

ANOTHER GREAT STORY OF POPULAR TOM MERRY & CO. IN THIS
ISSUE.

The GEM 2^d

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

No. 352.
Vol. XXV.
June 7th,
1924.

LIBRARY OF
SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES



THE PRICE OF SILENCE!

Cutts' IOU seals Trimble's tongue—for the moment! (A tense situation between senior and junior, taken from the grand, long, complete school story "UNDER TRIMBLE'S THUMB!" 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.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

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

MY DEAR CHUMS,—There is a lot of pleasure in looking forward to something one wants. Some say that anticipation is the best part, but that is surely an exaggeration. But I know from many letters to hand that Wednesday morning, when the GEM comes out, is an occasion always regarded with eagerness. Next week's issue is prime, and the long St. Jim's yarn is just so much certain enjoyment.

"CARDEW—THE CRICKETER!"

By Martin Clifford.

This is the treat for our new number. I am just obeying orders by publishing this special story about Cardew. Numerous readers have written to me of late urging me to do so. It is a tip-top tale. Cardew is met with, as dry and humorous as ever, in his extraordinary way. There is something of the oyster about Cardew. He knows when to shut up, but he comes out of his habitual reserve this time, and presents a surprise to a good many fellows, including even the seniors. Cardew turns out for the junior eleven. There is more than meets the eye in this decision on his part. St. Jim's has suffered a good deal of late from the actions of certain spoilsports. In order to read these black sheep a richly merited lesson Cardew puts all he knows into his

bowling which is something deadly, and thanks to his grand play the juniors win a thumping victory. It is safe to say that the triumph of Cardew on the cricket-field will long be remembered. The yarn is a real winner—like Cardew himself.

THE DERBY.

A chum who lives in Australia asks me to tell him something about the famous race on Epsom Downs which takes place this week. Well, it is impossible to give any idea of the wonderful scene in a few lines. The Derby is the great classic popular race of the year, and every year as summer comes round the picturesque writers in the newspapers say that everybody goes to it. Most likely a few people do stay away, but anyway, the stretching Downs are pretty well packed with enthusiasts. The Derby is a great race, but it also means a splendid holiday for thousands. It is a grand carnival with all the fun of the fair. The gipsies are found there, and the funny men on stilts, and folks take their lunches and bivouac on the grassy slopes of the hills, from which you can descry the sea if it is a clear day. No wonder the Londoner dotes on the Derby, for it means to him a day in the country, with pots of excitement thrown in.

THE "ST. JIM'S NEWS."

Be sure you look out for this feature in our next issue. I have just been reading a glowing tribute to the supplement from a reader overseas who says he likes it no end. I fancy this opinion echoes the feelings of all Gemites, for you get in the bright little "St. Jim's News" just those taking bits of information that Mr. Martin Clifford is unable to tuck into his yarns. Space is precious, but I trust there will always be room for Tom Merry's pithy little journal. It is one of those things that are wanted.

TAKING A DISAPPOINTMENT!

A correspondent who says the GEM is the best—it is, too!—tells me of a disappointment he has met with over his magazine. He wrote to me some time back asking for advice on how to start this magazine. The paper boomed along splendidly, and then he was moved into another class, and the venture came to an end. There are two ways of looking at this matter. My chum went up, and the magazine went down, but it had done its bit, I am sure. As for disappointments in a general way the real character comes out in the way such experiences are taken. To smile over a set-back is equal to taking out an insurance policy against anything further of the sort happening.

"THE BATTLING BURGLAR!"

By Edgar Sayers.

Dick Dennison, amateur boxer and athlete, plays a noteworthy part in this stirring complete yarn for next Wednesday. Dick's place is burgled, and he and his trainer, "Rough" Hart, make a very surprising capture. You will relish the real tingling excitement of this fine story. Things happen when least expected, and though your sympathies are not a bit likely to go out to burglars as a race, you will find that circumstances alter the case. Wait for Wednesday, and find out what the Battling Burglar was about, and the whole reason for his action. It is something worth knowing.

THAT BAD TEMPER!

There is a question about going off the deep end in a rage in my budget of letters, but really the answer might be found attached to the query if it were looked for. My correspondent asks whether it is not perfectly excusable to "boil over" under certain conditions? Excusable it may be. Wise it seldom is. Of course, a flash of anger may be reasonable enough, but it is the constant ebullitions of ill temper which give the show away. My chum says he cannot help getting into a rage at times. I feel, however, that he has grasped the fact that these occasions ought to be very few and far between. It is the even-tempered fellow who gets on best in the world.

"RIVALS OF THE RACECOURSE!"

By Andrew Gray.

A record instalment of this fine serial will appear next week. The brilliant yarn rips along with the interest piling up in best fashion.

OUR NEW SERIAL.

Be on the qui vive for the grand story which will follow the present one. I am not giving the secret away at present, for we have time yet, but I may say that I have given a lot of time and thought to the consideration of the coming treat. It is bound to please GEM readers, for in making my selection I have been guided mainly by opinions which come in. A large section of supporters are keen on old romance, but detective work and sporting adventure have their votaries. Well, there is no chance of meeting the wishes of everybody at one and the same moment, but I can assure you in my decision about the new serial I have done my best to fall in with the views of my chums.

THE TUCK HAMPER.

By the way, I should be glad if everybody would remember that this free and open competition is still inviting winners. Send in your brightest yarnlets to the Editor, the GEM, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

Your Editor.

Gerald Cutts, the



GERALD CUTTS along the hurled open terrific crash Cutts seemed wr. There were three Manners and Low open.

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THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 852.

Gerald Cutts, the "sportsman" of the Fifth, falls right into the hands of the treacherous Baggy Trimble, who does not fail to make capital out of the wonderful opportunity afforded him!



UNDER TRIMBLE'S THUMB!

A New and Amusing Long Complete
School Story of Popular Tom Merry
& Co. at St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1. Exit Cutts!

GERALD CUTTS of the Fifth Form of St. Jim's came along the Shell passage in the School House and hurled open the door of Tom Merry's study with a terrific crash.

Cutts seemed wrathful.

There were three juniors in the study—Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther. They jumped as the door crashed open.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Cutts strode in.

"Where is he?" he demanded.

"Who, what, or which?" inquired Monty Lowther politely.

"I'm looking for Trimble."

"Look a little further, then," suggested Manners. "And next time you butt into a study where you're not wanted knock at the door first!"

"Don't they knock at the doors, Cutts, in the slum where you belong?" inquired Monty Lowther.

"I don't want any cheek!" roared Cutts.

"Well, we don't want any," remarked Tom Merry mildly.

"But we're getting it. Shut the door after you, will you?"

"I'm looking for Trimble."

"Bother Trimble, and bother you!" said Tom impatiently.

"I suppose you know that Trimble doesn't belong to this study, as he's in the Fourth Form. Get out!"

"Look here—"

"Get out!" repeated the Terrible Three with one voice.

Cutts of the Fifth glared at the three juniors. He was evidently in a rage, and disposed to hand them something more drastic than a glare. But the Terrible Three had just come in from cricket, and Tom Merry had brought his bat with him. He took a businesslike grip on the cane handle of the bat, with the obvious intention of using it if Cutts followed up his glare with more drastic proceedings. So Cutts of the Fifth thought better of it.

"Are you getting out?" inquired Tom Merry. "The fact is, Cutts, you're rather shady company, and we don't want you in this study."

"We've got our reputation to think of," explained Monty Lowther. "And we really don't want any tips about geegies!"

"We don't play banker or nap," added Manners. "Really, Cutts, we're not in your line at all. Good-bye!"

Cutts of the Fifth breathed hard.

"I've come here for Trimble!" he said.

"You're welcome to him, if you can find him," said Tom Merry. "I don't see him myself. Not that we'd let you bully Trimble, if he were here. Trimble's rather a worm, but that's no bizney of yours. If Trimble were here we wouldn't let you touch him. And he's not here. So travel."

"You're hiding him!" roared Cutts.

"Bow-wow!"

"Trimble's been in my study," said Cutts of the Fifth more calmly. "I've laid in tuck for tea with some fellows in the Fifth. Trimble's bagged the cake!"

Tom Merry & Co. grinned. They understood now why Gerald Cutts was so wrathful, though they did not concern themselves about it in the least. The bully of the Fifth had no terrors for Study No. 10.

"Well, that sounds like Trimble," assented Tom Merry. "Trimble's got a wonderful nose for cake. Still, I don't see why even Trimble should be found guilty simply because you've missed a cake."

"He was seen to leave my study with the cake under his arm!" hooted Cutts. "St. Leger saw him. I've been to his study, but he's dodged me. He came in here!"

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Tom. "Can't you see that he's not here? You've got eyes, if you haven't any sense, I suppose."

"He was seen to dodge into this study only a few minutes ago. Racke of the Shell saw him, and he's told me!"

"Perhaps Racke was pulling your leg. Anyhow, Trimble's not here, and we're fed-up with you. Get out!"

"Look here—"

"Travel!"

Tom Merry lifted the bat. Monty Lowther picked up the poker, and Manners annexed the fire shovel. Thus equipped with weapons of war the Terrible Three advanced upon Gerald Cutts.

"You cheeky young rotters!" gasped Cutts. "I'm not going without that cake!"

"Buzz off!"

Gerald Cutts backed away from the bat, the shovel, and the poker. The big Fifth-Former was a good match for any one, or two, of the Shell fellows—but the three of them were too large an order for Cutts. He backed towards the doorway, his face crimson with fury.

"I'm after Trimble!" he gasped. "I'm not looking for a row with you cheeky cads!"

"You'll get it without looking for it if you don't clear," said Tom Merry. "There's the door."

Monty Lowther made a pass with the poker. Cutts made a backward jump just in time.

"You've got that fat rascal hidden here, and you're sharing the plunder with him!" he gasped. "By gad, I'll go to the Housemaster if you don't hand it over!"

"You can go to the Housemaster, or to the Head, or to Jericho!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "But you're going out of this study, anyhow. Charge, you fellows!"

"Ow!" roared Cutts.

The Terrible Three charged with weapons presented. The poker, the cricket bat, and the shovel lunged at Cutts together, and all of them landed on Cutts' handsome waistcoat. The Fifth-Former felt as though he had been punctured in three places, and he roared.

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He went backwards into the passage and sat down. From the doorway of Study No. 10 the Terrible Three grinned at him. They were not at all averse to a little passage-at-arms with Gerald Cutts. There was a feud of long standing between the chums of the Shell and the dandy of the Fifth.

"Come in and have some more!" said Monty Lowther invitingly. "We'll keep up this game as long as you do, Cutts!"

"Oh! Ow! Oh!" gasped Cutts.

An elegant figure came along the Shell passage, and an eyeglass gleamed at Cutts as he sat on the hard, unsympathetic floor. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth regarded the Fifth-Former with astonishment.

"Bai Jove, it's Cutts!" he ejaculated. "Whatevah are you sittin' on the flocah for, Cutts? If you are fatigued, deah boy, cannot you find a chaih somewah?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"You will make your twousahs dustay, Cutts," said Arthur Augustus. "I am wathah particulah about my twousahs myself."

Cutts staggered to his feet.

"You'll hear more of this!" he gasped. And, shaking a furious fist at the Terrible Three, Cutts of the Fifth brushed roughly past Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and strode away to the stairs.

"Bai Jove," said Arthur Augustus, "I weally must wemak that Cutts' mannahs leave much to be desiahed. I wegard Cutts as vewy little bettah than a hooligan. Am I too earlay for tea, you fellows?"

"Just in time!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "Trot in!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy trotted gracefully into Study No. 10, and Gerald Cutts and his wrath and his threats were dismissed from the minds of the cheery tea-party.

CHAPTER 2. Only Trimble!

"SOWWY, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that remark about ten minutes later.

The four juniors were seated round the table in Study No. 10, chatting cheerfully over their tea, for which cricket had given them a keen appetite.

"Sorry?" repeated Tom Merry.

"Yaas."

"What about?"

"Didn't I kick you, stwetchin' my leg just now?"

"No," said Tom, with a smile.

"Then it must have been you, Lowthah! Sowwy, deah boy."

"Not at all," said Lowther. "You didn't shove your hoof on me, old bean."

"Bai Jove! Then it was Mannahs! Sowwy, Mannahs!" said Arthur Augustus.

Manners grinned.

"All serene," he said. "It's a free country, and you can be as sorry as you like. But you didn't biff me with your hoof."

Arthur Augustus looked perplexed.

Stretching an elegant leg under the study table, he had certainly kicked somebody or something, and he had naturally supposed that it was one of his entertainers.

"My mistake, deah boys," he said. "I certainly thought I kicked somethin'. I suppose there isn't a dog undah the table."

"Hardly," said Tom Merry. "Another cup of tea, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Try the cake, old chap," said Manners hospitably.

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove, if you fellows don't mind my mentionin' it, this is a wippin' cake. Blake and Hewwies and Dig would have liked this cake, and I am sowwy I could not bwing them to tea. They are teain' with Julian in Study No. 5. By the way, I heah they've got flu in the New House, you fellows. That's wathah bad."

"Might be worse," remarked Lowther. "Might be in the School House instead."

"Bai Jove! That is vewy twue," agreed Arthur Augustus. "Nothin's so bad that it mightn't be worse. Wegardin' the cwicket, Tom Mewwy, I was thinkin' of makin' a suggestion."

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

"It looks as if Figgins & Co. will have to be left out of the Gwammah School match. In that case, I suggest fillin' up the team with School House fellows—and playin' all my study. A team with all Study No. 6 in it would be a weal winnin' team—what?"

"Thanks for the tip!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Not at all, deah boy. You're vewy welcome," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "I wegard it as a fellow's duty to assist his skippah with good advice, you know, in times of difficulty."

"Hallo! Sorry!" ejaculated Manners.

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"Bai Jove! What are you sowwy about, Mannahs?"

"I biffed somebody just then," said Manners, looking surprised. "Keep your hoofs over your own side, Tom, if they're yours."

"Not mine," said Tom.

"Lowther, old man, I've always told you your legs were too long and your feet too big," said Manners. "Gather them up a little and leave a chap room."

"You silly ass!" said Lowther. "My feet are under my chair."

"Oh, my hat! Then it was you I biffed, Gussy."

"Not at all, deah boy!"

"Look here, what the thump's under the table, then?" exclaimed Manners. "I biffed my foot on somebody. There can't be a dog in the study, I suppose?"

"Bai Jove! It would be no joke if Hewwies' bulldog had got loose and got undah the table—"

"Oh, my hat!"

Four juniors jumped up as if moved by the same spring. If the redoubtable Towser was under the table nobody wanted to touch him accidentally with a foot. Towser had a set of teeth that were not to be trifled with.

Monty Lowther bent to jerk up a corner of the cloth to look under the table; but Arthur Augustus D'Arcy caught his arm and pulled him back in time.

"Careful, deah boy! That wotten bulldog might bite, you know. He has no wespsect whatevah for a fellow's twousahs. Leave him to me. I'll wout him out."

Arthur Augustus picked up Tom Merry's bat, and, holding it at arm's length, made a lunge under the table.

"Twot out, you bwute!" he exclaimed.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Bai Jove! That isn't a dog!"

"Yooop! You beast, keep that bat away!" roared the voice of Trimble of the Fourth under the study table.

"Trimble!" yelled the Terrible Three.

"Great Scott!"

"Bai Jove! Then that wottah Twimble was hidden heah all the time, while Cutts was lookin' for him."

"Come out, you fat rotter!" shouted Tom Merry.

"All wight, deah boy. I'll wout him out with this bat."

"Yaroooooh! Keep off!" yelled Trimble.

The fat junior rolled hurriedly out from under the table. He looked red and flustered and breathless, and his podgy brow was bedewed with perspiration. For some little time Baggy Trimble had been in rather close quarters, crouching under the table, and anxiously dodging the numerous feet of the fellows sitting round it.

He sat on the study carpet and gasped.

"So you were here all the time!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Ow! No! Certainly not! I mean yes! All right!" gasped Trimble. "I—I dodged into the study as that beast Cutts was hunting for me. Ow!"

"You heard us telling Cutts you weren't here, and never let on," exclaimed Tom indignantly.

Trimble grinned breathlessly.

"Well, you see, the beast was going to lick me," he said.

"He thinks I bagged his cake from his study—a mouldy old cake. I wouldn't have touched it at any price. Not that I even knew he had a cake in his study. I never saw him buying it at the tuckshop."

"Bai Jove!"

"Honest Injun," said Trimble. "I suppose you fellows can take my word. Cutts is an awful fibber, you know. He's a bad character in every way. I'm shocked at him."

"He must be a jolly bad character, if you're shocked at him, and no mistake," agreed Manners.

"If the Head knew all I know, Cutts wouldn't stay at St. Jim's much longer," said Trimble. "He breaks bounds at night. I haven't exactly seen him, but I know he does. Lots of fellows know. Well, a fellow who'd do that would tell whoppers about missing a cake from his study, wouldn't he? My belief is that Cutts never had a cake at all."

Baggy Trimble rose to his feet. Tom Merry pointed to the door. Whether Trimble was guilty or not of raiding Gerald Cutts' cake Tom did not know, and did not care very much. Whether Trimble was guilty simply depended upon whether Trimble had had a chance of bagging the cake. But, innocent or guilty, Trimble was not persona grata in Study No. 10 in the Shell.

"Roll out!" said Tom.

"I'll stay to tea, if you like, as I'm here," said Trimble affably. "Then I can dodge under the table again if Cutts comes along. I know he's still hunting me—that's why I stayed there. You fellows can tell him that you haven't seen me, you know."

"Can we?" ejaculated Tom.

"Certainly! Don't trouble about giving me your chair, Tom, old chap. I'll sit on this box."

Tom Merry eyed the fat Fourth-Former.

"I'm not troubling about giving you my chair," he said.



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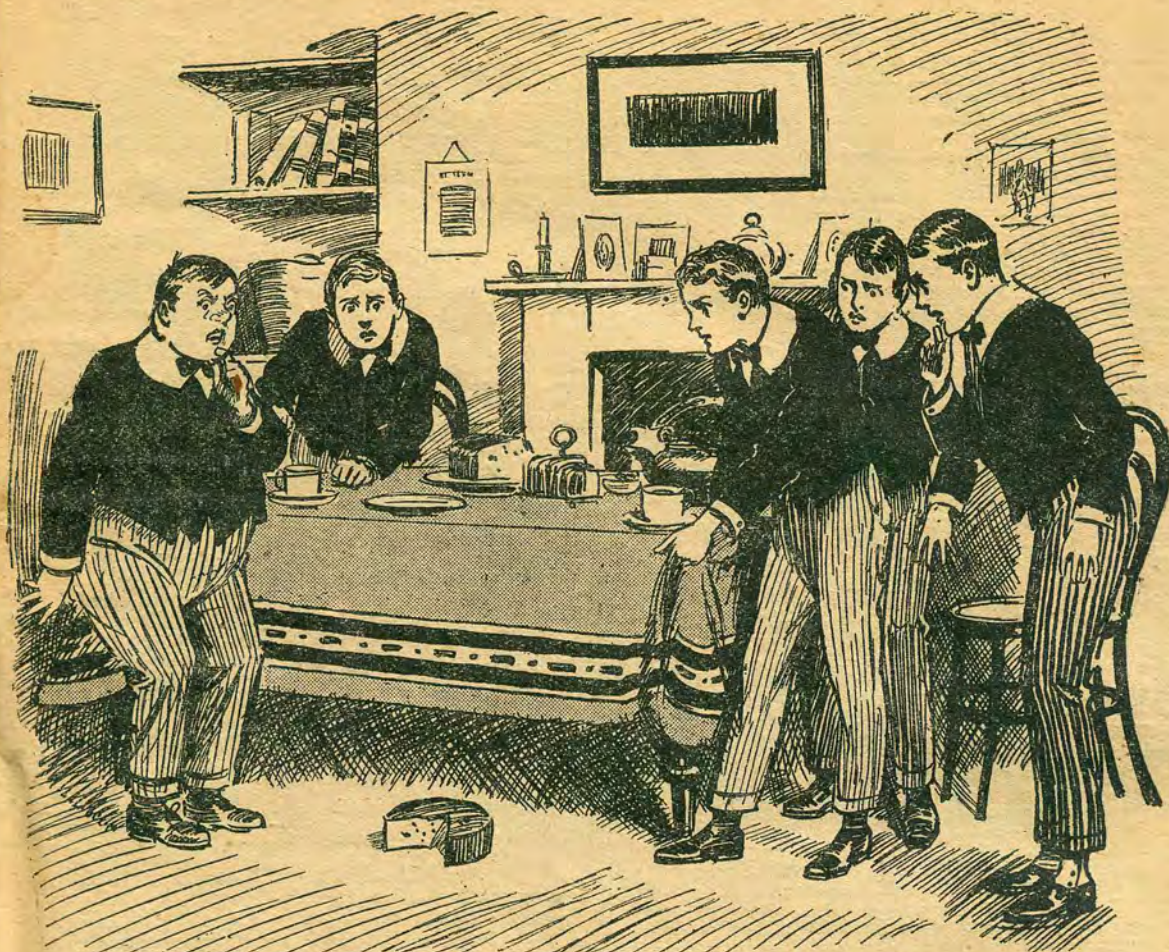
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"It's D'Arcy's imagination, old chap," exclaimed Trimble. "There's nothing under the table—honour bright!" "Weally, Twimble—" Tom Merry looked at Trimble grimly, then rose and pulled the tea-table aside. Ejaculations of amazement followed, for there, on the carpet, where Trimble had been crouching under the table while in hiding, was revealed a large cake—with a large gap in it! (See this page.)

"I'm going to trouble about giving you my boot if you don't travel—see?"

"Look here, you know—"

"My belief is that you bagged Cutts' cake," said Tom sternly. "He said that St. Leger saw you. Well, Cutts is a good deal of a bully and a blackguard, but that's no reason why you should bag his grub. You're a fat rascal, Trimble. Get out!"

"I never touched the cake," said Trimble. "I wouldn't, you know. You fellows ain't so particular in such matters as I am. But really, old chap, you shouldn't judge other chaps by yourself."

"What?" roared Tom.

"You shouldn't really!" urged Trimble. "It's not fair! You fellows might bag a cake. Not me. I'm above it! Here, keep off, you beast!"

Baggy Trimble dodged, and retreated round the table. He backed into a corner of the study.

"I—I say, I don't want to stay to your measly tea," he said. "But that beast Cutts is hanging about. Let a fellow stay in the study till the coast's clear."

Tom Merry frowned.

"Look here, did you bag Cutts' cake?" he demanded.

"No!" roared Trimble.

"Honour bright?"

"Of course! I never knew he had a cake. It's just his suspicious mind. Cutts is low."

Tom Merry eyed the fat junior very doubtfully. It was barely possible that Trimble was not guilty.

"Well, you can hang on a bit till the coast's clear, then," he said, and he sat down to tea again.

"Aftah all, we are bound to take Twimble's word, if he says honah bwright," said Arthur Augustus. "Even Twimble tells the twuth sometimes. I cannot say that I evah wemembah his doin' so, but he might."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, as he sat down again and put his elegant legs under the table. "There is still somethin' undah this table, deah boys—my boot clumped against somethin'."

Trimble gave a gasp.

"There isn't," he exclaimed hurriedly. "There's nothing there—honour bright! Imagination, old chap."

"Weally, Twimble—"

Tom Merry looked round at Trimble grimly. Then he rose, and pulled the tea-table aside. And there, on the carpet, where Trimble had been crouching under the table while in hiding, was revealed a large cake—with a large gap in it!

CHAPTER 3.

Paying the Piper!

TOM MERRY & CO. stared at the cake.

Evidently it was Gerald Cutts' missing cake—and evidently it had been brought to the study by Baggy Trimble, and taken into concealment with him when the fat junior hid himself under the table. He had left it there when he emerged—with the hope of retrieving it afterwards.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "It's a cake!"

"Cutts' cake!" said Manners.

"Trimble, you fat villain!" roared Tom Merry.

"Oh dear! I—I say, is—is that a cake?" gasped Trimble.

"I—I say, I—I wonder how that cake got there?"

"You wonder?" said Tom dazedly.

"Yes. Of course, I never had anything to do with it. It wasn't there when I was under the table."

"Wasn't there?" gasped Tom.

"No. I should have seen it, you know," argued Trimble.

"But I'll tell you fellows what. As we've found this cake,

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let's whack it out. I'm willing to share it with you fellows. I can't say fairer than that, can I?"

"It's Cutts' cake!" shouted Manners.

"Well, Cutts is a beastly bully!" said Trimble. "Serve him right to bag his cake. After all, I took all the risk. 'Tain't every fellow that would sneak into a Fifth Form study and raid a cake, I can tell you! It needs some pluck. That's me, all over!"

"So you admit that you bagged Cutts' cake, do you?" asked Lowther.

"Certainly not! I never touched it!"

"Oh, my hat! How did it get here, then?" shrieked Tom Merry.

"Blessed if I know! Perhaps one of you fellows bagged it. If you did, rely on me. I won't give you away!"

"Bai Jove," said Arthur Augustus, "I weally think that that chap Twimble takes the cake! He weally does, you know!"

"Is it a go?" asked Trimble, blinking round at the juniors hopefully. He lifted the cake to the table. "It's a jolly good cake—simply ripping! I know Cutts gave ten shillings for it, because I saw him. You don't get a ten-shilling cake for nothing every day, do you? I'll whack it out with you chaps, and you'll stand by me if Cutts kicks up a shindy—see? Cutts is a low, suspicious rotter; he wouldn't believe me if I told him, on my word, that I hadn't touched his cake. But if you fellows back me up it's all right! Let's get going, too; if Cutts came in, he would very likely make out that this cake was his—he's untruthful!"

"Oh dear!" said Tom Merry, feeling that Baggy Trimble was really a little too much for him.

Knock!

"Ware beaks!" murmured Manners, as the study door opened.

Mr. Railton, Housemaster of the School House, stepped into Study No. 10, with Cutts of the Fifth Form at his heels. The Housemaster had a rather annoyed and impatient expression on his face. Probably he was not pleased at being called into such an affair. There were matters more weighty than cakes—even ten-shilling ones—to occupy the attention of a St. Jim's Housemaster. However, he felt bound to take note of the Fifth-Former's complaint; and here he was.

Cutts uttered an exclamation at the sight of his property on Tom Merry's study-table. He pointed to it triumphantly.

"There it is, sir!"

"Upon my word! Is that the cake that was missed from your study, Cutts?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"That's it, sir!"

"Merry"—the Housemaster fixed his glance on Tom—"Cutts has complained to me that a cake was taken from his study by Trimble of the Fourth, and brought here, and that you and your friends prevented him forcibly from recovering his property. This is a serious matter, Merry!"

Tom's face was crimson.

The position was a very unfortunate one. There was the cake—partly devoured—on the tea-table; and undoubtedly Cutts' assertion that Trimble had had it in the study all the time was well-founded.

Cutts' eyes gleamed at the chums of the Shell. He had great hopes now that the Terrible Three were booked for a licking.

"We didn't know it was here, sir!" stammered Tom. "Cutts came here and cheeked us, and we turned him out. We never knew that Trimble was here—he was hidden under the table, and we've only found him a few minutes ago."

"Mr. Railton isn't likely to believe that!" sneered Cutts. The Housemaster gave him a cold glance.

"On the contrary, Cutts, I believe every word Merry has spoken," he answered.

Gerald Cutts bit his lip.

"It is perfectly true, sir," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We thought it was a dog undah the table at first, and we found out it was that fat wottah—I mean Twimble. The howwid boundah was hidin' undah the table with the cake!"

Mr. Railton nodded, and fixed his eyes on Trimble. That podgy youth quaked.

"Trimble! You took that cake from Cutts' study?"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Trimble.

"Where did you obtain it, then?"

"It—it's a birthday present, sir, from my—my uncle, Sir Montague Trimble."

"What?"

"I—I assure you, sir—to-day's my birthday!" gasped Trimble. "And—and my aunt—I mean my uncle—always sends me a cake on my—my birthday, sir. I—I've got a letter from Sir Reginald in my pocket—"

"That is enough, Trimble!"

"Thank you, sir! C-c-can I go now?"

"Mrs. Taggles will identify the cake as the one she sold to me this afternoon, if necessary, sir," said Cutts.

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"It is not necessary, Cutts. Trimble, you will follow me to my study."

"Yes, sir! M-m-may I take my cake?"

"Your cake?" ejaculated Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir! Mum—my birthday-cake."

Mr. Railton gave the fat junior a look that made him jump.

"Cutts, you may take your property away! Trimble, come with me!"

Gerald Cutts picked up the cake and left the study. Mr. Railton dropped a heavy hand on Trimble's shoulder and marched him off.

The fat junior wriggled with apprehension as he rolled down the passage with the Housemaster.

His apprehensions were well founded. A few minutes later howls of anguish were heard proceeding from the Housemaster's study. Baggy Trimble was finding out that the way of the transgressor was hard.

Ten minutes later a fat and anguished face was projected into Tom Merry's study, where the tea-party were finishing tea. Baggy Trimble blinked dolorously at the juniors.

"Licked?" asked Tom.

"Ow! Wow! Yes. Ow! Ooooh!"

"Serve you jolly well right!"

"Ow! And that cad Cutts has taken away my cake!" groaned Trimble. "Fancy those Fifth Form cads wolfing my birthday cake. Ow! And—and Cutts grinned at me when I came out of Railton's study, and when I called him a beast he kicked me. Ow!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "I twust that he kicked you hard, Twimble!"

"A fellow never gets any justice in this school," said Trimble bitterly. "I'm thinking of asking my pater to take me away and send me to Eton. Look here, are we going to let the Fifth bully us, and take away our birthday cakes, and all that? It's up to you, Tom Merry. You're junior captain, and you ought to back up a fellow. Are you going to give Cutts a House ragging for this?"

Tom Merry jumped up.

"No," he said cheerily. "I'm going to kick you as far as the stairs, Trimble!"

"Oh!"

Baggy Trimble vanished.

CHAPTER 4.

The Breaker of Bounds!

"WHO'S goin' to-night?"

Gerald Cutts asked that question, in a vaunting tone, in his study in the Fifth Form passage.

Tea was over in Cutts' study. The cake, about which there had been so much dispute, had been disposed of. The door was locked, and Cutts had produced a box of cigarettes. That was one of the little customs in Cutts' study.

Cutts was smoking, and Prye and Gilmore of the Fifth followed his example. St. Leger sat with an unlighted cigarette between his slim white fingers.

There was no answer from the three to Cutts' vaunting question, and the dandy of the Fifth repeated it.

"Who's goin'?"

St. Leger answered then, Gilmore and Prye smoking in silence and looking uneasy.

"I'm not, for one. Cut it out, old bean! It's not good enough."

"Cold feet?" asked Cutts unpleasantly.

St. Leger shrugged his shoulders.

"It isn't good enough, really, Cutts, old man," said Prye.

"Dash it all, we don't want to be bunked from the school! There's a time to kick over the traces, an' a time not to kick. The beaks are gettin' a bit too keen."

"Kildare of the Sixth was nosin' about askin' questions only yesterday," said Gilmore.

"Hang Kildare!"

"Hang him as high as Haman if you like, and if he'll let you!" grinned Gilmore. "That doesn't alter the fact that he's head prefect and captain of the school, and that if he found us breakin' bounds at night it's in his hands to get us bunked from St. Jim's. I'm not keen on goin' home and tellin' my people I'm sacked."

"I've promised to go to-night!" growled Cutts. "There'll be a little party at Joliffe's—a jolly set."

"That's all very well, but it's gettin' too thick. It's pretty well known that a St. Jim's man was seen sneakin' out of the Green Man one evenin', and we know the Head has asked all the prefects to keep their eyes specially open. I had it from Knox of the Sixth."

"Knox meant it as a hint to keep clear," said Prye. "My belief is that it was some silly junior who was sneakin' round that pub, but in watchin' for him they might catch us. Knox is a pal, but he couldn't help us if we were nabbed. It was decent of him to give us the tip."

Snap! Baggy him. "Grooo!" against the w

Cutts knitted his
"I'm goin' to-night!"
"More fool you takin' the risk?"
"I'm not afraid!"
"Well, I am," said
bunked once, and
the giddy hue-and-
"I'm goin'!"
Cutts spoke in his
"Well, if you do, not goin'. What's
"So every fellow sneered Cutts. "Y
"Don't do it," said
"I've told you I
"See you later,"
study to put an end
exchanged a glance,
Gerald Cutts scow
Cutts was the lea
"giddy goats" in the
his lead was followed
were scared now, an
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He did not think it
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pulled through.
He was determined



Snap! Baggy Trimble started, and opened his eyes. The snap of the breaking blade, close at hand, had awakened him. "Grooogh!" he murmured. Then rubbing his eyes and blinking round he became aware of a dark shadow against the window-pane. It was Cutts of the Fifth Form returning from his midnight expedition! (See page 9.)

Cutts knitted his brows.

"I'm goin' to-night!" he said.

"More fool you!" said St. Leger. "What's the good of takin' the risk?"

"I'm not afraid of the risk," said Cutts disdainfully.

"Well, I am," said St. Leger coolly. "I came near gettin' bunked once, and I'm not chancin' it any more. Wait till the giddy hue-and-cry dies out. Lots of time before us."

"I'm goin'!"

Cutts spoke in his most obstinate tone.

"Well, if you do, you'll risk the sack," said Prye. "I'm not goin'. What's the good?"

"So every fellow here has got the wind up, exceptin' me?" sneered Cutts. "You're goin' to let me chance it alone?"

"Don't do it," said St. Leger.

"I've told you I'm goin'."

"See you later," said St. Leger, and he strolled out of the study to put an end to the discussion. Prye and Gilmore exchanged a glance, and followed him.

Gerald Cutts scowled after them.

Cutts was the leading spirit of the little select circle of "giddy goats" in the Fifth Form of St. Jim's, and generally his lead was followed, and he had his way. But his followers were scared now, and determined to "toe the line" until the scare blew over. Cutts gave an impatient grunt and lighted another cigarette.

He did not think that the risk was great. And, great or small, he was determined to take it. Many and many a time he had taken such risks before, and his luck had always held good. How often Cutts of the Fifth had been near the "sack" he could hardly have told himself. But, somehow or other, his resources had never failed him, and he had always pulled through.

He was determined to keep his word on this occasion, if

only to show his faint-hearted followers that he dared do it. And the excitement of the forbidden escapade had an irresistible attraction for Cutts. Life at St. Jim's would have bored him to extinction had he not varied it with such outbreaks of dingy blackguardism.

Cutts left his study at last with a frowning brow. He was determined to break school bounds that night, but he did not want to go alone, and he was annoyed. It was unfortunate for Baggy Trimble that he happened to be in the Fifth Form passage just then. Trimble of the Fourth had no business whatever in the Fifth Form passage, but he was only too often where he had no business to be. He was loafing near Gilmore's door, and Cutts spotted him there as he came along and let out his foot.

There was a yell from Trimble as he caught Cutts' boot with his tight trousers.

The fat junior dropped on his hands and knees.

"What are you doin' here, you lump of lard?" asked Cutts. "Lookin' for a chance to steal another cake, or listenin' at a keyhole?"

"Ow! Wow!"

Cutts drew back his boot again. He was a bully all through, and Trimble of the Fourth was an easy victim.

Baggy Trimble picked himself up and fled, but he caught the second kick as he went, and vanished round a corner yelling. Cutts felt better as he sauntered away.

But Baggy did not feel better. He felt hurt, and he felt indignant and enraged. He rolled out into the quadrangle; but it was coming on to rain a little, and he rolled in again. He rolled disconsolately to his study—No. 2 in the Fourth—where he found Mellish and Wildrake sitting down to prep. Baggy plumped into the armchair with a discontented grunt.

"I'll jolly well make him sit up!" he announced.

Wildrake glanced across at him.

"Who is it now?" he asked.

"That beast Cutts."

Mellish gave a chuckle.

"I heard from D'Arcy that you've been licked for bagging a cake from Cutts' study. You might have whacked it out."

"The brute got it back," growled Trimble. "Besides, I never touched it. It was my birthday cake, sent to me specially by my uncle, Sir Frederick Trimble. I've often mentioned him to you fellows. Cutts practically stole my birthday cake, and Railton backed him up. Fancy that in a Housemaster!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to make him sit up, though," said Trimble darkly. "Fellows who break bounds at night should be a bit more careful how they kick chaps who happen to be near a keyhole. I wasn't listening to Prye and Gilmore talking in their study. I'm jolly well going to show Cutts that he can't kick me."

"It seems that he can," grinned Wildrake. "At least, he has. So you've been nosing out something about Cutts' shady games, have you, you fat coyote?"

"I know what I know," said Trimble mysteriously.

"I guess that isn't much, as a rule," remarked the Canadian junior.

"I fancy I can get Cutts sacked from the school, if I choose," said Trimble loftily.

"Swank!" said Mellish.

Wildrake gave Trimble a serious look.

"If you've nosed out something about Cutts, you'd better keep it to yourself, Trimble," he said. "Cutts is a pesky shady sort of hoodlum, I guess; but you can't sneak about a fellow."

"You couldn't prove anything, anyhow," said Mellish. "Cutts is too jolly deep for that."

"You wait and see!" said Trimble, still more mysteriously.

"I know what I know!"

"Oh, scat!" said Wildrake, and he turned to his prep again, and gave no further heed to Baggy Trimble. Mellish eyed his fat study-mate rather curiously, but Baggy Trimble, with unusual discretion, said no more on the subject. But as he did his prep that evening he several times emitted a fat chuckle, which seemed to indicate that entertaining thoughts were working in his podgy brain.

That night, in the Fifth Form dormitory, St. Leger woke at the half-hour after ten chimed, and started a little. He heard the sound of someone moving close at hand.

"Is that you, Cutts?" he whispered.

"Yes. Don't wake the house."

"You're goin'?"

"Haven't I told you so?"

"For goodness' sake chuck it, old man."

"Comin'?" asked Cutts unheeding.

"No fear!"

"Funk!"

St. Leger yawned, and laid his head on the pillow again. Gerald Cutts, having finished dressing in the dark, quitted the Fifth Form dormitory on tiptoe. Outside, the passage was dark—only a faint glimmer of light coming from the direction of the stairs. Cutts paused and listened for a minute or so—and as he listened his heart suddenly beat faster. There was a faint sound in the passage—as if of a stealthy movement.

Cutts, with his heart beating, stood quite still, listening intently. But there was no further sound, and he recovered his nerve. He glided away silently to the box-room at the end of the dormitory passage; and a couple of minutes later he was dropping from the leads outside the box-room window. He had left the window unfastened for his return. And as he vanished in the darkness and the lightly-falling rain it did not occur to him that a stealthy hand had fastened the window he had left unfastened. Had Cutts guessed that he certainly would not have enjoyed the merry little party in Mr. Jolliffe's room at the Green Man that night. But Cutts did not guess it, and he went cheerily on his shady way.

CHAPTER 5. Shut Out!

MIDNIGHT!
St. Jim's lay wrapped in darkness.

The last light had been extinguished; the last door had closed; the whole school was buried in slumber.

Had any suspicious master been "on the prowl" in the neighbourhood of the Fifth Form dormitory, he would probably have been surprised by a peculiar rumbling sound that proceeded from the box-room at the end of the passage.

It was a low rumble, something like the mutter of distant thunder; and that peculiar sound, proceeding from a box-room at midnight, certainly would have caused surprise had there been ears to hear.

Fellows in the Fourth certainly could have told what it was had they heard it. For it was a sound that was often heard in the Fourth Form dormitory. It was the resonant snore of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

He was sleeping in the box-room, the sleep of the just and the unjust.

Nobody in the Fourth knew that Baggy was missing from his bed. Baggy had all sorts of faults and failings; but assuredly he had never been suspected of breaking bounds at night. He was too attached to his bed to leave it when he could help it; he had, indeed, a strong objection to leaving it when the rising-bell rang. Whatsoever the other fellows

might have suspected him of getting

But on this particular what Baggy had done

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might have suspected Trimble of, they never would have suspected him of getting out of bed of his own accord.

But on this particular eventful night that was exactly what Baggy had done. It is said that even the worm will turn; and Baggy Trimble undoubtedly was a good deal of a worm. He had turned!

Cutts had kicked him—more than once, and very hard. Cutts had deprived him of a ten-shilling cake—and the fact that the cake was Cutts' property did not weigh much with Trimble—the rights of property did not appeal to Baggy more than to a Bolshevik. Cutts had been the cause of Baggy receiving a severe caning from his Housemaster. In fact, the sins of Cutts were innumerable; and Baggy, being a worm, had turned, and he was on the trail of vengeance.

There were few things that went on in the School House without Baggy having some knowledge of them. He was an expert eavesdropper, and it was said in the Fourth that there wasn't a keyhole in the House at which Baggy had not listened at one time or another. He knew enough of Gerald Cutts' shady ways to be aware of the easiest way of avenging himself on the dandy of the Fifth. And he had learned some particulars by playing Peeping Tom in the Fifth Form passage that afternoon. Baggy's scheme was cut and dried when he went to bed with the Fourth. After lights out he waited till the dormitory was wrapped in slumber, and then, spurred on to a great effort by the prospect of vengeance, Baggy detached himself from his bed. Little had Cutts dreamed that the fat junior, whose very existence he had forgotten by that time, was close at hand, when he crept out of the Fifth Form dormitory. But close at hand Baggy undoubtedly was, listening and watching—and with stealthy tread he had followed the breaker of bounds to the box-room, and, listening outside the door, had heard him leave by the window.

To creep into the box-room and fasten the window after Cutts was quite easy. Then Baggy Trimble chuckled softly.

Cutts of the Fifth was shut out for the night—unless Trimble chose to let him in.

Cutts' feelings, when he should return and find ingress barred against him, Baggy could imagine. He contemplated them with fat satisfaction.

Having securely fastened the window, Baggy considered. Shut out for the night, and found outside the House in the morning, Cutts of the Fifth was booked for the sack—there was not the slightest doubt on that subject. A junior might have been only flogged for such an offence—for a senior it was expulsion. The fat Baggy held Gerald Cutts in the hollow of his podgy hand.

But Baggy, determined as he was to make Cutts suffer for his sins, had not decided to carry his vengeance to so extreme a length. He did not return to the dormitory. He sat on a box to wait for Cutts' return.

It was his intention to keep awake and watch. But in a few minutes he was nodding.

In ten minutes he was asleep, with his head leaning back against the wall, and his mouth open. And then the low, rumbling sound was audible, and it continued without intermission till midnight chimed out from the clock-tower.

Deep in slumber, Baggy did not see a shadowy face that was pressed against the box-room window from the outside. He did not hear the faint sound of someone moving on the flat leads without.

He snored on regardless.

Gerald Cutts had returned.

He had returned in a tired and savage humour. An hour in a smoky atmosphere, and the loss of several pounds at cards had not had a cheering effect on Cutts of the Fifth. Possibly it occurred to him that "seeing life" in this peculiar way was hardly worth while, as he tramped back to St. Jim's, and clambered wearily up to the leads under the box-room window. St. Leger and Prye and Gilmore were fast asleep in their dormitory, and Cutts could scarcely help realising that they had done more wisely than he had done. With a scowling face, Cutts came up to the window, and strove to push up the lower sash.

Then his heart almost ceased to beat.

The sash did not move.

He had closed it down after leaving, but he knew that it would rise to pressure from without; he knew that from old experience. But now it did not rise.

His face grew pale. He knew that the window must be fastened; but he clung desperately to the hope that it had jammed somehow, and that he could force it up.

He repeated the attempt a dozen times, and failed; and then he had to realise that the window was fastened inside.

He leaned on the sill, feeling almost sick.

He was shut out for the night. Some overdutiful servant must have found the window unfastened, and closed the catch—or perhaps some watchful prefect. Cutts remembered the hint from Knox of the Sixth that the prefects were in an unusually watchful mood. That, then, was what had happened, and doubtless his absence was known!

He could not open the window, and there was no other way of ingress. It was the finish for him.

He almost groaned aloud in his anguish and terror. Again and again he had risked it, and his luck had held good. Now he had risked it once too often.

To be found out of doors when the House opened in the morning, to be taken before the Head, to meet that stern glance, to hear the sentence of expulsion—it was a terrifying prospect to Cutts. The danger had always been there, and he had not heeded it. Now he heeded it too late.

For ten minutes at least Cutts of the Fifth stood quite still, leaning on the window-sill, a prey to despair. Then he stirred at last. Somehow, anyhow, he had to get in.

He pressed his face to the panes, staring into the darkness of the interior. There was no light; he could see nothing. A faint rumbling sound came to his ears, but he could not guess what it was. He took out his penknife, and tried to force the blade between the sashes, to press back the catch.

Snap!

It was not the catch that snapped; it was the blade of the knife. The broken portion of the blade remained sticking between the sashes. Cutts breathed hard.

Baggy Trimble started, and opened his eyes. The snap of the breaking blade close at hand had awakened him.

Trimble rubbed his eyes and blinked round. He found that he was cold, and he shivered.

"Groooh!" murmured Baggy.

Then the fat junior became aware of a dark shadow against the window-pane. He started again, and chuckled softly. He knew now that Cutts of the Fifth had returned.

Baggy stepped close to the window, flattening his fat little nose on the glass, to stare at the Fifth-Former outside. Cutts started back as he saw him.

Trimble grinned. He unfastened the catch and raised the lower sash an inch. From outside a broken, whispering voice came:

"Let me in! Is that you, St. Leger?"

"He, he, he!"

Trimble's unmusical cachinnation made the Fifth-Former jump.

"Who—what?" gasped Cutts.

"He, he, he!"

"Who is it?" panted Cutts.

"Me!" said Trimble triumphantly and ungrammatically.

"You? Who? Is it Trimble?"

"Yes."

Cutts panted.

"You little fat beast! Did you fasten the window?"

"He, he! Just a few!"

"Open it at once! I'll smash you!"

"He, he, he!"

"Do you hear me, you fat scoundrel?" breathed Cutts, "Open the window this instant!"

"He, he, he!"

Cutts set his teeth. The sash was an inch up, and now unfastened. He got a grip on it and tried to force it up. Baggy Trimble held it on the inside. It was, of course, much easier to hold down than to push up—Baggy had only to put his weight on it. Cutts forced and forced till his fingers were aching and sore, and the sash did not move. He desisted at last, breathing fury.

CHAPTER 6.

I O U!

BAGGY TRIMBLE grinned through the glass at the furious face outside. He was master of the situation, and Cutts' fury was nothing to him. He could fasten the window at any moment he chose, and leave the breaker of bounds to his doom. Gerald Cutts realised that, and realised that he had to make terms with the fat Fourth-Former. He controlled his rage—a difficult task, for he was quivering with fury—and spoke in a quiet tone.

"Trimble, old man—"

"He, he, he!"

"Look here, old chap—"

"I was a little fat beast a few minutes ago," grinned Trimble. "Now I'm an old man and an old chap. He, he, he!"

"I—I'm sorry!" articulated Cutts. "I never meant—"

"You apologise?" asked Trimble airily.

"Yes, yes!" said Cutts between his teeth.

"Good! Are you sorry you kicked me to-day?"

"Eh? Yes. Certainly!" panted Cutts. And that much was true. He was sorry, at least, that the kicking of Trimble had led to this.

"That's all right, then," said Trimble. "Anything more to say before I fasten the window, Cutts?"

"Let me in!" breathed Cutts.

"Can't be done, old chap," said Trimble. "You see, I couldn't be a party to blackguardly proceedings like this. You've been out pub-haunting—breaking bounds at night. I'm shocked at you, Cutts!"

"Open the window!"

"Impossible! Good-night!"

Cutts desperately pushed his fingers under the sash to keep it from closing. Trimble chuckled.

"You'll get your fingers squashed, old fellow," he murmured. "Better take them away."

"You little villain—"

"That's enough! Shut up, Cutts! I say, Cutts, what do you think your people will say when you get home to-morrow? Do you think the Head will give you a public expulsion in Big Hall, or just kick you out—eh?"

Cutts trembled with mingled rage and apprehension. The sportsman of the Fifth was utterly at the mercy of this little, fat, greedy, malicious junior—a wretched nobody whom he hardly took the trouble to despise. It was bitterly humiliating to Cutts; but he had to make his peace with Trimble, to beg for mercy, if it came to that. Anything was better than discovery and expulsion from the school. Somehow or other, at any cost of humiliation, he had to persuade Baggy Trimble to let him in. Vengeance would come afterwards.

"Going to take away your fingers?" asked Trimble cheerily. "I'm shutting the window, Cutts."

"Trimble, old chap, let me in," pleaded Cutts. "I'll make it worth your while. I'll stand you a sovereign!"

"You can't bribe me," said Trimble loftily. "I'm not a fellow to be bribed."

"I'll make it two pounds."

Trimble's little round eyes glimmered greedily. Two pounds was a large sum to Baggy, and Baggy was of the same opinion as the ancient Roman emperor who declared that the smell of all money was sweet. So long as cash came, Baggy did not care much how or whence it came. As a matter of fact, Trimble did not intend to leave Cutts out for the night. His intention was to reduce the lofty and disdainful Fifth-Former to the lowest depths of humiliation, enjoying his terror and apprehension. Only Baggy, though he was not very bright, was bright enough to realise that he had to walk warily in dealing with Cutts of the Fifth. There was the morrow to be thought of.

"Do you hear?" whispered Cutts eagerly. "Two quids, honour bright, if you open the window!"

"And then you'll jolly well hammer me—what?" grinned Trimble.

"No—honour bright! Besides, you know I wouldn't kick up a row at this time of night. You—you can trust me, Trimble!"

"I know—as far as that!" agreed Trimble. "I should yell! He, he, he! But what about to-morrow?"

"I'll promise!" Cutts would have promised anything just then. Promises did not cost Gerald Cutts very much.

"Well, I'll think of it," said Trimble. "I don't want to be hard on you, Cutts, though you're a rotten bully and a cad. I despise you, Cutts!"

"Open the window!" said Cutts in a choking voice.

"Where's the two quids?"

"To-morrow! I've nothing about me now!"

"He, he, he! Left it all at the Green Man?" chuckled Trimble.

"He, he, he! All right, give me your IOU."

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"Promises are like pie-crust, you know," grinned Trimble. "I want it in writing. You see, I'm not going to have you kicking me to-morrow and the next day and the day after that. I've got you under my thumb now, and I'm keeping you there, see?"

"Look here, Trimble—"

"Write out the IOU for two pounds," said Trimble calmly, "and put to it, 'for letting me in at the box-room window at half-past twelve on Tuesday night.' And sign it."

Gerald Cutts trembled with rage.

"I—I can't do that, Trimble!"

"Can't you?" smiled Trimble. "Well, I'm not keen on it. I don't mind, if you don't! Good-night!"

"Trimble!" gasped Cutts, as the fat junior began to weigh down on the sash. "Stop it, Trimble! You're squashing my fingers!"

"Take 'em away, then!"

"Trimble, hold on a minute! I'll do anything you like!"

"Too late!" said Trimble calmly.

"Trimble, I—I ask you—I—I beg of you—" panted Cutts, throwing all self-respect to the winds now.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Trimble. "I wonder what the Fifth-Form chaps would say if they could hear him now?"

He ceased to press on the sash. "Look here, Cutts, if you want to beg off I'll give you another chance. The last time, mind. Shove in that IOU, and it's a go!"

"I—I've no pencil!"

"Here's one."

"I—I haven't any paper!"

"I've got a pocket-book here."

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"Trimble, old man, I—I'll promise. But—but I daren't sign such a paper!" pleaded Cutts. "Suppose—suppose you lost it? It would be enough to get me bunned from the school if it were seen!"

"I know that. But you're going to be bunned from the school, anyhow, if I don't let you in!" said Trimble coolly. "Seems to me that you've got no choice, Cutts. But suit yourself."

He grinned at the wretched sportsman of the Fifth through the glass. Cutts shook with rage and terror. To sign such a paper was to place himself at the mercy of a young rascal; to refuse to sign it was ruin. Never had Cutts of the Fifth found the way of the transgressor so terribly hard. Hard as it was, he had to tread it.

"I—I—I'll do it!" he gasped at last.

"Go ahead."

Trimble raised the sash again, cautiously, an inch or so. He passed out the pencil and the pocket-book. For several minutes Cutts stood irresolute, Trimble watching him with a grinning face. But the wretched fellow made up his mind to it at last. There was no help for it. The paper was written as Trimble had dictated, and Cutts passed it back under the sash.

"Now open the window!" he breathed.

"Wait a bit!"

Trimble struck a match and looked at the IOU. There was a yelp of terror from Cutts.

"Put out that light, you fool! It might be seen!"

"You haven't signed this paper in your usual fist, old chap," said Trimble cheerfully. "Write it out over again, and don't try to pull my leg."

Cutts, trembling with rage, did as he was bidden. Trimble struck a second match to examine the new IOU. This time he was satisfied.

"That's all right," he said. "Good-night, Cutts! I think I'll be getting back to the dorm."

And Trimble vanished into the darkness, prudently resolving not to be within Cutts' reach when the Fifth-Former entered. Gerald Cutts slipped his fingers under the sash and raised it and clambered in through the window at last.

He fastened the window quickly and hurried out of the box-room. Perhaps he had a faint hope of collaring Trimble and recovering the tell-tale paper by force before the fat junior could escape. But Baggy Trimble was already safe in the Fourth Form dormitory—whither Cutts could not venture to follow him.

Gerald Cutts went to his own dormitory with feelings that could not have been expressed in words. There was a yawn from St. Leger's bed as he was turning in.

"That you, Cutts?"

"Yes!" snapped Cutts savagely.

"Had a good time?"

"Oh, shut up!"

St. Leger grinned, and said no more. Apparently Cutts hadn't had a good time!

CHAPTER 7.

Gussy Comes in Useful!

"TOM MERRY!"

"Roll away, old tub!"

"But, I say, Tom, old chap—"

Tom Merry walked on. He was never anxious for the society of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth. But Baggy broke into a trot and kept pace with him. It was the interval before third lesson, on the day following Baggy's nocturnal exploits; and at first and second lesson that morning Baggy had been very thoughtful. The outcome of his cogitations was that he looked for Tom Merry as soon as the Fourth were out.

"Tom, old fellow," persisted Trimble, "it's important."

Tom Merry stopped.

"If you call me old fellow again I'll biff you—hard!" he said. "Now dry up and roll off."

"I'm in a fix, old fel—I mean, old chap!"

Tom laughed. Baggy was keeping warily out of reach as he spoke, eyeing the captain of the Shell anxiously.

"Well, what is it?" asked Tom. "Cut it short. Is Cutts after you again for bagging his cake?"

"Cutts! I don't care for Cutts!" said Trimble scornfully.

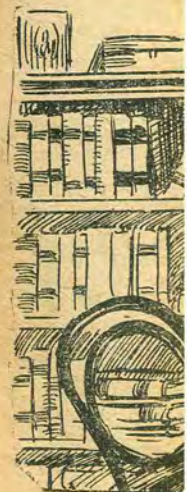
"Cutts won't go for me again, I can tell you. I should think nothing of pulling Cutts' ear in open quad!"

"You silly ass—"

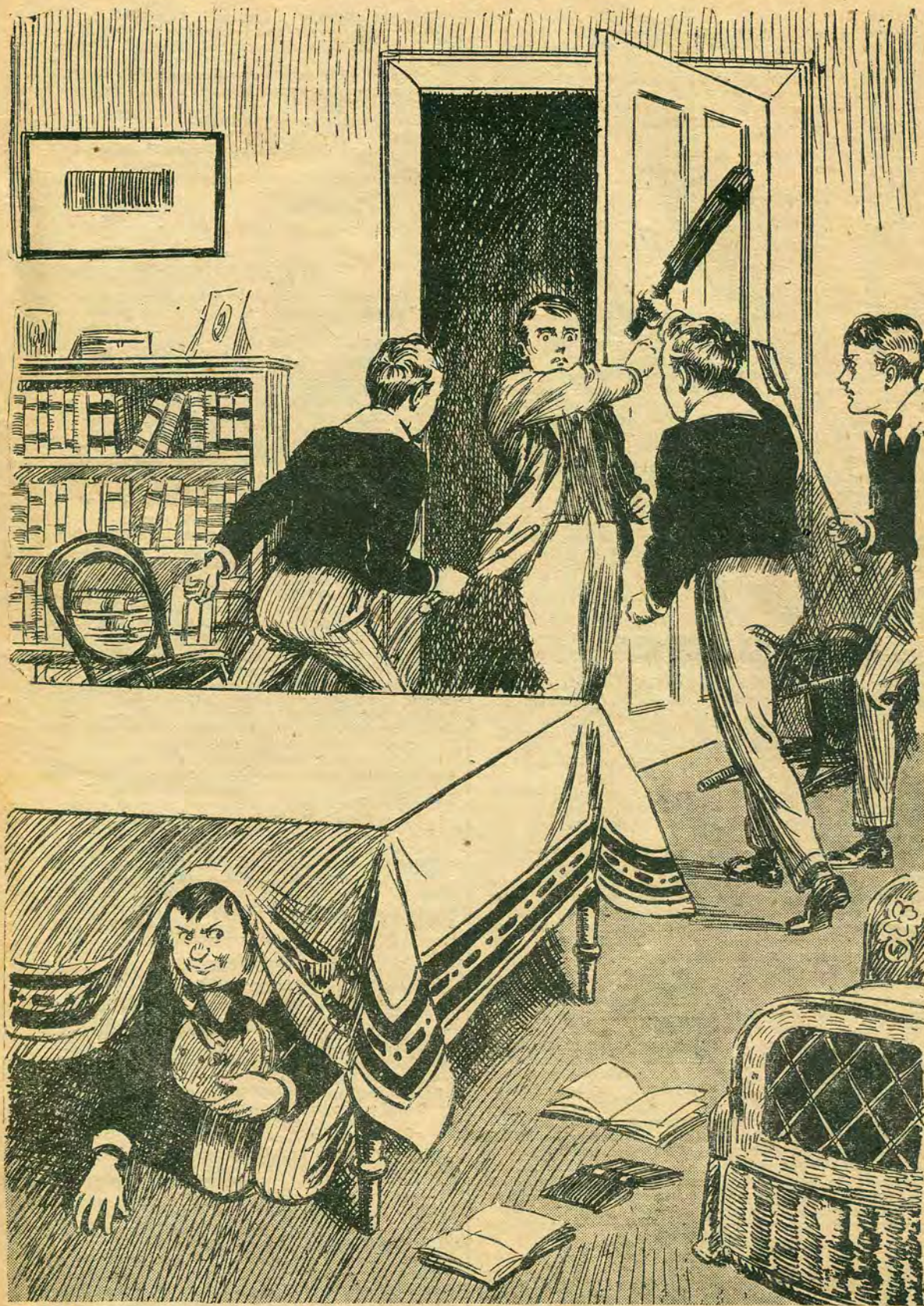
"I mean it," said Trimble. "I'll show you if you like. I'll jolly well cheek Cutts before the other Fifth Form chaps. There!"

"Oh, don't be a goat!" said Tom impatiently.

"You wait and see," said Trimble. "I can tell you, I'm not afraid of Cutts. But that isn't what I was going to say. I want you to mind something for me."



"You've got to
I'll go to the H
said Tom Mer
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"You've got that fat rascal Trimble hidden here, and you're sharing my cake with him," gasped Cutts. "By gad! I'll go to the Housemaster if you don't hand it over." "You can go to the Housemaster, or to the Head, or to Jericho," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "But you're going out of this study, anyhow! Charge, you fellows!" Trimble, from his hiding place, smiled as the Terrible Three charged, with weapons presented. (See page 3.)

"What rot!"

"It's a paper," said Trimble—"a—a valuable document. In fact, it's a banknote, and I want it to be kept safe."

Tom Merry stared at him. Trimble, after a cautious blink round the sunny quad, produced an envelope from his pocket. The envelope was carefully sealed, and apparently it contained the valuable document of which he spoke.

"Is there a banknote in that?" demanded Tom.

"Yes, exactly."

"Then you'd better take it back to the owner," said Tom Merry. "Whose is it?"

"I—I mean, it isn't a banknote," stammered Trimble. "It—it's a valuable paper—awfully valuable. In fact, an I O U."

"What on earth are you driving at?" demanded Tom, mystified. "If you've got an I O U from a fellow, why can't you look after it yourself?"

"I might lose it," said Trimble.

"Well, so might I."

"I—I mean it might be taken away from me. Suppose—suppose Cutts followed me some day, and set on me—"

"Cutts!" ejaculated Tom.

"Well, anybody," said Trimble. "The—the chap I lent the money to, I mean. He might take it back."

"You want me to believe that you've lent Cutts money, and he might grab his I O U away from you?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Are you off your rocker?"

"I—I can't exactly explain," stammered Trimble. "But it's a really valuable paper, and I'm afraid it might be stolen. I am really. I—I want you to mind it for me. It ain't safe in my pocket. I—I've got to see Cutts to-day—I mean I've got to see a chap, and if I've got that paper on me he'll have it, safe as houses!"

"Lock it up in your study, then."

"There isn't a lock on my desk," mumbled Trimble. "Besides, Melish is a prying cad, always nosing into something. He might find it. Cutts might look for it there, too, one night."

"Cutts again!" said Tom. "I really believe, Trimble, that you're going off your rocker. Ask the Housemaster to take care of it if it's valuable."

"No fear!"

"Well, I don't want to touch it," said Tom. "If it's something that belongs to Cutts give it back to him, and don't be a dishonest little beast."

And with that Tom Merry walked away, and joined Manners and Lowther, and Trimble was left blinking.

"Oh dear!" murmured Baggy.

The fat Baggy was feeling himself on the horns of a dilemma. So long as he had Gerald Cutts' I O U in his possession he had Cutts of the Fifth under his fat thumb. That was certain. Cutts would never dare to let that paper be seen. But how long was it likely to remain in his possession with the cool, unscrupulous, savage-tempered Cutts determined to recover it by hook or by crook. Already that morning Trimble had seen Cutts' baleful eye on him, watching him. He knew by instinct that the first time he went out of gates the sportsman of the Fifth would follow. He knew that Cutts might drop into his study when he was alone there, or might corner him in the passages, or round him up in some quiet spot in the quad. Cutts, it was certain, would stick at little to recapture that dangerous document. And as soon as that document was destroyed Baggy had the Fifth-Former's vengeance to look for.

To keep that paper about him was obviously too risky. To leave it in his study was equally risky. Even had his desk had a lock that lock would not have stopped Cutts. To conceal it in some nook or cranny of the House was easy, but it might have been found by chance.

So Baggy had hit on the brilliant expedient of trusting it to a fellow who would give it back to him if he wanted it, and who would not pry into it while in his possession. He had selected Tom Merry for the purpose, but he had drawn Tom Merry blank.

In Tom's hands, certainly, the paper would have been safe. He would never have yielded it to Cutts or anybody else had he undertaken the charge of it. But Tom had declined to be mixed up in an affair that was certainly mysterious and apparently "fishy." Baggy Trimble realised that he had to find some fellow who was as honourable and reliable as Tom Merry, but much less sagacious.

The sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy strolling elegantly in the quadrangle came as an answer to the problem.

"Gussy, of course!" murmured Trimble. "The very chap!"

And he rolled off to intercept the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus waved him away. But Baggy did not heed that.

"D'Arcy, old man—" he began.

"Wats!"

"Will you mind this envelope for me?"

"Eh?"

"There's a letter in it—a letter from—from my father," said Trimble. "I'm afraid of losing it. It—it contains a lot of—of good advice, you know, and I want to keep it. Be a good chap, D'Arcy, and mind it for me for a day or two."

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon Baggy.

"Weally, Twimble, that is a vewy peculiah wequest," he said.

"You're such an obliging chap, D'Arcy, I'm sure you'll do it," said Baggy. "Just shove it in your pocket-book and keep it safe."

"Vewy well, Twimble."

"You'll give it back to me when I ask you, won't you?"

"What!"

"I—I mean—"

"You are a howwid little boundah, Twimble, to ask a fellow such a question. I should gweatly pvefer to have nothin' to do with you."

"Sorry, old chap!" gasped Trimble. "I—I know I can trust you. Take it, old fellow. I'm no end obliged."

Arthur Augustus did not look pleased, but he hated to be disobliging. And it never occurred to him to be suspicious. He took the sealed envelope, and disposed of it in his little Russia leather pocket-book. The bell rang soon afterwards for third lesson, and as the juniors headed for the classrooms, Cutts of the Fifth looked for Trimble and found him, and walked to the School House beside him.

"I've got the two pounds, Trimble," he said, in a low voice. "You've got my I O U ready, I suppose?"

"Hand it over!" said Trimble.

"Come to my study after class."

"Right-ho!"

Trimble went in with the Fourth, grinning. Cutts wore a satisfied look as he went to the Fifth Form room. Trimble was coming to his study after class. And if Trimble once entered Cutts' study with the I O U in his possession, Cutts asked no more than that. Instead of two pounds the fatuous Baggy would receive, the thrashing of his life, and the dangerous document would be burned on the spot. Considering the manner in which Trimble had obtained the document, and the use to which he intended to put it, he did not, perhaps, deserve treatment any better than Cutts intended for him. But, in any case, Cutts was not the fellow to stick at trifles. With all his elegant ways and lofty airs, Gerald Cutts was at heart a pretty thorough blackguard.

But he had counted a little too easily on Trimble's fatuousness. Trimble was a duffer, no doubt, but he was not quite duffer enough to take that tell-tale paper into Cutts' study. And he grinned several times during third lesson as he thought of what Cutts expected—and of what Cutts would get.

CHAPTER 8

The Spider and the Fly!

CUTTS of the Fifth went to his study directly after class, to wait for Baggy Trimble there. St. Leger strolled in, to ask him about his escapade of the previous night. But Cutts scowled him away again. He did not intend to confide to his chums the scrape in which his rascality had landed him, and he did not want any witnesses to the interview with Trimble.

"Borin' you, what?" asked St. Leger, as Cutts snapped at him.

"Yes. Get out!"

"I thought you'd be full of your jolly old plunge," yawned St. Leger. "You generally want to tell a fellow all about it."

"Well, I don't now," grunted Cutts, "I've got a problem to work out, so leave me alone."

"Pleasure, old bean," answered St. Leger imperturbably. "Can't say I like your manners to-day, Gerald."

And he lounged out of the study, Cutts scowling after him. The dandy of the Fifth picked out a supple Malacca cane, and laid it on the table in readiness. He waited impatiently for Trimble.

His plan of campaign was simple. As soon as Trimble was in the study Cutts was to get between the junior and the door. Then Baggy would hand over the document—before or after the thrashing was immaterial. Then the document

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Tap!

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Baggy Trimble
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"Exactly!"

ANSWERS

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Gerald Cutts picked up the cane from the table. "I'm goin' to thrash you, Trimble," he said. "I'm goin' to give you the lickin' of your life. Now, are you handin' over that I O U first, or shall I take it?" "I'm not handing it over," said Trimble, enjoying the rage and dismay in Gerald Cutts' face, "I'm keeping it, and so long as I've got it you've got to toe the line!" (See this page.)

would be burned, and Trimble would be kicked out of the study.

Gerald Cutts felt quite cheerful at the prospect. The destruction of that peculiar I O U would relieve him of all his fears; and there would be nothing to prevent him from making Baggy Trimble suffer for his malicious rascality. It was quite a comforting prospect.

Tap!

"Come in!" called out Cutts cheerily.

Baggy Trimble rolled into the study. He blinked at Cutts, and noted the cane lying on the table, with a grin.

Cutts stepped quickly to the door and shut it. Then he faced Trimble, fixing two gleaming eyes on the fat junior.

"Hand it over!" he said.

"Where's the quids?" asked Trimble.

"What quids?" asked Cutts in his turn, unpleasantly.

"You owe me two quids, you know," said Trimble. "I've got your I O U for them, haven't I?"

"You have," assented Cutts. "I want that. Shell it out. I'm not givin' you anythin' but a lickin'—see?"

"I see," assented Trimble, with unexpected composure. "You've got me here to collar the I O U and wallop me."

"Exactly!"

"He, he, he!" cachinnated Trimble.

Cutts eyed him darkly. He could not understand Trimble's coolness in his perilous situation. The fat junior was an infant in his hands, and quite unable to resist. But Cutts began to have a feeling that there was something amiss somewhere.

He picked up the cane from the table.

"I'm goin' to thrash you, anyhow," he said. "I'm goin' to give you the lickin' of your life. Now, are you handin' over the paper first, or shall I take it?"

"I'm not handing it over," said Trimble cheerfully. "You see, I can't." He chuckled again. "You see, I'm not such a silly ass as to bring it here. Catch on?"

Cutts breathed hard.

"Turn out your pockets!" he snapped.

"Any old thing!" grinned Trimble.

"Where is the paper?"

"Where you won't find it," said Trimble coolly. "He, he, he! You can put down that cane, Cutts. If you touch me I'll yell, and I'll jolly well tell the Housemaster what

(Continued on page 16.)

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BAGGY THE COACH!

By Clifton Dane.

WALLY D'ARCY & CO. of the Third were at practice at the nets when Baggy Trimble rolled up. He watched them with a supercilious grin on his podgy face, and when Curly Gibson clean bowled Wally, he cackled.

Wally glared.
"Call that cricket!" sniggered Baggy. "You kids can't play cricket for toffee! What you need is some good coaching."
"Really!" said Wally, winking at his fellow-fags, who had commenced to pull up the stumps for use as weapons. "Well, Baggy, suppose you coach us—that is, if you can spare your valuable time."

"I don't usually waste time on mere fags, but I don't mind doing you kids a favour for once," said Baggy, with a smirk.

Wally D'Arcy & Co. exchanged glances and grins.

"First of all, let me show you how to bat!" said Baggy, taking an awkward stance at the wicket. "You might send me down a ball, young D'Arcy."

Wally nodded, and sent down a "yorker." Baggy's middle stump went skyrocketing.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ahem!" coughed Baggy. "I—I wasn't ready! Try again!"

Wally sent down another ball. This time Baggy took a mighty swipe with his bat, missed the ball, knocked his wicket over instead, and then, losing his balance, sat down on the spread-eagled stumps.

"How's that?" roared Wally D'Arcy. "Yow! We'll leave batting for a little while, and I'll show you youngsters some bowling!" moaned Baggy, rising to his feet. "You watch me closely, and you'll see how it should be done."

Wally went to the wicket, and Baggy took the ball.

He took a run, and flung the leather with all his might.

But, alas for Baggy's aim, it did not go to the wicket. The ball soared high in the air, miles wide of the wicket, and went whizzing towards a gentleman who was crossing the Close near by. That gentleman was Mr. Selby, the master of the Third.

Straight as a die the ball whizzed towards Mr. Selby's topper. It struck that article of headgear amidships on the star-board quarter.

Mr. Selby grabbed his topper, which had a huge dent in it, and dashed across the field.

"Trimble, how dare you!" he choked. "You deliberately hurled that ball at me!"

"Ow! I didn't, sir!" moaned Baggy. "I was bowling—"

"Do not lie, Trimble! You hurled the ball into mid-air, intending that it should strike my hat! You shall smart for this! Come with me!"

(Continued in next column.)

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EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

THE reign of King Cricket is now in full swing, and playing-fields throughout the land are resounding to the merry smack of the willow.

Cricket is one of the sports at which we at St. Jim's excel. Directly the footer season is over we take to cricket like ducks to water. Perhaps, however, I had better not mention "ducks" in connection with cricket. It had an ominous sound. Grundy, please note!

Cricket is essentially an all-British game, and ranks with football in being the greatest of our national sports. So widespread and deeprooted has its interest become, that the word cricket now not only signifies the game itself, but stands for everything that is right and sporting. "It isn't cricket"—that is how an unsportsmanlike act is described. Cricket is the healthiest and cleanest of all games.

Who is the best cricketer at St. Jim's? That is a question that is very frequently being asked. I would rather reply in the plural, for there are many budding W. G. Graces in our ranks. Kildare, our stalwart skipper, is, of course, by far and away the finest cricketer in the school. It does one's eyes good to watch him perform at the wicket, or on the green sward. As regards the Lower School, I happen to hold the highest batting average, so far; but Talbot, Figgins, and Blake are running pretty close. For bowling I must hand the palm to Fatty Wynn, the deadliest of all leather-slingers. We have heard much of Welsh Wizards and rarebits, and Fatty is certainly a wizard with the ball, and he is a rare, if somewhat bulky, bit of our Junior Eleven. He has performed the hat-trick more often than any other fellow at St. Jim's, and enemy batsmen hold him much in awe. Fatty looks on cricket stumps as skittles when he does get going. We really couldn't do without him.

Long live King Cricket! That is a cry that will find a ready echo in every schoolboy heart. Our Junior Eleven is going great guns this season. You watch us! We shall make the fur fly somewhat, or my name isn't—

Tom Merry

(Continued from column 1.)

Seeing that Baggy was unwilling to go, Mr. Selby took him by the left ear and led him away, howling.

And Baggy was howling still more when he came out of Mr. Selby's study afterwards.

He did not resume his coaching of the Third!

MY PAST CRICKET FEATS!

(Recounted by various St. Jim's celebrities.)

TAGGLES.—Which Hi've been a cricketer in my time! Wot Hi remembers most vivid is the time when Hi woz playin' for Little Puddleham. Them woz my very early crickettin' days. Hi woz last man in, and Hi 'eard someone say as 'ow Hi was the last 'ope of my side, and hif Hi didn't score the Little Puddleham chaps would 'arf murder me! Hi went to the wicket hin fear and tremblin'! Down came the ball, and Hi shut my heyes and 'it hout. Hi felt the terrific shout. "Run! Run!" 'owls everybody. So Hi drops my bat and Hi runs for dear life, thinkin' Hi 'ad 'arf Little Puddleham on my track. Hi didn't stop till Hi woz a good two miles from Little Puddleham! When Hi gets back that night I 'ears as 'ow Hi 'ad won the match. But it woz the Little Puddleham captain who told me, with strong expressions, that Hi 'ad won—for the hopposite side!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY.—My gweatest triumph, deah boys, took place duwin' the wegattah week, when I was stayin' with my brothah, Lord Conway, at Cowes. Con made up a team to play a Naval Eleven, and I got a game. I wemembah there were some weally wippin' gals lookin' on, and I wegahded it as my duty to show them what I could do. bai Jove! I piled up heaps of wuns, and old Con affahwards warmly congratulated me. That was all wight, but what a weally glorious time I had with the deah gals affahwards!

MONTY LOWTHER.—I can claim to have registered no less than 204 runs in that great inter-county cricket match at Abbot'sford last year, when some of the finest professionals in England were playing. 'Sfact! You see, my uncle, who was playing, got me the job of scorer!

JACK BLAKE.—I pulled a match out of the fire for the Fourth once by quite a neat feat. Our team was fielding, when Talbot slogged the ball right into the long-field. Gussy and I ran for it, and Gussy got there first. But, to the horror of all our chaps, the ball slipped through his fingers! With one leap I flung myself at Gussy's feet, and caught the ball as it dropped from his hands. Thus Talbot, who looked like being set for the duration of the innings, was caught out!

HERBERT SKIMPOLE.—I am afraid that I have not yet performed a cricket feat of any singular dexterity, my whole time having been devoted, so far, to the fundamentals of Socialism and Determinism. I leave the scoring of goals to more able cricketers than I!



The Plotter

"IT'S got to be done! Aubrey Racke c that statement in cronies, Meilish, S. It was a glorious Wednesday in half an hour's time, match with Gurnham Gr due to commence. Racke cussing that match. It thing for them to take matters, but on this brigade of St. Jim's had stake.

"Hewett, the Gurnham c to pay a liver if I can w team this afternoon," s got plenty of cash, but i We could do with that fiv

"Rather!" said the othe
"And, by Jove," exclaim the table, "I've got Wynn's the only chap in any chance of getting a tuck will do the trick. H any money?"

Racke & Co. turned the found that they had t tween them.

"We'll spend this mone to rake in the liver!" s crafty look. "A sort of mackerel, you know. The outside the tuckshop no from the window. Let's the wheeze."

On the way downstairs his scheme. His cronies idea, although they wou enthusiastic, had it not ing of all their worldly

Fatty Wynn was outsid usual haunt—looking long at the rabbit-pies and had forbidden him to par the tuckshop until after Fatty felt that he was a of cricket.

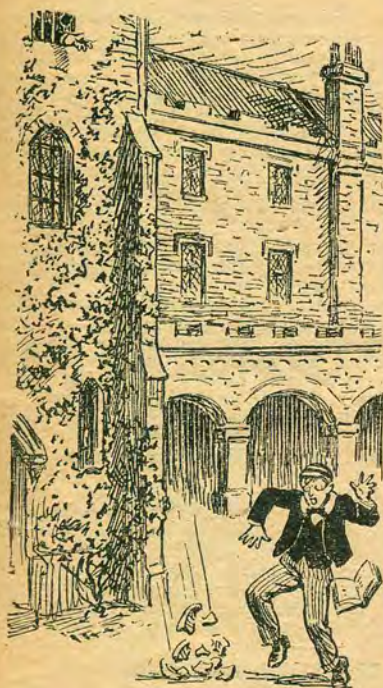
Racke came up and smile.

The rascal of the Shell shop, laid the twelve counter, and proceeded tuck in a loud voice.

Fatty's mouth watered. Tuck was his one gre was always ready for a noon he felt particular had cut down his dinner it wouldn't do for him full meal.

Racke emerged from t with parcels.

"I say, Wynn, old helping me?" he asked



The Plotters!

"IT'S got to be done somehow!" Aubrey Racke of the Shell made that statement in his study to his cronies, Mellish, Scrope, and Clampe. It was a glorious Wednesday afternoon, and in half an hour's time the home cricket match with Girnam Grammar School was due to commence. Racke & Co. were discussing that match. It was an unusual thing for them to take an interest in cricket matters, but on this occasion the rotters brigade of St. Jim's had certain interests at stake.

"Hewett, the Girnam captain, has offered to pay a fiver if I can wangle a win for his team this afternoon," said Racke. "He's got plenty of cash, but not many scruples. We could do with that fiver."

"Rather!" said the other young rascals.

"And, by Jove," exclaimed Racke, smiting the table, "I've got a wheeze! Fatty Wynn's the only chap in the team we stand any chance of getting at. His weakness for tuck will do the trick. Have you chaps got any money?"

Racke & Co. turned their pockets out, and found that they had twelve shillings between them.

"We'll spend this money as an investment to rake in the fiver!" said Racke, with a crafty look. "A sort of sprat to catch a mackerel, you know. There's Fatty hanging outside the tuckshop now. I can see him from the window. Let's go down and work the wheeze."

On the way downstairs Racke propounded his scheme. His cronies voted it a good idea, although they would have been more enthusiastic, had it not entailed the spending of all their worldly wealth.

Fatty Wynn was outside the tuckshop—his usual haunt—looking longingly in the window at the rabbit-pies and jam-tarts. Figgins had forbidden him to purchase anything from the tuckshop until after the match, and Fatty felt that he was a martyr to the cause of cricket.

Racke came up and gave him a sweet smile.

The rascal of the Shell went into the tuckshop, laid the twelve shillings on the counter, and proceeded to give orders for tuck in a loud voice.

Fatty's mouth watered as he listened.

Tuck was his one great weakness. Fatty was always ready for a feed, and this afternoon he felt particularly hungry, as Figgins had cut down his dinner rations, saying that it wouldn't do for him to play cricket on a full meal.

Racke emerged from the tuckshop, loaded with parcels.

"I say, Wynn, old chap, do you mind helping me?" he asked. "I'll stand you

WYNN'S WIN!

BY
DICK REDFERN.

some of the tuck for your trouble. I want this lot taken into the old tower."

Fatty could not resist the temptation.

"I want the tuck hidden in the top room of the tower, Wynn," said Racke, with a cunning look. "Must safeguard it against raids, you know."

"Right-ho!" said Fatty.

They went through the lonely cloisters, and climbed the long flights of crumbling stone steps that led them eventually into the top room of the ruined tower.

They put the tuck down on the floor.

Racke waved a hand hospitably.

"Pile in, Wynn!" he said. "There's plenty, so you needn't stint yourself. You'll find those rabbit-pies prime, and the tarts, too."

"Oh, good egg!" murmured Fatty.

Racke left the room and closed the door. He bent down and inserted a wedge between the old oak door and the frame.

Then he ran down the steps and joined Mellish, Scrope, and Clampe at the bottom.

"I've done it!" he chuckled. "Wynn's up there in the top room with the tuck, and the door's wedged from the outside. He'll imagine the door has jammed—it's jolly old, you know. He won't turn up for the match, and as Girnam are pretty hot stuff they are bound to win. Fatty will get into an awful row with Tom Merry & Co. afterwards, and we'll be quite beyond suspicion. I reckon that fiver is as good as ours!"

Missing!

TOM MERRY & CO. were dismayed and anxious.

The Girnam team had arrived, it was time for the match to commence, and Fatty Wynn, the hope of the St. Jim's Junior Eleven, could not be found anywhere.

Tom Merry & Co. and Figgins & Co. had searched the school from top to bottom, but Fatty seemed to have disappeared into thin air.

"I'm blessed if I can make it out," muttered Tom Merry. "The ass must be somewhere. Perhaps, as it's jolly hot, he has fallen asleep. He'll wake up, I suppose, and suddenly remember he ought to be playing in the match. I think we'll start without him. He's bound to turn up later."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And so Tom Merry signified to Hewett, the visiting captain, that he would play with one man short, leaving the place open in the hope that Fatty would arrive later.

Hewett sneered. He was not a likeable fellow. Although a good cricketer, he was not a sportsman. He scowled when Tom Merry won the toss, and elected to bat first. He had heard of Fatty Wynn's renown as a bowler, and would prefer to have had his own innings first, in case the missing bowler should turn up. It was a single innings match.

Tom Merry & Co. batted well, and runs mounted up encouragingly.

Fatty was not greatly missed, as he did not usually shine as a batsman. But as a bowler he had no equal. Without him, the St. Jim's Junior Eleven was crippled.

Tom Merry & Co.'s innings ended for 189, and during refreshments another hurried search was made for Fatty. But nobody thought of the old tower, and the St. Jim's team went out to field, feeling very glum.

Saving the Situation!

FATTY WYNN made good inroads into the tuck.

"That was prime!" he murmured, standing up at last. "I—I'd like to eat some more, but it belongs to Racke. It was jolly good of him, anyhow, to give me a free hand with his tuck. I suppose it's

close on time for the match. I'll be going." But Fatty, to his dismay, could not open the door.

He exerted all his strength in his efforts to open it, but of no avail. Twenty minutes later he fell back, panting. He was baffled. "The beastly door's jammed!" he moaned. "Oh, crumbs! The match must have started by now. Why the dickens doesn't Racke come back?"

Fatty shouted from the window, but at that height his voice would not carry to the ground.

He was helpless—a prisoner at the top of the tower.

Fatty began to realise that Racke had tricked him, and he blamed himself for allowing his weakness for tuck to lead him into the trap. What would Tom Merry and Figgins say?

At last Fatty hit on a desperate expedient. Looking out of the window, he saw Skimpole strolling through the arches below, his head buried in a book dealing with one of his cherished "isms." Fatty took up a china pie-dish which he had emptied, and, just as Skimpole was almost under the window, let it drop to the ground below.

Crash!

Skimpole nearly jumped out of his shoes when that sudden bang sounded in front of him. He was amazed to see a broken pie-dish lying at his feet. It had come down like a bolt from the blue.



The wizard bowler arrives in time!

He blinked upward and saw a hand waving frantically from the window at the top of the tower.

"Dear me!" said Skimpole. "There is somebody imprisoned at the top of the tower. I must investigate."

Skimpole ran up the stairs, and arrived breathlessly at the top. He discovered the wedge, removed it, and released Fatty.

Fatty had already made a parcel of the remainder of the tuck.

With the parcel hugged under one arm he dashed down the stairs. He halted for a few brief instants to hide the parcel in a remote corner of the cloisters, and then he dashed for the cricket-field.

A joyous howl greeted his appearance.

"Here's Fatty!"

"Fatty, take the ball for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Tom Merry, who had been making unavailing efforts to get Hewett out. "They're only five men down, and thirty behind us in the scoring. We rely on you, Fatty!"

Fatty's eyes glinted.

Dressed as he was, in Etons, he took his part in the match.

The third ball of his first over shattered Hewett's wicket. The next man in had his middle stump whipped out in an instant. Fatty gritted his teeth, and determined to make up for lost time. And he did! His bowling was glorious to watch. He performed the hat-trick, last man in completing the trio of "ducks" for the visiting team.

"Hurrah!" howled Figgins. "We've won by seven runs! Bravo, Fatty!"

And then came explanations. Hewett & Co. retired quickly from St. Jim's before Racke was caught.

When Tom Merry & Co. did lay hands on Racke, that wily youth had the time of his life. He felt, afterwards, that he had simply nothing to live for.

Fatty scored, after all, for not only did Racke & Co.'s plan come to naught, but Fatty had the whole twelve shillingsworth of tuck for himself into the bargain. And that, to Racke & Co., was like adding insult to injury.

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"UNDER TRIMBLE'S THUMB!"

(Continued from page 13.)

you're pitching into me for. If you want Mr. Railton to see the paper, go ahead."

Cutts laid down the cane. Evidently that Malacca was not to figure in this interview. He realised that Trimble had been too wary to bring the IOU with him.

Trimble grinned at him cheerfully. Apart from the entertainment of keeping the bully of the Fifth under his fat thumb, Trimble's regard for his own skin would have prevented him from parting with the IOU. He knew what to expect when Cutts had nothing more to fear.

"I'm keeping that paper," went on Trimble, enjoying the rage and dismay in Gerald Cutts' face. "So long as I've got it, you've got to toe the line. See?"

Cutts gritted his teeth.

"You can keep your beastly money, too," went on Trimble independently. "Not that I believe you've got two pounds; you lost all your tin at the Green Man last night. You're an awful blackguard, Cutts. I really think I ought to get you turned out of St. Jim's. You're a disgrace to the school, ain't you, old chap?"

Gerald Cutts clenched his hands hard. The fat Fourth-Former backed round the study table.

"Better keep off," he said. "You touch me, you bully, and that paper goes straight to Mr. Railton."

"What will you take for it?" breathed Cutts.

"I won't take anything for it," answered Trimble coolly. "I'm going to keep it, and keep you in order, Cutts. Do you think I'm a blackmailer? Well, I ain't. I'm not your sort, Cutts. I'm not asking you for any money, am I?"

"I want that paper!" said Cutts huskily. "Suppose—suppose somebody saw it?"

"Rough on you, what, if that happened," said Trimble agreeably. "But it's all right, old fellow. I've put it away safely. Anything more to say before I go?"

Cutts trembled with fury. He eyed Baggy Trimble almost wolfishly across the table; but he did not venture to touch him. Trimble grinned across at him.

"There's one thing," said Baggy cheerfully. "You collared my cake yesterday, Cutts."

"Your cake?" murmured Cutts.

"Yes, my birthday cake from my uncle, Sir Reginald Trimble. You made out it was yours."

"You—you fat scoundrel, you took the cake from this study."

"If you're going to call me names, Cutts, I'm afraid I shan't be able to let you off," said Trimble calmly. "For your own sake, old fellow, hadn't you better keep a civil tongue?"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Cutts.

"About that cake," resumed Trimble. "I shall naturally expect you to stand me a cake for the one you collared. That's only fair."

If looks could have slain, Baggy Trimble's fat career would probably have come to a sudden termination there and then. Fortunately for Baggy, looks couldn't.

"I shall expect that cake in my study at tea-time," said Trimble. "Can I depend on you, Cutts?"

"Yes!" hissed Cutts.

"Thanks, old chap!"

Trimble moved towards the door. Cutts made a motion, but he allowed the fat junior to pass. Trimble opened the door, and at the same time Prye of the Fifth came in.

"Hallo! Entertainin' the Fourth?" asked Prye, with a surprised glance at Trimble.

"Get out, Trimble!" muttered Cutts.

Trimble eyed him coolly. He had not forgotten his kickings; and he had the whip-hand now.

"What did you say, Cutts?" he asked.

"Get out."

"Don't be cheeky!"

Cutts made a convulsive movement. Trimble backed into the doorway, watching him warily. Prye looked on in blank astonishment. Cutts, as a rule, was the very last senior at St. Jim's to be cheeked with impunity by a Lower boy. But Cutts was taking Trimble's cheek in silence.

"Don't be cheeky, Cutts," repeated Trimble victoriously. "Mind, I mean what I say. I've had altogether too much swank from you, Cutts. I don't like it. Do you hear?"

Cutts glared, but did not answer.

"If there's any more of it," went on Trimble, "I shall have to cuff you, Cutts. I don't want to have to handle you. But if you give me any more lip, there's a cuffing to come. Understand that."

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Prye of the Fifth stood open-mouthed, rooted to the floor with astonishment. Cutts uttered no word.

Baggy Trimble, with a fat grin on his face, walked vauntingly out of the study. Prye stared at Cutts.

"What does this mean, Gerald?" he demanded.

"Find out!"

"Look here, what are you lettin' that scrubby little scoundrel cheek you for?" demanded Prye warmly. "Is that the way for a fag to talk to the Fifth? What do you mean by it?"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Look here, Cutts—"

"Shut up!" roared Cutts savagely.

Prye of the Fifth stamped out of the study, and closed the door after him with a bang.

Cutts was left to his reflections. To judge by his looks his reflections were not pleasant ones.

He was under Trimble's thumb—that much was clear! So long as the IOU existed he dared not quarrel with Trimble. The statement, written in his own hand, that he was handing Baggy two pounds for letting him into the house after midnight was more than enough to condemn him, if seen by the eyes of authority.

Under Trimble's thumb! Cutts writhed with rage at the thought of it.

But there it was—and there was no help for it! At tea-time that evening a large and handsome cake adorned the table in Study No. 2 in the Fourth—a present from Cutts, as Trimble airily explained to his surprised study-mates. And Trimble's idea was that so long as the IOU was safely guarded by his unconscious ally, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, there would be a good many more "presents from Cutts."

CHAPTER 9.

The Whip-Hand!

"HOLD on, Cutts!"

Cutts held on.

It was Trimble who spoke, and, for the present, the voice of Trimble was, to Cutts of the Fifth, a voice of command.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, who were coming along the path in the quad, held on, too, in sheer astonishment. The look of rage that flashed over Gerald Cutts' face was not lost on them. And the obedience of the "swanking" dandy of the Fifth was astounding.

Trimble grinned at the Terrible Three. It pleased the fatuous Baggy to display his power before the chums of the Shell. They knew that Cutts had kicked him and cuffed him times without number. Now they were going to see Cutts eat humble-pie.

"I've been looking for you, Cutts," said Trimble.

"Have you?" breathed Cutts.

"Yes. You've been keeping out of my way, I think," said Trimble. "Don't be funky, old man—I'm not going to cuff you this time."

Tom Merry blinked. Was it Cutts of the Fifth, the lofty, the disdainful, the arrogant bully, who was allowing Baggy Trimble to talk to him like this?

It was! Cutts took it without a word, though his face was almost white with rage.

"The fact is," went on Trimble, "I'm rather hard up. Cutts. I'm not asking you for the quids mentioned in your little IOU. I'm not going to trouble you about that. But I'd like you to lend me ten bob, if you could, for a few days."

Cutts breathed hard.

"Only for a few days, till I get a remittance I'm expecting from my uncle, Sir Montague Trimble," said Baggy.

The Terrible Three walked on. They were astonished, and they could not help being curious; but it was, after all, no business of theirs.

"Hold on, you fellows!" called out Trimble, anxious for his triumph to be witnessed. But Tom Merry & Co. went on their way unheeding.

Gerald Cutts gave the fat junior a malevolent look.

"You fat fool!" he muttered. "Haven't you sense enough not to gas before other fellows? Do you want this to become the talk of St. Jim's?"

"I don't mind," answered Trimble coolly. "Why shouldn't I borrow a few bob from a pal in the Fifth?"

"You—you—" gasped Cutts.

"You can please yourself about lending me the ten bob, of course," said Trimble. "I don't insist. Of course, if you don't oblige a fellow with a temporary loan I don't see that a fellow is bound to keep your disgraceful secrets. What do you think?"

Cutts did not answer. He extracted a ten-shilling note from his pocket as surreptitiously as he could, and passed it to Trimble. The fatuous Baggy had rounded up Cutts in open quad, and there were at least a dozen fellows in easy view, and several of them could not help seeing the incident.

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The dandy of the Fifth hurried away, leaving Baggy Trimble grinning with satisfaction.

He rolled away towards the tuck-shop, the ten-shilling note in his fat fingers. It did not seem to occur to Trimble that it would be wise to conceal his plunder. But, to do the fat Baggy justice, he did not regard it as plunder.

Trimble was not a scrupulous youth; but he really would have been shocked at the idea of screwing money out of Cutts as the price of keeping his secret. A "temporary loan" was quite another matter. It was, in point of fact, a distinction without a difference; but the distinction was enough to satisfy Baggy's obtuse brain and easy-going conscience.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther had gone into the school shop for ginger-beer. Baggy followed them in, and gave liberal orders. By the rate at which Baggy gave his orders, it looked as if Cutts of the Fifth would soon have to oblige him again with a temporary loan.

"Have some of these tarts, you fellows!" said Trimble hospitably.

"Thanks, no!" said Tom Merry, with a curious glance at the fat junior. "Look here, Trimble, what's this little game?"

"Eh?"

"Why is Cutt's giving you money?"

"He isn't! He obliged me with a loan."

"Oh, don't be an ass, if you can help it!" said Tom. "You were talking to me the other day about an I O U from Cutts that you thought he might take away from you. I don't understand all this, Trimble, but it looks to me as if there's something fishy going on."

"What rot!" said Trimble, with his mouth full. "Suppose Cutts gave me an I O U. Nothing fishy in that. Suppose he was afraid of his I O U being seen by the Head? Well, that's his look-out. Fellows shouldn't break bounds at night, should they?"

"Do you mean to say that you've found out something about Cutts, and you're holding it over his head?" exclaimed Manners, in disgust.

"I don't mean to say anything. You fellows are jolly inquisitive," said Trimble. "I know what I know."

"Well, what's that?" asked Lowther.

"Oh, nothing!"

The Terrible Three finished their ginger-beer, and left the tuckshop feeling rather puzzled and disturbed. It was pretty clear that something was going on of a shady kind, and that Trimble somehow had Cutts of the Fifth under his thumb was plain enough. It was not a pleasant thing to contemplate; but it was not much use talking to Trimble.

"I'm blessed if I can understand it!" Tom Merry remarked. "But, whatever it is, it ought to be stopped!"

Manners nodded thoughtfully.

"Trimble's got hold of something in writing that would get Cutts into a row if it were seen," he said. "That's how it looks to me. He doesn't understand what a horrid little rotter he is; but he ought to be made to give it up. I dare say it serves Cutts right, though."

"Very likely," assented Lowther. "Anyhow, you were right not to take charge of the giddy document, Tom, whatever it was. You don't want to get mixed up in it."

Tom Merry thought a good deal over the matter, and at tea-time he dropped into Study No. 2 in the Fourth, expecting to find Trimble there, and intending to speak to him seriously. Wildrake and Mellish were at tea, but the fat Baggy was not to be seen.

"Trimble not here?" asked Tom.

"He's gone out to tea, I guess," said Wildrake. "Trimble seems to be making friends in the senior Forms. He's gone to tea with Cutts of the Fifth."

"My hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"He told us Cutts had asked him," grinned Mellish. "As a matter of fact, I heard him ask Cutts. Cutts looked savage, but he said yes. Cutts seems afraid of Trimble."

"Can't imagine anybody being afraid of Trimble," said Wildrake.

"Well, he didn't want Trimble to tea in the Fifth—who could want Trimble to tea, anyhow?" said Mellish. "He looked as if he'd like to kick him. But he said yes. Trimble told him to have a plum-cake, and he said he would."

"I guess I don't catch on to it, then."

Tom Merry left the study with a frowning brow. Trimble was obviously making full use of his advantage over Cutts, whatever it was. That advantage lay, it was pretty plain, in the mysterious document Tom Merry had refused to take charge of a few days before, and which now—although Tom was not aware of it—reposed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's pocket-book.

After prep that evening Tom looked into Study No. 2 again. He found Trimble there, slowly and methodically working his way through a large bag of chocolate creams.

"Have some, old chap!" said Trimble.

Tom eyed him.

"That lot came from Cutts, I suppose?" he said.

"How did you guess?" said Trimble affably. "Yes, old Cutts thought I should like them."

"I don't know that it's any business of mine," said Tom slowly. "But I think you're more a fool than rascal, Trimble!"

"Look here, you know—"

"You ought to chuck this," said Tom. "Give Cutts his paper, whatever it is, and stop playing the rotter. It's not only rotten, kid, but if you keep it up there'll be trouble for you in the long run."

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Trimble cheerfully. "Shut the door after you, old fellow!"

Tom Merry gave it up.

CHAPTER 10.

Good News for Cutts!

"TWIMBLE heah?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came into the junior Common-room a few days later with a distressed countenance. It was evening, and prep was over, and Tom Merry & Co. were in the Common-room, when the swell of St. Jim's entered and asked after Trimble. D'Arcy turned his eyeglass on the fellows in the room, seeking for Baggy, but finding him not.

"He's not here," grinned Mellish. "He's gone to supper with his pal in the Fifth."

"Bai Jove! I didn't know Twimble had a pal in the Fifth."

"Jolly old Cutts," said Blake. "Trimble's got hold of Cutts. Blest if I know how! He's always hanging about his study."

"What on earth do you want Trimble for, Gussy?" asked Monty Lowther. "How can anybody ever possibly want Trimble?"

"I do not want Twimble, Lowthah—very far frowm it!" said Arthur Augustus. "But I have lost his lettah."

"Lost his letter?" said Tom Merry, looking round.

"Yaas, wathah! Last week, you know, Twimble asked me to take care of a lettah frowm his fathah—"

"What the merry thump did he want you to do that for?" exclaimed Manners.

"I weally do not know, Mannahs. He said he was afraid of losin' it, and it contained some good advice, and all that, and he wanted me to take care of it, so I said I would."

"Oh!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

The Terrible Three exchanged glances. They understood easily enough the nature of the "letter" that the unsuspicious Gussy had taken care of. It was evidently the mysterious I O U which Tom Merry had declined to handle.

"You've lost it?" exclaimed Manners.

"Yaas, wathah! It is vevy unfortunate," said Arthur Augustus. "The fact is, I forgot that I had it. I put it in my pocket-book, you know, along with some old lettahs, and the mattah passed frowm my mind entiahly. The othah day I cleahed out my pocket-book, and thwew the old lettahs into the fiah."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You see, I had quite forgotten that Twimble's lettah was among the west," said Arthur Augustus. "A fellow can't be expected to wemembah ewerythin'. Just now it flashed into my bwain that I must have put Twimble's lettah into the fiah along with the othahs. So I want to see Twimble and explain to him. I suppose it does not mattah vevy much, as Twimble can easily ask his fathah to w'ite him anothah lettah. But I feel bound to explain to Twimble at once and apologise."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"Bai Jove! It is not weally a laughin' mattah, deah boys. I feel vevy much to blame. Howevah, I will go and see Twimble and explain."

And Arthur Augustus walked away to the Fifth Form passage to seek Baggy Trimble in Cutts' study.

"Come in!" growled the voice of Gerald Cutts, as the swell of the Fourth tapped at the study door.

Arthur Augustus entered.

There was a well-spread table in Gerald Cutts' study—with a scowling face on one side of it and a smiling visage on the other. The former belonged to Cutts, the latter to Baggy Trimble.

Having asked himself to supper with Cutts Baggy was enjoying himself. He did not mind Cutts' scowl. Baggy did not see anything to scowl about.

"Well, what do you want?" snapped Cutts, with a hostile glare at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Nothin', deah boy; only to speak to Twimble, as I was told he was heah," said Arthur Augustus mildly.

"Go ahead, old bean," said Trimble. "Pass the cake, Cutts! Cut it for me. Don't be lazy!"

(Continued on page 28.)

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The elusive Dr. Ziglio, the world's master criminal, who has set the whole world at defiance, at last pays the penalty. How, and in what circumstances, you will read in this thrilling story.

ZIGLIO'S LAST CARD!



By MARTIN WALKER.

CHAPTER 1.

Bombing a Train!

THE aeroplane that had brought Jennifer Pettigrew Wren, the eminent crime investigator, on his perilous attempt to frustrate the master criminal, Dr. Ziglio, in the biggest coup he had ever attempted, wheeled round and retraced its course, and the pilot, Robertson, Wren's secretary and aide-de-camp, yelled over his shoulder to Augustus, their young assistant:

"Focus your glasses on that little bunch down there! I don't like the look of 'em at all. Something's up!"

Robertson's instructions were promptly complied with. Augustus unshipped his binoculars from his side, and, leaning over the edge of the aeroplane, glued them upon the little group of people many thousands of feet below. By means of skilful circling, Robertson kept them pretty much in the same spot, and Augustus was able to obtain an unimpaired view.

He picked out the railway-coach that Ziglio's men had succeeded in severing from the parent train, and which now stood derelict on the railroad-track. He could discern quickly moving figures. He was pretty certain that he could identify Ziglio himself. He could make out Ziglio's car, too, drawn up on the road that ran parallel to the railway, and in it he could distinguish the shapes of several boxes, packed tightly together. Figures seemed to be carrying more of these boxes from the coach to the car, wrapping them on behind, after first wrapping them in what appeared to be canvas.

"Can you spot the chief?" shouted Robertson.

"Not a sign of him!" roared back Augustus. "Think I can see Ziglio, though, sir! 'E seems all active-like. There ain't no 'olding 'im!"

"Can you see any of the others?" shrieked Robertson.

"Not a one, sir!"

Augustus, who knew that Robertson was alluding to the police who had accompanied the treasure that Ziglio was fast securing, was now perfectly certain that the man directing operations below was none other than the redoubtable master criminal himself.

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"They've all disappeared, sir," said Augustus. "The men workin' below is Ziglio's bunch, an' Ziglio 'imself is there all right. No doubt about that, sir!"

Robertson thought rapidly. It was perfectly obvious that Wren and the police must be somewhere. They could not have disappeared into thin air. Nor could they have escaped across the barren country without being seen by the occupants of the aeroplane. There was only one possible place for them to be, then, namely, inside the derelict railway-coach. Then a ghastly thought flashed across Robertson's brain.

He remembered learning from a railway official, before they started out, that the down express, which came on to that single stretch of railroad fifty miles farther up the line, was due within three-quarters of an hour to pass the spot where stood the lone coach.

Across this stretch of country it was the practice of the express drivers to make up time that they invariably lost. The down express would be travelling at between seventy and eighty miles an hour, and would round the bend of undulating, low-lying hills about a mile away at that speed.

The hills were just high enough to obscure the line ahead from the driver's watchful eye, and to pull up a heavy train travelling at such a terrific speed was, Robertson knew, a practical impossibility. The express would dash into the coach, wreck it completely, and more than probably wreck itself into the bargain.

Robertson, knowing Ziglio as he did, was perfectly certain that the criminal would leave no stone unturned to facilitate the ghastly catastrophe.

Robertson looked at his watch. The time was a quarter to twelve o'clock. He knew that the express entered upon the single track at fifteen minutes past twelve. Inside another quarter of an hour she would, if not stopped, crash headlong into the coach, and another terrible disaster would be added to the already long list of the world's railway tragedies.

All thought of Ziglio and the bank's gold had now left Robertson's mind. Ziglio must escape, if needs be, and with his ill-gotten treasure, too. Nothing mattered, save that the down express must be stopped in its headlong career to destruction, and the lives of Wren and the others saved.

How to do it? That was the question that pumped through Robertson's mind as he sat with his hand on the wheel and his feet on the controls of the aeroplane.

"They're goin', sir," he heard Augustus' voice in his ear. "They're goin', and they aren't taking the chief nor none of 'em. Shall I let loose them bombs on 'em?"

Bombs! Let loose the bombs!

Augustus had solved the terrible problem. He had brought back to Robertson's mind the bombs that they had on board, and which they carried in the event of Ziglio escaping. It had been suggested that a bomb dropped in front of his car might seriously retard his progress.

But now—now that Ziglio's escape was a thing of infinitesimal importance, as compared with the holding up of the down express, those bombs would be used for that purpose.

Robertson dipped, and, dipping, turned his machine in the opposite direction once more. Then he opened her full out, and with a roar she sped forward on her terrible mission.

"Augustus!" roared Robertson. "Don't worry about a thing except what I tell you. When I say 'Let 'em go,' you let 'em go! That's all!"

"Right-ho, sir!" answered Augustus.

He had learned to accept commands, without raising any questions.

The wind sang in the wires of the fuselage as they sped onwards at a terrific speed. They were doing a hundred and ten miles an hour. In five minutes they ran into a cloudbank. Driving mist was all about them, and cut their faces with stinging pain. Groaning inwardly, Robertson dropped his speed to about a hundred, and ran out of the bank.

Looking forward with far-seeing eyes he could discern a puff of smoke in the distance that denoted the onward rush of the approaching express. He steered his course over the railway-line, and continued on. There was now not more than two miles between him and the train, each second decreasing the distance by an appreciable amount.

Robertson thanked his stars that he had been an expert bombing pilot in the days of the Great War, for he knew that possibly never before had so much depended on his accuracy. One mistake, one false move, and he would defeat his

own ends. Moreover, he unwittingly blow a whole lot of pieces. The irony of the situation forced him, and he could smile just a little. The train had bombed enemy trains and watched the shattered headlong to destruction!

Here he was now, in space, with a cargo of bombs to attempt to save just this train.

Robertson estimated that about a hundred yards of track itself. That would be space.

"Let her go!" he roared. Augustus, hearing, pulled his lever, and a bomb was sent downwards.

Almost in the next instant the dull boom as the bomb hit, and they saw the earth in all directions.

Robertson piloted his the track once more, and, coming with the express.

"Let her go!" he roared. Another bomb, released downward. This one came nearer to the track, and Robertson's blood froze. He felt sick with fear, smoke cleared away, but that no harm had been done. He breathed words of fervor.

"She's slowing up," Augustus, to whom the situation became clear. "You sir. She's slowing up."

And, indeed, the express up. Attracted by the seeing the aeroplane, he realised that something or for bad, was the matter with the brakes.

Robertson then began to slow down. In five minutes just above the train, and the express was slowing more than thirty miles. The brakes still full reached the fatal bend, it seemed to Robertson the train was in danger.

As the engine turned, however, the driver saw the coach, and straightaway to the guard for help applied. Every brake train clenched into the ground.

In a couple of seconds, accompanied by a noise, caused by meeting the great express car within five yards of the train.

The disaster had been averted.

Robertson brought the ground some distance from the line, and, springing towards the coach, found a sickening thought in his mind. Supposing Ziglio the chief in cold blood him at his mercy?

Ziglio—Robertson reached the ground surrounded by a crowd of passengers and officials. As Jennifer Pettigrew and assistant arrived, Jennifer Pettigrew emerged from the coach.

"I've got a bump on my head!" he shouted. "The heads of the officers, I'm all right."

The two men went out and had loose had bound him, ready to administer aid to the fated police party,

own ends. Moreover, he would then unwittingly blow a whole civilian train to pieces. The irony of the thing struck him forcibly, and he could not help but smile just a little. The times that he had bombed enemy trains off the rails, and watched the shattered coaches crash headlong to destruction!

Here he was now, rushing through space, with a cargo of similar bombs, to attempt to save just such another train.

Robertson estimated that he was just about a hundred yards off the railroad track itself. That would allow sufficient space.

"Let her go!" he roared.

Augustus, hearing the command, pulled his lever, and a bomb sped earthwards.

Almost in the next instant they heard the dull boom as the bomb exploded, and they saw the earth shoot upward in all directions.

Robertson piloted his machine across the track once more, and was now running with the express.

"Let her go!" he roared again.

Another bomb, released, hurtled downward. This one exploded a little nearer to the track, and for a moment Robertson's blood froze in his veins. He felt sick with fear. When the smoke cleared away, however, he saw that no harm had been done. He breathed words of fervent thankfulness.

"She's slowing up, sir!" shrieked Augustus, to whom the plan had now become clear. "You've found 'em, sir. She's slowing up!"

And, indeed, the express was slowing up. Attracted by the explosions, and seeing the aeroplane above, the driver realised that something, either for good or for bad, was the matter, and applied the brakes.

Robertson then began to spiral downwards. In five minutes he was flying just above the train, to the right of it, and the express was travelling at not more than thirty miles an hour, with the brakes still full on. They had reached the fatal bend by this time, and it seemed to Robertson that even now the train was in danger.

As the engine turned the corner, however, the driver saw ahead the lone coach, and straightaway signalled back to the guard for his brakes to be applied. Every brake throughout the train clenched into the wheels.

In a couple of minutes, to the accompaniment of a weird grinding noise, caused by metal meeting metal, the great express came to a standstill, within five yards of the coach.

The disaster had been averted!

Robertson brought the aeroplane to the ground some distance lower down the line, and, springing out, rushed towards the coach, followed by Augustus. A sickening thought had entered his mind. Supposing Ziglio had murdered the chief in cold blood, whilst he had him at his mercy? It was not unlikely Ziglio—

Robertson reached the coach. It was surrounded by a crowd of astonished passengers and officials from the express. As Jennifer Pettigrew Wren's secretary and assistant arrived upon the scene Jennifer Pettigrew Wren himself emerged from the darkness of the coach.

"I've got a bump on the back of my head!" he shouted to Robertson over the heads of the others. "But, otherwise, I'm all right."

The two men who had helped him out and had loosened the bonds that had bound him, returned to the coach to administer aid to the rest of the ill-fated police party, and the next minute

Wren was firmly grasping Robertson's hand.

"They got away?" he queried.

"They did," returned Robertson.

"Then," said Wren, "it's up to us to find them. This is going to be Dr. Ziglio's last escapade—you can take that from me!"

CHAPTER 2.

A Desperate Chase!

JENNIFER PETTIGREW WREN, later that day, held audience with the very highest police official in the country. And that worthy listened to what Jennifer Pettigrew Wren had to say, not because he wanted to, but because he knew that Jennifer Pettigrew Wren knew precisely and exactly what he was talking about.

Also, this very high police official was not a little troubled as to the continued failure of his men to capture the master criminal who was terrorising the land. People were threatening to call for action. What were the police doing? Where was the chief of police? What was he doing? Had not the Force better be reorganised? And so on. It was not at all nice.

The chief of police had at last been forced to realise that the time for drastic and swift action had arrived. He had also realised that, however drastic and swift that action might be, it would not be of the slightest avail unless it was directed into the right quarter and by the right people.

In the case of Dr. Ziglio, it was perfectly obvious that the police neither knew these quarters, nor had they men of the calibre necessary for the direction of operations.

That day Dr. Ziglio had walked off with a cool million sterling. He had bribed railway officials in high positions and had attacked a special coach with success on the broad highway of railway traffic. True, he had been frustrated in his attempt to secure the

whole of the prize for which he had set out, but this failure had been caused not by the police, but by the unexpected arrival on the scene of Jennifer Pettigrew Wren.

This master detective obviously knew more about Ziglio than any other man in the country. Ziglio obviously feared him.

Thus it was then that the chief of police listened to what he had to say, and was forced reluctantly into giving him the help that he had so long needed for the successful cornering of Ziglio.

"And you say, Mr. Wren," said the chief of the police, "that you know where this Ziglio is?"

"I do not say that I know where he is," returned Wren. "I say that I surmise where he is, and my surmise is based on previous experience of his ways and methods of working. What I will say definitely, sir, is that if you will do as I ask, and give me the help that I require, I'll guarantee you a better chance of arresting him and thus stopping his career than you would have in any other way. You know I'm not talking idly. Why should I? It would be a waste of time, and I think you know that my time is not without its value."

The chief of police made a pretence of creating obstacles. To give in immediately would have looked bad. He did not think he could get naval co-operation; it was too daring, this scheme. A hundred and one objections were raised. And then, at length, he came down to brass tacks.

"So actually, Mr. Wren," he said, "what you want me to do is to get you a couple of fully-armed torpedo-boat destroyers?"

"Preferably the *Iolanthe*, with Captain Jerome in command," supplemented Wren.

"And you want to accompany these two boats," proceeded the chief of police, "to this unknown island that you say is Ziglio's headquarters?"

"That is Ziglio's headquarters," corrected Wren. "I admit no error there, sir."

"Well, well, have it your own way," said the chief testily. "The main point is, have I outlined your requirements correctly?"

"You have, sir," returned Wren.

"And when you get to this island," continued the chief, "what do you propose to do?"

"That, I am afraid, sir," said Wren quietly, but with a note in his voice that the chief knew told only too well that argument was useless—"that, I am afraid, sir, you must leave to me."

As a matter of fact, Jennifer Pettigrew Wren had no idea at that precise moment what he intended to do. He only knew that he intended to get to Ziglio's island fortress with two heavily-armoured boats in tow, and that he intended to secure Ziglio, dead or alive.

"But, my good man," protested the chief, "you must tell me something of your plans. How am I to know that this criminal may not blow the whole lot of you to pieces? He seems a remarkably clever fellow. If I do as you ask, the responsibility for the safety of two boats and their crews will be upon my hands. It isn't good enough, you know."

"I can give you my word of honour, sir," replied Wren gravely, "that there will be only one person representing the law who will run any risk of death, and that person will be myself."

Wren's eyes and those of the chief met for just a moment. And in that moment the chief of police knew that

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"Let her go!" roared Robertson. Augustus, hearing the command, pulled his lever, and a bomb sped earthwards to explode just in front of the oncoming express.

he was dealing with a man whose word of honour meant more than life itself. He stretched out his hand across the table that separated them.

"I'll do the best I can for you, Mr. Wren," he said. "I'll give you a ring at your flat in an hour's time. You can rely on me for the assistance you want. I wish you good luck!"

A moment later Wren had left the office of the chief, and was soon speeding back to his flat in his car with the glad news for Robertson that at last he almost saw the shadow of Dr. Ziglio under lock and key!

CHAPTER 3. The Island Fortress!

IT was late that night when the Iolanthe, with Captain Jerome in command, slid out of Frankstown Harbour, closely followed by the Accurate.

Two sleek, black, sinister-looking shapes glided through the dark waters of the harbour, making the open sea at a high speed. The police chief had kept his word. He had brought to bear all the influence he had with the Navy Department, with the result that Jennifer Pettigrew Wren and Robertson were aboard the Iolanthe, and even at that moment were on the bridge with Captain Jerome, who was a very old and intimate friend of Wren's.

"Well, this is a nice thing you've landed me in for," the skipper was saying good humouredly. "I only came back from Japan a couple of days ago, and expected at least a month ashore. But here I am pushed off on this mad goose chase of your making!"

"You don't mind, really," said Wren, with a smile.

"Don't I?" Captain Jerome threw back his head and laughed heartily. "Well, upon my Sam, you're a wonderful man for cheek, Jennifer! But I give you best, all the same. Perhaps I don't mind. Perhaps I'm rather interested. How about that?"

"Right spirit to exhibit," returned Wren. "And you'll be more than interested when we lay this criminal with a thousand crimes to his credit by the heels, I can tell you. You'll be proud, old friend!"

"Seriously," said Skipper Jerome, "do you think we've any chance?"

"Every chance." "He seems a pretty wild merchant, this Ziglio. I heard about him in the small ports around the Java coast last. He seemed to be doing some dirty work round that way. Pretty cute customer, I should say."

"He's more than cute," returned Wren. "He's uncanny."

"And this island of his—now that Robertson's given me the course, I believe I know it. We call a certain group the Black Rocks. It's one of that collection, isn't it?"

"There are four of them, as you know," assented Wren.

"Four wicked brutes," said the skipper. "Ships always steer clear of them. But I've seen them through my glasses. Stick up out of the water like giant needles."

Wren nodded. "That's the little lot," he said. "Ziglio occupies the one on the extreme right as we are steering now."

"And how do you propose to effect a landing?"

"I don't know. We shall have to lower a cutter, and row right in. He's built his house more or less into the rock, I know, so that the landing won't be too easy; but it will have to be made. I shall find a way. The great point is

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that I must take him absolutely by surprise."

On Captain Jerome's suggestion, the detective, Robertson, and himself went below into his cabin for supper. A heavy cross-wind had sprung up now, and was lashing the sea fiercely. The destroyer had commenced a steady, rhythmic roll, with an occasional disconcerting pitch that sent articles that were not tied to stationary objects scuttling about the decks and ways.

As they sat in the skipper's cosy cabin and watched the knives and forks skidding across the table as the result of one particularly violent lurch, the skipper said

"It's a real lucky thing you two fellows are good sailors. It's going to be a little lively to-night. I can tell by the way she's started off. We're in a big land-swell just now, with a freshening gale. Wait—oh, wait, Jennifer, old friend, till we get farther out and meet the cross-currents! You won't know whether you're on your head or your heels; and if she lists less than forty-five degrees each side of her, we'll be mighty lucky."

As time passed by Captain Jerome's words proved only too true.

The torpedo-boat-destroyer Iolanthe surpassed all expectations. She rolled, she pitched, she tossed. One minute her nose would be buried deep in the breast of a great, green monster, with her propellers thrashing round at least six feet out of the water. Then she would be over on her port side almost till her taffrail touched the seething waters. Then over on to her starboard side. Up and down, over and back, her decks awash forward and aft, the gale roaring through her rigging, and singing, shrieking in her wireless. Yet ever she kept on her course, pressing forward steadily with indomitable pluck.

The night was, as the skipper had anticipated, "a little lively."

At one o'clock they staggered to the bridge once more, hanging on for dear life. On the bridge itself they found a disgruntled second officer, whose sou'wester was positively streaming with water.

"All's well!" said the skipper.

"Ay, ay, sir!" returned the second officer.

"What have we been making?"

"Not more than twelve and a half, sir," said the other. "And lucky at that. But the wind's dropping a bit."

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So it proved. In another hour the skipper said:

"We're about five miles off. Now that the wind's dropped so much, I think it's fairly safe to put in."

He laid the Iolanthe's course in the direction of the Black Rock light. Half an hour later, in a sea that was as calm as a mill-pond in comparison to the raging waters through which they had come, the Iolanthe dropped a neat-looking cutter into the water, and Jennifer Pettigrew Wren, in company with Robertson, stood talking to the skipper. Half a mile ahead of them the four great rocks reared their ugly heads out of the ocean-bed. Their bulky shapes could be dimly seen, silhouetted against the horizon by a moon that peeped fitfully between great banks of clouds.

"So what you want me to do," Captain Jerome was saying, "is, in an hour from now, to loose off a couple of salutes just to remind you that we are here."

"Exactly!" said Wren. "And when you see Robertson's light go up you'll know it's safe to send back the cutter to pick us up. Don't send it in before, though. I gave my word of honour that no one but myself—and by myself I naturally included my aide-de-camp—should run any risk at all from Ziglio's hands."

"And if you don't come back?"

"If I don't come back," returned Wren, "you will oblige me by shelling the rock to pieces. From your position now, you can give your gunners the best practice they ever had in their lives by dropping shells into the man-made crater that is Ziglio's domain."

There followed a firm gripping of hands, and the next minute Wren was following Robertson down the rope-ladder that flapped against the side of the destroyer and connected it to the cutter.

A moment later the soft purring of a powerful engine proclaimed the fact that the cutter was moving off in the direction of Ziglio's stronghold. In ten minutes they had made the distance separating them from the rock, and now they were running along by the side of it, its walls towering above them.

Wren, sitting beside the man at the tiller of the cutter, requested him to continue on round, slowly, and devoted himself to studying the solid rock for any possible means of effecting a landing.

They had proceeded half-way round, and had just caught sight of the Accurate, which had heaved to on the opposite side of the Iolanthe, when Wren gave a little grunt of satisfaction. His keen eyes had perceived a small, shelving reach of sand that was just big enough to take a boat the size of the cutter. He directed the man at the tiller to take her on to this little haven, and inside a couple of minutes the cutter had grounded without a sound.

About twelve to fifteen feet separated the edge of the waves and the rock itself, and it was sheltered, too, in a sort of alcove.

Wren and Robertson left the cutter. Each was well armed. Without a word they started on their search for a means of ascending the rock, and when Wren looked back five minutes later the cutter was nothing more than a black speck in the water.

He suddenly heard Robertson ejaculate a short grunt.

The detective joined him, and, following his pointed finger, saw that an aperture big enough to admit two men simultaneously, was showing in the side of the rock.

"Found it by chance," whispered Robertson. "I pressed the rock just below there, and my fingers came into



No sooner had Dr. Ziglio's room crashed

contact with a button. He's let steel into t shutter. It went back

Wren nodded, and entered into the passing his electric torch Robertson, according t against his will, remai

Wren pressed onv climb more tedious e way. The passage was ing, and as he went narrower and narrow bend himself almost gress, naturally, grew the passage became so forced to crouch down forward.

At last, with a feel he had seldom felt b that he had come th neck of the tunnel. It The light of his to another fifteen yards v the end of it.

Panting and breathl the journey, finding l another solid looking ing his torch carefully he perceived a brass those that are found

He waited just a n his equilibrium, and t revolver for his torc handle with his diseng

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Slowly and silently moved inward; it wa door on giant hinges, interior flooded out. Wren entered the r saw, to his amazem Ziglio bending over a of the room. The rhy money came upon t Ziglio was counting t he had escaped on the

"Put up your han Wren in even tones. beaten at last."

Ziglio swung round and the light in his surprise and rage. H as death.



No sooner had Dr. Ziglio pressed the button by the fireside than there came a terrific explosion. The ceiling of the room crashed in with a deafening report, and Wren saw flashes of yellow-red flames all around him.

contact with a button of some sort. He's let steel into the face of it—a shutter. It went back without a sound."

Wren nodded, and without a word entered into the passage beyond, flashing his electric torch in front of him. Robertson, according to plan, but much against his will, remained below.

Wren pressed onward, finding the climb more tedious every inch of the way. The passage was uneven and winding, and as he went upward it became narrower and narrower, causing him to bend himself almost double. His progress, naturally, grew slower. At length the passage became so small that he was forced to crouch down and worm his way forward.

At last, with a feeling of relief that he had seldom felt before, he realised that he had come through the bottleneck of the tunnel. It was widening out. The light of his torch showed him another fifteen yards would bring him to the end of it.

Panting and breathless, he completed the journey, finding himself faced with another solid looking obstruction. Playing his torch carefully over it, however, he perceived a brass handle, not unlike those that are found upon safes.

He waited just a moment to recover his equilibrium, and then, substituting a revolver for his torch, he twisted the handle with his disengaged hand.

Then he pushed.

Slowly and silently the obstruction moved inward; it was actually a great door on giant hinges, and light from the interior flooded out. With a quick step Wren entered the room beyond, and saw, to his amazement, the form of Dr. Ziglio bending over a table in the centre of the room. The rhythmical clinking of money came upon the detective's ear. Ziglio was counting the gold with which he had escaped on the previous day.

"Put up your hands, Ziglio!" said Wren in even tones. "I've got you beaten at last."

Ziglio swung round like a wild animal, and the light in his eyes showed both surprise and rage. His face was as pale as death.

"Wren!" he rasped, between his teeth. Wren nodded.

"Once more we meet," he said. "And this time you will not win, Ziglio."

Ziglio recovered himself with an almost superhuman effort.

"You are a daring man, Mr. Wren," he said. "You are the only person who has ever entered my stronghold uninvited. I am afraid you will be the last. How do you propose to escape?"

"By the way that I came," returned Wren. "Although I could wish that you were a little more conventional in your architecture. You will accompany me, too, Ziglio. I think we had better go now. I had made preparations for a lengthier struggle than this, but everything has panned out so well. I see no reason to waste time. I have two destroyers cruising in the waters around your rock, Ziglio. If you wait one moment you will see that they are itching to start work on it."

"You lie!" shrieked Ziglio, his face working convulsively.

"I do not lie," returned Wren calmly.

"And you know it. Listen."

A minute passed, and then:

Boom! Boom!

From across the waters Captain Jerome's gunners were firing their salute.

And once again:

Boom! Bo-oo-om!

The Accurate's guns were answering them.

"You see," said Wren, "that I am speaking the truth."

For a moment they stood there, the master criminal who had so long defied the law, and the detective who had sought him ruthlessly for months, and who had at last got him cornered. And then suddenly, and without the least regard for the detective's threatening weapon, Ziglio leapt to the wall. Wren fired, but not before Ziglio's long, thin fingers had fastened on to a button by the fireplace.

"You sha'n't get me, Wren!" shrieked Ziglio. "You shall not! We both go together!"

Wren fired again, his bullet plowing

its way through Ziglio's wrist, but the button had been pressed.

It seemed but a second passed, and then came a terrific explosion. The whole room rocked and reeled. As if moved by some gigantic earthquake, the island rock itself heaved upward and seemed to burst in a million directions. The ceiling of the room crashed in with a deafening report, and Wren saw flashes of yellow-red flames all around him. He felt himself falling—falling—falling. A tearing, burning pain shot through his head. Everything was very hot; and then icy-cold waters closed around him and over his head.

He knew no more.

Ziglio had played his last desperate card, reserved in case capture in his island fortress took place. He had blown it to pieces.

"He'll be all right. Oh, yes, the body is that of Ziglio, beyond a doubt—marvellous escape—Robertson's got off lightly, too. They're lucky."

Jennifer Pettigrew Wren opened his eyes as these disjointed words filtered through the cloud of oblivion surrounding him. He was lying on a bunk. He heard Skipper Jerome's voice in his ear.

"Take it easy, Jennifer. Take it easy, old friend. I can tell you all you want to know while you're lying down. Robertson's safe. You're safe. When the rock blew up we had the searchlights out at once, and picked you both up. Ziglio is dead. We've picked up four of his cronies dead, too, and another three, more so than alive. But they'll live, we think. We're now going home. That's all."

Jennifer Pettigrew Wren smiled faintly.

"Thank you, Bill Jerome," he said. "So Ziglio has met his doom at last. I'm grateful—that's all I need say."

THE END.

(Look out for a gripping and thrilling boxing story next week, entitled, "THE BATTLING BURGLAR!" you will vote it TIP-TOP!)

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Rivals of the Racecourse!

BY
**ANDREW
GRAY.**

A Sensational
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Turf.

The Whip Hand!

SIR ROGER RACKSTONE'S grim smile of triumph changed to a look of anger when he saw Mat. "Clear out!" he snarled, striding forward. "Furzedown is my property!" "Indeed!" answered Mat. "Perhaps you'll kindly explain to me how. Your aristocratic pal with the swivel eye was about to enlighten me, but your arrival interrupted him. I believe my father had to borrow five thousand pounds for something or other."

"Quite right. It was to complete the building of this place," assented Sir Roger, with a malevolent grin. "You always boasted that Furzedown was your own property absolutely, and so it would have been had you paid up the five thousand that was due on the mortgage yesterday. But unfortunately you forgot it."

"Forgot it! I never knew it!" "That is your affair, not mine!" was the sneering retort. "Your father had his copy of the deed. Indeed, I understand he did his best to warn you of its existence when you saw him in hospital!"

"Oh! And who do you understand that from?" demanded Mat, his suspicions awakened in a flash.

He turned to see what had become of Scarfe. Only he and Dick Derringer knew of that incident, he was sure.

Scarfe was there, right enough, just behind his shoulder. So quick did Mat twist on his heel that he was just in time to detect what looked to be a signal pass between the apprentice and the baronet.

And as for Sir Roger, when Mat looked again, his face confirmed it.

Mat was nonplussed for the moment. The next he had forgotten the incident in the whirlwind of rage and despair that seized him.

"Sir Roger, there was not the least doubt, had stolen a decisive march on them. He had secretly bought up the mortgage on which old Tom Martingale had raised his five thousand pounds. Thus the money had to be repaid to him."

As it had not been forthcoming on the fateful day he had seized the property, and was now going to sell it at public auction.

"But you can't take all the money it fetches!" protested Mat.

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"I don't want to. I merely take the five thousand due to me, and the rest your creditors will collar if they are only sharp enough."

Mat Martingale stood spellbound. "But this I will have done." Sir Roger Rackstone grinned, ignoring the fact that so many were listening. "I'll have you driven out of Furzedown, you young pup, before ever you can claim the Whiplash colt. Now the horse will come to me, and with that I am satisfied."

"Very well, then, you treacherous cur!" answered Mat, eyeing him with scorn. "We shall see. Sell Furzedown, if you dare, but I'll not shift out of here till someone else than you compels me."

"You will. You'll let these men of mine take possession at once!" blustered Sir Roger.

"Certainly, if they can," answered Mat. "But I'll warn them they'll get a pretty warm reception if they try—"

But Sir Roger would hear no more. Mat had given up trying to think what to do. He was waiting for Dick Derringer's return. This should not have been till the evening, according to his chum's plans.

To the youngster's infinite relief, who should appear almost at that moment but the American himself.

Perhaps Sir Roger thought that now Mat was entirely in his hands, nothing else mattered. At any rate, with a half-nervous glance in the direction of Dick, he beat a hasty retreat.

Then Mat told his tale.

This about the mortgage was shattering. In vain they hunted through Mr. Martingale's office again for his copy of the document. They ransacked every nook and corner. Mat did not know even the name of the solicitors who acted for his father, so that they could apply to them.

"The scoundrel may be only spoofing us."

"Hardly likely. He wouldn't have the neck for that," said Dick Derringer. "No, he's bought the deed over all right. And now he'll put up the property and sell it for what it will fetch, and give you what is over, after he's collared his bit."

"But Furzedown will be lost to us. Someone else will have bought it. And that means good-bye to the Whiplash colt!" groaned Mat.

"Oh, I only wish to goodness this fool, the new Lord Riplade, would hurry up and show himself!" he cried bitterly.

The Auction!

THAT week was a terrible one. Everyone had heard of the ruin of the famous stables, but not a soul had come forward to help to avert it.

"Not Lord Dungarrin even, and I thought he was a pal!" cried Mat in angry despair. "Though the Stunt won that race for him he has never written a line. I wonder what on earth has made him freeze us in this cruel fashion?"

Dick did not know, or, if he did, kept his mouth shut. Then the morning of the auction came round. All sorts of rumours had been flying about as to various celebrities who were going to buy the place. One was that Sir Roger was waiting to purchase it for himself, and was prepared to go to a very high figure. Sir Roger, however, was strenuously denying this as an unmitigated lie.

However, seeing that Whiplash, now easily the Derby favourite, must now almost certainly fall to him, it sounded not unlikely. As for his being able to raise the money, if the famous three-year-old did win the Blue Riband, it alone would be worth more than the stables were likely to fetch.

Mat raked up enough to pay his fare to London to hear the last of the old place. The shock would kill his poor old dad, he was sure, when he heard of it.

The famous auction-room at Tokenhouse Mart was crowded to suffocation. Everybody who was anybody on the Turf seemed to be there, and amongst the crowd was Lord Dungarrin.

But he took not the least notice of Mat, merely nodding to Dick Derringer across the heads of the throng. The youngster was utterly crushed. He could have sat down and cried, so heartbroken was he.

At last the auctioneer began to read out the conditions of the sale. The legal phrases were all Greek to Mat. Next came a glowing description of the house and stables, the private galloping grounds, and all that went to make Furzedown the best training quarters in England.

"Oh, my stars, I can't stand this!" ejaculated Mat, his heart torn in two now that the supreme moment had come. "Let me get out of here quick, or I shall scream!" he told Dick.

"No; wait if you urged Dick. "Don't feather after sticking down with all flags fly!"

"By George, yes!" said Setting his teeth, he

The bidding had started offered five thousand and "Five thousand pot offered that?" flared dad spent over sixty place!"

"Sh!" growled D sleeve, but the auctioneer

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"And five!" said "Thirty-seven th cried the auctioneer

"Thirty-eight!" y "And five!" mur with a yawn.

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"And five!" said unperturbed.

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"So at fifty-five magnificent proper men!" cautioned t "It's going at fi gentlemen! Going Whack!

The ivory ham down was sold. I seen the last of it

Mat stood with

"No; wait if you can, youngster!" urged Dick. "Don't show the white feather after sticking it so long. Go down with all flags flying!"

"By George, yes!" said Mat. Setting his teeth, he turned back. The bidding had started. Someone had offered five thousand pounds.

"Five thousand pounds! What fool offered that?" flared out Mat. "Why, dad spent over sixty thousand on the place!"

"Sh!" growled Dick, catching his sleeve, but the auctioneer had heard him.

"There you are, gentlemen!" he said. "That's young Mr. Martingale himself, if I am not mistaken! You have his word as to what these magnificent stables cost. Shall we make it ten thousand to start with, and save time?"

"No; we'll do nothing of the sort! I said five thousand, and you've got to take the bid!" cut in a savage voice, which everyone recognised promptly as that of Sir Roger Rackstone's.

He was red with rage at his own indiscretion the next instant, for he had let the cat out of the bag, as everyone was quick to spot.

"Hallo, Rackstone," chaffed one. "Thought you were stuffing us up just now that you were not bidding for the property? You said you wanted your money back, and nothing else."

A general laugh went up at the baronet's expense. It burst into a regular explosion a second later when some unknown in the crowd capped Sir Roger's measly offer with one of twenty-five thousand pounds.

"Come, that is more like the mark!" chuckled the auctioneer. "Now we shall save time, I fancy. Twenty-five thousand is offered, gentlemen. Any advance on twenty-five thousand?"

"Twenty-six!" sung out Sir Roger, bidding for himself now that he had been detected.

"And five thousand!" chimed in the same voice that had already outbid him.

"Thirty-one thousand!" announced the auctioneer briskly. "This magnificent freehold training establishment going at only thirty-one thousand pounds, gentlemen! Surely we shall have an advance on thirty-one thousand?"

"Thirty-two!" rasped Sir Roger, looking blue.

"And five!" said the unknown quietly.

"Thirty-seven thousand, gentlemen!" cried the auctioneer, totting up the bids.

"Thirty-eight!" yelled the baronet.

"And five!" murmured the stranger, with a yawn.

Sir Roger gnashed his teeth. Then a third bidder cut in and took the price to fifty thousand.

"And five!" said the stranger, still unperturbed.

Sir Roger was purple and apoplectic.

He was long ago out of the running. He had been hoping to secure the property for a mere song. Now, Furzedown looked like realising such a price that the Martingales would not only be able to square up all their bills, but have a few thousands left besides.

At fifty-five thousand pounds the bidding hung. In vain the auctioneer tried to stimulate the unknown rivals to further effort. They had frozen off.

"So at fifty-five thousand pounds this magnificent property is going, gentlemen!" cautioned the auctioneer at last. "It's going at fifty-five—at fifty-five, gentlemen! Going—going—"

Whack!

The ivory hammer had fallen. Furzedown was sold. The Martingales had seen the last of it for ever.

Mat stood with tear-brimmed eyes.

His under-lip shook, even though his teeth gripped it till they drew blood.

"Who the deuce is the man? Who has he bought it for?" demanded everyone.

They were only eager to know the new owner of Furzedown; none cared a jot about the old.

"Yes, will you oblige me with the name of the purchaser, please?" asked the clerk of the unknown bidder.

"Mr. Matthew Martingale!" came the reply, in the most casual tones imaginable.

"What?"

Young Mat had gone reeling backwards, as if he would faint dead away. Dick caught him. The American was looking just as bewildered as anyone else.

"Mat Martingale!" echoed everyone stupidly, and turned to stare at the youngster.

The auctioneer looked black. Sir Roger laughed a screeching laugh of derision.

Mat had never even seen the stranger in his life before.

"It's wrong!" he panted. "It's all a mistake! That gentleman does not know what he is saying. I have not bought the place at all!"

"Oh, oh! Hark at him! No, I should think not, the beastly little pauper!" sneered Sir Roger, beside himself with rage. "Why, he hasn't a penny to his name, nor his father neither. The young fool has only been playing a wretched practical joke, and now he's too scared to own up to it!"

"I can tell you, gentlemen," struck in the stranger impressively, "that this is no practical joke, particularly for a certain person who is not a hundred yards from me at this moment."

"Pooh!" spluttered the baronet. "Are you referring to me, sir, since you stare at me like an oaf? If so, out with it! What is your precious threat?"

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"No threat at all!" answered the quiet-voiced man. "I merely assure the auctioneer that Mr. Mat Martingale has bought in his father's property—that is, mark you," he added, "supposing the seller was ever legally entitled to offer it for sale."

"Entitled to!" gasped Sir Roger, turning suddenly green. "Why, I hold the mortgage! What the dickens do you mean?"

"Exactly what I say, sir; no more and no less!" was the flattening retort. "I merely remark that, should it turn out that you have exceeded your powers in putting Furzedown up for auction in this fashion, Mr. Mat Martingale intends to proceed against you for the very heaviest damages!"

Mat was flabbergasted. It was all a mistake. This man who was claiming to act for him must be some fraud or lunatic!

~~~~~  
Sir Roger Gets a Shock!  
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"THIS man must be stark, raving mad! I have never employed him to bid for me. How could I buy back Furzedown for fifty-five thousand when I've scarcely fifty-five pence left in the world?"

If this really was some practical joke, Mat certainly was no party to it.

All eyes in the auction-room turned to the mysterious stranger who had just coolly declared that young Martingale was the purchaser for whom he was acting. They were anxious to hear his answer to this flat denunciation.

The gentleman, however, merely turned to Lord Dungarrin. Till then Mat had no idea that the two were acquainted. And as for his one-time patron, he had long made up his mind that his lordship had done with him.

But the smile on Lord Dungarrin's face soon reassured him.

"It's all right, my boy," he said quietly. "You can leave this to me. You're buying back Furzedown right enough. I am seeing it through."

"You!" gulped Sir Roger Rackstone.

Fury filled him at finding the boy trainer still possessed a powerful backer when he flattered himself all had deserted him.

"You shoving in your long nose again into business that doesn't concern you? Confound you! What do you mean?"

"Excuse me," said his lordship, with perfect good temper, "but I might as well ask the same question. You, as mortgagee, put up this property to public auction; I, on Martingale's behalf, have bought it. You will get your five thousand that you are so keen about, and that is all that legally concerns you. Isn't it?" he finished sharply.

Sir Roger scowled and ground his teeth.

"Isn't it all?" persisted Dungarrin, meaning to have an answer out of him.

"Why, yes, dash you, I suppose so!" snarled the baronet.

"Then it happens you're wrong. It isn't, by any means!" retorted his lordship dryly.

"Oh, and what the dickens do you mean, confound you? You're the second fool to threaten me, and I demand an answer!"

"This, Sir Roger Rackstone, is my answer," said Lord Dungarrin, producing a document, which instantly struck Mat as looking familiar. "It is Tom Martingale's own copy of the mortgage, which a certain person filched from his house at your instigation!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 852.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE!

LORD RIPLADE, late owner of the estates of Furzedown and the famous racehorse, Whiplash, the most-talked-of two-year-old of his day.

TOM MARTINGALE, his lordship's "trusted trainer and esteemed friend," and "gunner" of the renowned Furzedown training stables, in whose charge are sixty thoroughbreds, famous among them being the Stunt and Whiplash.

MAT MARTINGALE, his sixteen-year-old son, a true and trustworthy apprentice.

SCARFE, another apprentice, but an unscrupulous rascal.

SIR ROGER RACKSTONE, a mean and despicable scoundrel, and owner of the Stunt, a most unreliable racer.

The late Lord Ripplade had so willed that, should his property be unclaimed by his missing heir within one year of his death, the Whiplash colt was to become the property of Tom Martingale, providing the trainer was still at Furzedown. Failing this, it would go to Sir Roger Rackstone.

Realising the situation, Sir Roger Rackstone sets a plot in motion, and gets Tom Martingale hounded out of Furzedown.

Mat Martingale, the old trainer's son, who is left in charge of the stables, finds a friend in Dick Derringer, an American.

Fearing further treachery at Furzedown, the American sets a trap, and Scarfe is found in the act of doping the famous Whiplash.

A dramatic scene follows, which nearly results in the arrest of Mat and Dick.

Later, after buying the Stunt for a ridiculous figure for Lord Dungarrin, one of the Jockey Club Committee, Tom is granted a trainer's certificate.

Further futile attempts to bring about Mat's disgrace follow. Mat is discussing the whole question with his apprentices, when a party of bill-stickers make their appearance, and start displaying bills of sale on the gates of his father's property.

Before Mat could realise the situation, there comes the sound of a motor-horn, and Sir Roger Rackstone appears upon the scene.

(Now read on.)

"You blackguard, you lie!" retorted Sir Roger, turning white, nevertheless. "Very well," answered his lordship quietly; "then you have your remedy in a libel action, if you choose. All the same, I repeat the charge for all to hear. What is more, this paper proves that you had no right whatever to offer the whole place for sale to get your paltry five thousand pounds!"

"I had!" spluttered Sir Roger.

"And I say you hadn't!" was the dry reply. "You thought, because you had only a defenceless boy to deal with, that you were going to bounce him out of his belongings. But I stand his friend!"

Mat could hardly believe his ears. His face was radiant.

"I am going to take this case to law," announced Lord Dungarrin, "and get the utmost farthing in damages out of you that I can squeeze on young Mat's behalf!"

"Hear, hear!" chorused several of the bystanders at this. None of them liked Sir Roger. He knew that, and, so, after flashing a wild-beast glare round the crowded room, he turned and stalked out.

He swung round as he reached the door, as if to give some parting shot. But his disappointment and passion choked him, and he fled down the steps.

Mat was already across the auction-room by that time, gripping his patron's hand. He was so overcome for the moment that he could not speak.

"All right, my boy. Do you think I don't know?" said Lord Dungarrin gently. "Why, you must have thought I had deserted you altogether!"

"I did!" panted Mat. "How could I think else, sir?"

"Quite so. I am not surprised. But I will tell you how it came about that you've had no word from me."

A few words sufficed, and indeed Mat was too excited and grateful to need any explanation.

His lordship, it appeared, had been summoned to Southern Russia to look after some oilfields that he was interested in, and owing to this many of his most important letters, apparently, had gone astray.

"But this one reached me right enough; also an account of all that villain was up to," he said, holding up the mortgage again.

"And you say you know it was stolen?" queried Mat. "I told Dick Derringer— Good old Dick! Where is he?" he broke off excitedly, catching his faithful friend's hand. "Bless me, I had almost forgotten him! Congratulate me, Dick, on having such a noble friend!"

"And congratulate yourself on having such another, young man!" said Lord Dungarrin, also shaking the American by the hand. "I've been hearing from Mr. Derringer all about the high jinks you've been having at Furzedown."

"You have?" cried Mat. "The crafty traitor! When, sir?" he demanded: for it was news to him that Dick had been in touch with his patron at all.

Lord Dungarrin saw that he had given the show away, and laughed. So did Dick.

"Then, you old scoundrel," said Mat, pretending to punch the latter, "you knew all the time, I suppose, about this auction, and what was going to happen?"

"No; I plead innocent to that," laughed Dick. "I only knew that Lord Dungarrin was hurrying back from Paris to do the best he could for you. And I reckon that that best is about the biggest leg-up any lame dog ever had. Don't you, sonny?"

Of course Mat did. He scarcely knew yet whether he was on his head or his heels. Furzedown was once again his father's property. The bailiffs had not wrested it from him, and he had a backer now who was ready to see him through all his bills and difficulties.

"But how on earth am I ever to repay you?" cried Mat, coming suddenly to earth again.

"Out of the damages you're going to squeeze out of Sir Roger. He ought to have got an order of the court first, before he touched the property. The mortgage shows that," concluded his lordship.

This led back to the mystery about the document again. Stolen from Mr. Martingale's office, it had found its way across Europe to Lord Dungarrin. Both Mat and Dick recalled the night when

they heard the roller-top desk in the next room shut with a bang.

"But who could have taken it, and why, if it was only to send to one already my friend?" queried Mat.

"I don't know," said his lordship. "Better not ask too closely, perhaps. At any rate, if he meant playing foul in the first place, he repented afterwards."

So it was left at that. His lordship paid over a cheque of ten thousand pounds to the auctioneer as a deposit on Mat's behalf.

"Now come and lunch with me and talk over the past performances and future achievements of my one-horse stud—the Stunt!" said his lordship cheerily. "And, by the way," he added, as they stepped into the taxi which was to speed them westwards, "I've another piece of news for you. They've discovered the new Lord Riplade at last!"

"What!"

Both Mat and his chum gasped the word together. But it was Dick Derringer who was the more startled, strange to say.

"I say they've unearthed the new Lord Riplade at last," repeated their host. "They discovered him up in a mining-camp in the Andes somewhere, and they've brought him home—"

"Great Scott, young man, you don't seem very cheerful over the news!" ejaculated his lordship, suddenly getting sight of Mat's face. "Oh, I forgot! Of course, the colt, Whiplash—eh? You mean he's come home just in time to claim that when it looked like coming to you."

This was the real truth, of course. Not that Mat coveted the horse actually for its money value, but as an advertisement for the stable. It was the one first-class animal he had to build his name upon as a trainer.

But his lordship might think him too young. Moreover, here were all these cruel slanders and charges flying about giving Furzedown a bad name. The young heir might well elect to remove his horse to another stable.

"And I shouldn't be surprised if that is just what he did do," agreed Lord Dungarrin, to complete Mat's dismay. "For shall I tell you who has palled up to him already?"

"Why," gasped Mat, fearing the worst, "you don't mean—"

"Sir Roger Rackstone?" queried his patron, finishing the sentence for him. "Well, that is just what I do mean, unfortunately. He discovered the new heir, in fact, and is sponging up to him as hard as ever he knows how."

"Hookey gee!" was Dick Derringer's remark to this.

Poor Mat was dumb; absolutely smashed flat, in fact. Already his future Derby winner that he had been building all his hopes on was as good as gone.

The New Lord Riplade!

IF there had been stirring scenes at Furzedown of late, there was none to come within a hundred miles of the one that evening when Mat arrived.

"Not a word yet! Don't say a word!" he cautioned Dick as they drew in sight of the gates, for there the little crowd of apprentices stood, with faces as long as fiddles, expecting the worst.

Most anxious of all was Scarfe. He was studying Mat's every expression, as if hoping to read there the tidings before a word was spoken. But the boy trainer kept a face as doleful as the rest.

"Well, boss, what's Scarfe eagerly, as the 'Bad!' groaned M. 'You mean—it's all Scarfe.'

"Yes; all up and Mat. 'The old place five thousand pounds. 'And you couldn't it? You had no frie garrin, I mean, to you?'"

Mat and Dick looked. "That sounds suspicious. But Scarfe was c sorry."

"Well, whoever's wish him all the ro cram into a lifetime amid a wail of hears!" from his ma

"May he never v May all his horses g and stringhalt and b

"Here, half a m Scarfe was going 'You're looking for you?'"

"Me?" gasped the "Why, no! How?"

"By wishing me can lay your tongu

"You! I never at all! What in th It's the new owner protested Scarfe.

"Well, and I am the old one!" a trainer, with a chu have knocked the w tices flat with a st soaking this in.

"It's a fact. Th plans are all b them, since they s gurgled. 'Lord D my rescue, like the he is, and he bou my name, and that troubles!"

"Oh, hurrah, cheered all the app

They whooped, punched one anot then carried their his home shoulder

Old Mrs. Gummi was there to mee nose red with w she that the end c that it was quite f could get her to listen to his new went into happy f

Mat and Dick lady's cackles and they were trying for the future. T the almost certain

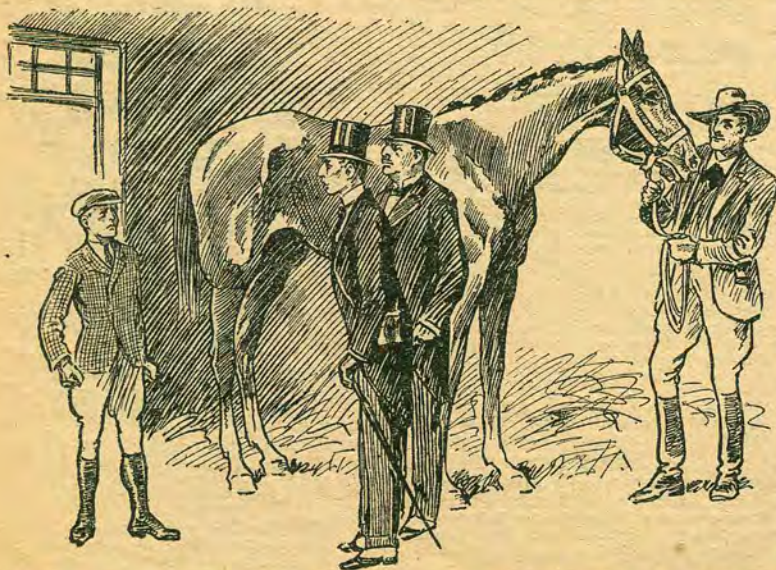
"If Sir Roger the new Lord Rip poison his mind Mat. "Any day may get an order

"Yes, I reckon Dick.

"No, it isn't!" ing round like a hanged if I give Do you hear? I own the beast, an guv'nor didn't. shame, I say, to this fashion! Do a month Whiplash for good?"

The youngster as his life. Only what a bitter bl be.

"Anyway, I'll cried impulsively to race in the



"And who may this young pawty be?" asked Lord Riplade, staring hard at Mat Martingale. "Why—er—he's your lordship's present trainer!" answered Sir Roger Rackstone.

"Well, boss, what's the news?" asked Scarfe eagerly, as they drew up.

"Bad!" groaned Mat.

"You mean—it's all up?" stammered Scarfe.

"Yes; all up and over!" confirmed Mat. "The old place is sold for fifty-five thousand pounds!"

"And you couldn't do anything to stop it? You had no friend like Lord Dungarrin, I mean, to step in and help you?"

Mat and Dick looked at each other.

"That sounds suspicious!" said Mat.

But Scarfe was obviously genuinely sorry.

"Well, whoever's bought the place, I wish him all the rottenest luck he can cram into a lifetime!" he said savagely, amid a wail of approving "Hear, hear!" from his mates.

"May he never win a blessed race! May all his horses get splints and spavin and stringhalt and blind staggers!"

"Here, half a mo'!" cut in Mat, as Scarfe was going spluttering on. "You're looking for a thick ear, aren't you?"

"Me?" gasped the other, taken aback.

"Why, no! How?"

"By wishing me all the bad luck you can lay your tongue to!"

"You! I never wished you anything at all! What in thunder do you mean? It's the new owner I'm talking about!" protested Scarfe.

"Well, and I am the new owner—and the old one!" announced the boy trainer, with a chuckle, for you could have knocked the whole pack of apprentices flat with a straw while they were soaking this in.

"It's a fact. That beast Rackstone's plans are all bust!" Mat assured them, since they still only gasped and gurgled. "Lord Dungarrin did come to my rescue, like the splendid sportsman he is, and he bought the old place in my name, and that's the end of all our troubles!"

"Oh, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" cheered all the apprentices excitedly.

They whooped and hurrahed and punched one another in sheer joy, and then carried their young boss back to his home shoulder high.

Old Mrs. Gummidge, the housekeeper, was there to meet him, with eyes and nose red with weeping. So sure was she that the end of the world had come that it was quite five minutes before Mat could get her to stop her weeping and listen to his news; and then off she went into happy hysterics.

Mat and Dick could hear the old lady's cackles and screeches all the while they were trying to arrange their plans for the future. The one bitter blow was the almost certain loss of Whiplash.

"If Sir Roger has really got hold of the new Lord Riplade he'll be certain to poison his mind against us!" groaned Mat. "Any day now, I suppose, we may get an order to give the horse up."

"Yes, I reckon that's about it!" said Dick.

"No, it isn't!" lashed out Mat, twisting round like a weathercock. "I'll be hanged if I give him up till I have to! Do you hear? I never wanted really to own the beast, and I know the poor old guy nor didn't. But it's a sickening shame, I say, to be cut out on the post this fashion! Do you know, in less than a month Whiplash would have been ours for good?"

The youngster loved the two-year-old as his life. Only now was he realising what a bitter blow the parting was to be.

"Anyway, I'll tell you one thing!" he cried impulsively. "Whiplash is down to race in the Bovington Stakes at



Sir Roger Rackstone's smile of triumph changed to a look of anger when he saw Mat. "Clear out of this!" he snarled, striding forward. "Furze down is my property!" "Indeed!" answered Martingale. "Perhaps you'll kindly explain!"

Kempton next Saturday. We meant him to run, whatever happened, and, by Jupiter, so he will! But he'll race for our stable, and, what's more, I shall ride him, if I never throw a leg over him again afterwards!"

"Hear, hear!" applauded Dick. "Bully for you, youngster! That's the way to take it! The last race, and the best you ever rode!"

That went without saying. Whether Whiplash was going to add to his already long list of victories was another matter. All these rows with the corn-dealers had meant that if Mat's charges got plenty of sound feed he had not been able always to spare them those dainties which go so far to keep bloodstock in perfect trim.

Nevertheless, by stinting he had managed to keep both the Stunt and the Derby favourite in pretty good racing fettle. Three days now would see a world of difference.

Saturday came round at last. Every hour Mat had been on tenterhooks, expecting the new Lord Riplade to appear, or a telegram to arrive.

He only breathed freely when he had Whiplash safely boxed on the rail and the train on the move.

"Now they won't stop me, dashed if they will!" he said, setting his teeth.

It was to be a great race. Bonny-brake, their most dangerous rival, was showing a burst of marvellous form. In his last two races he had romped home an easy winner; but then he had not had Whiplash up against him.

Now the whole sporting world was keen to see them meet again. The papers were full of the race. They only regretted that the Derby favourite was in the hands of a trainer so inexperienced as young Mat. They also de-

manded to see what some really first-class jockey would make of him.

"First-class jockey, indeed!" snorted Mat, as he read this. "The way they talk of Whiplash, anyone would think he was some old cab-horse that anyone could ride, instead of being about the most highly-strung animal that ever ran

on four legs. Still, I'll show them!" he declared, to Dick's huge delight.

The American chuckled, and chuckled again.

What was Mat's consternation, when almost the first person he met on reaching Kempton proved to be Sir Roger Rackstone!

Needless to say, he treated the baronet to a glare savage enough to have scared away a tiger. Perhaps it was this that made Sir Roger check himself as he was advancing towards him, and then, after a moment's thought, turn on his heel.

"May the fiends fly away with that beast!" burst out Mat, shaking his fist after him. "He's always hopping about like some greasy vulture!"

"Well, he hasn't succeeded in doing you very much harm yet, at any rate!" laughed Dick, smoothing him down. "Perhaps he only wanted to tell you how he came to discover the new Lord Riplade. He thought you'd be glad."

Mat was not so sure. Sight of his enemy so early on the field worried him. However, it looked like proving a false alarm.

Mat left his mount in Dick Derringer's charge, confident that he would defend him with his life. The boy trainer had to meet Lord Dungarrin, who had promised to introduce him to one or two men just taking up racehorse-owning. All depended, though, on the show he made with Whiplash that afternoon.

However, as usual, his lordship was not to be found anywhere, and, disgusted and out of temper, Mat sought out his chum again.

To his amazement, he saw Dick Derringer in Whiplash's box with Sir Roger

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and a stranger, all as comfortable as could be.

Dick was holding the horse's head with all the gravity of a professional groom when his boss is about, while the others stood back, plainly admiring the favourite's good points. Mat was furious.

"To let that pig, after all he's done to us, bring his pals in to mess our horses about!" he choked under his breath. "I don't know what the ass can be thinking of!"

However, catching a broad wink from Dick's eye, he said not a word, but entered the box, too. Sir Roger first scowled when he saw him, but that was sheer habit. The next instant his face was suffused with triumphant grins. Yet he said not a word either.

"Yaas, bai Je-ove," his companion was drawing, as he surveyed the two-year-old through a patent gold-rimmed eyeglass, "wather! A nailing good gee, I call that—what? And so they think it's going to win the blessed Dawby, do they? Bai Je-ove!"

The accent and the affectation of the fop made Mat sick. Who he was the youngster did not know or care. He crossed the stable dead in front of Sir Roger and his friend, and did not trouble to remove himself out of their line of view.

The fop glared in astonishment.

"Heah, I say, little boy, stand out of the light!" he said rebukingly. "What are you doing in heah at all, eh? You'd better wun away, or you'll get kicked, y'know!"

"Kicked, indeed! By whom?"

Mat was round on the fellow in a flash. The other looked more mildly astonished than ever. Sir Roger grinned a maddening grin.

"Why, you silly little jossler, by the horse, of course!" answered the fop. "But, anyway, you've no wight in this stable, I take it, so wun away and play!"

"No right in here!" seethed Mat, drawing up his modest inches to their full height. "Do you know who the dickens you are talking to?"

"No; cawn't say I do!" said the other, unruffled, though deigning to take another long squint at Mat through his monocle. "You're a very unmanly little fellow obviously, but—er—ah—"

He broke off.

"I say, Sir Woger," he added suddenly, seeing how purple Mat had flown, "p'waps you know who this young pawty is. I see you're gwinning!"

The baronet more than grinned. He burst into a hoarse laugh, for which Mat could have kicked him over the moon.

"Haw, haw, haw! Really, your lordship, I am not surprised that this young person should puzzle you. But he happens to be your lordship's present trainer. Yes, the trainer of your Derby favourite, in fact."

"What? Great Scott!"

Both Mat and his lordship yelped the same original remark together.

"His two-year-old!" gasped Mat. "Why, this young fop must be the new Lord Riplade!"

"Well, pommy word, you surpwise me!" his lordship managed to get out at last. "You told me he was young. But a mere boy—a mere bwat of a boy! Well, dash it—what!"

He plunked his eyeglass into his eye again, and stared at Mat as if he were

a whole cage full of freaks. The youngster returned the stare with a hundred per cent interest.

All that he had ever heard about the missing heir's appearance rose up before him. Yes, the fellow undoubtedly had grey blue eyes and thin cheeks, and black hair and a pointed chin. But then so had Dick Derringer and a hundred others.

As for being an aristocrat, with the blue blood of the Riplades in his veins, nothing would ever make Mat believe that this over-dressed dummy was the grandson and heir of so fine an English nobleman as his late lordship.

Yet such he must be. And poor Mat, who had hoped to secure the new heir's patronage, in spite of Sir Roger, had made this awful bloomer at the very outset.

Lord Riplade was furious.

"You beastly little bwute!" he screeched. "You dare to lay a fingah on that beastly horse of mine, and I'll put you in the beastly police-courts—what? You just do it, and see! Sir Woger, I appeal to you!"

"It's no use appealing to me!" snarled the baronet. "It's your horse, and I should dashed well take it! At any rate, I'd see that little viper shot first before I'd let him ride the race!"

"Shot! I'll see him beastly well spificated!" squeaked the new Lord Riplade. "I'll see the what-d'-you-call-em's at once about it. I'll tell them that either Wisby wides for me, or the beastly bwute is scawtched!"

Away went his lordship then in a high state of fury, with Sir Roger after him, to lend him his usual support.

Two Riders for Whiplash!

"WELL, I'll be hanged!" gasped Mat, not knowing whether to laugh or cry over it all.

"Did you ever see such a blob-headed flat in all your life? Surely he can't be old Riplade's grandson? Where on earth did they rake him up?"

Dick did not know. He was as staggered as his young chum. But there was his lordship's threat to think about.

"Surely, though, the stewards would not be asses enough to interfere simply on the word of a noodle like that? He's got to prove he is really the new Lord Riplade, hasn't he, before he can claim the horse?"

"Blessed if I know!" was all Dick would say. "Perhaps he has already. But whatever happens, I should stick out that you ride this last race on him. It's your big advertisement, as Lord Dungarrin said."

So Mat dashed off to change at once into riding kit. The Bovingdon Stakes was the second event on the card in any case, and the jockeys for the first event had just been weighed out.

"So here you are, young Martingale!" said the clerk of the scales, glad to polish off any rider for the next race in such good time.

Mat plumped himself into the scales, had his weight checked, and leads adjusted in his saddle flaps, and was out again as quick as he could skip.

In the saddling enclosure all was bustle and excitement. The riders in the first race were saddling up and

mounting, and as half the horses were giving trouble, there was plenty to think about.

But at last the field were despatched to the post, and by this time Mat's rivals in the Bovingdon Stakes were weighing out as fast as the clerk of the scales could attend to them.

Dick Derringer appeared just then with Whiplash. Mat was steering his way through the knot of experts admiring the favourite, when a splash of familiar colour just caught the tail of his eye emerging from the weighing-room.

Mat was roused in an instant. It was Wisby, wearing silk jacket and cap, identical with his own—the famous Riplade racing colours, and none else. Sir Roger must have been keeping a set handy somewhere.

Wisby was the vicious little beast who had accused Mat at Epsom of kicking him with his spur, and so causing him to fall off his horse.

To make matters more ominous, Sir Roger Rackstone was at one elbow bustling him along, and the new Lord Riplade at the other.

They were making straight for Dick Derringer and the favourite. Mat, however, barred their way.

"Here, what game is this you're playing?" he demanded. "Wisby has no right to wear those colours. I'm riding the only Riplade horse in this race."

"You, you little brute, we'll see you further first!" flared out Sir Roger. "His lordship has chosen a fresh jockey to ride for him, and he has just been weighed out!"

"But I've been weighed out first!" cried Mat, in a blaze. "Here, Dick, don't let them touch Whiplash. Stand off, you, or I'll raise such trouble that you'll repent it!"

However, the clerk of the scales had just discovered his blunder in checking out two jockeys for one and the same horse. He came tearing out in a rare way about it.

The case was explained to him as plainly as possible, seeing that both sides were almost at blows.

Some of the Kempton Park stewards had also appeared on the scene, attracted by the rumpus. But they did not seem to make head nor tail of it.

"It appears to us that this is a purely private matter that you ought to settle afterwards," was their verdict. "All we know is that the entry of the horse is perfectly in order, and that Mat Martingale has put himself down to ride him."

"But, dash it, he had no wight to! It's my horse. I'm the new Lord Riplade, and I shall do with my own property just what I choose!" declared the new claimant to the estates.

"That is as it may be," said the spokesman of the stewards. "If Martingale is on the wrong side of the law you can take action against him—but afterwards, not here."

"Hurrah!" cried Mat delightedly, for this was a verdict in his favour. The cry seemed to sting his enemies to madness.

A Thrilling Race!

THE new Lord Riplade retired, spluttering. As for Sir Roger Rackstone, he had made a guy of himself so often of late that he hardly seemed to feel the snub at

all. He threatened could abuse no more himself off, too.

At any rate, Dick was keeping his eye could see no sign.

Then along came free of the paddock unchallenged. For was not half so up.

He came to hand brisk burst, and Mat self bringing home.

"By Jove, if on spite those snobs!" eagerly. "And the horse away from what anyone else. Why, he'll fret him after two months!"

Mat was first at up came Bonnybr perfect picture that shaken.

The famous Sen The crack had b enormous fee to rid engagements until the world was wait would make of the

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Mat, on Whipla Senlake had staved repeating his Epsom on the rails.

This time, though, conspiracy to run t Each jockey was cor winning chance, and own hand.

(Who will catch t this thrilling neck-t sure of reading ne instalment of this serial by ordering i advance.)

all. He threatened and abused until he could abuse no more, and then took himself off, too.

At any rate, Dick Derringer, who was keeping his eye upon both of them, could see no sign of them.

Then along came the race. Mat, once free of the paddock, had cantered away unchallenged. Fortunately, his mount was not half so upset as he had feared.

He came to hand well after the first brisk burst, and Mat began to see himself bringing home a winner, after all.

"By Jove, if only I could, just to spite those snobs!" he said to himself eagerly. "And then let them take the horse away from Furzedown, and see what anyone else can make of him. Why, he'll fret himself into his grave after two months!"

Mat was first at the "gate." Then up came Bonnybrake, looking such a perfect picture that Mat's hopes were shaken.

The famous Senlake steered him. The crack had been booked at an enormous fee to ride him now in all his engagements until the Derby. So all the world was waiting to see what he would make of the horse.

Mat found Senlake paying him the compliment of looking him over, as if he were taking in every stitch. That was Senlake's way.

Kilclaw was there, too, and Ting-a-Ring, the filly that was fast making herself first favourite for the Oaks.

Catchpin and Gillaroo were also among the field. All the three-year-old stars, in fact, were out to-day, and the best jockeys in the land were "up" to see that they did themselves credit.

Unlike some of the small races, when Mat was out on the Stunt, there was an utter absence of sneaky, "clever-clever" manoeuvring at the start. All was fair and square.

Only the one caution "Ready!" was needed. Each rider crouched forward in his saddle, with every nerve stretched for the jump away. Then whish! up flew the tapes, and they were off.

It was a perfect start, Kilclaw cutting out the running as before, in spite of all his jockey could do to hold him in. Gillaroo and Bonnybrake lay next, and Mat comfortably half a length behind, where he had room to see how things were shaping.

On they swept, the ground shaking to the sound of the hoofs.

Whiplash was moving beautifully, with plenty in hand. The crowd saw this, and so did Dick Derringer. His eyes glistened with pride. Had he not been so intent on the oncoming horses, he might have noticed how Sir Roger Rackstone was skulking just in view of him.

The baronet seemed to be pointing Dick out to three racecourse toughs of the lowest type, so that they could take stock of him and know him again.

But here the horses were rounding into the homeward straight, and Dick Derringer was on tiptoe with excitement. The hoarse roar of cheering swept nearer and nearer.

Mat, on Whiplash, still lay fourth. Senlake had staved off any risk of his repeating his Epsom feat and cutting it on the rails.

This time, though, there had been no conspiracy to run the favourite wide. Each jockey was content that he had a winning chance, and was riding for his own hand.

(Who will catch the judge's eye in this thrilling neck-to-neck race? Make sure of reading next week's grand instalment of this powerful sporting serial by ordering your GEM well in advance.)



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TUCK FOR LEICESTER. SOLD AGAIN!

He was a smart boy, the newspaper lad. One of those youngsters who will one day make his mark in the world—become, perhaps, a Cabinet minister, or at least an M.P. He was crying his wares in the main street of the town one evening, when he came up to one of the big shopkeepers standing in the door of his shop. "Buy a paper, sir?" he asked, his voice hoarse from shouting. "No," replied the man abruptly. "Clear off!" "Local footballer shot!" went on the boy. In a moment the shopkeeper was all excitement. "Give me a paper quick!" he said, holding out a penny. "Local footballer shot, did you say?" "Yes," replied the boy, moving away. "But he never scored!"—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious tuck has been awarded to B. Gee, 82, Old Church Street, Aylestone, Leicester.

A PUZZLER!

Mr. Jiff (to Biff, who has a lame dog): "Say, why does your dog resemble a copybook?" Mr. Biff: "I'll be blessed if I know!" Mr. Jiff: "Because a copybook is an ink lined plane, an inclined plane is a slope up, and a slow pup is a dog that can't run!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Baker, 12, Midland Avenue, Netherfield, Nottingham.

ONE BETTER!

An American and a Britisher were having an argument about a sausage-machine. "It's a big affair," the American explained, "and simply wonderful. All you do is to drive the pig down a plank through a hole in the machine, and five minutes later out come the sausages." "What becomes of the hide?" queried the Britisher. "The hide?" came the answer. "Oh, that falls out of another part of the machine in purses, shoes, or saddles—just a matter of setting a lever." "Oh, is that all?" said the Britisher. "Well, we've used a machine like that for twenty years now, and, what's more, we've improved upon it. Sometimes the sausages were found to be not quite up to the standard." Well, what happens then? "Why, we just put 'em back in the machine, reverse the engine, and out walks the pig, as fit as a fiddle!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Michael Green, 10, North View, North Walbottle, Newburn, S.O.

SMART!

Tourist (after examining the lions in Trafalgar Square): "Do these lions ever roar?" Youngster: "Yes, guv'nor, every time they're fed!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Charles Ross, 51, Sinclair Drive, Langside, Glasgow.

TRUTHFULLY SPOKEN!

The lady of the house had just entered the kitchen and found the cook sitting on a policeman's knee. "Now, Bridget," she said sternly, "what have you got to say for yourself?" "Please, mum, this 'ere constable's 'a-restin' me!" Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Wainwright, Portland Hotel, Southsea.

NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE!

The poacher saw he could not dodge the squire, so he walked up to him and spoke first. "Good-morning, squire!" he said. "And why are you out so early this morning?" "Getting an appetite for my breakfast," replied the squire. "And what are you doing here?" "Getting a breakfast for my appetite!" was the witty reply.—Half a crown has been awarded to Norman Atkin, 16, Bishopton Lane, Stockton-on-Tees.

PUSH AGAIN, THEN!

Wealthy Motorist: "I want some petrol, boy, and please be quick. You will never get on in this world unless you push. When I was young I pushed; and look at me now. I'm worth thousands!" Boy: "Well, guv'nor, I reckon you'll 'ave to push agin, 'cause we ain't got a drop of petrol in the place!" Half-a-crown has been awarded to Harold L. Poore, 84, Colombo Road, Ilford.

(H)INDEED!

District Visitor (calling on Mrs. Harris, a new arrival in the village): "You seem to have a great many children, Mrs. Harris." Mrs. Harris: "Yes, mum, and what's more all their names begin with a haitch. There's 'Uberty, my eldest; then comes 'Ilda, 'Arriet, and 'Orace. Then there's 'Arold and 'Arry and 'Ector and 'Onoria. They're all haitches—except the baby, and we christened 'er Holive!" Half-a-crown has been awarded to Wilfred Tolan, 15, Upper Battye Street, Heckmondwike, Yorkshire.

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"Twimble, deah boy, you wemembah askin' me to take charge of an envelope containin' a papah the othah day?"

Cutts of the Fifth gave a start. Trimble started, too, and made D'Arcy a hurried sign to be silent. Arthur Augustus, however, saw no reason for being silent. He went on:

"It was a lettah frowm your fathah, you told me, Twimble. I am sowwy now that I took charge of it. But, weally, Twimble, as I told you at the time, there was no weason why you could not take care of it yourself. I feel bound, howevah, to apologise for havin' inadvertently destroyed it."

"What!" yelled Trimble. The lump of cake dropped from his fat hand in his consternation.

Cutts rose to his feet.

He did not need telling now where the IOU had been hidden. It had been in the keeping of D'Arcy of the Fourth, who was obviously unaware of the nature of his trust.

"Bai Jove! I am sowwy it seems to have given you a shock, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "Of course, I nevah saw the lettah, as it was sealed up in an envelope. Was it vevy valuable?"

"Oh!" gasped Trimble.

"I am awfully sowwy, old chap. I thvew it into the fiah with some old lettahs, quite forgettin' it was there," said Arthur Augustus. "But suahly, Twimble, you can ask your fathah to w'ite it again? I will lend you a stamp if you like."

"You silly owl!" yelled Trimble.

"Bai Jove!"

"You—you burbling chump!"

"Weally, Twimble—"

"You potty ass!"

"I wefuse to allow you to apply such dewogatory epithets to me, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I am sowwy the lettah is destroyed, but I cannot do more than apologise. Fwom one gentleman to anothah that should be sufficient. I am sowwy to observe, Twimble, that you are no gentleman!"

And with that crushing rejoinder Arthur Augustus turned and walked out of the study.

Trimble would have followed.

But before Trimble could follow Cutts of the Fifth caught him by the collar. With his other hand he caught up the Malacca cane.

"So the IOU's burnt, is it?" smiled Cutts. "You got D'Arcy to mind it, did you? That was clever of you, Trimble—a little too clever, as it turns out. Bend over!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Baggy Trimble did not finish his supper in Cutts' study. It was his last supper there, and he was not even allowed to finish it. Instead of that, Baggy Trimble bagged the biggest licking of his life, and he crawled away from Cutts' study, when Cutts had finished, feeling that life was not worth living.

For days and weeks afterwards the chief occupation of Baggy Trimble consisted in dodging Cutts of the Fifth. It was an exciting, but far from enjoyable, time for the fat Baggy, and quite a change from the time when Gerald Cutts had been Under Trimble's Thumb.

THE END.

(Another topping yarn next week, chums, and one, no "Gentle" should miss. Note the title: "CARDEW—THE CRICKETER!" Martin Clifford says himself that this is one of his finest stories.)

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