

TRIMBLE TELLS THE TRUTH!

AMAZING SCHOOL STORY
INSIDE!

The GEM 2^D

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SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES



WATCHING THE RAIDERS WOLF THEIR GRUB!

An uncomfortable experience for Figgins & Co., of the New House. (See the grand yarn inside.)



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.

BOLTING!

NO, this has nothing to do with a runaway horse. It's just a reference to the habit some people have of "bolting" their food. And it's a bad habit. Boys, especially, seldom give sufficient time to the eating of their food, and, as a natural consequence, their digestion suffers. Not for one moment do I want to preach, to advise my chums to masticate each mouthful of food thirty-two times, but there is always a happy medium. A reader from Blackpool has written me on the subject. He, apparently, is so keen to get on with his copy of the GEM every week that he bolts his tea regularly on Wednesday. His mother has pulled him up several times—and quite rightly so—for there is a time and place for everything. By bolting his tea my cheery chum might squeeze into his evening another five minutes before bedtime, but by the same token, he might be storing up trouble for himself which will take considerably longer than five minutes to get over. Our digestive organs, like every other part of us, require fair treatment, and we mustn't impose upon them—not even for the good old Gem.

"COMPLETE!"

A correspondent who signs himself "Particular," waxes a trifle indignant because St. Jim's stories, labelled "complete," are often extended into a series of one or two more stories. I can't see really where the grouse comes in. Each story is complete in itself, after all, and the series idea is only the response to thousands of requests reaching me for "more stories dealing with" So-and-So. It must surely be realised by the majority of my chums that Mr. Martin Clifford could not possibly get into one story all the "meat" he gets into, say, two or three consecutive yarns. I am afraid "Particular" is a little bit too particular if he's going to take exception to the word "complete." After all, it's the story that counts.

THE WARS OF THE ROSES!

Several of my chums thought they had caught Martin Clifford out over a historical reference to the Wars of the Roses which occurred in the story, "D'Arcy Minor's Secret," in the GEM for October 17th, No. 923. But Mr. Clifford is too old a bird to be found napping. He was quite correct, as it turned out, for he is a profound student of history, and knows all about the old campaign, Red v. White Rose. But what I am glad to see is the friendly keenness of my supporters. They just miss nothing whatever. It's the biggest compliment to the Companion Papers possible. I am much obliged to the readers who wrote in. That showed genuine interest.

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"TOO GOOD FOR ST. JIM'S!"

By Martin Clifford.

This is another remarkable story of Baggy Trimble trying to understand George Washington, the gentleman from U.S.A., who, it is alleged, never told a lie. You'll enjoy every line of it!

"A LEADER OF THE LEAGUE!"

By Sydney Horler.

There is another grand instalment of this fine footer yarn in next week's GEM. Dick Hastie has caught on with you all, I'll wager!

"MARTIN CLIFFORD" NUMBER.

Tom Merry & Co. of the "News" have devoted their next issue to Mr. Martin Clifford. The great author himself has written a short story specially for the occasion. You'll like it!

"JINGLES!"

Monty Lowther, the humorist of the Shell, figures in next week's poem by our special rhymester, making No. 12 in this splendid series of Jingles.

Order early, chums, is the advice of

YOUR EDITOR.

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WIRE IN NOW!

You Know A Good Joke? Let's Hear it, Chum.

Delicious Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes
Awarded for Interesting Pars.

All Efforts in this Competition should be Addressed to: THE GEM LIBRARY, "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

SWANSEA WINS!

FUNNY!

A motorist walked into the local antique shop. "I want something funny and grotesque to go on the front of my motor-car," he said to the girl in charge. The girl retreated to the back of the shop. "Father," she shouted, "you're wanted!"—A Delicious Tuck Hamper has been awarded to J. Hannu, 37, Langdon Place, Swansea, S.W.

A POSER!

Pianist: "If you want to make that song successful, you must sing louder." Vocalist: "I'm singing as loud as I can. What more can I do?" Pianist: "Be more enthusiastic. Open your mouth, and throw yourself into it!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Reid, 128, Godington Road, Ashford, Kent.

JUST THE DIFFERENCE!

The notice in the shop-window read: "Boots repaired!" so the small boy went in. "Please, father wants those mended," he said timidly, handing over a pair of boots. "And 'e needs 'em for Sunday." "What's he want done to them?" inquired the tradesman. "Wants 'em soled and 'celed," piped the youngster. "Also stretched." "Stretched 's well—eh? Where do they pinch?" "They don't pinch 'em," replied the lad, with a smile; "'e pinched 'em!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to F. J. Davies, 274a, St. Paul's Road, Highbury, N. 1.

A RUDE RETORT!

An American on a visit to England went to the Zoo. Approaching one of the keepers, he said to him: "Say, keeper, I want you to take me right along to your head man so that I can talk business with him." The stolid official eyed him suspiciously. "And what sort of business do you want to discuss?" he asked. "Waal, it's like this," explained the American. "I've taken a great fancy to this I'll exhibit, and I want to buy it for my kids." "Nothing doing in that line," answered the keeper tersely; "but I'll tell you what we might do; we might buy your kids for our Zoo!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Queenie Stone, 12b, Peabody Buildings, Bedfordbury, W.C. 2.

THE APOLOGY!

"Now, Dick," said the mother of a boy in disgrace, "you shouldn't have said that your father is silly." Go and apologise to him." "Father," said the infant, "I'm sorry you are silly!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to George Harmer, 10, Dalgleish Road, Dundee.

HE KNEW!

Yokel (gazing in surprise at aeroplane sky-writing): "Gee! That'll be wan o' them wireless messages caught fire!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. McKerrow, Dunard, Maxwelltown, Dumfries.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON.

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No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

ASTONISHING! Baggy Trimble is an old hand at telling whoppers. Indeed, they are as plentiful with him as the flowers in May! But he can tell the truth sometimes . . . It's wonderful what a five-bat will do!



CHAPTER 1.
On Trimble's Trail!

T RIMBLE!"
"Twimble!"
"Where's that fat villain?"
"Trimble! Trimble!"
"Somebody wants Trimble, and seems to want him bad!" remarked Monty Lowther, in Study No. 10, in the Shell.
"Trimble!"
"Twimble!"

More than one fellow wanted Baggy Trimble of the St. Jim's Fourth. It was evident. Five or six voices were shouting for him, and among them the dulcet tones of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were recognisable. Footsteps and voices were coming up the Shell passage towards Tom Merry's study.

"What on earth can they want Trimble for?" said Manners. "Not for his society, I should imagine."

Tom Merry laughed.
"More likely he's been bagging some fellow's tuck," he said. "Somebody's come in to tea and found his grub gone, I fancy. If so, he would naturally inquire after Trimble."

"Trimble!" roared Jack Blake's voice in the passage. A door was heard to open, and then to slam.
"Bai Jove! Where is that fat wotah!" came Arthur Augustus' voice. "I wathah think he is hidin', deah boys."

"Trimble!" shouted Herries.

"Trimble!" yelled Digby.

Another door banged.

Apparently the Fourth Form fellows were coming up the Shell passage, looking into study after study to see whether Trimble was there.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther grinned; but they did not pay much attention. The chums of the Shell had just come in from football practice, for a rather late tea, and they were hungry. There were ample supplies for tea in the study cupboard; but for some reason the door of the study cupboard seemed to be jammed. Tom Merry pulled hard at the handle, but the cupboard door did not open. He pulled again, and he pulled yet again, and still the cupboard remained shut.

"Something wrong with this blessed cupboard door," said Tom. "Blessed if I can see how it could jam—but it has!"

"Trimble!" shouted Blake, just outside the study.

"Pewwaps he's in Tom Mewewy's studay, deah boys. Julian says he saw him dodge into the Shell passage."

"We'll soon see."

Crash!

The study door flew open.

Tom Merry & Co. turned round from the cupboard. The study doorway was crowded with Fourth-Form fellows—Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy, and behind them, Julian and Kerruish, Hammond and Bates, Levison and

TRIMBLE TELLS THE TRUTH!

A screamingly funny story dealing with Baggy Trimble and Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's.

By Martin Clifford.

Clive and Cardew, and several more. A good portion of the St. Jim's Fourth seemed to be wanting Baggy Trimble that afternoon.

"Hallo, what's the trouble?" asked Manners. "Is that the way you fags generally enter a fellow's room?"

"Weally, Mannahs—"
"We've no time to waste," growled Blake. "We're hunting for that fat villain Trimble. We're after him."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Is he here?" roared Herries. "You fellows seen him?"

"We haven't had that tremendous pleasure," said Tom Merry, laughing. "But what's Trimble done this time!"

"What's he always doing?" snorted Blake. "We've come in furnished after footer, and late for tea in Hall; and that fat villain has raided our study. We had a pie—"

"A top-hole pie!" said Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!" It was a wippin' pie, Tom Mewewy. As a wile I am not vewy keen on such things; but this pie was weally a corkah."

"And it's gone!" said Herries.

"That isn't the worst," said Levison of the Fourth. "The fat villain has raided our study, too! Cardew had a hamper from home, and—we've still got the hamper."

"Just the hamper!" said Clive. "Nothing in it!"

"Hinc illie lacrimae!" said Cardew. "Hence these tears—"

at least, hence the tears that Trimble is going to shed when we get hold of him!"

"How do you know it was Trimble?"

"Fathead!" said Blake. "Isn't it always Trimble? Is there any other fellow in the School House who bags a fellow's grub from his study? It's not a question of proving it, but of finding Trimble and snatching him bald-headed."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We're wasting time," said Cardew. "He's not here! Come on and try the rest of the studies, then we'll draw the box-rooms."

"Yaas, come on, deah boys! I am suah that Twimble knows that we are aftah him, and is lyin' doggo, you know."

"Go hon!"

"Weally, Cardew—"

"What a brain!" said Cardew admiringly. "Gussy'y worked that out in his head!"

"You uttah ass!"

"Oh, come on!" exclaimed Blake.

Slam!

The juniors closed the door of Tom Merry's study, and

trapped on to the next, on the trail of Baggy Trimble.

Tom Merry chuckled.

"Poor old Baggy! He looks like getting it in the neck

this time!"

"Serve him jolly well right!" said Manners. "Why, the

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fat brigand might have raided our study! We've got ham and a cold tongue! If he had known that—"
 "For goodness' sake get that cupboard open!" exclaimed Monty Lowther in alarm. "I'm famished—simply famished. Nothing left in Hall by this time! If Trimble's been here, we're done to the wide!"

Tom Merry took hold again of the door-handle of the cupboard.

He tugged.

"It's stuck somehow," he said.

"But it can't be stuck!" said Manners. "The door opens all right! Here, let me get hold of it!"

Tom Merry stepped back, and Manners gripped the handle of the cupboard door. He tugged, and tugged again, but the cupboard remained shut.

"Well, my hat!"

"It can't be stuck, you know," said Tom, with gentle sarcasm. "The door opens all right!"

"Well, it does seem to be stuck somehow," admitted Manners.

"Let me try!" said Lowther impatiently.

"Go ahead!"

Lowther tried his luck on the cupboard door. But it did not move. The Terrible Three grew exasperated.

So far as they could see, there was a large cupboard, the lower part of which was used for such articles as football boots, and brushes, and foils, and boxing-gloves, and general lumber. The upper part was supposed to be used for books and writing materials; but was generally used as a larder. The cupboard door was an ordinary door, the handle was an ordinary handle; the only thing extraordinary about that cupboard door was the fact that it would not open. It was unlocked—in fact, the key had long been lost. Yet the door remained hermetically sealed.

"Blessed if I can catch on!" growled Manners. "Perhaps the hook inside has got caught on something."

"What on earth could it get caught on?"

"Goodness knows."

"Look here, that dashed door has got to open!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "We'll all tackle it together."

"We can't all hold the handle together, fathead!"

"More than one way of killing a cat, ass!"

Monty Lowther twisted up a silk muffler and tied the ends to the handle of the cupboard door.

"Now, lay hold!"

"Good egg!"

The three Shell fellows grasped the improvised rope together. There was plenty of room for holding, and they put their beef into it.

"Now, then! A long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together!" said Lowther.

"Go it!"

The Terrible Three tugged. It was a tremendous tug, with the strength of three sturdy juniors exerted upon it. Something was bound to go—the muffler, the door-handle, or the cupboard door.

Something went.

Crack!

Oh!

The cupboard door flew open suddenly. It flew open with startling and unlooked-for suddenness. Possibly Monty had not calculated upon such sudden and complete success of his ingenious device.

Crash!

Bump!

Yell!

The three juniors went backwards, as the door flew suddenly open, as if they had been smitten by a cannon-shot. Manners and Lowther were strewn on the study carpet, and Tom Merry was strewn on Manners and Lowther. And from the open cupboard stared a fat and startled face—the fat visage of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth Form!

CHAPTER 2. Run Down!

"O H!"

"Ow!"

"Gerroff!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Baggy Trimble, staring from the opened cupboard at the Terrible Three sprawling on the floor.

Tom Merry & Co. sat up dizzily.

For a moment or two they hardly knew what had happened. It seemed to them that several earthquakes had happened all at once. They were quite breathless, and they were severely bumped. They stared dazedly at the fat junior in the cupboard as if the podgy Baggy had been Baggy's ghost, instead of Baggy himself.

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"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry, rubbing the back of his head. "Oh dear! My napper's nearly cracked!"

"Ow!"

"I knocked it on something frightfully hard—"

"You frightful idiot!" groaned Manners. "It was my chin! Ow! Wow! Oh, my chin! I believe my jaw's broken!"

Monty Lowther was caressing his nose in anguish. Somebody's elbow had jabbed on his nose, and it was painful.

Trimble emerged from the cupboard. The Terrible Three were knocked out for the moment, and Trimble of the Fourth made the most of that moment. He dodged round the Shell fellows and bolted for the study door. Monty Lowther reached out just in time and caught a fat ankle as Baggy bolted by.

"Yooop!" roared Trimble as he landed on the carpet.

The Terrible Three picked themselves up. Manners put his back to the study door. Evidently it was Trimble who had somehow been keeping the cupboard shut, and Trimble had to answer for the damage.

"So that's where you were hiding!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "In our study cupboard."

"I haven't touched your grub!" gasped Trimble.

"You seem to have touched a good deal, from what Blake said. My hat, if you've cleared us out, too, we'll jolly well lynch you!"

"I haven't!" stammered Baggy. "Honour bright, you know!"

"Scat!"

"In fact, I haven't touched anything!" gasped Trimble. "I wouldn't, you know! It's all a mistake!"

"What were you doing here, you fat fraud?" demanded Tom Merry.

"I—I dodged into this study to keep away from those rotters, you know. I knew they were after me!"

Faintly from the passage, at a distance, came a shout.

"Trimble! Show up, Trimble, you fat rascal!"

Baggy Trimble grinned faintly.

"Don't you fellows let on," he said. "They've locked in here—I heard them when I was in the cupboard—and they won't look in again if you don't let on. I say, I haven't touched your grub. I've only been in here a few minutes. I dodged in to get clear of those cads, and then you came along, and I thought it was that crew, and I dodged into the cupboard, see?"

"I see," said Tom Merry. "You fat boulder, how did you keep the door shut against us? It doesn't fasten inside."

Baggy grinned again.

"Brains, you know," he said. "There's two or three hooks inside the door that you hang dusters and things on. There's some more hooks at the back of the cupboard. I noticed them last time I looked into your study cupboard—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I have never looked into your cupboard," amended Baggy hastily. "Never been in the study, in fact, except when I've called on you fellows as a pal. But—"

"Get on with it," said Monty Lowther, with his handkerchief to his damaged nose. "Roll out a few more lies before we lynch you."

"I—I say—look here, you know—"

Tom Merry looked into the cupboard.

The ingenious Baggy had fortified himself in that receptacle by quite a simple means. Certainly he was well acquainted with the interior of the cupboard, or he would never have thought of it in time—his fat brain did not work quickly, as a rule. But there were few cupboards in the junior quarters of the School House that had any secrets from Baggy or Trimble. There was a dog's chain in the cupboard, among the other lumber left over from last term, and Baggy had hooked one end on a hook on the door, and the other end on a hook on the back wall. That was what the Terrible Three had been up against when they tugged at the door.

It was the hook in the wall that had "gone." It had come out, with a chunk of the wall and a good deal of dust, and the cupboard was in a rather dishevelled state.

"Rather clever, what?" asked Trimble complacently. "You see, I thought it was Blake's lot after me, and I fastened myself in—see? Lots of fellows wouldn't have thought of that."

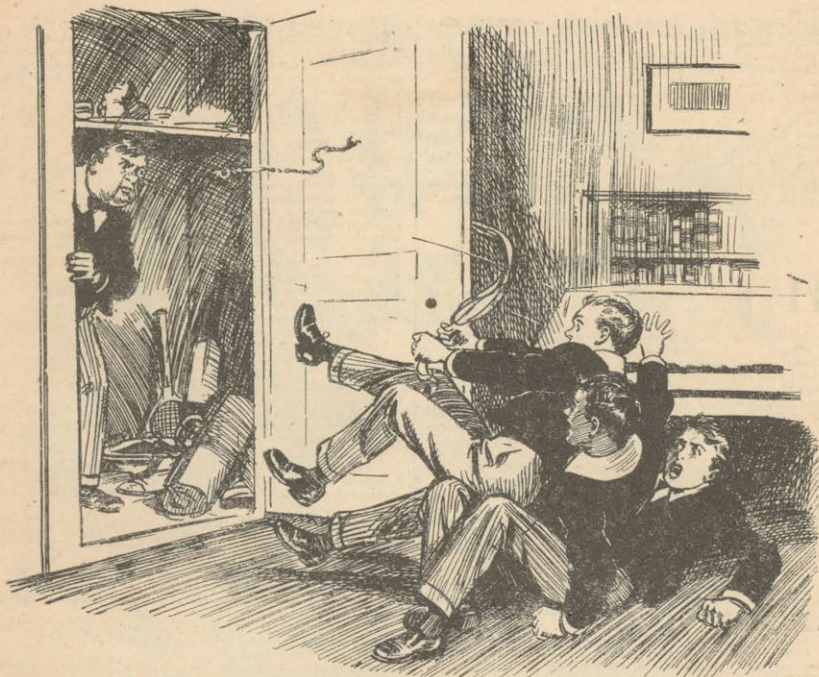
"Lots of fellows wouldn't have pried into our study cupboard a dozen times at least, and found out just what was in it," said Manners.

"Look here, you know—"

"The grub's all right," said Tom Merry. "The fat villain hasn't had time to scoff it. Shall we burst him on the carpet, larrip him with the fives bat, or hand him over to Blake?"

There was a howl of alarm from Trimble.

"Look here, you stand by a chap when he's down!" he exclaimed. "I tell you, I never touched Blake's pig or Cardew's hamper. Honest Injun! It's all a mistake. The fact is, it was the New House fellows made a raid. I—I saw



Crash! Bump! Yell! The Terrible Three went backwards, as the cupboard door flew suddenly open, as if they had been smitten by a cannon-shot. And from the open cupboard stared a fat and startled face; the fat visage of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth Form. (See chapter 1.)

them. Figgins and Kerr and Wynn, you know—that gang!

I—I saw them, and—and—

"Then why didn't you tell Blake so?"

"Well, he started after me with a fives bat in his paw. How can you explain things to a fellow who's got a fives bat and won't listen?"

Tom Merry laughed.

He had already recovered his sunny good-humour, and he was anxious for tea and to get rid of Trimble.

"Let's let him off, you chaps," he said. "It's barely possible he's telling the truth, too. I remember hearing a chap say that Trimble told the truth once last term. He may be doing the same thing again this term."

"Look here—" howled Baggy indignantly.

Manners rubbed his chin.

"Better give him six with a stump," he said.

There were footsteps in the passage again. Baggy Trimble quaked. Blake & Co., apparently, had explored the passage to the end, and drawn the box-rooms in vain, and were coming back towards the Fourth Form quarters. Trimble blinked imploringly at the Terrible Three.

"Not a word!" he breathed.

Tom Merry & Co. stood silent. Trimble was an exasperating young rascal, but they did not feel called upon to hand him over to the avengers. He was a fugitive seeking asylum on their hearth, as it were, and they would not betray him into the hands of the Philistines.

But the footsteps halted at the door of Study No. 10. Baggy Trimble's fat jaw dropped. Were the beasts coming in again? The voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was plainly heard.

"Betrah look in. Kangawoo says quite plainly that he saw the fat bounder dodge into Tom Merwuy's study."

"But we've looked there," said Levison.

"He may be hidin' in a cornah or somethin'."

"Oh, look in!" said Blake.

Trimble gasped.

"I—I say, let a chap get behind you, Tom Merry, old fellow," he breathed.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Don't move."

There was no time for more—no time to seek a safer place of concealment. Baggy Trimble sidled quickly round behind Tom Merry, hoping to be screened by the sturdy figure of the captain of the Shell.

The study door opened.

Blake & Co. stared in. Tom Merry did not move. He was willing to oblige Trimble if he could. But how his figure was to hide a figure nearly twice as wide he could not imagine. Baggy, doubtless, had forgotten the extent of his circumference when he dodged behind Tom for concealment.

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

"There he is!"

"Have him out!"

"He's hiding behind Tom Merry!" roared Cardew. "Do you see the game? He's hidin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hidin'!" gasped Cardew. "Why, you fat ass, I can see a yard of you on each side of Tom Merry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That was an exaggeration; Baggy Trimble was not so wide as all that. But undoubtedly all the Fourth-Formers could see a good deal of Baggy Trimble on either side of Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! What a frightful ass!" chuckled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Come out, Twimble!"

"Ow! I'm not here—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, it's all a mistake—I—I—"

"Have him out! Hand over that fat scallywag, you Shell bounders!"

"The game's up, Trimble," said Tom Merry, with a

laugh. "You'd better tell these chaps how awfully innocent you are. Hook it!"

"Oh dear! I say—look here—yaroooh!" roared Trimble, as Blake and Herries grasped him and whirled him out of Study No. 10. "Leggo! I tell you—I say—ow-wow!" Baggie Trimble departed from Tom Merry's study in the midst of a crowd of Fourth-Formers, who whirled him away to Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage. Manners kicked the door shut after them.

"Now for tea!" said Tom Merry cheerily. And the Terrible Three sat down to a very late tea—but they felt very keenly that it was better late than never—and had not Baggie Trimble been rooted out of the study cupboard in time, certainly it would have been "never."

CHAPTER 3. Trimble Causes Trouble!

"HELP!" Baggie Trimble howled dismally as he was marched into Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

But there was no help for Baggie. He was in the hands of the Philistines now, and he had to answer for his sins.

Blake and Herries marched him into the study, and D'Arcy and Digby followed. Levison and Clive and Cardew followed on. The rest of the juniors who had joined in the chase went back to their own studies to finish tea. But there was no tea for Study No. 6, or for Levison & Co.; all that remained to them was to deal with the fat study-raider. That they intended to do on drastic lines.

Bump! Baggie Trimble was hurled into the study armchair. He collapsed there, grunting. Levison closed the study door.

"Now, where's that pie, Trimble?" demanded Blake.

"Ow!"

"The fat villain has bolted it, even to the dish!" said Digby. "The dish is gone!"

"He left us our hamper," chuckled Cardew. "He cleared it out, but he left the hamper."

"I—I say, let a fellow speak!" pleaded Trimble. "It's all a mistake! Besides, if you fellows are hard up, I don't mind standing you a spread. Look here, I'll stand a spread to the lot of you, and you shall order what you like at the tuckshop. I can't say fairer than that."

"And who's going to foot the bill?" asked Blake.

"I will!" said Trimble. "Dash it all, I'm a generous chap—you ought to know that by this time!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I happen to be short of money to-day," went on Trimble. "I lent my last quid to Talbot of the Shell, in my thoughtless, generous way, you know. But we'll make it to-morrow. I'll go down now—"

"Will you?" said Blake grimly.

"Yes; I'll go down and ask Railton to let me use his telephone. I'll phone home to Trimble-Hall for a remittance, and—there you are. See?"

Baggie Trimble blinked hopefully at the Fourth-Formers.

"You've heard of my place—Trimble Hall," he said.

"You know the style we live in. It's simply a question of telephoning to my pater. I'll ask him to send me some banknotes by express."

"Well, my hat!" said Clive.

"You uttah wotiah—"

"Can it!" growled Herries. "Look here, let's give him six dozen with a fives-bat to begin with!"

"Oh dear!"

Apparently Trimble's generous offer was not going to be accepted, or even considered. Trimble Hall was not a name to conjure with. It was a chicken that would not fight. Certainly all the St. Jim's fellows had heard of it—from Trimble. Nobody could be at St. Jim's very long without having heard of Trimble's "place" and Trimble's "people." So it was unfortunate for Baggie that nobody believed a word of it.

"Turn him over and begin with the fives-bat," said Dig.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Go it," said Cardew. "When you fellows have done with him, we're goin' to take him along to Study No. 9 and give him our little bit. Leave some of him for us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, do give a fellow a chance to say a word!" howled Trimble. "What are you going for a chap for? 'Tain't my fault that the New House bounders raided your studies, is it?"

"What?"

"I saw them at it," said Trimble. "While you fellows were at the footer, you know, Figgins and Kerr and Wynn. I should have tackled them, but—but I thought the three of them would be too many for me. Two of them I could have handled, of course."

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"Half of one of them, you mean," grinned Dig. Blake stared at the fat junior. He had taken it for granted that the raid on the tuck had been perpetrated by Trimble; fellows always did take it for granted in such matters. But it occurred to him that he might have been a little hasty in finding Trimble guilty without evidence. House raids did happen; it would not be the first time that Figgins & Co. had raided their old rivals of the School House.

"Mean to say that it was the New House cads who raided us?" exclaimed Blake.

"Yes," gasped Trimble. "I saw them sneaking into the passage. I was going to tell you, but—but—"

"Well, why didn't you?"

"How could a fellow tell you anything when you were rushing about like a lunatic with a fives-bat?" demanded Trimble warmly. "You weren't going to give me a chance to explain."

"Bai Jove, there's somethin' in that!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I must admit that I wathah jumped to conclusions. It is possible that it was a House waid."

Blake looked very doubtful.

"Rot!" said Cardew. "It was Trimble!"

"Weally, Cardew—"

"Oh, get on with it!" said Ralph Reckless Cardew.

"After you've done with him we come in. We're wastin' time!"

Blake began to look obstinate at once. Study No. 6 was not to be dictated by Study No. 9.

"That's all very well, Cardew," he said. "But there's such a thing as justice. Quite possibly it was a House raid, as Trimble says."

"Rats!" said Cardew.

"Well, you can say rats till you're black in the face, but I believe in giving a man a chance," said Blake still more obstinately. "Look here, you kids can clear and leave it to us."

"Yaas, wathah! As top study in the Fourth, we are empowahed to deal with the mattah," said Arthur Augustus with dignity.

"Bosh!" said Clive.

"Trot!" said Levison.

"Look here," roared Blake, "we're going to inquire into this! If it was a House raid we're not going to lick Trimble, and you're jolly well not, either! See!"

"We jolly well are!" exclaimed Cardew hotly. "He's bagged no end of tuck out of my hamper—"

"He says it was Figgins' crowd."

"Wouldn't he say anythin' to get out of a lickin', you silly ass?" exclaimed Cardew impatiently.

Blake certainly would have admitted that there was something in that, but he did not like to be called a silly ass by a member of Study No. 9. That did it.

"Well, we're looking into it first," he said. "Precious lot of asses we should look if we ragged Trimble for bagging our grub, while Figgins & Co. are scoffing it in the New House all the time."

"That's so," said Herries. George Herries was by no means convinced, but he was backing up his study. And Robert Arthur Digby nodded assent for the same reason.

"You chaps can clear," went on Blake loftily. "We're quite capable of dealing with this matter."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Not without Trimble," said Cardew. "We're jolly well goin' to make him sit up for baggin' our tuck!"

"You shut up!" said Trimble, encouraged. "Don't you hear what Blake says? Blake's head of the Fourth, isn't he?"

"No, he jolly well isn't!"

"Isn't he?" hooted Blake. "Well, I can tell you he is, and I can tell you that if you don't clear you'll be helped! Now then!"

"Yaas, I weally considah that you fellows had bettah wethah and leave the mattah to wish heads," said Arthur Augustus.

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Levison—"

Blake threw open the door.

"Travel, you kids," he said.

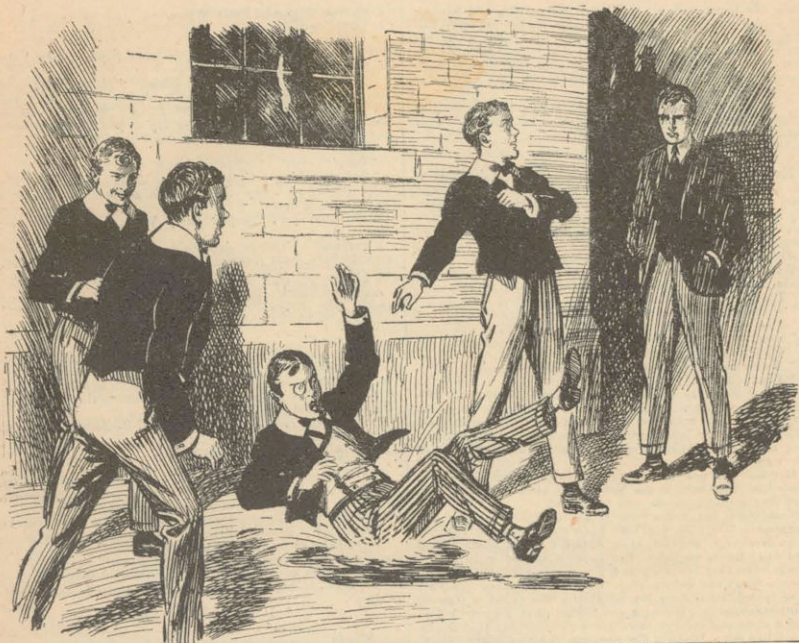
Cardew's reply was to make a grasp at Baggie Trimble. Blake promptly interposed and grasped Cardew. The next moment they were waltzing round the study, amid crashing furniture, in combat.

"Stop that!" shouted Levison.

He grasped at Blake to drag him off, and Herries promptly grasped him in his turn. Clive chimed in at once, and Digby and D'Arcy followed suit. Seven juniors were mixed up in a rough-and-tumble, and Baggie Trimble grinned at them from the armchair. Matters seemed to be going well for the fat Fourth-Form.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Thump! Thump! Howl!

Baggie Trimble slipped quietly from his chair and scudded



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dropped from the rope, and sat down with a bump. He uttered a lamentable howl. "Oh, dear! I've sat in a puddle!" "Well, it won't drown you, will it?" snapped Blake. "Don't make a row!" He stepped back, and to his surprise and horror, stepped on a foot. He swung round in dismay to find Knox of the Sixth scowling at him. "What's the game?" said the bully of the Sixth. "Climbing out of the study window!" (See chapter 5.)

out of the study. The seven juniors were much too busy to heed him. Blake & Co. were striving to pitch Study No. 9 out—and they were four to three. But Study No. 9 was a fighting study, and they gave Study No. 6 plenty to do. The din of the combat rang along the passage and drew a crowd to the doorway.

"Cave! Perfect!" shouted Bates of the Fourth suddenly. Kildare of the Sixth came tramping along the passage with a frown on his face and a cane under his arm. The juniors in the passage made way for him, and the captain of St. Jim's stared into the study. The combat stopped. Seven breathless juniors blinked at Kildare and glared at one another.

"Well, what's this game?" demanded the Sixth-Former grimly.

"Do you know this row can be heard all over the House?" "Hem!"

"Sowwy, Kildare! But—" "Take a hundred lines each!" said Kildare. "Levison, Clive, Cardew, get out of this study! Sharp!"

"You see—" "Get out!" "Anythin' to oblige, old bean," drawled Cardew. "You're such a nice chap, Kildare, that a fellow can refuse you nothin'!"

And Study No. 9 retired from the scene. "Any more of this, Blake, and it will mean six all round!" said Kildare. And he walked away.

"Bai Jove, where's Twimble?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. Echo answered where.

**CHAPTER 4.
Whose Pie!**

"**R**IPPING!" said George Figgins heartily. "Top-hole!" said Kerr. Fatty Wynn's plump face beamed. There was a royal spread in Figgins' study in the New House of St. Jim's. Figgins & Co., like the School

House fellows, had come into their House late and hungry for tea. But, unlike the School House fellows, the chums of the New House were well provided for.

The table was set, and in the middle of the table stood a large pie in a dish. It was a steak-and-kidney pie, of large size, piping hot, with a most delicious smell from the opening. Fatty Wynn had made in the crust.

"Like it?" beamed Fatty. "Like isn't the word! Love isn't strong enough! What about adore?"

Kerr chuckled. "I thought you fellows would be pleased," said Fatty Wynn happily. "The fact is that, though I say it myself, I can cook."

"You can!" said Figgins. "None better! You can make a pie as well as you can keep goal, old man, and that's saying a lot!"

"Hear, hear!" said Kerr. Kerr lifted hot plates from the study fender. Fatty Wynn, with the hand of an artist, proceeded to cut the pie.

"Of course, I've had to tip the cook to let me use her oven," he said. "But it was worth it, what?"

"I should jolly well think so!" "You fellows hungry?" "Famished!" "Oh, good!"

Fatty Wynn's plump, good-natured face was positively beaming like the sun at noonday. Fatty Wynn enjoyed a spread as much as Trimble of the School House, but, unlike Trimble, he enjoyed seeing other fellows enjoy it along with him. The satisfaction of his hungry chums was even more gratifying to David Llewellyn Wynn than the pie itself, though there was no doubt that that beautiful pie was very gratifying indeed.

Large helpings were ladled on the plates. It was more like a dinner than a tea, though really it excelled in quality any dinner that Figgins & Co. remembered in the New House. School dinners were very well, in their way, but this steak-and-kidney pie had been made with a loving hand, as it

were, the hand of an artist. There was nothing like football on a keen winter's day to give a fellow a good appetite, and Figgins & Co. had appetites just then calculated to do full justice to that lovely pie. The pie was calculated to do full justice to their appetites. So what more could have been wanted to cause complete satisfaction in that particular study in the New House?

"Cut and come again!" grinned Fatty Wynn as Figgins helped himself a second time. "Lots and lots and lots! Is it good?"

"Good? It's top-hole!"

"A giddy dream!" said Kerr.

Naturally, that beautiful pie occupied all the thoughts of the hungry juniors. If they heard a footstep in the passage they only supposed that it was some New House fellow passing along to his study, and did not heed it. They were quite unaware that four juniors belonging to the other House had slipped outside the study.

The door was ajar, and Blake peered in.

He started at the sight of a big steak-and-kidney pie on the table, and the New House fellows going strong with it.

"That does it!" murmured Blake.

He stepped back from the door.

"They've got it!" he whispered.

"Sure?" murmured Dig.

"They're scoffing it now."

"We're going to stop them!" said Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake glanced up and down the passage. There were no New House fellows in sight—the Fourth were at tea. But the situation was a risky one for the School House quartette. They were in the heart of the enemy's country, so to speak, and unnumbered reinforcements were at call if Figgins & Co. wanted them.

But that did not alter the determination of Blake & Co. They had come over to the New House after the raided pie, and they meant business, risk or no risk.

True, they had come over rather doubtful of Trimble's statements. Only too well they knew that truth and Trimble were strangers, scarcely even distantly acquainted. They had intended to inquire. But inquiry seemed quite superfluous when they saw Figgins & Co. beaming with enjoyment over a steak-and-kidney pie. A steak-and-kidney pie had been raided from Study No. 6. Really, the evidence seemed complete enough. It was a coincidence that Figgins & Co. had a steak-and-kidney pie on the very same day that Study No. 6 had one. Blake & Co. were not thinking about coincidences. They had no doubt on the matter, and they were thinking about action.

"Get in sharp, and I'll lock the study door," said Blake in a whisper. "Then we can handle them all right."

"Go ahead."

Blake tiptoed to the door again, and his comrades followed him. Figgins & Co., without a thought of danger, were helping themselves to more pie, when the door was suddenly hurled open and four School House juniors rushed in. The door was instantly slammed and locked. Reinforcements, if they arrived, would not be able to rescue Figgins & Co.

"What the thump—"

George Figgins jumped up in amazement.

"Collah the wottahs, deah boys!"

Before Figgins & Co. quite knew what was happening they were rushed over.

The New House trio went whirling back over their chairs, and they sprawled on the carpet, with the School House juniors sprawling over them.

"Pin the cads!" roared Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh! Ow! Rescue, New House!" spluttered Figgins.

"Gerroff!" gasped Fatty Wynn as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat on his chest and pinned him to the floor.

"Gerroff, you dummy!"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Gerroff, you fraibjous chump!"

"Bai Jove, I wufuse to be called a fwajbious chump, Wynn!"

"Will you gerroff?" gasped Fatty.

"I am sowsy, deah boy, but for the present I must decline to do anything of the sort. If you persist in stwugglin' like that, Wynn, I shall have no resource but to bang your head on the floor—like that."

"Yaroooh!"

Herries sat on Kerr and grinned. Blake had a knee on George Figgins' chest, and, hefty fellow as Fatty was, he resisted in vain. Digby was standing on his legs and grinning down at Fatty's infuriated face.

"Look here, you School House hooligans," howled Figgins, "what's this game? Why, we'll jolly well scalp you for this!"

"We've come over for the pie!" chuckled Blake.

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"Our pie!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Ours!" grinned Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You cheezy cads, how did you know anything about the pie?" exclaimed Kerr.

"Trimble told us!" chuckled Blake. "He saw you, you see. And we're here for the jolly old pie! No, don't yell for the other New House rotters, Figg! Sorry to have to damage you, but every time you try to yell I shall have to bang your head!"

Bump!

"Ow!"

"Get something to fasten up these cheezy cads, Dig. We can't get the pie away—there'll be an alarm soon. We shall have to eat it here."

"Eat that pie!" gasped Fatty Wynn in breathless indignation.

"Certainly! That's what we've come for. You fellows seem to have made rather a hole in it, but there's plenty left for us."

"Yaas, wathah!" chortled Arthur Augustus.

"Rescue, New House!" roared Figgins desperately.

"School House cads! Rescue!"

Bang!

"Whoop!"

Robert Arthur Digby sorted out a strap, a length of cord, and a necktie, and Figgins & Co., resisting desperately, were rolled together with their wrists tied in a bunch. By that time there were footsteps and voices outside the study, and the door-handle was tried.

"What's the row!" came the voice of Redfern of the New House Fourth.

"School House cads! Rescue!"

"I say, the door's locked!"

"And it's staying locked!" called out Blake cheerily. "You can smash it in if you like—if you want your giddy House-master to come up and inquire. Go and eat coke!"

"That's Blake!" came Owen's voice. "It's a House raid!"

"Just that!" assented Blake.

"Open this door, you School House rotter!"

"Go and eat coke, you New House worm!"

"Why don't you open it, Figgins?" shouted Redfern.

"I can't! They've tied our paws!" gasped the hapless Figgins.

"My only hat! Have you let them do it?"

"You silly idiot!"

"What?"

"You hurling chump!"

"Oh, my hat! Figg is growing polite in his old age!" said Redfern. "Look here, Figg, how are we to get in through a locked door?"

"What's the good of asking me footling questions?" snorted Figgins.

Redfern did not ask any more footling questions—he chuckled. As a matter of fact, it was impossible for the rescuers to get into the study. Breaking in the door was an heroic method a little too heroic to be tried on. Nobody wanted to bring a Sixth Form prefect or Mr. Rateliff, the Housemaster, on the scene.

There was no rescue for Figgins & Co. until the door was opened, and it was not going to be opened till the School House raiders chose. So for the present Redfern & Co. had to content themselves with waiting outside the door and breathing bloodcurdling threats through the keyhole of what was going to happen when the raiders came out.

In the meantime, Figgins & Co. sat on the floor of the study, their wrists tied in a bunch, utterly helpless. Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy, sat down round the table and started on the steak-and-kidney pie.

Fortunately it was a very large pie. Figgins & Co. had made a deep inroad in it, but there was plenty left, and the School House juniors proceeded to whack it out with great gusto. They were hungry—hungry as only fellows could be who had been playing football in a keen wind and were an hour late for a meal. Blake & Co. fairly wolfed that beautiful pie, while the New House trio sat and wriggled and glared at them and told them what they thought of them in sulphurous tones.

CHAPTER 5.

Merely a Mistake!

"BAI Jove, this is a weally wippin' pie!" "This pie," said Blake, pausing in his busy operations, "is the last word in pies! The very final syllable!"

"If Dame Tangles makes pies like this often I shall jolly well become a regular customer for them," said Herries. "We've never had one like this before."

"Never!" said Digby. "Why, it isn't a pie; it's a dream!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Some of the wrath faded from the plump face of Fatty Wynn. His pie was going—going from his gaze like a beautiful dream, as indeed it was! But it was something to see his handiwork appreciated like this. There was no doubt that the School House raiders were enjoying that pie with the greatest thoroughness.

"Plenty of it, too," said Dig. "It seems a rather larger pie than I thought it was. It didn't seem so large as this when I carried it from the shop."

"Well, it can't have grown!" said Blake, laughing. "No; but really it seems larger, and the gravy— Dig beamed at the rich gravy. "I cut it, you know, but the gravy didn't seem anything like this. Warming it up must have made a difference."

"Anyhow, it's jolly good."
"Wippin'!"

Figgins & Co. were talking most of the time, telling the

pie—Fatty Wynn made it himself, and the cook let him put it in her oven while we were at footer practice."

"Gammon!"

"If you've lost a pie we don't know anything about it."
"You didn't raid the School House and bag a pie from our study and a hamper from Cardew's?" asked Blake banteringly.

"No!" howled Figgins. "We haven't been in your mouldy old House."
"Draw it mild!" said Herries.

"Can't you take my word?" demanded Figgins excitedly. "Well, I can take your word, of course," said Blake, helping himself once more, with a final scrape of the pie-dish. "But, you see, somebody bagged a steak-and-kidney pie from our study, and Trimble told us he saw you fellows sneaking about the place. That rather settles it, what?"



St Jim's Tingles!



No. 11 DR. HOLMES
(the Head of St. Jim's.)

UNEASY lies the kingly head,
Our English bard supposes;
And the Headmaster's job,
'tis said,

Is not a bed of roses.
Duties and cares have lined his brow
With many deep-set wrinkles;
His shoulders stoop a trifle now,
His eye no longer twinkles.

How fine, think some, to be the lord
Of this illustrious college!
To be respected and adored,
To boast a wealth of knowledge.
But if a mortar-board were perched
Upon these juniors jealous;
And if by them the boys were
birched—
"A rotten job!" they'd tell us.

In Doctor Holmes, the school can
boast
A really fine Headmaster;
For years he has retained his post
Through triumph and disaster.

He rules with equity and sense,
And strives to fairly boss all;
His store of learning is immense,
Yea, verily—colossal!



DR. HOLMES.

Daily, he takes the Sixth in Greek,
And puts them through their paces;
Humbly they sit before the "Peak,"
Respectful are their faces.
They have to work with zeal and zest,
The bards of old to fathom;
The Head is stricter than the rest—
The Sixth would welcome Latham!

The onward march of Father Time
Has streaked his hair with white-
ness;
He's less alert than in his prime,
His step has lost its lightness.
His arm, however, is as strong
As Jessop's when he's slogging;
And victims sing an anguished song
When hoisted for a flogging!

But many years will pass, we trust,
Ere comes the sad sensation
When the Head feels he really must
Hand in his resignation.
Long may he reign in lofty state,
And hold dominion o'er us;
"Blessings upon his hoary pate!"
We cry in hearty chorus.

NEXT WEEK:—MONTY LOWTHER, Of the Shell.

School House fellows all sorts of uncomplimentary things; but their words passed by Blake & Co. like the idle wind which they regarded not. But as the chums of Study No. 6 made these remarks, the New House trio ceased to slang them, and stared at them in surprise instead.

"You burbling ass, young Digby," said Figgins. "Are you wandering in your silly mind? How could you have carried that pie home when it's never been outside our House since it was made? What the dickens do you mean?"

"Oh, come off!" said Dig.
"What do you mean, Figgins, if you come to that?" said Blake. "I suppose you didn't think we should let you bag our pie, and take it lying down, did you? That's not School House style."

"It isn't your pie, you silly owl! Have you lost a pie?"
"Have we lost a pie?" mimicked Blake. "Yes, we jolly well have, and now we've found it again."
"Yaas, wathah!"

Figgins & Co. exchanged glances. They realised now that some extraordinary mistake had been made.

"Look here, put it straight," said Figgins. "That's our

"Trimble's a lying worm, then!"
"Admitted; but even lying worms tell the truth sometimes, and this time Baggy got there all right. We found you scoffing a steak-and-kidney pie—the thing we'd come over to inquire about. Chuck it, Figg!"

"It's a coincidence," said Kerr.
"Too jolly much of a coincidence for me!" said Blake, laughing.

"You frabjous cuckoo!" said Fatty Wynn. "You burbling, blithering blockhead! Do you think Mrs. Taggles could make a pie like that? Do you think you can buy a pie like that in the school shop, or any other shop? You fooling chumps; I made that pie!"

Blake stared at him.
"Look here! Honest Injun!" he asked.
"Yes, you chump!"
"Phew!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, after a pause, during which he eyed Figgins & Co. thoughtfully through his celebrated eyeglass. "It wathah appears that we have made a mistake, deah boys. It is a wathah odd coincidence that

these wuffians should have the same kind of a pie at the same time, but it weally seems—

"You brainless rabbit!" said Patty Wynn. "I dare say there are a dozen steak-and-kidney pies going. Dame Taggles had about a dozen in her shop to-day, anyhow. But not like that! Shop pies ain't made like that one."

"Something in that," admitted Blake. "I was surprised, that's true—I never had a pie like it from the tuckshop before. Jolly good of you to make this pie for us, Fatty."

"Ha, ha, ha! Yaas, wathah!"

"If you'd known we had a pie, you'd have raided it, if you had a chance," argued Blake. "Well, you've got a pie, and we've raided it. We thought it was our pie, and that we were getting our own back. It isn't, as it turns out, so you can call this a House raid."

"I wegard that as put vewy clearly, and I twist you are satisfied, Figgins."

Figgins breathed sulphurously.

"I'll show you how satisfied I am when I get loose!" he said.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Well, everything comes to an end," said Blake, with a sigh, as he rose from the table. "You chaps won't need to wash that dish—we've cleaned it out for you, and it looks like new."

"And it was a New House pie all the time!" chuckled Dig. "That fat scoundrel Trimble had our pie all the time, you know, and he was pulling our leg about Figgins."

"Cardew was wight all the time, Blake."

"Well, he may have been right, but he was cheeky," said Blake. "Study No. 9 can't put on side over Study No. 6."

"No feah!"

"We'll deal with Trimble when we get back," said Blake. "I suppose he had the pie all right. Still, we've had a pie; and, as it turns out, a better one than Trimble barged from our study. Let us know when you make another pie, Wynn, and we'll pay you another visit."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You won't want to pay another visit after what you'll get this time," said Figgins. "You're not back in your House yet."

"Weally, Figgins, it was a mistake, you know—we weally thought it was our pie. I wegard it as bein' up to you to make it pax."

"That's right—we're willing to make it pax," said Blake generously. "We'll let you fellows loose if you make it pax and see us safe out of the House; and we'll go as far as to say that we're sorry you haven't anything left to eat. And, look here, you can kick Trimble next time you see him."

"Yaas, I wegard that as a feih offah. What do you think, Figgins?"

"I think you cheeky rotters will need an ambulance to take you back to your House when we've done with you!" said Figgins ferociously.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"How long are you School House cads going to keep us waiting!" called Redfern's voice through the keyhole.

"Oh, don't wait, old bean!" answered Blake affably. "We're making an evening of it here."

There was a chuckle in the passage. But there was no sound of the juniors there taking their departure. Redfern and Owen and about nine or ten of the New House Fourth were waiting for the raiders to walk into their hands.

"Bai Jove, you know, we seem wathah to have walked into a twap," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Howevah, we have had the pie."

"That's so much to the good," agreed Blake. "And I don't see any special need for using a door so long as they make windows to a study. Find a rope or something."

"Good egg!"

Figgins opened his mouth to shout a warning to the passage. A crust of bread was promptly jammed into it, and Figgins gurgled instead of shouting. Herries and Dig clapped their hands over the mouths of the other two.

"These chaps talk too much," said Blake sadly. "Kids who talk too much have to be stopped. Get some dusters or something, Gussy."

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Gussy.

Only one duster could be found, but two pocket-bandkerchiefs were extracted from two New House pockets. Quietly, scientifically, and effectually, Figgins & Co. were gagged.

"Sorry to leave you, as you look so hospitable and good-tempered," said Blake. "But the best of friends must part."

Figgins & Co. could only reply by glares. Blake & Co. searched the study at their case, and sorted out articles improvising a rope.

It was a good drop from the study window; and such a mode of exit was strictly against all rules written and unwritten. But the winter dusk was deep in the quad, and there was little likelihood of the descent being observed.

As for the risk, the juniors did not think of it; anyhow, it was to be preferred to the certainty of a terrific ragging if they left the study by the door.

They found a ball of string, and a whipcord, and some straps, and a box-rop, and proceeded to plait them together with the skin they had acquired as Boy Scouts.

Figgins & Co. watched them wolfishly.

"Are you fellows coming out?" yelled Redfern through the keyhole. "It will get worse with keeping, you know."

"Call again to-morrow," answered Blake.

"Look here, you'll be late for lock-up in your House, if you hang on here much longer," called out Owen.

"Don't you worry, old Scout!"

"We'll scalp you when you come out!" roared Pratt.

"My dear man, you'll scuttle off like a bunny-rabbit as soon as we open the door," said Blake. "We sha'n't see anything of you but your heels."

There was a roar of wrath in the passage. If any of the New House crowd had felt disposed to clear off, that would have decided them to stay. As a matter of fact, Blake preferred them to stay. He did not want any of them to wander outside the House just then.

"Ready!" he said at last in a whisper.

The rope was tested by tugging, and it seemed strong. Blake fixed one end to the leg of the table, which was lifted towards the window. The other end slithered down into the dusk.

Blake peered after it. The rope was not quite so long as he could have wished, and in the dusk he could not see whether it reached the ground or not. His impression was that it didn't.

"I fancy it will be all right," he murmured. "We shall have a bit of a drop at the end, that's all. I'll go first, and whistle if it's all right."

"Hold on, Blake—"

Blake was already climbing out of the study window.

"What's the matter, fathead?"

"Pway do not address me as a fathead, Blake—"

"Dry up, you ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Shut up, Gussy, old man," said Dig. "It's rather late now, you know."

"But this is wathah important—"

"Well, what is it, dummy?" asked Blake, pausing on the window-sill.

"I think I had bettah go first, Blake! Pway get in again!"

You see, in any situation of wisk or dangah, it is pwopah for a D'Arcy to lead," said Arthur Augustus innocently.

"I am suah you see that."

Blake breathed hard.

"Kill him, one of you," he said. And he slipped down on the rope, and began his descent.

Blake went down actively, and came to the end of the rope. Darkness and space were below him. But he felt a window-sill with his feet, and knew where he was. He dropped about five feet, as active as a cat.

A few moments later he whistled.

Herries came down next, and then Dig. Blake called to them softly in turn, and they dropped in safety. Then the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy slithered down the rope.

He swung at the end.

"Bai Jove, where is the ground?"

"Five foot drop!" said Blake. "Don't shove your hoof through that window!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Drop, you ass! Somebody may come along any minute!"

Arthur Augustus dropped, and sat down with a bump.

He uttered a lamentable howl.

"Oh dear! I've sat in a puddle!"

"Well, it won't drown you, will it?" snapped Blake.

"Don't make a row!"

"I was shinkin' of my twousahs—"

"Blow your trousers!"

Blake stepped back, and, to his surprise and horror, stepped on a foot. He swung round in dismay. Knox of the Sixth, a School House prefect, grinned at him in the dusk.

"What's the game!" said the bully of the Sixth. "Climbing ropes out of a study window! Might have broken your necks—not that it would have been much loss. Come with me to your Housemaster."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus forgot even the mud on his beautiful trousers. "Oh, what rotten luck!"

In the study above, Figgins & Co. were wriggling desperately round the locked door, striving to turn back the key with their tied hands. And in the dusky quad, Blake & Co. trailed dismally after Knox of the Sixth towards their own House, to be reported to their Housemaster.



Blake and Herries were peering into the cupboard belonging to the Terrible Three, when Blake gave a sudden shout. "Look!" "That's it!" exclaimed Herries. They had found what they wanted—right at the back of the cupboard, among bags and boxes and other lumber—there it lay, a large dish, with the cold remains of a steak-and-kidney pie! "Well, my hat!" ejaculated Blake. "Those Shell bouncers raided our pie while we were at footer!" (See Chapter 7.)

CHAPTER 6.

Mr. Railton Does His Duty!

TOM MERRY came down the staircase in the School House, with Manners and Lowther. There was still plenty of time before prep, and the Terrible Three were going to improve the shining hour by putting in some editorial work on "Tom Merry's Weekly," in the junior club-room. But they stopped at the sight of Knox of the Sixth striding into the House from the quad with four dismayed juniors trailing after him.

"Looks like trouble for Study No. 6," remarked Tom. "Perhaps they've lynched Trimble," suggested Monty Lowther. "I suppose the prefects would make a fuss about it—Sixth Form prefects are so fussy!"

Knox strode on towards the Housemaster's study. Blake & Co. gave the Terrible Three a dismal look.

"What's the row?" asked Manners.

"Lickings for four!" groaned Blake. "All Trimble's fault! We're going to slaughter Trimble after Railton has slaughtered us."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Knox of the Sixth did not look round. He had no doubt that the culprits were obediently at his heels as he strode on. As a matter of fact, they weren't. They stopped to have a few moments' chat with the Shell fellows. They weren't in such a hurry as Knox was to see their Housemaster.

"That frightful-fiber Trimble made us believe that

Figgins & Co. had raided our pie, you see," said Blake.

"So we went over and raided them—"

"And found them with a steak-and-kidney pie!" said Herries.

"What was a chap to think?"

"We bagged it, anyhow," said Dig.

"And left the study by the window, leaving Figgy and his

pals trussed up like turkeys for Christmas!" said Blake.

"Everything went well—except that it wasn't our pie after

all, and really that was all to the good, because it was

a much better pie than ours. And then that prying, piffing,

poking, perky Nobby Parker Knox had to butt in and catch

us coming down from Figgy's window! Of course, Gussy

had to give the alarm."

"Weally, Blake—"

"He got some mud on his trousers!" said Herries, with

deep sarcasm. "He had to let out a yell, and Knox was

nosing around. Only Gussy ought to be caned, really; but

we shall all get it."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Hard cheese, old man," said Tom Merry sympathetically.

"Yaas, wathah! I have ruined my trowsers," said

Arthur Augustus. "Pwactically new trowsers, you know,

and now—"

"I'll ruin them again with my boot when we get through

with Railton," said Digby ferociously.

"Weally, Dig—"

Knox had reached Mr. Railton's study. He tapped at

the door and entered, and the School House master glanced at him inquiringly.

"I have to report these juniors, sir," said Knox, "for climbing out of a study window after dark on a rope. I was quite frightened when I saw them—afraid of what might happen to them. Come into Mr. Railton's study—"

Knox glanced round and stared. There were no juniors in sight.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

"I do not quite understand you, Knox," said the Housemaster. "To what juniors are you alluding? I see none."

"I told them to follow me here, sir," said Knox, colouring with vexation. "I'm awfully sorry to waste your time, sir—I'll fetch them."

Mr. Railton resumed his writing, and the Sixth-Former hurried back the way he had come. He came on Blake & Co. with the Terrible Three, apparently forgetful of the prefect's important existence.

"You young rascals!" exclaimed Knox.

"Weally, Knox, I stwongly object to bein' called a young vascal—"

"Go to Mr. Railton's study at once!" snarled Knox.

"Certainly, deah boy."

Blake & Co. marched on, Knox following them this time, and the Terrible Three walked away to the club-room, and were soon deep in editorial work. Blake & Co. marched into Mr. Railton's study.

Mr. Railton laid down his pen.

"Inform me of what has occurred, Knox, and kindly be brief," said the Housemaster.

Knox made his report. He made it with a great deal of pleasure. He did not like the four cheery and independent youths whose headquarters were in Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

Mr. Railton's brow grew very serious.

As a matter of fact, the juniors' escapade was a serious matter, though they had not realised it. It was like the bully of the Sixth to make frivolous reports about fellows he did not like; but this time, at least, the matter was one requiring attention.

"This is a very serious matter, my boys," said Mr. Railton severely. "I have no doubt you acted thoughtlessly, without thinking any harm—"

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"But what you did was very dangerous, and might have resulted in injury to yourselves."

"Oh, we can climb all right, sir," said Herries. "There wasn't any danger."

Blake & Co. might also have informed their Housemaster that they had climbed down from study windows before—not once, but a good many times. But they realised that this information would not improve the matter.

"As your Housemaster, I am responsible for you, my boys, and must see that you do not risk sustaining injury from foolish recklessness," said Mr. Railton. "It is my duty to impress this upon your minds, for your own sakes. Kindly hand me a cane, Knox."

"Certainly, sir."

"You first, Blake."

Mr. Railton rose to his feet. Blake dimly bent over a chair. It was Mr. Railton's duty, and he was going to do it; but Blake would have been fully satisfied just then with a much less dutiful Housemaster.

Whack! Whack!

"Now Herries!"

Whack! Whack!

"Digby!"

Whack! Whack!

"D'Arcy!"

"In the circumstances, Mr. Wailton—"

"Kindly bend over that chair at once, D'Arcy."

"Certainly, sir. I should not dream of disputin' an ordah from my Housemastah," said Arthur Augustus. "But I should like to explain—"

"I am waiting, D'Arcy."

"I wewget vevy much keepin' you waitin', sir, because I know your time is valuable," said the swell of St. Jim's.

"Howevah, I feel bound to point out—"

"Bend over that chair!" said Mr. Railton in a formidable voice.

"Oh, yaas, sir!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Ow! Wow!"

There was an extra whack for Arthur Augustus, doubtless because he had wasted his Housemaster's valuable time, though he had so politely expressed his regret for doing so.

"You may go," said Mr. Railton. "Do not let anything of this kind occur again, or your punishment will be more severe. I am obliged to you, Knox, for bringing this matter to my attention."

Knox smirked. He did not often receive commendation

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from his Housemaster. Blake & Co. trailed wearily out of the study.

In the corridor they wriggled painfully and gave one another doleful looks.

"Well, we had the pie, anyhow, and we did Figgins & Co. in the eye!" said Dig, with an attempt at philosophy.

"And Trimble had our pie and got us a Housemaster's licking," said Blake. "It's his blessed lying and fibbing that caused this. He sent us over to the New House with his lies."

"I'm going to skin Trimble!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's about time that fat villain was given a lesson on the subject of lying," said Blake. "Let's look for him."

At the end of the corridor they came on Ralph Reckness Cardew. The dandy of the Fourth smiled at them. The four were wriggling very painfully.

"Hallo! You chaps look as if you had been sittin' on tinnacks," he remarked. "What is it—St. Vitus' dance, or a new idea in physical jerks?"

Blake & Co. glared at him. They did not expect or desire sympathy from the nonchalant dandy of the Fourth, but they did not want to be chipped while suffering from the effects of an over-developed sense of duty in their Housemaster.

"Weally, Cardew, you ass—" began Arthur Augustus.

"Have you seen Trimble?" growled Blake. "We're looking for Trimble. He sent us on a wildgoose chase and we've got licked, if you want to know. Now we're going to slaughter him."

"I haven't seen the dear youth since he dodged out of your study," answered Cardew. "I fancy he's lying doggo. Have you had it bad?"

"Ow! Yes!" groaned Dig.

"Awfly sorry, and all that," said Cardew affably. "But perhaps it may do you good. And those exercises you are doin' are probably good for the muscular system."

The next moment Ralph Reckness Cardew was in the grasp of four pairs of hands, and he sat down in the corridor with a terrific concussion.

"Oh!" yelled Cardew.

Study No. 6 walked on, leaving the dandy of the Fourth sitting on the floor, gasping for breath. Leaving him to it, they proceeded to hunt once more for the elusive Baggy Trimble.

CHAPTER 7.

Tricky Trimble!

BAGGY TRIMBLE bent a fat ear to listen, rose from his chair, and dodged under the table in Study No. 2 in the Fourth. Study No. 2 was Trimble's study, which he shared with Mellish and Kit Wildrake.

His studymates had not yet come up for prep, and Baggy had the room to himself. But he was not enjoying his own company.

Every time there was a footstep near the door Baggy dodged under the table, to lie doggo till the footstep had passed.

It was said of old that the way of the transgressor is hard; and undoubtedly there were many worries and woes in the career of a cupboard-raider. Baggy Trimble had feasted royally while the other fellows were at footer that afternoon, but after the feast came the reckoning.

Baggy did not want to pay the reckoning, and his hope was to dodge retribution till the affair blew over. On the morrow the fellows would have something else to think about. School-boy memories were short, and probably they would not let the sun go down and rise again upon their wrath. In the meantime, however, Baggy Trimble's life was a rather anxious and exciting one.

Footsteps had passed the door a dozen times since Baggy had returned to his study, and each time the hapless Baggy had dodged under the table for concealment. Now he dodged under it again, but this time the footsteps did not pass. They stopped at the door of Study No. 2.

The door was hurried open.

Under the table, Baggy quaked and scarcely breathed. An eyeglass gleamed into the study.

"Not heah, deah boys."

"The fat brute must be somewhere!" growled Blake.

"Nobody seems to have seen him. He's big enough to be seen—wide enough, at any rate."

"He's bound to turn up here for prep presently," remarked Herries. "Let's wait in the study. We've drawn the whole House now."

"Yaas, that's wathah a good ideah!"

Baggy Trimble suppressed a groan.

If these awful beasts waited in the study until time for prep, what was he going to do? Even if he let preparation slide, as he sometimes did, he could not spend an evening under the study table.

"Good! We'll wait!" said Blake.

The four juniors came into the study. Then Jack Blake uttered a sudden exclamation. It was caused by the sight



"Are you a sneaking, cringing, untruthful, unpleasant, slacking, loafing toad?" asked Blake, flourishing the five-bat. "Yes or no?" "Yes," gasped Trimble. "Then that does it," said Lowther. "Trimble can tell the truth if he tries. Gentlemen, I vote we let Trimble off the ragging—so long as he sticks to the truth!" (See Chapter 9.)

of a large size in boots under the table. As a matter of fact, the table was not large enough to screen all of Baggy Trimble. He was crouched up into the smallest possible space, but his diameter and his circumference were against him.

"My only hat!"

Blake stooped and glanced under the table.

"Come out, Trimble!" he said grimly.

"Oh dear!"

"Bai Jove! Is the fat wottah there all the time?"

"Here he is."

"I—I say," gasped Trimble, "I—I—"

"Hand me the poker, Dig! I'll soon root him out!"

"I—I'll come out!" gasped Baggy.

"You'd better."

Baggy Trimble rolled out from under the table—on the opposite side. He blinked across the table at the chums of Study No. 6, and grinned feebly.

"Only—only a larf!" he murmured. "I—I was going to jump out and—and startle you fellows, you know."

"Weally, Twimble—"

"We've been over to the New House after our pie, Trimble," said Jack Blake, in grim tones. "We've got a looking for raiding the New House! What are you grinning at, you fat imago?"

"W-w-w-was I?" stammered Trimble. "I—I'm awfully sorry you've got a licking! D-d-did you get your pie back?"

"They never had our pie, you fat rotter! We know that now. You had the pie, and now you're going to have the licking of your life!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I—I say, hold on!" exclaimed Trimble. "The—the fact is—"

"You are a lym' wottah, Twimble! You knew vevy well that Figgins had not waided our pie!" said Arthur Augustus sternly. "You are goin' to be punished for bein' such a feahful Ananias!"

"The—the fact is—" stammered Trimble. "Hold on a

minute, and I—I'll tell you what really happened. As—as you fellows are so friendly with Tom Merry, I didn't really like to tell you—"

"What on earth has Tom Merry to do with it?" demanded Herries.

"He had the pie."

"What?" yelled Study No. 6 with one voice.

"I know it's rotten!" said Baggy. "That—that's why I said it was Figgins, you know. I—I thought you'd let the matter drop, then. I—I didn't want to make trouble—you fellows being so friendly with Study No. 10, and—and me being such a considerate chap, you know. The actual fact is that Tom Merry had your pie—and Manners and Lowther. I can prove it."

The juniors stared at Baggy.

"Lies, of course!" snorted Herries.

"Well, if he can prove it, let him," said Blake. "Trot out your proof jolly sharp, Trimble, before we begin on you! There won't be much left of you when we've finished."

"You remember I dodged into Tom Merry's study when you fellows were after me!" gasped Trimble.

"Yes, you fat rotter!"

"They were scoffing the pie then," said Trimble breathlessly. "I didn't like to mention it. I'm not the fellow to make trouble between friends, as you know. They—they slammed the pie into their cupboard a second before you opened the door. Honest Injun!"

"Wats!"

"I shouldn't wonder if it's there now!" gasped Trimble. "Very likely they haven't finished it. Look here, you know, you just look before you quarrel on a fellow who was only trying to keep you from quarrelling with your pals. I don't expect gratitude; but really this is too thick!"

Blake & Co. stared at Trimble.

Whether he was telling the truth this time, or whether

(Continued on page 16.)

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JAPES THAT MISSED FIRE!

By Monty Lowther.

I SUPPOSE I can truthfully style myself the champion japer of St. Jim's. Just as a Boy Scout believes in doing one good turn a day, so I believe in playing at least one jape a day—if only to keep my hand in. Every day this term—Sundays excepted—I have planned a practical joke on somebody. But the best-laid schemes of mice and men—and merry japers—miss fire at times, and I will give you a few instances of this.

ONE morning the news went the rounds that Mr. Linton was down with 'flu, and would be unable to take the Shell. It was reported that Knox of the Sixth was to take charge of the Form for the time being. Now, I've got no superfluous affection for Knox, and I decided to give him a warm reception—or rather, a wet reception—when he came into the Form-room to take morning lessons. Placing the door a few inches ajar, I ingeniously contrived to fix up a pail of whitewash, in such a manner that when the door was pushed open from outside the pail would turn turtle and discharge its contents upon the head of the obnoxious Knox. The fellows watched the proceedings with broad grins, and presently there was a sharp whisper of "Cave!" Footsteps were heard approaching the door of the Form-room. I hopped back into my seat in a twinkling, and waited for Knox to push open the door and receive his baptism of whitewash. Knox came into the Form-room, certainly; but the only drawback was that he was preceded by the Head! Directly I caught sight of his gown I fervently prayed that my ingenious booby-trap wouldn't work. But this is the worst of booby-traps. When you want them to work without a hitch, a hitch occurs, and when you want them to go wrong they work like a charm! This particular booby-trap performed its functions faithfully and well. The Head pushed the door, the string by which the bucket was suspended gave a sudden jerk, and then—swish! swoosh! The whitewash pelted down, and the Head was covered as with a garment. And Knox didn't get so much as a splash! Of course, there was a most frightful row, and I received a public flogging. We banter the noble Gussy,

ANOTHER of my japes which sadly missed fire was one which I attempted to work off on Baggy Trimble. I carefully filled a big packing-case with rubbish and addressed it to Baggy, leaving it at the railway-station to be called for. I thought that Trimble would imagine the packing-case was filled with tuck, and that he would drag it all the way up to St. Jim's, only to discover that he had been hoaxed. Baggy trotted down to the station to collect the packing-case; but there the jape ended. Some prying porter had wrenched off part of the lid, so that Baggy could only see what was inside. And what do you think the fat boulder did? He re-addressed the packing-case to "M. LOWTHER—TO WAIT

UNTIL CALLED FOR." I knew nothing of this until, after the jape of a few days, the railway company charged me a bob for storage! If I had let the packing-case remain at the station I should soon have had quite a big bill to pay. So I had to go down and collect the heavily lugging sack what was due, and it was Trimble who had the laugh at the finish!

THE JOLLY JAPERS!

(Sung by Tom Merry & Co. at a recent concert.)

We are the jolly japers,
As lively as can be;
We play the merriest capers,
We're full of mirth and glee.
Merry and Monty and Manners,
Chumps of the British brook;
And beneath our streaming banners
The fellows gaily flock!

CHORUS:

Oh, we are the Terrible Three!
The pick of the bunch are we,
Ragging and raiding the New House
chaps.

Planning elaborate booby-traps,
Hurling our own in schoolboy scraps—
Oh, we are the Terrible Three!

We banter the noble Gussy,
And pull his illustrious leg;
And if he becomes too fussy
His pardon we humbly beg!

We batter his shining "topknot"
With snowballs large and round;
He doesn't consider it "pwoah"
As he sprawls upon the ground!

CHORUS:

Oh, we are the Terrible Three,
And a rollicking band are we!
We laugh and chaff from morn till
night,

In japes and jokes we take delight,
And we're always game for frolic or
fight—

Oh, we are the Terrible Three!

We harass the worthy Taggles,
And his hair is turning grey;
And when through the quid he straggles
He is often heard to say:
"I reckon that Master Merry
Deserved to be drowned at birth!
He's a himpernt rascal—very!
The cheekiest scamp on earth!"

CHORUS:

Oh, we are the Terrible Three,
For never a rap care we
For Ratty's moans, and Knox's scowls,
For Ratty's rage, and Flazy's growls,
For Gussy's glares, and Grundy's
howls—

Oh, we are the Terrible Three!

For life was meant for laughter,
And this world's a merry-go-round;

It's frolic and fun we're after;
Wherever they may be found:

A fig for the dismal jimmies
Who consider the skies look grey;

Our constant aim and whim is
To be happy the livelong day!

CHORUS:

Oh, we are the Terrible Three,
Eager for jape and glee!
"A merry heart goes all the day,"
That's what the wise old scribbler says;

And we mean to be happy and blithe
and gay,

For we are the Terrible Three!



JAPES are the spice of a schoolboy's existence. What a dreary world it would be if the japers ceased from japing, and the leg-pullers were unemployed!

There are two sorts of japes, of course—the harmless sort and the cauldish sort. We are only concerned with the former in this special "Japing" number.

Not a day goes by at St. Jim's without a jape of some kind being perpetrated. The Noble Army of Leg-pullers is for ever planning manoeuvres, and you never know who will be the next victim. A fellow has to walk very warily, and keep his "peepers" open if he wishes to avoid falling into the japer's trap. He must open study doors very gently and gradually, lest he find himself swamped with a hideous mixture of soot and ink and whitewash! When he gets into bed at night he must do so very gingerly, in case there is a sprig of holly or a prickly hedgehog concealed between the sheets!

"All Fools' Day" is the japers' festival; but every day seems to be an "All Fools' Day" at St. Jim's. The japers are never idle, and you have to be constantly on the "qui vive" to avoid being caught napping. Some people always seem to be getting japed more than others. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, for example, is always having his noble leg pulled. Being a guileless sort of fellow, Gussy walks blindly into the traps which the japers set for him.

Taggles, the porter, is also the favourite prey of the practical joker. Taggles regards japers as "pesterin' pests," and he declares and he is "worried out of his wits" by their humorous attentions. If Taggles had his own way, he would see that all japers were hanged, drawn, and quartered, and then—if there was anything left of them—suspended on a gibbet as a warning to others!

Japes happen with such frequency at St. Jim's—Mr. Martin Clifford's yarns are packed with them—that they are soon forgotten. Only a few of them ever become historical, and these are super-japes. I wish I had space to tell you of some of the famous japes of old, in which the whole school has been hoaxed by some bright youth with a mania for practical joking. "Great Japes in History" would make a most attractive article. You shall have it scirped up one of these days.

St. Jim's is not the only school where japers abound. One of the cleverest japers I know is Gordon Gay of Rylcombe Grammar School; and this week you will read how he successfully spoofed St. Jim's.

Good luck to the Noble Army of Leg-pullers! And long may they flourish—so long as they refrain from pulling the lower limb of your editor and friend.

Tom Merry



GOALKEEPER GRUNDY!

The Story of an Amusing Jape--and its Sequel.

By DICK REDFERN.

"YAH! Call yourself a goalkeeper?" Fatty Wynn, who was keeping goal for the St. Jim's Junior Eleven, flushed with annoyance as he fished the ball out of the net. It was not often that Fatty was beaten. But even the best of goalies have to surrender their charge at some time or other. There are such things as unassailable shots, and it was one of these which had beaten Fatty now. The plump junior had sprawled in the muddy goalmouth in a frantic but futile attempt to save.

Behind the net stood George Alfred Grundy of the Shell. Grundy had come down to see the match, not to cheer, but to deride, and the look of lofty derision on Grundy's face made Fatty Wynn writhe.

"Fancy not being able to stop a soft, simple shot like that!" scoffed Grundy. "This is what comes of Tom Merry putting duds in the eleven! Now, if I were keeping goal—"

"You'd have been beaten a dozen times by now!" snorted Fatty Wynn. "I'll trouble you to keep your mouth shut, Grundy! If you must criticise, save up your rotten criticisms till after the match! I'll be able to answer them then!"

Grundy, however, declined to keep his mouth shut. He lounged behind the goal, with his hands in his pockets, and he kept up a running fire of criticism at Fatty Wynn's expense.

And the more Grundy criticised, the more rattled Fatty became. The fat junior would have been wise to ignore Grundy; but you can't very well ignore a fellow with a voice like a ship's siren, who bellows at you all the time.

Fatty Wynn, usually so cool and resourceful, was put off his game by Grundy's scornful shouts. Presently he was beaten again.

"What a goalkeeper!" said Grundy contemptuously. "I should advise you to chuck goalkeeping, Wynn, and start keeping rabbits!"

"You—you—" spluttered the incensed Fatty. "Just you wait till after the match! I—I'll jolly well burst you!" It was a disastrous match for St. Jim's. It was one of their "off" days. Figgins and Kerr, at full-back, could do nothing right, and Fatty Wynn was worried out of his usual game by the stentorian shouts of Grundy.

Abbotsford were the victors, and they were enjoying themselves. They were a couple of goals up, and they made it four before the finish. St. Jim's replied once only—through Tom Merry.

When the final whistle went three wretched juniors—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn—rushed round to the back of the net for the purpose of having Grundy's blood. Perhaps Grundy did all had expected something of the sort. At all had expected something of the sort. At all had expected something of the sort. At all had expected something of the sort.

"I'll flay that ass Grundy!" roared Fatty Wynn. "He put me clean off my game! I should be beaten at least two of those goals if it hadn't been for Grundy!" "He's a chop-headed chump!" snorted Figgins. "He thinks Tom Merry ought to have played him in your place, Fatty. Tom Merry's a School House bouncer, it's true, but he's still got some glimmering of sanity left." He'd have to be clean off his rocker before playing a duffer like Grundy!"

Kerr said nothing. The Scottish junior seemed to be deep in thought.

"What do you think about it, Kerr?" asked Figgins.

"Eh?" "Shall we search for Grundy and slay him?"

Kerr shook his head. "I know a wheeze worth two of that," he said. "I've been thinking out a little plan for making Grundy sit up."

"Oh, good!" Figgins and Fatty Wynn looked at their chum hopefully. Kerr's wheezes, as a rule, were not to be despised. "You fellows know Pikkins, the skipper of Wayland Wizards?" said Kerr.

"Of course!" "Pikkins is the easiest fellow in the world to impersonate," went on Kerr. "It will be a simple matter for me to make up my face to resemble Pikkins' cheery chivvy. I'll do it, and I'll call at St. Jim's to-morrow afternoon, and pretend that I'm wanting the services of a goalkeeper."

"My hat!" "Grundy will fairly jump at it," said Kerr. "I'll bring him down to Little Side and give him a trial, and by the time I've finished firing shots at him he'll have had all the goalkeeping he wants—and more!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Then I'll pretend to be highly delighted with his form, and I'll ask him to turn out for Wayland Wizards on Saturday. How's that?"

"Topping—if it works!" said Figgins. "Of course it'll work—like a charm!" said Kerr confidently. "You leave it to your uncle!"

And the New House trio strolled away towards the school building, chuckling.

Next day, when afternoon lessons were over, an athletic-looking youth, garbed in a sweater and wearing heavy, hobnailed boots, came strolling in at the gates of St. Jim's. Tom Merry & Co. were in the quad at the time, and they took the visitor to be Pikkins, the skipper of Wayland Wizards. They were on friendly terms with Pikkins, and they hailed him cheerily.

"Hallo, old top!" said Monty Lowther. "Come to challenge us to a match?"

The newcomer shook his head. "I want a goalkeeper," he explained in deep, pleasant tones. "I'm not quite satisfied with the form of our regular goalie; and as we've got an important match on Saturday, I want a real good man between the posts."

"Naturally," said Tom Merry. "So you're going to borrow one of our seniors—what?"

"No; a junior will fill the bill better."



"What about that fellow lounging on the steps?" said the athletic-looking youth, pointing to Grundy. "He looks as if he would make a good goalkeeper!"

He'll be more pippy on his pins. I dare say it seems awful cheek on my part to borrow a St. Jim's fellow—"

"Not at all—so long as you don't borrow Fatty Wynn!" said the captain of the shell. "We can't spare Fatty. He's our star man."

"What about that fellow lounging on the steps?" said the visitor. "He looks a useful man."

"Oh, that's Grundy!" said Minners. "I shouldn't borrow Grundy, if I were you—unless you want your opponents to run up a cricket score against you!"

"Is he such a duffer as all that?" "Give him a trial and see!" suggested Lowther.

"Thanks! I will." The youth in the sweater strolled up to George Alfred Grundy. He explained what he was after, and Grundy's eyes sparkled.

"I'll turn out for you with pleasure, Pikkins!" he said.

"Are you willing to have a trial first?" "Quite!"

"Come on, then!" They walked down to Little Side together, Tom Merry & Co. following to see the fun.

Figgins and Fatty Wynn also came along. Kerr, for once in a way, was not with them. Grundy peeled off his jacket, and took up his position between the posts. Pikkins also peeled off his jacket, with a businesslike air, and he cleverly trapped the football which Figgins had thoughtfully brought along.

"Ready?" inquired Pikkins. Grundy nodded.

Pikkins settled the ball on the turf, and took a running kick at it.

"Hold that one!" he panted. Grundy held it all right!

Grundy whizzed in with the velocity of a bullet, struck him just below the chest in the region known as the "bread-basket."

"Yooooop!" Grundy sat down violently in the goal-mouth making a noise like a deflated tyre. The on-lookers simply yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Try again, Grundy!"

"It was some time before Grundy was sufficiently recovered to collect the ball and punt it out to Pikkins.

"I—I wasn't quite ready for that one!" he explained. "Give me another. And shoot from farther!"

Pikkins lengthened the range by a few yards and fired in another shot. He seemed to have a kick like a mule.

Grundy saw the ball whizzing towards him like an avenging cannon-ball. He blinked at it in startled fashion for a split second, then he promptly dodged out of the line of fire. The ball crashed past him into the net.

"Goal!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Had enough?" grinned Pikkins.

"Ahem! I—I'm a bit below form to-day," explained Grundy. "Even the best of goalies have their off-days, you know."

"Quite!" assented Pikkins gravely. "What about Saturday? Will you turn out for us?"

Grundy hesitated for a moment. He had experienced quite a bit of goalkeeping to be going in. But he told himself that he would find his true form by the time Saturday came.

"Yes! I'll play," said Grundy. "Let's see! Just the Wizards' ground?"

"Just beyond the cemetery," said Pikkins. "Right! I'll be there!"

Pikkins walked away with Figgins and Fatty Wynn, and the trio appeared to be doubled up with laughter. They had all their work cut out to conceal their merriment from George Alfred Grundy.

When Saturday came Kerr's jape had an astonishing sequel.

Grundy duly reported himself at the Wizards' ground, where he learned from the real Pikkins that he had been spoofed. It so happened, however, that the Wizards' goalie had not turned up, and Grundy was given the name. He gave a deplorable exhibition of goalkeeping, being beaten no less than ten times; and the infuriated Wayland Wizards, after the match, told Grundy exactly what they thought of him. He was turned up at St. Jim's, later in the evening, he looked as if he had been through a mangle, under a steam-roller, and in the middle of an ear-mangle.

THE END.



TRIMBLE TELLS THE TRUTH!

(Continued

from page

13.)

this was a new dodge to escape punishment, they could not tell; but the probability was that the latter was the case. But there was a doubt, and the chums of Study No. 6 felt that Baggy was entitled to the benefit of the doubt, if any. They had already acted over-hastily once, in the matter of Fatty Wynn's steak-and-kidney pie. "But we'll give the fat bounder a chance," said Blake. "But we'll give the fat bounder a chance." "We'll jolly well see whether there's any signs of our pie in Study No. 10!" "It won't take a few minutes," said Dig. "They'll own up if we put it to them straight. Come on." "Wait here, Trimble." "Oh, yes! Rather!" said Trimble. "I—I wasn't thinking of clearing off, of course." "Of course not," said Blake sarcastically. "But I'll look you in, in case you change your mind." "Oh!"

Blake locked the study door on the outside, and the four juniors proceeded to Study No. 10 in the Shell. Blake knocked at the door and opened it; but the study was dark and empty. The Terrible Three were still busy with their editorial duties in the club-room downstairs.

Blake put on the light. "They're not here," he said. "Look in the cupboard." "Weally, Blake, I doubt wethah we are quite justified in pokin' into a fellow's cupboard duwin' his absence from his quarters." "Fathed!"

Blake swung open the cupboard door, the door that the Terrible Three had found it so difficult to open when Baggy Trimble was hidden within. It opened easily enough now, however, and Blake peered into the cupboard.

"Nothing here," he said, having scanned the upper part of the receptacle which the Terrible Three used as a larder. Half a loaf, a pat of butter, a plate with remnants of ham and tongue, an inkwell full of salt, and a cracked egg-cup half-full of pepper met Blake's searching eye; but nothing else in the way of comestibles.

Then he glanced into the lower part of the cupboard, and gave a shout.

"Look!"

"Dai Jove!"

"That's it!" exclaimed Herries.

There it was—right at the back of the cupboard, among football-boots, and foils, and bags and boxes, and other lumber—there it lay, a large dish, with the cold remains of a steak-and-kidney pie!

The Fourth-Formers stared at it.

They had not believed Baggy Trimble's story; but there was the piedish, there was the remnant of the pie—and this was confirmation strong as proof of holy writ.

"Well, my only hat!" ejaculated Blake. "It was those Shell bounders all the time—they raided our pie while we were at footer. I wonder if they had Cardew's hamper, too?"

"Cardew can look after his hamper himself," said Dig. "But that's our pie—that's one of Dame Taggles' dishes. There's some left—and that's a jolly good proof that Trimble never had it—he would have cleaned it up to the last scrap." "Yaas, wathah!"

"I say, this is rather thick," said Herries. "They had the pie, and they knew we were after Trimble for the pie. They ought to have owned up."

"I am bound to remark that I regard it as wathah wotten. A fellow might void a fellow's studay, but there is a limit, you know."

"We don't want to make a mistake again, though," said Dig. "We felt jolly certain about Fatty Wynn's pie—"

"There's the blessed thing itself," said Blake. "That's the proof. It was a coincidence those New House bounders having a steak-and-kidney pie as well as us; but if Tom Merry had one as well it would be too jolly extraordinary a coincidence. Besides, you can see it's shoved out of sight

—down there among that lumber, when they keep their grub on this shelf."

"That's so."

Study No. 6 were convinced. They knew nothing of Trimble having been hidden in the cupboard while the search was going on; so naturally they could not guess that, having his plunder with him, he had hidden it in the study cupboard when he had hidden his own fat person there.

"It's pretty clear," said Blake grimly, "we've got the right party at last! I'll cut along and let Trimble out; and then we'll wait here for those Shell bounders to come up."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The Terrible Three, busy with editorial work, little dreamed of the ambush that awaited them in their study when they returned to No. 10 in the Shell. Blake & Co. waited patiently, lining up on either side of the door to collar the Shell fellows as they came in.

There were footsteps at last, approaching the doorway of Study No. 10.

Blake grinned at his comrades.

"Collar them the minute they get in!" he whispered.

"Yaas, wathah!"

The footsteps came on, and stopped at the door, and Blake & Co. waited breathlessly.

CHAPTER 8.

Sold Again!

"PREP!" said Tom Merry. "Let prep wait a tick," said Monty Lowther. "I want to read this out to you fellows. It's one of the best things I've done for the 'News.' You fellows deaf?"

Apparently Tom Merry and Manners were deaf. They smiled genially, and walked out of the club-room, and Monty Lowther—with one of the best things he had done for the "News" still unread—grunted and followed them. Monty's good things were doubtless good; but prep was prep.

The Terrible Three went up to the Shell passage, and passed Baggy Trimble on the stairs as they went. Baggy gave them a peculiar grin. Blake had let him out of Study No. 2, and Baggy Trimble was going downstairs, and the sight of Tom Merry & Co. coming up made him grin. He wondered what would happen when they met Blake & Co., and charitably hoped that both parties would lose their tempers and give one another a thorough hammering. Baggy felt that they deserved a thrashing for all the trouble they had given him on account of a pie that he had not even had time to finish.

"Hello, what's the joke, fatty?" asked Manners, catching the derisive grin on the fat face of Trimble of the Fourth.

Baggy chuckled.

"You are!" he answered.

"And Baggy rolled on—rather fast, to escape a lunge on Manners' boot as he went. "Trimble seems rather cheery, after all his exciting experiences," said Tom Merry, with a laugh. "He seems quite bucked. Hallo, the light's on in the study!"

Tom threw open the door of Study No. 10 and entered, followed by Manners and Lowther.

The next moment there was a rush of feet, and a heavy bumping on the floor of Study No. 10.

"What the thump!" gasped Tom Merry.

"We've got the rotters!" panted Blake. "Sit on 'em!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Fourth Form cads!" panted Manners. "What sort of a jape do you call this, you frajvous asses! Get off my chest!"

"Mop them up!" roared Lowther.

"Pin the rotters down!" yelled Blake.

There was a terrific struggle on the floor of Study No. 10. The chums of Study No. 6 were four in three, as they had been in dealing with Figgins & Co. But three Shell fellows were rather a bigger handful than three of the Fourth. The struggle was a terrific one, and Manners and Lowther gave Herries and Digby plenty to do, though they were taken at a great disadvantage; while Tom Merry, exerting all his strength, fairly hurled off Blake and D'Arcy, and regained his feet.

"You silly asses!" he gasped. "What—"

"Down him!" panted Blake.

"Mop the boundah up, deah boy!"

The two juniors rushed at the captain of the Shell. Tom Merry backed to the wall of the study, with his hands up, stalling them off in great style. There was a roar from Arthur Augustus as a hefty drive on the chest sent him spinning, and he crashed into a chair, and accompanied it in a wild career across the study.

Talbot of the Shell looked in at the half-open door.

"You fellows breaking up the happy home!" he asked.

"Why—what—who—how—my hat!"

"Rescue!" yelled Monty Lowther. "Fourth Form raid! Pile in!"

"What-ho!" said Talbot cheerily.

He rushed into the study and promptly collared Arthur Augustus as the swell of St. Jim's was rallying to the attack. That left Tom Merry only Blake to deal with, and Blake, much to his annoyance, found himself driven back by the counter-attack of the captain of the Shell. Tom Merry snuffed genially as he drove Blake into a corner, fighting hard.

Kangaroo of the Shell came along, and Bernard Glyn and two or three other Shell fellows, attracted by the din in Tom Merry's study. In their raid on Figgins & Co., Study No. 6 had had time to lock the door. This time they hadn't, and it made all the difference. The Shell fellows only wanted to know that it was a Fourth Form incursion into the Shell quarters. They piled in without wanting to know the reason why.

In a very few minutes Blake & Co. were reduced to impotence, resisting to the last, but overpowered by numbers.

Blake wriggled wrathfully with the grip of Kangaroo and Glyn on either arm. Herries was giving Digby the same attention. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was sitting on the carpet in a breathless state, quite winded, and groping feebly for his eyeglass.

"But what on earth's all the row about?" asked Talbot of the Shell.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Blessed if I know—unless it's these fellows' idea of a jape! They were in the study, and jumped on us as we came in."

"Fathheaded sort of a jape," said Kangaroo. "Just like the Fourth! Let's give them the frog's-march back to their quarters."

"Weally, you fellows!" gasped Arthur Augustus faintly.

"Will you leggo my arms, you piffing Shell duffers!" asked Jack Blake in sulphurous tones.

"Not yet, old bean. You don't look good-tempered."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'd better lick them before they go," said Manners. "We can't have Fourth Form fags kicking up a shindy in our passage like this."

"No fear!"

"You uttah wottah—"

"Can't you?" roared Herries. "You'll jolly well get another shindy next time you raid our study cupboard, you rotters!"

"Who's raided your study cupboard, fathhead?"

"You have!" bawled Herries.

"Yaas, watah!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "You feabul wottahs—it was you all the time, while we were huntin' down Twimble. I weally considah that you ought to be ashamed of yourselves!"

Tom Merry stared blankly.

"Are the silly chumps making some silly mistake?" he asked. "We haven't been anywhere near your study, Herries."

"Oh, can it!" snapped Blake. "Mean'to say you didn't raid our steak-and-kidney pie while we were at the footer?"

"Oh, my hat! Do you think we'd take your silly old pie at a gift?" said Monty Lowther. "Didn't Trimble raid it, you ass?"

"You did!" roared Blake. "Trimble saw you!"

"Oh, this is too thick!" exclaimed Tom Merry indignantly. "You ought to know what a lying rotter Trimble is, Blake!"

"You didn't raid that pie?" shouted Blake.

"No, you thumping ass!"

"Then how does it come in your study cupboard?"

"Eh! It isn't in our study cupboard."

"You look in the cupboard, Talbot," said Blake. "If there isn't a pie-dish there, I'll eat it!" Which was not very logical. But Blake was a little excited.

Talbot smiled and glanced into the cupboard.

"Down among the lumber," said Blake. "A pie-dish with what's left of our steak-and-kidney pie in it."

"It's here, sure enough," said Talbot, lifting it out. "But I suppose that it belongs to this study, as it's here."

"Does it?" jeered Herries.

"It doesn't," said Tom Merry, staring at the pie-dish. "I've never seen it before."

"Did you raid our study with your eyes shut?" jeered Blake.

Tom Merry laughed.

"You footling chump!" he said. "I've never seen that giddy remnant before, but I know how it came here. When we came in to tea Trimble was hiding in the cupboard."

"In—in the cupboard?"

"Yes, ass! I suppose he had the pie with him, as he had taken it from your study. He hid in the cupboard, and must have shoved the pie there. He fastened the cupboard door—you can see where we had to drag out a hook to get it open. You fellows nabbed him here a few minutes later, and so he

had no chance to get away with the pie again. Now do you understand, you footling fatheads!"

Blake & Co. exchanged sickly looks.

They realised now that there had been another mistake. Once more Trimble's amazing powers of invention had taken them in and started them on the wrong track. This time it was their own pie that they had tracked down, but evidently Trimble had left it where it was found, and the owners of the study knew nothing about it.

"Oh!" stammered Blake feebly.

"Oh!" mimicked Monty Lowther. "You've burgled Figg's study in the New House—you've burst into our study—after your ghastly pie. What's the next? Are you going to raid the Head's study next, and accuse Dr. Holmes of begging your steak-and-kidney pie?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, I weally think we owe these fellows an apology," said Arthur Augustus. "It was anothah wotten mistake."

"That villain Trimble!" breathed Herries.

"That lying Hun Trimble!" gasped Digby.

"You ought to know better than to believe a word Trimble says on any subject whatever, you duffers!" said Tom.

"Well, I didn't believe him till I found the pie here," said Blake. "I never knew anything about Trimble having been in your dashed cupboard. But—but, as it turns out, I'm sorry."

"As the pie wasn't finished, deah boys, how could we suppose that it had been in Twimble's hands?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Something in that," said Tom Merry, laughing. "I suppose we came in and interrupted him before he had wolfed the lot. Never mind, mistakes will happen. You kids ought to be licked, but we'll make it pax. Look here, something ought to be done about that villain Trimble. He ought to be stopped. It must be bad for a chap's health to lie as much as Trimble does."

"Yaas, watah!"

Blake snapped his teeth.

"He's going to be stopped," he said. "By Jove, I'm going to make an example of him! I'll give him such a ragging as would make George Washington turn over a new leaf and tell the truth!"

"We'll lend a hand," said Tom Merry cordially. "Let's round him up after prep, in the club-room, and put him to the torture."

"Good!"

"Yaas, watah! As a matak of fact, you know, the feabul wottah ought to have somethin' lingewin' with boilin' oil in it."

"It's a go!" said Tom. "After prep we'll reform Trimble."

"Done!" said Blake.

And, peace having been restored, Blake & Co. returned to their own study for prep, after which the iniquitous and unspeakable Baggy was to be dealt with, and some glimmering of the distinction between truth and untruth impressed upon his mind by the most drastic means available.

CHAPTER 9.

Reforming Trimble!

BAGGY TRIMBLE groaned.

He groaned dismally.

So far he had not suffered damage, and had nothing to groan about. He was groaning in anticipation as he was marched into the junior club-room with Monty Lowther gripping one of his fat arms and Jack Blake the other.

After prep Baggy had been rounded up. He had dodged and eluded as long as he could. But after lock-up he could not escape from the House, and, inside the house, he could not dodge permanently. The Terrible Three and the four members of Study No. 6 and Levison, Clive, and Cardew were all seeking him, and at last he was found and marched away to his doom. And the fat junior, shook like a fat jelly, in horrid apprehension of what was going to happen to him.

Till now he had escaped the punishment of his sins through his wonderful inventive faculty. He had hoped that Blake & Co. and the Terrible Three would hammer one another and part on fighting terms without any explanation having been made. It had been a faint hope, and it had failed him. Trimble had staved off the evil hour, but it was upon him at last. He groaned dismally as he was marched in.

There were ten fellows who had personal reasons for dealing with him, and there were two or three dozen other juniors in the room, with grinning faces, prepared to be entertained by Baggy's awful fate. Not a single face showed any sympathy. Baggy blinked dismally at face after face, and read only cheery anticipation therein. His stern judges were gathered to give him justice. The door was closed, and not a fellow in

the crowd present had the slightest idea of raising a finger on Baggy's behalf.

For the first time in his fat career the heir of Trimble Hall wondered whether it was, after all, a paying game to be a greedy, lying rascal. True, he had captured an enormous feed; true, he had caused a number of fellows whom he disliked to punch one another. But these pleasures were past, and it was the present he had to think of now—and the near future. The sight of a fives-bat on the table made Baggy groan again. He had a well-founded apprehension that he was shortly going to make a closer acquaintance with that bat.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Monty Lowther, "this fat villain, this cringing worm, this unseemable apology for a toad—"

"Look here, you know—" murmured Baggy Trimble feebly. He did not seem to recognise that description of himself, though any other St. Jim's fellow would have known at once to whom Monty was alluding.

"Go it!" said Cardew. "This is eloquent, by gad!"

"This miserable specimen, this footling fraud, this flabby octopus—" resumed Lowther.

"Hear, hear!"

"This fat, flabby, footling, fraudulent fooler—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He stands before you, gentlemen, chaps, and fellows—or, rather, he cringes and sneaks before you," went on Lowther. "He cringes here covered with obloquy—"

"With what?"

"Obloquy—"

"Good word, that!" said Cardew approvingly. "Lowther's got that out of some Cross Word puzzle."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Order! Dry up, Cardew!"

"Covered with obloquy as with a garment," went on Monty Lowther. "When it comes to telling lies, Ananias wasn't in it with Trimble. George Washington was a feeble fooler in comparison. George Washington was an American who said that he could not tell a lie. That showed what he could do when he tried—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But Trimble beats him hollow at his own game. In sheer, unadulterated lying Trimble could give George ninety in a hundred and beat him hands down. When Trimble grows up he may go into politics, and then his gift may come in useful. But it won't do for St. Jim's."

"Wathah not."

"Trimble and the truth have hitherto been unacquainted," said Monty Lowther. "They are going to be introduced. I've heard a fellow say that Trimble told the truth once last term—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I dare say the fellow was exaggerating: it sounds rather steep. Still, to give Trimble the benefit of the rumour, wild as it is. We will take it that he was heard to tell the truth last term."

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What Trimble did last term he can do again this term," proceeded Lowther. "It may cost him a fearful effort. Such an exertion may undermine his constitution, but he must risk that. Somehow or other he's got to tell the truth if it bursts him. We are going to help him to reform. That's why we've got this fives-bat here."

"Yaas, wathah."

"Now, lay him across the table," said Lowther. "Every fellow present will give him six cuts, like a prefects' beating." "Yaroooh!"

"What are you yelling about, Trimble? If you waste your breath now you won't have any left when you need it. You will need it."

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

Trimble blinked round dully at the grinning faces. These proceedings were being taken in a humorous spirit on all sides. The School House fellows seemed to look on this as an entertainment. That was all very well for the on-looker. But there was nothing humorous in getting the fives-bat on a pair of tight trousers. Baggy Trimble was the only fellow in the room who was not entertained—but he was not entertained at all.

"I—I say—" he gasped.

"Shove him over!"

"I say, let a fellow speak!" howled Trimble. "Give a fellow a chance, you know."

"Certainly. Let the fat villain speak," said Tom Merry.

"If he's got anything to say—"

"Lot," gasped Trimble. "I—I say, the—the fact is—"

"Draw it mild!" said Cardew. "What the dooce do you know about facts?"

"The—the fact is, I'm sorry—"

"Sorry for yourself!" asked Lowther. "You'll be sorer soon. Is that all?"

"Nunno! I've repented—"

"What?"

"Bat Jove!"

"I have, really!" gasped Trimble. "I—I feel that I've done wrong. I—I realise that I haven't told the truth. I—I mean to turn over a new leaf. I—I'm going to reform! Honour bright!"

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"That's all right," said Lowther reassuringly. "We're going to help you to reform. That's what the fives-bat is for."

"Ow! I—I say, I really mean it!" gasped the terrified Baggy. "I—I'm going to stick to the truth. I'm going to reform. You fellows chuck it, you know, and—I'll turn over a new leaf. I—I see the error of my ways, I do really."

"Well, you'd have to be stone blind not to see them, I suppose," said Blake. "But you're not getting off so cheaply as all that."

"I—I say, you oughtn't to rag a chap who sees the error of his ways, and—is trying to turn over a new leaf, and—and reform!" gasped Baggy. "Give a man a chance, you know. I own up! What can a fellow say more than that?"

"Bat Jove, there's somethin' in that, you know," said Arthur Augustus. "If Trimble really means it—"

"But could he tell the truth if he tried?" said Manners. "Of course you never know what you can do till you've tried, and Trimble's never tried yet."

Blake had picked up the fives-bat. Baggy Trimble's fat knees knuckled together. He cast an imploring blink round at his judges.

"Give a man a chance!" he pleaded.

"Look here, we'll give him a chance," exclaimed Monty Lowther. "I'll put some questions to the cringing toad, and if he answers them truthfully, we'll let him off. At the first lie, he goes through it."

"Done!" exclaimed Trimble eagerly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In the first place," said Monty Lowther, holding up his hand, "is there such a place as Trimble Hall?"

"Oh!" gasped Trimble.

There was a roar of laughter. The new turn of the proceedings had taken seemed more entertaining to the School House than ever. That leading question was a poser. All the fellows had heard of Trimble Hall, and the glories thereof, without believing a word of it. But to expect Baggy Trimble to own up that Trimble Hall was an airy nothing, merely a figment of his fertile fancy, was expecting a great deal. But the fives-bat awaited him if he did not. All eyes were fixed on Baggy Trimble, as the fat junior stood dismayed.

"Yes or no?" chuckled Blake, swishing the fives-bat in the air.

"That did it! The truth was unpalatable, but the fives-bat was still less palatable."

"No!" gasped Trimble.

"Great Scott!"

"Fan me!" gasped Cardew. "Trimble's told the truth!"

"You see, he can do it if he tries," chuckled Blake.

"Did I give you a pain, Trimble?"

"Go ahead, Monty," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Any more questions?"

"Yes. Are your people rolling in wealth, Trimble?"

"Oh dear!"

"Yes or no!" roared Blake.

"No!" gasped Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Don't miss this yarn, boys!

THE UNKNOWN HAND;

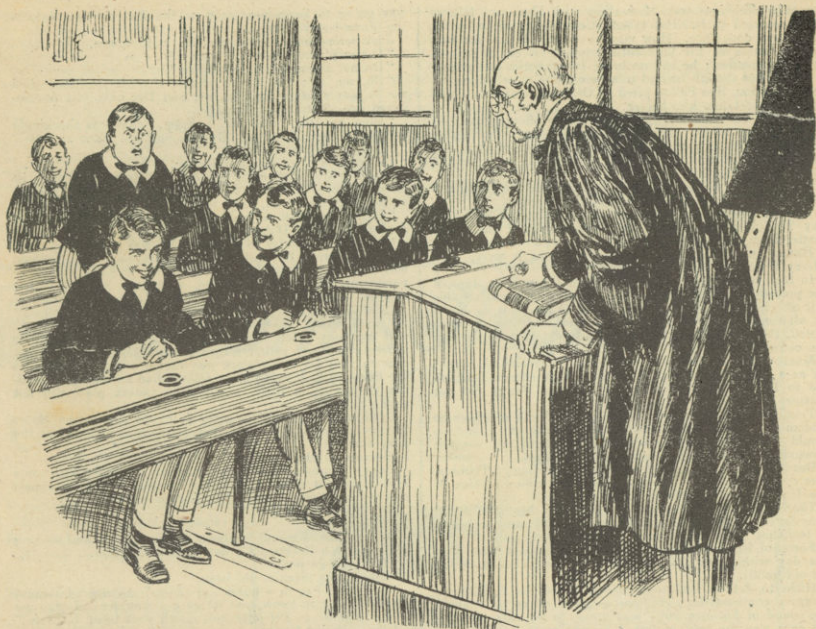
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Baggy Trimble jumped desperately to his feet. "Mr. Lathom—please, sir—" he gasped. "I—I—I want to own up. I—I—I told you I'd written my lines yesterday, sir. I—I—I hadn't, sir!" "What?" "I—I—I'm sorry, sir—I—I—I told you a whopper, sir—I—I—I am telling you the truth now." "Bless my soul!" The Fourth Form-master blinked at Trimble in great surprise. Trimble's confession had astounded him. (See chapter 12.)

"Splendid!" exclaimed Lowther. "He told the truth once last term and twice this term! Trimble's getting on! We shall reform him yet. Now, you fat imago, did you raid a hamper from Study No. 9, and a pie from Study No. 6?"

"Yes," groaned Trimble.

"Are you a sneaking, cringing, untruthful, unpleasant, slacking, loafing toad?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes or no!" exclaimed Blake, flourishing the five-bat.

"Yes!" gasped Trimble.

"That does it!" said Lowther. "Trimble can tell the truth if he tries! He's tried, and he's done it. Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows, I vote that we let Trimble off the ragging—so long as he sticks to the truth. First time he wanders off the straight and narrow path, he bags the ragging."

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah! Keep to the path of reform, Twimble, and you're all wight," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy kindly. "It will do you no end of good, you know; you will respect yourself much more when you are no longah a lyn' worm. For the present you can regard yourself as bein' on probation."

Baggy Trimble sidled towards the door, amid shouts of laughter from the juniors.

He had escaped the punishment of his manifold sins, which was so much to the good; but that punishment was suspended over his head, like the sword of Damocles, which was extremely uncomfortable. If Baggy was to bag the ragging the first time he was caught lying, it looked as if the ragging was not postponed for very long.

"The only thing that could save Baggy from the wrath to come, was a genuine reform; and that was likely to be uphill work for Baggy.

"Try hard, old fat pippin!" said Monty Lowther. "Remember what you'll get the first time you side-slip, and that will help to keep you straight."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Baggy looked back with his hand on the door. He was greatly relieved to find himself there, unlicked. His little round eyes glistened at Monty Lowther.

"Thanks!" he said meekly. "You want me to give you the frozen truth, don't you, Lowther?"

"Eh? Yes! That's it!"

"Silly ass!"

"What?"

"Frabious dummy!"

Lowther stared at Baggy Trimble.

"I've started!" said Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Blake. "That's one for your nob, Lowther. You asked for the truth!"

"I say, Blake—" went on Trimble.

"Yes, you funny ass?"

"You're a footling chump!"

"What?" roared Blake.

"A footling chump! They're all footling chumps in your study, but you're the footlingest."

"Why, I—I—I'll—" Blake grabbed up the five-bat again.

"You wanted the truth!" howled Kangaroo of the Shu'l.

"You've got it! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let him rip!" chuckled Cardew. "Now he's started tellin' the truth, Blake, don't discourage him with that five-bat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Slam!

The door closed and Baggy Trimble vanished, leaving the club-room in a roar.

CHAPTER 10.

Trouble for Trimble!

BAGGY TRIMBLE wore a worried look the following day. Life was full of trouble for the fat junior of the School House.

It seemed very unfair to Baggy.

In fact, it was a regular persecution; and Baggy felt like a member of the noble army of martyrs.

The chopper had come down so suddenly! Baggy was now unaccustomed to being kicked. Kicking Baggy was really

the only efficacious way of dealing with him, and fellows often resorted to it. But systematic kicking, so to speak, was a new departure. How many untruths Baggy had told in the course of his untruthful career, he could not of course, remember; he had no brain for statistics on so huge a scale. But though he had piled crammer on whopper, fib on fabrication, like Pelion piled on Ossa, no punishment like this had overtaken him before.

The fact was, that Baggy's innumerable offences had had a cumulative effect. His House-fellows were thoroughly fed-up with Baggy; and quite a large number of them felt that it was high time that Baggy changed his ways, or had them changed for him.

There was a limit; and Baggy had reached the limit, and overstepped it, and now he had to pay the piper.

The fat Baggy had nourished a hope that the following day Tom Merry & Co. would have dismissed the whole matter from their minds. Never was a hope more elusive.

Having set their hand to the plough, as it were, Tom Merry & Co. did not turn back.

In fact, many members of the School House bore signs of the pomelling that had resulted from Baggy's remarkable gift of lying. The tussle in Study No. 10 had left its marks on all concerned. So long as thick ears and swollen noses lasted, the owners were not likely to forget that Baggy was the cause thereof.

Moreover, the scheme of reforming Trimble had caught on as a joke. It seemed likely to furnish entertainment—not to Baggy, of course; but in this case Baggy did not matter.

Trimble was a fellow who loved the limelight, of which he seldom got very much. Now he had plenty of it, and he would have been glad to withdraw into the deepest obscurity. Thus do circumstances alter cases.

But there was no modest retirement for Baggy Trimble. The eye of the House was upon him—the junior portion of the House, at all events.

Therefore his fat brow was worried, and his little round eyes developed a watchful, apprehensive look, and he began to feel that life was hard and set on a thorny path.

Force of habit was strong, and for Baggy to pass even one day within the limits of veracity was to break up all his old habits.

Hitherto, fellows had never shown any desire to listen to Baggy's conversation. He was a great conversationalist; the sound of his own voice was music to his ears, and his fat chin was the part of him that was most developed by exercise. But fellows would walk away, or even run, to escape the delights of his conversation—up till now!

Now they listened to Baggy, and let him run on as much as he liked, and Baggy knew the reason. They were lying in wait for him, as it were. The sentence had gone forth that Baggy was to get a ragging every time he lied. There was no lack of volunteers for the task; every fellow in the House seemed willing to take any amount of trouble in reforming Trimble. Even before lessons that morning fellows joined Baggy in the quad, and led him on to talk, with grinning faces, and Cardew even led to the subject of Trimble Hall, which was a sure bait. Baggy escaped by the skin of his teeth, as it were, and was still unlicked at first lesson.

But it was a wearing life. In class that morning Mr. Latham put Trimble on to construe, and, as usual, Trimble's construe was what Arthur Augustus called a "corkah." Trimble often neglected his prep, and on the previous evening he had given much more time to dodging the other fellows than to prep. But as usual the fat Baggy was ready with an excuse.

"I am afraid that you did not prepare this lesson, Trimble," said Mr. Latham severely.

"I had a fearful headache, sir," said Baggy. "I'm awfully sorry, sir, but my headache was so bad that I had to lie down in the study, sir. I did my best, sir, but my headache was so awful—"

"Well, well, never mind," said the good-natured and unsuspecting Mr. Latham.

Baggy smiled contentedly.

But the smile vanished from his fat face as he caught the expressions on the faces round him.

He had done it!

Of course, he had not had a headache the previous evening; he had not lain down in the study. Most of the Fourth knew how he had been occupied. Baggy had lied from habit, without giving the matter a thought. Long practice had made him able to roll out an untruth without stopping to think. He had "stuffed" Mr. Latham successfully. But the looks of the juniors round him showed him that he had the Fourth to consider this time, as well as the Fourth Form master.

In the Form-room his reformers could not deal with him. They had to wait till the morning break. Baggy Trimble waited in a direful state of apprehension. He knew what THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 927.

was going to happen as soon as the Fourth were outside the Form-room door.

Just before break he started up in his place.

"If you please, sir—"

"Do not interrupt me, Trimble."

"Oh, no, sir; but if you please, sir, Mr. Railton asked me to post a letter for him, sir, and I've only just remembered it," stammered Trimble.

"Bless my soul," said Mr. Latham, "that was shockingly careless of you, Trimble! Go and post the letter at once!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Baggy.

He hurried from the Form-room.

Blake & Co. exchanged glances. This was untruth the second. They knew very well that it was a dodge to get out earlier than the Form, to go into hiding until third lesson.

"Bai Jove, what a feafully deep wotah!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Cardew rose quietly to his feet. He was nearest the door, which Baggy, in his haste, had left half-open. Mr. Latham had his back turned for the moment, looking out some papers on his desk. On tiptoe, without a sound, Cardew stepped to the open door and vanished into the passage.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"Good man!" whispered Blake.

It was only a few minutes to break, and Mr. Latham, a short-sighted and rather absent-minded gentleman, did not observe that Cardew's place was vacant when he turned to the Form again. Some other fellows had moved up, spreading themselves a little, so that the vacant place did not strike the eye.

Cardew stepped quietly away from the Form-room door, in time to see a fat figure disappearing at the end of the long corridor.

He ran lightly in pursuit.

Baggy Trimble reached the staircase, no doubt with some idea in his fat mind of scuttling upstairs to the box-rooms and lying "doggo" while the Fourth were out.

But it was not to be.

"Trimble!"

Baggy blinked round in alarm, to see the cool and smiling face of Ralph Reckness Cardew just behind him.

"Oh! he was gasped.

"Hold on a minute, old bean."

"Let me say, I'm in a hurry! I—I—" stammered Baggy.

"Look here, you know, you let go my shoulder! Leggo my collar, will you? I'll jolly well punch your head, Cardew!"

"Do!" smiled Cardew.

But Trimble didn't. The result would have been painful to Trimble.

"Old man, you mustn't dodge the public view like this, and waste your sweetness on the desert air," said Cardew chidingly. "All the fellows are anxious to see you in break."

"Leggo!"

Cardew hooked Trimble away from the stairs by the collar, and then slipped his arm through Trimble's.

"Let's take a little walk till the fellows come out," he said. "It's only a few minutes now."

"I—I don't want to see the fellows."

"But they want to see you."

"Leggo!" howled Trimble.

"Not at all."

Cardew walked the fat junior away arm-in-arm. They walked out into the quadrangle, Trimble wriggling unhappily. On any other occasion he would have been pleased to be walking arm-in-arm with the grandson of a lord. On the present occasion he was not pleased.

They walked under the elms, at a distance from the House. Baggy Trimble had a foreboding why Cardew had chosen that spot. It was to keep the subsequent happenings out of the sight of the House windows.

"I—I say, Cardew, let a chap go!" pleaded Trimble.

"I—I say, be a pal, you know, and—and I'll take you home with me for the Christmas holidays to Trimble Hall."

"That's number three," said Cardew.

"What! What do you mean, you ass!"

"First, you told Lathorn you'd cut prep because you had a headache. Next, that you had a letter to post for Mr. Railton. Now you've trotted out Trimble Hall again. That makes three whoppers—a jolly good allowance for a reformed character like you, Trimble."

"I—I say, let me run into the House just for a minute," groaned Baggy. "I—I've left my purse in my study with all my money in it—"

"That's number four."

"I've got a pain, old man," mumbled Baggy. "Honest injun, I—I think I'd better go and see the House dame and get some medicine."

"Number five," said Cardew.

"Oh, you beast!"

There was a whooping of youthful voices as the Fourth Form, dismissed at last, poured out into the winter sunshine.

"There they are!" shouted Blake. "Cardew's got him!"

"Yaas, wathah! Come on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A reindeer with a pack of wolves rushing on him would have felt a good deal as Baggy felt at that moment as the Fourth-Formers swooped down on him under the elms.

"Here he is, gents," said Cardew cheerily. "I've kept him for you. He's told me three more lies in the last three minutes. Still, that shows that reform is beginnin'—his allowance is generally more than one a minute."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say—" stuttered Trimble. "I—I haven't, you know—"

"That's number six."

"Line up," said Blake. "Double row, and every fellow has to give Trimble a kick as he passes. You start him, Cardew."

"Pleased!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Baggy Trimble.

The grinning juniors lined up on either side of the path under the elms. Baggy Trimble watched them with dilated eyes, Cardew still keeping a grip on his fat arm.

"I—I say, I—I know you're only joking, you chaps!" groaned Baggy. "I—I know you wouldn't kick an old pal like me."

"Ready!" called out Blake. "Start him."

Cardew jerked the fat junior to the end of the double row of waiting juniors. The Ananias of St. Jim's wriggled.

"I say, Cardew, old chap—"

"Start!"

"Look here, old fellow— Yaroooooh!" roared Baggy, as Cardew's boot landed on his tight trousers and started him.

He staggered between the rows of waiting Fourth-Formers.

"Go it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give a fellow room!"

"Yooop!" roared Baggy. "Oh crumbs! Yaroo! Oh crick! Whoop!"

He ran for it!

The longer he lingered the more kicks he received; and he ran his hardest, with boots lunging at him from both sides. Wild yells echoed under the elms, as Baggy fairly flew.

"Oh! Ow! Wow! Oh dear! Oh scissors! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy was through at last. He staggered away from the last boot, and collapsed on a bed of fallen leaves.

"Now," said Blake, with a wink at his comrades. "Gather round, my infants, and all jump on him together!"

"Hear, hear!"

Baggy Trimble did not wait for the juniors to gather round. He picked himself up with wonderful celerity, and fled, followed by a howl of laughter.

CHAPTER 11.

More Trouble for Trimble!

"T O-MORROW, Mrs. Taggles—" "To-morrow isn't to-day, Master Trimble."

"It will be all right, ma'am," said Baggy

Trimble eagerly. "I shall get a pound-note from my uncle the first post in the morning."

Dame Taggles snifed.

Half a dozen fellows in the school shop looked round. It was teatime, and Baggy, having had tea in Hall—merely that and nothing more—was hungry! He was in his usual stony state; and after his late experiences even Baggy hesitated to attempt another study-raid. Dame Taggles was his last resource, but Dame Taggles had a strong objection to

knock on ticks. She knew her Trimble. Fellows like Tom Merry or Blake could order what they liked, remittance or no remittance; but Baggy Trimble was never known to settle a debt. So Trimble found it extremely difficult to obtain credit from Mrs. Taggles.

"First post," said Baggy persuasively. "The fact is, Mrs. Taggles, I had a letter from my uncle to-day—I've got it in my pocket now—and he mentions that he was sending me a pound-note. Only he forgot to enclose it—a mere oversight. He will send it on by the next post, of course. I should think you could trust me for five shillings, in the circumstances, Mrs. Taggles," said Baggy, with a reproachful blink at the good dame.

Mrs. Taggles hesitated.

Baggy blinked at her eagerly; in his eagerness to obtain a supply of tuck for tea, he had quite forgotten that he was "at it" again, in the hearing of six or seven of his self-constituted reformers. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther rose from a little table where they were discussing cake and ginger-beer.

"At it again, old bean!" said Lowther genially. Trimble started.

"Well, Master Trimble, if you assure me—" Mrs. Taggles was beginning.

But Trimble did not assure her. He was blinking in alarm at the Terrible Three, and at Clive and Kangaroo and Herries and Digby, who were surrounding him.

"I—I say, Tom, old chap—" murmured Trimble.

"Going strong, what?" smiled Tom Merry. "I think I've heard of that pound-note before, Trimble."

"It's true!" howled Trimble. "No business of yours, Tom Merry! What are you butting in for, I'd like to know?"

"If you'd really like to know, I'll tell you, old fat bean," said the captain of the Shell. "It's because we're reforming you. Every whopper means a ragging."

"Accidents will happen, though," said Monty Lowther seriously. "Trimble may be telling the truth this time. He says he's got his uncle's letter in his pocket."

"So I have!" exclaimed Trimble.

"Trot it out, then, and let's see."

"I—I—I'm not going to show you my private correspondence, Monty Lowther. You can't expect it."

"I don't!" agreed Lowther. "Not in the least! Trimble having confessed, you chaps, it's up to the Reform Committee to deal with him."

"I haven't!" yelled Trimble. "Look here, I—I—I'll show you the letter, if you like."

"Trot it out!"

Trimble backed away, and ran his hands through his pockets, apparently in search of a letter. The juniors watched him, grinning. They did not expect a letter to be forthcoming; and they were right. Trimble's fat hands came out empty.

"Now—now I think of it, I left it in my study," stammered Trimble. "I'll cut off and—fetch it."

"Will you?" grinned Manners.

"Yes; you see—"

"Collar him!"

"Yaroooh!"

Bump!

Baggy Trimble sat on the floor of the tuckshop. Dame Taggles stared at the scene over her counter. She was not unaccustomed to the sight of raggings in her establishment—when seniors were not present.

"Young gentlemen!" she exclaimed. "Young gentlemen!"

"It's all right, Mrs. Taggles," said Tom Merry cheerily. "We're reforming Trimble—we're going to turn him into such a truthful chap that his nearest relation won't know him next hole."

"Bump him!"

"All together!" chuckled Kangaroo. "He's a tidy weight."

"Now-ow-ow! Leggo!" roared Baggy Trimble as Tom Merry & Co. gathered round him and grasped him.

Bump!

"Whoop!"

"Give him another!"

"Bai Jove! What's goin' on, you fellows?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he stepped into the doorway of the tuckshop. "You chaps killin' a pig?"

"No; only reforming one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo!" roared Baggy Trimble. "Oh crumbs! I'll yell for a prefect! I'll— Yaroooh! Leggo!"

Baggy Trimble, with a terrific effort, tore himself loose, and bolted wildly for the door.

"After him!" yelled Lowther.

"Stop him, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stopped Trimble—but quite unintentionally. The fat junior fairly crashed into the elegant figure in the doorway, and Arthur Augustus staggered back as if a cannon-ball had smitten him.

"Oh, cwikey!" he gasped faintly.

Arthur Augustus collapsed, with Baggy Trimble sprawling breathlessly over his elegant legs.

"Oh dear! Oh cwumps! Dwaggimoff!" moaned Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a rush of the juniors from the tuckshop.

"Cave! Prefect!" exclaimed Lowther, as Knox of the Sixth came striding up, his ashplant under his arm. And Tom Merry & Co. vanished into the tuckshop again, like rabbits into a burrow.

Knox strode up and grasped Trimble by the collar. He jerked the fat junior up.

"Now, then—"

"Leggo, you rotter!"

"What?"

"You beast, let a chap go!" yelled Trimble, in his confusion supposing that it was one of the juniors who had collared him, and struggling violently.

Knox gasped with astonishment. He had Trimble by the back of the collar, and it did not occur to him that Trimble—

having no eyes in the back of his head—could not even see him.

"Let go! I'll hack your shins, you beast!" roared Trimble. "I'm not going to be ragged, you rotter! I—"
 "Is that how you talk to a prefect?" bawled Knox.
 "Wha-a-at!"

Baggy twisted his head round and blinked at Knox of the Sixth. If he had been a little less excited it might have dawned upon him that the grip on his collar was a little too hefty for a junior. His jaw dropped as he saw Knox.

"Oh!" he gasped. "I—I—oh dear! I—"
 "You'll hack my shins, will you?" stammered Knox. "You'll hack a prefect's shins! My word, these fags are coming to something!"

"Nuno! I—I—"
 "Bend over!" roared Knox, slipping his cane down into his hand. "Now, then, sharp!"

"I—I say, Knox, I—I never—"
 "Bend over!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!
 "Bai Jove, you know," said Arthur Augustus as he limped breathlessly into the tuckshop. "Twimble's baggin' it. Fancy Twimble havin' the nerve to talk to a Sixth Form prefect like that, you know!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!
 "Ow! Wow! Wow!"

"There," said Knox, tucking his cane under his arm. "Now cut off, you fat young scoundrel, before I give you another six!"

Baggy Trimble crawled away dismally. Truly, the way of the transgressor was hard!

CHAPTER 12.

Reformed!

HOPE, as the poet has assured us, springs eternal in the human breast. Baggy Trimble hoped that, in a few days at the most, he would be relieved of the useful but unwelcome attentions of the School House juniors who were bent on reforming him. But to his dismay the House seemed to warm to the work. No doubt the fellows found entertainment in reforming Trimble. It came to be looked on as a sort of game. Trimble was not keen on games at any time, but this game appealed to him less than any other. The fat and fatuous fellow, who had always yearned to bring himself into notice, now asked nothing better than to be allowed to retire into oblivion and be forgotten—and that was denied him.

Never had a fellow in the House received more attention, and never had attention been more unwelcome.

Baggy had never liked solitude. He was a gregarious youth, whose gregariousness made other fellows think how pleasant solitude might be. But now he longed for solitary places sometimes. Often and often fellows hung on his words, as if pearls of wisdom were dropping from his fat and podgy lips—waiting for a whopper! And if the whopper came—or, rather, when it came—the reformers would pile in. How often Baggy Trimble was kicked in those days, how often he was bumped, he could not surmise. But he knew that it was very, very often.

Gregarious as he was, Baggy Trimble sometimes sneaked away from the joys of society, though he was now offered more society than he was accustomed to enjoy, and all opportunities of exercising his fat chin which once would have delighted him.

He wondered how long this state of affairs was going to last. After it had lasted a few days it seemed to Baggy Trimble to have lasted almost for years.

Really, it seemed that the reformers were bent upon keeping it up till the end of the term, and if it went on till the Christmas holidays Baggy felt that it would be a mere shadow of his fat self that would crawl home dismally for Christmas.

He even thought seriously of reform. But that was difficult, if not impossible. He had to break the fixed habits of years. He thought of laying complaints before his Form master. But what was the use of complaining to Mr. Latham that the fellows were all down on him for telling lies? Evidently the remedy was in his own hands. At all events, that was certain to be his Form master's opinion. Mr. Latham was, in fact, one of Trimble's most frequent victims. It was on the fourth or fifth morning of Trimble's tribulation that Mr. Latham called to him in the Form-room:

"Trimble! You have not written your lines!"
 "Oh, yes, sir!" said Trimble at once.

He did not stop to reflect. Habit was too strong. Many and many a time had he escaped imposts by fibbing to his easy-going and unscrupulous Form master. He earned numberless imposts by laziness, slacking, and inattention, and he counted upon dodging at least half of them by lying.

"Really, Trimble, I think you must be mistaken," said

Mr. Latham, blinking mildly at Baggy over his glasses. "I did not find them in my study, and I directed you to place them on my table before bedtime yesterday."

"So I did, sir! I—I hope they're not lost, sir. It took me a long time to write them out, sir, as I was very careful with them, sir."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Latham doubtfully. He knew that he was a rather absent-minded gentleman, and that he might have slipped the impost into his wastepaper-basket and forgotten it. And he shrank from the idea of committing any injustice. "But—"

"I put them on your table, sir, and put a paper-weight on them," said Trimble. "On the corner of the table nearest the fire, sir." Trimble was always categorical in his whoppers. Details cost him nothing.

"Well, well, I will take your word, Trimble," said Mr. Latham. "But on another occasion bring them to me when I am in my study."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"
 Lessons began, and Baggy winked at his inkwell. Once more—for the untried and untripped time, so to speak—he had successfully stuffed his unscrupulous Form master.

"You fearful fibber!"
 That whisper behind him reminded Baggy. He blinked round at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and caught a dozen grinning looks cast upon him. The reformers were round him, and he was booked once more.

"Oh dear!" murmured Baggy.
 His satisfaction vanished. Had he told Mr. Latham the truth his impost would have been doubled for his negligence. But what was that in comparison with what he had to expect from the reformers? Baggy Trimble sat in a dismal mood during lessons.

"Running the gauntlet," he heard Blake whisper to Levison while Mr. Latham's back was turned a little later. "That's the idea! We'll all get hold of a bat, or a rope's end, or something, and make him run the gauntlet of the whole Form and the Shell, too—what?"

"Good!" grinned Levison.
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Top-hole wheeze!" said Cardew. "It's about time Trimble signed the 'Daily Mail' insurance coupon. He will need it before Christmas."

And there was a chuckle in the Fourth.
 Baggy Trimble listened dismally. From the bottom of his fat heart he wished that he had told Mr. Latham the truth on that occasion. He did not want to run the gauntlet of the Fourth and the Shell. Very much indeed he didn't want to.

During second lesson Baggy was thinking hard—though not of second lesson. The Fourth were waiting eagerly for break, to deal with him. Whispers reached his ears of what was in store. Baggy's fat brain worked at full pressure, and when Mr. Latham was about to give the signal to dismiss, Baggy jumped desperately to his feet.

"Mr. Latham— Please, sir—" he gasped.
 "Well, Trimble?" The Form master blinked at him over his spectacles. "What is it, Trimble?"

"I—I—I—"
 "What?"

"I—I—"
 "Bless my soul!" said Mr. Latham. "What do you mean, Trimble?"

"I—I—I—I—" stammered the unhappy Baggy.
 "Upon my word, Trimble, are you in your right senses?" exclaimed Mr. Latham. "What can you possibly mean by the incessant repetition of the first personal pronoun? Is this a foolish jest?"

"I—I—I—I—" Baggy got it out at last, with a crimson face. "I—I—I—I want to own up, sir—"

"Eh?"
 "I—I—I told you, sir—"

"Well?"
 "I—I told you a whopper, sir!" groaned Trimble.

"A—a—a what?"
 "A whopper, sir—I mean a cram—that is to say, a fib."

"Bless my soul! Do you mean that you have told me an untruth, Trimble?" exclaimed Mr. Latham, staring at him in astonishment.

"Yes, sir!" groaned Baggy.
 The Fourth Formers stared, too. Baggy had chosen it as the lesser evil, but he was in fear and trepidation.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, almost overcome. "Twimble is imp'v'ning. He's weally reformin'!"

"Bai Jove!"
 "I—I—I—I told you I'd written my lines yesterday, sir!" gasped Baggy. "I—I—I hadn't, sir."

"What?"
 "I—I—I'm sorry, sir, I—I—I told you a whopper, sir! I—I'm telling you the truth now!" spluttered Baggy.

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Latham blinked at Trimble in great surprise. Knowing nothing of the reform movement, with Baggy as its un-

(Continued on page 27.)

UP AGAINST IT!

With only a few shillings in his pocket between him and starvation, Dick Hastie sets out to find work. But nobody, apparently, wants anything to do with the son of an absconding solicitor!

A LEADER OF THE LEAGUE!

By SYDNEY HORLER.

A Magnificent New Story of League Football, describing a plucky youth's up-hill fight against overwhelming odds.



A Rebuff!

SO filled was Hastie with this new idea which he had followed up with so much enthusiastic promptitude, that it did not occur to him what sort of a reception he would receive.

But this was early seen. Directly he told his name to the clerk who asked him his business, he saw the eyes not only of the man himself but of all the other office staff look at him with a directness and an avid curiosity which was both maddening and extremely embarrassing. He might have been some remarkable exhibit by the battery of glances which was turned in his direction.

The clerk hesitated.

"I don't think Mr. Grantley—" he started nervously.

"I suggest you tell Mr. Grantley that I have called, and that I should very much appreciate a short interview with him. What does it matter what you think?"

It may not have been polite, but Dick Hastie was not feeling in a very polite mood just then. He was fed-up with that look of curious suspicion with which everyone seemed to regard him. He would have liked to have leapt over the mahogany railing and bumped all those staring clerks' heads together.

The man to whom Dick had given the curt command left the main office, tapped on a door marked "Private," and entered. He was away for several minutes, during which time Dick Hastie's already frayed nerves throbbled intolerably.

"Mr. Grantley says he will give you exactly two minutes." The clerk's tone was flagrantly insolent. It said as plainly as words could have done: "Of course, he doesn't want to see a fellow like you, and he's not going to waste time on you, either!"

"Which is Mr. Grantley's room, please?"

Once again Dick had had to call upon every ounce of self-control that he possessed. The strain was so great that anyone looking at him that moment would have declared him to have been ten years older than what he really was. His face was drawn and grim-set, and the veins on his forehead showed like small cords.

"This way."

Again the clerk was most irritatingly insolent, and again the youth who followed him would have given much to have punished him with his clenched fists; but Dick mastered himself with the greatest difficulty, and entered the main office through the wooden gate which the clerk reluctantly held open for him.

"Is that fellow going to get a job here? If he does, I shall give in my notice."

The words were evidently meant for Dick Hastie to hear. They were spoken so loudly that everyone in the big outer office must have heard them. Dick knew that the remark was meant to hurt him, and it did hurt him. It also enraged him, and the result was that when he found himself standing before Mr. Horace Grantley he was fairly trembling with rage.

"Well, what do you want?"

The solicitor had slewed round in his chair, and had shot the question almost surlily at his visitor. Mr. Grantley had not offered his hand to the son of his old business associate,

or even passed him the compliment of asking him how he was.

Dick was so astounded at the man's manner that he stood tongue-tied. He could frame no words in reply to the cold and callous greeting.

"My time is always very valuable, but this morning it happens to be particularly so," resumed the solicitor in cutting tones.

"I do not know why you have asked to see me—"

"I thought I would ask you to give me a job, Mr. Grantley. I am not quite qualified, but I have been studying law for over four years, and I have confidence that I could be of some use to you and your firm. I should not expect a big salary, of course—"

The solicitor held up his hand, interrupting the words which the youth had said more or less mechanically.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

DICK HASTIE, a young fellow of twenty, and a born footballer.
J. B. TOVEY, a football "scout" on the look-out for fresh talent for his club, the famous Swifts.

BOB LAYTON, a veteran winger of the Swifts, who takes a great fancy to Dick.

Tovey, desperately keen to sign Dick Hastie on for the Swifts, declares that he will make him an international within two years. The offer is a tempting one, and Dick agrees to be "tried out" in a reserve match between the Swifts and Clapton Orient. He acquires himself well in the match, and is offered a regular place in the team. Dick rejects the offer to turn professional, however, but agrees to play for the Swifts in his amateur capacity. Arriving back at his lodgings, his elation suffers a severe blow, for he finds, lying on the hallstand, a telegram addressed to him, which reads: "Come home at once. Terrible news." It was from his sister Sybil.

Dick rushes home, and is astounded to find that his father, a solicitor, has apparently misappropriated some thousands of pounds in his father, and promises the infuriated creditors who storm the offices that he will pay back every penny entrusted to his father. Everything that can be sold is put up for auction, and Sybil and Dick are left without a home. Having pledged his word not to Swifts, Dick has to turn down the tempting offer of the Swifts. Then, realising that he must find work elsewhere, he decides to apply for a job at a firm of solicitors, the chief of whom is an old friend of his father.

(Now read on.)

"I have already told you," he said, "that my time is particularly valuable this morning, and therefore we will cut this talk short, if you don't mind. I am afraid I cannot help you, Mr. Hastie—for obvious reasons. I cannot help you. As a matter of fact, I must go. I am somewhat surprised that you should have come to me."

"I came to you, Mr. Grantley," replied Dick Hastie slowly and distinctly, "because I thought you to be an entirely different man to what your present attitude and remarks show you to be. Like all the rest of Springdale, apparently, you, my father's closest business friend and associate, are judging him unheard. I came to you not to beg for charity, but to get some work to do which I am fully qualified to undertake."

"You seem to forget that a man in my position, and with all the business interests I have at stake, cannot afford to employ anyone about whom there is the least breath of suspicion. It is for that reason I have to refuse your request. It was for that reason I did not come here for charity. Mr. Grantley, and after your manner this morning I would sooner starve than accept any favour from you. Neither shall I take your advice and leave the town. What is more, I shall keep my present name. In spite of the present trouble, I am proud, and not ashamed, of that name! I wish you good-morning—and I am very sorry I made a mistake."

Once again he encountered the battery of curious, prying eyes in the outer office, but he returned these with defiant glances as he walked out of the building.

His soul was on fire; the monstrous injustice of kicking a man when he was down, as he had been kicked, filled him with a sense of burning resentment.

The shock of the reception he had received at the hands of the very man he felt should have sympathised with instead of condemning him, was so great that he stumbled along until he came to the eating-house in a back street of the town. He entered the place and ordered some coffee and a plate of sandwiches. The room was quiet, and he hadly wanted a quiet corner in which he could try to think out the problems that lay before him.

He must get work; that was essential. The few shillings that remained in his pocket was the only money that stood between him and actual want—starvation.

But how could he hope to get work in Springdale now that he was tainted with his father's crime? If a man like Horace Grantley would not help him, it was evident that he could hope for no better luck elsewhere. He was a marked character—that much was painfully evident—and, being a marked character, he would be always viewed with suspicion. The finger of scorn would be pointed at him no matter where he went in the town, or whatever he tried to do.

Then, like a flash, came the thought. He would leave this wretched abode of Pharisees, and go back to London—even if he had to walk all the way!

But there would be no need for him to walk. Hadn't he made good in his first game for the Swifts? Weren't the latter willing to sign him on as a professional player? A wire—and they would send him his railway fare by return, he hadn't the slightest doubt.

That was the solution. He would get the decent wage of five pounds a week to start, and with that he could live quite comfortably. Why, it was twice as much as his father had been able to allow him; and although he had had to skin and scrape, he had been happy enough during those student days, which now, alas! seemed so far away as to have belonged to a different age!

And if Sybil liked to come to London she could keep house for him! They would be happy as anything together. But the thought of his sister smashed this day-dream into a thousand pieces. He could not play for the Swifts for the very simple reason that he could not leave the town. Hadn't he promised his father's creditors that he would remain in the town so that they could see him whenever they wanted to do so. He had promised to take over his father's responsible position, and he could live up to his word—at least, in the eyes of the men to whom he had given the promise—only by standing fast in Springdale!

Thus—through his own strict sense of honour—all his hopes were shattered, and he found himself back in the

old dull state of utter despair. It was surely the most ironical position ever invented; he had pledged himself to stay in a town which viewed him with suspicion, and consequently refused to give him work, and by doing so had cut himself off from the only means he saw of being able to earn bread to live!

Football, it seemed, was the only means by which he could get a living. In ordinary business no one would trust him—not through his own fault, but because he had the misfortune to be the son of a man who had cast himself outside the pale.

Yes, he would have to rely on football for a living. Thank Heaven there was something he could do well enough to break down any prejudice. It would mean becoming a professional player, but he had never had any ridiculous or absurd views about social caste in sport; if all pro's were like dear old Bob Layton of the Swifts he would wish for no better workmates.

But, continuing this train of thought, he was again pulled up with a start. The only professional football team in the town was the notorious Springdale Albion—the very club against whom J. B. Tovey had given him such an emphatic warning! This was the team which the Swifts' scout had prophesied would ruin him, or any other decent young fellow, if he once got into their toils.

Dick remembered that when he had heard this warning on the previous Saturday—how long ago that Saturday seemed!—he had been inclined to dismiss it as so much melodramatic rubbish. But after the incredible events through which he had passed himself since that time nothing seemed too impossible.

But the Albion, if he joined them, would not ruin him. He would jolly well see to that! Thank goodness, he was well enough able to look after himself, even with his fists if the occasion arose; and, moreover, he would be in the team for strict business reasons. Still, it was not the most pleasant of thoughts—that the team to whom he intended to apply for employment bore such an unenviable reputation as to be the byword of the Three Leagues.

But that he would apply he made up his mind.

The Scorned and Rejected!

NO sooner had Dick come to this decision than he resolved to act on it. There was no time like the present; and, moreover, he was in such a desperate plight that he could not afford to waste any time.

"Going to the match this afternoon?"

Two men had entered the eating-house, and seated themselves at the next table while he was waiting for his bill to be brought, and one of them asked the question of his companion.

"Match? What match? There isn't any match to-day, is there?"

Yes; a friendly between the Albion and a team from Milltown. Don't you remember that the Albion, when they got Strang, their outside-right, from Milltown Athletic, promised to play a match with the Athletic and hand over the proceeds? That was because they couldn't afford to pay much of a transfer fee for the kid.

"Go and see a game like that!" scoffed the other in the highest disgust. "I wouldn't go across the street to see the Albion play a Cup tie, let alone a friendly! Why, they're the rottenest team in England! Goodness only knows how they got elected even to the Third Division of the English League! A dirty crowd, players and directors, if you ask me! They ought to be chucked out of Football! The team's a disgrace to the game!"

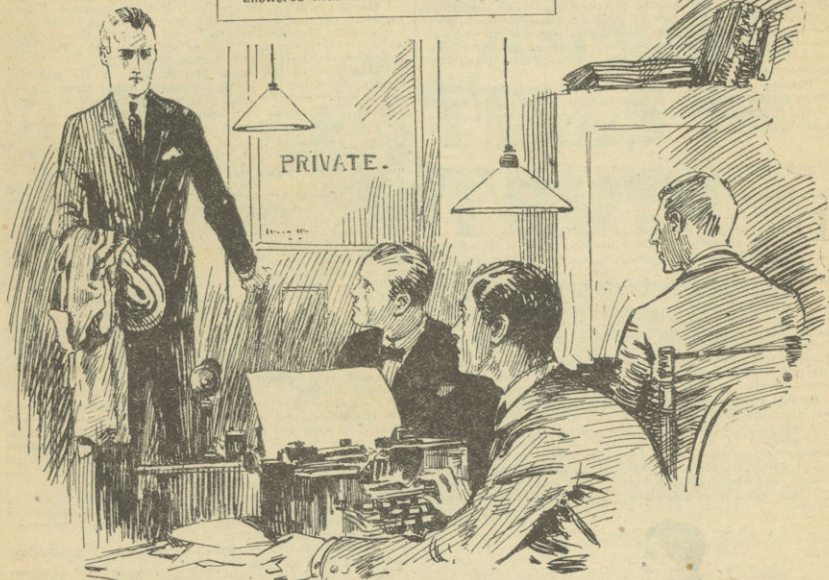
"Hold hard, Sam!"

His companion seemed partly amused and partly angry. Whatever the Albion team was he supported it, and no football enthusiastic likes to hear his team run down too harshly.

"It is right, and you know it, Bill, only you won't say so! The time will come, Bill—you see if it doesn't—when the Albion will either have to clear out of big football or change its character, lock, stock, and barrel. I'm willing to bet on that. No, Bill, I won't go to see the match! Even if it is only a friendly, the Albion will try, as usual, to half-kill half of the other side! That's the rotten kind of team they are!"

Dick Hastie did not wait to hear any more, for, his bill being forthcoming by this time, he walked to the cashier's desk, paid over the amount he owed, and then strode briskly into the street. He would kill two birds with one stone that afternoon, he suddenly resolved. He would apply to the Albion officials to be signed on as a professional, and he would also give himself the chance of seeing what kind of football this team with such a black name did play.

Once again Dick encountered the battery of curious, prying eyes in the outer office, but he answered with defiant stares. (See page 24.)



Three-quarters of an hour later he stood outside the small building on the front door of which was painted the word "Office." He had already formed a very poor opinion of the Springdale Albion ground, and the office part of it did little, if anything, to improve this impression. An air of slovenliness hung over the whole ground. What a contrast to the trim and beautifully-appointed enclosure of the Swifts, on which he had played his last game! The memory brought a lump into Dick's throat.

But the time for hesitancy had gone. He had burnt his boats—or, rather, Fate had burnt them for him—and he must go through with this thing, however much he disliked doing it.

He raised his hand, and with his knuckles knocked on the door.

"Come in!" growled a voice from inside.

Dick liked the voice as much as he liked his errand, but he went inside as ordered. Once inside the door he found himself in a short corridor, or passage, from which rooms branched off on either side. In the first room on the right, which was filled with football gear of all sorts, a man with an immense back sat at an indescribable roll-top desk. This looked as though it might have been salvaged by Noah himself for use in the Ark. Choking spirals of tobacco-smoke reeked upwards from a short black pipe which the man had between his teeth.

"Cough it up!" growled the smoker, without turning his head.

"Are you the manager, please?" Dick thought this was the best way of making a start.

It started things all right! The mammoth sitting at the untidy roll-top desk swung himself round convulsively at the words, and treated Dick to an offensively malignant stare.

"I'm the manager all right!" he growled. "But who the tarnation are you?"

"My name doesn't matter for the moment," promptly replied Dick, "but I can tell you what I want to see you about—and that is the most important matter—very quickly. I want you to give me a trial as a player."

"Ha, ha!"

Dick felt that the man had the most offensive laugh he had ever heard.

"You will excuse me, I hope, but I do not think there is a great deal to laugh at," replied the youth, who was nettled. "Recently I played as an amateur for the Swifts' Reserves against Clapton Orient in the London Combination, and did well—so well that the Swifts offered to sign me on as a professional. As a matter of fact, I did sign an amateur form for them, but I want to play for you as a professional."

If the Prince of Wales had come to Josh Meadows, the Springdale Albion manager, and had offered to keep goal for his team, he could not have shown more amazement in his coarse face than he did at the present moment. His mouth was wide open, his fleshy jaw had sagged, and his eyes were like unto those of a stranded cod.

"Are you balmy?" he bellowed suddenly, and so loudly that the words almost made Dick Hastie jump.

"What's going on in here, Meadows?"

A third person had entered the sanctum of the Springdale Albion manager. At the sight of him Dick Hastie jumped in real earnest. The newcomer was the man he had hit sprawling in his father's office. There could be no mistake; the man still bore the marks of the blow in the shape of a swollen and cut upper lip.

"This—this fly-by-night, Mr. Travers, wants me to sign him on as a pro, if you please! Says he's played before all the crowned heads of Europe, as well as the King of Siam!" Josh Meadows waved a hand that ought to have been ashamed of itself, and guffawed more coarsely and heartily than before.

The newcomer swung round. Dick Hastie had been standing in a corner, and he had not noticed him before. When the director of the Albion—for Mr. Benjamin Travers had aspired to this questionable honour—saw who the lad was his mean eyes fairly blazed with gloating triumph.

"So it's you, is it?" he snarled, as though he could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes. "Come for a job as a player, have you? Well, understand me, I wouldn't sign you on if you were Buchan, Kelly, Walker, and Steve Bloomer all rolled into one! Clear out, you swindler's scum, or I'll throw you out! Here, Meadows—"

The valiant director had instantly called upon the assistance of the manager when he saw that the youth he had so

grossly insulted evidently intended to make a retaliatory attack upon him.

But this time Dick stayed his hand. He would bide his time. Sooner or later the balance of power would be reversed, and in his favour, he felt sure. When that time came he would know how to deal with this creature. But in the meantime, he could do no good by getting physical satisfaction through punching the man's head. After all, he could not allow himself to forget that his father owed this man money.

Turning without a word, he walked out of the room. Even in this connection he had been despised and rejected.

And Springdale Albion had seemed his last hope—his very last!

Benjamin Travers Gets a Surprise!

DARK and gloomy indeed was Dick Hastie's outlook as he stepped on to the cinder pathway which led from the office of the Springdale Albion club round to the grandstand.

He was glad he had been able to master his feelings sufficiently to avert what might have proved a tragedy—for he felt like murder—but he was forced to walk rapidly away from the office, or he would have gone back on his good resolution to wait for time to bring him a chance to get his revenge on the insulting Travers. One thing he resolved, and that was he would discover how much money Travers was owed by his father, and this debt would be the first he would discharge. Then—but not until then—he would be able to meet the man without any moral qualms.

He had already paid his admission money to see the game, but after the interview with the two Albion officials he felt like getting as far away from the ground as possible. Even the prospect of watching a game of football—which in ordinary times would have kept him rooted to the ground—had no charm for him. Springdale, and all that it contained, was abominable to him in that moment; he would get out into the surrounding country, and try to forget things.



"I want to play for you as a professional," said Dick Hastie quietly. Josh Meadows' mouth opened wide, his fleshy jaw sagged, and his eyes were like unto those of a stranded cod. "Are you barmy?" he bellowed suddenly, and so loudly that the words almost made Dick Hastie jump. (See page 25.)

Putting this resolve into action, he had almost reached the entrance gates again when he felt himself suddenly seized in a firm grip, and a heavy hand clapped him resoundingly on the back.

"Hastie! Isn't it Hastie?" cried an eager voice. "What on earth are you doing in this part of the world, Hastie?"

For some seconds Dick could not "place" the speaker—a tall, well-set-up man, five or six years older than himself—but at length remembrance came to him.

"Dunster—I didn't know you at first!" He purposely ignored the other's remark, because it might mean answering so many embarrassing questions, and made an inquiry himself. "What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Playing for Milltown Athletic. I ran home to see how the 'gun nor and the rest of the crowd were getting on the day before yesterday, and Billy Maxwell, the skipper of the Athletic, who is a great pal of mine, roped me in for to-day's match.

"The Athletic are a crowd of amateurs, you know, but in consequence of one of last year's players turning pro, and signing on for the Albion, the latter have arranged to to-day's match, and have promised that the proceeds shall be devoted to the fund for the new pavilion which the Athletic are having built. I'm playing centre-forward for 'em. If you're not doing anything, come along and see Billy Maxwell; he's a great lad!"

Dick's arm was seized eagerly by the speaker, and the old player for the Bohemians—for which "crack" amateur side Dunster had made one or two appearances, hence Dick's recognition of him—was dragged along willy-nilly until the visitors' dressing-room was reached. Here Dunster introduced him to a genial giant of enormous body thickness, who proved to be Billy Maxwell, the Milltown Athletic skipper.

"Pleased to meet you!" he said to Dick Hastie. "Aren't you the Bohemians' inside-left? Ah! Well, I'm more than pleased to meet you now! They tell me to expect a rough game, even if it is only a friendly. But I can promise any of the Albion crowd who start any coarse stuff with me to look out for trouble. I go nearly fifteen stone, and when I lean against anyone something's got to go!"

The words were uttered in a tone of humorous gravity which was irresistible. Dick Hastie, who was a quick and accurate reader of character, took to the man at once.

"Telegram—Maxwell!"

A man who looked as though he might be a groundsman thrust his head through the door.

"That's from Cartwright!" choked Maxwell, the Milltown Athletic captain, as he snatched the buff envelope from the man's grimy hand. "If that fellow has let me down to-day I'll never play him again!"

He stopped speaking while he ripped open the envelope and read the telegram, and, then burst out into a fresh tirade.

"Listen, you chaps!" he called, turning to the other members of the Milltown Athletic team. "This is what Cartwright says. 'Regret unable to turn out. Awfully sorry. Awfully sorry! Well, he'll never get another game with this crowd. I can promise him that! Leaving it till the very last minute, too! Now we're a man short; what the deuce I can do I don't know—I say.' He added, turning swiftly to Dick Hastie, 'would you care for a game to-day? You'd be doing me a tremendous favour if you would turn out! What do you say? You can see how awkwardly I'm fixed.'"

Dick Hastie's heart gave a great jump. It was funny how things sometimes worked out. He had brought his footer togs along in case the Albion might care to give him a trial in that very match, and here he was being asked to play for

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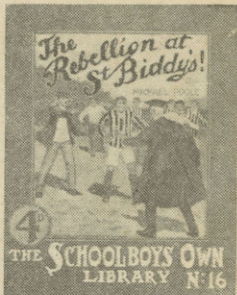


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the other side, after being turned down by the Albion? Would he play? He'd play until he dropped!

"Nothing I should like better," he replied, and the face of Billy Maxwell smiled once more.

"Got any toes here—you haven't, I suppose?"

"Yes, I have! They're in this bag. After the game is over I'll tell you why I brought them along. It's rather a good story, I think, and it will keep."

"I don't care a hang about your secrets so long as you help me put a decent team in the field! Mathers"—Maxwell turned to a stockily-built youngster who was already changed—"I'll get you to play left-half to-day, if you don't mind, and Mr. Hastie will then be able to play in his usual position at inside-left. Hastie, here's Finlay, who will play on the wing to you."

He indicated a wiry boy with the lean legs of a human greyhound who came forward somewhat sheepishly, and held out his hand.

"Pleased to meet you," he said. "I hope I sha'n't let you down. You're quite a famous player, I'm given to understand, and it will be an honour for me to play with you."

Dick flushed with pleasure. He could not help recalling that he had said practically the same words to Bob Layton, the Swifts' star winger, when he had been introduced to him. He didn't know about being a famous player himself, but he was going to strain every nerve to give of his best that day. He would show that he could be trusted in one respect at least!

He did his changing in quick-fire time, and stood up with the rest of the amateurs as the door of the dressing-room opened.

"Are you all ready, gentlemen?" inquired an unpleasant voice that he had every reason to remember.

"All ready, thank you. I suppose you can let us have a practice-hall for the kick-in!" replied the Milltown Athletic captain.

"Certainly; I'll get you one at once."

Mr. Benjamin Travers, all unaware of the surprise of his life which awaited him, returned with a much-worn and out-of-shape practice-hall—to stare straight into the set features of the youth he had so recently insulted!

"You!" he almost screamed. "What are you doing in our dressing-room?"

(It seems that Mr. Benjamin Travers is out to make himself as objectionable as possible, but Dick has a very good put in Maxwell. Read what happens to the young amateur in next week's sensational instalment of this fine story. boys.)

TRIMBLE TELLS THE TRUTH!

(Continued from page 22.)

happy object, he supposed that Trimble's fat conscience had been at work, and he was gratified as well as surprised. His look was quite benevolent.

"Then you had not written the lines, Trimble?"

"N-n-n-no, sir."

"You informed me that you had placed them on the table in my study."

"I—I—I hadn't, sir!" groaned Trimble.

"It is very mean to speak falsely, Trimble—very mean and base!" said Mr. Lathom. "I am very glad that you have realised this, and have owned up in this way. In the circumstances, therefore, I shall excuse you, and trust that, in deceiving me, you acted thoughtlessly, and that your conscience would not allow you to leave me in error. I trust you are a truthful boy at heart."

"Yes, sir; that's just it," said Baggy eagerly.

Then he caught Blake's eye.

"I—I mean, sir, that isn't it!" he gasped.

"What? What?"

"Not at all, sir," stammered Baggy.

"Do you mean that you are an untruthful boy, Trimble?" exclaimed the astonished Form master.

"Oh dear! Yes, sir!" groaned Baggy.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Lathom. "Well, I am at least glad that you are aware of your errors, Trimble, and I trust that that you will endeavour to correct them. You need say no more."

And the Fourth were dismissed.

Baggy Trimble rolled out with the rest; and in the corridor Arthur Augustus clapped him on the shoulder.

Trimble gave a yell.

"Hands off, you beast! I told the truth, didn't I?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I was not collahin' you, Twinkle! I was goin' to offah my congwattals on your weform!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"Oh!" gasped Trimble.

"Well done, Baggy!" chortled Jack Blake. "We were going to make you run the gauntlet. Do you feel ill?"

"Ill? No."

"Well, if you can tell the truth without feeling any ill-effects, keep it up, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

(Continued on next page.)

"Hallo! What's the merry joke?" asked Tom Merry, coming along from the Shell room.
 "Trimple's told the truth."
 "What?"
 "Pan me!" murmured Monty Lowther.
 "Help!" gasped Manners.
 "Yaas, wathah; he's told the twuth, of his own accord!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "Actually stood up and told the twuth like a little man! I'm not exaggerwatin', deah boys! Trimple's told the twuth!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've reformed him!" chuckled Tom Merry.
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Yah!" snorted Baggy Trimple.
 And he rolled away, followed by a roar of laughter.
 THE END.

(To reform Baggy Trimple might be regarded as a noteworthy achievement—and get the success of this reformation is short-lived. Baggy DOES tell the truth in next week's grand story, but even the truth sometimes has its drawbacks. On that you will all agree when you have read—"Too Good for St. Jim's," by Martin Clifford.)

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