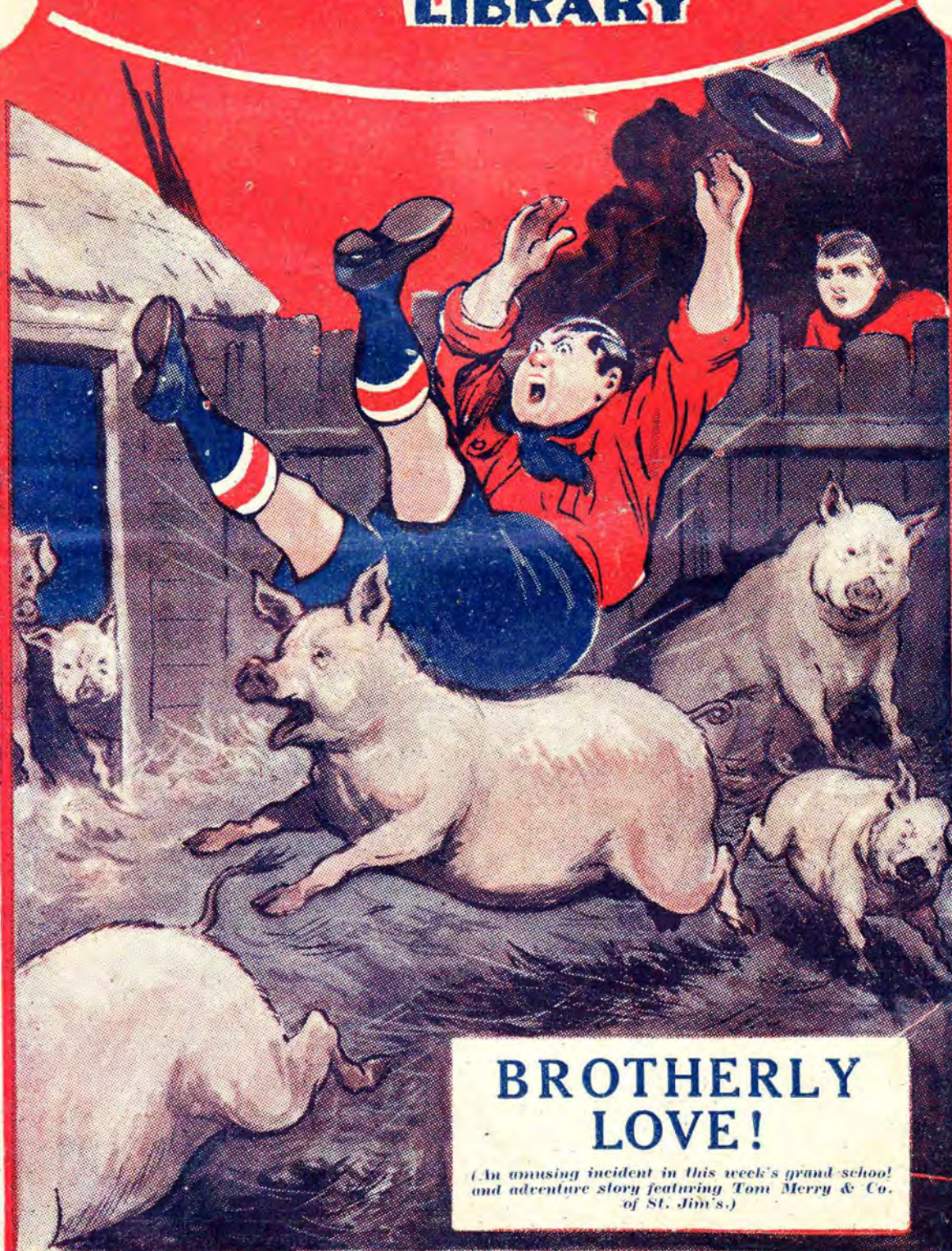


The GEM² LIBRARY

No. 1,057.
Vol. XXXIII.
May 19th, 1928

EVERY
WEDNESDAY



BROTHERLY LOVE!

(An amusing incident in this week's grand school
and adventure story featuring Tom Merry & Co.
of St. Jim's.)

A STIRRING STORY OF SCHOOL-LIFE & SCOUTING ADVENTURE—

Baggy Trimble is the last person Tom Merry & Co. are prepared to welcome to their camp at Chubb's Farm, so that when the fat Fourth-Former does appear on the scene, with happy anticipations of an easy time, he gets a rude awakening. But the age of miracles is not yet past, for Trimble, of all people, is responsible for solving—

The SECRET of



CHAPTER 1.

A Little Mistake!

TIME to be turning in, you chaps!" Tom Merry yawned as he stood up and stretched himself. In his Scout's attire Tom looked a sturdy figure, and his good-natured face showed ruddy and healthy in the red glow from the camp-fire.

Dusk was deepening into darkness over the quiet countryside, and the last glimmer of sunset gleamed on the windows of Chubb's Farm. From the farm itself the varied outcries of its hoofed and feathered inhabitants had died away some time since, and all was still save for an occasional eerie hoot from an owl in the deep fastnesses of Rylcombe Wood.

"Time to be turning in!" repeated Tom, yawning again.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

"We've got to be up bright and early in the morning, you men. Don't forget that we're half-timers now—St. Jim's chaps in school hours, and giddy farmer's boys for the rest of the time."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"There'll be plenty of work to do in the morning—stock to feed and goodness knows what else before we start for St. Jim's," went on Tom grimly. "So the sooner we get to sleep, the better."

"But it's scarcely dark yet," objected Lowther, with a grimace. "Let's have a yarn or two more, Tommy. This camp life suits me down to the ground."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I said bed, and I mean it," he said emphatically. "The Head's jolly decent to allow us to start this spare-time camping-stunt. We're not going to take advantage of his

—FEATURING TOM MERRY & CO., THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S



shouldn't be a bit surprised if he didn't turn up again to-night."

"I shouldn't either," said Blake. "Better take turns at sentry-go. We can see the farm from here, and if Bill Pegfold does require help we shall hear him shout."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"My hat! Yes, you're right!"

All the juniors saw the possibility now. Since Mr. Chubb, the farmer, had been taken to hospital with a broken leg, the juniors had had quite a lot of trouble with Jukes, who had been, until that day, the farm-hand on the little farm. While poor Mr. Chubb had been deeply grateful to the juniors for their help in his extremity, Jukes had shown only resentment and hatred.

That same afternoon the climax had come. The juniors had caught Jukes either giving away, or selling for his own profit, eggs and fowls belonging to the farm, and after ducking both Jukes and his friend Alf in the duck-pond, they had warned the pair off. In Jukes' place they had, luckily, obtained the services of Bill Pegfold, a very decent farm-hand who happened to be needing work, and who was now "living-in" at the farm.

But Jukes and his friend would be unaware of this fact, and also unaware that Tom Merry & Co. were camping out in the big meadow within sight and sound of the farm. For not only had the Head of St. Jim's approved of the juniors' idea of helping with the farm work in Mr. Chubb's absence, but he had actually given them permission to take their Scout tents and equipment there to be on the spot, excusing them from prayers in the morning and preparation at night.

This was a great relief to the juniors. They had good reason to believe that Jukes and his pal had designs on the farm other than the mere thefts of fowls and farm produce. Only that day they had caught the pair searching the farm, though what they were searching for was a complete mystery to the juniors as yet.

But Tom Merry & Co. were determined to frustrate those designs—to guard the place in the absence of Farmer Chubb. "I'll take first watch if you like," said Tom Merry, gazing through the thin belt of trees at the farmhouse across the meadow. "Bill Pegfold's a hefty chap, but he wouldn't stand much chance against Jukes and his pal. Goodness knows what the brutes are searching for at the farm! But it must be something of value, else why— What's the matter, Gussy?"

"Quiet!" breathed Arthur Augustus, holding up a warning hand. "I heard a sound then, and when I looked I just caught a glimpse of someone movin' beyond the trees. Wait heah, and I will make suah."

"Gussy—"

But Arthur Augustus had crept stealthily away. He vanished through the trees, but scarcely half a minute later he came back again, his aristocratic features ablaze with excitement.

"I was wight, deah boys," he said tensely. "He is cweepin' along on the othah side of the hedge towards the farm. Quick!"

"Who is?" demanded Blake dubiously.

"The man. I onlay glimpsed one, but I am suah it was Jukes, and his pal is bound to be with him. Come on—quick!"

Arthur Augustus flitted away again, and his chums followed a trifle breathlessly. The alarm had come much sooner than they had expected. Believing the farm was now unguarded, the rascally Jukes and his accomplice had come again—in the still hours of the night this time—to carry on with their mysterious searching.

Into the thin belt of trees the seven Scouts trod like shadows, scarcely making a sound. Each had grabbed up his Scout's staff, and they were more than ready to give the two rascals a hot reception. There was a deep ditch just beyond the spinney, and as Arthur Augustus did not give his chums any warning, six splashes sounded in quick

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

good-nature by risking being late for morning school to-morrow. We're also going to stick strictly to school routine—bed at nine-thirty, lights out at ten."

"Quite wight. Tom Mewwy!" remarked Arthur Augustus, rising to his feet gracefully. "We have also had a vewy twyin' day, and I am quite weady for bed. Yaas, wathah!"

"What about sentries?" asked Blake suddenly.

"Someone ought to be on guard—not only for looking after the camp, but to keep an eye on the farm. If that rotter, Jukes, and his pal come prowling round again—"

"Not much fear of that," grinned Lowther. "After being ducked in that duckpond and warned off, I should think even Jukes and his pal have had enough."

Tom Merry frowned.

"I don't know," he said thoughtfully. "Remember, Jukes doesn't know we've got a man to take his place—that Pegfold is sleeping at the farm. He doesn't know that we're camping on the farm, either. He will think we're back at school and that the farm's deserted and unguarded. I

succession and six startled explanations broke the silence of the night.

"Quiet, deah boys!" breathed Gussy warningly.

"Quiet, be blowed!" snorted Blake, in deadly accents. "I went into the dashed thing up to my knees!"

"So did I!"

"Why didn't you warn us, Gussy, you born idiot?"

"Quiet! Not a sound, you feahful idiots!"

Arthur Augustus had avoided the ditch himself, and he was, apparently, not interested in it. He trod on with the stealth and woodcraft of a Red Indian, and his chums did likewise, though their soaked stockings and shoes were decidedly uncomfortable.

Reaching the hedge bordering the meadow, Arthur Augustus led the way along its inner side very cautiously, eyes and ears on the alert. He paused at last, with a low hiss of warning.

"There he is, deah boys! Quiet! Not a sound!"

The Scouts held their breath and peered through the hedge. Sure enough, they glimpsed a figure on the other side of the hedge—a shadowy form moving slowly along towards the farm.

"Shall we collar the wottah heah," whispered Gussy, "or wait until he weaches the farm? The othah man does not appeal to be with him, so we ought to overpower him easily."

"He's stopped!" muttered Lowther. "Must have heard us. Hold on! Hold on— Oh, mum-my hat!"

Lowther's warning came too late. The sound of vague movements beyond the hedge had ceased, and the dim form had undoubtedly stopped. But before the juniors could halt, the hedge suddenly ended and they came to a gate. Beyond the gate loomed the shadowy form, and a shadowy head came over the gate. Then it gave voice—a voice that made them fairly leap into the air:

"He-haw! He-haw! He-haw!"

"Ow! Oh, bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "A—a donkey, bai Jove!"

CHAPTER 2. The Real Thing!

IT was a donkey undoubtedly. Its brazen voice rang out over the silent fields, and made the breathless trackers jump almost out of their skins.

Obviously the zealous Arthur Augustus had made a little mistake. The prowling figure he had glimpsed in the gathering darkness was Mr. Chubb's donkey. All their keen scoutcraft had been wasted—on tracking a donkey.

"Oh, bai Jove!" repeated Arthur Augustus. "It—it is a donkey, atfah all, deah boys!"

"You—you—" gasped Blake.

"You—you—you—" choked Herries.

"You—you donkey!" gasped Tom Merry, being the only one able to find more than one word. "You—you burbling, blithering bandersnatch! Brought us all this way—got us drenched in a dashed ditch to trail a—a donkey! Oh, you—you—"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Bump him!"

"Smash him!"

"Weally— Yawooogh! Leggo! Oh, you feahful—"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus descended to earth with a terrific concussion. Really Arthur Augustus should have been more careful with his facts. His irate and disgusted chums were determined to teach him a lesson that would possibly make him more careful in future.

Bump, bump, bump!

On the cold, dewy earth Arthur Augustus was bumped again and again with vigorous force, and his wails of anguish rang out over the silent fields. Startled, the donkey removed his curious head from the gate and trotted away, still giving voice.

"He-haw! He-haw! He-haw!"

"There!" panted Blake, as they released the hapless Gussy at last. "If you dare to bring us tracking down your blessed relations again, you'll get more than that, my pippin. Let that be a lesson to you, Gussy!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gwoooogh! Oh deah! Oh, gweat Scott! Oh, you feahful wuffians! Gwoogh! Oh cwumbs!"

Leaving the swell of the Fourth seated on the wet grass, panting and exhausted, Tom Merry & Co. marched back to the camp in high dudgeon, their feet squelching in their soaked shoes. Arthur Augustus staggered up and trailed after them, fairly seething with outraged wrath and indignation.

"That burbling lunatic fairly takes the bun!" said Blake, as they reached the camp. "Trust that dummy to find a

mare's-nest! I've only one pair of socks with me—I'll have to dry the things before morning somehow."

"Same here!"

"Weally, Blake—" Arthur Augustus staggered along, almost choking. "Weally, Blake, you feahful wuffian!" he spluttered. "I wefuse to go to sleep to-night until I have given you a feahful thwashin' all wound. I—"

"Oh, bump him again!" snorted Herries. "He hasn't had enough!"

"Good wheeze!"

It was a suggestion that appealed to all but Arthur Augustus. A general movement was made towards him, and Gussy backed away, his noble fists raised purposefully. But the second bumping was not fated to take place, for just at that instant a sound reached the ears of the juniors—a significant sound that made all of them pull up, startled.

It was an angry shout, faint but unmistakable, and it came from the direction of the shadowy farmhouse across the meadow. As the startled juniors wheeled round and stared in that direction a light appeared at one of the open windows of the farmhouse. At the same moment more yells, and sounds of a commotion came faintly on the night air.

"Phew! I was right, then!" panted Tom Merry, his eyes gleaming in the flickering firelight. "That means trouble, chaps! Jukes and his pal have turned up, and Bill Pegfold is greeting them! Come on!"

"My hat! What-ho!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

In that startling moment all personal disagreements and strife were forgotten, and Arthur Augustus was one of the first to race after the captain of the Shell as he started for the farm with a rush.

"Wun—wun like anythin', deah boys!"

They needed no encouragement to do that. The thought of Bill Pegfold fighting against odds was enough for Tom Merry & Co. Across the dark meadow they pelted, heedless of pitfalls, stumbling and tumbling in the darkness.

The low wall of the farmyard was reached in a very short time, and Tom Merry rushed for the back door. It was closed and bolted on the inside, but Tom only hesitated a second.

"This way, chaps!"

He raced to an outhouse against the main building. The open window of a bed-room showed above this, the curtains blowing inwards in the breeze.

"They got in that way, and what they can do we can!" snapped Tom breathlessly. "Give me a back—quick!"

Manners stooped promptly, and swarming on his shoulder, Tom reached up and grasped the gutter of the outhouse. The next moment he had hauled himself up to the low roof, and was crawling up to the open window.

The rest followed, Manners coming last and being helped up by Monty Lowther.

The sounds of strife were still to be heard, and they came from a room somewhere in the front of the house. Tom swarmed through the window, darted through an empty bed-room, and found himself on a tiny landing. Opposite him was another room. The door was wide open, and in the light of a candle three figures were struggling desperately.

"Stick it, Pegfold!" yelled Tom. "On the ball, St. Jim's!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Look out, Alf!"

It was a yell in the familiar tones of Sam Jukes. Tom Merry caught a glimpse of his red, beefy features, and then he charged in and landed out with his right.

It took Jukes neatly under the chin, and Jukes howled fiendishly in surprise and pain.

"Hook it, Alf!" he yelled furiously. "It's them blamed young 'ounds agen!"

But this was easier said than done. As Jukes wrenched himself free and turned to bolt, Blake, followed by the other five juniors, swarmed into the room.

What followed was swift, and very confusing. It was a case of too many cooks, and as the first thing the over-eager Gussy did was to knock over the candle, there followed a few seconds' whirling battle in the darkness.

"Shove the light on, somebody!" howled Blake, suddenly realising that he was struggling with Herries. "Buck up! Oh, good!"

A match-flame shot up. Manners had stumbled against the candlestick on the floor, and a moment later he had the candle alight and was holding it up. It revealed Bill Pegfold holding on grimly to Jukes, with himself in the grasp of Digby, who was evidently under the impression that Pegfold was one of the enemy.

The others were mixed up in a heap on the floor. But they soon sorted themselves out, and within a short time after the light was put on again, Jukes and his accomplice were flat on the floor, safely held.

"Good for you, Pegfold!" panted Tom Merry, dabbing at his streaming nose. "Phew! That was warm while it

"Shall we collar the wottah?" whispered Gussy, as the Scouts crept nearer to the shadowy form by the gate. But the next moment a head came over the top of the gate and gave voice to an amazing sound. "He-haw, he-haw, he-haw!" "Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "It's a donkey!" (See Chapter 1.)



lasted. Shut that door, Gussy! We're not losing these merchants now we've got 'em!"

"Let us go, you young rips!" gasped Sam Jukes, glaring up at the grim faces of the juniors. "Let us go, or it'll be worse for ye!"

"When the bobbies come!" assented Tom.

"The—the bobbies?" Jukes' coarse features paled. "Look—look 'ere!" he panted. "No need to fetch no bobbies into this. I came 'ere to-night jest to fetch my belongings what I'd left in my room 'ere!"

"Rats! Think we believe that?" said Tom scornfully.

"Well, it's true enough!" snarled Jukes. "I got my best clothes 'ere yet, and other things o' mine, too! I came to fetch 'em!"

"And broke in like a giddy burglar—eh?" said Blake.

"I—I didn't know as anyone was 'ere," vowed Jukes, his eyes glinting at Bill Pegfold. "I tried the door, and as I wanted my things I climbed through that there winder. I ain't been sacked yet by the boss, and I ain't takin' me notice until old Chubb gives it me himself!"

"We saw Mr. Chubb this evening," said Tom Merry curtly. "He told us we did quite right in clearing you out. He's already sacked you, Jukes. As for your yarn about coming here just for your belongings—I don't believe it. You've got some shady game here—there's something hidden at this farm that you're after, you rotter!"

Jukes looked quite startled at that. He exchanged a quick glance with Alf, his friend.

"Eh? Of course, we ain't after nothin'!" he scowled.

"Then what were you taking the floorboards up in the front room downstairs for then?" demanded Tom. "We caught you in the act only last night. I suppose you don't keep your best clothes and other belongings under the floor in that room?" he added, his lip curling.

"I'd dropped sixpence down atween the floorboards," growled Jukes.

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Tom. "There's some mystery about this. But I tell you straight, Jukes, if we find you hanging round here again you'll get short shrift. We're here to look after the farm with Mr. Chubb's approval, and we mean to do it. If it wasn't that Mr. Chubb doesn't want the police on the job we'd hand you over right now."

"Oh!" breathed Jukes; he looked quite relieved at that.

"They—then you told Mister Chubb about me—"

"Yes, I did!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

"Hang you, you little, rat!" hissed Jukes, his eyes glinting. "An' now I'm sacked, am I?"

"Just that! This chap 'ere," said Tom, indicating Bill Pegfold, "has taken over your job. And now what's to be done with these rotters, chaps?"

"Boot them out and let's get to bed," said Blake. "How did you catch them, Pegfold?"

"I were jest gettin' into bed, and I 'eard somebody talking," explained the new hand, who was half-dressed. "I up's and ran in 'ere, and caught 'em nicely, I did."

"Good man! Are there any things in that room that belong to Jukes?"

"I ain't seen none," said Pegfold, scratching his head. "The room was all untidy and tumbled about when I took it over. But there weren't no clothes nor nothin', sir."

"I jest remembered," stammered Jukes, as all eyes were turned on him. "I took me things earlier this evenin'."

"I thought as much," said Tom. "There's nothing here belonging to you, then?"

"No!" snarled Jukes, scowling.

"Right! See the rotters out, chaps. Next time they come they'll be dealt with as burglars—for they're nothing else."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Jukes and his friend Alf went—glad enough to get off so cheaply in fact. They tramped downstairs, and Bill Pegfold and the juniors kept a close eye on them as they went. The back door was unbolted, and the two rascals vanished into the darkness, Jukes shaking a furious fist as he went.

"Let's hope that's the last of them," said Tom Merry. "And now let's get back to camp and bed, chaps. Look here, Pegfold, old chap, take this Scout's whistle. If there's another alarm, blow it like blazes, and we'll soon be along here with a rush. But I fancy the beggars have learnt their lesson this time."

But Tom Merry was wrong there. Jukes and his confederate had not learnt their lesson yet!

CHAPTER 3.

A Visitor!

"HAIL! Smiling Morn, smiling Morn, smiling Morn That tips the hills with gold—"

In the gladness of his heart, Arthur Augustus sang his apostrophe to the morning.

And it was a smiling morn, indeed. The sun was just

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

peeping over the tops of the trees in Rylcombe Wood, and the sky was blue and cloudless, giving promise of a hot summer day. It gleamed like silver on the shining surface of the river Rhyl which flowed beyond the meadows where stood Tom Merry & Co.'s camp.

From the farm came a medley of lively sounds—neighing of horses, lowing of cows, crowing of cocks, cackling of geese and grunting of pigs—all clamouring for breakfast.

"Hark to 'em!" grinned Blake, coming out of the tent after Arthur Augustus. "Cheerio, Tommy! Top of the morning, old scout!"

Tom Merry came out of the tent he shared with Lowther and Manners, his cheery face ruddy with health and good spirits.

"Same to you, old son!" he said cheerfully. "Ready for work, you chaps?"

"I shall be when I've had breakfast," remarked Herries. "Sleeping out makes a chap hungry."

"When you've had breakfast, eh?" repeated Tom Merry. "My hat! No breakfast for us, old scout, yet awhile. We'll have breakfast when the stock's been fed. Can't you hear 'em howling for it?"

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Herries.

"What about a swim, then?" asked Manners.

"No swim, either!" said Tom grimly, glancing at his watch. "We'll have to get up even earlier than this to get a swim in. Just a swill in the bucket, and then—work! That's the programme."

And grabbing the camp bucket, Tom went off to the stream just beyond the spinney, looking very businesslike in his Scout's uniform. He was back in a few moments with a bucket brimful of sparkling water. He found his chums all staring curiously across the meadows.

"What's the matter, chaps?"

"Someone coming to the camp," said Blake, shading his eyes from the morning sun. "Who the dickens—"

"Looks like a Scout!" said Lowther.

"It is!" said Digby. "And if I'm not jolly well mistaken it's—"

"Grundy!" gasped Tom Merry. "Well, I'm blowed!"

It proved to be Grundy—right enough—the great George Alfred of the Shell Farm, at St. Jim's.

The Scouts stared and stared at him as he came trotting up, his rugged features heated and red with exertion. What Grundy was doing there at that hour of the morning—before rising-bell at St. Jim's—was a complete mystery to them. And it was stranger still that he should be in Scouting rig.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "What the dickens are you doing here at this hour, Grundy?"

"Surprised, what?" panted Grundy, grinning round at his schoolfellows. "You didn't expect me along, I bet! Well, I've come to work, of course."

"Bai Jove!"

"Work with a capital 'W'!" explained Grundy briskly.

"You fellows started feeding the stock, yet?"

"N-nun-no!"

"Not yet? My hat! Lazy slackers! Still, it's a good job really—you would only have made a muck of the job. Now you'll have the benefit of my experience!"

"You—you cheeky owl!"

"You dry up, Blake. I should have come along last night, the moment I heard about this game," Grundy went on to explain, "but that cheeky ass, Kildare, spotted me and yanked me back—gave me a few licks with his ashplant, too, the rotter!"

"Good man, Kildare!"

"You shut up, Lowther! Anyway," went on Grundy, "I managed to wake early this morning, got out by the box-room window, and—well, here I am!"

"Are—are you?" gasped Tom.

"Of course!"

"And you've come here to work, have you?"

"With a capital 'W'!" said Grundy, nodding. "Though, actually, I shan't have time for much work myself—I shall be busy supervising you fellows. See?"

"Yes, I see," said Tom Merry grimly. "You're come here to join us without permission from Railton, or the Head, or anyone, Grundy?"

"Just that! If you kids are allowed on a game like this, why shouldn't I be?" demanded Grundy.

"Then you can clear out—sharp!" snapped Tom. "There's no vacancy for a comedian here, Grundy. When the Head gives his permission you can come—and not before. Savvy?"

"Yaas, wathah! Pway wun away, Gwunday!"

"This isn't a circus!" explained Lowther. "When we want a funny turn on the programme we'll send for you, Grundy."

"You cheeky owls!" hooted the burly Shell junior.

"Rats! Run away and play, old chap!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

"Look here—"

"Good-bye!"

The great George Alfred fairly seethed with wrath. He had, possibly, not expected a greeting like this. Though a hopeless duffer in almost everything, Grundy had a remarkably good opinion of his own capabilities, and of his own importance.

And he expected everyone else to have the same opinion of him as he had himself. He had come to join the camp, to supervise the work—to take charge of the camp, in fact. He was amazed and horrified at the discovery that he wasn't even wanted.

"You—you cheeky rotters!" he hooted. "Why, for— for two pins I'd mop up the lot of you!"

"Did we bring any pins, chaps?" asked Lowther eagerly, hurriedly feeling over his Scouting attire. "Blow! I've none!"

"Chuck it, Lowther!" said Tom Merry hastily. "We've no time to waste on that born idiot—"

"If you call me a born idiot, Merry—"

"I do. Now clear out, for goodness' sake! We don't want the whole affair mucked up through you playing truant, you cheeky ass!" snorted Tom.

"Well—well, I'm dashed!"

Grundy fairly spluttered at that, and then, as if words were scarcely suitable to the occasion, he made a rush at the captain of the Shell, his rugged face red with wrath.

"Back up!" called Tom.

"Staves!" called Blake.

A rush was made for staves. Tom Merry neatly dodged Grundy's rush, planted out a foot, and the burly duffer of the Shell sprawled over it, landing on his face in the dewy grass.

"Yaroooooogh!"

By the time the great man had jumped to his feet, breathing out dire threats of slaughter, Blake and the rest had rushed up with their Scout's staffs. Grundy had his own with him, and he grabbed it as a general move was made towards him.

"Look here—" he roared.

"Off you go! Give him a few parting taps, chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Look here, I'm jolly well not going, so— Yooop! Yarooooogh! Yooop! Oh crumbs!"

Crack, crack, crack, crack!

The staffs began to play a sort of tattoo on Grundy's person. He raised his own staff on guard in vain. It was knocked down, and he backed away, howling with pain and fury.

"Go it, chaps! There's work to be done. Can't waste any more time on this duffer—"

Crack, crack, crack!

It was more than flesh and blood could stand. Howling furiously under the rain of cracks, Grundy turned and bolted for his very life.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good-bye!" roared Blake. "Come back, and you'll get some more, Grundy!"

"Now let's get on with our jobs!" said the exasperated Tom Merry. "I fancy Grundy won't come worrying us again."

"Wathah not!"

And under that impression Tom Merry led his band of farm workers towards the farm, where Bill Pegfold could be seen already hard at work. It was very kind indeed of Grundy to offer to help, but the juniors were not chancing it, for Grundy had an unhappy way of "mucking up" everything he undertook. Besides, it was obvious that Grundy had taken French leave, and to have accepted him would probably have led to their being recalled by Dr. Holmes.

Grundy, however, was not likely to see that. He stopped running at last, and then, as he saw the amateur farmhands disappearing towards the farm, he clenched his fists and scowled after them ferociously.

"The—the cheeky owls!" he gasped. "Don't want me, eh? Me! My hat! Jealousy again, the cheeky cads! Same with footer, and cricket, and every dashed other thing! But I'm blowed if I'll be kept out of this."

And Grundy started towards the farm grimly. Just as suddenly he pulled up again, however. It occurred to Grundy's rather dull wits that it would only be asking for more trouble to tackle Tom Merry & Co. in their present mood.

After thinking for some moments he changed his direction and tramped towards the camp. He was very keen indeed to work on the farm, and especially keen to camp out, with all its manifold joys and advantages, especially the advantages of being excused prep at night, and to be free of official supervision.

Yes, Grundy was very keen indeed, and he decided to pocket his great wrath and pride for once. The only way—he could see that now—was to get round Tom Merry & Co.

"I'll show 'em I'm in earnest, and mean to make myself useful," he mused, glancing over the camp critically. "Plenty of jobs to be done here. I'll light the camp fire, cook breakfast, and clean up generally. They'll be jolly grateful then—especially to come back and find breakfast waiting for them. Good wheeze!"

It certainly appeared a sound idea. After working hard at the farm, Tom Merry & Co. would undoubtedly be pleased to find breakfast ready on their return.

So Grundy got busy at once. There was a big packing-case just outside one of the two tents, and, finding the camp axe, Grundy started to break up the wood. That box had been especially selected and brought to the camp for use as a table, but Grundy never thought of that. He broke up the box with powerful strokes of the axe, and then he made a camp-fire with it.

On the camp-fire he rigged up three crossed sticks, and from these he hung the kettle, after filling it from the stream. This done, he hunted for the frying-pan, greased it well—with about a pound of butter—and placed in the pan the rashers of bacon.

"Not much there to go round," he mused, "and no more butter, or marmalade, or anything else, scarcely, excepting bread. What the dickens are they thinking of, with such a small stock of grub? Shows just what they know about camping!"

And, with a sniff, George Alfred went on with his work. He placed the frying-pan on the fire, and soon an appetising scent of frying bacon, and a pleasant sizzling sound pervaded the camp.

This done, Grundy looked about him for fresh worlds to conquer, whilst the breakfast was cooking. His eyes suddenly caught sight of one of the tents.

"Pegged down much too tightly," he decided, squinting critically at the tent. "The blessed tent-pole's lop-sided, too! My hat! What hopeless duds those chaps are. That pole's not a bit straight. Any fool can see that! I'll soon put that right!"

He started to work at once. Grundy was always a fellow who never could let well alone. Certainly, the pole did not look quite straight, but that was because the ground sloped slightly at that spot.

Instead of loosening the guy-ropes, Grundy tugged and tugged at the tent-ropes until he had removed nearly all at one side of the tent. This done, he went to the far side, took a good grip of one of the ropes, and pulled like a Trojan.

His intentions were of the best, of course—Grundy's usually were. He intended just to straighten the pole a trifle. But he underestimated his strength. Instead of merely straightening the pole, he pulled the whole tent over on top of him.

Crash!

"Yarrooooooh!"

A wild, smothered howl escaped George Alfred as the tent collapsed, and the pole caught him a fearful crack on the head. Then the canvas enfolded him like a shroud.

It was just at that interesting moment that Tom Merry & Co. returned from their labours. As Bill Pegfold had already been at work some time, they soon got through the remainder of the feeding of the livestock. Now they were returning, very hungry indeed, for breakfast. The early rising, the open-air sleeping, and the unusual work had given them tremendous appetites.

But even their appetites were forgotten as they stared blankly at the heaving, swaying bundle of canvas and tent-poles that covered Grundy.

They stared at it, and then at the fire, and breakfast arrangements.

"What the merry dickens—"

"Bai Jove! Gwheat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Someone has lit a fire, and is cookin' breakfast. Some feafullly cheekay twamp—"

"But the tent?" howled Tom Merry. "What the thump—"

"It's a bull, or perhaps a cow, though it sounds more like a donkey," said Monty Lowther, who had already guessed the truth. "Here, give it a few thumps with Scout staffs. That'll soon drive the animal out."

"Good wheeze!"

Lowther grasped his Scout's staff and brought it down with a fearful whack on the bulging canvas.

Whack!

"Yoooooop!"

Though smothered, the voice was familiar enough.

"Grundy!" breathed Blake. "Well, the—the cheeky rotter! Pull our tent down, would he? We'll see about that!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The next moment Blake's staff was also whacking away at the bulging canvas. Tumbling to the joke, all the rest

joined in, until the sound was like the continuous beating of a carpet. Grundy's howls were ear-splitting.

But he managed to release himself at last.

The moment he was free from the clinging canvas he made a furious rush at Tom Merry & Co. They collared him in a flash.

"Leggo, you cheeky rotters!" he roared. "I'll teach you to lam me! You howling, ungrateful rotters! After doing what I've done—lighting your fire and cooking your dashed breakfast! Why, I'll—I'll—"

Grundy choked.

"Lighting our fire!" yelled Tom Merry wrathfully. "Don't you see what you've done, you burbling lunatic? You've lit the fire with our camp table, blow you!"

"And pulled our thumping tent down!" howled Blake. "Now we've got the job of putting it up again."

"And, bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, suddenly sniffing. "That bacon seems— Yaas," he added, looking into the frying-pan, "the bacon is burned to a cinder, deah boys."

"And has he put all the bacon in?" howled Tom Merry.

"Eewwy sewap!" said Arthur Augustus.

"And the whole of the butter!" shrieked Herries. "We've nothing left for breakfast now."

Seven fists were shaken under the nose of George Alfred Grundy.

"You—you frabjous clump!"

"You chuckle-headed lunatic!"

"You yaving idiot!"

"Look here—" bellowed Grundy.

"Smash him!" roared Herries. "Nothing for breakfast, and I'm famished. Smash him!"

Tom Merry & Co. wasted no more time in words. They made a rush for their Scout staffs.

"Come on!" bellowed Grundy in a terrific rage. "Think I'm afraid of you? I'll lick the lot of you. I'll—"

Crack!

"Yoooooop!"

That first crack was followed by several more as Tom Merry & Co. went for Grundy as one man. And, for once, Grundy showed unusual good sense. He did not wait—he flew!

"After him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

They swarmed after Grundy, getting a whack in where and when they could. The great George Alfred did not stay to lick the lot of them; he went streaking across country, yelling back threats of future vengeance. He disappeared through a distant hedge, going at a great rate. Tom Merry & Co. returned to the camp, feeling slightly better. The discovery then that Grundy had also accidentally upset the tin of coffee over the grass did not add to their feeling of betterment, however.

"And there's no tea," groaned Tom Merry. "Only thing to do is to run over to the farm and buy some eggs and milk—and perhaps we can buy tea, too. But—if that born idiot comes near this camp again we'll—we'll make shavings of him."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

There was general agreement upon that point, and with feelings too deep for words, the campers set to work again. They put up the tent, and Blake and Herries went to the farm for eggs and milk. Then they had breakfast, seated on the grass.

It was quite an enjoyable meal after all, however, and after breakfast they all felt much better and equal to the work that was to be done before starting for St. Jim's and morning-school. By that time they had forgotten all about Grundy, and it was in very bright and cheery spirits that Tom Merry & Co. left the farm and turned in the direction of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 4.

Trimble's Dodge!

"HALLO! You fellows got back, then?"

Gerald Crooke's tone was cordial—genial in fact. He came up to Tom Merry & Co. in the Fourth-Form passage and greeted them almost effusively. This was passing strange, since Tom Merry & Co. were not, at any time, on the best of terms with Gerald Crooke.

But Tom Merry & Co. understood on this occasion. They smiled.

It was really remarkable how popular the chums of the School House had become all of a sudden.

Tom Merry & Co. had always been popular in the school—with the decent element, at all events. But since the camping-out scheme had become known, they had, all at once, reached undreamed of heights of popularity.

Fellows came along to congratulate them on their "luck," and to give them kind tips, and make kind suggestions. And they one and all ended up by the casual suggestion that they

themselves, were ready—indeed, eager, to help with the good work on the farm. Like George Alfred Grundy, they saw no reason why they should not join the campers and share in their freedom and many joys.

True, many of them, like Racke, Mellish, Crooke, or Trimble had, as Tom Merry well knew, no intention of working on the farm; all they wanted was a lazy time of slacking—to rise when they liked, and go to bed when they liked, and to be free from irksome restrictions.

Others, like the enthusiastic Grundy, were ready enough to work; with all his faults, George Alfred was no slacker. He was genuinely in earnest to help Mr. Chubb and to do his share of work on the farm.

But to all of them, slackers and enthusiasts alike, Tom Merry gave the same answer—that it was a matter for the Head, or Mr. Railton to decide who was to join the party.

Thereupon, a steady stream of fellows had gone to interview Mr. Railton—until the irate Housemaster had made it known that the next fellow to worry him in the matter would be caned severely.

There was, as Talbot ruefully put it, "Nothing doing!"

The original seven, in the Head and Mr. Railton's opinion, were quite sufficient to take Mr. Chubb's vacant place on the farm. They had no intention of allowing Chubb's Farm to be over-run with St. Jim's fellows.

So the lucky seven smiled when Crooke stopped them so genially just after dinner.

"Yes, we got back all right!" assented Tom.

"And we have no bananas!" added Lowther.

There was a chuckle, and Crooke flushed a little.

"I once spent a holiday on a farm," he remarked, with apparent carelessness. "No end of a lark, and I picked up a lot about farm work!"

"You don't say!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, what's the joke?"

"You are, Crooke!" said Tom Merry, with a laugh. "It's no good, old chap. Nearly every fellow in the Lower School has been trying it on. Even Figgy, over in the New House, asked us if there was anything doing. If you're keen to join—go and ask Railton."

"He says he'll lick the next fellow who asks," grunted Crooke.

"We know that; that's why we suggest you going, old chap!"

"Look here," urged Crooke. "Don't be so dashed mean! If you mentioned to Railton that you'd like me to join up—"

"I should be telling a lie if I did," said Tom blandly. "I don't like telling lies, old chap. Now buzz off, there's a good chap! There's absolutely nothing doing—for you!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The lucky seven could not help laughing at the sudden change in Crooke's attitude. He stamped away, scowling.

"Hullo! Here's dear old Grundy!" remarked Blake.

"Now for fireworks!"

The juniors looked rather grim as Grundy of the Shell came studding up to them. They were prepared for trouble.

But, for once, Grundy was not in search for trouble.

Grundy, in fact, had decided to overlook the affair of the morning.

The burly Shell fellow was a stickler, and he was keener than ever to join the campers. He realised that his desire could only be brought about by "getting round" Tom Merry & Co.

"I've just been to see Railton!" he said.

"Good!" smiled Tom Merry. "Get a licking?"

Grundy nodded and frowned.

"Two on each hand!" he snorted. "Nice thing for a fellow to get licked because he's keen to carry out the Scout laws and do good turns to people!"

"But would it be doing a good turn to anyone if you did get permission to join us?" asked Tom solemnly.

"Eh? Don't be an ass! Of course it would—to poor old Chubb, and to you fellows, too. I could get through as much solid work as the rest of you put together. Well, Railton's turned me down, but I'm not done yet. Now, I want you fellows to see Railton, to tell him that it'll be absolutely necessary for me to join you; that you need the benefit of my advice and experience. See?"

"Not quite!"

"Does that mean you won't?" snorted Grundy.

"Exactly. You see, by allowing a fumbling duffer like you to join us, we should be doing old Chubb a very bad turn."

"You cheeky rotter!"

"Thanks! Good-bye!"

Tom Merry and his chums strolled on, laughing. Grundy rushed after them, and, catching the captain of the Shell by the arm, he whirled him round. There was a fearful crack as Tom Merry's head came into contact with Blake's.

"Ow!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

"Turn me down, would you?" snorted Grundy. "Now, listen to me, you cheeky— Here—"

Crash!

"Yaroooooh!"

It was Grundy's turn to howl. Tom Merry and Blake walked on after their chums, leaving the great George Alfred sitting on the corridor floor, blinking about him dazedly.

It was some moments before Grundy had regained his scattered senses, and by that time Tom Merry & Co. had vanished into Study No. 5.

"Ow!" gasped Grundy. "The cheeky cads! Why, I'll—I'll—"

He scrambled to his feet, and hurled himself at the closed door of the study. But it was locked as well as closed.

"He, he, he!"

Breathing hard, Grundy turned from the door to find Baggy Trimble regarding him with a grin on his fat face. The grin faded abruptly as Grundy eyed him ferociously.

"If you cackle at me, you fat worm—"

"Nunno! I wasn't grinning at all, Grundy! Honour bright!" gasped Trimble hurriedly. "I wouldn't! I—I say, won't those beasts let you join 'em?"

"They won't!" snapped Grundy. "You sheer off—"

"Hold on!" said Trimble, lowering his voice.

There was something rather mysterious about the fat Fourth-Former. Grundy eyed him, breathing hard. He allowed the fat junior to catch him by the arm, and lead him a few yards further along the passage.

"Look here, Grundy," said Trimble earnestly. "I believe I can work it for us both."

"Work what, you fat rotter?"

"Permission to join those chaps camping-out, of course! Look here—"

"Rot! If you come here with any of your rotten tricks, Trimble—" began Grundy, raising a huge foot.

"Not at all, old chap! I say, it's the genuine goods, Grundy. I've got a lot of influence with old Chubb."

"You have? Bunkum!"

"I tell you I have!" said Trimble eagerly. "You leave it to me, and I tell you I'll work it for us both. I'll ask Chubb to recommend us to the Head. See?"

Grundy had been about to sling Trimble out of his way and walk on, but he paused. There was a chance that Trimble was not "talking out of his hat" as usual.

"If you're spoofing, you fat rotter—" he began again.

"I'm not!" insisted Trimble. "I mean what I say. I can work it. Hand over five bob—"

"What?"

"Half-a-crown, then!" said Trimble, rather startled at Grundy's look.

"You—you fat worm!" hooted Grundy. "I knew it was a cadging dodge! Why, I'll—"

"Here, hold on!" gasped Baggy, as Grundy made a grab at him. "I'm not cadging—honour bright! I shall need half-a-crown for working expenses—to carry the scheme through. I may have to tip somebody to get into touch with old Chubb, of course."

"You fat fibber!" roared Grundy.

"Only half-a-crown!" urged Trimble, eyeing Grundy warily. "Look here, I'm not spoofing, Grundy! Can't you believe a fellow? Half-a-crown, and I'll get you fixed up with Railton. And, if I don't," added Trimble recklessly, "you can lick me! So there!"

Grundy hesitated, eyeing Trimble suspiciously. For Trimble to make such a bargain was something new. After all, it was only a matter of half-a-crown, and the possibility of joining the campers-out, slim as it seemed, was worth it. The burly Shellite rattled some coins in his pocket.

"Is it straight and above board, Trimble?" he demanded.

"Because if it isn't—"

"Straight as a die, old chap!" said Trimble eagerly.

"Think how ripping it will be to dodge prep—I mean to be able to help poor old Chubb! Half-a-crown, and it's done!"

"Right! I'll chance it!" sniffed Grundy, taking out a silver coin, and pitching it across to the fat junior. "But mind, if it's spoof and doesn't come off, I'll either have my half-a-crown back, or take it out of your hide!"

With that Grundy marched away, looking back at Trimble as if he already half-regretted his rashness in trusting that tricky youth.

But Trimble did not mind Grundy's looks—now he had the half-crown. He scurried away, and made for the cycle-shed, taking his cap from his pocket and cramming it on his untidy head as he ran. His own bike was useless, but there were plenty more in the shed to choose from, and, taking Skimpole's machine, Baggy was very soon riding hard up Rylcombe Lane.

There was plenty of time before afternoon classes to get to Rylcombe and back. But Baggy hurried, for that half-crown was burning a hole in his pocket. He went

The St. Jim's Scouts crowded round Grundy, and seven fists were shaken under his nose. "You raving lunatic!" "You chuckle-headed idiot!" "You've burned the bacon, used all the butter, and there's nothing left for breakfast now!" "Smash him!" (See Chapter 3.)



first to the village tuckshop, and, after spending two shillings of the half-crown there, he began to think about the business in hand.

Instead of making for the hospital, however, Baggy made for the telephone-box in the village post-office. The very thought of what Baggy Trimble proposed doing would have made most of the fellows at St. Jim's gasp. But Trimble was not like other fellows. It was a case, once again, of fools rushing in where angels feared to tread.

Baggy was a funk of the first water, but he often carried out reckless schemes, simply because he could not see, in his fatuous blindness, the terrific risk he was running; also, because he rarely looked ahead.

Once in the telephone-box, however, even Baggy hesitated, his heart thumping against his fat ribs. Then, with sudden desperation, he took off the receiver and gave a number. The number he gave was that of St. Jim's.

In a few moments he was put through to the head-master's study, and then Dr. Holmes' deep voice came over the wires. Baggy trembled a little as he heard the voice, but a sudden mental picture of the camp in the pleasant meadows of Chubb's Farm, gave him the courage to answer.

"Hallo!" he said, adopting a deep, husky voice. "That Dr. Holmes?"

"Yes!" came the somewhat impatient answer. "Who is speaking?"

"Mr. Chubb speaking, sir!" replied the fat Fourth-Former, pulling himself together desperately. "Mr. Chubb, of Chubb's Farm, sir. I'm speaking from the Cottage Hospital, sir."

"Mr. Chubb—who— Oh, I see! Ah, yes! What is it, Mr. Chubb?"

The Head's voice was polite, but also rather impatient. Dr. Holmes was very busy at that moment, and he did not like being interrupted—certainly not on the telephone. And he could not imagine what Mr. Chubb—who was almost unknown to him—wanted to speak to him about.

He soon knew.

"I'm—I'm speaking from—from the hospital," repeated

the deep, husky voice of Trimble. "I wished to thank you, sir, for your very great kindness in allowing your boys to help me in my—my extremity, sir."

"Oh! Ah! Quite so, Mr. Chubb! I am very glad indeed that my boys have shown themselves so unselfish and willing, and it has given me great pleasure to support them," said the Head, rather ponderously. "I trust you will soon have recovered from your accident, Mr. Chubb."

The Head hoped that that would end the conversation. But it didn't.

"Thank'ee kindly, sir!" returned Trimble. "I hope you won't think me too expectant if I asks another favour, sir."

"What is that, Mr. Chubb?"

"There's two other young gents that I should like to join the party on my farm, sir," replied Trimble. "Trimble and Grundy their names are, sir, and two fine young fellers they are. Two old friends of mine, sir—lads as can work, and who I can trust to help. I should feel easy, like, if I knowed they were on the job. If you wouldn't mind allowing them to join, I should feel obliged, Dr. Holmes."

There was a pause at the other end—but only a short pause.

"H'm! I have no objection to that, Mr. Chubb," came the answer. "My only reason for restricting the helpers to the original seven was because I imagined you would not wish the farm to be overrun by schoolboys. However, if you desire it—"

"I do, sir!" almost gasped Trimble. "Certainly, sir!"

"Very well! I will arrange for the boys named to join the campers, Mr. Chubb. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, sir!" gasped Trimble.

He rang off, and fairly tumbled out of the telephone-box, mopping his perspiring brow. It had been easier than he had dreamed—and it had "come off." Baggy Trimble grinned gleefully as he mounted his machine—or, rather Skimmey's machine—and peddled back to St. Jim's. He arrived back just in time to spend the fourpence left out

of the half-crown at the tuckshop before the bell rang for classes. It had certainly been worth the risk.

In the Head's study—little dreaming of the "dodge" played upon his august person—Dr. Holmes was scribbling two brief notes, one to Mr. Lathom of the Fourth, and one to Mr. Linton of the Shell. Being such a trifling matter, Dr. Holmes did not bother to trouble Mr. Railton. This was just as well for Baggy Trimble, for the Housemaster, not being so busy as the Head, might possibly have wondered how Mr. Chubb, a bed-ridden patient, had managed to use the telephone at the Cottage Hospital, which might have proved awkward for Trimble.

CHAPTER 5.

Work for Baggy!

"TRIMBLE'S looking chirpy!" remarked Jack Blake. "Perhaps his remittance has come!" grinned Digby. "The one he's been expecting since last term, I mean!"

"He's wearing trouser-clips!" said Herries. "My hat! Where the dickens has he been?"

With smiling curiosity, Blake & Co. stared at Baggy Trimble as he hurried towards the Form-room. Baggy certainly was wearing trouser-clips, and he had obviously been hurrying, for he was perspiring, and his fat little face was red with exertion.

He gave the juniors a fat grin.

"What's the joke, Trimble?" demanded Blake. "Or have you come into a fortune, old fat bean?"

"Yaas, wathah! I am vewy glad to see you lookin' so chirpy, deah boy. You had bettah take off your twousah-clips, howevah, or Mr. Lathom will be wantin' to know where you've been, Twimble."

"Oh crumbs!"

Trimble hurriedly removed the trouser-clips and pocketed them.

"It's all right!" he said cheerily. "I've just been out for a little run—exercise, you know. I say, you fellows, has the Head been asking for me?"

"Asking for you?" echoed Blake, staring. "Why the dickens should the Head ask for you, Trimble?"

"You never know!" said Trimble, with a smirk. "I say, I hope you fellows have plenty of grub at the camp. If I'm to get a heap of work done I shall need plenty of nourishing food."

"What on earth is the fat ass gassing about?" asked Blake.

"Bai Jove! Does the fat wottah imagine he is goin' to join us at the farm?" said Gussy, eyeing the grinning Trimble through his eyeglass very curiously. "Weally, Twimble—"

"He'd better jolly well imagine something else, then!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He, he, he! You'll see!" grinned Trimble, quite enjoying the thought of the surprise in store for Blake & Co. "I'm joining you right enough—this evening, too!"

"You're jolly well not!"

"Oh, why waste time gassing with the fat idiot?" snorted Herries. "He's spoofing, of course."

"Am I?" said Trimble cheerily. "You'll see! I've arranged it all with the Head, and I'm joining you fellows this evening!"

"Rats!"

"You can join me sooner than that!" grinned Blake. "Here's my boot, Trimble!"

"Yarrooogh!"

"Blake!"

It was Mr. Lathom's scandalised voice. He rustled up and looked severely at Blake.

"How dare you kick Trimble, Blake!" he said sternly. "I am surprised at you!"

"Only a joke, sir!" gasped Blake, flushing. "I didn't really hurt him."

"You should not play such rough jokes, Blake!"

Having admonished Blake, the master of the Fourth turned to Trimble, who was rubbing himself indignantly.

"Ah, Trimble!" he said, eyeing the fat youth rather curiously. "I have just received a note from Dr. Holmes in regard to you, my boy."

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Trimble, brightening up.

"He wishes me to inform you that permission is granted for you to join the boys who are camping-out on Chubb's Farm," proceeded Mr. Lathom.

"Oh, good, sir! I knew it would be all right—"

"What?"

"I mean, I knew the Head would choose a hard-working fellow like me, sir," Trimble hastened to add.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Lathom grimly. "For my part, I am only astounded that Dr. Holmes should choose the

laziest boy in my Form for such a purpose. However, I trust you will, for once, prove worthy of his selection."

"Bai Jove!"

"Is—is that right, sir?" Blake could hardly believe his ears. "Is Trimble to join us on Chubb's Farm?"

"Yes, Blake—it is the headmaster's order, my boy. Trimble will accompany you to the camp this evening."

With that Mr. Lathom swept into the Form-room.

"He, he, he!" grinned Trimble, eyeing the astounded four triumphantly. "I told you so, didn't I? He, he—Yooooop!"

Blake's boot cut his triumphant remarks short.

Fortunately, Mr. Lathom had vanished into the Form-room, and Blake and his chums marched in after him. That Trimble had been allowed to join them, when other fellows—decent fellows like Figgins and Levison and Clive—had been refused, was amazing.

But there it was—such a thing had happened.

Almost in a dazed state, Blake & Co. took their places in the Form-room.

Trimble was a fellow who never could keep anything to himself, and soon all the Form knew. Naturally, the news caused astonishment, and no little resentment. Why a fat idiot like Trimble should get permission when other fellows had been turned down, certainly was a mystery—to all but Trimble. The fat youth could scarcely contain his glee.

In the Shell Form-room, something similar had happened in regard to Grundy—as Blake & Co. found out quickly enough at the end of afternoon class.

"Well, I'm blown!" gasped Blake, as Tom Merry related the news that Grundy had also been given permission. "This beats the band! The two most footling duifers in all St. Jim's! We're jolly well not standing it, Tommy!"

"We'll have to, I'm afraid," said Tom, with a rueful laugh. "Still, although we can't help Trimble and Grundy joining in, it doesn't mean that they'll have such a jolly time as they think. If Trimble comes, he's got to work."

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!"

"I see the idea!" grinned Blake.

"Another thing," said Tom; "we're all expected to find our own grub on this game. If Trimble comes, he finds his own grub or goes without. He's got to do his fair whack of work and find his own grub."

"Good wheeze!" grinned Blake.

"As for Grundy—well, we know he'll work all right, and we know he'll pay his whack all right. But if he starts any of his funny little games he gets it in the neck, as he did this morning. That's the programme!"

"Good egg!"

"And now let's be off!" said Tom briskly. "We'll have a quick tea at the camp to-day."

"Wight-ho!"

As they were leaving the school Baggy Trimble spotted them.

"Hold on, you fellows!" he called. "I've not changed into my Scout's togs yet!"

"Rats!"

"Here, wait for me—"

"Bow-wow!"

In a laughing group Tom Merry & Co. started off for the farm. Trimble was blissfully ignorant of the reason for their laughter, however. Had he known he would not have been so self-satisfied as he was. Baggy hadn't the faintest intention of working on the farm, or providing his own food. He was booked for an unpleasant awakening.

To their relief, Tom Merry & Co. found all in order at the farm, and Bill Pegfold soon set them their jobs for the evening, after they had snatched a hurried meal at the camp. They had just finished tea when Grundy came trotting up, looking burlier than ever in his Scout's clothes.

"Why the thump didn't you fellows wait for me?" he snorted. "Well, now I'm really on the job you'll see some work done. I think I'll take on the milking."

"I'm just going to help Pegfold to finish that job," smiled Tom Merry. "Where's Trimble?"

"Blessed if I know. In the tuckshop, I expect. The little worm touched me for half-a-crown just as I was starting out."

"And you were ass enough to give it him?" ejaculated Dig.

"Yes, you see, I was so jolly—" Grundy paused. He had been so delighted at Trimble's astonishing success that he had handed over another half-crown willingly enough. How the fat youth had "wangled it" was a mystery to Grundy, nor would Trimble enlighten him. Still, he had brought it off, and that was all that mattered. But Grundy felt it wiser, knowing Trimble as he did, not to mention his little bargain with the fat junior. "You—you see," he went on, "I was glad to get rid of the fat cadger, for one thing. Now, what about that milking?"

"Nothing about it for you, old chap. I'm in charge by the Head's orders," said Tom pleasantly. "My orders are

to send back any fellow who misbehaves himself, Grundy."

Grundy frowned. He himself had intended to be in charge. But he saw it would not pay to dispute the junior skipper's authority yet.

"Oh, all right!" he grunted. "I'm ready for work. Where's my job, then?"

"There," answered Tom Merry, pointing to a pile of logs. "That little lot's to be sawn into logs for fires. That's the first job for you and Trimble."

"Trimble? Am I to work with that fat slacker?" hooted Grundy.

"Yes, old chap. I don't know how you and Trimble have wangled yourselves into getting permission to camp out," said Tom grimly; "but I'm jolly sure there's been some spoofing game somewhere. Anyway, you're here, and I can't clear you out. But I'm jolly well going to see Trimble works as well as you!"

"Well, aren't I going to work?" roared Grundy indignantly.

"I don't doubt it, old chap. I will say you're no slacker, Grundy. But that fat worm is, and he's got to do his whack. I'm putting him to work with you, Grundy, because I know you'll see he does work."

It was a very diplomatic remark for Tom to make, and it had its effect on Grundy.

"Work!" he exclaimed, looking grim as he rolled back his sleeves. "Yes, I'll make the little rotter work! My hat! Yes, rather! You leave him to me, you fellows!"

"Talk of angels!" grinned Lowther. "Here he is now!"

CHAPTER 6.

Baggy Departs!

TRIMBLE came rolling into the farmyard, a fat grin on his face. There was a smear of jam on his cheeks and another smear on his fat little nose. In his Scout's clothes Trimble looked more like a scarecrow than anything else.

"Here I am, you fellows!" he grinned. "I say, is tea ready? I was going straight on to the camp, but I spotted you fellows here. I hope tea's ready, for I'm jolly hungry!"

"Hungry, are you?" said Grundy. "After a study tea and a feed in the tuckshop—what? My hat!"

"He means hungry for work!" said Lowther.

"Oh, really, Lowther—"

"Hungry, are you?" repeated Grundy grimly. "Right, I'll feed you, Trimble! Take your thumping jacket off—I mean, roll your giddy sleeves up! Sharp's the word!"

"M-my sleeves up? Wha-what for?"

"Work, of course! There's the saw. Get hold of the other end, lard tub!"

Trimble went quite pale as he glanced round apprehensively at the grinning faces.

"Look here!" he gasped, in alarm. "I'm not jolly well going to do any rotten sawing! No fear! I want my tea!"

"Grab that saw!" roared Grundy. "You're going to help me saw those logs up, Trimble! You've come here to work, you fat fraud! Look lively!"

Grundy set his lips.

"M-my hat! Me saw those rotten logs up! I'm jolly well not!" howled Trimble. "I want my tea, you grinning rotters! Besides, I can't saw. I've just hurt my wrist—sprained it, in fact. Fell down the School House steps just as I was starting out, you know. Awful nuisance, isn't it?"

"Hand me that Scout's staff, Trimble!"

"Wha-what for?"

"To tan your fat hide with if you don't take hold of that saw!" roared Grundy. "Like this!"

Crack!

"Yoooop!"

Grabbing the staff from Trimble's hand, Grundy gave him a light tap on the head with the end of it.

"No good, Trimble!" grinned Tom Merry. "The Head's given you permission to come here to work. We're going to see you do!"

"Yow! Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trimble's dismay was a picture.

"Look here," he howled at last, "I'm jolly well going to the camp for my tea! I—I'll come back and saw logs afterwards!"

And he started to roll away. Grundy was after him in a flash. He hooked a big hand in Trimble's shirt and yanked him back. Then he planted a heavy boot behind the fat junior.

"Get hold of that saw!" bellowed Grundy.

"Yow! Oh, you beast, Grundy! After all I've done for you—after working the dodge and getting you here—"

"What's that?" said Blake.

"I mean, after—after promising to show Grundy how to do farmwork!" gasped Trimble. "You—Ow! All right!" he yelled, in alarm, as Grundy grabbed the staff again. "I'll work, you beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no help for it. Trimble saw that now. It was useless to argue, or plead, and it was useless to think of flight. Before he could get a dozen yards Grundy would easily catch him up.

With a groan Baggy Trimble grabbed the saw-handle, and Grundy chuckled and grabbed the other handle. The rest of the farm workers dispersed to their various jobs, laughing. They knew now that Trimble would work.

And Trimble did.

The saw began to bite into the wood, Grundy at one end and Trimble at the other. After about a dozen strokes Trimble was breathless, and he halted.

"What the thump are you stopping for?" demanded Grundy.

"Yow! Oh crumbs! I'm tired!" gasped Trimble.

Whack!

"Yoooop!"

"That's what you get every time you stop!" said Grundy, throwing the staff down again. "I'm jolly glad you brought your staff, Trimble! Grab that handle!"

"Look here—Ow! Oh, all right!" howled Trimble.

He grabbed the handle again, and the sawing went on.

It was not an easy job, even to the burly Grundy. It was a nightmare to the fat and flabby Trimble.

But Grundy gave him no respite.

During the next twenty minutes the staff was brought into use about twenty times, and Trimble was almost weeping by that time. He was also panting hoarsely for breath, aching from head to foot, crimson in the face with exertion, and fairly streaming with perspiration.

But the last log was cut. Trimble almost fainted in

(Continued on next page.)



A Fine Long Tale

IN EACH OF THESE SPLENDID VOLUMES.

THE BOYS' FRIEND 4d. LIBRARY

No. 141.—**THE FOOTBALL PRINCE.** A Corking Yarn of Close-season Soccer. By ROBERT MURRAY.

No. 142.—**SONS OF THE MEN OF MONS.** A Stunning Story of War Thrills. By ALFRED EDGAR.

No. 143.—**CAPTAIN MOONLIGHT.** A Thrilling Tale of Adventure. By FRANCIS WARWICK.

No. 144.—**CHUMS OF THE CIRCUS.** A Stirring Yarn of Boxing and Circus Life. By WALTER EDWARDS.

THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN 4d. LIBRARY.

No. 75.—**TAMING A BULLY.** A Rousing Story of School life, featuring Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

No. 76.—**THE FIGHTING FORM-MASTER.** A Topping School Tale, starring the cheery chums of Rookwood. By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE SEXTON BLAKE 4d. LIBRARY.

No. 141.—**THE MYSTERY OF MITCHAM COMMON.** Sexton Blake, Tinker, and Splash Page in a thrilling detective novel.

No. 142.—**THE ADVENTURE OF SPEED-MAD CAMDEN.** A gripping mixture of detective work and motor racing.

No. 143.—**THE RIDDLE OF THE PHANTOM PLAGUE.** A fascinating tale of baffling mystery.

No. 144.—**THE CASE OF THE BOGUS MONK.** Further daring escapades of George Plummer and his partner Vali Mata-Valli.

deep relief. He gave one glance at the pile and then collapsed on to it, utterly whacked to the world.

Tom Merry came along just then, having finished milking. He grinned down at Trimble.

"Finished that lot, then?" he remarked. "Good! If you want more to be going on with, you can carry on with chopping those saplings down at the far end of the orchard—the other side of the fence."

"Oh, my hat!" panted Grundy. "Oh, all right! I'll be ready in a few seconds! Just let me get my wind back. It'll be a change from sawing, and that fat rotter's no good at it; leaves all the dashed work to me!"

"Yow! Oh dear!" panted Trimble.

"Buck up and get ready for those saplings," said Grundy. "No slacking, Trimble."

Trimble glowered.

"Me?" he howled, mopping away at his crimson face with his handkerchief. "You—you jolly well want me to do more work?"

"Of course!" grinned Grundy, mopping his own face.

"Certainly!" said Tom Merry. "Old Chubb wants that bit of ground cleared as soon as possible. We've already made a start on the trees. All you've got to do is to chop 'em down, and then drag 'em here. After all, they're only saplings, and the work will take some of your fat down, Trimble!"

Trimble staggered to his feet. He was seething with wrath and indignation. He was aching all over, and the thought of more work made him shudder. He glared and glared in speechless fury.

"Oh, you—you rotters!" he panted. "You can go and eat coke, you beasts! You—you can chop the beastly trees down yourselves, you beasts! I'm done, and I'm not jolly well going to do another stroke! So there!"

It was mutiny with a vengeance. Grundy reached for the Scout's staff.

"Your own fault, Trimble!" grinned Tom Merry. "Only workers are wanted here, old fat man! You've wangled yourself here somehow, and you've got to play up! If you don't like work, you'd better take your fat hook out of this, and don't come back again!"

"That he jolly well won't!" snorted Grundy. "He's got permission to come, and he's jolly well going to stay and work like the rest of us!"

He made a rush at Trimble. The fat Fourth-Former howled and fled, his fat little legs going like clockwork.

"After him!" roared Grundy.

"Yooooop!"

Across the yard went Trimble. Despite his exhausted state, he flew like the wind, for Grundy had grabbed the staff up. Scarcely had Baggy started, however, when he stumbled on the cobbled yard and went down on his hands and knees. Grundy, being just behind him, went sprawling headlong over him, coming into painful contact with the cobbles.

"Yarrooooooh!"

It was Grundy's turn to roar, and he did roar. His howl of pain and wrath could have been heard at Rylcombe. He scrambled up again, bellowing with fury, and went on after Trimble.

"Help!" roared Trimble. "Keep him off!"

Grundy's yell was certainly terrifying, and it was no wonder Trimble was alarmed. He flew across the yard, and made a mad and desperate leap over the farmyard wall—or what he imagined was the farmyard wall. As it happened, it was merely the brick wall of the piggyery.

Trimble—for all his weight and exhaustion—cleared it like a bird. Unfortunately, he landed right in the midst of four fat pigs who were busily and noisily feeding at the feeding-trough.

Crash!

"Yooooooooop!"

Trimble's howl of fright and pain was enough to awaken the celebrated Seven Sleepers. But even Trimble's howl was drowned in the terrified squeals from the startled pigs.

The terrific uproar brought Bill Pegfold and all seven of the amateur farmers rushing to the spot. Tom Merry was almost weeping with laughter. The rest looked over the wall of the pigsty.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help!" shrieked Trimble. "Help! Murder! Fire! help!"

Trimble needed help at the moment. He had somehow managed to land astride one of the big porkers, which disliked the present state of affairs quite as much as Trimble did. It was charging round the walled-in enclosure, squealing madly and angrily. The rest of the pigs were also rushing about in the same way.

The air resounded with the porkers' squeals and with Trimble's terrified howls.

"Better let the fat ass out!" laughed Tom Merry.

"Leave him in!" choked Lowther. "He's fairly in his

element now! Let him frolic with his relations if he wants to!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help!" shrieked Trimble.

The fat junior clung on desperately to the back of the porker. It was a very precarious mount, but he dare not let go. Tom Merry ignored Lowther's advice. He leaned over the low door, and, withdrawing the bolt, swung the door wide.

It was rather an unwise proceeding, for the instant the door was open, the porker, bearing Trimble on its back, charged through, squealing madly. Only just in time did Tom slam the door again to prevent the rest of the excited pigs from following.

"Tally-ho! Yoicks!" called Lowther. "Two to one on the Trimble brothers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better stop this!" said Bill Pegfold, grinning.

"Yaas, wathah! I'm afwaid Twimble will get hurt, deah boys!"

Trimble did get hurt. The terrified porker only carried him a few yards, and then he rebelled. He pulled up abruptly, and the hapless Trimble went slithering over his head, to land sprawling on the ground.

Unfortunately for Trimble, there happened to be a bed of nettles just at the corner of the yard. Trimble plunged forward into them on his face.

"Yarrooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In a way it was lucky that there were no cobbles just there, and, on the other hand, it was unlucky the nettles were there instead. Trimble fairly wallowed in them.

"Let me get at the fat rotter!" roared Grundy, rushing up. "I'll—I'll smash him to mincemeat!"

"No, you won't!" laughed Tom Merry, holding the irate Grundy back. "The fat ass has had enough, I fancy, Grundy!"

"Yow-ow!" wailed Trimble, sitting up in the nettles. "Yow! My backbone's broken, and I'm stung all over!"

Yow! Oh, my hat! Yow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake and Arthur Augustus helped the hapless Trimble to stagger to his feet. Bill Pegfold had already caught the still squealing porker, and was shepherding it into the sty.

"Never mind!" said Blake kindly. "All in the game, Trimble!"

"Yaas, wathah! In a good cause, deah boy!"

"Get on with some more work, and you won't feel the pain!" grinned Lowther.

"Yow! Oh dear! I'm jolly well not doing any more work!" wailed Trimble. "Keep that beast Grundy off, you fellows! I've had enough! Yow! I'm going back to St. Jim's! Wow! I've had enough of this! Grooooh!"

"Oh, good!"

"Good man, Trimble!"

"Open that yard gate for Trimble, someone! He's going home!"

"Three cheers for Trimble! Good-bye, old man!"

"Beasts!"

Trimble glowered round at the grinning juniors. It did not seem to please him to hear the remarks of relief at the news that he was going, and that he had had enough.

"Beasts!" he repeated indignantly. "You're all beasts, and Grundy's the biggest beast of the lot! I'm fed-up! I absolutely refuse to stay and help you any longer! I'll thank you to leave me alone, D'Arcy!"

Arthur Augustus, who had been about to do a Scout's good turn by brushing Trimble down, ceased doing so. Trimble glared about him furiously, and staggered away, still mopping his heated, tingling face. To fall face downwards into a thick bed of nettles is not a nice experience, and it was no wonder the fat youth was wrathful. He fairly tottered through the gate Herries kindly held open, and a yell of laughter followed him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trimble's start as a farmer's boy had not been a success.

CHAPTER 7.

A Little Error!

"N OW for those trees!"

Trimble had vanished, and the rest of the amateur farm-hands had gone about their work again. They were not heartbroken at the thought of losing Trimble. Somehow, they had quite expected the fat Fourth-Former to depart when he realised he was going to be forced to work. Trimble did not like work—unless it was the work required of his masticating apparatus. Trimble never minded overworking his chin or his jaws.

Only George Alfred was disappointed at Trimble going. Grundy had quite enjoyed making Baggy work, and he

had been quite looking forward to making him work still more.

Now he was obliged to do the job of cutting down the saplings on his own. Actually, it was not a very urgent job, though Mr. Chubb wanted the ground cleared. But Tom Merry had given the job to Grundy and Trimble just to keep them out of the way—a little circumstance about which Grundy, perhaps fortunately, was blissfully ignorant.

None the less, it was a job after George Alfred's own heart. He was a burly, lusty fellow, and chopping trees—even young saplings—was a job that appealed to him. So, having been told by Tom Merry just where the trees stood, Grundy was eager now to get to work. Shouldering his long, woodman's axe and carrying a saw, Grundy started off through the orchard.

He reached the end of it, and pushing his way through the gap in the fence, found himself on a short stretch of what appeared to him to be waste ground. In one corner of it were several straggling young trees. The rest of the ground was covered with bracken and ferns.

"What the dickens is this?" muttered Grundy, eyeing the trees scornfully. "Old Chubb can't want—Oh, I see!"

Grundy understood—or thought he did. Beyond the patch of ground was a hedge, and beyond that Grundy

little matter of trespassing—as had more than one St. Jim's fellow. Farmer Simpkins was not a kindly man, and he was not popular—either with his neighbours or anyone else. He was crusty and very bad-tempered.

He seemed to be in a particularly bad temper now. He was fairly bellowing as he came charging through the trees. He came up with a rush, and before the startled Grundy had realised it, he had grabbed the junior by the collar of his shirt. With his free hand he shook a stick in front of Grundy's face.

"What game's this?" he bellowed furiously. "You—you impudent rascal! You—you confounded young villain! Cutting down my best Blenheims, hey? What the thunder—"

"Leggo!" roared Grundy, astonished and angry. "Leggo! What the dickens—"

"Cut down my trees would you?" booted Farmer Simpkins.

"Rot!" Grundy glared up at him. "Rubbish! Your trees, eh? Think I don't know what I'm doing? If you don't leggo and clear off this property, I'll—I'll punch your nose, big as you are!"

"P-punch my nose!" repeated the farmer in choking accents. "C-clear off my own property! Good gad! You—you—"



RALPH RECKNESS IN THE LIMELIGHT AGAIN!

Ralph Reckness Cardew of the Fourth thinks the world of young Frank Levison of the Third Form, and would go to any lengths to help him out of a quandary. But Cardew's peculiar methods of "doing good by stealth" do not always work out according to plan. Once more Cardew "puts his foot in it" and causes a lot of anxiety and unpleasantness when, at heart, all he wanted was to do Frank Levison a good turn. That's just like Cardew; still, no one likes him the less when the full facts become known. All "Gemites" will thoroughly enjoy

"FOR FRIENDSHIP'S SAKE!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD,

next week's stirring yarn of school life and adventure at St. Jim's.

Order Your Copy of the "GEM"
To-day, Boys!

could see quite a number of trees, some of them quite big ones.

"Those must be the ones," mused Grundy. "Old Chubb can't want these for firewood—too small for one thing."

There was no gap visible in the hedge, but Grundy soon made one by squeezing his way through. He saw then that the trees nearest him were in bloom.

"Crab-apple trees, I expect!" said Grundy, who knew as much about trees as he did about most things. Here goes, anyway! These are worth a chap's time cutting down!"

Dropping the saw, Grundy made a start with the axe on the first tree.

Clang, clang, clang!

Grundy put his "beef" into it, and the ring of the axe gave him a great deal of satisfaction. It was really hard work, but Grundy enjoyed it.

He did not get the chance to enjoy it more than three minutes, however. A sudden shout caused him to cease work and look round him.

The Shell junior's eyes opened wide at the sight of a burly individual, whom Grundy recognised as a crusty old farmer named Simpkins, who owned the next farm to Chubb Farm. Grundy, on one occasion, had had trouble with him over a

Words failed the farmer. Instead he fell back on actions. He twisted Grundy round into a suitable position, and then he brought his stick down.

Whack!

"Yaroooooogh!"

It was a terrific whack, and Grundy's yell was ear-splitting. It reached the ears of Blake, Herries, Lowther and Manners who were hoeing potatoes in a field a short distance away. They looked at each other, quite startled.

"Grundy again!" said Blake. "What on earth is he up to now? Come on! Something may be wrong!"

Something certainly was wrong—for Grundy. For the irate farmer did not stop at that first whack—he went on and on.

"I'll durned well teach you to come cutting my best Blenheims down, dang you!" he roared.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yooooooph! Yow! Leggo!" shrieked Grundy, almost beside himself with rage and indignation. "Help! Leggo! Yooooooph! Oh, crikey! Yaroooooogh!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Farmer Simpkins was fairly letting himself go. But a sudden, terrific wrench from Grundy ended it. The wrench

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

tore Grundy's collar, but he was free and he made the most of it. Even the great George Alfred realised that it would be injudicious in the extreme to attempt to punch the nose of Farmer Simpkins, who fairly towered over him. The only thing was flight.

Grundy flew—a last blind swipe almost flooring him as he jumped desperately away. He was through the hedge in a flash, and he did not stop running until he was half-way through the orchard beyond. A glance behind had shown him that Farmer Simpkins was not following.

He stopped, and as he did so Blake & Co. came rushing into the orchard. They stared blankly at the gasping, groaning Grundy.

"What's happened?" demanded Blake.

"Happened?" panted Grundy, fairly seething with fury and indignation. "I've been assaulted—thrashed by that old rotter Simpkins! I—I'll report the rotter to the police for this! Thrashed me—all for nothing! Came into that ground beyond the orchard—trespassing on old Chubb's property, you know! I was just chopping one of the trees down and the brute rushed at me! Thrashed me—me, you know! Ow-yow! Oh, crikey! I'm a mass of bruises and aches!"

"My hat!" gasped Blake. "Is that a fact? Did old Simpkins do it, Grundy?"

"Of course! Aren't I telling you?" howled Grundy.

"Look here, come on, you fellows, and we'll handle the brute—we'll teach the rotter to handle a St. Jim's chap like that! Come on!"

"Yes, but—"

"Come on, you rotten funks!" bellowed George Alfred, yearning for vengeance. "Thrashed me—me, you know! All for nothing! Came in as if he owned the dashed ground! Back me up!"

"Yes, but hold on a bit!" said Blake. "Sure you haven't made a giddy mistake, Grundy—you know what you are, old chap!"

"Look here—"

"Where was the tree you were cutting down?" grinned Blake, beginning to guess at the truth. "Was it in the ground beyond this?"

"Eh? Of course not! Tom Merry told me to cut down those trees at the far end there—some crab-apple trees or something they are. Well—"

"Oh, my hat! That's old Simpkins' orchard, you born idiot!"

"Wha-what?"

"It is, you burbling chump!" gasped Blake. "Old Chubb's ground ends in the waste bit at the end of this!"

"Rot! Bunkum!" snorted Grundy. "Think I don't know? There's only a few mingy little trees there—not worth cutting up for firewood!"

"It wasn't wanted for firewood, you idiot! Chubb only wanted the ground cleared. Oh, you—you duffer! You've started cutting down old Simpkins' orchard. No wonder he walloped you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared at the expression on Grundy's face. He could not doubt the truth now. Indeed, it was the only way to account for Mr. Simpkins' fury and treatment of him.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Grundy. "Oh, my hat! Is—that a fact, Blake? Does Chubb's ground end there?"

"Of course! That's Simpkins' orchard, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I've left the thumping axe and the thumping saw in there!" scowled Grundy. "One of you fellows might go and fetch them."

"Not much!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll all go, though," said Blake, wiping his eyes. "You'll be the death of me yet, Grundy—or of your giddy self. Better leave tree-felling to someone else after this, old chap, and come and help us weed potatoes. You can't do much damage then."

And they all went, Grundy being too subdued at the moment, even to attempt to "wallop" Blake for his cheek. They went through the orchard very cautiously, and after scouting round a bit discovered that Farmer Simpkins had gone—they just got a glimpse of his burly form disappearing in the distance.

At the same moment Manners spotted the axe and saw lying on the grass in the patch of waste ground. The tools had obviously been pitched over the hedge by the irate and justly indignant Mr. Simpkins. Grundy picked them up, and they started back, Grundy limping and gasping, and his companions grinning. And very soon, his enthusiasm for felling trees quite gone, George Alfred Grundy was engaged under supervision—at the much less exciting task of hoeing potatoes.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

CHAPTER 8.

Trimble in the Wars!

"PHEW! I'm tired!"

"Same here!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry & Co. were tired—extremely tired. Fit and healthy as they were, the hard manual labour had tired them out. But they had enjoyed it, and they had the satisfaction of knowing they had done a good evening's work.

"I'm hungry, too!" added Herries. "Farm work gives a chap no end of an appetite."

"Well, I think we'll all enjoy a good supper to-night!"

remarked Tom Merry. "There's plenty of eggs, some potted meat, and that rabbit-pie we brought along from the tuckshop."

"Oh, good!"

"Ripping!"

In the dusk of the summer evening the schoolboy farm-



The St. Jim's Scouts were lined up inside the cattle-pen and the Grammar long feeding-trough up and placed it under their noses. "Ha, ha, ha!" r youths. "Look at 'em! Be they cows or

workers tramped their weary way across the meadows towards the camp with thoughts of the rabbit-pie, the potted meat, and the eggs uppermost in their minds.

"Clover-cutting to-morrow!" said Tom Merry. "It's not a big field, but we shall require all hands on the job. It'll take us all Wednesday afternoon to finish it, though. Here we are!"

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, jamming his eyeglass into place and scanning the camping ground. "Someone has been heah, deah boys. We left the camp nice and tidy, and now look at it."

"A jolly funny smell, too!" said Blake, sniffing. "Smells as if something's burn— Oh, mum-my hat! Look at the spirit stove. Who the thump—"

He ran over to the spirit-stove which stood upon a box. It was burning, and upon the tripod was a small saucepan. From the saucepan pungent-smelling smoke was issuing.

"Well, I'm blowed!" gasped Tom Merry. "Some silly idiot's been here boiling something and forgotten to put out the flame. The dashed saucepan's burned dry. No wonder it was smelling. Any of you asses been here during the evening?"

There was a general shaking of heads.

"Have you, Grundy?" demanded Tom wrathfully.

"Of course I haven't!" snorted Grundy. "Why should you think I had?"

Tom Merry did not answer that question. If anyone had done it belonging to the party, it was more likely to be Grundy than anyone else. But he did not tell Grundy that. Yet who was responsible? He looked blankly at his chums.

Blake put out the spirit-stove and kicked the saucepan away. The bottom was almost burnt out, and it would never be of any use again to the campers or anyone else. He had just done so when Manners gave a startled exclamation.

"There's someone in our tent!" he gasped. "Listen."

"Sounds like an animal!" said Herries. "A wandering cow—"

"Cow be blowed!" said Blake. "It's a pig or a dog!"

The curious rumbling and grunting coming from the Shell tent certainly sounded like an animal of some sort, and a general rush was made for the tent. Tom Merry reached it first, and dragged aside the flap.

Then he howled.

"Trimble!"

It was Trimble.

The fat youth lay on Tom Merry's bed, and he was



Grammarians tied their hands to their ankles. Then Gordon Gay dragged a ... roared the Grammarians. "Haw, haw, haw!" echoed the village ... or pigs, maister?" (See Chapter 12.)

sleeping heavily and snoring heavily. The question of the kind of animal it was making that strange noise was solved at once. It was Trimble.

They blinked at him in amazement, having believed him to be safe at St. Jim's. Obviously Trimble had not gone, after all. He had not had enough of the schoolboy campers if he had had enough of farmwork. He lay on his back, snoring, his mouth wide open, and wearing a fat and satisfied smile of content.

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

"The—the fat rotter!" gasped Tom Merry. "He's been raiding the grub, of course. Have a look round, chaps!"

"Shush! I'll wake him up!" murmured Lowther.

The other juniors ran to the store-box. As they feared, it had been raided—on a wholesale scale. All the eggs had gone, all the rabbit-pie had gone, and likewise the potted-meat. The stock of food had been transferred from the store-box to Baggy's interior.

A howl of wrath went up from the campers. At the same moment Lowther came staggering in with a bucket of water. He was about to empty it over the slumbering Trimble when Tom Merry pulled him back.

"My pallsies! You'll drench it!" he howled in alarm. "Stop, you ass!"

The warning came just in time. Lowther drew back with the bucket.

"Yank the fat rotter out, then!" gasped Manners. "The—the worm!"

Blake grabbed one leg of the slumbering Baggy, and Manners grabbed the other. They hauled, and a wild howl escaped Baggy as he awoke abruptly, to find himself being whirled out of the tent.

"Yarrooooooooooogh!"

It was rough measures, but the juniors were not in the mood to be gentle—far from it. The sight of the raided larder had made them hungrier still—and exceedingly wrathful. Baggy travelled out of the tent at a great speed, and mainly on the back of his head.

Outside the tent his legs were released, and Lowther jumped forward with the bucket.

Swoosh!

"Yaroooh! Gug, gug, gug!"

Baggy's wild yell ended in a gurgle. He was as wide-awake now as he was ever likely to be. He sat up, gasping frantically, with cold water streaming from his face and head.

"Take that!" snorted Lowther. "Let that be a little lesson to you, you fat grub-raider!"

"That's not enough!" gasped Herries excitedly. "Smash the little worm! Kick him out—send him back to St. Jim's!"

"Here, leave the young rotter to me!" snorted Grundy.

Grundy was as hungry as any of them, and far more wrathful. He grabbed a Scout's staff and would have started on the yelling Baggy there and then, but Tom Merry held him back.

"He's had enough for the moment!" said Tom grimly. "Now, Trimble, you fat worm! Off you go while you're alive! Clear!"

"Yow-wow! Groooooogh!" gurgled Trimble. "Oh, you awful beasts! It wasn't me. I never touched the grub!"

"You fat fibber!" roared Grundy. "Lemme get at him!"

"Ow! Keep him off!" yelled Trimble. "Keep that beast Grundy away!"

"I'll smash the fat toad! Here, lemme get at him!"

"Ow! You are a beast, Grundy!" yelled Trimble. "After doing what I did for you—taking an awful risk like I did just to get you in the party. You might have a bit of gratitude, you awful rotter! If I hadn't worked the stunt you wouldn't be here now."

"Eh? What's that?" said Tom Merry, looking at Grundy. "Did Trimble work a dodge to get you here, Grundy?"

"Yes, I suppose he did!" grunted Grundy, after a pause. "Blessed if I know how the little worm wangled it, though. Still, he got five bob for doing it. He said he had influence with old Chubb, and I suppose he's wangled it that way."

"My hat! So that's it!" said Tom wrathfully. "That little sweep's been worrying Mr. Chubb!"

"I haven't!" shouted Trimble excitedly. "I never did—I know nothing about getting Grundy here. Don't believe him, you fellows. As for telephoning to the Head and pretending I was old Chubb, why, I never even thought of doing such a thing."

"Bai Jove!"

"Phew!"

"You—you spoofing little rascal!" breathed Tom Merry, eyeing the grovelling fat youth blankly. "So that's how you worked it. You telephoned to the Head—"

"Didn't I say I didn't telephone to the Head?" shrieked Trimble in sudden alarm. "Nothing of the kind! I never even went near the Rycombe post office. I haven't left the school at all to-day—not been through the doors."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was all out now. The juniors remembered having seen Trimble come into the School House at noon, wearing trouser-clips and covered in perspiration. They understood why now. Trimble had been to the post office in Rycombe to telephone to the Head.

"Well, my only hat!" stuttered Tom Merry. "Fancy spoofing the Head himself like that! Don't you realise it would mean the sack, perhaps, if you were found out?"

"Yow! I tell you I didn't! Don't I keep telling you?" gasped Trimble, wondering how on earth they had found out his guilty secret. "I never even thought of such a thing. If that beast in the post office told you I was there just after dinner, he's telling fibs! Besides, I didn't go near the telephone; I only went in for a stamp! It was like this—"

"That's enough; we don't want to hear any fairy yarns!" said Tom Merry warmly. "You're a spoofing, tricky little sweep, Trimble! But this settles you, old fat man! The Head said I was to send home any fellow who didn't behave himself, and I'm going to send you home now I know how you wangled yourself here. Off you go—sharp!"

"Oh dear! I say, it's too late now. Besides, Railton would want to know why I'd come back!" wailed Baggy.

"That's your own look-out! I intended to let you stay if you behaved yourself. But now you've been up to your tricks again with the grub, you can clear, you rascal! Off you go!"

"I—I won't! I'm not going back this time of the—"

"Won't you?" roared Grundy.

Tom Merry had left Grundy now; and with a rush George Alfred went for Trimble. Grundy was a fellow who could never stand much from anyone—and certainly not from Trimble.

Nor had Trimble any intention of standing much from Grundy.

He leaped up with remarkable agility and fairly flew, Grundy's boot just catching him as he went. The two disappeared, going at a great rate. From beyond a distant hedge there sounded a sudden, wild series of howls. Grundy had evidently caught up Trimble.

A minute later George Alfred came trotting back, breathless but satisfied.

"I lammed him!" he said. "No good being soft with a fat rascal like Trimble. Only way to keep him in order is to lam him—lam him hard! Well, he's gone. I gave him a dozen with my boot, and let him go. You can leave camp discipline to me, Tom Merry."

"I will—if Trimble comes back!" grinned Tom. "Well, this has mucked up supper, and no mistake! I'm rather glad Grundy dealt with that fat rotter, after all. Someone had better trot back to the farm and see what grub he can get."

"Yaas, wathah! I'm feashfully hungwy, deah boys!"

They all were hungry. And Grundy, being in funds, he and Arthur Augustus went off to see what could be purchased for supper from the farm.

And half an hour later the amateur farm-workers were seated round the camp-fire, yarning and enjoying a repast of eggs and cold ham, washed down with hot coffee. Then, as darkness stole over the camp, they turned in, tired and quite ready for their well-earned sleep. Grundy—who had omitted to bring his own bed—making one for himself out of straw and an old blanket. And soon only Tom Merry, who had elected to take first watch, was awake.

CHAPTER 9.

An Alarm in the Night!

"O H dear!"

From the bottom of his heart Baggy Trimble wished that he had never thought of joining the schoolboy farm-workers.

That it was after the junior bed-time at St. Jim's, Baggy knew well enough. He knew that it was impossible for him to enter the school without being discovered by someone in authority. And discovery would mean trouble, without a doubt. He would be questioned, and Tom Merry would be questioned, and that would mean that his secret would come out.

Only now did the fat youth begin to understand what a serious offence he had committed in "spoofing" the Head. Even if it did not end in the sack for him, it would end in a flogging—a worse possibility, in Trimble's view. The sack might hurt his parents, undoubtedly it would; but it would not hurt him much. But a flogging—

Baggy trembled and halted just beyond the farm.

"I'm jolly well not going back to-night!" he groaned. "Oh, the awful beasts! Turning a fellow adrift at this time of night! Perhaps the beasts will have forgotten it all by morning, and will be decent to me. But—Oh dear! What am I to do?"

That was the problem. He was determined not to return to St. Jim's that night. Yet what else could he do? He certainly dare not return to the camp.

As he stood in dismal indecision the fat youth sighted the grain store at the end of the farm-buildings. He hurried up to it and fumbled for the door-fastening in the gathering darkness.

His heart gave a jump of joy as he found that the door was only secured by a peg of wood.

"Oh, good!" he murmured. "There's bound to be straw or something to lie on in here. In the morning those cads will have forgotten all about that grub, the mean beasts! I'm jolly well not going back to St. Jim's, anyway!"

Baggy was resolved upon that. He entered the barn and vaguely he made out a ladder leading to the loft above it. The ground floor was crowded with boxes and old farm implements.

It was neither easy nor pleasant exploring in the darkness, for Baggy had no matches—fortunately, perhaps. But he soon found that the loft only held sacks of potatoes, straw, and other odds-and-ends.

"Oh, good!" breathed Baggy. "Won't be as comfy as a bed, but it'll be just as good as a tent. Here goes!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

And Baggy composed himself for slumber, and was very soon fast asleep. Sleep was an accomplishment that came easily and quickly to Baggy Trimble.

It seemed to Baggy afterwards that he had only been asleep a few minutes when he awoke suddenly with husky voices in his ears. For a moment he wondered where he was; but, suddenly remembering, he sat up in some alarm.

The voices sounded from below; and after a brief hesitation Baggy cautiously crawled to the edge of the loft ladder and peered down.

There was a light in the barn below—a feeble glimmer from the flame of a candle stuck into a bottle-neck. By the light Trimble made out the figures of two men—one of whom he recognised as Sam Jukes, the rascally farm-hand who had been sacked for dishonesty.

Baggy's eyes opened wide with curiosity. What was Jukes doing there at that hour?

He soon had his curiosity satisfied in some measure.

"Yes, I bin waitin' 'ere ten minutes, Sam," Jukes' friend Alf was assuring him. "Not in 'ere, of course; outside in the field there."

"It weren't safe to come afore," said Jukes. "I bin waitin' until I seed the light go out in them blamed tents. Hang them durned interferin' kids! We should 'ave found the stuff long afore this, I bet, but for them! If only I was still on the job—"

"Well, you are at night!" grinned Alf. "If they knowed as you was sleepin' in the loft 'ere, Sam—"

"Well, I got to sleep somewhere," growled Jukes. "I ain't got a 'ome near 'ere, like you 'ave. But, look 'ere, we've got to go more carefully about the job to-night. It was a near thing afore. If we're collared agen, it means the cops for us!"

"What's the programme, mate?"

"We got to get in; if they've fastened that there winder, I knows of another way," said Jukes, his eyes glinting in the candle-light.

"If that cove Bill Pegfold chips in agen he'll get 'urt," said Alf.

"We ain't chancing that!" snapped Jukes. "Soon as we gets in we makes straight for 'is door and fastens it. With a bit of rope as I've got we'll easily fasten it to the banisters so's he can't get out. But we've got to make no noise, so's he won't wake this time, Alf. Mind that!"

"I'll watch it," said Alf. "But, look here, Sam, you're certain as the stuff's there all right?"

"I'm thunderin' well certain it is!" vowed Sam Jukes, lighting a cigarette from the candle-flame. "My old father was the fust on the spot arter old man Chubb—this bloke's father, understand—'ad bin chucked from 'is horse what killed 'im. Leastways, he died arterwards, and he jest managed to whisper to my father afore he went, 'Tell Jim,' 'e said, 'to look in the—' That was all 'e managed to get out afore 'e went unconscious-like."

"That don't tell much, do it?" granted Alf.

"I s'pose not. But the stuff's somewhere about the rotten place—I know it is!" said Sam Jukes between his teeth. "Everybody knowed as he was a miser—queer, like, too. My old father told Jim—that's this Mister Chubb, blow 'im—who'd jest come 'ome arter livin' in Canada for years, workin' on a farm there, and they both searched the place. But they never found anythin'."

"Looks to me as if there ain't nothin', arter all!" said Alf.

"I'm certain there is, though!" said Jukes. "They never found nothin', 'cause they never looked prop'ly. This Mister Chubb didn't believe there was anythin', and he only 'arf looked. But I'm going to look prop'ly, mate!"

"Ain't you ever searched afore jest lately?"

"Yes—though I've only bin here two months, and little chance I've 'ad with Chubb bein' about all the time. That's why I means to make the most of this chance, Alf. When the boss comes back we're done for good!"

"Proper done!" agreed Alf, with a grunt. "Well, what about makin' a start?"

Sam Jukes put out his cigarette and nodded grimly.

"Come on!" he said grimly. "I'm ready! Keep close to the buildin's, mind!"

The light of the candle below was extinguished. Breathlessly Trimble watched as the two moved out of the barn, closing the door after them. The fat junior gave a gasp of relief.

It seemed clear that Sam Jukes slept in that very loft, and Trimble trembled at the thought of what might have happened if he had climbed the ladder—instead of having business elsewhere.

The thought of that business brought a gleam to the eyes of Baggy Trimble.

"Oh, the awful rascals!" he murmured. "They're going to break into the farm, of course! I—I suppose I ought to do something. Oh dear!"

The idea of leaving the barn with those rascals about was not a pleasant one. On the other hand it would be far

less pleasant if Sam Jukes came and found him in the loft.

There was another point, Trimble reflected. If he played up now and gave the alarm, it was quite possible that Tom Merry & Co. might forgive and forget in their gratitude.

Trimble decided it was worth trying, so he slipped down the ladder, and cautiously peered out into the night.

All was silent, and he saw no movement anywhere. He gave himself another few minutes to be on the safe side, and then he left the barn.

His heart was thumping very uneasily, and not until he was well away from the farm did he breathe freely again. Then he set off at a run for the camp.

It was not a very dark night, and he easily picked out the two white tents of the camp. A glow came from the camp-fire beside which Tom Merry was sitting.

Trimble got quite a start until he realised who it was. Tom Merry got a bigger start the next moment as Trimble dashed up to him, wildly excited.

"What the dickens! Well, you little idiot!" he gasped, grabbing the fat youth by the collar. "What the thump have you come back for at this hour, you fat rotter?"

"I'll soon tell you that!" panted Trimble. "Leggo, and I'll explain!"

The next moment Trimble was breathlessly relating what he had overheard in the barn. Tom Merry whistled as he finished.

"Right!" he said. "I'll rouse the other chaps!"

Tom ran to his own tent and, dragging open the flap, dashed in.

There was a startled exclamation from Monty Lowther as the captain of the Shell stumbled against his recumbent form.

"Who—what—"

"Wake up, you fellows!" yelled Tom Merry. "Trimble's just brought news that Jukes and his pal are breaking into the farm. Quick!"

"Trimble?"

"My hat!"

Leaving Manners, Lowther and Grundy to digest that startling piece of information, Tom Merry dashed to the other tent and roused Blake & Co.

"No time for explanations now!" said Tom crisply. "Come on!"

A wet sponge could hardly have awakened the chums of Study No. 6 more quickly, and within a few seconds the juniors were dressing, in feverish haste.

"What about Trimble?" demanded Blake. "We're not leaving that fat worm in charge here!"

"Wathah not!"

"Bring him along!" snapped Tom. "Grundy, you're in charge of Trimble. See the fat rotter doesn't give you the slip!"

"Oh, I say, you know— Yow! Leggo!"

Trimble yelled as Grundy's heavy hand closed on him.

"Come on, Trimble!" said Grundy. "I'll see to you, my pippin!"

Tom was already racing for the farm; his chums struggled into their coats and shoes, and dashed after him. Grundy brought up the rear with the indignantly protesting Trimble.

But Trimble had to go—there was no escape. Trimble had raided the larder once that day, and the juniors were taking no chances of a repetition.

In next to no time Tom Merry reached the wall of the farmyard, and leaped it easily. Blake and the rest did the same.

"Over you go!" snapped Grundy.

"Look here— Yoooooop!"

Trimble's howl rang far and wide over the silent farm as Grundy planted a boot behind him. Trimble had hesitated, fearful of coming into personal contact with Messrs. Jukes and Alf. Unthinkingly, Grundy had applied his boot—a trifle too suddenly and heavily, as Grundy himself realised when Trimble's involuntary yell rang out.

"You—you born idiot!" hissed Grundy. "You've done it now—you've given the rotters warning!"

Trimble had done it.

Scarcely had Tom Merry reached the door of the farm and tried it, when Blake gave a warning yell as he sighted a dark figure scrambling out of the little window of the scullery a few yards along the building.

"Look out! There they go!"

The dark figure had been followed instantly by a second, and as Blake shouted, both dashed away into the darkness. Tom Merry & Co. were after them in a flash.

Sam Jukes and Alf had a few seconds' start, and they made the most of them. Their figures vanished into the darkness. Just then a shrill whistle sounded at one of the upper windows. It was Bill Pegfold. He stopped blowing the Scout's whistle as he sighted the dark figures in the yard below.

"That you, Master Merry?"

"Yes; it's all right now, Pegfold, old chap. The brutes have gone. They'd just got inside, I think."

"What? Jukes and that other bloke?"

"Yes!"

"By hokey! I'll be down in a minute, Master Merry!"

"Well, I'm blown!" gasped Tom, as the figure of Bill Pegfold vanished from the window. "That—that fat ass wants licking, if ever anybody did! What on earth made him yell out like that?"

"It was Grundy!" wailed Trimble. "The beast kicked me! I couldn't help yelling."

"Grundy, you idiot—"

"Well, the fat little worm jibbed at the wall," growled Grundy. "I'll boot him again for yelling like that!"

"No, you won't!" said Tom, with a rueful laugh. "Well, after all, perhaps it's as well they did get clear. Goodness knows what we could have done with them had they got caught. We certainly don't want a police job made of it. Our job is to guard the farm until Mr. Chubb returns."

The door opened just then, and the juniors went in to see what had been done. But a search revealed nothing—not a thing had been touched, and it was clear that Jukes and his friend had only just managed to get into the house.

(Continued overleaf.)

ATHLETES TRAIN ON IT



There is half a cup
of English full cream
milk in every

**CADBURY
BIG MILK
BAR 2^D**



MY CYCLES BARGAINS

ONLY 2/6 A WEEK

Brand New 1928 Coventry Models. Fully Guaranteed. Sent on 15 Days approval. Packed free and Carriage paid. Only a small deposit. Money refunded if dissatisfied. Write to-day. Established 28 years.

George King
Dept. C.U.
COVENTRY, LTD



ART
LIST
FREE

The scullery window had been forced—a simple matter to anyone with a knife.

"But it shows that the brutes don't intend to give up their game, and from Trimble's story it's pretty clear now what that is!"

"What is Trimble's story?" said Blake, staring. "And how the thump does Trimble come to be round here at all? We thought he'd gone back to St. Jim's!"

"So did I!" said Tom Merry. "But I'm forgetting—you haven't heard the yarn yet."

And Tom Merry told them what Trimble had overheard in the loft of the barn. His chums gasped.

"Well, it's pretty clear now what they're after," said Lowther. "I've heard that old Chubb's pater was a miser—in fact, this farm's known in the village even now as Miser Chubb's farm. But—if you ask me, it's all bunkum! Surely Mr. Chubb would have searched enough and found it, if there was anything hidden."

"I don't know about that!" said Tom, shaking his head. "It's quite possible something was hidden. And remember that the Mr. Chubb we know was in Canada for years—he's told us so himself. It's quite possible he never dreamed his pater had anything to hide, and he took the story as a yarn, and didn't trouble to search properly."

"Bai Jove! I think that, too, dear boy. Mr. Chubb is not a mercenary man at all—he is too generous. It is wathah surpris'n' to learn that his patah was a misah!"

"Well, this has solved the mystery somewhat," said Tom at last. "Trimble's proved a bit useful, after all."

"But for me, goodness knows what might have happened!" said Trimble, feeling quite important now. "Some fellows might have funk'd giving the warning with those fearful rufians hanging around, but not me!"

"You didn't come to us to put your fat carcass in safety, of course!" said Lowther, with heavy sarcasm.

"You dry up, Lowther!" snorted Trimble. "Fat lot you've done, anyway! I've saved the whole situation, and Tom Merry says I've solved the mystery. I say, you fellows, supposing there is treasure hidden about the house! I vote we have a jolly good search before—Yoop! Wharrer you kicking me for, Grundy, you beast?"

"To stop that tongue of yours rattling!" snorted Grundy. "But for you yelling like that, we should have collared those beauties! Done me out of a scrap, you little rotter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently Grundy was very disappointed that there had been no scrap.

"Well, Trimble has done something, at all events!" said Tom Merry, with a chuckle. "So I think we'll allow him to stay—for the night, at all events. Bring some straw along, Baggy, and you can sleep in our tent for the rest of the night."

"Oh, good!"

And Trimble accompanied the juniors back in quite a cheery mood. His request for a jolly good supper to celebrate his pluck and resource was not agreed to, however, and soon Baggy's snore was resounding through the Shell tent. But the Terrible Three and Grundy were much too tired to hear or heed it.

For the rest of the night a keen look-out was kept by the sentry on watch, but nothing happened; and when Tom Merry and his fellow-campers turned out, cheery and bright, the next morning to face another day, Trimble was still snoring. So they carefully tied him hand and foot to his mattress without waking him, and then, as the morning sun rose high in the heavens, they started out for the farm and their duties there. They were not taking any chances of Trimble waking and raiding the grub again in their absence.

CHAPTER 10.

Grammarians on the Warpath!

"WELL, here we are again!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We ought to finish the clover easily by this evening," said Tom Merry, glancing up at the blue sky. "No signs of rain, thank goodness! We got on jolly well with it last night!"

"Here's Trimble!" said Manners, glancing round.

"Blow Trimble!"

"Shall I boot him back?" asked Grundy eagerly.

Tom Merry laughed as he looked round and sighted the fat figure trotting along behind them. It was Wednesday afternoon, and the schoolboy farm-workers were making for Chubb Farm immediately after dinner.

Since the night when Baggy Trimble had given the alarm they had had no further trouble with Sam Jukes and his friend Alf. But whether the two rascals had given up their rascally quest or not was exceedingly doubtful. At all events, they had seen nothing of them, and the work on the

farm had gone on smoothly and without friction, excepting for little troubles with Grundy, who had a genius for putting his foot into matters.

None the less, the great George Alfred had proved very useful indeed in many ways. He was a terrifically hard worker, and, though he made numberless mistakes, he also worked like a Trojan, and soon proved his worth on the farm.

Trimble was a different proposition, however.

He refused to work, and even Grundy got tired of trying to make him. And as Tom was reluctant to send him back to St. Jim's, and thus risk awkward questions being asked, they had been obliged to put up with Trimble.

But they had not put up with his little ways. A very close watch had been kept on the fat junior. For his special benefit a lid had been fixed by Blake to the camp larder-box and a lock fitted to it, which kept the grub safe from Trimble when the camp was left unguarded.

The fat Fourth-Former was allowed his share of food, but no more. Really, he did not deserve or earn that. But Grundy always had plenty of money, and spent it lavishly. There was always plenty to go round, so Trimble's share was not missed.

"Let the fat ass come!" laughed Tom Merry. "He can't do much harm in the field."

"Or good, either!" sniffed Manners.

"Here he comes!"

Trimble trotted up, panting and blowing like a grampus.

"Why didn't you wait for me, you rotters?" he gasped. "I say, that beast Gordon Gay and his pals are behind us! They're up to something, I believe! That rotter Gay bunged an apple at me!"

"Gordon Gay!" exclaimed Tom Merry, suddenly interested. "Phew! Then we'd better look out!"

"Rather! Hope the rotters aren't on the warpath this afternoon!" said Blake.

"Where were they, Trimble?" demanded the captain of the Shell.

"They must have been behind the hedge when you chaps passed!" grinned Trimble. "They crawled out just after you'd passed—hadn't spotted me coming, you know. I just managed to dodge 'em and run for it!"

"Well, forewarned is forearmed!" said Tom Merry grimly.

He looked back, but there was nothing to be seen of Gordon Gay or his chums from the Grammar School at Rylcombe. But Tom knew Gay only too well. Gay was not likely to show himself if he was up to mischief.

But Tom Merry was looking rather worried as the juniors walked on to the farm. Since they had started farm-work the cheery and troublesome Gay had already played one practical joke on them. Disguised as a sanitary inspector, Gordon Gay had visited the farm, and had ordered Tom Merry & Co. to move a big heap of farm refuse from one side of the yard to the other. They had been taken in completely, and after doing the job they had been obliged to cart the stuff back again—altogether, a good two hours' work.

In return, however, Tom Merry & Co. had set the farm goat after the gleeful Grammarians, and all three of them had been butted into a ditch.

But this fact made Tom very uneasy now. The Grammarians would be seeking vengeance for that set-back, without a doubt—indeed, Tom wondered why they had not tried something on before this. And as there was the clover-raking to be done, Tom did not wish to be troubled with practical jokers just now—much as he would have enjoyed a tussle with their rivals at any other time.

They would have to chance it, however, and soon Tom Merry & Co. were busy at work in the clover-field, Tom warning his chums to keep a sharp look-out, and putting Trimble on guard at the gate leading to the lane.

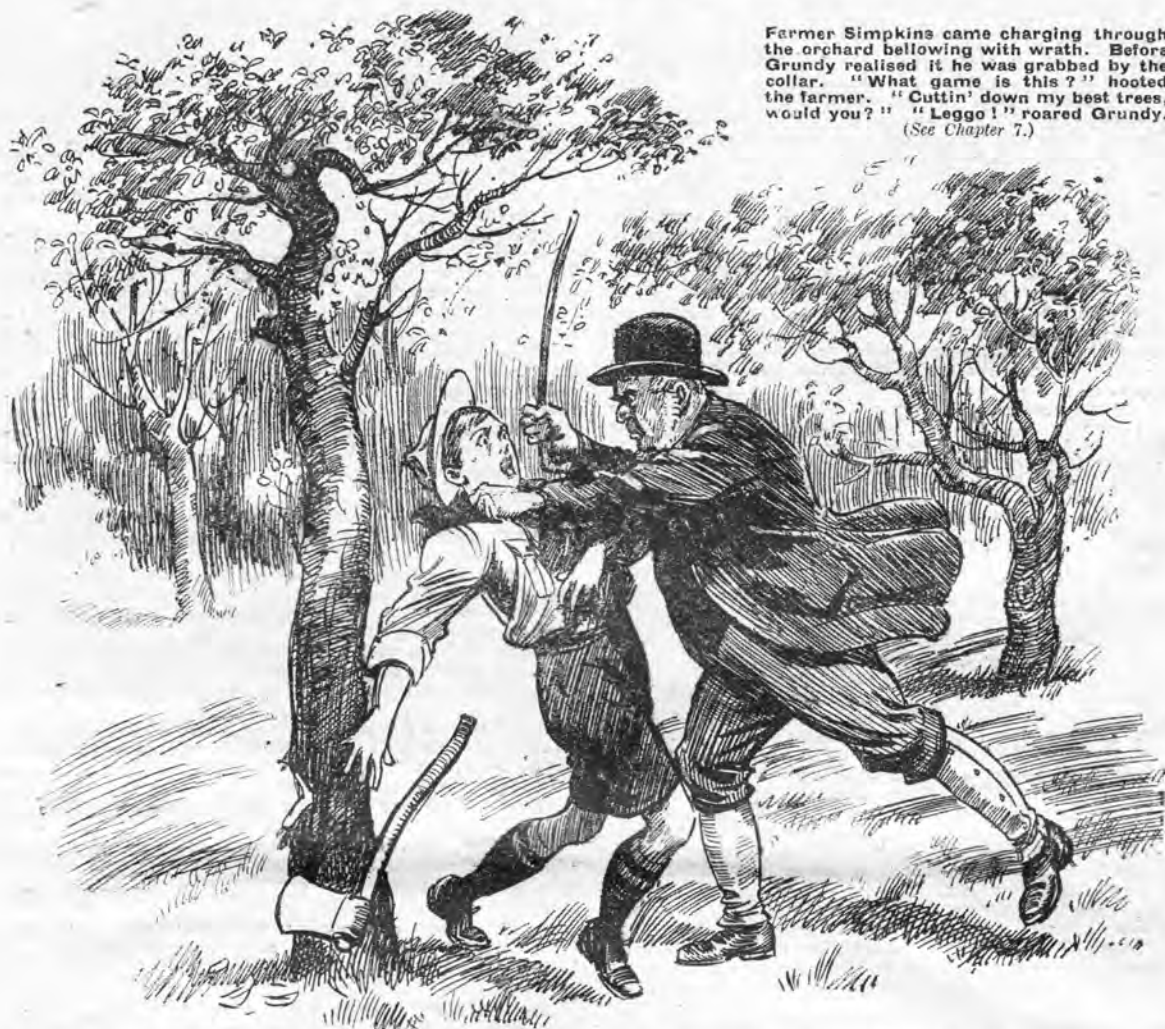
Trimble didn't mind the job at all. It was a hot afternoon, and Baggy made a pile of clover near the field gate and lay down luxuriously upon it. The rest of the workers went on loading the cart and raking. Herries was on the cart, taking the clover and packing it as his chums handed it up to him with their forks.

It was a peaceful scene. Baggy Trimble felt happy and comfortable. With his hands clasped behind his head, he drowsily listened to the hum of insects and lazily watched the perspiring workers.

It was a job that just suited Baggy Trimble. Unfortunately, things were a trifle too peaceful for Baggy, for before he had been lying there five minutes his mouth opened, his eyes closed, and he dropped asleep.

His snore failed to reach the workers, but it was heard by five youths wearing Grammarian caps who were watching the workers through a gap in the hedge.

"He's asleep!" breathed Gordon Gay, grinning gleefully. "I thought the fat merchant wouldn't be long awake. Now we've got to watch our chance. That cart's nearly loaded up, and they'll be going off with it soon."



Farmer Simpkins came charging through the orchard bellowing with wrath. Before Grundy realised it he was grabbed by the collar. "What game is this?" hooted the farmer. "Cuttin' down my best trees, would you?" "Leggo!" roared Grundy. (See Chapter 7.)

"Let's hope that'll give us our chance, though I'm blessed if I can see how we're going to work it!" said Frank Monk rather glumly. "We're only five, and they're eight!"

"Leave it to me!" said Gordon Gay. "Our chance will come! You don't suppose I mean we're to tackle 'em all together. It's going to be a ticklish job. I didn't expect 'em to be together like this. Still, we'll watch our chance."

That chance came sooner than they had expected.

The cart was loaded up now, and as it was the only cart suitable owned by Mr. Chubb, it had to be unloaded at the farm. To this end, Arthur Augustus, Herries, Manners, and Digby went off with the cart laden with clover, their forks over their shoulders. Tom Merry, Lowther, Blake, and Grundy remained behind to rake. The machine had done the main part of the raking the previous day.

Tom Merry and Grundy went to the far end of the field, and Blake and Lowther remained at the end close to the hiding Grammarians.

"In three minutes or so," said Gordon Gay, eyeing the perspiring workers, with a chuckle, "our giddy chance will come!"

"Yes; but Merry and Grundy will see us scrapping and come along!" said Carboy.

"Wait!" said Gay. "In three minutes those two will be round the corner there and out of sight!"

"Oh, my hat! You're right!"

Gordon Gay's words were true enough. The field farther along took a sharp bend towards the farm, and Tom Merry and Grundy, working industriously, would be round the corner very soon, and out of sight of their chums who were just finishing the part near the hedge.

Well within the three minutes their task had indeed taken them out of sight.

"Ready?" breathed Gay, with a chuckle. "Got your giddy cords ready?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Follow me, then! Here's where we do a bit of stalking." And with that Gordon Gay crawled through the gap and

began to worm his way along the dry ditch bottom towards the unsuspecting Blake and Lowther.

Baggy Trimble, asleep at his post, went on snoring.

CHAPTER 11.

Trimble's Chance!

"PHEW! It's hot!" gasped Blake.

"Just a bit!" agreed Lowther, stopping to mop his streaming forehead. "Well, we've about finished this little lot. Better go and help those chaps round the corner."

"Right-ho!"

The last lot of clover had been raked into a pile near the hedge, and, with a glance of satisfaction at the result of their labours, the two St. Jim's juniors were just about to move away when something happened.

Like a bolt from the blue five youthful forms arose from the bottom of the ditch, and before either of the Scouts could make any show of resistance a hand was clapped over their mouths and other hands grasped them.

Both went down with a thump, taken completely by surprise.

Under the blissful belief that Baggy Trimble was keeping a look-out the amateur farm workers had dismissed danger from their minds; or had forgotten to keep a look-out, at all events.

So startled and amazed were they indeed that neither of them thought of struggling until it was too late. In a matter of seconds they were flat on their backs, and cords were swiftly twisted round their wrists and legs and secured.

"Got 'em!" panted Gordon Gay, with a chuckle. "What price us, Blake, old chap?"

"Urgggg!" came from behind the hand clapped over his mouth.

"Better gag 'em!" grinned Gordon Gay, taking Blake's

Scout's scarf off. "Here we are; these will do nicely for the job."

"Yes, rather!"

Without having a chance to shout for help Blake and Lowther were gagged, only sundry gasps and gurgles escaping them during the process. But their eyes were eloquent enough. They glowered at their captors helplessly.

Rolling them into the hedge and piling hay over them, the Grammarians moved on softly along the hedge. To their joy both Tom Merry and Grundy were scarcely ten yards from the hedge at the spot where it turned the corner.

As in the case of Blake and Lowther the two were taken completely by surprise, and their brief and futile struggles availed them little. In less than two minutes they were as safely trussed up as were Blake and Lowther.

"Good!" remarked Gordon Gay, wiping his forehead. "That's four of 'em safe. Now, how long are those other wasters going to be, I wonder?"

Apparently Gordon Gay was by no means satisfied yet. The five Grammarians sat down to wait for the return of the cart and its escort.

It came rumbling into view at last, coming through the inner gate by which it had gone to the farm, the four juniors laughing and talking cheerily.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, adjusting his eyeglass and blinking about him. "Where are those fellows, dear boys?"

"Must be round the corner," remarked Digby. "Two of us had better go and help round there. Two will be enough to finish off here."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Herries and Digby shouldered their forks again and went off, intending to join Tom Merry and Grundy "round the corner." Arthur Augustus left the horse's head, and, getting a fork, he joined Manners. The two began to pick up the heaps of clover and throw them into the cart.

They had just made a start, and Herries and Digby had just vanished round the bend, when once again five youthful forms emerged from hiding, and there was yet another bloodless victory for the Grammarians.

If anything, Arthur Augustus and Manners had less chance of defending themselves than had the others. Arthur Augustus just had time to let out one wild, startled yell and then he went down with a fearful thump, Frank Monk and Harry Wootton sprawling over him. Gordon Gay jumped to help, and in a matter of seconds the hapless swell of the Fourth was trussed up like a chicken.

With gleeful chuckles the Grammarians then turned all their attention to Manners, who was struggling desperately but hopelessly. Against the five he hadn't the ghost of a chance. They had just finished tying him up when Herries and Digby came hurrying back, alarmed by Gussy's strangled yell.

They stared in amazement at the five Grammarians, who instantly made a combined rush towards them.

Herries and Digby stood their ground gallantly enough.

"Rescue!" roared Herries. "Tom Merry—Blake—rescue! Those Grammarian rotters are here! Rescue!"

Naturally enough, there came no answer. It was only then that Herries and Digby guessed the worst. But they put up a terrific fight, and it was only after a fierce and prolonged struggle that they were overpowered and made helpless.

Meanwhile, Baggy Trimble still slumbered and snored through it all.

"Shall we collar that fat worm, too?" asked Frank Monk.

"No, let the fat ass rip!" grinned Gordon Gay. "He isn't worth the trouble! These are the goods, my lads! Set a blessed goat on us, would they? We'll show 'em who's top-dog now! We'll make 'em sing small. Schoolboy farmers, eh?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay & Co. roared with laughter.

"Better not waste any time, though," said Gordon Gay, suddenly becoming serious again. "That farm-hand may happen along any moment. Good job he wasn't here, or we might have found it dashed awkward."

"Yes, rather!"

The Grammarians wasted no further time. They grabbed Herries and Digby first and bundled them into the clover-cart. Then, one after the other, they carried the rest along to the cart and placed them in the bottom with Herries and Digby.

The looks of Tom Merry & Co. were ferocious as they one and all grasped the real gravity of the position. Not being visible, Gussy and the rest who had been to the farm had hoped against hope that Tom Merry and the other three had escaped.

All was in readiness at last, and Gordon Gay led the horse and cart out into the lane.

There the Grammarians boarded the cart, and Gordon Gay

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

took up the reins. With a crack of the whip the cart rumbled on, Gay driving the horse at a brisk trot.

"So far so good!" grinned Gordon Gay gleefully. "What a really lucky thing I remembered it was cattle-market day in Wayland to-day, chaps. I think we're going to score this afternoon, chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gug, gug, gug! Urgggh!"

And Gordon Gay & Co. roared still more as the cart rumbled on its way along the rutty lane, and then turned on to the Wayland Road. It looked like being the Grammarian jokers' day of success.

Meanwhile, Baggy Trimble, his mouth wide open and an expression of contentment on his fat face, snored on. But his dreams were suddenly disturbed as a hand grasped his shoulders and shook him some ten minutes later.

It was a heavy hand, and it belonged to Bill Pegfold, who had been cleaning milk-cans at the farm. But he had finished his task now, and he had come along to see how his "men" were progressing with the clover. His amazement was great to see neither cart nor Scouts in the clover-field—only Baggy Trimble.

"Ere, Master Trimble!" he gasped, as Baggy blinked up at him. "What's this 'ere game?—Where's them lads, and where's the bloomin' cart?"

Baggy blinked about him, and then he sat bolt upright.

"Ow!" he gasped, yawning. "Wharrer you want to wake me up suddenly like that for? Blessed if I know where they are! I must have fallen asleep."

"Well, this 'ere beats everythin'!" remarked Bill, scratching his head. "The cart's not up at th' farm, that's sartin'! Yonder's some of th' lads' hay-forks jest as if they'd bin chucked down, like!"

"Better look round for the bounders!" suggested Trimble, who, didn't feel equal to the strain of looking round himself. "P'raps gone over to the camp for some grub, or a drink."

"They wouldn't take the 'oss and cart with 'em if they 'ad," grunted Bill. "I 'opes as they ain't up to no larks—not as they're the sort as would. Still, I'd better go and look about for 'em. I got to be at the station with them milk-cans afore four, and then get back sharp."

And Bill Pegfold tramped away. He paused the next moment, however, as his eyes spotted the wheel marks leading to the gate in the lane.

"Crimes!" he gasped. "Looks as if they gone this way. 'Yus, they 'ave, right enough!"

The wheel marks were plain enough—freshly made, and they went off down the lane, away from the direction of the farm.

"M-mum-my hat!" gasped Trimble. Then a sudden brilliant thought came to him. "I know! The silly asses have gone off for a ride in the cart. Gone to Rylcombe, to the tuckshop, perhaps—"

"Well, they're gone, anyway!" grunted Bill, though he looked astonished. "Still, I reckon as Master Merry ain't the lad to get up to no mischief. But I'll 'ave to be off. I came along to tell Master Merry as I was jest goin'. You'll p'raps tell 'im when he comes back, Master Trimble?"

"Oh, all right!" grunted Trimble ungraciously.

Bill Pegfold trudged away towards the farm, frowning in rather a perplexed manner. Trimble scowled. The more he thought of the situation the more he believed in his remarkable theory. Of course, that was it! The mean beasts had gone off in the cart for a joy ride, to get a feed at the village tuckshop. They would be jolly thirsty, of course, after their work. Why, he himself was nearly famished, and dying of thirst, though he hadn't been working!

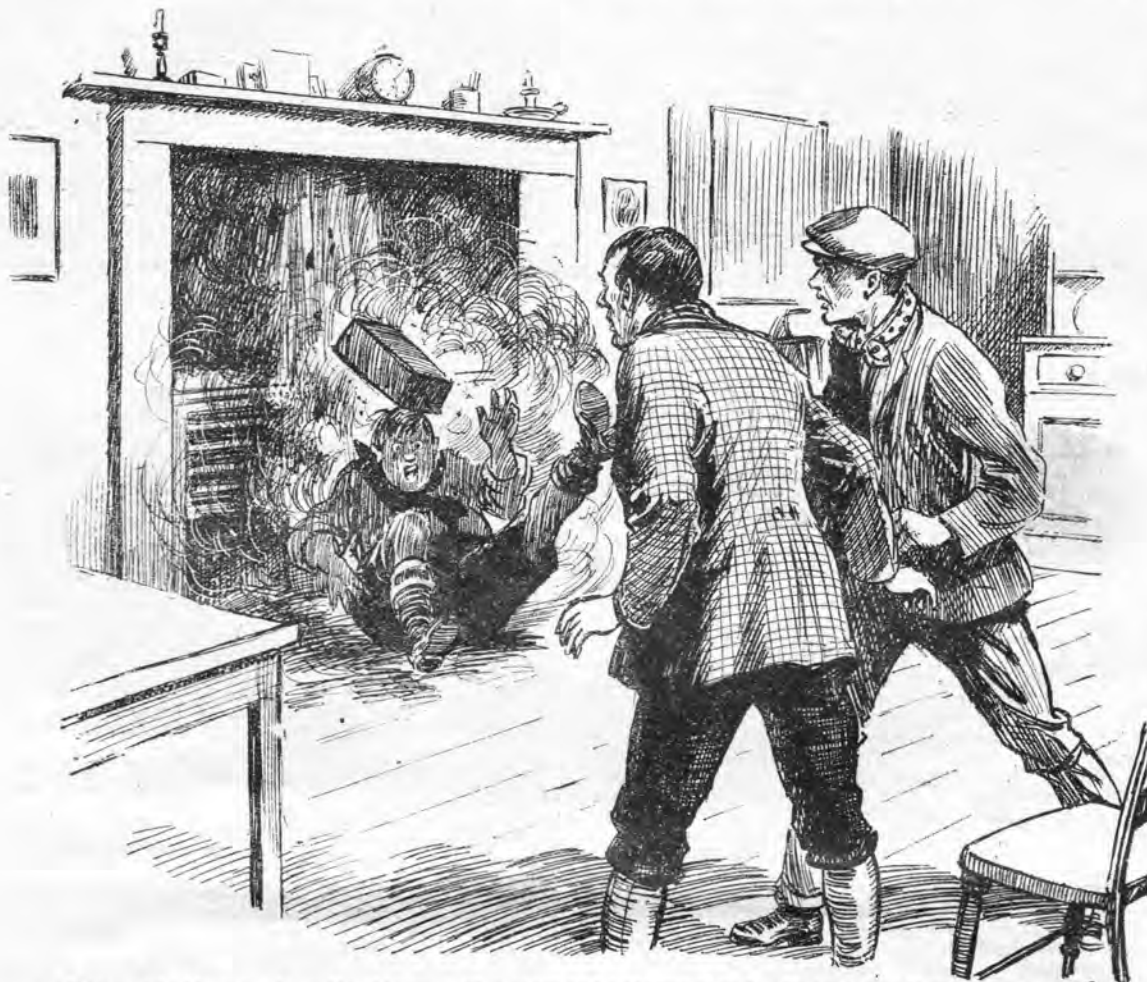
So argued Trimble to himself, and as he did so his fat face set with determination.

"The mean beasts!" he mumbled. "Too jolly mean to wake me up and ask me to go with 'em! Blow them! I'm jolly well not going to starve. Not likely! I'll slip over to the camp, and if that rotten box is locked I'll try the farm. I know how to get in, and there's bound to be heaps of grub about there."

Musing thus, Trimble rubbed his drowsy eyes and started for the camp. To his disgust, the box was locked, however. Tom Merry & Co. did not intend to be caught napping by Trimble again.

"Have to be the farm, then!" murmured Trimble. "I—hallo! Oh, good! There's that beast, Pegfold, just going! Now's my chance—the giddy chance of a lifetime! I'll show 'em I'm not to be starved."

In the distance Baggy saw Bill Pegfold just driving the milk-float and pony out through the farm gates into the lane. And Trimble watched it gleefully as it bowled out of sight, and then he streaked for the farm, with visions of cream, jam, eggs, and cold ham, before his greedy eyes.



Baggy Trimble came down the chimney with a crash and a shower of soot. He landed on the floor with a wild yell, and the next moment a bulky box followed him down. It caught the fat junior a fearful crack on the side of his head. "Ow! Yarooooop! Wow!" Sam Jukes and his friend Alf stood rooted to the floor at this sudden and amazing intrusion. (See Chapter 13.)

CHAPTER 12.

For Sale!

"YOU can take their giddy gags off now, you chaps!" Gordon Gay spoke cheerily as the farm-cart rumbled on into the outskirts of Wayland. In the bottom of the cart, bumped, bewildered, and shaken by the constant rocking, the eight captives lay and fumed and gurgled. Where the grinning Grammarians were taking them they had no idea, though Tom Merry guessed it was to Wayland. For what reason, however, he could not imagine.

It was really rather alarming.

But Gay's orders to take the gags out were a relief indeed. The juniors' bonds were bad enough, but their gags were worse.

As the scarves were untied the captives gasped with relief, as if for a wager.

"Sorry it had to be done, my infants!" grinned Gordon Gay. "But there was nothing else for it. We might easily have met some of your chaps in the lane."

"Groogh!" gasped Tom Merry. "Oh, you—you cads! Let us free, and we'll make mincemeat of you!"

"Likely, isn't it?" smiled Frank Monk. "D'you know what to-day is, Merry, old man?"

"Blow you!" gasped Tom. "And blow the day!"

"It's cattle-market day in Wayland," said Gordon Gay cheerfully. "And you chaps are taking part in the business. We've got quite a treat in store for you."

"You—you rotters!" panted Blake, glowering up at him. "What's the game?"

"All in good time, little dears!" said Gordon Gay cheerfully. "Ever been sold, Merry?"

"They've been sold many a time," grinned Carboy.

"But not as they're going to be sold to-day," said Gordon Gay, with a chuckle. "Hallo! Here we are! Mind they don't run wild, chaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grammarians were in high feather.

Laughing uproariously, they unfastened the back of the haycart, and, removing the hay that had half-covered the captives, they hauled them out one by one.

As they reached the ground Tom Merry & Co. glanced apprehensively about them. Then one and all of them gave vent to exclamations of startled alarm.

They found themselves on the cobblestones of a great yard. All about them were cattle-pens and sheep-pens. It was the Wayland Cattle-Market.

They understood now, somewhat, Gay's cryptic reference to cattle market day.

But what was the game?

They soon knew—only too soon.

Opening the nearest gate of a large cattle-pen, Gordon Gay gave the word, and one by one the hapless Tom Merry & Co. were carried into the cattle-pen and placed facing the wooden railings. Their hands were then released—only to be tied again, this time to their ankles. They crouched in that awkward and humiliating position, struggling desperately to preserve their balance.

Then the Grammarians carried a large feeding-trough up and planted it almost underneath their noses.

"Oh, you—you cads!" panted Tom Merry, almost beside himself with wrath and dismay as he began to guess the full extent of the Grammarian "rag." "Oh, you—you rotters! We'll make you sit up for this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, bai Jove!" groaned Arthur Augustus, who looked a picture with his eyeglass dangling forlornly at the end of its cord. "This is weally too tewwible for words. Gay, you feahful wuffian, welease me this vewy instant! Oh, bai Jove! Theah is a cwowd beginnin' to collect already!"

It was true enough. As yet it was only a crowd of urchins, for Gay had selected the far end of the market, where little business was done, and few pens were occupied.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

But they knew that their comparative isolation would not last long.

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared the Wayland urchins. "Look at 'em! Be they cows or pigs, maister?"

"Sheep," answered Gordon Gay cheerily. "Or, rather, little lambs, my lad! Hark to 'em bleating!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let us free!" yelled Blake, his face red as a beetroot with fury.

"Welease us, you wottabs!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"Be decent!" gasped Tom Merry. "Be decent, you cackling Grammar School rotters!"

"Aren't we being decent?" asked Gordon Gay, eyeing them reflectively. "We're doing the thing in proper style. We're going to auction you presently—put you up for sale, when the crowd really starts to gather. But first of all, we've got to dress you up suitable for the sale, like they do beef at Christmas!"

"Good egg!" chorled Frank Monk. "This is the giddy jape of the term, Gay. What is the next move?"

"The next move is to get the stuff," said Gordon Gay. "There's a toyshop at the end of this road—only a few seconds' run from here. Get some toy trumpets to attract the crowd, and some old newspapers, and coloured paper, if you can. We'll wrap the dear things round with paper, and make paper horns to stick on their nappers. Then we'll write up the sale placards."

"Good wheeze!"

But the hapless "sheep" did not think it a good wheeze at all. They groaned, and almost wept with humiliation and dismay as Frank Monk and Harry Wootton dashed away for the toyshop at the end of the road.

"Take it smiling!" urged Gay, smiling cheerily himself.

"Oh, you—you howling rotter, Gay!" gasped Tom. "Let us free, and chuck this game, you rotter! We've got that clover to get in to-night. It may rain before morning. For poor old Chubb's sake, let us go. You're Scouts yourselves, aren't you? It's a Scout's job to do good turns to people in trouble, not bad turns, like this."

Tom spoke bitterly, and Gordon Gay's features showed his astonishment. He gazed blankly at Tom. He was completely ignorant of the fact that Farmer Chubb had been injured, and was in hospital, or he never would have played any joke at all on the amateur farm helpers—far from it. The cheery and fun-loving Grammarians had imagined that it was some new "stunt" at St. Jim's—that the juniors were taking special lessons on the farm, with the approval of the school authorities. That had been the only possible explanation of the business to Gordon Gay & Co.

"What on earth do you mean, Merry?" he gasped, his face changing with remarkable suddenness. "What on earth's the matter with old Chubb? Is the old chap in trouble?"

"Of course he is!" snapped Tom. "He broke his leg the other day and had to go into hospital. As he couldn't afford to get extra help on the farm we offered to do what we could. Our Head gave us permission to sleep at the farm and do what we could to help."

"Oh, m-my hat!" gasped Gordon Gay.

The Grammarian's face went red with dismay as he understood. The other two Grammarians stared blankly, and their grins faded.

"Mum-my hat!" groaned Gordon Gay. "We've made a muck of things, and no mistake. I—I say, Merry, old man, believe me we didn't dream it was like that. We would never have done this sort of thing if we'd known."

"Rather not!" said Frank Monk contritely. "We've dashed sorry, Merry! Poor old Chubb! He's a jolly decent old chap, and we're not the fellows to have done this sort of thing if we'd known the truth before."

"Cut us free and don't waste time gassing, then!" hooted Grundy. "I'll—I'll smash you to bits, Gay!"

"Yaas, wathah!" groaned Arthur Augustus, his face crimson with the exertion of keeping his position without tumbling over into the trough. "Bai Jove! Gay, you feahful wuffian, huwwy and fwee us!"

"Oh—oh, of course!" gasped Gordon Gay.

And the next moment the Grammarian was slashing through the cords. He did not even stop to ask them to make it pax. That the St. Jim's fellows were eight to three at the moment did not even occur to him. The great joke had quite suddenly fallen very flat to Gordon Gay. To have played a prank like this on fellows who were engaged in doing a good turn to others was not a thought that made the good-natured Grammarian leader feel at all happy.

In a matter of moments all were free and rubbing their cramped limbs. Only Grundy was inclined to "go for" the three Grammarians, though the rest felt very much like doing so. But Tom Merry would have none of it.

"None of that, Grundy!" said the captain of the Shell. "It was the sort of joke we should have played on them if

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

we hadn't known how things stood. And these chaps have played the game, and we're not going to take a rotten advantage of it."

"Oh!" gasped Grundy, as he realised that fact. "Oh, all right, blow them!"

The next moment Frank Monk and Harry Wootton came rushing back, carrying parcels. They almost fell down as they saw the change in the situation. But when Gay had explained they gasped and understood.

"Oh, my only hat!" said Frank Monk blankly. "What asses we've been!"

"Ere," yelled one of the urchins, as the Grammarians and Saints came out of the cattle-pen and the gate was fastened again. "Ain't there goin' to be no bloomin' entertain'mint?"

"No, there ain't," grinned Gordon Gay feebly. "It's all over, kid."

"Yah! Bloomin' swizzlers!"

"Yah!"

It was a howl of disappointment.

"Better clear out, sharp!" said Tom Merry, with a rueful grin. "These kids look upon us as welsbers, and they'll be mobbing us soon."

"Look here," said Gordon Gay eagerly. "We'll come back with you if you like and lend a hand at the farm."

"Jolly glad to!" said Frank Monk heartily.

"Hear, hear!"

"Right!" said Tom, with a laugh. "We can do with more help to-night! Good for you, Gay! We'll make it pax until we've finished the giddy farming."

"Yaas, wathah! That is a vewy good ideah!"

And so it was settled. And though Tom Merry & Co.—and especially Grundy—still felt very sore, they gradually melted towards the Grammarians as the old farm-horse hauled them all back to Chubb's Farm. And by the time they came in sight of it the friendly rivals were on the best of terms.

CHAPTER 13.

A "Soot-able" Ending I.

"H E, he, he!"

Baggy Trimble gave a fat chuckle as he tried the back door of the farm and discovered that it was not even fastened. As a matter of fact, Bill Pegfold had quite forgotten to fasten it. And, in any case, neither he nor the schoolboy workers had much fear that Jukes and his rascally accomplice would dare to visit the farm in daylight after their previous experiences.

That he was about to do anything wrong was not clear to Baggy at all—even if it had occurred to him. He was hungry, and wasn't that good reason enough to raid the farm larder? Moreover, wasn't he working on the farm and fully entitled to a feed when he liked?

Baggy Trimble had a most remarkable and convenient gift of being able to square his conduct at all times with his conscience, though, actually, he was far too obtuse and fatuous to understand really what he was doing. He was hungry—that was the only important point to Trimble.

So Trimble opened the door, listened a moment, and then he stepped into the outer kitchen and closed the door carefully after him. Then he began to hunt round for food-stuffs. He soon found a jug of cream, which promptly disappeared into his capacious interior.

Then he turned his attention to finding something else. The next moment he gave a gasp of terror and stood stock still, listening.

Footsteps had sounded outside—cautious footsteps, and then voices—voices he had heard before. They were men's voices, huskily whispering.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Trimble, his fat knees knocking together.

He stepped to the window of the kitchen and peeped cautiously through. He was just in time to see the slinking figures of Sam Jukes and his friend Alf vanish through the doorway of the outer kitchen.

It was enough for Baggy Trimble.

He looked round him wildly for a brief second, and then, in sheer terror, he dived beneath the old-fashioned kitchen table.

It was a long, low table, but there was no cloth on it. Trimble groaned and trembled as he heard the two men enter the kitchen. He could see their legs, but he dare not look out to see their faces. He just crouched and shook.

But, luckily for the fat junior, they did not see him. The table was quite close to the door, and from where they entered they could scarcely have spotted him without stooping.

"Well, this 'ere's a bit of luck, and no error, Alf!" Sam Jukes was saying. "Them kids working in the field, and Pegfold gone to the station! It's a chance we may never get agen, and we've got to make the most of it, Alf!"

"You've said it, mate!" said Alf, though he sounded none

too comfortable. "Goin' to make a start in this 'ere kitchen, Sam?"

"I've turned the place upside down more'n once," grunted Sam Jukes. "We're going to try the floorboards of them bed-rooms this afternoon, Alf. Come on! Better fasten that outer door first, though, in case them kids 'appen to come in for summits!" said Jukes. "Hold on, Alf!"

He hurried into the outer room, and Trimble heard him shooting the bolts. Then he heard the key turned in the lock. Then, to his deep relief, Sam Jukes walked through the kitchen and both of the rascals went tramping upstairs. "Oh, dear!" gasped Trimble, his heart palpitating against his fat ribs. "Thank goodness!"

He scrambled from under the table and scuttled into the outer apartment. He tugged desperately at the bolts, and drew them back at last. Then he gave a deep groan of dismay.

The key was not in the lock. Jukes had evidently put it in his pocket. At all events it was gone, and Trimble realised with a thrill of alarm that he was, for the time being, trapped. Then he remembered the front room, and

So Trimble hid under the table and trembled. He heard the men upstairs moving about, and he heard the splintering of wood as they worked at the floorboards. And then, just as the fat youth was almost fainting from cramp and fear, he heard a sudden startled exclamation from upstairs.

"Look out, Sam; here's them durned kids comin' back! By hokey! We're copped!"

A sudden thrill shot through Trimble. He fairly shook with fear. They would come downstairs for a certainty now, and nothing could prevent him from being seen. The door leading to the stairs was some distance from the table, and they could not fail to spot him as they came through it.

What should he do?

At the moment he was far too terrified to think of bolting into the front room—even had he dared to take the risk of being seen from the stairs. He crouched and shook. Then came Jukes' savage voice.

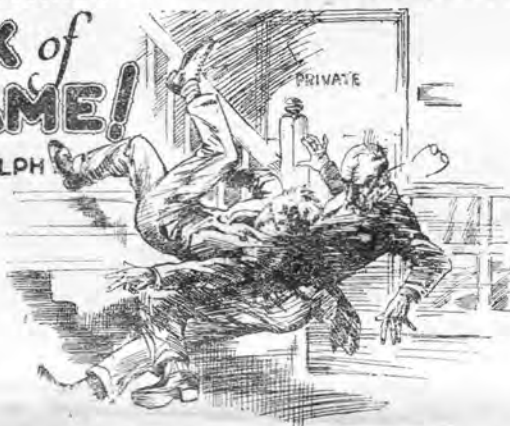
"Better run for it!" he gasped. "The young 'ounds'll hand us over to the bobbies if they cop us this time, mate! Downstairs and run for it!"

"By hokey! You're right, Sam!"

GRAND CRICKET STORY STARTS IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE, CHUMS!

The LUCK of the GAME! By RICHARD RANDOLPH

The Story
You've Been
Waiting
For!



Chapters of
Thrills,
Sport,
and
Adventure!

Dick Dare, full of grit and a sportsman to his finger-tips, longs for the smiling, green cricket field; longs to feel the willow in his capable hands. But the powers that be have decided that Dick should follow an indoor occupation. It would appear that cricket, the game he loves and for which he is naturally fitted, is not for him. It would appear so until Fate steps in and re-shuffles the fortunes of young Dick. Every sportsman will enjoy—

"THE LUCK OF THE GAME!"

By Richard Randolph

—the opening chapters of which will appear in next week's GEM. Do your pals a good turn and tell them about this wonder story of King Cricket!

stepping cautiously past the bottom of the stairs, Baggy made a dive for the front door.

There again he met with a set-back, however. The door was locked, and the key was gone—evidently in the safe keeping of Bill Pegfold.

Baggy groaned deeply and slipped back into the kitchen again. In the front room there was not a cupboard, or even a decent-sized table to hide under.

"Oh, dear!" groaned Baggy.

Sooner or later he realised that the rascals would come downstairs. When they did—

Baggy shuddered.

The next moment he had scrambled under the table again. A single glance at the window had shown him that escape that way was hopeless. It was a small, tiny-paned window, consisting of a small lead frame of four small panes of glass that opened outwards—scarcely large enough for a cat to scramble through.

And the window of the outer room was less promising. Certainly it was a casement window, built in at a later date, and usually kept open in the day-time. But—only that morning Bill Pegfold, having in mind the fact that Jukes and his accomplice had got in that way once, had screwed the window up—and he had made a very safe job of it. Without tools it was hopeless for a duffer like Trimble to think of opening it.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

In that instant of great alarm Baggy's mind worked swiftly. He glanced wildly about him, and then—his eyes caught sight of a possible hiding place.

The chimney!

It was a wide, old-fashioned chimney—very old indeed. The chimney-place itself was arched and stretched almost the whole length of the room. And the fire was out.

Trimble acted swiftly on that first, reckless impulse.

He scrambled from under the table and made a leap for the fireplace. At each side were two huge hobs, with great iron bars across the middle, forming the grate. Above was the wide, yawning gap of the chimney itself—wide enough for three fellows, even of Trimble's girth to get into. And hanging down from the black gap above, was a big hook at the end of a soot-covered chain.

Trimble grabbed at the hook desperately, hauled himself up, and placed a foot on either hob, his head and shoulders up the chimney.

But he was by no means satisfied with that position. His legs were still showing—and there was plenty of room higher up, in spite of a very thick coating of soot.

The thump of feet on the stairs settled the matter for Trimble. He grabbed the chain and hauled himself up higher, wedging his feet against ledges on either side of the chimney.

A shower of soot fell on him, and down into the grate. Trimble felt as if he was choking—he felt enveloped in soot.

It was in his eyes, his mouth, and his nostrils. He wanted to sneeze—badly.

But he dare not, and he restrained the desire with a desperate, frantic effort.

As he hung there, clinging on with might and main, his fat features screwed up into an agonized expression, Sam Jukes and Alf dashed through the kitchen.

"No good, mate!" panted Alf, taking a swift look out of the window. "We're trapped properly; they're in the yard already, durn 'em. Better 'ide upstairs!"

"Nothin' else for it!" gritted Sam Jukes. "Arter all, they don't know as we're 'ere, and we can 'ide until they've cleared out agen. Quick! Get up—what—"

"A-tish-oooo!" came from the kitchen in one terrific sneeze.

The two stood, thunderstruck.

Believing they were quite alone in the house, that startling, muffled but terrific sneeze must have made them suddenly believe in ghosts.

"Wha-what's that?" panted Sam Jukes, going quite pale.

The outer door latch was suddenly rattled—youthful voices and the clatter of feet sounded in the yard outside. The two men waited no longer. They darted into the kitchen just as another terrific sneeze sounded from the chimney. They stopped again, and as they stood in sudden alarm a flood of soot came down the chimney following a scraping and scratching.

It was the hapless Trimble. Knowing the men were in the room now, he was frantically struggling to get higher up the chimney.

He only succeeded in doing just the opposite, however.

There came another terrific sneeze, a wild, startled yell, and the next moment something closely resembling a great ball of soot fell down the chimney into the grate with a scraping, rumbling sound.

Bump!

"Yarrooooooogh!"

Trimble rolled off the grate on to the hard, stone-flagged hearth. He had scarcely reached it, when something else followed him—a rather bulky sort of box it seemed to be, covered completely in thick soot. It caught Trimble on his sooty head with a fearful crack, and Trimble's bowl was ear-splitting.

Sam Jukes and his friend, Alf, stood rooted to the floor.

They stared and stared at the ball of soot—or, rather, Baggy Trimble, who was roaring in terror.

"By—by hokey!" articulated Sam Jukes at last, too astounded to remember their danger. "It—it's someone fallen down the blinkin' chimney!"

"It is, mate—you've hit it!" gasped Alf. "And what—"

He was interrupted by a startled yell from his friend. Sam's eyes had suddenly sighted the square mass of soot that resembled a box. He pounced upon it, and heedless of the soot he shook it.

From inside the box—for it was a rusted, iron cash-box—came a metallic clanking—heavy and significant.

The effect it had on Sam Jukes was remarkable. He fairly leaped up into the air, shaking the box madly.

"It's it, Alf!" he roared. "We got it at last! It's it—the bloomin' treasure at last, mate! By hokey, what a stroke of luck! Wasn't I right, arter all, Alf? By hokey! I told you—Crimes!"

The sound of a heavy thump, followed by another and another from somewhere upstairs, brought Sam Jukes to his senses with startling abruptness.

He realised in a flash what it was. Tom Merry & Co. were entering the house by the bed-room window after climbing on to the sloping roof by the out-house.

The next moment Tom Merry came thumping down the stairs, and after him came Grundy, Lowther, Blake, D'Arcy, and a swarm of fellows including Gordon Gay.

"Look out, mate!" snarled Jukes.

He stood at bay, the box under his arm, his eyes glittering with menace. At the moment of success—or so it seemed to him—he was to be beaten by the schoolboy farm-hands!

But he did not get the chance to strike a blow—nor did Alf. Before they had recovered themselves, Tom Merry & Co. swarmed over the two rascals, and Sam Jukes and his friend, Alf, vanished almost from sight. In less than thirty seconds they were flat on their backs, dishevelled and breathless, with half a dozen grinning juniors seated on them, pinning them down.

"A fair cop!" grinned Tom Merry. "And what—m-mum-my hat!"

He had suddenly realised that the queer-looking bundle of soot was alive—moreover, that it was Baggy Trimble! The hapless fat youth was sitting up on the floor, gasping and panting, his eyes showing strangely in his sooty face.

"Trimble!" howled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd of juniors roared with laughter at the queer and pathetic picture Trimble presented.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,057.

"Grooooooh!" choked Trimble. "It's nothing to laugh at, you beasts! Grooooooh! Oh, crikey! I'm full of soot! I've had an awful time! But where's that box?"

He pounced on the box which had fallen from Jukes' grasp. Soot fell in showers from Trimble as he stooped and from the box as he snatched it up.

"You let that durned box alone," howled Jukes in a fury.

"That belongs to me, you little rat!"

"It doesn't," shrieked Trimble, hugging the rusty, sooty box to him. "I found it, and findings are keepings. Don't let that awful villain take it from me, Tom Merry! It's mine—I found it in the chimney! A-tish-ooooo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young idiot!" said Tom Merry, keeping his laughter back with an effort. "If that's what those rascals have been hunting for, Trimble, then you've no more right to it than they have. Hand it over—sharp!"

"I jolly well won't!" howled Trimble indignantly. "It's mine! I found it, you beasts! You shan't take—atish-ooo!—from me. Groooooh!"

But Trimble was wrong there. With the aid of a broom Blake managed to pin the fat youth up into a corner, while Grundy, keeping well away from the soot, snatched the box from him and handed it to Tom.

"That's better!" said Tom grimly. "I'll explain how you stand in the matter later, Trimble, my lad! I suppose you came here raiding grub, and these chaps bumped into you, and you hid up the chimney. Isn't that it?"

"Yow! Beasts! Atish-oooo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've fairly got it in the neck, anyway," laughed Tom Merry, unable to restrain himself at the weird picture Baggy presented. "Anyway, this box belongs to nobody but Mr. Chubb, and he'll be the one to open it. Now, you fellows, you can deal with those rascals as you like. I suggest giving them another good ducking in the dockpond! I fancy we shan't be troubled with them again after this. They know the game's up now."

And Tom Merry spoke the truth there. With the willing aid of Gordon Gay & Co., the schoolboy farm-workers duly ducked Sam and his pal Alf in the slimy dockpond, and then they chased them off the farm, speeding their going with turnips and rotten potatoes.

With a crowd of eager and excited chums Tom Merry went afterwards to the Cottage Hospital, and after a bit of trouble with the matron, Tom managed to get permission to see Mr. Chubb. He took the box—cleaned up a bit by this time—and he handed it over to Mr. Chubb and explained the circumstances in which it was found.

The old farmer listened to the story in blank amazement. Then the box was opened with the aid of a poker, and then his smiling disbelief received a shock—but a decidedly pleasant one, for the box was full of money—gold coins for the most part, all of them early Victorian, but none the worse for that!

"Well, I'm darned!" gasped Mr. Chubb, blinking in amazement at the sight. "And 'ere's a letter addressed to me from my old father; I knows his hand well enough. blow me! I expect it's 'is will what they never found. Why, there must be a few hundred pounds here—enough to more than put me on my feet for good, lad! I never believed that there yarn about the old dad hidin' his money—I always believed he was pretty hard up. But it was right, arter all. And that rascal, Jukes, has gone, you say. Master Merry?"

"Yes; he went at about thirty miles an hour!" grinned Tom.

"Well, let him go!" said Farmer Chubb. "I shan't do anything against him. Arter all, he's done me a good turn—helped by you young gents. If you hadn't chipped in, though, that rascal would have found this box for a cert sooner or later. You've done me a good turn, lad—better than you can guess. You're good lads, all of you, and I shan't forget this. The doctor says I'm doing splendidly, and he's letting me get up next week—on crutches, of course. But I'll soon be back at the farm again."

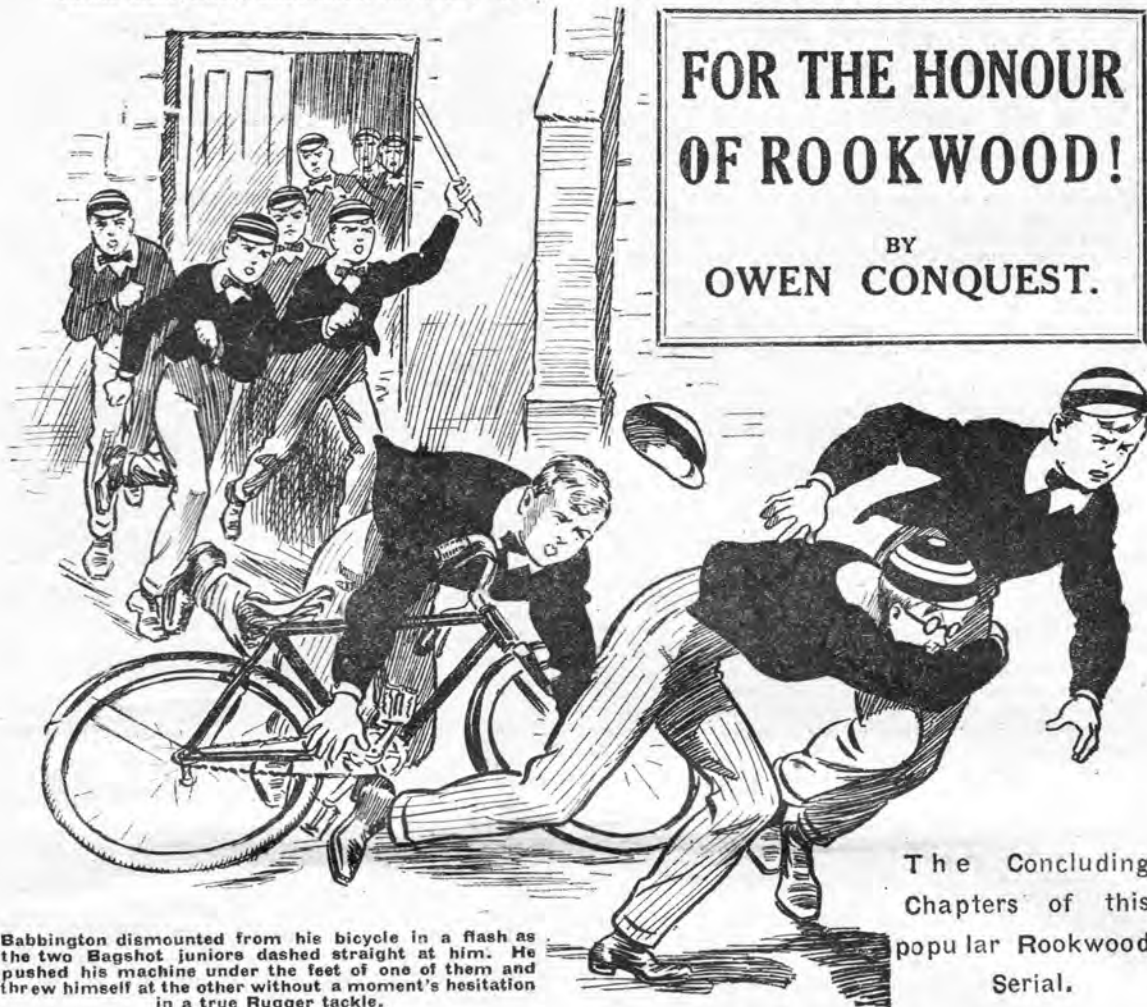
And Mr. Chubb was back at the farm a fortnight later. In that fortnight Tom Merry & Co. had a jolly, if strenuous, time on the farm and in the camp. Baggy Trimble's share in the discovery of the buried treasure persuaded them to keep his daring jape dark, though they made things level by seeing that the fat Fourth-Former did his fair share of the work. Strange to say, however, Baggy did not seem very grateful.

And when the time came for the juniors to pack up and leave their field of labour, so to speak, they packed up with many regrets, but cheered by the knowledge of the part they had played in solving the Mystery of the Farm!

THE END.

(There's another treat in store for you next week, chums, in: "For Friendship's Sake!" which "stars" Ralph Reckless Cardew. Don't miss it on any account.)

THREE CHEERS FOR BABBINGTON! Bagshot School has met with overwhelming defeat; the honour of Rookwood has been vindicated. But the credit of this great victory is due to one person only. And that one is James Montgomery Babbington, the freak! Give three cheers for the great B-a-b-b-i-n-g-t-o-n!



FOR THE HONOUR OF ROOKWOOD!

BY
OWEN CONQUEST.

The Concluding
Chapters of this
popular Rookwood
Serial.

Babbington dismounted from his bicycle in a flash as the two Bagshot juniors dashed straight at him. He pushed his machine under the feet of one of them and threw himself at the other without a moment's hesitation in a true Rugger tackle.

Ruptions in Court!

"I HAVEN'T got a black cap," remarked Jimmy Silver. "Let me have your handkerchief, Tubby; it's generally black enough!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"On second thoughts, however, I'll do without," continued the judge. "Prisoner at the bar, it only remains for me to say—Ow! Wow! Groogh!"

The learned judge had not intended to finish his sentence quite like that.

What caused him to utter these ejaculations was the fact that a broomstick was suddenly thrust through the window behind him, and, catching him between the shoulders, shot him forward off the high stool. He landed right on top of Tommy Dodd.

There was a loud roar from Tommy Dodd as the judge's chin met the top of his head with a resounding crack.

"Wow! My head!" he howled.

"Groogh! My chin!" roared the judge.

"Yow! Ow!"

"Wow! Groogh!"

The judge and the prosecuting counsel rolled on the floor in each other's grasp, yowing and yowing as if for a wager.

In a moment the court was in an uproar.

"Bagshot bounders!" yelled Putty Grace, pointing to the open window, where he had caught a fleeting glimpse of a couple of heads bobbing up and down.

"After 'em! Quick! Bagshot bounders!" roared fifty voices.

There was a wild rush for the door of the junior Common-room, which was wrenched open, and twenty or thirty juniors stampeded down the passage in quest of the daring intruders.

Cecil Pankley, in the dock, roared with laughter.

Pankley was, in fact, the only person in the Common-room who had not been electrified by the sudden interruption.

While the learned judge was about to pass sentence, every eye in the court had been fixed upon the prisoner at the bar; but the prisoner's eyes had been fixed upon the window at the back of Jimmy Silver, at which the countenances of the faithful Putter and Poole, Pankley's chums at Bagshot, had caught his attention.

Pankley had indeed hard work to repress a grin as he discerned a broomstick poised for the thrust which had cut short the eloquence of the learned judge.

Seeking to take advantage of the sudden confusion, Pankley grasped the fender and was about to hurl it aside when Tommy Doyle's heavy hand was laid upon his collar.

"No, you don't, you spalpeen!" said Tommy Doyle. "Here, Cook, where's the poker?"

Unfortunately for Pankley, his gaolers had not been distracted from their duty in the general excitement. Cecil Pankley was still a prisoner!

He grinned cheerily at the dusty figures of Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd, who were now sitting up on the floor grasping their nose and head respectively and groaning.

"Oh, my head!" groaned Dodd. "You silly ass, Silver! What d'you mean by jumping on me like that?" "Groogh! By dose!" exclaimed the learned judge. "Do you think I did it on purpose, you frabjous dummy?"

"You silly cuckoo!"

"You potty lunatic!"

"Faith, and Jimmy Silver got a broomstick between the shoulders!" grinned Tommy Doyle. "That's why he jumped on ye, Tommy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Pankley.

The damaged officials staggered to their feet and favoured the hilarious Pankley with two separate and distinct glares.

"We'll take it out of you, Pankley, for this!" said Tommy Dodd threateningly. "You'll be grinning on the other side of your face soon!"

"Yes, you're for it, Pankley!" said Jimmy Silver darkly, holding his nose. "Who was it at the window, anyway?"

"Why, Putter and Poole!" chuckled Pankley. "They biffed you through the window with a broomstick, hoping, I s'pose, that I should be able to get away in the confusion!"

"Well, you didn't!" said Jimmy Silver grimly.

"No, worse luck; but it was funny," said Pankley.

"Laugh away!" growled Tommy Dodd. "When the chaps come back with your precious pals, we'll stick all three of you in the dock together!"

"They won't catch 'em!" grinned Pankley. "As soon as they biffed Jimmy they dropped out of sight and bolted for the gates, I bet. They'll get away safe enough."

"We'll see," said Jimmy Silver darkly.

It was quite possible that Putter and Poole, the faithful chums of the great Pankley, would have got away safely after their daring exploit but for one circumstance—and that was they met Babbington, who was returning to Rookwood after having taken the big elephant back to the circus to hand over to Ali, the animal's attendant.

Ali, having nothing particular to do, had walked along the road to meet his charge, wheeling with him the bicycle on which Babbington had ridden to the circus that afternoon.

Ali, grinning, had taken charge of Rancee, and after certain coins of the realm had been dropped into the native's dusky palm, Babbington, with great satisfaction, mounted his bicycle and returned to Rookwood.

As he turned into the gates, he was just in time to observe two flying figures dashing towards him from the direction of the Classical House, while from out of the big doorway charged in pursuit a howling mob of Rookwood juniors.

In the course of this story, James Montgomery Babbington has more than once been shown to be a youth of unusual resource.

In spite of his mild manners and innocent appearance, his brain worked remarkably quickly.

Never had Babbington shown himself more resourceful than in the present emergency. He dismounted from his bicycle in a flash, and as the two figures dashed straight at him, he pushed the machine with a hefty shove right under the feet of one of the figures, while he threw himself at the other without a moment's hesitation in a true Rugby tackle.

With Babbington clinging like a leech to his ankles, the unfortunate Putter of Bagshot crashed helplessly to earth! While, at the same moment, the hapless Poole, with a loud howl, tripped over the bicycle and was similarly grassed!

Before either of the Bagshot fellows could so much as struggle to their feet, the pursuing Rookwooders were down upon them like wolves on the fold.

"Got you!" gasped Lovell, who was the foremost of the pack, laying a heavy grasp upon the collar of the almost-winded Putter.

"Good man, Babbington!"

"Neatest thing I ever saw!" gasped Mornington, seizing hold of Poole, who was gasping as if he would never stop.

"Bring the bounders back!" exclaimed Teddy Grace. "We'll jam 'em in the dock along with their precious leader!"

"Hear, hear!" roared the Rookwooders.

"Up you get, Babbington!"

And with Babbington and the two hapless prisoners in their midst, the triumphant crowd of Rookwooders streamed back to the junior Common-room.

Carried Unanimously!

CECIL PANKLEY'S face fell as he saw the figures of his faithful chums hustled into the junior Common-room.

"So they were caught!" he muttered.

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd, with satisfaction.

"We've got 'em!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell triumphantly. "They jolly nearly got away, though, but Babbington—"

"Babbington!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"They were nearly at the gates when they met Babbington coming in on his bike, and he stopped them both."

"Chucked his bike at the feet of one and tackled the other like a good 'un!" chuckled Teddy Grace.

"He's a nut, Babbington is!" said Tommy Dodd, with admiration. "Turns up just where he's wanted every time."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hip, hip, hooray!"

"Good old Babbington!"

There was a roar of cheering as the figure of James Montgomery Babbington, looking very flustered and dishevelled, was propelled into the room in the midst of the tumultuous crowd.

"Babbington again!" exclaimed Pankley in disgust. "Blest if that chap doesn't pop up everywhere!"

"And dishes you every time!" chuckled Teddy Grace.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shove 'em in the dock with Pankley," said Jimmy Silver, taking charge of the situation again in his best "Uncle James" manner. "Shove 'em behind the fender with their blessed leader."

"Hear, hear!"

Putter and Poole, much the worse for wear, were jerked over the rail of the fender, and there was a shout of laughter as the three prisoners gazed out of the dock upon their enemies.

Jimmy Silver picked up the high stool and sat on it again.

"Order in court!" he shouted. "We won't go over the whole trial again, but we'll find all three of the prisoners guilty and sentence 'em straight away."

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The question is, gentlemen," continued Jimmy Silver, "what possible punishment can we give these bounders that will meet the case, now we've got 'em? We ought to give 'em something to remember us by."

"We can make 'em run the gauntlet, of course," said Tommy Dodd reflectively.

"A bit hard on 'em, perhaps, though they are Bagshot bounders," said Jimmy Silver.

"What about the frog's-march?" sang out Mornington.

"Hear, hear!"

"Give 'em the frog's-march!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then we might tie 'em up and black their faces," chimed in Teddy Grace.

"Hear, hear!"

"And gum their hair!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And paint 'em green!"

"That's it!"

"Rag 'em baldheaded!" yelled Lovell.

Jimmy Silver held up his hand.

"Order!" he roared. "Gentlemen, the general opinion seems to be that what our friends, Pankley & Co.,

want is the frog's-march. They have asked for it, gentlemen—in fact, they have begged and prayed for it—and I think we cannot do better than give it to 'em."

"Hear, hear!"

"Give 'em the frog's-march!"

"One moment, if you please!"

Amidst the noise and shouting of the excited juniors, the mild voice of Babbington made itself heard, and there was an instant hush.

"If you please, Silver, may I say a word?"

"Go ahead, Babb!"

James Montgomery Babbington blinked round on the assembled company with a somewhat heightened colour in his mild countenance.

"Gentlemen of the Remove," he said, "excuse me butting in—"

"Go ahead, Babbington!" said Jimmy Silver cordially.

"We've done these Bagshot chaps fairly and completely," continued Babbington.

"You have, you mean!" said Tommy Dodd enthusiastically. "All your doing, Babbington?"

"Hear, hear!"

Babbington blushed modestly.

"I may have had something to do with it," he said.

"But you will remember that when I first came to Rookwood I made an unfortunate blunder."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I let the Bagshot chaps get hold of me and went to Bagshot instead of to Rookwood," continued Babbington, smiling gently. "It was silly of me, and I was told that I had let Rookwood down."

There was a hush of interest as Babbington continued:

"After that the Bagshot chaps scored off us again, and it became a question of getting our own back for the honour of Rookwood."

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen," went on Babbington, blinking rapidly, "we dished Pankley & Co. with the girls' school footer match."

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we've dished them again over the old business!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And now we've got Pankley & Co. prisoners in our midst!"

"Good old Babbington!"

"Gentlemen, I think that you will agree that the honour of Rookwood is satisfied."

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"I should like to suggest, then," continued Babbington, almost shouting to make himself heard, "that, instead of ragging Pankley & Co., who, after all, are jolly stout fellows, we should heap coals of fire on 'em, you know—and ask them to tea!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's the stunt!"

"Good idea, Babbington!"

There was a roar of laughter and cheers at Babbington's unexpected ending, but it was easy to see that it appealed to the crowd considerably.

"You're right, Babbington," said Jimmy Silver at once. "You're responsible for the victory, and, by Jove, you've taught us all a lesson! Shake hands!"

And the captain of the Fourth shook James Montgomery Babbington warmly by the hand.

"You're a nut, Babbington!" said Tommy Dodd, making that valuable remark for the hundredth time. "I always said so, and I shall say it again! You're a nut!"

The excited juniors were crowding round Babbington and patting him on the back and shaking his hand until it almost looked as if Babbington was undergoing the ragging which had been intended for Pankley & Co.

Jimmy Silver jumped on the high stool and raised his voice above the din.

"Chaps," he yelled, "I move that Babbington's suggestion be adopted. Instead of ragging the prisoners, let's give 'em a jolly good tea!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The honour of Rookwood is satisfied, and we can afford to be generous to Pankley & Co. Three cheers for a real good sportsman—James Montgomery Babbington!"

And never had the walls of Rookwood echoed to a heartier round of cheering since the foundation of that ancient seat of learning.

THE END.

(You've read the particulars of our grand new serial on page 23, haven't you, chums? Well now look out for the opening chapters which will appear in next week's BUMPER number.)

GREAT RECORD BARGAIN!!

THE NEW 1923 IMPROVED MODEL OF THE FAMOUS "MONARCH" DE LUXE CAMERA

Fitted with genuine GUARANTEED MENISCUS LENS. Reflex Viewfinder. Nickel-plated Spring Lever Shutter. Lever Guard. Flexible Leatherette Handle, and

SALE PRICE 1/9 **PERFECT LARGE PHOTOS.**

ONLY! Size 3 1/2 x 2 1/2 ins. BRITISH MADE and supplied complete with all accessories:—Box

Post 3d. Quality Plate, Developing and Printing OUT-FIT with easy instructions for use. Send P.O.

2/- to-day for complete Camera and Outfit!! Selling in Thousands! **TESTIMONIALS GALORE!**

W. J. Thomas, Esq., writes:—"Developed and printed photo, and think it as good as if taken with a camera which cost £3." Miss E. Le Cheminant writes:—"I

was astonished to see the result of my first effort. The picture is as good as that done by a proper photographer."

Write for Richly Illustrated Catalogue, hundreds of Big Bargains. Drapery, Jewellery, Cutlery, Novelties, etc., **POST FREE!**

THE LEFDS BARGAIN CO. (U.S.), 31, Kendal Lane, Leeds.

HEIGHT INCREASED 5/- Complete Course.

IN 30 DAYS.

No Appliances. No Drugs. No Dieting. The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS. Full particulars and Testimonials, stamp—Melvin Strong, Ltd. (Dept. S.), 10, Ludgate Hill, London, Eng.

MY GREAT OFFER

I supply the finest Coventry built cycles **ON 14 DAYS' APPROVAL, PACKED FREE AND CARRIAGE PAID.** on receipt of a small deposit. Lowest cash prices, or easy payment terms.

Write for Free Bargain Lists NOW.

Edw. **O'Brien** THE WORLD'S LARGEST CYCLE DEALER

26 WEEKLY

FREE! to all asking to see Approvals—Magnificent Unused Set of 25 Different FRENCH COLONIALS (worth 1/6). Many other (Abroad 6d.) Free Sets.—W. A. WHITE, Engine Lane, LYE, Stourbridge.



2'6 DEPOSIT

ensures delivery of a world-famed 400a Mead "Marvel" Bicycle. Nothing more to pay till you have ridden the machine one month. "MARVEL" 400—£4 7s 6d CASH. We pack FREE, pay carriage and guarantee satisfaction or refund your money. Factory-soiled cycles CHEAP. Accessories at popular prices. Write TO DAY for illustrated Catalogue, Testimonial Budget and special offer of 15 Days Free Trial.

Mead CYCLE COMPANY (INC.)
Dept. B 611, BIRMINGHAM.

STAMP OUTFIT FREE!

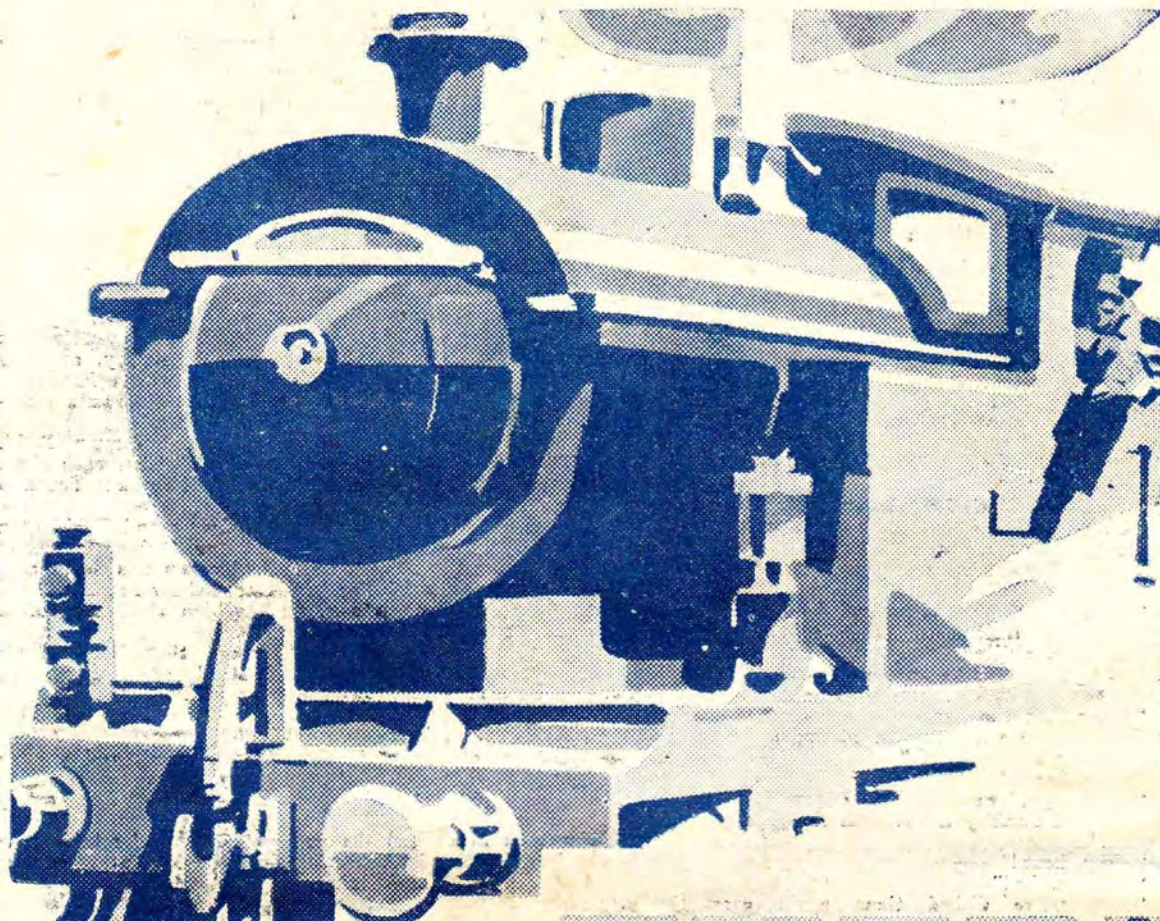
DUPLICATE STAMP ALBUM
BRITISH COLONIAL STAMPS
60 ALL DIFFERENT STAMPS
POCKET CASE and GAUGE

Sample of "Liver" Stamp Mounts, Stamps from Cuba, Hyderabad, Prussia, S. Americans, Wurttemberg, Old Canadian, Slesvig, Indian Native States, etc. This magnificent parcel absolutely free! Send postcard only requesting our Approval Sheets.—**LISBURN & TOWNSEND, London Rd., LIVERPOOL.** (SPECIAL ATTENTION TO COLLECTORS ABROAD.)

BLUSHING.—FREE to all sufferers, particulars of a proved home treatment that quickly removes all embarrassment, and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Enclose stamp to pay postage to—**Mr. A. TEMPLE (Specialist), Palace House, 128, Shaftesbury Avenue (2nd Floor), London, W.1.** (Established over 20 years.)

MENTALISM—the science by which anyone can become more capable and successful. 1/2. E. H. Reason's treatise on the influence of the mind upon the body. Invaluable to Athletes and Physical Culturists. 1/2 (the two, 2/2).—**REASON, GREAT CROSBY.**

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, **UNION JACK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.**



**120
COUPONS**

FREE!

A beautifully finished, weighty, Bing tank-type engine. With powerful spring action and reverse lever for shunting. Supplied in L.M.S. or L.N.E.R. colours. 7ins. long; 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins. high. Gauge O. Will take any curve at speed. A joy for any boy.

Post coupons to: GODFREY PHILLIPS, Ltd. (Gift Dept. Gen.), 112, Commercial St., E.I.

Write for the New B.D.V. Gift Book, worth 5 coupons. It contains 84 pages of splendid gifts, including full particulars of Bassett-Lowke and Bing free model railway systems and complete set of accessories.

A few of the Gifts illustrated in the Gift Book:

DUOPHONE
UNBREAKABLE
RECORDS

50 coupons

MIDLAND
RADIO VALVE

100 coupons

"RAJAR"
ROLL FILM CAMERA

100 coupons

BASSETT-LOWKE
EXPRESS LOCO
(AND TENDER)

375 coupons

All Gifts Post Free.

B.D.V.

CIGARETTES

"— just like hand made"

10 for 6d., 20 for 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Plain or Cork Tips

(COUPONS ALSO IN EVERY PACKET OF B.D.V. TOBACCO, 11d. PER OZ.)

COMPARE THE VALUES WITH OTHER GIFT SCHEMES