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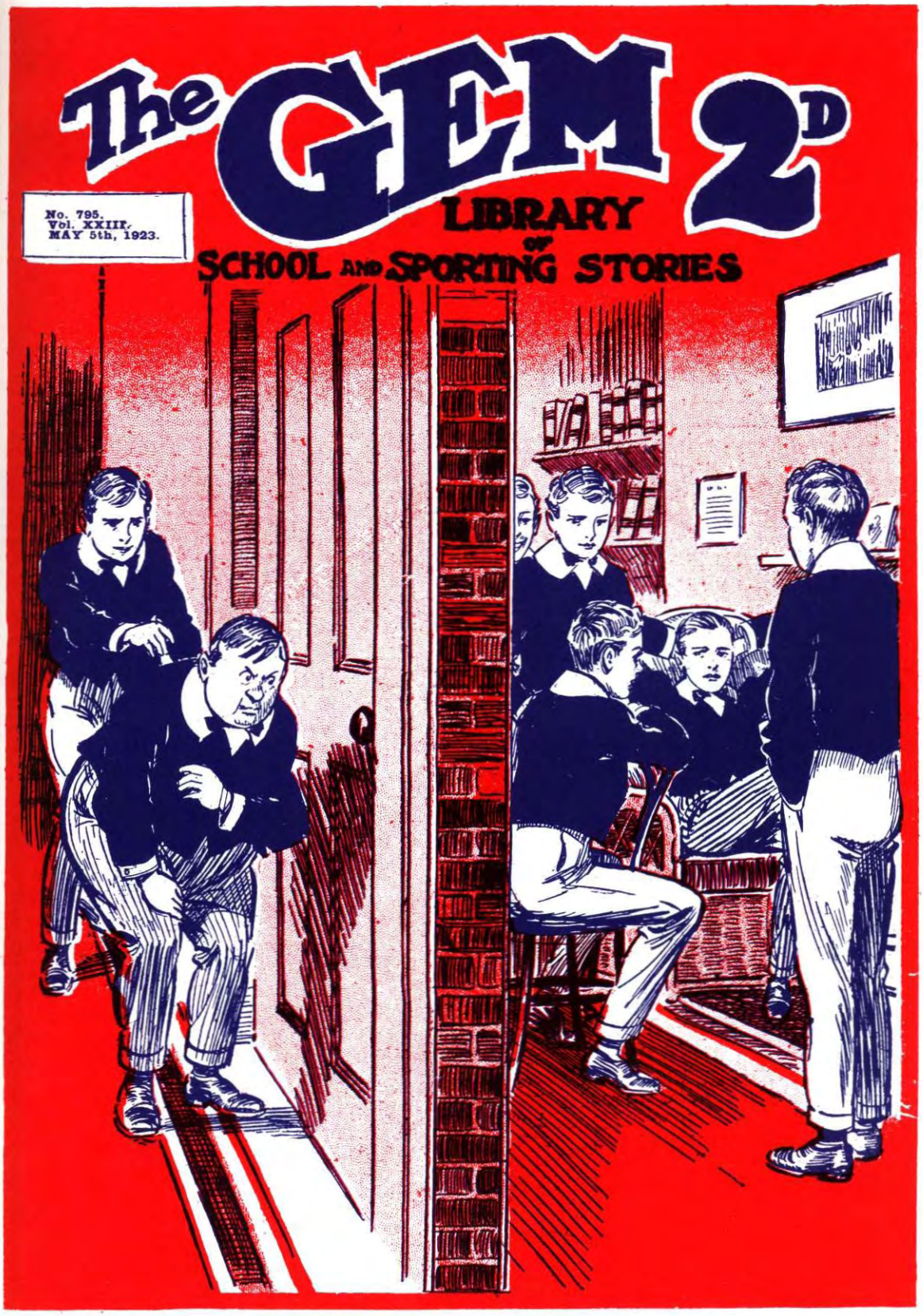

BAGGY TRIMBLE "LISTENS-IN" AT THE KEYHOLE!

(An incident from the Amusing, Long, Complete School Story, entitled: "TRIMBLE TRIES IT ON!" in this issue.)

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Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND"	Every Monday
"THE MAGNET"	Every Monday
"THE POPULAR"	Every Tuesday
"CHUCKLES"	Every Thursday
"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL"	Published Yearly

My Dear Chums,—There is always a hearty welcome awaiting a story in which that popular character, Lumley, appears. I am constantly receiving suggestions about Lumley from my correspondents. Lumley does not appear so very often, but on those occasions when he has figured in the limelight he has left an unforgettable impression. For all reasons I know that you will accord a tremendous reception to next week's dramatic story of St. Jim's.

"DISOWNED BY HIS FATHER!"
By Martin Clifford.

That is the title of the grand yarn. Look out for it, and tell your chums that Lumley will be on the scene. I would not dream of giving away the salient points of this gripping tale, but I might mention that among the characters who make their bow is Lumley's cousin, a fellow no better than he ought to be. I am certain you will be impressed by this great story. It is unusual, and it throws sidelights on a character like Lumley in a very interesting way. We get Cutts and Knox playing considerable parts, and several more with whom you are all familiar, but the central interest rests with Lumley. He is a strange fellow with the makings of a really great man in him. He meets misfortune in a sportsmanlike manner, and he gets plenty of ill-luck this journey. You will see next Wednesday the reason why he finds himself adrift, forced to do anything for a living so that he shall not starve. He does not strike the flag, nor ask for pity, but freezes on to the first job that comes along. Mr. Martin Clifford is a rare adept at describing the grey side of life, and he proves his mastery of this side of the subject here. There is plenty of shadow in this yarn, but the shadow is the complement to the sunshine, and this Martin Clifford knows.

"ORDERED OFF!"
By Capt. Malcolm Arnold.

Tu Sin is right in the thick of things in our grand long complete boxing story next week. The loyal little Chinee, Tu Sin, and his chum, Ginger Dan, have all their plans upset by a rascally boxing showman who orders them off their pitch. They have a right to the pitch, but the burly brute gets his way—and a bit more as well. The yarn rips along in fine style, and reveals the tenacity and endurance of Tu Sin. The Chinee has a very uncomfortable time of it, and for a spell Ginger Dan loses sight of him entirely. The mystery of Tu Sin's disappearance gets cleared up at long last in a very ingenious fashion. Look out next Wednesday for a very startling discovery.

"THE SPIDER OF THE NORTH!"
By David Goodwin.

One of the big treats for next week is to be found in the opening instalment of our brilliant new serial. "The Spider of the North!" is an exceptional story altogether. It tells of the grim, earnest life up North in mill-land, where the looms are always at work, and where so much of the power and grit of the Old Country are concentrated. It was a good move to secure this powerful serial for the GEM, for it will please the myriad northern readers of the favourite paper, while, as regards others, they will be glad enough to get such an accurate account of the mighty world of the mill. You will read with the deepest interest of the perils incurred by Tom Compton, a plucky lad of the mill, while the personality of the Spider himself will leave you something to think about for many a day. For the Spider, to use the sobriquet by which the dangerous arch-plotter is known, is the most masterful rogue imaginable. He holds the threads, and he is resolved, for sinister reasons of his own, to bring about disaster to the mills. To accomplish this end, he stops at nothing. The commencement of the new story will prove to you that here we have the industrial story of the year. The author knows his subject from A to Z, and he handles the theme as only a genius could. I strongly advise you to make dead sure of next Wednesday's GEM. There will be a bigger rush than ever.

COMPETITIONS.

Don't forget that the GEM is in the front line as usual with a very attractive Cricket Competition. In addition, our Tuck Hamper Page continues to be a big draw.

LIFE IN AN OFFICE.

Before I wind up for this week, I should like to reply to a friend of mine who writes to tell me of the trouble he is in. He is the fortunate possessor of a good berth in a busy office. I can see from the style of his communication that he is appreciated by his fellow-workers, also by his chiefs; but he tells me that, after a long spell of desk work he gets back home too tired to do anything, and he is feeling the strain; he gets frightfully depressed; the work interests him no end while he is at it, but afterwards comes the reaction. He says he sees the world all askew; things seem muddled up and all wrong. But it is not the work that tells on him. That is what he assures me. I am certain he is right. I think that all his despondent sensations will vanish if he will brace himself up to the necessity of taking a bit of exercise in the open air when and where possible. He has time for that. It is just this sort of thing his life lacks at present. If he owns a bike he must take it out for a brief spell. Half an hour will serve—say, in the summer morning before he starts for his office. It is worth the effort. It is a jolly difficult thing to get out of bed in a morning before the needful time, but it can be done with an effort. Then, as the evenings are long, there could be a short spin at night. To get tired physically after a lot of brain work is the finest rest cure under the sun.

Your Editor.

TRIMBLE TRIES IT ON!

A New and Amusing Long Complete Story of School Life at St. Jim's.

By

Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1.
One Pound for Trimble.

"MEANDER in, dear men!"

Ralph Reckness Cardew took the trouble to detach his lazy person from the armchair in Study No. 9, and rise to his feet, as a knock came at the door.

Study No. 9 seemed to be expecting visitors.

The table was laid for tea—for five. Sidney Clive was making toast at the study fire, adding to a huge pile already stacked on a plate in the fender. Cardew, stretched elegantly in the armchair had been watching him, that apparently being his contribution to the preparations. But he yawned and rose when the knock came at the study door, and politely bade his visitors "meander" in.

The door opened.

Cardew expected to see Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther of the Shell, those three cheery youths being the invited guests on this occasion. Instead of which he beheld the fat figure of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth Form

Baggy Trimble nodded and grinned.

Cardew neither nodded nor grinned. He did not seem pleased to see Baggy Trimble. Sidney Clive glanced up from toast-making with a ruddy face, and as he saw Trimble, he grunted, and returned to his task. Baggy's reception in Study No. 9 could not be called either enthusiastic or flattering.

But Baggy did not mind. He rolled in.

"Haven't you made a mistake, Trimble?" asked Cardew politely.

"Eh? No."

"Haven't you come to the wrong study?"

"Not at all."

"I think you have," said Cardew gently. "I think you'd better roll along and look for the right study, dear man. I think you'd better lose no time about it."

"Levison's not back yet?" asked Trimble.

"No."

"When is he coming back?"

"The precise date," said Cardew gravely, "is not yet ascertained. No doubt Levison will apprise you of it in due course, if he thinks it's any bizney of yours. Probably he won't. Good-bye!"

"That's all very well," said Trimble. "When Levison went over to Greyfriars, I wasn't aware that he was staying away so long. He never told me."

Cardew raised his eyebrows.

"Was there any reason why he should tell you?" he inquired.

"Lots! I haven't come to tea, if that's what you think," said Trimble, though his eye lingered lovingly on the cake that adorned the table. "I've come about the two pounds."

"The which?" ejaculated Cardew.

"Levison was hard up when he went, you know."

"I don't know," contradicted Cardew.

"Well, you know now I've told you," said Trimble. "I lent him a couple of pounds to pay his fare."

Cardew looked up from the fire again. He seemed about to speak; but changed his mind, and grunted instead. Ralph Reckness Cardew regarded Trimble with a curious gaze.

"You lent Levison two pounds when he started for Greyfriars?" he asked.

"That's it."

"That was generous of you," remarked Cardew gravely.

"Well, you know what I'm like in money matters," said Trimble airily. "I'm always lending fellows money, in my thoughtless, generous way, you know. Leaving myself in a fix sometimes, too. At the present moment I'm hard up. Has Levison written since he's been at Greyfriars?"

"Oh, yes! He hasn't mentioned the debt, though."

"Well, I dare say he's got a lot to think of, with his young brother being ill, and all that," said Trimble tolerantly. "And it's only a trifle, of course. I don't want to write to him and dun him for the money."

"No; you naturally wouldn't," assented Cardew.

"My idea is that you fellows, being Levison's study-mates and pals, might settle up for him," suggested Trimble. "Levison would square when he came back. Levison always squares, you know."

"He does," agreed Cardew.

"Never mind about the whole amount now," said Trimble. "Hand over a pound for me to go on with. I dare say that will last me till I get a cheque from Trimble Hall."

Another grunt from Clive. But Trimble did not heed Sidney Clive. His eyes were fixed hopefully on Cardew. Cardew of the Fourth had plenty of money, and he was great friends with Ernest Levison, now absent from the school. There was no doubt that Cardew could, and would, settle any little money matter that Levison might have overlooked in the hurry of his departure from St. Jim's. The only question was whether he would swallow Baggy Trimble's statement on the subject.

But that was a deep question, and Baggy was quite conscious that this was a sort of forlorn hope. He hoped rather than expected to gather in that little sum from Cardew. Baggy had reasoned it out that nothing would be lost, at all events, by trying it on. If he swallowed the statement, there was the cash. If he didn't, Baggy would be no worse off than before. At the worst, he might kick Baggy out of the study. But Baggy had been kicked out of studies so often

that he was hardened to it. He felt that it was worth the risk.

But his hopes were rising now—changing to expectations, in fact. Cardew was evidently considering the matter seriously.

There was a tramp of feet in the passage, and three Shell fellows came cheerily into Study No. 9. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther had arrived. The Terrible Three seemed slightly surprised to find Trimble there.

"Trickle in, old beans," said Cardew. "Tea's just on ready. I hope you've brought a good appetite."

"Rely on that," said Tom Merry, with a smile. "We're just in from the river."

"Famished!" said Manners frankly.

"I could eat anything except Trimble," said Monty Lowther. "I'm not really fond of pork."

"Yah!" said Baggy Trimble.

"Trimble's called in to settle a little matter of business," explained Cardew. "Would you fellows mind if I go into it now with him?"

"Not a bit."

"Go ahead!"

"Take a pew, and look on," said Cardew.

The Terrible Three sat down, rather puzzled. Then Cardew turned all his attention to Trimble, whose expectations were now blossoming into certainties.

"Two pounds, I think you said?" remarked Cardew.

"That's the amount," said Trimble eagerly.

Clive rose from the grate with a plate of toast.

"Don't be an ass, Cardew!" he said gruffly. "You know jolly well that Trimble never lent Levison anything. Levison wouldn't borrow of that fat bounder, even if he had anything to lend, which he hadn't."

"But Trimble says——"

"Oh, rats!"

"Cardew can take my word," said Trimble, with dignity. "I must say you're suspicious, Clive. It's rather low to be suspicious."

"Oh, get out, you fat fraud!" grunted Clive.

Cardew slipped his hand into his pocket as if for his purse. The Terrible Three exchanged glances.

"Excuse me," said Tom Merry. "I don't want to butt in. But is Trimble sticking you for some money he says he lent Levison?"

"Just that," assented Cardew. "In his thoughtless, generous way he lent Levison two pounds when he was starting for Greyfriars. He just told me so."

"What utter rot!" said Tom. "He did nothing of the kind."

"Bosh!" said Manners.

"Piffle!" said Lowther.

"You fellows can mind you own business!" exclaimed Trimble. "I'm settling this matter with Cardew, as Levison's pal."

"You see, I'm bound to take Trimble's word," explained Cardew. "A scion of the Trimble family, heir to the Trimble de Trimbles, of Trimble Hall, would scarcely lie. Besides, money is nothing to Trimble. He has only to telephone to the Hall, to get money down in cartloads. If he handed two pounds to Levison——"

"He didn't, you ass!" said Tom Merry. "Why, we all saw Levison off at the station, and we should have seen something of it if it had happened."

"If!" sniffed Manners.

"Trimble is one of those chaps who hide their light under a bushel," explained Cardew. "He does good by stealth, and blushes to find it fame. Isn't that so, Trimble?"

"Er—yes, exactly," said Trimble. "If you'll hand over the two pounds, Cardew, I'll clear off."

"Come here, then."

Trimble fairly bolted across the study to Cardew. Clive frowned, and the Terrible Three grinned. If Cardew was ass enough to accept Trimble's statements on money matters, it was his own look-out. Trimble's fat face was fairly beaming. He had never dared to hope for luck like this. Indeed, he wished that he had made it five pounds now.

"Two pounds——" said Cardew.

"Yes, yes."

"Here's one!"

Thump!

Cardew drew his hand from his pocket, clenched. It came like lightning on Trimble's podgy chest, and the fat junior staggered back with a wild howl, and sat on the study carpet.

"Yoooooop! Ow! Wow! Wharrer you up to?" shrieked Trimble.

"Pounding you!" answered Cardew calmly.

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"That's one pound!" said Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three. Clive chuckled. Evidently the "pounds" that Cardew was thinking of were not coin of the realm.

"Ow! You rotter!" gasped Trimble. "Why, you beast—you rotter—— Ow! Wow! Grooogh! I'm hurt! Wow!"

"Get up, old chap!" said Cardew gently. "There's the other pound to come. I think you said two pounds."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble did not get up. He did not want the other pound. He squirmed along the carpet to the doorway in a great hurry.

"Ow! You awful beast! Wow! You were pulling my leg all the time!" gasped Trimble, as he scrambled up in the doorway.

"What a brain!" said Cardew. "That's really dawned on him at last! Come and have the other pound, Trimble!"

"Yah!"

"Hold him, you fellows! He's got to be paid in full!"

Tom Merry & Co. made a movement, and Baggy Trimble fled down the passage for his life. There was a roar of laughter in Study No. 9 as Baggy's flying footsteps died away in the distance.

The tea-party in Study No. 9 sat down round the table, chuckling, and Baggy Trimble did not interrupt the merry party by calling in to collect the other pound that was due to him.

CHAPTER 2.
The Other Pound!

"LEVISON'S away!" remarked Jack Blake of the Fourth Form, in a serious and thoughtful manner.

Herries and Digby and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked at their chum inquiringly. As all St. Jim's knew that Levison was away, Blake's remark seemed a little superfluous.

"I suppose he's coming back some time?" yawned Dig.

"Yes; but he's not come back yet. His young brother's on the sick list at Greyfriars, and Levison's staying on till young Frank is well."

"Weally, Blake——"

"Why not tell us something we don't know, old chap?" asked George Herries encouragingly.

"Levison being away——" resumed Blake.

"We are weally quite awah that Levison of the Fourth is away, Blake," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy mildly. "You are wepeatin' yourself, deah boy."

"Levison being away," continued Blake unmoved, "Clive and Cardew will be a bit lonely, I should think."

"Let 'em!" said Herries heartlessly. "Now, what about tea?"

"I'm coming to that," explained Blake. "Levison being away——"

"Oh, my hat! Can't you give Levison a rest?"

"Levison being away, and Clive and Cardew left on their lonesome own, as it were, I should think they would be glad to see some bright and cheery chaps drop in at tea-time——"

"Oh!" said Herries and Dig together. That, apparently, was what Jack Blake had been driving at. He was not wandering in his mind, as his affectionate chums had feared.

"We're next door to stony in this study," said Blake. "Gussy, as usual, has been wasting his money on new neckties and top-hats——"

"Weally, Blake, you are well awah that I have had only thwee new toppahs this term——"

"And what did you want with three?" demanded Blake warmly. "Are you starting in business as an old clo' man, wearing three top-hats at a time?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wefuse to weply to such a fwivolous question, Blake. Hewwies' wotten bulldog wowwied one of my hats, and wuined it. Hewwies twod on anothah. Between Hewwies and his beastly bulldog, it is neahly imposs for a well-dwessed fellow to wub along at all. I have now only four hats that are weally wespectable."

"I've only one!" grunted Blake.

"You exaggewate, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, with a kind smile.

"What?"

"You haven't one, you know. Your Sunday toppah is not what a fellow would call weally wespectable."

"You silly ass!" howled Blake, while Herries and Digby chuckled.

"Weally, Blake——"

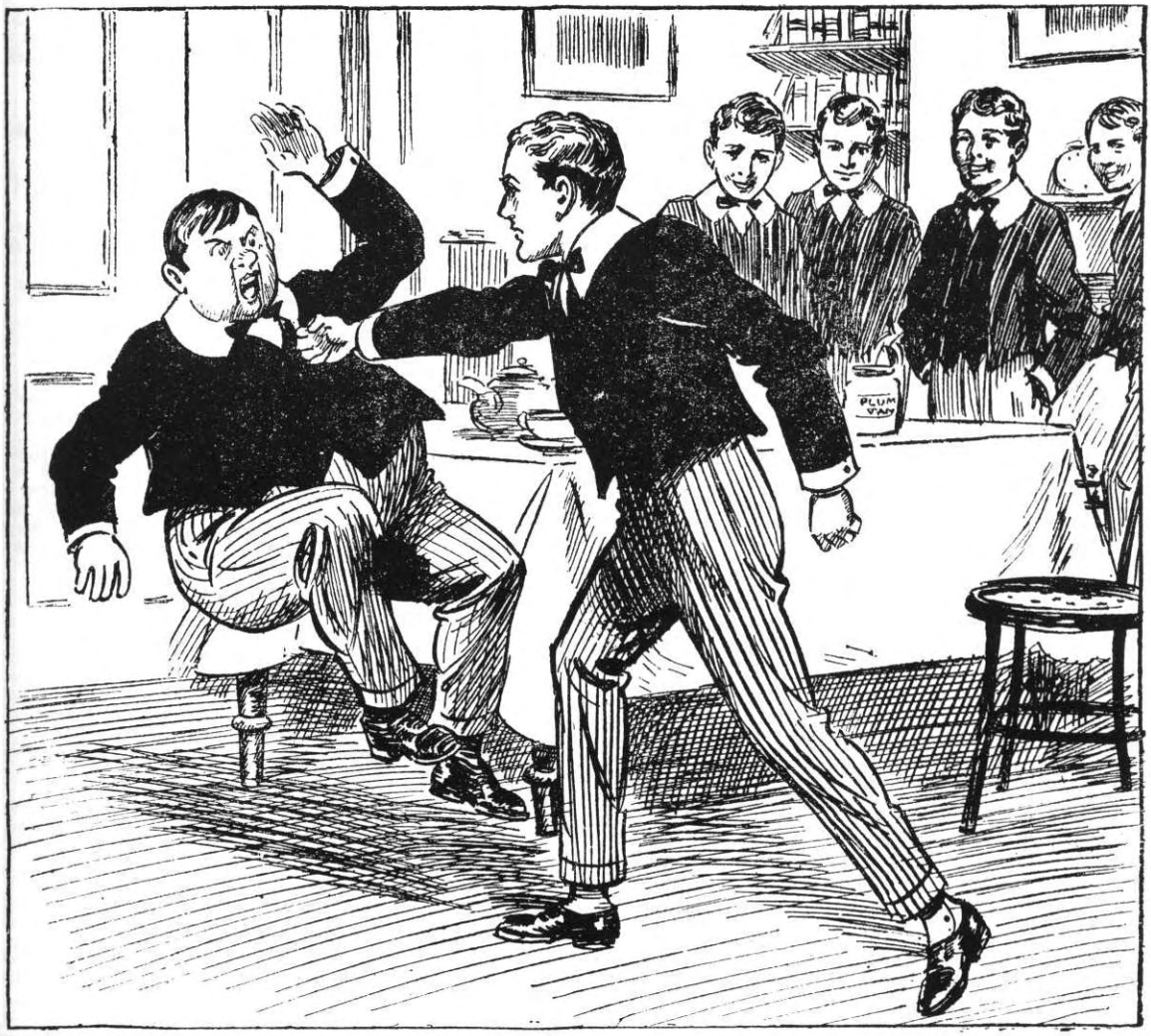
"Now, about tea," said Blake. "We're stony, and we don't want to grub in Hall with a lot of grubby fags. Levison being away, and Cardew and Clive feeling very down in the mouth——"

"Are they?" asked Dig.

"Well, they ought to be, anyhow, with their chum away. Take it that they're feeling down in the mouth, it would be only kind to give them a look in and cheer them up."

"At tea-time?" grinned Dig.

"The labourer is worthy of his hire," said Blake, with dignity. "If we're going to cheer them up, the least they



"So you'll clear off if I give you two pounds, Trimble ?" said Cardew. "Well, come here, then." Trimble, his face beaming, fairly bolted across the study to Cardew. But his face changed somewhat, when Cardew drew his hand from his pocket, clenched, and drove it like lightning on his podgy chest, sending him staggering backwards with a yell. "That's one pound towards it!" said Cardew. (*See page* 4.)

can do is to stand us some tea. And, by the same token, as Mulvaney minor says, I saw Clive carrying up a big bundle just after lessons."

"Hurrah!"

"Looks as if there's a spread on," said Blake thoughtfully. "If there is, it would be hardly kind to leave the poor fellows to sit down to it by themselves, with their pal away. Let's go and give them a look in."

"Weally, Blake——"

"Come on, Gussy."

"I was goin' to say——"

"Exactly. Come on."

"I was goin' to say——"

"Life's too short, old fellow, for all you were going to say. We've done about fifteen years out of our three score and ten, and there isn't enough left for you to say all you were going to say. So cheese it and come on."

And Jack Blake took Arthur Augustus playfully by the ear and jerked him out of the study.

"You uttah ass!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "I was goin' to say——"

"This way, old top."

"Leave go my yah, Blake! If you persist in hangin' on to my yah, I shall stwike you!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"Are you coming?" demanded Blake.

"Yaas; but I was goin' to say——"

"Hallo! Look out! Beware of the steam-roller!" exclaimed Blake, as Baggy Trimble came bolting down the passage.

He released Arthur Augustus' noble ear, and caught the fat ear of Baggy Trimble as he rushed by, and spun him round against the wall. Baggy gave a yell.

"Ow! Leggo! Wow!"

"Only stopping you, old steam-roller," said Blake. "Don't you know that you ought to have a red flag in front when you put on steam?"

"Yow! I say," said Trimble, rubbing his ear, "don't be a silly beast, you know. I say, will you fellows back me up?"

"Somebody after you for stealing a cake?" asked Herries.

"Certainly not! That beast Cardew——"

"Was it Cardew's cake?"

"No," yelled Trimble, "there wasn't a cake! Look here, you fellows remember Levison leaving in a hurry when he heard that his brother was at Greyfriars?"

"Well?"

"Well, I lent him two pounds to pay his fare," said Trimble. "All I had, as it happened, though I'm not usually short of money. Well, I asked Cardew to settle, as Levison's not back, and he said he would."

"More fathead Cardew!" commented Blake. "You never lent Levison anything, you fat fraud!"

"I wefuse to believe for a moment that Levison bowwowed anything of you, Twimble!" said Arthur Augustus warmly.

"Cardew admitted it," said Trimble. "And then, instead of handing over the two pounds, what do you think he did? Punched me!"

"Good for Cardew!"

"Said what he meant was a pound on the chest, you know!" said Trimble, with breathless indignation. "Pounded me on the chest like a battering-ram, you know! What do you think of that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I left the study," said Trimble. "Treating him with the contempt he deserved, I left!"

"In rather a hurry—what?" grinned Herries. "You didn't give him time to hand out the second pound—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But look here," said Trimble, lowering his voice a little, "Cardew's got plenty of money. He would shell out the two pounds if he—if he believed I'd lent them to Levison. He won't take my word, for some reason—low, suspicious beast, you know! Now, you fellows were in the crowd that saw Levison off——"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Suppose you fellows saw me lend Levison the money?" said Trimble.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Back me up, and I'll back you up!" said Trimble. "You fellows are stony——"

"How do you know that, you fat octopus?"

"I heard you trying to borrow some money of Kangaroo, and he was stony, too. Now, you back me up. Just bear witness to what you saw when Levison went, and I'll go halves."

"Halves!" said Blake dazedly.

"That's it. Fair play, you know—halves! All you fellows have got to do is to mention what you saw."

"But we didn't see anything!" howled Herries.

Trimble winked.

"What does that matter?"

"What does it matter?" gasped Digby.

"Yes. You see, all I want is some witnesses; then that suspicious cad Cardew will have to shell out. See? I'll go halves—honour bright!"

Study No. 6 looked at Trimble, scarcely able to believe their ears. Baggy did not seem to see any moral objections to the masterly scheme he propounded. Baggy judged other fellows by himself; so, necessarily, he had rather a low opinion of human nature.

"I mean it!" he said briskly. "Halves. Nothing mean about me, you know. I always was generous in money matters. Come on!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"You fat villain!" roared Herries, in great wrath.

"Look here, you know——"

"Cardew gave you only one pound?" asked Blake, with a gleam in his eyes.

"Yes. He——"

"Then here's the other!"

Crash!

"Yaroooooh!"

Baggy Trimble, with a terrific yell, was strewn along the Fourth Form passage. Blake & Co. walked on, and left him there—roaring. He had received the second pound, and it was a more hefty one than the first. Blake had put his beef into it.

Trimble's voice followed the chums of Study No. 6 along the passage in a series of terrific howls.

"Bai Jove, that howwid boundah weally is a corkah!" said Arthur Augustus. "But I was goin' to say, Blake——"

"Here we are."

"Befoah you go in, Blake, I was goin' to say——"

"Bow-wow!"

"Weally, Blake——"

Blake tapped at the door of Study No. 9, and opened it, wearing his most agreeable and friendly smile. He was rather surprised to find five juniors in the study, instead of two, sitting round the tea-table. Five faces were turned towards the door.

"Hallo!" said Clive.

"Oh!" ejaculated Blake.

There was already a tea-party in Study No. 9—evidently four more fellows would have been four too many. Blake coughed. Cardew and Clive were not so lonely in the absence of their chum as Blake had supposed.

"Want anythin'?" asked Cardew.

"Hem! You fellows going in for the Shakespeare prize next Saturday?" asked Blake.

"Eh! Not I!"

Clive shook his head.

"Oh! All right! Thought I'd ask."

And Blake backed into the passage, and drew the door shut after him. He gave his chums an eloquent and expressive look. Dismally, Study No. 6 trod away down the passage.

"Just our luck!" grunted Herries.

"Oh, just!" said Dig.

"Well, I turned it off rather neatly," said Blake. "As there was no room for us, there was no need to let the fellows think we were coming in for their measly feed."

"Weally, Blake, I was goin' to say——"

"Bet you they knew," said Digby. "I saw Monty Lowther grinning like a Cheshire cheese—I mean cat."

"Yaas, wathah! I was goin' to say——"

"I think Gussy's wound up this afternoon," said Blake. "Extraordinary thing that his chin keeps going on like this!"

"I was goin' to say that Tom Mewwy and Mannahs and Lowthah were at tea in Study No. 9——"

"What," roared Blake, "you knew, you fathead?"

"Yaas, wathah, and I was goin' to say——"

"Then why didn't you tell me before I butted in?" demanded Blake wrathfully.

"Weally, Blake, I was twying to tell you all the time! I was going to say——"

"Oh, sit down!" said Blake crossly.

"Yawooooooooh!" roared Arthur Augustus, as he sat down quite suddenly—with Blake's assistance. "You uttah wuffian——"

"We shall be late for tea in Hall at this rate!" said Dig. "Oh, come on!"

The three juniors raced for the stairs. Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet, pink with righteous wrath.

"Blake, you uttah hooligan——"

"Come on, Gussy!" yelled Blake, from the stairs.

"I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin', you wuffianly wottah!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "Come back, you wuffian——"

Arthur Augustus rushed in pursuit of his chums. Blake & Co. sped away to Hall; and Arthur Augustus did not overtake them till they reached that apartment. There it was impossible to take vengeance; so Arthur Augustus had to content himself with bestowing withering and crushing looks upon Blake—which, fortunately, did not seem to affect Jack Blake's appetite in the least.

CHAPTER 3.
Bagged by Baggy!

THERE were smiling faces in Study No. 9 after the sudden departure of Blake & Co. The Terrible Three, at least, guessed with what object Blake & Co. had looked in, in spite of Blake's masterly presence of mind and his reference to quite another matter.

"What's that about a Shakespeare prize?" asked Tom Merry. "You Fourth Form kids going in for the giddy drama?"

"Not this study—now Levison's gone," yawned Cardew. "Levison was going in for it. He's out of it now, though. He's left a giddy essay lying about somewhere. Shockin' waste of talent!"

"But what's the idea?" asked Manners.

Manners of the Shell was interested in such subjects. Manners had been seen, more than once, reading Shakespeare "on his own"—an amazing taste at which fellows marvelled. Most of them had enough of Shakespeare in the form of "English Literature" in class, and did not yearn for him out of lessons.

"It's Lathom's wheeze," explained Clive. "Our jolly old Form master is keen on these things."

"A taste not largely shared by his Form!" yawned Cardew.

"What sort of a prize?" asked Lowther. "A giddy gilt-edged volume of the great bard, what?"

"No. Lathom's got more sense than that," said Cardew. "The prize is a new cricket bat."

"Oh, good!" said Tom. "That's worth bagging. Is it open to Shell chaps?"

"No fear—only the Fourth."

"Rotten!" said Tom Merry. "I'd have made Manners mug it up, and bagged the bat for our study. Manners could have had the glory, and I'd have had the bat. Manners could do it on his head."

"What is it—an essay?" asked Manners.

"That's it. Lathom's a jolly old enthusiast," said Cardew. "He's giving a brand new cricket bat as a prize for the best essay on the giddy old drama, with special reference to the immortal William. Fellows in the Fourth are, I believe, sittin' up at nights with wet towels round the place where their brains would be if they had any. Levison would have bagged the prize, of course, if he'd been here. Now he's shunted over to Greyfriars, he's out of the game."

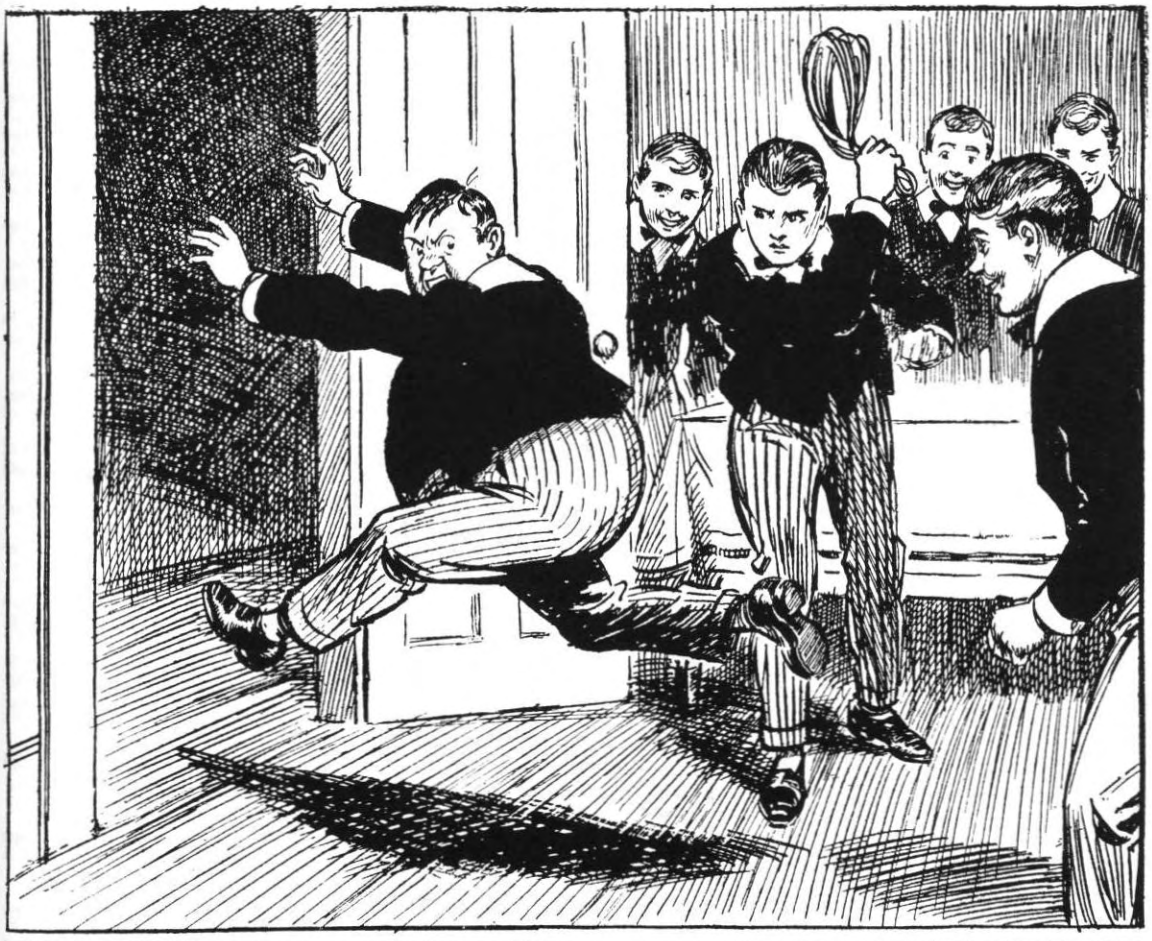
"That's rather hard lines, if he's done work on the essay," said Manners.

"Nearly finished it, I think, when that trouble happened with his minor, and after that he forgot all about it," said Cardew. "Dramatic essays and prizes and things don't count in the balance against Levison minor of the Third Form. I dare say Levison's forgotten there's such a person as Shakespeare in the giddy universe at all—or was, I mean; I believe the chap's dead now."

Tom Merry laughed.

"It's rather a pity to waste the essay," he remarked.

"I was thinkin' of lookin' it out, and copyin' it out, and baggin' the prize myself," said Cardew. "But it wasn't quite finished, and it would be a fag to finish it. Besides, I might have made some mistakes—might have put down Shakespeare as the author of Hamlet, or somethin'."



Baggy Trimble made a desperate rush for the doorway and the passage. As he did so, the coiled cord in Cardew's hand whistled through the air. There was a report like a pistol shot as it landed on Trimble's tight trousers, and the fat Fourth-Former went speeding on yelling. (*See page 8.*)

"He was the author of Hamlet, fathead!"

"Was he? Good!" said Cardew. "I'll make a note of that, in case I ever go in for Shakespeare prizes. I've asked Clive to finish it and bag the prize, but he seems to have dug up some sort of moral objections to the proceedin', or else he's too lazy."

"Fathead!" said Clive.

"I'd like to see it," said Manners. "Levison is a clever chap, and I dare say he's done a good essay. What lines was it on?"

"The lines ruled on the paper, naturally."

"You silly owl! I mean what line did Levison take? What was his point of view?"

"Blessed if I know. I heard him babblin' one day about some weird thing he called the dramatic unities. I think he was workin' 'em into the essay. Anybody know what they are?"

"Manners can tell you," grinned Monty Lowther. "I say, Lathom would be no end impressed by a Fourth Form chap wedging in the giddy dramatic unities. No end clever. Pity Levison is missing it."

"Let's see it," said Manners. "No harm in our seeing it, as we're not in the contest."

"Know where it is, Clive?"

"You put it somewhere, fathead!"

"So I did," said Cardew, with a nod. "It was lyin' about, and I shoved it somewhere. I hope I haven't lighted the fire with it. I shouldn't wonder if Levison asks after it when he comes back. I'll have a hunt for it presently, and bring it to you in your study, Manners."

"Right-ho!" grunted Manners. It was evident that the lazy dandy of the Fourth had no intention of hunting for the manuscript just then. But nobody was interested in it but Manners, and the subject dropped. The talk turned on the coming cricket season, and it did not occur to the juniors in Study No. 9 that a fat pair of ears, outside the study, had heard most of the foregoing conversation.

Baggy Trimble was there. After Blake & Co. had cleared off Baggy had returned to Study No. 9 on tiptoe. He had a cord in his fat hand, which he intended to tie to the door handle, the other end to be secured to the handle of the next study. This was Baggy's retaliation for the pound Cardew had bestowed on him. Kneeling outside, carefully attaching the cord, Baggy had heard all the talk in the study—and he was so extremely interested that he almost forgot his occupation.

Baggy Trimble was about the last fellow in St. Jim's to be interested in such things as Shakespeare essays, as a rule. But undoubtedly he was keenly interested in Levison's unfinished manuscript.

"My hat!" murmured Baggy. "What a giddy opportunity!"

As the talk turned on cricket, Baggy lost his interest in it. No consideration under the sun could have interested Baggy in cricket. He proceeded to knot the cord on the door handle, and he was thus engaged when a hand descended on his collar and gripped it.

"Yooop!" gasped Trimble, startled almost out of his fat wits.

He squirmed round and blinked up, to see the grinning face of Dick Julian of the Fourth looking down at him.

"Listening again!" said Julian.

"Ow! Leggo!"

Julian, holding Baggy's collar with one hand, opened the study door with the other. He rolled the fat junior in, much to the surprise of the tea-party.

"Hallo, that fat bounder again!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yaroooooh!"

"I found him at your keyhole," said Julian. "I thought I'd roll him in." And Julian grinned and walked on his way, leaving Baggy Trimble gasping on the carpet of Study No. 9.

"Yow! I wasn't!" howled Trimble. "That silly ass is mistaken! I never heard a word about Levison's essay——"

"What were you doing with that cord?" asked Cardew.

"I—I—I——"

"Japin' us, by gad! Japin' this study!" exclaimed Cardew.

"My hat! Things are comin' to a pretty pass when a fat slug starts japin' this study!"

"I—I wasn't! I—I——"

Cardew picked up the cord, standing between Trimble and the door. The fat Fourth-Former scrambled up, eyeing him apprehensively. Cardew coiled the cord into a convenient length, evidently to use it for purposes of chastisement. Then he stood beside the doorway.

"Cut!" he said.

"I—I say——"

"Hook it!"

"Look here, give a fellow room to pass——"

"Would you mind touchin' him up with your boot, Lowther?"

"Pleased!" said Monty Lowther.

"Yah! Rotter!" howled Trimble.

He made a desperate rush for the doorway and the passage. As he expected, the coiled cord swung round as he passed, and there was a report like a pistol-shot as it landed on Trimble's tight trousers. There was a yell from Baggy Trimble as he fled.

Cardew tossed the cord into the fender and returned to his chair. After tea Cardew and Clive left the study with the Terrible Three, and the five juniors walked down the passage together. They had forgotten Baggy Trimble by that time. But Baggy had not forgotten. From the passage window he watched the juniors saunter out into the quadrangle. Then he scudded into Study No. 9.

For a quarter of an hour, in breathless haste, Baggy was busy in that study—searching. What he was searching for, it would have puzzled any other fellow to guess. Even Baggy, free and easy as his ideas were on money matters, could not have been suspected of looking for plunder. But evidently he was eagerly in search of something.

"Good!" he gasped at last. "Oh, good!"

From an untidy heap of papers in the bookcase Baggy had clutched some sheets of foolscap, fastened at the corner. They were written on in Ernest Levison's neat hand. Baggy gave the papers one glance, and then shoved them under his waistcoat and scudded out of the study. He sped down the passage and hurried into Study No. 2, his own quarters. His study-mates, Mellish and Wildrake, were there, and they both stared at the breathless Baggy.

"What's up?" asked Mellish.

"Eh? Nothing!"

"Study raiding again?" asked Wildrake.

"Certainly not."

"I guess you've got something hidden under your waistcoat," said the Canadian junior.

"Oh, not at all! You—you see——"

"Let's see it," grinned Mellish. "Collar him, Wildrake!"

"Yah!"

Baggy dodged out of the study again. His prize was not safe there. It was a case of there being no rest for the wicked. Baggy hurried on down the staircase—and caught his breath as he passed Cardew and Clive, coming up. He ran on, and found refuge in the deserted Fourth Form room. There at last he was able to examine his prize without fear of interruption. He sat at his desk and fairly gloated over Ernest Levison's unfinished essay, with a satisfaction that would have puzzled any St. Jim's fellow who had seen him. Baggy Trimble hated Shakespeare almost as bitterly as he hated Virgil, and his interest in Levison's lucubrations was deeply mysterious, but it was evidently very real. Great thoughts were working in Baggy Trimble's fat brain.

CHAPTER 4.

Cricket-bat for Sale!

"IT'S all wight!"

"Is it?" grunted Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Has your jolly old pater shelled out a remittance?"

"No. But it's all wight. I know how to waise the wind," said Arthur Augustus confidently.

Blake and Herries and Digby eyed him doubtfully. It was the following day, and lessons were over. The shortage of cash still reigned in Study No. 6—that celebrated study was in the state of ancient Egypt in the seven lean years.

"Well, if you know how to raise the merry wind, raise it in time for tea," said Blake. "I'm fed up with tea in Hall—doorsteps and weak wash! Fed up to the chin. How are you going to do it?"

"I'm goin' to sell the cwicket-bat."

"Ass! You're not going to sell your bat, with cricket coming on!"

"I am not alludin' to my own bat, Blake. I shall wequiah my bat when the matches begin. I am alludin' to Mr. Lathom's bat."

"Which?"

"The cwicket-bat Mr. Lathom is offewin' as a pwize for the Shakespeare essay," explained Arthur Augustus.

"You howling ass!" said Blake in measured tones.

"Weally, Blake——"

"The bat isn't awarded to the winner till Saturday——"

"And you won't be the winner," said Dig.

"Last on the list, most likely!" said Herries.

"Wats! I am doin' a wippin' essay on Shakespeare and the dwamah, and it is bound to womp home, you know," said Arthur Augustus. "Mr. Lathom will award me the bat on Satahday. I shall not wequiah it for my personal use, as I have a vewy good bat alweady. Therefore, I shall sell the bat."

"First catch your hare!" grinned Blake.

"We cannot wait till Satahday for tea, Blake," said Arthur Augustus in a tone of patient remonstrance. "I am not a gweeday chap, but I object stwongly to waitin' till Satahday for tea. As the bat is a cert, there is no weason why I should not sell it to-day in time for tea."

"You blithering ass!" howled Blake. "If a fellow buys a bat of you, he will want the bat, won't he?"

"I shall undahtake to delivah it on Satahday."

"And suppose it doesn't turn up?"

"Wubbish! Mr. Lathom is a man of honah," said D'Arcy. "Havin' pwomised the bat for the best essay, he is bound to hand it ovah."

"You—you—you——" gasped Blake. "Mr. Lathom will hand over the bat all right. But how do you know he will hand it to you?"

"He will have no choice about that, deah boy. You see, he has pwomised it for the best Shakespeare essay."

"It's no good talking to him," said Herries. "Better bump him. Now, what are we going to do for tea? Can we stick Tom Merry?"

"Nevah mind Tom Mewwy, Hewwies. I am goin' to sell the bat. You fellows come with me, and we will go stwaight to the tuckshop as soon as I have sold my bat."

Arthur Augustus walked out of Study No. 6. Blake & Co. followed him, undetermined whether to chuckle or to collar the noble Gussy and bump him in the passage. Talbot of the Shell was coming along the corridor, and D'Arcy stopped him.

"Would you care to buy a bat, Talbot? A weally good bat!"

"Selling your bat?" asked Talbot, in surprise.

"Hem! I am sellin' a bat—a vewy good bat——"

"The one he's going to win on Saturday with the best Shakespeare essay," explained Blake. "He hasn't won it yet."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Talbot.

"Weally, Blake, I wish you would not butt into a business twansaction with iwwelevant wemarks."

"Ha, ha! No, I'm not buying that bat, Gussy!" chuckled Talbot, as he went on his way, apparently considerably entertained.

"Blake, you are an uttah ass! You have stopped the sale of my new bat with your buttin' in. I say, Wildwake, I——"

"Hallo, old scout!" said Wildrake of the Fourth.

"I suppose you are goin' to play cwicket this season——"

"Sure!"

"I am offewin' a splendid bat for sale——"

"Oh, good!" said Wildrake. "If it suits me——"

"It's Mr. Lathom's bat," put in Blake. "Gussy hasn't won it yet."

Wildrake stared. Then he burst into a laugh.

"Ha, ha! I guess I'm not buying that bat, Gussy!" And the Canadian junior went on, grinning.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon Blake with a withering look.

"Do you think, Blake, that I shall be able to sell that bat if you keep on buttin' in in that widiculous mannah?" he asked.

"I'll jolly well see that you don't, old pippin!" answered Blake. "You see, you've got about as much chance of bagging that bat as Trimble has! Why, I'm going in for it myself!"

"Yaas, but you haven't any chance, deah boy."

"Why not?" demanded Blake warmly.

"Well, a thing like that wequiahs bwains——"

"You cheeky ass——"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Hallo, Gussy! Just looking for you!" Baggy Trimble rolled along the passage and joined the four juniors. "Thinking of buying a bat?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I'm selling a cricket-bat," said Trimble. "I've nearly finished my essay for Saturday, and there's no doubt that I shall bag the prize. If you care to take the bat off my hands now I'll let you have it cheap. What do you say?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake & Co.

Arthur Augustus' face was a study. Apparently he was not the only Fourth-Former who was bent on selling the bear's skin before the bear was caught, so to speak.

"You uttah ass, Twimble!" ejaculated the swell of

St. Jim's. "I wegard you as a widiculous, cheekay boundah! You have not the wemotest chance of baggin' the pwize!"

"Come off!" said Trimble. "I'll show you some of my essay if you like, on condition that you don't steal it, of course. Once you see what I've written you'll admit right off that you don't stand a chance against it. You see, I know the subject."

"You are a pwesumptuous ass, Twimble!"

"Oh, let's see it!" grinned Blake. "I'd like to see Trimble as an essayist. It will be a work of originality, so far as the spelling's concerned, at any rate."

"Mind, you don't bag my idea if I let you see it!" said Trimble suspiciously.

"If you cannot wely on our honah, Twimble——"

"Of course I can, old chap!" said Baggy. "What do you say to giving me ten-and-six for the bat? That's cheap!"

"Wats!"

"Let's see the giddy essay," said Blake. "It's bound to be entertaining."

"I've gone into the subject fairly thoroughly," said Trimble airily. "I've dealt with the question of the dramatic unities——"

"The what?" yelled Blake.

"The dramatic unities——"

"What the merry thump are the dramatic unities?" asked Herries.

Trimble sniffed.

"There's ignorance for you!" he said. "The unities are—are—are——"

"Well, what are they?" asked Dig.

"The—the unities, of course!" said Trimble. "One of the characteristic distinguishings of Shakespeare——"

"One of the what?" gasped Blake.

"I mean one of the distinguished characteristics of Shakespeare, in his disregard of the—the—the narrow limits"—Trimble seemed to be trying to remember—"the narrow limits set by the—the unities. As Macaulay says——"

"Macaulay!" said Blake dazedly. Trimble quoting Macaulay was a "facer." Blake would as soon have expected to hear him quoting Einstein.

"Yes, as Macaulay says, such a work as 'Hamlet' could never have been written by a playwright who confined himself to the narrow limits prescribed by the ancient tragedy——"

"Am I dweamin'?" asked Arthur Augustus. "Have you learned that stuff by heart fwom some book, Twimble?"

"Certainly not. That's my essay."

"And what does it mean?" shrieked Blake.

"Mean?" Trimble seemed slightly taken aback by that question. "Hem! Can't you see what it means?"

"No. What does it mean?"

"If you can't see it, Blake, it's no good my explaining. You're rather ignorant in Study No. 6."

"Bai Jove!"

"I illustrate my argument," continued Trimble, "by French quotations——"

"You quote French?"

"Certainly. Voltaire——"

"Voltaire!" said Blake, like a fellow in a dream.

"Certainly. Voltaire's remarks on the subject—in the original French——"

"He's pulling our leg," said Blake. "He's not written anything at all. Bump him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I—I say—yaroooh—really—honest Injun—yoop!" roared Trimble as he sat down in the passage—hard!

"Now, all jump on him together!" said Blake.

But Baggy Trimble was gone before Study No. 6 could jump.

"The cheekay ass!" said Arthur Augustus. "He has been weadin' some stuff in a book, and twyin' to impose upon us you know. Now, you fellows, about sellin' that bat——"

"Bow-wow!" said Blake. "If you and Trimble both sell that bat in advance, there will be trouble for somebody on Saturday. Let's go along to the Shell and stick Tom Merry for tea."

And Blake led the way to No. 10 in the Shell.

CHAPTER 5.

Trimble Astonishes the Natives!

TOM MERRY and Manners and Lowther were in rather high feather. There had been a remittance from Miss Priscilla Fawcett that afternoon; and Study No. 10 were in possession of a whole pound. That whole pound was soon reduced to half a pound, as it were, by preparations for tea in Study No. 10. The Terrible Three were looking satisfied with themselves and things generally, when Ralph Reckness Cardew glanced in at the doorway.

"Trot in!" said Tom. "I was just coming along to ask you and Clive to tea, if you'd care to come."

"Thanks no end, old bean! There seems to be a rush on us," said Cardew. "Our fascinatin' ways, I suppose. We're booked for tea with Figgins, over in the New House. I looked in to tell Manners I'm sorry I can't find that paper of Levison's that I was going to show him."

"Lost it?" asked Manners.

"Not at all. I never lose anythin'. But it seems to have lost itself," said Cardew. "I'm sure it was about the study somewhere. I have a sort of vague idea that I shoved it on the bookcase, but it isn't there. If it turns up some day I'll trot it along."

"Levison may want it when he comes back," said Lowther.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Cardew. "I hope it will turn up by that time. Levison being out of the game, I've been thinkin of puttin' in myself for that nobby cricket-bat. It seems a waste not to use what Levison's written already; but the thing's lost, and there's an end. You fellows care to hear what I've done on my own, and give me your valuable opinion?"

"Go it!" said Tom Merry, with a smile.

Cardew tossed a sheet of impot paper on the table. Tom Merry picked it up and read it aloud.

"In reading Shakespeare, our great national poet, one is chiefly struck by the fact that he was a lazy sort of chap, and given to scamping his work. The general massacre of the characters at the end of 'Hamlet' is a case in point, this being the easiest way of getting rid of them and winding up the play without trouble."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Manners.

"Go on!" grinned Monty Lowther. "This will bag the Shakespeare prize—I don't think! I can fancy Lathom's face!"

Tom Merry chuckled, and read on:

"This method of Shakespeare's has led to much controversy among critics, as to what Shakespeare meant, and did not mean, by this, that, or the other. The explanation seems to be that he did not mean anything in particular. So far as he meant anything, it appears that he meant to get his job done as soon as possible, and get off to the Mermaid tavern."

"Ha ha, ha!"

"You think it will do?" asked Cardew. "It is said that truth is great, and will prevail; so why not introduce a few facts even into a Shakespeare essay? Clive thinks it's rot."

"Clive's about right, I think," said Tom Merry, laughing. "That essay is more likely to get you a licking than a prize, I should say."

Cardew sighed, and returned the paper to his pocket. Sidney Clive came along the passage.

"Come on, Cardew; Figgy will be waiting for us."

"Comin'!" answered Cardew; and, with a nod to the Terrible Three, the dandy of the Fourth strolled out of the study.

A few minutes later there were more footsteps in the Shell passage, and Blake looked in. Tom Merry grinned.

"Still stony?" he asked.

"Hem!"

"Trot in. We're rolling in filthy lucre, and the festive board is going to groan under enormous supplies."

"Oh, good!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Study No. 6 came in cheerfully. It was corn in Egypt at last! Seven juniors sat down round the festive board to tea. Tea and talk were going on merrily in Study No. 10 when a fat face appeared in the doorway.

"Bai Jove! It's that boundah Twimble——"

"I've come here to speak to Tom Merry," said Trimble, with dignity. "I hadn't even noticed that it was tea-time——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, Tom, old chap, I've got a bat to sell," said Trimble.

"I am bound to warn you, Tom Mewwy, that the bat Twimble is twyin' to sell is my bat!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly. "That is to say, pwactically mine. It is the pwize bat, you know."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I fancy I shouldn't buy any prize bat till it was won," he remarked. "Try next door, Trimble."

"I've got another suggestion to make," said Trimble, eyeing the tea-table. "As I'm certain to bag the bat, I shall sell it. Well, look here, you know, you fellows stand me a feed now, and I'll stand you a topping spread out of what I get for the bat. That's fair."

"You have not the wemotest chance of winnin' the bat, you fat fwaud!"

"I'm willing to show Tom Merry my essay, and leave that to his judgment," said Trimble loftily.

"Gammon!" said Manners. "What thumping sort of a Shakespeare essay could you write, you duffer?"

"I've got it here!" said Trimble. "Splendid work, though I say it myself. Quotations from Macaulay and Dr. Johnson, and from Voltaire, in the original French——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Wats!"

"Gammon!"

"Hold on!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Let's see the jolly old essay. If Trimble is an undiscovered genius, it's worth finding out."

"Uttah wot! Twimble weadin' Voltaire in Fwench!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus contemptuously. "I don't suppose he has evah seen a volume."

"There's Voltaire's works in the school library," said Tom Merry. "I remember Levison having them out once. But Trimble——"

"Seeing is believing!" said Trimble. "Just look at my essay, and judge for yourself!"

Trimble jerked a rather grubby bundle of foolscap from under his jacket, and handed it over to Manners. Manners received it with a grin; but his expression grew serious as he looked at it. An expression of utter wonder came over his face. The other juniors looked at Manners, wondering, too.

"Well, what's it like?" asked Monty Lowther.

"My only hat!" said Manners.

"Anything in it?" asked Tom.

"Blessed if this doesn't beat me hollow! It's in Trimble's fist, or I should think he'd bagged it from somewhere."

"I suppose you know my handwriting!" grunted Trimble.

"I know your scrawl, old pippin. You mean to say that you wrote this stuff?" ejaculated Manners. "Great pip! I fancy this will bag the prize, and give Lathom fits into the bargain."

"Bai Jove!"

The tea-party in Study No. 10 were more interested in Trimble's essay than in tea, now. They knew that Manners knew what he was talking about; and their wonder was great. Certainly nobody had ever suspected Baggy Trimble of possessing literary abilities before. If Manners was impressed, there was "something in it"; and obviously Manners was greatly impressed. Baggy Trimble took advantage of the general attention fixed on Manners, to draw a box up to the table and sit down to tea. He started on the cake with destructive energy.

"Let's see it!" said Tom.

Manners cleared a space on the table, and laid out the manuscript so that all could read it. The juniors looked at it, fully expecting to read something absurd couched in ungrammatical language and weird orthography. That was really all that could be expected of Trimble of the Fourth. But as they gazed, their faces grew wondering, amazed. Baggy Trimble's attention was fixed on the cake, but every other fellow had his eyes glued, now, on that amazing manuscript—amazing as proceeding from the most obtuse duffer in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

> "The most distinguishing characteristic of Shakespeare's works is his utter disregard for the so-called dramatic unities. Macaulay justly remarks that such a character as that of Hamlet could never have been developed within the narrow limits imposed by these unities. Dr. Johnson was the first great critic to condemn them. He especially refers to the great number of authorities that could be brought against him upon this subject. Judged by these authorities, Shakespeare's were the most incorrect of works, 'without form and void.' Voltaire is particularly emphatic on this point. With regard to the unity of action, he declares, 'La nature seule nous a indique ce precepte, qui doit etre invariable comme elle.' And 'Par la meme raison, l'unite de lieu est essentielle; car une seule action ne peut se passer en plusieurs lieux a la fois. Si les personnages que je vois sont a Athenes au premier acte, comment peuvent-ils se trouver en Perse au second?' And further, 'L'unite de temps est jointe naturellement aux deux premieres.' But the refutation of Voltaire is contained in the fact that the greatest of dramatists—Shakespeare—produced his greatest works in complete disregard of the unities of action, place, and time; and could not, indeed, have produced them had he confined himself within these narrow and arbitrary limits. Further——"

That was all. The essay was unfinished. The Terrible Three and Study No. 6 read it, and read it again, and then they blinked at Trimble. Baggy, by that time, had nearly finished the cake.

"You haven't finished, Trimble," said Manners, with quite a new respect in his manner.

"I'll finish it, if you don't mind," said Trimble.

"Eh! Why should I mind your finishing your essay?"

"Oh, I—I thought you meant the cake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I haven't had time to finish the essay yet," said Trimble. "Lot of work in it, you know—reading up Macaulay, and Johnson, and Voltaire in French, and all that——"

"Blessed if I'd ever have believed that you could read Voltaire in French!" said Blake, in wonder.

"Read it just as easy as a page of 'Chuckles,'" said Trimble airily. "I'm a dab at French, you know."

"I don't know," answered Blake.

"Bai Jove! This is weally vewy surpwisin'," said Arthur Augustus. "I should not weally like to undahtake to wite on the subject of the dwamatic unities myself. I should be afwaid of gettin' out of my depth."

"Same here," said Herries, with a suspicious look at Trimble. "Has Talbot been helping you with this, Trimble?"

"Certainly not. You can ask Talbot."

"Or some Fifth Form chap?" asked Dig.

"My dear fellow, the Fifth Form are not in it with me when it comes to things of this sort."

"Phew!"

"Well, it's a good thing, and it shows a jolly lot of knowledge for a Fourth Form chap," said Tom Merry. "I fancy Mr. Lathom will be jolly pleased to see one of his Form digging into the giddy subject like this. I fancy this essay will take the bun."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Manners nodded thoughtfully.

"I dare say I could put it a bit better," he remarked. "But the chap who wrote this had gone into his subject. Dash it all, how many fellows are there in the Lower School who can quote Dr. Johnson?"

"Only me," said Trimble.

"Trimble must have been mugging up in the library," said Blake. "Blessed if I thought him capable of it! I shall withdraw my essay. It's nothing like up to this."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus slowly.

"Looks as if Trimble is going to bag the prize, after all!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Who said the age of miracles was past? Finish the cake, Baggy; you've earned it."

"Thanks, old chap!" said Trimble. "The fact is, Manners, I—I wish I had your literary style——"

"Good!" said Manners dryly. "I've nothing to lend."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean it, old fellow. I'd take it as a favour if you'd finish that essay for me. Wind it up well, you know. You could do it."

"I dare say I could," said Manners. "But I'm not going to. It wouldn't be fair on the others if you had help from a higher Form."

"Oh, that's rot!" said Trimble. "I'm certain of the prize, anyhow. It's only to save me trouble."

"Well, take the trouble yourself, if you want the prize, you fat bounder!"

Trimble grunted, and finished the cake. There were still some bananas and chocolates left on the table, so Trimble thoughtfully finished them also. All was grist that came to Trimble's mill. Then he rose, and grunted again, and took his manuscript.

"After all, it's long enough," he said. "I'll cross out the last word, and it will do as it is. I say, any of your fellows like to buy my bat—cheap? I'm offering it for ten shillings."

"No fear!" said Lowther. "There's many a slip, you know. Suppose Levison comes back before Saturday——"

Trimble jumped.

"Levison!" he stammered.

"Yes. Cardew says that Levison had partly written a jolly good essay, and if he comes back in time, he will put in, and he will have a jolly good chance of bagging the prize."

"B-b-but Levison isn't expected back on Saturday, is he?" exclaimed Trimble, evidently utterly dismayed by the possibility.

"Not that I know of. But he might——"

"Oh, rot! His young brother's ill at Greyfriars; he won't come," said Trimble, recovering his assurance. "Not that Levison could beat me in this line, you know. Not at all. I say, Tom, old fellow, I'll let you have the bat for seven-and-six."

"Wait till Saturday!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"You see, I happen to be hard up now, owing to lending my money to Levison when he went——"

"What?"

"I—I mean, owing to lending it to Racke of the Shell," said Trimble hastily. "I'll take five bob for the bat, cash down."

"Not in this study."

"D'Arcy, old chap, if you care to give me half-a-crown for the bat——"

"Wats!"

"Don't be an ass, Trimble," said Tom Merry. "The bat

Trimble had not searched in vain. For from an untidy heap of papers in the bookcase he found the sheets of foolscap, fastened at the corner. After scanning the neat writing of Ernest Levison's fist Baggy thrust the papers under his waistcoat and scudded out of the study. (*See page 8.*)

will be worth a guinea or so, and you've only got to wait a few days, if you win it."

"Yes; but Levison might come back—I—I—I mean, what I want is to be generous. I'll take two bob for the bat."

"Generosity is at a discount in this study," said Monty Lowther. "Trimble, old man, you're beginning to be a bore. Take your generosity, and your essay, and yourself, along the passage!"

"Yah!"

With that elegant rejoinder, Baggy Trimble quitted Study No. 10, leaving Tom Merry & Co. surprised and mystified by his unexpected powers as an essayist. For once Baggy Trimble had succeeded in astonishing the natives.

CHAPTER 6.
Trimble Takes the Plunge!

"WILDRAKE, old fellow——"

"Cut out the 'old fellow!'" said Kit Wildrake rather gruffly. "What do you want, you fat image?"

"You're not going in for the Shakespeare prize?"

"Nope."

"Of course, you couldn't very well," said Baggy Trimble patronisingly. "What do you know about it?"

"More than you do, I hope," answered Wildrake. "I couldn't know less, I guess. But I'm not well up in it enough to go in for Mr. Lathom's prize. Besides, Saturday's a half-holiday, and I guess I'm going for a ride. Mr. Lathom should have fixed it in lesson-time, if he wanted me to enthuse."

"Well, as you're not going in for it, you might lend me a hand," said Baggy Trimble. "I've asked Manners, and he says a chap oughtn't to have help from a chap in a higher Form——"

"Sure!" assented Wildrake.

"But you're in the same Form, so it doesn't matter. Lend me a hand to finish it, old chap."

Wildrake stared at him.

"You've just asked me what I know about the subject," he said.

"Well, of course, you don't know enough to enter—not to compete with a fellow like me. But you could help."

"Bow-wow!"

"I say Wildrake——"

"Rats!"

Kit Wildrake walked out of the study. It was Thursday, and on the day after the morrow Mr. Lathom was to receive the papers from his Form, on his favourite subject, Shakespeare. This little prize-giving was quite an unofficial proceeding on Mr. Lathom's part. The Fourth Form master was "standing" a guinea bat out of his own pocket for the laudable purpose of encouraging the study of literature in his class. It really was very nice of Mr. Lathom—and it was remarkably intelligent on his part, to offer a cricket-bat instead of a handsomely bound volume of the immortal poet. There were few fellows in the Fourth who would have mugged up Shakespeare for the sake of a presentation copy of that great man's works. A cricket-bat was a different proposition, however. Even Baggy Trimble was keen on the cricket-bat, as it had a saleable value. The saleable value of a presentation volume of Shakespeare would have been negligible in the Lower School.

Baggy was very keen on that prize. Already he had turned the affair to account. Several times of late in the Form room he had disarmed Mr. Lathom by allusions to the Shakespeare essay. If Trimble had scamped his prep, it appeared that he had been devoting his time to dealing with Shakespeare—if he was late for class, it was because he had been so engrossed in Shakespeare that he hadn't heard the bell.

Mr. Lathom was an unsuspicious gentleman; and he took most of Baggy's cunning excuses at face value.

He was indeed pleased to see that the laziest and most obtuse slacker in his Form was "going in" for the prize. It showed an unsuspected keenness in Trimble, and made the Fourth Form master think better of the fat and fatuous youth.

Trimble was generally in hot water in class, owing to

his obtuseness, reinforced by laziness and inattention. It was quite a new experience to him to be in his Form master's good books.

He liked it. It gave a wider scope to his natural bent for idling and slacking. His private opinion of William Shakespeare was that the said William was an "old ass." But he was very careful not to betray that opinion to Mr. Lathom.

If Trimble bagged the prize it was not only its cash value that he would receive. He would receive Mr. Lathom's commendations, and could look forward to an extension of leniency, till he wore out the patience of the Form master.

So Baggy's keenness was unabated. But though prize day was drawing near, Baggy's essay remained unfinished.

For reasons best known to himself, Baggy did not proceed with it, and get to the finish. Thrice he had asked Manners of the Shell; and each time Manners had refused—accompanying his final refusal with a kick, in order to leave no possible doubt upon the subject. So Baggy had given Manners up. He tried Talbot of the Shell, but Talbot declined, for the same reasons as Manners. Now he tried Wildrake—and Wildrake had declined—possibly not pleased by Baggy's tactful way of putting the matter.

Baggy grunted, and sat down to the table, with his unfinished essay before him, and wrinkled his fat brows over it.

"What the thump was coming next, I wonder!" he murmured. "Must have been something coming next—but what the merry dickens was it? What ought to come after 'further'——"

Percy Mellish came into the study, and Baggy hastily covered up his manuscript. Mellish grinned.

"That the jolly old essay?" he asked.

"You let it alone!" growled Baggy. "I'm not going to have you prigging my valuable ideas."

"I'm not going in for it," said Mellish. "Catch me wasting a half-holiday listening to old Lathom chinning. Fellows who go in for it will have to turn up in the Form-room on Saturday afternoon."

"Only for the prize to be handed over," said Baggy.

Mellish winked.

"Think Lathom will lose a chance like that?" he asked. "He will jolly well give you a lecture on Shakespeare, while he's got you all there at his mercy. I know him."

"I say, that wasn't mentioned," said Trimble. "That wasn't in the bargain at all."

"You'll get it, all the same," grinned Mellish. "I shouldn't wonder if he keeps you a couple of hours listening to what he will call a few remarks on this interesting subject."

And Mellish chuckled.

"Well, I don't care," said Baggy. "It's worth it, for a guinea bat, and to pull old Lathom's leg for the rest of the term. I say, as you're not going in for it, Mellish, you can help me if you like."

"Catch me!" said Mellish derisively.

"I just want to put a few more lines to it to wind it up, you know," said Baggy. "You might help a chap. I'm going to stand a spread in the study when I sell the bat."

"Well, let's look at it," said Mellish.

He glanced at Baggy's essay. Then he stared, and whistled.

"Great pip! Did you write that stuff?"

"Don't you know my fist?" snapped Baggy.

"Well, it's in your scrawl, that's a cert," said Mellish, in wonder. "Mean to say you've been mugging up Dr. Johnson and Macaulay and Voltaire in the school library?"

"Exactly!"

"Gammon!" said Mellish. "You've got that tipped you from some chap in the Sixth. 'Tain't fair on the others."

"I don't suppose there's a chap in the Sixth could do it," said Baggy. "Look here, what would you put next, if you were writing it, Mellish?"

"Blessed if I know. What the thump are the unities?" asked Mellish. "And what do you know about them? French quotations, too! You're the worst ass in Mossoo's class. Old Morny is always ragging you."

"He won't rag me so much when I win a prize for a paper with French quotations in it," said Trimble loftily. "And Lathom's bound to respect a fellow who quotes Johnson and Macaulay. He will realise that he's done me a lot of injustice."

"More likely to realise that you've prigged all that from somewhere," said Mellish, grinning.

"Look here, what shall I put next?" asked Trimble. "I must write a bit more—it's not long enough."

"Ask the chap who did that to do some more," suggested Mellish.

"You silly ass! I did it!" howled Trimble.

"Then you can do some more without asking me," said Mellish; and he lounged out of the study, grinning.

Trimble was left to handle his problem unaided. He wrinkled his fat brows over it in vain. As his fat mind was, in point of fact, a beautiful blank on the subject, it was not surprising that he could not continue the essay he had bagged from Levison's study.

He gave it up at last.

"Dash it all, it will have to do!" he grunted, and he crossed out the word "further" at the end of the unfinished essay. "It's not very long, but it's good. Manners thought it was jolly clever, and he knows. Seems a lot of silly rot to me; but Levison knew what he was doing, and Manners thinks it's all right. I'll let it go at that."

And Baggy Trimble let it go at that, and dismissed the problem from his fat mind.

The next day was Friday, and the essays had to be handed in after lessons, to give Mr. Lathom time to go over them before awarding the prize on Saturday.

After lessons on Friday, Baggy Trimble repaired cheerfully to the Fourth Form master's study, manuscript in hand. He met Figgins & Co., of the New House, coming away.

"You fellows going in for it?" asked Baggy.

"Kerr is," answered Figgins. "He's handed in his stuff.

"Why not?" demanded Trimble warmly.

You don't mean to say that you're in it, Trimble?"

"Well, you fat duffer!" said Fatty Wynn.

Kerr, the Scottish junior, looked keenly at Trimble. Trimble as a Shakespeare essayist was a surprising Trimble.

"I fancy I shall bag it," said Trimble airily. "Not much chance for you, Kerr."

"Well, I thought I had a pretty good chance," said Kerr good-humouredly. "Levison was the only one I was afraid of, and he's out of it now. What are you grinning at, you fat image?"

Trimble chortled. He could not help it.

"Oh, Levison doesn't count!" he said. "But I think my essay will be quite as good as if Levison had done it. He, he, he! You won't have an earthly, poor old chap! You see, I've gone into the subject pretty deeply. My paper deals with the dramatic unities——"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Kerr in amazement.

"I dare say you don't know what they are!" said Trimble loftily.

"Well, yes, I think I do," said Kerr. "But I'm pretty certain that you don't, you fat ignoramus."

"Well, what the thump are they?" asked Figgins.

"Trimble will tell you, as he's dealt with them in his paper!" grinned Kerr.

"I'm afraid you wouldn't understand, Figgins," said Trimble. "You see, it's rather a deep subject."

"Too deep for me, and not too deep for you!" ejaculated Figgins.

"Just that," said Trimble. "And I'll bet that Kerr can't explain what the unities are, either."

This was a deep move on Trimble's part. As "his" paper dealt with the unities, he was rather anxious to know what they were—a point upon which he was as yet blissfully ignorant. Mr. Lathom was not likely to suspect that a competitor did not understand his own paper. Still, it was as well to be on the safe side as possible. Figgins, who was far from following the weird workings of Baggy's powerful brain, fell blindly into the trap.

"I'll bet that Kerr knows," he said. "Go it, Kerr! You can beat any School House chaps at this swotting stuff."

Kerr grinned.

"It's not quite such a deep subject as Trimble seems to think," he remarked. "The three unities are the unities of place, action, and time. That is to say, that a play should contain only one main action—that's the unity of action—that it should be made to happen in or near one particular spot—that's the unity of place—and that the time it's supposed to take should be, roughly, the same length of time as the representation—that's the unity of time. The Greeks followed these rules; so do the French. We never do—we've got more sense."

"I—I see!" said Trimble.

"Oh, you see, do you?" said Kerr. "If you didn't see before now, how did you manage to put it all into your paper?"

"I—I mean—— Oh, rats!" said Trimble. "Go and eat coke, you New House bounders!"

And Baggy dodged into Mr. Lathom's study before Figgins & Co. could kick him.

Mr. Lathom greeted Trimble with a benevolent blink over his spectacles. Already there was a little pile of papers on his table.

"Ah, Trimble!" said the Fourth Form master. "You have brought your paper, I see. Lay it with the rest, Trimble."

"Yes, sir."

"I am glad that you have at least made an attempt, Trimble," said Mr. Lathom kindly. "I cannot, I fear flatter you with hopes of success; but I am very pleased indeed by this keenness on your part."

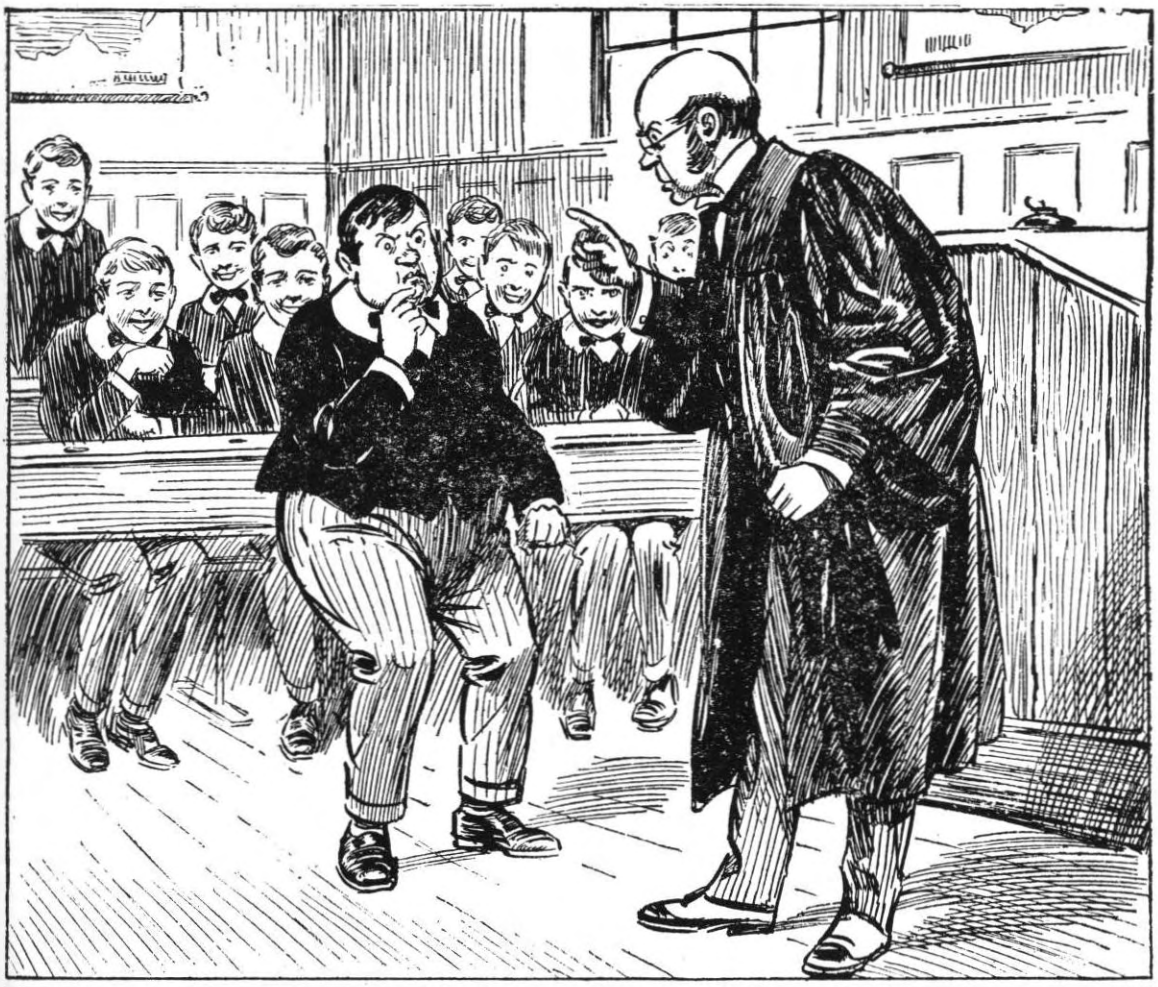
"Thank you, sir!" said Baggy modestly. "I—I've gone into the subject rather deep, sir."

"Indeed, Trimble!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Baggy confidently. "I've quoted only a few authorities, such as Dr. Johnson——"

"Eh?"

"And Macaulay——"



"Did you abstract a paper from Levison's study, copy it, and then try and pass same off on me as your own work, Trimble?" thundered Mr. Lathom. "Certainly not, sir!" answered Trimble. "I—I never thought of such a thing. How was I to know that that beast—I mean Levison, would send over his paper by post. I—I mean—you don't know what a clever chap I am, sir, when I'm roused!" *(See page 17.)*

"What?"

"And Voltaire——"

"Voltaire!" said Mr. Lathom faintly.

"In the original French, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

Baggy Trimble left his Form master's study in triumph. Mr. Lathom, with quite a dazed look, picked up the worthy Baggy's essay and looked at it. Baggy Trimble was the very last fellow in the world whom Mr. Lathom would have expected to go into a subject "deep," with quotations from Dr. Johnson, Macaulay, and Voltaire in the original French. And as he read Baggy's paper Mr. Lathom's amazement grew, and he ejaculated once more:

"Bless my soul!"

CHAPTER 7.
Two of a Kind!

"THAT ass Cardew here?"

Sidney Clive asked that question as he looked into Tom Merry's study, what time Baggy Trimble was calling on Mr. Lathom.

"Adsum!" said Cardew's tired voice.

Ralph Reckness Cardew was seated on a corner of the table in Study No. 10. The Terrible Three were all there. Tom Merry oiling a cricket-bat; Monty Lowther compiling his Comic Column for the "News"; Manners perusing a photographic Manual, with an occasional grunt to indicate disagreement with the author. Cardew, on the corner of the table, was talking in his usual airy fashion, receiving more or less attention from the chums of the Shell.

"Here he is," said Tom Merry with a smile.

Clive stepped in.

"Have you been to Mr. Lathom yet?" he asked.

"By gad! Forgot all about it!" said Cardew regretfully. "Is it too late? Poor old Levison!"

"It's not too late, fathead!" grunted Clive. "But you'd better cut off now."

Cardew seemed loth to leave his seat on the corner of the table.

"Sure it's not too late?" he asked. "All the papers had to be handed in by six this evenin'."

"It's not six yet."

"What a pity!" yawned Cardew. "I tremble at the idea of facing the Lathom-bird in his lair. He will begin tellin' me about the beauties of Shakespeare, and he will never leave off. I can't tell him to clear off, as I should you, Clive, old bean."

"Fathead!" said Clive. "Give me Levison's paper, and I'll take it in."

Cardew grinned.

"Dear old lamb," he said, "I was only waitin' for you to make that generous offer. Here you are!"

The dandy of the Fourth drew a folded manuscript from his inner pocket and passed it to Clive. The South African junior hurried away with it at once. Cardew settled back on the table, swinging his graceful and elegantly-trousered legs.

"What was I tellin' you chaps when that Africander butted in?" he asked.

"Never mind now," said Tom Merry. "Tell us what that means instead. Have you heard from Levison?"

"Eh? Oh, yes! Letter came this afternoon from Greyfriars," answered Cardew.

"Young Frank going on all right there?"

"I believe so. Levison mentioned him, but I forget what he said. Either he's better or he's worse; I can't remember which. Anyhow, Levison seems to be having a good time at Greyfriars. Likewise, he's remembered this Shakespeare

(Continued on page 16.)

OUR SPECIAL SHORT COMPLETE DETECTIVE STORY!

THE HAUNTED MINE!

BY EDMUND BURTON.

Another of the Amazing Exploits of ANTHONY SHARPE—Investigator.

CHAPTER 1.
A New Mystery!

"SIR WILLIAM GARVEY, Marley Hall, Marley Moor."

Anthony Sharpe glanced at the visiting-card, then at his caller, with a gleam of understanding in his keen eyes.

"Good-morning, sir!" he said. "I am familiar with your name, though we have not met before, to the best of my knowledge. Am I not right in assuming that you are the well-known colliery owner and equally as well-known sportsman?"

The big, clean-looking individual nodded, smiling slightly.

"Quite correct, Mr. Sharpe!" he answered. "I must claim a certain notoriety under both headings, and"—his face suddenly took on a rather troubled expression—"it is about the former that I wish to consult you."

"The colliery? Well, sir, pray proceed."

The investigator sat down opposite his visitor and listened intently to what the latter had to relate.

"Yes, I'm rather in a quandary concerning a certain part of my mining property," Garvey began; "in fact, unless the thing—supernatural mystery, I'd call it, though I'm no firm believer in such—is cleared up very shortly, I fear I'll find myself facing a general strike."

Sharpe remained silent, so the other continued:

"About three months ago we had a bad accident in No. 7 workings—an explosion of firedamp which brought down the roof and entombed five men. They were never seen again in the flesh, for the galleries became flooded, which stopped the work of the rescue-party, and, after this, my engineers condemned that part of the mine as unsafe for further work, owing to the very treacherous nature of the soil. It was a pity, for we were just beginning to follow up some most promising seams when the accident happened; but, of course, the lives of my men were my first consideration, and I closed down all the galleries within the danger zone.

"One of the entombed fellows was a certain Davy Jackson—known as 'Daft Davy,' on account of his rather eccentric habits—and now I have had several reports that the spirit of this unfortunate chap has been seen flitting along the galleries by men working in the vicinity. Also, they declare positively to have heard strange sounds from the isolated area, which they believe to be the ghosts of the other four who lost their lives, and who are still trying to dig themselves out. Of course, Mr. Sharpe, all this is very ridiculous; but the rumours are spreading and many of my employees are inclined to be very superstitious about such matters. Consequently, I can forsee a lean time ahead unless these 'spooks' are laid. Only the other day, for example, eight of our best fellows stubbornly refused to go down in the cage at all, and you can guess what that will mean if the thing becomes general."

"Yes, I see your dilemma, Sir William," the detective nodded, "and I—— By the way, have you a plan of the mine with you at the moment?"

"I have."

Garvey produced a bulky parchment, folded neatly and secured by a rubber band. This he opened, and indicated a section to the extreme left.

"There," he explained, pointing to a shaded portion, "that's the boundary of our present working area. I have darkened the banned galleries, which you will notice are pretty extensive. They must still be flooded, of course, for we were unable to get the pumps to work owing to the great danger of a fresh fall."

Sharpe studied the plan very carefully, presently stubbing his finger upon what appeared to be another series of galleries lying beyond the condemned zone, and with a blank space, suggesting "neutral" ground, in between.

"What are these, here?" he asked. "The borings of another of your mines, I suppose?"

"No," Sir William answered. "Those mark the limits of the Henderson No. 2 Pit, situated in the same valley as ours. You've possibly heard of Henderson's—a fairly new concern, which is doing pretty well?"

"I may have noticed the name, but didn't pay much heed to it," Sharpe said. "Well, sir, what exactly do you wish me to do? I happen to be free for two or three days, and I'm ready to assist you to the best of my ability."

"Why, I want you to come down to Marley Moor and clear this spook scare up in the slickest possible time, Mr. Sharpe," Garvey smiled. "It may be a very simple matter to a man of your qualifications, but it means a lot to me, and I sha'n't haggle over the fee——"

"That will be all right, sir," the detective interrupted. "We shall discuss terms when I have finished my investigations, for I usually base my charges upon the amount of interest I find in a case. Tim!"

"Yes, sir!"

Timothy Dennis Michael O'Carroll, Anthony Sharpe's boy assistant, entered from the adjoining room, a towel over his arm and his freckled face shining from a liberal application of soap.

"Pack the two small suit-cases, and look up the next train from Paddington to Marley——"

"There's a fast train at 12.50, Mr. Sharpe," cut in Sir William, "and it will land us there shortly after three o'clock."

"Right!" the investigator said, glancing at his watch. "Then, if you care to wait a few minutes, we'll be with you. You'll find some good 'Coronas' in that box, sir."

"What's on the mat now, guv'nor?" inquired Tim, as Sharpe joined him in the bedroom. "Has he lost his missus, or his season-ticket, or——"

"Neither," his master laughed. "He's merely come to ask us if we'd like to turn coalminers for a couple of days, and I told him that there's nothing we'd like better. Hurry up, lad; we mustn't miss that train!"

"Sufferin' snakes!" muttered O'Carroll. "I've only just washed my face, an' now I've got to go pokin' about in a dirty coal-pit! However, these sudden quick-changes are all in the day's work!"

He obediently busied himself with the little packing that was necessary, Sharpe

The ghostly figure, swinging a "Davy" lamp in one hand and carrying a short pick in the other, approached Anthony Sharpe and his boy assistant.

grinning behind his back as he recognised the tune which his bright assistant was softly whistling as he worked. It was a well-worn ditty, and seemed strangely appropriate on the present occasion—"Don't go down the mine, dad!"

CHAPTER 2.

The Spectre of the Mine—"Daft Davy"—A Catastrophe—The Way Out!

MARLEY MOOR was a typical mining district. The little town itself was composed of well-built cottages, cleaner than most of their kind, and here and there the monotony was broken by the great pit-head machinery, black against the sky. On the far side of the wide valley was another group of habitations, which, Sir William explained, belonged to the Henderson concern aforementioned.

Anthony Sharpe wasted no time in tackling the matter in hand. They had arrived just as the few workers from the affected galleries were drawn up to the surface, their shift finished. Accompanied by the mine-owner and one of his foremen, the investigator and his assistant made the descent. Clad in overalls, and each bearing a "Davy" lamp, they soon reached the borings from which the strange manifestations were reported, and here Sharpe requested that they should be left to pursue their investigations alone.

Sir William and the overseer obediently withdrew, after telling the detective to follow the tram-lines, which led direct to the shaft, when they wished to come up; and having listened to the footsteps dying away along the gallery, Sharpe reinforced their illumination with the light of a powerful electric torch.

This he shone down a boring to the left, the bright beams resting upon a mass of rock and earth away beyond the barrier which had been placed across the cutting as a warning to the workers to go no farther. Another tunnel on the right told a similar story, except that here the black water was visible where the passage dipped steeply downwards.

"That's impassable, I fear," Sharpe muttered, nodding towards the last-mentioned boring, "so we must try the other. Come along, lad, and walk like a cat. We can't risk bringing the roof in on top of us and spoiling your youthful beauty!"

They climbed the barrier, progressing cautiously along the narrow cutting until they reached the mass of debris previously seen. This however, had not completely blocked the place, for, by flattening themselves against the wall, they managed to squeeze past, continuing for a considerable distance and rounding several other minor obstructions successfully. Then the gallery turned sharply to the right, dipping downwards, and the investigator closely examined the rocky floor. Here the water lay in little pools only, where slight depressions had formed, although the damp nature of the surroundings testified that they had been recently flooded.

This was curious. Sir William had declared that they had been unable to pump the area dry, yet this place seemed to be comparatively free from water. Had it subsided gradually, or flowed to a deeper level? If not, who——

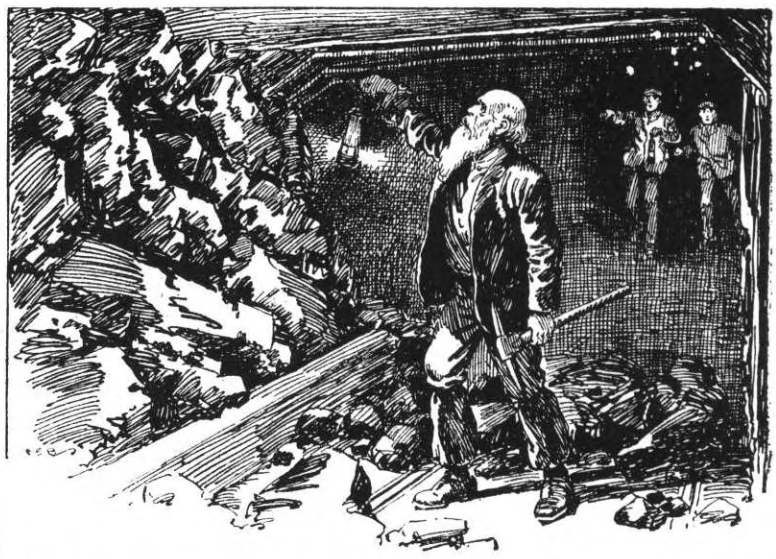
"Hist! You hear that, guv'nor?"

Tim's voice was not quite steady as he suddenly laid a hand on his master's arm. Yes; Sharpe had heard it and switched out his torch instantly, besides depositing the Davy lamps behind a heap of debris, where their light also would be hidden.

Then the pair threw themselves flat on the ground, pressing closely to the wall and gazing through the Stygian blackness of the tunnel.

Suddenly Sharpe gave vent to a suppressed gasp. From a branch passage ahead a light gleamed, steadily growing stronger, whilst a patter of swift footsteps became audible. Then a strange figure appeared—the form of an old man, white-bearded, but still agile, judging from his movements. He came towards them rapidly, mumbling something as he walked, and swinging a Davy lamp in one hand, whilst he carried a short pick in the other.

He approached almost level; then, as though struck with a sudden idea, swung aside down another boring, which neither of the pair had hitherto noticed.



Anthony Sharpe looked hard at the old fellow, who was scrutinising the great mass of wreckage. Then, as an inspiration struck him, he shouted: "Jackson!"

"Daft Davy, for a fiver!" Sharpe breathed. "Quickly! After him!"

They started in pursuit, guided by the dim, swinging lamp in front; but suddenly Tim stumbled, and the figure ahead stopped short. Then, with a startled cry that echoed weirdly through the maze of galleries, he forged ahead again at a more rapid pace, which gave his followers all they could do to keep him in sight.

The demented man's footsteps now rang noisily through the narrow boring—for he was certainly no ghost—and, further attempt of concealment being useless, the others threw caution to the winds, clattering after their quarry with all speed. Somehow, Sharpe guessed that this strange being would probably supply the information he at present lacked—the clue which would put him on the track of a solution to these mysterious happenings.

Daft Davy twisted and turned, plainly scared out of his remaining wits at finding himself the object of pursuit, but he never obtained sufficient lead to baffle his trackers. They gained rapidly, and had almost overtaken him when a heavy, rumbling noise from somewhere ahead caused all three to halt as though by mutual consent.

Scarcely had the echoes of the first sound died away ere a second crash came from the rear, and Sharpe gripped Tim's hand in the darkness.

"This is pretty bad, youngster!" he whispered. "The vibration of our rush along the galleries has caused further damage, and it may be that we are—— Still, perhaps it's not so serious as that, though our friend yonder seems doubtful!"

He pointed towards where the old fellow, his lamp raised on high, was scrutinising a great mass of stuff which had tumbled from the roof of the boring just in front of him. A trickle of blood was visible upon his forehead, suggesting that he must have been struck by a ricochetting piece of coal or rock when the crash came.

"Jackson!" Sharpe called softly, snatching at a sudden inspiration. "Davy Jackson! Come here, man; we sha'n't hurt you!"

The old chap shivered slightly, then turned slowly and advanced a few steps until he found himself face to face with the two strangers.

"Who be ye?" he asked, in a shaky voice, as he passed his hand across his injured brow. "I dunno ye!"

"Of course not!" Sharpe gave a reassuring smile—and there were few men who could smile just like the famous investigator, when he chose—"but you soon will. Sit down here on this shelf. We've got to look into matters."

Jackson obeyed immediately, though never taking his eyes from Sharpe's face. And the latter, examining him closely, realised one important fact—that Daft Davy's mental condition had somewhat improved, for, as sometimes happens, that blow on his forehead seemed to have helped towards restoring his slumbering wits.

"Ay, I be Dave Jackson," he said, "an' I want to get out o' this. I've had enough of it, ever since—since——"

"Since the explosion three months ago," prompted Sharpe, "when you and four others were entombed—eh?"

The man's eyes opened.

"Of course, mate—that's right!" he agreed. "Phil Jones, Beckett, Tom Hudson, Stevens, an' me—we were workin' higher up when it happened. T'other four—poor chaps!—were buried under tons o' stuff, but I was dug out by a miracle!"

"You were what?"

"Dug out, mate," repeated the old fellow. "I wasn't hurt, an' they heard me rappin' with my pick on the gallery wall."

Sharpe leaned forward quickly.

"Who heard you? Who liberated you?" he asked tensely. "Not Sir William Garvey's men, for you were given up as dead by them. The place was flooded yonder, and they couldn't reach you."

"Garvey's? No; they didn't do it. It was—— Hark ye! There they go!"

Jackson paused, holding up his hand. Seemingly far away, and muffled by the distance, a faint noise sounded—the regular thud of pickaxes at work.

"That's them! They'll dig us out now, if we keep rappin' to let 'em know——"

"Stay a moment!" Sharpe cut in. "Who are they?"

"Why, Henderson's gang!" replied Davy, doubtless thinking his interrogator very stupid. "They're not so far off as ye imagine, mate. Ye're new to the pits, I reckon—eh?—or ye'd know that!"

"Henderson's gang!" Anthony Sharpe's lips tightened as he pondered over the importance of those two words. At last he believed he had struck the solution to this queer affair—the "motive" he was so badly in need of. His fingers closed round Daft Davy's wrist.

"Wait!" he said. "There may be a shorter way out. Come back with us along the passage!"

"But 'tis blocked both ends!" the old fellow objected. "I heard the second fall just after the first!"

"Quite so; but it wasn't so heavy," replied Sharpe. "It may not have completely filled the place. Come along—quickly!"

At all costs the detective was anxious to avoid a chance meeting with those who were busily at work in the vicinity; nor did he wish to signal to them, and let them

(*Continued on page 26.*)

bizney. Seems he hadn't forgotten it at all. Marvellous memory some chaps have!"

"Then Levison's going in for it all the same?" asked Manners.

"Just that."

"But didn't he leave his essay here, when he went?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes; but that's nothin' to a fellow with a tremendous intellect like Levison's. It seems that what he had written out was only part of the first draft of the giddy essay, and he had it all in his brain-box. He's written out the whole thing at Greyfriars, getting terrific volumes out of the library there to look out authorities, and so on—awfully energetic chap, you know. As he's too far away to look in on Mr. Lathom, he sent it to me by post to hand in for him."

"Good!" said Tom. "I hope he'll have luck."

"Yes; I fancy he will walk off with the tennis-racket—or is it a cricket-bat? Yes; a cricket-bat! I was goin' to Mr. Lathom's study with the jolly old paper in my pocket, when I was drawn in here by the fascinatin' attraction of your company, and forgot all about it. Lucky Clive came along, wasn't it?"

"Ass!"

Meanwhile, Sidney Clive was losing no time in delivering the goods in Mr. Lathom's study. As he came up the passage with the manuscript in his hand, he passed Baggy Trimble, and that fat youth looked at him with a fat grin.

"No chance for you, old scout!" he said loftily.

Clive smiled, and passed on. He was not in the competition himself, but Baggy, seeing the paper in his hand, naturally supposed that it was Clive's. The South African junior did not trouble to explain. Had he done so, Baggy's anticipations of the morrow would not, perhaps, have been quite so bright. As it was, Baggy Trimble rolled away in a very satisfied mood.

Clive tapped at Mr. Lathom's door and entered. The Fourth Form master was perusing Baggy's essay in great astonishment; but he looked up from it to give Clive a smile and a nod.

"Lay your paper on the table, Clive," he said.

"I ought to explain, sir," said Clive. "This isn't my paper—it's Levison's."

"Levison! Is he not still absent from the school?"

"Yes, sir; but he's finished his paper, and sent it to us by post, and asked us to hand it in for him. No objection to that, sir?"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Lathom, smiling genially. "I am very glad indeed that Levison has not forgotten the matter, and that he has taken this trouble. I expect quite a good paper from Levison. It will be judged with the rest."

Clive added the paper to the pile on the table, and left the study. Mr. Lathom, having finished Baggy's paper, picked up Levison's, being really interested to see it, Levison of the Fourth being one of his keenest and most promising pupils.

As he looked at Levison's paper, Mr. Lathom gave quite a jump.

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Lathom took off his glasses, wiped them, and put them on again, and then read Levison's paper once more.

The expression on his face was extraordinary.

He picked up Baggy's paper and compared the two. Levison's paper was longer than Baggy's; but in the middle of Levison's essay there was Baggy's paper, word for word!

There it was—quotations from Johnson, Macaulay, and Voltaire—all complete!

No wonder the Fourth Form master was astonished.

Such a similarity was amazing—astounding. It was not only that the idea was the same; but the very words were the same. Mr. Lathom's first feeling was simply wonder. But, unsuspicious old gentleman as he was—his next feeling was suspicion. A frown came over his usually placid brow.

There was a tap at the door, and Julian of the Fourth came in with a paper in his hand. Mr. Lathom motioned to him to add it to the pile.

"Julian," he said, "will you kindly find Clive and send him here at once."

"Certainly, sir!"

Julian departed, and in a few minutes Sidney Clive entered the study, looking rather surprised.

"I understand that you received this paper from Levison by post, Clive?" asked Mr. Lathom.

"Yes, sir, this afternoon. It came to Cardew."

"Have you shown it to anyone since it came?"

"No, sir. Cardew had it in an inside pocket."

"You are sure that Cardew did not show it to anyone?"

"I'm pretty sure not, sir," said Clive in astonishment. "He had it in his pocket, and had forgotten about it."

"Are you aware whether Levison commenced his essay before leaving St. Jim's to go to Greyfriars?"

"Oh, yes, sir. He had most of it done, and he left the paper in the study when he went."

"Ah, I think I see!" said Mr. Lathom grimly. "What has become of the paper that Levison left in your study, Clive?"

"I don't know, sir. We can't find it."

"It has been lost, then?"

"Well, Cardew put it somewhere, sir," said Clive. "Manners of the Shell wanted to see it, so we looked for it, but couldn't find it. I suppose it must have got destroyed somehow."

"It was not taken from the study?"

"I—I suppose it might have been, sir, if anybody wanted to take it," said Clive. "I never thought of that."

"The paper did not contain the finished essay?"

"No, sir. Levison had done about half of it, I think, when that trouble happened about his minor, and he left it unfinished."

"I quite understand," said Mr. Lathom. "Thank you, Clive, you may go."

And Sidney Clive went in a state of wonder. Mr. Lathom transferred his attention to the two essays, and the expression on his usually kind face was of the grimmest.

Clive returned to the Shell passage to look for Cardew. He found him in Tom Merry's study.

"Something's up about those blessed essays," he remarked. "You didn't show Levison's paper to anybody, Cardew?"

"Forgot its blessed existence," answered Cardew.

"And you haven't come across that old paper of Levison's—the rough draft he left in the study when he went?"

"No; forgot its existence, too."

"Well, Lathom seems to have an idea that somebody's bagged that old paper, and used it up for an essay," said Clive.

"Oh, great gad!"

"What a rotten trick!" said Tom Merry. "You chaps ought to have been more careful with it."

"Catch Cardew being careful with anything!" grunted Clive. "But who could have bagged it from our study?"

There was a sudden yell from Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha! Jolly old Trimble."

"Trimble!" exclaimed Clive.

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Lowther. "Don't you remember he was doing his keyhole stunts the other day when you fellows were telling us about Levison's paper. Julian caught him and slung him into the study. Ten to one Baggy bagged that paper afterwards. I wondered at that fat duffer going in for a giddy literary competition. Wasn't there something about the jolly old dramatic unities in Levison's paper?"

"Yes; something of the sort, I remember."

"So there is in Baggy's. He showed it to us and dumbfounded us!" roared Lowther. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"My only hat! The fat rotter——"

"Were there quotations in it from jolly old Dr. Johnson, and the inestimable Macaulay, and some French johnny?"

"I believe so."

"So there were in Baggy's!" chuckled Monty.

"The awful rotter!" exclaimed Clive, in great indignation. "Why, he might have bagged the prize by stealing Levison's paper if Levison hadn't sent his over by post from Greyfriars."

"That was the giddy idea, of course. Baggy's improving!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "He wanted Manners to finish the paper for him—Levison's paper all the time. No wonder. He couldn't have finished it himself!"

"I'll squash him!" shouted Clive wrathfully.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Cardew.

"Rot! I'm going to look for him and—and burst him!"

"Hold on, you ass!" Cardew caught his excited chum by the shoulder and stopped him. "It's all serene now. Lathom's got Levison's paper all right. Leave dear old Baggy in blissful ignorance till he turns up for the jolly old prize-givin' to-morrow. It will be such a pleasant surprise for him."

"Oh!" said Clive; and he grinned.

There was a roar of laughter in Tom Merry's study. The thought of Baggy Trimble attending the prize-giving on the morrow, in ignorance of the fact that Levison's paper was in Mr. Lathom's hands, made the juniors yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A fat face looked in at the study doorway.

"What's the joke, you fellows?" asked Baggy Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. roared again in great merriment. But they did not tell Baggy Trimble what the joke was. He was to learn that on the morrow.

CHAPTER 8.
Not for Trimble!

ON Saturday afternoon quite a little army of fellows marched into the Fourth Form room. Saturday afternoon was a half-holiday, for which reason Mr. Lathom had fixed that time for the prize-giving, very thoughtfully, as he did not wish it to interfere with lessons. His pupils were by no means grateful for that thoughtfulness on his part; they would have preferred the affair to take place in lesson-time. However, they could not explain that to Mr. Lathom; Form masters were not to be argued with, and had to be given their heads. So on Saturday afternoon all the juniors interested in the Shakespeare essay competition turned up in the Form-room. About a third part of the Fourth Form arrived there, and with them came three Shell fellows—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther. The Terrible Three were not concerned in the prize-giving itself, not being members of the Fourth, but they were deeply interested in Baggy Trimble.

Baggy was there, fat and self-satisfied as ever. He had not yet been able to sell the prize bat, but that was coming soon. Baggy had no doubt that Levison's essay would win the prize for him. He was still in blissful ignorance of the circumstance that Levison had sent his essay over from Greyfriars.

Study No. 6 came in together. But even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not looking confident. Since he had seen Baggy's essay, Gussy was doubtful about his own. Still, he hoped for the best.

There was a respectful silence when Mr. Lathom came in with papers in his hand.

The Fourth Form master's face was unusually grave. There were half a dozen fellows present who understood the reason.

Rather to the surprise—and much to the relief—of the assembled juniors, Mr. Lathom did not open the proceedings with a lengthy dissertation on William Shakespeare. He plunged into business at once.

He stated that twelve papers had been handed in, each of which had been examined carefully by himself. All of them showed merit. Four of them great merit. There were two, however, that were specially good, but after due consideration he had decided that he must give second place to Kerr's paper, meritorious as it was. Kerr of the New House made a slight grimace. Then he smiled. It was something to have attained second place.

Baggy Trimble grinned expansively.

He had no doubt as to whom first place had been awarded—and the prize cricket bat.

"The prize," went on Mr. Lathom, "will be awarded to a member of the Fourth Form who is, at the present moment, absent from the school."

Astonished silence.

Baggy Trimble's jaw dropped.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"The name of the successful competitor is Ernest Levison."

"Hurrah!" ejaculated Cardew, who had come in with Clive to look on at the proceedings.

"Levison's essay was sent by post, and handed in by one of his friends here," said Mr. Lathom. "After due consideration, I have decided to award the prize to Ernest Levison."

"Bravo!" chirruped Clive.

Baggy Trimble blinked at Mr. Lathom dazedly. Monty Lowther winked at his chums, and Tom and Manners barely restrained a yell of laughter. The expression on Trimble's face was almost too much for them.

"Clive!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You will take charge of the prize bat, to be handed to Ernest Levison on his return to St. Jim's."

"With pleasure, sir."

"Doubtless you will also write to Levison and acquaint him with his success?" said Mr. Lathom genially.

"Yes, rather—I mean, certainly, sir!"

"Before we disperse," continued Mr. Lathom, his brow growing very grave again, "I have a few words to say."

The juniors looked restive. The Shakespeare dissertation was coming after all, and they felt that it wasn't fair. Fellows who hadn't won the prize couldn't be expected to stand it.

But Mr. Lathom did not proceed to deal with Shakespeare. He proceeded to deal with Trimble.

"Among the papers handed in," he went on, "was one signed by the name of Trimble. Trimble, stand out!"

"Now the giddy circus is going to begin!" murmured Lowther.

Trimble staggered out from his seat.

"This paper, signed by Trimble," continued Mr. Lathom, "contained a whole section from Levison's essay, word for word. It appears that Levison left a rough draft of his essay behind when he went to Greyfriars, and that the paper was lost—or purloined. I fear that it was taken by an unscrupulous boy, who copied it out in his own handwriting, to pass off as his own."

"Phew!"

"So that's that!" murmured Blake. "Trimble, of course! That accounts for the milk in the jolly old coconut."

"Yaas, wathah!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"Silence, please! Trimble!"

"Yes, sir!" gurgled the hapless purloiner.

"Did you abstract a paper from Levison's study?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"And copy it?"

"Not at all, sir!"

"And palm it off on me, Trimble, as your own work?" thundered Mr. Lathom.

"Certainly not, sir! I—I never thought of such a thing. How was I to know that that beast—I mean Levison—would send over his paper by post?" groaned Baggy. "I—I never thought of that, or I wouldn't——"

"You would not—what?"

"Nothing, sir!"

"Do you dare to say, Trimble, that this paper, written in your hand, is your own unaided work?"

"Certainly, sir! You—you don't know what a clever chap I am, sir, when—when I'm really roused!" gasped Trimble.

"Very well," said Mr. Lathom in a grinding voice. "This paper, Trimble, deals with the propriety of the three dramatic unities. You will kindly define the three unities."

"Oh!" gasped Trimble.

"I am waiting!"

Trimble's fat brow was wet with perspiration. He made a frantic effort to recall Kerr's definition of the unities. But Baggy's memory never was good, and he was too scared and confused to think clearly now.

"The—the unities, sir!" he gasped. "They are—are——"

"Well?"

"Passive in form, sir, but active in meaning!" gasped Trimble.

"Wha-a-at?"

There was a moment of dead silence in the Form-room. Then there was a terrific roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In his confusion Baggy had handed out a definition of deponent verbs. Mr. Lathom seemed scarcely able to believe his ears.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "You pretend, Trimble, to have treated of the dramatic unities in your paper, and you do not even know what they are. Of all the unheard-of impudence——"

"I—I—I mean——" gasped the unhappy Baggy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

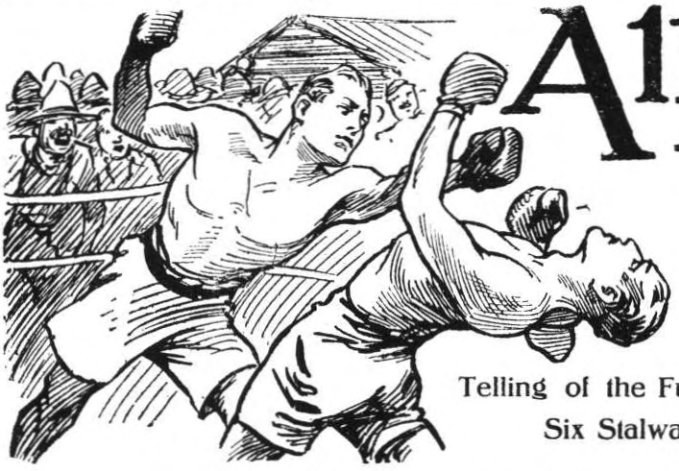
"Boys," said Mr. Lathom, "you may go! Trimble, you will remain. I shall deal with you, sir, severely for this attempted deception."

"I—I—I——"

Mr. Lathom took up his cane. What followed was painful—very painful for Baggy Trimble. Mr. Lathom felt that, on an occasion like this, it was up to him not to spare the rod, and he did not spare it. When Baggy Trimble crawled out of the Form-room, squeezing his fat hands in anguish, he was a suffering and repentant Trimble—from the very bottom of his podgy heart he repented of having "tried it on."

THE END.

A MAGNIFICENT STORY OF THE WILD WEST!



All for a Wager!

by GORDON WALLACE.

Telling of the Further Exciting Adventures of the Six Stalwart Chums of Thunder Creek.

CHAPTER 1.
Something of a Sensation!

SAM KNAPP, foreman of the bridge-construction camp up at Rolling River, grinned at Corporal Nevin, as that remarkably efficient member of the North-West Mounted Police quizzed him through the monocle he wore—quite against regulations.

"We came up here to work like the deuce," he said. "I've got to build a bridge within a given time."

"Yes," said Nevin, "I believe that's what bridge-builders have to do. But all work and no play makes Jack——"

"Makes Jack earn the dollars a day he's paid!" grunted Sam Knapp, who was a hustler from the word "Go!" "Start gettin' 'em turned into a lot of sports fans up here, and there'll be mighty little work done."

"Don't agree with you there," said Nevin promptly. "Sport's a relaxation, and the men return to their work mentally and bodily refreshed after a spell of it. Just you ask Jim Raven and his brother-Sportsmen of Thunder Creek."

"I'll admit Jim Raven and his pals are about the best workers I've got up here," said Knapp; "and I'm mighty glad to have six husky fellows like them behind me, amongst all these foreigners. Gives me a feeling of security. But give 'em a chance to have some sport, and they'll all forget at once that they're supposed to be working."

"Hear what the boss is saying about you?" Nevin called to a big, fit-looking young fellow who was just pushing a wheelbarrow-load of cement-sacks past the boss and the Mounted visitor to the camp. "He's talking about sport——"

And at that Jim Raven, who was the leader of the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek, proved how nearly right his boss was by dropping the handles of his wheelbarrow, smiling broadly, and joining them.

"Sport?" he asked eagerly. "Sport? What about it? Is there going to be any around here? Haven't put the gloves on since——"

"Get back to work!" laughed Sam Knapp. "One of these days I'll put the gloves on with you myself, and give you such a towelling as will make you wish you'd never been a sportsman!"

"But what about the sport?" asked Jim Raven. "It's about time I sent another remittance home to our godson in England."

"You mercenary blighter!" chaffed Corporal Nevin. "Always out after the cash side of it!"

"Only after the cash because we've got to educate young Syd," said Jim Raven, his face going rather graver. "Poor kid! It's up to us to see he gets the best he can have. His father's in pen for stack-burning, and——"

Knapp clapped his favourite worker on the shoulder.

"If what Nevin says is true," he remarked, "the whole bunch of you are going to have a real old tummyfull of sport soon—and my work's going to get badly into arrears. We're going to have real sports meetings at this camp regularly, for the good of the men's souls!"

"Hurrah!" shouted Jim Raven; and forthwith forgot his wheelbarrow, rushed off, and found the rest of his comrades, all hard at work at very unromantic concrete-mixing, for they were building this bridge over Rolling River of concrete buttresses and steel girders.

Smiler Dickinson brushed his cement-stained hands together when he saw his leader approaching. Smiler was looking very ghastly with the cement that coated him all over, but he seemed quite fit and happy. So did the others, who stopped working and leaned on their shovels, hoes, or whatever implements they were using.

"Gone batty, or something?" asked Digger Harrison, the Australian Sportsman. "What's annoying you, Jim?"

"Sport!" carolled Jim Raven. "Sport, here at this camp!"

"What kind?" asked the others, just as eager for relaxation as Jim was. "Tell us all about it!"

"Come along to the boss and Nevin, standing over there," said Jim. "They're talking about it now."

But before they could down tools and follow their leader, Sam Knapp and Corporal Nevin were joined by another man, a stranger at the camp.

"Land's sakes!" Knapp exclaimed, with a comical scowl at Nevin. "Didn't I say so. First sniff of sport, and the whole boiling of 'em drops work and goes off their heads! Six of 'em now, wasting the company's good time!"

"What's the sport, boss?" asked Digger Harrison quickly. "We won't go back to work till we know all about it!"

Sam Knapp picked up an axe-handle that was lying near, and made a few passes with it at the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek. They all dodged his facetious attempts to beat them. And the stranger who had joined Knapp also stepped back, shaking his head and smiling quietly.

"Oh, all right, then!" sighed Knapp. "Got to tell you, I suppose. But Nevin ought to have waited till quitting time before he set the sports bug moving in this camp. Tell 'em, Nevin."

"There's the son of the biggest-noise man in this construction company," Nevin told his friends the Sportsmen, "who's got his father to allow sports to be held up here at this camp. Old Grogan's the works up here, as you know. It's his company, practically. And young Grogan is sports mad, like you are. See? So the old man's decided to encourage sport of all sorts up here, as a means of keeping the men occupied and happy. He's offering substantial money prizes for events. A hundred dollars for the man who can fight his way with the gloves through a whole tournament. Best swimmer in the camp to get another hundred bucks, and so on. Thought you'd be interested to know all this, as you're such sports fans."

"Guess," said the stranger, interrupting, and smiling frankly at the group of Sportsmen, "I'll go in for some of those prizes! I mean, I shall if I can get a job here."

The Sportsmen eyed the stranger over. They saw a tall, athletic young man, with a not unlikable face. He seemed very compact in his figure, and looked about as fit as any man could need to be. He had ruggedness about his face that spoke of considerable strength of character. The Sportsmen unanimously decided that they liked him at first sight.

"What's your name?" barked Knapp, using the tone he always used when addressing strange railroad "stiffs."

"Banks," said the stranger. "I'm looking for a job at any sort of work. Want me?"

"Sure," said Knapp. "All the 'white' men I can get. Haven't got too many English-speaking fellows in the gang. Start right now."

Banks had brought with him the railroader's "turkey." This he picked up and slung over his shoulder. He moved away; but Jim Raven, watching him, was sure he saw Banks and Corporal Nevin exchange the slightest possible sort of wink. Indeed, Nevin's eyelid barely fluttered, and only the slightest crinkling of his short-clipped moustache disturbed the usual placidity of his countenance.

Banks strolled off to the timekeeper's office-shack. Knapp turned to the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek.

"Taking a day off?" he demanded pointedly. "Or might we have the pleasure of seeing you fellows return to work shortly?"

"Right-ho, boss!" said Jim. "Just got a word to say to the corporal, and then we'll mosey along to the unending grind."

Sam Knapp moved away, grumbling to himself, and leaving the six Sportsmen and Corporal Nevin alone.

CHAPTER 2.
A Lunch-Hour Scrap!

"WHAT was the wink for?" asked Jim Raven of Nevin. "I saw it."

"You ought to consult an occulist," said Nevin dryly. "Why should I wink at every new railroad stiff that floats on to the landscape, you sports-mad beggar?"

"Huh!" growled Jim. "Just the same, you two aren't complete strangers. Now, let's have some more news about this sports business that the big white chief's starting up here. What's the notion?"

"Just what I told you," said Nevin. "I've just told you something that'll give you all the chance to earn money for young Syd's keep. There are substantial prizes offered for the winners of the various events. Old Grogan's a pretty good sport himself, while his son——"

He broke off. Just then Banks drifted past again, a long-handled shovel on his shoulder. He nodded cheerfully to the assembled Sportsmen, then went on to a ganger to report for duty.

"And if you want to know why I winked at Banks," said Nevin, "I don't mind telling you that I know the chap; and he's as tough a customer as you fellows could want to meet. He's no slouch with a pair of gloves on. He can wrestle, swim, run, jump, and do everything a sports fan could want to see a man do. Get me?"

"Oho!" said Jim Raven, and glanced after Banks with interest. "Good sort of chap to meet. Must cultivate his acquaintance. My boxing has been getting rusty ever since coming up here."

"So's my wrestling," said Sandy Graham, the Scottish sportsman.

"Guess," put in Pete Craddock, "if he's any good at riding or driving a horse, I'd also like to meet him."

Each of these sportsmen was a specialist in at least one particular line of sport. They were all good at all sports, but each had one branch that he was extra keen on—boxing being Jim Raven's, as an example.

"But, at the same time," said Jim, "we mustn't forget that we're out to make a bit, if we can, to pay Syd's school fees and keep him at home. Professionalism in sport's not my idea of sport, but we aren't the regular sort of professionals. I'll welcome some of those hundred-dollar prizes that old man Grogan's offering."

"If you don't go back to work soon," Nevin warned them, "you'll never have the chance to compete for them, as Knapp'll fire you all out of his gang as a crowd of lazy loafers. Get!"

They drifted back to their work; and they worked all the better the rest of that forenoon, for they had something interesting to think about, and, though they talked together, they worked hard, and did not call down the anger of their ganger. They fairly made the cement, sand, and broken rock fly until the gong outside the cookhouse summoned them in to their dinner.

Jim Raven found himself, in the dining-camp, seated next to the newcomer, Banks, and was not a little interested in the man. For, unlike the majority of railroad stiffs, the new man Banks semed to have quite dainty table manners. He did not eat with his knife, or pick his teeth with his fork. He passed dishes to those who asked for them without grumbling about it. And he and Jim found themselves talking together like old pals before the meal was half-way over. Boxing, too, was the subject of their conversation.

But it is contrary to all rules and regulations to sit at table in any of those Western Canadian industrial camps, talking when the meal is finished. Jim knew this. "Eat and get out!" is the motto—a pretty good one, perhaps, because the cook and his staff are very hard-worked men, and they like those who eat their grub and get out of the way as soon as possible.

But so interested did Jim Raven and Banks get in a discussion of a fight that had taken place down in Edmonton some months ago, that neither noticed they were the very last to be sitting there at the table when the meal was finished.

"Slug Daly fouled half-way through the fourth round," said Banks heatedly. "Darn it, man, I was there, and saw the fight. Why, the referee—— Ouch!"

There was a resounding thwack, and Gustave Lamont, the French-Canadian half-breed cook seized the talkative Banks by the shirt-collar and gave him a tug that fetched him out of his seat and made him strike the floor heavily. Banks came to his feet in a hurry, rubbing his shoulder, which had suffered severely from the copper-stick the cook held in his hand.

Now, be it known that a man, before he can hold his job as a cook to over a hundred railroad stiffs, must be something of a scrapper as well as a culinary artist. Gustave Lamont was a big, broad-shouldered fellow, more white than red. He had rather a brutal face, which had been knocked about a bit in his time, and he seemed to have some courage—or else he was a mighty bluffer. Jim and the other Sportsmen, since coming up here, had never clashed with him, for, as a rule, they had had nothing to do with him; had never been the object of his wrath. They—the Sportsmen—had seen Gustave use that copper-stick before, and had seen Gustave back up his blow with another from his great fist, sending many a stiff half unconscious to the floor. Indeed, Gustave was something of a terror in the camp, but, as Knapp said, a "darned good cook."

"I say zat no man shall sit 'ere and talk when my cookees want to clear ze table and wash ze deeshes!" shouted Gustave, eyeing the newcomer fiercely. "Allez! Beat it! Scoot!" And he raised his copper-stick menacingly again as he spoke.

"Well," said Banks, carefully peeling off his coat, "I want to tell you that you can't start enforcing your rules with a stick if I'm about. Get me?"

Gustave swiped at him again with the copper-stick. Jim, seeing the gleam in Banks' eyes, stood back, anticipating something interesting. Gustave stared for a moment at the white man's preparations.

"Begar!" the cook shouted warningly. "I want to tell you zat I am one big-noise scrapper. I beat up all ze men who dare look at me in my cookhouse! Yes!"

"Prove it!" said Banks quietly, and, with a quick movement of the hand, got possession of Gustave's copper-stick. He snapped the stout thing across his knee with the ease of a child breaking a match-stick, and tossed the ends away from him. Jim Raven whistled his admiration of the newcomer, knowing the strength that had been necessary to perform that feat.

"Prenez garde—take care!" shouted Gustave, his face going savage in his rage. For he was part Indian, and the rest of him was Canadian-French. That meant that the man was possessed of fierce, almost murderous passions when aroused. His eyes were pools of living fire as, for a moment, he stared at the cool-faced Banks.

Four of Gustave's cookees came into the dining-room, and stood there watching the scene with boyish delight. There were two English boys amongst those four. And what British boy does not like to see a scrap at any time?

"I'll take care all right," said Banks, and struck.

Jim Raven, a boxer himself to the finger-tips, almost cheered as he saw the perfect manner in which Banks lunged for Gustave's face. And the new railroad stiff's fist took Gustave a heavy blow on the chin that sounded almost like a pistol-shot.

Gustave staggered back against a table, with a sound that was half a cry and half a grunt. But he had not won his reputation as a terror easily. He was not shaken or particularly disturbed by the blow. He was quick to retaliate, and sailed in with both fists working like piston-rods.

Three, four times he struck at Banks, taking one of Banks' left-handers in the face as he did so; and the fourth jab caught the newcomer on the right cheek-bone, fetching blood, and making

THE "WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS" FOOTBALL COMPETITION RESULT!

In this competition three competitors sent in correct solutions. The first prize of £5 has therefore been divided among the following:

LEONARD GRAYSON, Coal Aston, Sheffield.
MARY H. WILLIAMS, 43, Glanmor Road, Llanelly, S. Wales.
TEDDY OGDEN, 41, Nugget Street, Oldham.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following fifteen competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

S. Moorhouse, 41, Nugget Street, Oldham; K. Coverer, 41, Nugget Street, Oldham; E. Carpenter, 1, Dene Street Gardens, Dorking; A. Burrows, 2, Broadheath Terrace, Ditton, Widnes; James Williams, 31, Marine Street, Llanelly, S. Wales; W. E. Way, 19, Elmhurst Road, Gosport; Thomas Williams, 43, Glanmor Road, Llanelly, S. Wales; Mrs. A. T. Cole, Thorpe Morceux, Bury St. Edmunds; Frances Morton, 7, Eyre Street, Pallion, Sunderland; C. Veale, 37, Whittington Street, Plymouth; B. Ashworth, 756, Oldham Road, Failsworth, Manchester; John Miller, 108, King Street, Stretford, Manchester; N. Cross, 141, Moorhey Street, Oldham; L. Bachelor, 19, Kettering Road, Levenshulme, Manchester; H. H. Mattick, Church Hill, Writhlington, Somerset.

Twenty-nine competitors, with two errors each, divide the ten prizes of 5s. each. The names and addresses of these prize-winners can be obtained on application at this office.

SOLUTION.

Wolverhampton Wanderers rank as one of the noted clubs in football history. Their connection with the First Division lasted for a long time, and they have twice won the English Cup. Since 1908 the Wanderers have not been lucky enough to get higher than the Second League.

Gustave yell out aloud in his delight. That yell was cut short as Banks landed the half-breed a flush hit on the jaw that felled him.

The watching cookees yelled aloud in delight; for some of them had felt the weight of Gustave's copper-stick before now. The yell spurred Gustave on to fresh and fiercer efforts. These two went at it hammer and tongs for five minutes, without rest. But at length, Banks got his man fairly with a beautiful upper-cut under the chin that fetched a shout of admiration from Jim Raven as well; and it had to be some good boxing that drew forth comment from a boxer like Jim Raven.

Gustave seemed to go flaccid all at once. He rolled under the table and lay there, gasping, twitching, but quite unable to get up or move. Banks, with a growl of self-satisfaction, stooped, grabbed the cook by the ankles, and dragged him out. He told one of the delighted cookees to fetch a pail of water. And when this was fetched, Banks deliberately douched his antagonist with the liquid, making Gustave gasp more, but fetching him round very thoroughly, if the water did make a dreadful mess of the dining-camp floor.

"You lick me?" asked Gustave, rather uncertainly. "Me, the bes' cook in the Nort'-West, and one awful scrapper?"

"Seems so," grinned Banks cheerfully. "Hope I didn't put it across you too severely, cook. But I don't like being hit with copper-sticks—not even by the best cook between here and Halifax."

"There weel not be room in dis camp now for you an' me," said Gustave. He nursed his jaw as he spoke.

"There ought to be," remarked Banks. "Anyway, I've got no intention of moving. I seem to see a bit of fun here soon."

And he went out, followed by Jim.

"You're some boxer, aren't you?" Jim asked. "Care to put the gloves on sometimes? We've got some gloves here, and we could rig up a ring. I'd love to put it across you."

Banks laughed.

"Not half so much as I'd like to lay it about you," he said. "I've heard something about you as a boxer—what you did once down at Red Wheat City. Yes, I'll box you as soon as you like."

And then Jim remembered that there were money prizes drifting about, waiting to be won. And he wanted money to send home to his mother, who was looking after young Syd Patterson, his and his brother-Sportsmen's "godson."

"Why not let us be the first to start fighting for Old Man Grogan's hundred dollars?" he suggested. "I expect there'll be others in the camp waiting to try for that. But—well, I don't think I'm at all afraid of anybody else. You'd give me a pretty good mill, though. I'd love to knock your block off!"

"We'll fix it up whenever you like," said Banks, with a happy laugh. "Say you and the other Sportsmen. I'd like to know you all better. But I don't mind telling you that I've also got a big motive in wanting to shine out at all the sports there are at this camp. If I don't make sixty per cent of wins, I'm due to lose——"

Then he broke off, and, smiling softly to himself, left Jim.

Jim returned to his fellow-Sportsmen in the bunk-house, and there described Banks' fight with Gustave. He also said, with glee, that he had arranged to meet the victor of that fight with the gloves on.

"Well, you'll beat him!" said Smiler Dickinson warmly. "Hope it comes off soon, because it's about time we sent some cash along to Syd."

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CHAPTER 3.
Treachery—Well Won!

CORPORAL NEVIN seemed to take a very active part in the organisation of the new sports they were going to have up there at Sam Knapp's camp at Rolling River. The Sportsmen of Thunder Creek were not particularly surprised at this, knowing what a dead-game sport the Mounted man was himself. But all the time he worked and arranged things Nevin had a slight, inscrutable smile on his face, which, despite the frequent questions of Jim Raven, he would not explain.

The time was summer now for the Sportsmen, and that meant that the evenings were nice and long. Knapp did not believe in making his men work overtime. He always said that ten hours a day were enough for any man—in which the Sportsmen agreed that he was quite right. And so, after six o'clock in the evening, there were always four hours of sufficient daylight to indulge in whatever occupations the men liked. Once the sports notion got going in the camp most of the stiffs took it up with enthusiasm.

But there were very few outside the English-speaking men who cared anything much about boxing, and there were not many English-speaking people working under Knapp besides the Sportsmen.

Corporal Nevin, whose duty just about that time kept him working within reachable distance of the Rolling River Bridge Camp, organised the sports very well indeed. The boxing event was the first thing that he concentrated on, and one Saturday evening the first rounds of the tournament were fought out.

Nevin resolutely refused to let Banks and Jim meet in the first round.

"Why," he said, "you'd smash yourselves up so badly that anybody could lick you afterwards! No, boys, I know a bit about the boxing of you both, and you'll both get into the final, if you're lucky. Then you can decide which of you are going to win that hundred dollars!"

That was said chaffingly, of course. He showed that he was quite a sportsman, however, when he had a draw for the first round. And the man Jim first met was more ambitious than skilful. Jim knocked him out in the first round; Banks had as easy a time with his man.

So it happened in the second round, the third, and the semi-finals. Never

There was a resounding thwack as the copper-stick came down. Then Gustave Lamont, the French-Canadian half-breed cook, seized the talkative Banks by the shirt-collar and gave him a tug that fetched him out of his seat and made him strike the floor heavily. "Now allez! Beat it! Scoot!" he cried.

did those two splendid boxers draw to meet each other.

After an easy run through the rounds, these two knew they would have to meet in the final bout. Which was what both Jim and Banks had wanted, and they both looked forward to their match with eager anticipation. For real, true sportsmen like nothing better than to meet foemen worthy of their steel.

Of course, all the earlier rounds were not fought out in one evening. Three nights were taken altogether, and it was on Thursday that Banks and Jim were fated to meet.

But on the night before this anticipated match there was an incident that all but left this championship unsettled.

That evening Banks had drawn to box Gustave, the French-Canadian half-breed cook. Banks had accounted for Gustave more easily even than in his bare-fist fight, and Gustave had gone away rankling under his double defeat, also with ideas of winning the hundred dollars pretty well squashed. They had heard him muttering threats against the fellow he could not lick, with gloves or without, but everybody had just put that down to the mixed blood that was in him.

But there evidently was something more than talk in Gustave's threats, as was proved late that same night.

Jim Raven was returning to his bunkhouse from the stables, where his and his comrades' horses were stalled. Without their hardy half-bred bronchos these Sportsmen of Thunder Creek could never have been as happy as they were, even though the feeding of them made an ugly hole in the wages they made at this labouring job they had secured for the summer. They took it in turns to water, feed, and litter down these six horses, and it happened to be Jim's turn this night.

He had to cross by the cookhouse to get from the stable to the chum's sleeping quarters. By the woodpile he met Banks, who greeted him cheerfully.

"Just been in to offer to shake hands with Gustave," said Banks. "He's a surly sort of sportsman, that man! Won't shake at all, but threatens he'll get even somehow! Says I'm not going to win the tournament, anyway!"

"Nice of him! Then he wants me to win, does he?" said Jim, with a shrug and a laugh. "Turning in now?"

"No," said Banks. "I've got to get on to the bridge. I left my coat there this evening, I remember, and—well, everybody in the camp can't be as honest as you, for instance. So-long!" And he turned away with an airy wave of the hand.

Jim was proceeding to his bunkhouse when he was stopped by the entirely unexpected sight of a man who came out of the cookhouse. That would have been nothing extraordinary in itself, but this man—and he was Gustave, Jim saw—dodged back into the doorway as soon as he saw Jim standing there by the woodpile.

Jim perhaps thought nothing of that, either. He went on towards the building where he and the other "white" men slept. Just as he was pushing open the door he turned his head, and saw that same shadowy shape moving towards where they were building the bridge.

There was a slice of moon showing in the sky now, and the light from this suddenly glinted on something that the shadowy shape there was holding in his hand.

At once Jim named that something as a naked knife, and his interest was aroused. He watched Gustave creep along towards the scene of the bridge-building. Then—he never accounted for the impulse that prompted him—he followed Gustave, also keeping out of the man's sight, and treading carefully as he went.

The bridge-construction job at Rolling River had got so far now that there had been thrown across the wide and swiftly-flowing stream a temporary bridge of timber, piles, and stringers, to enable the concrete gangs to build their buttresses in midstream, preparatory to laying the mighty steel girders along it later.

To get along this network of timbers at night was a somewhat risky business. The sleepers that were laid across the

stringers were very irregularly spaced. One had to step very carefully even in the daytime. A misstep meant a clear drop through into the waters that frothed against the piles, fifty feet below.

It was on this bridge, then, that Banks had left his coat; and it was on to the bridge that Gustave, knife in hand, followed Banks as that sportsman stepped on to the precarious footing.

Not until both men were on the bridge did Jim Raven really believe what was working in the half-breed cook's mind. But now Jim was almost sure that Gustave meant to inflict some grievous bodily harm on the man who had beaten him twice at the fist-fighting game.

But Jim did not shout out to warn Banks. For one thing, Jim was not yet quite sure that Gustave was meditating murder. Jim was shy about making scenes any more than necessary. Therefore, he kept quiet and just followed Gustave.

There was a little shed erected on the bridge, which sheltered a concrete-mixing machine. It was near this shed that Banks stopped and began to look down for his coat. He did not seem able to find it at once. And, as he stooped, Gustave crept up close behind him.

Then it was that Jim, only a few paces behind him, gave a shout. But almost at the same moment Gustave reached out and touched Banks on the back.

Banks straightened up immediately and turned, to see the savage-faced half-breed facing him, knife in hand, and the point of the knife was pressed against Banks' body in a very suggestive fashion.

"Jump over!" Jim distinctly heard Gustave say. "I no keel you! You keel you'self, den. Jump!"

"Darn you, Gustave—— Oh!" cried Banks, and took a backwards step as the half-breed deliberately gave his knife a forward movement and actually pricked his skin with it.

What followed then was almost too quick for Jim to follow with his eyes.

But his subconscious mind worked more swiftly than did his eyes. He certainly saw Banks take another backward step and tread on nothing as he stepped off the unguarded edge of the bridge. He saw Banks' arms shoot upwards; then the man disappeared.

At once Jim dashed forward, taking the sleepers of the bridge in great, reckless strides. Gustave turned to meet him, snarled, and slashed at him with the knife. The blow ripped Jim's shirtsleeve, but inflicted no further damage. At the same time Jim struck—just one blow that had all his strength behind it, and Gustave, with a scream, stepped backwards, then fell.

Jim paid him no more attention, but looked downwards—shudderingly, certainly, for it seemed as though only death could have resulted in that misstep of Banks. Then he gave a yell of delight, for he saw two sets of fingers frenziedly gripping the rough edge of a timber, and, kneeling down, could see the crown of Banks' head immediately below him. As he looked, Banks turned upwards a white, scared face.

"Give a hand!" he panted. "I'm just about done!"

Jim bent down and grasped Banks' wrists. He was a powerful youngster was Jim; but Banks was no feather-weight, and there began a struggle that fetched the veins out thick on Jim Raven's neck, that made the muscles of his arms and shoulders crack.

But once he had got a hold of Banks' wrists, that resolute young fellow, the leader of the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek, knew inwardly that he would not let go until Banks' weight dragged him over the edge. He had to lie down to get a better purchase on his new friend and boxing rival. But gradually he worked his hands lower down Banks' upheld arms, until he was grasping his elbows, and Banks was able to grasp his.

"Now for it!" gasped Jim, the sweat rolling down his face and falling on Banks'. "One more heave!"

It was a mighty output of effort. No man really knows how strong he is until he is put to the test. But he succeeded in drawing Banks so high that he was able to get a fresh grip with arms and hands on a sleeper. Quickly Jim shifted his hold and seized the man's belt. Another heave, and Banks was safe on the bridge, gasping and sobbing, while Jim, his heart beating till it was well-nigh bursting, lay beside him; nor did either think about the author of the trouble—Gustave—who was just then in a position almost as grave as Banks' had been. For Gustave, in falling beneath Jim's swift and angry blow, had dropped through, head-first, between two sleepers, and—with more luck than he deserved to have—had caught a sleeper with crooked legs. He was now hanging downwards from the legs like an acrobat from a trapeze. He was howling scaredly, was gripping the timber convulsively with his legs, and there was nothing to save him from a fifty-foot drop, for he could not hang on there for ever.

"Best give him a hand!" said Jim, bracing himself up again with an effort.

Banks rose to the occasion. Really, it was rather a noble thing Banks did when he helped to save the man who had tried to kill him. These two enthusiastic young boxers seized a leg apiece of Gustave's, and, very ungently, jerked him back to safety. Blubbering, Gustave lay there. They left him, and returned to the camp. There Banks held out a hand to Jim.

"I'm going to scratch that final in your favour, so you can win the hundred dollars," he said simply, huskily.

"Oh, are you!" said Jim. "But you aren't! Think you're doing me a good turn, don't you? But you'll be doing a dashed bad one if you deprive me of that fight. And, also, old chap, don't you try to fight wildly, so I can win. If you don't give me a tip-top fight, I'll give you a jolly good hiding!"

Banks laughed a little, and he blinked his eyes.

"All right," he said, "to oblige you, and to reward you for saving my life, I'll knock your block off to-morrow night, and I hope you'll enjoy the process."

The fight came off all right the following night. Everybody who had watched the preliminary bouts was present—save Gustave. That cook had rather left Sam Knapp "in the cart" by leaving camp that same night. Probably he was afraid he would be arrested if he stayed.

And it was such a fight as the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek seldom were permitted to watch. They had seen their leader engaged in some hefty scraps in their time. But certainly Banks put up as hearty a fight as any man Jim had ever met.

It lasted eight rounds. The first seven of those eight were just keen, concentrated fighting, without any sort of attempt to go slow. But the eighth round was distinctly the best, though the shortest.

By this time both fighters had been well blooded; both had forgotten that they were pals, that there was a hundred-dollar stake on it. Each was out to win by sheer merit, and they were about

As Banks, balancing himself on the timbers, turned round, he saw the savage-faced half-breed facing him, knife in hand, the point of which was pressed against his body in a suggestive fashion. "Jump over!" Gustave ordered. The knife pricked Banks, and he took a backward step to avoid it.

equal in height, weight, fitness, and skill.

At the call of "Time!" Banks rushed in and delivered a couple of short arm jabs at Jim's body that made Jim gasp. But Jim managed to beat him off from this infighting game, and as he thrust Banks away from him, he brought up a swinging, full-arm upper-cut that caught Banks terribly under the ear, distinctly shaking him, but not in any way causing him to get excited. Jim followed this up with a thudding blow right on the solar plexus, that made Banks gasp, and at length got one on Banks' ear that sent him to the ground with a dull thud. Jim stood back, waiting for him to regain his feet. Looking considerably the worse for wear, Banks managed to come up again.

"If I quit now," he croaked, "you'll think I'm giving you the fight, so I won't quit!"

He summed up some energy, and administered a blow at Jim's face that sent Jim reeling against the ropes. He followed that up, but Jim evaded his next blow, and landed one instead on Banks' sorely-tried jaw. It was a perfect blow. It sent Banks' head up with a jerk, made his knees crumple, and, eyes turned upwards, Jim's adversary rolled to the grass, where Corporal Nevin had to count him out—regretfully, perhaps, for Nevin always thought it was a pity both of two game sportsmen cannot win.

And so Jim won another hundred dollars towards the upkeep of young Syd Patterson, in England, and, for the time being the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek were relieved of their financial worries.

The following morning Banks stayed in bed, and that was only natural, as all the camp agreed. Before the rest of the men went out to their work Banks sent for Jim, said he wanted to speak to him in private. Banks' face was rather battered about—as was Jim's; but the game young sportsman smiled wryly as Jim entered the bunkhouse

"Guess I sha'n't meet you again, as you're the boxer of this lay-out," he said. "But I dare say I'll meet the rest of you Sportsmen in something or other."

"Hope I didn't hurt you too badly," said Jim anxiously.

"Oh, I'm talking sanely enough! Thought you'd be interested to know something about me," said Banks. "You won't tell your pals, I know, if I ask you not to. But the truth is, I'm up here for a bet. I know it was a silly bet, but it holds. I wagered young Grogan, son of old man Grogan, whose outfit this really is, that I could come up to any railroad camp, earn my own living, and, furthermore, make sixty per cent of wins at any sort of sport that might be going. I used to think I was some sportsman down in Toronto, and young Grogan, who's a wealthy beast, wagered that I'd meet men up here in his father's camps who could teach me just what sport was. You're the first to show he was nearly right. But there are other kinds of sport still. Old Grogan, a sportsman also, put up the prizes. Nevin knows all about it. In fact, it was Nevin who suggested that I should come up to this particular camp, to get all the sport I wanted."

"That being because Nevin knew we were here," said Jim, "wanting money for a special purpose. I see why you two winked at each other now. Well, it's a funny notion you've got; but I hope you keep it going, because the Sportsmen of Thunder Creek need all the money they can get hold of."

"You wait till I send out a swimming challenge!" said Banks, his eyes gleaming.

"You'll find O'Hara, one of us, will be ready to meet you," answered Jim, with a grin. "We've got a specialist in almost every line of sport you can think of. You took on a big thing, old chap, when you put yourself up against us. But I'm glad you've come. I think we're going to have some interests here besides work."

He went off to that same work a few moments later. An hour of shovelling, and he decided that he liked sport much better.

THE END.

(Another splendid Tu Sin story next week, boys, entitled: "ORDERED OFF!" By Capt. Malcolm Arnold. Next week's number of the GEM will be a real ripper, so make sure of your copy by ordering early.)

LOOK OUT FOR THE OPENING INSTALMENT OF "THE SPIDER OF THE NORTH!"

The Wolves of St Beowulf's!

A Story of Thrills and Breathless Situations on Land and Sea.

BY

DUNCAN STORM.

Wobby & Co. are the pluckiest and liveliest boys you ever met, and their adventures are amazing.

Introduction.

Jack Wabbygong, James Ready, Sweet, and a Chinee named Lung, chums together in the great school of St. Beowulf's, together with Viscount Waffington, a relation of the Countess of Castlewood, are instrumental in bringing about the capture of a gang of international burglars.

John Lincoln, one of the governors, takes an interest in the lads, and arranges to take them on a world tour.

The great day comes, and aboard the Pole Star the happy party set off on their great adventure.

After an exciting sea trip, the Pole Star drops anchor at San Carlo, where the boys make things so lively they have to dash back to the ship to avoid arrest. Immediately they get back they are told they are to rout out a number of pirates—a prospect they hail with joy. The journey is continued until the coast of Morocco is reached. Here the party land, and, armed to the teeth, they advance upon the stronghold of Suini Baba, the pirate chief.

They are captured, however, by a party of mounted Moors, and marched to the residence of El Took, the nigger governor of Suini Baba. Things would have gone badly for the boys, but for the sudden appearance of Nobby, whose strange antics help them in effecting their escape. They prepare a further attack, this time with the aid of some of Suini Baba's own riders, to whom the party had shown great hospitality. The rush meets with no resistance. Suini Baba, knowing his fate, leaps to his doom.

Confiscating his ill-gotten gains, the party again board the Kipper King, to turn their attentions next to Juan Pereira, a Portuguese who had portrayed Mr. Lincoln. Camouflaging the trawler, they move up the Sloogee Channel. Landing, they advance inland, where they come across a skull. It was that of a slave who had suffered at the hands of Pereira.

(Now read on.)

Ingakook, the Spy!

JOHN LINCOLN could read the traces of a sudden slave raid in these few ruins.

"Pereira shall die, the scoundrel!" he muttered.

"Shall we gather the bones, sir?" asked Stubbs.

"No, leave them there till we have done our work!" said John Lincoln. "We'll settle with Pereira first. Then we will give poor Fred Christian burial."

John Lincoln was quiet and sombre as the swift African twilight set down upon the gloomy river.

He had trusted Juan Pereira, and the man had betrayed him. Pereira had wasted his substance and had murdered his people. He had spoiled ten years of hard work, and had turned a prosperous little colony of kindly, industrious niggers into a nest of slaves, widows, and orphans.

Mr. Hobbs was out in the boat when they returned from the ship. Wobby and Stickjaw rowed him a hundred yards out in the stream, so that he might view his handiwork.

He found it good.

At this short distance the Kipper King was not to be distinguished from the bank against which she lay.

Her sides were shrouded in clumps of reed, her masts had been turned into palms, and her wheelhouse and ventilators were hidden in clumps of bushes and mimosa.

When she came away from the bank she would be indistinguishable from the masses of floating vegetation which the rains had brought away from the banks.

"Now I think we can get on the move, sir," said Mr. Hobbs as the boys brought the boat alongside. "She's blotted right out, and she looks like a chunk of Kew Gardens gone adrift. Pooh! Get away, you brute! What are you blowing about here for?"

This last remark was addressed to a hippopotamus, which, with a puff and a snort, had shoved its huge nose up above the water, not far from the boat.

The hippo snorted again and submerged like a submarine.

This was another good omen in itself. It was plain from the tameness that would lead a hippo to inspect a camouflaged trawler that this branch of the Ivory River was very little frequented, and that Pereira and his gang of slavers kept to the main river in their nefarious traffics.

The boat was hoisted aboard, and in the last glimmer of the twilight, had anyone been about in the Sloogee Channel, they would have seen the strange sight of a piece of the bank breaking away and travelling up-stream against the current at a speed of seven miles per hour.

Mr. Hobbs said that he felt like a Jack in the Green as he stood in the dark wheelhouse and steered the Kipper King up-river.

It was seven o'clock as they reached the junction of the river and turned down-stream.

The air was thick and close with impending thunder and rain.

It started about ten o'clock, when the disguised trawler slowed and stopped her engines, falling in behind a floating island of about her own size, and allowing the current to drift her down the dark river.

The monkeys started howling in the woods ashore as the flashes of sheet lightning lit the forest.

Then came a blinding, roaring downpour of tropic rain, which lashed down upon the decks and sent everyone to shelter. But this stopped as quickly as it had started, as though someone had turned it off at a tap, and the two islands drifted down together on the stream, Mr. Hobbs holding his steering by an occasional kick from the propeller.

At eleven o'clock a clump of reed detached itself from the side of the Kipper King.

It was a tuft that would have aroused not the slightest notice, even had Pereira got his spies out on this part of the river.

No one could have dreamed that in it was hidden an Eskimo kayak, and that behind it were a pair of eyes which, long trained in the Arctic night, could see as well as the eyes of a cat.

Drifting down inshore, this clump was soon lost in the shadows.

It came back to the floating islands almost at midnight, and Ingakook made his report.

The Last of Pereira!

THEY were now four miles above Pereira's stronghold, half a mile below which a boom of barges and tree trunks closed the river.

The barges were crowded with armed men. Ashore, men were working by flare lamps on an oil launch, which was drawn up on the bank. She had been in collision with a snag, and they were building new plates into her with feverish haste.

"That's all right!" said Mr. Hobbs,

rubbing his hands when he heard this news. "They've burst their patrol boat, and they can't keep watch on the lower river. And, the banks being flooded, they can't keep a string of look-outs to signal a ship coming up. So they are blind below and blind above. And how do they let the snags through their barrage, Ingakook?"

Ingakook explained how he had watched the floating islands and the snags bearing down upon the barrage of boats and logs, and how men were stationed to open this boom and let them through.

Mr. Hobbs rubbed his hands again.

"Better and better still," he said. "That's where we catch them!"

Amidst rumblings of distant thunder and occasional flashes of lightning the two dark islands drifted down the river together.

The boys' hearts beat fast as they stood by their gun behind the screen of reeds.

They could see the dark mass of the first island about three hundred yards ahead of them.

Up the silent river came the tap-tap of iron against iron. They were getting near Pereira's stronghold now. It was round the next bend.

Keeping about in mid-river, the two islands glided on, the real and the false, the first a mass of tangled vegetation, and roots, inhabited by a few snakes and rats, and the second swarming with men and armed to the teeth.

Against the glimmer of the lightning they could see the high-pitched roofs of the slave-holds, where the last of John Lincoln's people were imprisoned for the night.

And from these came the sound of voices which made John Lincoln's eyes misty and steeled his heart against the scoundrel who had betrayed him and these faithful souls.

They were singing one of the old camp meeting hymns that all niggers love: "Waiting by the River," and little did they dream that deliverance from their slavery was so near.

Their hymn served a purpose—it told Mr. Hobbs where their friends were when it came to firing.

A flash showed them the mud fort which Pereira had arrogantly placed to command both reaches of the river at this bend.

Then they came in sight of the flare lamps on the shore and the great boom of barges and tree trunks that barred the river.

A warning grumble on an ombeyeh, or horn of elephants' tusks, gave the signal to the boats that two islands were bearing down on the barges, and as the first island approached the boom, there was a rattle of chains, a gate in the boom swung open, and the leading island drifted through.

They could hear chattering in Swahili and Arabic. Threats of what that crowd of ruffians in the boats were going to do with the English yacht when she came up the river. There were curses, too, for these islands which kept on coming down on the flood.

On the Kipper King there was a dead silence as she drifted slowly towards the opening. Peering through the reeds, John Lincoln saw a lamp on a big barge, which was the main key to the defence. And by the light of the lamp he saw a European, attired in white drill, who shouted orders and threats to the motley gang that thronged the boats and barges.

He was yelling that they had not left enough room for him to pass, and he cursed his followers freely, declaring that they would never get the boom together again before their enemy came up the river.

"Do you want to be eaten alive by this Lincoln!" yelled the shrill voice.

And little did Pereira dream that, behind the bushes of that supposed island, the eyes of his wronged master were upon him, sighting the rifle which had never yet failed by day or night in killing a wild beast.

Crack!

There was a spurt of flame from the reeds.

Pereira threw up his hands, stood for a moment staring at the island, then fell on his face.

A yell went up from the barges and boats, savage and wild, for suddenly, with a clanging of bells and a thumping of powerful engines, the island, yet in the gateway, started to steam in a circle heading down the river, then charging up amongst the barges.

Crash!

A yell went up as she butted into the steel sides of the barge on which the body of Pereira lay.

A sparkle of musketry broke out along the barrage of boats, and a storm of bullets swept over the hidden trawler, cutting the leaves up so that they fell in showers upon the boys.

Mr. Hobbs was where he wanted to be. He had got the boats between himself and their covering fort.

"Now let 'em have it, boys!" he cried.

The Kipper King spurted flame, and the echoes of the forest woke up in repose to the roar of gunfire.

The fort ashore woke up and started firing wildly, the shells from the guns bursting in the woods on the far side of the river or exploding with heavy thumps in the mudbanks. The Kipper King ground in amongst the steel barges and the crowded wooden boats, sinking some and battering the others to pieces.

The boys worked at their guns like madmen, sending shell after shell into the fort.

There a searchlight sprang into life.

"Good shot!" yelled Mr. Hobbs, as Wobby knocked it out in a single burst.

Crack!

"Better shot!" he cried.

There was a pillar of flame that lit all the river springing from the fort, lighting the mile-wide current blood red. Then the mud walls and ramparts seemed to leap and spread out fanwise as a tremendous explosion roared down the river.

"That's put the match into the fire-work box!" muttered Wobby.

The explosion of the fort seemed to take all the heart out of the crowd of ruffians in the boats and barges. They hastily chopped away their moorings and drifted down river, working their way towards the shore, where they could take to the woods.

But a few bargeloads kept on down the river, only to get out of the frying pan into the fire, for there sounded the yelp of the Pole Star's steam siren and the crack of a gun signalling the runaways to come alongside and surrender.

Then the engine-room called up to Mr. Hobbs through the speaking tube.

"I don't want to worry you," said the engineer, "but if you don't mind me mentioning it, there's a foot of water on the engine-room floor, and I should say, from the way it's coming in, you'd better put her on the mud with the last of 'er steam."

Mr. Hobbs nodded.

"Thought she wouldn't stand that punching, George," he replied. "Right you are! It's all over now except the cheerin'." And he steamed the Kipper King neatly on to the mud beside the half-ruined wooden wharf.

The Wolves of St. Beowulf's were first ashore. The craft had done its work and the Pole Star was here.

Away they went up the wide beaten track by the river, making their way to the slave-holds, John Lincoln and the rest close at their heels.

They burst into the slaveholds, where the song of the slaves had turned into a hymn of triumph and thanksgiving for John Lincoln's men, shut up in that pestilent den, knew that he had come as they had always said he would, to free his people from servitude.

THE END.

Crack, crack, crack! The boys worked at the gun like madmen. Suddenly there was a terrific roar, and the walls of the fort seemed to leap into the air as a terrible explosion roared down the river.

"THE HAUNTED MINE!"

(Continued from page 15.)

know that anyone was in need of assistance, until every other avenue of escape had been explored. He had his own reasons for this—and very sound reasons they were.

Dragging the reluctant Jackson with them, they retraced their steps, presently halting at the base of a big mound of debris; and here Sharpe again employed his electric-torch, shining it upwards.

The tunnel was extra lofty at this point, and the brilliant beam at once showed that Anthony Sharpe's hopes were well founded; for a gap was visible between the obstruction and the roof through which the trio could pass—that is, unless the fall was higher beyond.

"Up with you!" the detective commanded, shoving Jackson in front of him. "Now, Timothy Dennis, mind yourself, and don't shift any of those big lumps of rock, if you can avoid it!"

After some difficult scrambling, they reached the summit and slid down on the far side, where, to their great relief, they found the remainder of the gallery fairly clear.

Still keeping a grip on Daft Davy, Sharpe told him to lead the way out of the banned area, for he had himself become rather mystified with the many turnings they had taken during the pursuit.

Jackson dumbly obeyed.

Ultimately, they reached the point where the pair had parted from Garvey and his foreman, and where the tram-lines led directly to the main shaft.

"Now, my friend, you are coming along with us!" Sharpe said quietly to their prisoner. "I fancy you may have a yarn to spin in which Sir William will be vastly interested!"

CHAPTER 3.

The Secret Out!

It was in the big library at Marley Hall that the truth was revealed at last. Daft Davy, his inner man satisfied and his outward appearance greatly improved by means of a bath, showed no further hesitation about setting things right, for he was not so silly as to fail to realise that the game was up.

Briefly, the facts were as follows. When the five men were entombed, his signals had been heard by some of Henderson's workers, who managed to break through to him. Among these was an overseer, who noticed the particularly rich coal seam this part of Garvey's mine displayed, and reported same to his employer, taking Jackson with him.

Then, when Sir William was known to have closed down these treacherous galleries, the other company had seized their opportunity. The valuable seams extended well beyond the banned area, and Henderson wanted them for himself; so he had bribed Daft Davy to scare the miners working in the coveted locality, in order that he might have a clear field for his own men. Meanwhile, most of the water had been pumped out from Henderson's side, for it was easier to tackle this task there than from Garvey's.

Davy was presumed dead, so it was small wonder that his "ghost" had walked, whilst the occasional sound of picks in action also lent colour to the theory that the spirit of the five luckless fellows were striving to break free.

"So you see, Sir William," Sharpe said, as Jackson concluded his mumbling narrative, "the manifestations were merely a cloak so that this objectionable Henderson person could 'milk' your mine in safety. He likely hoped that you would close down still more galleries as he advanced, and—well, I leave you to take whatever steps you think fit. I should, however, be lenient with Davy, here," he added, in a whisper, "for the poor fellow really needs someone to look after him. He's not by any means a criminal, and may yet be quite a useful man, if he completely recovers. He showed undoubted traces of returning sanity when we were together down yonder, and a little skilled attention might make him all right. Now, Timothy Dennis, your 'dad's' finished mining, so let's be moving!"

THE END.

(Another of these thrilling Anthony Sharpe detective stories coming soon. Keep a sharp look-out for it.)

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The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

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I enter the GEM "CRICKET" COMPETITION and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

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NN

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All Attempts in this Competition should be Addressed to: The GEM, "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

This Wins Our Tuck Hamper.

A STINGER!

A gentleman purchased at a Post Office a large quantity of stamped envelopes, newspaper wrappers, and other postal requisites. Finding them somewhat difficult to carry, he asked one of the counter clerks if he could supply him with a small quantity of string. "We are not permitted by the department to supply string," was the reply. "Then give me a bit of red tape!" was the sarcastic retort. The string was supplied.—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to Miss Grace M. Denham, 55, Montgomerie Road, Southsea, Portsmouth.

MISUNDERSTOOD!

An old countrywoman wanted to go to Balham. Going up to a policeman, she asked him to direct her. "You just stay here, madam," said the kindly man in blue, "and take the first Tooting tram which comes along, and get off at Balham Station." Returning half an hour later, the policeman was surprised to find the old lady still waiting. She was very indignant with the L.C.C. system. "But there have been plenty of Tooting trams pass by," said the constable. "Not one," said the old lady. "They all had gongs or bells. Not one of 'em tooted!" —Sent in by H. H. Shepherd, 46, The Grove, Vauxhall, London, S.W. 8.

WELL CAUGHT!

The knight of the road was spending his last coppers in the bar of the Bull and Bush, when the wags of the village called on him to sing them a song. The tramp, nothing daunted, replied that for the price of a night's lodging he would sing them "The Lost Sheep's Cry on the Mountain." At last a collection was made and handed to the tramp, and everybody settled down to listen. Noisily clearing his throat, the tramp edged towards the door, and, with a loud and pitiful "Baa, ba.!" hastily made his exit.—Sent in by William Mitchell, 5, North Shore Street, Campbeltown, N.B.

A THIEF, BUT NO LIAR!

"Did you notice no suspicious character about the neighbourhood?" said the magistrate to a new policeman. "Shure, your honour," replied the keeper of the peace, "I saw a man, an' I asked him what he was doin' there at that time o' night. Says he: 'I have no business here just now, but I expect to open a jewellery store in the vicinity later on.' At that I says: 'Wish you success, sor.'" "Yes," said the magistrate, in a disgusted tone, "and he did open a jewellery store in the vicinity later on, and stole seventeen watches." "Begorra, yer honour," answered the policeman, after a pause, "the man may have been a thafe, but he was no liar!" —Sent in by George Harrison, 2, Dawson Street, Dudley Hill, Bradford.

A MATCH SAVED!

Pat found himself hard up, and without a flake of tobacco in his pouch. Suddenly he spied an old friend of his, a Scotsman, coming along the road. Pat hadn't the cheek to ask a perfect stranger for a pipeful of baccy, but a brilliant thought struck him. Approaching Sandy, he asked: "Might I trouble ye for a loan of a match?" "Ay," answered the Scotsman, and gave him one—just one. "Faith, now," cried the artful Irishman, "if I haven't come out without any baccy, and all the shops are shut." "That's rough luck," said Sandy, reaching out his hand. "In that case then ye'll no' be needing that match!"—Sent in by Leslie Goff, C2 Ward, Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton, Surrey.

Readers' Notices.

S. C. Cossick, 15, Benedict Road, Brixton, S.W. 9, wishes to hear from keen stamp collectors.

A. Maxwell, 73, Richmond Road, Cardiff, South Wales, wishes to correspond with readers in the United Kingdom.

Arthur J. Webb, Corinda Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, wishes to hear from readers willing to join his exchange club; magazine published.

K. Q. Teo, 24, Macao Street, Singapore, Straits Settlements, wishes to correspond with readers interested in stamps. All letters answered.

Miss Muriel Reeve, 49, McCaul Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wishes to hear from readers who are keen on the old stories in the companion papers.

Laurence Pitt, Scott Road, Observatory, Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers interested in soccer, cycling, rugby, cricket, and postcard collecting.

Geo. W. Peach, 32, Sneinton Boulevard, Sneinton, Nottingham, wishes to correspond with stamp collectors.

Horace H. Bray, 33, Fleet Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, wishes to correspond with readers all over the world—British Empire, China, the United States, and European countries. Scouts especially asked to write to him. All letters answered. Any subject.

Ran Puttick, 41, Ridgeway Street, Kensington, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere. All letters answered.

James Clegg, amateur journalist, wishes to become English correspondent to American, Canadian, Australian, and Indian magazines. Address 5, Brook Street, Todmorden, Yorks, England. He would be glad to hear from amateur editors. J. Clegg also asks for letters from J. P. Savidge and E. C. Ford.

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Roy Woodington, 9, Pitts Road, Headington Quarry, near Oxford, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere.

B. Palframan, Sandygate Cottage, Wath-on-Dearne, Yorkshire, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 12-15, interested in stamps, etc.

William Marriott, 16, Sherlock Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, wishes to hear from readers of the companion papers, ages 19-20. All letters answered.

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Arthur J. Webb and G. C. Wynne, Exton House, Queen Street, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, want to hear from companion paper readers interested in their new postcard and stamp collecting club. There is a fortnightly paper included.

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