

844
"RIVALS OF THE RACECOURSE!" A THRILLING TALE OF THE TURF. **STARTS TO-DAY!**

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

No. 844.
Vol. XXV.
April 12th,
1924.

The GEM 2^D

LIBRARY OF
SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES



BAGGY CATCHES THE WRONG PERSON!

The revengeful Baggy Trimble's effort to lasso his Form master results in a fright for Mary, the maid! (An amusing incident from the grand, long complete school tale of Tom Merry & Co., contained in this issue.)



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

MY DEAR CHUMS, Just as I expected, our new serial has gone off with a rush. There is no need for me to go hunting round for the reason. I know it. There is the right sort of magic in this great story, and it gets more enthralling with each chapter, and you will follow with intense interest the ups and downs in life of young Mat Marlingale. We see here something of the glory of the Turf—its immense fascination, and the flashing brilliancy of the pictures it conjures up in the mind. But we also get the reverse of the medal. There is a bright and sunny side, and there is an eclipse side, with many deep shadows of disillusionment. Don't miss a line of this splendid yarn. Be wise in time, and fail not to register your "Gem" order with the trusty newsagent. Then there will be no let down.

"GLYN, THE GOLDMAKER!"

By Martin Clifford.

Yes, it's coming! Look out for the great event next week! If you ask me what the striking sensation is, my reply will soon set all doubts comfortably at rest. I refer to the new story about that prime inventor, Bernard Glyn. Lots of chums have been itching to know what had become of Glyn. He had not become. He was merely in quest of gold. Just that!

DOES GLYN SUCCEED?

Glyn lives in a more scientific age. He feels that goldmaking, to those who have probed tremendously deep into auriferous mysteries, is as easy as pie. And what is the outcome? That is the question as Hamlet says. The story is a real surprise-packet, and Martin Clifford once again proves his mettle as an unfold of a wonderful tale. And whatever else you do, keep your eye on Baggy Trimble. How Baggy comes in; and why, you will see if you will just have patience till the next triumphant issue of the "Gem" is on the market.

THE "ST. JIM'S NEWS."

Tom Merry & Co. could not have done less than devote the supplement next week to the important season. This Grand Easter Number is a kick-off for the holidays which will suit everybody. There is a friendly, cheer-up element about Easter which puts the whole world in a good temper. I give you my word, the new supplement plays up to this spirit in grand style.

"JIM KEELING'S SCOOP!"

By Jack Crichton.

This magnificent complete story about the trials and tribulations of a smart young journalist deserves its place in our next number. A scoop is to a journalist the very breath of life. Your born journalist may at odd times and seasons snatch a hurried meal of bread-and-cheese, but he really lives on scoops. If he fails to get fat, that is his own look-out; but, anyway, he is never happy unless some tempting coup in the way of news-getting is simmering in the pan of his mighty brain. I could say a lot about this tempting story. I should like nothing better, but the limitations of space are all against me, so it must be mostly mum. At any rate, I can point out that Jack Crichton has hit on a dashing plot, and he has put to right good service his masterly knowledge of the art of the journalist. There is a suggestion of grim peril in the yarn. Jim Keeling is up against it. He is fired with all the enthusiasm of his craft. He has got to win. Does he bring it off? It is a tale that will magnetise every reader, and, of course, it has an enormous appeal to all chums who aspire to rally one day to the service of the Press.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

THAT REMINDS ME!

"Gem" readers are recruited from all sections of workers, and in my budget of letters every day I find evidence of the keen interest in things in general. Because you happen to be a potter, or a fellow interested in trade, retail or otherwise, that is no reason why you should not want to know what is going forward in other spheres. To know something of a heap of things will enable you to turn out better pots and pans, or to sell the latest goods in the right way. But I will be bothered if this knowledgeable stunt does not hold good of the journalist more than anyone. He has to know pretty well everything, or he is no good in the long run. N.B.—The journalist has a very long run, indeed, and he may not always seem

to win, but, as I often tell correspondents, if the real trier does his utmost in his own special corner, turning out the best that is in him, he does win—he really does—as final records always show.

"RIVALS OF THE RACECOURSE!"

Andrew Gray's brilliant serial has been mentioned. One more word. The doings in this story next week are worthy of the very closest attention on the part of all Gemites.

THE TUCK HAMPER.

Keep on sending in the smartest storyette you can find. If you do not bring it off one week, there is always another week coming on. It is better to use postcards. Address your entries to the Editor, the "Gem," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4, and mark them "Tuck Hamper" in the corner.

A REAL BUMPER NUMBER!

That exactly fits the case as regards next Wednesday's issue of the "Gem." It has something to please all, and to accomplish this feat is my one aim. It keeps me awake of nights, but that's a bagatelle, so long as the goal is made.

Your Editor.

Read the Famous Companion Papers

The Big Six

Books for Every Boy

THE GEM LIBRARY

HOLIDAY 1923 ANNUAL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

EVERY WEDNESDAY

The GEM 2

EVERY MONDAY

The Magnet 2

EVERY TUESDAY

The Popular 2

EVERY MONDAY

The Boys' Friend 2

EVERY THURSDAY

JUNGLE JINKS 2

PRINTED IN COLOURS

Clean, wholesome reading—and lots of it. School, sport, and adventure stories—you get the best of everything in Your Editor's famous Companion Papers. Stick to them, and you'll never regret it!

"Findings keepings," is known to be the motto of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth. No wonder when Mr. Lathom's gold tiepin is missing suspicion falls upon the shoulders of the fat junior!



TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

A Magnificent, New, Long Complete School Story of the World-Famous Tom Merry & Co., at St. Jim's.

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Findings Keepings!

A POUND, at least!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy glanced round, as he heard the murmuring voice from the dusky window-seat at the end of the Fourth Form passage. It was the voice of Baggy Trimble, the fat ornament of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's; and Baggy, apparently, was communing with himself.

"A pound—perhaps two!" murmured Trimble. Something in Baggy's fat paw glimmered at the window, as he held it up to look at it. The glimmer was of gold; and Arthur Augustus, as he noticed it, started a little.

The swell of St. Jim's was on his way to Study No. 6; but now he paused, and fixed his eye—and his celebrated eyeglass—upon Baggy Trimble.

"Twimble—"

The fat junior gave a start.

"Oh! Is that you, Gussy?"

"Yaas, Twimble! What have you got there?"

"Nothing."

Trimble's fat hand vanished into his pocket.

Arthur Augustus came into the window-recess, his noble eye fixed more sternly than ever on Trimble.

"Twimble, you young boundah—"

"The fact is, old chap, I'm glad to see you!" said Trimble, recovering himself. "Sit down here, D'Arcy—"

"I refuse to sit down! I—"

"I was just thinking of looking for you, Gussy, old chap! A really well-dressed fellow like you—"

"What?"

"The best-dressed fellow at St. Jim's—" went on Baggy.

D'Arcy's frowning brow relaxed a little.

"The glass of fashion, and the mould of form, and all that," said Baggy. "Being the best-dressed fellow at St. Jim's, I think you ought to have a tiepin—"

"A what?"

"A handsome gold tiepin," said Baggy, blinking at him. "Let me explain how the matter stands. My uncle, Sir Montague Trimble—"

"Bai Jove!"

"He's sent me a gold tiepin for my birthday," said Trimble. "Now, it's kind of him, but it's a bit too handsome for me. My idea is that it would suit you, D'Arcy—a well-dressed and handsome fellow like you."

Arthur Augustus' brow relaxed still further.

"Weally, Twimble—" he said.

"So I'm going to give it to you, D'Arcy."

"Wha-a-t?"

"That is, practically. You can give me a nominal price for it—say a pound."

"Bai Jove!"

"Is it a trade?" asked Trimble. "You can look at it, you know."

"Pway let me see it, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, his brow growing stern again.

"Here you are, old bean,"

Trimble's fat hand came out of his pocket, and again there was a glimmer of gold in the light from the window. His fat fingers held a tiepin—a plain gold tiepin, worth perhaps thirty shillings or two pounds. He held it up for D'Arcy's inspection.

"Like it?" he asked.

"You feahful young wascal!" said Arthur Augustus, in tones of deep wrath. "Where did you find that pin?"

"I—I didn't find it—"

"You did, you fat wascal!"

"Well, findings are keepings, aren't they?" demanded Trimble. "Besides, I never found it. I've mentioned already that it was a Christmas present from my uncle, Sir George Trimble—"

"Gweat Scott!"

"I'll show you the letter that came with it, if you like!" exclaimed Trimble indignantly.

"Bai Jove! I twust I am not doin' you an injustice, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "But Mr. Lathom has lost a tiepin—he is always dwoppin' somethin' or othah—and that looks vewy much like Mr. Lathom's pin."

"Tiepins are very much alike, you know."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And I suppose my uncle's letter is good enough, if you want me to prove that this is mine," said Trimble, with dignity.

"Certainly, deah boy!"

"Then I'll show you the letter." Baggy Trimble fumbled in one pocket, and then in another. "Oh dear! I must have left it in the study! But it's all right—a letter with a crest on it, you know, signed by Sir Reginald in his own hand—"

"You feahful fabwicatah—"

"Look here, you know—"

Jack Blake put his head out of the doorway of Study No. 6, and bawled:

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, deah boy?"

"Hurry up, you ass! Have you got the tea, or have you not got the tea?" roared Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I have just bwrought it up fwom the tuck-shop, Blake."

"Then why the thump don't you bring it into the study? Are you taking that packet of tea for a walk up and down the passage?"

"Certainly not. I wegard the question as widiculous, Blake! I am talkin'—"

"You generally are!" snorted Blake.

"I am talkin' to Twimble. Pway come heah, deah boy—Hewwies and Dig, too. It is wathah sewious."

"Oh, blow Trimble!" growled Jack Blake. "I want my tea."

But he came along from the study, and Herries and Digby followed him.

Baggy Trimble had jumped up from the window-seat, and cast a longing glance towards the stairs. But the way of escape was barred to Baggy; Arthur Augustus stood in the way, and evidently did not intend to let him pass.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

"Well, what's the row?" asked Blake.

"Look at that tiepin."

"What tiepin?"

Trimble's fat hand had vanished into his pocket again. There was alarm in his fat and fatuous countenance now.

"The fat boundah is hidin' it! He has picked up Mr. Lathom's tiepin, and he is 'twyin' to sell it to me for a pound," said Arthur Augustus, in deep indignation.

"Great pip! That's rather thick, even for Trimble!" said Blake incredulously. "Sure you've got it right?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Show us the pin, Trimble," growled Herries. "I know old Lathom's pin—I've picked it up for him in the Form-room once or twice. It doesn't fasten safely."

"This one does!" said Trimble promptly. "So, you see, it can't possibly be Lathom's pin."

"Well, show it up," said Dig.

"Sha'n't!"

"What?" roared Blake.

"I—the fact is, I'm not selling this pin," said Trimble. "I couldn't very well, as it's a birthday present from my pater. It came by registered post from Trimble Hall to-day."

"The fearful fabwicatah said it was from his uncle—"

"I mean my uncle—my uncle, the baronet," said Baggy.

"Sir Courtenay Trimble, you know—"

"Are you showing up that pin, you fat villain?" demanded Blake.

"Shake it out of him," suggested Herries.

Baggy Trimble made a desperate rush. For the moment he took the chums of the Fourth by surprise. One of his fat elbows crashed into D'Arcy's handsome waistcoat, and Arthur Augustus, with a gasp of anguish, staggered against Blake, knocking him against the wall. Herries and Digby grabbed at the fat junior, but Baggy eluded them and sprinted up the passage.

"After him!" gasped Blake.

"Yawwoh! I am winded—wow!"

"After him!"

And Blake and Herries and Digby raced after Baggy Trimble, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, panting for breath, raced after them.

CHAPTER 2.

The Way of the Transgressor I

"WHAT—"

"Who—"

"Which—"

Crash!

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, of the Shell, were seated round the tea-table in Study No. 10. The Terrible Three, fresh and ruddy from the playing-fields, were enjoying their tea, and chatting cheerily—and thinking of anything or anybody but Baggy Trimble. And suddenly the study door was hurled open, and that fat youth came hurtling in at top speed.

"Help!" gasped Trimble.

Baggy came in with an impetus that carried him right across the study. The study-table was in the way; but a study-table was a trifle, light as air when it came up against a weight like Baggy's.

The table spun away, and there was a general crashing and smashing as the crockery went in various directions.

Tom Merry & Co. jumped up. There was a yell from Manners. Manners had caught the flying teapot with his knee. And the tea was hot.

"Whooop!"

"What the thump—" yelled Tom Merry.

"Scalp him!" howled Lowther.

"Help, I say—help!" panted Baggy Trimble. "They're after me! I say, hide me somewhere! Keep them off! They want to steal my gold pin—"

"What!"

"It's all a mistake—I haven't a tiepin about me—and besides, it's my own!"

"Here he is!" roared Blake.

The pursuers had arrived. Blake and Herries and Digby rushed into Study No. 10, and after them came Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Baggy Trimble dodged behind Tom Merry.

"Keep them off!" he yelled.

"Collar him!"

"Ow! Help!"

Tom Merry pushed back the excited Blake.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "What are you after Trimble for?"

"He's got Lathom's gold pin—"

"Eh?"

"Yaas, wathah! And he twied to sell it to me for a pound!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "We're goin' to make him take it back to Mr. Lathom."

Tom Merry's face became very grave.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 244.

"Shut the door," he said.

Dig closed the door. It was a serious matter, though evidently the fatuous Baggy did not understand its seriousness; and the instinct of the juniors was to keep masters and prefects off the scene. Baggy Trimble was not popular in the School House of St. Jim's—very far from that. But nobody wanted even Baggy to be expelled from the school and sent home in disgrace.

"Look at our crocks!" said Monty Lowther, with a deadly glare at Baggy.

"Never mind the crocks, for a minute!" said the captain of the Shell. "This is jolly serious. Put the pin on the table, Trimble!"

"Sha'n't!" gasped Baggy. "It's a birthday present from my aunt—"

"Put it on the table—"

"I've got his letter in my study, signed by Sir Montague Trimble himself! I—I'll go and fetch it!"

"Your aunt?" yelled Blake.

"I mean my uncle! She—I mean he—sent it to me—"

Tom Merry took the fat junior by the collar. With calm precision he proceeded to knock Baggy's bullet-head on the table.

Bang! Bang!

"Yarooooooooop!" roared Trimble.

"Cough it up!" said Tom.

"Ow! Oh! Ow! Here it is, you rotter! I was going to show it to you!" howled Trimble.

The pin was laid on the table. All the juniors looked at it. It was a gold tiepin of a far from uncommon design, and certainly more than one person might have possessed such a pin. But that this particular pin was not rightfully possessed by Baggy Trimble was also certain.

Blake picked it up and examined it.

"The fastening's loose," he said. "You know Lathom's always dropping this blessed pin—or perhaps you Shell fellows don't know. It's been picked up in the Fourth Form room half a dozen times! Look at it!"

"Has Lathom lost his pin now?" asked Tom.

"Yes; he mentioned it after class, and asked us to keep our eyes open for it."

"I fancy that settles it. You picked this up, Trimble."

"Certainly not."

"Then where did you get it?"

"My uncle, Sir Basil Trimble—"

"Cut that out!" snapped Tom Merry. "Did you know it was Mr. Lathom's pin when you picked it up?"

"How should I know?" demanded Trimble. "Findings are keepings, I suppose."

"A good many fellows who supposed that are now in chokey," said Monty Lowther. "I think it's time Trimble joined them."

"You picked this up in your Form-room?" asked Manners.

"No, I didn't—it was in the quad."

"You knew it was Lathom's?"

"I didn't know whose it was," growled Trimble. "That is, I knew it was mine. My uncle—"

"So you think findings are keepings, do you?" asked Tom.

"Certainly."

"Then, first of all, we'll try to impress on your mind that findings are not keepings," said the captain of the Shell. "Lay him over the table!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry picked up a fives bat and handed it to Blake. Manners held Baggy Trimble by the neck, and Monty Lowther took charge of his ankles. The fat junior wriggled face downward on the table.

Then Blake laid on the bat.

There was a sound in Study No. 10 in the Shell as if someone were beating carpet there, and beating it with unusual vigour.

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yooooooooop!" came in a prolonged howl from Baggy Trimble.

The door opened, and Talbot of the Shell looked in.

"Anybody killing a pig in this study?" he asked.

"Not killing one—only teaching one a lesson!" said Tom Merry. "Baggy's found Mr. Lathom's tiepin, and he thinks findings are keepings. We are trying to make him understand that they're not. Are findings still keepings, Trimble?"

"Yaroooooooo!"

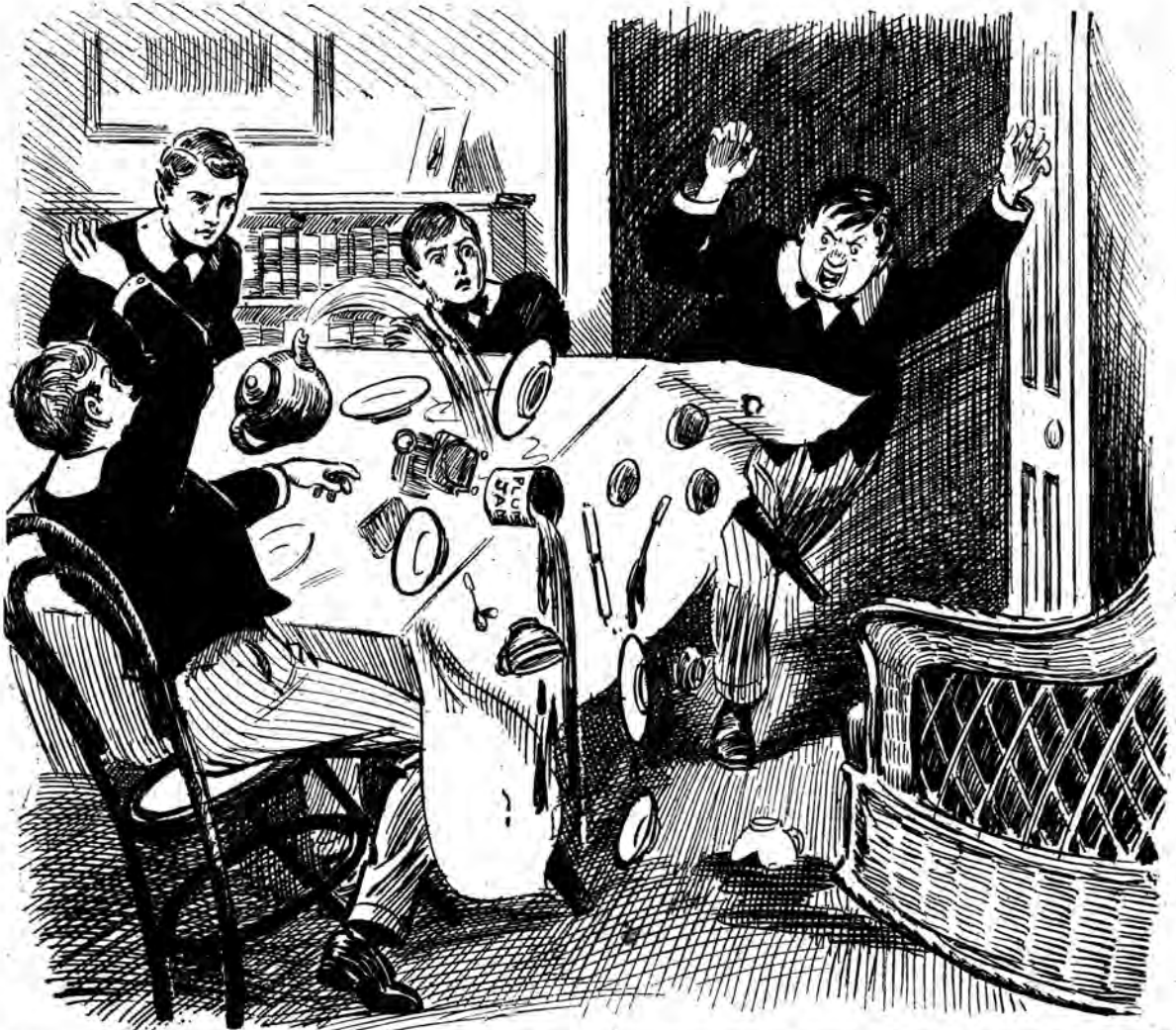
Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Whooooooooop!"

"Findings still keepings, old bean?" asked the captain of the Shell genially.

"Yow-ow! No! Certainly not!" yelled Baggy. "Nothing of the kind! Oh lor! Leggo! Woy!"

"That's better!"



The Terrible Three were enjoying their tea in Study No. 10 when suddenly the study door was hurled open and Baggy Trimble came hurtling in at top speed. "Help!" he cried. Unable to check himself, the fat junior went crashing up against the tea-table, sending the crockery smashing in all directions. There was a yell from Manners as he caught the flying teapot with his knees. (See page 4.)

"Leggo! Oh dear! I don't want the beastly pin! I—I was going to take it back to Lathom, anyhow! Oh! Ow! Wow!"

"Do you understand that you are a dishonest little beast?"

"Ow! No—"

"Whack! Whack!"

"Yes!" roared Trimble. "Oh dear! Leave off!"

"You know you'd be expelled for stealing that pin, if you sold it?"

"Oh dear! No! Yes! Yes! Ow!"

"Let him roll off," said Tom.

Baggy Trimble rolled off the table, moaning with anguish. Whether he was now dissatisfied with his own code of honour was doubtful; but there was no doubt that he understood that such a code was not popular at St. Jim's. That had been made quite clear.

"Now, somebody had better take that pin back to Mr. Lathom," said Talbot, laughing. "That fat duffer hasn't sense to understand what a thundering young rascal he is."

"It's time he learned to keep his podgy paws from picking and stealing," growled Herries.

"If you think I'd steal, Herries—" howled Trimble.

"Well, what do you call it, then?"

"Findings are—"

"What?" roared Blake.

"Not keepings!" said Trimble hastily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, shut the door, Talbot," said Trimble. "Of—of course, I—I never meant to keep this tiepin, though it's a birthday present from my uncle—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Put him over the table again!"

"Hold on!" gasped Trimble. "I—I'm going to make a suggestion. There's the pin. Well, we're all in this."

"All in it?" repeated Tom Merry blankly.

"Yes. I'm not a greedy chap. I'm prepared to go halves."

"Halves?"

"Yes," said Trimble eagerly. "The pin will sell for a pound. Well, I take half, because I found it. You fellows whack out the other half. What do you say to that?"

Tom Merry & Co. had nothing to say to that. They stared at Baggy Trimble almost dazed. Evidently the fives bat had not taught Trimble the expected lesson.

"You—you—you—" gasped Blake at last.

"Scalp him!"

"Lynch him!"

"Squash him!"

The juniors rushed at Baggy Trimble. He was collared on all sides, and he went to the floor with a bump. Tom Merry & Co. were wrathful, and they felt that their wrath was righteous. And the vials of wrath were poured upon the devoted head of Baggy Trimble.

He was rolled, and he was bumped. His head was dabbed in cinders, and ink was poured on it. And the yells of the hapless Baggy rang the length of the Shell passage, and far beyond. Round the doorway of Study No. 10 a crowd of juniors gathered, staring in at the scene. There was a sudden yell from Julian down the passage.

"Cave! 'Ware beaks!"

"Help!" yelled Baggy.

"What—what—what—"

Mr. Lathom, the master of the THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

Fourth, pushed a hasty way through the mob of juniors in the passage, and stood in the doorway of Study No. 10, amazed and wrathful.

CHAPTER 3.

Baggy Trimble's Unlucky Day!

"GGGGRRRRHHHHH!" Baggy Trimble gurgled as he sat up on the floor of Study No. 10. He was scarcely recognisable now. Ink streamed over his fat features, and cinders plastered his hair. He sat and gurgled and gasped and spluttered, while Mr. Lathom stared into the study over his glasses, as if unable to believe his eyes. The juniors were all silent. On the study table, in full view of the Form master, lay the gold pin. If Mr. Lathom's glance fell upon it it was certain that he would recognise his lost tiepin; and then it was probable that Baggy would regret that his terrific yells had brought the little gentleman to Study No. 10.

"What does this mean, Merry?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom.

"Hem!"

"This is, I presume, what you would call a ragging?"

"Hem! Something of the sort, sir!" stammered Tom.

"Is that Trimble of my Form?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"I scarcely recognise him. I—"

"Ow, ow, ow! It's me, sir!" wailed Baggy Trimble.

"Make 'em leave off, sir! Make 'em chuck it! Ow!"

"You may certainly depend upon me for protection, Trimble. Merry, I am surprised to see this. It appears to me a flagrant case of bullying," said Mr. Lathom sternly.

Tom Merry flushed scarlet.

"Nothin' of the sort, sir," exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hotly. "I twust, sir, that you do not suppose that I should be guilty of the wotten bad form of bullyin' a chap."

"Ow! They're all bullies, sir!" howled Trimble.

"They've been bullying me—ow! Look at me, sir! Yow!"

"It's a ragging, sir," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Twimble asked for it, sir."

"What? He asked for it?"

"Yaas, sir! Certainly."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "I cannot credit that statement for one moment, D'Arcy! It is incredible to me that Trimble can have asked to be treated in this manner."

"Oh, bai Jove! I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Lathom. "This is not a laughing matter."

"Sowwy, sir!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "But—but when I say Twimble asked for it, I don't mean that he asked for it—"

"What do you mean, then?" snapped Mr. Lathom.

"I—I mean, he 'pwovoked it, sir—weally begged and pwayed for it, in a mannah of speakin'—"

"It was for his own good, sir," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We shall see!" said Mr. Lathom grimly. "It appears to me that Trimble—" He broke off suddenly, as the gold pin on the table caught his eye. "Dear me! There is my tiepin. I am very glad that it has been found. Did one of you boys find it?"

Mr. Lathom picked up the pin.

The juniors exchanged looks. No one answered Mr. Lathom's question, and he glanced round at the conscious faces.

"Whoever found this pin should have returned it to me," he said. "Did you find it, Merry?"

"N-no, sir."

"It is in your study, on your table. Did Manners find it?"

"N-no, sir."

"Then you, Lowther—"

"No, sir," said Monty. "A Fourth Form chap found it, sir, and—and it was brought here."

"This is very curious," said Mr. Lathom. "I cannot see why a Fourth Form boy should bring my property to this study in the Shell, instead of restoring it to me. Kindly tell me at once the name of the boy who found this tiepin."

The juniors looked red and uncomfortable. Baggy Trimble, dabbling ink from his fat face and cinders from his hair, was still gurgling and gasping. Mr. Lathom looked at one fellow and then at another, and read discomfort in every face. And then he fixed his eyes upon Baggy Trimble. It flashed into his mind that there was a subtle connection between the finding of the gold pin and the ragging of Baggy.

"Did you find this pin, Trimble?" he asked in a deep voice.

"Ow! Wow! Groooogh!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

"Answer my question, Trimble."

"No, sir! Certainly not! I've never seen it before, sir," said Trimble. "I didn't know you had a tiepin, sir."

"Bless my soul! You are sure that you did not find it, Trimble?"

"Quite sure, sir. Besides, I never meant to keep it."

"You—you never meant to keep it?"

"Certainly not, sir! I hope you don't think I'd keep a gold pin I picked up in the quad. I should think it—it dishonest. Some fellows think findings are keepings, but I hope I'm not that sort," said Trimble virtuously.

"Then you did find it?"

"Oh, no, sir. Nothing of the kind."

"You have already admitted that you found it, Trimble," said the Fourth Form master in a grinding voice.

"Have I, sir?" gasped Trimble. "I—I meant—"

"You brought it to this study, instead of returning it to me," said Mr. Lathom. "I demand to know why."

"I—I couldn't help it, sir!" gasped Trimble.

"Why not?"

"They—they were after me," stuttered Baggy. "I—I came in here for protection, sir. Tom Merry ought to stop bullying, you know, sir, as he's junior captain. Instead of that, the beast helped them lather me with a fires—ow!"

"Who were after you, as you term it?"

"Those rotters, sir," Baggy jerked a fat thumb at Blake & Co. "They chased me along the passage, sir. They won't dare to deny it."

"I should certainly not deny it, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy disdainfully.

Mr. Lathom, the gold pin still in his hand, shifted his glance from Trimble to the chums of Study No. 6.

"Why did you pursue Trimble?" he asked.

"Hem!"

"Was it because he had this gold pin in his possession?"

"Hem!"

"Were you aware that the wretched boy did not intend to return it to its owner?"

"Hem!"

Study No. 6 looked distressed and unhappy. Certainly they did not intend to bear witness against Trimble in a matter that would have caused his expulsion from the school. But it was exceedingly difficult not to answer direct questions from their Form master.

Fortunately, Mr. Lathom did not press the point. He understood now how the matter lay, and he respected the scruples of the juniors. He fixed his eyes on Trimble again.

"When did you find this gold pin, Trimble?"

"I—I didn't, sir."

"What?"

"I—I mean—I—I wasn't—"

"The truth!" thundered Mr. Lathom; and the hapless Baggy jumped.

"About—about two hours ago!" he gasped.

"And it has been in your hands ever since?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Then where has it been?"

"In—in my trousers pocket, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, though he smiled slightly himself. "You absurd boy, I mean it has been in your possession ever since you found it?"

"Yes, sir. I—I—I was taking awfully great care of it, sir, knowing it to be yours, and—and—"

"Why did you not return it to me immediately?" asked Mr. Lathom sternly.

"I—I—I—"

"Answer me, Trimble!"

"I—I—I was looking for the owner, sir," stammered the wretched Baggy. "You see, sir, gold tiepins are much alike, and it might have belonged to anybody. How was I to know it was yours?"

"Bless my soul! You have just stated that you took especial care of it knowing it to be mine."

"Oh lor! I—I mean, of—of course, sir! Any fellow would, sir. We—we all respect you so highly, sir!" gasped Trimble. "We—we respect you more than the Head, sir, if—if you don't mind my mentioning it, sir. Because—because you're so—so nice, sir!"

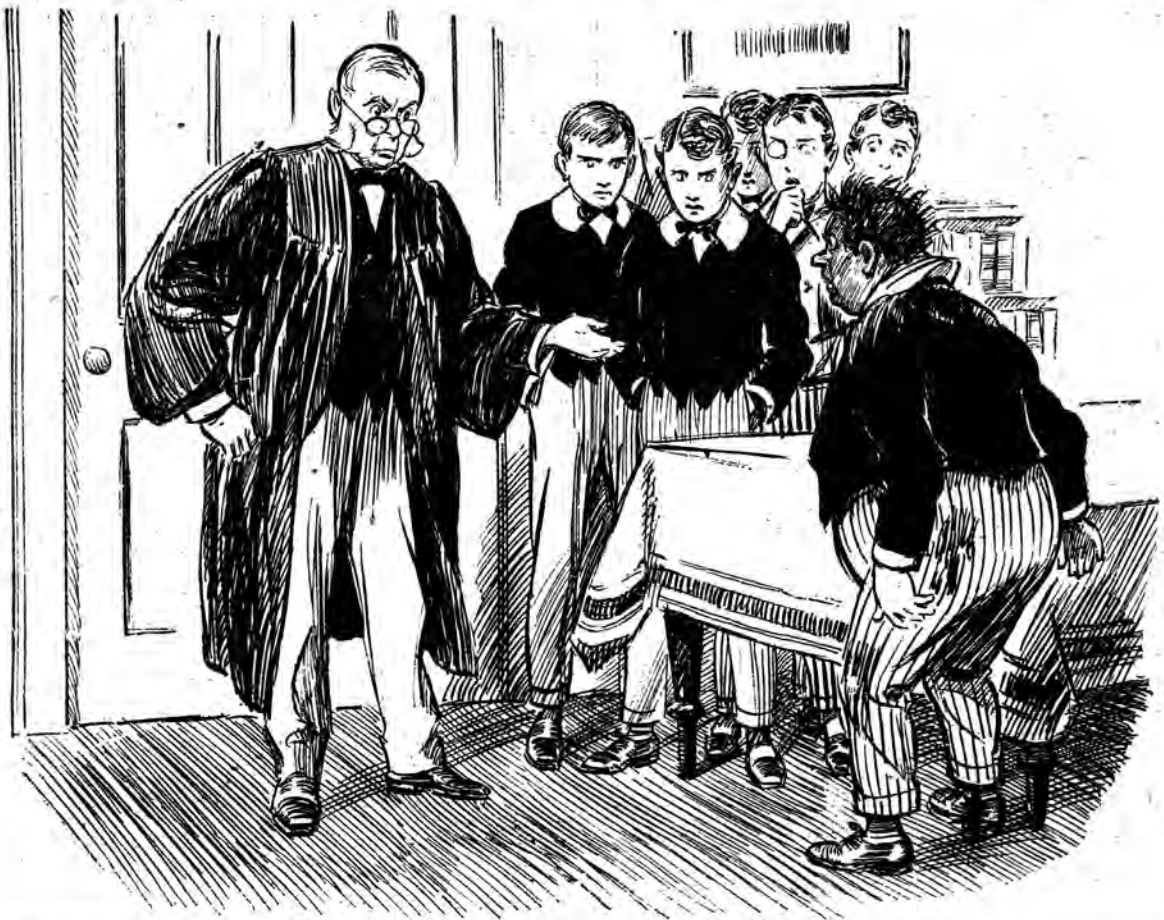
"Bless my soul!"

"C-c-can I go now?" gasped Trimble.

"Trimble, you found this tiepin, and did not return it to me, although knowing it to be mine. I greatly fear that you intended to keep it. I fear, Trimble, that you are a dishonest boy. I am very loth to ask your Form-fellows to bear witness against you, otherwise I should take you to the Headmaster at once. These boys have shown you what they think of your despicable conduct. I exonerate them from all blame for having punished you."

"Oh dear!"

"You will now proceed to your dormitory and clean



Mr. Lathom looked at one fellow and then at another, and read discomfort in every face. Then he fixed his eyes upon Baggy Trimble. "Did you find this pin, Trimble?" he asked, in a deep voice. "Ow! Wow! Groogh!" wailed the fat junior. "No, sir. Certainly not. I didn't know you had a tiepin, sir. Besides, I never meant to keep it!" "You—you never meant to keep it!" said the Fourth Form master, in a grinding voice. (See page 6.)

yourself," said Mr. Lathom. "Then you will come to my study. I shall cane you severely."

"Ow!" groaned Trimble.

"You may consider yourself fortunate, Trimble, that you are not expelled from the school. I make some allowance for your stupidity. But if this lesson is lost on you, Trimble, and I find you on any future occasion betraying any dishonest proclivities, I shall explain the whole matter to the Head, who will certainly send you home. Remember that, Trimble, and reflect upon it. I shall expect you in my study in half an hour's time."

And Mr. Lathom rustled away.

Baggy Trimble blinked at the juniors. His cindery and inky countenance wore a very injured expression.

"Jevver hear such an old ass?" he asked. "Dishonest—me, you know! I like that! Talking about dishonesty, and then walking off with my gold pin!"

"Yours!" yelled Blake.

"Yes, mine! My uncle, Sir George Trimble——"

"Bai Jove!"

Blake picked up the fives bat.

"I—I mean, it's mine, because findings are keepings," said Trimble. "Keep that bat away, you beast! Yaroo! I mean, findings ain't keepings—wow!"

And Trimble fled.

"Well," said Tom Merry, with a laugh, "I suppose we shouldn't be down on Trimble too much. With an intellect like that he's a bit handicapped. But why they sent him to St. Jim's, instead of to a lunatic asylum, is a giddy problem."

In the Fourth Form dormitory Baggy Trimble rubbed and scrubbed, and was tolerably clean by the time he had to present himself in Mr. Lathom's study. He hoped that by that time Mr. Lathom's wrath had cooled down. Unhappily for Baggy, the Fourth Form master was actuated by a strong sense of duty. He felt bound to impress upon Baggy's mind the difference between meum and tuum, and the truth of the ancient proverb that honesty is the best policy. Baggy would have been satisfied with a much less dutiful Form master.

Mr. Lathom looked quite tired when he had finished, and Baggy Trimble was more than tired. In Study No. 2 in the Fourth that evening Baggy Trimble moaned and groaned, and groaned and moaned, till Kit Wildrake and Mellish, his study-mates, fairly drove him from the study. And the hapless Baggy felt that he was a much injured and much misunderstood youth, and even debated whether he should write to his father, and ask Mr. Trimble to send him to some other school where his merits would be better understood and more highly valued.

CHAPTER 4.

Trimble on the Warpath!

"VENGEANCE!"

Kit Wildrake gave quite a jump.

The Canadian junior was coming into Study No. 2 after lessons, a few days after the affair of Mr. Lathom's gold pin. In the study, Baggy Trimble was reposing in his usual elegant attitude in the armchair, with his fat little legs resting on another chair, and his fat thumbs stuck in the armholes of his waistcoat. There was a frown of wrath and deep reflection on Trimble's podgy face.

He was muttering to himself as Wildrake came in, and that startling word caught the Canadian junior's ear. Wildrake had a coiled lasso in his hand, the lasso he had brought with him from the Boot Leg Ranch in British Columbia. Kit Wildrake was skilled with the "rope," and he had been showing the School House fellows some tricks with it after lessons. He hung it on the hook in the study wall where it was usually kept, and turned round to look at Trimble.

"Gone off your rocker, fatty?" he asked.

"Yah!"

"What are you mumbling about, you fat guy?"

Trimble eyed him morosely.

"Think I'm going to stand it?" he demanded. "Think I'm going to be caned because I found Lathom's tiepin, and prevented it from falling into the hands of some dishonest person, who might have kept it?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

"Oh, great gophers!" ejaculated Wildrake.
 "Lathom might have thanked me, at least," said Trimble.
 "There's such a thing as gratitude. But it's always the same. I'm always doing these kind, thoughtful things, and never getting any thanks. But caning a fellow was too thick."

"So you're going in for giddy vengeance on Mr. Lathom?" grinned Wildrake.

"You'll see. I'm not standing it! The old ass is always dropping or losing something!" said Trimble. "Next time I find anything of his, I'll chuck it into the river! Catch me minding it for him carefully, same as I did with his silly gold pin. But that isn't all. I'm jolly well going to make him sorry for himself. You'll see!"

The Canadian junior chuckled.

"Going to punch his jolly old nose, or strew the hungry churchyard with his bones?" he inquired humorously.

"I thought of heaving a brick at him."

"Great snakes! You'd better think again."

"I thought of pushing over the blackboard on him in the Form-room."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But the trouble is, I don't want a Head's flogging," explained Trimble. "That's important. But I've thought of another way, Wildrake, and you can help me."

"Can it!" said Wildrake.

"We've always been good pals, old fellow—"

"I guess I wasn't wise to it, if we were."

"My idea is, lasso the beast!"

"Lasso a Form master?" yelled Wildrake.

"That's it!" said Trimble eagerly. "I listen at his door, you see. That's easy enough—"

"Easy enough for a galoot like you," agreed Wildrake. "That's where you come out strong."

"Listen at his door, and make sure he's in his study. Then I go out and throw some stones up at his window. He looks out to see what it is, and then you lasso him."

"Oh Jerusalem!"

"You see, there's a box-room window over his study, and you can be at the window. You look down, and as soon as he puts his head out you drop the lasso over it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good idea, what?" grinned Trimble. "Of course, you don't really hurt him. Just give him a jerk or two, you know. It will fairly make him sit up."

"I fancy the Head would make me sit up afterwards," grinned Wildrake. "In fact, I guess I should be made to sit up to such an extent that I shouldn't want to sit down. Cut it out, old fat man! Wash it away!"

And Kit Wildrake walked out of the study, evidently not in the least disposed to join Baggy Trimble in his wonderful scheme of vengeance upon the master of the Fourth.

"Yah! Rotter!" howled Trimble.

Baggy sat and reflected. His little round eyes were fixed on the coiled rope hanging on the wall. Baggy had tried his skill with Wildrake's lasso more than once, with very indifferent success. But Baggy never lacked confidence in his own abilities. He would have preferred Wildrake to take the risk, and the probable consequences, of lassoing Mr. Lathom. But as Wildrake had been drawn blank, so to speak, Baggy was seriously considering taking the matter in hand himself.

The difficulty was that such an outrage would be rewarded with a Head's flogging at the very least. Baggy hated floggings. The mere thought of a flogging made him wriggle. Nevertheless, he was resolved to make Mr. Lathom sit up; and undoubtedly the Form master would have "sat up" most emphatically had he suddenly found himself lassoed at his study window. Baggy grinned at that thought. And another thought came to decide him. The lasso being Wildrake's, it was practically certain that the blame would fall on Wildrake. Wildrake would bag the Head's flogging, which would serve him right for being a beast. Really, it would be killing two birds with one stone.

Baggy Trimble rose from the armchair at last and took the lasso from its hook. He had made up his fat mind. He left the study with the coiled rope in his hand, and almost ran into Tom Merry, who was coming along to the stairs.

"Hallo!" said Tom, with a smile. "Did you find Wildrake's lasso, Baggy? You will get scalped if you make findings keepings this time!"

"Yah!" said Trimble. "I—I've just borrowed it to—"

to— Oh, nothing, you know! If you think I'm thinking of lassoing old Lathom, you're jolly well mistaken!"

And Baggy rolled on, leaving the captain of the Shell staring.

The lasso was carried up to the room above Mr. Lathom's study, and Baggy opened the window cautiously and peered out. Directly below him was Mr. Lathom's window. Even an unskilled hand might very well drop the lasso over a head put out of the lower window. The problem was to get Mr. Lathom to put his head out. A handful of pebbles thrown at the panes doubtless would have that effect. But Baggy could not be in two places at once.

Baggy left the box-room, looking very thoughtful. He rolled cautiously into the masters' corridor, and blinked this way and that way, like Moses of old, and, finding the coast clear, listened at Mr. Lathom's door. There was a sound of someone moving in the study.

"That's all right!" murmured Baggy, satisfied that Mr. Lathom was at home.

Five minutes later Baggy was deep in conversation with Piggott of the Third Form. A packet of toffee passed from Baggy to the fag, and then Reuben Piggott strolled out of the School House.

Baggy Trimble returned in haste to the box-room.

With Wildrake's lasso in his hand, he stood at the open window, and at a distance he spotted Piggott of the Third. He waved a fat hand to Piggott as a signal.

The packet of toffee had been a bribe. Piggott of the Third now proceeded to earn it. After a cautious glance about him, the fag hurled a handful of pebbles at the study window and fled.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!

Piggott had done his work well—too well, in fact. One of the panes in Mr. Lathom's window cracked. Baggy, listening at the window above, heard the window below open. He leaned out, lasso in hand, and as a head was put out at the window below, he made his cast with the lasso. And a loud howl from below followed.

CHAPTER 5.

Awful for Mary!

MARY PERKINS was astounded.

Mary had ample cause for surprise. Mary Perkins was the housemaid to whom fell the task of keeping Mr. Lathom's study free of dust. That was not an easy task. Mr. Lathom was not a careful gentleman. He would knock out tobacco ash almost anywhere. He would open letters, and strew the floor with torn envelopes. He was a short-sighted gentleman, and he would knock things over, especially inkpots. Mr. Lathom was a single gentleman, and had never had the advantage of being kept in disciplined order by a Mrs. Lathom. He was irregular in his habits. He would be found in his study just when Mary wanted to sweep or dust, and if Mary appeared with broom or duster when he was there Mr. Lathom would wave her away with great energy. Often and often Mary Perkins confided to the cook that, if Mr. Lathom had his way, he would live in dust till he died in it. And so Mary Perkins had a way of dodging into Mr. Lathom's study at all sorts of hours when he was out, and sweeping and dusting, though the old gentleman, on his return, would never notice that his room was newly swept and garnished.

"The best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agley," as the poet has told us. Thus it was with Baggy Trimble. With great astuteness, he had listened at Mr. Lathom's door to make sure that the Form master was in. And it had not occurred to him that the "someone" he had heard moving in the study was not Mr. Lathom.

But it wasn't. It was Mary Perkins, who had seen Mr. Lathom walk across to the masters' Common-room, and had immediately snatched up her Bissell-broom and dodged into his study. Mary Perkins was busy in the study when a handful of pebbles came clattering on the window, cracking one of the panes, to the intense indignation of Mary Perkins.

"Them boys!" said Mary. And she dropped the Bissell-broom and fairly flew to the window and opened it, to put out her head and spot the offender—for subsequent report and punishment.

Then the astounding thing happened, a thing which, as Mary afterwards told cook, she never would have dreamed of, not if it was ever so.

From the sky, as it seemed, a coiled rope slithered down, and a noose dropped over Mary's head, utterly ruining the arrangement of hair and hairpins, which had kept Mary busy for half an hour earlier in the day.

The loop passed under her chin.

It jerked her head up.

Mary Perkins gave utterance to a howl that could have been heard on the other side of St. Jim's quadrangle.

Shriek on shriek followed.

"What the thump—"

"What—"

ANSWERS

EVERY MONDAY.....PRICE 2:

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

St. Jim's fellows raced up on all sides. A crowd swarmed under Mr. Lathom's study window.

Whop!

The rope dropped from the upper window. Baggy was not even yet aware that it was Mary Perkins he had lassoed, and not Mr. Lathom at all. But, as fellows ran up, he realised that he would be safer elsewhere; and he dropped the rope and fled.

There was a roar from Kildare of the Sixth. The rope dropped on his head.

"It's Wildrake's lasso!" exclaimed Racke of the Shell.

Shriek on shriek from Mary!

"My only hat!" exclaimed Blake. "Has that thumping ass Wildrake been lassoing the housemaid?"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Where's Wildrake?"

"I guess he's here," said the Canadian junior's voice quietly. "That's my lasso right enough—I left it in my study."

Shriek, shriek, shriek!

The lasso had fallen clear of Mary Perkins now; but she was in a state of flustered nerves, which was not surprising. Besides, she probably felt that, in the circumstances, she was entitled to an attack of hysterics. So she shrieked and shrieked.

Wild shrieks from Mr. Lathom's study rang over the whole house.

Mr. Lathom came out of masters' Common-room in alarm; Mr. Railton and Mr. Linton came out with him.

"What—what—what—" ejaculated Mr. Lathom. "What—what is all this—what—what—"

"The—the noise appears to proceed from your study, Mr. Lathom," said Mr. Linton.

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Lathom fairly ran for his study. He threw open the door, and Mary Perkins tottered from the window.

"Save me!"

"What—what—Mary—what—" stuttered Mr. Lathom.

"Save me! Oh, oh, oh!"

Mary Perkins threw herself into the startled arms of Mr. Lathom, almost overturning him with her weight. Mr. Lathom himself was a light-weight. Mary Perkins was not.

"Oh dear! Bless my soul! What—what—what—" stuttered Mr. Lathom.

"Save me!"

In her excitement Mary clung to the astounded Form master, and Mr. Lathom struggled in vain to free himself. His face was crimson, as Mr. Linton and Mr. Railton looked into the study.

"Mary—girl—woman—release me!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "This—this—this—is—is scarcely proper! I beg you—"

"Oh, oh, oh! Save me! Oh, oh!"

"Upon my word! Mr. Railton, help! What—what—what— Is the girl mad? Mary, calm yourself, I beg. This—is—is most—most embarrassing! Mr. Railton, I beseech you to believe that I have never—never given the foolish girl cause to behave in this—this extraordinary manner! Mary, I command you to release me!"

Kildare of the Sixth came up, with Wildrake's lasso in his hand. He explained what had happened, and Mary Perkins was at last induced to calm herself—though she insisted, as her undoubted right, upon having a gentleman's arm to lean upon in her progress towards the regions below stairs.

"I can scarcely credit this," said Mr. Railton, his brow dark with anger. "Such a foolish, dastardly trick upon a servant-girl—"

"It is Wildrake's rope, sir, but it was not Wildrake who played that silly trick," said Kildare. "He was in the quadrangle."

"The boy must be found at once."

"Certainly, sir."

There was not much difficulty in finding the culprit. Rushden, a prefect of the Sixth Form, had seen a fat face at the window above Mr. Lathom's; and he was already marching Baggy Trimble to the Housemaster's study for judgment, with a hand upon his collar.

Baggy had not had the least intention of allowing himself to be spotted at the box-room window. He had planned to execute a masterly retreat unrecognised. Like most of Baggy's schemes, it was a failure. Indeed a dozen fellows had seen him at the window, if witnesses had been wanted. But witnesses were not needed; Baggy was always a conclusive witness against himself.

"I didn't, sir!" he exclaimed, as Mr. Railton came into his study and Baggy was presented to him as the culprit. "I haven't been in the box-room at all, sir. I haven't seen Wildrake's lasso, sir—and I left it hanging up in the study!"

"Trimble!" said Mr. Railton, in a deep voice.

"I assure you, sir, it's all a mistake!" gasped Trimble.

"Tom Merry can bear witness, sir—"

"What does Tom Merry know of the matter?"

"I told him at the time, sir, that I wasn't going to lasso Mr. Lathom—"

"Mr. Lathom!" ejaculated the Housemaster.

"Tom Merry will tell you so, sir—he met me in the passage, sir, and I told him I wasn't going to lasso Mr. Lathom, sir, when he asked me what I was doing with Wildrake's lasso, sir," said Trimble eagerly.

"Then you had Wildrake's lasso?"

"Oh, no, sir! Certainly not!"

"You have just stated—"

"I—I told you I left it hanging up in the study, sir. It was there when I left. Besides, I haven't seen it to-day. I—I didn't really know that Wildrake had a lasso at all, sir."

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Railton, quite taken aback by this complicated defence.

"I hope you can trust me, sir!" gasped Trimble. "I assure you, sir, I never had any idea of revenge on Mr. Lathom for whacking me the other day for keeping his tie-pin—"

"You have said quite enough, Trimble."

"T-t-thank you, sir! C-c-c-can I go now?"

"You have attempted an outrageous prank on your Form master. You have frightened a housemaid and caused a great disturbance. You have prevaricated and lied, Trimble."

"Oh, no, sir! I—I—"

"Your punishment, Trimble, will be exemplary," said Mr. Railton, taking up his cane. "Possibly you regard what you have done as a practical joke. If so, your punishment will be an example to any other boy who may think of such a foolish and reckless proceeding."

"I—I say, sir," gasped Trimble, "I—I'd rather you caned some other fellows as an example to me, sir, if—if you don't mind."

Apparently Mr. Railton did mind. Anyhow, he caned Trimble—hard! The trail of vengeance had proved a thorny path for Baggy.

CHAPTER 6. Asking for Trouble!

"B AI Jove!"

It was some days later, and Arthur Augustus, coming into Study No. 6 in the Fourth, was startled to see Baggy Trimble there. Baggy spun round as the swell of St. Jim's stepped in, with a startled and guilty look on his fat face. There was something clutched in his podgy hand, which he kept behind him.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy adjusted his celebrated eyeglass in his eye, and fixed it upon Trimble sternly.

"What are you doin' here, Twimble?"

"Nothing, old chap."

"Are you playin' some twick?"

"Oh, no, old fellow! Nothing of the kind!"

"You have somethin' in your hand, Twimble."

"Look!" said Trimble, holding out his left hand.

"The wight hand, which is behind you, Twimble."

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"This is wathah shockin'," said Arthur Augustus. "Last week, Twimble, you had a waggin' and a canin' for twyin' to bag Mr. Lathom's gold pin. Is it possible that you are now wootin' through the studies lookin' for othah fellows' things? Do you want to be sent to a reformatory, Twimble?"

"I'm not!" roared Trimble indignantly. "You beast! Can't a fellow borrow a bottle of red ink?"

And Trimble, realising that he had laid himself open to dark suspicion, brought his hidden hand into view, and displayed a bottle of red ink in the fat fingers.

"Bai Jove! I am vevy glad to see it is only that, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, greatly relieved. "I was afwaid that you were weally takin' to dishonest ways."

"Yah!"

"But you should not take even a bottle of wed ink without permission," added Arthur Augustus. "Howevah, if you want some wed ink, I will lend it to you with pleasuah!"

"Good," said Trimble. "Can you give me some purple marking-ink, too?"

"There is some of Blake's. I am suah he will not mind."

"And some gum?" asked Trimble.

"Weally, Twimble, you had better buy a bottle of gum."

"No fear! I've got a bottle in my study."

"Bai Jove! If you have a bottle of gum in your study, Twimble, why are you twyin' to bowwow gum in this study?"

"Well, I don't want to use my own gum in Lathom's slippers; it would be a waste. Gum costs money."

"Gweat Scott!"

"I dare say I can get some from Tom Merry, though. I'll take the red ink and the marking-ink. Thanks!"

"Twimble!" shouted Arthur Augustus, as the fat junior hurried out of the study.

But Trimble did not heed.

Arthur Augustus looked thoughtful. Evidently Baggy

Trimble was on the trail of vengeance again. One lesson was not enough for him. Certainly he was not likely to attempt to lasso Mr. Lathom again—the mere thought of that made him feel a reminiscent ache in his podgy palms. But there were other ways, and Trimble's fat brain, working at full pressure, had evolved the scheme of a mixture of gum, ink, and marking-ink in Mr. Lathom's slippers.

"The uttah ass!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "I disapprove vewy strongly of japin' old Lathom. He is a vewy good little man, although he found fault with my constwue this mornin'. But, affah all, the fat boundah is suah to make a muddle of it, as usual, so I needn't wowwy."

And D'Arcy dismissed the matter from his mind; all the more easily, because he had come to the study to try on some new neckties—a matter of great importance. With a matter of so much consequence to engage his attention, Gussy soon forgot even the existence of Baggy Trimble.

Baggy proceeded in search of gum. Red ink and marking-ink in his slippers would, doubtless, have given Mr. Lathom a surprise; but Baggy felt that the mixture would not be complete without gum. He found a bottle of gum in Talbot's study, and annexed it. In Tom Merry's study he found a large bottle, in which Manniers kept a combined toning and fixing solution. That solution had been made up by the amateur photographer of St. Jim's, and it was very valuable to him. But it had no great value in Baggy Trimble's eyes, and he wanted a large bottle for his mixture. So he poured away the solution behind the bookcase, and carried off the bottle.

In his own study, he mixed red ink and marking-ink and gum in the large bottle, almost filling it. Trimble was ready for action now. He slipped the bottle into his pocket, and strolled downstairs with an air of assumed carelessness and unconsciousness which made at least a dozen fellows stare at him.

He strolled round the masters' corridor, and paused outside Mr. Lathom's door. When the old gentleman was out his slippers were left to keep warm in the fender; and certainly he was too short-sighted and absentminded to notice whether they had been tampered with before he put them on. Baggy listened at the door, and then tapped. He was not taking any risks. If Mr. Lathom was there, Baggy intended to ask for some information on the subject of deponent verbs, as an excuse for having come to the study. If Mr. Lathom was not there, all was plain sailing.

There was no answer to the tap, and Trimble opened the study door. The room was empty.

After a quick blink down the passage Trimble whipped into the study and closed the door.

The study looked very bright and cosy. Mr. Lathom was out! and, as frequently happened when Mr. Lathom took his walks abroad, Mary Perkins had slipped into his study with Bissell-broom and duster and tidied up. The fender was spotless, the grate was tidy, the fire burned brightly, there wasn't a speck of dust in the room—a state of affairs that would be very quickly altered when Mr. Lathom returned. In the fender lay the roomy, comfortable slippers that Mr. Lathom was accustomed to don when he came in from taking a walk.

Baggy Trimble spotted the slippers at once, and grinned. "Some in the slippers and some in the armchair," he murmured. "He'll never know who did it. I—"

Trimble broke off his muttering suddenly.

There was a footstep in the passage.

The fat junior stood rooted to the floor, his podgy heart beating with great thumps.

Had Mr. Lathom come in? It would be just like the beast to return at an awkward moment like that.

The footsteps came on to the door, and the knob turned. Baggy Trimble almost ceased to breathe. The door opened; and Baggy, moved by a sudden inspiration, dodged behind it, so that it hid him as it opened.

Mr. Lathom stepped in, and there was a voice from the passage—that of Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell.

"Back already, Mr. Lathom?"

"I did not walk so far as the village, after all, Mr. Linton. I remembered that I had dropped my tiepin in the study," said Mr. Lathom. "I was going to take it to the watchmaker's for the fastening to be repaired. I have lost it several times. Then I suddenly remembered that it had fallen from my tie while I was going over the exercises this afternoon."

Mr. Linton smiled.

It was just like Mr. Lathom to leave behind him the article he had set out specially to take to the watchmaker's.

"I should certainly have it repaired, Mr. Lathom," said the master of the Shell, and he walked on down the corridor.

Mr. Lathom crossed the study without closing the door, and began to peer over his spectacles, about the carpet. Baggy Trimble's fat face looked round the edge of the door.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

Mr. Lathom had his back to him—and now was Trimble's chance.

On tiptoe, breathless with terror and eagerness, Trimble stepped from behind the door, and backed into the doorway. As he did so Mr. Lathom, still peering after the lost tiepin, shifted his position, and caught sight of the fat junior.

"Trimble!"

Baggy made a backward jump into the passage.

"Trimble!"

But Baggy was gone.

CHAPTER 7.

Wanted!

KILDARE of the Sixth came along the Fourth Form passage, and stopped at Study No. 2. It was tea-time, and most of the Fourth had come in to tea in their studies—excepting the hapless youths who, funds being low, had had to go down to Hall for the school tea. In Study No. 2 in the Fourth Kit Wildrake and Percy Mellish were disposing of ham and poached eggs.

"Where's Trimble?" asked Kildare.

"I guess I give that up," said Wildrake. "Haven't seen him since lessons."

"No here," said Mellish.

"He's wanted," said the prefect, frowning. "Have you any idea where he is?"

"Not the slightest."

Kildare grunted and went on up the passage. He looked into every study in the Fourth, inquiring for Trimble. And then he looked into the Shell studies. He finished his round without finding Baggy Trimble. The fat junior was keeping out of sight.

By that time, however, all the School House juniors were aware that Baggy was wanted; and, from Kildare's looks, it was clear that the matter was serious.

"The uttah ass has been playin' twicks on Lathom," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in Study No. 6. "Puttin' gum and things in his jollay old slippahs, you know."

"Something more serious than that, I fancy," said Blake sagely. "Kildare was looking awfully serious. I hope the howling ass hasn't been playing again at findings keepings."

"Bai Jove!"

"Perhaps he's found a gold watch this time," grinned Herries, "or he may have found a banknote—in somebody's pocket."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Dig. "I've never quite made up my mind whether Trimble's more fool than rogue, or more rogue than fool, but he's a lot of each."

"Yaas, wathah!"

After tea, Study No. 6 strolled out to gather news. They found a good many more fellows equally interested. A rumour had spread among the junior studies that Mr. Lathom's gold pin was missing again. Grundy of the Shell declared that he had positively heard Mr. Lathom say to Mr. Railton that the gold pin had been taken from his study.

That rumour, combined with Baggy's absence and the search for him, gave the affair a very grave aspect.

"If Baggy's done it again, it's the sack for him!" said Tom Merry. "Lathom is bound to report him to the Head."

"Yaas, wathah, and serve him wight," said Arthur Augustus warmly. "If he has taken the pin from Mr. Lathom's studay, he cannot even pwetend that it was a case of findings keepings. The howwid wottah must have stolen it!"

"That's rather thick, even for Trimble," said Levison of the Fourth. "I can't swallow that. Trimble's a born idiot, but he's not a thief."

"I twust not, Levison. But it looks feahfully suspicious."

"It does," agreed Levison.

"All the prefects are looking for him," said Wilkins. "They've been over to the New House to see if he's there."

"And he wasn't there," added Gunn.

"Here comes Kildare!"

The captain of St. Jim's came along from the stairs, his brows knitted. The juniors eyed him eagerly.

"Hasn't Trimble turned up?" asked Kildare abruptly.

"Nobody's seen him," said Tom Merry.

"You kids start looking for him, then," said the prefect.

"He must be in the House somewhere. The young idiot's keeping out of sight. If he's gone out of gates it looks very bad."

"Is Mr. Lathom's tiepin missing, Kildare?" asked Blake.

"Yes."

"Oh, my hat! And Trimble—"

"He's got to go before the Housemaster. Find him as soon as you can. It's known that he was in Mr. Lathom's study; he was seen there."

"We'll find him," said Tom Merry.

A crowd of juniors set out in search of the missing Baggy. For his own sake, if for no other reason, it was necessary for him to appear and answer the charge that was evidently



Mr. Lathom fairly ran for his study. He threw open the door, and Mary Perkins tottered from the window. "Save me!" she cried pitifully. "Save me!" "What—what—Mary—what—" stuttered Mr. Lathom. "Save me! Oh! Oh! Oh!" Mary Perkins threw herself into the startled arms of Mr. Lathom, almost overturning him. At that moment Mr. Linton and Mr. Raiton looked into the study! (See page 9.)

to be made against him. If he had gone out of gates, the suspicion would be almost irresistible that he had gone to dispose of his plunder. Trimble was not popular, but all the fellows hoped that he would be found in the School House.

Studies and passages and box-rooms were searched; and it was Tom Merry who succeeded in tracking down the missing Baggy. He found the door of a remote box-room locked on the inside, which was a sufficient indication that somebody was hidden there.

"Trimble!" Tom called through the keyhole. "Come out, you fat duffer!"

"Oh dear! Is that you, Tom, old chap?"

"Yes, you ass!"

"Don't tell anybody I'm here!" gasped Trimble. "You see, old Lathom will be waxy. I never touched his slippers—I hadn't time. I've chucked the bottle away over the leads. But he's bound to suspect that I was up to something in his study. He saw me there, you know."

"I know," said Tom.

"I want to give him time to cool down," said Trimble through the keyhole. "You know old Lathom; he gets fearfully waxy for a time, and then forgets all about it. Well, I'm jolly well going to keep out of sight till he's forgotten about it—see?"

"You'd better show up, Trimble," said Tom Merry quietly. "The prefects are hunting for you everywhere."

"Oh lor!"

"Mr. Lathom has reported it to the Housemaster, and Raiton wants you. The sooner you show up the better. Don't play the goat."

"Oh crumbs!"

Trimble unlocked the door and came out. His fat face was very dismal.

"Here he is, you fellows!" called out Tom Merry. "Come along, Trimble. I hope you will get through somehow, you awful ass!"

"I—I say, what a lot of fuss to make about nothing," said Trimble, as he went down the box-room stairs with Tom. "Lathom's got no proof, you know."

"No proof?" said Tom.

"None at all," said Trimble confidently. "He saw me in his study. I can't deny that, as he saw me. But I never touched his slippers."

"His slippers?" said Tom blankly.

"What about his tiepin?" called out Grundy.

"Eh? Has Lathom lost his tiepin again?" asked Trimble. "Well, if he has, I don't know anything about it."

"I trust that that statement is correct, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a grave shake of the head.

"I hope you don't think that I would tell an untruth, D'Arcy?" said Baggy, with a great deal of dignity.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Do you ever tell anything else?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Look here, you know—"

"He hasn't been out of gates, anyhow," said Cardew of the Fourth. "That's a point in his favour. The giddy gold pin is still in the House."

"Weally, it's about time Mr. Lathom had that dashed tiepin repaired!" said Arthur Augustus. "He's always dwop-pin' it about somewhah. I've picked it up for him twice in the Form-woom. It is weally thowin' temptation in the way of a duffah like Twimble, who is too fatheaded to know wight f'rom w'ong!"

"If you think I'd touch old Lathom's gold pin, D'Arcy—"

"You touched it before, and kept it!" hooted Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Do you mean to say that you haven't pinched the dashed thing this time, Trimble?" asked Tom Merry, eyeing the fat junior very doubtfully.

"Certainly not!" said Trimble indignantly. "Don't know anything about it. I suppose nobody would suspect me of being dishonest."

"Oh dear!"

"Some fellows might do such things," said Trimble. "You might, for instance, D'Arcy—"

"What?"

"Or Tom Merry. I know you're not so particular as I am in such matters. But I hope I'm above suspicion, like—like Pontius Pilate's aunt!"

"Do you mean Caesar's wife, you fat ass?" asked Manners, and there was a chortle, serious as the state of affairs was.

"No, I don't. I mean Pontius Pilate's aunt. You haven't much classical knowledge, Manners."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You've found him?" Kildare of the Sixth came along.

"Come with me, Trimble; you're wanted."

"I didn't—"

"Come along!"

"I wasn't—"

"Get a move on, you young ass!"

And Baggy Trimble, in a state of great dismay and apprehension, was marched away with the prefect's grasp on his collar.

CHAPTER 8. Found Guilty!

MR. RAILTON fixed his eyes sternly upon Baggy Trimble. Mr. Lathom stood near the Housemaster, his kind old face troubled and sorrowful. The matter came before the Housemaster for inquiry. In the event of Baggy Trimble not being able to clear himself it would come before the Head, after which the result was not doubtful. Baggy, obtuse as he was, had some realisation of the danger in which he stood, and he cudgelled his fat brain for plausible prevarications, the resource of telling the truth not even occurring to him. Truth and Baggy Trimble had long been strangers.

Some of the juniors had gathered in the wide corridor outside the Housemaster's study. Nobody, perhaps, was much attached to the fat Baggy, but some of the fellows were anxious for him.

If Baggy was not only a fat Ananias, and a raider of study-boards, and a keeper of findings, but actually a thief, St. Jim's was no place for him, and the sooner he went the better. Nevertheless, many fellows felt concerned about a chap upon whom the "chopper" was coming down. And as Arthur Augustus remarked, it was not so bad in Trimble as it would have been in another fellow, Baggy not being "weally wespensible" for his actions.

"Trimble," said the Housemaster, and his deep voice was heard outside the study, "you are brought before me upon a very serious charge."

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir!" stammered Trimble confusedly.

"Mr. Lathom has been forced to conclude that you abstracted his tiepin—a gold pin of some value—from his study."

"Oh, no, sir! Never!"

"I trust, Trimble, that you will be able to make your defence good. It will be a very shocking thing to discover that there is a thief in this school. You went to Mr. Lathom's study during his absence this afternoon. You do not deny, I presume, that you were there when Mr. Lathom unexpectedly returned, that you concealed yourself behind the door, and attempted to steal—"

"I didn't steal—"

"Attempted to steal away—"

"Oh!"

"And that Mr. Lathom saw you, and called to you, but that you ran away and concealed yourself."

"You—you see, sir, I—I thought Mr. Lathom would be waxy!" wailed Trimble. "He got in a terrific wax with me the other day, sir. I thought I'd give him time to cool down this time, sir."

"Before Mr. Lathom went out," continued Mr. Railton, "he had dropped his tiepin—a gold pin. He remembered this when half-way to Rylcombe, and came back for it. The pin was gone."

"W-w-w-was it, sir?"

"Mr. Lathom distinctly remembers the pin falling when he was examining some exercises at his table. It remained where it fell. It appears that the catch is defective—"

"He's always dropping it about somewhere, sir," said Baggy. "It's a regular joke in the Fourth, sir."

Mr. Railton coughed, and Mr. Lathom turned pink.

"Blake said the other day, sir, that Mr. Lathom would be dropping his head off next, and forgetting to pick it up," said Trimble.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Lathom.

"You need not repeat to me frivolous remarks made in the Fourth Form," said Mr. Railton, though his stern face twitched for a moment. "Did you go to Mr. Lathom's study to-day to steal the gold pin?"

"Certainly not, sir? How could I know that Mr. Lathom had dropped it again?"

"That is quite true; but being in the study, did you see the pin lying there and pick it up?"

"I never saw it, sir."

"Why were you in the study?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

A small allowance of common sense would have led Baggy Trimble to own up to his intended jape on the slippers. But Baggy Trimble never had recourse to the truth if an untruth occurred to his fat mind—and one generally did.

"I—I went to speak to Mr. Lathom, sir. I—I wanted to ask him about some deponent verbs. I—I—I'm rather keen on deponent verbs, sir."

"Oh, bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, as he heard this in the passage. "Does that cwass ass think that Walton will swallow that?"

"Really, Trimble—" said the Housemaster.

"You see, sir, I—I think deponent verbs are so—so interesting," pursued the fatuous Trimble. "They—they're so—so interesting because they're nominative in form and genitive in meaning, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom. "Is it possible that this boy does not know that deponent verbs are passive in form and active in meaning?"

"Oh, of course, sir, that's what I meant to say!" said Trimble. "That—that's why I like them, sir."

"Possibly you went to Mr. Lathom's study to speak to him, Trimble. I admit the possibility. Why did you remain when you found that he was not there?"

"I—I didn't, sir."

"What?"

"I—I mean I—I did, sir. That is to say, I—I wasn't—I mean, I—I—I thought I'd better wait for Mr. Lathom to come in, sir."

"And why, Trimble?"

"Oh dear!" Trimble cudgelled his fat brains again. "To—to ask him how he'd enjoyed his walk, sir."

"You will find it more advisable to tell me the truth, I think, Trimble."

"Yes, sir. That's what I'm doing, sir. Mr. Lathom will tell you that I'm the most truthful chap in the Fourth, sir."

"Mr. Lathom has told me, on the contrary, that you are the most untruthful boy he has ever known," said the Housemaster sternly.

"Most decidedly!" said the Form master, with emphasis.

"Oh dear!"

"And if," resumed the Housemaster, "you waited in the study for Mr. Lathom to return, why did you, on his return, hide behind the door, and attempt to steal away unseen?"

"I—I thought he would be waxy, sir!" groaned Trimble.

"You are contradicting yourself, Trimble."

"I—I mean—"

"It comes to this," said Mr. Railton. "Mr. Lathom distinctly remembers that the gold pin fell on his study floor, and as he omitted to pick it up at the moment, the matter passed from his mind, and it was left there. You entered the study afterwards, and you have spoken falsely about your reason for doing so—you attempted to escape unseen, though you have told me that you waited there for Mr. Lathom to return. The gold pin was gone—and for a long time you could not be found. The presumption is that you were concealing your plunder somewhere, Trimble."

"Oh lor!"

"On this circumstantial evidence," continued Mr. Railton, "I should not find any boy guilty, if he were known to be honourable—even if he were not known to be dishonourable. But I am informed that one day last week, when this article of jewellery was lost, you found it, and kept it, to Mr. Lathom's knowledge. Your House-fellows punished you for this dishonesty, and Mr. Lathom caned you, and warned you of the consequences if you should be guilty of such an act again. This lesson was lost upon you, Trimble. What you did once—"

"I—I didn't, sir! That was findings keepings!" groaned Trimble.

Mr. Railton raised his hand.

"Do not repeat to me, Trimble, such a wretched excuse for dishonesty. You kept the pin you found, knowing it to be Mr. Lathom's property. Your Form master dealt with you very leniently, and you have taken advantage of his leniency. You have repeated the same act—in a more flagrant manner. I cannot doubt, Trimble, that you went to Mr. Lathom's study this afternoon with dishonest intentions, and that you fled with the gold pin in your possession."

"Pretty plain, I should say!" murmured Blake in the passage; and there was a general nodding of heads.

The juniors had no further doubt on the subject. What had happened before had happened again, that was all.

"After this, Trimble, you must be aware that you cannot remain in the school," resumed the Housemaster. "I make every allowance for your stupidity; but you are not so stupid as to fail to know the distinction between honesty and theft. A thief cannot remain in this school. I shall now report the matter to Dr. Holmes; it is for him to decide. But I hold out no hope whatever that you will be allowed to remain. You may go now."

"I didn't, sir—"

"That will do, Trimble."



"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom faintly. "That—that is the article, that is the gold pin Trimble is accused of having taken! Did Master Trimble give you this gold pin, Mary?" "No, I didn't!" yelled Trimble. "Silence, Trimble!" "I found it this morning, sir," said Mary Perkins, "when I was cleaning out the Bissell-broom after tidying up Mr. Lathom's study." (See page 17.)

"I—I—I'll tell you all about it, sir!" gasped Trimble. Even in that extremity, the fatuous Baggy could only think of prevarication as a resource. "I—I'll make a clean breast of it, sir. I—I never touched the gold pin, sir—"

"That is enough."

"It—it was there when I left the study, sir!" gasped Trimble. "I—I saw it there, sir."

"You have denied that you saw it."

"That—that was only a figure of speech, sir," stammered Trimble. "I—I saw it. And—and my belief is that Mr. Lathom found it, sir, and he's got it all the time!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Is—is—is the boy insane?" gasped Mr. Lathom.

"That's what I think, sir," spluttered Trimble. "If—if he hasn't got it, sir, perhaps he—he—he's pawned it."

"Pawned it!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "Upon my word! I really think this boy must be out of his right senses, Mr. Railton!"

Mr. Railton rose to his feet, his brow thunderous.

"Trimble, leave this room! You will be dealt with by the Head! Not a word, you insolent young rascal! Leave my study!"

And Baggy Trimble almost jumped out.

CHAPTER 9. The Sentence of the Sack!

IF evah any fellow fairly asked for it, I weally think that Trimble is the chap."

That was the considered opinion of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth. It was an opinion that was shared by all the School House.

That Trimble was guilty nobody had the slightest doubt. The evidence was strong enough to cast the deepest suspicion upon any fellow who was foolish enough to lie instead of telling the truth when placed upon his defence. Any possible doubt that might have lingered was banished by the remembrance of what had happened the week before. That very same gold pin had been bagged by Baggy, on the plea that findings were keepings. It was only too probable that he had seen the gold pin lying on Mr. Lathom's carpet, and

had "found" it once more. Indeed, that seemed the only possible explanation of the article's disappearance.

Tom Merry & Co., after all the talk there was on the subject, knew that no other fellow had visited Mr. Lathom's study during that gentleman's absence. Mr. Lathom was certain that the pin had been left there. Exhaustive search in the room had failed to reveal any trace of it. It was gone, that was indubitable. That it had gone in Baggy's pocket could scarcely be doubted.

Trimble's denials counted for nothing at all. It really was to be doubted whether Trimble could have told the truth had he thought of doing so; and it seemed established that he never did think of doing so. And his denials were complicated with a maze of palpable prevarication. A fellow who stated, almost in the same breath, that he hadn't seen the gold pin at all, and that he had seen it lying in the study when he left, could scarcely expect to get much credit. Trimble got none at all.

The hapless Baggy was to come before the Head that evening, and it was certain that he would receive the "order of the sack." When a Sixth Form prefect came to conduct him to Dr. Holmes, Baggy was in his study, vainly explaining to Wildrake and Mellish what an innocent fellow he was. Darrell of the Sixth looked in and beckoned to him.

"You're wanted, Trimble. Come along!"

"Oh dear! Is it the Head?"

"Yes."

"I—I say, Darrell, you're a good chap. Will you tell the Head I'm ill, and can't come?" mumbled Trimble. "Toll him I'm dying, like a good chap. Say I fell down the stairs and broke my leg—"

"Come along, you young duffer!"

Trimble groaned and followed the prefect. Some of the fellows in the passage cast compassionate glances after him. They did not believe a word he uttered on the subject. But, really, as Monty Lowthorpe said, Baggy seemed rather to want a mental specialist than the "sack." A fellow who could

(Continued on page 16.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 244.



EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

IS it not high time, dear readers, that the immortal Gussy had a special number to himself? Yaas, wathah!

Everybody knows Gussy. Everybody likes him. He may have a few fads and foibles; he may be a bit "touchy" concerning the cut of his coat and the crease of his trousers; but, then, we've all got our funny little ways. Gussy certainly is a dandy, but he is not an effeminate dandy. He is a brilliant sportsman, and he can use his fists, too, when the occasion arises. Nothing "soft" about Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. I have played footer side by side with him, and I have seen him take the hardest knocks with the courage of a Spartan. I have boxed with him, and can testify to his hitting powers. Gussy often threatens, when anything rouses his ire, to "administrah a fearful thwashin'," and he could lick fellows of his own size and weight.

I have also played cricket with Gussy, both at St. Jim's and at Eastwood Lodge—his country home. Gussy is a very polished batsman, and there is style in every stroke he makes. He is also a brilliant field, and he can hold a catch with one hand when the ball comes red-hot from the bat. He plays in both junior elevens—cricket and footer—and he thoroughly deserves his place.

Of course, Gussy has some quaint and amusing ways. He has a habit of screwing his celebrated monocle into his eye, and regarding you with lofty scorn and withering contempt, as much as to say, "Fway get off the earth, you uttahn worm!"

Gussy's wardrobe, like Sam Weller's knowledge of London, is extensive and peculiar. He has several suits of clothes—lounge suits, and dress suits, and sporting outfits. I have even seen Gussy in "plus fours," though he doesn't play golf. He has a standing army of "toppers," and a battalion of fancy waistcoats, and sufficient socks and neckties to stock a hosiery shop. We often tell Gussy that they will have to build a new wing on to St. Jim's to accommodate all his raiment!

Gussy has very decided political views, and he hopes to get into the House of Lords one of these days. He is never happier than when making speeches. Singing also gives Gussy great pleasure; but I regret to say that it gives his audience great anguish. He can't sing for toffee. His voice is more like a raven's croak than a skylark's trill. But Gussy is a jolly good sort for all that, and I feel sure that this special number concerning him will be as welcome as the flowers in May!

Tom Merry

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

MYSELF!

By Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

I'VE no desiah to boast, deah boys, But I'm a champion fellow; I sport silk spats, an' high top-hats,

An' fancy waistcoats yellow.
If I should meet a charmin' lass
I always waise my toppah;
Because, you see, it seems to me
It's only wight an' pwopah!

I'm always smart, an' spick an' span,
Shoes polished to perfection;
Of silken hose, an' stylish clothes
I've got a vast collection.
I always twy to play the game,
I nevah tell a whoppah;
I'd never sink to that, I think
It's hardly wight an' pwopah!

I'm bwright an' mewwy, as a wule,
I'm debonair an' dashin';
But if a lad should make me mad
He gets a fearful thwashin'!
Yaas, gets it in the neck, deah boys,
Where chickens get the choppah;
To meet a chap in fistic swap
Is only wight an' pwopah!

I've got a wippin' voice, bai Jove!
I warble like a linnnet;
But when I sing, the fellows fling
Hard missiles, ewevy minute!
On such a wuff an' bwutal game
I'll have to put the stoppah;
To hurt an' pelt, I've often felt,
Is neithah wight nor pwopah!

At ewicket I'm a dazlin' blade,
My style is simply toppin'.
The ball comes quick, my bat goes click,
And I wun without once stoppin'.
"Always a 'four'!" the fellahs wear.
"That last one was a toppah!"
Applause is gwanted, woars are chanted.
Of course it's wight and pwopah!

I've nothin' moah to say, deah boys,
These w'yms must now be ended;
Some will say "Bosh!" an' othahs
"Tosh!"

An' othahs, "Simply splendid!"
An' some will say, "He ought to be
Awrested by a coppah!"
But such wemarks fwom gay young
sparks
Are hardly wight an' pwopah!

QUOTATIONS FROM GUSSY!

Collected by Monty Lowther.

"IT'S nevah too late to mend—unless that beastly bulldog, Towssah, has uttally wuined your best pair of bags!"

"Nevah put off till to-morrow what is fashionable to-day."

"I quite agree with those thwifty fellows who invest their spare cash in Savings Certificates. But, personally, I always pwfer to make investments in vestments!"

"The boy who is badly dwessed is an abomination. But there is always hope for him, if he will only model himself on me, bai Jove! Let him cultivate an interest in his personal appeawance; an' day by day, in ewevy way, he'll get bettah an' bettah an' bettah—or, wathah, smartah an' smartah an' smartah!"

"This is what Tennyson ought to have w'tten, but didn't:

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
A shabbay person is a dud;
Toppahs are more than cowonets,
And fancy socks than Norman blood."

"Monty Lowthah declares that my socks are suffewin' fwom spotted fevah. But I notice that lots of Sixth-Formahs are weawin' spotted socks, so the fevah must be spweadin'!"

"No, deah boys; I am not in favah of the Eton suits we have to wear at St. Jim's. They are much too staid an' sobah. Besides, they are black, an' it looks as if the whole school has gone into mournin'! I considah that a dash of colour should be introduced. What about pink jackets with yellow swipes?"

"Bettah to be 'all dwessed up an' nowhere to go' than 'badly dwessed an' somewhere to go'!" Fellows who won't take the trouble to dwess themselves pwopahly, an' polish their boots, should not be allowed out of gates."

"I had a little argument with Lowthah on the subject of Baggy Twimble. Lowthah declared that Baggy was a well-dwessed fellow. I stwongly denied it. 'But he must be a well-dwessed fellow, Gussy!' insisted Lowthah. 'Because when he came into our studdy at tea-time, he was "smartly turned out"!"

"When I leave St. Jim's, I shall endeavah to get a job on the staff of a papah dealin' with Male Fashion. I shall be in my element, bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!"



INTERVIEWING GUSSY!

By Our Special Representative.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was wearing a cheery smile when I stepped into his study. He was also wearing a weird and wonderful suit, of a light green colour; a fancy waistcoat, in which all the colours of the rainbow were blended; a red necktie—though Gussy is anything but a Socialist—a pair of patent leather shoes; and a pair of socks which looked as if they had spotted fever. The great Gussy was surveying himself in the mirror with intense satisfaction.

"Extremely smart, bai Jove!" he murmured. "My-tailah has given me a perfect fit!"

"And your appearance will give all the fellows a perfect fit, if you appear in public in that rig-out!" I said.

Arthur Augustus spun round from the mirror.

"What do you mean, you howwibly wude person?" he demanded.

"What I say!" I retorted. "The fellows will have a fit if they see you in that suit. It might be all right to dress a scarecrow in; but it doesn't look a bit becoming on a young aristocrat."

Arthur Augustus screwed his monocle into his eye, and glared at me grimly. Then he pushed back his cuffs.

"You have dared to criticise my personal appearance!" he exclaimed. "You know the penalty?"

"A fearful thvashin'?" I suggested, mimicking Gussy's drawl.

"Exactly! Put up your hands, you wottah!"

I smiled, and kept my hands in my pockets.

"I'm not a man of war," I said. "I'm merely a cruiser—a fellow who cruises around interviewing people for the 'St. Jim's News.' I'm not spoiling for a scrap. If I have ruffled the temper of your Highness, I humbly apologise."

"Gwanted, deah boy," said Gussy, his brow clearing. "Had you not had the gwace to apologise, I should have been compelled to stew the hungwy churchyard with your bones, as the sayin' is. But you have made an 'amende honowable,' so-I will ovahlook your insultin' remarks. Pway sit down, an' I will treat you to a cup of weak tea. I'm afraid it's got cold by now. It's been standin' in the pot twenty minutes."

"That's all right," I said. "Next to ginger-wine, cold tea is my favourite beverage."

The tea having been poured out and imbibed, I produced my notebook.

"This is my confession book," I explained. "I get people to confess all their fads and fancies, for publication in the 'St. Jim's News.' Last week, I dragged a number of confessions out of Talbot. This week it is your turn. May I start firing questions at you?"

"Certainly, deah boy!"

"All serene. What, in your opinion, is the most important thing in life?"

"A perfectly-cweased pair of twousahs!" came the prompt reply.

"Good! And what ranks next in importance?"

"The fit of a fancy waistcoat."

"But fancy waistcoats don't have fits—"

"Ass! I'm not talkin' about epileptic fits, or apopleptic ones. I'm wewefwin' to the fit of a garment."

"Oh! Sorry I'm so dense. And what, my dear Gussy, is your opinion of the 'St. Jim's News'?"

Arthur Augustus stroked his chin thoughtfully.

"Well, it's wathah a wippin' wag," he observed, at length. "It possesses, howevah, one gweat dwawback."

"Namely?"

"It ought to have a special page each week, dealin' with spvin' an' summah fashions, an' witten by an authority on the mattah—myself, for instance."

"Ahem! Now, what's your favourite occupation, Gussy?"

"Choosin' a suit of clothes. Let me loose in one of the big outfittin' stores in London—let me vandah aound at my own sweet will—an' I'm happy."

"Do you agree with Shakespeare that the apparel oft proclaims the man?"

"Most emphatically, deah boy! You can generally judge a fellow by his appearance. Take Baggy Twimble, for instance. His clothes hang on him like a sack, instead of fittin' him pwopahly. His shoes are nevah polished; his collah is nevah clean; an' his necktie is a disgwace. What are we to deduce fwom these things? Why, the fact that Twimble is a slovenly boundah!"

I fidgeted uncomfortably in my chair. My own appearance, at that moment, was far from immaculate. I had been punting a football about in the quad, and had sat down in several puddles, and rolled over in the mud. By contrast with the spick-and-span Gussy I was a terrible tramp.

Arthur Augustus eyed me sternly.

"No wondah you look uncomfortable," he said. "The remark I made about Twimble applies with equal twuth to yourself. Your pwsent appearance is shockin'—wewoltin'—disgustin'! You look as if you have been undah a steam-wollah. I weally cannot undahstand a fellow who takes no pwide in his clothes."

"We can't all be like you, Gussy," I said. "We're not all millionaires, who can afford to change into a fresh suit two or three times a day. By the way, this latest get-up of yours is the limit. Bright green, of all colours! It—it sort of hits a chap in the eye."

Arthur Augustus frowned.

"I am goin' to the Theatre Woyal, ovah at Wayland," he explained. "I have booked a box, all to myself."

"My hat!"

"A bright gween suit will look vewy stvikin', in a bwiliantly-lighted theatre," said Gussy. "Bein' in a box, I shall be very much in the limelight, an' the audience will feast their eyes upon my smart figgah!"

But Arthur Augustus was not destined to appear at the Theatre Royal in that striking suit. For at that moment there was a wild yell from the corridor.

"Fire! Fire!"

"Buckets this way!"

"It's in No. 6!"

Arthur Augustus spun round towards the door.

"What the mewwy dickens—" he began, in astonishment.

The door was thrown open without ceremony, and Reilly and Hammond of the Fourth armed with brimming buckets of water appeared on the threshold. Without pausing to look round, they discharged the contents of their buckets over Arthur Augustus.

Swish! Swooooosh!

The swell of St. Jim's staggered back with a wild yell. He was drenched from head to foot. His new suit, which had fitted him so perfectly, now hung to him like a wet sack.

"You—you feahful wottahs!" roared Gussy. "What do you think you're doin'?"

"Puttin' the fire out!" panted Reilly.

"Fiah? But there's no fiah, you cwiss ass—"

Suddenly there was a shout from the corridor. It was Tom Merry's voice.

"You fellows have come to the wrong shop. The fire isn't in Gussy's study at all! It's in Lefevre's—Number 6 in the Fifth Form passage! Refill your buckets, and hurry along!"

Reilly and Hammond promptly scuttled away with their empty buckets. They had indeed come to the wrong shop. They had been told there was a fire in Study No. 6, and they took it for granted that it was No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage. In reality, the fire was in Lefevre's study—No. 6 in the Fifth Form passage.

It wasn't much of a fire. A lighted spill, which Lefevre had used for the purpose of lighting the gas, had come in contact with the window-curtains, and there had been a bit of a blaze. It was speedily extinguished by the amateur firemen with their buckets. Of course, the curtains were ruined; but, as Lefevre pointed out, they were only a cheap and flimsy pair.

Something else was ruined, too—that wonderful bright green suit of Gussy's!

The swell of St. Jim's was almost choking with rage and chagrin. He picked up a cricket-stump, thrust me aside without ceremony, and rushed out of the study, breathing threatnings and slaughter.

He was going to look for Reilly and Hammond!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 644.



roll out such astounding "whoppers," with any expectation of being believed, was blessed with an extraordinary intellect, to be regarded more in sorrow than in anger.

Tom Merry spoke to him in the passage as he passed.

"Tell the Head the truth, Trimble. For goodness' sake, for your own sake, don't tell him any lies!"

Trimble blinked at him indignantly.

"I hope you don't think me capable of lying, Tom Merry. You shouldn't judge others by yourself, you know."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom.

"If there ever was a truthful chap, I'm that chap," said Trimble. "Straight as a die, that's me. And I think—"

"Oh, come along!" said Darrell, and Trimble was marched away.

Tom Merry & Co., forgetful of prep, waited for him to return. Somehow or other, they could not help feeling sorry for Trimble, though certainly he did not seem to deserve much sympathy.

Trimble came back at last. His fat face was red with wrath. There was a chorus in the Fourth Form passage.

"Sacked?"

"That's it," said Trimble. "Would you believe it? Sacked! Bunked from the school! Me, you know. And the Head actually asked me to hand over Mr. Lathom's pin before I left."

"What a cheek!" said Blake sarcastically.

"Yes, wasn't it?" said Trimble, blind to sarcasm. "I'd have told him so, too, only—he might have licked me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you're not going to give up the jolly old tiepin?" demanded Manners.

"Eh? Of course not!"

"Goin' to take it home as a keepsake?" asked Racke of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I haven't got it!" yelled Trimble. "If I had it I'd hand it over, rather than be bunked—I mean, I should hand it over as a matter of course. I dare say you fellows might keep it. But that's not my sort. But, you see, I haven't got it."

"Then what have you done with it?" asked Blake.

"I never had it. Don't I keep on telling you that I'm innocent?" howled Trimble.

"You can keep on telling us till you're black in the face, but you won't find any takers," chuckled Racke.

"Bunked!" said Trimble, with deep indignation. "Bunked, you know! I wonder how this House will get on without me? It won't take the New House long to give you the kybosh when I'm gone!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wonder what my people will say when I get home?" continued Trimble. "The butler and all the footmen, when I get to Trimble Hall. And my uncle, Sir Montague, and—"

"Perhaps they'll say that you ought to keep your fat paws from picking and stealing!" suggested Herries.

"I tell you I never—"

"Rats!"

"I never did—"

"Bow-wow!"

The juniors dispersed to their studies for prep, leaving Baggy Trimble still proclaiming his innocence and his wrongs. Baggy was left to waste his sweetness on the desert air. The voice of the fat Baggy was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, which was regarded not.

Baggy rolled into his study at last, and sat down to prep. Wildrake and Mellish regarded him curiously.

"Not doing your prep?" asked the latter.

"Why not?" asked Baggy.

"You're going in the morning, aren't you?"

Baggy snorted.

"I hope the Head will have more sense in the morning. There's such a thing as justice."

"That's what you've had, isn't it?" asked Mellish.

"Yah!"

Apparently Baggy nourished a hope of the sentence being rescinded. Upon what he based his hope was difficult to discover, unless it was upon a consciousness of innocence. And that nobody was likely to believe.

In the dormitory that night Trimble was eloquent. He sat

up in bed after lights out, and told the other fellows at great length how innocent and wronged he was. And in their compassion for a fellow under sentence of the sack, the Fourth refrained from throwing boots and pillows at him, and let him run on till he was tired. After that, Baggy Trimble snored till morning.

He came down in the morning with the Fourth, and rolled in to breakfast with his Form, the observed of all observers. Mr. Lathom spoke to him curtly at the table.

"You will pack your box immediately after breakfast, Trimble."

Trimble grunted.

"Then you will go to the Head to receive your journey money," said the Fourth Form master, "and I trust Trimble, that by that time you will have made up your mind to make restitution. The only thing you can do now is to restore the stolen article."

"How can I, sir, when I haven't got it?"

"I am sorry to see you persist in these wretched falsehoods, Trimble."

"I'm innocent, sir—"

"Nonsense!"

"I never even saw the gold pin, sir—"

"That will do, Trimble."

"I hope you can take my word, sir."

"I am sorry that I can do nothing of the kind, Trimble." Trimble finished his breakfast—an ample one—with a good appetite. In that important department Baggy did not seem to be affected by his misfortunes.

After breakfast he went dismally to pack his box. By that time he seemed to have realised his position, and his fat face was the picture of woe. As he rolled disconsolately towards the Head's study, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tapped him on the shoulder quite kindly.

"Twimble, old man, I'm sorry," said Arthur Augustus. "But, weally, deah boy, I urge you to return Mr. Lathom's pwopahthy befoah you go."

"You silly ass—"

"Bai Jove!"

"I'm innocent, you dunny! Don't I keep on telling you so? I never touched the beastly thing—never saw it in my life, in fact."

"But it is the same pin you found in the quad last week and kept, Twimble," urged Arthur Augustus.

"It isn't! That one was a birthday present from my uncle, Sir Reginald Trimble!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"I told you so at the time!"

"Weally, Twimble, you are too much for me! I trust, when you get home, your patah will have a medical man to examine the state of your bwain."

"Yah!"

Trimble disappeared into the Head's study.

CHAPTER 10.

Mary Perkins to the Rescue!

MARY PERKINS had a flustered look.

Generally, Mary was calm and placid. Now she seemed flustered, and a little cross. Several fellows who noticed Mary heading for Mr. Lathom's study noticed that she looked cross. Mr. Lathom was not in his study, and Mary Perkins seemed crosser than ever as she ascertained that fact.

"Can you tell me where Mr. Lathom is, Master Merry?" she asked.

"He's with the Head, Mary," answered Tom. "I—I think he's rather busy now—"

Mary snapped:

"I must see him, busy or not. Drat it! There never was such a careless gentleman as Mr. Lathom! The wonder is that it wasn't lost!"

What "it" was, Mary Perkins did not stop to explain. She rustled away to the Head's study, where at that moment Baggy Trimble was having his final interview with his headmaster and his Form master.

Tap!

Mary Perkins entered the sacred apartment. Baggy Trimble was standing dismally before the Head's desk. Mr. Holmes was gazing at him with great severity over his glasses. Mr. Lathom stood by, looking grieved and troubled.

"For the last time, Trimble, will you restore Mr. Lathom's property before you leave the school?" said the Head, in his deep voice.

"If you please, sir—" said Mary Perkins.

"Really, you should not come here now!" said the Head testily. "You can see that I am engaged—"

"It couldn't wait, sir," said Mary respectfully but firmly. "Which, if Mr. Lathom missed it he might think it had been took."

And Mary laid a gold tiepin on the Head's desk.

The Head stared at it. Baggy Trimble blinked at it. Mr. Lathom gazed at it fixedly, and then wiped his spectacles and gazed again.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom faintly. "That—that is the article—that is the gold pin, Dr. Holmes!"

"That's it!" said Trimble.

"Dear me!" said the Head. "Did Master Trimble give you this gold pin, Mary?"

"No, I didn't!" yelled Trimble.

"Silence, Trimble!"

"I found it this morning, sir, cleaning out the Bissell-broom," said Mary.

"Explain yourself, my good girl," said the Head. "This gold pin was missed yesterday from Mr. Lathom's study—"

"He must have dropped it on the floor, sir," said Mary.

"Certainly I did," said Mr. Lathom.

"And never picked it up again. Which Mr. Lathom, sir, is that careless with things you'd never believe!"

"Where did you find this pin, Mary?"

"In the Bissell-broom, sir. Which, when Mr. Lathom went out yesterday, I hurried to his study to sweep and dust, sir, likewise I often do, him being so particular not to be disturbed when he is indoors, sir, and often a-setting there before breakfast in the morning, which doesn't give the maids a chance, as often and often I've said to cook—"

"Yes, yes," said the Head hastily. "But—you swept up this pin, then, during Mr. Lathom's absence yesterday afternoon."

"Yes, sir."

"And why did you not bring it back to Mr. Lathom at the time?"

"It was in the Bissell."

"But—but surely you would have noticed a gold pin in a broom—"

"Perhaps you've never seen a Bissell-broom, sir, though one's used every day, and twice a day, in this very study," said Mary. "Tain't an ordinary broom, sir—"

"Dear me! I—I think I have observed such a—a contrivance," said Mr. Lathom, nodding his head. "There is a revolving brush, Dr. Holmes, somewhat resembling a sweep's brush, but horizontal instead of vertical. It revolves inside a kind of metallic case, bisected on the under side, and so sweeps dust and paper cuttings and such trifles into the case. This, I believe, obviates the use of an article which, I think, is called a dustpan—the dustpan being ingeniously combined with the broom. Is not this correct, Mary?"

Mary blinked, but nodded.

"I—I think I understand, Mary," said the Head. "It appears that this gold pin, lying on Mr. Lathom's floor, was swept into this—this peculiar variety of broom—into a kind of receptacle attached to the brush for the reception of dust, and remained there till this morning. Quite so! You did quite right in bringing it to Mr. Lathom at once, although he was engaged in my study. Very right indeed! Thank you very much, Mary!"

And Mary Perkins curtsied and vanished.

Dr. Holmes looked at Mr. Lathom. Mr. Lathom looked at Dr. Holmes. Then both looked at Baggy Trimble.

Baggy was grinning now.

His innocence—such as it was—had been proved.

"It appears, Trimble, that you did not, after all, take this pin from Mr. Lathom's study," said Dr. Holmes.

"I told you so, sir."

"H'm!"

"I've been unjustly suspected, sir—"

Dr. Holmes rose to his feet.

"You have not been unjustly suspected, Trimble. You owe the suspicion to your looseness of principle, to your unscrupulous prevarication, and, even now, I think that, strictly speaking, it is my duty to send you away from the school."

"Oh lor'!"

"But I will give you a chance to amend," said the Head. "Bear in mind that you have had a narrow escape—entirely due to your own unscrupulous character. You may go!"

"I—I say—"

"Go!"

And Trimble went.

"Well, I'm jolly glad!" said Tom Merry, when the news was spread. "This is Trimble's lucky day."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And Lathom didn't even apologise," said Trimble. "and the Head said it was all my fault! Mine, you know! Said that I was a fellow of no principle! Me! Looks to me as if the Head's getting softening of the brain. What do you fellows think?"

But the fellows did not tell him what they thought—they only chortled. That day they were all glad that Baggy had escaped the chopper; but a few more days of Baggy made most of them feel that it was, after all, rather a pity that the "sack" had not been the outcome of Trimble's Trouble.

THE END.

(Look out for another topping yarn next week, chums, entitled: "GLYN, THE GOLDMAKER!" This is one of Martin Clifford's extra-specials, so don't miss it!)



Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes Awarded for Interesting Paragraphs.

(If You Do Not Win a Prize This Week—You May Next!)

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

TUCK FOR MANCHESTER! THE LAST STRAW!

Owner to jockey: "William, you are too heavy yet. Can't you take something off?" Jockey: "I'm wearing my lightest suit of clothes, I haven't tasted a morsel of food this day, and have just cut my finger-nails." Owner: "Then go and get shaved!"—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious tuck, has been awarded to Clifford Chester, 23, Grosvenor Street, Denton, near Manchester.

CLEVER!

A man who gave his wife a small weekly allowance to keep house on, asked her if she would like a wristlet-watch or a necklace for her birthday. "Neither of them," she said: "What I want is a photograph of my wages." "Why?" asked the hubby. "So that I can get it enlarged!" was the cool rejoinder.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to N. Glegg, 16, Flower Street Gardens, Cape Town, South Africa.

GIVING HER A CHANCE!

An old woman went up to the fish-hawker's barrow and looked at his stock with longing eyes. She was evidently very poor, for when the hawker asked threepence for a scaleful of selected bits, she hesitated. "Have 'em for tuppence, mum," growled the hawker. "No, it's too much," said the woman. "Have 'em at a penny, then." Still the woman hesitated. There was a look of pity on the hawker's face, and turning to the woman he said: "Here, missus, I'll turn away while you sneak 'em!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to P. Coates, 16, Charlotte's Terrace, Clarendon Street, Hull.

DONE!

It was a third-class railway-carriage, and a young fellow had talked so long and loudly about the rate at which he could run that an old man sitting in one corner of the compartment thought he would like to take the young braggart down a peg or two. Leaning over, he tapped him on the knee and asked: "So you can run a bit, can you?" "I can that!" came the ready reply. "I'll race you if you give me a yard start," said the elder man. The young man laughed sarcastically. "I'll take you on," he said. "That's easy money for me. Where will you run?" "Up a ladder!" came the answer amidst roars of laughter from the other occupants of the carriage.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to John S. Gosen, 29, Blythe Street, Bethnal Green Road, E. 2.

THE BELVA!

Desirous of buying a camera, a certain fair lady inspected the stock of a local shopkeeper. "Is this a good one?" she asked as she picked up a dainty little machine. "What is it called?" "That's the Belvedere," said the handsome young shopman politely. There was a chilly silence, then the young woman drew herself coldly erect, fixed him with an icy stare, and asked again: "Er—can you recommend the Belva?"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to T. Mahoney, 43 Spring Place, Horton, Bradford.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON.

The GEM LIBRARY.

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

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 344.

His willingness to help
others leads—

—Mike Hunter to the paths
of fortune!

WHAT MONEY DID FOR HIM.



A Splendid True-to-Life Story

By JACK CRICHTON.

CHAPTER 1. A Chance!

THE doctor turned away from the sick bed with a shake of his head, and laid his hand on Mike Hunter's shoulder as he went out of the room.

"It's a bad business, Mike," he said, as together they went downstairs in the little cottage. "She is very bad. Needs a long holiday somewhere by the sea. Not a hope, I suppose?"

Mike Hunter looked up into the medical man's face with a shake of his head.

"No, sir, I'm out of work, and—well, we cannot do it. Mother's bad, sir?"

"Overworked, my boy. Nerves run down. She really wants a long holiday. Well, I'll look in to-morrow, and if by any miracle you've found a hundred pounds by then we'll send her away for three months or so."

The doctor patted the lad on the shoulder again and went on his way, a very decent old fellow, with many worries of his own, in this busy, teeming Midland town, and not too much time to concern himself with the worries of others.

The lad stared after him.

His mother was all he had in the world, and she had been so good to him. Never had she complained, even when things had been hard, never had she seemed to flatter, until now at last she had given way under the strain of hard times, and had had to take to her bed.

Mike knew that she was worse than even the doctor said. She was his mother, and he knew her so well. There was a sad, weary look about the dear eyes that haunted him. It was awful.

Suddenly he seized his cap and followed the doctor out into the dismal night. It was raining, and he had no coat. But that did not matter—anything was better than to remain in the little cottage and try to think how he could get a hundred pounds!

Why, the idea was grotesque. He could not get a hundred pence! He had been looking for a job for weeks.

He walked on and on, thinking, dreaming, but ever coming to the same sad conclusion. There was no way out for him. He would never be able to do it—and his poor old mother would have to remain where she was, and perhaps she—

But no; he refused to think of it!

Suddenly he stopped and listened hard. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

He heard the sound of shouting, and listened again.

It sounded like "Fire!"

Yes, it was!

Mike Hunter started forward, running into the night. Suddenly he saw the glare in front of him, and realised that it was the house of old Sam Vernon which was on fire, a big house on the edge of the town, which stood very much by itself.

He knew old Sam—a big bookmaker, and quite a character—and even as he reached the house and saw that it was already well alight he recognised the old man's voice shouting loudest of all and crying out in despair.

"Where's Susan? Where's the little girl?"

And at that moment Mike understood. All those who stood about on the ground beneath the burning house understood, too.

In the window of an upper room a little girl of not more than five or six years appeared, a pathetic, terrified little figure in white, holding out her arms to those below.

Several ran forward, but the flames beat them back from the house, and a moment later Mike had realised where lay the only hope, for as yet there was no sign of the fire-engines.

Rushing forward, he started to clamber up the drain-pipe, which ran right up beside the window where the child stood, and before anybody could stop him he was a long way up.

Hand-over-hand he went. It was slow and cruel work, and more than once he thought that the smoke was going to stop him, but he would not give in. At last he reached the window and felt the child's arm about his neck.

"All right, kiddie!" he whispered, his voice hoarse with the fumes of the smoke. "It's all right. We'll soon be down!"

He put her tiny hands about his shoulders, and once again started towards the drain-pipe.

It was a dangerous and terrible descent, for a false move would have dashed them both to the ground. But the child hung on tightly in her terror, and Mike went hand-under-hand with the greatest care, and at last, even as the fire-engine dashed up the drive towards the house, he let go, and they were both caught by willing hands, while a hearty, generous cheer went up for the lad.

Old Vernon came rushing towards him.

"My dear boy, you saved her, you

did! You're a hero! She'd been gone but for you! You're a hero! Here—this is all I've got on me, but take it, my lad, and may it bring you luck!"

He pushed into the lad's hand a Bank of England note.

Mike was almost fainting, but he staggered away and gratefully took a glass of water that was offered him. Then in the glare of the fire he glanced down at the note he held in his hand, and saw that it was a Bank of England note for one hundred pounds!

CHAPTER 2.

The Turn of the Wheel!

MRS. HUNTER shook her white head as the lad laid the hundred pounds in front of her the next day.

He had been to the bank, and had changed the note into one hundred one-pound notes, feeling that this would look much more impressive than the rather crumpled note which Mr. Vernon had produced so miraculously from his trousers pocket. Now he had placed these on his mother's bed, and had told her that he was going to send her away for a good long holiday with it.

But Mrs. Hunter shook her head hard. "You are a good boy, Mike," she said, "and your old mother will never forget this day, but I am not going to take it all!"

"You must, mother!"

The old lady counted out fifty of the notes, slowly and almost painfully.

"No, my dear lad," she said softly and kindly, "here are fifty. I am going to take fifty. I can go away for quite a long time with that, and I shall be quite strong and well by the time I come back. And you are to have the other fifty."

Mike flushed.

"But whatever am I to do with fifty pounds, mother?" he exclaimed. "I have nothing to do with it. I want you to take it. I shall be happier."

He saw tears appearing in his mother's eyes.

"I shall get better more quickly," she explained, "if I know that you have it, my dear. You have to live while I am away. I dare say you are quite right, and that Mr. Vernon will find you work; but if he does you need some new clothes, and one thing and the other, and I shall be very much more easy in my mind if you have it!"

So it was decided. Not that Mike

really wanted to take the notes, but he knew his mother well enough to understand that she was speaking the absolute truth when she said that she would get better much more quickly if she knew he was all right.

That very day she went off to the country, and Mike was left to his own devices.

He went round in the evening to try to find Mr. Vernon, but no one quite seemed to know where that good man was now that his home had been burned down. The lad had to resign himself to the thought that he would have to wait a few days before seeing him, and, in any case, he didn't want to bother the old chap too soon after all that had happened.

Mike was strolling back thoughtfully into the town again, reflecting that even the possession of fifty pounds was not as satisfactory as feeling that one had a steady job of work, when suddenly he bumped into someone walking along quickly.

A moment later he had been caught by the shoulder.

"What cheer, Mike!" said a hearty voice. "It's you, isn't it? Say, what have you been doing, the hero of the town!"

Mike blushed modestly.

"Oh, I didn't do anything, Bill!" he said. "I just did what I could!" And then, anxious to change the subject as quickly as he could, asked: "How are you getting on?"

"Rotten!"

Mike Hunter looked at his friend in surprise. Bill Smith was one of the coming young boxers of the town; and had been quickly making his way to the front. Mike admired and liked him tremendously. He had not the slightest idea that he was down on his luck.

"Why, what has happened, Bill?" he asked.

"Money!"

"Eh?"

"You know I am due to fight Issy Woolf next week at the Baths for a purse? Well, I have to put up a guarantee of fifty quid by twelve o'clock to-morrow, and the chap I was looking to has suddenly gone broke, and I have no chance in the world of getting the cash. It means ruin for me. You see, I always seemed to have missed Issy, who is in the top class—accident or something—and folks are beginning to say that I am afraid of him."

"No, Bill!"

"Yes, they are. Of course, I'm not. I'm simply aching to get at him, but that doesn't help when I have not got the fifty to put up. He and his mob are as hot as mustard on the cash, and if the fifty is not put up by twelve to-morrow I am done in the eye!"

Mike felt in his pocket, and in another moment he had spoken.

"Bill!"

"Yes?"

"Here's your fifty!"

Bill Smith looked at Mike Hunter as though he had suddenly taken leave of his senses, and as the fifty one-pound notes were shoved into his hand he looked down at them askance.

"Are they real ones, Mike?" he gasped.

"Yes, Bill," smiled Mike. "Real ones, and honestly come by. Old Vernon gave them to me last night for rescuing his little girl from that fire, and I want you to take 'em. You have often been a good pal to me, and I want to help you!"

Bill had turned red with excitement.

"See here, Mike!"

"Yes, Bill!"

"I'll take them on one condition."

"What's that?" asked Mike.

"That you go half-shares with me in the purse. It is for three hundred pounds. If I win—and I'm going to win now, after this piece of luck—I am going to give you one hundred and fifty pounds and your fifty back, that's two hundred, and you are going to promise me now, solemnly, that you will agree to this."

Mike smiled.

"All right, Bill!" he said. "But honestly, I don't want anything except the fifty."

"You've got to have it, my lad," prompted Bill Smith. "And now I am going back to bed, for this is not the way to train for a fight with Issy Woolf."

It was just one week later that Mike Hunter entered the Baths behind his pal Bill, as one of his seconds, and saw him enter the ring against the great Issy Woolf.

There was little doubt that the local lad was popular with the crowd, but there was equally little doubt that the talent thought that he had very little chance of beating Issy. The betting was something like four to one on Issy Woolf.

They got through the preparations, the bell went, and they moved into the centre of the ring.

For a moment or so the two boxers sparred. Then Issy fainted, and came for his man, but Bill cleverly side-stepped, and while Issy dropped his guard for a moment in sheer surprise at his opponent's cleverness, Bill's right flashed round, and in another second Issy Woolf was taking the count in the middle of the ring, dead to the world.

It was an amazing and a dramatic

scene, and a yell of delight went up as Bill was proclaimed the winner.

He struggled from the ring and went back to his dressing-room. Half an hour later he was counting out two hundred pounds, in crisp Bank of England notes, to the astonished Mike.

"There you are, Mike," he said with a smile. "The quickest two hundred pounds you have ever earned."

Mike stared.

"I don't like to take it, Bill," he exclaimed.

But Bill laughed at him.

"You have done me the best turn of my life, Mike," he said. "I have a chance of getting a fight with the champion now. I've already been offered several big fights as it is. I shall get that money back again and again. You have done me a great turn, old chap, and may it bring you luck."

CHAPTER 3.

In the Dead of Night!

MIKE walked on air. That was the only expression for it. He didn't care if it snowed, and even as it was, it was raining quite hard, and he hadn't the slightest conception of the fact. He walked on and on. To go home would have been useless. He could not have slept, and his mother was not there for him to talk to, so he might as well walk on, and try to get used to the amazing fact that he now was the proud and surprised possessor of two hundred pounds.

He had reached the end of the town by this time, and was just considering whether he should turn back or whether



Hand over hand Mike clambered up the drain-pipe. At last he reached the window and felt the child's arm about his neck. "All right, kiddie," he whispered, his voice hoarse with the fumes of the smoke. "It's all right, we'll soon be down!"

he should continue on into the open country when a light in an office window attracted his attention. He didn't know quite why, except that it was late for anyone to be working in an office, and from idle curiosity he sidled up to the window and glanced in.

In another moment he had given a gasp.

It was the office of a popular young solicitor, John Fraser, whom Mike knew well by sight, and as he looked over the top of the ground floor window the lad saw the young man hopelessly bound and gagged in a chair, his safe wide open behind him. At the same moment two men rushed out past the lad.

"Hi!" roared Mike, realising the situation, and giving chase.

He did not get far, however, for even as he started one of the two men turned and struck out.

Mike dodged and the blow missed. In another moment, crying "Police!" at the top of his strong young voice, the lad had dived at the man's legs, and had brought him tumbling to the ground.

But it was two to one now, and no one seemed to have heard the lad's agonised cry.

The two men fell upon him, and in a few moments Mike Hunter had been flung, bruised, bleeding, and half-conscious, into the gutter, while his attackers fled into the night.

There he lay for some minutes, not knowing what had happened, and when at last he sat up and looked about he wondered whether the two men had taken his money.

But no, he had it safe, and it came to him that perhaps it would be wise not to interfere in other people's troubles until he had put his two hundred pounds in some place of safety.

But even as that thought came to him he remembered young Mr. Fraser, and jumped swiftly to his feet.

He dashed into the office, and a moment later he was untying the helpless young man.

"What's happened?" he asked.

Fraser stared at Mike, and then, realising the lad's utter amazement, he buried his face in his hands and began to sob like a child.

"The matter, Mike," he exclaimed—"the matter is that I have been a fool, and worse. I—I have properly made a mess of things now."

"What, sir?"

The young solicitor looked up at the lad.

"Oh, this has done it! I never really had a chance of getting away with it, and I was a fool not to face the whole thing like a man. Mike, it was all a put-up job. Those were two friends of mine, and they tied me to this chair of my own free will!"

Mike looked amazed.

"I don't understand, Mr. Fraser," he said.

The solicitor rose stiffly to his feet and pointed to the safe.

"See that?" he said.

"Yes!" answered Mike.

"They are supposed to have robbed that!"

"What?"

"Yes," said Fraser, "that was the yarn I was going to tell, though, now it has all been done, I can see how feeble it was. The office is not disarranged, there has obviously been no struggle, the blind of the window is up—the whole thing is too futile. I was a fool to think of it at all. I shall have to take my medicine like a man!"

Mike wiped his brow.

"What's up, sir?" he asked.

Fraser gazed at the lad.

"You wouldn't understand, my boy," he said.

"I might, sir!"

Fraser nodded.

"Oh, well, all the world will know by this time to-morrow, so you may as well know now. I—I have spent two hundred pounds belonging to a client, and things are so bad everywhere that I have not been able to raise it. I shall have to account for it to-morrow, and I can't. So I thought of this childish and futile way of getting out of my troubles, hoping that, as I had a good name, the police would swallow it. Good name!" he moaned. "I have no name at all, now!"

Mike thought hard. He knew Fraser well. He was not a bad fellow. He played centre-forward for the Town, and in the War he had done marvels. People had said that he would have had the V.C. with luck. As it was the D.S.O. had come his way, and the whole of his native town had been heartily proud of him.

This was just a slip. Mike was only a lad, but he understood that, and suddenly decided upon a plan.

"Mr. Fraser," he said, "I want to help you!"

"You, Mike!"

"I reckon you only did this out of sort of impulse?"

Fraser started.

"Yes, it was. Heaven knows it was. To help a friend. It is no excuse, Mike, but it is the truth!"

"Well, sir, I've got two hundred pounds, and I don't mind lending it to you!"

"What?"

In answer Mike carefully counted out his two hundred pounds, before the astonished eyes of the young solicitor.

"Am I mad, boy?" Fraser gasped.

"Where did this money come from?"

Mike looked up hotly.

"Honestly, sir!"

Fraser flushed.

"I'm sorry, my boy—I'm very sorry, I am sure it did. But it is a lot of money. Where did it come from?"

Mike explained, and when he had finished his story John Fraser shook his head.

"I've got no right to take it, my lad," he said, a lump in his throat. "It means so much to you!"

"Take it, Mr. Fraser," begged Mike. "I know you will give it to me back sooner or later."

A light of sudden hope came into the solicitor's weary eyes, and he sat down at his desk.

"Mike, you are a good lad," he said. "You shall never regret this. Here is an acknowledgement of the sum. It shall be paid back to you within one week, and here—"

He went to the safe, rummaged about in it, then turned to the lad again, holding out a packet of documents.

"Here are one hundred shares in an old Australian gold-mine. They are bearer shares, and I make them over to you, by way of interest on your two hundred pounds. Wait! I'll make you out a paper so that they cannot be questioned as being yours. Here you are. They belonged to my old father. He swore by them. They have never brought in a penny, but he was in Australia when he was a young man, and he swore that one day they would be worth thousands. Take them!"

Mike Hunter's head was going round dizzily. He took them.

"Thank you, sir!" he said.

"Thank you, Mike!" returned Fraser. He held out his hand, and Mike gripped it hard.

CHAPTER 4.

Mike Strikes Lucky!

THE joke of it was, however—if it were a joke, that although he possessed a bunch of shares in some aged Australian gold-mine, which might or might not suddenly take it into its head one day to produce gold, and although he possessed an acknowledgement from a well-known solicitor, Mike was hungry for the next few days.

He hadn't a penny-piece, and he couldn't find work, for heroism is soon forgotten. By the time he began looking for it again, people had already forgotten that two days before he had been the hero of the town.

He was feeling pretty desperate, and

THE Boys' Friend Library

No. 709.—PHANTOM ISLAND.

A New and Original Yarn of Schoolboy Adventure, introducing NIPPER & Co. and the Juniors of St. Frank's.

No. 710.—FOUGHT TO A FINISH.

By JOHN HUNTER.

No. 711.—THE SPORTING PIT-LADS.

By J. S. MELLALIEU.

No. 712.—THE INVINCIBLE TEAM.

By A. S. HARDY.

NOW ON SALE. PRICE 4d.

Cricket Bats and Cameras GIVEN FREE

For a few words! Postcards only!

For full particulars, see this week's

BOYS' CINEMA

The great weekly cinema adventure paper. On sale every Wednesday. Make sure of this week's fine issue NOW.

THE Sexton Blake Library

No. 327.—THE CASE OF THE ECCENTRIC WILL.

No. 328.—THE FARROWSHOT PARK AFFAIR.

No. 329.—THE THIRD KEY; or, The Clue of the Horoscope.

No. 330.—THE VANISHED MILLION; or, In the Land of the Letts.

NOW ON SALE. PRICE 4d.

was wondering what he could possibly do, when suddenly he heard that Mr. Vernon was staying at the principal hotel in the place, and at once his decision was taken.

He went round at once, and asked to see the famous bookmaker. The clerk at the desk did not like the look of Mike, for he was of the vast tribe that judges a man by the clothes he has on his back, not perhaps an altogether unwise way of judging, but certainly risky.

"You tell him it's Mike Hunter," the lad said, "and he'll see me at once."

And Mr. Vernon did.

He came bustling downstairs, his face glowing, and a hand held out.

"Hallo, m'lad!" he cried. "So there you are! Heard you had been looking for me. Come in! Come right in, my lad— But I'm glad to see you!"

Before the astonished eyes of the clerk, the old bookmaker took the boy by the arm and led him to a comfortable chair in the corner of the lounge of the hotel.

"Well, my boy," he said, when they were seated, "and what can I do for you?"

Mike looked his friend in the face. He was a jovial old person, with an honest and pleasing look about him.

"Work!" said Mike.

The man started.

"Eh?"

"I want a job, sir," said Mike. "It's awful being without work!"

Mr. Vernon frowned in sympathy, and gazed long at the lad.

"I bet it is. Fact is, when I was a young man I knew it sometimes myself, Mike, and there is nothing in the world like it for taking the spirit out of one. By the way, what have you done with that hundred?"

Mike smiled.

"Mother was ill, sir," he said; "she's gone away!"

"Good lad!" cried the bookmaker, smacking his knee. "Well, I tell you what, you can come to me!"

"Yes, sir?"

"I'm giving up bookmaking."

"Oh?"

"Yes," said Vernon; "I'm going out to Australia, and I reckon I'll want a secretary, because I'm going to be a very rich man, Mike, I don't mind telling you, and rich men always seem to have secretaries. Dare say I'll learn what to do with one. Fact is, I've had a bit of luck. There was a chap once who owed me a monkey—that's five hundred, you know, and he couldn't pay. Dead now, poor chap. But he was an honest sort of a fellow, and he came to me and gave me a lot of shares in a gold-mine out in Australia. I never took any notice of them. Shoved them away in a drawer at home. People don't give you shares in a gold-mine if they are any good, not likely. And then yesterday morning I opened my morning paper to have a look at the news, and I saw they have found gold in tons, and that I—I am a rich man!"

Mike held his breath.

"What mine is that, sir?"

"Western Australian, Limited," said the bookmaker.

Mike tried to breathe, but he was not very successful. He held on to the side to his chair, to try to stop himself shouting out.

"Would a hundred of them be worth anything, sir?"

Old Vernon threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"Worth anything, Mike?" he said, "Why, they would be worth a good many thousand pounds!"

Mike blinked, swallowed. He could not speak.

"Well, my lad," said Vernon, "what



As Mike peered through the ground floor window at the strange sight two men came rushing out of the office. "Police!" he cried at the top of his strong voice. Then, diving at the nearest man's legs, he brought him tumbling to the ground!

do you say? Will you come with me? Fine country, fine climate, everything all right. Will—"

Mike shook his head.

"It's very kind of you, sir," he said, "but I could not leave my mother!"

The old man nodded.

"Well, that is right," he responded. "If you feel like that, you must act like it. Sorry! You are a good lad, and brave, just the sort of lad to get on hand-over-fist out there, I reckon. Want a job, though? Well, I dare say I can fix you up here. I've got a lot of friends. You come and see me this time to-morrow, and there shall be a good job waiting for you in the old town."

Mike could scarcely speak, he was so excited.

"Thank you, sir!" he said.

Vernon held out a hand.

"That's all right," he said. "You did me a turn I can never repay!"

Mike had just come out of John Fraser's office.

He had a long and rather heated argument with the young solicitor, who had handed him back his two hundred pounds, and had wanted Mr. Fraser to take back the gold-mine shares, or at any rate, share with him the wonderful luck. But Mr. Fraser had been adamant, and had steadfastly refused.

"You saved more than my life, Mike," he said; "and I would be a cur if I took them back!—Go on, boy, you have a good job now in a good firm, and you have money behind you—go on and win!"

And so once again Mike walked out into the streets of his home town, feeling happy and cheerful.

He reached home, and went slowly in. Then suddenly he gave a whoop of joy and surprise.

There sat his mother.

"Mother!" he cried.

The old lady held out her arms and embraced him.

"What are you doing here, mother?" asked Mike.

His mother smiled at him tenderly.

"My dear, I could not stay away another day, worrying about you," she answered tenderly; "and the doctor I had down there said that it was doing me more harm than good, so I came back to look after my boy. Don't be angry with me, Mike; you still have some of the fifty left, and I have some of mine!"

Mike laughed, and kissed her dear white head.

"You dearest old thing, look!"

From his pocket he took the two hundred pounds which Mr. Fraser had just paid him, and he let it run through his fingers in front of his mother's astonished eyes.

"Look, mother!" he said excitedly. "That is what has happened to my fifty—two hundred of the best—"

"Mike!"

"And I've got more," he laughed. "I am worth nearly five thousand pounds, mother; and I've got a good job, too! You are going away to the sea at once to get really well, and we are never going to have another worry in our lives!"

Mrs. Hunter shook the tears from her faded eyes and, putting out her arms, embraced her son tenderly.

THE END.

(Look out for another absorbing yarn next week, chums: "JIM KEELING'S SCOOP!" By James Crichton. This, like the other yarns by this famous author, is ripping, and you cannot afford to miss it.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

THE OPENING INSTALMENT OF A SPLENDID SPORTING SERIAL!



Rivals of the Racecourse!

BY
**ANDREW
GRAY.**

The Most Thrilling
Tale of the Turf
Ever Told!

CHAPTER 1.

A Surprise for Mat!

"HALLO! Good-morning, Mat! Good-morning, Spurrell! Putting the finishing touches on the Stunt for to-morrow, I see!"

A youngster of sixteen and a short, stocky man of sixty, who had been wiping down the slender limbs of a racehorse, straightened their backs as their "gav'nor," Mr. Tom Martingale, appeared in the doorway.

The boy, blue-eyed and brown as a berry, was the trainer's son—young Mat.

Furzedown Training Stables, famous all the world over, would be his some day; but, all the same, he was being made to go through the mill, like any other apprentice, for old Tom was a great believer in every man learning his trade.

Spurrell, the older mah, with wisps of side-whisker and face like a shrivelled nut, was Mr. Martingale's head lad.

"Yes, dad, we're hard at it!" laughed Mat cheerily. "Sir Roger'll have to find something to grumble at this time, I reckon!"

"Ay, that he will!" growled old Spurrell, twisting up a fresh bunch of straw and turning to his task again with loving care.

"Good!" said the trainer. "I've just had a wire from the gentleman, as it happens. He's motoring over to see his horse this afternoon. He's backing the brute heavily this run, so I hope to goodness it doesn't play us up as it did before!"

The trainer eyed the animal as if he was none so sure of him. He was certainly a puzzler, this Stunt of Sir Roger Rackstone's. All last season he had been a level performer of excellent promise. Then his present owner bought him, and put him under old Tom Martingale's charge.

His first engagement had been at Kempton Park. He was tipped everywhere as a certain winner, and to all appearances he was in the very pink of condition.

Yet for some reason his performance was an utter fiasco. He started easy favourite, and finished a bad last, his owner dropping two thousand pounds over him.

The Stunt's second appearance was at Newbury. Again the stable worked like Trojans to get him into tip-top trim.

Sir Roger could have got almost any price he liked against him after his previous collapse; but, to Mr. Martingale's surprise, he refused to back him for a penny.

The horse rolled home an easy winner, as it turned out. So much so that if it had been any other trainer than old Tom Martingale the stewards would certainly have asked him to account for the amazing difference between the two races.

As it was, there was gossip enough. Sir Roger was furious, and almost insulting.

Now, the horse was to run to-morrow at Sandown in the Coronet Stakes, and Mr. Martingale was doubly anxious that he should win.

"But come along, dad," said Mat, taking his father's arm. "There he stands, trained to the nines, and we can't do more. Now let's go and look at our future Derby winner."

Furzedown looked a picture in the perfect sunshine. Row on row of model, red-roofed stables, spick-and-span as toy Noah's Arks, with young chestnut-trees shading the sanded alleys-between.

Mat led the way to the box which held the stable's particular pride and the most talked-of two-year-old of his day.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

Whiplash his name was. There he stood with coat shining like satin, his head turned to see who it was had come to visit him.

Young Mat's eyes glistened as he entered the stall. He had called him proudly "our Derby winner," not without a certain amount of excuse.

There was just a chance that the colt would become his dad's own property before many months were out, and this without paying a penny for him, either.

Whiplash had been the property of the famous Lord Riplade until the latter's death. In the ordinary line of succession the peer's estates passed to his grandson, but whether the heir was alive to receive them was not yet known.

The old Lord Riplade had had his doubts, and so had willed that if the property were still unclaimed within one year of his death, the Whiplash colt was to become the property of Tom Martingale, his lordship's "trusted trainer and esteemed friend."

"But I don't like to hear you always harping on that, Mat, even before Spurrell!" said Mr. Martingale rebukingly, and his youngster's face fell. "Whiplash may fall to me, true enough, but I can't say that it will be the happiest day of my life if he does."

"What!" gasped Mat in surprise. "You don't want to own a Derby winner, dad?"

"Not to own one; train one, if you like," answered his father. "Running first-class racers, unless you mean to back them, means a mint of money. As you know, I never bet; and if I did, it happens that I've a good deal better use for all I've got just now."

He glanced along the fine range of stables as he spoke. Furzedown was the envy of every trainer in the land. Sixty thousand pounds the place had cost him to build, with the pretty, red-roofed house beyond.

He had been able to pay the most of it out of his savings, but the last seven thousand he had had to raise on mortgage.

When this latter was paid up he would be proud and happy as a king, for Furzedown then would be his absolute own.

Mat looked puzzled. He was still only thinking of Whiplash, who was nuzzling Mat's cheek with his velvet nose.

"No one, to see him now, would think he was shy and nervous as a kitten, would they, dad?" he said, hugging the glossy neck affectionately.

"Ah, my boy, there you've hit it!" said old Tom Martingale. "You don't think old Lord Riplade, the best judge of bloodstock on the Turf, was going to leave a colt like that to a mere trainer like me for nothing without a good reason?"

"And what was his reason, dad? His lordship was your friend, anyway."

"Certainly, and I'm right proud of it," answered the trainer; "but he knew, as you do, that the colt is just a bunch of nerves, and that if ever he was taken out of this stable he'd pine himself into his grave. It was the same with his sire before him—Gantry, who won the Derby seven years ago."

Mat answered nothing for a moment.

"So that was how he came to leave him to you, was it?" he said at last. "Lord Riplade did not know that the missing heir to his estates might never be found—"

"Yes, that's it," cut in his father. "This grandson of his, who should step into his property, was last heard of

somewhere in South America seven years ago; but, though they've been ten months on the job, the lawyers have not been able to trace him since."

Mat listened attentively.

"And from what I used to hear of the young scallywag I should say it's quite likely they never will," added Mr. Martingale. "He was as wild as they make them—always in rows, and the sort of young fool who'd get a bullet through him pretty quick in a tough crowd."

"Well, I'm not going so far as to wish him that," laughed Mat, "but if he does choose to keep out of the way another couple of months longer, so that Whiplash comes to you, I shall be glad."

"You will, you young rascal?" said his father grimly. "Well, remember the old saying, and don't count your chickens before they're hatched. Even if he doesn't turn up, there's still one chance that the horse might not fall to me."

"There is?" said Mat, in astonishment. "How?"

"Why, Lord Riplade laid it down in his will that if by any chance I am no longer here at Furzedown when the year is up—"

"You not here?" exclaimed Mat. "What stuff, dad, to talk like that! Why on earth shouldn't you be here?"

"Me? Why, I might be dead, for one thing," said the old trainer, "or ruined and bankrupt, for another."

Mat laughed in open derision at this last notion.

"Ah, my boy," said old Tom Martingale indulgently, "you're young yet. When you've lived as long as I have, though, you'll realise that more curious things than that can happen sometimes. His late lordship was on his guard, at any rate," he added. "His one object was to ensure that Whiplash remained under training at Furzedown, whatever happened; and if by any luck I am not here to take him when the year is up, he passes to someone else who is bound to carry out his lordship's wishes."

"And who is that?"

"Why, a cousin of her ladyship's, and a gentleman you know well," was old Martingale's answer. "The person, in fact, who is coming to look us up this afternoon—Sir Roger Rackstone."

Neither said a word after that. Somehow of late mention of that name always filled them both with a sense of foreboding.

Sir Roger's attitude over the in-and-out running of his horse, the Stunt, had been strangely bitter, and even treacherous. Mr. Martingale knew for a fact that he was saying many ugly things behind his back, and he meant to tell him so when he appeared.

He had not long to wait, as it happened, for already the rush of a big motor was heard along the road. There was a warning hoot, and the car swept through the entrance-gates and came on up the avenue.

Only one man was in it. He alighted, and, seeing old Tom Martingale, came towards him, stuffing his big fur motor-gauntlets into his coat pockets.

The trainer advanced to meet his client none too genially, for Sir Roger had the air of a man who brought not peace, but war.

CHAPTER 2.

The Scene in the Stables!

"**M**AT—Spurrell! Come here!" Tom called out abruptly. "Get out that brute!" he said, pointing to the Stunt as they hurried up. "Take the blankets off him and lead him out!"

The horse was brought forth.

"Now then, Sir Roger," said the trainer, "there is your horse. See for yourself whether he looks fit or not, and then repeat, if you dare, before these lads, what you said just now."

"What have I said, my good fellow?" drawled Sir Roger superciliously. "I have said nothing, except to ask you whether you think my horse absolutely fit to win to-morrow."

"No, no!" cut in Mr. Martingale. "Don't hedge, sir! Out with it, unless you are frightened that I shall make you prove your words!"

Sir Roger's only answer was a contemptuous laugh. Old Tom was a man who could keep his temper in most circumstances, as Mat knew. But it seemed to the youngster as if the other was deliberately trying to make him lose it. That laugh had stung the old man to the quick.

"You won't repeat what you said, then? You refuse? You are frightened?" demanded the trainer, bridding his rage with an effort. "Then I must tell them myself!"

The two lads looked anxious.

"Mat—Spurrell," he went on, turning to the two lads, "this is Sir Roger Rackstone, come to see me about his horse, the Stunt. You know the brute's record as well as I do. But you do not know that Sir Roger is now accusing me to my face of tampering with his horse for my own ends!"

Mat flushed with rage at the mere suggestion of such an accusation.

"Pshaw! I never said anything of the sort!" laughed Sir Roger promptly.

"Yes, you did!" was the blunt reply. "Not in so many words, perhaps, but that was what you meant. Your horse lost his first race, we know. And now you have the impudence to insinuate that it is a plot of mine to rig the betting and get money on myself for the next. You accuse me of doping him, in fact!"

"Doping him!" sneered Sir Roger. "Well, if the cap fits, let it!"

"Fits!" cried old Tom Martingale, lashed to fury. "By Jupiter, there's somebody whose cap won't fit him if he doesn't look out for himself!"

"Indeed! You would threaten me?"

"Ay, and make good my threat, too, if you ever dare to breathe such a charge against me again!" roared the trainer. "I say that you accuse me deliberately of doping your horse. And, not only that, you come to me now pretending you are frightened that I may try the same trick to-morrow. By thunder!" he bellowed, losing all control of himself. "You low-down cad to insult me like this! Apologise for it, do you hear, or I'll horsewhip you out of the gate!"

With a stride and a clutch he seized Sir Roger by the collar, and in another second would have laid his hunting-crop across his shoulders. But, luckily for his owner, the Stunt came to his rescue. Swinging round in fright, it lashed out, causing everybody to scatter to dodge his heels. It served to give old Tom a fresh grip of himself.

"Take that beast back to his box again quick, Sam!" he ordered the head lad. "And you, sir," he went on, confronting his client again, "your horse has saved you. Take the chance, and clear off, too, before I lose my temper again! The Stunt shall go to the post to-morrow as fit as ever a horse was in its life. I'll guarantee that, and I can't do more. But when the race is over, remember, he never sets foot back here again. I've done with him and you, too, for ever!"

Sir Roger Rackstone, black with passion, stood glaring at him.

"Oh," he said at last, "you are, are you? Well, so you may flatter yourself, you impudent old fool! But we shall see! I'll teach you to lay your dirty hands on me, and before all your stable scum, too!" he ran on, almost foaming at the mouth. "I'll hound you down to the gutter, for that, I will!"

It was old Tom Martingale's turn to laugh derisively now.

"Oh, yes, you may grin. You say my horse is fit now, and so he is, as I have seen for myself. But just look out that nothing happens in the night to make him otherwise, or, sure as a gun, to-morrow I'll see you kicked off the Turf as a doper, a swindler, and a fraud! Do you hear me?"

Old Tom could hear right enough, though he looked on the verge of apoplexy. That any man could dare to breathe such a threat against him was beyond his comprehension. With a bellow of rage he made another jump at Sir Roger.

But the latter was no fighter when it came to the push. Swinging round, he half-ran, half-hastened down the alley, between the rows of horse-boxes to where his motor-car stood at the entrance gate.

Grinning faces from under the shadow of stable doorways watched his retreat, as he knew well. Right and left his scowling eyes darted, nevertheless. They seemed to be on the look-out for someone who should be waiting.

At the end box of all he detected a lad's white face staring out at him. Seeing it, Sir Roger turned his own to the front then, a light of relief and vengeance in his dark eyes.

He gained his car, and with a last scowl back at old Martingale, swung over the starting-crank.

Promptly the engine rumbled and purred. He flung himself into the driver's seat, gripped the wheel, and turned the car in a sharp curve. A moment later he was out of the white-painted gates.

But just outside the gate he deliberately pulled off one of the big fur gauntlets he was wearing, and flung it into a patch of gorse beside the road.

"Now, then, you young demon!" he laughed, jerking back his head to see whether the face that had peered out at him from that end stable door was again in view, "find that, and be quick. Give it to the Stunt to-night, and that will complete my first step towards winning Whiplash, the Derby, and ten fortunes besides!"

CHAPTER 3.

A Young Scoundrel!

SURELY Sir Roger had let rage get the better of reason, judging by those last hissed-out words, as he sent his car speeding back along the London Road.

Yet already a vague suspicion had awakened in young Mat's mind that all this bother about the Stunt might

possibly have something to do with his dad's claim upon Whiplash, the Derby colt.

Whether it proved so remained to be seen.

Meantime, someone had certainly run to the entrance-gates, though only to close them, as it looked.

This was Scarfe, the best of all the Furzedown apprentices, and a youngster who was fast making his name as a clever young jockey.

Scarfe had ridden the Stunt for Sir Roger in both his former races, and was to ride him again at Sandown to-morrow.

He closed and bolted one half of the iron gates, and then stepped out into the middle of the road, as if to take a last look at the retreating car.

But no sooner was he out of view of the stables than he darted to the same bushes in which Sir Roger had tossed his glove. He must have known exactly where it was to be thrown. A moment's quick search, and he had found it.

Scarcely had his fingers closed on it, however, than he heard swift footsteps behind him, and knew he was observed.

"Why, hallo, Scarfe! What have you got there?" demanded a voice, and, swinging round, he saw Mat running up to him, with cheeks aglow.

Scarfe, on the other hand, had gone as white as death. He was a couple of years older than Mat, well built, and but for a certain hardness of features, would have been distinctly good-looking.

Mat liked the chap well enough, but not so much as his father, who thought the world of him.

"Eh, you son of a gun," demanded Mat, "what have you got there? A glove? Why, it must belong to that beast who left here just now—Sir Roger Rackstone!"

He tried to take it, but Scarfe whipped it out of his reach.

"Why, what are you doing?" demanded Mat, who, if he was a couple of inches shorter than the other, was, at

any rate, his father's son, and did not mean Scarfe or anyone else to forget it. Besides, the other's manner was so queer.

"Give it up, do you hear?" commanded Mat.

"Sha'n't!" retorted Scarfe, twisting away as Mat tried to snatch it again. "I found it! What the deuce has it got to do with you?"

"With me?" queried Mat, in astonishment. "Why, it's Sir Roger's, I tell you, and I must give it to the guv nor! What do you want to keep it for, anyway? Are you going to send it back to him yourself to curry favour with the dirty sneak? You know the way he's been talking about my father, don't you?"

"Why, yes!" blustered Scarfe.

"Then, if you're any pal of mine, and not of his, give me his rotten old glove and let me heave it into the dustbin!" cried Mat, in boyish fury. "Do you hear? Give it up, or I'll punch you!"

He grappled with the other as he spoke. All his anger at the way Sir Roger Rackstone had spoken to his dad came flaring out now.

It seemed as if Scarfe were siding with the insulting hound, and not with his dad. He flew at Scarfe, and landed him a stinging "cowardly" blow in the chest.

Scarfe was no match for his nimbler adversary with the gloves, if he were an older hand with the reins. Mat's bullet fist slipped over his guard and caught him in the eye. Another second and Mat would have knocked him spinning into the furze-bushes.

Fortunately for Scarfe, however, Mr. Martingale appeared upon the scene.

The sight of the apprentice's puffed cheek aroused the trainer's wrath. He was already seething over Sir Roger's treatment of him.

So he snatched at Mat's collar and jerked him backwards.

"You young fool, what the dickens do you think you are doing?" he demanded, bringing his hunting-crop down on his boy's shoulders. "Do you know that Scarfe is riding for us to-morrow, and yet you go lashing into him as if

you were trying to break his ribs!"

Again the whip thudded on Mat's shoulders, and then, with a swing, his dad sent him flying into the same prickly bed from which Scarfe had just escaped.

"What was it about, Scarfe?" demanded Mr. Martingale with a roar.

"What set him at you in that fashion?"

"Why, I found this glove, sir," answered the apprentice. "That was all. Mat wanted to snatch it from me, and I wouldn't let him."

He held out the bearskin gauntlet frankly enough. But he had finished with it by this time. A tiny paper packet which had been concealed in the thumb was now safe in his pocket.

What it contained was another matter. Scarfe could not have told himself. But it was a drug given him thus mysteriously by Sir Roger Rackstone for a certain purpose, and the young hypocrite knew that purpose well.

"It was my fault, really, sir, that we had a scrap," he went on, without turning a hair. "I ought to have given it up. I made Mat lose his temper."

"Indeed!" said old Martingale, taking the glove from him. "Why, it belongs to that scoundrel who has just gone."

He turned and looked at Mat as if he knew now why his son had been fighting. Perhaps Scarfe had made some sneering remark, though that was hardly likely, for he could swear the youngster was loyal to the core.

It was not old Tom Martingale's way, however, to apologise. He turned, without another word, and strode back through the gates. Scarfe looked down for a moment at Mat's face, so burning hot with resentment.

His own expression was a baffling one. No one, to look at him, would ever have believed that he was going to lend himself that night to the dirtiest act of treachery possible on the Turf. And all to help a villain to ruin one who had been as kind as any father to him; who had adopted him, clothed him, and apprenticed him, without ever receiving a penny of pay.

Certainly young Mat never suspected anything. He had spoken up like a Briton, and confessed that the row was his fault.



"You low-down cad to accuse me of doping!" roared Tom Martingale. "Apologise for it, do you hear, or I'll horsewhip you out of the gate!" The trainer would have carried out his threat had not the Stunt swung round and lashed out just at that moment.

THE STUNT COMES TO THE RESCUE OF SIR ROGER RACKSTONE!

"Mat, old son," said Scarfe, in a voice thrilling with regret, "I'm awfully sorry I landed you into trouble. I don't know why I didn't give you the glove straight off. It must have been the snappy way you asked for it."

"Perhaps I did!" groaned Mat. "Only I saw it must have been dropped by that brute Rackstone, and I was so sick with the beast for the way he cheeked my dad."

"And don't you think I wasn't, too?" demanded Scarfe smoothly. "Why, I bet I was just as mad as you. The man's a rotten outsider, who ought never to run racers if he can't lose like a gentleman."

"Hear, hear!" said Mat. "It isn't the gov'nor's fault that that wretched beast of his wins one day and loses the next. Everything is done to turn him out fit."

"Of course it is," assented Scarfe. "And I told Sir Roger so myself pretty sharp when he began yapping at me for winning that last time."

"Yapping at you for winning!" laughed Mat bitterly. "That just shows the sort of outsider he is, doesn't it? Oh, well, let the cur go!" he added, regaining his feet. "If he thinks the gov'nor could ever be guilty of doping a beast, he's the only one in the world who does, I swear!"

"Rather!" chimed in Scarfe. "Your dad is the finest, straightest—yes, and kindest man in the world, for all he's done for me!"

Mat was so touched by this tribute that he gripped the other's hand and shook it. Then they went back to bed down their horses for the night.

The Stunt's stable was one of those of which Scarfe had charge. The moment he was alone the apprentice fished out of his pocket the tiny package he had extracted from the finger of Sir Roger's glove.

A grin spread over his sallow face as he inspected it. He had handled just such another as this before, that time the Stunt "went down" at Kempton Park.

"And now he's going down wollop again to-morrow," grinned Scarfe. "And fifty quid is all I'm to get for 'downing' him. Eh? Fifty quid!" he leered. "I'll watch it! No, Sir Roger, I mean to have a bigger finger in the pie than that before I've done with you. What your game is quite beats me. But I'll get on with it, so don't you kid yourself, and then I'll make you pay well for my services. Eh, you ugly lump of catmeat!" he laughed, viciously landing the Stunt a punch in the ribs which made the brute jump and scramble away. "I'm talking about your blessed owner, I am. He's given me a little dose of medicine to pop into you between now and the morning. Just see you don't give me away when I come, or, by hooky—"

The horse made another frightened scramble as Scarfe lifted his fist again. But the apprentice only treated him to another triumphant leer, and then left the stable.

CHAPTER 4.

Just Before the Dawn!

OLD Tom Martingale lay tossing on his bed, feverish with the excitements of that day and the possibilities of to-morrow.

More than ever that vague sense of foreboding gripped him. It was as if a mighty crash was coming somehow to shatter him and all he had wrought for through life.

"Here, I can't stand this!" he groaned at last. "I must get up and get out into the open."

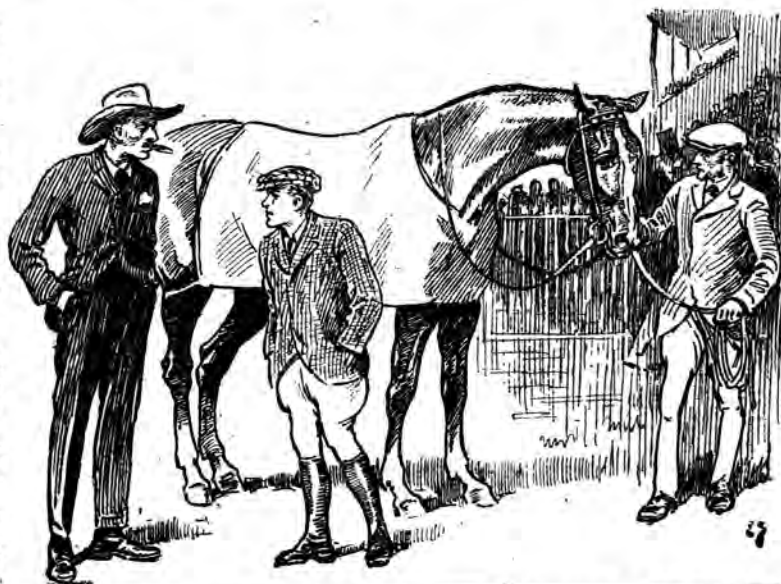
He dressed and went out. It was the cold, keen hour that comes before the dawn. There was an ache in the air, yet there was promise in the stars of another brilliant day to come.

All seemed quiet, then suddenly, from the end stable in one of the rows, came a restless stamp of hoofs.

"That sounds like the Stunt," the trainer thought, and bent his steps towards the spot.

But he did not hurry, for a moment later all was quiet again.

"Only a rat running round his manger, perhaps. How I wish to goodness I had never taken the brute into my place! He's been a regular Jonah to me; and as for Rackstone—"



"About this yar Stunt!" said the stranger from America. "Is it the goods? I've put my shirt on it, that's all—at least, one tail of it." "Well," answered Mat, in a friendly way, "my father trained him, and up to last night the brute was as fit as ever a horse was in its life!"

Old Tom Martingale ground his heel down into the gravel, as if he wished his enemy's neck were under it.

"Bah!" he said contemptuously. "Why should I let the blackguard worry me like this? I've done nothing except my duty by his wretched screw. All this pretence that I doped him is his bluff, or else he's mad. Yet why should he bluff? And why blurt that out about ruining me, and bringing me to the gutter?"

The trainer paced on. He trod softly outside Whiplash's box, for the slightest noise at night would scare the highly-strung beast out of his wits. Still, there was not a sound.

Arriving at the Stunt's box he produced his private master-key, that fitted every lock in the stables, and pushed open the door. A glimmer of light from his electric torch showed the beast stretched on the floor asleep.

"Whoa, lad! Steady!" said old Tom caressingly, as the horse lifted his head to stare at him. "I only want to make sure that nobody is playing monkey-tricks with you. But you're all right, I see. Steady, lad! Down!"

As he closed the stable door behind him he saw in the east the first grey tinge of approaching dawn. The thought that it would soon be daylight brought him peace. The sense of foreboding lifted.

Old Tom Martingale turned away, feeling suddenly drowsy—so drowsy, in fact, that he forgot to lock the stable door behind him. He clicked the latch, but that was all.

"Crums!" gasped a voice, as soon as he had turned the corner. "Am I dreaming, or has the old fool been walking in his sleep, or what?"

A skulking figure had been watching the trainer all the time apparently.

It was Scarfe, who was also on the prowl about the stables, but who, on hearing footsteps, had popped into an empty rain-butt just in the nick of time.

So there was a reason for that stamping of hoofs in the Stunt's stable, after all!

Now that his master had vanished, and all danger was over, Scarfe hoisted himself out of his hiding-place, and scuttled along silently in the shadow to the Stunt's door.

He swept his hands over the panels where the keyhole should be, and suddenly his fingers snapped on something. Another sharp gasp of triumph escaped him.

"Well, of all the blessed luck!" he exclaimed in glee. "why, it's his own master-key! The old fool has left it in the lock to prove he's been here in the night. He's absolutely walked into our trap up to his blessed neck!"

CHAPTER 5.

The Fury of the Mob!

"SIX to four the fee-old! Six to four the fee-old! Two's the Stunt; the Stunt's on two's. Six to four the fee-old! Don't keep the old firm waiting, gents! Roll up—roll up!"

It was Bonnie Sandown Park, looking bonnier than ever
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

in the glorious sunshine. Smartly frocked women flitted like swarms of butterflies over the stands and enclosures. Everybody who counted in the sporting world was there, while the betting rings were doing a roaring trade.

The numbers had just gone up for the Coronet Stakes. Six horses were to run, and the Stunt was among the starters all right, in spite of a rumour that had just been flying round that the favourite was off colour, and likely to be scratched.

"Scratched! What, the Stunt? Punkum!" was all the thanks the first man got who came bursting into the paddock with the news.

"Oh, all right! You just look at him!" he retorted. "They're bringing him in now. Besides, where's old Martingale, if he's really fit? He hasn't been near the brute all the morning."

This was true. Old Tom, who was invariably one of the most prominent and popular figures round Tattersall's or the paddock, had scarcely been seen by a soul on this occasion.

"That youngster of his is here, though," said someone. "I saw him round the stables just now, and precious queer he looked. So there may be something in it."

However, at this moment the Stunt was seen being led into the enclosure by Spurrell, the Farzedown head lad. He, too, looked pale and dazed.

The Stunt's owner paced beside, while young Mat Martingale followed after, casting despairing glances round the onlookers in the hope of seeing his father there at last.

"A piece of dashed impertinence, I call it! What the dickens does your father mean, leaving a boy like you to superintend a job that he ought to be doing himself?" insisted Sir Roger Rackstone, when it was found that there was still no sign of Mr. Martingale.

Young Mat could not give any reason.

"No; but I can!" snarled Sir Roger, wild with rage. "He's been playing his Kempton Park tricks again, that's what it comes to. Only this time he's overdone it, and made it too palpable. Just look at the brute!"

"I don't know what you mean, sir!" protested Mat hotly.

"You don't? Then lucky for you if you can prove that!" laughed Sir Roger viciously, turning away; but only to be buttonholed by racing friends, who were anxious to hear the truth of these rumours.

"Truth, my dear boys!" answered Sir Roger. "I tell you frankly that though the Stunt is mine, I know no more about him than you do. I've backed him, and that's all I know. For the rest, I am in the hands of the stable."

The sneer was unmistakable. They saw young Mat flush crimson. But they were unstrapping the cloths from the favourite now, and there was a rush to inspect him.

The brute's eyes had been dull enough to look at, but now his coat, staring and lustreless, confirmed every suspicion.

Mat himself was horrified and ashamed to see it. The Stunt seemed to be going more and more "off colour" every minute.

"But are you still intending to race him like that?" asked one of Sir Roger.

The latter turned and indicated Mat.

"There is the representative of my stable," he jeered. "I have to depend on brats of sixteen nowadays for my expert advice. He assures me, out of his vast experience, that the brute was as fit as a fiddle when he started out from home, and so does the other one who rides him—Scarfe."

Mat would have let fly in self-defence of this. But his position was bewildering.

"Oh, how I wish dad was here!" he groaned in despair. "What on earth can he be up to? He knew this morning that the brute didn't look as fit as last night. The more reason, then, why he shouldn't slide off like this."

He moved restlessly to the paddock gate to look out among the crowd. Sam Spurrell was a trusty old hand, and would look after the saddling.

Suddenly Mat caught sight of a rough-looking man, who was eyeing him closely. He was dressed in sea-stained, faded blue clothing, a grey flannel shirt and collar, while his headgear was the most incongruous thing of all about him for such swagger surroundings. For it was a regular Wild West cowboy hat, with a wide soft brim shading his sun-tanned face.

Mat put him down to be about forty at first. But when the stranger stepped forward and came towards him he saw that he would have been nearer the mark if he had set him at half that age.

"Say, younker, you'll 'scuse me, perhaps, but—"

The stranger hesitated while he again fixed Mat Martingale with a pair of grey, searching eyes.

"But what?" demanded Mat.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 844.

"Why, it's about this yar Stunt," continued the other in a strong American accent. "No, don't get riled and turn me down," he broke off, as Mat flashed upon him a savage glare. "I've put my shirt on him, that's all—at least, one tail of it!"

Mat looked at the stranger in surprise.

"But there's rumours kinder buzzing around, I notice," went on the American. "And seeing you looking as if you were in charge of the galoot—"

"You thought I'd give you the friendly tip, so that you could save that one tail of shirt with the other, perhaps. Is that it?" said Mat, for there was something about the fellow that he liked. "Well, I do know everything about the Stunt, as it happens. My father trained him, and you can take it from me that up to last night the brute was as fit as ever a horse was in its life."

"But now?" queried the other.

"Now you must judge for yourself. If I was a betting chap, though, I'd back him to my last cent."

Mat's eyes flashed as he said it. He was thinking more of Sir Roger Rackstone then, however. The latter's sneers had so stung him that he only wished he had had a thousand pounds of his own, so that he could have put it all on the Stunt, and in this way prove the stable's good faith.

"Well, now," drawled the young man in the cowboy hat, "that's no slouch of a tip, I reckon, from first hand, and I'm mighty obliged to you for giving it me. I'll wish you so-long for the present, younker, and p'raps I may see you again."

Before Mat had time to grasp just what sort of a tip it was exactly that he had given the fellow, the other had gone striding away in the direction of the betting rings.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Mat, pulling himself together. "Why, what have I done now? The silly ass is off to back the brute again with the rest of his cash. And he'll lose it, sure as a gun. The Stunt's clean off as anyone can see. And I've made it look as if I thought he was bound to win. Here, hi!"

Without stopping to think how Sam Spurrell might be needing him, Mat Martingale set off in pursuit. With such a hat to guide him, it should have been an easy chase.

Yet Mat pushed his way on and on, and still there was no sign of the flapping sombrero anywhere ahead.

"And he looked like a poor chap, too," thought Mat in despair. "He might have worked his passage over on a cattle-boat, by the cut of his hair. And now I've probably made him lose all his savings."

He hurried on past all the betting-rings, keeping a despairing eye open for his father as well. What had become of the latter he could not think.

At the first breath that the Stunt had "gone wrong" his dad seemed to stagger as if a fist had struck him. From that moment he had scarcely answered a question even. Then he had vanished.

Mat was far past the stand and enclosures now, threading his way through the "shilling crowd" strung out along the rails.

He was just pausing to turn back in despair when who should he see standing with chin on breast, staring into vacancy, but his father, old Tom Martingale.

"Dad!" cried Mat, rushing up to him. Yet it was a moment or so before his father seemed to realise who he was. "Dad," Mat pleaded, with a voice quivering with anxiety, "for goodness' sake don't go on like this! You frighten me! Tell me what is wrong, won't you?"

"Wrong!" echoed the trainer, and then flared out in a rage. "Can't you see that for yourself, you young fool, without asking me? Look at the Stunt—just look at him!"

A welcoming roar of voices had burst forth, and there was a rush of the crowd to the rails. The horses for the Coronet Stakes were already coming cantering by to the starting-point.

Last of all came the Stunt, with a low, swinging stride. Scarfe in the saddle, looking all the paler, perhaps, with Sir Roger's flaming "crimson" that he was wearing.

But the crowd was not critical. The Stunt's owner, at any rate, was known to be backing him heavily, and that was enough for them. So they gave the beast a rousing cheer as he went galloping by. "Mr. Martingale only groaned."

Mat said no more. The old man's snub had hurt him; but it was not that so much. He, too, had been over-weighted all that day with a ghastly sense of foreboding, as if the end of all things was silently yet swiftly rushing upon them both.

His dad had swung away from him in savage despair. Mat watched him, but did not follow.

And then suddenly a shout went up:

"They're off!"

The race had started, and the jostling at the rails began afresh.

Carried away by the excitement of the moment, Mat butted in under a big man's elbow, and tried to squeeze a view of the course. The crowd shoved and surged.

"Here they come! Hats off in front there, and give someone else a chance, can't you?" appealed the back-rankers vainly. But the lucky ones only had eyes for the oncoming race.

"Jaquelin's leading!" Mat heard them shout. "And who's pink-and-blue, lying next? Black Arrow, ain't it? And Ting-a-ring on the rails, and Yellow Hammer. But where's old Stunt?"

Yes, where was the Stunt? That was what Mat wanted most to know.

He, by this time, had managed to ram his head, at any rate, into some view of the proceedings.

And the wretched beast was last, of course, as he might have expected. There he was, tailing along like a rheumy old cab-horse, without a spark of spring in him, while Scarfe was plying whip and spur like a madman.

"Hurrah! Fetch him along, lad! The Stunt! The Stunt!" roared his backers, feeling they must shout something, yet plainly agast.

For already an angry murmuring was sounding like the first note of a bursting squall. Mat's heart stood still. He knew what it meant—and who, after all, could blame them?

"Strike a light! Just look at him!" a great, blubbery brute with a high-pitched voice suddenly squeaked, giving tongue to the rest. "Call that a 'oss? Why, he's been doped, that's what it is! They've nobbled him. 'E's drunk, or walking in his sleep!"

Some laughed who had not backed the favourite; but those who had, raged. They broke back from the rails as if to seek someone on whom to wreak vengeance.

"It's the same game as Kempton Park!" yelled one wild-eyed rough, recalling the Stunt's first unaccountable failure.

"Yes; and then they let 'im win at Newbury, and now they're doing it on us again!" answered another shrilly.

"No; it's the stable, that's 'oo it is! It's old Martingale!" shouted the first, who looked like an out-of-work book-maker's "pug." "Let's go and find him, boys! He's up round the rings somewhere. I can spot him. We'll give him Stunt!"

Already a mob of them were breaking away, intent on vengeance; but none fought more wildly to be first in the hunt than Mat.

He must stand shoulder to shoulder with his dad, or these brutes might lynch him. Where had he got to again? he wondered. He was close by only a moment ago.

Scarcely had the question shaped itself in his mind than he suddenly found himself running full tilt into the very victim the crowd were hunting.

"Dad, get out of this quick, for mercy's sake!" he said hoarsely, catching the trainer's arm to drag him along. "They're coming after you! Hide your face in your collar!"

Fortunately, the mob would never dream of finding Tom Martingale so near, so there was yet a chance.

But, to Mat's horror, his dad, so far from trying to escape, flung him contemptuously aside.

"What! Hide my face—me?" thundered the old trainer, confronting the yelling pack. "Is it Tom Martingale you're looking for—eh? Well, I'm your man. So now your business!"

The roughs fell back in amazement. They had not expected to corner their quarry so easily as this. At most they thought to see him safe behind the railings in one of the rings, where they could look at him over the shoulders of the police.

Booing was about all most of them were game for; but the bookmaker's pug came at the trainer with his teeth showing like a bulldog's.

"So you're Martingale, are you?" he roared. "And that was your horse, the Stunt, and you've been dopin' 'im to swindle us!"

"What, you bound?" choked old Tom. "You dare to repeat that vile lie again? I am Tom Martingale, as I told you straight, and I've nothing to hide."

"Then why are you skulking here away from your swell friends—eh? Why ain't you with Sir Roger Rackstone now, 'elpin' 'im to lead in his winner he's paid you to train?" demanded the squeaky-voiced man from the back ranks of the crowd.

"Because——" began old Tom. But too late. The crowd had seized on the point. They jeered, they hooted, and hustled.

"Over with 'im! Turn 'im up and shake 'im, so we can get some of our shiners back, p'raps!" yelled one of the toughest.

The bookie's pug, who all this time had been marking his quarry like a watchdog, danced in at this.

"Back, you scum!" threatened old Tom, flourishing his cane. "I've enough to bear to-day——"

But the brute had already made a smashing hit at him, and the trainer went reeling, not backwards, but to one side. Nor was it the blow that sent him staggering, either, but his own boy, Mat.

He had thrust his dad away, and taken his place. The bully, punching wildly at empty air, came plunging over him, whereat Mat dealt him an upper-cut and an overarm jab which made him blink and stagger to his knees.

"No, by gosh, you don't!" cried the trainer breathlessly. "Back, Mat! Out of this! I'll fight my own battles! Come on, you curs!" he challenged the crowd. "Twelve to one, if you like!"

The roughs accepted with a roar, and before Mat got one punch fairly home he was down, and being trampled on mercilessly. Old Tom did not long survive him, though he battled like a Trojan.

He crashed to earth, too, with a dozen on top of him. The yelling, hooting mob surged over them.

"Help! Police!" cried Mat, kicking and punching out blindly.

He knew the temper of the racing riff-raff too well. They would murder his dad, perhaps, before they had done.

And then suddenly the air was split by what sounded like a revolver-shot close by. Mat felt the roughs on top of him cower and shrink at the sound. Again came a mighty double crack, making the eardrums sing.

It must be some lunatic firing off a six-shooter in the excitement of the moment. Mat's assailants waited no longer, but clambered off him with a panic-stricken gasp.

Nemesis had already overtaken them, however. From the way the hooligans leapt into the air and shrieked they might well have been struck by bullets. Mat jumped to his feet in double-quick time, in case it might be his own turn next.

Then he saw who it was who had come to their rescue in such timely fashion. It was the stranger in the cowboy hat who had accosted him at the paddock gate.

Crack, crack, crack!

Like lightning he was clearing a wide ring about them—not with a revolver, though, but with a stock-whip!

(Mat and his father had been rescued from the race-course pugs. But that was not all. The Stunt had not run up to expectations—who was responsible? He sure you read next week's long thrilling instalment of this powerful serial, chums!)

Earn spare cash with Fretwork

Every boy can turn out splendid articles in Fretwork in his spare time. A Hobbies complete British Outfit can be bought from 4/- to 57/6, and free designs are given every week with Hobbies. Little practice is needed before you can sell what you make, and so earn more money.

Get this Catalogue

The 1924 Catalogue contains 200 pages and illustrates over 500 designs. All tools, materials and prices are given and a China Cabinet design free. Price 9d. complete or 1/- Post Free.

A 1/6 Design Free!

Write now to Department 34.
HOBBIES, Ltd., DEREHAM, NORFOLK.
Branches or Agents in every town.



Yours for 3^d. ONLY.

The "Big Ben" Keyless Lever Watch on THE GREATEST BARGAIN TERMS ever put before the British Public by one of LONDON'S OLDEST-ESTABLISHED MAIL ORDER HOUSES.



Free An absolutely FREE Gift of a Solid Silver English Hall-marked Double Gurb Albert with Seal attached, given FREE with every Watch.

SPECIFICATION: Gent's Full-size Keyless Lever Watch, improved action; fitted patent recoil click, preventing breakage of mainspring by overwinding. **10 YEARS' WARRANTY**

Sent on receipt of 5d deposit; after approval, send 1/- more. The balance may then be paid by 9 monthly payments of 2/- each. Cash refunded in full if dissatisfied. Send 3d now to

J. A. DAVIS & CO.

(Dept. 87), 26 Denmark Hill, London, S.E. 6.



By Appointment to
H.M. Queen
Alexandra.

*It speaks
for itself—
"My
Goodness!"*

**SHARP'S
SUPER-KREEM
TOFFEE**



HEIGHT COUNTS

in winning success. Let the Girvan System increase your height. Wonderful results. Send P.C. for particulars and our £100 guarantee to Enquiry Dept., A.M.P., 17, Stroud Green Road, London, N. 4.

RIDE A BIKE

The Royal Imperial High-Grade Cycle all British Built. Guaranteed for 12 months £4 19s. 6d. Carriage Paid. Gradual payments arranged. Write to-day for Free List.—Watts (Dept. C.), Eccles New Rd., Salford.

*When Answering Advertisements
Please Mention This Paper.*

400
MODEL
\$5.5^s
CASH



**2/6
Weekly**

Is all you pay for our No. 400A lady's or gentleman's Mead "Marvel"—the finest cycle ever offered on such exceptionally easy terms. Built to stand hard wear. Brilliantly plated; richly enamelled, exquisitely lined in two colours. Sent packed free, carriage paid on

15 DAYS' FREE TRIAL. Fully warranted. Prompt delivery. Money refunded if dissatisfied. Big bargains in slightly factory soiled mounts. Tyres and Accessories 33 1/3% below shop prices. Buy direct from the factory and save pounds.

How a seven-year-old MEAD which had traversed 75,000 miles beat 650 up-to-date machines and broke the world's record by covering 34,556 miles in 355 days is explained in our art catalogue. Write TO-DAY for free copy—brimful of information about bicycles and contains gigantic photographs of our latest models

MEAD CYCLE CO. (INC.)
(Dept. B797)
Birmingham

50-Shot Automatic Repeater Pea Pistol

New and Improved Pattern.

Complete with ammunition 2/8 post free. 12 shot Automatic 1/8 post free. Extra ammunition 2d. per box.

SCOUT CAMERA.—Every Camera guaranteed to take photographs. Complete with plates, chemicals, and complete instructions, 2/8 post free. Illustrated catalogue free on request. Our guarantee: **SATISFACTION OR CASH REFUNDED.**

BENNETT BROS.,

37, RED LION STREET, HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C. 1

120 DIFF. STAMPS FREE including Br., Fr. and Port. Colonies, Persia, Cuba, etc. Ask for Blue List for approval. No. 695 and send postage.—B. L. Coryn, 10, Watte Great, Whitestable, Kent.

MY GREAT OFFER

I supply the finest Coventry built cycles from £5-5-0 cash, or 2/- weekly. Any cycle sent **ON 14 DAYS' APPROVAL, PACKED FREE AND CARRIAGE PAID**, on receipt of small deposit. Write for **FREE BARGAIN LIST**. Satisfaction or Money Refunded.

O'Brien The World's Largest Cycle Dealer.
Dept. 22, COVENTRY.



YOURS for 6^d.



This handsome full-sized Gent's Lever Watch sent upon receipt of 6d. After approval send 1/- more, the balance may then be paid by 8 monthly instalments of 2/- each. Guaranteed 5 years. Chain Free with every watch. Ladies' or Gent's Wrist Watches in stock on same terms. Cash returned in full if dissatisfied. Send 6d. now to—**SIMPSON'S (BRIGHTON) Ltd. (Dept. 1221)**
94, Queen's Road, Brighton, Sussex.

SALE! SALE!!
WIRELESS

Complete CRYSTAL RECEIVING SETS **Now Only 2/9 Post Free** (Tested and Guaranteed). Thousands Sold. Order NOW.
KEN'S, 91, MOORE PARK ROAD, LONDON, S.W.

FREE! 25 BULGARIA Stamps to those sending postage (abroad 6d.) and asking to see Approval Sheets.—**M. FLORICK, 179, Asylum Road, Peckham, London, S.E. 15.**

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, **UNION JACK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.**