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EVERY
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"THE MORE WE ARE TOGETHER
THE MERRIER WE'LL BE!"

"TRIMBLE'S TENNER!"

This week's extra-special School
story, featuring Tom Merry and
Co. at St. Jim's.

WHOSE ? When Baggy Trimble is in possession of such a large amount of money as a tanner, his Form-fellows, knowing him and his little ways so well, naturally ask, "Whose is it ?" Yet in this case he actually produces a tanner which his father has sent him—a tanner with a history attached to it!

TRIMBLE'S TENNER!



A Rollicking New Long Complete Story of Tom Merry & Co., the Cheery Chums at St. Jim's, with the one and only Baggy Trimble filling the principal role.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1. "For It!"

"I'll telephone—"
"Wats!"
"To Trimble Hall—"
"Weally, Twimble—"
"For a tanner!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form, jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye and looked at Baggy Trimble with a look that ought to have withered him on the spot.

But Baggy Trimble was not withered. He grinned cheerfully.

If contempt, as the Eastern proverb declares, can pierce the shell of the tortoise, Baggy Trimble must have been better protected than a tortoise. The weightiest scorn and the heaviest sarcasm had no effect whatever on Baggy. Nothing lighter than a boot made any impression on him.

"So that's all right, Gussy," said Trimble cheerfully. "You needn't make a fuss over a few sardines; you needn't make a song about a measly cake; you needn't set up a yell over a tin of condensed milk. I'll settle up these few miserable shillings—"

"You uttah wottah!"

"As soon as I get a remittance. I've only got to telephone home for a tip from my pater—"

"I wefuse to listen to your wotten fibs, Twimble. I am goin' to give you a fearful thwashin'."

"Look here; you know—"

Baggy Trimble backed away in alarm.

It was an awkward situation for Baggy, for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was between him and the door.

But for that little circumstance, Baggy would not have stayed to argue about this trivial matter.

Blake and Herries and Digby were still at footer practice. Arthur Augustus had come in a little earlier than his chums, to get tea going in Study No. 6 in the Fourth. That was how he happened on Trimble. Baggy was standing at the study cupboard in Study No. 6, just finishing. It was now impossible for Gussy to get tea going—for tea was gone!

These occurrences were not uncommon in the Fourth Form passage. Baggy Trimble had a bad memory. But if he had possessed the memory of Macaulay, he

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could not have remembered the number of times he had been kicked for grub-raiding. This time Gussy felt that it was the limit. He had come in hungry to tea, and three hungry footballers were soon due. And like the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard, when he got there the cupboard was bare.

Had Trimble thrown himself on Gussy's mercy, as the impecunious fellow who had the smallest allowance of any fellow at St. Jim's, and who never got remittances and hampers as the other fellows sometimes did, no doubt Arthur Augustus would have let him off. But that was not Trimble's way. Swank was Trimble's way.

In the circumstances, swank from Baggy, about Trimble Hall and telephoning for a tanner, was altogether too much for Gussy's patience. The Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy himself certainly could never have telephoned home to Lord Eastwood for a tanner. Trimble, the grub-raider, the borrower of sixpences and twopences, spoke of it as a trifle light as air. It put the lid on, so to speak, and Arthur Augustus' noble eye gleamed behind his eyeglass, and he pushed back his cuffs.

There was no tea in Study No. 6, and it was too late for tea in Hall. The only solace that remained was to take it out of Trimble's hide.

"Now, you fat wottah—"

"I—I say, you know," stammered Trimble, "don't cut up rusty, old fellow! A few measly sardines—"

"You howwid octopus, you have devoured all that we had for tea for four fellows!"

"That's all right! You have pretty measly teas in this study," said Baggy. "I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll stand a study spread—a better spread than you ever get in this study. The best stuff money can buy, and more than the lot of you can put away. What?"

"You uttah outsiders, are you goin' to stand that studay spwead with the twopence you bowwowed from Dig this mornin'?"

This was sarcasm. But Trimble was deaf to sarcasm.

"I mean it," he said. "I'll telephone home—"

"I wefuse to listen to your silly bwaggin', Twimble!"

"I happen to be short of cash at the—the present moment," said Trimble. "I lent my last quid to Tom

Merry, as it happens. You know how thoughtless I am in money matters—thoughtlessly generous."

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"I'm not going to dun Tom for it—that's not my style. But if you're going to make a fuss about a few sardines and a cake—"

"I am!" said D'Arcy, grimly.

"Well, then, there's nothing for it but asking my pater for a really decent remittance," said Trimble. "I'll telephone for a tenner while I'm about it—"

"Will you stop tellin' me sillay whoppahs, Twimble, and come wound fwom behind that table?"

Trimble did not come round from behind the table. So long as Gussy was between him and the door, Baggy preferred the table to be between him and Gussy. Neither did he stop telling whoppers. Probably he couldn't have if he had tried. But he never thought of trying.

"You can come with me to the telephone, if you like, if you doubt my word, D'Arcy," he said, with a great deal of dignity.

"So that you can dodge away at the first cornah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I undahstand!"

"Hem!"

"Are you comin' wound fwom behind that table?"

"The fact is, Gussy, I don't want to hurt you," said Trimble, keeping on the safe side of the table. "We're pals—"

"Wats!"

"I wouldn't knock you about for anything, old chap," said Trimble.

"You wotten fat funk! Come wound that table!" roared Arthur Augustus, greatly incensed at the bare suggestion of being "knocked about" by the fat and fatuous Baggy.

"Sha'n't!"

"You—you—you fat wottah—"

"Come round after me," said Trimble defiantly. "Yah! Funk! You're afraid to come round after me! Yah!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus, in towering wrath, rushed round the table.

That was exactly what Trimble wanted.

As Gussy negotiated one side of the table at great speed, Baggy negotiated the other side at still greater speed and, the positions now being reversed, Baggy bolted for the door.

The table was still between them, and while Gussy was finishing the circumnavigation of that article of furniture, Baggy Trimble shot into the doorway and came out into the Fourth Form passage like a bullet from a rifle.

The next moment there was a terrific crash, and a roar. Baggy's masterly strategy had been successful—up to the last moment. One moment more and he would have been scudding down the passage. But that moment was not granted him. Blake and Herries and Digby had arrived, and they reached the doorway of No. 6 from the outside as Baggy reached it from the inside.

Crash!

Bump!

"Yarooooop!"

Four juniors sprawled headlong together in the Fourth-Form passage, dazed and dizzy from the sudden collision. Arthur Augustus reached the door, and looked out on the yielding, sprawling heap, and ejaculated:

"Bai Jove!"

CHAPTER 2.

A Chance for Baggy!

TOM MERRY and Manners and Lowther, of the Shell, came up from the changing-room with ruddy, cheerful faces. Football practice in the keen weather had made them feel merry and bright, and given them an excellent appetite for tea. They were heading for No. 10 in the Shell, in rather a hurry to feed. But, hurried as they were, they stopped at the sight of four

juniors sprawling outside Study No. 6. Blake and Herries, and Dig and Baggy Trimble were mixed up or the floor, and they were all vocal. Four voices were blended, not in harmony.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"What the thump—"

"Yoop! Ow! Oh, my eye! Groogh!"

"Mmmmmmmmm!"

"What on earth's that game?" demanded Tom Merry, as the Terrible Three came to a halt.

"Fags mustn't play these games in the passages!" said Monty Lowther, shaking his head.

"Might have fallen over you kids!" said Manners.

Blake sat up.

He dabbed his nose. Somebody's elbow had jammed on his nose in the sudden confusion, and his nose was streaming crimson.

"Ow! Wow!" gasped Blake. "Oh, my hat! What was it? Some silly owl has smashed my nose with his silly elbow! Wow!"

"Ow!" groaned Dig. "Oh, my funny-bone! Wow! Ow! Yow-yow! I've banged my funny-bone—"

"Ow, my nose!" howled Blake.

"Blow your nose! Ow, my funny-bone!"

Herries clambered up and rubbed the back of his head. The floor of the passage was of old oak, and old oak is very hard. Herries had not specially noted that before. But he noticed it at once when the back of his head came into sudden contact with the old oak.

Trimble was the last on his feet. He had more weight to lift than the other juniors.

He staggered against the passage wall, gasping.

"Oh, dear! Ow!"

"Collah that fat villain!" shouted Arthur Augustus from the study. "He has waided all the gwub!"

Trimble made a rush to escape, winded as he was. Blake and Herries and Dig were attending to their damages, and had no attention for Trimble. Fortunately, the chums of the Shell were there.

The Terrible Three grasped Baggy as he was fleeing, and brought him to the floor with a bump.

"Got him!" said Tom Merry cheerily.

"Yaroooooh!"

"That's wight, deah boys!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "The fwrightful wottah has cleashed out our studay cupboard, you know, and instead of waitin' for me to thwash him, he bolted like a fat wabbit."

"Here he is, all ready to be thrashed!" said Lowther. "Roll him in! Roll him over and over like a barrel!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo! I didn't—I haven't been in the study at all! I never touched the cake! And it was a measly cake, anyhow—hardly a plum in it! Yarooooop!"

Baggy was rolled into Study No. 6. The way of the transgressor is hard. Baggy Trimble had found that out before. Now he was making the discovery again.

Blake and Herries and Dig, with wrathful faces, followed Trimble in. The Terrible Three, smiling, lined up in the doorway. Baggy backed into the farthest corner of the study, with apprehensive looks. It appeared that Baggy was "for it." And appearances were not deceptive.

"Not a thing left!" said Blake, glaring into the study cupboard, and still caressing his nose.

"Not a giddy sardine!" said Dig.

"Squash him!"

"Lynch him!"

"Burst him!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I weally think that the time has awwived to make an example of that fat scoundwel, you know."

"I—I say," gasped Trimble. "I—I haven't—I mean, I didn't—that is, I wasn't—"

"I am goin' to thwash you, Twimble!" said Arthur Augustus, pushing back his cuffs once more. "Come on! Are you weady?"

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"Nunno!" gasped Baggy. "I—I'm not quite ready." "It will probably be some time before Trimble is ready," remarked Monty Lowther gravely. "By the time Trimble is ready to scrap, he will be able to settle up the damage out of his Old Age pension."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you know—" said Trimble feebly.

"I am goin' to thwash you, you fat wottah! I insist upon your puttin' up your paws at once!"

"You—you see—"

"I'm going to kick him," said Herries, "and I'm not going to wait! Here goes!"

Crash!

Herries had a large and hefty foot. There was a terrific roar from Baggy Trimble as he caught it. He spun towards Blake, who caught him by the collar, and jammed his head against the study wall. Another roar from Trimble, and he jerked himself away from Blake, only to fall into Dig's ready hands. Robert Arthur Digby received him with right and left, and Baggy reposed on the study carpet.

The roars that proceeded from Baggy would have excited the envy of the celebrated Bull of Bashan.

"Wag him!" said Arthur Augustus. "Wag him, deah boys! Put his head in the coal-lockah while I sort out a fives bat!"

"Good!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Help!" roared Trimble. "I say, Tom Merry, aren't you going to stand up for a pal?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, keep off!" howled Trimble, dodging round the study. "Let me pass, you beasts!"

He rushed for the door; but the Shell fellows blocked the way. There was no escape for the study pilferer.

"No exit!" said Lowther cheerily.

"Oh, dear! I say, leggo! I'll pay for the stuff—I will, really!" roared Trimble. "I'll settle up every shilling! I'll stand you a study spread. I'll—I'll—"

"Give him a chance!" said Blake grimly. "Shell out, Trimble!"

"If you're going to be mean—"

"We are! Shell out!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Baggy Trimble ran his hands desperately through his pockets. Perhaps he hoped to discover some coin there that had been overlooked. Perhaps he was only trying to gain time.

No coin came to light.

"I—I've left my money in my—my study!" gasped Trimble. "Wait here a minute and I'll fetch it, and—"

"Try again!" snorted Blake.

"If you don't believe me, Blake—"

"Believe you! My hat!"

"Oh, collar him!" exclaimed Herries. "We shall have to cadge a tea along the passage now. I'm going to make him squirm for it."

"Tea in our study, dear men!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "We've got rather a spread!"

"Good! But that burglar's going through it all the same."

"I—I say, give a man a chance!" panted Trimble. "I tell you, I'll square! I will, honest Injun! I'll telephone home—"

"What?" roared Blake.

"To Trimble Hall!"

"Why, you—you—you—"

"I'll ask the pater for a tenner while I'm about it!" gasped Trimble. "I will, really!"

"Heah's the fives bat, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "We will give Twimble six for wobbin' us, and six more for tellin' lies, and six more for his sillay swank about Twimble Hall."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, struck by a bright idea. "Give him a chance, you chaps! Let him telephone to Trimble Hall for a tenner."

"What rot!" roared Blake. "You jolly well know there isn't such a show as Trimble Hall. The Trimble Arms, more likely."

"And if there's a Trimble Hall, there aren't any

Trimble tenners!" snorted Dig. "The fat rat never has any money."

"Lay him over the table!" said Herries. "Better hand that bat to me, Gussy. I'll give him jip!"

"Yaroo!"

"But hold on!" persisted Lowther. "Hear me out, as they say in the novels. Let him telephone to Trimble Hall for a tenner. It's sure to come if you phone for it, isn't it, Trimble?"

"Yes!" gasped Baggy.

"Absolutely certain?"

"Absolutely."

Baggy Trimble would have agreed to telephone for ten thousand pounds, and promised its safe arrival, for the sake of getting out of Study No. 6 unbatted.

"That does it, then!" said Monty. "Baggy gets the tenner, and he shells out for what he's pinched, and he stands a feed as a penalty."

"Willingly!" gasped Trimble. "I've offered D'Arcy already—"

"You fat spoofah!"

"But there won't be any tenner!" howled Blake. "What the thump are you getting at, Lowther, you ass?"

"Trimble!" explained Lowther. "I'm getting at that fat, swanking chump. We make it a condition that the tenner arrives to-morrow—it will arrive to-morrow, won't it, Trimble?"

"Certain."

"Good! If it doesn't arrive to-morrow, we give Baggy six with a fives bat."

"Eh?"

"And six more every day that it doesn't arrive," said Lowther.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, you know, that's a wippin' ideah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, with a chuckle. "I'm weally more fed up with Twimble's fathended swank than with his wobbin' the study cupboard. He will have to own up that he is a lyin' wottah, and he will get the battin' all the same."

"Hear, hear!"

Blake & Co. grinned and nodded.

Trimble certainly deserved punishment; but if he was going to get "six" every day till his tenner arrived, undoubtedly he was booked for plenty of punishment. For that meant that Baggy Trimble would capture the fives bat regularly every day till the end of the term.

"Done!" said Blake. "You agree, Trimble?"

"I—I—I—" gasped Trimble, in dismay.

"Do you agree?" roared Blake.

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Of course! The—the tenner will be here to—to-morrow, you know!" spluttered Trimble.

"That's all right, then. You will be able to square about half what you owe in the Fourth Form, if it comes," said Blake. "If it doesn't, you know what to expect."

"There—there may be some—some delay in the post, you know," said Trimble haltingly.

"There may!" assented Blake. "But there won't be any delay in the batting. You can depend upon that being right on time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "Six ewevy day till the tennah turns up! A vewy good ideah!"

"But—but, I say—" stuttered Trimble.

"Outside!"

The Terrible Three made way, laughing; and Herries drew back his boot. Baggy did not wait for the boot. He fled.

"Now tea in No. 10!" said Tom Merry cheerily.

"Good man!"

And Study No. 6 walked along to the Shell passage with Tom Merry & Co. to tea—what time Baggy Trimble scuttled into his study and collapsed breathless into the armchair, in a state of great dismay.

The fat Baggy had been prepared to promise anything to get out of Study No. 6. Nobody ever expected Baggy to keep a promise, so there was no sense of responsibility attached to it, in Baggy's fat mind.



Whack! Jack Blake ceased to snore, and woke up quite suddenly, as the fives bat rapped on him. "Yaroooh!" he roared. "Oh, you're awake, are you?" said Kildare genially. "Now, what was this fives bat doing under your bed?" (See Chapter 4).

But on this occasion he was to be held to his word. Baggy would not have minded that, but for the penalty attached. Batting every day till the non-existent tenner came was a fearful prospect. Tom Merry & Co. were in earnest—and it was not surprising that the fellows were fed up with Trimble's swank about Trimble Hall and the Trimble wealth, when it was combined with grub-raiding. A fellow who talked airily of fivers and tenners and "ponies" ought not to have been, at the same time, a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. Trimble seemed to want to have it both ways; and really that was asking too much.

Baggy was deep in troubled thought when Wildrake and Mellish came in to tea. His pilfering in Study No. 6 was not troubling his conscience—Baggy's conscience could stand that and more. His untruthfulness and his reckless promises, made only to be broken, did not trouble him. But the prospect of a batting every day for the rest of the term troubled him greatly. Baggy was fond of taking his ease in the study armchair. After to-morrow, he was extremely unlikely to feel easy in the easiest of easy chairs.

"I—I say, Mellish, old fellow!" he said.

Mellish looked at him.

"C-c-can you lend me a-a-a tenner?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mellish.

"Wildrake, old fellow, you get tips sometimes from your relations in—in Labrador," said Baggy.

"I guess I haven't any relations in Labrador," said Wildrake.

"I—I mean British Saskatchewan."

"If you mean British Columbia, that's where I was raised," said Wildrake; "and I have relations there, and I get tips from them; and I'm keeping the tips in my own trousers' pocket."

"Lend me a tenner, old chap!"

"Fathead!"

Baggy Trimble grunted. Really, it was rather hopeless to seek to borrow ten-pound notes in the Fourth Form. No fellow in that Form was ever known to possess so much money at once, excepting sometimes Cardew, and rarely Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Racke, of the Shell, had tenners. But if Orpheus, with his lute, drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek, he could not have drawn a tenner from Aubrey Racke with the aid of a whole orchestra. It was a tenner or a batting every day for Baggy; and it certainly looked as if the batting was to be expected.

Baggy sat down at a corner of the table to write home. He could not telephone to Trimble Hall. The Trimble villa, which in Baggy's fertile imagination was magnified into Trimble Hall, was not on the telephone—quite an insuperable difficulty. So Baggy Trimble, in dire dread of the wrath to come, wrote an imploring letter to Mr. Trimble, and hurried out to the school box to catch the post with it. It was possible—barely possible—remotely possible—that Trimble senior might turn up trumps for once. The bare chance was worth trying, at least.

But the chance was very bare.

It was all that Baggy could do. The letter home was gone—but it was more than doubtful whether the

tenner would come. Slight as it was, that hope was all that Baggy now had to cling to. Baggy's many sins had found him out, and he was finding the way of the transgressor hard.

CHAPTER 3. No Tenner!

"TOM, old fellow!"
"Hook it!"
"He, he, he!"

Baggy Trimble cachinnated feebly. It was the following day, and after morning classes, the fat Fourth-Former bore down on Tom Merry & Co. in the quadrangle. The Terrible Three smiled as he came along. They understood the cloud on Baggy's fat brow, and they knew what was weighing on his podgy mind.

"Tom, old chap, I know it was only a joke—he, he, he!" Baggy cachinnated dismally. "Only your little joke—what!"

"The batting?" asked Lowther.

"Yes! He, he, he!"

"That wasn't a joke," said Monty. "That was serious, awfully serious. But it's all right if the tenner comes."

"Of—of course it will come—"

"Then what are you worrying about?" asked Manners.

"You see, the pater may lose the post with the letter—"

"He may!" grinned Lowther.

"The—the letter may get lost in the post—"

"Accidents will happen," assented Tom Merry.

"So if it doesn't arrive to-day—"

"You get the batting!"

"But there might be some accident with the letter—"

"There won't be any accident with the batting!"

"Look here, you beasts!" roared Baggy. "I'll jolly well complain to Mr. Railton if you start batting me!"

"Good! And we'll let Railton know what it's for!" said Tom cheerily. "He's licked you a dozen times for bagging fellows' grub. If you'd rather have it from Railton, all serene!"

"I—I wouldn't! But—"

"Roll away, barrel!"

The Shell fellows walked on, leaving Baggy blinking after them in dismay and wrath. He sighted Study No. 6 in the quad and bore down on them. But he did not stop to speak. Blake lifted his foot in such a significant manner that Trimble decided to give that study a wide berth.

"Tanner come yet, Baggy?" bawled Herries, as the fat junior backed off.

"N-n-not yet!" stammered Baggy. "It couldn't come by the first post, you know."

"All right if it comes by the last!" grinned Blake. "The bat's ready in our study!"

"Yah!"

Trimble of the Fourth rolled away dismally. Grinning faces met his resentful view on all sides. All the School House juniors knew by this time what Trimble was up against; and all of them regarded it as the joke of the term. There was a plentiful lack of sympathy for Baggy. All the fellows had heard—often—of Trimble Hall and the magnificence of that palatial establishment. Telephoning home to the Hall for a fiver or a tenner was, to Baggy, a trifle light as air—according to his own account. All he had to do now was to do it!

That afternoon Baggy scanned the letter-rack with eager eyes. He hoped against hope that his pater might, by some miraculous chance, have played up and sent along the much-desired tenner. And his fat face brightened as he saw a letter for himself, addressed in Trimble senior's hand. He grabbed it down from the rack.

"Is that the tenner, Tubby?" asked Kangaroo of the Shell, with a chuckle.

"I rather think so," said Trimble.

"My hat! Doesn't your pater register banknotes?" chortled Reilly of the Fourth.

"Oh, not at all! A tenner's nothing to my pater!"

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said Trimble airily. "He might register a hundred-pound note. Hardly a tenner. You see, you'd scarcely understand how wealthy people do things, Reilly."

"Oh, my hat!" said Reilly.

Baggy rolled away with his letter. He opened it in a secluded corner. He hoped there might be a tenner in it. But he feared that there wasn't. And it proved to be his fears, not his hopes, that were well-founded. There wasn't!

Trimble glanced through the letter. It was not of much interest, as there was no cash attached. It ran:

"Dear Bagley,—I was both surprised and shocked to receive your request for ten pounds. Certainly I am not in a position to send you any such sum, as you are well aware. I fully agree that you should, as you say, keep up appearances at your school, and it is not in the least necessary to let the other boys know that your parents are not wealthy, but you cannot expect me to disburse large sums for this purpose. I had intended to send you ten shillings this week—"

Baggy's fat face brightened as he came to that passage. But it fell again as he proceeded with his pater's letter:

"—but as it happens, I have suffered a very severe loss. A counterfeit banknote for ten pounds has been passed on me. It was so good a counterfeit that I was quite deceived, and only learned at the bank that it was spurious. This is a very heavy loss to me, as you may imagine. It will prevent me from sending you anything over your allowance this term, and may possibly compel me to curtail your allowance. I recommend you to be extremely careful in the expenditure of money—"

There was a good deal more in this strain, but Trimble did not take the trouble to read it. No doubt a lecture on economy was beneficial; but what Trimble wanted was a tenner, not a lecture. He crumpled the letter in his hand and snorted with utter disgust.

"Oh dear! Rotten!"

He felt it was really too thick. His father had been swindled out of the very sum that he required. It would have cost Mr. Trimble no more to send him ten pounds than to lose that sum on a counterfeit banknote. Baggy felt that it was shocking carelessness on the part of his pater; and the suggestion of curtailing his allowance, because Mr. Trimble had played the ox in this ridiculous manner, roused his deepest indignation. He was so deeply occupied with his own grievance that it did not occur to him to waste any sympathy on his father for the loss that gentleman had incurred.

"Oh dear!" he mumbled again.

He was "for it," that was clear. A shouting voice broke in on his gloomy meditations.

"Trimble! Anybody seen Trimble? Oh, here you are, you fat rotter!"

"I—I say, Blake—"

"Ready?"

"Ready for what, old chap?"

"Batting in Study No. 6 at five-thirty sharp."

"Yah!" yelled Baggy Trimble, as he scuttled away.

At five-thirty Tom Merry & Co. were gathered in Study No. 6. Baggy Trimble did not arrive. Baggy was, at five-thirty, as far from Study No. 6 as the limits of St. Jim's allowed. The Terrible Three and Blake & Co. had their tea; but at a quarter past six there was no sign of Trimble.

"Bai Jove, you know, that fat wottah weally has the feahful cheek not to come for his battin'!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly.

Tom Merry laughed.

"I did not quite think he would! I fancy Baggy will be hard to catch until dorm."

"Same here!" grinned Blake. "We'll sneak the fives bat up to the dorm. and bat him after lights out. You fellows can come along."

"Wha't-ho!"

Baggy Trimble did his prep. that evening in fear and trembling. But he was not interrupted. After prep. he vanished; but he was not sought for. But when, at bed-

time, he rolled into the Fourth Form dormitory with the rest of the Fourth, he knew that the hour had come.

CHAPTER 4.

"Turn Out, Trimble!"

"KILDARE!"
"Hallo!"
"I say! I—I say——"
"Well?"
"Um!"

This was not very intelligible, and it was not surprising that Kildare of the Sixth stared impatiently at Trimble.

he saw punishment on the horizon. Apparently he had never expected his sins to find him out.

He blinked dismally at Kildare, who turned away as he did not speak again. Baggy laid his bullet head on the pillow, with a dismal conviction that it would not be allowed to rest there long after lights out.

But as Kildare was about to extinguish the light and leave the dorm, Baggy lifted his head again and squeaked almost involuntarily:

"I—I say, Kildare!"

The St. Jim's captain looked round again.

"What on earth do you mean, Trimble?" he snapped.

"I—I say——"

"Have you anything to say to me?" demanded Kildare.

"Yes," stammered Baggy.

"Say it, then, sharp."

CAMEOS OF SCHOOL LIFE.

THE EASTER VACATION!

THE breath of spring is in the air,
The sun is shining gloriously;
The festive spirit's everywhere,
And vaunts itself victoriously.
For lo! the Easter Vac is here,
A time of mirth and merriment;
In sunny smiles, and words of cheer,
We're eager to experiment.

"The captains and the kings depart,"
In other words, the masters;
And scores of scholars see them start;

There are a few disasters,
When Mr. Rateliff boards the hack
The horse becomes quite restive;
Fatty goes sprawling on his back,
His scowl is far from festive!

Then Mr. Selby, in hot haste,
Down the school steps comes dashing;
Alas! his shoe has come unlaced,
He trips, and comes down crashing;
His hat goes whirling into space,
Clothes burst from out his valise;
He scrambles up, his livid face
Twisted with hate and malice!

Then other mighty men depart,
Kildare, Monteith, and Darrell;
They all look very spruce and smart
In holiday apparel.
And, last of all, a cheery crowd
Of Third and Fourth and Shellfish,
Boarding the brake with laughter loud,
And playing pranks quite elfish!

Good-bye to Latin and to Greek
Throughout the gay Vacation!
We shall enjoy a glorious week
Of fun and recreation,
House-parties, footer, cycle-spins,
All sorts of romps and revels;
This is the time for cheerful grins
And banishing "blue devils"!

The old school now deserted stands,
Save for the worthy Taggles,
Who laughs and rubs his horny hands
As through the quad he straggles.
He now can smoke the pipe of peace,
And keep his "spirits" bubbling;
For pranks and japes and wheezes
cease,
And schoolboys keep from troubling!



Kildare was there to see lights out for the Fourth Form. He was not there to listen to unintelligible remarks from Baggy Trimble.

Most of the Fourth-Formers grinned.

Everybody in the dorm, excepting Kildare, knew what was on Baggy's fat mind. There was a batting to come after lights out, and Baggy did not want the batting. Very much he did not want it.

The Sixth-Form prefect, of course, would have allowed nothing of the kind had he known.

Baggy had only to tell him.

But the penalty for sneaking would probably have been more severe than the batting. Moreover, Baggy could not tell the story without the whole of it being told. He had been caned several times that term for pilfering tuck from other fellows' studies, and Mr. Railton had promised him a flogging next time. Baggy did not want to be flogged. Still less did he desire to be flogged. Baggy was, in fact, in a cleft stick now. Whichever way he turned his piggy little round eyes

"Bai Jove, Twimble, if you say anythin' about the bat——" began Arthur Augustus.

"Shurrup, ass!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Bat!" repeated Kildare, his suspicions rising.

"What's that about a bat?"

"I was goin' to say——"

"Shurrup!"

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Look here. What does this mean?" demanded the captain of St. Jim's impatiently. "My time's of value. Is there some rag on here?"

"There's a fives bat under Blake's bed," squeaked Trimble.

"Oh!"

Kildare crossed over to Blake's bed, glanced under it, and fished out a fives bat.

"What's this doing here, Blake?" he asked.

Snore!

Jack Blake seemed to have fallen asleep very suddenly.

"Asleep, what!" asked the prefect.

Snore!

"Bai Jove! Blake has drowped off to sleep vewy suddenly!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "He is snoahin', too! Blake does not genewally snoah."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whack!

The fives bat being in Kildare's hand, he used it for the purpose of drawing Blake's attention. Jack Blake ceased to snore and woke up quite suddenly as the fives bat rapped on him.

"Yaroooo!" he roared.

"Oh, you're awake, are you?" said Kildare genially. "Now, what was this fives bat doing under your bed?"

"Must have been lying on the floor, I think," said Blake meekly. "I don't see how it could have been doing anything else, Kildare."

The prefect stared at him. Blake's face was quite serious, and it was some moments before Kildare realised that his reply was of a humorous nature. Kildare was not in want of humour at the moment, and he made that clear with another rap of the fives bat.

"Yow-ow! Chuck it!" roared Blake.

"I shall take this bat away, and it will be confiscated till the end of the term," said Kildare.

And with that he put out the lights and retired, with the fives bat under his arm.

Baggy Trimble lay in apprehension.

He could not be battled now. The bat was gone with the prefect. That was something. If a slipper was used instead, that was not so bad. A slippering was greatly preferable to a batting.

"You fat villain!" said Digby. "You've sneaked to a prefect!"

"Two extra for that!" said Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I've got a slipper you fellows can have," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Pewwaps a slippah will do," remarked Arthur Augustus. "We can lay it on extra hard, you know."

"Oh dear!" murmured Baggy.

"That's all right," said Blake. "We're not beginning till those Shell fellows come, and Tom Merry's bringing a bat with him. I asked him to."

"Oh!" gasped Trimble.

"I thought that fat rotter would peach," said Blake, "so I put that old bat where he could see it. I didn't want to give Kildare the trouble of rooting about after it. Tommy's bat will do the trick."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, you know, that was quite bwright of you, Blake! I nevah thought of that."

"You wouldn't," agreed Blake. "Not with your brain box, old chap."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Look here, you fellows—" stuttered Trimble.

"Shut up! Save your breath for the execution. You'll want it then."

"Oh dear!" mumbled Baggy.

A few minutes later the door of the Fourth Form dormitory opened softly and closed again. Three Shell fellows were inside the room when the door closed. An electric torch gleamed out.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, in slippers, with coats on over their pyjamas, had arrived. Blake turned out of bed and lighted a candle-end. All the Fourth sat up in bed, and six or seven fellows turned out. Two or three more candle-ends were lighted.

"Ready!" said Tom Merry.

"Got the bat?"

"You bet!"

"Right-ho! Turn out, Trimble!"

"I—I—I say, Blake, old chap—" moaned Baggy.

"Cut out the old chap, or I'll give you some extra. Turn out!"

"You—you see—"

"Turn out, Twimble!"

"Gussy, old fellow—"

"I wefuse to allow you to address me as old fellow, you fat wottah! I wegard you with disgust!"

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"Turn out!" snapped Blake.

And there was a chorus from the grinning Fourth-Formers.

"Turn out, Trimble!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble did not turn out. But that made no difference. His bedclothes were jerked off and he was rolled over the side of the bed. He landed on the floor with a bump and a howl.

Tom Merry handed the fives bat to Blake. All was ready for the execution—excepting Trimble. He did not seem ready. Ethelred of old was not more unready than Baggy Trimble. But, ready or unready, Trimble was for it!

CHAPTER 5.

A Batting for Baggy!

"PRISONER at the bar—"

"Oh, chuck it, Lowther!"

"Prisoner at the bar," pursued Monty Lowther, unheeding, "sentence has been passed on you. Have you anything to say before sentence is carried into execution?"

"Yes," gasped Trimble, "lots!"

"I wefuse to listen to Twimble."

"It's cold, too," said Herries. "At him and get it over. Six for grub-raiding and two for sneaking."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Look here, you know!" said Trimble feebly.

"Collar him!"

"Hold on!" said Monty Lowther. "If Trimble can produce the tenner, he's let off—that's agreed."

"Cough it up, Trimble!" grinned Cardew, of the Fourth.

"The—the fact is—let a fellow explain!" gasped Trimble. "I—I wasn't able to telephone for the tenner, because—because—"

"Can it!" growled Blake.

"Oh, let's hear the because!" said Manners. "Trimble's because's are always worth hearing. What was the because this time, Trimble?"

"The—the telephone has broken down at Trimble Hall, and I couldn't get through!" gasped Baggy.

"Oh, my hat!"

"You should have sent a telegram!" said Lowther.

"Perhaps the telegraph wires have broken down, too?" suggested Cardew. "Oh perhaps Trimble's pater is broke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but I'm going to try again!" gasped Trimble. "Leave it till to-morrow, and—and the tenner will be here. I'll square for those few measly things, Blake. Make a list of them. You can't expect me to remember sordid trifles like that."

"Can you remember the sordid trifles you pinched from my study yesterday?" asked Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the sordid trifles you bagged from my study the day before?" asked Levison, of the Fourth.

"Is that all you have to say?" asked Lowther. "If that's all, bend over! Telephone broken down isn't good enough."

"Wathah not!"

"A tenner will just about square for what you've pinched from the fellows this term," said Lowther. "When the tenner comes, you shall stand a spread to the Shell and the Fourth, and make it all square. Of course, we don't expect a wealthy fellow like you to remember such a trifle as a tenner. You would naturally forget such a bagatelle. So the batting will keep it green in your memory, see?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bend ovah, you fat wottah!"

"I—I say!"

"Bend him over!"

"Yarooooop!"

In the grasp of many hands, Baggy Trimble was bent over his bed. Blake raised the bat.

"Whoooooop!" roared Trimble, in anticipation.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, what are you makin' that feahful wow for, Twimble?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in surprise. "You are not battled yet."



"Prisoner at the bar," said Monty Lowther, "sentence has been passed on you. Have you anything to say before sentence is carried into execution?" "Yes," gasped Trimble, "lots! Leave it till to-morrow, when my tenner comes, and I'll square up for the few measly things I've had. Make a list of them. You can't expect me to remember sordid trifles like that!" (See Chapter 5.)

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Dear man," said Lowther, "you err on the side of emphasis. If you expend all your breath before the batting begins, how will you express your feelings while it's going on?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whack!

"Yooooooooooooooooooooop!"

Baggy had breath enough left to express his feelings. The Fourth-Form dormitory echoed with the expression thereof.

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!

"That's six!" said Blake.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

Whack! Whack!

"That's the extra two!"

"Whooooop!"

"Thanks for the bat, Tommy! I'll borrow it again to-morrow," said Blake—"unless the tenner comes along, of course."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You Shell fellows had better cut, before a prefect comes along to inquire!" grinned Levison. "I believe I can hear footsteps."

"Oh, my hat!"

In an instant candle-ends were extinguished, and the juniors bolted back into bed. Baggy's voice was still heard, yowing and wowing at a great rate.

The Terrible Three hurried to the door. But there were footsteps in the corridor; evidently Baggy Trimble's vocal efforts had been heard downstairs. The escape of the three was cut off.

"Behind the door!" breathed Tom Merry.

And the three backed against the wall, so that the

big door would screen them from view when it was opened.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!" came from Trimble.

"Shut up, you fat villain!" said Blake ferociously.

"Do you want another batting?"

Baggy Trimble silenced his woeful wails, and bolted into bed. He did not want another batting.

The dormitory door opened.

It was Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, who entered, carrying a lamp. The big door shut the Shell fellows off from his sight, as he advanced into the dusky dormitory.

Mr. Lathom blinked up and down the row of white beds, in surprise. The Fourth Form seemed buried in balmy slumber. Even Trimble was silent—with the apprehension of another batting if he gave utterance to sounds of woe.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom. "The noise could not have come from this dormitory. Yet I was assured that it was from this room that I heard a sound of extraordinary uproar."

The Fourth-Formers smiled in their sleep.

"Are any of you boys awake?" asked Mr. Lathom.

No reply. Only steady breathing, and a snore or two. The dormitory might have been occupied by Rip Van Winkle, Epaminides, and the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. Mr. Lathom was puzzled. He was almost convinced that it was from the Fourth-Form dormitory that the sound of extraordinary uproar had proceeded.

"Blake!"

"Yaw-aw-aw-aw!" yawned Blake.

He sat up in bed, blinking in the light.

"Oh, dear! Is—is that a burglar?" gasped Blake.

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"Do not be alarmed, my boy!"

"Help!"

"Blake! It is your Form master?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "I regret very much if I have alarmed you. Calm yourself!"

Blake rubbed his eyes.

"Oh, it's you, sir? What's the matter, sir? Is the house on fire? Oh, dear! Fire! Fire!"

"Calm yourself, you foolish boy—there is no fire!"

"Oh," gasped Blake, "what's the matter, then, sir?"

Blake, as he sat up in bed, looking past Mr. Lathom, had a view of three silent forms stealing on tiptoe from behind the door, and vanishing into the corridor.

Mr. Lathom, naturally, did not see them. He had no eyes in the back of his scholarly head.

"I thought I heard a loud noise—a noise of shouting and howling, from the dormitory," said Mr. Lathom.

"Did you, sir?" exclaimed Blake, in astonishment.

"It appears that I was mistaken. I will look in at the Shell dormitory," said Mr. Lathom. "Good-night, my boy!"

"Good-night, sir!"

Mr. Lathom departed, and the door closed on him. A chuckle ran from bed to bed.

"I hope those chaps will have turned in by the time Lathom gives them a call!" chortled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fortunately, the Terrible Three had lost no time. When Mr. Lathom looked in at the Shell dormitory, all was silent—the Shell were deep in slumber, especially Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther. And Mr. Lathom went back to his study, considerably puzzled to account for the extraordinary uproar he had heard, but which he had been unable to track to its source.

CHAPTER 6.

Awful!

THE following day there was one face in the School House that was deeply clouded with thought.

It was the fat face of Baggy Trimble, of the Fourth Form.

Baggy was not much given to thinking. His fat intellect worked slowly when it worked at all.

But he was putting in an extraordinary amount of thinking now.

It was borne in upon Baggy's fat mind that he was seriously up against it. Wherever he looked, on all sides, the prospect was gloomy.

He wriggled a little on his form that morning. The effects of the batting had not quite worn off. And another batting was to come along that day—and another the day after. Batting after batting would have a cumulative effect; it was doubtful whether Baggy would be able to sit down at all after a week of it. It was an awful prospect. That he deserved it and had asked for it, was no comfort to Baggy. Really, a fellow could not expect to escape punishment if he could not keep his fat hands from picking and stealing. Baggy seemed to have expected it, and, upon the whole, considering his manifold sins, he had so far got off very lightly. Now the day of reckoning had come all at once.

Baggy pondered over the dreadful state of affairs in the Form-room that day, instead of seeking to benefit from the instruction imparted by his Form-master. Latin prose was a very trivial matter in comparison.

But he could see no way out.

To escape the just punishment of his sins he had promised to "square" all round out of a tenner from Trimble Hall. He had been taken at his word—and now he was held to it. Probably the School House

fellows were as much fed-up with his fat swank as with his grub-raiding. He was going to have a lesson on both subjects.

He had undertaken to produce that tenner. He was only required to make good his undertaking.

But that was exactly what Baggy could not do.

His faint hope in Trimble senior had failed him. At the best of times Mr. Trimble would not have been likely to shell out ten pounds to his hopeful son. Baggy had made his request at the worst of times, as it happened, Mr. Trimble having just lost precisely that sum. It was, as Baggy dismally reflected, just his luck.

After the second post was in that day—without a letter for Baggy—the fat junior rolled away to Study No. 9, in the Fourth. He had little hope of obtaining help there; but there were, at any rate, banknotes there. He knew that Cardew was well supplied, as usual. Where there were banknotes there was at least hope.

Levison, Olive, and Cardew were at tea in Study No. 9 when the fat junior blinked in at the door.

Cardew waved him away.

"Ask for Study No. 6," he said.

"Eh?"

"It's Blake's job," said Cardew. "Don't bother us about it."

"Wha-at do you mean?"

"Haven't you come here for your battin'?"

"No!" roared Trimble.

"Oh, my mistake!" said Cardew gracefully. "What do you want, then? You're not standin' in that doorway just to improve the view, I suppose? If so, you're in error. You don't improve it."

Baggy rolled into the study.

"I want to speak to you, Cardew."

"Queer how Trimble always knows when a fellow has had a remittance," said Cardew musingly. "How do you do these things, Trimble?"

"I want to speak to you in private," said Baggy, with a blink at Levison and Olive.

"You can want, dear man."

"Well, I'm speaking in confidence, anyhow," said Baggy. "Look here, Cardew, lend me a tenner."

"So sorry I haven't one," said Cardew regretfully.

"Two fivers would do."

"Oh, gad! Jevver meet such an accommodatin' chap as Trimble, you men?" asked Cardew.

Levison and Olive chuckled.

"You've got two fivers?" said Baggy.

"Guilty, my lord."

"Well, then, lend them to me for a few hours."

"Only for a few hours?" asked Cardew. "Are they working double shifts to mend that telephone at Trimble Hall?"

"Only for a few hours," said Trimble, without answering that question. "I'll let you have them back—the same fivers, see?"

"I don't quite see—and I'm jolly certain I shouldn't see the fivers," said Cardew. "Forget it."

"I just want the ten for an hour or two," urged Trimble. "You know those beasts are going to bat me—"

"Us beasts, too," said Cardew. "We're all in the game. I'm quite lookin' forward to it."

"Do listen to a chap," said Trimble. "Those rotters are going to bat me if I don't show up ten pounds. They won't really make me stand a spread with it; they ain't mean really, you know. I can get out of that. But I've got to show up a tenner. Well, you lend me a tenner and keep it dark—and after I've shown it about I'll hand it back."

"Well, my only hat!" ejaculated Cardew. "You'll show around my tenner as a tenner from Trimble Hall—what?"

"That's it. That will let me out, see?" said Trimble eagerly. "You fellows keep it dark; I—I rely on your honour to do that, you know. The ten will be safe as houses—only a loan for a few hours till I've shown those beasts that I really do have tenners."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cardew.

Levison and Olive roared. In his extremity Baggy Trimble was evidently being driven to think of desperate expedients. He could not have had a very

ANSWERS

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strong hope of inducing Cardew to accede to his request.

"You'll do it, old chap?" asked Baggy. "And I'll tell you what—you oblige me in this and I'll ask you home for next hols. to Trimble Hall."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Here he is!" came Blake's voice from the passage. "I've been looking for you, Trimble."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Study No. 6 came in. Blake had a fives bat under his arm.

"Ready?" he asked.

"No!" yelled Trimble.

"Weally, Twimble, we cannot waste a lot of time on you, as we have not yet had our tea," said Arthur Augustus.

"Keep off!" roared Trimble.

"You fellows mind if we bat him here?" asked Blake. "We've got to bat him somewhere."

"Go ahead, and don't mind us," said Cardew politely. "In fact, it will be rather amusin'. Here's a chair."

"Bend over, Baggy!"

"Sha'n't!" yelled Trimble, dodging round the study table. "Look here, you rotters— Leggo, Levison; leggo, Clive, you pair of outsiders! Leggo my ear, Herries! Yaroooooh!"

Trimble was bent over the chair. Blake proceeded to do business with the fives bat.

Six loud whacks rang through Study No. 9, to an accompaniment of six fiendish yells from Baggy Trimble.

"Second lot!" said Blake, tucking the bat under his arm again. "Third lot to-morrow. Come to Study No. 6 to-morrow at half-past five, Trimble."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Blake & Co. departed, justice being done. Baggy Trimble roared with anguish.

"Would you mind trottin' along to your own study to kick up that row, Trimble?" asked Cardew courteously. "If you don't mind my mentionin' it, your voice isn't precisely musical."

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Can I help you, dear man? If you require first-aid to get into the passage, my boot is at your service."

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Here you are, old bean!"

Cardew rendered first-aid, and Baggy Trimble jumped into the passage. He did not wait for any more assistance; he departed.

At prep. in Study No. 2 that evening, Baggy Trimble wriggled most uncomfortably on his chair and groaned considerably. Wildrake and Mellish did not sympathise; they chuckled. Baggy had never realised before that he belonged to a stony-hearted, unsympathetic House. Nobody compassionated Baggy except Trimble.

And on the morrow there was another batting to come, and on the morrow after that, another! And another and another! Battings without limit, unless Baggy could make good his swank and show up a tenner. And within the precincts of St. Jim's it was impossible to beg, borrow, or steal a ten-pound note. Baggy was at the very bottom of the abyss of impecuniosity, and if tenpence would have saved him instead of a tenner, he could not have come by the tenpence.

No wonder Baggy's fat wits worked at double pressure with a problem like this to solve—a problem worse than anything he had ever come across in Euclid. But when he went to bed that night he was still at a loss, and he rose on the morrow morning with the direst anticipations. If that utter beast, Cardew, would have lent him a tenner to show about, it would have saved him, for he was quite aware that Tom Merry & Co. would not have held him to his engagement to spend it. In fact, they would have disdained to attend a spread stood by Baggy Trimble, even as a compensation for his pilferings. If only he could have borrowed a tenner for a few hours!

But tenners were rare in the Lower School at St. Jim's, and any fellow possessed of one certainly never would

have trusted it into Baggy's fat hands for a few minutes, let alone a few hours.

Baggy ate only enough for four at breakfast. This dreadful worry on his mind was beginning to affect his appetite.

CHAPTER 7.

Something like a Wheeze!

IT was a half-holiday that afternoon, and football was the order of the day. Baggy Trimble, though of undiminished importance in his own eyes, vanished entirely from the memory of Tom Merry & Co. No doubt they would remember, after the football match, that such a person as Trimble of the Fourth existed. And when they remembered his existence they would remember that another batting was due. But when Tom Merry & Co. went down to Little Side to meet Piggins & Co. of the New House at Soccer, their minds were perfect blanks so far as Trimble was concerned.

Had they observed Baggy, however, they might have observed that the cloud of worried thought had quitted his fat brow.

Trimble no longer looked as if he found life a weary burden.

As only the arrival of the tenner from Trimble Hall could save him from his next batting, and the next, and the next, and the next, it might have been supposed that the tenner was coming. But nobody who knew Trimble would have supposed that he was a likely recipient of tenners. Fellows who knew him were more likely to think that he had devised some dodge for escaping the chopper he had brought down upon himself.

And they would have been right. Baggy Trimble's fat brain had worked at unaccustomed pressure, and it had not worked in vain.

While the rest of the Lower School gathered on the football ground, Baggy retired to his study to carry out the little scheme that had been hatched in his hard-driven brain. He had Study No. 2 to himself. Wildrake had gone down to see the House match, and Mellish had joined a little cigarette party in Racke's study in the Shell. Baggy locked the door to make sure of no interruptions, and sat down to write a letter. And this was the letter when Baggy had finished it:

"Dear Father,—You mensioned in your letter the uther day that sumboddey had passed a bogus tenner on you. I am orifully sorry you have had such a badd loss, but will you pleeze send me the badd tenner? Of korse, I shall not use it. I shall be very careful to keep it safe. I want to let the fellows see it, bekorse they always think that I never have any tipps from home. They will not know that it is a badd one, of korse. I shall just let them see it, to show the rotters that my people are ritch, and then I will poast it back to you. You have always told me to keep up appearances, and I doo my best, and this is a good opportunity to show that I have Bank Notts.

"Your affecshunate Sun,

"BAGLEY.

"P.S.—Pleeze enklose a stamp to send the badd tenner back."

Baggy Trimble read over this letter with considerable satisfaction.

It was the way out.

Once he had a tenner to show, all was well. Certainly, it was not likely to occur to Tom Merry & Co. that it was a counterfeit tenner.

Indeed, in ordinary circumstances it would have been harder for a St. Jim's junior to come by a counterfeit tenner than to come by a genuine one. Probably no fellow at the school had ever seen a spurious banknote. Such articles, naturally, did not come their way.

It was owing to the fact that a spurious banknote had been passed on Mr. Trimble that it was possible for Baggy to work this little scheme.

Of course, he had no idea of passing the counterfeit note. Even Baggy, unscrupulous young rascal as he was, would have jibbed at that.

But he did not need to pass his tenner. He only

needed to show it. And any kind of a tenner was good enough for that purpose.

That the bad tenner was still in existence, in Mr. Trimble's possession, he had no doubt. It was worthless from the point of view of legal tender, but it had its value from the point of view of swank. In such matters as swank and snobbery Baggy was rather a chip of the old block, so to speak. He had seen Mr. Trimble furnish his pocket-book with three or four currency notes wrapped round a folded letter, giving an impression of a wad of notes. He had no doubt that Trimble senior, having been done out of ten pounds by the counterfeit note, was keeping the article in his pocket-book to allow it to be seen when he opened the pocket-book. More likely still, it was kept wrapped round a folded letter to look like a wad of tenners. That was all the value it had, to keep up appearances—appearances that in this case were very deceptive.

There was no reason why Mr. Trimble should not loan that valueless tenner to his son for a day or two for the noble purpose of keeping up appearances at his end.

Baggy was highly satisfied. He folded his letter and sealed it, searched Wildrake's desk till he found a stamp, and then sallied out to the postbox.

The letter dropped in the box, and Baggy Trimble rolled down to Little Side to give the footballers a look-in.

The House match was going strong. The first half was over, goal to goal. Now School House and New House were fighting hard for the winning goal.

Baggy was not keen on Soccer, but he deigned to watch the exciting finish of the match. He joined in the roar of cheering from his House when Tom Merry put the ball into the New House goal almost on the stroke of time.

He joined the footballers when they came off, and headed for the changing-room. So far from desiring to dodge out of sight, Baggy was quite prepared to face the Terrible Three and Study No. 6 now. But they did not heed the unimportant Baggy. They were discussing the match as they marched into the changing-room, and they continued to discuss it while they changed. When they came out after changing, however, they observed the fat junior, and his existence was recalled to their minds.

"Bai Jove! Heah's Twimble comin' to wemind us of his battin'," said Arthur Augustus D'Arey. "I had quite forgotten."

"I haven't the bat with me, Trimble," said Blake. "Come up to the study if you're in a hurry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I want to tell you fellows—" began Trimble.

"Needn't tell us any whoppers, old fat bean," said Monty Lowther. "Or have you thought of a specially good one? If so, we'll hear it."

"I'm going to telephone—"

"We've heard that one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"To Trimble Hall!" shouted Baggy.

"My dear man, you're repeating yourself," said Tom Merry, laughing. "We've had that."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You fellows have doubted my word," hooted Baggy. "Well, the telephone is mended now at Trimble Hall, and I'm going to phone. As you've doubted my word, I want you to be present."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"I can use Lathom's phone," said Baggy. "He's gone over to the vicarage for his silly chess game. He's never back till call-over. So when you fellows are ready I'll phone to my pater at Trimble Hall."

The juniors stared at Baggy.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "But how can you telephone to Twimble Hall, Twimble, when there is no such place on the map?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can see me do it!" roared Baggy.

"Wats!"

"You can listen to all I say on the phone."

"Bow-wow!"

Tom Merry & Co. did not heed the voice of the charmer. They went away to their studies to tea.

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Baggy tea'd in his own study, No. 2, with Mellish and Wildrake. After tea, as he was preparing to leave the study, Wildrake called to him.

"Hold on, Trimble! I guess the fellows are coming here to bat you."

"You silly owl!" hooted Trimble.

"May as well get it over!" grinned Mellish. "What's the good of dodging it until dorm?"

"I'm going to telephone—"

"Can it!"

"To my pater—"

"Give us a rest!"

"For a tenner—"

"What on earth are you keeping up that rot for?"

"Yah!" retorted Baggy.

And he rolled out of the study to look for Tom Merry & Co. The batting was due after tea, and Trimble might have been expected to dodge out of sight. But he didn't. He was going to telephone to his pater for a tenner, and Tom Merry & Co. were going to see and hear him do it. That, Baggy considered, ought to put an end for good to all petty cavilling and detraction on the subject of Trimble Hall.

CHAPTER 8.

Telephoning for the Tenner!

"YOU fellows ready?"

Baggy Trimble came on Tom Merry & Co. chatting in the Fourth Form passage. Once more his unimportant existence had been forgotten, till the sight of his fat face recalled it to the chums of the School House.

"Oh, yes!" said Blake. "Wait a minute till I get a bat."

"I don't mean that, you ass!"

"I do!" said Blake.

"I'm going to telephone—"

"Weally, Twimble—"

"I want all you fellows to be present," said Trimble, blinking at the seven juniors. "You've doubted my word. You needn't deny it."

"We're not denying it, old bean!" chuckled Lowther. "It's the giddy truth! We have doubted—we are doubting—we shall doubt—we are about to doubt—we shall be about to doubt—you can run it through every conjugation you can think of!"

"Well, come on, then!" said Baggy, with a sniff. "I'm going to use Lathom's phone."

Tom Merry stared at him.

"What on earth are you driving at, Trimble?" he demanded. "What's the good of rolling out these whoppers?"

"You don't believe me?" demanded Baggy.

"Believe you! My bat!"

"Weally, Twimble, I would wathah believe Ananias or George Washington, you know!"

"I'm going to prove it. I suppose you'll believe me when you hear me phone, and when the tenner comes to-morrow!"

"When?" said Manners.

"As that Indian chap at Greyfriars would put it, the whenfulness is terrific!" chuckled Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm waiting for you!" said Trimble, with dignity. "Follow me to Lathom's study. It's up to you."

And Baggy Trimble turned and rolled away, with his fat little nose in the air. The juniors stared after him.

"Blessed if I catch on," said Tom Merry in perplexity. "What new dodge is this?"

"He's fixed up a telephone call with somebody," said Lowther, after some thought. "Spoof, of course!"

"Let's go," said Blake. "After he's got through with his spoofing, we've got to get on with the batting."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Tom Merry & Co. followed Trimble.

They followed him into Mr. Lathom's study. The master of the Fourth was out and not expected back till call-over. So his telephone was at the service of anyone who had nerve enough to steal into his study and use it. Blake closed the door when the party was in the study, and Baggy Trimble went to the telephone.



Blake rubbed his eyes and blinked at Mr. Lathom. "What's the matter, sir?" he cried. "A fire—!" "Calm yourself, you foolish boy," said the Form-master, "there is no fire!" "Oh!" gasped Blake. "What's the matter, then, sir?" The Fourth-Former, sitting up in bed, had a view of three silent forms stealing on tiptoe from behind the door, and vanishing into the corridor. (See Chapter 5.)

They watched him with smiling faces, not in the least doubting that this was some new dodge to escape the batting—and quite determined that it should not be a success. Monty Lowther picked up the telephone directory.

"Shall I look out the number of Trimble Hall, or do you remember it, Baggy?" he asked blandly.

"We don't have our number in the directory," said Baggy loftily. "Really nobby people don't."

"Oh, my hat!"

Baggy picked up the receiver.

"Lexham one-two-one," he said into the transmitter.

Baggy's home was at Lexham, about twenty miles from St. Jim's, the juniors knew that. But, as a matter of fact, they knew that telephone number, too.

"That's Lexham Court he's calling," said Blake. "It's Lord Lexham's house."

"Yaas, wathah. That is vewy well known, Twimble."

"My pater is staying for a few days with Lord Lexham," explained Trimble. "We're neighbours, you know."

"Oh!"

"They're answering," said Trimble. "Shut up a minute."

Tom Merry & Co. watched him in wondering silence. "Hallo! Lexham Court?" asked Baggy.

"Yes, sir," came back a smooth voice over the wires, probably that of the butler at Lexham Court.

"Very good. I wish to speak to Mr. Trimble, who is staying with Lord Lexham."

"My hat!" murmured Blake.

The juniors heard what Baggy said. But they could not hear what Lord Lexham's butler said in reply, as there was only one receiver, and that was glued to Baggy's fat ear. The Lexham butler's reply was;

"There is some mistake, sir. No gentleman of that name is staying here."

Baggy did not need Lord Lexham's butler to tell him that!

He went on calmly:

"Very good! Ask him to come to the telephone. Tell him it's his son Bagley phoning, and it's rather important."

"Bai Jove!"

Baggy Trimble grinned triumphantly at the juniors. He had succeeded in making an impression.

He had also succeeded in astonishing the butler at Lexham Court.

"No gentleman of the name of Trimble is staying here, sir," came the smooth, polite voice. "No doubt you have the wrong number."

"Very well, ask him to be quick," said Baggy, just as if the Lexham butler had answered that he would call Mr. Trimble.

And he waited.

"It's the butler," he explained to the wondering juniors. "He's gone to fetch my pater to the phone."

"Well, this beats it!" said Manners.

"Yaas, wathah! Is it possible that Twimble has been tellin' us the twuth?" asked Arthur Augustus.

Monty Lowther shook his head.

"The age of miracles is past," he said gravely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quiet, you fellows!" said Trimble. "Here's my pater on the phone. I can't hear what he says while you're cackling."

The juniors were silent again, quite mystified. As a matter of fact, the Lexham butler was still speaking.

(Continued on page 16.)

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BY YOUR EDITOR.

ALTHOUGH this issue of the GEM is numbered 1,000, this figure is actually an under-estimate of the actual number of weeks of continuous publication of the good old paper! I wonder how many of my chums are old enough readers to be aware of this interesting little fact? The explanation is that the GEM was first issued in 1907 as a halfpenny paper and ran for 48 weeks as such. So great was its success that it was decided to bring out a companion paper, to be known as the "Magnet," and simultaneously to enlarge the GEM to penny size. Thus the very week that No. 1 of the "Magnet" saw the light, the GEM came out in its new and enlarged form, the issue being designated No. 1 (New Series). The present issue is thus, really, No. 1,000 (New Series); had the old numbering been carried on consecutively, it would have been No. 1,048. So that the good old paper is really an older-established favourite than most people have hitherto given it credit for! In the course of time the term "New Series" has been, of course, dropped; a "series" that has been running nearly 20 years can hardly remain "new" indefinitely!

A RECORD TO BE PROUD OF!

The GEM record, then, is of 1,048 weeks' continuous publication, with the exception of one week last year, when it was unable to appear—in common with every other weekly paper in the country—owing to the General Strike. This is, indeed, a record to be proud of. From the very first number, the paper captured the imagination of a vast public of British boys, and girls, too. It was a new departure in boys' papers—something different, something brighter and more attractive than anything that had ever been published before. It was, in fact, an experiment—an experiment which, thanks to the versatile genius of Mr. Martin Clifford, proved triumphantly successful. For Mr. Clifford has never failed the GEM. Surely there was never before an author like him! For all these hundreds of weeks, his cheery stories of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's—the best known schoolboy characters in the world—have held captive the imagination of the youth of Britain. More than that, the famous chums of St. Jim's have retained the affection of many thousands of readers who are now well on into middle age; but still they read the GEM regularly! My post bag every day provides abundant evidence of this.

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A CONSISTENT POLICY!

The editorial policy of the GEM has hardly varied from the first number until now. Various improvements have been introduced, of which perhaps the most notable is the present attractive coloured cover. But the main policy is the same; it was right to start with, and right it remains. When No. 1 (New Series) came out, your present Editor was a junior member of the staff, and except during the War years, has continued his connection with the old paper ever since. Thus a consistent editorial policy, coupled with stories of Mr. Martin Clifford's consistently high level of excellence, has resulted in a consistently high circulation—and a special place in the hearts of the youthful public of the Empire.

FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH!

The clamour of "more Tom Merry stories" has never ceased since the launching of the first issue of the GEM, and in the course of time a number of other publications, of which the GEM must be regarded as the real parent, have come into being, wherein Tom Merry & Co. are also prominently featured. There is, for instance, our vigorous companion paper, the "Popular"—now, with its gay coloured cover, more popular than ever—which publishes a complete Tom Merry story every week. Then the "Holiday Annual"—favourite of all Annuals—never fails to include a number of St. Jim's stories and interesting items in its comprehensive programme. The issues of the popular monthly "Schoolboys' Own Library," which feature the St. Jim's chums, always meet with an enormous demand.

It will be seen, therefore, that we have gone a long way since No. 1 (New Series) of the GEM. Tom Merry & Co. are known all over the world; they are familiarly spoken of wherever the English tongue is spoken at all. This achievement has been made possible by the unvarying loyalty of as devoted a body of readers as any paper ever possessed. With such support, there is no limit to the further progress of the GEM, and so far from resting upon our oars, we are going on from strength to strength! To make the good old GEM better, brighter, more popular than ever is the sole aim of your true friend of over a thousand weeks' standing.

Your Editor.

WHAT THE GOOD OLD GEM
IN 1928!



A reproduction in miniature of the
appeared Thursday, February 13th
back some, isn't it?



1000 OLD GEM LOOKED LIKE
IN 1908!



miniature of the GEM cover which
February 13th, 1908—that's going
back some, isn't it?

A THOUSAND weeks!
I rubbed my eyes when the Editor of the GEM told me that he was about to celebrate the 1,000th number of the good old paper.

Really, it seems to me only the other day that Tom Merry & Co. made their bow to the public. Certainly they seem to me, at least, as fresh as ever. Like Cleopatra, age cannot wither them nor custom stale their infinite variety!

Many great things—besides the GEM—have happened in that time. Wireless, and the War, and Oxford trousers, to mention only a few.

The War, happily, is over. Oxford trousers, of course, are under. And wireless, no doubt, will last as long as the GEM. I do not see why a less period should be assigned to it. Carefully disentangle the foregoing sentence, and you will find a pun in it, worthy of Monty Lowther at his best.

Shall I confess that the character of the humorous Monty is founded largely on my own? Punning is my one weakness. If I were going to be hanged, I feel sure that I should instruct my lawyer to apply for a stay of execution! There was quite a coolness once between me and a friend of mine named Isaacs, because when he went into the cavalry, I advised him not to charge too much!

At school sometimes our French master had the pleasure—or otherwise—of taking us out for walks. Once I quite perplexed the dapper little gentleman, as he strutted ahead, by remarking "Je suis heureux parceque je ne suis pas ce que je suis." It was quite a good pun in his own beautiful language, but he did not seem to catch on, which was no doubt fortunate for me. While scouting one day, my patrol leader told me to get on ahead. I asked "Whose head?" It is painful to relate that instead of laughing heartily, as I naturally expected, he kicked me. It was still more painful at the time.

But my favourite character in the GEM is the one and only Gussy.

I have often been asked whether Gussy was drawn from life. Certainly he was. He came into existence as the result of a discussion with an editorial gentleman more than a thousand weeks ago. But it was later that I found the real model for him. At that time there was an extremely elegant young gentleman, then a

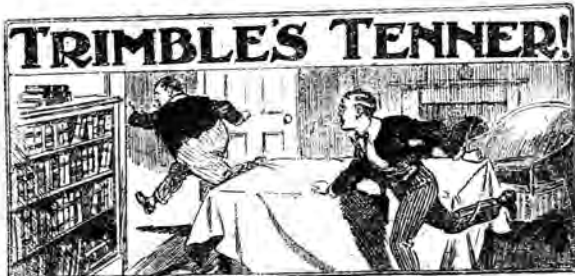
sub-editor on the GEM, whose manners were moulded on those of Lord Chesterfield, and who wore such beautiful clothes that I—who am rather careless in such matters—regarded them with awed admiration. Quite unconsciously he served as a model, and every time I had the pleasure of seeing him I went away with fresh characteristics stored up in my mind for Arthur Augustus. But there was good stuff inside the beautiful clothes, for when the War came, the elegant youth was in it from the first month to the last day. And he never knew how useful a purpose he had served, and never will know, unless he should chance to read this article—and guess.

Tom Merry, too, is taken from life, though from no special individual. Just a hearty, decent British lad who plays the game, such as I count by tens of thousands among the readers of the GEM.

Another character I rather like is Ernest Levison. Properly speaking, he doesn't belong to me. Old readers of the "Magnet" will remember him at Greyfriars. His experiences there were not altogether happy. He fell into bad company and began to tread the slippery downward path. In spite of Harry Wharton's efforts to save him, Nemesis overtook him at last. But there was always a good deal of what was good in Ernest Levison, and I felt that perhaps I could do better with him than my friend Frank Richards had done! At any rate I felt greatly inclined to try, if I could get the required permission, for I was as familiar as his original creator could be with every trait in Ernest's complex make-up. I read the "Magnet" as regularly as Frank Richards, I believe, reads the GEM, and I was greatly taken with this character—and borrowed him. I became so attached to him that I am still borrowing him. Richards sometimes asks me rather sarcastically to let him have Levison back when I am finished with him. Certainly I shall, but I am not finished yet. After another thousand weeks, perhaps!

Well, here we are at No. 1,000, and it is a real pleasure to me to speak these few words to the many friends whom I shall never see, but who are none the less, I hope, my friends. I have lots more to say, but space forbids, so I shall ask the Editor's permission to say it in No. 2,000. You fellows make a note of the date

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(Continued from page 13.)

courteously explaining that the caller must have got the wrong number, as there was no such person as Mr. Trimble at Lexham Court, and the name was not known there! Baggy let him run on. He had no objection to the Lexham butler saying anything he liked, so long as Tom Merry & Co. could not hear it—and they couldn't.

"That you, dad?" said Trimble cheerily, breaking into the butler's polite explanation. "Good! Baggy speaking from St. Jim's."

"I repeat that you must have the wrong number," said the Lexham butler, with a touch of impatience.

"I'm rather short of cash, father," said Baggy.

The butler, in the telephone cabinet at Lexham Court, fairly jumped. It dawned upon his mind that he must have been rung up by some lunatic; otherwise it was impossible to account for a perfect stranger addressing him as "father."

"Can you manage a tenner to-day, dad?"

There was no reply at all now. The Lexham Court butler had cut off. But Baggy did not mind.

He went on speaking into the transmitter. The butler's replies really were not necessary.

"I say, that's awfully jolly of you, dad. No, not twenty. Ten will see me through. If you post it to-day I shall get it in the morning. Don't trouble about registering it; just pop it into the post to save time. Right-ho! Thanks, dad. You're a real brick!"

And with that Baggy Trimble hung up the receiver and turned round to the amazed juniors.

"It's all right," he said. "The pater's catching this

afternoon's post, so the tenner will be along to-morrow morning."

"Well, my hat!" said Herries.

"Satisfied now?" sneered Trimble.

"Not quite," said Blake. "It's a trick of some kind, and the batting is due now. Will you come up to my study?"

"Look here—" roared Trimble.

"If you prefer it here I'll fetch the bat," said Blake considerably. "Anything to oblige."

"Why, you—you—you—" stuttered Trimble.

"Hold on," said Tom Merry, laughing. "There's a bare possibility that Trimble is telling the truth."

"Bosh!"

"Miracles have happened before," said Tom. "Let's give him a chance. Leave it till to-morrow, and if the tenner doesn't materialise we'll give him sixteen instead of six."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"That suit you, Baggy?" asked the captain of the Shell.

"Certainly!" said Baggy Trimble rather unexpectedly.

"But there's one other thing. You've doubted my word. When you see the tenner I shall expect you to apologise all round."

"When!" snorted Herries.

"We'll think about that when we see the tenner," said Tom. And the juniors left the study, Baggy rolling out after them, evidently in a fat state of satisfaction, and not at all apprehensive of sixteen on the morrow, which was a perplexing puzzle to Tom Merry & Co.

CHAPTER 9.

The Tenner!

TOM MERRY & CO. remembered Baggy Trimble's fat existence on the morrow. They really were quite curious now. Quite a number of other fellows were interested also. The batting of Baggy was now a standing joke in the School House. The fat and fatuous Trimble, quite unintentionally, had added considerably to the gaiety of existence at St. Jim's. The daily batting was likely to go on till the fellows tired of the jest. Certainly, it was not likely to be stopped by the arrival of a tenner from Trimble Hall. But Trimble's mysterious proceedings on Mr. Latham's telephone made the fellows wonder, all the same.

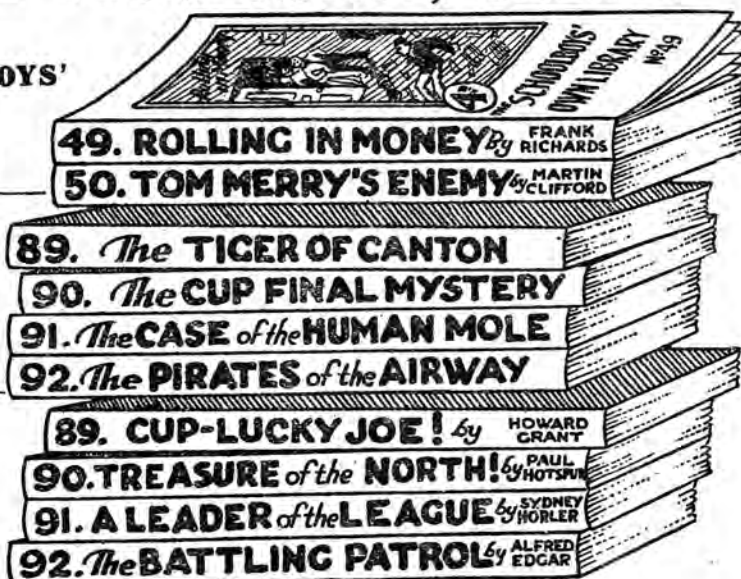
Lowther pointed out that any fellow could say anything he liked into a telephone, and only Baggy's half of the talk had been heard. But that left unaccounted for the circumstance of Baggy's complete confidence. He obviously expected the arrival of the tenner. And if the tenner came, what then? It would be a proof that there were tenners in the Trimble family, just as Baggy had declared. His swank would be justified, and it was as much for his absurd swank as for anything else that he was getting the battings. The fellows whose tuck he had pilfered were fed-up with Trimble Hall and the Trimble

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wealth, as well as on Baggy's grub-raiding. It would be an odd enough outcome to the ragging of Trimble if it proved that the Trimble wealth really existed and that Trimble Hall actually had a local habitation and a name.

So for once Baggy was not forgotten, and a great many fellows were curious about him and about the letter he confidently declared would arrive for him that morning.

In morning break, when the letters were in the rack, Baggy had no need to round up Tom Merry & Co. They gathered round him, with a dozen other fellows. Even two or three New House men came over, the history of the batting of Baggy now having spread as far as the other House of St. Jim's, and caused much merriment there.

"Letter for Trimble!" announced Blake.

"Hand it over," said Baggy carelessly.

Blake tossed the letter to him.

It was addressed to Trimble in his father's handwriting. The postmark was Lexham. Evidently it was a letter from home, whether it contained the famous tenner or not.

Baggy shoved his fat thumb into the envelope, that being his usual elegant way of opening a letter.

His podgy heart beat a little faster.

He was sure, absolutely sure, that Trimble senior would accede to his very reasonable request to be allowed the use of the useless tenner for a few days for the important purpose of keeping up appearances. Trimble senior was as keen as Trimble junior on keeping up appearances and giving an impression that he was better off in the world's goods than really was the case.

Still, it was barely possible that he had refused. It was barely possible that he had thrown the counterfeit banknote into the fire before Baggy's letter had reached him. It was not likely, but it was possible. So Baggy felt a tremor as he drew the letter out of the envelope.

But his doubt was only for a moment. As he unfolded the letter there was a rustling of crisp paper.

It was the banknote!

Baggy drew it from the letter and placed the latter hurriedly in his pocket. That was not to be seen. It was very important for that not to be seen. Mr. Trimble's epistle was quite certain to contain something that would give the game away if it were seen. But nobody, of course, was likely to think of asking to read a private letter. Baggy moved it hurriedly out of sight into his pocket, unread, reserving the pleasure of perusing it till later, when he should be alone and no eye could possibly catch a glimpse of it.

The tenner was there!

Tom Merry & Co. gazed at it. They could scarcely believe their eyes. Baggy handed it carelessly to the captain of the Shell.

"Look!" he said.

He had not the slightest fear that Tom would discern that it was a counterfeit. A forged banknote that was good enough to deceive Mr. Trimble was more than good enough to deceive an unsuspicious schoolboy.

Tom stared at the tenner. A dozen fellows stared at it. There it was—a genuine tenner to all appearances. "Bank of England. I promise to pay Bearer on Demand the sum of Ten Pounds. 1925, July 25, London, 25 July, 1925. For the Governor and Company of the Bank of England," with the number and the signature of the chief cashier. Tenners were rare enough in the Lower School at St. Jim's, but the fellows knew one when they saw one.

Tom Merry handed the tenner back to Trimble.

Baggy shoved it carelessly into his trousers pocket, as if tenners were nothing to him. True, that tenner wasn't very much!

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

"I guess Trimble scores this time," chuckled Wildrake. "He gets off the batting."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You fellows have doubted my word!" said Trimble, with dignity.

"Hem!"

"I suppose you can believe your own eyes?"

"Hem!"

"I won't say what I think of your low suspicions,"

pursued Baggy victoriously. "Low, that's the word. But I won't rub it in."

"Oh, can it!" growled Blake. "You've talked tenners for whole terms, but you've never shown one before."

"Naturally," said Trimble calmly. "I'm not the fellow to swank about money, I hope."

"What?"

"Racke of the Shell splashes his banknotes about," sneered Baggy. "We hear a lot about D'Arcy's fivers, too."

"Bai Jove!"

"But I'm not that sort, I hope. I shouldn't have shown you fellows this tenner, only you've doubted my word. Naturally, I should have said nothing about it. No purse-pride about me!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You see, a tenner isn't so much to me as it is to you fellows," explained Trimble.

"Oh dear!"

"I dare say I shall run through this in a few days. In fact, I've been thinking of contributing it to the box of the Cottage Hospital at Rylcombe."

"Great Scott!"

"Or I might give it to a beggar, in my thoughtless, generous way, you know."

"Phew!"

"And I'm waiting for the apology now," said Trimble loftily. "I told you I'd telephone to my pater for a tenner. You doubted my word. I've done it. I've got the tenner in my trousers pocket. I won't tell you what I think of your nasty, low, sneering suspicions. But I expect an apology."

Tom Merry & Co. eyed one another dubiously.

Baggy Trimble had made his words good. At least, it appeared that he had. It was quite an awkward moment for the fellows who had batted Baggy.

"Oh, rats!" growled Blake at last. "You seem to have got a tenner; but there's a catch in it somewhere."

"Look here, you know—"

"And tenner or no tenner, you're a pilfering little beast, and the fattest fiber in the wide world, and a swanking ass! So that's that!"

"Hear, hear!" said Manners.

"Gentlemen," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in his most stately manner, "I twust you will do the wight thing. We have w'onged Twimble."

"Oh, chuck it, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to chuck it, Blake! I have chawactewised Twimble as a swankin' fibbah, and he has kept his word and p'woved us in the w'ong. We owe him an apology."

"Rats!"

"I twust, Blake, that you will follow my example and tendah an apology to Twimble."

"Fathead!"

"Blessed if I catch on!" said Tom Merry. "But it's Trimble's own fault if he's considered a liar and a swanking ass—for he's both!"

"Wats! Twimble, I apologise!" said Arthur Augustus nobly. "I beg your pardon, Twimble!"

"Granted!" said Trimble airily.

Gussy's apology was the only one that Baggy received. But Tom Merry & Co., as they walked away, were feeling quite uncomfortable. And the batting of Baggy, of course, was a thing of the past now. Baggy had kept his engagement; and though the juniors could not help thinking that there was, as Blake said, a catch in it somewhere, the fact remained. There were no more battings for Baggy; instead of battings, there was the honour and glory of being a fellow who could walk about with a ten-pound note in his trousers pocket. Baggy was the fellow to make the most of that; and if he swanked before, he swanked doubly and trebly now, and indeed seemed likely to understudy that classic gentleman who struck the stars with his sublime head.

CHAPTER 10. Shell Out!

"SEVEN-AND-SIX!"

"Eh?"

"Seven-and-six!" repeated Wildrake.

"What the thump do you mean, with your seven-and-six?" demanded Baggy Trimble crossly.

Wildrake of the Fourth had come on Baggy after lessons. Baggy was not alone. Generally, the company of Baggy Trimble was not much enjoyed by anyone but Baggy himself. His conversation was not generally considered entertaining. It was always on one topic—Trimble, Trimble Hall, and the Trimble wealth. But things were a little changed now. Mellish, his study-mate, was with Baggy, and was very friendly and civil. Racke and Scrope of the Shell were with him, and extremely cordial. Baggy was no longer under the necessity of butting in where he was not wanted, or of hanging on. Fellows sought him out. Certainly they were not very nice fellows.

"Oh, chuck it, Wildrake!" said Mellish. "You can't stick Baggy for a loan just because he's in funds. Draw it mild!"

"I expected this!" said Baggy, with a sneer. "You can walk your chalks, Wildrake. You're no pal of mine!"

"Correct!" grinned Wildrake.

"Only yesterday you refused to lend me half-a-crown," said Baggy severely. "You needn't deny it. You did!"

"I guess I'm not denying it. I'll refuse again to-day, if you like!" said Wildrake, laughing.

"Then I think it's like your thumping cheek to want to borrow seven-and-six from me!" said Trimble scornfully.

"But I don't, old fat bean. I want you to settle the seven-and-six you've borrowed from me this term. You can afford to now you're rolling in banknotes."

"Oh!" stuttered Baggy.

Wildrake held out his hand.

"Shell out!" he said. "I shouldn't have asked you to square, as you never do square; I guessed you never had any money. But as you're rolling in it, there's no reason why you shouldn't settle a debt like any other fellow. Seven-and-six."

"I—I'd forgotten all about that trifling loan," stammered Baggy.

It was borne in on his fat mind, that swank was a commodity that could not be had without paying for it. Wildrake was the first; but it was probable that there would be a good many demands like this. Baggy owed money up and down St. Jim's to such an extent that he had long ago lost count of the various items. His borrowings had only been limited by the unwillingness of lenders to lend.

Nobody ever expected Trimble to settle a debt, but good-natured fellows, when in funds, would often lend him a shilling, or a half-crown, without any expectation of seeing it again. But now that the Trimble tenner had materialised, it was only natural that Baggy's creditors would begin to think about repayment. The Trimble tenner was a windfall for Baggy's creditors rather than for Baggy himself, on these lines. Certainly, in the Shell and the Fourth, in the School House and the New House, the total of Baggy's indebtedness, for that term alone, mounted up to a very considerable sum.

It was quite a dismaying idea to Baggy.

He could not settle up his debts out of that tenner, that was quite certain. That tenner was worth precisely the paper it was printed on—neither more nor less.

Baggy was undoubtedly an ass and a little of a rogue; but he was neither ass nor rogue enough to think of passing the tenner on anybody. It had one use only—swank.

The dismay in Baggy's fat face rather puzzled Wildrake. He had not the faintest suspicion of the real nature of that tenner. And he could not see why a fellow should not be willing to settle so small a sum as seven shillings and sixpence out of so large a remittance as ten pounds.

"I guess I've said I'm waiting," he remarked.

"You couldn't expect Trimble to remember such a trifle, Wildrake," said Mellish.

"Well, I've reminded him now."

"Oh, all right!" said Baggy recovering his confidence. "Here you are! Nine pounds twelve-and-six change, please!"

And he groped in his pocket for the tenner.

Had Wildrake possessed such a sum as nine pounds twelve shillings and sixpence, Baggy would have been

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in an awkward position. But he was well aware that Wildrake possessed no such sum.

Wildrake grinned.

"I guess I could manage the twelve-and-six," he remarked. "All serene, old barrel! Leave it till you've changed the tenner."

"I sha'n't forget," said Baggy loftily. "I owe some trifling sums to two or three other fellows, and I shall settle them all out of this tenner."

"That won't leave you much," grinned Wildrake.

"Who cares? I can get another by asking for it," said Trimble carelessly. "I'm not hard up like you, you know. My people—"

"I guess I've heard enough about your people," said Wildrake, laughing, and he walked away. Baggy breathed more freely.

"Tea-time," remarked Mellish. "What about a spread in the study, Baggy, old bean? It's up to you—what?"

"You see, I haven't changed the tenner yet."

"Mrs. Taggles will change it at the tuckshop."

Baggy shook his head.

"No fear! If it gets out that I get tenners, the House-master will chip in. Tain't really allowed, you know. You know that Railton wrote to Crooke's people and stopped them sending him so much money."

"That's so," agreed Racke of the Shell. "I remember. Crooke was in no end of a fix, and rowed with me because I wouldn't shell out. You don't want that to happen, Baggy?"

"No fear!" said Trimble.

"But you'll have to change it, old man," said Mellish anxiously. "What's the good of a tenner just to stick in your pocket?"

Baggy did not explain that that was the only possible use of that particular tenner.

"Oh, that's all right," he answered. "I shall go down to the post-office to-morrow and get some stamps. They'll have to change it for me."

"Good!" said Mellish, but not very enthusiastically. The prospect of a lavish spread in Study No. 2 faded from Percy Mellish's eyes like a beautiful dream.

"Tea in my study, Baggy," said Racke of the Shell, linking his arm in Trimble's. And he walked away with Baggy Trimble and Scrope, leaving Mellish frowning. In the Shell passage they encountered the Terrible Three. Monty Lowther held out his hand.

"Three bob, please!"

"Eh?"

"You owe us a bob each, dear man, and now's the time to settle."

"Certainly!" said Trimble. "I'm glad you've reminded me. You might mention to other fellows that I'd like to be reminded of any little amounts I may have forgotten."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Here you are," said Baggy. The rustling tenner came into view. "Three bob, did you say? That will be nine pounds seventeen shillings change."

"You footling ass! Do you think we've got even the seventeen shillings?" grunted Manners.

"If you haven't, you'll have to wait till I've changed the banknote, of course," said Trimble. "Dash it all, you pay them, Racke, and I'll settle when I've changed the tenner."

Aubrey Racke, afflicted with sudden deafness, went into his study. Baggy glanced at Scrope, who was afflicted with sudden blindness, and did not observe him. He followed Racke into Study No. 7. The Terrible Three chuckled.

"I'm tea-ing with Racke," said Baggy. "Bring the change along, and here's the tenner."

And he went into Racke's study.

CHAPTER 11.

Tea in Racke's Study!

TRIMBLE smiled.

Racke was smiling, too, and so was Scrope. But Trimble considered, with good reason, that he was the fellow who was entitled to smile.

Trimble had been a hanger-on of Aubrey Racke, greedy for the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Aubrey had sometimes taken him up and some-



There was a rustling of crisp paper and Trimble produced a "tenner." Tom Merry & Co. gazed at it. They could scarcely believe their eyes. Trimble handed it carelessly to the captain of the Shell. "Look!" he said. (See Chapter 9.)

times dropped him without ceremony, as the spirit moved him. Certainly, he had never thought of wasting any politeness on Trimble of the Fourth. Now matters were changed. Judging by Racke's manner, Trimble of the Fourth was a fellow whom he delighted to honour.

Trimble was fatuous and conceited, but he was at no loss to account for this change. He did not suppose that Racke had discovered in him, all of a sudden, some fascinating quality previously overlooked. It was the tenner that had done it. Racke was not one of Baggy's creditors. He was close enough with his ample cash. He was rich, and did not want to borrow money, like Mellish or Mulvaeny minor. But it was the tenner that had worked the oracle, all the same, and Baggy was at no loss to guess the thoughts in Aubrey Racke's unscrupulous mind. And he smiled. Nap and banker were customary in Racke's study when the coast was clear and all was safe. Baggy had been always anxious to join in those little games, and had been willing to sign IOU's to any amount. As Racke was not a collector of wastepaper, he had no use for Baggy's IOU's. But Baggy in funds was a different Baggy. Racke was not at all averse from initiating him into the mysteries of nap and banker, now that he had the cash. And Trimble, reflecting exactly how much cash he actually had, smiled.

Baggy might have fallen to Racke's wiles had the

tenner been a genuine one. But as the matter stood Baggy would not have parted with that tenner, or run the slightest risk of doing so, for love or money. The cold shades of a reformatory loomed before Baggy if he did anything of that kind. He did not consider that he received his due at St. Jim's, but he was not at all anxious to exchange St. Jim's for Borstal.

But he was more than willing to tea with Racke. Racke spent money freely on his spreads, and his spreads were always welcome to fellows who were not very particular what company they kept. Baggy was not at all particular about the company, but very particular indeed about the spread. So that was all right.

Racke and Scrope were very cordial to Baggy over tea. They helped him to good things, though really that was not necessary. Baggy was ready to help himself. Crooke of the Shell, Aubrey's study-mate, was silent and rather morose. He left the study immediately after he had finished tea, and as he went out he spoke to Baggy.

"If you've got any sense, Trimble, you'll get out of this. Get out while you've still got your tenner in your pocket."

"Why, you cheeky cad," roared Racke angrily, "what do you mean?"

"What I say," answered Gerald Crooke. "You've got that fat fool here to skin him, and it's a shame!"

Racke jumped up, crimson with rage.

"You rotter! Do you think the whole study's goin' to turn pi because you've turned pi?" he shouted.

"Pi-jaw from Crooke," grinned Scrope. "That's rich!"

Crooke shrugged his shoulders, went out of the study, and slammed the door. Crooke's late misadventures had made a difference to him, and he was no longer pally with Racke & Co. as of old.

Aubrey glanced rather anxiously at Baggy.

He knew that Trimble was a fool, and he did not allow for the slyness and cunning which is often the accompaniment of obtuseness. But even a duffer might have taken warning from so very plain a hint as that which Gerald Crooke had given.

But Baggy did not seem to have heeded. He smiled and nodded to Racke.

"Crooke's turned pi, has he?" he giggled.

"He came a mucker," growled Racke. "I believe he would have been a goner if Talbot hadn't fished him out of it somehow, though I don't know the rights of it. Don't take any notice of his rot."

"I don't," said Baggy. "Pass the jam."

"Here you are, old fellow."

Racke and Scrope were finished, but Baggy was not done yet. Baggy Trimble was very seldom finished at a spread so long as a crumb remained. There were plenty of good things on the table yet, and Trimble was going strong.

He finished the jam and started on a cake. It was a large cake, but it did not last Trimble long.

"You fellows aren't eating much," he remarked, with his mouth full.

"Finished," said Racke rather surlily. He was impatient for Trimble to have finished, too.

"All the more for me, what?" said Baggy, chuckling at his own humour. "Shove the biscuits this way. I say, these are jolly good biscuits!"

"You seem to like them," said Scrope sarcastically.

"I do," said Baggy. "If you fellows don't want any, I'll finish the lot."

And he did.

"And now—" said Racke, with growing impatience.

"Now I'll have those tarts, old chap."

The tarts, fortunately, were the last. Even Baggy had to stop when the table was bare. Racke cleared off the tea-things and produced a box of cigarettes.

"Smoke, old chap?" he asked.

"What-ho!"

Trimble smoked, when he could get cigarettes for nothing. He preferred tuck when it was a question of expending his own cash.

"What about a little game?" asked Scrope, with a wink at Racke.

It was business at last.

"Oh, I don't mind!" said Aubrey carelessly. "Trimble's a sportsman, and he'll join us."

"Certainly," said Baggy. "Got any nuts?"

"Nuts!" ejaculated Racke.

"Yes; we'll play for nuts."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Scrope.

"I don't see anything to cackle at!" said Baggy. "We couldn't play for money; it's against the rules of the House."

"Never mind the rules of the House," said Racke, taking a pack of cards from the table drawer. "Of course, we're not going to gamble. We'll play for shillin' points to make it interestin'."

"I'm agreeable," said Scrope.

"Same here, only I haven't got any change," said Trimble. "I'll play you, though. My IOU's good enough, isn't it?"

"Oh, quite!" said Racke politely. "But I'll change your tanner for you, old bean—I can do that."

Trimble breathed rather hard.

"The—the fact is—" he said.

"Cut for deal!" said Racke.

"The—the fact is—"

Baggy Trimble rose from his chair. Not for his fat life did he dare to let Racke change that spurious tanner. He moved towards the door.

"Where are you goin', Trimble?" asked Racke, still politely, but with a glint in his eyes.

"Prep!" said Baggy. "Mustn't be late for prep, you know."

"What about a little game first?"

Trimble shook his head.

"Sorry, and all that," he answered. "But I really couldn't do it. Rather shady, you know. Blackguardly, if you don't mind my saying so."

"What?" roared Racke.

"Bit too thick!" said Trimble. "Of course, I'm not pi—but a man has to draw a line somewhere. I draw it at gambling. Good-bye!"

"Why, you—you fat rotter!" shouted Racke. "Look here—"

"I don't think you ought to call me names, Racke, because I won't blag and break the rules of the House!" said Trimble. "The fact is, I'm rather shocked at you. You, too, Scrope!"

"You greasy little rotter!" growled Scrope.

"I decline to remain here and be talked to like that," said Trimble, his hand on the door. "If this is how guests are treated in this study, Racke, I shall think twice before accepting another invitation from you!"

Racke gritted his teeth.

"You fat little scoundrel, you're not such a mug as you make yourself out to be!" he said savagely. "You've stuck me for a spread—"

Trimble grinned.

"You're not sticking me for a tanner, at any rate!" he chuckled; and he opened the door and stepped out.

But he did not step out quite quickly enough. Aubrey Racke rushed after him and landed out with his boot.

"Yaroooh!"

Baggy Trimble fairly flew into the passage, and landed there with a terrific bump. He rolled on the floor and roared.

"Yow-ow-ow-woooooop!"

"Take that, you fat rotter!" snarled Racke.

"Yow-ow-ow! Help! Yooooop!" roared Trimble.

"What the thump's that fearful row?" asked Tom Merry, looking out of Study No. 10. "Shut up, Trimble!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Keep him off!" yelled Trimble. "I won't play cards with him! Yaroooh! I'm not going to play banker and let him bag my tanner! Yooooop!"

"What?"

Tom Merry came up the passage with a darkening brow. Three or four Shell fellows gathered round.

"Yow-ow-ow! That beast has kicked me because I won't gamble with him!" yelled Baggy. "Yow-ow-ow!"

"Sudden end to a friendship!" sighed Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It—it's nothing of the sort!" stammered Racke, in alarm. "The—the fact is—the—the fact—"

"Yes, we can guess what the fact is," said Tom Merry grimly. "Trimble doesn't often do the decent thing, and when he does he's jolly well not going to be kicked for it! Lend me a hand here, you chaps!"

"What-ho!"



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Trimble had been hurt. But he chuckled as he watched the proceedings in Racke's study during the next ten minutes. Tom Merry & Co. were of opinion that the blackguard of the Shell wanted a lesson—as certainly he did. They gave him one.

There was wild uproar in Racke's study for some time. When Tom Merry & Co. left, Racke and Serope, in a dusty and breathless state, were struggling to extract themselves from a stack of overturned furniture. They did not feel inclined for a little game any longer. They did not seem inclined for anything for quite a long time, excepting to groan and gasp, and gasp and groan.

Baggy Trimble rolled away to his study very cheerfully. That kick had been amply avenged, and Baggy was a spread to the good. His only worry was that before bed-time at least a dozen fellows gave him a look-in, to ask whether he had changed the tenner, and to remind him of little sums that were long overdue. Now that Baggy could pay, he was expected to pay; and it was clear that if he did not change that tenner on the morrow there was trouble to be looked for. That tenner, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, was unchangeable. And Baggy had to revolve in his fat mind various schemes for disposing of the tenner without changing it. And when he went to bed that night he was still undecided whether the tenner was to be lost, to be given to a blind beggar, or to be donated to the Cottage Hospital. Obviously, he had to account for it after he had posted it back to Mr. Trimble. It was quite a nice little problem, and Baggy gave it a great deal of deep thought.

CHAPTER 12. Noble Trimble!

"Gussy, old chap!"

Arthur Augustus made a grimace. He did not like "old chap" from Baggy Trimble. In fact, he objected to it strongly.

But he answered as politely as he could. Gussy's tender conscience was not easy with regard to Trimble. He felt that he had done that fat youth wrong in doubting his word—on one occasion at least. It really did seem hard cheese that Trimble should be adjudged a fibber when he was telling the truth—though positively for one occasion only.

"Yaas, Twimble?"

"I'm feeling a bit worried, old fellow," said Baggy.

"I was wondering if you'd advise me."

Arthur Augustus relaxed very much.

The swell of St. Jim's rather fancied himself in the role of adviser to fellows who were not blessed with his own tact and judgment.

"Certainly, deah boy. What's the twouble?"

"About that tenner," said Baggy, blinking very seriously at Arthur Augustus. "It's a bit on my conscience."

"Eh?"

D'Arcy could not help being surprised. This was the first time that he had heard that Trimble had a conscience. Judging Baggy by his actions, nobody would have guessed that he was in possession of such an article.

"You see, it's like this," said Baggy. "I've had a tenner from my pater. I often get big remittances—"

"Hem!"

"But a tenner is rather unusually big, you know. It's against the rules of the school for fellows to have such whacking remittances without the permission of the Housemaster. I feel rather uneasy about it, you know. Having that big remittance, without letting Mr. Railton know, seems to me to smack of deceit. What do you think?"

Arthur Augustus almost fell down.

That Trimble had a conscience at all was surprising, in view of his general line of conduct. That he had such an excessively tender conscience as this was simply amazing.

"Bai Jove!"

That was all Gussy could say.

"You know, old chap, they're very strict about this," said Baggy. "When Racke was showing off his money, and Mr. Railton heard of it, he made him send some

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banknotes back home. He wrote to Crooke's people, objecting to their sending him so much money. If he knew that I had this tenner he would get his rag out."

"Pwobably," assented Arthur Augustus.

"Of course, if it was to pay a big bill, and so on, it would be all right. But it's just to spend," said Baggy, blinking at Arthur Augustus with owl-like seriousness. "Mr. Railton wouldn't let me have such a whacking sum of pocket-money if he knew."

"Pwobably not."

"It's worrying me a bit," said Baggy.

"Bai Jove! Most fellows wouldn't wowwy about it. Twimble."

"I know," assented Baggy. "Most fellows aren't so particular as I am."

"Oh deah!"

"What's worrying me is this. Does it smack of deceit?" asked Baggy. "Doesn't it seem rather deceitful towards my Housemaster?"

"Weally, Twimble—"

"I'd like you to advise me," said Baggy. "Of course, I don't want to part with the tenner."

"Natuwally."

"But if you think it's rather deceitful to keep it without letting my Housemaster know, I'll jolly well send it back to the pater and ask him to send it to me again through Mr. Railton, if he consents. That seems to me more straightforward."

D'Arcy gazed at Baggy Trimble.

He was so astonished that he could do nothing else for a few moments.

"What do you think, old chap?" asked Baggy.

"I think vewy pwobably Mr. Wailton would not allow you to have so much money in your pockets if he knew Twimble."

"Then is it quite straightforward not to let him know?" asked Baggy anxiously. "You see, I want to be quite above board. You know what an honourable chap I am."

"Oh ewumbs!"

"You might advise a chap," said Trimble.

"Certainly, deah boy. If you wish to be absolutely straightforward, pewwaps it would be bettah to let your patah tell Mr. Wailton that he is givin' you ten pounds, and ask his permission."

"You really think so, Gussy?"

"Yaas, as you ask me."

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"Then I'll do it!"

"But you had better wemembah, Twimble, that if your patah w'ites to ~~Mr.~~ Wailton on the subject, it is most likely that our Housemaster will stwongly object to a juniah bein' given so much money, and vewy likely you will not get the tennah at all."

"Think so?"

"I think it vewy likely indeed."

"I'll risk it," said Baggy valorously. "Anything is better than being deceitful."

"Gweat Scott!"

"Don't you agree to that, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah! But this is weally vewy surpwisin' fwom you, Twimble. I—I twust that you are not twyin' to pull my leg?"

Trimble gazed at the swell of St. Jim's more in sorrow than in anger.

"Doubting my word again?" he said. "I say, you know, it's really too thick. I'll tell you what I'll do. You lend me a stamp to post the tenner home, and you can see me write the letter."

"Gussy," roared Blake, "come and help us punt this footer about, you slacker!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"What the dickens are you confabbing with Trimble for?" demanded Blake, coming up with Herries and Dig. "You're not borrowing his tenner, I suppose?"

"I am advisin' Twimble in a mattah of conscience," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "Twimble is wathah wowwied about havin' so much money, against the wules of the House."

"Rats!" said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Oh, I'll settle that for him," said Dig. "Give me the tenner, Trimble. It won't worry me."

Trimble grinned feebly.

"Twimble thinks he ought to send it back and ask his pater to send it to him thwough the Housemaster," said D'Arcy.

"So he ought. But Railton jolly well wouldn't allow him to have a tenner," said Blake. "Tain't allowed in the Fourth, if the beaks know."

"I'm risking that," said Trimble.

"Gammon!"

"Trimble's pulling your leg, fathead!" said Herries.

"You can see me write the letter if you like," said Trimble.

"Yes; I'll believe it when I see it," said Blake.

"Come up to the study, then."

"Fathead! You're not pulling my leg!" snapped Blake. "I'm not as soft as Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"I daresay he might write the letter to pull your silly leg, Gussy, but he wouldn't post it."

"Oh, bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"

"You can post the letter if you like," hooted Trimble. Blake stared at him.

"I don't know what this game is," he said, "but if you bother me to come up to the study, Trimble, I'll jolly well make you post the tenner back home, whether you like it or not."

"Done!" said Trimble.

"Oh, my hat!"

In sheer amazement, Blake & Co. accompanied Baggy Trimble to Study No. 2. There they stood round him and watched him write the letter:

"Dear Father.—It was vewy kind of you to send me ten pounds, but after thinking it over I feel that I ort not to have so much pocket-munny without my Housemaster noing. It seems to me a little deceitfull on my part. I enklöse the tenner. Of korse, it is vewy hard to part with it, but will you pleeze send it to me in a letter to Mr. Railton, asking him to hand it to me? I am sorrey to give you this trubble, but I am shore that you will agree that I ort not to do annything that seems at all deceitfull.

"Your affectshunate Sun,

"BAGLEY."

"Railton won't let you have the tenner if it comes through him," said Blake. "You jolly well know that."

"I'm risking it."

"Oh, gammon!"

"Rats!"

Trimble, with great dignity, drew the tenner from his pocket. Under the eyes of Study No. 6 he folded it in the letter, placed it in the envelope, sealed and addressed the letter.

"Isn't your pater staying with Lord Lexham now?" asked Dig sarcastically. "The address on the letter was 'No. 1, Smithson's Villas, Lexham.'"

"Nunno. He's left."

"Not gone back to Trimble Hall?" grinned Blake.

"Nunno. He's staying with some people."

"Br-r-r-r!"

Trimble held the letter.

"You don't believe I mean to post this?" he asked.

"No," said Blake, "I jolly well don't."

"Post it yourself, then."

"Oh!"

Blake took the letter like a fellow in a dream. Either there was something behind this that he could not understand, or else Trimble had been very much misjudged at St. Jim's.

"Mind, I shall really post it," said Blake.

"I want you to."

"Well, this beats me!"

And Blake, in a state of utter astonishment, went out to the school box and dropped the letter into it.

Trimble's tenner was gone!

CHAPTER 13.

Alas for Baggy!

TOM MERRY looked astonished.

He had reason to be astonished.

After classes, in the quad, he had the unusual sight of Baggy Trimble walking with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, obviously on the friendliest terms.

They seemed quite chummy.

Nobody had ever been known to feel chummy towards Trimble, and Arthur Augustus, in particular, was well known to be unwilling to touch him with a barge-pole.

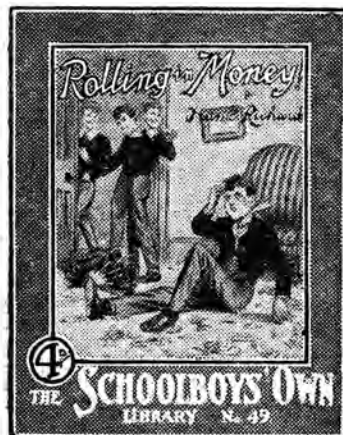
Yet here they were, walking in the quad on the most cordial terms.

As a matter of fact, Arthur Augustus, at the bottom of his heart, was still unwilling to touch Baggy with a barge-pole or anything else. But his conscience was at work.

Baggy had been misjudged. D'Arcy had misjudged him. So far from being merely the sneaking, grub-raiding, pilfering young rascal and fibber that the St. Jim's fellows had always supposed him to be, Baggy was, in some matters at least, more scrupulous than most of the other fellows.

D'Arcy himself had had remittances, at times, rather in excess of the rules. His conscience was quite tender;

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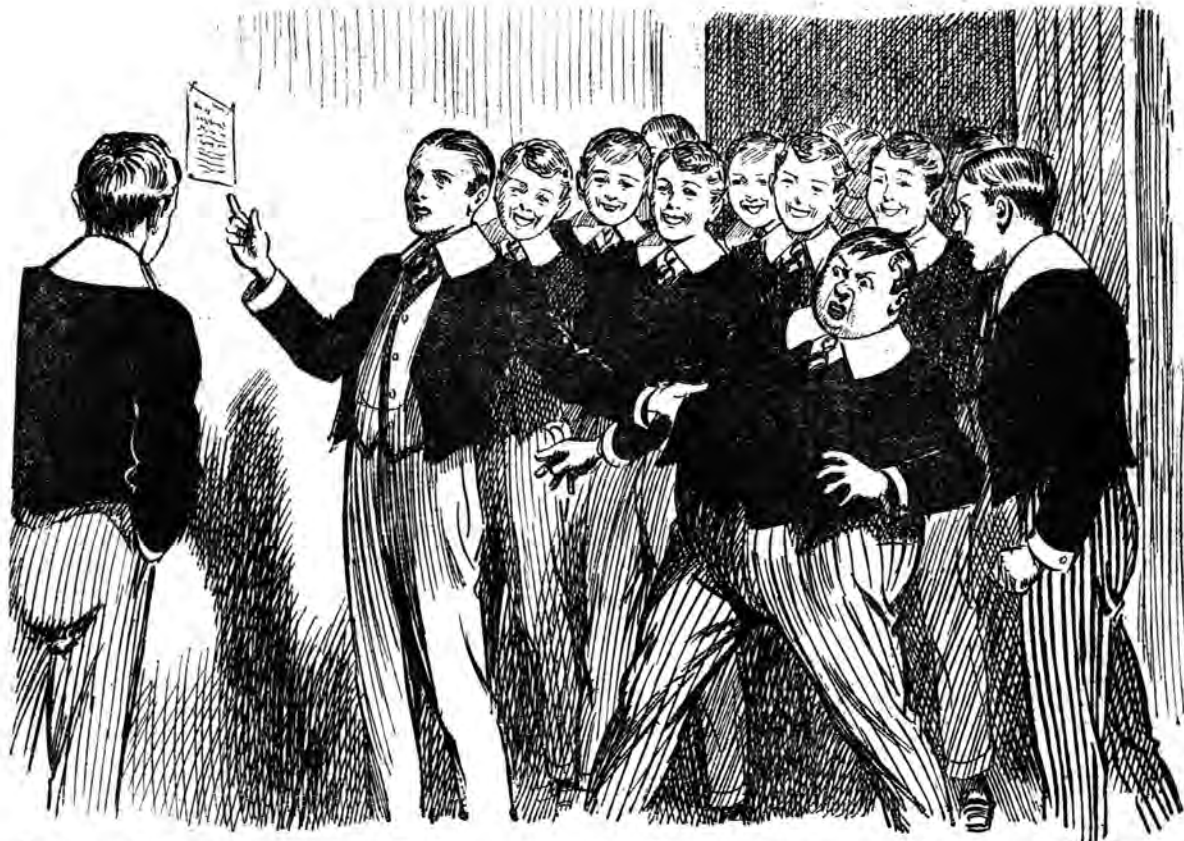
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Aubrey Racke read aloud Trimble's letter, while the fat Fourth-Former, in a state of dismay that deprived him of speech, stood rooted to the floor, dumbfounded. The reading was punctuated with chuckles and chortles from the other juniors. (See Chapter 13.)

but it had not worried him on such occasions. Baggy's conscience, evidently, was the tenderer.

Trimble had been condemned as a swanking ass—and he had made his swank good; the tenner from Trimble Hall had materialised. He had been supposed to be greedy and unscrupulous in money matters—and he had parted with a ten-pound note for conscientious reasons. He had been more than suspected of being a shady young blackguard when in funds; yet he had been kicked by Racke of the Shell for refusing to be drawn into his shady proceedings. Trimble was showing up in altogether a new light; and D'Arcy felt that compensation was due.

So, though some instinct still made Trimble repugnant to him, D'Arcy would not heed that instinct. He was going to make up to Baggy for that unfounded and undeserved distrust and contempt.

"You fellows comin' to Study No. 6 to tea?" asked Arthur Augustus cheerily, as he met the Terrible Three in the quad.

"Certainly, old top!" said Tom.

"Twimble's comin'."

"Oh!"

"Gussy! Gussy!" said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"I notice that Trimble's making friends since he got a tenner," said Monty. "But you, Gussy—"

"You uttah ass!" roared Arthur Augustus indignantly. "Do you think I'm thinkin' of Twimble's tennah?"

"Then why this thusness?" asked Lowther. "He hasn't any other attraction, has he?"

"Yah!" said Baggy.

"Twimble has been w'onged," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "We have all been too hard on Twimble."

"Bow-wow!"

"Twimble is weally a vewy upwight and honouvable chap."

"When did this sudden change take place?" inquired Monty.

"Wats! I twust that you fellows will be decent to Twimble now that he has shown that he is a weally honouvable chap. Pway listen to me."

Arthur Augustus told the story of the tenner that had been sent home. The Terrible Three listened in amazement.

"Blake posted the lettah," wound up Arthur Augustus. "The tennah is gone. It is vewy pwobable that Twimble will not get it again, as you know that the House-mastah is vewy stwict on such mattahs."

Tom Merry whistled.

"Oh, my hat!" said Manners.

"Twimble's conduct is noble," said Arthur Augustus. "In some wespects he is wathah a wottah; but in othahs he is more conscientious than any othah fellow I know. We have done Twimble w'ong."

"It doesn't seem to fit in, somehow," said Lowther.

"But if the tenner's really gone—"

"It is weally gone."

"Trimble might have settled up his debts and sent his pater the change!" grunted Manners.

"If any!" remarked Lowther.

"I wegard Twimble as havin' acted in an extwemely stwaightforward and honouvable mannah," said Arthur Augustus, with emphasis. "I am wesolved to wegard Twimble as a fwiend. I twust that you do not object to his pwesence at the spwead in Study No. 6."

"Oh, not at all!" grinned Lowther. "We'll stand Trimble, if you stand the spread."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors went into the School House to tea, Baggy Trimble's fat face wearing a happy smirk. Herries and Dig joined them in the House, eyeing Baggy rather dubiously. Baggy had slipped his fat arm through D'Arcy's arm, and Gussy nobly repressed any sign of discomfort thereat.

"Where's Blake?" asked D'Arcy.

"He's gone into the Common-room," said Dig. "There seems to be something on there. The fellows are yelling over something."

"Some giddy jest on," said Monty Lowther, as a roar of laughter came from the junior Common-room. "Let's look in."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry & Co. and Gussy's new chum walked down the corridor to the junior Common-room. A crowd of School House fellows were there, roaring with laughter.

"Here he is!" yelled Mellish. "Here's Trimble!"

"You fat spoofing villain!" howled Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Somebody fetch a fives bat!" bawled Blake. "He's going to have his batting now!"

"Bai Jove! What—"

"Look!" yelled Kangaroo of the Shell, pointing to a paper that was pinned on the wall of the Common-room. Racke of the Shell stood beside it with a grinning face.

"Come and look!" chuckled Racke. "Trimble dropped this out of his pocket when I kicked him out of my study yesterday evening. I picked it up, thinkin' it was a letter of mine, as it was in my study doorway, and shoved it into my pocket. But when I came to look at it a little while ago, I found that it was Trimble's."

"Weally, Wacke, if it is Twimble's lettah you were a feahful wottah to wead it!"

"How could I tell it was Trimble's letter, fathend, without looking at it?" snapped Racke.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

"I looked at it," continued Racke, "and I've pinned it up here for all the fellows to look at. It's a matter that interests everybody."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Railton had chanced to see that letter, he would have been very much astonished.

Baggy had realised at the time that that letter required being kept very dark. He had shoved it out of sight into his pocket immediately on receipt. Then, with his usual obtuse carelessness, he had forgotten its existence.

He was reminded of it now.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus faintly.

"And the address on the letter is No. 1 Smithson's Villas, Lexham!" roared Racke. "Is that another name for Trimble Hall?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Baggy, you fat rotter—"

"You spoofing bounder—"

"A counterfeit note!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you awful spoofer—"

"Somebody passed it on old Trimble, and old Trimble lent it to young Trimble to swank with!" yelled Lowther. "Oh, this is too rich! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's that bat?" howled Blake.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Trimble.

Baggy made a jump for the letter, grabbed it down, and jammed it into his pocket. Blake cut out of the room in search of a fives bat.

"I—I—I say," gasped Trimble, "that—that letter—that was only a joke, you know!"

"A what!" roared Tom Merry.

"Just a joke! My—my pater's rather a humorous chap, you know!" stuttered Baggy. "Merely a joke! The tenner was—was genuine—"

"Bai Jove! You feahful fibbah—"

"Don't you believe me, Gussy?"

"Believe you! Gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Trimble tenner was spoof, and Trimble Hall is

FOR NEXT WEDNESDAY.

"UNDER FADDIST RULE!"

A humorous extra-long story of Tom Merry & Co., at St. Jim's, dealing with the arrival of a temporary Headmaster with some amazing ideas of how a school should be run. Don't miss this gem of a story, boys.—Ed.

"Nobody has a wight to wead Twimble's lettah—"

"Well, I've read it out loud a dozen times, so they haven't much choice about that," grinned Racke. "Here goes again."

"Weally, Wacke—"

Aubrey Racke proceeded to read. Baggy Trimble, in a state of dismay that deprived him of speech, stood rooted to the floor, dumbfounded. He had not missed the letter yet. Now he missed it and found it at the same time.

"I wefuse to listen—"

"Shut up, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke of the Shell was reading the letter out again. The reading was punctuated with chuckles and chortles from the juniors.

"Dear Bagley,—I have received your letter, and I quite agree that there would be no harm in your showing about a counterfeit note to keep up appearances. I therefore enclose it. You will be very careful that it does not pass out of your possession; you realise that that would be a serious matter. Show the note to your friends, and then return it to me by post. You need not go to the expense of registering it, in the circumstances. No one is likely to suspect that it is not genuine, as it is so good an imitation that it imposed upon me, and caused me a heavy loss. But take the greatest care that it does not leave your possession.

Your affectionate father."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Common-room was in a roar.

Baggy Trimble's fat face was a study.

This was the letter that had accompanied Trimble's tenner to St. Jim's. The letter, being addressed in Mr. Trimble's handwriting, had, of course, run no risk from the Housemaster's inspection. Certainly, if Mr.

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spoof, and Trimble's giddy conscience is spoof!" chortled Lowther. "Blessed if I don't begin to think that Trimble is all spoof, and doesn't really exist at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake came back into the Common-room. There was a fives bat in his hand.

"Where is he?"

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Six for to-day, six for yesterday, and six for the day before," said Blake. "That's eighteen. Lay him over the table."

"Yooop! Hooop! I—I say—I tell you—I say, I was only joking—I—I—I say—Yaroooh!"

The batting of Baggy was carried out to an accompaniment of roars of laughter from the other fellows, and roars of quite a different kind from Baggy. And Baggy did not "tea" in Study No. 6 that day. His friendship with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had come to a sudden end.

Baggy's life for the next few days was quite exciting. When the batting came due, it was duly administered, and Baggy, in the Form-room, wriggled and wriggled as if he found the form red-hot.

There was no hope now of a tenner, genuine or not genuine, coming to the rescue. Baggy was "for it." Fortunately for Baggy, the juniors decided at long last that he had had enough. Baggy was convinced that he had had more than enough. For quite a long time nothing more was heard in the Fourth Form of Trimble Hall; and Baggy sagely decided to give that magnificent establishment a rest until the fellows had had time to forget all about Trimble's tenner.

THE END.

THE TALISMAN! According to O-Kama, the witch, good fortune and a charmed life go to the white man who takes the great talisman known as Oyorara from its secret hiding place. And Adam Byrne is that white man who comes to fulfil the witch's prophecy!



ADAM.

HARRY.

An Amazing, New Story of Perilous Adventure in the heart of the African Jungle.

By **ARTHUR S. HARDY.**

The Burial Cave of O-Kama.

IN spite of all that Sandy McTavish could do for her, O-Kama, the witch, died before noon.

For most of the time after the rescue party came she lay in a stupor.

Closer examination of her wound than Adam had previously made showed that it would soon prove fatal.

Towards the end she awakened, and as Muta knelt and bowed his head she blessed him.

Then she spoke, while Muta interpreted what it was she wanted them to know.

"She wishes us to bury her in the great cave," he said. "Muta know the way. He show."

Adam frowned. He felt that he wanted to carry out the wishes of the dead woman, particularly as it appeared that she came of the same race of people who held his father and his sister Rosa captive.

Yet, with these hostile Skeleton men roaming the forest wilds, it seemed imperative that they should make their way back to the second aeroplane which Sandy McTavish declared to be safe and sound and loaded with a goodly amount of petrol and oil, supplies of all kinds, wireless apparatus, weapons, and ammunition.

But Sandy McTavish had, on hearing those rifle-shot signals, started out to the rescue, leaving four rather scared natives in charge of the plane.

He felt that the natives could be trusted, and yet it would never do to leave the aeroplane in their charge for long. They might, at a pinch, loot the machine and destroy it, and then—

With these fears uppermost, Adam turned to Muta.

"Why not bury your mother here in the Temple of the Forest God?" he said. "It seems strange that she should have come here when the Temple was beset by her enemies, Muta."

"She came because of the beating of the tom-toms she told me, O white master," Muta replied, "and because she heard the rifle bangs. Moons ago she told me that white men would come like birds flying through the air. When they came she said her end would be near. But there is treasure in the cave where she wishes to be buried. It is hidden in the upper cave, which only she and Muta know of. Only by taking her body there will my white masters find the treasure and the secret of the mountain, whose crest is hidden in a cloud of mist. So, O-Kama, my mother, has spoken."

Muta's words impressed. Adam could not help believing. Muta was not the sort of man to make up such a tale. Already they had seen something of the occult power this strange withered hag had possessed.

Eagerly Adam and Harry discussed the question with Sandy McTavish.

"Sandy," said Adam, "we are for burying the poor woman here. Those Skeleton men, who evidently went in fear of her, burnt her hut, chased and wounded Muta, her son, and slew her here in this one-time holy place. Yet, when dying, she expressed a desire to be buried in this cave that Muta knows of, and which we have yet to find. We ought to get back to the aeroplane. But there is this talk of the secret of the unknown mountain being hidden in the cave to which we are to bear her body. We will be bound by what you say. Which shall we do?"

WHO'S WHO IN THIS STORY!

ADAM BYRNE, accompanied by his chum, **HARRY FRANKLIN**, and a band of trustworthy followers, set out in search of Adam's father and sister, news having been received that the great white explorer, **GEORGE WILLIS BYRNE**, and his daughter, **ROSA**, who left England four years ago to explore the African jungle, are alive and well, but prisoners in the hands of a strange people at Barcoomba, which lies north of the Silver Glacier and beneath the Mountain of the Hidden Crest.

Well equipped with guns, stores, provisions, two aeroplanes, and wireless apparatus, the party leaves Baruda for their journey into the

interior. The plane containing Adam and Harry, however, is wrecked in a terrific storm, and the stranded chums are left to face a crowd of hostile Hekebus, who pursue them to the Temple of the Forest God. Aided by **MUTA**, a native whose life they had saved, Adam and Harry are putting up a stout resistance when Muta's mother—a witch whom the natives have learned to fear—suddenly steps between the warriors and their white victims. Overcoming his superstitious fears, however, the giant leader of the Hekebus flings his spear at the witch and she collapses mortally wounded a moment or so before the chums are rejoined by the remainder of their party, which is led by Sandy McTavish.

(Now read on.)

Sandy McTavish pulled at his red beard and looked at the sheeted remains of the dead woman.

"A-weel!" he cried. "I'm a supersteethus mon. I ken what I would do if I were hame in Bonnie Scotland. But oot here—why, I'm all for doing what the puir body weeshed for fear she might lay a witch's curse on us."

Adam nodded. He was glad Sandy had so spoken. It settled the question so far as he was concerned.

So, within half an hour, having made a stretcher out of entwined boughs cut down from the forest trees and lain the body upon it, the four white men and the three blacks began their trek through the forest.

Turn and turn about they took with the bier and the packages they had to carry.

Lost among the trees, shut in with green creepers and lofty boughs on every side, with never a clear glimpse of the blue sky, they followed a trail which the bearers found with ease. And every now and then, as they walked, Sandy McTavish, pointing to a blaze he had made upon a tree, would cry:

"Why, look, Mr. Adam, if we are not following the same path we kept when we were hurrying to your rescue."

Only once in a while did the densely growing forest lighten and enable them to walk at greater ease and see the sky. And at long last they passed out into the open, to find the stranded aeroplane resting where it had come down after escaping from the grip of the thunderstorm.

It had escaped accident by a miracle, for all about it were trees and stunted bushes.

Sandy McTavish attributed his escape to the fact that the machine had been flying much higher than the leading plane when the storm gripped it.

The four natives who had been left in charge of the plane, instantly recognising their friends, came racing and leaping towards them, giving vent to every possible and conceivable manifestation of joy.

"Where, Muta, is the cave you spoke of?" asked Adam, a while later as he stretched himself out upon the grass.

Muta pointed into the forest.

"There!" he exclaimed.

"Is it far away?"

"No, white master."

"Then, Muta, we'll rest here till to-morrow," said Adam, "and fud it then."

Adam and Harry ate and drank their fill, climbed up into the aeroplane, and stretched themselves out in it to sleep whilst the others set a watch.

When they awoke the following day, long after sun-up, they were fresh and vigorous enough for anything. They rose up with the sound of chopping wood ringing in their ears, and when they looked out, saw that Sandy McTavish had set the natives to work at felling the trees and levelling the clearing—work that was imperative if ever they wanted to rise in their aeroplane again.

Jimmy Brown was directing the work and urging on the coloured men with the choicest of Cockney invective.

They breakfasted, and then resumed their march to the cave of O-Kama, the natives being told, should any danger beset them, to fire one of the rifles which had been left in their charge as a signal.

Once again the party walked amid the densely growing vegetation, till at last Muta cried:

"Look—the cave!"

At first they could see nothing unusual, for it was dark hereabouts, but, as they looked, the objects ahead of them took separate shape, and they observed a rocky-looking mound, in the face of which was an arch-like opening about six feet high and from four to five feet wide at the base.

Muta, reaching this opening, ducked and passed beyond. Adam's keen eyes noticed that a wall or cliff of stone rose up beyond the trees which were set at its base.

They had brought electric flash-lamps with them and spare dry batteries, for use in case any gave out. The blazing light of the lamps revealed a stone passage that led windingly ahead. It opened out presently into a vaulted chamber of considerable size, which was dimly lighted from above.

Here they saw a bed of dried leaves, a table, and cooking utensils of native make. There were sconces set in the wall, some of which held resinous torches. This evidently was O-Kama's cave of refuge.

The bearers set the bier down.

"Now, Muta," said Adam, "where is the place of burial to which O-Kama referred?"

Muta blinked, pointed, then, crossing the sandy floor, pulled at a great boulder which rolled backwards, revealing an unsuspected opening in the wall of rock.

Coming back, he helped to raise the bier, and the party

passed beyond the boulder to a rocky way which led tiringly upwards. Some of the steps had been made by Nature, others by human hands.

They moved with difficulty and very slowly to the light of their torches and a faint gleam of daylight from above.

At the head of the stairway the walls fell away, and they found themselves in a cool, dry cave, dimly illuminated from far above.

Again they set the bier down.

"Here is the burial place," said Muta, stooping.

He pulled away a flattened stone, another, a bigger piece, more, and finally revealed to their gaze a hole about eight feet long by four feet wide.

Muta raised his mask-like face.

"My mother O-Kama and Muta made this hole many moons ago," he said. "And look, white masters, here is the treasure!" He took up as he spoke a bag of skin, the contents of which rattled as he shook it. "And here is the secret my mother—the witch, O-Kama—spoke of. See!"

The thing he gave into Adam's hands was a roll of dried skin, which, when he opened it out and turned the hairy side of it undermost, he saw had been bleached to a creamy whiteness.

Harry flashed his torch on it. The others craned their necks to see.

"Great Scott!" yelled Adam, blinking; for he could scarcely believe his eyes.

The thing he held in his hands, which shook with excitement, was a rough chart or plan, with native hieroglyphics printed on it. But the drawings were plain to read.

The centre of the chart displayed a mountain whose top was hidden in a cloud represented by a smudge of the indelible ink or dye which the artist had used.

It was a mountain whose crest was hidden.

Below it, and stretching right across the base of the mountain, the creamy surface of the dried skin had been bleached to a dead white.

"The Silver Glacier, Adam," said Harry, pointing.

Then, to the right of the mountain, was a ring from which radiations had been drawn, and upon which a circle had been made. Evidently representing the sun, this was settling down into or rising from a sea of cloud.

And on the other side of the mountain, standing high in space, was the crescent of the moon.

The signs were easy for them to read—since they were looking for some such place as this—but the native hieroglyphics and writings were indecipherable.

"Mutt can read the riddle!" cried Harry excitedly. "Come, Mutt, tell us what it says!"

But Muta shook his head.

"It is in the language I do not understand," he said. "The language of my dead mother, the witch, O-Kama. I cannot read the riddle, O my masters!"

"And you don't know where this mountain is, Mutt?"

The strange-looking native shook his head once more.

"No," he answered.

"Well, we're beaten at that point, at any rate," said Adam, studying anew the chart. "Now let us have a look at the treasure, Mutt."

Dutifully Muta handed Adam the bag of skin, and, opening it, Adam looked in.

The flash of a torch revealed gems that sparkled and flashed until they almost blinded—jewels from which scintillated all the colours of the rainbow.

Never had they seen the like, and Sandy McTavish threw up his hands in sheer amazement.

"Diamonds—rubies—emeralds! And all the precious stones to the value of a prince's ransom!" he exclaimed, in a deep-throated roar. "And a wee bit baubel to spare to mak' my Martha in Glasgy a wee bit o' a brooch—if only I could tak it hame to her!"

The Tallsman!

ADAM and Harry were so startled at the immensity of their discovery that for a while they were speechless. Here, delivered into their hands, was proof that the land of the Unknown Hokahulas did, in actual positive fact, exist. That strange being who had brought Professor Byrne's message to the settler Beavan at Baruda, and whose body lay buried in a grave on the fringe of the forest, must indeed have come from the unexplored country beyond the Silver Glacier and beneath the Mountain of the Hidden Crest.

Strangest thing of all, the dead woman O-Kama, the witch, mother of Mutt, was, if those markings meant anything, one of that unknown tribe. They had brought the

body here to bury it, according to her wish, in the grave which she had prepared for herself many years ago, no doubt; and in doing so they had found the positive proof that the mountain of the Hidden Crest was no myth.

Now as they stared wide-eyed at the jewels which were poured out of the bag, and handled eagerly in the light of the gleaming electric torch which Sandy McTavish flashed upon them, exclamations of delight and cries of wonder echoed in the inner cave.

"Why, Mr. Byrne, sir," cried Sandy McTavish eagerly, "if we were to du nae maig but just fly back to seevell-sation, takin' the wee haubels wi' us, we'd be rich men, d'ye ken. Now I wonder where that old wunnian found all they stanes?"

"It's a riddle we shall never solve," said Harry. "Mutt, do you know anything about these things?"

Muta shook his head, looking mystified.

"I have seen my wiche mother with them at times, O White Flyer," he answered. "Sometimes I have heard her laugh as she poured them out of the bag. But never have I heard her tell what they are and whence they came."

Jimmy Brown now uttered a cry of astonishment, as, diving his hand into the bottom of the skin bag, he drew out of it a necklace of dull-looking stones, uncut and irregular in shape, which were strung together on a string of dried and toughened gut. When the light was held close to the stones it was seen that they were of deepest blue.

"Sapphires!" ejaculated Adam Byrne.

"Maybe," murmured McTavish. "But I ha'e never heard of sapphires being found in any part of Africa—surely!"

"Snakes!" shouted Jimmy Brown, dangling the necklace, so that the curious pendant at the end of it swung slightly to and fro. "What's this? 'Ere's a rum old guy sittin' cross-legged like an East End tailor! Funny-looking thing, that! Might be worth a bit o' brass, though, mightn't it, Mr. Byrne?"

"It might!" growled Sandy.

The pendant, when Adam took it in the palm of his hand and held it very close to the light, was seen to be strange indeed. It was perfectly round, measuring nearly four inches in diameter, and in a bed of rough-looking metal which formed the setting were set precious stones, so arranged as to form a figure. At first glance the workmanship appeared to be rough and uneven; but a closer examination proved the piece to be of rare and even unexampled beauty.

The stones made up the figure of a god, who was sitting cross-legged on a throne; held in his right hand was a staff of office or sceptre.

On its head was a conical helmet or crown of beaten metal, which, when Adam rubbed it, shone like gold. The figure was almost naked, and was patch-work in colour, composed of rubies or reddish stones and diamonds.

Adam pointed out this feature excitedly.

"It is surely made to represent one of the mixed-skinned race—the Hokahulas!" he ejaculated.

The eyes of the figure and its mouth were perfectly represented. The throne on which the figure sat cross-legged was composed of a solitary diamond. The background was unique. In the small space the workman who had made this thing had managed to represent the Mountain of the Hidden Crest—of dull red stones, with its summit smudged off in tiny jewels of blue. Beneath, in small diamonds, was the expanse of white, the meaning of which was still a puzzle to Adam. On the right was set the glittering golden orb of the sun; on the left of it the crescent of the moon, these being represented in yellow and white metal.

Adam, as he polished the strange pendant with the palm of his hand, brought the details into strong relief as he removed the dust and dirt which had gathered in the stones and setting.

The thing was indescribably beautiful in its rough and original way. As it flashed and sparkled in Adam's hand, silence reigned for a while in the vaulted chamber of the inner cave.

"Marvellous! I wonder what it's worth, Adam?"

It was Harry who broke the silence, and the others, breathing hard, burst into rapturous praise.

"What are we ganging tae du wi' the haubels?" asked Sandy at last.

"Put them back in the grave with the body of O-Kama," answered Adam. "It is useless and unnecessary to carry them with us, Sandy."

"What a waste!" groaned Sandy, dismayed at the prospect of leaving jewels which might prove to be of untold value behind.

"Adam's right," Harry agreed. "We must leave 'em, Sandy."

"But we're ganging to fly awa' fra here," objected Sandy.

HOW A RECORD "INNINGS" STARTED!

1908—1,000 NOT OUT—1927.

No. 1. NEW STORY BOOK!



HE TORE HIMSELF FREE AND CLARED AROUND!

Hearty Congratulations to our World-famous Companion Paper

THE MAGNET

which celebrates this week its

THOUSANDTH NUMBER.

The picture shown above is a reproduction in miniature of the Magnet's first cover, which appeared on the bookstalls Tuesday, February 11th, 1908.

This week's souvenir number—Now on Sale—is brimful of good things.

"Hoo du we know that we'll ever be able tae find our way back?"

"Muta would always be able to show us if ever we got anywhere within reach of this place," said Adam. "And if not—well, we should have to lose them, that is all."

Rolling up the chart of skin, he set it in his pocket.

Then removing his linen coat, he hung the pendant round his neck.

"This at all events I shall take with me," he said, with a grim smile. "Let us regard it as a talisman. I am superstitious about it. It may serve to protect us from evil and enable us to achieve the end we have in view."

He had no sooner done this and was in the act of putting on his coat again, when Muta, bursting into a wild outcry, began to throw about his arms and execute the steps of a fantastic dance.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,000.

"What's the matter with yer?" growled Jimmy Brown. "Suddenly gone barmy?"

"How! How!" cried the strange-looking black fellow, his eyes rolling. "O-Kama, my witch mother, foretold it! 'The white men will come,' she said, 'and when the white men come through and out of the air it will be time for your mother, O-Kama, whom they call the witch, to die. They will lay her bones to rest in the grave she has prepared to receive them. In the bag of bright stones the white men will see the great charm called Oyorara. The white man who takes it will pass through many dangers, but the charm will preserve him according to his worth. He will succeed in his enterprise according to the strength or weakness of the courage that burns within him. Yet let him not falter by the way, for the falterer is lost.'"

"What?" Adam blinked as he stared at the excited black man.

"When did your mother, O-Kama, the witch, tell you that?" asked Adam.

"Often. Sometimes many moons would pass between the times of her saying it. Usually, if we came here to avoid the rains in the wet season, she would say it again and again. And now it has come true."

"But you told us nothing about this, Mutt? You said nothing about the jewels that were hidden here!"

"It was for you to find. How else was Muta to know that the white flyer of the air who had come was the right man? Now you, oh, my white master, have taken the great charm, Oyorara. It is proof—Whow!"

He threw his arms high in the air, and then dropped down upon his knees beside the open grave.

Instantly his demeanour changed. Muta suddenly betrayed the grief which had been eating at his heart ever since his mother had died, slain by the Hekebu chief whom Muta himself had hurled to his death a moment later.

He began to moan and chatter, and betray manifestations of grief which were deeply affecting.

Adam and his friends drew back, standing in line, and staring at him as his strangely misshapen figure assumed gigantic proportions in the strange light which filtered in somewhere at the top of the vaulted cave.

Respecting Muta's grief, they waited till the paroxysm ended.

Then rising, the black turned to them, blinking solemnly.

"O-Kama, my mother, must now be shut out from the light," he said, hanging his head. "All is ended."

Sandy McTavish shivered.

The cold and gloom of the inner cave were getting on his nerves. He wanted to get away—and besides, there was nothing more to do save seal the grave.

Tying up the mouth of the skin bag which contained the jewels, Adam set it in the stone cavity beside the body of O-Kama. Then between them they replaced the stones that covered the hole. For a moment they remained staring at it, and then they moved down the stone-stepped way, proceeding cautiously, for a slip would have meant an ugly fall, and so at last reached the entrance of the outer cave.

(Will the possession of the Tallsman mean much to Adam Byrne? Will it mean all that O-Kama, the witch, has prophesied? Be sure to read next week's thrilling instalment of this powerful serial, chums!)

FREE.—THE GREAT CHINESE PACKET.

Containing the Splendid CHINESE LABOURER Stamp (Chinese Coolie at Work), the BROWN JUNK, the GREEN JUNK, the ORANGE JUNK, the RED JUNK, the MAUVE JUNK, and the GREAT CHINESE DRAGON Stamp, together with a host of other EASTERN STAMPS such as HONG KONG, SIAM, PERSIA, etc., etc.—quite FREE! Send a postcard asking to see Approvals.

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