

ANOTHER TIP-TOP SCHOOL STORY!

The GEM 1^D₂

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LIBRARY

20 Pages.

Every Wednesday.

March 4th, 1922.



RACKE TO THE RESCUE!

(A Dramatic Incident from the Grand Long Complete School Story Inside.)

"My Readers' Own Corner."

Half-a-crown is paid for each contribution printed on this page.

If your name is not here this week it may be next.

A DISCOVERY!

Father was very irritated by the questions Jackie was persistently asking him, and at last got so angry that he ordered the inquisitive youngster from his presence. Half an hour later Jackie put his head in at the door. "Dad," he said, "I've made a discovery." "Well, what is it?" asked father, who had cooled down somewhat. "Why," said Jackie, "I've found out that the heavy end of a match is always the light one." Then he dashed for safety.—W. G. Hill, 161, Newcombe Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.

NOT WHAT HE MEANT.

Old Gentleman: "No, my man, I have no money to give you, but I will tell you of two things that will help you to get up in the world. Those two things are—" Weary Walter: "I knows 'em, governor—a ladder and an alarm clock."—Eric Stager, 1, Dundas Street, Huddersfield.

A GOOD START.

The old soldier was in trouble again, and the O.C. was quite fed up with seeing the name of Private Hawkins on the charge sheet before him. After passing sentence of seven days' C.B. for the third time in a month, the officer thought he would appeal to the man's better nature. "Are you aware, my man," he said, "that this company has a great reputation for sportsmanship? Now, why don't you try to uphold it, and be a sport?" Private Hawkins: "I never looked at it in that way, sir." Officer: "Well, try this time, Hawkins, and you'll find that if you're a sport I'll be a sport." Private Hawkins: "Well, there's nowt like starting rest, sir. I'll toss you whether it's fourteen days or nowt."—Miss A. Misbett, 41, Cotford Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey.

CHINESE CUSTOMS.

It is interesting to note how in many things Chinese customs are just the reverse of ours. The Chinese shake their own hands when they meet friends. English women cover their heads. When a Chinese woman wears any headdress at all, she keeps the crown of her head uncovered. The Chinese gentleman keeps his hat on as a mark of respect. In China long hair is fashionable. It is only the old and infirm who use a walking-stick. Chinese books are read from right to left. White is a sign of mourning. At feasts the left-hand side of the host is the place of honour. A Chinaman drives with the reins in his right hand. In China it is a mark of courtesy to ask anybody's age.—Guy Robertson, 15, Bankhall Street, Govanhill, Glasgow.

DISGRACEFUL!

Little Henry, who was the possessor of a bad threepenny-bit, entered a confectioner's shop and asked for a threepenny pie, at the same time throwing the coin on the counter. As the boy was leaving the place the shopkeeper saw the threepenny-bit was bad. "Hi!" he called. "That's a bad 'un, my lad." "Never mind," said Henry, "I'll eat it if it kills me, for I'm desperately hungry."—E. Llewellyn, Par-ou, Harrogate Road, Knaresborough, Yorks.

CHEEK!

Cardew (to Grundy): "That new chap just told me that I look just like you." Grundy (wrathfully): "The cheeky ass! Where is he? I'll knock him down!" Cardew: "It's quite all right. I've knocked him down."—Kenneth Blake, 36, Fitzroy Street, London, W.1.

SNUBBED!

A passenger by train wanted to read, but the man facing him persisted in talking. After several attempts to get on with his book, the would-be reader felt irritated. "The grass is very green, isn't it?" said the conversationalist pleasantly. "Yes," was the answer. "Such a change from the blue and red grass we have been having lately!" Then there was silence.—Miss Doris Healy, 55, Standon Park, Honor Oak Park, S.E.8.

THE LIMIT.

"I don't like a friend to domineer over me," said the young man with the patient disposition. "Who has been domineering?" "My room-mate. He borrowed my dress-suit. It was a bit of a liberty, but I gave way. When, however, he demanded my umbrella, I told him that I might want to use it myself, but he said, 'Have your own way; they're your clothes I am trying to keep from getting spoiled, not mine!'"—Miss D. M. Cosway, 16, Roxburgh Street, Hull.

GETTING EVEN.

An Irishman was in England, and farmers there were trying to make jokes at his expense. "Hi!" said one. "Your hair is like a mop of hay!" "Ay!" retorted the Irishman. "That accounts for the many asses round me!"—F. Bart, 28, Swan Street, Benoni, Transvaal, South Africa.

BAGGY GOES TRAVELLING

Baggy: "I say, porter, can I take the train to London?" Porter: "You can, if you like, but the engine generally takes it."—F. Conwell, Tutaromua P.O. via Dannevirke, New Zealand.

(Continued on page 19.)



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RACKE to the RESCUE

A Grand Long Complete Story of the Boys of St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

The Finger of Scorn.

"**H**E, he, he!" It was Baggy Trimble, of the St. Jim's Fourth, who indulged in that unmusical cackinnation.

Trimble was leaning his fat form against one of the stone pillars of the School House steps, blinking across the quad. A most remarkable sight dawned upon his gaze. It was no wonder that that sight drew a cackinnation from Baggy Trimble.

Racke of the Shell was walking in the quad with his hands driven deep into his pockets, and a troubled frown on his brow.

Approaching Racke on the gravel path, were the chums of Study No. 6 in the Fourth—Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy.

Racke scowled at the four. As they drew nearer to the scowling Shell fellow, the actions of Blake & Co. were peculiar.

They swerved off to the right to pass Racke with a wide berth, as if in fear of contamination.

And as they passed they turned up their noses with an air of exaggerated scorn and contempt.

Aubrey Racke's scowling face grew blacker and blacker. "You silly dummies!" he called out.

The chums of Study No. 6 did not answer. They elevated their noses more emphatically, and walked on in silence.

Racke stood still on the path clenching his hands. "He, he, he!"

Trimble's chortle came to his ears, and he bestowed a scowl on Trimble. Then Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther of the Shell came along.

Racke looked at them. They looked at Racke. Then, just as Blake & Co. had done, the Terrible Three turned up their noses and passed Racke with emphatic contempt.

"Oh, you rotters!" hissed Racke.

"He, he, he!"

Baggy Trimble was deriving great entertainment from this extraordinary performance in the quadrangle. And it was not over yet.

Levison and Clive and Cardew of the Fourth walked down the path past the spot where Racke stood scowling.

"I say, Levison!" called out Racke.

Levison did not answer.

He turned up his nose, and Clive and Cardew followed his example; and in grim silence they walked past the cad of the Shell.

Racke trembled with rage.

"He, he, he!" cackled Trimble.

Racke slouched away savagely. Near at hand he came upon three Fourth-Formers—Figgins & Co. of the New House. Figgins & Co. eyed him scornfully, and then turned up their noses as the School House fellows had done. They walked away with their noses in the air.

Aubrey Racke of the Shell was not thin-skinned. But there was a limit to what even Racke could stand with comfort. He bit his lip and tramped away towards the School House to get indoors. Taking the air in the quad that morning was not a pleasant experience for Racke.

Trimble's fat and grinning face greeted him as he arrived at the School House steps.

Racke gave him a bitter look. Trimble, as a rule, was his toady and hanger-on; Racke was wealthy, and Trimble had an eager eye for the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. But Baggy Trimble was not the fellow to stand by anyone who was down on his luck. The finger of scorn was

being pointed at Aubrey Racke, and Trimble was prompt to be down upon him, too. Besides, it was rather a pleasure to Baggy to be down on somebody. Generally, fellows were down on Trimble.

So, as Racke came up, the grin faded from Trimble's fat face, and a look of lofty scorn took its place.

Trimble turned up his fat little nose—not a difficult task, as Nature had given it a good start in that direction.

All the scorn that he could throw into his look, Baggy Trimble threw into it; and his little fat nose almost curled with contempt.

Racke stopped.

Scorn from fellows like Tom Merry and Blake and D'Arcy was bad enough. But scorn from Trimble was past the limit. It was the "Thing-too-Much!" A fellow must have fallen very low indeed for Baggy Trimble to have the right to despise him. Racke did not feel that he was quite down to that level yet. Besides, he was boiling with rage by the time he arrived at the steps, and Baggy Trimble was not a dangerous adversary to deal with. Racke wanted a victim, and the fat and fatuous Baggy was, as it were, offering himself like a lamb to the slaughter.

"What's the matter with you, Trimble?" asked Racke, in a low voice that trembled with rage.

Trimble waved a fat hand at him.

"Don't speak to me!" he said.

"What?"

"I despise you!"

Racke breathed hard.

"You're a funk!" said Trimble. "The fellows are all cutting you! I don't care to be seen speaking to you, Racke."

And Trimble, with an effort, elevated his little fat chunk of a nose a little more.

Smack!

Right on that elevated nose came Racke's open hand with a terrific smack that rang out like a pistol-shot.

The smack was followed by a terrific yell from Trimble.

"Yooooooop!"

Baggy staggered away and sat down in the quad. His nose was no longer turned up. It was glowing red, and Trimble rubbed it in anguish.

"Ow, ow, wow-wow! You awful rotter!" gasped Trimble.

"Oooop! My nose! Oh crumbs! Ow!"

Grundy of the Shell was looking out of the doorway. He grinned as Trimble sat down. But as Racke came in, leaving Trimble sitting, Grundy frowned majestically, and turned up his nose. The turning up of noses seemed like an epidemic at St. Jim's that morning.

Racke stared at him, and passed.

Grundy's nose was turned up as Trimble's had been, and Racke would have given a week's pocket-money to smack it as he had smacked Trimble's. But Grundy's nose was not to be smacked with impunity. Grundy's leg-of-mutton fists would have made hay of Aubrey Racke in a minute afterwards. So Racke passed on, leaving Grundy to turn up his nose as much as he liked. A snort of contempt from Grundy followed him.

Racke tramped up the big staircase.

On the landing he passed Julian and Hammond of the Fourth. They turned up their noses. In the Shell passage he came on Kangaroo and Dane and Glyn. Up went their noses as if by clockwork.

CHAPTER 2.

Rough on Racke.

TOM MERRY frowned.

The captain of the Shell was at tea in Study No. 10, with Manners and Lowther that afternoon, when Racke looked in.

The Terrible Three had been chatting cheerily over tea, but their cheery chat died away at the sight of Racke.

Tom Merry, in silence, pointed to the door.

Unheeding that hint, Aubrey Racke came into the study. His eyes were glinting, his thin lips set in a tight line. He looked as if he had come to Study No. 10 to "hunt for trouble." If that was the case, there was plenty of trouble ready for Racke.

"I want a word with you, Tom Merry," said Racke, between his teeth.

"The want is all on your side," said Tom. "Shut the door after you, Racke."

Racke did not heed.

"I'm getting fed up!" he said.

No answer.

"How long is this foolery goin' to last?" demanded Racke. "What foolery?"

"Cuttin' me in the quad, and turnin' up silly noses!" exclaimed Racke savagely. "You're at the bottom of it, Tom Merry. It's your doin' from beginnin' to end."

"Not at all," said Tom politely. "If you don't like it, Racke, you can reflect that it's your own fault. If every fellow in the school despises you, it's because you've asked for it."

"What have I done?"

Tom Merry raised his eyebrows.

"You know well enough. You picked trouble with Grimes, the grocer's boy in Rylcombe, and insulted him like a cad and a snob. When you had to put up your hands, you bolted like a rabbit. There's a limit, you know. If you're a funk, I suppose you can't help it. In that case, you shouldn't go out of your way to insult decent fellows like old Grimey. You've disgraced your school. The village fellows are chortling over it. We've had two or three fights on our hands since, just to show them that we're not all funks at St. Jim's. You ran away. Naturally, the fellows are letting you know what they think of you."

Racke clenched his hands.

"It's all your doin'!" he muttered.

"Let it go at that, if you like," said Tom Merry carelessly.

"I don't mind."

"Beware, Tommy!" said Monty Lowther gravely. "Racke will wade in and mop up the study if we're not careful. You know what a terrific fighting-man he is when he's roused."

Tom Merry chuckled.

"But I'm glad Racke dropped in," said Lowther. "I've got a proposition for Racke."

Racke stared at him.

"What's that?" he asked suspiciously.

"Next sports, I think you ought to put in for the mile," said Monty Lowther blandly. "I think you'd win for the Shell. We could arrange to have Grimes on the scene, then I'm sure that your running powers would cause no end of surprise."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke clenched his hands.

"Mind your eye, Monty!" grinned Manners. "Racke's getting waxy! Once his fighting blood begins to boil—"

"Keep calm, Racke, keep calm!" implored Lowther. "This is a peaceful study. We're not used to your wild and reckless ways."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm doing some verses for the 'Weekly' on your terrific fight with Grimes," continued Lowther. "An occasion like that ought not to be allowed to pass unhonoured and unused."

"Look here, you silly fool—"

"S-hush! What do you think of this for a limerick?"

"I don't want to hear your rot!"

But Monty Lowther proceeded unheeding.

"There was a boy hero named Racke,
Who couldn't stand more than one whack.
He stood up like a man,
Till the punching began,

And then we saw only his back."

Aubrey Racke stared grimly at the grinning Shell fellows, he turned in silence and quitted Study No. 10, slamming the door after him. With a black brow, he tramped down the Shell passage. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was coming along from the stairs, and his noble features froze into cold contempt at the sight of Racke. Racke stopped.

"Look here, D'Arcy—" he began.

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Arthur Augustus held up his hand.

"Pway don't speak to me, Wacke!" he said icily.

"Look here—"

"I werged you with contempt!" said Arthur Augustus.

"You picked a wovw with Gwimes, and wan away fwom the sewap! You are an uttaw wottah and a funk, Wacke! I werged your pwesence in the School House as a feafuh disgwace! I wewuse to speak one word to you! Not a syllable, hai Jove!"

"You silly idiot—"

"I wewuse to be called a sillay idiot, Wacke! Pway keep your distance, and do not speak to me at all!"

"I've a jolly good mind to mop up the passage with you!" hissed Racke.

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy detached his celebrated eyeglass from his eye, and pushed it into his waistcoat pocket. Then he pushed back his spotless cuffs in a businesslike way.

"Weady!" he announced.

"You frabjous ass—"

"You are goin' to mop up the passage with me, Wacke," said the swell of St. Jim's calmly. "If you weally wish to twy to wedeen your chawactah, Wacke, I am pwepared to give you a chance. Pway come on."

Racke did not come on. He backed away.

"I am waitin' for you, Wacke."

"You silly chump—"

"Are you not goin' to mop up the passage with me, Wacke?"

"I'm not goin' to take the trouble."

"Bai Jove! Then I will take the twouble, Wacke, and I will mop up the passage with you, deah boy!"

With that, Arthur Augustus advanced, with his noble fists in the air, and a warlike gleam in his eye. Aubrey Racke backed farther away. He backed along the passage towards his study, and Arthur Augustus followed him up, till they reached the door of No. 7—Racke's study.

"Weally, Wacke—" began Arthur Augustus.

Racke dodged into the study, slammed the door, and turned the key.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

He knocked at the door.

"Wacke!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I werged you as a sneakin' funk, Wacke!"

And Arthur Augustus walked on.

CHAPTER 3.

The Outcast.

HA, ha, ha!"

Racke stared at his study-mate, who burst into a laugh. Crooke of the Shell was in the study, and Crooke seemed distinctly amused by Racke's sudden entrance, and the locking of the door, and Arthur Augustus' remark through the keyhole.

"Funny, ain't it?" snarled Racke.

George Gerald Crooke nodded cheerfully.

"Jolly funny!" he agreed. "You'd better keep out of rows, Racke. I advise you as a friend. No good a chap like you bein' quarrelsome. Have you heard Lowther's limerick?"

"I don't want Lowther's cheeky rot second-hand from you, Crooke."

"It's rather funny—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I hear that he's doin' a Latin ode on the subject," grinned Crooke. "It begins, 'Crura puerunque cano—'"

"Shut up!" roared Racke.

He threw himself savagely into a chair and lighted a cigarette. Crooke watched him with amusement. They were pals, these two, but there was no love lost between them. Their friendship, such as it was, was founded upon the fact that they were birds of a feather. Now that Racke was down on his luck, he had no mercy to expect from his pal.

Racke had never been popular in his Form or his House; but he had had his own set, who were very civil to him. He had plenty of money—much more than was good for him—and it was his favourite maxim that "money talks." But even his own special pals were looking coldly on him now. None of the set, certainly, was a hero in any sense of the word; but they agreed that there was a limit. To pick a quarrel with an inoffensive fellow and run away from the resulting "scrap" was past the limit. Until the affair blew over Racke's friends felt that it was judicious not to have too much to do with Racke.

That did not worry Aubrey very much. His ample cash was still a great attraction to fellows like Crooke, and Clampe, and Mellish. If the better fellows came round, they would come round fast enough. Tom Merry & Co. had never concealed their contempt for the wealthy profiteer's son, whose ways were not their ways. But they were

generally content with keeping their distance from Racke, and having nothing to do with him. Now they were going out of their way to mark their scorn for the cad of the Shell. He had earned it, and he was getting what he had earned. From the bottom of his heart Aubrey Racke wished that he had let Grimes alone. But it was too late to think of that now. Racke was trying to think of some way out of the disgrace he had fallen into. Even Racke felt that he could not endure open scorn and derision from all his House.

His glance turned bitterly on Crooke, who was grinning over his cigarette.

"You find this entertainin'!" he snarled.

"A little!" smiled Crooke.

"You wouldn't have put up much of a fight against Grimes."

"I shouldn't have picked trouble with him, if I wasn't goin' to see it through, I know that."

"Look here," said Racke desperately, "I can't stand this! Fellows are turnin' up their silly noses at me in open quad."

"I've seen 'em!"

"It's becomin' a sort of stunt!" hissed Racke. "They twist up their silly noses as soon as I come along."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're been pals, Crooke," said Racke. "Can't you give a fellow a tip to help him out of a scrape?"

"Certainly. I'll give you some jolly good advice if you care to listen to it."

"Go ahead!" said Racke, not very hopefully.

"Challenge Grimes to another fight, and go through with it."

"You fool! I should be licked."

"Well, a lickin' is better than what you're gettin' now, isn't it?"

Racke grunted savagely. Crooke spoke the truth; but Racke felt an inward premonition that he would not be able to screw up his courage to the sticking-point and face Grimes' fists again.

"It's the only way," said Crooke, "as the johnny says in the play. You're set down as a coward, and you've got to prove that you're not, if you want the fellows to treat you decently. If you don't care to take on Grimes, put up a fight with somebody else. If you stood up to Tom Merry—"

"He's tougher than Grimes."

"But it would show that you've got pluck. What's a lickin'?" said Crooke loftily.

"Somethin' that you wouldn't face!" growled Racke.

"Well, I'm not in a scrape," smiled Crooke. "I'm advisin' you as a friend. That fact is, you can't go on like this. Clampe was sayin' that fellows can't pal with a fellow who's pointed out by the whole school as a sneakin' funk and a worm. I must say I agree with Clampe. Chowle says the same. If you want your friends to stand by you, Racke, you've got to do somethin'."

"If lickin' you would do any good, I'd lick you fast enough!" said Racke, his eyes glittering at his "friend."

Gerald Crooke laughed. "It wouldn't!" he said. "Begin on Tom Merry."

"Oh, don't be a fool!"

"Or, Blake—"

"Rot!"

"Or try D'Arcy—"

"Try him yourself!" snarled Racke.

"No, thanks! I'm not in the soup!" grinned Crooke. "You could lick Trimble, but that wouldn't do any good. What about Cardew?"

"Oh, dry up!"

Crooke's advice was good; but it was evident that Racke did not care to act upon it. He wanted to rehabilitate his character, so to speak; but he did not want a fight with a tough adversary. But he realised that Crooke was speaking the truth; unless he could do something to wash out his disgrace, he was likely to have to endure the finger of scorn for a long time to come.

"Well, that's the best I can give you," said Crooke, throwing away the stump of his cigarette and rising. "Ta-ta!"

"Where are you goin'?"

"Clampe's study in the New House. There's a little game on after tea."

"I'll come!" said Racke.

Crooke shook his head.

"You won't!" he said. "Clampe doesn't want you. You've got to lie low a bit for the present, Racke, like Brer Rabbit or Brer Fox, or whoever it was. So-long!"

Crooke left the study.

Aubrey Racke was left alone with his thoughts, which were not pleasant. He did not care to leave his study; scornful glances on all sides were getting on his nerves.

Contempt, as the proverb says, will pierce the shell of the tortoise. Racke was thick-skinned enough; but he was feeling it, and feeling it deeply. He pondered desperately over the situation, wondering what he should do. The study door opened, and Baggy Trimble's fat face looked in. Trimble gave a glance along the passage, and came in quickly and shut the door, Racke scowling at him.

"Just looked in to speak to you, old top," said Trimble, apparently forgetful of the smack upon his fat nose that morning. "Of—of course, I don't care to speak to you in open quad. You understand that. But in the study, you know—what?"

Racke clenched his hand, but he unclenched it again. In his disgrace and solitude, even Trimble was not so unwelcome as usual.

"By the way," said Baggy confidentially, "you saw me talking to Talbot this afternoon—"

"No!" growled Racke.

"Well, I was," said Trimble. "I've lent Talbot of the Shell my last ten-bob note, Racke. Talbot's good to square. Could you lend me five bob till he pays up?"

Aubrey Racke did not answer. Trimble's company, if it was worth anything, certainly was not worth five shillings.

"What do you say, old top?" asked Trimble.

"Oh, get out!"

"Is that what you call grateful, when a fellow comes in to speak to you, and you cut by all the House?" sneered Trimble.

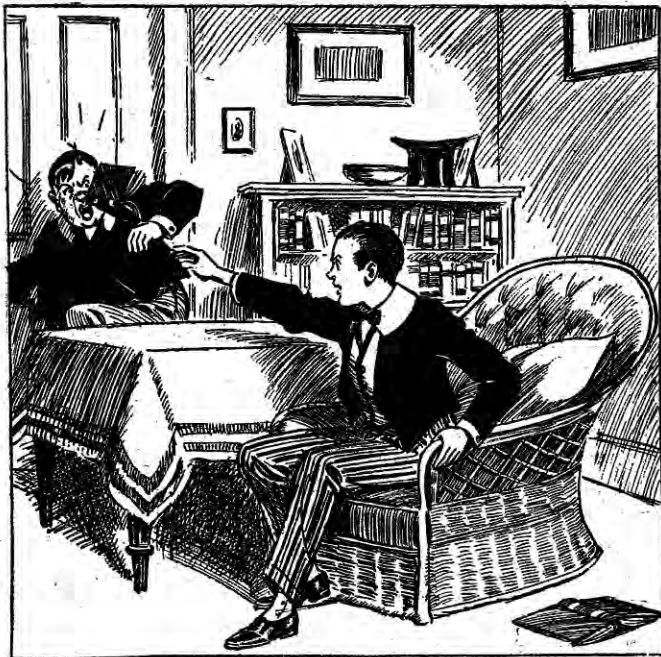
Whiz!

A Latin dictionary was near Racke's hand. He picked it up and "buzzed" it at Baggy Trimble, who caught it with his chin.

"Oh!" roared Trimble.

"Now get out, you fat rotter!"

Trimble backed to the door. He picked up the dictionary, with a gleam in his round eyes. As he retreated through the doorway, there was another "whiz," and Trimble banged



Whiz! A Latin dictionary was near Racke's hand. He picked it up and "buzzed" it at Baggy Trimble. "Oh!" roared Trimble, "Now get out, you fat rotter!" shouted Racke.

the door and fled. The dictionary came back to Aubrey Racke, and landed on his nose.

Racke jumped up with a roar of wrath.

But Trimble was out of sight when he dragged open the study door. Racke slammed the door again and rubbed his nose, and returned to his chair, his feelings too deep for words. He had fallen so low that even Baggy Trimble ventured to raise the heel against him!

That was the limit!

When Racke, an hour or two later, sick of the solitude of his study, left Study No. 7, he came on the Terrible Three in the Shell passage. They did not look at him; but Racke came savagely up to the captain of the Shell.

"Look here, Tom Merry—"

"Keep your distance," said Tom. "I don't want any trouble with you, Racke, but I don't want you to speak to me. Keep away!"

"I'm fed-up," said Racke. "Look here, what are all the fellows down on me like this for? What—what can I do?"

Racke had swallowed his lofty swank with a vengeance! Tom Merry looked at him.

"I'll tell you what to do," he said. "Do something to show that you're not the sneaking funk that you've proved yourself to be. That's what you've got to do, Racke. And that's all."

And Tom walked away with his chums. It was much the same advice that Crooke had given; and it was not of much use to Aubrey Racke. He drove his hands into his pockets, and tramped on with a black brow. The way of the transgressor is hard; and Racke was beginning to learn what it was like to be an outcast.

CHAPTER 4.

Mysterious!

"BY gad!"

Racke of the Shell uttered that exclamation.

It was a couple of days later; and Racke was still in the shades of disgrace. He was not exactly sent to Coventry, but it was very nearly as bad as that; and Racke writhed under it, and every day his angry bitterness grew. He was alone in his study now, reading a daily paper. Racke was looking at the paper for the racing news—that was the kind of news that interested Racke of the Shell. But by chance his eye fell upon a paragraph in another column.

It was headed "Gallant Rescue by a Schoolboy." Racke glanced at it carelessly and sneered as he read the account of how a lad had plunged into a half-frozen stream to rescue a schoolfellow. That sort of thing was not in Racke's line at all.

"Silly fool!" was his mental comment. "Might have been drowned, silly ass! Catch me playing the goat like that!"

But after reading the paragraph a new train of thought started in Aubrey Racke's mind. It was then that he ejaculated "By gad!" and his eyes gleamed.

He threw down the paper, jumped up, and began walking to and fro in the study, his brows knitted.

A startling idea was working in Aubrey's brain.

"Why not?" he muttered.

His eyes glittered. He threw himself into the chair again, and lighted a cigarette. Racke had succeeded in persuading himself that he thought better when he was smoking.

"Why not? It might work; and that would end it; no mistake about that. The rotter would have to admit, hang them, even Tom Merry! By gad, I've a mind to try it on!"

"Try what on, old scout?" asked Crooke's voice, as that youth came into the study.

"Nothin'!" scowled Racke.

He lounged out of the study, leaving Gerald Crooke staring.

"What the thump has he got in his noddle now?" murmured Crooke, in wonder.

He could see that Racke had something in his mind, though he was far from guessing what it was. Racke was not likely to confide his startling idea to Gerald Crooke.

Racke went down the Shell passage, still thinking deeply. Mulvaney minor of the Fourth passed him, and grinned and turned up his nose. But Racke did not even see him.

He was too deep in thought.

He walked out into the quadrangle, still thinking.

"Crooke's no good. The cad wouldn't play up! Clampe—Chowle—Mellish, they wouldn't take it on. But I'll find somebody. What about Trimble?"

Racke smiled.

Trimble, of course! Trimble was exactly the fellow he wanted to help him carry out the amazing stunt that had dawned upon his brain. Baggy Trimble was the very fellow!

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"That fat rotter, he'd do anythin' for half a quid!" murmured Racke. "He's my man!"

And Aubrey Racke proceeded to look for Trimble of the Fourth. He had not far to look. Trimble was loafing outside the school shop, eyeing the good things in the little window. Trimble was hard up, as usual, and Mrs. Taggles, who knew Trimble, dealt only for cash with that fat and impecunious youth. So Trimble eyed the good things that he could not taste, and felt morosely that life was hard.

"Hallo, Trimble!"

Racke tapped him on his fat shoulder, and Trimble blinked round.

He was undecided whether to turn up his fat little nose and walk away, or whether to attempt to "touch" Racke for a small loan. "Touching" Racke for a loan was not a very hopeful prospect, but Trimble was hungry. So he smiled genially, instead of turning up his nose.

"Hallo, old fellow!" he said affectionately. "I say, Racke, could you lend me a bob until Lowther squares up for the quid I lent him yesterday?"

"Certainly!" said Racke.

Trimble almost jumped.

Racke had sometimes "squeezed" out a loan, but always in a lofty and patronising and scornful way. This prompt and genial response was quite surprising.

But Trimble immediately guessed the reason, or thought that he did. Racke was tired of being "cut," and he wanted somebody to speak to. So Trimble assumed a lofty look.

"Hand it over," he said carelessly.

Racke handed over the shilling. Trimble was rather sorry that he had not made it two!

The fat junior rolled into the tuckshop immediately.

Aubrey Racke waited till he came out. Trimble was not long in disposing of the "bob." He emerged with a smear of jam and a more satisfied expression upon his fat face.

"I want to have a little jaw with you, Trimble," said Racke.

Baggy Trimble eyed him.

Unless there was going to be another loan forthcoming, Trimble did not want a "jaw" with the outcast of the School House.

"Oh, do you?" said Trimble loftily.

"Would you like a quid?"

Trimble's round eyes glimmered.

"Wouldn't I just!" he remarked.

"I want you to do somethin' for me," said Racke. "If you play up, I'll stand you a quid, Trimble."

"As a loan, of course," said Trimble.

"No. I'll give it to you."

Trimble shook his head.

"Of course, I couldn't accept money from you, Racke," he answered.

"Oh, don't be a fool!" said Racke harshly. "Look here—"

"I'll accept it as a loan," said Trimble. "I'll square when Figgins pays me the five pounds I lent him last term. Now, what do you want me to do?"

"Come along," said Racke.

What he had to say to Trimble was not to be overheard.

"Oh, I don't mind taking a stroll with you!" said Trimble kindly. "I suppose you're feeling awfully lonely and rotten, Racke?"

"Never mind that," said Racke, gritting his teeth. Patronage from Baggy Trimble was very hard to bear. "Come along where we can talk."

He led the fat junior away to a seat in a quiet corner under the elms. Trimble was rather curious now. If it was not merely his fascinating society that Racke wanted, Trimble could not guess in the least what he did want.

Racke proceeded to explain.

As he proceeded Trimble's round eyes grew rounder and wider, and he blinked at Aubrey Racke in blank amazement.

"My only hat!" he ejaculated.

"Catch on?" asked Racke.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Well, Trimble?"

Trimble burst into a chuckle.

"He, he, he! What a stunt! Do you think you'll make the fellows believe that you've got any pluck, Racke? They know you haven't!"

"Cut that out!" hissed Racke. "Will you do what I want? It will be worth a quid to you."

Trimble considered.

"I should get my clobber wet," he said.

"You can get them dry again."

"They would be damaged. I couldn't do it—"

"Look here—"

"For a pound," continued Trimble calmly. "You've got tons of money, Racke. Make it two!"

"You extortionate little beast—"

"That's enough!" said Trimble, with dignity, rising.

"So long! On second thoughts, I don't care to be seen talking to you, Racke!"

Racke caught him by the sleeve.

"Hold on, you fat fool! I—I'll make it two."

"Now you're talking!" said Trimble.

And he sat down again.

For the next half-hour Racke and Trimble were engaged in deep consultation. The consultation was punctuated with chuckles from Baggy, though Racke was savagely serious all the time. It ended at last, and they separated, Trimble with ten shillings in his pocket, paid in advance for the mysterious service that he was to render to the outcast of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 5. Reckless Baggy.

"GUSSY, old chap!"

"Weally, Twimble!"

"Will you lend me your skates?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy raised his eyebrows.

It was Wednesday afternoon—a cold and clear afternoon—and Tom Merry & Co. were thinking of football. School House juniors were playing the New House that afternoon. Arthur Augustus had come out, with his coat and muffler on over his elegant football clobber, when Baggy Trimble addressed him with his surprising request for skates.

"Skates!" repeated the swell of St. Jim's.

"Yes, old chap. You won't be wanting them this afternoon, as you're playing footer."

"I am afraid, Twimble, that I could not twust my skates into your hands. You are too careless with othah people's propahety," said Arthur Augustus. "And in any case, Twimble, what do you want with skates? There is no ice for skatin'."

"The Ryll is frozen," said Trimble.

"You young ass, the ice is much too thin to bear."

"Oh, I'm going to risk that!" said Trimble recklessly.

"I'm not nervous, you know."

Arthur Augustus turned his eyes back upon Baggy Trimble in great surprise. Baggy was about the last fellow in the school to risk his precious person on thin ice. And the Ryll, though certainly it was frozen over that cold day, had only a thin crust, on which the most reckless junior at St. Jim's would not have thought of venturing.

"Weally, Twimble!" said Arthur Augustus at last.

"Lend them to me, old top!" urged Trimble.

"Wubbihi! I do not believe for one moment that you would risk skatin' on thin ice, Twimble. You are twyin' to pull my leg. Pway what do you want to howwow my skates for?" demanded D'Arcy.

"To skate, you-know."

"Wats!"

"I can tell you," grinned Jack Blake. "Trimble's going to pop them with his unnie, and expend the proceeds in riotous living at the tuckshop. Isn't that it, Trimble?"

"Rai Jove!"

Herries and Digby chuckled. Really, Blake's explanation seemed the only possible one.

"Look here, you know," said Trimble. "Don't be selfish, Gussy. If I choose to risk my life, that's my business, isn't it?"

"Catch you riskin' your little finger-nail!" grunted Herries. "You're about as likely to risk your life as—as Racke."

"Just about!" grinned Digby.

"I shall not lend you my skates, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "If you are weally thinkin' of skatin' on dangewous ice, I should wogard it as my duty to prevent you. But I am sorry to say, Twimble, that I cannot accept your assurance. You are a pweawicacah, Twimble."

"Well, I'm jolly well going!" said Trimble. "If you won't lend me your skates, I can get a slide, anyhow."

"Wats!"

"Yah!" retorted Baggy.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther came out of the School House, and Tom called to the fat junior as he was turning away.

"Trimble! If you're really thinking of sliding on the river—"

"I jolly well am!" said Trimble.

"Well, don't do it," said Tom. "All the fellows will be on the football ground, and there will be nobody handy to fish you out if you go in. Don't be a silly young ass."

"I'm a splendid swimmer," said Trimble. "I shouldn't be afraid of a fall through the ice."

"You can't swim for toffee," said Tom. "And the water's too cold for swimming. Keep away from the ice to-day, fathead."

"Rats!"

Trimble rolled away, leaving the chums of the School House staring.

"I suppose he was only gassing," said Tom Merry. "If he's really thinking of going on the ice, he ought to be stopped."

"Yass, wathah!"

"What rot!" said Monty Lowther. "It's only gas, because nobody will be near the river to-day. Baggy will roll in at tea-time and tell us that he's been sliding on thin ice. Nobody will ever see him doing it."

"He, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"I suppose that's it?" he assented. And the School House juniors headed for the football ground, and dismissed Baggy Trimble from their minds. Levison and Clive, who were in the eleven, followed them; but Cardew, the third member of Study No. 3 in the Fourth, remained on the steps, looking curiously after Trimble's fat figure. Levison looked round and called to him.

"Aren't you coming along, Cardew?"

"Later on, old bean," said Cardew. "I'll be in time to see you kick the winning goal."

Levison smiled and went on with the footballers. Ralph Reckness Cardew sauntered away across the quad after Baggy Trimble. For some reason, the dandy of the Fourth seemed interested in Baggy.

Trimble rolled away towards the gates, where Racke of the Shell was loafing idly, with his hands in the pockets of his overcoat. In the gateway Cardew overtook Trimble, just as that fat youth was bestowing a fat wink upon Aubrey Racke.



Mr. Station came into the dormitory, and the juniors drew back as he approached Trimble. The Housemaster's face was stern. "Trimble, I am glad to see that you have not suffered from your foolish recklessness," he said. "You know perfectly well that all boys are forbidden upon the ice unless it has been pronounced safe."

"Goin' on the ice—what!" asked Cardew.

"Yes," said Trimble briefly.

"Rather dangerous—what?"

"What do I care?" said Trimble loftily.

"I suppose not—a bold, bad character like you," said Cardew urbanely. "But think of the weepin' and wailin' in the school, old bean, if anythin' should happen to you."

"Oh, don't be a funny ass," said Trimble.

"I'm speakin' quite seriously, old fat bean. Suppose you got drowned?" said Cardew. "We should miss you awfully. We should feel like a farmer man who had lost his fattest pig."

"Yah!" said Trimble.

He rolled away on the frosty road, and to his surprise and annoyance, Cardew walked along with him.

On any other occasion Baggy Trimble would have been pleased and honoured by the company of a lord's grandson. On the present occasion, whether he was honoured or not, he certainly was not pleased. Baggy had business on that afternoon which did not require witnesses.

He glanced at Cardew in a sidelong way uneasily.

"Goin' to the village?" he asked.

"I'm goin' where you go, old bean."

"Wha-a-t for?"

"Keepin' an eye on you," said Cardew gravely. "You're goin' to risk your valuable life, Trimble. I'm goin' to watch you do it! When you disappear under the ice I shall carry the sad news back to St. Jim's."

"Look here!"

"Hallo, there's Racke," remarked Cardew, glancing back. "Is Racke goin' with you to risk his precious life on the ice, Trimble?"

"Eh? Nunno!"

"Well, come on," said the dandy of the Fourth. "It's cold standin' still, and you're awfully liable to cold feet, Trimble."

"Aren't you going to watch Levison in the footer match?"

"I was," said Cardew, "but now I'm more interested in you, Trimble. Not bein' a giddy hero myself, I like watchin' deeds of derring-do in heroic youths about your size. Come on."

Baggy Trimble did not come on. Apparently his reckless exploits on the ice that afternoon had to be done without a witness.

"Look here, you know," said the fat junior at last, desperately, "you refused to lend me half a crown yesterday, Cardew."

"I'll refuse again to-day, if you like."

"I don't want to speak to you. Fellows who refuse to trust me with half a crown can go and eat cokes. Sheer off!"

Baggy Trimble rolled away down the path to the river. Cardew smiled, and walked after him.

On the towing-path Trimble blinked round, and his little eyes glittered with rage at the sight of Cardew close at hand. The exasperating dandy of the Fourth seemed determined to stick to him.

"Look here, are you going to clear off, Cardew, you rotter?" roared Trimble.

Ralph Reckness Cardew raised his eyes in mild surprise.

"Have you bought the towin'-path, Trimble?" he inquired.

"Yah!"

Trimble tramped away down the path. Ice stretched across the river, but it was cracked and thin, and quite broken at the edges among the rushes. It was obvious that the ice would not have supported a child of six, and any junior of St. Jim's would have gone straight through if he had stepped on it. While Baggy Trimble's considerable avoirdupois was calculated to put a strain on the thickest ice.

It was, in fact, quite certain to Cardew that Trimble had not the remotest intention in the world of going on the ice that afternoon. Why the fat junior had spun such a yarn was a mystery, and it interested Cardew to penetrate the mystery, especially as he could see that he was exasperating Trimble almost to boiling point.

In the distance, behind Racke of the Shell was hovering. Cardew glanced in his direction two or three times. He divined that Racke had something to do with Baggy's peculiar proceedings, though the connection was most mysterious. Trimble stopped at last.

"Look here, you rotter, you sheer off," he growled. "I don't want you hanging about."

"Why not?" smiled Cardew.

"Well, I don't! Leave me alone, confound you!"

Cardew smiled cheerily. Whatever object Trimble had in mind, it was apparent that he would not carry it out.

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while Cardew was there. Ralph Reckness Cardew yawned and turned away.

"Well, to-ta!" he said. "You really won't let me view the heroic stunts on the ice?"

"Yah!"

Cardew laughed and walked away. He took the path through the wood, and Trimble breathed more freely when he was out of sight. Cardew strolled on to the football ground at St. Jim's a quarter of an hour later.

CHAPTER 5.

Racke's Heroic Action!

"WHAT the dickens—"

Kildare of the Sixth uttered that astonished exclamation.

The captain of St. Jim's was walking in the quadrangle, in conversation with Darrel. His glance turned on the open gates, where a surprising sight met it.

Racke of the Shell came staggering in at the gates with Baggy Trimble hoisted on his shoulders!

Both the juniors were dripping with water!

Racke was panting and staggering under Trimble's weight. He was not exactly an athlete, and Baggy was heavy, Kildare hurried towards them.

"What on earth's happened, Racke?" he exclaimed.

"You're both wet through."

Racke gasped.

"Trimble went through the ice. I—I got him out!"

"My hat!"

"He couldn't walk!" gasped Racke. "I—I've carried him on."

"By Jove!" said Kildare.

Racke lowered his heavy burden. Baggy Trimble collapsed on the ground and groaned.

"Out it and change your clothes sharp, Racke," said Kildare.

"Right-ho!" panted Racke.

He sprinted across the quad. Kildare lifted Trimble to his feet.

"Run!" he said. "You've got to keep moving! Run!"

"I—I can't!"

"I'll help you," said Kildare.

"Ow!"

The Sixth-former grasped Baggy by the collar and ran him across the quad. Baggy found that he could run, and he ran hard to keep pace with Kildare. He was spluttering for breath when they reached the School House. A dozen fellows saw them arrive, and there was general interest at once. Mr. Ralston came out of his study as Trimble's wet boots squeaked in the hall.

"What has happened, Kildare?" the Housemaster inquired.

"Trimble's been in the river, sir."

"Trimble, you foolish boy, go to the dormitory at once, and go to bed! I will ask the House-dame to come to you."

"Oh! Ow! Yes, sir!" gasped Trimble.

He squeaked up the stairs.

"What on earth's this game?" exclaimed Grundy of the Shell in amazement. "How did Trimble get in the river?"

"I heard him saying he was going sliding this afternoon," remarked Julian of the Fourth. "But—"

Grundy sniffed.

"He wouldn't go on the ice if it was safe," he said. "And it's not safe. This is jolly queer."

Trimble bolted into bed in the Fourth Form dormitory, and the House-dame looked after him. With a hot-water bottle at his feet and a pile of blankets over him, Trimble was quite comfortable. Meanwhile, Aubrey Racke was changing his clothes in the Shell dormitory; and thither proceeded half a dozen fellows whose interest was aroused by the startling happening. Racke towelled himself down and bundled into dry clothes, and his wet things were sprawling about him when the juniors came in.

"What's happened?" asked Grundy.

"Oh, nothing much."

"You've been in the water?"

"Yes."

"Did you fall in along with Trimble?" asked Julian.

"No."

"Then how did you get in?"

"Oh, don't bother," answered Racke. "You can ask Trimble, if you like!"

The mystified juniors proceeded to the Fourth Form dormitory. Mrs. Minna had finished tucking up Trimble, who looked very fat and comfortable.

"Is he ill, Mrs. Minna?" Julian asked.

"Not at all, Master Julian. But he must not catch cold," answered the House-dame. "The silly boy ought to be careful for going on the ice when it is not safe."

"On the ice!" exclaimed Grundy. The juniors gathered round Trimble's bed, as the House-dame left the dormitory.

"You've been on the ice, Trimble?" demanded Grundy.

"Yes—sliding, you know."

"You!" ejaculated Grundy. "Are you off your rocker? The ice wouldn't bear a quarter of your weight!"

"Oh, I wasn't afraid," said Trimble carelessly. "I'm not so nervous as some fellows!"

"You went through?" asked Hammond.

"Don't I look like it?"

"Then how the thump did you get out?" demanded Julian.

"You can't swim for nuts!"

"Racke got me out."

"Racke!" yelled the juniors.

Trimble nodded calmly.

"Yes. It was jolly plucky of him. Came in for me, you know—a regular header. Never thought Racke had it in him—did you?"

"I jolly well never thought so, and I don't believe it now!" said George Alfred Grundy. "You're pulling our leg, Trimble!"

"Here's Railton!" murmured Kernuish.

The School House master came into the dormitory, and the juniors drew back as he approached Trimble.

The Housemaster's face was stern.

"Trimble, I am glad to see that you have not suffered from your foolish recklessness," said Mr. Railton. "You know perfectly well that all the boys are forbidden to go upon the ice unless it has been pronounced safe by a master or a prefect. You have acted with reckless folly!"

Trimble smirked.

Mr. Railton was angry; and he certainly did not realise how pleased Trimble was to be supposed guilty of reckless folly. Dare-devil recklessness was not exactly one of Baggy's characteristics.

"You might have been drowned, Trimble."

"I—I never thought about that, sir!"

"You should have thought of it, Trimble!" snapped the Housemaster. "You will be punished for this!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Trimble.

"You will take two hundred lines, and I shall cane you to-morrow," said Mr. Railton.

"Ow!"

"Racke seems to have carried you back from the river," said the Housemaster. "He was wet, too. Did he help you out?"

"He saved my life, sir."

"What?"

"Dived in for me, sir—otherwise I should have been carried away under the ice."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Railton.

"It—it was awfully plucky of him, sir!" said Trimble. "It—it was rather lucky he—he happened to be walking on the towing-path—"

"It was certainly very fortunate," said Mr. Railton. "This is very courageous of Racke—very much to his credit. I must speak to him. I hope you will realise, Trimble, that you have endangered another life, as well as your own, by your obtuse folly!"

"Oh, sir!"

Mr. Railton quitted the dormitory, and Grundy & Co. stared at one another.

"Racke!" said Grundy. "My hat!"

"Saved his life!" said Kernuish.

"Dived in for him—in broken ice!" said Julian. "I—I say, Racke can't be such a funk—as we thought!"

Grundy nodded thoughtfully.

"There's different kinds of pluck," he said. "Racke—"

showed up badly enough in that scrap with Grimes. He can't fight for toffee. But a fellow who would dive among broken ice—"

"It was jolly plucky, even if he does funk in a scrap."

"Yes, rather!"

Grundy and the rest followed Mr. Railton. They were curious to see Aubrey Racke, and met a dozen pairs of curious eyes, all turned upon him. His face was red; but perhaps that was due to modesty.

"My dear Racke, I have just heard from Trimble how gallantly you went to his assistance."

"Oh, sir!" said Racke, flushing.

"Are you sure you ought to be up?" said Mr. Railton. "If you feel any symptoms of a cold coming on, you had better go to bed."

"Oh, I'm quite all right, sir!"

"It was a very courageous act," said Mr. Railton. "It was very, very fortunate that you chanced to be on the scene, or that foolish boy might have paid for his folly with his life!" And Mr. Railton shook hands quite warmly with Aubrey Racke.

As the Housemaster went back to his study, Aubrey Racke glanced round him, and met a dozen pairs of curious eyes, all turned upon him. His face was red; but perhaps that was due to modesty.

"Racke, old man, that was jolly decent of you," said Grundy. "I—I'm sorry I lathered you the other day for running away from Grimes. You've got some pluck."

"Nothing to make a song about!" muttered Racke.

"Well, it was plucky. Bless it! I knew you were such a swimmer, either," said Grundy. "Where did it happen exactly?"

"Along the towing-path, about a quarter of a mile from the boat-house."

"The water's jolly deep there," said Grundy. "Bless it! I know how you ever got out alive, with that fat frog hanging on to you. Lots of fellows wouldn't have risked it. Of course, I would! But lots of fellows wouldn't. You wouldn't have, would you, Wilkins?"

"I hope I've got as much pluck as Racke, anyhow!" growled Wilkins.

"I don't think you'd have done it," said Grundy calmly. "I don't think you would either, Gunn. Of course, I would!"

"I don't see the 'of course!'" remarked Wilkins testily.

"Same here," said Gunn.

Racke walked out of the School House, and left Grundy & Co. arguing. He smiled to himself as he strolled in the quadrangle. Before very long, the crowd on Little Side who were watching the House match heard the news of Trimble's terrible danger and Racke's heroic rescue. And they heard it with astonishment—with one exception. That exception was Ralph Reckness Cardew. When Cardew heard the news, he smiled satirically, and winked at the old elms. Which seemed to indicate that Ralph Reckness Cardew had an opinion of his own on the matter.

CHAPTER 7. Heroic!

"WACKE?"

"Yes!"

"Bai Jove!"

That astonished ejaculation was indicative of

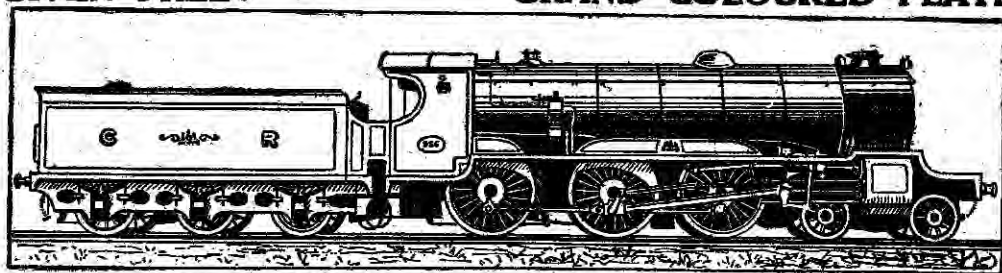
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's opinion.

"Great Scott!" was Tom Merry's comment.

(Continued on page 14.)

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Our Gripping Yarn Which Tells of a Party of Ch Read How They Set to Work to Make Thei

READ THIS FIRST.

Donald Gordon and his brother Val leave St. Christopher's School, in company with Tommy Binks and Septimus Todd, a junior master, commonly known as Scat, to join their uncle, who is on a big plantation in the Solomon Islands.

Captain Targe, in charge of the schooner Wittywake, learns of the party's quest. He plans to abandon the boat and leave them to their fate, with the intention of overthrowing the wealthy plantation owner and obtaining hold of his land. Taga, the black cabin-boy, hears of this and warns the party. Unknown to the villainous captain, he places the boys in one of the ship's boats, and they are about to make their escape when Anna, the captain's daughter, taking the opportunity of getting away from the harsh treatment of her father, joins them.

Not long after the party have obtained on their perilous journey a severe storm breaks out, the party are thrown from their boat, but luckily get washed up on the "Island of Pleasure."

Cast on the island, they at once set about preparing their new home, and refresh themselves with some fruit which they find growing on the island.

Tommy and Taga set off to capture a goat to supply the party with meat.

Tommy, who drops fatigued, falls off to sleep, and is suddenly awakened by a pummeling and blowing over him. He looks up, and gazes into the hairy face of a goat.

(Now read on.)

A Night in the Jungle!

IT was this second moist, beating blowing into his face that told Tommy that his visitor was not of the sulphury type he had expected.

A long, red tongue appeared from between the lips, and, bending over him, the goat tried to lick his face.

Tommy thrust out his hand, sending the creature back a pace, and the youngster scrambled to his feet.

"A goat, by James!" Tommy broke out.

It was a full-grown nanny-goat, a shaggy, twisted-horned creature; and, recovering from his surprise, Tommy gave vent to a chuckle of delight.

Here was a bit of luck! Poor old Taga was footing it over the hills in search of the goats, and yet there in front of Tommy stood a very promising specimen, his apparently for the taking.

"I'll make those beggars sit up when I get back," Tommy thought to himself. "There's enough grub on you to last for a week, I should think."

The nanny-goat had moved on a pace or two, and resuming her munching of the succulent grass, Tommy clenched his fists, and began to approach his prey.

It dawned on him then that he was remarkably unprepared for his task. That goat had to be killed in order that its meat might be brought down to the camp, but a search through Tommy's pockets revealed the fact that all he possessed was half a bootlace!

"Silly, blinking asses," he said to himself, "sending me out on a job like this! How on earth did they expect me to kill a goat with nothing but a bootlace?"

He stared helplessly at the creature, who

seemed to be not at all concerned about his presence.

Under a bush he saw a length of knotted wood, and he reached for it, then, gripping it in one hand firmly, he advanced towards his victim.

The nanny had her head down, and Tommy, swinging his weapon aloft, brought it down with all his might on the horned head.

Crack! The club snapped like a carrot, and it was only then that Tommy discovered that it was rotted right through.

He flopped forward, then, unable to regain his balance, he fell on his knees, and his head came in violent contact with the hard skull of his intended victim!

"Ouch! Tommy yelped. The nanny started back, staring at the figure on all fours in front of her; then, imagining that it was a challenge to her, she lowered her horns, and drove at Tommy with all her force.

Tommy saw that bluff coming, but was quite unable to avoid it. The horns caught him on the chest and sent him sprawling.

"Yow! Here, stash it!"

When a nanny-goat has her battle-flag up she requires a great deal of stopping, and Tommy for the next few, bustling moments had a rough time of it. Thrice in quick succession the nanny-goat butted him fore and aft, and the last charge saw him reel over into a bush.

"Gerraway! Clear off! I don't want you!" Tommy moaned, as he scrambled to his feet.

"You wait till I get back and see Don; I'll tell him—Ouch!"

The goat had started it again, and this time Tommy did what he should have done much earlier in the proceedings; he turned and fled for his life, with the nanny-goat rushing after him at full speed.

Twice she managed to land on him, but her horns only served to increase his speed, and he went flying down that hillside like an animated football.

It was not until he was on the verge of a deep cavity that Tommy realised his danger, and it was too late to stop. He shot downward and landed with a thud on the sandy bottom of a pit-like trap that he had his fingers in.

A moment later there was a terrified bleat, and down on top of him came the nanny-goat, to roll over on the sand.

"Now you've done it!" Tommy gasped. "Why the deuce did you follow me?"

He was in a natural pit, some ten or twelve feet deep, and the walls were as smooth as the sides of a house. The pit itself was some five or six feet wide.

He drew himself up rather shakily, and, as he did so, the nanny-goat also regained her feet.

To Tommy's horror, she swung round on him, lowered her horns, and resumed the battle. A wild leap to one side saw Tommy dodge that first charge. The horned head smote the side of the cavity with a thud that sent a cold thrill of fear through the stout youngster's heart.

He drew himself up rather shakily, and, as he did so, the nanny-goat also regained her feet.

"Chuck it, can't you? Chuck it! I don't want to fight with you in here!" But it takes two to sign peace terms, and the nanny-goat was having none of it. Unable to flee, driven round and round in that awful penthouse, Tommy finally turned, and in

sheer desperation threw himself on his wiry little challenger.

He managed to get hold of the nanny's horns, and a gladiator-like battle took place.

They rolled over and over together, Tommy struggling desperately to retain his hold on the horns, while the goat butted and jerked and snorted to free herself.

At intervals Tommy sent out a yell for help, his voice going up in a squeal; finally he found himself, winded and exhausted, lying on his back with the shaggy beast on top of him, and, gripping the horns like grim death, Tommy held the creature's head off.

The sun was shining full into the pit, and suddenly the youngster saw a shadow appear above them, then the head and shoulders of Taga came sliding over the edge and looked down.

Tommy opened his lips to send forth another shout for help, then a new notion flashed upon him. Taga had to be impressed, and Tommy changed his tone.

"Hurry up, can't you, you fool!" he gasped. "I have been holding this blinking thing for hours. Where the deuce have you been to? I—I want to capture it alive!"

Taga's sinewy, bronzed shape came slithering down into the pit, and, grabbing at the nanny, he drew her aside.

"I got um, Tommy!" Taga cried.

Tommy, breathing heavily, rose to his feet. He was covered with sand from head to foot, and so far as he knew, there was not a single inch of his body that was not bruised. "You got him goat-fellah by yourself? By ding, you clever fellow! How you get him into pit—eh?"

Taga's eyes were full of a sincere admiration as they looked across at Tommy.

The nanny, exhausted in her turn by the battle, was making no further attempt to escape from the strong hands that were holding her.

Tommy leaned against the edge of the pit, and wiped the sweat from his eyes.

"Oh, I—I just chased it for miles!" he said. "Then I—I managed to drive it in here and jumped on it."

That was one way of describing the scene, but it seemed to be accepted by Taga without comment.

"You clever fellow!" he repeated. "We go get this goat-fellah down to camp, then we've plenty milk."

He dragged the goat forward a pace. "You hold him, and I go get some creeper to tie him up with."

"No, no! You hold her; I'll get the blinking vine!" said Tommy, dropping back a step. In one corner of the pit the walls were a trifle rough, and Tommy managed to clamber up to the top. The jungle was quite close, and he headed for it, finding a creeper-clad trunk from which he tore a long length of vine.

He returned to the pit, and cast this down to Taga, and watched the native tie up the strong, slender limbs of his captive.

The nanny protested violently, but Taga mastered her, and with Tommy hauling and Taga pushing, they drew her out of the pit, and Taga followed.

"Plenty more goat over there," said the native. "What do you say—we go hunt one and kill it?"

Tommy looked at him.

PLEASURE

Chums Who Were Stranded on an Uninhabited Island. Their Strange Home into "The Island of Pleasure!"

"I have had enough hunting for goats to-day, Taga," he said. "Besides, I reckon we ought to be vegetarians on this island. 'Live and let live' is my motto. I have had enough of this hunting, anyhow. We'll cart this nanny back to the camp, and that's quite enough work for one day."

Taga shook his head.
"We no get back camp to-night!" he proclaimed. "Better wait till to-morrow morning, and we'll fetch her then."

"If you think that I'm going to sleep out here in this wild place, you're mistaken!" said Tommy firmly. "We're going back to camp."

Again Taga submitted to Tommy's dictation, and presently the goat was slung between them on a stout branch, and their return journey began.

Dusk falls very swiftly in the tropics, and half-way through the jungle the darkness descended upon them, blotting everything out. After one or two ineffective attempts to find the way Tommy gave it up.

All round them stood the tall trees of the tropical forest, and the tangle of creepers and vines made the place as black as pitch.

"What shal we do, Taga?" the stout youngster asked.

Taga rubbed his chin. To sleep out in the jungle was no new experience for the native, but it was quite otherwise with Tommy.

"We just go sleep here," Taga said. "I fix up things."

A length of vine was attached to the goat's neck and she was tethered to a thick branch, then Tommy and Taga lay down beside a tree, and in a few minutes Tommy heard the steady breathing of his companion, proving that the native had gone to sleep.

But the jungle at night is a place of strange sounds and eerie whisperings, for all the quiet life that lies so silent during the hot hours of the day, wakes to activity with the coming of the night.

Gradually Tommy's imagination began to run riot with him. Every vine became a snake, every quick flutter of the leaves overhead became a warning signal of the approach of some awful jungle monster, and once, when a soft-fleathered, noiseless creature swooped down, fluttered for a moment over Tommy and Taga, to go on up again, Tommy's nerve gave way. He grabbed at Taga's shoulder and shook him.

"I'm—'m not going to sleep here," he said. "The place is full of blinking wild beasts. Come on, I would rather be on the move. I can't stick it, I tell you!"

And so Taga was dragged to his feet and the goat collared once more, but this time Taga led it by the short length of twisted vine.

They must have walked miles through that trackless jungle. Tommy and his companion were utterly exhausted when at last the pearly grey of the dawn came through the trees, banishing the dark pall of night.

They turned eastward then, and, guided by the sun, Taga finally cleared the jungle, to find themselves almost opposite the place where Tommy and his companions had first landed.

A long trudge down the beach followed, and it was noon before Tommy and the native gained the rough heap of boulders behind which the little camp stood.

A shout from the cliff heralded the appearance of Val and Anna.

"Oh! Look—look!" Anna called. "They are bringing a goat with them."

It was that note of genuine delight that gave Tommy his cue; the memory of the fatigue and bruising and hard times vanished then, and, taking the twisted vine from Taga's hand, Tommy strolled leisurely across the sands, with his captive walking dejectedly behind him.

Don came out from under the shelter bearing a gourd filled with cocoanut milk, which he handed to the stout hunter.

"Here you are, old chap! I dare say you could do with a drink."

Tommy put his lips to the gourd and drained the receptacle, then turned and pointed towards the nanny.

"I'd no end of a job to get her, Don," he said; "but I thought it was fatter to bring her in alive. We can start a farmyard with her, and besides, I couldn't kill her. I—I didn't have the heart!"

He might also have added the wherewithal!

Scat's Midnight Madness.

"HIS—he's a slave-driver!" Tommy groaned, as he flung himself down on the warm sand and mopped his sweating brow. "Whoever would have thought that old Don would have developed into such a jolly old tyrant!"

Scat, a lean, brown figure, squatted beside his one-time pupil, and grinned through his lensless glasses at Tommy.

"Someone has to be leader, Tommy, my dear fellow!" Scat said; "and, after all, one must admit that Don has justice on his side. If he does make us work, he works three times harder himself."

Tommy and Scat had just completed the task of lugging a particularly heavy log through the patch of jungle to the cleared space below the cliff, and Val and Taga and Don were now preparing the foundations for that log to rest in.

Hardly any of the little party had given much thought to the flight of time; from dawn to dusk they laboured, with a short interval of a couple of hours in the hottest part of the day.

Despite the fact that they were handicapped with regard to working tools, for the axe, their one precious weapon, was, after all, a very inadequate implement, and could only be used to hack off the minor branches of some fallen trunk, they had made good progress.

Don had discovered that at some recent period a tornado had visited the island, and had cut a swath through the trees, felling many of the more slender growths, and leaving others half-uprooted, and it had been that part of the jungle, which he called "Tornado Mile," that the work-party used to set out for each morning.

To Taga and Scat was entrusted the task of selecting suitable material from which to make the twisted ropes with which each log was tied into position. Val and Tommy and Don tackled the selection of logs and branches to form the walls of the hut.

It was hard labour for them all, yet it seemed to have done them good, for Tommy and Scat, as they lay there, were bronzed and healthy-looking. It was true that

Tommy's mother would have wailed at the sight of her son's hands, for they were rough, scarred, and as hard as a navvy's. His costume, too, might have caused that worthy lady a severe shock, for it consisted of a pair of ragged pants, the shirt which he once wore having become useless, and been cast aside.

"What are you doing this afternoon, Scat?" Tommy asked.

The tutor blinked.
"I have got to get some more food, Tommy," he said. "This island is a perfect botanical garden, and I think we are all rather sick of bananas and plums. Anna has warned me that the larder is rather low, and I shall have to buck up."

So far the party had contented themselves with living on fruit and an occasional fish that Taga managed to provide them with. Val, who was the official fisherman for the island, had, up to that time, failed to have much success, and Taga, in his good-natured way, had come to Val's assistance.

Armed with a slender reed, roughly shaped by the axe and fire to a point at one end, he would swim out to a cluster of coral reef some thirty or forty yards away from the beach, and would wait there, poised on a flat ledge, watching the surface. Then his spear would be raised, and the watchers from the hut would see the sinewy shape tighten; the spear would dart down into the sea, and Taga would follow it with a clean, headlong dive. It was seldom that he failed to rise to the surface again without some fine, fat fish, struggling at the end of the spear.

Now and again Tommy, who was particularly fond of fish, would eye the curious-looking creature that Taga had brought ashore, with considerable misgiving. For, while on occasions it was a mullet or a sort of bream that Taga produced, there were other times when he came ashore with a horrible-looking prize that seemed the reverse of edible.

Anna, however, was always quite content with the catch, and it was amazing how good some of these very unpromising fish tasted.

Anna's cooking operations were simple, consisting merely of broiling the catches in red-hot ashes.

But, apart from the fruit, another splendid addition to their food had been brought about by Tommy's captive. The nanny-goat, now a contented prisoner in a small, fenced-off space near to the shelter, was supplying them with a good quantity of rich, nourishing milk.

With six hungry mouths to fill, Some Girl had her work cut out, but the unlimited supply of fruit made that task possible, and the only one who grumbled was Tommy, but then, as Val said, he would have complained in a tuckshop!

The hut was beginning to show signs of satisfactory progress. The four corner-posts were already in their places, and the beams and supports for the roof had been lashed into place. Now one side, consisting of lengths of stout branches, was in position, and they had nearly completed the back.

"We've got to get on with it, you see," Scat announced; "for Taga says that when the rainy season starts here it's a terror, and we must have the shelter by that time."

A hail from Don brought Tommy to his feet, and he smothered a groan.



To Tommy's horror the nanny swung round on him, lowered her horns and charged. A wild leap to one side saw Tommy dodge. "You—your vicious brute!" he gasped. "Chuck it, can't you? I don't want to fight you!"

"Another blinking log, I'll bet!" he said. "I seem to get all the knobby ones, and they are usually covered with ants, and the little beggars bite like billy-ho!"

Taga and Don were standing in front of where the door was intended to be placed, deeply engaged in studying the problem.

"I say, Don?" Tommy broke out. "Scat is going off on a fruit-gathering expedition, and he doesn't think he'll be able to carry them all back. Don't you think it would be rather a good idea if I gave him a hand?"

"But, I say, Tommy, I never—"

Tommy thrust out his foot behind him, and caught Scat on the shin.

Don, with his back to the twain, nodded his head.

"All right, Tommy," he said. "You can go with Scat if you like. Try to get a new sort of fruit; bananas are all very well in their way, but I think we're pretty well fed up with them!"

Tommy wheeled round, grabbed Scat by the arm, and hurried him off at a rapid pace across the sand, in case Don might rescind his order. When they had climbed the barrier of boulders and were trudging along the well-beaten path that led to the jungle, Tommy rounded on Scat.

"You very nearly dished me!" he said. "Hang it all, I would rather carry a bunch of bananas any day than a hulking great log! I'll tell you what we'll do, Scat. We'll go up to the banana grove and have a sleep, then come back with a bunch of fruit when it's getting dusk."

"Oh, no, we won't," said Scat. "I have planned a different expedition for to-day. We shall only take bananas if we can't find anything else."

Scat had a will of his own when it came to the point, and Tommy, who had been looking forward to an idle afternoon, found himself dragged into a long, wearisome tramp. Instead of heading for the banana plantation, Scat kept to the left, following the line of the jungle for some distance before he turned and plunged into it. Scat, being long and lean and wiry, could slip through gaps in the heavy undergrowth that left Tommy a victim of thorns and foliage, and finally, at the end of a couple of hours' steady walking, Tommy called a halt.

"This is a blinking sight worse than log-carrying," he declared. "Where the dickens are you going, anyhow?"

Scat was walking along in that ecstasy which only the true botanist can develop. At every step in his way through the jungle the wonders of that teeming plant life were revealed to him. He would pause and gloat over the glories of some small orchid, or would break out into rapture at an enormous

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lily or some other scented bloom. That part of the jungle was a veritable flower-garden, and the scent from the blossoms hung heavy on the still air.

"Are we going to get any darned grub, or are we just out for a stroll?" Tommy went on.

Scat turned and blinked at him.

"Grub? Oh, yes, of course, we must get some fruit."

Tommy groaned.

"Do you mean to say that you have been trudging all this time and not bothering about grub?" he demanded.

Scat rubbed his chin.

"Well, I'll admit that I have been rather interested in the floral growths," he returned. "They are positively amazing. I have never seen so many arum lilies, and those acacias are too wonderful!"

"Never mind about blinking acacias!" Tommy grunted. "You go on and find a melon or something,

and cut out the flowers!"

Thus admonished, Scat took up his real task, and presently in a small clearing he halted under a slender tree, the leaves of which were something like those of a fig-tree, and from out of the stem there hung large melon-like fruit.

"I think this will interest Taga," Scat proclaimed, peering up into the tree, which was something like a horse-chestnut in appearance. "Come along, Tommy; we'll gather a few of these."

The tree did not present a very severe proposition to climb, and presently Scat, the more wiry of the two, had climbed into the upper branches, and Tommy, standing below, received the fruit as they were dropped.

The first one came hurtling down, and Tommy found it much heavier than he had imagined, for, although he got his fingers against it, it slipped through his hand and landed at his feet, to burst there, revealing a dry mass inside—and a very unsavoury mass it seemed to the stout youngster.

He stooped and picked up a handful, tasted it, then spat it out.

"Look here, Scat, this is no dashed good!" he declared. "Tastes like poison."

Scat's visage appeared from behind one of the broad-leaved branches, and he grinned down at Tommy.

"It's no good until it is cooked, old chap; and it's not much use my dropping them down to you if you are going to let them burst, for they have got to be cooked whole."

At the end of half an hour's work six immense, melon-like globes had been taken from the tree, then Scat came down again, and grinned at his companion.

"Bet you don't know what they are, Tommy?" he said.

"You need not bet," Tommy commented. "They don't seem worth it, anyhow."

Scat laughed, rubbing his hands together.

"It is breadfruit, my dear chap," he said. "And you wait till Anna gets it and bakes it in the ashes. We're jolly lucky to find a tree like this here."

"Breadfruit, eh? By Jove, that's ripping! Shall we be able to have toast?"

"Oh, no; I have never heard of it being toasted."

They left the heap of fruit under the tree and went on for another hundred yards or so; then Scat came to a halt again, this time at a tree which, to Tommy's prejudiced eyes, seemed something like a feather duster gone mad.

It was about twenty feet high and four or five feet in girth. Small bunches of leaves, larger and thicker than a cocoanut palm, ornamented the top, and from these leaves there hung enormous flowers. But it was not the flowers nor the leaves that seemed to

attract Scat. Growing out from the trunk were huge, round things; and one of these Scat broke off, then held it out to Tommy.

"Mushrooms," he declared.

They were certainly very like the edible fungi that are to be found in our English fields, but Tommy drew back and shook his head.

"No fear, old chap!" he said. "Mushrooms don't grow on trees! These are blinking toadstools, I know!"

Scat smiled at him.

"That's where you're wrong, Tommy," he said; "and this find of ours is, perhaps, the best of the lot, for I'm convinced that this is a sago fariniferous."

"And what the dickens is a sago-sag-sag—what you said?" Tommy asked.

Scat shook his head.

"It is a sago-tree," he returned, "and I should think there is the best part of a couple of hundredweight of food stowed away in this part of the trunk, if we could only get at it."

"Sago pudding! I like that. But how do you get it?" Tommy asked.

"We'd have to fell the tree and split it open, for it is the pith that makes the sago."

Tommy reached out and caught Scat by the arm.

"Silly ass! That settles it," he declared. "We'll never know how you think we're going to fell this blinking tree—gaw it away by the roots like a couple of rats!"

Scat eyed the tree gloomily.

"I shall never be satisfied until we do get it down, Tommy," he said. "We certainly can't get it down to-day, but we can have the mushrooms. They grow from the pith."

There must have been eight or nine pounds in weight of mushrooms growing from the trunk, and although Tommy was distinctly doubtful, he and Scat gathered the crop.

"That will be enough grub now," he said.

"We've got a long way to go back, thanks to your flower-gazing! I don't want to have to creep out in the jungle again if I can help it; I've had some of it!"

They went back to the breadfruit-tree, and after tying the fruit together with vines, so that they could be carried over the shoulder, Scat and his companion commenced their return journey, but before they had gone very far Scat came to a halt again, dropping his load, and giving vent to a gasp of sheer amazement.

"I tell you this is more like a botanical garden than a jungle!" he broke out.

"Someone must have been here, planting specimens. Do you know what this is?"

Tommy stared up at the high forest giant and shook his head.

"Dunno what it is," he remarked, "and don't care much, for it is a bit too tall for me to tackle!"

"It is a durian-tree," Scat went on. "It is supposed only to grow in the Indian Archipelago, and is said to have the most wonderful fruit in the world!"

Tommy, who was standing nearer to the tree, became conscious of a most nauseating odour, and it dawned on him suddenly that the stench was coming from a bush close by.

He stepped to the bush, looked into it, and saw a round object, very similar to the breadfruit he was carrying. The youngster reached out and drew a prize from the bush.

"By Jove, that's a durian-fruit!" Scat called, stumbling forward. "I know that the fruit drops from the tree when it is ripe."

Tommy had caught a real whiff of the fruit by then, and he dropped it, backing away.

"You call that fruit?" he said. "Why, hang it, it smells like dead bodies!"

Scat picked up the precious globe.

"Yes, it is a durian!" he proclaimed, his eyes shining with excitement. "Now we have something to take back to Don! He'll be simply delighted!"

"You mean to tell me that you're going to take that filthy-smelling thing back to the camp?" Tommy demanded.

"You wait till you've tasted it, my boy!" said Scat. "You'll see the difference then! We must try to find some more if we can."

"No blinking fear! You don't get me carrying anything like that!" was Tommy's comment.

Scat, however, made a circle round the tree, and discovered four or five other ripe fruits. They must have weighed some six or seven pounds each, and when he had collected them he selected the smallest, and, after a struggle, managed to split it in half.

Tommy had backed away to windward now, and he watched Scat, with a disgusted scowl

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on his face. The tutor produced a small piece of shell from his pocket, and scraped out a portion of the luscious, creamy custard. "Come and taste it, Tommy!" he said. "No fear!" Tommy answered. "I don't want to die just yet!"

Scat squatted beside his heap of fruit, and laughed.

"You are very foolish!" he commented. "It is simply delicious."

Leaning against a tree-trunk, Tommy watched Scat as he proceeded to ladle mouthful after mouthful of the custard-like mass between his lips. Gradually the look of contentment and sublime enjoyment that appeared on the face of Scat made Tommy's mouth water. The other half of the great fruit lay on the ground at Scat's feet, and finally, conquering his aversion, Tommy dipped one finger into the custard, and applied it to his lips. The change of expression that came over his face made his one-time tutor grin.

For, of all fruits that grow, there is none like the durian. It has a taste and exquisite flavour of its own. With all that is luscious—strawberries, apricots, pears, peaches, and oranges.

"Great Scat!" Tommy gasped. "Who would believe that a stinking fruit like this would taste so gorgeous. Here, gimme that shell!"

A ripe durian weighs about six to ten pounds, and one fruit will make a respectable meal for two hungry youths. By the time that that specimen was finished Tommy felt himself to be a different man—a new man—and he instituted a search entirely on his own, discovering two more fruits that had fallen in the undergrowth at the foot of the tree.

"Never mind the blinking breadfruit!" he said. "Let's take these things!"

"Oh, no!" Scat observed. "The breadfruit is more useful to us, and we can't leave them behind."

It was a real hefty load that Tommy arranged on his shoulders then, and, strange though it seemed, the nasty odour of the durian no longer affected him.

Those who once taste that delicious fruit forget all about the corpse-like scent that emanates from its rind before it is opened.

Before they reached the end of the jungle the dusk fell, and the last half-mile was covered in the dark.

The sound of the surf breaking on the reef was the first indication they had that they were clearing the trees, and presently they emerged out on a stretch of shimmering sand. The moon was shining down on the scene, and Tommy, panting from that last stage, came to a halt, slipping the heavy load of fruit from his shoulders.

"We're all right now, Scat," he said. "I don't care so long as we are out in the open; it's that blinking jungle that gets me!"

He stretched his cramped limbs. "I don't see why we should not sleep here," he observed. "We've two or three miles to go to get back to the camp. Besides, I think I could do with another durian!"

Scat swung his load down, and shook his head at his companion.

"We'll have nothing left to give the others if you go on in this way," he said.

Tommy had already seated himself, and Scat had to follow his example.

They shared a small durian, and presently Scat, who was really tired, found himself dropping into a doze. How long he slept he was not able to say, but he was awakened by the pressure of a hand on his shoulder and Tommy's face close to his ear.

"Scat! Scat! I say, old chap, wake up, can't you?"

The lanky tutor drew himself to a sitting position.

"What is it?" he asked.

"The moon was well to the westward now, and where they lay, under the shadow of the trees, was in darkness. Tommy, kneeling beside Scat, pointed across the silver sands.

"There's someone down there! I can hear him panting and spluttering!" he whispered. "And I think he's—he's digging! Hark!"

Scat strained his ears, then a distant sound came to him—the swishing of sand as it was cast away—the swishing of sand, and a faint, creaking sound, as though someone was rubbing thin strips of metal together.

"What is it? What is it?" Tommy whispered.

"There's someone down there!" he whispered. "Hark!"

Scat strained his ears, then a distant sound came to him—a faint, creaking sound, as though someone was rubbing thin strips of metal together. "What is it?" Tommy whispered.

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My Dear Chums,—

Letters pour in on me every week all proving that interest in the St. Jim's yarns are keener than ever. It was partly this consideration which prompted me to persuade Mr. Martin Clifford to let his portrait appear in the Gallery. Of course, I get plenty of suggestions, and what caused me some little amazement was a critical note about Cardew. The writer absolutely dislikes the clever fellow, who has somehow managed to add greatly to the interest of the series.

I suppose, in the case of a strongly-defined character, there must be a chance of this kind of thing. Cardew's mannerisms might not make for popularity with everybody. He is for ever holding something back; he does not show all his goods in the shop window, and that mystifies a reader sometimes; and, in the case of the correspondent referred to, causes exasperation. But I think it is a mistake to be annoyed with a chap because you cannot understand him in a hurry. Cardew has shown himself a rattling fine fellow on innumerable occasions. Just remember the sporting way he took the descent on St. Jim's of Wacky Dang, the dusky Prince of Bhungaree.

By this time you will have been able to form an opinion of the serial, "The Island of Pleasure." It is a great yarn, and has just the refreshing dash of novelty which makes adventure welcome. Just let me know on a postcard your impressions of the new story.

Here is a fresh batch of St. Jim's suggestions, all of them interesting. "Mr. Martin Clifford is indeed a genius," writes one supporter. It is cheery to get a line like that. Can Levison go back to his old, unreformed ways? Just one outbreak, say? Then we should

see how Cardew would act. You note that Cardew's character always looms large.

Well, a new series of yarns revealing Levison back in his old courses would be attractive, but the notion is, I think, behind the times. Levison has played up to his new principles to such an extent, that it would be difficult to show him just as he was.

The Chat is not long enough. That is the opinion of a staunch supporter—by name "Vicky Van." I see no chance, unfortunately, of putting this right, since space is short, and our extra features are pretty numerous, and not one can be spared.

Later on, perhaps, there will be more room. Then we can have special information about everybody—more about Miss Priscilla Fawcett, and quotations from the letters she writes to Tom Merry. I am sure they are good ones, crammed full of excellent advice. There is plenty that might be touched on. How little we hear, in the ordinary course, of Baggy Trimble's family, what his father does for a living, and how he manages to stave off bankruptcy, with a reckless fellow like Baggy as his son and heir.

Then there is Herbert Skimpole. He is despised all round, scarcely tolerated, though Skimmy does not really care. He is always deep in his books.

If Mr. Martin Clifford tried to tell us all, the famous author would be found asleep at his writing-table, fagged out with the pressure of work. I know we want more, but, perhaps, things are better as they are, with the few side-lights the supplement gives us from time to time.

No apology is needed, I think, for reminding everybody of the unrivalled opportunity offered by the "Popular,"

with its magnificent series of coloured plates of railway engines. The set of pictures constitutes a history of railway development. There is a wonderful lot of interest taken in the railways and their gradual rise to popularity. The early beginnings would be smiled at now with the cumbersome rolling-stock and the odd-shaped engines, just the quaint sort of locomotive you see in the scrap-yard now.

Look out for Gordon Gay in the "Boys' Herald." The new series will show the Grammarian in a fresh phase. The "Boys' Herald" never offered a finer programme than is the case at present. There is still time for you to obtain one of the 30,000 gifts the Editor is giving away. Get a copy of this week's "Boys' Herald!"

THE EDITOR.

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Tommy, kneeling beside Scat, pointed across the silver sands. "There's someone down there!" he whispered. "Hark!" Scat strained his ears, then a distant sound came to him—a faint, creaking sound, as though someone was rubbing thin strips of metal together. "What is it?" Tommy whispered.

Look out for next week's grand instalment of this magnificent serial. You must make a point of ordering your GEM early.)

"RACKE TO THE RESCUE."

(Continued from page 9.)

And Monty Lowther inquired who the duffer was who had said that the age of miracles was past!

The football match was over, and it had ended in a draw. Figgins of the New House said it had been a very near thing; and the School House fellows agreed that it had been a very near thing indeed. Both sides, in fact, had been on the verge of victory, and both, therefore, must have been on the edge of defeat. But even football, and the doubtful result of the House match, were driven from the minds of the juniors by the startling news that greeted them when they came off.

Startling the news undoubtedly was—in fact, it was amazing! It was, according to Jack Blake, flabbergasting!

Baggy Trimble was in bed after a ducking—and Racke of the Shell, the fellow who had had pointed at him the finger of scorn as a "funk," was the fellow who had pulled him out of the frozen river. Racke of the Shell had dived in for him—dived from the high bank into broken ice for Baggy Trimble, and saved his life. A dozen fellows gave descriptions of how Racke had come staggering in, dripping, with Trimble dripping on his back. The Housemaster had complimented Racke, and shaken him by the hand warmly and publicly. So there was no doubt about it—no possible, probable shadow of doubt, as the song says; no possible doubt whatever!

It was amazing, but it was true; all the more amazing because it was true. The footballers discussed the matter as they changed after the match, and they agreed that they had been rather rough on Racke. The fellow had been denounced as a funk, cut by the House—and even while under a cloud of contumely, he had distinguished himself in this way.

"But he did run away from Grimes, you know!" Monty Lowther remarked.

"He did!" agreed Blake. "Like a bunny rabbit!"

"But now—"

"After all, he put up a round or two with Grimes!" said Manners. "And a chap can't help it if he funks, I suppose. He ought to get over it, but perhaps—"

"It wasn't only that!" said Tom Merry, frowning a little. "He insulted Grimes in a rotten, snobbish way, and started the trouble. That's what I was down on. But, now—"

"Wacke has certainly played up well for once!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You never know a fellow, you know, till you know him—"

"Go hon!" murmured Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthab—"

"It's jolly queer," said Levison of the Fourth, "but there's no doubt that Racke's done a plucky thing. I think a fellow might be civil to him after this."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, yes, certainly!" said Tom Merry at once. "In fact, I told him the other day that it was up to him to do something to show that he wasn't the rotten funk he'd proved himself to be. This chance has come along, and he's done it!"

"This chance?" said Cardew. "Was it a chance?"

"Eh! I suppose Racke couldn't foresee that Trimble was going to fall into the river, could he?" said Tom, puzzled by the remark of the dandy of the Fourth.

Cardew smiled.

"Why not?" he said. "There have been prophets—and perhaps Racke has the prophetic gift. I can't help thinkin' somehow that he had a sort of presentiment that somethin' of the sort would happen."

"What rot!"

"Yaas, wathah! Your remark is perfectly asinine. Cardew, Wacke certainly cannot have foreseen anythin' of the kind!"

"I stand corrected," said Cardew gravely. "If you fellows are going to get up a testimonial for Racke, or anythin' of that kind, put me down for twopence! Racke's pluck is worth that. Not more!"

And Cardew walked away whistling.

He left the juniors feeling rather irritated. Just when they were feeling kindly towards the outcast, and generally benevolent, as it were, Cardew had to chip in with his sarcastic remarks—it was just like Cardew.

"Dash it all," growled Blake, "give a chap his due! I'm blessed if I see what Cardew wants to sneer at a fellow for, now he's done a decent thing for the first time since he's been at St. Jim's!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

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"Cardew's a silly ass!" said Kangaroo. "I'm jolly well going to speak to Racke as soon as I see him, and chuck up cutting him!"

"Same here!"

"Yaas; I wogard that as bein' due to Wacke."

And quite a little army of fellows looked for Racke soon afterwards, to express their new feelings on the subject of his excellent self. They found Racke strolling in the quadrangle with his hands in his pockets. He was looking much less morose and sulky than of late. Already he had received a good many compliments, and friendly words, and he was no longer feeling like an outcast.

"Racke—" began Tom.

Arthur Augustus interrupted the captain of the Shell.

"Fwavy leave it to me, deah boy! Wacke, my deah man, we have all heard about your wescuin' Twimble—"

"Have you?" murmured Racke.

"We wogard it as vewy pluckay," said Arthur Augustus. "I think I speak for all the gentlemen pwsent, when I say that we are vewy glad to see that you are not such an uthah cad and wottah as we have always supposed."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors. Arthur Augustus' way of complimenting Racke struck them as having its funny side.

The swell of St. Jim's turned his eyeglass severely upon the hilarious juniors.

"Weally, you fellahs, this is not a laughin' mattah. A tewwible twagedy has neashly happened. I wogard it as bein' up to you to take it sewiously. To wesome, Wacke—we are vewy pleased to find that, as Shakespeare wemarks, there is some soul of goodness in things evil—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke bit his lip. Arthur Augustus had evidently prepared a little speech for the occasion; and he got on with it, heedless of the laughter of his companions, or of the expression on Aubrey Racke's face.

"Shakespeare also wemarks," continued Gussy, "that there are sermons in stones, and good in ewerythin'. Nobody at St. Jim's has evah seen any good in you befoah this, Wacke—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pwavy be quiet, you fellahs. Nobody havin' ever seen anythin' good in your befoah, Wacke, we are all the more pleased to see it now. It would nevah have occurred to any of us that you would do a wippin' thing like wiskin' your life to save anothah chap's life. Nobody would have dwamed that you were capable of it—"

"Look here—"

"You have surpised us all, Wacke, and we all wecognise, with gwreat satisfaction, that you are fah fwom bein' the uthahly contemptible wottah you have always seemed."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors. Racke's face was a study.

"You silly chump!" howled Racke.

"Wha-a-t?"

"You burblin' owl—"

"Weally, Wacke—"

"Never mind Gussy, Racke," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Asses are born, not made, and Gussy can't help it."

"Weally, Tom Merry—"

"We're all jolly glad that you've played up so well, Racke," said Tom. "We were down on you, and you deserved it—no good making any bones about that. But you've played up well, and the trouble's over so far as we are concerned. That's all."

"I'm glad!" muttered Racke.

"Yaas, wathah! I have a few more words to say—"

"You always have, old top!" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Br-r-r!"

"Anybody want to hear Gussy's few more words?" called out Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nobody did, evidently. The juniors scattered, and Arthur Augustus, deprived of his audience, turned to Racke, to give that gallant youth the benefit of his few words more. But Racke was walking away; and the swell of St. Jim's was left to waste his sweetness on the desert air. So Arthur Augustus sniffed and walked away, too.

CHAPTER 8.

Cash for Val.

WHAT'S on, Gussy?" It was rather late in the evening, and Tom Merry, coming away from his study after prep, happened upon D'Arcy in the passage. The swell of the Fourth was heading for the dormitory staircase with a paper bag in his hand, which was obviously packed with jam-tarts. The captain of the Shell glanced at it curiously.

"Whose tarts?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Mine, deah boy! I am takin' them to the dorm—" "Fancy Gussy taking grub away into a quiet corner to devour it at his leisure!" remarked Manners. "You've been learning manners from Herries' bulldog, Towser!"

"Weally, Mannahs—" "I can't approve of this!" said Monty Lowther, shaking his head. "When Gussy backs into solitary corners with a bag of tarts instead of whacking them out to his old pals, it's time to butt in. I think we ought to bump Gussy, and confiscate the tarts."

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry. Arthur Augustus jumped back as the three Shell fellows closed in on him, grinning.

"Pway don't play the goat, deah boys!" exclaimed D'Arcy hastily. "These tarts are for Twimble!"

"You're wasting good tuck on Trimble?" "You see, poor old Twimble has been through a fearful time to-day," said the tender-hearted Gussy. "I thought I would cawwy him up a few tarts. He's remained in bed evah since he was in the wivah, feelin' wathah bad, you know. He hasn't been able to do his pwep."

The Terrible Three chuckled. "Has he stayed in bed because he feels bad, or to get out of prep?" asked Manners.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyhow, he has had a fearful time, and I am goin' to take him some tarts," said Arthur Augustus. "I looked into the dorm to ask him wethah I could do anythin' for him, and he said tarts—"

"He would!" grinned Lowther.

"So I'm takin' him some. So don't you boundahs play any twicks!"

"Pass on, Good Samaritan, and all's well!" said Tom Merry solemnly. And the swell of the Fourth was allowed to pass unspoiled.

Arthur Augustus proceeded to the Fourth Form dormitory. The electric light was on, and Baggy Trimble was sitting up in bed. He was reading and yawning, but he looked very comfortable, and certainly none the worse for his ducking of the afternoon. His fat face lighted up at the sight of the bag of tarts.

"This way!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"I've brought you a few jam-tarts,

Twimble, deah boy!"

"Thank you! Hand them over!"

"It has occurred to me, howevah, that they may not be good for you just before goin' to bed," added Arthur Augustus considerably.

"Rubbish! Hand them over!"

"If you weally considah—"

"Hand them over!" shrieked Trimble.

"Not so much gas!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

The good-hearted Gussy was unconsciously inflicting upon Baggy Trimble the tortures of Tantalus. However, he handed over the bag, and Baggy thrust in a fat paw, extracted a tart, and jammed it whole into his capacious mouth. Beatific satisfaction overspread his fat face as his jaws champed rhythmically on the juicy tart.

Arthur Augustus sat on the edge of the bed to keep him company. Nobody else had bothered to give Trimble a look in; but Arthur Augustus was always kindness itself.

Tart followed tart, and Baggy's fat face became shinier and jammier with every one that was consumed.

"Good!" he said at last, with a sigh of satisfaction.

"I am vewy glad you like the tarts, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "Are you still feelin' wocky, deah boy?"

"Oh, I'm feeling all right," said Trimble. "You mentioned to Mr. Lathom that I couldn't do my prep?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What did he say?"

"He said undah the circs he would excuse you."

"Good!" said Trimble. "I—I wonder if I can hang it out over to-morrow. I suppose it wouldn't work."

"Weally, Twimble—"

"Still, I've been wet through," said Trimble argumentatively. "Lots of fellows would be ill. I'll think it out."

Anyhow, I've cut prep, and old Lathom can't ask me to construe in the morning, can he? That's so much to the good."

"Bai Jove!"

"Where's Racke?" asked Trimble. "Racke hasn't been to see me."

"Bai Jove! Aftah pullin' you out of the wivah, too!" said Arthur Augustus, rather surprised at that remissness on the part of the gallant rescuer. Trimble grinned.

"Yes, after pulling me out of the river," he assented. "Have the fellows come round yet—about Racke?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"They admire his pluck—what?"

"Yaas!"

Trimble chuckled.

"Well, you tell Racke that I want to see him, Gussy!" he said. "He owes me some money—I—I mean, I—I want to thank him for pulling me out of the water, you know."

"That is vewy wight and pwopah, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "I am vewy glad to see that I was mistaken in thinkin' you incapabul of gwatitude."

"You sily ass!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Hallo, here's Racke!" said Trimble, looking round as the dormitory door opened. "This way, Racke!"

Aubrey Racke came in, but he stopped and coloured, as he saw the swell of the Fourth. Evidently he had expected to find Baggy Trimble alone in the dormitory.

"Pway twot in, Wacke," said Arthur Augustus. "Twimble was just sayin' that he wanted to see you, to thank you for wescuin' him."

"Oh!" muttered Racke, coming towards Trimble's bed. The fat Fourth-Former grinned at him.

"Feeling all right, Trimble?" stammered Racke.

"Right as rain—I mean, awfully ill, and not like doing any lessons to-morrow," said Trimble.

"Better not try that on, Trimble," muttered Racke. "Least said soonest mended, you know."

"What rot! When a fellow's ill, he's ill!" said Trimble. "I'm going to squeeze all I can out of it, of course."

"Bai Jove!"

"You can clear off now, Gussy; Racke's going to keep me company for a bit," said Baggy Trimble.



"Wacke, my deah man," said Arthur Augustus, "we have heard about your wescuin' Twimble—" "Have you?" murmured Racke. "We wegard it as vewy pluckay," continued D'Arcy. "I think I speak for all the gentlemen present when I say we are glad to see you are not the uttah cad and wotthah as we have always supposed."

Arthur Augustus had come up with the benevolent intention of keeping Baggy Trimble company till the rest of the Fourth came to bed. But at this very plain hint he retired—not sorry to get out of his self-imposed task. Certainly he did not guess for a moment what Baggy Trimble had to say to Racke when he was gone.

"Now—" began Trimble.

"Wait till the door's shut!" whispered Racke hurriedly. Trimble grinned. The door clicked shut after the retreating swell of the School House.

"Now, about the cash," said Trimble. "It's worked like a charm, Racke. I've heard all about it. Old Railton shook your paw—what? He, he, he!"

"Shut up that cackle!"

"Well, it's funny," said Trimble, still chuckling. "No end of a giddy hero, ain't you, Aubrey?"

Racke scowled at him.

"Ten bob in advance yesterday," said Trimble, "that leaves two-pound-ten to come, doesn't it?"

"One-pound-ten," said Racke. "Two pounds was agreed to—"

"Did I say two?"

"Yes, you did, you fat slug!"

"I'm awfully careless in money matters," said Trimble airily. "Being brought up in a wealthy home, you know—"

Racke glanced round to make assurance doubly sure that there were no eyes in the dormitory to watch him, and then he extracted a pound note and a ten-shilling note from his purse. He laid them on the coverlet, and Trimble blinked at them, but did not touch them.

"What's that?" he asked, his fat lip curling in a sneer.

"Thirty bob—what I owe you."

"There's the other pound—"

"You know it was two pounds in all, you fat rotter!" hissed Racke.

"I overlooked the damage done to my clothes," said Trimble. "My bags were awfully wet, and they'll shrink. I shall have to have them pressed. My jacket, too—you insisted on my jacket being wet, though I didn't want to damage it. Your own fault, Racke!"

"I've given you what I owe you, Trimble," said Racke between his teeth. "You can take it or leave it. That or nothing!"

Trimble eyed him coolly.

"I'll leave it, then," he said. "I've been thinking over the matter while I've been lying here, Racke. It really doesn't seem to me to be good enough. Taking in all the fellows, you know—making out that you dived into the river for me, when all you did was to splash me with water—"

"Shut up!" hissed Racke.

"It's a bit on my conscience," said Trimble calmly. "I think, on the whole, you'd better take your money away, Racke, and I'll explain to the fellows exactly how it was. Take it away! You think your dashed money will buy anything. I'm not that sort, I hope!"

Aubrey Racke had an internal struggle. He had plenty of money, but he did not like parting with it. But he realised that if Trimble talked his whole house of cards would come down with a crash. The trick had worked—the outcast's amazing stunt had been a success. But it needed only a few words from Trimble—

Slowly, savagely, Racke of the Shell extracted another pound-note from his well-filled purse, and laid it beside the others. Then Baggy Trimble condescended to take them.

"Thanks!" he said carelessly. "I sha'n't forget this, Racke! I'll square as soon as Talbot pays me the five I lent him."

"Oh, stop your lies!" hissed Racke. "Talbot would kick you if you offered to lend him anything. You're sticking me for my money, like the sneaking, dishonest, little fat scoundrel you are!"

Trimble sat bolt upright. His little round eyes glittered with wrath. How much Trimble believed of his own humbug was a problem the St. Jim's fellows had never been able to solve. But howsoever much or little he believed in it, certainly he did not like the veils being rent aside in this ruthless manner.

"You insulting cad!" he gasped. "Take your filthy money!"

Trimble had slipped the currency notes into the pocket of his pyjamas. He did not reproduce them. Obviously, he had no intention of doing so. But he continued, with great scorn and wrath:

"Take it! You and your money! Pah! Purse-proud upstart! I wouldn't touch your money with a barge-pole! D'Arcy!" shouted Trimble.

"Shut up!" breathed Racke. "What are you yelling to D'Arcy for?"

"I'm going to tell him the whole story. I'm not going to enter into any of your sneaking plots!" said Trimble. "Not my style at all, I can assure you. D'Arcy!" he shouted again.

"Dry up!"

"Sha'n't! D'Arcy!" roared Trimble.

"I—I—I'm sorry!" gasped Racke, in dire terror of seeing the dormitory door open, and of hearing the whole story poured into the astonished ears of the swell of St. Jim's. "I—I say, Trimble, old fellow, I—I'm sorry! You—you can have the other pound. I—I don't mind."

"Oh!" said Trimble. "If you put it like that, Racke—"

"I—I do!"

"This is to be regarded simply as a loan, then," said Trimble. "You're not making out that you're giving me money!"

"N-no!" gasped Racke.

"That's all right, then," said Trimble, genial once more. "In the circumstances, Racke, I overlook your ill-bred remarks. But don't let it occur again."

Aubrey Racke quitted the dormitory with feelings almost too deep for words. Trimble laid his head on the pillow with a fat grin. He was master of the situation now, and he enjoyed it. There was going to be no more "swank" from Aubrey Racke towards Baggy Trimble—not if Baggy knew it. He held the millionaire's son in the hollow of his fat hand, though Racke did not yet realise all that that implied. But Baggy Trimble thought it out with great satisfaction, and his fat face was smiling when the Fourth Form came up to the dormitory.

CHAPTER 9.

The Horn of Plenty.

TOM MERRY nodded genially to Racke in the Form-room passage the next morning.

Racke returned the nod cheerily.

Matters were very much changed now for the outcast of St. Jim's. His ostracism was over.

Certainly. Tom Merry & Co. were never likely to be friends with Racke, unless he changed his manners and customs very considerably, which he had no intention of doing. But, without being friendly, they could be civil, and their example was generally followed. There was no more turning up of noses—no more looks of scorn—no more cutting remarks. What Racke had looked on as a persecution came to an abrupt end. He was allowed to go his own way in peace, and that was all he wanted.

But he really had more than that—not only was the persecution over, but fellows were more civil to Racke than they had ever been before the trouble with Grimes. Pluck was a quality that the St. Jim's juniors delighted to honour, and Racke had shown unexpected pluck, according to the general belief. Quite a number of fellows said that Racke

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wasn't such a bad chap, after all, with all his "rorty" ways.

Which was pleasant enough for Aubrey.

Racke felt that, extortionate as Trimble had been, the benefit he received was worth it. Three pounds was not an important matter to the profiteer's son. He did not like parting with that sum, but he had had his money's worth. So he dismissed Trimble from his mind, and enjoyed the relief he had earned by his extraordinary stunt.

Now that Racke's trouble had blown over his friends rallied round. Crooke was quite friendly, and amicable in the study. Clampe and Chowle came over from the New House to be very cordial.

Indeed, the slack set felt that Racke had brought some credit on them. They could no longer be pointed out as a "gang" consisting wholly of slackers and wasters and funks. They were unendingly astonished at what Racke had done, certainly; they could not make it out. But there it was, and as they were not thought-readers they did not get on to the facts.

Racke received the overtures of his friends, who had abandoned him in the hour of adversity, with cynical welcome. As they had done by him, so he would have done by them in the same circumstances, and he knew it, and perhaps that helped him to overlook their defection. Once more the cad of the Shell became a welcome member of the shady set that met in Clampe's study in the New House to play nap and banker.

Matters were on their old footing now, and Aubrey Racke was satisfied. Meanwhile, Trimble of the Fourth was also in a state of considerable satisfaction.

Two pounds ten shillings was a large sum for Baggy Trimble. In spite of the enormous wealth of Trimble Hall and the Trimble family, Baggy was seldom or never seen with pound notes in his possession. Now he had two pound notes and a "ten-bobber," and he revelled in the fat of the land. He would always have been Dame Taggles' best customer at the school shop if funds had allowed. Now funds did allow, and Trimble naturally became the best customer. Nothing was too expensive for Trimble, so long as his supply of cash lasted.

But everything comes to an end, and the horn of plenty ran dry at last.

Trimble did not intend that it should remain dry for long. It was on Saturday afternoon that he found his cash resources reduced to twopence. But Trimble thought he could renew those resources.

He looked cheerfully for Racke.

Racke was going out for the afternoon with Crooke and Clampe, and Baggy Trimble caught him in the quad on his way to the gates.

"Aubrey!" shouted Trimble.

"If you call me Aubrey, you fat cad, I'll kick you!" said Racke.

"Shut up, and don't follow me about!"

"Clear off, Trimble," said Crooke. "You're not wanted."

Trimble did not heed.

"Will you lend me ten bob, Racke?" he asked.

"No."

"Sure?" asked Trimble threateningly.

Racke hurried on, with a sinking at his heart. Trimble scuttled after him.

"Stop a minute, Aubrey."

Racke stopped.

"Cut off, and leave me alone, you fat rotter!" he said between his teeth.

"I hope I'm not the fellow to stay where my company isn't wanted," said Trimble loftily.

"I certainly shall not come out with you this afternoon, Racke. But my trousers have come home from being pressed, and I've got to pay the bill."

Crooke stared at him.

"Why the merry thump should Racke pay for your bags to be pressed, you fat lunatic?" he exclaimed.

"They were mucked up in the water last Wednesday," explained Trimble.

"Well, you fat rotter, you ought to thank Racke for pulling you out, without asking him to pay the damages."

Trimble grinned.

"Oh, I've thanked Racke," he said. "Haven't I, Aubrey? Now Racke's going to lend me ten bob to pay for the bags—ain't you, Aubrey?"

"I wouldn't!" said Clampe.

"Perhaps you wouldn't, but Racke will."

Racke bit his lip hard. He began to understand now.

The affair that he had regarded as so happily terminated was not at an end yet—in fact, it was only beginning.

"I'm waiting for you, Aubrey!" said Trimble, with a grin.

Smack!

Racke's temper got the better of his prudence. He reached out and gave the fat Fourth-Former a terrific smack on his fat ear, and Trimble went over like a skittle, yelling.

"Take that, you fat brute!" hissed Racke.

Trimble had already taken it. He sprawled and roared. Crooke and Clampe exchanged curious glances. Suspicion had come into both their minds at once.

"Come on, you fellows!" said Racke savagely.

Trimble sat up, spluttering.

"Ow! You awful rotter! Yow-ow-ow! I'll tell Tom Merry now— Yaroooh! Tom Merry!"

Tom was walking in the quad with Manners and Lowther.

He looked round as his name was howled across the quad.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" he called out.

"I've got something to tell you!" yelled Trimble. "Something about Racke—"

"What on earth—"

Racke's face was a study. He had an inward struggle as the surprised captain of the Shell came towards the spot. In a minute more, the true story of the heroic rescue would have been told.

Racke bent hurriedly over Trimble.

"I'll make it a pound!" whispered Racke, in an agony, as Tom Merry drew near.

Trimble rubbed his burning ear.

"Too late, you rotter—"

"Trimble, old chap—"

"Well, what's the merry row?" asked Tom Merry, coming up.

"Get it off your chest, Trimble!"

Trimble staggered up, with Racke's assistance. Racke watched him in anguish of spirit. It pleased the fat Fourth-Former to keep him on tenterhooks.

"The fact is, Tom Merry—" he began.

Crooke and Clampe were grinning. Tom Merry looked from Racke to Trimble, and from Trimble to Racke, in surprise.

"Well?" he asked.

"The fact is, Racke—"

"Trimble!" breathed Racke.

"Blest if I can make you out!" said Tom Merry. "If you've got anything to say, Trimble, cough it up. Life's short."

"Racke owes me a pound," said Trimble, at last. And Aubrey Racke breathed more freely.

"No business of mine if he does," said Tom. "And I don't believe it, either."

"Don't you owe me a pound, Racke?"

"Yes," gasped Racke.

"Well, if you owe him a pound, pay him a pound, Racke," said Tom Merry. "Have you called me here to see that Racke pays up Trimble?"

"That's it—exactly," said Trimble, with a grin. "Racke wouldn't pay up, so as you're his Form-captain—"

"I'm ready to pay!" gasped Racke. "I—I didn't like being dunned, that's all. Here's the pound."

He handed a pound-note over to Trimble, whose fat fingers closed upon it eagerly. Racke walked on with Crooke and Clampe—who were grinning still and whispering together.

"Well, that's that!" said Tom Merry. "You've got your pound, Baggy. Don't spend it all at once on jam-tarts and burst!"

"Yah!" said Trimble. And he rolled away towards the tuckshop with the pound-note in his fat paw.

"How on earth did Racke come to owe Baggy a pound?" said Lowther.

"Racke's got more money than any two fellows in the school—and Trimble never has a half-crown to bless himself with. Isn't that jolly queer, Tommy?"

"I suppose it is," said Tom.

"I wonder—" said Lowther.

"I wonder—" said Manners, at the same moment.

And Tom Merry, by a curious coincidence, remarked at the same moment:

"I wonder—"

But the Terrible Three did not state what they wondered.

It was only a vague suspicion, and they let it drop. They were reminded of it in the junior Common-room that evening when Baggy Trimble, in the presence of a dozen fellows, reminded Racke that he "owed" him ten shillings—which Racke paid without a word. The glances of the Terrible Three met—and they wondered still more!

THE END.

Will the Chums of St. Jim's continue to admire Aubrey Racke when they learn the true facts of his "heroism"? See next week's grand story, entitled:

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The Return of Mr. Stanton.

RAM DARRY was so amazed at the rapid and unexpected entry of the police that he remained quite stationary for a moment or so. His followers were also too surprised to take any action. Now it seemed that they were too late to make a fight for their liberty, for each of the five men stood with revolvers levelled. The detective walked over towards Ram Darry, and taking a pair of handcuffs from his pocket, he prepared to place them on the man's wrists.

The leader obediently held out his hands, but as he did so a peculiar shrill cry left his lips, and immediately there was the sound of something moving behind them.

Dr. Brutell glanced back, and a surprising thing met his gaze. The panels in the wall of the room had opened, and each one disclosed a member of this queer society with a levelled rifle in his hand. Brutell and his men had been trapped completely.

Dr. Brutell and the detective were distinctly annoyed. Here they were within an ace of rescuing Madeleine from the clutches of Ram Darry, and now the tables were completely turned. It was, of course, impossible for them to resist.

They were completely outnumbered, and the evil-looking men behind the guns would not hesitate to shoot if they showed fight. Yet there might be a possible means of escape.

Dr. Brutell was a most resourceful man, and he intended to make one more effort. He whispered a few words to the detective who stood next to him, and he, in turn, passed it on to his comrades.

The special police officers were all men who had been used to tight corners, and they knew how to act in times of emergency. They were quick to understand the doctor's scheme, although his idea was conveyed to them in so few words that none of their enemies suspected that there was anything afoul.

Suddenly, by a silent and agreed signal, all the captives gave a wild yell. For one second consternation reigned in the room. The ear-splitting noise was so sudden and unexpected that the men with the rifles were completely taken off their guard.

It is true it did not last long, but in that brief moment Dr. Brutell and the rest of them had been able to accomplish their desire.

Each man had grabbed hold of the nearest person to him and dragged him in a most unceremonious manner into the line of fire. The Orientals made most effective shields, and Ram Darry, who had not yet got over his surprise, had the honour of protecting his enemy, Dr. Brutell.

If any one of Ram Darry's men pulled a trigger the bullet would have to pass through the body of one of their number before any harm was done to the enemy.

Dr. Brutell instructed the detective to take advantage of the opportunity thus presented to rush out into the street. This was a wise

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RAM DARRY

The Mystery Man

Written by Professor Hector Gordon, Science Master of St. Jim's.

move, for he knew perfectly well that Ram Darry would not dare to try any more tricks if one of their number was at liberty.

The Orientals quickly realised that the game was up, and they became very dejected indeed. Their courage quickly deserted them when the odds were on the other side.

The remainder of Brutell's party had no difficulty in getting away, and once they had gained the street door they saw that it was securely locked. The three police officers mounted guard, and Brutell and the detective hurried away to secure a force of men large enough to arrest the whole of the gang. In a very short time they were safely lodged in prison.

Madeleine was once more safely back in the house of her friend. She was overjoyed at having escaped from the clutches of Ram Darry, but there was still one thing which worried her very much. Her father was still a prisoner of the Black Circle gang.

But there was a ray of hope!

During her captivity, Madeleine had overheard two of Ram Darry's men discussing her father, and they had mentioned the name of the place where he was being detained.

The girl at once told Dr. Brutell all that she knew. Dr. Brutell was surprised at the news that the millionaire's prison was a small wooden shack, situated in a desolate spot some thirty miles distant from the Stanton ranches.

"We must lose no time in setting out for the west!" said Dr. Brutell. "The place where your father is being kept prisoner cannot be very far away from the mountain retreat of the Black Circle gang, and no doubt we shall find it a fairly difficult job to get him away. But that must not deter us. Jack Regan, your father's foreman, and his cowboys will render us every assistance."

Madeleine suggested that they should set out for the Stanton ranch early in the morning, and the doctor heartily agreed with the proposal.

Luck was certainly with Madeleine and her friend, for a day or so after their arrival at the ranch, a big party of cowboys were rounded up, and an expedition started out at once in search of the captured millionaire.

After a couple of hours hard riding they saw in the distance three horsemen, and the fact that the man in the centre was attached by a rope to the other two men made them take particular notice.

Brutell took out a pair of field-glasses, and after a brief survey, he handed them to Madeleine.

"Do you recognise anyone there?" he asked.

The girl gave a gasp of astonishment.

"Why, it's my father!" she muttered.

And then tears of joy commenced to run down her cheeks. It was the first time she had seen him for many a long day.

"Yes, there can be no doubt about it!" returned Dr. Brutell. "We must be after them at once. They must not be allowed to escape. These two men are probably taking him to a fresh prison."

The cowboys, headed by the popular Jack Regan, spurred up their horses and set off on the trail of the three riders. They were a good distance away, but with ordinary luck they should have no difficulty in rounding them up.

Unfortunately, however, the two guards

soon became aware of the fact that they were being followed.

They untied the ropes which were attached to their prisoner, and made him ride in front of them; then, holding a pistol at the head of Mr. Stanton, they ordered him to ride for all he was worth.

To refuse their demand would have meant instant death.

But if they were riding hard, so also were Regan's men, and they were steadily but surely overhauling them. At length it was apparent to the members of the Black Circle that they could no longer hope to get away.

Jack Regan raised his revolver, aimed it, and with a crack shot brought the man on the right down to the ground. Then this expert shot repeated the performance.

The bullet, however, went a trifle wide, and the remaining guard made a desperate final effort to get away.

Another shot rang out, and a third. This one found its mark, and the next minute there were two riderless horses, and Mr. Stanton left.

The millionaire ranch-owner was never more surprised in his life than he was at this amazing incident. He had thought that the horsemen were a rival gang of outlaws, and it never entered his head that they were friends of his.

A few minutes later the party rode up, and Mr. Stanton was astonished to see his daughter and Dr. Brutell among them.

It was a wonderful reunion, for Mr. Stanton had never expected to see his daughter again. The joyous party hurried back to the ranch-house to celebrate the great occasion.

At the end of the festivities, Dr. Brutell went to his room to rest. He picked up a book and commenced reading. But he was not at ease, and he knew that one of his dreaded spells were creeping over him again.

Dr. Brutell had confided in Madeleine, and told her all about his strange malady. He sent for her, and asked her to go to his bag and mix the potion from the two bottles which she would find there.

This mixture was the only thing which saved the doctor from the spells of evil.

Madeleine hastened to do his bidding, but, unfortunately, by the time she returned, the doctor was in the full power of his demon self. He rushed about the room like a madman, shrieking and tearing his hair; and when Madeleine offered him the mixture, he snatched at it in a violent manner, and then dashed the glass to the ground.

It seemed that he had never seen her before.

Dr. Brutell then tore wildly out of the room, rushed downstairs, and before anybody was able to stop him, he dashed out of the house.

Brutell made his way to the stable where his favourite horse was tethered, and, mounting it, he rode full-blut up the canyon road and away from the ranch.

He presented an extraordinary sight, and nobody could believe that this man and the respected Dr. Brutell were the same.

The doctor rode the horse at a mad pace, and he continued to yell and wave his arms frantically, until at length he was out of sight of the ranch-house.

Madeleine lost no time in telling her father of the strange happenings to their friend.

The ranch-owner ordered Jack Regan and some of the cowboys to follow after Dr. Brutell and see that no harm came to him. But the scientist was riding with such reckless abandon that he quickly outdistanced them all, and he was soon lost to sight.

The party rode back despondently, and wondered if they would ever see their hero again.

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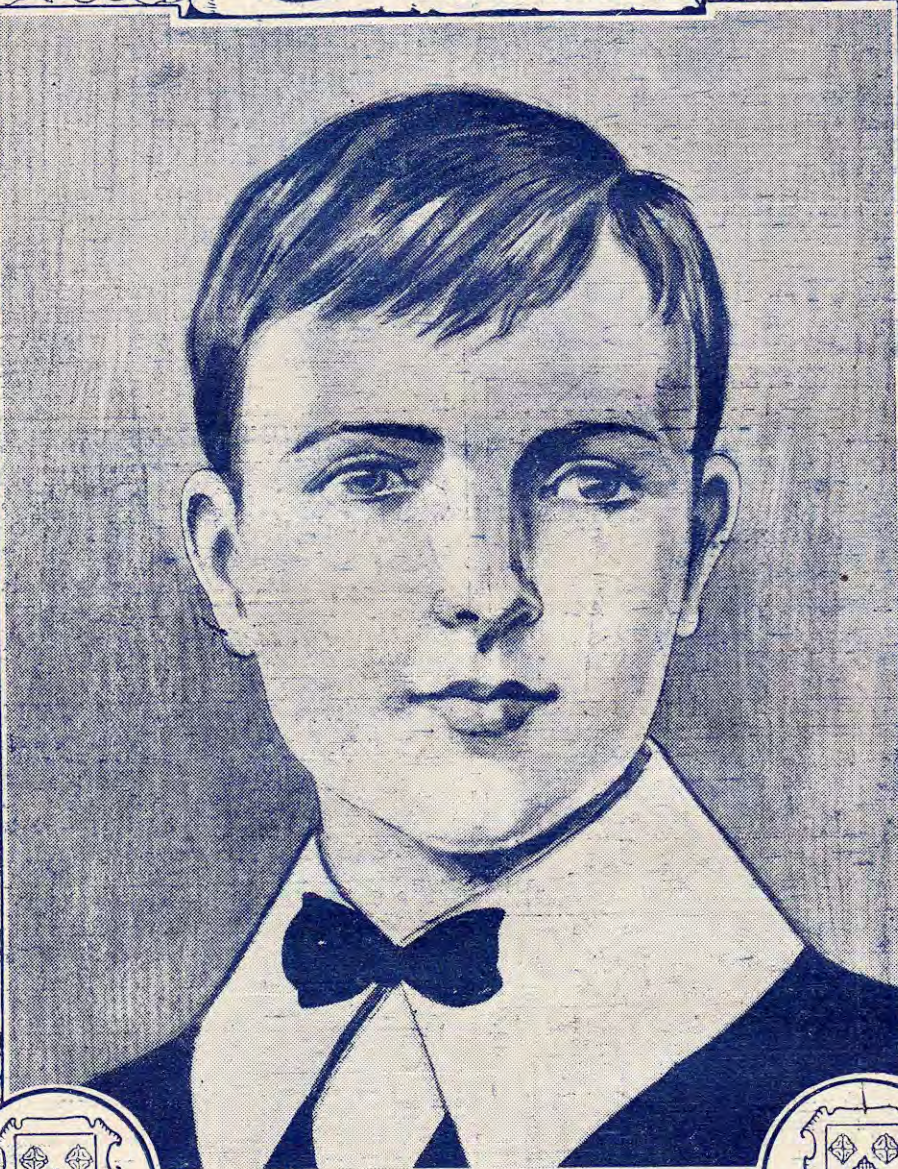
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