

"FLATS and SHARPS at ST. JIM'S!" SCREAMINGLY FUNNY LONG
COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY INSIDE.

The GEM

2^D



MEET PERCIVAL PILBEAM, FIDDLING FORM MASTER! HE THINKS—

FLATS AND SHARPS

CHAPTER I.
Borrowing Tower I.

TAP!
"Come in!" called Jack Blake, the Cashier of the Fourth at St. Jim's.

The door of Study No. 8, where Blake & Co. were gathered, was pushed open, and the cheerful face of Tom Merry, the captain of the Shell, looked into the room.

It was a Wednesday afternoon, and therefore a half-holiday at St. Jim's. Since dinner rain had been falling, but it looked as though it would clear up at any moment now.

"Hallo, hallo!" sang out Tom Merry cheerfully, stepping into the study. "I say, Horrie, old top, I want to ask—ahem!—a little favour! I want you to lend—"

"Berry, old boss," said George Horrie, with a very grimace, "but I'm sorry-look. Only got Sorpesons in the world just now! Better ask old Gloss-look. The One and Only is rolling in tin, as usual—"

"But Jove! I refuse to be referred to as the One and Only!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the rival of St. Jim's, surveying Horrie through his gleaming monocle with his hatbox. "I consider that an offensive reference, Horrie! I consider—"

"Well, pack up your consider, and lend old Tommy what he wants," grinned Horrie cheerfully.

"But Jove! Of course, I shall be only too pleased to make Tom Merry any loan he wishes, but I still consider—"

"Thanks awfully, George!" cut in Tom Merry hastily, with a smile. "But I didn't come here to borrow any tin." He glanced again at Horrie. "Horrie, old chap, I—I wonder if you'd be sporting enough to lend me Tower for the afternoon?"

"Tower?" asked Horrie, with a jump.

"Tower!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, with equal astonishment.

Blake and Digby also stared at Tom Merry in great surprise. The captain of the Shell grinned and nodded.

"Yes, old Tower!"

"Tower was Horrie's hall-day, in Horrie's opinion, Tower was a dog in a thousand. But Tower was not popular with his—Horrie's—chose. Tower had probably raised more pairs of trousers in his life than any other building in England, to say nothing of caps and slippers and books and smelly other articles.

"Gwer Scott!" Arthur Augustus surveyed Tom Merry as though he doubted the reality of the Shell's sanity.

"Why should you want to borrow that beast, Tommy?"

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"Oh, what's that!" roared Horrie, glaring at his noble chest with reddened countenance. "If you want a thick waist, you deserve—"

"Check it, you fool!" exclaimed Tom Merry quickly, stepping hastily between Horrie and Arthur Augustus as they glared at one another. "I didn't come here to start a row in Study No. 8! I only want to borrow old Tower, Horrie—"

"What do you want to borrow Tower for?" demanded Horrie, rather suspiciously.

Where Tower was concerned, Horrie was inclined to be rather touchy. He half suspected a little jape at Tom Merry's part, but apparently, did the others.

"What the dickens do you want with the beast?—I mean, with old Tower?" Digby corrected himself hastily, as Horrie glanced round at him.

"It's like this!" Tom Merry explained. "You know old Pilbeam is coming this afternoon?"

"Pilbeam? What's Pilbeam got to do with it?" asked Horrie suspiciously.

Mr. Pilbeam was the new master of the Shell, who was coming to St. Jim's to replace Mr. Linton, the former

GOOD-BYE, LATIN! GOOD-BYE, GREEK!

It's music all the time at St. Jim's now that the music-mad master has arrived. Get started on this riotous long complete yarn of Tom Merry and Co. at St. Jim's, boys!

—HE'S 'A BORN MUSICIAN, BUT NOBODY ELSE DOES!

AT ST. JIM'S!

By
Martin Clifford



"What's Filbeam got to do with Tomer?" repeated Herrick guardedly. "It's like this," repeated Tom Merry. "Naturally, the Shell are jolly keen to see Filbeam and get an idea of what he's like—"

"I'll bet you are!" grinned Blake.

"So some of us have decided to busy along to the station and meet the train," went on Tom cheerfully. "We'll offer, of course, to conduct him to the school. And old Talbot has suggested that we ask him to tea—"

"But Jones?"

"I know it isn't usual for chaps to ask masters to tea in the dining, of course," nodded Tom Merry. "But the Head and old Railton have both had to go out this afternoon, so know, so Filbeam won't be having tea with either of them, as I guess he would have done otherwise. But he'll want some tea—and as Talbot says, there's no harm in asking him to have tea with us. If he will, it'll be a ripping chance of getting to know him and seeing what sort of a chap he is."

"That's so," a good ugly. "But Tomer—"

"That's where Tomer comes in," explained Tom Merry, with a laugh. "We've laid out a bit of a spread in Study No. 10, all ready in case Filbeam accepts our giddy invitation. It's a bit of a bad luck the lock on the door has gone wrong, and won't work. And with Buggy Trouble across—"

"Oh! of course I see!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake & Co. chuckled. Now they understood.

Buggy Trouble of the Fourth, the famous jester at St. Jim's, was the most (private) back-raider that ever lived. A cake or a exhibition, or even a job of lace, was never safe for a moment if left unguarded when Buggy Trouble was in the neighborhood. Mervyn Leather, the humorist of the Shell, had declared that Buggy's nose was so constructed by Nature that he could smell a single lametta from a distance of three miles. Mervyn Leather perhaps exaggerated, but there was no doubt at all that the spread in Study No. 10 of the Shell, which had been prepared for Mr. Filbeam, would never be enjoyed by that gentleman if it were left unguarded in an uncollected study while the Shell fellows were off to meet his train. Buggy would find it for a cost—and ~~half~~ the lot!

master of that famous Farm, Mr. Linton having left the school for good on indenting a big Boston society. Mr. Linton had taken up his residence at Fosses Towers, a big old house a few miles on the other side of Wayland, which he had purchased upon his retirement. This afternoon the new master was due to arrive on the three-thirty train—a few days later than he had at first been expected. The whole school was interested in Mr. Filbeam's arrival; but the Shell fellows were, of course, intensely so. They were very anxious to know just what they were in for in the way of a Farm master.

Mr. Linton had had his faults; but he had also had many good points, and the Shell realized that they might very easily get a change for the worse with the arrival of Mr. Filbeam. On the other hand, they might get a change for the better.

For one reason, at any rate, they were thoroughly glad that the new master was turning up at last. Since the departure of Mr. Linton the Shell had been taken by Dr. Holman, the old Head himself. And Linton under the scrutiny eye of the dignified headmaster of St. Jim's were rather an unenvying ordeal most of the Shell had agreed.

"See!" grinned Tom. "Buggy's been hanging round all the afternoon. We thought if we could leave old Tomer tied up in the study he'd guard the giddy feed for us if the fat picnic tried to collar anything!"

"You bet he would," nodded Herrick enthusiastically.

"Tomer's a great watchdog; he wouldn't let a soul touch that feed. He's so jolly intelligent—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herrie glared at him.

"Do you mean old Towser ain't intelligent?" he roared.

"Oh, no, no, rather not!" gasped Blain.

"Will you lead him to us?" asked Tom quickly.

"All right," Herrie roared. "I'll go and fetch him and bring him up to your study right away."

"Good egg! Thanks awfully!"

Tom grinned and departed.

CHAPTER II.

Barkett & Co. on the Warpath!

"GOD old Towser!"

"Good dog!"

"Wood!" Towser wagged his stumpy tail.

"Wood!"

Towser was standing on the carpet in Study No. 10 of the Shell, with a length of stout cord attached him by the collar to a table, where he had just been summoned by Herrie. Tom Merry & Co., Reginald Talbot, Kangaroo, the Australian jester, Bernard Gips, George Alfred Grandy, and one or two other leading lights of the Shell were gathered round, surveying Towser, with grinning faces.

"Good old Towser!" chuckled Mopsy Lovelace.

"Your tail'll be safe enough with Towser looking after it," said Herrie solemnly, glancing at the table. "Trust old Towser!"

The table in Study No. 10 was certainly in need of a guardian! The good things laid out upon it were not only very tempting, they were also very plentiful. If the new master accepted his pupils' invitation to tea, all these now present wanted to join in the meal, so enough took had been prepared in honor of Mr. Pillsbury and Baggy Trimble, the Falstaff of the Fourth, could probably have devoured the lot without blinking!

But with Towser on guard, Baggy would not get a chance! Herrie frequently heaved at Towser's intelligence; some of his chums disagreed with him on that point—but there was no doubt that Towser was at any rate intelligent enough to know when he was left on guard, and to allow no one to touch the spread beneath which the table in Tom Merry & Co.'s study was grinning.

Tom Merry glanced at his watch.

"Come on, you chaps! The time we lunched along to the station!"

"Right!" nodded Grandy.

"O.K. with me," drawled Cyrus E. Handcock, the jester from the land of sky-scrapers and chewing-gum. "Let's beat it!"

Tom Merry & Co. and their friends crowded from the study, and Massena closed the door, with a last grinning glance at Towser. Herrie added to the Shell fellows, and went off in the direction of the Fourth Form passage as the others made their way down to the quad.

The rain had stopped as the little crowd of Shell jesters came out on to the steps that led up from the quad to the big doorway of the School House. Four figures were standing there.

"Here they come!"

It was the voice of Frederick Barkett, the gigantic bully of the Shell, that greeted Tom Merry & Co. and their companions as they emerged from the School House doorway. Barkett was leaning at the top of the steps with his pal Crooke of the Shell, and two of his toadies—Percy Mellish of the Fourth and Chowie of the New House.

"Off to meet Pillsbury, aren't you?" grinned Barkett. He gave a gasp. "Well, I'm blessed! Who'd have thought all you chaps would start toddling to the new master like this! How, how?"

"Why, you silly ass—!" began Grandy hotly.

"Out of the line, Barkett!" growled Massena.

"Bain!" growled Barkett. "You a right to stand here, haven't I? I—oh crumbs! Oh! Whoops!"

Barkett was very big, and he was very hairy, but even he would have done wisely to have stepped aside and made way for the little crowd of his Form fellows who were descending the steps! However, he had not stepped aside—and consequently, he had been pushed. He fell in balance, and the next moment the big Square of Frederick Barkett had gone sprawling in a large puddle at the foot of the steps.

"Splish! Sploosh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Voweh!" spluttered Barkett, sitting up and gurgling muddy water from his eyes. "Oh, my hat! I—"

Bracing high-diving, Barkett, old chap! grinned Mopsy Lovelace. "But I can't say you're very stylish—"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll jolly well slaughter you!" gasped Barkett, scrambling to his feet, dripping wet, and clenching his big fists.

He blinked stupidly along them as they vanished out of the gates and turned in the direction of the village. His face was almost purple with rage as he scrambled up and turned to his three cronies, Crooke, Mellish, and Chowie had been grinning, but now they composed their faces hastily.

"Hand luck, old chap!" exclaimed Crooke, hurrying to his leader. "Pushed you into a puddle, didn't they?"

"Haven't you got eyes?" roared Barkett. "Of course they did! My hat, I'll pay 'em out for that! By George, I will! I—I'll slaughter the lot of 'em!"

"Them?" coughed Mellish.

Though Barkett was a match for two or three average jokers at a time, there was one fellow in the Shell who could look him; that was Tom Merry! In threatening to "slaughter" Tom Merry and the others, even Barkett was talking rather rashly.

"Don't be an ass," said Crooke bluntly. "You can't do that."

"Who says I can't?" bellowed Barkett fiercely.

"Ahem—"

"Ha, ha, ho!" There was a sudden snigger from Mellish. "I'll tell you what—let's rag their lead! You know that spread they've got ready in Study No. 10 for the new master—"

"I say, that's a wheeze!" said Crooke brightly.

Barkett's swelling countenance brightened, too. A grin appeared on his rugged face.

"Yes, that's a good scheme!" he agreed. "You're not such a fool as you look, Mellish."

"Thanks!" said Mellish dryly. Mellish, in his crafty way, had plenty of brains—far more than Frederick Barkett, who ran to brains, but not to grey matter! "Thanks!"

"Not at all," said Barkett kindly. "I say, lend me that."

He reached out and calmly took the clean white handkerchief that had been adorning Mellish's bosom pocket, and began to wipe the red splashes from his face and clothing. Mellish gave a yell.

"Here, give me my handkerchief—"

Barkett, towering above Mellish, glared down at him.

"What's that?" he growled. "I can borrow your handkerchief if I want to, can't I? If you've any objection, just say so!"

"Oh, all right," mumbled Mellish. "I—I've no objection."

"Good," growled Barkett, and continued cleaning himself up with the previously spotted handkerchief; it was anything but spotless, however, when he headed it back to Mellish, who put it calmly back into his pocket. "Now," said Barkett, briskly, "what about Tom Merry & Co.'s dinner?"

"Let's collar the lot!" suggested Chowie.

"Bain!" Mellish shook his head. "I've got an idea worth ten of that! They've got one of those big chocolate sandwich-cakes—Mrs. Taggitt's special. I saw Tom Merry buying it. Well, doctor, it will rag 'em good! And when the chaps see masses taken a bite out of it—and they're sure to offer it to him before they touch it themselves, of course—he'll have a mouthful he won't dare touch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, won't they have noticed the door?" exclaimed Chowie, as they made their way up the stairs.

"Well, just it is, if they have!" grinned Barkett.

But, rather to their surprise, Barkett & Co. found that the door of Study No. 10 was not locked. Barkett pushed it open, and strode into the study.

"Here we are!" he exclaimed. "My hat, look at all this tuck! What a spread! I— Oh! You! Help! You!"

Barkett had failed to notice the figure of Towser curled up under the table! But Towser had not failed to notice Barkett's entry, and, true to his trust, he had got busy very promptly! Barkett gave an anguished yell as he felt a pair of rusty jaws fasten on to his ankle like a mantrap.

"Oh! Oh crumbs! What the dickens— Youch! Help!"

Barkett leapt back from the table like an Indian doing a wild war-dance. His movement was so sudden that his ankle jerked free of Towser's teeth. It was so sudden, too, that Crooke, Mellish, and Chowie had no time to get out of their leader's way. Barkett crashed backwards into them, and all four collapsed in a straggling, gaping heap in the passage.

"You!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Yaroo! Gerro! my shoos, you see!" panted Mellish feebly. He was pained down, half suffocated, by Barbett's hairy arm, which was seated on his waistcoat. "Oh, yaroo! Gerro!"

Barbett scrambled up. Mellish lunged to his feet, glaring at his leader.

"You dummy!" he roared. "What did you do that for?"

"That blessed dog!" gasped Barbett, hopping on one foot and nursing his injured ankle. "Yov! He bit me!"

"Look out!" yelled Mellish.

Tower had been straining all the time on the cord that fastened him to the table. Horrie, apparently, had tied the cord carelessly. It had given way at last, and the next moment Tower was leaping across towards the doorway, the cord flying behind him, his teeth bared.

"Yarooop!" gasped Barbett.

The body of the Shell turned to bolt, and so did Crooks and Mellish and Chowie. For a moment the four of them were wriggling, struggling, in the doorway. Then they hurried out into the passage, and after them hurried Tower.

Crooks missed his footing and went sprawling. Barbett and Mellish turned and roared off in one direction, and Chowie in the other.

"Gree-ee!"

Tower was not built for speed, but he was covering the ground at a surprising rate now.

For some reason he ignored Crooks and rushed down the passage in pursuit of Chowie, who was heading for the stairs at something like thirty miles an hour. The New House fellow glanced over his shoulder and saw the water coming after him, and gave a wild yell.

Barbett and Mellish, from the other end of the passage, had realized by now that Tower was pursuing the unlucky Chowie, and came hurrying back to the open doorway of Study No. 11.

"Poor old Chowie!" grimaced Mellish breathlessly. "Quick! Help us! Tower comes back!"

Followed by Barbett and Crooks, Mellish hurried into the study.

It being a half-holiday, the Shell studies were all deserted at that hour of the afternoon. No one had heard the din raised in the passage when Tower had got busy. Barbett and his chums were free to carry out their little scheme, if they could only do so before Tower returned.

Mellish darted across to the cupboard, and soon found what he was seeking—a pepper-pot. He turned quickly to the table, where the pile of good things prepared for the new master's tea were spread in gorgeous profusion.

From Crooks there came a sudden, excited exclamation.

"Look!"

He was staring out of the window into the quad. Barbett and Mellish did the same.

A flying figure could be seen racing across towards the New House. It was Chowie, with the angry Tower still hot on his heels.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Barbett.

"Yes to one on Tower!" grinned Mellish.

"Poor old Chowie!" gasped Crooks, tears of mirth streaming down his face. "Oh, my hat! He's got him! Ha, ha, ha!"

As Chowie had leapt frantically for the New House steps, Tower had also leapt—a fraction quicker. His teeth had come together in the seat of Chowie's trousers, and even at that distance Barbett, Crooks, and Mellish could hear the rustling tearing sound as the trousers parted.

Chowie vanished into the New House, leaving Tower on the steps, a ragged square of cloth hanging from his jaws. Barbett, Crooks, and Mellish fairly shrieked. Safe at the window of Study No. 10, they seemed to have very little sympathy for the unfortunate Chowie. But the next moment Mellish's jaw dropped.

"Look out! Tower's coming back!"

"Oh crooked! Quick!"

Tower had turned, and was now trotting back across the quad towards the School House. Mellish's laughter died away abruptly. With the pepper-pot clutched in his hand, he leaped swiftly to the table, while Crooks edged nervously towards the door.

"Dash up!" urged Barbett.

Mellish did not need to be told that! With the aid of a knife he hastily sliced off the top layer of the ham-slice, chocolate sandwich, in the corner of the table, and emptied the contents of the pepper-pot on to the creamy layer below. He replaced the top section swiftly, and gave a breathless shriek.

"Old Pillsbury'll know it when he bites into that!"



Barbett lost his balance, and the next moment his huge figure had gone sprawling in a large puddle at the foot of the school steps.

"Ha, ha, ha! Come on!"

Barbett and Mellish roared for the door, Mellish clanking it behind him. At that instant Tower appeared at the head of the stairs and came tearing down the passage, growling hoarsely at sight of the startled trio.

They did not stand upon the order of their going; they went. Barbett, Mellish, and Gerald Crooks lay for the door of Study No. 7 as if their lives depended on it.

The door of Study No. 7 slammed. In the passage Tower stood, with the seat of Chowie's legs hanging from his mouth, and wagged his stumpy tail triumphantly.

For a moment or two he surveyed the door of Study No. 7 expectantly. Confused sounds could be heard from within. But it did not open, and at last Tower turned again towards Study No. 10.

But the door of Study No. 10 was closed. Tower scratched at it. It did not open, however, and after a few sniffs at the crack beneath it, he evidently made up his mind that his job there must be finished. With the seat of Chowie's trousers still hanging from his jaws, Tower turned and trotted off in the direction of the stairs, to seek fresh fields and pastures new, so to speak.

Across the quad the deep tones of the school clock began to strike half-past three.

At that moment the train bearing Mr. Pillsbury, the new master of the Shell, was arriving at Rycombe Station. When Tom Moory & Co. and the other Shell fellows who had gone

to meet the new master returned to St. Jim's, it looked as though a little surprise would be waiting for them in Study No. 10.

As the last note of the half-hour died away a stop sounded at the end of the Shell passage in the other direction from that taken by Towser.

A fat figure rolled into sight.

The fat figure of Buggy Trimble of the Fourth!

CHAPTER 3.

Mr. Fitzsim's Antics.

THERE was a disconcerting expression on Buggy Trimble's face.

"Buggy was hungry!"

"Hush!" muttered Buggy, as he rolled along the passage. "Mean bewans, all of them!"

He came to a halt outside the door of Study No. 12. His mouth watered as he stared sulkily at the closed door.

Buggy had seen Tom Merry & Co. and the others carrying the good things into the study after dinner. He remembered the delicious pork-pie, and bags of lovely pastries, the jars of jam, the tin of biscuits, the big chocolate sandwich. His stomach growled.

Although he had eaten enough dinner to satisfy four persons, Buggy was still hungry.

His fat fingers went out to the door handle. The door was locked, of course, he felt sure, but he could not resist trying the handle.

"May giddy aunt!"

Buggy Trimble had never been so astonished in his life as he was at that moment when the door of Study No. 12 opened easily to his touch. The door swung back, and

Buggy found himself staring in with blank astonishment at the heavily laden table within.

"Oh!" breathed Buggy. "Mum-mum-mum ha!"

He glanced round hastily. There was no one about. Like a flash the Fatball of the Fourth recovered from his dazed astonishment and shot into the study, closing the door behind him.

That he was safe for some little time he felt sure. Drawing a chair up to the table, Buggy sat down, and got to work! A couple of port-pies vanished in a twinkling.

"That chocolate sandwich looks prime!" gasped Buggy, reaching out for it.

He seized a bun and cut himself a large slice.

"Ho, ho, ho!" muttered Buggy. "Wouldn't Tom Merry & Co. be wild if they could see me now? Serve 'em right! They're a lot of mean rascals! Never give a chap any back! I'll teach 'em! I'll—oh! Cooooooh!"

Buggy Trimble had long to his face with a wild yell, a hand clapped to his mouth, his eyes bulging, his fat face dropping as he ran round to a violent paroxysm. There was a crash as the doctored cake fell to the floor, plate and all.

"Coooooh! Oh! Oh!"

Mellish's pepper had been laid out thick, and Buggy had taken a big, greedy mouthful. He felt at that moment as though his tongue was being burnt out at the roots, and as though his throat was lined with red-hot coals. Preparation streamed down his fleshy countenance as he turned and staggered with bulging eyes and both hands clamped over his mouth to the door.

"Yoooh! Mum-mum-mum! Cooooooh—"

"My giddy aunt!"

There was a startled exclamation from the passage, as Buggy Trimble staggered out of Study No. 12, his one idea to get to the bath-rooms and bury his head in a basin of cold water. Through his streaming eyes Buggy saw three figures in the passage—Barbott, Crooks, and Percy Mellish.

Buggy could not speak. Weird and wonderful noises were the only sounds that he could make.

"Cooooooh! Mum-mum-mum!"

In a flash it was clear to Barbott & Co. what had happened. They had ventured forth from Study No. 7 on hearing strange noises, as they had thought. Great Study No. 12, to find that Towser was no longer on his watch. But Buggy was—and as they realized that Buggy had spoilt their little scheme by himself sampling the doctored cake, their first astonished quiet gave place to rage.

"You—you—you—" spluttered Mellish.

"You fat jabberwock!" yell of Barbott. "You've spoiled everything! Why, you—"

It was certainly like adding insult to injury to abuse Buggy for having sampled that doctored cake. But Buggy had no time to stop and listen. He turned with bulging eyes, and rushed away.

He was heading for the bath-rooms. But in Barbott & Co. it seemed that he was running for fear of chastisement. Instinctively they started in pursuit.

"Calla him!" yelled Barbott.

"We'll teach him to interfere with our whoans!" gasped Mellish.

"My hat, you!" roared Crooks. "I'll slaughter him!"

Crash! Ruff, bang, thump!

Buggy had seized his footing at the top of the stairs and went sailing down them, with a gasping yell, flying about every fourth stair in transit.

Dump, bump, bump!

At every bump, Buggy yelled. He landed at last at the bottom, and sat up dazedly as Barbott, Mellish, and Crooks arrived at the top of the stairs in angry paroxysm.

"Come back, you fat little beast!" thundered Barbott.

"I'm going to skin you!"

"Oh, ho!" roared Buggy.

He scrambled up hastily.

He fairly flew down into the Hall and out into the quad, with the furious figure of Barbott hot on his heels and Mellish and Crooks a bad third and fourth.

"I'll smash him!" bellowed Barbott, as he tore across the Hall and out on to the top of the steps that led down into the quad. "I—I—"

He broke off, and came to a standstill. There was no sign of Buggy in the quad.

"Where the dickens has the fat rotter got to?" gasped Barbott.

Crooks and Mellish came panting up. As they did so Crooks hung out a pointing hand.

"There he goes!"

A fat figure had emerged heavily from the oval shed, wheeling a bike. It was Buggy Trimble. The Fatball of the Fourth had evidently decided that the only thing to do was to get clear of the school altogether for the time being, until Barbott's wrath had subsided, and he had taken



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advantage of his long lead to dash straight to the cycle and get his bicycle for that purpose.

It was a very nice bicycle—a new one—a present from his father. But Buggy was not, unfortunately, a very skilful cyclist. He scrambled into the saddle somehow, however, and wobbled desperately to wards the gates as Burdock & Co. tore down the slope in hot pursuit.

"Collar him!" bawled Mellick.
Driving the peddle round for all he was worth, Buggy got up speed in the nick of time. Burdock hurried himself forward to grasp the service, but missed by an inch and lost his balance. Buggy shot away, and Burdock went sprawling on the gravel with a yell.

"You!" gasped Burdock.
Buggy shot a desperate glance back over his fat little shoulder, and gave a gasp of relief as he saw the big figure of Burdock scrambling up painfully. A breathless grin appeared on his fat features as he flew on towards the gate. He was safe!

From Mellick there broke a sudden started shout.
"My hat! Look out!"
A group of figures had appeared in the gateway, fell in the path of Buggy Trimble's wildly careering bike.

Tom Merry & Co. Talbot, Grandy and the others were entering the quad, and with them was a tall figure that could only be Mr. Filbeam, the new master of the Shell. They were back early. In a flash Mellick realized that the new master must have arrived at Weyland by a slightly earlier train. It was clear, too, that Mr. Filbeam and the juniors had decided to enjoy the sunshine by walking from the station.

And they had arrived just in time to meet Buggy coming out.

Buggy Trimble, glancing round at Burdock, heard a sudden excited yell, and turned his head. A yell of dismay burst from him as he found himself charging full tilt for the tall figure of the elderly gentleman entering the quad with the Shell fellow.

"Look out!" cried Tom Merry instinctively, in startled tones.
"Buggy, you horribler!"
"Bibber my word!" gasped the tall figure at his side.

Mr. Filbeam—Mr. Percival Filbeam, to give him his full name—was a tall gentleman, with ruddiness cheeks and mild, brown eyes. His distinctly mild appearance was helped by the procedure on his upper lip of a drooping, sandy moustache. He had rather an air of absent-mindedness about him; but at the moment, with Buggy Trimble shooting towards him in the saddle of a bounding push-bike like a cowboy on a bucking broncho, that air of mild absent-mindedness had abruptly vanished!

Mr. Filbeam surveyed Buggy Trimble's careering figure with startled alarm.
"How do you do!" repeated Mr. Filbeam breathlessly.
"Oh!"

Buggy, clinging to the handlebars for dear life as he shot straight for the new master, had the choice of hitting into Mr. Filbeam or of swinging aside into one of the pillars of the gateway. If he chose Mr. Filbeam he would probably have himself a good deal of hurt, but would equally probably hurt Mr. Filbeam very much indeed—with unpleasant results for Buggy later!

Consequently, Buggy chose the latter!
Crash!
"Tag!"

A few moments later Buggy found himself sliding dazedly amid the ruins of his wrecked machine, rather like Marley amid the ruins of Carthage. One of the buckled wheels was round his neck, his feet were through the other, and most of the contents of the tool-kit had somehow become littered in his hair. He sat and gasped, blinking dazedly at the perfect solar system of stars that seemed to be circling round his bullet head.

"Oh!" gasped Buggy Trimble feebly. "You! Oh, ho!"
"How my word!" ejaculated Mr. Percival Filbeam yet again. "Bibber my word!"

CHAPTER 4.
No Luck for Buggy!

"H A, ha, ha, ha!"
From the direction of the School House stole a yell of laughter rang out across the quad.

Burdock & Co. were coming.
"My giddy aunt!" ejaculated Minty Louther. "What's the idea, Buggy? Practising for speedway racing, or what?"

"What ever is the meaning of this?" gasped Mr. Filbeam helplessly.

Tom Merry, Cyrus K. Handcock, and Grandy hurried to

Buggy and raised him to his feet. Grinning, they dis-entangled him from the coils of his bike.

One thing was certain—the new bike which his father had given to Buggy Trimble would never be ridden again by Buggy or anyone else!

"Oh!" moaned Buggy. "I—I'm injured! My spine's broken in three places, you claps, I think!"

"Rubbish!" grinned Tom Merry.
"Oh, really, Mervy! I—I'm in great pain. I believe I need some assistance to pull me through, you know. If you fellows will carry me gently to the tailboard, and lay me some blankets and a dozen or two of tartar, it would save my life, I expect!"

"Think you'll die otherwise, old chap?" asked Messers sympathetically.

"Yes!" moaned Buggy.
"Good! Then leave him here to die!" said Messers brightly. "Come on!"

And Tom Merry and the others, grinning, turned towards Mr. Filbeam. Buggy glared after them speechlessly.

"It's all right, sir," said Tom Merry. "He's not hurt! If you'll come this way, sir—"

"You are sure the poor boy is not injured?" asked Mr. Filbeam anxiously.

"He's all right!" said Tom cheerfully. "This way, sir! We'll show you to the School House!"

Mr. Filbeam nodded, greatly relieved, and turned away, surrounded by the Shell fellows. Buggy glared after them with feelings too deep for words. Though unharmed, he was bruised and sore. His bike was smashed beyond repair—and he had not even been able to wrangle a few tarts out of the situation!

"Bones!" panted Buggy, at last. "Yab! Bones!"

Though Mr. Percival Filbeam looked a mild enough gentleman for his appointment as master of the Shell he had taken with much satisfaction by the Shell fellows, the arrival at St. Jim's of the new Form master had proved anything but a happy event so far as Buggy Trimble of the Fourth was concerned!

"I guess we're in luck, laddies!"
It was Cyrus K. Handcock who made that cheerful remark later that evening.

You was over in Study No. 10.
Though, on arrival at their study, Tom Merry & Co. had been dismayed to find Tomey gone, and the scattered chocolate cake on the floor, showing that someone had been visiting the study for nefarious purposes during their absence, a thorough examination had soon shown that the rest of Miss Taggles' delicacies had not been tampered with. So the ton had taken place without anxiety—with Mr. Filbeam the guest of honour.

Mr. Filbeam had gone now, and Tom Merry & Co. and their friends were free at last to discuss him to their hearts' content.

"My hat!" gasped Grandy. "Mind as the breeze in May, ain't he?"

"Looks like it!" chuckled Minty Louther. "Good rag!"

"He seems rather decent, though," put in Glyn.
"Oh, yes! Things ought to be pretty easy in the Form-Shell in future!" grinned Kangaroo.

He was voicing the opinion of most of the others. But Tom Merry looked doubtful.

"Well, I hope so!" he said, with a smile. "But you never saw me! He may be a blessed tiger in the Form-room, although he's more like a lamb outside! Never saw him!"

He broke off. A tap had come at the door. Without waiting for an answer to his knock, the fat figure of Buggy Trimble called into the room.

"Hello, Buggy!" sang out Minty Louther cheerily.
"How knocking my mate's walls down?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Thinking of taking a job as trink cyclist at a street, old bloke?" inquired Talbot.

The Shell fellows chuckled. Buggy Trimble glared at them wrathfully.

"Look here!" he began peevishly. "That's what I jolly well came along to talk about! My bike's smashed to bits!"

"Yes, we noticed that," nodded Louther.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it's jolly well nothing to chuckle at!" roared Buggy. "That bike was a present from my father, and he particularly told me to look after it!"

"Is that your idea of looking after it—bumping it into streets with and things?" chuckled Glyn. "Seems all wrong to me!"

"Ho, ho, ha!"
 "You—you blessed snaking asses!" roared Baggie. "I didn't do it on purpose!"

"Oh! We thought you did!" said Glyn gravely.

"Oh, rats!" roared Baggie. "Look here, you went on in innocent tones. I want to know what you chaps are going to do about it!"

"What do you want us to do? Boy is for old swarriers!" inspired Grandy. "That's all it's worth now, I should think!"

Baggie glared at him.
 "My pater told me particularly I was to look after that bike," he told them again. "I—I—ahem—I've had had luck with one or two bikes in the past, you know—"

The jinxes checked. Baggie's bicycles had always been terrible old crooks since after passing into Baggie's possession, for the Falstaff of the Fourth never took the slightest trouble or care over his machine. The Shell fellows were not surprised to learn that Trimble never had put his foot down at last, and had told Baggie to mend his ways.

"My pater would be jolly waxy if he knew I'd looked up that new bike already," went on Baggie, ignoring the checkers. "In fact, if he got to know about it there'd be a frightful row!"

"Hark back, old fat man!" said Tom Merry. "But what's all this got to do with us?"

"Why, I'll jolly well have to get a new bike before my pater knows about it!" said Baggie, with a worried look.

"And so you've blamed in to ask us to lend you the cash?" checked Talbot. "Nothing doing!"

"Rather not!"

"Kiss!" Baggie Trimble glared round the study. "It's not that at all. I've come along to tell you gentlemen that I jolly well expect you to share in and buy me a new grid!"

"Who-ah?" gasped Mammaos faintly.

"Why, of all the cheek!" ejaculated Glyn dazedly.

"My hat!"

The Shell fellows stared at Baggie in amazement. Baggie wagged a peevy forefinger at them. "It was clear that he actually meant it. He was in earnest!"

"Well, it was all your fault I busted up my bike, wasn't it?" demanded Baggie.

"Our fault?" yelled Mammaos.

"Yes, your blessed fault!" retorted Baggie obstinately. "I had to tell him that pillar to lean hisself into Filbeam, hadn't I? If you men hadn't brought Filbeam along just then I'd have been all right. Therefore it was all your fault—and I jolly well expect you to do the dearest thing and buy me a new jigger!"

"Oh, carry me home to die!" gasped Monty Lowther feebly.

"Ouf all the cheek!" shattered Grandy. "Why, you—you fat dammy—"

"Pshaw!"

Baggie Trimble had certainly succeeded in staggering the occupants of Study No. 10. He might not have convinced them of the correctness of his peculiar point of view; but he had at any rate left them momentarily breathless.

Farmed for check through Baggie was, this was the limit!
 "There's a pretty nice grid in Filbeam's in Wayland, going for seven guineas," went on Baggie coolly. "That will suit me fine. The sooner you get it the better."

"Mammaos my hat!"

"Why, you—you cheeky rotter!" yelled Talbot.

"Check him out!" gasped Kasperine.

"By Jove!"

"Look here," bellowed Baggie. "I—O! Telescope! Yeh! Hark off! Oh, my hat! Goo-roo-coo!"

Baggie Trimble gave a breathless yell as he found himself sailing through the air, his fat little arms and legs waving frantically. He flew out of the doorway of Study No. 10 like a cannon-ball.

"Crash!"

"Oh gad!"

It was rather unfortunate that Gerald Knox, of the Sixth, the most unpopular prefect at St. Jim's, had happened to pass the door of Study No. 10 at that moment!

Baggie hurtled into Knox with a yell, and his wildly waving arms slapped the prefect round the neck. Baggie and Knox collapsed together in a straggling heap.

"You!" gasped Knox. "Oh gad! Telescope!"

"Ho, ho, ha!"

There was a yell of laughter from the Shell fellows. Though there looked like being trouble as soon as Knox had pulled his wits together, the sight of Knox sprawling on the floor of the passage with Baggie on top of him was altogether too funny, in their opinion. They roared!

"Oh!" gasped Knox feebly. "Ow! Dragged!"

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"Dear old Knox is taking Russian!" shrieked Lowther.

"Ho, ho, ha!"

"Oh dear!" Baggie Trimble scowled up, assisted by Mammaos and Grandy. "Yeh! Yeh! Bessie! I'm hurt! I know, you scowled up. His face was purple with rage as he glared with glittering eyes at the group of jinxes in the doorway. His tin was awry, his hair wildly dishevelled.

"You—you young hoodlums!" he panted. "How dare you!"

"Sorry, Knox!" grinned Lowther. "Accidents will happen!"

"You will cash of you do me a couple of hundred lines!" gasped Knox savagely.

He turned and stomped away, breathing hard. There was a snort from Baggie Trimble.

"Yah!" roared Baggie. "Serve you right! Bessie!"

Then Baggie turned and fled.

Not one thing was very certain. Baggie's visit to Study No. 10 to induce the Shell fellows to buy him a new bicycle had been a miserable failure!

It was hard luck on Baggie that he had smashed his cycle—particularly so, since apparently it was urgent for him to get it replaced before his father knew about it. And Baggie knew that his father proposed to visit the school in a week or two's time!

But Baggie's idea that Tom Merry & Co. and the others ought to replace the wrecked bicycle for him was certainly the biggest "cheek" in the world! They had already made that abundantly clear to him. Baggie Trimble realized that he would have to find the means, by hook or by crook, of purchasing a new cycle of his own fat, somehow.

But how Baggie Trimble, utterly alone, as usual, was to raise the wind sufficiently to buy a new bicycle was really rather a problem for the Falstaff of the Fourth!

CHAPTER 5.

Mr. Filbeam's Struggles!

"WELL, well, well!" exclaimed Mr. Filbeam to himself. "So this is St. Jim's!"

The new master of the Shell was standing at the window of his study, peering out into the quad with great interest. His mild, brown eyes roamed over the grey old buildings opposite, and over the ancient elms, with quiet satisfaction.

Mr. Percival Filbeam was feeling very contented at that moment.

It was later that evening. Both Dr. Holmes and Mr. Railton had returned to the school some-time before, and Mr. Filbeam had interviewed the Head and got on very well with that astute old gentleman. He also liked Mr. Railton. He liked, too, the little he had seen of the leading lights of the Shell.

In fact, Mr. Filbeam had come to the conclusion that he would like St. Jim's as well as he could like being a schoolmaster anywhere!

For Mr. Percival Filbeam believed that he was wanted as a schoolmaster. There was, in his opinion, no doubt about it. He firmly believed that in taking up a schoolmaster's career he had missed his life's work.

His life's work, he was sure, should have been, of all things in the world, that of a great musician. Mr. Filbeam fancied himself as a musician. He could play himself playing a violin in orchestral multitudes at great concerts in London, or composing dependent operas that would earn his name to rank with those of Mr. Wagner, and Mr. Beethoven. He was, in fact, composing an opera in his spare time. It was not yet half finished; but when it over—it was finished, Mr. Filbeam felt sure it would be a tremendous hit! It would make him famous!

Mr. Filbeam was a modest gentleman, but he was quite convinced that when he had finished his opera, and it had been performed he would be hailed as the greatest genius in England—perhaps the greatest genius in Europe—the greatest genius, it might even be, in the world!

When Mr. Filbeam allowed his imagination full play he inclined to the last of those alternatives.

"Tun, tun, tiddly-um-tum!" burred Mr. Filbeam thoughtfully, as he stared across the quad at the New House, grey and picturesque in the gloaming. "Tun-tun-tun-tun—"

Even at that moment, as usual during his leisure moments, Mr. Filbeam was vaguely busy with an aria for his world-famous opera—world-famous, that is, with any luck!

Mr. Filbeam was an excellent schoolmaster. At his last school he had been thought of very highly by the Head and the rest of the staff. Despite his mild appearance, he could handle a Form excellently as a rule—as the Shell boys discovered! But even in Form, now and then Mr.

Pilbeam had his dreary moments; moments when his life's work filled his mind, and the little matter of the big duck, say, in Act Three, Scene Two, between his hero and heroine, or all those thoughts of melodramatic matters from his mind! At such times, Mr. Pilbeam—as the Shell went also due to sleep—was near prey for ragsmen.

"Tom, tiddy-um-tum!"
Mr. Pilbeam turned dreamily to where a violin case lay on the table near him. He opened it, extracting a decrepit-looking violin. It was Mr. Pilbeam's proudest possession. It was, so he stoutly declared, a genuine Stradivarius—a very famous make of violin indeed. Mr. Pilbeam would have defended that Stradivarius with his life, if necessary! With his wild brows open and thoughtfully upon the door-knob, his string frame casted against the window behind him, and his drooping moustache stirring slightly in the draught, like grasses in a summer breeze, Mr. Pilbeam raised the ancient violin to his shoulder, and began to play.

"Great Bohemian!" ejaculated Handcock faintly. "For the love of Mike!"

Had Tom Merry & Co. not been seeing it with their own eyes, they would never have believed that such ghastly noises could have been produced by anyone, on any violin, as those which Mr. Pilbeam was extracting from the tortured catgut of his alleged Stradivarius. Yet Mr. Pilbeam was not only producing them—he looked as if he enjoyed producing them.

There was a dreary, far-away look upon his countenance as he worked away busily, producing sounds like squeaking cats one moment, and agonized cart-wheels the next.

The chairs of the Shell gazed in at him blankly.
"Oo!" gasped Monty Lovelace. "Oo crumb!"
Really, the noises issuing from Mr. Pilbeam's violin were

"My hat! What the thump!"

"Listen!"

"What the merry di-ehem—"

Tom Merry & Co., in the passage outside Mr. Pilbeam's study, came to a sudden, startled halt.

They had been to the Sixth Form passage to deliver their lines to Lord Kees. On their way back they had to pass near the new master's study.

"My tiddy-um-tum!" bawled Monty Lovelace.
"Hark!"

Weird and wonderful sounds were issuing forth from Mr. Pilbeam's room.

What they were caused by Tom Merry & Co. could not imagine. They sounded rather like the wailing of half a dozen cats, or a donkey dying with a good deal of pain. But it seemed unlikely that Mr. Pilbeam had half a dozen cats in his room—let alone a dying donkey.

"Holy smoke!" ejaculated Cyrus K. Handcock wonderingly. "I guess someone's hurt! That sounds like some guy in pain to me!"
The Terrible Three and the American junior listened, with strained faces.

The sound issuing from the closed door of the new master's study seemed now more like feeding-time at the Zoo than anything else they could think of. Tom Merry's face took on a look of real alarm.

"I—I say, you chaps, there must be something wrong!" he gasped. "Quick!"

He turned, and jumped swiftly for the door, the other three at his heels. He grasped the door-handle and pushed the door open hastily, forgetting, in his anxiety, even to knock.

Whoooo! Wow! Whaaaaah! burst upon them as the door swung back.

Had twenty cats been battling for one slice of catmeat the sounds could scarcely have been more appalling.

Tom Merry gasped into the study, his face a picture of consternation and alarm. Mazzara, Lovelace, and Handcock gazed in over his shoulder.

"M-m-m-m-m-m!"

Standing in the centre of the floor was the tall figure of the celebrated Mr. Pilbeam. He was alone; there were neither fighting cats nor dying donkeys in the study with him, after all! The strange, horrible sounds that had so startled Tom Merry & Co. were being emitted by the decrepit violin which Mr. Pilbeam was strooping as if for dear life.



Happy Trimbles took one huge bite of the sandwich, then lunged to his feet with a wild yell, a hand clapped to his mouth, his eyes bulging, his fat face deepening from red to violet purple!

hardly bearable! Tom Merry backed hastily as an extraordinary series of real fireworks—rather like the shrieks and groans of the wounded in a hand-to-hand battle, as Monty Lovelace afterwards remarked—erupted upon their ears.

"I guess I'm gonna beat it!" mumbled Cyrus K. Handcock feebly. "Wow!"

"I can't stand it, either!" gasped Mazzara. "Help—"
But before Tom Merry & Co. could hear their busy retreat, Mr. Pilbeam suddenly caught sight of them.

Till then, he had been too engrossed in his task to notice that the door had opened. But suddenly he seemed to become aware of their presence. He stopped suddenly, lowering the violin. For a moment or two he surveyed them almost miserably. Then, evidently realising who they were, he smiled genially.

"Ah, Merry—Lovelace! Come in!"

To enter the study while Mr. Pilbeam was still armed with that dreadful instrument of torture was about the last thing that Tom Merry & Co. would have chosen. But there was no help for it. Very gingerly they stepped into the room.

Mr. Pilbeam surveyed them with a beaming smile, gazing with one hand at his drooping, sandy moustache.

That he was pleased to see them, there was no doubt. It was quite clear that he did not dream for a moment that they had anything but enjoyed his musical efforts. In Mr. Pilbeam's evident opinion, they had been drawn to the spot irresistibly, enthralled and delighted!

"Well, well, well!" murmured Mr. Filbeam. "So you boys—ah—appreciated a little music, eh? Splendid, splendid! You are all fond of music?"

"Amen!"

"Do you like Schubert, I wonder?" inquired Mr. Filbeam brightly. "Would you like a little Schubert now?"

"Thank, sir!" echoed Messers blankly. "Well, sir, Mrs. Taggles stocks plenty of sheet—"

"Schubert, my dear boy—Schubert! Not Schubert! Shall I play you a little Schubert? Kindly close the door, Leuther. Now, if you will seat yourselves, I shall have great pleasure in rendering Schubert's Serenade—a truly delightful piece, which should not be above your heads. I believe in encouraging boys in a love for good music—"

"Oh dear!"

"What did you say, Leuther?"

"Oh! Non-sensical, sir!" gasped Leuther hastily.

With a bright glance at one another Tom Merry & Co. sat down gingerly. Mr. Filbeam, with a flourish of his violin-case, got up, so to speak, and let fly:

With a dreary expression on his face, Mr. Filbeam got into his stride again, drawing forth from the tortured organ such weird and wonderful sounds that politeness alone prevented Tom Merry & Co. examining their hands hastily over their appointed ears.

Mr. Filbeam might imagine himself a budding poet, but his imagination was perhaps rather over-fertile.

A very fair imitation of a cat and dog fight was issuing from his instrument now.

"Oh! oh!" gasped Messans under his breath, with a dimpled glance at Tom Merry. "This is awful! Help!"

Tom Merry glanced longingly at the door. He, too, felt that he could not stand the strain a moment longer.

But Mr. Filbeam was swaying on with a will, blissfully enjoying every anguished note apparently. That his audience loved it, too, he had no doubt at all.

Tom Merry rose desperately to his feet.

"I—I say, sir, I—I've just remembered that the Head has asked me to go to see him!" he gasped, and dived for the door. "Do you mind if I go, sir?"

It was true enough. The Head had asked Tom Merry to go to see him—but Tom did not mention to Mr. Filbeam that the request had been made some days ago, and duly obeyed. At any rate, he felt, he must escape from Mr. Filbeam's rendering of Schubert's Serenade!

"How unfortunate!" murmured Mr. Filbeam. "I am so sorry, Merry! I know you were enjoying the music!"

"Oh, rather, sir!" gasped Tom faintly. "O-good-bye, sir!"

Misty Leuther jumped up. His face was desperate.

"Dear me! You have not to go, too, Leuther?"

"Hem! Kooz—he's one of the protocols—gave me a couple of hundred lines to do this evening, sir," murmured Leuther—travellingly enough! "Didn't you think I ought to get them done, sir?"

"I suppose you should, Leuther," nodded Mr. Filbeam, with genuine sympathy. "How unfortunate, though, since you are so fond of music!"

"Yes, isn't it?" mumbled Leuther, tottering to the door. Handcock and Messans had also risen to their feet. The new master surprised them in surprise.

"Dear me! You do not mean to say you two boys have to go as well?"

"I guess so!" gasped Handcock. "Kooz gave us both lines to do tonight, too, sir!"

"Thanks awfully for the music, sir!" mumbled Messans.

"Not at all!" smiled Mr. Filbeam kindly. "You must come some other time and have a long evening devoted to good music, my boys. You will enjoy that?"

"Hem!"

"Yes, thank you, sir!"

Handcock, Messans, and Leuther hurried out after Tom Merry and closed the door. As they turned away hastily along the passage, the wall of tortured organ came to their ears some more, merrily muffled by the intervening door.

"My giddy aunt!" gasped Leuther, mopping his perspiring brow. "What an escape!"

"Oh, my giddy aunt! Rather!"

An outer loud wail, far-off though it was, from the Stradivarius came to Tom Merry's ears. He shuddered.

"I guess the guy means well," groaned Handcock. "Who'd have thought he was a music fan, though, to look like that? He can't play for his own ears, either!"

The chords of Study No. 15 tumbled into the Shell passage. They were grizzling now. But their tones were thoughtful, all the same.

They could not help but like Mr. Filbeam. But it certainly looked as though the coming of the new master

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had brought an unexpected danger to everyday life at St. Jim's!

At any time, it seemed, a fellow would be liable to be collared by Mr. Filbeam and forced to listen to that infuriating gentleman's extraordinary efforts on the descript violin!

CHAPTER 6.

Buggy's Great Idea!

CLANG, clang, clang!

The school bell rang out across the quad noisily. It was a welcome sound to the St. Jim's fellows in the various class-rooms, for it meant that afternoon lessons were over at last.

It was the following Tuesday—a week after the arrival at St. Jim's of Mr. Filbeam, the new master of the Shell.

In the Shell Form-room the fellows glanced expectantly across towards the master's desk as the clang of the bell died away. Mr. Filbeam, a pair of pince-nez tilted at an angle on the bridge of his beaky nose—looking very much like some elderly work, as Misty Leuther whispered to Messans—nodded his head dreamily.

"Dinner?"

The Shell fellows rose to their feet as one man and fled out of the Form-room. Mr. Filbeam, seated not after dinner and away up the stairs in his study.

Judging from the far-away expression on his beaky face, it was evident that the new master was busy, in thought, with the latest aria of his great opera!

"Good old Filbeam!" grinned (John) Dave, the Canadian junior. "He's a jolly good sort, isn't he? We're lucky! A sunny old bird in some ways—that violin of his—ugh! But he's jolly decent!"

"Hear, hear!" nodded Reginald Talbot.

"Buz!" growled Crooke. "He dropped on me heavily this afternoon—two hundred lines—"

"Well, you asked for it," grinned Misty Leuther. "Never will do your prop, will you, Crooke?"

"Buz-z!" growled Crooke, and stomped away.

Now that the Shell had been working under their new master for nearly a week, they had had plenty of opportunities of forming his up.

Their first opinion, that Mr. Filbeam was as mild as the breeze in May, had had to be somewhat modified. They had found that the new master of the Shell was quite a strict disciplinarian, though his mild expression still lurked on each fellow as Crooke and Barlett, and the other slackers in the Form, to try to scamp their work—with painful results, as a rule! As Barlett had indignantly remarked, it was really like dropping a fellow as heavily as Filbeam did!

But most of the Shell liked Mr. Filbeam. He had little peculiarities, of course—all masters had, in their opinion! And it was better to keep very clear of the new master's study when that musical gentleman was searching for someone on whom he could try out the latest aria he had composed for his great opera. Already, several other fellows had suffered justice in Mr. Filbeam's study from the strains of the Stradivarius, thanks to the assistance of Tom Merry & Co., his first victims.

But nevertheless, Mr. Filbeam was a good sort, which was a great relief to the Shell.

"Hallo, hallo! Post's come!" exclaimed Misty Leuther, as Tom Merry & Co. strolled into the Hall, to find a big crowd of fellows waiting round the letter-box.

The drama of Study No. 15 charged into the crowd with a will, and in a few moments had allowed their way into the front rank.

Tom Merry found there was a letter for him from his old governess, Miss Fritillia Fawcett. There was a letter for Cyrus K. Handcock, bearing an American postage-stamp, and another for Messans.

"I say, you fellows, anything for me?"

The voice of Buggy Trimble came to Tom's ears.

Buggy rolled into the hall with a very discontented expression on his fat face.

For the past week Buggy had been wondering round St. Jim's, according to Misty Leuther, looking as if he had swallowed his last supper.

The reason was known to everyone—Buggy had failed to find a means of replacing his smashed apple as yet; and he was in terror that his father would visit the school soon and discover that little fact. If Trimble could learn that Buggy had already wrecked his new machine, that gentleman was likely to let the law fly! That was natural enough. And Buggy had had many sleepless nights racking his brains for a means of raising the "necessary" for the purchase of a new bicycle as soon as possible.

In the opinion of most of the juniors, Buggy was likely to have to go on racking his brains! For one could

imagine Baggie succeeding in raising the large sum necessary for the purchase of a new girl.

"Anything for me?" gasped Baggie nervously.

"Affair of a letter from your father saying he's coming over to see you?" chuckled Gips.

"Raised a new piggy-peg?" inquired Mallich blandly.

"Oh, rate!" growled Gips.

"Yes, there is a letter for you, old fat tulip," nodded Tom Merry, tossing an envelope across to the Falstaff of the Fourth.

"Catch!"

Baggie's jaw dropped as he saw the writing on the envelope. It was his father's writing. It looked as though the dreaded announcement of his father's proposed visit had come at last!

"Oh cranks!" muttered Baggie.

Commencing the letter into his pocket, the Falstaff of the Fourth hurried out into the gym. Alone under the stars, he took the letter from his father and ripped open the envelope nervously. It was with anything but a look of pleasure that Baggie glanced down at the enclosed sheet.

"Oh dear!" growled Baggie.

The letter began as he had feared, with the announcement that his father intended to visit St. Jim's in a week or two's time, on Saturday, to watch one of the junior matches. It added, rather sarcastically, that he supposed he would not have the pleasure of seeing his son playing on Little Side for the junior eleven.

Baggie groaned, and read on.

"I trust that you are taking more care of your new cycle than you have of the others in the past, Baggie," the letter continued. "The way you have ruined machines after machine is a disgrace. I intend to examine your present one when I visit the school, and if it is not in thoroughly good order, I shall dock your pocket money for a considerable time to pay for any necessary repairs, by way of teaching you a lesson."

"Oh cranks!" muttered Baggie.

So far, the letter appeared to have been written when his parent had been in a somewhat acid mood. But the next paragraph was in a decidedly different tone. Baggie caught his breath as he read it.

"Mony hat!"

His little eyes glowered suddenly as he read that paragraph a second time, with quick embarrassment in his face.

It was to the effect that Tripsible senior was tired of continued reports of his son's jacking habits in class—Baggie had heard that remark before, and it had caused to worry him. But the next bit was something new! If Baggie would work hard, and would actually work as hard as to win a cup over into the next Farm, Tripsible senior would present his son and heir with the sum of ten pounds as a reward for his labours.

Tom Merry if he succeeded in getting a shove up into the Shell! Baggie gave a breathless exclamation.

"Flaw! Ten giddy quid!"

But then his face fell. How could he possibly manage to get moved up into the Shell? It was almost to think of it yet awhile, at any rate. However hard he worked, it would be a long time before he could manage that!

His momentary vision of winning that ten quid in time to buy the new cycle that he had to get hold of by hook or by crook before his father visited St. Jim's, died away hopelessly.

He examined the letter back into his pocket with a groan. But there was a very thoughtful look on Baggie's fat face. Ten quid! Surely there was some way in which he could "wangle" that ten quid—by fair means or foul?

Where that ten quid was concerned, Baggie was not likely to be very scrupulous.

He knew that he could not win a move up into the Shell on his merits. But was it possible that there were other methods, if only he could think of them?

"What I could save the Head's life, or something," growled Baggie. "I'd ask him to stick me in the Shell, then. Or that new book, Pilbeam. If I could get on the right side of him, and ask him to use his influence."

Baggie looks off with a sadistic gleam in his eyes.

Mr. Pilbeam knew nothing of Baggie Tripsible. If he could succeed in impressing Mr. Pilbeam with his cleverness, he might be able to induce that gentleman to ask for his removal into the Shell! If he could, it was barely possible that Mr. Lathorn of the Fourth, glad to be rid of Baggie, might consent. Baggie had no illusions regarding Mr. Lathorn's opinion of him! And if both Mr. Pilbeam and Mr. Lathorn agreed on his removal from the one Form to the other, surely the Head would agree?

"My hat!" growled Baggie.

To most fellows such a plan would have seemed too utterly hopeless to be bothered with for a moment. But Baggie was a great optimist at times. And his desperate need of win-

ning the ten pounds his father had offered made him anxious to stretch at any stretch.

To and fro under the stars Baggie Tripsible rolled, with a wary, very thoughtful expression upon his greasy countenance.

Baggie meant to do it, somehow!

CHAPTER 7.

Baggie, the Mischief!

"BUCK UP, Gussy, you dummy!"

"Bai Jero! I wanna to be referrod to as a durnmy—"

"Oh, chuck the gas, and come on!" growled Jack Blake, Gussy's study-mate.

It was the following afternoon, and Blake & Co. had planned to go with Tom Merry & Co. to Spalding Hall, the school for girls near Weyland where Ethel Cleveland, Arthur Augustus O'Jarry's pretty and popular cousin, and the juniors' other girl chums, were pupils of the Fifth. It was a glorious, sunny day, and the two Co.'s were looking forward to a very cheery half-holiday in company with the Spaldingites on the river.

Since it had been decided to take the girls on the river, however, Arthur Augustus had found it necessary to deck himself out in his richest white fluff and nautical shoes, his richest straw hat, and his richest bloomers. All this had taken time, and Blake & Co. were growing impatient.

"Dime on, see!"

"Look here, Hiram—"

"Buck up, lad, no more!"

"Bai Jero, Diggles—"

Arthur Augustus, standing before the mirror, surveyed the set of his white shirt critically.

"I wathin' think this shirt is not quite right, dear boys," he remarked thoughtfully. "I wathin' think I shall have to change it for another! I consider that a fellow's shirt—"

Blake, Hiram, and Dig looked at one another. Then, as one man, they luried themselves at their noble chum and seized him ferociously.

"Yee! Bai Jero! Leggo, you wotkake—"

"You're coming, right now, so you are!" hissed Blake.

"Bring him along, you men!"

"What-he!" chuckled Hiram.



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"Yessssss!"

Arthur Augustus was roused from the study and away down the stairs, to where Tom Merry & Co. were waiting impatiently in the hall. The sound of his indignant yells and protests died away below.

"Good egg!"

Blake & Co. had failed to notice a fat figure lurking in the doorway of Study No. 2 as they had rushed Arthur Augustus past it—so, if they had noticed, they had not been particularly interested. But Baggie, on the other hand, seemed interested indeed in the departure of Blake & Co.

With a snigger of satisfaction, the Pawnoff of the Fourth hurried along to Study No. 3, and slipped quickly into the room, closing the door softly behind him.

It did not take him long to find what he sought.

On the top shelf of the cupboard into which Baggie was peering a few moments later lay Herrick's famous cornet—a musical instrument which the Princess of St. Zina's fairly doted. The sounds which Herrick produced upon it, when he insisted upon playing it, were about as weird and wonderful as the sounds which Mr. Pilbeam produced from his Stradivarius—perhaps even worse.

Baggie reached up and took the cornet down with an excited quivering hand.

That cornet was essential to the little plan he had thought out for endeavoring himself to the new master of the Shell!

With a fat grin on his face, Baggie scuttled from the study, the cornet under his coat. With rapid steps he made his way in the direction of the Shell passage, and halted outside the door of Study No. 11.

Bernard Glyn, the schoolboy inventor, and his two chums, Kangaroo, the Australian, and Giffon Dana, the Canadian, were out, Baggie knew. With a hasty glance round to make sure that the coast was clear, Baggie pushed open the door and scuttled into the study.

Instantly his eyes went to one corner of the room where a handsome wireless set, which Glyn himself had made, stood on a small table. It was a magnificent instrument; when playing, it sounded just like the real thing. No one would have guessed, without seeing it, that music from Glyn's radio was out of a loud-speaker and not the real thing!

Baggie glanced quickly at the clock on the chimney-piece. He was only just in time. In five minutes, so he had discovered from the wireless programme in a newspaper, a cornet solo was to be broadcast by one of the world's finest cornet players.

Baggie hurried to the wireless set and switched it on, tuning in on the station he wanted with excited fingers.

"Here my soul!"

Mr. Pilbeam, seated by the open window of his study, reading the musical notes in the "Times," turned his head suddenly and listened.

Floating to his ears on the warm afternoon breeze came the notes of a cornet solo, exquisitely played.

A glimmer came into Mr. Pilbeam's eyes like the glimmer in the eyes of a workman at the sound of battle. He jumped to his feet, his ear turned to the open window.

"Beautiful!" ejaculated Mr. Pilbeam. "Exquisite! What technique! What feeling! What wonderful execution!"

He listened enraptured, but greatly astonished. Never for a moment did it occur to the new master that he was hearing a loud-speaker broadcasting a solo on the cornet, and not the actual soloist himself. The tone of Glyn's wireless was perfect.

"Blow my soul!" piped Mr. Pilbeam. "This is genius!"

Whoever was it? The sound appears to be coming from one of the studios above! Well, well, well! Whoever would have thought that one of the boys at this school could perform an exploit of this sort on the concert? I must discover his identity at once!

It was clear to Mr. Pilbeam that the silvery notes were issuing from the open window of one of the studios. His instant method of discovering the identity of the player would be to hurry out into the quad and look up at the study windows.

With rustling gown, his eyes gleaming excitedly, Mr. Pilbeam hurried from the room and out into the quad.

He peered up at the row of windows above his study. He drew a sharp breath of satisfaction. Standing by one of the open windows was a fat figure, a cornet held to his lips, his fat fingers apparently playing.

Mr. Pilbeam stood staring up, enraptured by the music. Never for a moment did it occur to him that the concert he saw was not the instrument that was producing the sounds he heard! Mr. Pilbeam was a little short-sighted without his spectacles, and he could not see well enough to notice anything wrong with Baggie's pretended finger-work.

Baggie suddenly caught sight of Mr. Pilbeam.

"Good egg!" he saluted inwardly.

The cornet solo came to an end and on the radio, and Baggie hastily withdrew into the shadow of the study and turned it off before the announcer's voice could come through to spoil the effect. Peering down from behind the curtains, he saw the delighted expression on Mr. Pilbeam's face and chuckled.

"Boy!" called Mr. Pilbeam, his voice quivering with excitement. That he had discovered an unknown genius the new master did not doubt. "Boy! Come down at once! I wish to speak to you! Come to my study!"

Baggie popped his head out of the window.

"Mr. sir?" he inquired blandly. "Oh, yes, certainly, sir."

Two minutes later, with Herrick's cornet tucked under his fat little arm, Baggie rolled into Mr. Pilbeam's study, with a smug smile on his fat face.

Mr. Pilbeam grasped his hand warmly.

"My boy! Wonderful—wonderful!"

"My playing, sir?" smiled Baggie.

"Your wonderful playing! Beg, you are a genius!"

"I am rather a dab at the cornet, aren't I?" smiled Baggie.

"Such superb technique in one so young!" gasped Mr. Pilbeam. "How did you acquire it?"

"Gim! Just a natural gift, you know," said Baggie blandly. "A gift far that sort of thing runs in my family, you see. All we Trimbles are great musicians. My father's a dab at the—um—the viola."

"The—the viola?" asked Mr. Pilbeam, puzzled.

"I—I mean the violin," Baggie corrected himself hastily.

"Yes, all my ancestors have been dab at playing them. My grandfather invented the piano, I believe."

Mr. Pilbeam—fortunately, perhaps, for Baggie's education—failed to lose that last remark, which was intended to impress him greatly. The master of the Shell was busy extracting his beloved Stradivarius from its case.

"I myself play the viola, my boy!" he boomed.

"Really, sir?" murmured Baggie innocently.

Mr. Pilbeam did not apparently realize that his viola was already faced—and dented—throughout St. Zina's.

"I imagine that we play a duo—violin and cornet, a very pleasing juxtaposition!" exclaimed Mr. Pilbeam. "I have here the name of an aria from an opera I am composing, my boy. You see interested in opera?"

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"Hem! Oh, rather! But—but I don't think I'll play a duet, sir," returned Baggy quickly. "If you don't mind, sir; I find that if I play too much it's bad for my lips, you know, sir?"

"Dear me!"
 "My lips are very sensitive, sir—"
 "Of course, of course!" I understood. "Will we need play a duet some other time." In the meantime, I am sure you would enjoy listening to the airs as a violin solo. Do you know, my boy, this is a *Ständchen*?"

Mr. Pilbeam spoke in a hushed, awed tone. Baggy Trimbles, who had never heard of a *Ständchen*, and had not the remotest idea what a *Ständchen* was, nodded with as knowing an expression as he could muster.

"Pray be seated!" urged Mr. Pilbeam. "I will play you the airs."

Baggy sat down. He was fairly hugging himself with joy. So far his plan was working wonderfully well.

"By the way, what is your name, my boy?"

"Trimbles, sir—Trimbles of the Fourth," Baggy sighed heavily. "I ought by rights to be in the Shell, sir. But I am afraid I'm not really appreciated, you know, sir, by Mr. Latham. When Mr. Linton left he was—been moving heaven and earth to get me put into the Shell, sir. It was bad luck for me that he left when he did, wasn't it?"

"Dear me!" Mr. Pilbeam surveyed Baggy interestedly. "If that is the case, surely Mr. Latham could be prevailed upon to request to Dr. Holmes that you are moved up into my Form?"

"I'm afraid he won't do that, sir. I—I fancy my music spoils my chances in the Form, sir. Sometimes I get lost in playing, and all other thoughts slip from my mind. I forget to do my prep, I am afraid, now and then, and Mr. Latham does not understand why, sir."

Baggy gave a deep, resigned sigh.

"Tut, tut!" Mr. Pilbeam looked distressed. He could understand that a musical genius like Baggy Trimbles sometimes forgets such little matters as preparation. It was only to be expected. And he could understand that Mr. Latham, not being musical himself, failed to appreciate Baggy's sensitive temperament. "How singularly unfortunate!"

"I'd like to be in the Shell, sir," went on Baggy. "I am past the work they do in the Fourth really. Besides, sir, seeing you are so musical, it would be great to be in your Form, sir! Of course, I wouldn't suggest that you asked Mr. Latham if I could be moved up! I wouldn't trouble you to do a thing like that, sir—"

"Why, bless my soul, why shouldn't I?" murmured Mr. Pilbeam thoughtfully.

Mr. Pilbeam was not an easy rule a very "green" individual. But when his pet hobby—music—was concerned he sometimes became a sentimentalist that he lost his sense of judgment entirely for a time. It did not occur to him for a moment to suspect Baggy's story; convinced as he was that Baggy was a budding musical genius, Mr. Pilbeam would have believed anything about him.

"You would, sir?" gasped Baggy. "You'd ask for me to be moved up into the Shell? I'd be frightfully grateful!"

"I will speak to Mr. Latham this evening, my boy, and discuss your case with him," said Mr. Pilbeam broadly. Baggy's eyes glowed.

That Mr. Latham would be astonished at the new master's desire to have Baggy in the Shell the Felists of the Fourth knew well enough. But Baggy had an idea that Mr. Latham would be so glad to be rid of him that he might agree to the move if the Head could be persuaded to it. And with both the master of the Fourth and the master of the Shell

anxious for the change, he felt sure that the Head would leave it to their judgment.

Whether Baggy's reasoning was correct, Shely, as to whether he was building on very false hopes in that line would tell. But Baggy believed he was right—and already his father's ten pounds seemed as good as in his possession.

Baggy was nothing if not an optimist.

"Now?" beamed Mr. Pilbeam. "I will now play you the airs. I have recently composed for the quartet in Act One. I shall play it in C minor—"

He broke off. As he raised the violin to his shoulder there had come a tap on the door.

"Come in!" barked Mr. Pilbeam irritably, annoyed at the interruption.

The door opened, and Baggy gave a gasp. Mr. Latham, the master of the Fourth, rushed scoldingly into the room.

"Oh, crumbs!" breathed Baggy.

CHAPTER 8.
No Go!

"A H, Mr. Pilbeam—"

"Ah, Mr. Latham—"

"I just—ah—looked in, Mr. Pilbeam, to know if you would care to join me in a—ah—cup of tea in my room, sir?" beamed Mr. Latham.

"Tell me, he had failed to notice Baggy's presence. He was in the right of him suddenly and started with surprise.

"Indeed, sir!" murmured Mr. Pilbeam, with a pleasing grin. "I am glad you have come in, see me, Mr. Latham." I wished to discuss the matter of Trimbles with you."

"How?" Baggy coughed very nervously. The last thing he wanted was to be present at that interview. "I—I think I had better be going, sir—"

"Nonsense, Trimbles!" exclaimed Mr. Pilbeam. "You had better reason." He turned to the puzzled Mr. Latham.

"To come to the point, Mr. Latham, I have a suggestion to make with regard to Trimbles."

"Indeed?"

"Yes," nodded Mr. Pilbeam earnestly. "I understand that Trimbles has been a considerable time in the Fourth?"

"That is very true," agreed Mr. Latham dryly.

"And that he has thoroughly mastered the work done in your Form?"

Mr. Latham jumped.

"I understand, too, that his slight absent-mindedness, owing to his temperamental nature, has in the past mitigated against him so far as a concern into the Shell is concerned."

"Was—?" gasped Mr. Latham. "I—I beg your pardon, sir."

"I therefore propose, Mr. Latham," went on Mr. Pilbeam enthusiastically, "that we request the headmaster's permission for Trimbles to be removed from the Fourth and placed in the Shell without delay."

"Re-commended?" stuttered Mr. Latham. "Into the Shell? Trimbles?"

"Exactly!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Latham.

"I feel confident, Mr. Latham," beamed Mr. Pilbeam, "that a boy of such genius—"

"G-g-giving!"

"Gosh," indeed, sir," nodded Mr. Pilbeam firmly, "where music is concerned I have had the pleasure of hearing Trimbles's execution of the cornet—"

"I—I— Really, Mr. Pilbeam, I fail to understand you!"

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gaped Mr. Latham, in dazed bewilderment. "I have known Trimble a very long time, and I can assure you that he is no more musical than—than my foot!"

"Foolish, sir, not being musically inclined yourself, you have failed appreciably to appreciate Trimble's amazing musical ability," returned Mr. Pilbeam gravely. "I can assure you, Mr. Latham—"

"And I can assure you, Mr. Pilbeam," retorted Mr. Latham, in acid tones, "that you are laboring under some peculiar misapprehension. That Trimble has no musical talent in any direction I happen to be well aware!"

"Perhaps you have never heard him playing the concert?" demanded Mr. Pilbeam a trifle stiffly.

"Trimble—playing the concert!" Mr. Latham smiled grimly. "Nonsense, Mr. Pilbeam!" He turned to Buggy. The faintest of the Fourth was beginning to look decidedly polite. "I see he is at the moment in possession of a concert," went on Mr. Latham carelessly, "but I recognize it now as the property of Herriss, of my Form."

"Oh, really, sir?" stammered Buggy feebly.

"If Trimble has informed you that he is capable of playing upon that instrument, Mr. Pilbeam, in order to do—reduce your interest in him, I can only say that you have been most grossly deceived, sir."

"But—but I heard him playing it!" gasped Mr. Pilbeam. It was his turn now to look dazed and bewildered.

"Trimble," barked Mr. Latham, "am I to understand that you have been deceiving Mr. Pilbeam with the intention of seeking his aid in bringing about your revenge? Shall I?"

The little Fourth Form master's eyes fairly danced into Buggy like glasses. His mouth was set in very grim lines.

"Oh!" gasped Buggy. "I—I—I wouldn't do such a thing, sir!" he gulped. "I—I—as a matter of fact, I'm a job at the concert!"

"Then suppose you treat us to a performance!" suggested Mr. Latham grimly.

"Oh, certainly, I—I can't just now, sir," stammered Buggy. "My lips are frightfully sensitive—"

"I think the wretched boy's refusal to play upon the instrument which he claims to be an expert in, is a pretty strong proof of his inability to do so," observed Mr. Latham very dryly, with a glance at Mr. Pilbeam. "How Trimble came to deceive you in the first place is bewildering to me! Such a stupid boy—"

"Oh, really, sir—"
"Silence, Trimble! Mr. Pilbeam, believe me, Trimble is the most lazy, stupid, and altogether unsatisfactory pupil in my Form!"

"Blame my pool!" ejaculated Mr. Pilbeam feebly. "Then he has indeed deceived me?"

"I can assure you that you need take no interest in Trimble's musical talents, Mr. Pilbeam, for the simple reason that he has none. I know that very well!"

"Blame my pool! But—" Mr. Pilbeam turned a glass eye upon Buggy. The mild expression which his face usually bore was not to be seen now. "Fretful boy!" he murmured. "How—how dare you! You deliberately told me—"

"Oh!" gasped Buggy. He saw that the game was up. All he could do now was to cut his losses, so to speak. "I—I didn't deceive you, sir, really. It wasn't my fault, was it, if you heard the music and thought it was me?"

"H—m—m—m!" muttered Mr. Pilbeam, with the death of understanding.

"I was only just a little j-j-joke, sir!" gasped Buggy anxiously.

"That—this is disgraceful!" roared Mr. Pilbeam. "You—you utterly unscrupulous boy! You deserve punishment! I—"

"Please leave Trimble's punishment to me, sir, as his Form master," said Mr. Latham grimly. "I promise you Trimble will regret his impudence to you. I will deal with him at once! And then perhaps, in about five minutes' time, you will come to my room, Mr. Pilbeam, to partake of tea!"

"You are very kind!" Mr. Pilbeam's voice was still breathless. Buggy's deception had "settled" him. But suddenly he pulled. "Perhaps you would like me to bring my violin, Mr. Latham, and give you a few renderings of arias from my opera—"

"How! You—you are very kind," gasped Mr. Latham, "but—er—I am suffering slightly from a headache, Mr. Pilbeam. It would be as well, I feel, to postpone that—ah—pleasure till some other time."

"Very well," agreed Mr. Pilbeam, disappointed.

"Come, Trimble!" barked Mr. Latham.

Trimble went!

It was a matter, if not a whim, Buggy that snatched five minutes' leave from Mr. Latham's study with his head!

quipped under his armpits, his face undergoing the strangest contortions.

"Yes!" muttered Buggy. "Oh, the beast! Six on each hand! Oh, puh!"

Buggy turned towards the Fourth Form passage, growling. At that moment the tall, cadaverous figure of Mr. Pilbeam swept into view. The master of the Staff roared past Buggy with gleaming eyes, but without glancing at the Fabled of the Fourth. Buggy glanced after him as he vanished into Mr. Latham's room.

"How Pilbeam!" growled Buggy. "He's a beast, too! Oh, couldn't he!"

And Buggy legged away, very discontented.

His previous plan had failed miserably. He was still faced with the well-nigh impossible task of "raising the wind" sufficiently to buy a new bicycle before his father arrived on his threatened visit to St. Jim's.



Buggy found himself sitting steadily among the ruins of his rebellion. (Continued on other page)

CHAPTER 6.

Her Chuck!

"SEEN the notice?"

Jack Blake asked that question with a grin on his face. The leader of the Fourth had emerged from the big doorway of the School House to find Tom Merry & Co. coming up the steps from the quad. It was two days later—Friday evening, after tea.

"What notice?" asked Monty Lowther.

"About Her Chuck," grinned Blake. "Come in and have a nip at it. It's Pilbeam's latest!"

Tom Merry & Co. followed Blake into the Hall, where a big crowd of fellows—juniors mostly, but with a few seniors as well—were gathered round the notice-board, reading a notice written in the rather abstruse handwriting of Mr. Pilbeam.

"NOTICE:

"With the permission of Dr. Hulman, a pianoforte recital will take place in Big Hall on Saturday afternoon at three o'clock. The artists who will give the recital is Herr Gluck, the famous German pianist. I trust that as many boys as possible will attend and enjoy this unique opportunity of hearing so great a musician. (Signed) W. FURBERMAN."

"Well, whatever know about that?" demanded Cyrus K. Handcock.

There was a snigger from Percy Mellish. "Furberman's an phony or Fench!" grinned the coach of the Fourth. "I heard him talking to Lathrop about it is the grand after dinner. This giddy German, Gluck, is a frightfully famous chap, apparently, and he wrote to Furberman saying he'd like to play at St. Jim's in the chapel. He seemed to have heard of Furberman being somewhat successful—goodness knows how—and Furberman's been rambling round to the other masters beseeching Gluck somehow know about him."

"But how the diabolical can Gluck have known anything about Furberman?" asked Talbot of the Shell, with a puzzled frown.



of the machine. One of the wheels was raised his neck, while his feet was enough, the other!

Tom Merry shrugged, and grinned. "Well, there's no match on Saturday. I'm going!" "Oh, what?" nodded Mansers. "It ought to be fun!" "Ha, ha, ha! Neither!" News of the other parties, however, noticed rather an odd look that passed between Monty Leowber and his three chums as they turned away from the notice-board. Had they seen it, they might have wondered if Monty Leowber, the lieutenant of the Shell, knew something concerning the mysterious Herr Gluck.

"Hess they come?"
"Oh, good!"
"Bring him! Look at the blessed pianist!"
"Oh, my giddy aunt! Ha, ha, ha!"

There were hastily suppressed chuckles in Big Hall as these figures appeared on the platform.

It was the following afternoon. Herr Gluck's pianoforte recital was about to commence.

Big Hall was crowded. Nearly everyone seemed to have turned up, driven there by curiosity rather than any real desire to hear that foreign German gentleman, Herr Gluck, at work on the keys. The fact that Monty Leowber, of the Shell, and Mansers had failed to turn up had been noticed by a few. But no one attached any importance to that fact.

"Great Scott!" Arthur Augustus adjusted his spectacles and stared across at the platform in grinning astonishment. "But Jose, dear boys, look at Gluck! What a scrovin!"

Herr Gluck certainly was rather amusing to look at. He was short but immensely fat, a pair of heavy horn-rimmed spectacles ornamented his features which were otherwise all but completely obscured by masses of black beard and whiskers, which radiated in all directions like a Balshavik's. He was clad in a black coat and violently checked trousers. He bowed stiffly to the gaping crowd of St. Jim's fellows gathered to hear him.

"Good afternoon, mine papa!" observed Herr Gluck in guttural accents.

The Head nodded forward, and the fellows hastily concealed their grins.

"Thanks to Mr. Furberman and Herr Gluck, this—musical hour has been arranged for your entertainment," coughed the Head. "It will—be a very great treat for us all to hear so famous a performer upon the piano as Herr Gluck! Now those of you who are not inclined to be musical should appreciate this—great treat, and thank Herr Gluck and Mr. Furberman warmly for having made it possible!"

"Hear, hear!" mid Burbett blithely, with a wink at Crooks.

"Three cheers for Herr Gluck!" proposed Mr. Pilbeam, casting forward with a beam upon his cadaverous countenance.

The chimes were given with a will, though there were a good many chuckles mixed with them. The St. Jim's fellows were not inclined to be very musical—they preferred the latest song-bits to Bach and Beethoven. But they were ready to get all the fun they could out of the situation.

"Tack you, mine papa!" beamed Herr Gluck, as the chimes died away. "I thank you from the bottom of mine heart."

He blinked round at the assembled fellows through his big spectacles.

"I please to you this afternoon made by de grand composer, Schmaffschaben," he announced. "He is grand composer!"

And Herr Gluck sat down at the big grand piano that had been set on the dais and beamed across at Mr. Pilbeam.

"You like the works of de grand Schmaffschaben?" he inquired.

"About!" Mr. Pilbeam coughed. "I—I am afraid I cannot recall coming across his works, my dear Herr Gluck! I cannot understand how I can have missed doing so—"

"Ah, ah! De grand composer, Schmaffschaben is ver' new composer," explained Herr Gluck. "No one knows him but me! I alone play Schmaffschaben! Now, dis is piece called 'Sonata in D'—by de grand Schmaffschaben!"

Crash!

Herr Gluck had brought down his fingers on the keyboard with such a resounding thump that Mr. Pilbeam almost lost out of his train, where he had taken his seat on the platform beside the Head.

"My hat!" ejaculated Burdett. "Listen!"

"Search as if he's trying to smash the piano!" grizzled Korrath of the Fourth. "Watch the bottom drop out in a jiff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There were subdued chuckles among the jokers. "Thump, thump! Crash! Bang!"

Herr Gluck, as Korrath had said, was certainly playing up to his chief idea, was to smash the piano! His hands fairly flew over the keys.

"Dear me!" gasped the Head, under his breath. "I—I do not know much about the modern musical impression, Mr. Pilbeam, but really this work of—Schmaffschaben strikes me as being very singular."

"Eccentricity!" agreed Mr. Pilbeam. "But, of course, Herr Gluck is so great a pianist that we can depend upon it that his rendering is correct."

"Oh, indubitably," agreed the Head hastily.

Crash, crash, crash!

With his whiskers waving wildly, Herr Gluck was treating the piano like a heavy-weight boxer dealing with a sparring partner. How it held together seemed really rather a mystery.

"Crash, crash, crash!

"There!" grinned Wjerska of the Fourth. "Sounds more like the charge of the Light Brigade to me than a blasted tune!"

The extraordinary efforts of the great pianist ended abruptly. He rose to his feet, gasping profusely, and bowed to the Head, and to Mr. Filbeam, and to the grinning school.

"Done!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "But is good, eh? You all like dat? Ja, ja! Good app. as you English say! Now I play for you another piece by der great Schmaefelshoben. His name is called 'Sonata in C'."

Here Gluck changed back to the piano and got to work with Jewishish energy!

"Crash, bang, bill!"

"Dear me!" murmured the Head. "Bliss my soul—what extraordinary technique! Was I not aware that Herr Gluck is a great virtuoso? I should be inclined to the view that he is but an indifferent performer. But, of course, that simply shows that I cannot fully appreciate his modern methods."

"I feel so myself, Dr. Holman," murmured Mr. Filbeam. "I had always heard that Herr Gluck was of the old school. But he is really the most modern of modern! Astonishing!"

With a final tremendous waltz Herr Gluck finished Schmaefelshoben's Sonata in C, and came forward, having right and left as he bowed his brow.

"You all like dat? Good!" he boomed. "Now I play for you another piece by der great Schmaefelshoben. It is called 'Sonata in D.'"

"Oh, ho!"—he's going through the giddy alphabet!" gasped Figgins of the New House.

There were shrieks. The Head heard them, and frowned majestically, and the shrieks ceased abruptly as Herr Gluck darted back to the piano, sat down, and started once more to crash the keys.

"Bill, bang, waltz!"

It was a most unearthly din that the famous pianist was producing. The great Schmaefelshoben seemed to be a really extraordinary composer, just as Herr Gluck was apparently a very extraordinary pianist. But the last little German himself seemed to be enjoying it.

"You all like dat, eh?" he shouted excitedly, as he played. "Dis is der greatest work of der great Schmaefelshoben. When I finish dis I play to you piece 'Sonata in E,' by Schmaefelshoben, and der der 'Sonata in F,' and der der 'Sonata in G,' and der—"

"My hat!" yelled Tom Merry, in sudden alarm. "Look out!"

Herr Gluck, in his excitement, had been edging his stool nearer and nearer to the edge of the platform. A tremendous bang as the base given caused the peculiar gentleman to lose his balance entirely, and the next moment Herr Gluck and his piano stool had gone hurtling off the platform, to land among the grinning audience.

"Turoocoop!"

From Herr Gluck there broke a most boyish and undignified yell as he flew off the platform. But a moment or two later there were other yells—yells of stupefied amazement from the St. Jim's fellows.

In falling, Herr Gluck's wig and false whiskers had come off, revealing the dumpeared countenance of Monty Leather of the Shell.

"Leather!" yelled Barkitt. "Many hat! Spoofed!"

"Greatest Spoof!"

"My giddy aunt!"

"O'Grumbar!" gasped Tom Merry in consternation.

Tom Merry and Barkitt, alone of those present, had known the secret of Herr Gluck's identity. Messers had known it, too, but he was not present. He was waiting in the hut in Rykman's Woods, where Leather had changed into his amazing outfit before arriving at the school as the famous pianist, for the humorist of the Shell's return when his great joke was over.

Leather made a wild dive for his wig and whiskers. But it was too late, as he realized the next moment.

Upon the platform came the thunderous tones of the Head. "Leather! How—how dare you? How dare you perpetrate such an outrageous deception upon myself and Mr. Filbeam! How—how dare you, sir! This passes all bounds!"

The Head's face was purple with wrath. As for Mr. Filbeam, the new master of the Shell looked as though he would have a fit at any moment.

The unhappy Leather gasped up at the Head's hissing figure in blank dismay.

"I—I—" stammered the humorist of the Shell.

"Come with me to my study, Leather!" growled out the Head.

The Gem Library.—No. 1212.

"Oh dear! Ye-es, sir!"

The Head and Mr. Filbeam rustled from the platform, and Leather followed them—very reluctantly. A great yell of laughter followed him.

The fellows felt sorry for Leather—very sorry! That he was in too trouble, lots of trouble, there was no possible doubt! But he had certainly amused them; and at memory of Herr Gluck's recent performance, they fairly shrieked with laughter.

"How did Leather?" gasped Digby tearfully. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The jape of the form!" shrieked Lovison of the Fourth.

"Oh, my hat! Schmaefelshoben! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say," grinned Clive, the South African justice, "I wonder what the real Herr Gluck would say, if he got to know? See old Filbeam for damages, I should think, for putting on a piano recital that was supposed to be by him!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes!"

The fellows crowded out of Big Hall, still breathless with laughter. Monty Leather, in the Head's devoted attention, in the act of bending over while the Head selected his lowest cane, heard their laughter as they poured out into the quad, and it was a great consolation to him! Leather could take a licking; and the great jape, though it had been discovered, had been worth it!

In the quad, everyone seemed to be gasping with laughter still—with one exception.

Baggy Trumble was standing by the School House steps with a greatly thoughtful expression on his fat face.

Clive's words, in Big Hall, had given Baggy a new idea for raising the wind to buy the luggage that had to be procured before Trumble senior visited St. Jim's!

CHAPTER 10.

DAMAGE for Herr Gluck!

"LETTER for you, sir!"

Tom Merry, the School House page-boy, had entered Mr. Filbeam's study at midnight the following Tuesday, with a letter on a tray.

"Ah! Thank you, Tom!"

Mr. Filbeam took the letter, and Tom departed. The master of the Shell ripped open the envelope, and drew out the enclosed sheet. It was typewritten, except for the signature. And as he read it, Mr. Filbeam's jaw dropped!

"Dear sir," he read "as Herr Gluck's professional agents, we are writing to you concerning a matter which has been brought to our notice by an anonymous correspondent. We learn that on Saturday last, at St. James' School, you caused to be announced a piano-recital by Herr Gluck; where it appearing the recital was given by some other pianist. This, I hardly need point out, is a grave matter, affecting as it does our client's professional reputation.

"We should like to keep this matter out of the lay courts, but at the same time we must insist upon reasonable damages being paid to our client.

The sum of ten guineas, sent to Herr Gluck, cure of this address, will settle the matter as far as we and our client are concerned. Otherwise, a suit for damages will be brought against you in a court of law."

The letter was signed, "F. Rosenstein."

"G-goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Filbeam.

He stared down at the letter in horrified dismay.

Mr. Filbeam was not a gentleman who possessed a very good knowledge of law; he had been fortunate enough once to have had to appear in a court of law in his life! The very idea of such a thing filled him with consternation.

What if Herr Gluck could actually have won damages from him for having arranged the "recital" by the bogus Herr Gluck, he did not know at all. According to Mr. Rosenstein, he could, however, and that was enough for Mr. Filbeam!

"Ten guineas!" he ejaculated. "Oh dear!"

It was a point for Mr. Filbeam's apprehensiveness that in that moment he did not see for an instant blame Monty Leather. He considered that the whole fiasco had been his, for having allowed himself to be japed by the cherty humorist of the Shell into arranging the recital, and then being fooled by the pseudo pianist so completely that he had allowed it to take place.

"What ever shall I do?" gasped Mr. Filbeam.

For a moment it occurred to him to show the letter to the Head. But he dismissed the thought from his mind. He had been made to look absurd enough already ever that affair, he considered; he did not wish to remain anyone of it. In fact, now he came to think it over, it seemed well worth ten guineas to be free of the whole thing.

"I'll do it!" muttered Mr. Filbeam. "It is worth ten guineas. I do not know if Herr Glanck can really claim damages, but I shall certainly not fight the case!"

He glanced at the letter again. He noticed now that there was a postscript.

"If you decide to pay the ten guineas, kindly remit it in cash, since our client dislikes signing cheques."

"How—how very extraordinary!" muttered Mr. Filbeam.

They he remembered that great pianists never used a pen when they could avoid it, since it was supposed to spoil the touch of their sensitive fingers.

"I will send the money at once," Mr. Filbeam said himself.

He unlocked a drawer, and from a pocket-book within drew out two crump, rustling, five-pound notes. Hastily addressing an envelope to Herr Glanck, care of Mr. Rosenstr., he enclosed the notes in it, and rang the bell for Toby.

"Kindly post this for me, Toby!" said Mr. Filbeam, with a sigh, handing the paper a slipper.

"Very good, sir!" grinned Toby.

"My giddy aunt!"

"O giddy aunt!"

Blake & Co. had entered the tobacconist's two days later, at ten-thirty, to buy in a few things for Steady No. 6. But in the doorway they had looked in blank amazement.

"Do my good eyes deceive me?" gasped Blake wonderingly. "Or is it really Buggy?"

The fat figure seated at the counter, with stacks of tugs and doughnuts, and several bottles of ginger-beer beside him, glanced round with a gross countenance.

Buggy Trinkle had evidently been stuffing for a long time, judging from the shiny tinge of his skin, as he blinked at Blake & Co.

That Buggy was in funds was obvious. The beaming smile on Mrs. Taggler's face was proof enough of that! As a rule, Mrs. Taggler treated Buggy very coldly; Buggy

always swept a fat coin at the little tobacconist under the chin. Only the fact that Buggy had paid that debt would have caused Mrs. Taggler to be serving him with her good things now—and only the fact that Buggy was in funds could have enabled him to pay his old bills, and pick up these new ones!

"Been robbing a bank?" gasped Digby, in astonishment.

"Or has your postal order turned up at last?" speculated Horrie wonderingly.

Buggy grinned contentedly.

"As a matter of fact," he smiled, "I've had a remittance from a titled uncle of mine. He often sends me a few tons!"

"Well, that's a bit, to start with!" said Blake blantly.

"Oh, really, Blake! If you don't believe me, I'll jolly well prove it!" smiled Buggy.

He plunged a fat little hand into his pocket, and produced before the amazed eyes of Blake & Co. a crackling five-pound note.

"And Mrs. Taggler'll tell you I've just changed another with her!" grinned Buggy triumphantly. "Ain't I, Mrs. Taggler?"

"Certainly you have, Master Trinkle."

Blake & Co. stared at Buggy blankly.

"Then he has been robbing a bank?" gasped Digby.

"I tell you a titled aunt sent me these five," said Buggy jollyly. "She often—"

"You said a titled uncle just now!" yelled Blake.

"But Jews, you! So you did!" Arthur Augustus surveyed Buggy very suspiciously. "You are an awful fat fellow, Trinkle. I wonder how you would get those five!" Not that it is really any business of ours, of course, I suppose, dear boys," added the swell of St. Jim's thoughtfully to his chin.

"It jolly well is!" growled Buggy, who realized he had made a slip. "Mind your own business!"

"Going to buy a new bike now?" inquired Blake

(Continued on next page.)

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curiously. "You've been missing round for days now, saying you want to get a new grid?"

"Yes, I'm getting a new one this evening!" grinned Buggy. "There's a ripper in Wayland for seven against My pal's coming on Saturday to see the match against the Grammar School—I want to have it before then. He'll never know the difference between that and the other one!" He sniggered. "I told you I'd raise the wind somehow, didn't I, to get a new jigger?"

"Did you?" Blake surveyed Buggy very curiously. "That there was something 'faisy' about it all, Blake felt instinctively. But after all, as Gony had said, it was none of their business. "Well, I dunno how you get hold of all that tin, Buggy—but I hope the police don't get you!"

"Oh, really, Blake——" Blake & Co. made their purchases, and departed, leaving Buggy looking a trifle uneasy.

"Another dozen of tarts, Mrs. Taggles, please!"

"Certainly, Master Trimbale!"

"Very good, Master Trimbale!"

It was seldom, indeed, that the old lady was in such a good temper towards the Falstaff of the Fourth! Buggy grinned to himself.

There was a stop in the backshop doorway.

"My hat! It's true!"

"Blake wasn't pulling one leg, after all!"

Buggy glanced round, and saw Tom Merry & Co. striding into the backshop with great assurance. They had evidently learned from the clues of Steady No. 8 that Buggy was in touch—that Buggy was, in fact, fairly rolling in money! And they had now come to see for themselves.

"Well, whether you agree that!" ejaculated Handcock.

"Been robbing a poor-las, Buggy?" inquired Merry Lowther.

"Oh, really, Lowther!" said Buggy peevishly, beginning on another tart. "It was conspiratorial—perhaps a little unscrupulous—the way someone jumped to the conclusion that he had come by his sudden increasing wealth dishonestly. "I've had a consultation——"

"Garrison!" gasped Manners incredulously.

"Oh, really, Manners——"

"It looks as if the fat boulder really has had a remittance, though!" cut in Tom Merry thoughtfully. "How else could he have a couple of fivers, I mean? Unless he found 'em in the road, or something."

"If he did he could be run in by the police, couldn't he, for not taking them to a police station?" asked Lowther.

"I tell you I've had a remittance," boomed Buggy, in great exasperation, "from a titled relative!"

"Titled relative be blessed!" grinned Lowther.

"I tell you——"

"Rats!"

Tom Merry & Co. walked away, still looking very mystified. Buggy glared after them.

There was rather an uneasy look in Buggy's fat face, when he saw with his own eyes in the leading line. No one, however, seemed to believe his story of a remittance—and for some reason their doubts appeared to unrest the Falstaff of the Fourth; it was as though he was suffering inwardly from rather a guilty conscience himself with regard to those fivers!

He finished his tarts and ginger-pop, and slipped from his chair with a great.

"Another half-dozen tarts, Master Trimbale!"

"No, thanks!" grinned Buggy, and rolled from the backshop.

He turned towards the School House. But under the door he was accosted by George Alfred Grundy and his two chums, Wilkins and Gony. They, too, it seemed, had The Gem Library.—No. 1222.

heard the rumour that was already spreading on all sides concerning Buggy Trimbale and his rash of mysterious wealth.

"Hallo, porpoise!" exclaimed Grundy, glancing himself in Buggy's path. "What's this yarn about you having ten grand?"

"All right, I suppose," said Wilkins.

"It's not!" roared Buggy. "I jolly well have, so there!"

"I don't think!" sniffed Gony disbelievingly.

Buggy glared at Grundy & Co. It occurred to him that they declined to believe in his wealth. When Buggy had money—which was seldom enough—he always liked to swing about it.

"If you don't believe me I'll jolly well show you!" boomed Buggy. He plunged a fat hand into his pocket, and drew out a crisp fiver. "There, you blessed doubting Thomases! And I've got a lot more tin on me!"

"Mumsey-mumsey hat!" ejaculated Grundy. "Is it a dud?"

"No!" roared Buggy. "It's jolly well a real one!"

He thrust it angrily under Grundy's nose.

"By George, I believe it is a real one, too!" gasped Grundy.

"My hat!"

"Who says the age of giddy miracles is past?" grinned Gony. "Been robbing blind gibbons, or what, Buggy?"

"It was a remittance," explained Buggy, with a snarl. "A millionaire uncle of mine—— Oh! Oh crumbs!"

He gave a sudden started yell.

A gust of wind had come sweeping across the quad and whirled the fiver from Buggy's fingers. It went sailing away towards the School House steps.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy, Wilkins, and Gony seemed to find Buggy's excited dismay amusing, as the Falstaff of the Fourth rushed in pursuit of his flying fiver.

The fiver came to rest a dozen yards from the foot of the School House steps. Buggy pounced upon it. The next moment, however, another gust of wind swept it from under his very fingers, and dropped it neatly as the top of the steps.

At that moment a tall figure in cap and gown stepped out from the School House doorway.

It was Mr. Filbeam.

"Blen my soul!"

At sight of a nice new fiver lying at his feet the master of the Shell gave an astonished exclamation. He stooped and plucked it up, just as Buggy came pouncing up the steps to snarl it.

Buggy halted. His face had gone oddly dismayed. Mr. Filbeam glanced at him, then at the fiver. The next instant a bronchial spasm had broken from Mr. Filbeam.

He stood staring down at the fiver in his hand as if he could not believe his eyes!

CHAPTER 11.

"Barrah for Filbeam!"

"BLESSED my soul!" muttered Mr. Filbeam. For some mysterious reason Buggy Trimbale was looking as if he would have been very glad could the earth have opened and swallowed him up.

"Oh crumbs!" he gasped under his breath.

He turned as if to make a bolt for it. But Mr. Filbeam's voice arrested him.

"Trimbale!" boomed Mr. Filbeam.

"Or! E-yee, sir!"

"How did you come by this note, Trimbale?" demanded Mr. Filbeam, angry eyebrows gleaming from his usually kindly eyes.

"Oh dear! I—I had a remittance from a titled relation, sir!" stammered Buggy. "I—I——"

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He broke off, stammering. Mr. Pilbeam's eyes were very grim as he surveyed the Falstaff of the Fourth.

"Do you realize, Trimble, that this five-pound note is one which I received in London—some time two days ago?" said Mr. Pilbeam quickly, as if pointed it to—showing a gentleman in London, having taken the number at the time.

"Yes—you must be wrong, sir!" panted Buggy wildly.

"Nonsense! If that is all you have to say, Trimble, you had better accompany me to the headmaster at once, and we will throw the whole matter out," said Mr. Pilbeam very grimly. "Come, Trimble!"

He turned into the House, taking the friver with him. Buggy dared not disobey! With quaking knees that nearly supported his fat frame, he tottered up the steps and into the House in the wake of the master of the Shell.

"Hallo, hallo—"

"What the dickens—"

"But Jove! What's happenin', I wonder!"

Bals & Co. and Tom Herry & Co. were standing chatting in the Hall as Mr. Pilbeam appeared, followed by the unhappy Buggy. They stared in astonishment at the master of the Shell (panted by, grim-faced, the Falstaff of the Fourth) entering the hall.

Using the stairs, Mr. Pilbeam strode, Buggy following with a countenance that had gone positively green. But at the top of the stairs, instead of turning in the direction of the Head's dreaded anatomy, Mr. Pilbeam halted and glanced at the Falstaff of the Fourth.

"Before we see Dr. Holmes, Trimble, will you admit what is only too clear, that by some means you managed to have a bogus letter posted to me from London, purporting to come from the agents of Horv Gluck, demanding money from me?" he asked quietly.

Buggy almost collapsed. It was evident that Mr. Pilbeam had figured it out in detail by now.

"Ow!" gasped Buggy. "—Yes, sir! It—it was only a joke, sir! I—I would have paid you back, of course, sir. I wrote the letter and got a couple of notes in London to post it, sir, and send me the answer. He didn't know what it was about, though—"

"I am glad that your credit, at any rate, is honest," remarked Mr. Pilbeam dryly.

"Don't show me up to the Head, sir!" gasped Buggy pitifully. "If you do, I'll get hounded—I mean, expelled, and there'd be a frightful row at home—"

"Where in the other five pounds of which you sought to rob me?" asked Mr. Pilbeam in stern tones.

"Oh dear!" Buggy produced four pounds and a few shillings in silver. "I—I spent a bit in the washup, sir—"

Mr. Pilbeam took the money without comment. He surveyed Buggy thoughtfully. Then he swung on his heel.

"Come to my study," he said briefly.

Buggy gave a gasp of relief. Was this a reprieve?

In Mr. Pilbeam's study the new master of the Shell turned to Buggy Trimble with a face that was not in very grim lines.

"I have decided not to take you to the headmaster, Trimble. You appear to be a very stupid boy, as Mr. Laithorn says—"

"Oh! Nonsense, sir—I mean, yes, sir—"

"I feel sure that you did not fully realize the enormity of your impudence, Trimble," went on Mr. Pilbeam. "You are aware of a good thing a house, I believe. Therefore, as I say, I shall not take you to Dr. Holmes, since that would result inevitably in your expulsion. I will deal with you myself."

He pointed.

"In that drawer, Trimble, you will find a case?"

So relieved was Buggy that he was not to be taken to the Head and expelled, after all, that he produced Mr. Pilbeam's case almost joyfully! But he did not realize what came to him next of all joyfully. In fact, as the case rose and fell upon his tightly stretched trousers, while he bent over the table, the Falstaff of the Fourth yelled and danced!

"There!" gasped Mr. Pilbeam. "Now you may go! But remember, I shall expect you to repay me the twelve shillings you have spent of my money in the washup! Understand that I am warning you before the end of the term. I shall always my mind again and report you to the Head!"

Buggy staggered from the room, his fat hands clasped to the seat of his trousers, gasping and grunting.

"Here he is!"

"Here's the parrot!"

"He's been fished!"

A big crowd of juniors was gathered at the end of the passage. They had learnt from Grundy & Co. that something was "in the wind," and they had come to investigate. But if they hoped to learn the facts from Buggy they were disappointed! Buggy could only moan and groan as he rolled away to his study!

But the facts did come out in the end, nevertheless, so far

as the juniors were concerned. Percy Mellish somehow got hold of the whole story, and when the Shell heard it they were so indignant at Buggy's attempt to swindle their Form master that they hounded him in the Common-rooms till Buggy yelled, and yelled again!

But it was generally agreed that Mr. Pilbeam had shown himself a thorough sportsman in not reporting Buggy to the Head. Three cheers were given for Mr. Pilbeam—shows that could be heard throughout the School House, and painted the new master of the Shell as much as anyone!

And Buggy got his new cycle, after all! He did not deserve it, but he got it!

Mr. Pilbeam happened to learn, somehow or other, the story of Buggy's licks, and the fact that he himself had been indirectly the cause of its destruction; at any rate, it had been to avoid crashing into him that Buggy had crashed into the gateway. And on the very day before Mr. Trimble's arrival at St. Jim's a very nice new cycle arrived at the school for Buggy Trimble from an anonymous donor.

Buggy's delight knew no bounds! His heart was sore with Trimble's sin in the nick of time!

About a week later the secret of the bicycle's donor leaked out—thanks again to the prying habits of Percy Mellish. It was then discovered that it had been Mr. Pilbeam who had bought the bicycle and had it sent to Buggy; and this convinced the Shell, if they had needed to be convinced, that their new master was a true-blue sportsman—even though he had little penitence.

THE END.

(Mr. Pilbeam appears to be a jolly good fellow, doesn't he, doesn't he? On an occasion when our week's thrilling story concludes St. Jim's game, "The Flying Fugitive.")

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CHAPTER I.

The Mystery of Muffin!

RICHARD DALTON, master of the Fourth Form at Rockwood, was surprised.

And he was growing annoyed.

He had come to be both surprised and annoyed. The name was named Cecil Adolphus Reginald Muffin. Classes were over at Rockwood for the day. Almost every Rockwood man was out of the House, enjoying the sunshine of early summer. Jimmy Silver & Co. were at cricket practice. Mr. Dalton would have been glad enough to have been on the cricket ground himself; but he had a pile of Latin papers to correct for his Form, and he was, therefore, at work in his study.

Necessity kept Richard Dalton indoors. What kept Tully Muffin indoors was unknown. And the strange, odd, and wild proceedings of Tully Muffin were causing his Form master surprise and increasing annoyance.

In the first place, Dalton, coming to his study, had found Tully in the doorway there-of. The fat Chinaman had mumbled some unintelligible sense, and vanished. Ten minutes later those had come a tap at the study door, and Tully's fat and intuous face had looked in. He had mumbled another unintelligible sense and disappeared. Richard Dalton, a little surprised, went on marking Latin papers. Fifteen more minutes elapsed, and then the door opened again, and again Reginald Muffin looked in.

At Mr. Dalton's surprised stare he vanished, without even stopping to mumble an unintelligible sense.

Richard Dalton compressed his lips.

This looked like a "rag."

True, Reginald Muffin was about the last fellow at Rockwood to rag a master, especially a master like Richard Dalton. Tully was obtuse; he was given to a sort of nervous stammer; he was lazy, and he was untidy—in fact, Tully's faults were too numerous to mention. But restless hardness was certainly not counted among them. If Muffin was beginning as a ragster, it was quite a new departure for Muffin.

Surprised, annoyed, and puzzled, Richard Dalton recommenced marking papers. But he ceased to mark papers, and lifted his head, with a grim expression on his face, ten minutes later. There was a sound of footsteps in the passage outside, cautiously approaching the study door.

Mr. Dalton picked up the brass lined card that served him as a paper-weight, and laid it on the heap of papers. Then he picked up a case and rose to his feet.

THE GUN LAMAR.—No. 1,212.

If this was Tully Muffin coming back to the study again Dalton was ready for him this time!

Yap!

"Come in!" rapped out Richard Dalton.

The door did not open. There was a sound of horribly creaking feet in the passage. Whoever had tapped at the door had promptly departed on hearing the Form master's voice.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton.

He strode to the door, threw it open, and stamped out into the passage. He was just in time to catch a glimpse of a fat figure vanishing round the corner in the distance.

"Muffin!"

If Muffin heard, he headed out. He faded out of the picture, and Richard Dalton was left staring at an empty passage.

"Upon my word!" said Dalton again.

He closed the door, returned to his table, and resumed marking papers. But he kept the case quite handy. Whatever might be Reginald Muffin's mysterious motive for his mysterious proceedings, it was probable that he was not finished yet. If he came again Mr. Dalton intended to have the matter out. There was going to be a heart-to-heart talk with Reginald Muffin—a little scene featuring the case.

Twenty minutes elapsed, and by that time Mr. Dalton, busy with his work, had almost forgotten Muffin. He was reminded of him when a tap came softly at his study door.

Mr. Dalton's lips opened—and closed again. If he had called out "Come in!" he had no doubt that rapidly retreating footsteps would have been the sequel. For some unexplainable reason it appeared that the fatuous Muffin desired to enter the study when his Form master was not there. He was making visit after visit to ascertain whether Mr. Dalton was gone. But for that heap of papers to be marked, Mr. Dalton would have been gone long since; and Muffin's object, whatever it was, would have been achieved. As it happened, Mr. Dalton was not gone; he was there,

and he was wrathful. He did not call out to the tapper to come in. He placed the brass lined again on the heap of papers, picked up the case, and stopped quietly towards the door. He stood so that the door would screen him when it opened. And he waited.

A second tap was given at the door to make sure. Dalton stood still. The door handle turned, and the door opened.

A fat face was inserted into the study. Reginald Muffin blinked eagerly across at the master's writing-table. The chair there was vacant.

"Oh, good!" gasped Tully under his breath.

He whirped into the study and across to the table. His fat hand dropped on the brass lined that lay on the heap of papers.

With that object in his podgy grasp Muffin went round and whirped back to the door—and gave a sudden gasping burst of surprise and dismay, as he almost ran into Richard Dalton.

"Muffin!" said Mr. Dalton, in a deep voice.

"Oh, cutney!" gasped Muffin.

His eyes almost bulged from his head as he blinked at his Form master. The ghost of Richard Dalton could hardly have startled him more.

"What are you doing here, Muffin?" inquired Mr. Dalton gently.

"Oh, nothing, sir! I—I thought you were gone!" gasped Muffin. "I—I mean I—I never came—I mean—I wasn't—that is, sir, I—I didn't—"

If there's a wrong way of doing a thing, bet your sweet life Lovell will do it! . . . But the miracle happens, and at last Lovell does the right thing—

AND GETS £10 REWARD!

"You have come repeatedly to this study since dawn, Muffin, and apparently your object was to enter the room in my absence," said Mr. Dalton sternly.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Muffin. "I—I wanted to see you, sir."

"For what reason, Muffin?"

"Because—because—because you're so nice, sir?"

"Who are you?"

"I—I—mean—" stammered the wretched Tabby—"I mean—that is—I—didn't come here to beg this brazen liard, sir."

"I gather from your actions, Muffin, that you have come to my study unpermittedly to remove my paper-weight," said Mr. Dalton. "It is what you would call a rag, I suppose. Such a childish trick—"

"The fact is, sir—"

"Such an absurd, infantile trick, Muffin, I should have thought beneath even your intelligence!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "You are a stupid boy, Muffin, but such stupidity as this is really extraordinary. Put that paper-weight back on the table!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Muffin.

He replaced the brazen liard on the heap of Latin papers. His fat fingers lingered over it as if unwilling to relinquish it. That brazen liard seemed to possess some sort of fascination for Tabby Muffin. But he had to let it go.

"Now, Muffin—" began Mr. Dalton, avoiding the case.

"I—I say, sir, o-o-ow I go now!" gasped Tabby. "James Silver wants me at the cricket, sir. I—I'm going to give him some tips about batting—"

"Silence! Muffin, you have come to my study to abstract that brazen paper-weight. I cannot think that you are a dishonest boy; I conclude that you expect to play a childish trick on your poor master. Wait—" Mr. Dalton paused, searching Muffin with his eyes—"last night, Muffin, you were out of your dormitory. You came down to this study. As it happened, a hanger entered by my window, and you gave the alarm. You explained to me that you had heard a noise, and came down. I was not satisfied with that explanation. I suspect now that you came down to my study last night to play the same trick that has brought you here now."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Tabby. "I—I—"

"Muffin, am I to believe that you intended to perjure that brazen paper-weight, which is of some little value?"

"Oh dear! Oh, no, sir! I—I—I was just—just—only—just—just—"

"I will give you the benefit of the doubt, Muffin," said Mr. Dalton sternly. "I shall punish you as a foolish trickster, but I warn you, Muffin, to be careful—very careful. Now bend over that chair!"

"Oh, ho!" gasped Reginald Muffin duplicitously.

He grounded in anticipation as he bent over the chair. His anticipations were more than realized. The case came down on Muffin's tight trousers with a terrific swipe.

"Oh!" roared Muffin. "Goo-cooh!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

It was "six," and every stroke told. The pain of the hapless Muffin rang far and wide. Richard Dalton generally had a light hand with the cane. But he could wield a heavy hand when he considered that it was required, and he considered that it was required now.

The same fairly sang on Cecil Adolphus Reginald Muffin.

"You—ow—ow—ow—ow—ow—ow!" roared Tabby.

Mr. Dalton laid down the cane.

"You may go now, Muffin!" he said.

"But if there is any repetition of this—" He left the rest to Tabby's imagination, and pointed to the door.

Muffin crawled out of the study. He went down the passage wriggling and writhing like a contortionist. Life, just then, seemed hardly worth living to the fatigued and most infelicitous fellow at Blackwood.

Richard Dalton sat down at his table, and resumed marking Latin papers. He was not interrupted again by Reginald Muffin.

CHAPTER 2.

What's Up With Lovell?

JIMMY SILVER, & CO. came off the cricket ground in a cheery crowd, and headed for the House. Jimmy and Ruby and Norwona looked very merry and bright. Only Arthur Edward Lovell had a slightly knotted brow. Arthur Edward had been demonstrating a "late cut," of which he was rather proud, to his class, and James, the champion junior bowler of Blackwood, had sent him down a few to enable him to demonstrate that late cut to advantage.

Unfortunately, Lovell's late cut had been a little too late every time, and what had been demonstrated was not so much Lovell's skill with the bat as Jimmy's skill with the ball. Ruby had remarked that Lovell rather overdid the lateness of the cut, and Norwona advised him to cultivate an early cut instead. All this was rather irritating to a fellow who knew that he was the best cricketer in the Fourth, though on what grounds Lovell based his belief was unknown to his friends. Hence the thoughtful frown on Arthur Edward's brow as he walked back to the House with the Co.

Leggett of the Modern Fourth had nothing whatever to do with Lovell's late cut. Leggett had not even been at games practice. He never was there if he could help it. Leggett was not one of the fellows who had smiled when Lovell failed to demonstrate the beauty of that cut. So why Arthur Edward Lovell kicked Leggett as he met him on his way to the House, was rather mysterious.



Tabby Muffin's anticipations were more than realized. The case came down on his tight trousers with a terrific swipe!

Leggett was standing by one of the old Rockwood benches, counting over a little book in which he kept the accounts of the small sums he lent among the janitors, and the interest that was due thereon. Leggett was undoubtedly a "tink," and perhaps that was why Lovell kicked him. Or perhaps Lovell was feeling inclined to kick somebody.

Anyhow, he kicked Leggett, and there was a howl of indignant surprise from the Muffin Junior, and the little book dropped from his hand, and he glared round furiously at Lovell.

"You Classical better!" howled Leggett.

"Here, come on!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, catching his arm by the arm, and dragging him towards the house.

"Let Leggett alone, you see!"

Albion Leggett picked up his precious book, and scowled blackly after the Classical chums. Lovell went on his way sorrowfully.

"Might as well give him another!" he granted.

"Come on, you see! What the thump are you kicking Leggett for?" demanded Newcomb.

"Well, he's a tink. And a Modern tink. And a worm!" said Lovell. "He got that brass lined off Tabby for sixpence. I'll bet he got ten times as much for it when he diddled Dalton into buying it! And he's darning Jones' razor for money. Why shouldn't I kick him?"

"Well, you've kicked him," said Jimmy Silver pacifically. "Now let's get it to us."

The Fictal Four went into the House. Three members of the Co. walked, suspecting that Leggett had been kicked, not so much because he was a tink, as because of Arthur Edward's hapless failure with that beautiful late cut.

However, Leggett did not matter. The Classical chums agreed that Leggett of Manglew's House could not be kicked too often or too hard. And they hoped that the soothing influence of tea would wash the brown from the corrugated brow of Arthur Edward.

Bullseye of the Sixth met the Fictal Four as they came in.

"Where's Muffin, Silver?" he called out.

"Haven't seen him, Bullseye."

"Well, he's wanted," said the Rockwood captain.

"Inspector Sharpe has come over from Rockham, and he's in Dalton's study now. Muffin's wanted. He saw the man who broke in at Dalton's window last night. Found him and sent him to Dalton."

"Oh, all right!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. went up to the Fourth Form studio. Jimmy Silver, as a matter of fact, wanted his tea, but a search for Reginald Muffin. But the word of the captain of the school was law. He stopped at No. 2 in the Fourth, knocked open the door, and looked in.

Some minks, Higgs, and Fatty of the Fourth were at tea in the study. But their fat study-mate was not visible there.

"Isn't Muffin here?" granted Jimmy.

"No jolly well isn't!" said Higgs. "Dicky Dalton's been whapping him, and he came up here, growning, so I slung him out. He's jolly well not going to grow here while I'm having tea."

"Fateful!" said Jimmy politely.

He walked along the passage with his chums. Mornington was in the doorway of No. 4.

"Seen Muffin, Morry?"

"Look in your study," said Mornington. "You'll hear him when you get a bit further on. He's had it hot from Dicky."

The Fictal Four marched on to the end study. Before they reached that celebrated study they had wanted that Muffin was there. Deep and hair-raising growns were proceeding from it.

Tabby Muffin blinked dolorously at the chums as they came in. He was standing by the table; for once the fat Muffin was distinguished to sit down. He wriggled and growled, and growled and wriggled. It was half an hour or more since Mr. Dalton had given Tabby tea for which he had asked. But the effects had not worn off yet. Tabby was still in a state of woe.

"Oh, here you are, fatty!" said Jimmy Silver.

Growl!

"Had it bad?" asked Baby sympathetically.

Growl!

"Well, don't make that row here, Muffin!" said Lovell. "If you won't leave you in your own study, you can go into a box-room to make that row."

Growl!

"Dalton wants you in his study, Muffin!" said Jimmy Silver. He was sympathetic, but the growling of Reginald Muffin was not music to the ears. It was, in fact, a horrid discord.

"Oh, the best!" growled Muffin. "He's given me six

already! He's jolly well not going to give me any more! Ow!"

"It isn't a licking! You're to see the bobby from Rockham about the jolly old bungler last night. You're the only man at Rockwood who saw him, you know."

"Show the bobby!" I've told them it was that man Bright," growled Tabby. "The same man that old Innes, of London, says robbed him of a string of pearls last week. I wish I hadn't mentioned it now."

"He, why, was an?"

"Well, that man Bright says that he will give two pounds to get that brass lined back," said Tabby. "He sent me a note, you know, to tell me. He says he got it it's his, and that somebody checked it over the school wall for a job on him, when it hit me on the nose. Anyhow, he's willing to give two pounds to get it back, and I don't want him run in—not till he's handed over the two pounds, you know."

"My hat!" ejaculated Lovell. "Could the fellow have been after that brass lined when he bungled Dalton's study last night?"

Jimmy Silver whistled.

"If it was Bright—" he said.

"It was Bright," growled Tabby. "Think I didn't know him—with two front teeth missing! I dare say he was after that brass lined, though goodness knows why he wants it so badly. He's an awful thief! He robbed old Innes, when he worked for, and he bungled Rockwood last night. And the same, I'd rather be wasn't run in till he's coughed up the two quid he offered for the brass lined—"

"You fat villain!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Have you been after that brass lined again? Was that why Dalton whapped you?"

"He caught me in his study!" growled Tabby. "I made sure that he wasn't there—and he was there after all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He gave me six! Ow!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Lovell. "Where's that brass hat! Let's give him another six!"

Tabby made one jump for the doorway. Apparently he did not want another six. He faded down the passage.

The Fictal Four sat down to tea in the end study. Arthur Edward Lovell sat with a corrugated brow, without speaking. His forehead was puckered into thoughtful lines; he did not answer his chums when they spoke.

"I've thought it out," said Lovell suddenly, "and I think I've got it. He jumped up from the table. "Come on!"

"Here!" demanded the three.

"Dalton's study, of course, fathead!"

"What the thump are we to go to Dalton's study for?" howled Baby.

"Because the brass lined's there."

"The—the—the brass lined?" muttered Newcomb.

"Yes. Come on! You know that old Innes has offered ten pounds reward for finding those pearls that Bright pinched from him last week?"

"My hat! What—?"

"You know I'm going to put it into the cricket club funds if I bag it!"

"But what—" stammered Jimmy Silver.

"What's the good of wasting time?" demanded Lovell. "Come on! I'm going, anyhow!"

Lovell strode to the door.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another. Unless Arthur Edward Lovell had gone off his rocker, there was no accounting for this. Certainly his words seemed to indicate that something was amiss.

"Lovell!" exclaimed Jimmy.

Lovell strode out of the study. His comrades followed him in sheer wonder. Lovell hurried down the stairs and headed for Master's studios. And his anxious comrades almost convulsed now that Arthur Edward was off his "rocker," hurried after him to Mr. Dalton's door.

CHAPTER 3.

Starting!

TURBID MUFFIN'S eyes glowered.

It was his chance at last.

Tabby had related his thrilling experience with the bungler to the police inspector, and had been dismissed. But Tabby had not gone far. Tabby's peevish mind was still fixed on the brass lined. He lingered in a window recess in the passage, with an eye on Mr. Dalton's door. A little later, the police inspector came out, and Mr. Dalton walked with him to the door of the House. As they disappeared down the long corridor, Reginald Muffin realised that his chance had come.

He fairly scudded along to the study. He whipped in

and stared round breathlessly for the brass liard. There it was—on a pile of papers on Dalton's table.

Muffin jumped at it. He had only a brief interval. Mr. Dalton would be coming back to his study in a few minutes. But a few minutes were enough. Glancing the brass liard in a fat hand, Toby hurried to the door again. He bounded out into the passage—and crashed right into Arthur Edward Lovell, who arrived at the same moment outside.

"Bump!"
"Oooooooh!" gasped Toby.
He staggered back from the shock. Lovell reeled backwards, gasping; and Jimmy Silver and Raly and Newcome caught him and set him on his feet again.

"What the thump!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.
"That—that fat idiot!" articulated Jimmy Lovell.
Toby glanced at the Fiscal Four. What had brought them to Mr. Dalton's study at that unfortunate moment, he did not know; but they had arrived very awkwardly for the fatsoz Toby. He grasped the brass liard tightly in a fat paw, dodged past the janitors, and raced down the passage.

"Stop!" yelled Jimmy.
"He's got that liard!" shrieked Lovell. "I saw it in his paw! After him!"
"Toby, you fat dumpty, stop!"
Toby took on. After him, the Fiscal Four rushed along the corridor. The patter of pursuing feet behind him spurred Reginald Muffin to frantic efforts. He tore



Pursued by the Fiscal Four, Toby takes an racing round the corner of the passage!

breathlessly on to the corner of the passage, and tore round it.

"Muffin! What?"
It was Mr. Dalton's voice.
Muffin was going too fast to stop. Another second and there would have been another crash; but Mr. Dalton grabbed Muffin by the collar in time, and halted him.

"Muffin! What—what—why, what—what—" ejaculated the astonished Fiscal master as four janitors came tearing breathlessly around the corner.

"Hold on!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "It's Dalton!"
The Fiscal Four halted, panting. Toby, with the master's grip on his collar, wriggled apprehensively. Mr. Dalton stared at the excited janitors, angry and amazed.

"Silver! What does this mean? Muffin, what— Upon my word! You have taken the paper-weight from my study!"

"I—I haven't!" gasped Muffin, forgetting, in the excitement of the moment, that the brass liard was in his pocket hand. "I—I haven't seen it, sir! I—I haven't touched it!"

"It is in your hand!" thundered Mr. Dalton.
"Oh lor!" gasped Toby.
"You will come to my study, Muffin!" said Mr. Dalton; and, taking no further notice of Jimmy Silver & Co., he marched the hapless Muffin back to his study. The Fiscal Four followed.
"Place that paper-weight on the table, Muffin!" said Mr. Dalton sternly.
"Oh dear!" groaned Toby, as he obeyed. It looked like another "sis" now, and Reginald Muffin had barely recovered from the first one.
"Muffin, this appears to me to be an act of theft!"
"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Muffin. "It—It's mine, sir!"
"What?"
"It's really mine, sir!" groaned Toby. "These fellows know, sir. You fellows tell Dalton that it's mine."
"I fail to understand you, Muffin. Loggett told me this paper-weight. I understood that he purchased it at Mr.

Isaac's shop in Latham for ten shillings, and regretted it afterwards, and I took it off his hands for the same sum."
"Oh, the woful fibber!" gasped Muffin. "He got it off me for a tanner! Those fellows know."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "I shall speak to Loggett about this. But that does not excuse your persisting the article, Muffin."

"I—I was going to buy you a new paper-weight out of the two pounds, sir!" groaned Toby.

"What! What two pounds!"
Toby Muffin babbled out an explanation. Mr. Dalton listened in astonishment to the strange history of the brass liard. His brow was darker than ever when Toby had finished.

"Muffin, you had no right to keep an article that was thrown over the school wall by some delinquent person—"

"It—it hit me on the nose, sir—"

"If it really belongs to this man Wright, he is entitled to its return!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "Certainly he will not be allowed to give you a reward for returning it."

"Oh, lor!"
"If it is his, however, I fail to see why he did not come openly to the school and claim it. In any case, I forbid you, Muffin, to have any dealings with the man. He is suspected of a cheat from his former employer; and he entered the school last night, and he will be charged with attempted burglary. Muffin, you are a young rascal! You had no right to keep the liard, in the first place; no right to sell it and, above all, no right to attempt to perjure it from my study. I shall punish you severely, Muffin."

"Ow!"
Mr. Dalton picked up his seat.
"Bend over that chair, Muffin!"
"Wow!"

And history repeated itself.

"You may go, Maffin!" said Mr. Dalton, laying down the case, and the hapless Tiddy sagged dejectedly away. Mr. Dalton fixed his eyes on the Physical Form. "If you janters have anything to say to me—"

"Yes, sir," said Lovell.

"Well—well, what is it?"

"About that brass lizard, sir," said Lovell. "I've been thinking."

Mr. Dalton stared at him and raised his eyebrows. Possibly he was surprised to hear that Arthur Edward Lovell had been thinking!

"What do you mean, Lovell?" he explained testily.

"I've got an idea, sir!" explained Lovell.

"Really, Lovell?"

"Old Isaac—I mean Mr. Isaac, of Latcham, sir, has offered a reward of ten guineas—I mean pounds—for the recovery of a string of pearls that Bright stole from him—"

"I'd fail to see any connection."

"Bright thought—I mean there—that brass lizard over the school wall, sir—"

"I understood from Maffin that Bright stated that someone had thrown it where it fell for a foolish joke on him."

"That was gossamer, sir?"

"It was what?" ejaculated Mr. Dalton.

"I mean, good, sir—that is, a crammer! You see, sir, it happened the day Bright pinched—I mean scooped—that is, stole—old Isaac's pearls. The Latcham hobby—I mean policeman—was after him and right at his back, and they told Bright checked the pearls away, so they were not found on him. Well, sir, the pearls have been hunted for everywhere, but they've not been found. But that brass lizard—"

"I really do not follow your meaning, Lovell! Silver, do you know what Lovell is talking about?"

"No, sir!" gasped Jimmy.

"But suppose, sir," gasped Lovell—"suppose the pearls were hidden in, sir!"

"What?"

Mr. Dalton fairly jumped. Jimmy Silver, Raly, and Newman almost bounded. All four of them stared at Lovell.

Lovell had said that he had been thinking. Apparently, for once at least, Arthur Edward Lovell had been thinking to some purpose!

CHAPTER 4.

Lovell's Luck!

JIMMY SILVER broke the astonished silence in Mr. Dalton's study.

"My hat! Lovell's got it!"

"Lovell—," gasped Raly.

"Fancy—Lovell—," stuttered Newman.

Corrections flashed into the minds of the three juniors at once. In fact, only the suggestion was needed to be in sight on the mystery. Ephraim Bright's almost frantic efforts to regain possession of the brass lizard had been quite inexplicable.

Long minutes passed while the Fourth Form master examined the brass lizard. Lovell could hardly resist his desire to ask the Form master to hand it to him for examination. Fortunately, however, he did so.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton suddenly.

The juniors thrilled! Mr. Dalton had taken a magnifying-glass from his desk and examined the scales given on the neck of the lizard. Apparently he had made some discovery.

"I think," said Mr. Dalton, "that the head answers. We shall see."

With finger and thumb he tried to sever the head of the brass lizard but it remained immovable. Mr. Dalton sought in a drawer of his desk and took out a small pair of pliers. With almost painful excitement Jimmy Silver & Co. watched him. Mr. Dalton gripped the lizard's head with the pliers, and, holding the body firmly in his left hand, he twisted the head. Slowly the lizard's head revolved. Evidently there was a screw in the neck, and the head was movable.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Jimmy Silver, as the brass head came off in the pliers, revealing an orifice. The body of the brass lizard was hollow! The interior was stuffed with wool, and Mr. Dalton nipped it with the pliers and pulled it out. A glittering stream of pearls poured on the study table.

"Glossious gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton.

"Pearls!" yelled Raly.

"Oh crumbs!"

The pearls glittered in the sunlight from the window. Mr. Dalton picked them up, staring at them in the light. They were loose, but there could be no doubt that they were

the string of pearls that had been "pinched" from the sleep at Latcham. There was no doubt now that Ephraim Bright had "pinched" those pearls, and "pinched" the brass lizard also, in concealment then. The whole mystery was explained now.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Dalton. "Lovell, I shall take these pearls to the police-station, and Mr. Isaac will be called upon to identify them; but there can be no doubt on the subject. These are Mr. Isaac's stolen pearls. Yes, Lovell, are undoubtedly entitled to the reward of £20 offered by Mr. Isaac for their recovery."

"It's going to the cricket club lunch, sir," said Lovell. "I told those fellows from the first that that was what I should do with it if I got it. I rather thought—"

"You may leave the matter in my hands now, my boys!" said Mr. Dalton; and the Physical Form left the study.

The name of Lovell was an easy target at Hookwood School the next day.

The stolen pearls, duly identified by the delighted Mr. Isaac, went back to their owner. Mr. Isaac was not, perhaps, so delighted at paying over the reward; but he paid it over. Mr. Bright was the person most dissatisfied with the way matters had turned out. Ephraim Bright, after dodging the police for some time, was "run in" at last, with the prospect of six months' "hard" before him; and at long last Mr. Bright probably realized that Isaac was the best policy and that "pinching" was not really a paying game.

Young fellows at Hookwood, however, were not wholly satisfied. One of them was Tiddy Maffin. Tiddy almost wept when he learned that the brass lizard which he had sold for sixpence contained four hundred pounds' worth of pearls. He pointed out eloquently to Lovell that he, Tiddy, was really entitled to the reward; and he asked Lovell what he intended to give him. Lovell drew back his right foot—and as what he intended to give Tiddy was clear from that action, Tiddy departed hastily without waiting to receive it.

The other fellow who was not satisfied was Leggett of the Modern Fourth. Leggett almost tore his hair when he heard the facts. He did not approach Lovell on the subject; he knew, from painful experience, the weight of Arthur Edward's boot. He went to Mr. Dalton.

"Ah! I wished to see you, Leggett," said the Fourth Form master, as Albert presented himself hopefully. "In reference to the brass lizard—"

"I'd come to speak to you about that, sir," said Leggett.

"As—as it was mine—"

"Toasts!" repeated Mr. Dalton.

"Yes, sir, and as I sold it to you in ignorance of its value, I—I feel sure you will decide, sir, that I ought to have a share in the reward!"

Mr. Dalton gave the hapless Albert a grim look.

"The reward goes to the junior who discovered the lost pearls, Leggett. It was not about the reward that I intended to speak to you. You allowed me to believe that you had bought that curio at Mr. Isaac's shop for ten shillings, and I gave you that sum for it. It transpired that you really obtained it from a Hookwood boy for sixpence; a boy who, as you know, was not entitled to sell it at all!"

Leggett's jaw dropped.

"I have punished Maffin," continued Mr. Dalton. "It is now my intention to punish you, Leggett."

"Oh!" gasped Leggett.

"To obtain such an article from a foolish boy for sixpence was a mean action; particularly near a dishonest action," said Mr. Dalton. "I shall allow you to keep sixpence, the sum you paid Maffin. The remaining nine shillings and sixpence you will return to me."

"Oh!"

"And now you will bend over that chair, Leggett!"

"Oh!"

It was quite a painful interview, for Leggett. When Mr. Dalton laid down the cane Albert Leggett crawled from the study and wriggled his doubtful way down the passage; a sadder if not a wiser Leggett.

The £20 reward was duly handed over to Arthur Edward Lovell; and duly presented by Arthur Edward to the junior cricket club; and the arbitrators passed a unanimous vote of thanks to the magnificent Arthur Edward. Lovell made a little speech, which was cheered to the echo. And so, with the inconsiderable exception of Tiddy Maffin, Albert Leggett, and Mr. Ephraim Bright, the mysterious affair of the brass lizard ended in general satisfaction.

FINIS.

(Pursued in the mystery of the Brass Lizard! Next week's GEM will contain another ripping yarn of Hookwood, entitled: "TUDOR MAFFIN'S TREASURES!"—an up-lifter you will all enjoy!)

MORE THRILLS ON A DESERT ISLAND!

THE ISLAND CASTAWAYS!

(First Chapter
re-told on page 24.)



A Voice on the Ether!

I SUPPOSE you can get used to anything. I know Mother and Jill dared not go to their hut. I knew we just sat there, and I was rubbing Nigger's ears, and Dad was smoking cigarettes as though he'd only just got to the corner to get some more, and then I fell asleep.

I suppose the others must have been longer in getting off. Anyway, when I woke to find the wet sand, they were all on the blue-covered section we'd brought from the cabin, and Dad sprawled on a rug, whilst old Dad lay back in a chair, his legs apart and his mouth open, snoring away like fury.

I thought it would be a shame to wake them, so I went outside with Nigger, and pulled off the sweater I'd been jolly glad to, in the night. Our fire had been drenched, but there was a collection of dry sticks and grass under a tarpaulin, and I soon had it going again, fired a bottle with water, and then, leaving it to boil, I ran round to the roof to see what had happened to the wreck.

The Maglo had disappeared. Of course, it didn't surprise me, we'd felt pretty certain that she would never stand a heavy sea. There was wreckage on the sand and up against the roof, and I saw there would be some house-crafting to do. In one way I was glad that the wreck had gone; we'd got all that we could reasonably want off her, and I was free to see if I could get the wireless going, and we could set about making ourselves more comfortable in case the wireless was a wash-out.

I walked along to the lagoon, pulled off shirt and shorts,

and had a dip in the water, which seemed delightfully fresh and cool after the night's storm. The sun dried me in no time, and, pulling on my clothes, I hurried back to the camp, brought out the tins, got tea and condensed milk from the rough shelter we called my locker, and made tea, just as Dad appeared, yawning and blinking round him.

"Early morning tea is ready!" I said.

"You're a brick, Harry!" said Jill, coming out after him. "The others are just awake, and I thought I should have to light the fire before getting breakfast. Oh, that ghastly storm! I'll never forget it!

I wonder what happened to the brown man? Has the Maglo gone?"

"I needed."

"Poor old dad!" said Jill softly, and, having sipped her tea, she carried the other two cups into the shelter, and I collapsed Dad.

"We've got a job of work to do before breakfast," I

said. "There's the very thing I want washed up against the roof, the small mast of the Maglo. It's snapped off fairly high up, but it ought to be long enough for the receiving end of the aerial."

"Right-o, I'll give you a hand," answered Dad. "But I'll let the fork out first. Good job dad shut them up last night."

Dudley walked over to the farmhouse we had hoisted over from the wreck, then I heard him give a shout of delight as he opened the door and the fork came fluttering out.

"Eggs, old lad!" he shouted. "The storm must have tossed these fellers into laying!"

He came towards me holding half a dozen eggs in his

NOT A DECEIVING SET!

Castaways on Pacific Isle hear
broadcast from London!

heads. They were on the small side, but we couldn't guess about that, and Jill said it settled the breakfast problem. Both she and another felt rather rambled out, but boiled eggs would be little trouble and soon ready. She said the pickled eggs we had brought out also would furnish good food. "Don't you get laddy, young Jill!" said Dad, and taking a couple of sips, we made for the roof. Dad had a dip in the lagoon on the way, and felt better for it, but he was wishing he had not smoked so many cigarettes during the storm. He said he had a sore throat and an awful cough, and now he would have to ration himself severely until he had caught up on the average, which he calculated would last him about six months.

"What a ghastly prospect to be faced with year last fall!" he said, and looked rather down in the mouth. "You're not likely to be if I can get the wireless going," I said. "As a matter of fact, I reckon this is an ideal time to send out an R-O-S; the gale last night has probably sent several ships out of their usual course, and as we're off the regular route, there's all the more chance of being picked up."

That seemed to cheer him a bit, and we set off along the reef. We had to cut away a couple of ropes and reworked and then we easily floated the mast ashore. We had got the upper twenty-five feet of it, and it was all we wanted to carry back to the camp, and breakfast was ready when we got there.

Dad was a little gloomy. He had revolved in searching that week for anything that might possibly be useful, but he chooped up a bit after breakfast and a pipe, took Jill off her bounding, and left Dad and me to put up the aerial. We fixed one end to a big tree in the jungle, and, thinking of snakes, I can't say I enjoyed the climb to about forty feet up. Then we hauled the mast to the firm sand, and stepped it, and after Dad had helped me fix up a sort of tent for the set, he went off to join the others at the beach-combing job, and I was left to see what I could do with the set. It took some time to fix up in the tent, then I switched on to the receiver and got on headphones. How the thing was as dead as the dead, though the valves lit up all right. The lit, battery was all right, and the accumulator from the car showed a full set of volts when I tested it with a voltmeter. That meant going over the wiring, and I found two loose connections. It took a long time, but I was full of hope, and stuck at it. I felt pretty certain that if I could get reception I'd be able to get the transmitter going, though it would be weakened considerably by only having one transmitting valve instead of two. I'd searched the wreck for the spare one Polford, the wireless operator, ought to have carried, but without having any luck. With one there was a chance of being picked up, and there was nothing like being hospital of one's chance.

Mother called me to dinner. Dad and Jill chaffed me. Dad clearly regarded it as a waste of time. He said it was most unlikely that we should pick up anything, and the chance of getting a signal through wires we had not seen the outside of any ship seemed to be too remote to be worth considering. But I went back to it and stuck at it all afternoon.

Then at last I got some faint Morse, and knew the set was working, and I gave a yell which brought Dad and Jill into the tent. Then I got a carrier wave. I was trying for Deventry, remembering the setting Polford had used when he had let me help in on his spare headphones.

And then suddenly came a voice, a cultured, clear, distinct voice.

"This is the National Programme. Our lunch-time music to-day comes from Fremont's Restaurant."
"We got it!" I yelled. "Yes as Deventry! It's lunch-time at home, and— Mind that dog—the transmitting valve, man, the valve!"

I think I must have shrieked in the agony of that moment, for Nigger had dashed into the tent with a flapping bird in his mouth. Dad made a wild grab at him, missed, and the dog and big bird crashed against the small table, and there was a crash at that long valve, the thing on which we depended for communication with the outside world, rolled off the table, hit against the big black accumulator on the sand, and was shattered to pieces!

Green Eyes!

FOUND as I was of that black messenger, I felt I could have killed him then, and I should have seen the fury on my face, for he stopped—
—The Gem Library—No. 1003.

between me and the dog who was so proudly holding the flapping bird in his mouth.

"Steady, Harry!" he said sharply. "It's no use blaming the poor brute, he didn't know what he was doing. It's tough luck, old boy, but it can't be helped."

And there was that one Nigger holding the flapping bird in his mouth, evidently expecting me to make a fuss of him, while I was half-blinded by tears of rage and disappointment.

"Get the silly idiot out before he does any more damage!" I said in a choking voice; and then I saw Jill sort of grimace at the others, and they all went out except her, taking the dog with them.

I suppose I must have looked pretty well broken up. I began to pick up the pieces of the valve. I believe that had she been sympathetic or sympathetic or sorry over it I should have yelled. You see, to use it was far the worst disaster that could possibly have happened. All sitting in its teeth with some valve to take the place of the one broken in the wire transmitting valve! I knew that failure to find the spare transmitting valve would have meant a very small range, but so long as we could keep sending messages out we should at least have had some sort of hope. But now we could send out nothing at all, and I would have given several years of my life to have had that valve that was now but shattered bits of glass.

And then Jill said quite calmly:

"Aren't you going to let me listen in to Deventry, Harry?" She spoke as though nothing at all had occurred, and it made me feel myself together. Mechanically I fixed on the second pair of headphones, and Jill probed them over her dark lashed hair. Then I switched on. I haven't much ear for music, but I seemed to know the tune they were playing.

"Sullivan's 'Yeomen of the Guard,'" said Jill. "I love it!"

I thought it rather fine, too, and when it came to an end there was some applause, then a murmur of conversation, and I could never I heard knives and forks on plates and the clink of glasses. Then the orchestra started again, and there were we on a desert island in the Pacific, with night coming on, listening to the band in a famous restaurant in far-away London.

I felt Jill's warm little hand laid on mine. It was becoming dark in the rough tent I had rigged up for a wireless-room, but we sat on, entranced, and I had a lump in my throat, and presently the music stopped.

Then that cultured voice which I had heard at home, and last in the Panama Canal, and which somehow seemed the voice of a friend, was speaking again.

"That ends our programme of lunch-time music from Fremont's Restaurant, and Deventry is now closing down until the programme to schools at half-past two."

"So that's that!" I said, and we were almost in pitch darkness.

"It's thrilling!" said Jill.

Dad appeared at the door with a lantern.

"Aren't you two coming to grab?" he asked.

"Let's!" said Jill. "Oh, Dad, we've had a ripping programme! It's great of old Harry to have rigged up the wireless; we shall feel quite in touch with things now."

"Rather!" said my brother enthusiastically, though at home he had always hated the wireless.

"That's just what I don't feel now!" I said a little bitterly; but the ghastly disappointment was wearing off, and, after all, it was something to have Deventry coming in at good strength and there was no knowing what other programmes might be picked up.

It was a tinny supper, pork and beans and tomatoes, with pineapple slices to follow, but it went down well. Poor old Nigger had evidently realised that in some way he had upset me, for he slunk away, and then later he came and creased beside me. I put down my head, a cold, wet nose was thrust into it, and then a long, red tongue protruded to lick me, and I was feeling a long, happy man.

And so we made it up. As soon as my wife was away I went back to the wireless. A talk to schools was on; but I wasn't gripping the ether. General Union I picked up some Morse, but it was either too rapid for me to read, or in code. I got two foreign stations I could not identify. A lot of jammings on the very

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

THESE BARRY MATYAS is an old story in New Zealand country. He plays with his father and mother. MURPHY, his other brother, and JILL, his sister, are also with them. During a stormy storm in the Pacific, the ship strikes a coral reef and the party are stranded on a strange island, which they discover Necessity Island. After attempting a way, together with some provisions, Harry and Jill leave the island and discover a sheltered harbor in the sand. On their return a savage storm beats over the island, and the survivors see a startling crash and see the ship break up and disappear from sight.

(After continue the story as told by Barry.)

low more-lengths, but not a thing to suggest that there was a slip within a hundred miles of us.
 I went back to Bercester, lived in the children's hour, and then found the mid-afternoon. It was afternoon. The sheet had turned in, so I crept off and went to bed.

The next morning we started building operations. Jill was going to have her own room, and she was determined to build it herself. Dad and I were going to rig up a decent building which would contain our sleeping quarters and a window-screens. Dad wanted to plant potatoes, but mother begged him to help her improve what she called the kitchen.

We had no end of material, and tools, nails, and screws from the carpenter's shop. Mother and dad were to have the original shelter we had rigged up, while our old sleeping quarters were to be a garage for the Moonbeam.

We soon found that saving was the hardest job. A lot of the wood was weak, and mighty tough to get through with an ordinary saw, and that, making for the "kitchen" with a white enamel cupboard, placed at us sympathetically as we worked in the tropical heat with the perspiration pouring off us.

"If only we'd got an electric plant and could run that circular saw I brought off from the carpenter's shop, your job would be easier," he said.

I gave a yell of delight. I'd no idea dad had brought such a thing of the work, though I know he had hated the idea of leaving anything that might possibly be of use to us.

"We've got the power!" I cried. "All we've got to do is to jack up the back ends of the car, take a wire from one of the wheels, and we've got a dynamo!"

Dad seemed a bit sceptical about it, but Dad was enthusiastic. The saw took a good deal of hating up, and the rim of the wheel wasn't an ideal pulley for the belt, but before midday we'd got it going, and it was jolly fun to hear the sound of the saw as it cut the wood as a wire-cut device.

Jill's job happened to be a bit. It didn't look much on the outside, but inside it was quite swaggy. We'd brought off a big bale of green artificial silk at her request, and she'd used the silk like wallpaper round the bath; it was a pale shade, and looked jolly well. She'd put a few pictures up, and I'd laid it into a sort of nook, put some rugs over a tarpaulin floor, set out two or three chairs, fixed up a table, washstand and dressing-table, and on a small table was a vase of flowers.

"A most charming flat!" said Dad. "But wait till you see my delightful bachelor chamber!"

I grinned, and we went back to work again, determined to get our furniture in before it got dark. Dad was clearing a potato patch, and mother and Jill were getting other materials such as I brought off from the carpenter's special order, and, with the exception round it, it looked jolly good.

As soon as we'd got the heavy stuff in, I set up the window in its new home, standing it on a stout block this time, then I went to fix up some chairs. We had two dumps, one of the things we had brought off from the wreck and kept covered with tarpaulins, and the other of junk washed up by the sea. I'd just selected a couple of chairs and was looking for the last when mother called to me.

"We've nearly out of water, Harry. Would you go and get a puddle? That will last until the morning. I don't like this game, as it will soon be dark."

There was nothing else for it, so though I had been on putting up some curtains and making our flat look more comfy, I picked up my electric torch from the window bench, and, taking up my tin, started Nigger, and set off along the sand to get the water.

The change from light to darkness is very sudden in the jungle, and I crept on to the new well-worn path in the jungle, and had to do the spring. I was surprised to find how dark it was. Nigger was a few feet in front of me when we reached the opening by the spring, and suddenly I saw his eyes in a twinkling.

"What's up with you?" I asked him.
 The dog did not move, but seemed to stand paralyzed by fright, and, thinking of Jill's horrible experience with a snake at that place, I was just going to switch on the torch when I suddenly felt my hair rising and a horrible empty feeling in the pit of my stomach.

On the other side of the trickling stream, peering out of the darkness of the undergrowth, were two glowing green eyes.

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Send Your Questions to the Oracle!



Some people think the Oracle's busy, but so far we see he's bewitched them not! You try, dear.—Ed.

EVERY day my life-lying, Win-livers? the Editor asked me when I got to the office this morning.

"I should just say I have," I told him. "I've been reading for it, believe me." The Ed. then picked up a letter from the stack of correspondence on his desk. "George Heywood, a fine reader, wants to be told a few things about life-lying, but, he wants to know when life-lying begins, and how high it's possible to get a life to go, and what's the best way to do so, and a lot more. Now come along, my livery friend, let's have of you large about life-lying and life-lying."

I sat down in a chair, picked up a letter, and my livery friend picked up a letter, and we both got hold of them and began:

"Well, Ed., the sport of life-lying is a very ancient one, before our time. The average fellow, like the Maoris of New Zealand, have flown life-lying since the year dot. So have the Chinese, the Japanese, the Tibetians, the Americans—"

"You don't stop up on that," said the Ed., "Get to the interesting part, my boy."

"Well, Ed., it never occurred to me to know that in China, Japan, and Korea it is quite usual for the shopkeepers to pop out in the street, when trade's slack, and give a life. In China and Japan they give a few bits of various striking designs—so printed in Japan, like stamps, and such. These life-lying are very often given for a few cents, and are made of the paper, or some of this silk stretched on a frame of bamboo strips. In China they think an ounce of life-lying that the sixth day of the sixth month is

the year is called 'Alice's Day,' on which occasion boys and girls set out with their own sets of life-lying, which they then sell to their friends."

"I've never heard of Alice's Day," said the Ed.

"No, sir? Well, this is how it's done. The boys and girls set out with their own sets of life-lying, which they then sell to their friends."

"This is life-lying," said the Ed.

"Yes, sir, and I have lots more," said I. "There is no difficulty about making a perfectly wonderful life-lying, in a matter of five or six days, on the right sort of paper. And it is very common that a life is made to reward some one three weeks, though in 1907 the Russian Observatory got a life up to just four weeks. They used to give the life of five or six weeks to the people of the sea, and it was very common to give a life to a sailor who had been at sea for a long time. The life-lying is made of paper, or some of this silk stretched on a frame of bamboo strips. In China they think an ounce of life-lying that the sixth day of the sixth month is

that it happened in France, and I've demonstrated that life-lying was everywhere."

"How do life-lying get their name? It was the life's good question."

"From their resemblance to a life-lying, in a kind of way that was at our first existence in Britain, and to have nearly nothing. This life-lying was called the life, and there are many kinds of life-lying, and with the usual thing to see life-lying flying over the streets of London. They would fly about all day in hot weather and pick up the passengers and establish flying about. They acted as messengers. There are not many of these birds about nowadays, excepting in certain parts of Scotland."

"What's a knook-knock?" asked the Ed., looking at the next letter.

"A strong short stick used by the Scotch Highlanders for fighting and hunting."

"Did you tell Robert Coote what a knook-knock is?"

"A wild cat, found in the Himalayas, with a red, painted head and a shaggy tail. The word knook-knock means 'knook-knock'."

The Ed. paged at me with admiration. "You're a wonder," he said. "I can't find anything to talk you with, though. How are knooks in wood carved?"

"You won't be up in knooks with a knook-knock, I told him. There is a kind of wood used for making knooks that has become known in the world by the name growing over them. It is a kind of wood that has a hole in it, and is called a 'knook-knock'."

"Another reader wants to know what you have to do to carry a knook-knock."

"First of all," I told the Ed., "you get hold of the knook. Then you get a carriage, and you run the knook down with it. That's called carrying. To carry is to get hold of the knook, and it is a knook-knock. You cut the knook up and put it in a knook-knock."

"I don't try to be knook-knock," said the Ed., "don't trouble. You're an absolute wonder as you are, without trying."

"You might tell that reader that the man who knows and catches knooks is known as a knook-knock," said I, "and I'm taking my knook-knock under my knook-knock, I hope for the knook. You never know, however. It is not those long enough the Ed. might have found something to talk about, anyway."

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