take out a summons agen yer—fer assault!"

"Go ahead!" said Reddy cheerfully.

"I will! I'm a lor-abidin' citizen, that's wot I am, an' you punched me on the face an' in the ribs! If you think I'm goin' to sit tight an' say nothin' you're werry much mistook, young shaver!"

"Rats!"

At that moment a number of juniors, wearing the familiar caps of St. Jim's, crossed over from the other side of the street.

They were the Terrible Three of the Shell, and Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of the New House.

"What's going on?" asked Monty Lowther, clapping Redfern on the back.

"Ow!" gasped Reddy. "If you want to let off steam, do it on that brute of a driver!"

"Has he been ruffling your giddy feathers, old scout?" asked Kerr.

"He was licking his horse till it could hardly stand."

"Phew!"

"So I gave him a dose of his own medicine!" explained Reddy.

The juniors stared.

"You—you licked a fellow that size?" gasped Tom Merry.

Reddy nodded.

"Well, you've got some pluck!" said the captain of the Shell. "It's not the sort of job I should care to tackle!"

"If you'd seen how he was lashing that horse," said Reddy, "you'd have pulverised him!"

"The hound!" said Fatty Wynn, glaring at the driver of the coal-waggon.

"Never mind; after he's had a New House fellow's fist planted in his ugly phiz perhaps he'll tame down! Come on!"

And the juniors moved off in the direction of St. Jim's.

Reddy's victim made no attempt to spur his horse into action after that. He was still badly shaken up.

"Drat 'im!" he muttered. "If I can only find out who he is I'll take out a summons agen him, as sure as my name's Mike Jarvis!"

"Pr'aps you won't be such a brute in future!" came a voice.

The driver looked round.

Mr. Bunn was standing in the doorway of his little shop, grinning.

"I saw the whole affair," he said.

"Master Redfern laid it into you right and proper!"

"Keep yer mouth shut, can't yer?"

Then he added, to himself:

"So 'is name's Redfern, is it? Good! I'll teach 'im to lay 'ands on a sober an' respectable man! He'll ave the shock of a life in a day or two!"

With which Mike moved off.

But he was very careful not to wield his whip any more. He had had one licking that afternoon, and he decided that it would not be wise to emulate Oliver Twist!

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gasped Fatty Wynn. "Why, nothing short of starvation would induce me to lay hands on Ratty's grub!"

"No wonder Ratty was ratty!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "You were lucky to escape with your life, Baggy, old scout. It's a wonder Ratty didn't strew the hungry churchyard with your bones!"

"I explained to the Head that Ratty was an antiseptic—" began Trimble.

"A what?"

"An antiseptic!"

"You mean a dyspeptic!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Yes, that's it. I told him Ratty couldn't touch cake or pastry, and that he'd go making himself ill."

"And what did the Head say?" asked Kerr.

"Told me I was a greedy glutton."

"The Head has a wonderful habit of getting right on the wicket!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And then he licked me till I couldn't stand!" said Trimble wrathfully. "But I was very plucky all through. Not a murmur escaped my lips!"

"Why, you fat fibber!" exclaimed Figgins. "We could hear you almost in Rylcombe!"

"That—that must have been somebody else you heard."

"Rats!"

"I'm not going to take this lying down, anyway!" said Trimble. "I'll make the Head sorry for himself!"

As a rule, Baggy Trimble's threats were wild, and he seldom put them into practice.

But on this occasion he spoke as if he really meant business.

Revenge glittered in his little round eyes.

"Look here, Trimble," said Tom Merry quietly, "don't go making a bigger ass of yourself than you are already. If you start playing tricks on the Head you'll be well in the running for the sack!"

"I don't care. He hurt me, and I'm jolly well going to hurt him!"

"Are you going to ask him to step into the gym for a few minutes?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's more ways than one of killing a cat," said Trimble. "I'll get even with the Head somehow. As for that beastly Ratty—"

A sudden hush fell upon the juniors.

Unseen by Baggy Trimble, whose back was turned, Mr. Ratcliff had rustled to the spot.

"Ratty wants pulverising!" said Trimble, blissfully unconscious of the presence of the New House master.

"He wants flaying alive, and then boiling in oil! What are you making these faces at me for, Lowther?"

"Oh!" gasped Monty Lowther.

"I wonder you New House fellows don't take Ratty in hand," Trimble went on. "Why don't you go for him bald-headed? Now, if I were over in the New House, I'd start a campaign against him. He'd be mobbed and lynched, and kicked out on his neck! Why are you fellows looking so scared? It's no more that Ratty deserves!"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Tom Merry.

Mr. Ratcliff stood as if turned to stone.

Listeners seldom hear any good of themselves, and this was a case in point.

"The sooner Ratty goes out of St. Jim's on his neck the better!" said Baggy Trimble, quite unmoved by the fact that Redfern had hastily trodden on his foot.

"Ratty's not a man at all.

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He's not even an old woman. He's a Bolshevik!"

"M-m-my hat!"

The juniors directed horrified glances towards Trimble; but, like the wicked people of old, he heeded not.

"Now, if Ratty had been a good sort," continued Baggy, "he'd have let me stay in his study, and he'd have sent over to the tuckshop for another lot of cakes. But Ratty's as mean as they make 'em! He flew in a paddy, and took me in front of the Head. The beast! Ow! That's the second time you've trodden on my foot, Redfern!"

"Dry up, you fat idiot!" hissed Reddy.

"Why should I dry up? Ratty's a tyrant and a beast, and— Oh help! Oh crumbs! I—I didn't know you were standing there, sir!"

Baggy had sighted Mr. Ratcliff at last. He nearly fell down as he met the wrathful and accusing glare of the master of the New House.

"Boy! Trimble!" spluttered Mr. Ratcliff. "How dare you! How dare you apply such disrespectful epithets to a master of this school!"

"Ow! I—I wasn't! I didn't! I—"

"Enough!" said Mr. Ratcliff grimly. "I heard the whole of your conversation!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"You will accompany me to Mr. Railton at once! I will see that condign punishment is meted out to you for this unparalleled display of impertinence!"

"Oh, really, sir, I—"

"Do not stand and goggle at me, sir!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "Follow me at once!"

Mr. Ratcliff whisked away with rustling gown, and Baggy Trimble, doomed to two lickings in one afternoon, followed.

"The silly fat toad!" muttered Redfern. "I warned him twice!"

"The chopper will come down this time, and no mistake!" said Monty Lowther. "Baggy seems to be making a corner in lickings just lately."

A few moments later, when the Terrible Three had retired to their study, a fat face looked in at the door.

"Another dose?" asked Manners.

"No."

"You mean to say Railton let you off!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in wonder.

"He gave me five hundred lines. Ratty wanted him to lick me, but Railton saw that I'd only just been licked by the Head. So he gave me lines instead."

"Well, you can't say you didn't ask for them, my fat tulip!" said Monty Lowther. "And if you start playing tricks on the Head goodness knows what will happen!"

"The Head's a beast," growled Baggy, "and I'm going to make him sorry he lammed me!"

"B-r-r!"

"I say, you fellows, is that a new cake?"

"It is—it are!" said Monty Lowther. "But it's for our own consumption. Run away and pick flowers!"

And Baggy Trimble, realising that there was nothing doing in the cake line, ran away—not to pick flowers, but to think out ways and means of "getting his own back" on the worthy Head of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 3.

A Pig in Clover!

"BLESS my soul!" Dr. Holmes uttered the exclamation in tones of great surprise.

He had a letter in his hand, and the contents seemed to have staggered him.

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Leaning back in his chair, the Head read the missive for the second time.

It ran as follows:

"Dear Sir,—As you are doubtless aware, there is to be a Boys' Boxing Tournament in the Public Hall at Burchester on Saturday next. Representatives are being sent from most of the big schools in the county. There will be middle-weight, light-weight, and bantam-weight contests.

"The entries are practically complete, so I regret I cannot invite you to send a number of boys to Burchester to take part in the various bouts. But there is room for one more light-weight representative, and I venture to ask if you would be so kind as to allow Trimble, of your school, to take part in the competition.

"Next year I hope St. Jim's may be represented in every event; but there has been such a rush of entries that it is impossible on this occasion.

"If you will kindly notify me that Trimble has your permission to participate in the tournament, I will arrange for my chauffeur to pick him up at St. Jim's on Saturday morning. Thanking you in anticipation,

"Believe me,

"Yours very truly,

"BERTRAM CHUMLEY.

"Organising Manager."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head again.

There was nothing very surprising in the fact that a boxing tournament was to be held in the little market town of Burchester, half a dozen miles beyond Wayland.

Burchester was quite a centre for sport of all kinds.

Neither was there anything very surprising in the Head being requested to send a junior to the meeting to represent St. Jim's.

But Trimble!

Dr. Holmes didn't know a great deal about the athletic qualities of his juniors; but he knew enough to understand that the fat and flabby Trimble was not a suitable candidate for any sort of contest—unless it were an eating one.

"It must be a mistake!" murmured the Head at length. "Mr. Chumley has given me the wrong name. Fortunately, his telephone number is on the letter. I will ring him up for confirmation."

Dr. Holmes took up the receiver.

"Burchester 590, please," he said. There was a moment's pause, and then a cheery voice sounded over the wires.

"Hallo! Who are you, please?"

"I am Dr. Holmes, of St. Jim's," said the Head. "Is that Mr. Chumley?"

"Speaking!"

"I have received your letter, Mr. Chumley."

"Oh, yes!"

"And I am quite willing to send a St. Jim's representative to your boxing tournament—"

"Good!"

"But—but I fear some mistake has arisen—"

"Eh?"

"You have asked that a boy named Trimble may attend—"

"That's so."

"Are you certain it is Trimble whom you want?"

"Quite!"

"It is not Tom Merry, or Piggins, or Redfern?"

"No; Trimble's the chap. I believe he's known as Baggy."

"There is certainly a boy of that name here. But I fear he will not suit your purpose. His knowledge of boxing is, I believe, very limited.

Mr. Chumley checked.

"I have reason to believe otherwise, Dr. Holmes," he said. "However, we won't quarrel about that. Trimble is the boy I want, right enough. May he come?"

"With—with pleasure!" stammered the Head.

"Many thanks! Good-morning, sir!"

"Good-morning!" said Dr. Holmes.

And he replaced the receiver on its hooks with a gasp.

Then there was no mistake, after all!

It was Trimble—Baggy Trimble—who was required to uphold the honour and glory of St. Jim's!

"Dear me!" murmured the Head. "I had no idea that Trimble possessed any fistic talent. However, I am somewhat out of touch with the athletic accomplishments of the junior boys, and it is quite possible that Trimble may be worthy of the honour which Mr. Chumley seeks to bestow upon him. I will send for Trimble."

And the Head did.

A few moments later the fat junior rolled into the study.

There were smears of jam on Baggy's face, and he looked anything but a boxer as he floundered on the Head's carpet.

Dr. Holmes reflected, however, that appearances were sometimes deceptive.

"Ah, Trimble! I sent for you in order to—"

"It wasn't me, sir!" said Baggy promptly.

"What!"

"I expect it was Racke, sir, or Melish, or one of the others. I haven't been within a mile of Knox's study, sir!"

"Trimble!"

"I didn't touch his beastly cake—honour bright, sir! And it was only a stale thing, anyway. It tasted like the war bread we used to have."

The Head frowned.

"Do I understand that you have appropriated a cake belonging to Knox?" he exclaimed.

"Oh no, sir! Not at all, sir! I wouldn't dream of doing such a thing, sir!"

"You have already been punished once to-day, Trimble, for consuming food which was the property of another. Was not the lesson I gave you sufficient?"

"Nunno, sir—I—I mean, yessir! I won't touch so much as a crumb in future, sir!"

"Very well" said the Head. "I sent for you, Trimble, in connection with quite another matter."

"Oh!"

"I have received a request from a gentleman named Mr. Chumley that you may be allowed to go over to Burchester on Saturday to take part in the boxing tournament there."

"My hat!" muttered Baggy, in surprise.

"I was not aware that you could box, Trimble."

"Eh? Oh, yes, sir!" said Baggy. "I'm a wonderful chap in the ring, sir. B boxing's my strong point."

The Head looked doubtful. He did not possess that simple faith which is said to be so much better than Norman blood.

"I have never heard your name, Trimble, in connection with the boxing activities of the juniors."

"That's because I never get a fair show, sir," explained Baggy. "Tom Merry and the others are jealous of me. They always try to keep me under. But I'm better than all the lot of them lumped together. I could lick their heads off!"

"You are guilty of foolish exaggeration, Trimble."



The next moment the driver of the coal-wagon was hauled down from his seat. He took a short cut to earth, and landed in a sprawling heap in the roadway. (See Chapter 1).

"Not at all, sir! I'm real hot stuff in the ring. I don't know who this chap Chumley is, sir, but he knows where to come for talent."

"I am not prepared to discuss the matter any further, Trimble. I do not believe for one moment that your abilities are so pronounced as you suggest. At the same time, Mr. Chumley has requested me to send you to Burchester on Saturday, and I have consented. He will arrange for his chauffeur to call for you here."

"Oh, good!" murmured Baggy.

"That is all, Trimble."

The fat junior left the Head's study feeling hugely elated.

He had not abandoned his scheme of revenge—not by any means; but he felt that life was once more worth living.

To go to the Burchester tournament would mean, not only a day off, but probably some free feeds in addition.

As for the boxing itself, Baggy had no intention of taking part in it.

He would wriggle out of that part of the affair somehow. He would represent that he had sprained his wrist, or something of that sort.

So long as he went to Burchester as

the guest of Mr. Chumley, everything in the garden would be lovely.

Trimble lost no time in acquainting his schoolfellows with his good fortune.

Tom Merry & Co. were staggered. And so was everybody else.

The fellows were incredulous at first; but later in the day the Head was heard to mention the matter to Mr. Railton.

"It's true, right enough," said Manners. "Baggy's going to Burchester to represent St. Jim's in the ring. Did you ever?"

"No, never!" said Tom Merry solemnly.

Trimble as a fighting-man was something quite new.

"Why, he doesn't know a boxing-glove from a straight left!" said Tom Merry.

"And he's been chosen in preference to all of us!" said Manners. "Carry me home to die, somebody!"

"This takes the cake, beats the band, and prances off with the whole giddy biscuit-factory!" said Monty Lowther.

And for the rest of that day the conversation of the juniors centred upon the astounding selection of Baggy Trimble as the St. Jim's representative in the forthcoming boxing tournament.

CHAPTER 4.

An Adventure for Reddy.

"NOW look out for squalls!"

Monty Lowther made that remark to his chums.

The Terrible Three were standing in the old gateway of St. Jim's in the early morning, waiting for the postman, when a familiar and portly figure came in sight from the direction of Rylcombe.

"It's Crump!" said Manners.

"What's he want here, I wonder?"

"Give it up," said Tom Merry.

"P'raps one of the bold, bad blades has been caught smoking in Rylcombe."

"Crump looks very much on the war-path, anyway," said Monty Lowther.

"He's snorting like a fiery dragon!"

P.-c. Crump came on with his poudrous tread.

As he stamped through the open gate-

way, the Terrible Three bowed low

before him.

"Hail!" said Manners.

"Fire, brimstone, and treacle!" said

Monty Lowther.

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"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Mr. Crump snorted.
 "Which you needn't try to be funny," he growled. "Let me pass, you young rips! I'm 'ere on humpertant business."
 "Anybody been burgling a bank?" asked Tom Merry.
 "Wuss than that, Master Merry."
 "My hat!"
 "What's all the rumpus about?" asked Manners.

"The lor does not hallow me to throw hout any 'ints on the subjick," said Mr. Crump darkly. "I'm a-goin' to see the 'Ead."

And the portly constable passed on to the Head's study, leaving the Terrible Three in a state of growing wonder and curiosity.

The Head was curious, too, when P.-c. Crump announced himself.

"Good-morning, Mr. Crump!" he said. "You have a complaint to make to me?"

"I 'ave a summons agen one of your boys, sir."

"Bless my soul! I trust nothing serious is the matter?"

"Somethin' werry serious indeed, sir. It's a case of battery an' hassault!"

"Dear me!"

Mr. Crump impressively produced a blue paper from his pocket and handed it to Dr. Holmes.

The Head's brow clouded over.

It was almost unheard of for a summons to be taken out against one of his pupils.

The blue document briefly stated that Redfern, of St. Jim's, was to appear at the Wayland police-court that morning, charged with assaulting Mike Jarvis, a coal-carter of Rylcombe.

"Surely this must be a mistake!" muttered the Head.

Mr. Crump shook his head.

"It's Master Redfern that's wanted, sir," he said. "I thought I'd better bring the summons to you first."

"Yes, yes! Very well, Mr. Crump. I will look into this distressing matter, and see that Redfern appears at the court this morning."

P.-c. Crump withdrew.

When his heavy tread was no longer audible in the passage, the Head sent for Redfern.

The Now House junior was startled when he caught sight of the Head's grave and troubled face.

"You sent for me, sir?" he said.

"Yes. I have received a great shock, Redfern. I have here a summons for you to attend the Wayland police-court."

Redfern jumped.

He had expected anything but this.

True, Mike Jarvis had threatened to bring an action against him for assault; but Reddy had regarded this as an empty threat.

For a moment the junior was thrown completely off his balance. But he pulled himself together, and faced the Head.

"I am indeed sorry that this should have come to pass, Redfern!" said Dr. Holmes. "There is nothing I more heartily abhor than a court scene. If you are fined—as you probably will be—it will mean that the fair name of this school will be dragged through the papers!"

"What exactly is the charge against me, sir?"

"It is one of assault. Did you strike a man named Jarvis, in Rylcombe?"

"I did, sir—and I'd do it again!"

"Redfern!"

"I had good cause to lick the rotter, sir," said Redfern. "He was ill-treating his horse. I told him to stop, and he wouldn't. So I hauled him down from his cart and gave him a hiding."

"That alters the whole complexion of things," he said. "The man received no more than his due. Doubtless the magistrate will dismiss the case. Were there any witnesses of the scene who could give evidence in your favour?"

"Not that I know of, sir."

"That is unfortunate. It will be a case of your word against this man's. Personally, I have no doubt that you acted from the best motives—"

"Thank you, sir!"

"But whether the magistrate will share my view remains to be seen. You had better proceed to Wayland, Redfern. Telephone me the result of the proceedings."

"Very well, sir!"

Redfern left the Head's study with a grim expression on his face. He would miss morning lessons; but that thought gave him no pleasure. A Form-room was preferable to a police-court.

But Reddy had no fears as to the result of the summons.

He was in the right, and he knew it.

Redfern was not altogether ignorant of how to defend himself, either.

There had been a time when he ran away from St. Jim's to take up a profession which was dear to his heart—that of a reporter on a provincial paper.

His work had sometimes taken him to the police-court, and in reporting the proceedings of the various cases he had picked up a good deal of useful information.

When he reached the court his hopes soared higher.

The first person he met was Mr. Bunn.

"Hallo!" said Reddy. "Are you in the soup as well?"

"No, Master Redfern—and neither are you. Fortunately, I was a witness of that little affair the other day; and between us we will convince the magistrate that Mr. Mike Jarvis hasn't a leg to stand on."

"Good!" said the St. Jim's junior.

A few moments later the court proceedings began.

Reddy's case was a long way down the list, and it was nearly noon before he stood face to face with the magistrate.

Mike Jarvis gave his evidence—evidence which made matters look very black indeed against Reddy.

But when Mr. Bunn was called the tables were completely turned.

Mr. Bunn was not an orator, but he excelled himself on this occasion.

In clear, ringing tones he described how Mike Jarvis had ill-treated his horse, and how Redfern, after giving the man a caution, which was ignored, had given Mike Jarvis the hiding he so richly deserved.

The magistrate was satisfied that Reddy's action was justified up to the hilt.

He administered a strong rebuke to Mike Jarvis.

"You had better be very careful in future," he said. "There can be no doubt that you have been guilty of gross brutality to your horse. Judging by the somewhat battered appearance of your face, Master Redfern did his work well. I hope the action he took will be a lesson to you!"

The case against Redfern was then dismissed, with costs to Mike Jarvis.

Shortly afterwards the telephone sounded in Dr. Holmes' study at St. Jim's.

"Redfern speaking, sir!" came a voice over the wires. "I've come through all right, sir!"

The Head gave an exclamation of relief.

"I am very glad to hear it, Redfern! This has been a very trying ordeal for

you, my boy, and I am sorry it should have occurred."

"That's all right, sir!" said Reddy cheerfully. "I'm coming back to the school at once!"

And he rang off.

The Head was about to replace the receiver on its hook's when a startling thing happened.

There was a deafening crash close at hand, followed by a heavy thud.

For a moment the Head stood thunder-struck. His mind went back to the Zeppelin raids of war-time.

"Bless my soul! What on earth—"

With a dazed expression on his face, the Head glanced round the room. What he saw caused him to compress his lips with anger.

The study window was smashed; and on the table lay a brick—a large and hefty brick, which must have narrowly missed the Head himself!

Some person unknown had hurled the missile through the study window, with deliberate intent to cause annoyance, and perhaps injury, to Dr. Holmes.

As soon as he had recovered from the shock, the Head moved towards the window.

But the quadrangle was deserted.

There was no sign of the mysterious assailant.

The Head's brow grew very stern.

He was angry and hurt to think that a boy—for it must have been a boy—should so far forget himself as to perform such a dangerous and dastardly action.

The brick could hardly have found its way into the Head's study by accident.

It had been maliciously hurled through the window.

For some moments Dr. Holmes stood wrapped in thought. Then he sent for Kildare.

The captain of St. Jim's glanced curiously at the smashed window, and at the brick on the table, but he ventured no comment.

"I wish you to summon a general assembly in Big Hall, Kildare!" said the Head.

"At once, sir?"

"Yes—it is very urgent!"

Kildare left the Head's study wondering.

Morning lessons had just finished, and he rounded up the fellows and shepherded them into Big Hall.

There was general excitement throughout the school.

There was apprehension, too, in some quarters.

Aubrey Racke, and others of his kidney, were wondering if some of their old sins had come home to roost.

"Wonder what it's all about?" said Tom Merry.

"Gussy is going to be presented with the O.B.E.," said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha?"

"Weally, Lowther," said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard it as much moah probable that you are goin' to get it in the neck for w'iting about one of the mastahs in your Comic Column!"

"Slush!" whispered Manners warningly. "Here comes the Head!"

CHAPTER 5.

The Fiat Goes Forth!

DR. HOLMES swept into Big Hall with rustling gown.

There was a hush as he mounted the dais.

"My boys," he began, "I have called you together in connection with an outrage—an unparalleled outrage—which has recently occurred!"

"Wonder if he means Gussy's pink-and-pale-blue necktie?" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Dwy up, Lowthiah, you ass!"
"Well, you can't deny that your necktie's an outrage against society!" whispered the irrepressible humorist of the Shell.

"Silence!" rapped out the Head. "I have been the victim of what was probably meant to be a practical joke, but what I regard as far more serious."

"My hat!" murmured Manners.
"I had just concluded a telephone conversation in my study," the Head went on, "when a missile, in the form of a brick, was hurled through my window!"

There was a murmur of amazement from the assembly.

"Had the brick struck me," continued Dr. Holmes, "I should not have escaped serious injury. I can scarcely realise that there is a boy here who would wilfully seek to harm his headmaster. Yet such is the case. I call upon the boy who threw that brick to stand forward and admit the offence!"

"And don't all speak at once!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

They didn't!
Not a fellow stirred.
"Come," said the Head, "if the culprit chooses to confess, and tells me he hurled the brick without stopping to think of the possible consequences, I shall deal more leniently with him than if I have to find out by other means."

Still no one stirred.
"I wish you all to understand," said the Head, "that this is a very serious matter. If the culprit is not discovered, that regrettable incident may lead to others. Once again I call upon the guilty party to come forward!"

But the guilty party, whoever he was, preferred to hide his light under a bushel.

"I will wait three minutes," said the Head grimly. "If during that period no one comes forward, I shall be reluctantly compelled to punish the whole school for the offence of one."

The silence which followed this remark could almost be felt.

"Two minutes have expired," said the Head at length.

There was a general craning of necks, and a good deal of muttered speculation, but the offender discreetly held his peace.

"The time is up," said Dr. Holmes at length. "I have given the culprit ample opportunity to confess, and he has not done so. I therefore have no resource but to punish the whole school."

"Oh crumbs!"

"It is not often that I take such a step," said the Head, "but law and order must be maintained. No boy will be allowed out of gates for a week!"

"Oh!"
There was a gasp of dismay from the St. Jim's fellows.

Gated for a week!
The Head could not have selected a more severe punishment.

No jaunts into Rylcombe and Wayland, no boating or bathing, no country walks for a whole week!

And all because the boy who had thrown the brick chose to remain anonymous.

"If the culprit confesses in the meantime," said the Head, "the ban will, of course, be lifted. But if he fails to come forward the whole school must suffer. That is all."

When the school was dismissed, seniors and juniors alike discussed the strange affair.

Who had thrown the brick through the Head's study window?

Who was causing the whole school to pay the penalty of his folly?

"It's rotten!" growled Jack Blake.

"Our match with the Grammarians is knocked on the head now."

"And so are a good many other things," said Tom Merry. "It's no joke, being gated for a week."

"It's a wotten shame!" agreed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Why couldn't the wottah have owned up?"

"Echo answers 'Why?'" said Monty Lowther. "He finked a licking, I suppose."

Tom Merry & Co. tried to puzzle out in their minds who the culprit could have been.

The name of Baggy Trimble did not occur to them in connection with the affair.

They had forgotten Trimble's threat to be revenged upon the Head for the swishing he had received.

In any case, they would not have supposed that Baggy Trimble had sufficient nerve to hurl a brick through the Head's study window.

Baggy himself was very excited.

"I say, you fellows," he began, approaching the Terrible Three in the quad, "I'm in for the time of my life!"

"I don't see it," said Tom Merry.

"You're gated, like the rest of us."

"Eh?"

"The Head won't let you go to the boxing tournament after what's happened."

"Won't he, by Jove? He promised me, and I'll keep him to it. I'll go and tackle the old beast now!"

And Baggy Trimble rolled away to the Head's study.

"Well, Trimble?" said Dr. Holmes, as the fat junior knocked and entered.

"I came to see you about the boxing tournament, sir," said Baggy. "I suppose I can go, sir?"

The Head reflected for a moment.

"The whole school is gated, Trimble," he said. "However, I promised Mr. Chumley that you should go, and I do not wish to go back on my word. If Mr. Chumley's chauffeur calls for you on Saturday you may accompany him."

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

And the fat junior rolled out of the study in high feather.

"You mean to say the Head's letting you go?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather! Why shouldn't he?"

"But—but you can't box!"

"That's all you know, Tom Merry. Why, I could lick you gagged and bound and blindfolded!"

"You—you cheeky, fat toad—"

"Oh, bump him!" growled Monty Lowther. "We seem to be suffering from too much Trimble just lately!"

"Here, I say, hold on—I mean, leggo!" gasped Baggy, as he felt himself being swept off his feet. "I—I was only joking, you fellows—"

Bump!

"Yaroooooh! Give over, you beasts! You're only jealous because you're not coming—"

Bump!

"Another one for luck!" sang out Monty Lowther.

For the third time Baggy Trimble descended upon the hard flagstones with a crash and a yell.

The life of the special boxing representative of St. Jim's was not proving exactly a path of roses, after all!

CHAPTER 6.

A Treat for Two!

SATURDAY dawned—a glorious, sunny day.

The conditions were ideal for cricket.

They were still more ideal for an open-

air picnic, or for a dip in the rippling waters of the Ryll.

But there was nothing doing. St. Jim's writhed and chafed under the Head's sentence.

Perhaps Dr. Holmes had acted more sternly than usual.

But the fellows could hardly blame him.

As Monty Lowther remarked, it was no joke to have brickbats sailing through one's window, and the Head had taken what he felt to be the most effective measure of preventing a recurrence of the affair.

A party of juniors strolled disconsolately in the quad in the bright, summer sunshine.

"We're like birds in a giddy cage!" growled Jack Blake.

"Exiles in Siberia!" sighed Monty Lowther.

"Can't something be done about it?" asked Herries desperately. "I wanted to take Towser out for a run."

"Blow Towser!" growled Manners.

"We've heard enough about that muzzled beast!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who had been pondering deeply for some moments, jammed his monocle into his eye, and surveyed his schoolfellows.

"I had a wemittance this mornin', deah boys!" he announced. "It was a fivah. I p'pose we have a picnic this aftahnoon in the woods!"

"Ass!" said Jack Blake.

"Dolt!" said Digby.

"Silly chump!" said Tom Merry.

"How can we have a picnic in the woods when we're all gated?"

"It is not imposted, deah boys! We could bweak bounds!"

"Eh?"

The juniors stared blankly at their elegant chum.

"We've done it befoah, an' we can do it agan!" said Arthur Augustus resolutely.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Can't be done!" he said. "We're like rats in a trap. The prefects have been instructed to keep their optics open, and prevent anyone from leaving the premises. There's Knox on sentry-go at the school wall."

"Bai Jove! Anyone would think we were a set of cwiminals!" said Arthur Augustus heatedly.

At that moment a car swung through the open gateway.

It was a fine, grey car, lavishly upholstered.

"A visitor for somebody!" said Jack Blake.

The chauffeur slowed up as he approached the group of juniors.

"Is Mster Trimble here, young gents?" he asked.

"That's me!" said a voice.

And Baggy Trimble pushed his way towards the car.

The juniors gasped when they saw him. As a rule, Baggy Trimble was the most slovenly junior at St. Jim's.

But his appearance on this occasion left nothing to be desired.

The fat junior had treated himself to a wash—a real wash, as distinct from his usual cat's-lick—and his Etons were spotless.

He also sported a snowy-white collar, and his boots gleamed in the sunshine.

From his button-hole protruded a red rose.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I weally believe Twimble's wofermin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's fairly out-Gussied Gussy!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

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Baggy Trimble clambered into the big car, and made himself comfortable.

He waved a fat hand to the juniors. "Ta-ta, you fellows!" he said. "I'll send you a wire telling you that I've won the light-weights!"

"The light-weights!" gasped Monty Lowther. "Oh, my hat! Make it the leaden-weights, Baggy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble lay back in the car with a beaming smile.

He was the only fellow at St. Jim's to whom the gating order did not apply. He was free—free to go over to Burchester and enjoy himself to the full.

"Lucky dog!" said Jack Blake, as the car moved off.

"Blessed if I can make it out!" said Digby. "Why should a fat duffer like Trimble be selected to box for St. Jim's? He'll be licked to a jelly!"

"Why not bowl Knox over, and bunk over the wall?" suggested Horries.

"That would be too thick!" said the captain of the Shell. "Breaking bounds is bad enough, in the Head's eyes; and bowling a prefect over in the process would just about put the tin hat on it! Afraid there's nothing for it but to cool our heels at St. Jim's."

A party of New House fellows strolled into view.

"What about a junior House-match?" suggested Figgins. "It's pretty tame, when you think of the ripping time we might have on the river or in the woods. But it's better than nothing!"

Tom Merry nodded. "I'm game!" he said.

"In that case, I'll get up an eleven!" said Figgins. "You'll play, of course, Kerr?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Same here!" said Fatty Wynn.

"What about you, Reddy?"

"Sorry!" said Redfern, "I'm going over to Burchester!"

"What!"

"I'm very curious to see this boxing tournament."

"So are all the rest of us!" said Tom Merry. "But it can't be done! We're gated!"

"I don't see why the order should apply to me!" said Reddy. "I wasn't at St. Jim's when that brick was heaved through the Head's window. I was in Wayland at the time."

"Bai Jove! Weddy's quite wight!" said Arthur Augustus. "He can pprove that he had nothin' whatevah to do with the bizney!"

"I should speak to the Head about it, if I were you, Reddy!" said Kerr.

"That's precisely what I mean to do!" said Reddy.

And he made tracks for the Head's study.

Dr. Holmes was still very angry; but he simmered down a little when Redfern came in.

"You wish to speak to me, Redfern?"

"Yes, sir. May I go over to Burchester to see the boxing?"

"Are you not aware that the whole school is gated, Redfern?"

"That ought not to apply to me, sir. I wasn't here when the brick was thrown through your window. If you remember, I was at Wayland at the time, attending the court proceedings."

"You are quite right, Redfern. I do not care to make exceptions, but in your case it is only fair. Yes, you may certainly go to Burchester, if you wish."

"Thank you, sir!"

Reddy left the Head's study with a grin.

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He, at any rate, was not going to be robbed of his pleasure.

The other juniors eyed him enviously as he wheeled his machine from the bicycle-shed, and set off on his excursion.

"Lucky dog number two!" said Jack Blake. "Wish I could prove an alibi of some sort!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Knox of the Sixth, who was patrolling near the school wall, shouted to Redfern as the junior cycled out of gates.

"Come back, you young sweep!"

"Not this evening!" chuckled Reddy.

"Some other evening!"

"You are defying the Head's orders—"

"Rats!"

"I shall report you——"

"More rats!"

Knox clenched his hands, and Redfern sped on his way, waving his hand in mock farewell as he vanished down the dusty road.

Knox gritted his teeth, and strode away to the Head's study.

He told himself that he had a very good case against Redfern.

Had he stopped to think, he might have known that Redfern would scarcely have dared to go out of gates without the Head's sanction.

But Knox seldom stopped to think. He hoped that the Head would send him in pursuit of Redfern. That would give him a much-needed opportunity of calling in at the Green Man.

In a great hurry, Knox burst into the Head's study.

Dr. Holmes looked up in some annoyance.

"It is customary, Knox, to knock at my door before entering!"

"Yes, I know, sir. But this is a most important matter. Every minute is precious!"

"What do you mean, Knox?"

"Redfern, of the New House, has set your order at defiance, and broken bounds!" panted the prefect. "I called to him to stop, but he ignored me. I wish to know if I may go and fetch him back, sir!"

"You may do nothing of the sort, Knox!" said the Head tartly.

"But——"

"Redfern had my full permission to go out of gates."

"Oh!"

In his blind desire to get Redfern into trouble, Knox had not realised that the junior might have the Head's sanction.

"I—I thought——" stammered Knox.

"You should not be so hasty in jumping to conclusions, Knox! You had better go back to your duty!"

And Knox went—inwardly fuming.

His case against Redfern had failed; and, what was worse, his projected visit to the Green Man was decidedly "off"!

CHAPTER 7.

The False and the True!

BAGGY TRIMBLE was in high feather.

He felt that the sun was beginning to shine at last.

Not often did he enjoy the luxury of a motor-ride; but he meant to make the most of this one.

Several curious glances were directed at him as the car flashed through the old-fashioned High Street of Wayland.

The fat junior lay back with a self-satisfied smirk, like a war profiteer enjoying his ill-gotten gains.

"This is prime!" he murmured. "I wish Burchester wasn't so jolly near. I should like a few hundred miles of this!"

But Burchester was reached all too soon.

The car slowed up outside the public hall.

There were posters outside the hall announcing the various contests.

A sturdy-looking young man advanced towards the car as Baggy Trimble stepped out.

"Master Trimble?" he asked.

"That's me!" said Baggy.

"I'm Bob Spencer—boxing-trainer. Mr. Chumley is unable to turn up at the hall just yet, and he asked me to look after you in the meantime."

"Oh, good!"

"The preliminary heats will take place in an hour," said Bob Spencer.

"Blow the hats!"

"Eh?"

"Look here," said Baggy. "I refuse to touch a pair of boxing-gloves until I've had a feed! I'm famished!"

Bob Spencer gasped.

He looked Baggy Trimble up and down, and decided that he had never seen a fellow who looked less like a boxer.

Why had Mr. Chumley chosen this plump, podgy youth to represent St. Jim's?

Was it midsummer madness on Mr. Chumley's part?

Baggy Trimble's voice broke in upon the boxing-trainer's reflections.

"I'm awfully peckish, you know. I hardly had any brekker. Half a dozen sausages, and only ten slices of bread-and-butter! It wasn't enough to feed a field-mouse!"

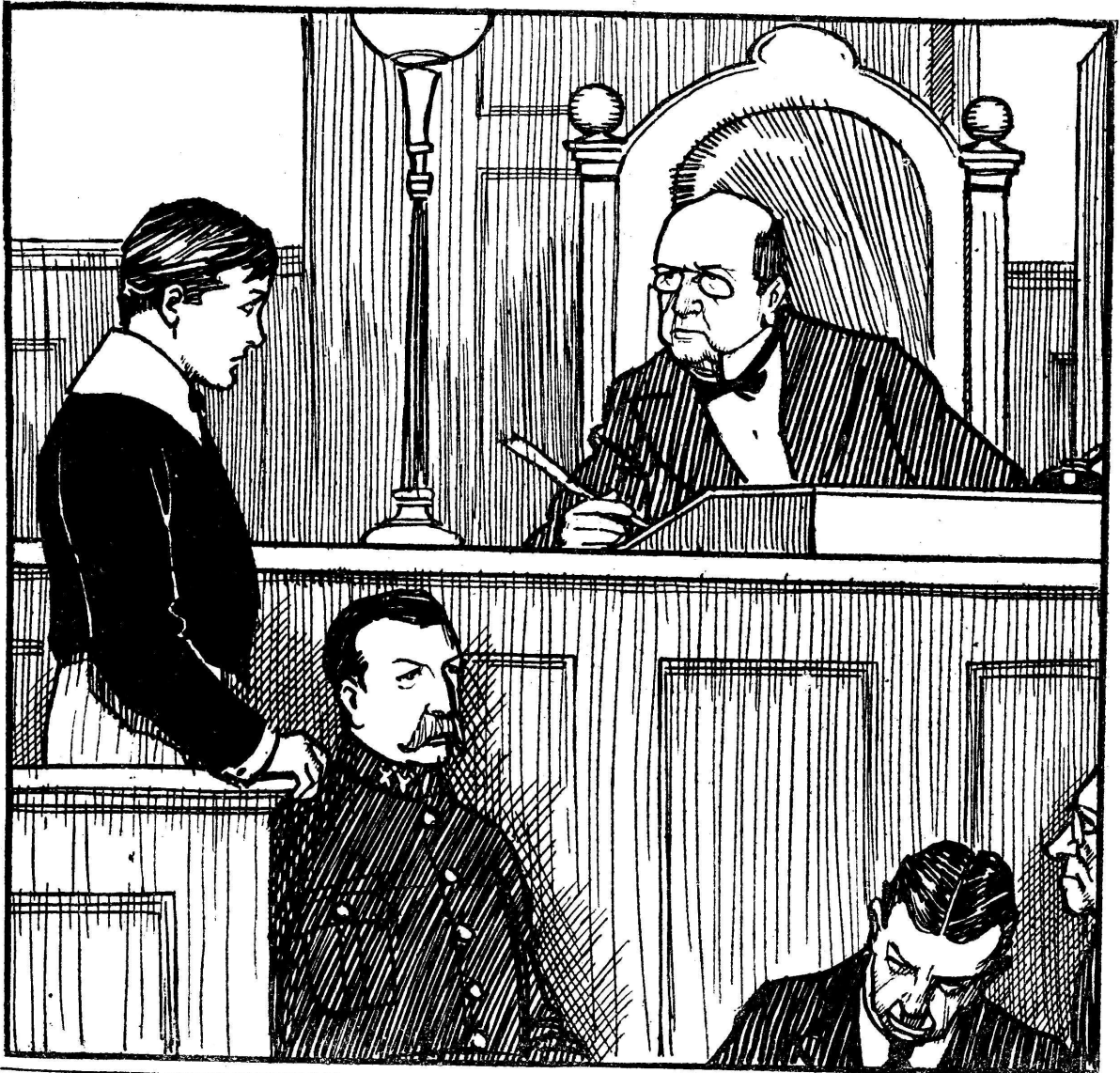
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Redfern's case was a long way down the list; but at length his name was called, and he stood face to face with the magistrate! (See Chapter 4).

"Great Scott!"

"Isn't there a bunshop in this hole-and-corner place?" demanded Baggy. "I can't do anything until I've laid a solid foundation!"

"If you take my tip," said Bob Spencer, "you'll leave pastry alone for a bit. How on earth can you do yourself justice in the ring, if you cram yourself with a lot of indigestible rubbish?"

"The more I eat, the better I can box," said Baggy cheerfully. "Just you take me along to a bunshop, there's a good fellow!"

Bob Spencer hesitated.

Mr. Chumley had requested him to make the St. Jim's junior as comfortable as possible.

Did that include taking him to a bunshop and standing treat?

Bob Spencer doubted it.

But he was a good-natured sort, and there was just time for a feed before the boxing tournament began.

"This way!" said Bob.

Baggy Trimble, his fat face beaming like a full moon, suffered himself to be led to the nearest bunshop.

It was a very spacious and well-

stocked establishment—much better than the bunshops in Wayland and Rylcombe. Burchester prided itself on its shops.

The boxing-trainer and the fat junior—an ill-assorted pair—sat down at one of the tables.

Bob Spencer beckoned to the waitress. "Bovril for one, please!" he said.

"Here, I say, that's not for me, is it?" exclaimed Baggy Trimble.

Bob Spencer laughed. "No; it's for me!" he said. "Go ahead, and give your order!"

Baggy Trimble blinked at the array of tarts and cakes on the shop counter.

"I should prefer to have a stool at the counter, and pick and choose as I go along!" he said.

"You'll be getting in the way of the customers if you do that. Better stay where you are!"

"Oh, all right!" grunted Baggy.

And then he gave his order.

The magnitude of it made Bob Spencer gasp. As for the waitress, she looked as if she were about to swoon.

"A dish of doughnuts, a dish of cream buns; a dozen ham-rolls, and a big, fat currant-cake!" said Baggy.

"No time for joking, kid!" said Bob Spencer, rather sternly.

"I'm not joking! I've just ordered a little snack—"

"Great pip! And do you really imagine you'll be able to keep your end up in the ring after that little lot?"

"Wait and see!" said Baggy sagely.

He was reflecting that he wouldn't go within a dozen yards of the ring.

The waitress brought the things Baggy had ordered.

She had to bring them on the instalment system. It was the only way.

Baggy Trimble lost no time in getting off the mark.

He bolted doughnuts and buns and rolls with amazing rapidity.

Bob Spencer, his Bovril forgotten, sat and watched the fat junior like one in a dream.

Bob's knowledge of boxers was, like Sam Weller's knowledge of London, extensive and peculiar. But he had never known an aspirant for boxing honours to stuff himself in this manner just before a tournament.

Baggy Trimble was in great form. He did not pause to take a breather, as it were, until the last ham-roll had departed, and the currant-cake had been reduced to a handful of crumbs. "That's tons better!" he said, at length.

"How often do you do this sort of thing?" asked Bob Spencer, in growing wonder.

"Whenever I get the chance—which isn't often!" said Baggy. "Trot out a dozen jam-tarts, waitress!"

Bob Spencer stared. "You—you mean to say you've not finished?" he stuttered.

"No jolly fear! I'm just getting into my stride!"

"By Jove!" Bob scarcely knew whether to be angry or amused.

He had never met anyone quite like Trimble before. He wondered where the fat junior managed to stow it all.

The waitress brought the jam-tarts. Baggy Trimble attacked them at once. "You don't seem to be eating any thing," he mumbled, blinking at Bob Spencer.

"I'm not hungry, thanks!" said Bob. "The sight of you feeding has sort of put me off my stroke!"

"I'm beginning to feel awfully fit!" said Baggy Trimble, starting on his seventh tart.

"It's a wonder you're not bilious!" said Bob.

"My hat! It takes more than a few scraps like this to make me bilious! By the way, I think I'll sample some of those chocolate macaroons—"

"I don't!" said Bob Spencer firmly.

"Eh?" "You've eaten enough for twelve healthy people already. And, besides, the show's due to begin!"

"Oh crumbs!" In the enjoyment of the feed Baggy Trimble had forgotten that he was due to appear in the ring.

He would have to dodge it somehow. But how?

Trimble's mind worked rapidly. The sprained wrist excuse would not avail with a man like Bob Spencer, he knew.

But there were other ways of backing out of the boxing. He could arrange to feel faint, and collapse on the floor of the dressing-room before his turn came. Yes, that ought to work all right.

"Penny for 'em!" said Bob Spencer.

"I—I was thinking that I ought to

have a dish of those maids of honour to wind up with!"

Bob Spencer thought otherwise. Reaching out his hand, he jerked Trimble to his feet.

"It's time this orgy finished," he said. "Mr. Chumley would have a blue fit if he knew what you'd eaten!"

"Bless Mr. Chumley! And leggo my car, you beast!"

But Bob Spencer had come to the end of his tether.

He led Trimble out of the bunshop, paying the bill en route.

It was a gigantic bill, and Bob Spencer thanked his lucky stars that he happened to be in funds.

Bob marched the fat junior into the dressing-room at the back of the public hall.

Quite a crowd of schoolboys of varying age, size, and weight were getting ready for the tournament.

From the body of the hall came a constant hum of voices. The spectators had already poured in.

Mr. Chumley, who was in charge of the proceedings, arrived shortly afterwards.

"Hallo, Bob!" he said genially. "Did you meet Master Trimble all right?"

"Couldn't very well miss him!" grinned Bob. "Here he is!"

"Yes, rather! Here I am!" said Baggy.

Mr. Chumley eyed the fat junior with extreme disfavour.

"What is all this nonsense?" he exclaimed. "You are not Master Trimble!"

"Of course I am!"

"Don't tell fibs!" said Mr. Chumley sternly. "Trimble is as different from you as chalk from cheese!"

Baggy Trimble inserted a fat hand into his coat-pocket, and produced a letter, addressed to himself.

"If you don't believe me, look at this!" he said.

Mr. Chumley looked, and was staggered.

The envelope was addressed to Master Baggy Trimble, at St. Jim's.

"Blessed if I can make this out!" said Mr. Chumley, passing his hand over his brow. "There's a mistake somewhere. You're not the kid I met in Rylcombe the other day. I don't understand—"

"Then I'd better make things clear to you," said a quiet voice.

Mr. Chumley spun round.

A cheerful-looking junior stood framed in the doorway of the dressing-room. It was Dick Redfern!

CHAPTER 8.

Fowled Out!

"WHAT does this mean?" gasped Mr. Chumley.

He recognised Redfern at once as the boy who had thrashed Mike Jarvis in Rylcombe.

"It's my fault that a misunderstanding has arisen," said Reddy. "When you asked my name the other day I told you it was Baggy Trimble. Goodness knows why I did it! It was one of those whims a fellow gets sometimes."

Mr. Chumley nodded. "Then your name is not Trimble?"

"No—thank goodness! I'm Redfern."

"Look here," said Baggy Trimble wrathfully, "you've come along to do me out of a good time—"

"Rats!"

"I'm going to box for St. Jim's in the light-weights."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I rather think," said Mr. Chumley, "that you carry too much overweight. Redfern's the man I want—not you. However, now you're here you can stay."

Redfern turned a flushed face to Mr. Chumley.

"Are you wanting me to represent St. Jim's?" he said.

"Of course!"

"Oh, good!" said Reddy delightedly.

Had he known in the first place why Mr. Chumley wanted his name he would have given it correctly.

Here was a golden opportunity of proving his worth in the ring.

Reddy was a fine boxer, with a clear eye, a powerful left, and plenty of science.

At St. Jim's he was rather overshadowed by fellows like Tom Merry and Figgins, though his chums knew that he could hold his own against most fellows of the same size and weight.

Reddy's eyes sparkled.

"Who am I up against?" he asked.

Mr. Chumley consulted a list in his hand.

"The draw has just taken place," he said. "Your first contest will be against a boy called Browne, from Brighton. It will take place in half an hour."

"Ripping!"

"If you can only fight your way through the opening heats and reach the final," said Mr. Chumley, "you will more than justify the good opinion I have of your abilities."

"Rely on me," said Reddy.

Mr. Chumley and Bob Spencer made their way on to the platform, where the first heat of the heavy-weights was about to take place.

Baggy Trimble blinked furiously at Redfern.

"It's just like a New House bargainer to come barging in!" he said. "You're bound to get licked! Now, if I were boxing for St. Jim's it would be different."

"It would!" said Reddy. "It would be a pantomime!"

"Beast!" growled Baggy. "You know jolly well I should win all along the line!"

It suited Trimble to talk like this. He was glad—very glad—that someone else had turned up to represent St. Jim's.

Not for whole hemispheres would the fat junior have ventured into the ring. He had a wholesome dread of straight lefts, and of the pain which accompanies violent blows to the nose.

But it would not do to let Redfern see that he funkled. Hence his idle boasting.

"How did you manage to get here?" inquired Baggy, as Redfern began to get into boxing attire.

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"I had the Head's permission," said Reddy shortly.

"Same here!" chuckled Baggy. "I'll bet the Head wouldn't have been so willing to let me come if he'd known the facts! Ho, he, he!"

Redfern stared at the fat junior in astonishment.

"What are you cackling about?" he exclaimed.

"The way I spoofed the Head!" gurgled Baggy. "It was prime! He didn't dream that I had anything to do with chucking that brick through his window—I—I mean—"

Baggy realised that he was letting his tongue wag far too freely.

Redfern eyed him keenly.

"So it was you?" he said.

"Eh? Of course not!" said Trimble promptly.

"But you've just given yourself away!"

"I—I haven't! What I said was merely a j-j-joke!" stammered Baggy, growing very alarmed at the expression on Redfern's face.

Redfern strode up to the fat junior and fastened a firm grip on his shoulder.

"It was you who threw that brick through the Head's window!" he said.

"Ow! D-d-don't shake me like that, you beast!"

"It was you!" repeated Reddy fiercely.

"Oh crumbs! I—I didn't know you were watching me!" stuttered Baggy.

"I wasn't watching you, ass! But you've given the show away now, with a vengeance!"

"Look here," gasped Baggy, as Redfern began to shake him like a fat rat.

"I—I know I can trust you to keep mum about this!"

"My hat!"

"You're not a sneak!" said Baggy.

"You wouldn't be so mean as to tell the Head!"

"I don't intend to," said Reddy grimly.

"Good!"

"I'm going to make you tell him yourself!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Redfern released his hold of the fat junior.

He pulled on a sweater, donned his school cap, and turned to the door.

"Where are you going?" asked Trimble, in alarm.

"To the post-office," said Redfern.

"And you're coming, too?"

"I won't!"

"We'll soon see about that!"

Reddy advanced towards the fat junior in such a hostile manner that Baggy saw there was no help for it.

"I—I'll come," he said.

"This way, then."

"And Reddy escorted Trimble from the dressing-room, and accompanied him to the post-office on the other side of the street.

"What's the little game?" asked Baggy, as they went inside.

"You're going to send a wire to the Head, confessing that it was you who sent the brick!"

Baggy Trimble turned almost green.

He was in one of the tightest corners of his school career.

Had he indeed been the fighting-man he claimed to be he would have made a bold bid for freedom.

But Redfern confronted him with a very grim, determined look.

He was not likely to let the culprit slip through his fingers.

"You'd better write out that wire at once," said Reddy. "Time's precious.

I've got to be in the ring in a few minutes."

"Oh dear! Oh crumbs! I wish I'd never heard that blessed brick! Don't

be too hard on a fellow when he's down, Redfern."

"You worm! You've 'caused the whole school to be gated, just because you hadn't the decency to own up. And now you expect to wriggle out of it. But you jolly well won't! Get a move on!"

Reddy produced a telegraph-form, and handed Trimble a pencil.

"What—what shall I say?" asked Baggy desperately.

"You'll write at my dictation," said Redfern.

And he leaned over the junior's shoulder and watched him write.

It was rather a long wire, but Redfern felt that the expense was justified.

When completed, the telegram ran as follows:

"Dr. Holmes, St. James' College, Rylcombe.—It was I who threw the brick through your window. Please cancel the gating order, so that the fellows may come to Burchester to see the boxing. Redfern is bringing me back to the school this evening.—TRIMBLE."

"That hits it off, I think," said Redfern.

He handed the wire over the counter, and escorted Trimble back to the public hall.

Reddy calculated that it would be nearly two hours before his schoolfellows arrived at the hall.

They would not be in time to witness the opening heats.

But if Reddy were lucky and plucky enough to reach the final they would be able to see it.

When the two juniors regained the dressing-room they found Bob Spencer there, looking rather excited.

"Back up, Master Redfern!" he said.

"Your bout's nearly due."

"All serene," said Reddy. "By the way, will you get someone to keep an eye on this fat load?"

"With pleasure!" grinned Bob.

He remembered Trimble's tremendous orgy in the bunshop, and bore no superfluous love for him.

A moment later Reddy heard his name called, and he stepped into the ring.

The hall was packed.

The sea of faces would have startled a fellow not accustomed to the limelight.

But this was not Redfern's first public appearance.

He faced the murmuring crowd without a tremor.

Redfern's opponent, however, was restless and ill at ease.

He wanted to get on with the fighting. The preliminary formalities embarrassed him.

But he looked every inch a boxer.

Redfern noted his well-knit figure, and he knew that he would have to go all out.

Bob Spencer was acting as Reddy's second.

Bob's knowledge of ringcraft was inexhaustible, and he gave the St. Jim's junior some very useful tips.

Then the bout began.

After two sledgehammer rounds, during which neither schoolboy claimed the advantage, Redfern asserted his superiority.

He drove Browne against the ropes, and the Brighton fellow gasped under a rain of blows.

When he came into the open again, Redfern thrust home his advantage.

A sharp, swift blow to the jaw, followed by another in the same spot, finished Browne's chances.

He went to the boards with a crash.

The referee began to count.

Redfern looked on with silent satisfaction.

He knew that his man would fail to respond.

"Redfern wins!" said Mr. Chumley.

And the St. Jim's junior retired to the dressing-room in high spirits.

He had survived the opening heat, anyway.

But had he foreseen what was ahead of him he would have described that first brief bout as a picnic.

CHAPTER 9.

In the Final!

"I DO not quite know what to make of this, Railton."

The telegram which Baggy Trimble had so unwillingly written had been received by Dr. Holmes.

Mr. Railton was in the study at the time, and the Head handed him the wire.

"An extraordinary document, sir," said the Housemaster.

"Do you think it is genuine, Railton?"

"It is difficult to say," said Mr. Railton.

"Of course, any unscrupulous boy could have sent a telegram of this sort, in order to get the gating order withdrawn."

"Exactly! We have no proof that the telegram really came from Trimble."

Mr. Railton reflected a moment.

"I think it must have done," he said, at length.

"Strict watch and ward has been kept by the prefects, and no boy is out of gates with the exception of Trimble."

"And Redfern," added the Head.

"But Redfern is not the sort of boy who would practise such a deception. It seems fairly clear that Trimble sent the wire."

"It is very curious," said Mr. Railton.

"It is not like Trimble to make a voluntary confession of this sort."

"The question is, am I justified in removing the gating restriction on the strength of this telegram?" said the Head.

"I think you would be quite justified," said Mr. Railton.

"After all, we shall learn the real facts of the case when Trimble returns this evening. And if the telegram proves to be a hoax, then you can bring the gating order into force again."

"That is so," said the Head. "I will send for Kildare."

A few moments later the captain of St. Jim's appeared.

Kildare was looking unusually ruffled.

He had arranged to spend the afternoon on the river with Darrel and Rusden, and the gating order had knocked the expedition on the head.

"Will you notify everyone, Kildare," said Dr. Holmes, "that the gating order is withdrawn forthwith, and that those who wish may go to Burchester to witness the boxing tournament?"

The old, happy flush returned to Kildare's cheeks.

His afternoon's outing was not "off," after all!

"With pleasure, sir!" he said.

To convey the Head's message to the whole school was the work of a few moments.

As soon as one fellow got to know, the good news would spread through St. Jim's like a fire through gorse.

Kildare sighted Wally D'Arcy in the quad, and beckoned to him.

"Just nip along to the cricket-ground, D'Arcy minor, and tell the fellows they are free to go out of gates," he said.

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"You might also mention that anyone who wishes to go to Burchester may do so."

"What ho!" said Wally D'Arcy. And he sped away like the wind. Tom Merry & Co. were engaged upon their cricket-match with the New House.

It was a poor game, for the gating order hung like a cloud over the proceedings.

Tom Merry was just going in to bat when Wally D'Arcy rushed up.

"It's all serene, you fellows! The gating order's cancelled!"

"What?"

"It's a fact. I had it from Kildare just now. He told me to come and tell you."

"Hurrah!"

"How perfectly wippin', deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We shall be able to go owah to Burchestah now an' see the boxin'."

"Yes, rather!"

A general move was made in the direction of Burchester.

Some of the fellows went by train; but Tom Merry & Co. decided to bike the distance.

The cyclists were the first to arrive at the little market town.

"Here's Baggy Trimble!" exclaimed Jack Blake, as they dismounted outside the public hall.

Trimble stood near the entrance, and a sturdy young fellow in a sweater and flannel trousers was keeping an eye on him, with a view to nipping in the bud any attempt at escape.

"How did you fare in the boxing, my fat tulip?" inquired Monty Lowther.

"The beasis won't let me box!" growled Baggy.

"Wherefore this thushness?"

"That boulder Redfern has cut me out."

Tom Merry grasped the fat junior by the arm.

"You mean to say that Reddy's boxing?" he exclaimed.

"He's been boxing all the afternoon. He's won goodness knows how many heats, and now's he's going to fight in the final."

The juniors did not wait to hear more. Leaving their machines at a garage close by, they swarmed into the hall.

There were no seats available; but there was standing-room at the back commanding a good view of the platform.

Scarcely had Tom Merry & Co. taken up their position when the referee was heard to announce:

"The final for the light-weights will now take place."

And then, after a pause, followed the names:

"R. H. Redfern, St. James' College, and—"

"Good old Reddy!"

"And P. O'Connor, of St. Clive's."

"Play up, Pat!" came in a chorus from the St. Clive's section of the spectators.

The referee raised his hand for silence.

"Seconds out!" he said tersely.

"Time!" Craning eagerly forward, the St. Jim's juniors watched the two finalists as they shook hands and commenced sparring.

Redfern was rather worn and jaded in appearance.

After defeating Browne, of Brighton, in the opening heat, he had been engaged in some desperate tussles.

It had been necessary for Reddy to defeat three fellows in succession before reaching the final.

O'Connor, on the other hand, had come through the opening heats without much effort.

He was a big fellow for a light-weight, a very sturdy youngster indeed; and St. Clive's thought the world of him.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Weddy's got all his work cut out, deah boys! That Iwish fellah knows how to box!"

"Yes, rather!" said Jack Blake. "Look at that!"

O'Connor's left sailed past Reddy's guard and landed on the junior's jaw.

For a moment Reddy was staggered. But only for a moment.

He came on again, plucky and determined as ever.

When the bell rang at the end of the round both combatants were slightly the worse for wear.

The honours rested with O'Connor so far; but Bob Spencer seemed to have great faith in Redfern.

"Keep pegging away!" he said cheerfully, as he brought the sponge into play.

"He's a bit of a terror; but I fancy you can put the kybosh on him all serene."

"Hope so!" panted Reddy. "At the present moment I feel more like crawling away into a quiet corner and chucking in my mit."

"Never say die!" said Bob. "Go for him hammer-and-tongs in the second round. He's a fine boxer, but he's the sort of fellow who will curl up under heavy punishment. You see!"

"It's all very well for Bob to talk like that," thought Reddy, when the second round was in progress. "Go for him hammer-and-tongs' sounds fine—but I can't get near the beggar!"

Perhaps O'Connor's strongest point was his ability to swerve rapidly to one side when Reddy attacked.

He dodged and ducked in an almost uncanny fashion.

"Afraid Reddy will be whacked!" remarked Figgins. "Still, he's reached the final—and that's something worth shouting about! I only wish he could get to close quarters with that Irish fellow!"

"It's only a matter of time," said Talbot. "O'Connor seems to be playing

to the gallery. He's taking too many risks—and he'll be caught napping before long."

Talbot was right—as usual. In the third round, O'Connor played with his opponent as a cat plays with a mouse.

But he rather overdid it. And presently, when he ducked, Redfern got his head in chancery, and proceeded to pommel it for all he was worth.

The St. Jim's juniors surveyed the scene with delight.

"Bravo, Reddy!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "Sock it into him, old scout!"

Whether Reddy heard or not, he certainly carried out what was required of him.

Left and right, right and left, his fists shot out; and O'Connor reeled back against the ropes, sick and dizzy.

The call of "Time!" saved him.

"Good man!" said Bob Spencer approvingly, as he set a miniature gale blowing with his towel. "You've got him tied up in knots now. The next round ought to be the last."

"If it isn't," gasped Reddy, "goodness knows what will happen! I'm beginning to feel whacked!"

"Shush! You mustn't admit anything like that—not even to yourself! You've got plenty of fight in you yet. Don't forget to use your left!"

Redfern ought to have stepped up for the next round fit and confident.

But he had received a good deal of hammering in the course of the afternoon, and his strength was failing him.

He did not realise that his opponent was at the door of defeat.

Yet such was the case. O'Connor tottered, rather than walked, into the ring.

The fierce activity of the Irish boy had spent itself, leaving him like a pricked balloon.

His left managed to get home on Reddy's jaw, but it was merely a tap. There was no force behind the blow.

The spectators looked on eagerly. The bout had resolved itself into a tussle between two fellows who were both on the verge of exhaustion.

"Go it, Reddy!" came a loyal shout from the back of the hall.

Reddy heard that shout, and he caught a momentary glimmer of the group of St. Jim's juniors.

Those fellows, he reflected, looked to him to pull off the contest for St. Jim's.

Come what may, he must not disappoint them.

With a supreme effort Reddy pulled himself together.

Once, twice, he aimed a blow at O'Connor's head, and on each occasion the Irish boy just managed to get clear.

But a third blow—a smashing straight left—fairly did the trick.

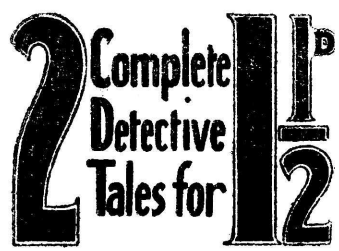
O'Connor was lifted clean off his feet, and he went down for the count.

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Redfern stood aside, pumping in breath, while the referee began to count.

"One—two—three—"

"Buck up, Pat!" exclaimed the supporters from St. Clive's.

But it was easier said than done.

No one could say that O'Connor had not fought gamely. But his belt was shot now.

"Four—five—six—seven—"

It seemed for a moment that the Irish boy would succeed in regaining his feet.

But he sank limply back to the boards, and the referee concluded the count.

"Eight—nine—ten!"

And then, after a brief pause:

"Redfern wins!"

There was a sudden commotion from the back of the hall. A dozen juniors forced their way towards the platform and scrambled into the ring.

"Well, played, Reddy!"

"You giddy old brick, to put up such a performance!" said Tom Merry, grasping Reddy by the hand.

"Yaas, wathah! I doubt—I vevy much doubt—if I could put up a much better show myself, deah boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Redfern's hand performed the functions of a pump-handle during the next few moments.

He was too fagged to call upon his chums to desist.

"Stand clear, young gentlemen, please!" said Mr. Chumley. "We've not come to the end of the programme yet!"

"Sorry!" said Tom Merry. "But we felt so jolly backed—"

"Yes, yes; I quite understand! It was a capital performance on Redfern's part."

The St. Jim's juniors bore their champions away to the dressing-room, where he soon rallied.

"Jove! That was the hottest afternoon I've ever had in my life!" said Reddy.

"I shouldn't care to go through it again!"

"Never mind!" said Figgins. "You've won, and that's all that matters!"

"Of course, your victory wasn't so sweeping as Trimble's would have been!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "But if you persevere you'll become as good as Baggy yet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That reminds me," said Reddy. "I've undertaken to bring that fat toad to the seat of judgment when we get back. It's a hateful bizney, but the silly chump brought it on himself. It was Trimble who shied the brick through the Head's study window—"

"Bai Jove!"

"He caused all you fellows to be gated, and now he must pay the piper."

"Look here, you fellows," interposed the peevish voice of Baggy Trimble. "I—I don't think I'll be coming back to St. Jim's just yet—"

"Oh, don't you!" growled Figgins. "We'll jolly soon see about that! I'll leave my bike here for the time being, and take you back by train—see?"

"Oh crumbs!"

Figgins marched the fat junior out into the street, and kept a tight grip on his arm all the way to the railway-station.

With a groan of dismay, Baggy Trimble realised that he was being led to the slaughter. And he knew from past experience that the Head was not likely to spare the red!

CHAPTER 10.

After the Feast the Reckoning!

"BRING him along!"

"This way to the torture-chamber!"

"Leggo, you beasts!"

Tom Merry & Co. had arrived back at St. Jim's, and they readily gave Figgins

a hand in escorting Baggy Trimble to the Head's study.

In the ordinary way the juniors would have dealt with the matter themselves, and punished the fat junior in accordance with their own wishes.

But, unless Trimble made a verbal confession to the Head, the gating order would come into force again, and the whole school would suffer.

That was unthinkable. Baggy Trimble struggled and roared in the grasp of his captors.

"Leave me alone, you rotters! I haven't done anything! I'm not going to be mauled about like this! I'll tell the Head—"

"Good!" said Monty Lowther. "That's exactly what we want you to do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't make such a giddy rumpus!" said Tom Merry. "The Head will come out in a minute! You'd better go in with Trimble, Reddy. The rest of us will wait outside."

"All serene," said Redfern. "I won't go in, I tell you!" hissed Baggy.

"I think you will, my pippin!" said Reddy.

And he grasped Trimble's ear between his thumb and forefinger and propelled him to the door of the Head's study.

"Yow-ow-ow!" Leggo my ear, Redfern, you beast!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Dr. Holmes, suddenly opening the door. "What does this disturbance mean?"

"I've brought Trimble along to see you, sir," explained Redfern. "He seems rather unwilling, so I had to use a little gentle persuasion."

"Ahem! Come in, both of you!" The two juniors advanced into the study.

"What have you been doing to your face, Redfern?" demanded the Head.

"Mum-mum-my face, sir?"

"Yes. Your appearance suggests that you have been fighting!" said Dr. Holmes sternly. "Is that so?"

"Yes, sir."

Dr. Holmes compressed his lips. "I am very sorry to observe—" he began.

"They're honourable scars, sir," explained Redfern.

"What?"

"I got slightly damaged in the boxing tournament at Burchester, sir."

"Do you mean to say that you took part in the tournament, Redfern?"

"Yes, sir."

"But I understood that Trimble—"

"I'm afraid a little error arose, sir. I was the fellow Mr. Chumley wanted."

"And did you accomplish anything noteworthy?"

"I won the light-weights, sir," said Reddy modestly.

The Head melted at once. "I am very pleased to hear of this success, Redfern. I was afraid you had been indulging in a rough-and-tumble with one of your schoolfellows."

The Head then turned to Trimble, whose knees were beginning to knock together.

"Did you send me a telegram this afternoon, Trimble?"

"Nunno, sir! I—I mean, yessir!"

"To the effect that it was you who threw the brick through my window?"

"No, sir. I don't know anything about that affair, sir. You see, I was in the box-room at the time."

"Own up, you fat cad!" muttered Redfern.

"One moment, Redfern. You say you were in the box-room at the time, Trimble?"

"Yessir. And if any fellow says I wasn't he's a rotten fibber!"

"Trimble!"

"It's all rot, sir, for the fellows to say it was me who threw the beastly brick! I made sure no one was looking before I threw it!"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I didn't throw it at all, sir!" stammered Baggy, scarcely knowing what he was saying. "It was a pure accident! Honour bright, sir! The thing slipped out of my hand, and—"

"Enough!" said the Head sternly. "You have been guilty of the most despicable conduct, Trimble. You perpetrated a cowardly and shameful action; you refused to confess, thus causing the whole school to be punished; and now you attempt to deceive me by clumsy prevarication!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"But for your utter stupidity I should consider your immediate expulsion from the school!" said Dr. Holmes. "I am willing to believe that you had no intention of inflicting serious injury upon your headmaster—"

"That's so, sir! I—I didn't mean to do you in, sir—not for a moment! I just wanted to stun you—"

"Boy!" gasped the Head.

"You gave me such a fearful licking, sir, that I simply had to get my own back somehow!" said Baggy.

"Do I understand, Trimble, that you have harboured feelings of revenge against me for having given you a thrashing which you richly deserved?"

"Nunno, sir! I'm not a bit revengeful, really! I always believe in turning the other cheek!"

The Head selected a brand-new cane from his desk.

Baggy Trimble watched him with considerable apprehension.

"You—you're going to lick me, sir?"

"Your supposition is correct, Trimble!"

"But—but I haven't done anything, sir!"

"Silence! Hold out your hand!"

Baggy Trimble gingerly extended a fat paw.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yaroooooh!"

"Keep your hand extended, Trimble, or I shall be compelled to place you across the desk!"

"Oh dear! Oh crumbs! I—I'm hurt!"

"That is merely a foretaste of what you are about to receive!" said the Head grimly.

And he proceeded to give Baggy Trimble one of the soundest lickings he had received in his school career.

Baggy's yells floated out to the crowd in the passage.

"The Head's going strong!" murmured Monty Lowther. "I should think Baggy would give up brick-throwing after this, and start keeping rabbits!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A few moments later two juniors emerged from the Head's study.

One was smiling and erect; the other seemed to be trying to tie himself into knots.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! The beast has half-killed me!" moaned Baggy Trimble. "I'll make him sit up for this!"

"Hallo! Still harping on revenge?" said Manners. "I think we'll take him back to the Head for another dose, you fellows—"

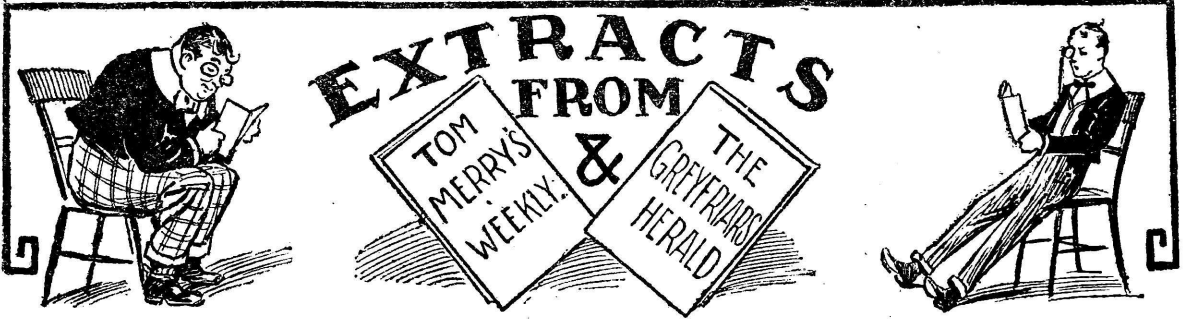
"Leggo, you rotters! You wouldn't dare—"

"Are you going to be a good boy, then?" demanded Jack Blake.

"Ow! Yes!"

(Concluded on Page 16, Col. 3.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 593.



TAMING TRIMBLE!

By MONTY LOWTHER.

"IT'S got to stop!" roared Jack Blake. "But how, where, and when are you going to stop it?" grunted Digby. "Whopping the fat beast is N.G.; fellows are doing that every day, and the blessed scrounging goes on just the same! No; the only way to stop it is to stop Trimble, and the only way to stop Trimble is to kill Trimble! It's the only way!" "Then why not kill Trimble?" grinned Herries. "Does anyone know the address of the nearest pig-slaughterer?" Blake snorted.

"If you asses think this eternal thieving is a blessed joke, I jolly well don't!" he growled angrily. "This is the third time this week we've returned from the cricket-field for tea and found the blessed cupboard cleaned out. There was a whole cake, a tin of sardines, an' a pot of shrimp-paste in that cupboard for tea—and every scrap's gone! I tell you it's got to stop! It's getting beyond a joke!" And, in a very grumpy mood, Blake began to lay the tablecloth. Fortunately, there was a little tea and sugar, and the raider had left the bread-and-butter severely alone—Trimble was never very partial to bread-and-butter. But it was a very frugal meal that afternoon in No. 6, nevertheless—and not a very happy one, either.

Blake munched his bread-and-butter gloomily, and in silence—evidently thinking out schemes for trapping Trimble. D'Arcy's aristocratic features also wore a thoughtful frown, and it was soon plain that he, too, had been concentrating on the problem of trapping Trimble, for quite suddenly his face beamed.

"Blake, deah boy," he gasped excitedly. "I've got a weally wippin' idea in wegard to twappin' the beastly gwub-waider!" "Good!" grunted Blake. "Let's hear it, then, for I'm hanged if I can think of anything, Gussy!"

D'Arcy smiled reminiscently. "Do you chaps wemehbah that feahfully clevah invention of Glyn's—that beastly ingenious armchair with the arms that gwipped and held the unfortunate person who sat in it? Well, why not get old Glyn to wig one up in our cupboard? I wegard that—"

"You—you utter ass!" hooted Blake, in disgust. "Of all the potty ideas— How the dickens are you going to get Trimble to sit in the cupboard, fathead?"

"Weally, Blake, I nevah suggested Twimble sittin' in the wotton cupboard!" said D'Arcy somewhat coldly. "That suggestion is wedic! What I mean is, that we persuade Glyn to wig up somethin' on similar lines that will gwip anyone interferin' with our gwub in an iron gwip."

"H'm! Not a bad idea, Gussy!" said Blake, after a pause. "Your brain power is certainly improving, old nut!"

"Sounds all right," grinned Herries. "I wegard it as a wippin' notion!" said Gussy, with enthusiasm.

"Glyn's a jolly clever chap at inventing things like that," mused Blake thoughtfully. "My hat, yes! Something's got to be done—Trimble must be trapped, and if anyone can do it, Glyn can. Yes, we'll tackle old Glyn directly after tea, Gussy!"

"Tea was very soon finished—there was precious little to finish, in fact. And five

minutes later D'Arcy, Herries, and Digby were following their leader towards the study Glyn shared with Dade and Noble. As it happened, Glyn was alone, and to him Blake poured out his trouble, and Glyn grinned as he listened.

"As a matter of fact, you chaps," he chuckled, "I've often thought of rigging something of the sort up in our own cupboard. That fat beast Trimble wants stopping, no doubt about that! Only yesterday a topping plum-cake walked from our cupboard, an' I'm still looking for our friend Baggybus, to discuss the cake's remarkable pedestrian feat with him."

"Then you'll weally fix somethin' up for us, Glyn, deah boy?" gasped D'Arcy eagerly. "For the good of such a glorious cause, I will!" said Glyn heartily. "Rely on me, old tops! Ere another sun goes down Baggy will be bagged—or, at least, the bag will be ready to bag Baggy, so to speak!"

And the chums of Study No. 6 departed from Bernard Glyn's study, satisfied and cheerful once more. Glyn was a man of his word, and they knew that the problem of arranging something to teach Baggy Trimble the unwisdom of raiding study cupboards could be safely left in the capable hands of the St. Jim's inventor.

II.

"BLAKE—I say, Blake!" Jack Blake paused and grinned as Bernard Glyn called out to him as he was mounting the School House steps the following afternoon. With Blake were D'Arcy, Herries, and Digby.

"Hallo! How's the little job progressing, Glyn, old nut?" said Blake cheerily. "Thought of a giddy man—or, rather, pig-trap yet?"

"Thought out and finished," smiled Bernard Glyn.

"Good! Splendid!" said Blake. "We'll come to your den for it now, old man. Lead on, Edison Secundus!"

Glyn chuckled. "No need, old top," he said. "The thing's already in your study. As you chaps were out, I stuck it in the cupboard. Quite a simple little dodge, really—but very effective. I've called it the 'Glyn Trimble Ticker.' Hope you like it! Ta-ta!"

And Bernard Glyn, who seemed to be in rather a hurry, went down the steps into the quad still chuckling. Apparently he was highly amused about something.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Wonder what it is?" expect it's some kind of electrocuting machine—he's beastly clevah with electrical devices, you know."

"I bet it's jolly ingenious!" remarked Blake. "Good old Glyn! He's a jolly useful chap, is Glyn! Let's go and have a squint at it!"

And, very curious to see Glyn's Trimble Ticker, Blake led the way to No. 6, and strode across to the cupboard.

"We'll rig the thing up at once, whatever it is," grinned Blake, fumbling with the catch of the door. "Ha, ha!" The next time our friend Baggy visits our cupboard I bet he'll get a surprise! If it's— Yaroooh!

Bill! Bang!

Blake yelled fendshily as the cupboard doors flew apart and a boxing-glove, propelled by a powerful spring attached to the back of the cupboard, flashed out with terrific force, and, smiting him on the nose, sent him whirling across the room, to sit in the tender with a crash that shook the room.

"Ha, ha, ha!" D'Arcy, Herries, and Digby roared with laughter as Blake sat up, mopping a rapidly-swelling nose, and glaring in blank amazement at the well-padded boxing-glove now bobbing slowly at the end of its spiral spring. Whether Trimble was likely to get a surprise when he opened that cupboard door or not, it was pretty certain that Blake had got one.

"Wow! Oh dear! Oh, by dose!" wailed Blake. "What was it? Did a mule kick? Oh crumbs!"

Blake's mouth opened wide as his eyes fell upon Glyn's Trimble Ticker. And he realised now that Glyn's invention was not, after all, an electrocuting machine, but merely a padded boxing-glove attached to a strong spiral spring, which in its turn was fixed to the back of the cupboard with screws. As Glyn had said, it was a simple little dodge, but, as Blake himself could now testify, extremely effective.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries. "What price good old Glyn now? Jolly ingenious—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Blessed if I can see anything to cackle about!" howled Blake, rising to his feet slowly and painfully. "You—you laughing jackasses! Only wait until I—!" Blake stopped, and snorted angrily as he noticed the grinning faces of Racke, Crooke, and half a dozen other chaps in the doorway—evidently come to see what the row was about.

"Stop that idiotic cackling, and get that cupboard door shut!" he hissed quickly. "Do you want every blessed chap in the place to see the beastly thing, you utter asses? Oh, by dose! I'll smash that rotter Glyn for this—you see if I don't!"

Nearly weeping with laughter, Herries and Digby carefully pushed Glyn's Trimble Ticker back into position and fastened the cupboard doors.

"What are you idiots cackling about?" grunted Blake. "I'll admit the blessed thing biffed me, but that was a pure accident. Every fellow in the House will soon hear about it, and it won't be long before Trimble's long ears will get wind of it. What good will the beastly thing be then?"

"That is quite true, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, frowning thoughtfully. "Weally, it is watah awkward! But what do you propose to do, Blake?"

"Act at once, before the fat beast does get wind of it, of course!" snapped Blake, jumping to his feet. "We're now going to find Baggybus, and drop a few hints as to the good things waiting to be pinched in our cupboard. The rest will follow as a matter of course. Buck up, my infants!"

And Blake led the way out of No. 6 in search of Trimble.

Finding Trimble was never a very difficult task. Outside class-times and meal-times, there was only one place where he was at all likely to be. And Blake & Co. accordingly made for the school tuckshop under the old elms.

Sure enough, the fat, ungraceful form of

Baggy Trimble could be seen hovering disconsolately round the tuckshop window. Blake stopped hesitatingly on the steps, and turned an anxious face to his followers, without—apparently—a glance at the fat youth.

"Half a minute!" he said reflectively. "Blessed if I think we shall want anything from the tuckshop for the feed, after all. Let's see—there's sausages, an' shrimp-paste, an' sardines—"

"And cakes and tarts and cherry-wine!" added Herries cheerfully.

"And, of course, the jam and jellies," added Digby.

Blake stood a moment as if thinking out the knotty problem.

"No!" he announced at last. "I think the stuff we've got in the cupboard will be enough, after all. But, I say, you fellows," he added anxiously, "do you think all that stuff would be safe in our cupboard? If that fat toad Trimble got to know—"

"Safe as houses!" remarked Herries. "How should Trimble get to know— My hat! Shush! There he is!"

The four schemers wheeled abruptly at Herries' warning hiss, and seemed to become aware of Trimble's presence for the first time.

But just as suddenly Trimble, who had been staring at the group on the tuckshop steps with wide-open mouth and gleaming eyes, turned also, and apparently became engrossed in a plate of stale jam-tarts in the window.

"It's all right!" hissed Blake, in a thrilling whisper that could have been heard half-way across the quad. "He hasn't heard us—p'aps. And now, let's be moving!"

And the four moved away, feeling satisfied that they had—so to speak—sown good seed in fertile ground. Baggy's deep interest in Mrs. Mimbles' tarts ceased the moment their backs were turned.

For a moment he gazed after them, his eyes glittering greedily. Then he gave vent to a fat, cunning chuckle as he noticed them making for the gates. And next second he was making a bee-line for the School House steps. Barely had the fat youth got half-way across the quad when the faces of Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn peered round the door-ways of the tuckshop. They were not watching Baggy Trimble, however—as a matter of fact, they barely glanced at that fat purveyor as he rolled hurriedly across the quad, but their eyes were fixed greedily on the plates of Blake & Co. just vanishing through the gates.

"My hat!" breathed Figgins slowly. "Did you chaps hear 'em? Shrimp-paste and tarts, and cheese-cakes—"

"Sausages!" groaned Fatty Wynn, licking his lips. "Oh my! And cakes and tarts and cherry-wine—"

"And jams and jellies and ginger-pop!" cried Kerr hungrily.

"The bloated millionaires!" muttered Figgins warmly. "And we New House chaps have only raise the price of a humble ginger-pop, while those rotters have a cupboard full of—"

Figgins paused, and for a minute the three New House chaps stared guiltily at each other. Then Fatty Wynn voiced the secret thought of all three.

"I—I—say, you chaps!" he whispered longingly. "They've gone out of gates, you know, and I couldn't we raid—raid their blessed cupboard! It—it's only fair—"

"We could, and we will—somehow! It's jolly risky!" said Kerr.

Figgins stopped, and frowned as he nodded towards the gates.

"We're too late!" he grunted in disgust. "Look—the beggars have turned back! My hat! They seem in a jolly hurry, too!"

"Must have forgotten something an' turned back!" observed Wynn sadly.

In gloomy silence the three watched Blake & Co. as they scudded across the quad and vanished through the School House doorway. They quite unexpectedly, Kerr chuckled.

"I say, Figgy, old man, I've thought of a wizen!" he said quietly. "It's rather risky, but I'm willing to take the risk if you are."

Figgins had cleared somewhat. The ideas of the canny Scotch member of the Co. were usually worth listening to.

"Cough it up, then, old man!" he said heartily. "If it's for collaring some of that grub, I'm your man."

"Then come up to our study and hear it!" said Kerr, with a smile. "It's a bit too risky to talk over here."

And Figgins and Wynn obediently followed Kerr into the New House to hear that canny youth's wheeze for raiding the supply of good

(Continued on page 16.)

The Editor's Chat.

The Companion Papers are:

THE MAGNET. THE BOYS' FRIEND. THE GEM. THE PENNY POPULAR. CHUCKLES.
Every Monday. Every Monday. Every Wed. Every Friday. Every Friday.

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS GLAD TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS.

For Next Wednesday:

"THE GOODNESS OF GUSSY!"

By Martin Clifford.

Next Wednesday's grand, long, complete story of St. Jim's describes how an impostor arrives in the neighbourhood, claiming that he is Tom Merry's uncle, lately released from prison. The glib Gussy swallows this story, and in order, as he thinks, to save Tom Merry from unpleasantness, he bribes the impostor to hold his peace. Nevertheless, the story that Tom Merry has an uncle who is a good-bird spreads through St. Jim's; and the captain of the Shell has rather an unenviable time, thanks to

"THE GOODNESS OF GUSSY!"

"HAMPSHIRE HEROES!"

Some time ago a reader of the GEM Library was kind enough to send me the marching song of the Hampshire Regiment. It was a rousing refrain, to the tune of "Keep the Home Fires Burning"; and when the Huns heard that refrain they knew that the gallant "Tigers"—as the Hampshire soldiers are called—were out for scalps.

Love of one's own county is a thing always to be fostered and encouraged; so I am publishing this week "A Song of Hampshire," which, in the fulness of time, will become just as popular as the other famous county songs, such as "Glorious Devon!" "Sussex by the Sea!" "Up from Somerset!" and "Dorset Dear!"

The writer of this song is not a "high-brow," or a long-haired poet. He is just a modest reader of the GEM Library; and he has given me permission to publish his song before it appears on the music-stalls. I appreciate this act of courtesy on my reader's part, and have much pleasure in reproducing his song, since I think it a very fine effort.

Here is the song:

"Oh, sing me a song of Devon,
Of Surrey and Somerset, too;
Of the Cambrian hills and the rippling rills,
And of Snowdon's braising view.
And when you have sung their splendour,
And dim grow the firelight's rays,
Let the final song ring clear and strong,
And echo our Hampshire's praise!

Sweet shire of Southern England,
Dear haven of love and light;
We have drifted wide on the world's great
tide,

But our hearts are thine to-night!
The might of her gleaming harbours,
The breath of her forest glade,
Re-kindle each thought of the giants who
wrought

And triumphed with sword and spade.
The Downs, where the fresh'ning breezes
Are borne from the booming sea,
Saw the earliest flame of our noblest game,
And are trely dear to me!

Sweet shire of Southern England,
Dear haven of love and light;
We have drifted wide on the world's great
tide,

But our hearts are thine to-night!
Proud sons of a peerless county,
March on in your mustered might!
At Old England's call let the bat and ball
Be shelved for a sterner fight.

But, wherever the Fates may thrust you,
Wherever your steps have strayed,
Rest loyal and true to the shire you knew,
Whose lustre shall never fade!

Sweet shire of Southern England,
Dear haven of love and light;
We have drifted wide on the world's great
tide,

But our hearts are thine to-night!"

Such is the song which a boy reader of the GEM Library, living in the wonderful New Forest, has penned in praise of his county. Hampshire boys and girls will appreciate this song; and so will the GEM readers resident in other counties.

Hampshire is very much in the limelight just now; for in this Friday's issue of the "Penny Popular" Frank Richards has written a grand long, complete story of school and sport, entitled

"HAMPSHIRE HEROES!"

The story describes how Harry Wharton & Co., the famous Greyfriars juniors, visit Hampshire to engage in a sports Tournament with the boys of that county. Frank Richards is particularly happy in his descriptions of sporting events, and I hope every Gemite—and certainly every Hampshire Gemite—will make a special point of securing this Friday's issue of that fine all-school-story paper, the "Penny Popular."

"SCHOOLBOY AND BOXER!"

(Continued from Page 13.)

"That's the wisest decision you could come to!" said Tom Merry. "If you throw a brick through the Head's study window again, you'll be drummed out of St. Jim's!"

"Oh dear! I—I feel faint with agony! I think the least you fellows might do is to invite me to a study spread!"

"We'll invite you to a boot—and sharp—if you don't travel!" said Digby.

And Baggy Trimble, after blinking round at the group of unsympathetic faces, travelled.

There was great rejoicing throughout St. Jim's that evening.

Redfern's performance in the boxing-ring was the topic of the hour.

Over in the New House the juniors kept high revel.

Fatty Wynn was called upon to cook for a score of guests, and Dick Redfern occupied the place of honour.

Mr. Chumley turned up in time for the feed; and with him was Bob Spencer.

"I've seen a good many schoolboy fights in my time," said the latter; "but I think I can safely give the palm to Master Redfern's display this afternoon. He had a tough nut to crack in that Irish boy, and he cracked it—finally and completely."

"Hear, hear!" said Figgins. "Reddy's performance only bears out the old motto, 'Always come to the New House for talent.'"

"Rats!" said Monty Lowther. "The New House is merely a Home for Incubables! Still, I'll admit that Reddy rose to the occasion this afternoon!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wedfern, deah boy, you were great! As I remarked befoah, I could hardly have done bettah myself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The feed progressed merrily. With the exception of Baggy Trimble—who was refused admittance—everyone was merry and bright.

Toasts were honoured and songs were sung; and it was not until a late hour that the St. Jim's juniors bade farewell to their good friends Mr. Chumley and Bob Spencer.

And a few days later a small silver cup arrived for Reddy, as a souvenir of the occasion when, in defiance of all opposition, he had fought nobly and well for the honour of his school!

THE END.

TAMING TRIMBLE.

(Continued from page 15.)

things in Study No. 6—a supply, unfortunately, that only existed in the fertile imagination of the owners of that famous apartment.

III.

MEANWHILE, Blake & Co. were stealthily approaching No. 6, conscious that their interesting conversation on the tuckshop steps had been overheard by the person it was intended for—namely, Baggy Trimble; but blissfully unconscious that it had also been overheard by persons whom it had not been intended for—namely, Figgins & Co.

For Fatty Wynn had been wrong in his surmise that Blake & Co. had turned back because they had forgotten something. As a matter of fact, they had not gone farther than the gates, but had waited there until Baggy Trimble had disappeared indoors. Then they had rushed across the quad and followed him.

"He'll just be about opening the cupboard doors now!" grinned Blake. Listen out—Hallo! There she goes!"

From the direction of Study No. 6 came a sudden fiendish yell.

Blake led the way at a run, and kicked open the study door.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The four roared as they gazed into the room. As they expected, the cupboard doors were wide open, and from within Glyn's Trimble Ticker still bobbed invitingly. And seated on the floor, yelling wildly, and mopping his nose with a dingy rag that did duty for a handkerchief, was Baggy Trimble.

Trimble, almost weeping with rage and pain, staggered to his feet and tottered to the door. There he paused, and turned a red, furious face on the hilarious chums.

"Yah! Beasts!" he howled viciously. "Ow! By dose! You're a beastly lot of rotters and pigs! Yah! Rats! Go and eat coke!"

And with that last Partian shot Baggy Trimble rolled away hurriedly, and his footsteps died away down the passage.

"Gentlemen," grinned Blake, with a tremendous sigh, "cupboard raids will now be as scarce as air-rails. Here, what the Dickens are you up to, Dig?"

Disby, who had just put the Glyn Trimble Ticker back into fighting position, closed the cupboard doors and chuckled.

"Fixing the thing up again, of course!" he said. "Now Trimble's out of the running, someone else may take a fancy to raiding our—"

"Rot!" said Blake. "It's done it's duty here, an' may as well come down now, in case anyone forgets and gets biffed. Besides," added Blake darkly. "I'm jolly well going to rig that up in Glyn's study to-night, my cherubs!"

"Wha-what?"

"In Glyn's study? Weally, Blake—"

"In Glyn's study!" repeated Blake firmly. "I'm very grateful to Glyn, of course, for his invaluable help in trapping Trimble. But the beggar's just a little too funny. He knew jolly well that one of us would go to the cupboard to have a look at his invention! I wondered why the rotter was grinning, and in such a hurry—"

Blake stopped, and gave a jump as, almost noiselessly, the study door opened, and a figure in cap and gown appeared.

"Boys!"

"My hat! Ratty!" murmured Blake in astonishment.

In silence the boys stared at the master as he entered and closed the door. It was like Ratty to enter a room without knocking.

"I understand," said Mr. Ratcliff, "that stored in your cupboard you have a large assortment of eatables and—er—drinkables. Is that so?"

For a moment Blake stared in amazement at the master. Then he found his voice.

"No, sir!" he growled sullenly. "There's nothing in the cupboard—at least, nothing worth eating."

"M-my ha-ahem! That is to say, is that true, Blake?"

"Certainly it's true!" said Blake hotly. "You are insolent, Blake!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff. "How dare you answer a master like that?"

Blake scowled, but did not reply. Mr. Ratcliff opened the window and looked down into the quad below.

"Figgins, Wynn, come to Study No. 6 at once!" he called out.

"Yes, sir! Certainly, sir!"

"Figgins, Wynn," rapped out Mr. Ratcliff later, "I am about to hand you a supply of eatables—a disgusting mass of indigestible comestibles—which I require taking immediately to—my study in the New House. You understand?"

"Yes, sir! Certainly, sir!" answered Figgins and Wynn promptly and cheerfully.

"Very well!" said Mr. Ratcliff, "striding towards the cupboard."

Blake jumped to his feet.

"One moment, Mr. Ratcliff!" he growled. "I advise you not to touch that cupboard, sir!"

"You—you advise me! How dare you, Blake!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff. "This—this insubordination—"

"You'll be sorry if you do, sir!" muttered Blake. "There's a—"

"Silence, Blake!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff.

Blake subsided, with a grim face. He had done his best—he had tried to warn the interfering master. But as Mr. Ratcliff was determined to disregard his advice—was looking for trouble—well, it was his own funeral.

Mr. Ratcliff found the trouble all right.

There was a sudden click, a dull riff, a wild yell, and a tremendous bump as Glyn's terrible invention did its fell work. But this time there wasn't a single laugh—not then. Blake & Co. stared, fascinated, and not a little alarmed, at the unfortunate master, who was sitting up gasping, and mopping his nose with the sleeve of his gown.

"Oh crumbs!" he said.

It was an extraordinary expression for a master to use—especially a master like Mr. Ratcliff—and the astonished School House fellows fairly jumped. Then suddenly Blake gave a roar. For one of Mr. Ratcliff's mutton-chop whiskers was hanging below his chin, while one of his bushy eyebrows was missing altogether, giving the master a really extraordinary appearance.

"Kerr!" yelled Blake, in astonished surprise. "The rotten spoofer! My hat! It's Kerr!"

Blake dashed to the door, and, locking it, placed the key in his pocket.

"Collar the spoofer rotters!" he howled, throwing himself at Figgins.

"It was only a lark," explained Figgins, feebly grinning. "We—we happened to overhear you chaps talking about the feed outside the tuckshop, and, as we were stony, we determined to have some of the good things. So Kerr got himself up as old Ratty, did it jolly well, I think—and the rest of the wheeze you chaps know. But"—Figgins grinned and nodded towards the cupboard—"we've made a little mistake somewhere. Where's the grub?"

For a brief second, Blake & Co. glared at the New House leader. Then they understood, and a roar of laughter arose, in which even Figg and Fatty Wynn joined. Only Kerr did not laugh, as he woefully shed cap and gown and rubbed the grease-paint from his face.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Blake. "So you also overheard our spoofer conversation. Well, my only hat!"

"It's all very well," groaned Kerr, rubbing his nose ruefully—"very funny, and serves Trimble jolly well right; but that infernal machine's too jolly dangerous. It wants taking down before anyone else gets biffed."

"Don't you worry about that," said Blake darkly. "It's coming down, and going to be fixed in Glyn's study cupboard to-night. The giddy inventor's going to get a taste of his— My hat! We know Glyn's out this afternoon. Blessed if I don't do the trick now! Supposing you run along, Gussy, and invite Dane and Noble to tea while we take the thing down. Then, when they come, Kerr and I will slip out and fix the thing up. When Glyn comes in he's bound to go to the cupboard to get his own tea ready. How's that?"

"Whippin', dear boy!" smiled Arthur Angus-tus. "I'll go at once!"

And he went.

It was not until bed-time that Blake saw Glyn, and then he chortled a chortle of un-holy glee. For Glyn's nose was swollen to twice its normal size, whilst he smiled a sickly smile as he encountered Blake's triumphant grin.

That was the last of Glyn's Trimble Ticker, for it was never seen again. And it was perhaps a fitting end to that terrible instrument's activities, that the inventor himself should be the last to prove its effectiveness.

THE END.

Greyfriars Epitaphs.

No. 7. By BOB CHERRY.

THIS STONE

is

ERECTED TO THE MEMORY

of

ALONZO TODD,

The Duffer of Greyfriars,

who, whilst distributing tracts among
savages, was

ROASTED AND SWALLOWED WHOLE

by a cannibal (who afterwards suffered severe
internal pains).

In his early days Alonzo was the bright particular star of Study No. 7 in the Remove passage. He walked in the ways of the wise, and devoutly followed the precepts of his Uncle Benjamin.

He was full of the milk of human kindness, and devoted his life to the cause of the out-cast and the prodigal. He looked forward with great eagerness to the time when

THE EDITOR SHOULD LIE DOWN WITH

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL CHILD,

and the workers of wickedness should be
finally and utterly squashed.

Alonzo was also a mighty juggler, for he swallowed whole dictionaries, and his vocabulary would have made Dr. Johnson vibrate!

He was docile as a lamb, and ever ready to champion the cause of the oppressed. Although unskilled in the arts of cricket and football, he possessed

A MARVELLOUS AND MIGHTY BRAIN,

and carried more learning in his little finger
than most fellows did in their heads.

At his untimely fate the whole world weeps, and none more copiously than Uncle Benjamin, who is shocked and horrified to learn that the apple of his eye has been peeled and eaten raw by a misguided cannibal.

"Wild creatures of the tropic clime,

Your tastes are rather odd;

Boiled beef and currant duff are prime,

But never try roast Todd!"

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