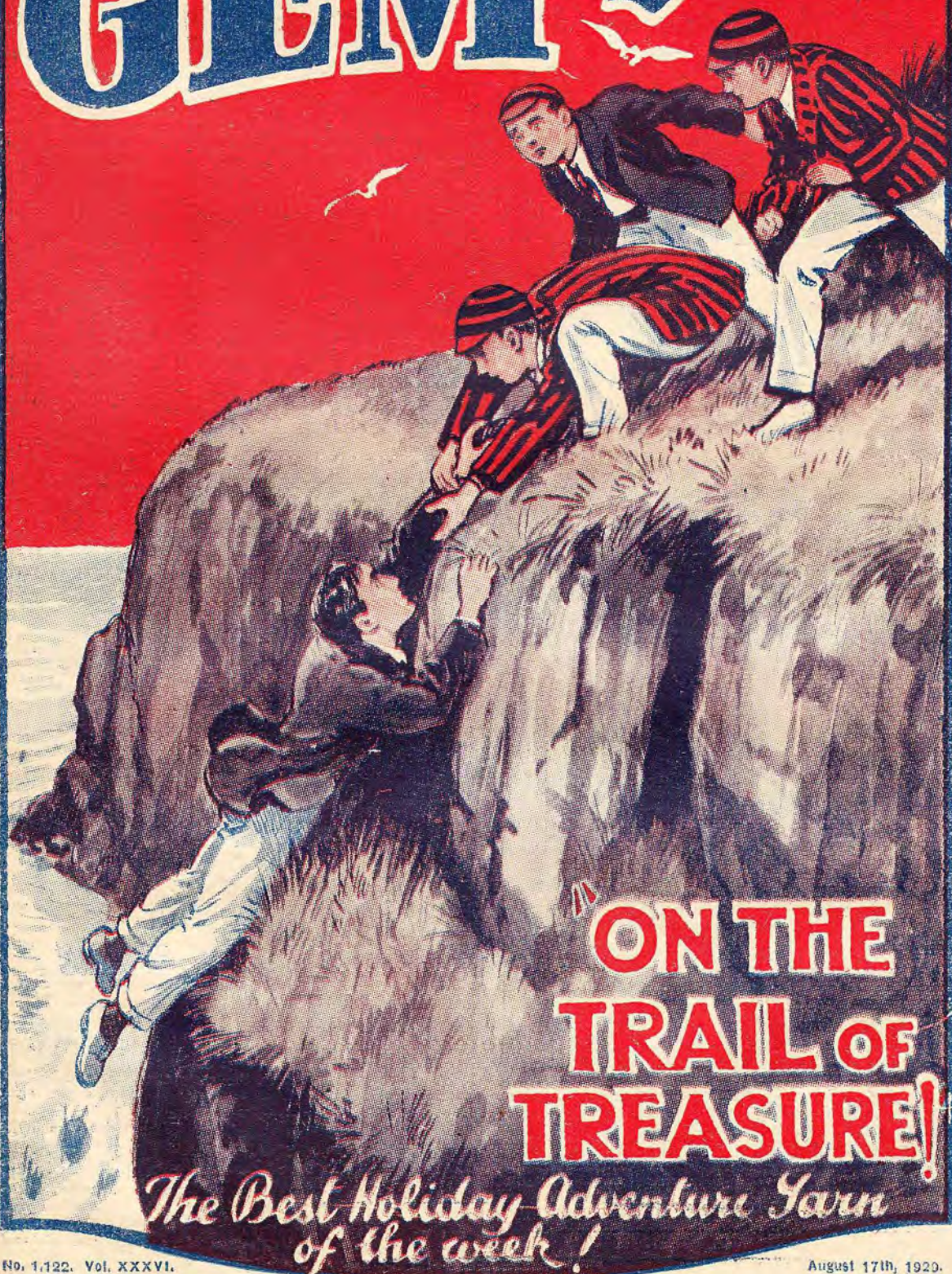


EVERY SCHOOLBOY'S FAVOURITE PAPER!

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THE GEM 2d



**ON THE
TRAIL OF
TREASURE!**

*The Best Holiday Adventure yarn
of the week!*

A Gripping Long Story Dealing with the Holiday adventures of the Chums of St. Jim's

Nothing is farther from the minds of Tom Merry & Co. and the rest of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's house-party in Cornwall than the thought that they have a traitor in their midst. Only Baggy Trimble knows of the ruthless scoundrel who is scheming and plotting to secure the treasure of Penperro Rock for himself, and Baggy's discovery places him in dire peril!

CHAPTER I. Baggy Gets Wet!

"A LL aboard!"
"What-ho!"
"Woom for you in this boat, Ethel, deah gal!"

"Row, boys, row!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
A very cheery party was gathered on the beach in the shadow of the great Cornish cliffs, by the four large rowing boats that were drawn up at the water's edge.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, was in high spirits. So were his guests—Tom Merry & Co. and Talbot of the Shell, Blake & Co. and Levison and Clive of the Fourth, and Figgins & Co. of the New House—to say nothing of his pretty cousin, Ethel Cleveland, and her two chums from Spalding Hall School, Doris Levison and Lady Peggy Brooke. Arthur Augustus had invited them all down to Cornwall for the summer holidays, to stay at Penperro House, the big old house on the cliffs that his father, Lord Eastwood, had taken for August.

Walter Adolphus D'Arcy of the Third Form, more commonly known as Wally, was also present, with his two chums of the fag fraternity, Reggie Manners and Levison minor. The three fags were bursting with excitement as they tumbled into one of the big boats at the edge of the water.

"Shove off!" grinned Wally eagerly.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, adjusting his celebrated eyeglass to turn a reproving eye upon his minor. "You three youngsters cannot have a boat to yourselves. You must make woom for othahs!"

"Well, back up!" chuckled Wally.

"Here comes your pater, Gussy," said Tom Merry, glancing towards the foot of the cliff-path, where the tall, handsome figure of Lord Eastwood had appeared.

"And Renfrew," put in Jack Blake, as a second tall figure appeared, joining Lord Eastwood as the latter crossed towards the waiting boats.

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By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Gilbert Renfrew was another member of the house-party that was being entertained under the hospitable roof of Penperro House.

He was a young man in the early twenties, and he had come to join the number of Lord Eastwood's guests in peculiar circumstances.

During a storm, Figgins & Co. had seen a small yacht in distress among the rocks at the base of the little island that rose from the sea opposite Penperro House, separated from the mainland by a channel of dangerous waters half a mile wide. Taking their lives in their hands, Figgins, Fatty Wynn and Kerr had gone out through the tempest and rescued from the doomed little vessel its only occupant.

This had proved to be the son of an old friend of Lord



On the TRAIL of TREASURE!

Eastwood's who was at present abroad; so he had been able to tell Lord Eastwood upon recovering from the effects of his terrible ordeal. And Lord Eastwood had asked the stranger whose father he knew so well to stay on at Penperro House and join the cheery house-party—an offer which Gilbert Renfrew had readily accepted.

"All ready for our visit to the mysterious rock?" smiled Lord Eastwood as he and Renfrew joined the group by the boats.

"Rather, sir!" grinned Talbot.

Lord Eastwood climbed into one of the boats and settled himself in the stern seat. Renfrew took his place beside him.

There was rather an odd look on the face of Gilbert Renfrew as he glanced out towards the gaunt shape of Penperro Rock, as the rugged little island that they were about to visit was called.

There was reason in plenty for that queer look in Renfrew's dark eyes! That night when Figgins & Co. had saved him from the fury of the storm-lashed waves at the foot of the island must have been very fresh in his mind as

he gazed out towards the dark outline of Penperro Rock, black against the sky even in the bright sunlight of morning.

"All aboard!" sang out Tom Merry cheerily.

"Step in, deah boys!"

At last the three girls and the St. Jim's juniors had all taken their places in the four boats that were to carry them across to Penperro Rock.

Ever since their arrival at the big house on the cliffs, the St. Jim's party had been keen to visit the island, for there was a legend that the monks who had once lived upon it, in the monastic buildings that could now be seen in desolate ruins against the sky upon the summit of the great rock, had left a huge treasure concealed there.

The juniors had been looking forward to a thrilling treasure-hunt, and the discovery by Blake and Tom Merry and Fatty Wynn of an old yellowed chart that seemed to mark the position of the treasure upon a plan of Penperro Rock, had made them twenty times as keen to begin their search. The strange disappearance of the chart from the safe into which Lord Eastwood had placed it had been a staggering blow. But even without the mysteriously-vanished chart to aid them in their hunt, they meant to leave no stone unturned until they had unearthed the old monks' treasure.

The reason why Lord Eastwood and his youthful guests had failed as yet to visit the island was that Penperro Rock was unapproachable in rough weather, owing to the dangerous currents set up in the rock-bound waters around it. But at last the heavy seas had abated. The St. Jim's juniors had awakened that morning to find the sea like glass. In place of the thundering surf and the mad, leaping foam that till then had barred their access to the rock, only a few smooth ripples stirred the surface of the channel they had to cross.

Immediately after breakfast everyone had prepared for the long awaited visit to the mysterious island! And it was with high spirits that the

juniors dipped their oars into the water now, as the boats pushed off from the beach.

"Now we're off!" chuckled Figgins. "Good egg!"

"Yo, ho, ho, and a bottle of rum!" sang Monty Lowther, in a voice that was loud and cheery even if it were not very musical.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the other juniors joined in with a will:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest!
Yo, ho, ho, and a bottle of rum!"

With-flashing oars, the four boats drew out towards the gaunt, jagged shape of the island, with the juniors lustily yelling the famous chorus from "Treasure Island"—which in the circumstances seemed a very suitable song for them to sing.

"Gad!" smiled Lord Eastwood. "Anyone would think that four boat-loads of cut-throat pirates had turned up in Cornwall out of the last century!"

"It sounds like it!" agreed Renfrew, with a smile.

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Cutting smoothly through the water, the boats turned in the direction of Penperro Rock.

And then from the beach there came a sudden yell!

"My hat!" ejaculated Manners. "Baggy!"

A fat, gesticulating figure had appeared on the beach. It was Baggy Trimble, the Falstaff of the School House, who was also a guest at Penperro House.

Everyone had forgotten Baggy!

Baggy had a little habit of coming down very late for breakfast—though it was the only meal for which he was ever late! This morning he had failed to put in an appearance at all by the time the others had left the house, and when at last he had crawled downstairs it had been to find himself left behind!

Baggy certainly did not mean to be omitted from the party that was visiting Penperro Rock. If the treasure were found, Baggy meant to be on the spot. For though the legendary treasure, if it proved actually to exist, would be the property of the friend of Lord Eastwood's, who owned the rock as well as the house on the cliffs, nevertheless Baggy had a sneaking hope that it would be possible to pocket a few pieces of eight, or a handful or two of gems, for himself.

So Baggy had snatched up a cold tongue and a lump of bread, and with these precious possessions had dashed out in pursuit of the treasure-hunters, to arrive breathless on the beach in time to see the four crowded boats rowing merrily away.

"Hi!" howled Baggy desperately, using every ounce of lung-power he possessed. "Hi! Come back! Come back for me, you rotters!"

Fortunately, Baggy's polite term regarding the party escaped the ears of Lord Eastwood.

"By Jove, it's Trimble!" ejaculated the old peer, glancing back at the fat figure by the water's edge.

He smiled, but there was a shade of annoyance in his face. Though Lord Eastwood was of a tolerant disposition and on the friendliest of terms with most of his son's chums from St. Jim's, Baggy Trimble's slacking habits rather irritated him at times. Lord Eastwood had no use for slackers!

"Come back!" bawled Baggy. "I—I say, don't be beasts! Come back for me, you rotters—"

"I suppose somebody's got to go back for the fat ass!" grunted Blake, who was at the oars of one of the boats. "Come on, Figgy!"

And he and George Figgins, who was at the other pair of oars, turned the boat containing themselves and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Cousin Ethel, and Lady Peggy back towards the shore.

Baggy gave a grunt of relief as he saw the boat turn back for him. He took a large bite out of the cold tongue.

In his excitement at finding the boats gone, Baggy had for the moment forgotten the fact that he had not yet had any breakfast! But now he felt the pangs of hunger that ached within him. He was still greedily devouring the tongue and bread when the boat came in at the water's edge, stern first.

"Come on, Baggy!" sang out Figgins, good-naturedly.

"Buck up, you fat slacker!" exclaimed Blake.

"Oh, really, Blake—"

"My hat! Not finished breakfast yet?" inquired Lady Peggy, in astonishment, at sight of the viands in Baggy's hands.

"Hem! Nunno! You see, I—I—"

"Jump in, Twimble!" snapped Arthur Augustus impatiently. "Pway huwuy up, deah boy!"

"Well, get the blessed boat farther in!" grumbled Baggy.

Though the beach shelved steeply at that point, and the boat was close inshore—quite close enough for anyone else to have jumped on board without much difficulty—Baggy was eyeing the yard or so of water that separated him from the stern of the boat with a very dubious eye.

"She won't go in any farther," explained Figgins. "Come on!"

There was no help for it. Tucking the remains of his tongue and bread under his arm, Baggy gathered himself for a fat leap.

Baggy's leap was not exactly graceful! As Blake remarked later, it was more like a prize pig trying to hop over a fence than anything. But it was a mighty leap for Trimble.

It was not, however, quite mighty enough for the occasion!

Splash! Swoosh!

"Yarooooogh!"

With a terrific yell Baggy landed in the sea, sending a great fountain of water shooting into the air around him.

There was another yell from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as a few pints of sea-water drenched his immaculate white trousers.

"Oh, gad! Gweat Scott!"

"Groooooh!" gasped Trimble. "Gug-gug-gug! Yooooosh!"

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Splashing and floundering, Baggy sat in the water and gasped and gurgled.

His face was a picture!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake and Figgins joined in a great yell of laughter. Lady Peggy was laughing, too. Even Cousin Ethel was smiling; she could not help it. Of all the occupants of the boat only Arthur Augustus was not amused!

"Bai Jove!" The swell of St. Jim's surveyed the stains on his elegant flannels with consternation. "Oh, you uttah ass, Twimble! You—you—you—"

"Help!" panted Baggy wildly. "Yow! Help! I'm drowning! Rescue!"

Baggy was floundering in about a foot of water only; but in his excitement the fat junior's mind was filled with frightening thoughts of being swept out to sea—of being devoured by sharks—of being sucked under by mysterious currents!

His face was yellow as he scrambled breathlessly back on to the shingle and collapsed in a palpitating, dripping heap.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, bai Jove! My twousahs are ruined! The—the fwabjous idiot!"

"Poor Trimble!" exclaimed Ethel, trying hard to stifle her amusement. "I am afraid he is rather wet!"

"He's wet all right!" grinned Figgins. "I've never seen anybody wetter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What were you doing, Baggy?" sang out Blake. "Playing at being a mermaid, or what?"

The three juniors in the boat roared—even the swell of St. Jim's, forgetting his trousers at the sight of Baggy's miserable soaked figure, as the Falstaff of the Fourth crawled to his feet with sea-water pouring from his clothes and hair.

"Oh, lor'!" groaned Baggy. "I—I say, it's nothing to laugh at, you chaps! I'm soaked!"

Baggy blinked round miserably for his tongue and bread; but they were floating gaily away on the surface of the water.

"Better trot back, Baggy, and get changed!" grinned Blake.

Baggy thought so, too!

His eagerness to visit Penperro Rock that morning had been very much damped!

With a glare at the chuckling juniors, Baggy turned and crawled up the beach in the direction of the path. Blake pushed off, and the boat cut out across the water in the wake of the other three, which were now far out on the flashing waters of the channel.

"Poor old Baggy!" gurgled Lady Peggy, wiping the tears of merriment from her eyes. "What a scream!"

"Yaas; but my twousahs—"

"Blow your trousers, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove! Weally, Blake—"

"Anyway, that's the first time Baggy's bathed this summer!" chuckled Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With Blake and Figgins pulling strongly on the oars, the boat turned in the direction of the mysterious island.

One thing was certain! Even if the treasure of Penperro Rock were found that morning, Baggy Trimble would not be there to feast his eyes upon it!

CHAPTER 2.

The Island of Mystery!

"HEAH we are!"

"Good egg!" exclaimed Lady Peggy.

The boat containing Cousin Ethel and Lady Peggy and their escorts had arrived at the island close behind the other three boats, and was dipping and lifting on the gentle swell beside the ledge of flat rock on to which the rest of the party were already scrambling.

Blake and Figgins shipped their oars, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy caught hold of a jutting rock and fastened a mooring rope round it. With the aid of Tom Merry and Talbot the girls climbed out.

"Here we are at last!" breathed Ethel, gazing round curiously.

The ledge of rock on to which the party had landed formed a kind of natural jetty. Leading up from it were some time-worn steps, evidently carved out of the rock by the monks of old. The steps wound up through a rocky gorge to the more or less flat summit of the great mass, where the ruins were.

Now that they were actually on the island, the juniors realised that it was far bigger than they had imagined.

Tom Merry nodded.

It certainly was rather eerie on the great rock, with the soft lapping of waves the only sounds. The gorge through

which the party had to climb to the summit was dark in shadow, and the lonely desolation of it all was almost oppressive.

Even the cheery talk and laughter of the party, headed by Lord Eastwood and Gilbert Renfrew, as it climbed the winding steps up the great gorge, seemed to echo with an almost forbidding sound from the dark rocky walls.

By the time they at last gained the summit Fatty Wynn, at any rate, was thoroughly puffed!

"Whew!" gasped Fatty, mopping his perspiring brow with a handkerchief. "What a blessed climb!"

"It'll help to take your fat down, old chap!" chuckled Ernest Levison.

Fatty Wynn glared at him.

"Look here, you skinny ass—"

Ernest Levison's well-built, athletic frame was anything but skinny. But in comparison with Fatty's weighty figure it was certainly slim!

"Who are you calling skinny?" demanded Levison indignantly.

But the arrival of Doris Levison beside them, at the top of the long climb, interrupted the argument.

nook and corner of the ruins. They found dark underground rooms beneath the massive walls, the entrance to them almost hidden by tumbled masonry, and they found more than one choked-up stairway leading down from the flagged floors of the centre portion of the old monastery. But though they found plenty of dust and rubbish they found nothing else!

Tom Merry, Manners, and Monty Lowther left the ruins after a while, leaving the others still exploring, and



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Blake, and Figgins roared with laughter as Baggy Trimble crawled to his feet, with sea water pouring from his clothes and hair. Lady Peggy was laughing, too, and even Cousin Ethel could not help smiling. "What were you doing, Baggy?" sang out Blake. "Playing at being a mermaid, or what?" "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter I.)

"Here we are!" cried Doris excitedly. "Now for the treasure-hunt!"

Her eyes were fixed eagerly on the ancient walls and broken archways of the ruined buildings, which stood upon the farther side of the great grassy space at the top of the rock.

"I suppose it will be somewhere among the ruins that we shall find the treasure?" went on Doris.

"If we find it at all!" smiled Talbot. "We mustn't count our chickens before they're hatched, you know."

"If only that chart hadn't vanished!" growled Herries.

"There's one thing," put in Tom Merry cheerfully, "the fact that that chart existed shows that the treasure is here to be found, unless the smugglers, or whoever it was that had the chart, collared it!"

"That is what most likely happened," said a smooth voice behind him.

Tom Merry glanced round. Gilbert Renfrew had joined the group.

There was a cynical smile on the face of the man whom Figgins & Co. had saved from the sea.

"I don't want to be a wet blanket," went on Renfrew lightly. "But I hardly think there's much chance of our finding the supposed treasure myself. Though it would be very nice if we did, of course!" he added, with a laugh.

"Well, let's have a look, anyway!" grinned Tom Merry.

And the little group moved towards the ruins, following the tall figure of Lord Eastwood, who had led the way towards the crumbling stone archway that gave entrance to the moss-grown interior of the main portion of the ruined buildings.

For the next twenty minutes the party explored every

strolled across to the edge of the cliffs. On the seaward side of the island the cliff dropped sheer to the sea, undermined in places by caves where the water could be heard gurgling far below.

"How would you like a nice high dive—only about a couple of hundred feet!" grinned Monty Lowther.

Suddenly Manners flung out a pointing hand.

"Hallo! Look at that!"

A little way to the right of where they were standing a ledge of rock jutted out from the face of the cliff, about a dozen yards from the summit. A narrow, precarious pathway led down to it, and on the ledge was a litter of broken stonework, and the remains of a crumbling wall.

"There was some sort of a building down there," said Tom Merry. "Let's go down and look at it. Maybe the treasure's hidden somewhere there!"

The three turned towards the top of the path that gave access to the ledge. But as they moved towards it, a sudden hail caused them to pause and glance back.

"Renfrew!" said Manners. "Wonder what he wants?"

Gilbert Renfrew was crossing quickly towards them with long strides from the direction of the ruins.

"I say," he called out cheerily, "come and help explore the vaults!"

"We've been down there," rejoined Tom Merry. "Nothing to see, except a lot of litter."

"We were going down to have a look at the ruins on that ledge down there," explained Manners, pointing.

"I shouldn't," advised Renfrew quickly. "It—it doesn't look safe to me, that path. You'd be done for if you missed your footing."

"I don't think we're likely to do that!" grinned Tom Merry. "Come on, you chaps!"

Renfrew laid a hand on Tom's shoulder, holding him back with a tight grip.

"Don't be young asses!" he exclaimed, almost roughly. "I tell you it's not safe! That path's too narrow; and, as I say, if you slipped you'd be done for. You'd go over the edge as likely as not, and be smashed to a jelly on the rocks below."

Tom laughed half impatiently.

"Oh, that's rot! We're not likely to go over the edge, I promise you!"

He moved forward again, and Renfrew let go his hold with evident reluctance. There was rather an odd look in his dark eyes.

"Well, if you will go, I suppose I can't stop you," he said. "But, look here, I'll go with you!"

Before the three juniors could turn down the narrow rocky path leading to the ledge, Renfrew himself stepped on to it, climbing down slowly and warily towards the ledge below.

The juniors followed.

It was not an easy climb; but it was safe enough. And in the back of his mind Tom Merry wondered vaguely why Renfrew had appeared so anxious to prevent their taking that path.

Yet perhaps Renfrew's warning had not been quite unjustified, after all. For the next moment Renfrew himself missed his footing on some loose pebbles.

The juniors heard his startled gasp. The man stumbled, and there was a hoarse, warning shout from Tom Merry. "Look out!"

The next instant Renfrew had lost his balance—or so it seemed. He gave a cry, and went plunging over the sheer edge of the path. His clutching fingers grasped a jutting point of rock, and he was left hanging, clinging desperately. His white face gazed up at the three juniors with a look of panic.

"Help!" he cried thickly. "Help!"

CHAPTER 3.

Renfrew's Ruse I

"HELP!"

Again Renfrew's voice quavered uncertainly.

In a moment Tom Merry had leapt forward, and kneeling above him, grasped his wrists.

wrists.

"Hang on!" cried Tom, tense-faced.

Manners and Lowther were at Tom's side in another moment. With each of them grasping a wrist, Renfrew was now safe enough. But his face was still white with fear. He licked his dry lips.

"Can you pull me up?" he muttered hoarsely.

"I think so," nodded Tom quietly. "Ready, you chaps?"

But it took all the strength of the three juniors to haul Renfrew back on to the safety of the path, from where he had been hanging over that terrible drop.

But when at last they had done so all thoughts of the little ruin on the ledge of which they had been climbing had left their minds. They felt only too glad to return with Renfrew to the top of the cliff. Back on the grassy summit Renfrew laughed shakily.

"That was a close shave!" he exclaimed, and shuddered.

"Yes, it was close enough!" agreed Manners grimly. "I thought you were gone for a moment or two."

"Look here," muttered Renfrew, "better not tell the others. It would only upset the girls, perhaps."

Tom Merry nodded agreement, and the four of them turned towards the ruins in silence. The voices of the rest of the party came to their ears, and Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn appeared through an archway. Blake & Co. and Levison and Olive followed them, with the three girls.

"No sign of the blessed treasure!" exclaimed Figgins in a disappointed voice. "We've searched everywhere."

"However, we must not give up hope, dear boys!" put in Arthur Augustus encouragingly. "We have plenty of time yet, you know!"

"That's the spirit!" laughed Renfrew.

Renfrew, Tom Merry & Co. noticed, had recovered swiftly from his unnerving experience. He was perfectly cool and smiling now.

"What about those caves down by the water, where we landed?" suggested Lady Peggy. "Let's explore those."

"Good wheeze!" nodded Fatty Wynn. "Come along!"

"Rather!" agreed Renfrew. "Let's go and hunt in the caves."

While some of the party, including Lord Eastwood, remained exploring the ruins, hoping to find some as yet undiscovered cache holding the treasure, the three girls, Blake & Co., Figgins & Co., and Gilbert Renfrew set off for the caves by the foot of the gorge. But on seeing that

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Tom Merry & Co. had joined Lord Eastwood and the rest in the ruins, Renfrew halted.

"I think I'll stay up here, after all," he murmured, and retraced his steps alone.

There was a queer, thoughtful look in his sallow face, with its dark, watchful eyes. He glanced across at the top of the path that led down to the ruin on the ledge.

"Lucky I had the presence of mind to fake that fall of mine," muttered Gilbert Renfrew to himself. "It stopped those three confounded youngsters going down there!"

A twisted smile appeared on his face.

He glanced round. Blake & Co. and Figgins & Co. and the girls had vanished into the gorge, and the rest were out of sight somewhere in the ruins. Drawing into the shadow of a ruined pillar, Renfrew took a folded piece of paper from his pocket, and opened it cautiously.

It was a copy of the vanished chart!

Of all the house-party at Penperro House, only Baggy Trimble knew that it was Renfrew who had taken that chart, and Baggy was finding it profitable to keep his mouth shut! Besides, Baggy had been quite willing to believe the man's explanation that the chart was a fake, a hoax that Renfrew had played on Lord Eastwood and his guests.

The fact that Renfrew, to prove his story, had burnt the original chart before Baggy's eyes had been only a clever piece of bluff! The fat junior had not the faintest idea that the man had first taken an exact copy of the precious chart.

"Yes," breathed Renfrew, as his keen eyes examined the plan, "this cross must mark the treasure—and it shows it in the ruins on that ledge! No doubt about that."

He carefully folded the plan and returned it to his pocket. There was a greedy gleam in his dark eyes.

"I've got to keep the others from visiting that ledge, at all costs!" he muttered.

The fact that Lord Eastwood and the St. Jim's juniors would inevitably visit the ledge in the end if they continued their exploration of the great rock, Renfrew realised. But it might be a long time before that happened—probably not on that day, at any rate. And by the time they eventually did so, Renfrew meant to have been there before them!

"Too risky to go there now," Renfrew told himself, as he moved away from the ruined pillar. "To-night, under cover of dark—"

He broke off with a soft chuckle.

In a far corner of the ruins he could see Wally & Co. scrambling about over the broken masonry. The three fags were enjoying themselves thoroughly! From a gap in a broken wall near him Lord Eastwood appeared, with Talbot.

"Ah, Gilbert!" exclaimed Lord Eastwood. "There you are! I am afraid our hunt for the treasure has not proved very successful up to now!"

He laughed. Renfrew shrugged his shoulders.

"Personally, I fancy the search is hopeless, sir! As you know, I never believed myself that there was very much hope of this supposed treasure actually existing."

Lord Eastwood glanced at his watch.

"I must be getting back to the house," he said. "I have several things to attend to. Perhaps you would not mind rowing me across, Talbot, and returning with the boat?"

"Certainly, sir."

Gilbert Renfrew stood watching Lord Eastwood depart in the direction of the gorge, accompanied by Reginald Talbot.

He took out a cigarette and lit it, and blew a thin stream of smoke into the air.

There was once more a twisted smile on his rather crafty face.

Then Gilbert Renfrew laughed softly and, turning, vanished into the ruins.

CHAPTER 4.

Rival XI's!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Look at this!"

It was Tom Merry who spoke.

Tom had come out on to the terrace of Penperro House, together with Manners and Lowther and Reginald Talbot. It was the morning after the day spent treasure-hunting on Penperro Rock.

That search for the treasure had proved a vain one. On finally leaving the island, however, the St. Jim's juniors had one and all agreed to visit it again on the following day. But that evening the wind had risen, and, with the rising wind, the sea, too, had grown high. Great waves thundering round the base of Penperro Rock had greeted the eyes of the juniors when they had got up that morning.

Once more the mysterious island was cut off from them by an impassable channel of foaming waters!

It had been a great disappointment to all. But there was nothing for it but to wait till calmer weather returned,

when they would be able to resume their search for the old monks' treasure of Penperro Rock.

Tom Merry & Co. had been discussing with Talbot in the library the question of how to spend the day, now that a visit to the island was impossible. They had stepped through the french windows on to the long terrace in search of the others, when something pinned to the woodwork of the windows had caught Tom Merry's eye.

"Hallo, hallo!" he repeated. "Look, you chaps!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Monty Lowther eagerly. "Cricket!"

"It must be a surprise of Gussy's!" chuckled Manners. "I never heard anything about it!"

The pinned notice that had so surprised the four Shell fellows was as follows:

"LORD EASTWOOD'S XI.

v.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY'S XI.

Lord Eastwood (Capt.).

T. Merry.

G. Figgins.

M. Lowther.

H. Manners.

D. L. Wynn.

G. Herries.

W. A. D'Arcy.

R. Manners.

H. Smith.

G. Hill.

A. A. D'Arcy (Capt.).

G. Renfrew.

R. Talbot.

J. Blake.

G. F. Kerr.

E. Levison.

S. Clive.

R. A. Digby.

B. Trimble.

F. Levison.

W. Roberts.

Match Commencing at 2 o'clock sharp this Afternoon."

Tom Merry & Co. and Talbot read the lists eagerly, then looked at one another with shining eyes.

A cricket match between an eleven captained by Lord Eastwood against one skippered by the swell of St. Jim's was certainly a good idea, and Arthur Augustus had kept the secret of his intention well. No one had known of the proposed match, and the prospect of it delighted Tom Merry & Co. and Talbot!

"Oh, good!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"Ripping!" nodded Talbot, with great satisfaction. "I see I'm in Gussy's eleven. Well, they look jolly well matched! It ought to be a great tussle!"

"Rather!" grinned Tom Merry. "I see Renfrew is playing. I wonder if he's any good?"

"He needs to be," grinned Monty Lowther. "Gussy's side want all they can get to make up for having Baggy in their side!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

An indignant voice caused the four to turn their heads. Baggy Trimble himself had rolled into view from the french windows just in time to hear Monty's remark.

"How many runs do you expect to make, Baggy?" inquired Manners gravely.

"Oh, about forty or fifty, I suppose!" said Baggy pompously.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Of course, that's a modest estimate," explained Baggy. "I shall aim at a century, of course. I dare say I shall get one, too!"

"M-my hat!"

"As everybody knows, I'm a jolly fine cricketer," went on the Falstaff of the School House impressively. "It's only Tom Merry's personal jealousy that has kept me out of the School House team in the past, of course—"

"Why, you—you—you—"

Words failed Tom Merry. He grasped Baggy by the ear, and Baggy squealed and wriggled like a hooked fish.

"Yow! Oh! Leggo, you beast!"

Baggy twisted free from Tom's grasp, and rubbed his injured ear, glaring at Tom.

The captain of the Shell at St. Jim's burst into a laugh. "You fat ass!" he exclaimed. "You know jolly well you're a hopeless giddy duffer at cricket!"

"Oh, really, Merry—"

Tom turned again to the notice.

"H. Smith and G. Hill," he said thoughtfully. Then he smiled. "Of course, they must be Henry and George, the two footmen!"

"That's it," nodded Talbot. "I remember Gussy telling me that Henry was rather hot-stuff at cricket, too!"

"Good!" grinned Monty Lowther. "He's on our side! And you've got Roberts, the chauffeur!"

There was the sound of footsteps at the far end of the terrace. Blake & Co. had appeared there, followed by Levison and Clive and Figgins & Co.

"Hallo, Gussy!" sang out Lowther cheerily. "I say, is this cricket-match your idea?"

"It was weally the patah's, deah boy!" explained the swell

of St. Jim's, as he sailed gracefully up to join the group, followed by the others. "I think it is a wippin' scheme!"

"Rather!" chuckled Figgins.

"The patah is pwovidin' small salvah cups for the winnin' eleven," went on Arthur Augustus, beaming round him through his eyeglass. "There will be a souvenir cup for each membah of the winnin' eleven!"

"Oh, ripping!" grinned Manners.

For some minutes the juniors stood on the terrace discussing the chances of the respective teams. The general opinion was the two elevens were very equally matched, and that the game would be a close one.

"Seems to me it largely depends on what sort of a cricketer this chap Renfrew turns out to be," said Tom Merry finally, and there was a murmur of agreement.

"Well, what about a bathe now, before lunch?" suggested Levison.

"Hear, hear!"

The juniors crowded into the house to get their bathing kit and to find Ethel, Doris, and Lady Peggy, who, it was hoped, would come bathing with them, and for the time being the subject of the cricket-match that was to be played that afternoon was put aside.

But as they trooped down to the beach with their girl chums to bathe, the St. Jim's juniors would have been very astonished to know of the strange, far-reaching results that the match between Lord Eastwood's eleven and that of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was destined to bring about—in connection, amazingly enough, with the treasure of Penperro Rock!

CHAPTER 5.

... An Amazing Scene !

"O H, well hit, there!"

"Boundary!"

"Hurrah!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eleven was batting first, and the members of it who were awaiting their turn to bat at the edge of the field were shouting themselves hoarse.

The swell of St. Jim's had opened the innings for his side in partnership with Gilbert Renfrew. And already, off the first four balls of the opening over, Arthur Augustus had sent the ball twice to the boundary.

"Good old Gussy!" chuckled Blake, sitting up eagerly in his deck-chair at the side of Lady Peggy. "He's in form to-day all right!"

There was no doubt that the swell of St. Jim's was!

Arthur Augustus was inclined to start rather shakily at times, only "getting into his stride" after he had been at the wicket for a while. But this afternoon he had started off with an exhibition of fireworks!

The match was being played on the big stretch of grass on the landward side of Penperro House, a wide expanse of crisp, green turf splendidly suited for use as a cricket-pitch, even though it lacked, perhaps, the velvety finish of Little Side at St. Jim's.

Old Wallington, the butler, was doing service as an umpire; the other umpire was one of the gardeners.

"Now for Renfrew!" murmured Clive, sitting on the grass by Doris Levison's chair.

A single snatched by the batsmen from a cut through the slips from the bat of Arthur Augustus had brought Renfrew at last to face the bowling for the final ball of the over.

The young man certainly looked a cricketer in his flannels and pads. His lean, lithe figure was evidently full of muscle, and as he waited for the ball to come flashing up the pitch from the hand of Fatty Wynn his keen eyes never wavered for a moment.

Click!

"Oh, well hit, sir!"

Renfrew had lashed out at the ball, and with the sweet sound of leather on willow the ball had gone soaring away over the bowler's head.

The batsmen started to run.

But Figgins was waiting by the boundary-line, and the ball was not likely to get past George Figgins! He gathered it in neatly and returned it to the nearer wicket with a splendid throw-in. Arthur Augustus, dashing to his crease, was only just in time.

"Only two," murmured Kerr. "If Figgy hadn't been so smart, that would have been a blessed boundary!"

The fielders changed over, and Tom Merry took the ball.

The swell of St. Jim's stole a single off the first ball of the over, and again Renfrew faced the bowling.

Click!

It was a boundary this time!

Renfrew had sent the ball into the trees with a splendid off-drive.

"The chap can play cricket all right!" chuckled Levison minor admiringly. "Can't he, Ernie?"

"You're right, kid!" grinned Ernest Levison.

The ball was returned to Tom Merry.

This time Tom Merry changed his tactics. He sent up a slow delivery, but it was a ball that twisted and curled in a mystifying fashion.

Renfrew stepped across his wicket in an attempt to slam the ball round to square-leg. But the ball eluded him. It struck his pad, and instantly there was a chorus from the fielders:

"How's that?"

It was clearly a case of l.b.w., and without hesitation old Wallington nodded.

"Out!"

Renfrew's face went livid.

"Nonsense!" he snapped furiously. "Ridiculous!"

His words were plainly heard by all.

The juniors stared at the tall figure by the wicket as though they could not believe their ears. For a batsman to question the umpire's decision in such a fashion was unheard of!

"M-my hat!" breathed Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

At the other wicket Arthur Augustus D'Arcy adjusted his eyeglass and stared up the pitch at the angry face of Gilbert Renfrew almost dazedly.

Renfrew had not moved from the wicket. He was glaring at old Wallington with furiously gleaming eyes.

"Ahem!" Wallington coughed. "Sorry, sir—out, sir! Leg before, sir, begging your pardon!"

"Nonsense!" repeated Renfrew harshly. "Why, you old fool—"

The old butler's visage went even more red than its normal generous hue. He turned to where Lord Eastwood was standing, fielding at mid-off.

Lord Eastwood's face was a study as he stared at Renfrew. He glanced round with a very grim expression as old Wallington addressed him.

"Excuse me, your lordship, but I should like to be permitted to retire from umpiring this here match!" said old Wallington, with great dignity.

"Bai Jove! Wats!" began Arthur Augustus hotly. But his father silenced him with a gesture.

"No Wallington," said Lord Eastwood grimly. "Your decision was a correct one, I feel sure. I shall be obliged if you will remain!"

"Very good, sir!"

There was a very stern frown upon Lord Eastwood's face as he moved towards Renfrew.

If the juniors had been amazed at Renfrew's unsporting behaviour, Lord Eastwood had been equally so. But now his amazement had turned to anger.

"Gilbert," he said in grim tones, "the umpire has given you as out! Do you understand?"

Renfrew's face fell before the angry look in his host's eyes. He realised suddenly that he was doing himself no good in Lord Eastwood's eyes by this exhibition, and Renfrew had very sound reasons for not wishing to offend him!

The black temper that existed beneath the suave surface he showed the world had caused the man to forget his own interests for the moment. But now he realised that he had made a bad mistake.

"I—I beg your pardon, Lord Eastwood!" he stammered. "I had no intention of disputing the umpire's decision. For the moment I am afraid I forgot myself."

He moved away from the wicket. Lord Eastwood put out a hand, detaining him.

"I consider you owe an apology to Wallington, Gilbert," he said curtly.

"Of course," mumbled Renfrew.

With crimson face he turned and crossed towards the old butler. Wallington's eyes held a look that showed his opinion of Gilbert Renfrew even clearer than words could have done!

"I'm sorry, Wallington!" said Renfrew stiffly.

"Thank you, sir!"

With scarlet countenance Renfrew swung off towards the group of cricketers seated under the trees with Ethel & Co. The fielders watched him go in silence—and a very awkward silence greeted Renfrew as he reached the group at the edge of the field.

He forced a laugh as he dropped into a vacant chair.

"I was unlucky, eh?" he said.

"You were out, anyway," said Blake bluntly.

Renfrew bit his lip.

He felt he could have kicked himself for being such a fool. But it was too late now. Though he had apologised to Lord Eastwood he knew very well that his host would never have quite the same friendly regard for him again.

Talbot of the Shell strode out to the vacant wicket, and the game continued. But the incident had been an unpleasant one, and there was not quite the same cheery atmosphere as there had been at the beginning of the game.

In a few brief minutes the St. Jim's juniors had very much revised their opinion concerning Gilbert Renfrew!

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CHAPTER 6.

Baggy—Batsman!

CRASH!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had failed to stop a hot one from Fatty Wynn, and his middle stump had been picked clean from the ground.

With his bat tucked under his arm, the swell of St. Jim's turned from the wicket.

But though disaster had at last come to him, Arthur Augustus had put up a magnificent display. Seven other wickets had fallen during his tenancy of the wicket, and he had the splendid score of 52 to his credit.

An enthusiastic cheer greeted him as he approached the group under the trees.

"Good old Gussy!" yelled Blake.

"Hurrah!"

"Thanks, deah boys!" murmured Arthur Augustus, as he dropped into a chair beside Cousin Ethel, and began to unfasten his pads. "I cannot undahstand how I failed to stop that last one. I intended to play it with a late-out—"

"The trouble was, Gussy," broke in Digby gravely, "that your late-out was a giddy sight too late!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Weally, Digby—"

"Never mind, Gussy!" grinned Talbot. "You got a rattling good score!"

Talbot himself had been caught at the wicket by Monty Lowther with his score at 30—the next highest score of his side. The total number of runs collected by the team at present was 127—a very useful score indeed.

"Good luck, Woberts!" called out Arthur Augustus, as Roberts, the chauffeur, looking very muscular and business-like, strode out towards the wicket.

"Thank you, sir!" grinned Roberts.

There was a sniff from Baggy Trimble.

"Really, Gussy, I think it's a bit thick putting in a blessed chauffeur before me!"

Arthur Augustus surveyed Trimble through his eyeglass very coldly.

"Wats! Woberts is no doubt a bettah ewicketah than you, Twimble!"

"I don't think!" snorted Baggy. "Anyway, he's only a blessed chauffeur—"

"What's that got to do with it, you fat idiot?" growled Blake. "Shut up!"

Blake reached out a hand and pulled up the supporting arm of Baggy's deck-chair. The chair collapsed, and Baggy collapsed with it.

"Yarooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy struggled up, gasping, and glared at Blake speechlessly. But he did not continue the argument!

He picked up his chair and moved it to a safe distance from Blake, and flopped down into it again with a very discontented look upon his fat face, and an occasional indignant sniff came from him.

But no one noticed Baggy's sniffs. They were too intent on watching the cricket.

Roberts' partner at the wicket was Levison minor. The Third-Former had marched out to do his bit looking distinctly nervous at finding himself playing in such company; but so far he had kept his end up well. Though Arthur Augustus had managed to take most of the bowling, on the few occasions when Frankie Levison had faced it, he had guarded his wicket very successfully and pluckily, though as yet he had not made any runs.

"He's a plucky youngster, your minor," remarked Talbot to Ernest Levison.

And Levison nodded and grinned, well pleased.

But, with only Trimble to follow, the present hope of his side was Roberts. And he soon showed that they were justified in believing that he would probably add considerably to the score before he was dismissed from the wicket.

Hitting out in fine style, Roberts was soon gathering runs. Two successive fours brought his total to 16, and then Levison minor faced the bowling again at the change of the over.

"Play up, kid!" sang out Ernest Levison.

At sound of his brother's encouraging voice, Frankie gripped the handle of his bat with dogged determination as he faced Tom Merry's bowling.

The ball came spinning up the pitch. The fag hit out, and there was a yell of applause as he drove the ball past mid-on, and a couple of runs were taken.

"Oh, good kid!" exclaimed Ernest Levison.

The next ball Levison minor deflected through the slips—perhaps more by luck than by good judgment—and another run was taken.

"We'll have to have your minor in the junior eleven next season, Levison!" chuckled Talbot. "I can see that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Roberts gathered another four, and then Levison minor



Click! "Oh, well hit, sir!" Gilbert Renfrew had sent the ball soaring over the bowler's head, and the batsmen started to run. But Figgins was waiting by the boundary line, and he returned the ball with a splendid throw-in. Arthur Augustus, dashing to his crease, was only just in time. (See Chapter 5.)

faced the bowling again. This time he met his doom at the hands of Fatty Wynn. With his leg-stump leaning at a sharp angle, Frankie Levison turned blushing from the wicket, and made his way back to the pavilion—to be greeted by a hearty thump on the back by his major. "Ripping, young 'un!" chuckled Levison. "You did fine!"

And Levison minor, who worshipped the very ground his major trod, felt as happy as a king.

"Now then, Baggy!" grinned Clive. "What about a giddy century?"

"If that chap Roberts doesn't let me down, I'll jolly well show you asses how to play cricket!" growled Trimble.

"My hat!"

"Did you say how to play cricket, or how not to play cricket?" inquired Kerr gravely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!"

And with a very grim and determined expression on his fat face, Baggy Trimble rolled out towards the empty wicket.

Lord Eastwood's side watched him coming with grins on their faces. They did not expect much trouble from Baggy!

Baggy, however, took his stand with a very important air, as though he were the star batsman of his side. He held his bat for centre. Tom Merry, standing by the wicket, chuckled.

"Half a yard down, Baggy, and you'll be somewhere near it!"

"Oh, really, Merry—"

Baggy blinked at his bat, and blinked at his wicket, and realised that he was rather wide of the mark. He shifted his bat a foot or so, and the umpire gave him centre. Baggy patted his block in a very professional manner, and blinked down the pitch to where Fatty Wynn was walking back from the wicket.

"Don't hit the ball into the sea, Baggy," murmured Monty Lowther at the wicket. "We don't want to lose it."

Considering that in order to hit the ball into the sea Baggy would have to knock it clean over Penperro House and over a long stretch of garden and cliff besides, Monty Lowther's remark was not meant to be taken exactly seriously. But Baggy shook his head quite solemnly.

"I'll try not to do that, Lowther, old chap!"

The fielders who had heard Baggy's remark grinned. But Baggy was not grinning as he crouched over his bat, ready to take Fatty Wynn's delivery.

When it came, it was a lightning ball that flashed up the pitch—one of Fatty Wynn's hottest efforts. Baggy made a wild poke at the ball with his bat, and by some extraordinary fluke the bat hit the ball—or, rather, the ball hit the bat!

The ball shot straight into the air like a cannon-ball. Baggy blinked round dazedly, quite unconscious of the fact that the ball was soaring skywards above him.

"I—I say, where the dickens has that gone?" gasped Baggy, peering at the boundary.

From the other wicket, Roberts had started to run.

"Come on, sir—run!" panted Roberts.

"Eh?" Baggy blinked at him down the pitch.

"Run!" yelled Roberts eagerly.

"Oh! Oh, yes, rather!" nodded Baggy.

He began to run in a fat, lumbering roll, gasping and puffing as he went.

Tom Merry had started to run a few moments before, his eyes on the now dropping ball, which was falling into the middle of the pitch.

Crash!

"Yarooough!"

"Oh, help!"

Tom Merry, his eyes raised skywards, had lifted his hands for the catch, when Baggy charged clean into him at a breathless rate. There was a gasp from Tom and a yell from Baggy as the two of them fell in a heap in the middle of the pitch.

Baggy sat up dazedly.

"Oh! Yow! Grooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a wild yell of laughter from all over the field. Tom Merry blinked round stupidly, half-stunned from the terrific impact of Baggy's elephant-like charge.

"Oh!" mumbled Tom feebly. "Ow! What hit me? A thunderbolt, or what?"

By now Roberts was safely at the other wicket, watching Baggy with desperate anxiety.

Baggy looked like being run out, even if he were not caught!

Baggy began to scramble up from an all-fours position. But the next moment another wild howl escaped him.

"The ball had dropped at last!"

It had dropped well and truly on to the seat of Baggy's tight trousers, and sent him sprawling.

"Yoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fielders were almost doubled-up with mirth. Baggy was certainly lending a little comic relief to things.

Tom Merry, chuckling, helped Baggy to his feet. The ball was lying on the grass beside him, but Baggy's antics had been so ridiculous that it seemed scarcely fair to bag his wicket on the strength of them.

Baggy limped along to the other wicket dazedly, and mopped his perspiring face.

"Oh! Grooooooh! I'm hurt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

He stood breathing heavily while Fatty Wynn, grinning, bowled again.

Roberts sent a lusty drive past Herries, at square-leg. Three at least could have been run from it, but thanks to Baggy they only succeeded in taking one. Baggy faced the bowling again.

This time there was a "do-or-die" expression on Baggy's face as he clutched the handle of his bat with fat fingers and blinked up the pitch.

The ball came shooting down towards him.

It was by no means one of Fatty Wynn's best balls. It shot past the wicket with several inches to spare.

But the next moment there was a mighty crash.

Baggy, wielding his bat like a club, had brandished it round his head in a circle. Next moment he lost his balance and toppled backwards, with a gasp. The wildly waving bat sent the stumps flying, smashing one of them; then Baggy sat down on the wreckage, and another one broke.

"Oh! Yaroooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sitting amid the ruins of his wicket, Baggy blinked owlishly at the shrieking juniors around him, and at the smiling face of Lord Eastwood.

"Ow! Oh, lor!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's that, umpire?"

"Out, sir—begging your pardon!" grinned old Wallington. Baggy's innings was at an end—and with it, that of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's team, too.

But it needed three juniors to lift Baggy and drag him from the field.

Baggy, after his great innings—of two balls only—was just about "done in."

There were still chuckles to be heard on the field as Arthur Augustus and his merry men took their places, and Tom Merry and Lord Eastwood himself strode out to open the innings for Lord Eastwood's XI.

CHAPTER 7.

Tom Merry's Great Hit!

"**N**OW for some runs!"

George Figgins had settled down in the chair next to Cousin Ethel's to watch the opening of the innings. As next man in, Figgins had taken the precaution of buckling on his pads already. He did not expect either Lord Eastwood or Tom Merry to be out soon, but it was wisest to be on the safe side.

Figgins and Fatty Wynn, Manners and Lowther and Herries were all looking confident. Though their eleven had the large score of 153 to collect for a win, they felt that they stood a reasonably good chance of collecting that number of runs.

In addition to themselves and the two distant figures already at the wickets, they had the valuable services of Wally D'Arcy and Reggie Manners at their disposal. At any rate, they were valuable services in the opinion of Wally and Reggie.

"Don't you chaps worry," said Wally serenely, as he squatted on the grass, with Reggie at his side near by. "We'll pull you through!"

"That's jolly decent of you," said Manners gravely.

And the others chuckled.

Henry and George, the two footmen, who had already shown themselves very useful fieldsmen, looked as though they might well prove themselves invaluable run-getters as well for their side. Altogether, Lord Eastwood's XI. considered their chances of a victory very rosy.

They had no cause to change their opinion as Tom Merry opened the scoring with a lusty smack on the on-side which reached the boundary before Levison could intercept it.

Another stroke in just the same direction caused Kerr, who was bowling, to revise the field a little. He moved Levison round a dozen yards, and motioned Renfrew

farther back towards the boundary line, hoping to lure Tom into putting up a catch in the deep-field. But Tom was not blind to the trap, and the next ball, though it was a tempting one, he carefully drove out past mid-on for a single.

Lord Eastwood faced the bowling.

In his younger days Lord Eastwood had played for a famous club. Even now he was a splendid batsman, and he joined Tom Merry in piling up the runs at a pace which brought delighted cheers from the rest of the team, in the little group under the trees, and a ripple of hand-clapping from the girls.

"The pater knows how to wallop 'em!" grinned Wally proudly.

"You're right, kid!" grinned Figgins. "There's another boundary! Looks as if we're going to wipe up the blessed field with Gussy's eleven! Well hit, sir!"

Lord Eastwood was in great form—and so was Tom Merry.

Between them they raised the score to 50, without having given any chances.

The faces of Arthur Augustus and his eleven grew rather grim.

"A giddy century from each of 'em would give us a win right off!" chuckled Manners optimistically, as Tom Merry again opened his shoulders and sent the ball soaring out into the deep-field.

Talbot was bowling, and he was sending up good stuff. But he seemed utterly unable to get the measure of the batsmen, and Arthur Augustus, after Kerr's next over, took off Talbot, and tossed the ball to Ernest Levison.

"Twy an ovah, deah boy!"

"What-ho!"

Lord Eastwood was facing the bowling at Levison's first delivery. He cut the ball for a couple.

But the next ball from Levison's hand found the wicket! It scattered the stumps, with a beautiful leg-break, and Lord Eastwood gave an exclamation.

"Oh, gad!"

"Out, sir—begging your pardon!" murmured Wallington respectfully.

Lord Eastwood chuckled ruefully, and turned away from the wicket, with a score of 25 to his credit.

Figgins went out to bat.

A partnership between Tom Merry and George Figgins always meant vigorous cricket, and the juniors under the trees settled down to watch with eager eyes.

They were not disappointed.

Figgins was soon hitting them up in fine style, and the score—together with the spirits of Lord Eastwood's eleven—rose steadily.

But in the next over Figgins was stumped by Blake, with his score at the very useful total of 22. Figgins retired, to be greeted by a very bright smile from Cousin Ethel, and Monty Lowther went out to take his place.

Monty Lowther was a very sparkling batsman, even though inclined to be a little wild and reckless at times. He did not treat the bowling with any respect whatever, and flogged it merrily from the first.

Tom Merry, who realised that though they had made a splendid start there was a distinct "tail" to the side, and that every wicket was very valuable, was taking no risks, however. He was scoring at a less rapid pace now, concentrating on safety, to some extent. His caution was proved to be justified when Monty Lowther was caught by Arthur Augustus with his score at 13.

Manners, who took his chum's place at the wicket, was something of a stonewaller as a rule, and to-day was no exception. But his steady tactics did not avail him much, for he was clean bowled by Kerr when he had only scored five.

With the total of Lord Eastwood's eleven standing at 107, and another 46 runs wanted for a win, a very big change had come over the aspect of the match.

Arthur Augustus and his merry men were looking much more cheerful than their rivals now!

When Herries was dismissed for a duck's egg, and Fatty Wynn followed next ball, they looked more cheerful still!

"We've got 'em on toast!" chuckled Ernest Levison. "Forty-six wanted for a giddy win, and only George and Henry and the two fags to bat!"

"If only we could get Tom Merry out, it would be a cert!" nodded Blake.

But Henry, the younger of the two footmen, stopped the rot for a while, in partnership with Tom Merry.

Henry was a very stylish batsman, and he collected a clever 15 before being caught near the boundary. George took his place.

George was a batsman of the stonewall variety, and he held his wicket very successfully for quite a while without scoring a single run. Tom Merry, however, made up for that by some vigorous work that kept the fieldsmen busy.

George's first attempt to make a run off his own bat

ended in disaster! A deadly throw-in by Talbot dismissed George from the field; and Wally D'Arcy came out to bat, with the total score of Lord Eastwood's eleven standing at 130—23 runs wanted to win!

It looked almost hopeless. Wally was not likely to last long; neither was Reggie Manners, who was still to follow.

But Tom Merry had to be reckoned with yet, and the swell of St. Jim's and his team did not feel quite so confident as they would have liked.

If Tom could keep the bowling, he might pull the fat out of the fire yet!

The hearts of Lord Eastwood's eleven were in their mouths as they watched Wally face the bowling for the last ball of the over. They almost sighed with relief when the ball passed the wicket safely without Walter Adolphus having touched it.

"Now, come on, Tom!" murmured Lord Eastwood.

"Twenty-three runs wanted, old boss!" sang out Monty Lowther.

Tom glanced towards the group, and grinned for a moment before taking up his position.

It certainly looked as though he were full out to collect

the further twenty-three that were necessary. To the first ball he leapt forward and opened his shoulders.

Crack!

The sound of the impact on the ball was like a pistol-shot.

Away over the field the ball went soaring.

It was a tremendous hit! High over the head of Gilbert Renfrew, who was not far from the boundary line, it sailed.

Behind Renfrew, beyond the path, stood the east wing of the house, with a grey old tower, the oldest portion of the ancient house, flanking it. The door of the tower was open, and there was an exclamation from Lord Eastwood as the ball was seen to bound in through the open doorway.

"Good gad!" ejaculated the father of the swell of St. Jim's in astounded admiration. "Right into the tower! What a hit! Bravo! Bravo!"

"Ripping!" gasped Lady Peggy. "Well hit!"

The juniors in the group cheered lustily. On the field Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass, and watched as Renfrew turned and vanished into the tower to fetch the ball.

(Continued on next page.)



CAPTAIN JAMES COOK!

"I must go down to the sea again,
To the lonely sea and the sky,
To the gull's way and the whale's way,
Where the wind's like a whetted knife!"

Those lines were written long after the death of Captain James Cook, the great British sailor-explorer, but they epitomise the call of the sea, which forever rang in his ears from the time he bid good-bye to the life of a landlubber and shipped aboard a collier at the early age of thirteen.

The call of the wild waves was the great lure of Cook's life, and the mighty ocean never failed to fascinate him through all his adventurous career. On the rare occasions he spent ashore, he longed to be back again on the ocean waves, with the tang of the salt spume in his nostrils, and the lurch of a good ship beneath his feet.

Captain Cook won distinction for himself as a brilliant sailor during the war between England and France in 1755. In that year he joined the Navy and was with Wolfe, when the great General was advancing on Quebec. It was Cook's job to sound the River Lawrence, and map out a safe passage in order that the British ships could reach their goal in safety. Thus Cook was instrumental in aiding Wolfe to capture Quebec for Britain.

Soon after this a scientific expedition set out for the South Seas, with Cook, now a lieutenant, commanding the good ship "Endeavour," in which he afterwards made his name ring throughout the world.

Round Cape Horn he went into the Pacific Ocean. He explored the coast of New Zealand and the East Coast of Australia, then returned homewards via the Cape of Good Hope, arriving in England in June of 1771, having sailed right round the globe in just under three years.

That was his first exploit! And in recognition of his magnificent feat promotion was again awarded him; this time to the rank of Captain.

In the Spring of 1777 Captain James Cook, in his little vessel "Resolution" reached New Zealand. This intrepid explorer had blazed a new trail, he had opened up new lands, and his name has gone down through history as the greatest of pioneers!

You might think that Captain Cook would have been willing to take a well-earned rest after his great voyage, but no, the call of the sea was too strong, and the following year he again set out on another world tour, commanding the "Resolution."

After a wonderful voyage full of adventure he once more returned safely to England, in July of 1775. Again promotion came his way. He was made post-captain, and everyone expected that he would settle down ashore and rest on his laurels.

But that wasn't Captain Cook's way! When the Government asked him if he would take command in yet another expedition, he said "Yes," and sailed away the following year in his old vessel, the "Resolution."

His aim was to discover whether there was a through sea route between the Atlantic and Pacific via North America. He reached New Zealand in the Spring of 1777. At Tahiti, the savage chief of the island, by name of Otoo, boarded the "Resolution" to pow-wow with Captain Cook, whom he had met before on a previous voyage.

Otoo was in great distress. He told Cook that he was fighting the inhabitants of a near-by island, and requested the Captain to help him defeat them. Cook smiled and answered,

"Not so, my friend! I have no quarrel with your enemies, nor do I know the rights and wrongs of the dispute between you. I have my duty to my King to perform, and cannot fight for any other king without permission of the King of England!"

At length Cook, sailing across the Pacific, reached British Columbia, although it was not called that in those days.

"The sea coast," Cook has written, "high as well as low, save when snow-clad mountains rose to the sky, was covered with high, straight trees, like one vast forest!"

For some time Cook cruised in the Behring Sea, where he studied numerous maps prepared by Russian trappers, and placed by them at his disposal.

Then he sailed back to the Sandwich Islands, probably because it was not the

right time of year to attempt the North West Passage. Had Cook but known it, he was never to succeed in crossing from the Pacific to the Atlantic. Even as he sailed into warmer climes his days were numbered. But then he had faced death so many times in one form and another during his adventurous sea-roving career.

Eventually Cook reached an island called Owhyhee. The king of the island and the principal chiefs seemed friendly

disposed towards their distinguished visitor, sending him presents and tokens of their good wishes.

But the rank and file of the natives were terrible thieves, and so trouble arose, often the boat crews being threatened and stoned when they beached for water.

At length things became so bad, that Captain Cook was obliged to summon the king of the island on board, in order to receive his explanation and impress upon him that he must keep his men in order.

Cook climbed into the ship's pinnace, and armed and accompanied by the chief members of his crew, rowed to the beach where hundreds of fierce cannibals with their king awaited him.

All went well until Cook asked the king to come aboard the "Resolution." His warriors would not permit it; they did not trust this strange white man with the big ship.

Hubbub broke out. The natives began to throw stones. Cook's men retaliated with their muskets. The Captain turned to climb into the pinnace, and as he did so one of the savages stabbed him in the back.

Without a sound the gallant explorer crumpled up and fell face downwards into the shallow water. He was not mortally wounded, but before his men could come to his aid half a dozen clubs used by the natives had battered the Captain to death.

Thus died one of the greatest explorers and daredevils the world has ever known. His life was one long romantic adventure. His name rang through the whole world, and rightly so, for his many achievements placed him upon a high pinnacle, attained by few men. At his death the Royal Society issued special medals struck in his honour!

The two ships in which he made his epic voyages epitomise the character of the great explorer; namely "Endeavour" and "Resolution." One of the men who sailed with him on his last voyage said:

"He was never afraid to try! He always made up his mind to win!"

Such was Captain James Cook, All honour to the memory of a great daredevil!

(Next week our special contributor deals with Colonel Lindbergh, the famous airman.)

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"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated the swell of St. Jim's. "That was a wippin' hit, Tom Mewwy! Bai Jove, yaas! I weally could not have done bettah myself, you know!"

"Thanks, Gussy!" grinned Tom.

The cricketers waited.

"Renfrew's a long time in there," said Blake, after a time, staring across at the distant tower curiously.

Still Gilbert Renfrew did not appear.

"Levison, deah boy," sang out Arthur Augustus, "do you mind goin' and helpin' him to look for that ball? It looks as though he can't find it."

Levison nodded and turned towards the tower.

He passed in through the low doorway and looked round. At first the tower seemed to be empty, to his astonishment. Then he saw a dark opening in the flagstones of the floor, and heard a movement below.

Levison crossed towards the opening and stared down.

A narrow flight of stone steps led into a dark vault, and he heard the splutter of a match.

"The blessed ball's down there, is it?" he called out.

"I'll come down and lend you a hand."

He heard a faint exclamation from below—an almost startled sound, it seemed. The match went out abruptly.

"It's all right," came the quick voice of Renfrew. "I've found it now."

A moment later the man appeared, climbing the stone steps with the ball in his hand. He glanced at Levison, and there was a faint, odd gleam in his eyes.

But the next moment the man smiled.

"Here it is," he said. "What a wonderful hit that was of young Merry's!"

"Rather!" agreed Levison. He glanced down into the blackness of the vault. "I don't wonder it took you some time to find the ball down there!"

They passed out together into the sunshine.

There was still a queer look at the back of the man's eyes, unseen by Ernest Levison.

Had he seen it, Levison of the Fourth might have wondered if Gilbert Renfrew had made some startling discovery down there in the vault beneath the old East Tower!

CHAPTER 8.

A Thrilling Finish!

THE brief delay over the lost ball had only served to whet the appetites of all concerned for what looked like being an exciting finish.

Only seventeen runs are wanted now to bring victory to Lord Eastwood's side. Tom Merry, Wally D'Arcy and Reggie Manners were the batsmen who were faced with the task of getting them! A strangely assorted trio!

Tom Merry was grimly determined to keep to the bowling end. But two balls later his plan was upset. In trying to run what looked like a safe two from a hit to square-leg, smart fielding forced Tom and Wally to go back to the wickets hastily as they began their second run.

"Oh crumbs!" muttered Tom in dismay.

He had put Wally up against the bowling.

But Wally D'Arcy was made of stern stuff.

He faced the bowling confidently enough, and no one could have criticised the way he treated it. He deflected a ball into the slips, and Tom gave a yell.

"Run!"

And Wally ran! Tom Merry only just reached the opposite crease in time, but he did reach it—and once more he was facing the bowling.

(Continued on next page.)



YOUR EDITOR SAYS!

When writing to me, chums, address your letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.



SOMETHING FOR NOTHING!

YES, you can grin with incredulity as you catch sight of the announcement on top; you can growl "Had some!" as much as you like! But just listen for a while, chums, and let me see if I can't convince you that in this case it's the stone cold truth.

There's the chance this week for all my readers and all their friends to get something really worth having at no cost to themselves—to benefit by the greatest FREE GIFT offer ever made! Have you heard of it? In case you haven't, I'll just explain. In the issue of our splendid companion paper, the "Magnet," dated August 17th, and on sale this week, will be found the parts of a FLYING MODEL AEROPLANE that are being given away absolutely FREE to all readers. Next week's issue will contain all the driving mechanism, ready for fitting.

Now what do you say, chums? Isn't a magnificent model aeroplane, which would cost up to five shillings in a shop, worth having? Coloured in orange and blue, it looks just like the real thing—a possession any fellow would be proud of. It will fly from the ground, under its own power, for fifty yards; launch it by hand, and you add another twenty-five yards to its flight. There's no fear of its being seriously damaged by hitting a tree or a wall, so strong and durable is it, while the propeller is practically unbreakable.

All you've got to do is to pop round to your newsagent's, get a copy of this week's "Magnet," read the instructions inside, and get to work putting the plane parts together. They won't take the average fellow more than an hour to assemble. While you're at the newsagent's, don't forget to order the following issue of the "Magnet," and so make sure of getting the driving mechanism necessary to complete the plane. It's a wonderful opportunity—a chance of a lifetime! See you don't miss it, chums!

NEXT WEEK'S THRILLER!

The concluding story in the St. Jim's holiday series tops the bill for next Wednesday, and a fitting conclusion it is! Round Penperro Rock and the secret of hidden treasure it holds Mr. Martin Clifford has woven as gripping a story as any it has been my pleasure to offer to my readers. Startling, dramatic surprises set things moving; thrill follows thrill in breathlessly swift succession, carrying one on to the final, smashing climax. What ever you do, make sure of reading

"THE PRISONER OF THE ROCK!"

The story of Tom Merry & Co. on holiday that is even better than its predecessors. Who is it signalling from Penperro Rock at dead of night, the flickering point of light spelling out a desperate call for help? What is the fearful peril that lurks in the subter-

anean passage under the sea? In the answers to these questions you have only two of the thrilling incidents of a story you'll vote one of the best of the year! 'Nuff said!

Next Wednesday's GEM is one long list of attractions. First, we have another spanking instalment of our exciting serial, "THE ROBOT MAN!" which contains even more than its usual number of thrills, which is saying something. Following this comes another gripping article in the FAMOUS DAREDEVILS series, and, last but not least, a further batch of questions which our walking encyclopedia, the ORACLE, has answered in his own inimitable style. He simply thrives on puzzling posers, so keep him busy, chums!

I hope all my readers on holiday have acted on the advice broadcast in previous chats. They'll have missed something if they haven't, for special representatives of the GEM are touring holiday resorts and keeping a keen eye open for boys and girls making a prominent display of their copies. The lucky readers whose copies are seen, and there's no earthly reason why you shouldn't be one of them, are asked to make a choice from a selection of special FREE GIFTS. These include Large Balloons, Kites, Windmills, Surprise Packets, etc.

THE BEST OF PALS!

A young friend of mine asked me what I thought was rather a peculiar question the other day. It was this: "Is a dog worth having?" He had had the offer of a puppy a few months old, but though he liked the idea of having it for his own, and his parents had no objection, he wondered whether it would be "worth the trouble." I had no hesitation in telling him that in my opinion that dog, if properly treated, would more than repay whatever trouble he was put to.

There is this about it, too. The dog who looks up to his master with respect in most cases inspires him with the determination to be worthy of that respect. And what better argument than that could you want in favour of having a four-footed pal?

So-long, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

"Oh, good kid!" he breathed.

Wally looked very proud of himself as he heard the applause from under the trees. He winked solemnly at his major, fielding near him.

"Just watch us Third Form men if you want to pick up a few tips about batting, Gussy!" grinned Wally cheerily.

"Bai Jove!"

The atmosphere was electric now. When Tom hit two successive fours from two balls of Talbot's the cheering from under the trees was terrific! But when, off the next ball, he was almost caught at point, the gasp of nervous dismay from the same direction was just as plainly heard!

For some minutes the scoring was slow. But Tom cleverly contrived to keep at the right end of the pitch, and the singles he snatched to do so brought the total score of Lord Eastwood's XI to 149—four wanted to win!

"Tom'll do it all right!" chuckled Monty Lowther, as the captain of the Shell took two more runs from an off-drive. But then came disaster.

With only two runs wanted for victory Tom Merry pulled a fast one round to square-leg. There was a yell of delight from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's XI as the ball was seen to be safe in the hands of Roberts, the chauffeur.

"Well held, bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus excitedly.

"Thank you, sir!" grinned Roberts.

Tom Merry strode from the wicket. His magnificent innings had added 68 to his side's score, and practically snatched a thrilling victory—but not quite!

A terrific cheer greeted him under the trees.

"Well played, Tom!" smiled Lord Eastwood. "Splendid! A wonderful innings!"

Tom coloured faintly as he sat down to remove his pads.

Harry Manners clapped his minor on the back.

"Now then, kid, let's see you and Wally collect those two runs we want for a win! Don't worry—take it as easy as you like."

But, despite the encouraging words, Reggie Manners looked scared to death as he picked up his bat and trotted out towards the wicket.

"Talk about a close finish!" muttered Manners, as with anxious eyes he watched his minor take his stand.

"Two for a win!" repeated Figgins breathlessly. "My hat! Do you think the kids can do it?"

In silence the little group watched as Kerr, who was bowling again, began his run and sent the ball speeding down towards Reggie's wicket.

That Manners minor was in a blue funk at finding himself in a position of such responsibility was obvious even from the edge of the grass.

He poked blindly at the ball, and missed it completely. But before the juniors could groan, the ball had passed the wicket with an inch to spare.

The next ball found Reggie's pad, but old Wallington shook his head at an appeal for l.b.w.

And then there was a mighty cheer as Reggie, gathering his wits together at last, hit out manfully at the next ball and put it past mid-on for a single.

"All square!" gasped Manners joyfully. "Oh, good kid!"

A great cheer from Lord Eastwood's XI under the trees announced the fact that they had, at any rate, been saved from defeat!

And then there was another and still greater cheer.

Wally D'Arcy, his face grim with determination, had slogged the next ball with all his force. It was a wild stroke, but it was a lucky one! The ball careered away over the grass, and the two delighted fags ran as if for their lives.

"They've done it!" yelled Monty Lowther, leaping from his seat. "My hat, they've done it!"

"Hip, pip!"

"Hurrah!"

"Three cheering rows!" gasped Fatty Wynn joyfully. "I mean, three rousing cheers!"

And the cheers were given with a will!

The match had been won, after all, and there was a very contented smile upon the face of Lord Eastwood as he took a long cigar from his pocket and lit it with a nod of satisfaction, as if in celebration.

The very next ball sent the bails of Wally's wicket flying. But it did not matter—Wally and Reggie were the heroes of the hour!

Tom Merry & Co., Figgins and Fatty Wynn and Herries rushed on to the field and seized the two fags and chaired them all the way to the edge of the grass.

Though it was Tom Merry who had really done more than anyone towards winning the match, it was the plucky feat of the two fags that had definitely brought victory!

There was a very proud look on the face of Manners of the Shell, and even though Arthur Augustus had been defeated by his own minor, he was not looking ill-pleased with the result as the cricketers and the three girls trooped cheerily into the house for tea.

It had been a great match and a thrilling finish, as Lord Eastwood said when presenting the small silver cups to his victorious team, including, of course, George and Henry,

after tea. It was a match that the St. Jim's juniors would not forget it in a hurry!

They would have been even less likely to forget it had they known of the discovery that Gilbert Renfrew had made in the old tower as a result of the match that afternoon.

CHAPTER 9.

At Dead of Night!

TOM MERRY stirred restlessly in his bed and opened his eyes.

It was very dark in the big bed-room.

He could hear the faint breathing of his sleeping chums, for he was sharing the room with Manners and Lowther. But that sound was all but drowned by the roaring of the wind outside.

The wind had been high and gusty when the juniors had gone to bed. But now it was raging half a gale, beating on the window and whining under the deep old eaves. Tom could hear the thunder of the waves at the foot of the great cliffs.

He glanced sleepily at his watch, and saw by the illuminated dial that it was well past midnight.

"My hat," he muttered, "what a wind!"

The window was wide open, and the curtains were fluttering wildly. Tom slipped from his bed, with the intention of partly closing it.

As he crossed the floor, however, a voice came from Monty Lowther's bed.

"What's up, old boss?"

Monty Lowther had been awakened, too, by the gale. "I thought I'd better shut the window a bit," whispered Tom.

"Good idea," nodded Lowther, in the darkness. "I say, what a night!" he chuckled sleepily. "I shouldn't care to be out boating just now!"

(Continued on next page.)

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"This is the sort of night that Figgy & Co. went out and panned that chap Renfrew from being drowned among the rocks by Penperro Rock," said Tom Merry, and there was a ring of admiration in his voice at the memory of the New House trio's heroism.

"Talking of Penperro Rock," put in Monty Lowther, in a low voice, in order not to awaken Manners, "with this blessed weather back again there's no chance of us having another treasure-hunt on the island yet awhile!"

"Afraid not," agreed Tom ruefully. "It's rotten luck! I feel sure, somehow, that the treasure really is there, you know. But nobody could possibly land on the rock in this weather."

He moved across to the window, and silently pushed up the top sash, closing it but for a few inches.

Tom stood staring out into the wind-swept darkness.

There was no moon, but in the dim starlight he could just make out the raging waters that were racing in from the open sea past the black shape of Penperro Rock, to crash and thunder at the foot of the jagged cliffs.

It was an awe-inspiring sight; there was something thrilling in the wildness of it, and Tom found his pulse beating a trifle quicker. He drew a deep, long breath as his blood answered to the call of the wild open spaces of the sea and the great lonely cliffs.

Then suddenly he caught his breath in utter amazement.

Through the darkness a light had come flashing—a tiny pin-point of light from the dark summit of Penperro Rock!

Tom rubbed his eyes.

He felt that he must be dreaming.

He knew that the island was utterly inaccessible that night—had been inaccessible all day, owing to the rough seas that had now risen to full fury before the gale. No one could land on the island under such conditions—no one could have landed during the last twenty-four hours or more!

As he stared across towards the gaunt black mass of rock rising from the foaming seas, gazing fascinated at that tiny gleaming yellow light, it seemed to move. Then it vanished.

"My hat!"

Monty Lowther heard Tom's soft exclamation of amazement, and he sat up in bed, staring across at Tom's dark figure curiously.

"What's up, Tom?"

"A light!" ejaculated Tom. "On Penperro Rock!"

"Rats! Nobody can land there—"

"I tell you I saw it!" Tom drew a quick breath. "There it is again!"

In a moment Monty Lowther was out of bed, and had hurried to Tom's side. The movement awakened Manners, and he sat up sleepily.

"Whassamatter?" yawned Manners.

"There's a light on Penperro Rock!" exclaimed Tom Merry excitedly. "Look!"

Manners was wide awake very quickly then! He joined his two chums at the window, and stared out into the darkness incredulously.

"Great pip!" he breathed. "So there is!"

Through the clear air the light shone steadily. It seemed to come from somewhere among the ancient ruins that crowned the great rock, but it was difficult to tell.

"Looks like a lantern!" muttered Lowther.

The light vanished, appeared again, and again vanished.

"It's somebody there, with a lantern, all right," said Manners; but his voice was doubtful, as though he himself were not quite sure. "It must be!"

"But there can't be anyone on the island!" breathed Tom Merry. "It's only because the sea has been far too rough for a landing to be possible that we haven't gone there ourselves since our first visit! If it can't land there, nobody else can!"

"Someone may have been hiding there when we landed, and been there ever since," suggested Manners.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Rats! We should have been bound to spot 'em, I feel sure. We hunted everywhere!"

"Look!" muttered Monty Lowther. "There it is again!" Once more the weird, ghostly light had gleamed out from the dark shape of Penperro Rock. It moved and vanished, leaving the Terrible Three peering out in utter bewilderment from the window where the gale was beating.

What could it be? That no one could have landed on the island Tom Merry felt convinced. And yet how else could that moving light be explained?

"Perhaps it's some sort of a will-o'-the-wisp," he suggested doubtfully. "There are such things, I believe."

"Of course there are," nodded Manners. "But I always thought they appeared over marshes—not over blessed islands!"

They waited, but the light did not appear again. At last the three turned and climbed back into bed.

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But not to go to sleep! Even when they had at last finished discussing the strange mystery of the light that they had seen, without coming to any satisfactory conclusion regarding it, Tom Merry, at any rate, lay awake, wondering!

His thoughts dwelt on the old treasure that was said to lie on the island—the treasure that the monks of long ago had hidden before being driven away from their island home.

Perhaps there was some connection between the two!

He heard a clock chime one downstairs. From the sound of their breathing both Manners and Lowther had at last dropped off to sleep again.

Then Tom Merry sat up suddenly in bed again, listening, every nerve on the alert.

Outside in the passage, stealthy footsteps were creeping past his door.

CHAPTER 10.

In the Old Tower!

TOM MERRY stared across the shadowed room at the door with startled eyes.

Faint and furtive though the footsteps in the passage were, Tom Merry could just hear them above the sound of the rattling window, where the gale beat in stormy gusts.

Someone was stealing past the door.



"Roberts is only a blessed chauffeur," snorted Baggy Trimble. "Ith growled Blake. He reached out a hand and pulled up the supporting it. 'Yaroooooh!'"

"Who the dickens—"

Tom Merry slipped noiselessly from bed.

For a moment he had thought that it must be some other member of the St. Jim's party, who had perhaps been taken ill in the night and was going to some other fellows' room for assistance. But the strange stealthiness of the passing footsteps made Tom realise that whoever it was creeping along the passage did not want anyone else to know of his nocturnal movements.

Tom slipped swiftly across to Manners' bed, and woke him, placing a warning finger over his mouth.

"What's up?" muttered Manners, sitting up quickly.

"Have you seen that light—"

"No; but there's someone sneaking about in the passage," breathed Tom. "I'm going to investigate! It may be a giddy burglar—"

"More likely Baggy Trimble off to raid the blessed larder!" grinned Manners.

"Rats! Those weren't Baggy's footsteps I heard. Hush! Listen!"

Tom and Manners strained their ears to catch the sound

of the mysterious footsteps above the whine of the wind under the eaves outside.

But there was nothing to be heard in the passage now.

"Sure you heard 'em?" murmured Manners doubtfully.

Tom nodded a little impatiently.

"Yes. Come on!"

He turned swiftly to Monty Lowther's bed, and awakened the humorist of the Shell, and rapidly explained. Monty Lowther whistled softly under his breath.

"Footsteps, eh?" he murmured.

For once Lowther's face was serious as he hopped nimbly out of bed.

The recent theft of the treasure-chart from Lord Eastwood's safe was fresh in the minds of everyone, and the information that Tom Merry had heard stealthy footsteps stealing past the door, down the passage, turned Lowther's thoughts in a moment to that mysterious robbery.

If some person unknown had found it so easy to break



's a bit thick, putting him in before me!" "Shut up, you fat idiot!" of Baggy's deckchair. The chair collapsed and Baggy collapsed with him, ha!" (See Chapter 6.)

into Penperro House in order to steal the treasure-chart, on that previous occasion, it seemed quite likely that the same person had returned for more definite valuables to-night!

"Come on!" breathed Monty Lowther excitedly. "We'll hunt the giddy prowler down!"

Tom Merry was already opening the door, careful to make no sound in doing so. The Terrible Three, with their bare feet noiseless on the floor, stepped out cautiously into the passage.

It was empty.

Dim light streamed in through the tall windows on the other side of the passage, showing that it was deserted.

"This way!" whispered Tom grimly. "Whoever it was, he was going along towards the stairs!"

"You two follow—I'll wake Gussy and the others!" muttered Manners swiftly.

"Good man!"

The night was warm, and the two juniors had not troubled to slip on dressing-gowns. Like two ghosts in their white pyjamas, Tom Merry and Monty Lowther hurried off towards the stairs, while Manners pushed open

the door of the next room and vanished within, intent upon rousing the occupants.

At the top of the shadowy staircase leading down into the great hall, Tom and Monty Lowther stopped, listening.

A faint whisper of sound came up to them from below.

"Hear that?" breathed Lowther, gripping the banister. "There's someone down there all right. What if it's the blessed burglar who pinched the chart—back again for something else?"

"That's what I'm wondering!" nodded Tom grimly, in a low tone.

Caution might have dictated waiting for the others. But Tom Merry had no use for "safety first" on an occasion like the present!

His bare feet made no sound as he stole down the broad staircase, with Lowther following at his heels.

At the foot of the stairs Tom peered round keenly.

The hall was empty now, it seemed. There was sufficient light coming in through the big windows to show that. But the door of the library was standing open, and he knew that Lord Eastwood always locked the doors at night.

Whoever the mysterious prowler was he had evidently vanished into the library.

Tom gripped Lowther's arm and pointed to the open door meaningly. Lowther nodded.

Side by side, like two shadows, the pair of Shell fellows stole towards the open door.

A cold rush of wind met them. Tom Merry, peering in, gave a sudden muttered exclamation.

Across the room he could see that the french windows were standing open.

He stepped quickly into the library, staring round. The room was empty.

"He's gone out on to the terrace!" breathed Tom. "Quick, or he'll get away!"

Even as he spoke there was a faint footfall behind him. Glancing round swiftly, Tom Merry saw the face of Figgins in the gloom. Figgins was accompanied by Kerr and Fatty Wynn, Levison and Clive; and on the staircase behind them could be seen the shadowy, pyjama-clad figures of Manners and Talbot and Blake & Co.

"Where's this blessed burglar?" grinned Figgins eagerly. Arthur Augustus, looking very elegant indeed in his mauve-striped pyjamas, with a pair of purple leather slippers on his feet, and his eyeglass jammed tightly in his eye, hurried to Tom Merry's side.

"Mannahs says, deah boy—"

"I know," grunted Tom, interrupting him. "Hush, you ass! This way! Whoever it is, he's gone through the library on to the terrace!"

"After him!" muttered Talbot in a low, eager voice.

With Tom Merry and Monty Lowther leading the way, the little group of St. Jim's juniors hurried across the dark library and out on to the terrace.

The howling wind fluttered their scanty garments. But they had no time to feel chilly, out there above the thundering sea that they could hear beating sullenly upon the foot of the great cliffs on which the old house stood.

"Look—over there—"

Tom Merry had flung out a pointing hand.

The others stared in the direction of the captain of the Shell's pointing finger.

The moon had risen from behind a bank of dark clouds, lighting up the gardens of the rambling old house very clearly. In the pale light a hurrying figure could be seen beyond the steps that led down from the far end of the terrace, hugging the wall of the house.

It was a tall, lean figure—the figure of a man. So much was certain, but no more.

"Come on!" snapped Tom.

"After him!"

"Yaas, atfah him, bai Jove!"

In an eager swarm the thirteen St. Jim's juniors broke into a run.

The flagstones of the terrace were cold to the bare feet of those who had not bothered to slip on shoes. But no one minded. The excitement of the hunt of that mysterious figure was the only thought in the minds of the pyjama-clad group at the moment.

"My hat!" gasped Manners, as at Tom Merry's side he reached the top of the steps that led down into the garden. "Look! He's gone into the tower!"

Evidently still ignorant of the fact that he was being pursued, the midnight marauder had vanished in through the doorway of the old East Tower; at the end of the long wing.

"After him!"

Down the steps and across the grass towards the tower the juniors raced.

Tom Merry was the first to reach the doorway of the tower, with Manners and Lowther and Blake and Talbot hot upon his heels.

There was no need for caution, or to attempt to take the prowler by surprise. Their numbers were sufficient for them to tackle him outright.

Tom Merry dashed in, the others crowding after him.

There was a startled exclamation from the shadowy interior of the stone chamber that they had entered. A tall figure that had been stooping over a dark opening in the flagstones straightened abruptly, and leapt round to face them, his face livid.

"M-my hat!"

Tom Merry came to a wondering standstill.

The other juniors behind him halted, too, staring in utter astonishment at the figure facing them, in the dimly lit interior of the old tower.

"Great pip!"

"Gweat Scott!"

For the midnight prowler upon whose track the juniors had been so eagerly hurrying, was none other than the man whom Figgins & Co. had rescued from the sea;

Gilbert Renfrew!

CHAPTER 11:

Renfrew's Explanation!

"**B**AI JOVE!"

Arthur Augustus, standing there in his silken mauve-striped pyjamas, adjusted his monocle and surveyed Renfrew in the greatest astonishment.

"Bai Jove!" repeated the swell of St. Jim's, almost dazedly. "It—it's Mr. Wenfrew, bai Jove!"

"Well, I'm blessed!" breathed Figgins.

"Renfrew!" muttered Blake wonderingly.

Gilbert Renfrew stood staring at the group of juniors crowding in the doorway of the old tower with a strange look in his dark, gleaming eyes.

For some moments he did not speak.

He was evidently staggered for the moment at finding himself not alone. But the first swift look of consternation and dismay that had leapt into his eyes had vanished now.

He glanced from face to face with an angry, suspicious look.

"What the deuce—" he began, in a voice that shook a trifle.

Tom Merry stared at the man curiously. He smiled—rather grimly.

"We thought you were a burglar," he said quietly. "We followed you from the house—"

"I see!"

Renfrew smiled. Slowly he took out a cigarette and lit it. The bright flame of the match lit up his face in the dim light, showing it pale still, as though he had not even yet quite recovered from the shock of the sudden arrival on the scene of the swarm of pyjama-clad juniors.

"I am sorry to disappoint you youngsters," said Renfrew, with a low laugh. "But, as you see, it is not a burglar, after all—it is only I!"

Some of the juniors were looking a little sheepish before the man's mocking eyes.

They felt that they had made fools of themselves. But Tom Merry and Manners, Talbot and Figgins, at any rate, were still watching Renfrew curiously.

Renfrew, presumably, could stay up till any hour of the night he liked, if he chose. But why he should choose to visit the East Tower between one and two in the morning was something of a mystery!

The juniors had liked Renfrew at first. But of late his silky manners had irritated them at times, and his behaviour on the cricket-field that afternoon in the match between Lord Eastwood's XI and that of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had definitely caused them to dislike the man.

So it was with almost a hostile look that Tom Merry and some of the others surveyed the coolly smiling face.

"If you'll excuse my asking," said Figgins bluntly, "I'm still a bit puzzled to know why you've come here!"

Renfrew flashed him a gleaming look.

"A natural question," murmured Renfrew silkily. "It must seem queer to you youngsters that I should be visiting this tower at this time of the night—or, rather, of the morning!" he added, with a laugh.

He blew a cloud of smoke from his cigarette. His dark eyes went from face to face, resting finally on that of Tom Merry.

"You may remember that our young friend Tom Merry here hit a magnificent boundary this afternoon," the man went on in purring tones. "The ball, in fact, was knocked clean into this tower."

"Yaas!" nodded Arthur Augustus. "But—"

"I was the fieldman who came in here to retrieve the ball," smiled Renfrew. "In looking for it, I believe I dropped a key from my pocket. It is the key to my trunk, as a matter of fact. I was sitting up late, reading, when I discovered the loss, and since I wanted to go to the trunk

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there and then for another book, I came downstairs and out here to look for this missing key of mine."

He drew smilingly at his cigarette.

"Oh!" said Digby. "I—I see!"

"Since you youngsters are all here, perhaps you'll help me look for my key?" grinned Renfrew. "Unless you're feeling too chilly in pyjamas for the job?"

"You are sure you dropped the key in here?" put in Tom Merry. "Isn't it more likely that you dropped it on the cricket-field?"

For a moment or two Renfrew did not reply. Then he shook his head.

"No. Er—you see, I distinctly remember hearing the tinkle of something falling on to the floor while I was looking round for that cricket-ball. I did not worry much at the time, thinking it was perhaps something quite unimportant. However," he added briskly, "I find now it was the key that I dropped, and it is most important for me to find it."

Tom Merry watched the man keenly as Renfrew turned away and began glancing round the shadowy stone floor.

It seemed to Tom that Renfrew was ill at ease. It seemed to him, too, that the man's explanation did not ring quite true.

Was Renfrew lying?

Tom felt that the man was—felt it instinctively. And yet he could not think of any other reason that could have brought Renfrew to the tower at such an hour of the night.

In any case, why should Renfrew wish to conceal his true motive? The tower was an empty place, only used by the gardeners for keeping a few boxes and tools in—there was clearly nothing there that could have brought Renfrew for some rascally purpose!

Tom told himself impatiently that he was imagining things, that Renfrew must be speaking the truth. And when, a moment later, the man stooped with a quick exclamation and rose again with a key in his hand, it seemed to Tom Merry that his suspicions were proved to have been unfounded.

"Thank goodness I have recovered it safely!" exclaimed Renfrew in a cheery voice. "Now we can all get back to the house."

Stepping past the opening in the floor that led down to the blackness of the vault beneath, Renfrew moved quickly towards the doorway. The juniors crowded out, and the man followed, closing the old iron-studded door behind him.

The wind was still howling merrily over the cliffs, and buffeting the grey stone walls of Penperro House as the juniors hurried back to the terrace and entered the library, with Renfrew following.

The juniors were not sorry to be indoors again! Warm though the night was, despite the wind, they had begun to feel unpleasantly chilly in their scanty garments.

"Good-night, youngsters!" exclaimed Renfrew. "Quietly up the stairs—don't want to wake Lord Eastwood or anybody!"

He disappeared at the top of the stairs in the direction of his own room. The juniors dispersed to theirs.

"Well, of all the giddy disappointments!" grinned Monty Lowther, as he scrambled back into bed. "Fancy it being only Renfrew looking for his blessed key! I'd hoped for a first-class burglar, with a bristly chin and a foot of lead pipe up his sleeve!"

Manners chuckled. Tom Merry glanced towards Lowther's bed and smiled without speaking.

But at the back of his mind as he settled down between the sheets, there still persisted a faint, vague doubt.

Was Renfrew's story true? Or had it been a hasty fabrication made up on the spur of the moment to hide his real motive for visiting the old tower in the dead of night?

CHAPTER 12.

Baggy in Clover!

"**N**OW, what are the rotters up to?"

Thus Baggy Trimble, in an indignant growl.

It was the following day, and ever since breakfast-time Baggy had felt sure that something was about to happen.

Rolling out on to the terrace after breakfast, Baggy had seen Tom Merry & Co., Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and Talbot of the Shell deep in conversation. But at Baggy's appearance the little group had ceased talking, and had strolled off into the garden, leaving a very suspicious Baggy staring after them.

An hour later the fat Fourth-Former had summoned the necessary energy to go for a walk along the cliffs. He had come upon Blake & Co. and Levison and Clive sitting on the grass in a shady little hollow, deep in conversation.

But as soon as Baggy had drawn within earshot their conversation had ceased abruptly, and they had started to talk about the weather instead.

Now, after lunch, Baggy had been crossing the hall when he had seen Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Tom Merry, Blake, and Figgins emerging from a mysterious-looking green baize door by the entrance to the kitchen premises.

At sight of Baggy, the four juniors had looked almost guilty, and had vanished into the garden, leaving Baggy staring after them, a prey to dark suspicions.

"What are the rotters up to to-day?" repeated Baggy to himself.

That something was "up" Baggy was beginning to feel very sure indeed!

The sea was still rough that afternoon, making a landing on Penperro Rock for a further hunt for the treasure impossible. It was unlike the St. Jim's juniors and their girl chums, however, not to make full use of their time, and it was becoming increasingly clear to Baggy's suspicious mind that something had been planned of which he was being kept in ignorance.

"The rotters!" breathed Baggy indignantly. "They're trying to do me out of something, I know!"

There was a step on the stairs. Glancing round, Baggy saw Ernest Levison descending into the hall.

He rolled towards him and caught him by the sleeve. Levison glanced at Baggy in surprise.

"Levison, old man—"

"Well, porpoise?"

"Oh, really, Levison! I say, what's up?"

"Up?"

"Yes, up?" snorted Baggy. "There's something up, I jolly well know. What is it?"

"I'll tell you," said Levison confidentially.

"Oh, good! Yes?"

"For one thing," said Levison blandly, "the sky is up—right up! So is the ceiling. So long!"

Levison strolled away, grinning, and vanished into the garden, leaving Baggy glaring after him.

"Of all the blessed mean beasts!" gasped Baggy. "He knows what's up, and he won't jolly well tell me!"

He turned his attentions once again to the green baize door from which Tom Merry, Gussy, Figgins, and Blake had emerged so recently, with what had seemed to Baggy a mysterious air.

"I'm jolly well going to find out for myself," muttered Baggy.

He glanced round cautiously. The hall was empty. Quickly he moved towards the green baize door, and slipped through.

There was a passage beyond that looked as though it led to the kitchens. Baggy rolled silently along it, and a door on the right caught his attention. He opened it softly.

A gasp escaped him.

He had found what was evidently the boot-room. A number of boots and shoes were standing on the shelves. But it was the object in the middle of the floor that held Baggy's fascinated gaze.

A great hamper!

In a flash Baggy understood.

The St. Jim's party had arranged a picnic for that afternoon—and they did not want Baggy at the picnic! They had been trying to keep it a secret from him, and the tea-hamper had been hidden in the boot-room till the time came for it to be smuggled from the house.

Baggy had only himself to thank for the fact that the other juniors did not want him to join the picnic-party that afternoon. Baggy always made himself very unpleasant on such occasions. He not only always avoided his fair share of the work, but he always grumbled at the walk, at the heat, and at everything else.

Another little habit of his was to take advantage of the presence of the three girls to be as rude as possible to the other juniors, who were too polite to retaliate, with Ethel & Co. present. And even though it was possible to bump Baggy for his sins afterwards, that did not alter the fact that he had spoilt the cheery atmosphere of the picnic on such occasions.

Altogether, the other juniors had very good reason indeed to do their best to keep Baggy from joining them that afternoon!

But Baggy—perhaps naturally—did not agree.

"The mean beasts!" he gasped. "Oh, the rotters!"

He glanced swiftly up and down the passage. It was deserted.

The next moment Baggy had slipped into the boot-room and shut the door behind him. Softly he turned the key in the lock.

"Now let's have a look in this giddy hamper!" muttered Baggy, his little eyes gleaming greedily.

He raised the lid.

A wonderful sight met his eyes!

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(Continued on next page.)

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reeds for Lord Eastwood's youthful guests when they went picnicking, were tasty-looking pies, and cakes that made Baggy's mouth water; a tin or two of sardines, complete with opener; golden new loaves and a great lump of butter; a pot of jam, and some baskets of strawberries, and a tin of Cornish cream; bags of buns and a bag of apples, and a tin of biscuits.

It was a hamper, such as Trimble had often dreamed about.

The fat Fourth-Former stood gloating over it, rubbing his podgy hands and licking his lips.

There was no time to waste. At any moment now the juniors might come for their hamper, to set off for the picnic.

Drawing up the bootboy's stool beside the open hamper, Baggy got to work!

A couple of pork pies vanished like lightning; so did a large plum cake and a smaller cake with icing on it.

As he was finishing off the iced cake Baggy was busy opening the sardine tins. He emptied the contents on to a plate, and the sardines followed the pies and the cakes on their last journey.

Buns and biscuits vanished in their turn. Then the apples—all but one which Baggy discovered had a maggot in it, and scornfully rejected!

The strawberries and cream Baggy was keeping to the last, as a grand finale.

By the time he was ready for them the Falstaff of the School House was breathing with some difficulty. His face was greasy and shining, and his eyes were a trifle glazed. But it was with a greedy grin that he at last poured the cream on to the strawberries and got to work with a big spoon.

How Baggy found room for those strawberries was something of a puzzle. Monty Lowther had long ago given it as his opinion that Baggy must possess hollow legs. Whatever the explanation, Baggy had evidently just enough further room within for those luscious strawberries, and they vanished in great spoonfuls at record speed.

When the last strawberry had disappeared from view Baggy dropped the empty plate back into the hamper, with the spoon, and sighed a sigh of utter contentment.

"Phew! Grooooh! Ripping!"

Baggy blinked owlishly at the interior of the hamper. Empty fruit baskets, empty paper bags, and empty sardine-tins were about all that it contained!

There was half a loaf of bread, and some butter, and some jam left over after Baggy's little effort. Baggy surveyed them doubtfully. Then he shook his head.

"No," he mumbled virtuously; "I'm not greedy—I won't take the lot! I'll leave them the rest."

Suddenly he remembered that he had no time to waste. He jumped up, with a nervous look on his shining features.

Baggy rarely counted the cost of his misdeeds until it was too late. But he realised now that if his attack on the tuck were discovered he was in for trouble—lots and lots of trouble!

"Better get clear!" he muttered, reaching out a hand to the key in the door.

Then a crafty gleam came into his eyes.

After all, it was unlikely that the juniors would open the hamper till they reached the spot where they had decided to picnic. They were bound to discover the loss of the tuck in the end, and would be sure to guess who had collared it. But Baggy could at any rate put off the evil hour for the present!

Grabbing an armful of boots and shoes, Baggy dropped them into the hamper. Another armful followed.

"He, he, he!" sniggered Baggy. "They'll never guess!"

He closed the lid of the hamper and fastened it. The weight of it would now be just about right again, he knew. The juniors carrying it would never guess that the real contents had been substituted for old boots and shoes.

With another snigger Baggy turned to the door.

He opened it cautiously and peered out.

The passage was empty. With a murmur of relief Baggy stepped out from the boot-room and closed the door. With his breath coming in short gasps, and his face still greasy from his tremendous feed, the Falstaff of the School House rolled heavily away.

He reached the hall in safety, and with some difficulty made his way upstairs.

He watched eagerly from the window of his room. But he had not long to wait.

After ten minutes or so he caught sight of Talbot and Clive emerging from a side door, with the big basket held between them. He saw them vanish in the direction of the cliffs, and a little later Tom Merry & Co. and Blake & Co. came into sight of the terrace, in company with the three girls. Followed a minute afterwards by Figgins & Co. and Levison, they all disappeared in the direction that Talbot and Clive had taken.

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"He, he, he!"

Baggy sniggered in great glee.

"The mean rotters!" he murmured. "Trying to do me out of the rotten picnic! I'll teach 'em! Just let 'em wait till they open that basket! He, he, he!"

Baggy rolled away from the window and flopped on to his bed.

"I'll just take a little snooze," murmured Baggy, a hand stealing thoughtfully to his distended waistcoat. "Grooooh! My hat, what a feed!"

And with a contented grin on his fat face Baggy Trimble lay back and closed his eyes and was soon dreaming sweet dreams!

CHAPTER 13.

A Startling Discovery!

"NOW, what about tea, dear gals?"

Arthur Augustus beamed through his monocle at Cousin Ethel, Doris Levison, and Lady Peggy.

"Rather!" exclaimed Lady Peggy, nodding her pretty auburn head vigorously. "I'm feeling as hungry as a hunter. Bring out the grub, somebody!"

The St. Jim's juniors and the three girls were picnicking among the rocks of a sunny little cove nearly three miles from Penperro House.

They had all been bathing, and everyone was in high spirits. And Lady Peggy was by no means the only one who was beginning to feel the pangs of a healthy appetite.

The big picnic-basket was standing near them. Blake and Herries lifted it and carried it into the centre of the little ring of girls and juniors.

"Thank goodness Baggy didn't twig we were off for a picnic!" chuckled Levison. "If he'd come, too, there wouldn't have been enough to go round—not with Baggy's appetite!"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Not with Fatty here as well," grinned Blake.

"Why, of all the blessed cheek!" gasped Fatty Wynn hotly.

Tom Merry stooped over the lid of the hamper and unfasted it. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy took hold of the lid to raise it, glancing round with a beaming smile.

"I fancy Mrs. Sexton, the housekeeper, has made up an extra-special hampah for us to-day," announced the swell of St. Jim's in a tone of great satisfaction.

"Oh, good!"

"What ho!"

"Let us see what she has prepared for us, dear boys!" smiled Arthur Augustus, and raised the lid.

Arthur Augustus did not exactly faint as he did so, but, judging by his expression, he came very near to it.

His genial smile died away, and was replaced by a ghastly stare as he surveyed the contents of the picnic-basket.

"Oh, gweat Scott!"

The others looked. Their faces, too, set in peculiar expressions as they surveyed the extra-special contents of the hamper!

A number of pairs of shoes were lying there, with three sardine-tins, empty and greasy, and some crumpled paper-bags—also empty.

"M-m-my hat!" stuttered Kerr dazedly.

"Look!" howled Herries, glaring at the basket as though he could scarcely believe his eyes, which he could not.

"Boots!" shrieked Digby.

"Oh crumbs!"

"What on earth—"

Tom Merry plunged a hand into the basket and pulled out the top layer of rubbish. Underneath he found an empty biscuit-tin, some empty fruit-baskets, and half a loaf of bread and a half-empty pot of jam.

He pulled them out, and with feelings too deep for words the assembled company surveyed the remnants of the feast that they had expected to enjoy.

"Half a blessed loaf," said Tom Merry grimly, "and some jam—and a little butter! My hat!"

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Fatty Wynn in hollow tones.

"Yes, that's about all there is—crumbs!" said Monty Lowther, with a ghastly attempt at cheerfulness.

"Oh dear!"

Arthur Augustus surveyed the loaf and the jam for some moments amid an expressive silence. Then suddenly a gleam came into his aristocratic eye.

"Bai Joye!" he ejaculated. "Of course! Twimble!"

"That's it," said Tom Merry grimly. "It's Trimble!"

From the library of Penperro House a fat figure rolled on to the terrace and stood blinking uneasily along the cliffs. Baggy was looking worried.

It was not conscience that was troubling Baggy exactly. It was fear—for conscience makes cowards of us all!

Baggy blinked along the cliffs, and was very relieved to find no one in sight.

He had been very much afraid that he might have seen a returning group of juniors heading for Penperro House! For Baggy was not looking forward with pleasure to the return to the house of the St. Jim's juniors.

After the feast comes the reckoning. Baggy had had the feast all right, but the reckoning was still to come. But even Baggy was beginning to realise that the reckoning was inevitable, and his nervousness was increasing with every minute as the time for the return of the picnic-party drew nearer.

"Oh dear!" muttered Baggy. "I—I wonder if they're frightfully waxy? I wonder if I told them it was only a joke they—they'd be decent about it?"

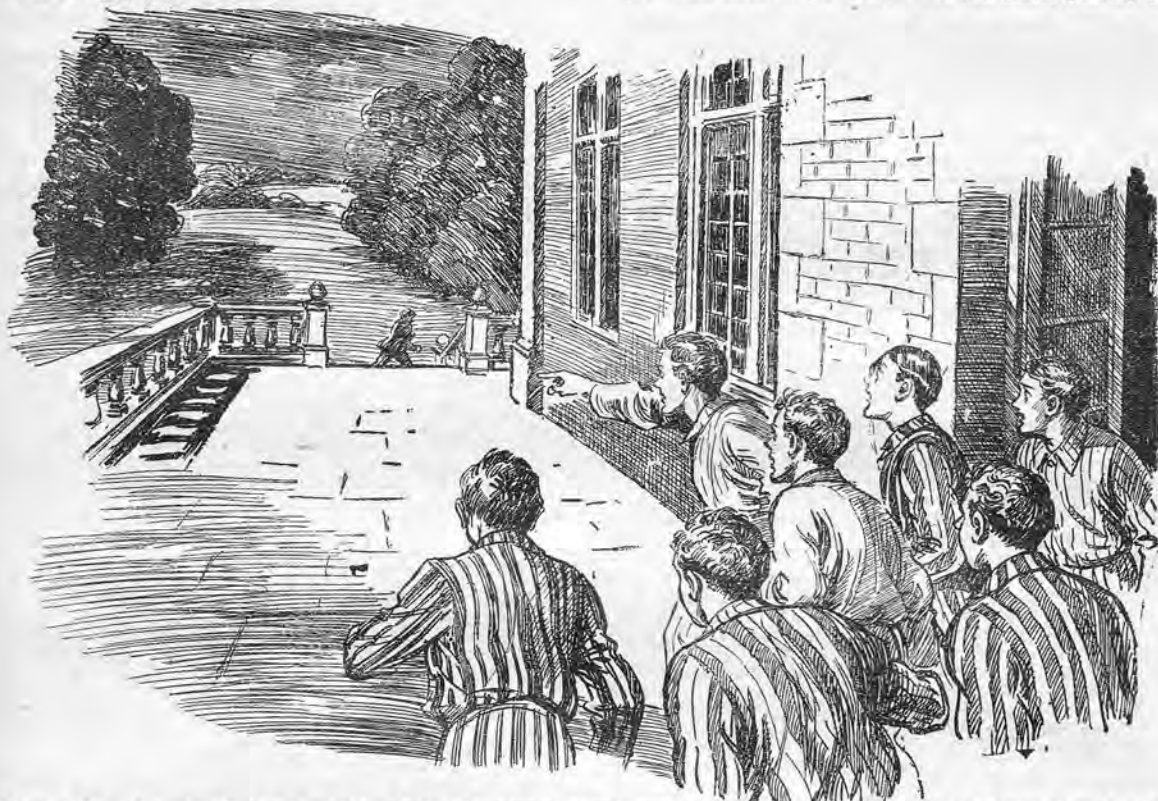
Then Baggy jumped.

He rose cautiously. The other juniors were not in sight. Baggy made a wild bolt for the door of the tower. As he reached it, he heard the voices of Blake & Co. and the others drawing near round the corner of the house.

There was not a moment to lose. Baggy swung open the door and vanished inside just a few seconds before Blake & Co. came into view. He did not wait to shut the door, but made a rush for the dark opening of the steps that led down into the old vaults.

Baggy had with him an electric torch that he had pocketed earlier that afternoon, with a vague idea that it might be useful if he had to seek a hiding-place later from the wrath of the juniors. By its light he almost staggered down the steps, into the arched gloom of the low, cold vault.

He could hear Blake & Co. and the others passing the



"Look! Over there!" The juniors stared in the direction of Tom Merry's pointing finger. The moon had risen from behind a bank of dark clouds, and in the pale light a hurrying figure could be seen beyond the steps that led down from the far end of the terrace. "Come on!" snapped Tom. "After him!" (See Chapter 10.)

Over the rim of cliffs a distant group had come into view. He recognised them readily enough.

"Here they come," muttered Baggy, moistening his dry lips. "Oh lor'!"

Turning hastily, Baggy rolled into the house.

With his usual habit of putting off inevitable trouble as long as possible, instead of facing the music, Baggy began to wonder wildly where he could find a good hiding-place.

He stood in the hall, looking round desperately, his fat frame fairly quivering with fright.

A sudden brain-wave came to him.

"That's the place!" muttered Baggy. "I'll hide in the old tower!"

He scuttled out of a side-door into the garden, and blinked round cautiously. He was safe from observation—the returning picnickers had not yet entered the garden. With a rapid roll, Baggy dived for the cover of some bushes, and, keeping low, made off in the direction of the tower.

Suddenly his heart seemed almost to stop beating.

Round the corner of the building had come the sound of footsteps on gravel. Baggy glimpsed the face of Tom Merry, in company with Manners and Lowther and Talbot—and the faces of all four were very wrathful!

"Oo-er!"

Baggy flopped down among the bushes, scarcely breathing. "When I catch the fat pirate I'll flay him!"

It was the voice of Reginald Talbot, and Baggy shook with fright as Talbot and the Terrible Three strode by within a few feet of where he was lying hidden among the bushes. He did not breathe easily until he had heard them enter the house.

door of the tower—heard Lady Peggy's cheerful laugh, and the voices of Figgins and Cousin Ethel. He drew a deep breath of relief.

For the moment, at any rate, he was safe!

The juniors would start to hunt for him when they could not find him in the house, he knew. But it might be quite a long time before they thought of looking in the tower.

By that time, Baggy told himself, Lord Eastwood would probably have returned from the motor-drive he had taken that afternoon. And once Lord Eastwood had got back to the house—Baggy would hear the car come up the drive from where he was hiding—he could emerge from cover and stick like glue to Lord Eastwood! The juniors would not be able to touch him then, in the presence of their host.

But Baggy's face was rather pale as he crouched in the darkness near the foot of the steps that led down from the stone chamber above.

He knew that if he were caught he was in for it with a vengeance!

"The bullying rotters!" he muttered. "Ow! What's that?"

"That" was the sudden scuttle of a mouse in the darkness. Baggy switched on his electric torch again, and blinked round nervously.

It was cold and eerie down there in the vault. Baggy shivered.

The minutes seemed to drag by like hours. He had put out his torch again, for fear that a gleam from it might be seen through the open doorway above. He began to feel that it would perhaps be better, after all, to come out and face the music, for he felt that he could not stand much

longer down there in the tomb-like darkness that was beginning to prey upon his nerves unpleasantly.

"What's that?"

Footsteps on the path outside the tower door had come to his ears. They grew louder, and stopped.

Baggy felt the perspiration stand out in drops upon his forehead. He knew that whoever it was up there had come to a halt in the doorway of the tower, was staring in.

Now that he seemed face to face with discovery all Baggy's thoughts of giving himself up vanished in a moment. He crept across the floor of the vault in trembling silence, groping for the big pillar there, not daring to switch on the electric torch. He found the pillar, and crouched behind it, his face pale in the darkness.

He heard the footsteps entering the tower.

"Oh lor!" groaned Baggy. "I—I believe it's that beast Merry! Or that cad Talbot!"

And then Baggy's heart seemed almost to stop beating.

Someone was coming down the steps into the vault.

Baggy pressed himself against the broad pillar in the darkness, scarcely daring to breathe. A moment later the bright ray of an electric torch raked the vault.

"Oh lor!"

Baggy felt sure that he was as good as done for.

The ray of torchlight cut through the gloom and steadied on the old stone wall at the farther side of the vault. Whoever held it could be heard moving rapidly across the flagstones towards the wall, and Baggy, for the first time, began to doubt whether this was some seeker for himself, after all.

His curiosity would be denied no more.

He put a cautious head round the pillar, in the dark shadows that concealed him.

He could make out a tall figure black against the torchlight, and, with a sudden rush of relief, he recognised it as the figure of Gilbert Renfrew.

"What the dickens is he up to?" Baggy asked himself a moment later, peering round the pillar in great astonishment.

For Renfrew was standing close by the wall, running a lean hand over one of the stones.

He pressed upon it, and then Baggy wondered if he were dreaming. For a slab of stone three feet square moved silently back beneath that light pressure, revealing a pitch-black opening. Before Baggy could even rub his eyes the shadowy figure of Renfrew had scrambled through the dark opening, vanishing into the blackness. The stone came back into position with a click, plunging the vault into utter darkness again.

Baggy was too amazed even to give a murmur of astonishment. He stood staring through the blackness stupidly.

At last his hand went to his torch, and he switched it on like a fellow in a dream. The vivid ray lit up the opposite wall, looking as solid as ever it had done.

"Am I going potty?" mumbled Baggy, passing a hand across his eyes.

But he knew that it had been no illusion. He had actually seen it. Gilbert Renfrew had descended into the vault, and had vanished through the solid wall.

That there must be some kind of a secret spring operating a movable stone the fat junior was beginning dimly to realise.

But how had Renfrew known of it? And where had Renfrew gone? Where did it lead?

Baggy was quivering with excitement now. He stepped out from behind the pillar with gleaming eyes, intending to investigate. But then he halted, as if frozen in his tracks.

From above his head the voice of Jack Blake had come to his ears, and tramping footsteps.

"Shouldn't wonder if the fat rotter's skulking somewhere in here," he heard Blake observe, and he heard the answering voice of Herries.

That there were several others with Blake and Herries Baggy knew from the sound of footsteps. In a moment the staggering mystery of Renfrew and the secret stone had been forgotten in his terror at the prospect of discovery by the wrathful juniors.

He stared round desperately.

Already Blake & Co. could be heard crossing towards the opening that gave access to the vault.

A gasp of fright broke from Baggy Trimble. There was a quick exclamation from above his head.

"Hear that?"

"Sounded like a mouse," came the voice of Talbot.

"I'll bet it was Baggy!" was Blake's grim response.

"Let's get down and see, anyway!" put in the voice of Sidney Clive.

"What-ho!"

Like a rat in a trap, Baggy felt his heart pounding against his ribs.

He was done for!

And then a wild, desperate idea came into his head. It

was his only chance. He stumbled blindly across to the wall of the vault, to the point where he had seen Renfrew vanish in such an amazing way. His trembling hands went out to the cold stones, pressing feverishly, searching for the secret spring in the darkness.

Footsteps could already be heard descending the steps behind him. He heard the rattle of matches in a box.

At that moment Baggy felt the apparently solid stone move beneath his fingers.

Terror lent agility to Baggy's movements then. He staggered up, his groping hands found the open stone, and he put a fat shoulder to it, closing it with a supreme effort. The stone clicked back into place, leaving Baggy panting and trembling in the darkness behind it.

In the vault Sidney Clive struck a match, and the tiny flame revealed dimly the empty corners.

"He's not here!" said Clive, shaking his head.

"But I tell you I heard him!" cried Figgins. "I heard him moving about."

"Can't have!" grinned Clive, striking another match and peering round.

"No, there's no one here," said Blake in a disappointed voice. "It was mice, after all, evidently."

"But I could have sworn—" persisted Figgins in great bewilderment.

"Rats! Come on!"

The group of juniors trooped up the steps and out of the tower, closing the door with a bang.

But there was a very puzzled frown on the face of George Figgins, as he and the others turned away to resume their search for Baggy Trimble elsewhere.

CHAPTER 14.

In the Bowels of the Earth!

"**P**HEW! Oh crumbs! That was a close shave."

In the pitch darkness beyond the secret stone Baggy Trimble stood panting and shaking.

For the moment he was still suffering from the effects of his blue funk. But as he realised that he was safe, after all, thanks to his amazing discovery of the movable door of stone set in the wall of the old vault, he began to pull himself together.

He groped for his pocket torch.

With a faint click, the switch sent a vivid ray of light stabbing through the darkness.

Baggy, swinging the light from side to side in his fat hand, peered round curiously.

He found himself in a small stone chamber, only just high enough for him to stand upright. It was cold and damp, with great brown fungi sprouting from the walls, and at the far end of it was a low doorway, beyond which could be seen the top of a flight of worn steps leading down into the earth.

Of Renfrew there was no sign.

"Well, this beats the band!" muttered Baggy.

The air was cold, and he shivered. But there was a growing excitement in his eyes.

He had certainly made a discovery!

That no one at Penperro House, with the exception of Gilbert Renfrew, knew of this secret he realised. And instinctively his thoughts turned to the treasure that was said to be hidden on Penperro Rock.

What if the treasure did not lie on the rock, after all? What if it had been transferred in some bygone time to this secret ramification of the rambling old house on the cliffs?

"My hat!" breathed Baggy, with shining eyes. "That's why Renfrew was such a blessed long time in the tower when he was looking for the cricket ball yesterday! I'll bet anything it was then that he happened to find that moving stone! Slipped against it, or something, and opened it by mistake, I dare say. And he never said a word to anybody!"

That Baggy had hit the truth in his conjecture he was to know definitely later.

"Won't he be sick when he finds I know all about it?" sniggered Baggy. "He, he, he!"

He crossed towards the dark opening from which the flight of ancient steps descended.

His curiosity was at fever pitch!

"I'll jolly well find out where these steps go to!" he told himself excitedly. "If the treasure's somewhere down there, I'll make that rotter Renfrew go halves!"

At the prospect of getting half of the elusive treasure for himself Baggy's eyes fairly gleamed with covetousness.

That he and Renfrew had no right to it, if it were found by them, did not even enter Baggy's mind! In Baggy's extremely accommodating code of honour, findings were always keepings.

At the top of the steps Baggy hesitated a moment. The dark stone stairway, with the chill, musty air striking

up into his eager face, seemed strangely silent and forbidding. But only for a moment did a quail of doubt cause him to pause. The next moment he was hurrying down the rocky steps, with the light of the torch dancing ahead of him.

There was no sound of Renfrew from below. Apparently the mysterious stairway went deep.

Down, down, down; till Baggy began to wonder if the steps would ever end.

"My aunt!" gasped Baggy, pausing to get his breath. "These blessed steps must go down a giddy mile!"

He went on again, winding down. The steps descended in steady circles, roughly hewn from the solid rock by the patient labour of men long dead. Baggy began to wonder wildly if it were all some weird nightmare, after all, for the steps seemed never-ending, like those of a dream. But at last he found himself in the entrance to a low, rough-hewn passage that sloped downwards from the bottom of the steps.

"Now, where the dickens does that passage go to?" Baggy asked himself doubtfully.

The deathly silence of that deep underground tunnel, the musty air, and the sense of being deep down in the

bowels of the earth, were all combining to shake his nerves.

But Baggy's curiosity got the better of his timidity. Pulling himself together, he rolled on into the darkness of the rocky passage, with its rough walls glistening with moisture around him in the glow of the torch.

If the steps had seemed never ending, so did the passage!

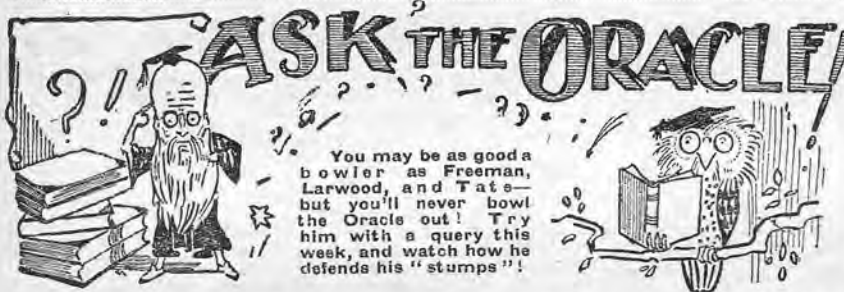
For a long, long way, that to Baggy Trimble seemed like several miles in his weariness, the tunnel sloped gradually downwards. Then, after a brief level stretch, it began to slope up. And at last Baggy found himself at the foot of a second flight of winding stone steps that wound upwards into the blackness above his head.

Baggy had gone too far to turn back now, though he was beginning to long for the daylight once more. Besides, the upward-climbing steps of rock seemed to promise the nearest way to the open air above him.

Baggy was by no means an athletic junior, and that long, long climb up the winding stairs almost finished him. But at last he caught a gleam of daylight above, and the sight lent fresh power to his flagging steps.

The steps opened into a low cave, where fresh air beat

(Continued on next page.)



What is thunder?

A. This question has been sent in by a chum who signs himself "The Bat."

Thunder is the loud noise following a flash of lightning and is caused by a discharge of electricity through the air, and not (as some imagine) by clouds bumping together.

Q. Which is the correct way to dive?

A. "Enthusiastic Swimmer" of Lancashire wishes to know the right way to hold his hands, for apparently he has an inconvenient habit of bumping his head on the sea-bed, or bottom of the baths, when he takes off from any height. Although I cannot give a diving lesson in detail here, chum, for lack of space, I will provide you with a couple of jolly good wrinkles. Firstly, select a spot on the surface of the water at which to aim definitely before taking off from the board. This should be about the distance outward of the height you are diving from. Keep your knees and ankles together, and directly you have entered the water, turn your hands sharply upward from the wrists. Ask any crack diver to show you; he will be flattered to help.

Q. What is the banyan?

A. A strange tree that grows in India and elsewhere. Many of its branches grow

downwards and take root again in the soil. To stand under a big banyan is like being in a small wood!

Q. What is the meaning of the wireless call "Mayday"?

A. It is the S.O.S. in use by the cross-Channel aeroplane services, T.T.B., of Wandsworth. It is really the French "M'aidez" which means "help me."

Q. Is baldness a sign of big brains?

A. Such is the opinion, Edwin Tilley, that I recently tried to impress upon that imp, the office boy. To which the cheeky rascal retorted that "an empty barn never needs thatch." Ought to be chastised, he did!

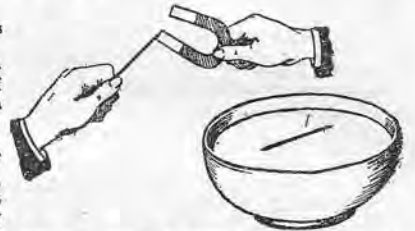
Q. What is a xylophone?

A. Such is the query of a young Hendon reader, who said he heard the word mentioned by some long-haired lads in a railway carriage on the way to town. My chum spells the word "xylophone" but that is merely how it is pronounced. It is a musical instrument usually with wooden bars graded in lengths which give forth different notes when struck—and not merely the same note like our office boy. And—talking of that imp of mischief—reminds me that he fancies himself as a musician, though as far as I have ever been able to make out, his only qualifications for such a claim are that he was born with drums in his ears and used as a child to play upon the carpet!

Q. Is there such a thing as a man-eating tigress?

A. Decidedly, Tom Morton, of Millfield! The tigress as well as the tiger sometimes develops a taste for a human diet, and she can become every wit as dangerous as her jungle lord. Only this year one of the most thrilling hunts of modern times for a man-eating tigress came to a dramatic and successful end. This particular tigress in Bengal had killed no less than 168 natives in four years, and the Indian Government offered a reward for the beast's skin. So cunning had she become, however, that she would never return to her kill a second time no matter what pangs of hunger she

felt. Her boldness became such that she would leap among a crowd of native villagers, strike down one, and carry him off in the confusion. At long last, the man-eating tigress met her Waterloo by returning to a kill during the monsoon rains, when she doubtless believed that no sportsmen would be in the jungle. A well-aimed bullet then stretched the Yellow Terror low! By the way, if you are interested in man-eaters and tiger hunting you should read the rattling fine book "THE RED TIGER" price 1s., by a Popular Companion paper contributor, Stanton Hope.



You can make a compass—it's easy—as the Oracle clearly shows!

Q. How can one make a compass?

A. This is the question sent in by Wally Pycroft, who lives in Yorkshire, and who complains that his parents keep him short of pocket-money. Wise parents have a way of doing that, Wally; no doubt they have your welfare at heart. A type of compass can be made quite easily if you have a magnet or can borrow one from a pal. Just take an ordinary needle and rub it a few dozen times on the magnet. It will then be a magnetised needle, and if you float it on water it will spin round to the magnetic north. At a pinch you could navigate a boat with such a simply made compass.

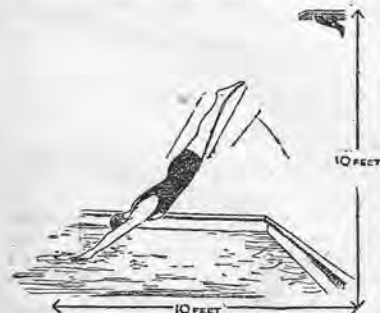
Q. What is Swag?

A. This is a nautical term, George Pearce of Canterbury, and it means to sag, or sink down by its own weight as in the case of a mooring hawser. By the way, you should have seen that superfluous specimen of humanity, the office boy, "swag" when the Editor told him the other day that he would get another rise in about five years' time at his present rate of progress. But it was a case of swank when the O.B. met the young typist and told her that the Great Man had begged him to stay on at an extra ten bob a week!

Q. Who was Bjornson?

A. A great Norwegian writer who lived between the period, 1832 and 1910.

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This is the correct way to dive. Our Oracle says it is, so it must be right!

upon his face. A dim light streamed in through a tiny opening that was all but hidden by close-growing bushes.

Forcing his way through the bushes, Baggy staggered out into the bright sunlight beyond, drawing in the fresh, sweet air in great gulps.

The thunder of waves came to his ears very clearly. He stared round.

A low, breathless cry of utter amazement broke from Baggy Trimble then.

In a moment he saw where he was. He was standing in the great gorge that split Penperro Rock on the landward side.

The tunnel he had followed had led him right under the narrow channel of surging sea—had brought him out upon the mysterious island!

CHAPTER 15.

In a Scoundrel's Clutches!

"GREAT pip!" stammered Baggy, staring round almost dazedly.

The winding of the stone stairs had utterly robbed him of all sense of direction, and he had had not the faintest idea that the tunnel had been leading him out under the sea.

It was a staggering discovery!

"Wonder where Renfrew is?" muttered Baggy, when he had recovered from his amazement. "He won't half be surprised to see me! He, he, he!"

He glanced across to where the grey pile of Penperro House rose upon the heights of the opposite cliffs, and grinned again.

Over there, the rest of the St. Jim's party were still, probably, hunting for him, to exact dire vengeance for the stolen feed!

Eagerly Baggy began to hurry up towards the summit of the gorge. He emerged breathless on to the flat, grass-grown stretches where the ruins stood, with the sea wind beating through them.

"No wonder Tom Merry saw a light on the island last night!" chuckled Baggy.

The story of the mysterious light that Tom Merry & Co. had seen on the island had puzzled everyone. Even Baggy had been interested. But now he understood! Evidently Renfrew had visited the supposedly inaccessible island by the secret tunnel on the previous night, and a lantern or torch that he had taken with him had been seen from Penperro House.

Baggy rolled across the grass towards the ruins, peering round eagerly. But there was no sign of Renfrew.

"Wonder where the chap's got to?" grunted Baggy.

He was eager to see Renfrew. Since the man had said no word about his discovery of the undersea way to the island, it was evident that he had intended to keep it a complete secret from everyone, and Baggy realised that the man's motive could only be that he hoped to discover the treasure for himself!

Baggy did not blame Renfrew for that. In the same circumstances Baggy would have done the same thing! But Baggy was beginning to realise that Renfrew could not be so sceptical concerning the existence of the old monks' treasure, after all!

Baggy was eager to strike a bargain with Renfrew concerning the treasure!

Fifty-fifty—that was going to be Baggy's ultimatum! If the treasure were discovered by Renfrew Baggy must have half of it as the price of his silence.

That he was planning to behave like an utter scoundrel Baggy did not realise—or, at any rate, he shut his eyes to that fact.

"Wonder where he is?" muttered Baggy again.

And then a sudden footfall on the grass behind him caused him to turn his head quickly.

He gave a gasp.

Gilbert Renfrew was standing in the shadow of an ancient archway, his eyes fixed staringly on the fat junior. Baggy was the first to break the silence.

"Hallo!" he said, fairly coolly; but something in the man's eyes rather frightened him. He laughed nervously, "Didn't expect to see me—eh? He, he, he!"

With a quick stride Renfrew was beside him, gripping his arm so tightly that Baggy squealed.

"How did you get here?" rasped Renfrew.

"Ow! Yoooooo!" Baggy rubbed his smarting arm and backed away hastily. "I came by the blessed tunnel, of course—there's no other way here, with the sea so rough, as you jolly well know!"

"You know about the tunnel?" breathed Renfrew.

"Rather! He, he, he!"

The look of consternation on Renfrew's face changed to one of almost fiendish rage. Baggy gave a startled exclamation, and backed farther away from the man.

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Renfrew gave a sudden harsh laugh.

"And how did you find out about the under-sea tunnel—eh?" he inquired coolly.

"I was in the vault when you came down there and did the secret stone stunt," explained Baggy, with an uneasy grin. "Never knew I was there—behind the pillar, did you? He, he, he!"

"No," said Renfrew, in a queer voice. "I didn't!"

Baggy, recovering his courage, wagged a meaning finger at the man.

"I know your little game now!" said Baggy, in a voice that was meant to sound threatening. "You're on the track of this blessed treasure! I shouldn't wonder if you were pulling my leg the other night when you burnt that chart and said it was all a hoax. You know something about it, you do! And you're out to collar the blessed lot for yourself!"

Renfrew laughed softly—a fact which disconcerted Baggy a trifle.

"Well, look here," he said, in as blustering a voice as he could command, "I'm in on this! See? It's going to be fifty-fifty, I can tell you, or I'll split! You can put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

Again Baggy wagged a fat forefinger at Renfrew. Again Renfrew laughed softly.

"Fifty-fifty, eh?" he grinned sardonically. "I see!"

"Is it a go?" cried Baggy eagerly.

Renfrew shook his head, with the same sardonic smile on his lean, dark face.

"No," he said; "your share of the treasure is—just nix!"

Baggy stared at him in dismay.

Apparently his threats had not had the desired effect of frightening the man into agreeing to go halves, after all!

"B-but look here—"

Renfrew shot out an arm, and again he gripped Baggy so tightly by the shoulder that he caused the Falstaff of the School House to yelp. But this time he did not let go his hold. He dragged Baggy towards him till the fat junior's face was within a few inches of his own, and the smile had died from his thin features as he glared into Baggy's frightened eyes.

"Yes," hissed Renfrew; "I'm out after the treasure all right. And I know where it lies. I'm going to take the lot of it, bit by bit—and I'm sharing with no one!"

"Ow! Leggo!" squeaked Baggy desperately, wriggling like a hooked fish. "I—I—I tell you, I want some of that treasure, or I'll jolly well split on you—"

"I don't think you'll get the chance!" muttered Renfrew.

Baggy scarcely heard. At any rate, he did not understand. He fought free of the hand that had held him, and stood panting in the shadow of the ruins.

"Look here," he whined, in a voice very different from the truculent tone he adopted before, "don't be a beast, you know! Don't be a mean rotter! Gimme my whack—"

"Not a pennyworth!" grinned Renfrew.

"I'll split, then!" gasped Baggy defiantly. "Yah! I'll tell Lord Eastwood—"

"I don't think you will!" growled Renfrew.

He made a dart at Baggy.

In sudden utter panic Baggy turned and fled.

Across the short grass Baggy raced, at a speed of which he had never known himself to be capable. Renfrew was hot on his heels in a moment, however, and Baggy's wild idea of gaining the secret tunnel and escaping back to the mainland was not even accomplished to the extent of reaching the top of the gorge into which the secret way opened.

Renfrew's hand dropped upon his shoulder, and with a wild squeal of fright Baggy lost his footing and went flying. He collapsed in a breathless heap, and Renfrew pounced upon him, holding him down easily, despite his desperate wriggles.

"So you'd try to escape, eh?" grinned Renfrew. "You haven't a chance, you little fool!"

"Wh-what are you going to do with me?" gasped Baggy faintly, terror in his flabby face.

"Why, keep you here on the island till I have unearthed the treasure and got it safe away!" explained Renfrew coolly. "That may take days. Well, you'll never be found here, my fat young friend. When they send out search-parties for you, they'll never dream you can have got on to the island. Penperro Rock is supposed to be inaccessible in this weather, remember!"

"But you can't keep me here!" cried Baggy in panic.

"I can. There are one or two little vaults I have found in the ruins which have escaped the notice of our friends when they visited this island the other day. Down there you will be safe for years, if necessary—even if the sea gets calm enough for Lord Eastwood and the youngsters to come back here to look for the treasure! The treasure



"Oh, gweat Scott!" As Arthur Augustus D'Arcy surveyed the contents of the picnic-basket, his genial smile was replaced by a ghastly stare. The faces of the rest of the party, too, set in peculiar expressions as they gazed at the collection of boots and shoes and empty sardine-tins in the hamper. "M-my hat!" "Boots!" (See Chapter 13.)

that is going to be all mine!" he added, with a soft, purring laugh.

"Look here," said Baggy hoarsely, "I swear if you let me go to say nothing—nothing at all—"

"Think I can trust you to keep your mouth shut?" sneered Renfrew. "Not likely, my bright young friend. No, you'll stay here, and you can make up your mind to that. Don't be afraid—I'll bring you food and water and some blankets. I won't say you'll get any fatter here, but you won't starve."

A look of relief came into Baggy's eyes for a moment, to be replaced almost instantly by his first terror and dismay.

"Ow! I—I can't stand it—not being locked in a vault—"

"You'll have to!" snapped Renfrew grimly. "You shouldn't have poked your nose into my business!"

He lifted Baggy with a jerk, and with a firm grasp on the fat junior's collar he propelled him towards the ruins. Baggy wriggled and kicked, but all in vain.

Into the ruins he was taken, and down a short flight of crumbling steps, choked with bushes. A heavy, iron-studded door at the bottom was standing open, and Renfrew pushed him in through the narrow opening with a rough push.

A lantern was hanging on the wall—evidently Renfrew had been down there only a few minutes ago, and had been disturbed by the sound of Baggy in the ruins. The dim light shone on bare stone walls and floor.

The door slammed to with a heavy crash.

Baggy Trimble was a prisoner—a prisoner in the hands of the unscrupulous scoundrel who called himself Gilbert Renfrew—a prisoner in the ruins on Penperro Rock!

CHAPTER 16.

'Missing !

"WELL, it's jolly rum!"

"Yaas, bai Jove!"

"Where the dickens can he have got to?"

"He's vanished!"

Tom Merry & Co., Blake & Co., Talbot, and Levison and Clive, and the New House trio were gathered in the hall at Penperro House,

They had been searching every nook and corner of the big old house for Baggy Trimble; but Baggy Trimble was nowhere to be found!

It seemed clear enough that Baggy had made himself scarce deliberately, knowing full well that upon their return from their picnic the rest of the St. Jim's juniors would be out for his blood, as a result of his scoffing their feed! But what undiscoverable hiding-place Baggy had hit upon was beginning to be a real mystery.

"The cunning fat rotter!" growled Manners. "He's got into some pretty good hiding-place all right!"

"My hat, he has!" nodded Blake. "Why, we've searched everywhere!"

"He must have left the house altogether," put in Digby. Tom Merry shook his head.

"Can't have! Old Wallington told us he saw Baggy only a couple of minutes before we got home ourselves, so if Baggy had tried to leave the house we should have been bound to see him on the cliffs."

"Well, that's so," agreed Digby, with a bewildered frown.

"It's vewy queeah!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Howevah, the gweedy wottah is bound to come out some time to-night. When he does, we'll collah him!"

"Rather!"

"We'll teach the fat worm to scoff our grub!"

Voices were grim and wrathful as the juniors, giving up the hunt as a bad job, finally dispersed, to wait for the time when Baggy should come forth from his hiding-place.

But when there was still no sign of Baggy at dinner that evening the juniors began to look at one another in some astonishment.

Lord Eastwood with a slight frown, inquired why Baggy's seat was vacant, but no one could tell him where the fat Fourth-Former was—or, at any rate, even if there were someone at the meal who could have done so, he kept silent!

"Haven't seen him since lunch myself," remarked Gilbert Renfrew, with a shrug. "Odd, I always thought he was rather keen on his meals!"

After dinner, the three Spalding Hall girls went off together, and the St. Jim's juniors gathered on the terrace to discuss Baggy's queer disappearance once more.

(Continued on page 28.)

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YOU'LL ENJOY EVERY LINE OF THIS AMAZING SERIAL, CHUMS!

The Robot Man!

By H.J. ALLINGHAM



(Introduction on next page.)

Jack Carter gives his word to help the mad professor—a promise that is to save his fellow-explorers. But he little realises the danger of the work that is given him as a result of his promise!

Dogged Will Power!

FIVE minutes later Jack Carter found himself in a large oblong cellar, the walls of which were roughly hewn out of the solid rock.

The place was dimly lit by one electric bulb. With Jack was the professor, Gonzales, and another half-breed.

A garment resembling a deep-sea diver's dress had been placed on the boy, and it encased him from neck to heel. It was made of a curious leather-like material. The professor himself saw to the fastenings with infinite care.

"What is this stuff made of?" said Jack curiously.

The professor smiled enigmatically.

"It is a native cloth," he replied, "covered with a preparation of my own invention. You are perfectly safe inside it. Nothing can pass through it. Neither the gas nor a bullet, nor even my own death-ray. You are invulnerable."

Again he smiled.

"At least you will be," he added, "when Gonzales fits that mask over your head."

The Spaniard was holding a large, but not heavy, head-piece, made apparently of the same material as Jack's costume.

It had two eyelet holes protected with thick glass, but no opening for mouth or nostrils.

"As soon as this is put on you must act quickly," said the professor, "for no fresh supply of air can be given you. You will find it close and stuffy, but I rely on you not to turn back until you have filled that."

As he spoke he pointed to a large, pouch-like bag fastened to Jack's belt and hanging in front of him.

"I'll do my best," said the boy quietly.

The professor nodded to Gonzales, who at once stepped forward, placed the mask over Jack's head, and laced it to the collar of the other garment.

At the same instant the half-breed produced a long thin steel cable, and secured one end of it to a ring at the back of Jack's belt.

Having done this, the half-breed glanced at the professor, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,122.

who gave another nod. Instantly the man drew from the floor a strip of canvas, and revealed the mouth of a dark, cavernous well.

From it there arose a faint, warm, sweet-smelling odour, an almost imperceptible vapour.

The next moment Jack felt himself lifted by strong hands and being lowered swiftly into the darkness.

He carried a small electric torch at his belt, and he saw the greasy, crumbling wall of the well as he went down.

He touched the bottom quickly, but without violence, and at once saw a hole on his left which he knew must be the mouth of the tunnel which the professor had shown him on the chart.

Without hesitation he plunged into it jerking impatiently at the cable which threatened to hold him back.

Instantly the cable became slack, and he darted forward swiftly. He was relieved to discover that the tunnel was not so low that he had to crawl. By stooping he was able to keep his feet.

Now he understood why the professor had told him to be quick. He felt stiflingly hot, and he could scarcely breathe, and a sharp pain caught him in his lungs.

He realised that he was engaged in a race against suffocation. Bending low, he plunged forward and came out suddenly in a circular chamber.

Still there was no relief to that choking sensation in his throat, and only his dogged will-power and his determination not to be beaten prevented him from rushing back the way he had come without completing his task.

The glowing lamp at his belt sent out a ray of light, and as he turned the light fell on a heap of what looked like grey mud scarcely a couple of paces away.

Jack almost flung himself upon it and began with feverish haste scooping the sticky stuff into the pouch fastened in front of him.

His hands were encased in gloves made of a special kind of rubber, and he found no difficulty in using them.

In spite of the choking sensation in his throat, the piercing pain in his lungs, and an awful dizziness in his brain, Jack did not pause till the pouch was filled to overflowing.

Then his strength failed him and he sank to his knees. The fear gripped him that he would soon lose consciousness. Desperately he crawled back to the tunnel.

At the same instant the ring at his back, to which the cable was attached, moving on a swivel, came round to the front, and he felt himself being dragged. This gave him renewed strength and courage. They were trying to drag him out.

On hands and knees he crawled along, and he was still conscious when he reached the bottom of the well.

He saw a light far up above him, and quickly-moving shadows, and then he felt himself lifted up and up, and banging against the sides of the well.

Now hands seized him, and he was rolled over. His next sensation was of fingers fumbling at the fastenings at his throat, and then he fainted.

The Professor is Pleased!

WHEN Jack Carter was hauled out of the radium pit and rolled, inanimate as a sack of wheat, on the cellar floor, three men bent eagerly over him.

The faces of all were glowing with excitement.

"He's done it!" gasped Gonzales, almost hysterically.

"Then take off the mask! Quick! Revive him. If he has done it once, he can do it again. He's worth the whole lot of you—you cowardly scum!"

It was the professor who spoke, and his face, manner, and voice, betrayed an excitement such as his subordinates had never witnessed before.

The Spaniard's nimble fingers were already removing Jack's headpiece.

The professor gave one glance at the boy's white face as it came to view, and instantly he became calm and composed.

"He will live, and we can use him again. See to him, and treat him well. Jose, bring that stuff and follow me."

The last words were addressed to the half-breed, who immediately unfastened the bulging pouch, or sack, attached to Jack's belt and, slinging it over his shoulder, followed the professor out of the cellar.

When Jack came to his senses he was lying in a comfortable bed and except for a feeling of extraordinary fatigue and lassitude, he experienced nothing to indicate that he was any the worse for his adventure.

Standing by the side of his bed and looking down at him with a curious expression of wonder in his eyes was Gonzales, the Spaniard.

"You do not suffer?" said the man in a soft voice.

He spoke excellent English with scarce a trace of accent.

"No, I'm all right!" replied Jack, smiling. "Only a bit done up. Can I have a drink?"

Gonzales disappeared and presently returned with a large glass of seltzer water, into which the juice of fresh limes had been squeezed.

Jack drank it greedily, and then leaned back on his pillow with a sigh of satisfaction.

"That's jolly good," he said.

"You are English?" said Gonzales, who was still gazing fixedly at the boy.

"Yes, quite!"

"You are brave."

Jack grinned.

"Thanks!" he said. "I do feel rather bucked with myself. It was a ticklish job. I'm glad I pulled it off. Is the stuff what the old boy wanted?"

"My master, the professor, is pleased."

"Good!"

"But he wants more. My master is like that. He always wants more. Do what one will for him it is not enough."

There was a mournful note in the man's voice which somehow amused Jack.

"He works you pretty hard, eh?" he said, with a smile.

"My master is the greatest genius in the world. He does what pleases him. It is well. We are but dust beneath his feet."

"He seems a bit of a corker, I admit," said Jack. "By the way, does he keep his word?"

The Spaniard looked puzzled, and did not answer.

"I mean, can he be trusted?" explained Jack. "If he makes a promise, can he be relied upon to carry it out?"

"My master does not need to be trusted. He does what pleases him, always."

"You don't get me," persisted Jack. "The old boy has promised that if I do this job for him he will look after my friends and see that they come to no harm. Will he keep his word?"

"If it pleases him," replied Gonzales simply.

"You mean if it suits him he will play me false?" said Jack sharply.

The Spaniard drew himself up stiffly.

"Whatever my master does is right," he replied coldly. "He is wise. There is no one wiser than my master."

"Well, he had better not play any tricks on me," said Jack. "I am willing to do my bit, but he must act square by me."

Again that wondering expression came into the dark eyes of the Spaniard as he stared at the boy.

"You should rest and sleep, senior," he said at length. "You are brave, but you will need also to be strong."

He turned away and moved noiselessly out of the room.

For the rest of the day Jack was treated with the greatest consideration. Delicate foods were brought to him; he received every possible attention, and he began to feel that he was an honoured guest.

He did not, however, see the professor again that day.

The professor indeed was busy in the chemical laboratory of the marvellous factory which he had created in the very heart of the mountain.

In a large, vaulted chamber fitted out with scientific appliances, he worked with the feverish zeal of a lunatic.

He was waited on by half a dozen assistants, but none of them worked harder than he did.

It was a slow and laborious process to extract the tiny specks of silver-white radium from the greasy, clinging substance which Jack, at the risk of his life, had brought up from the bowels of the earth. But at every stage of the process the professor's strange, inhuman eyes glowed with increasing triumph.

The clay was richer in the precious metal than he had ever dared to hope.

The money he required to carry on his experiments would soon be his.

A few more loads such as this, a few more trips by Jack Carter into the radium pit and tunnel, and Professor Rollins would have no more need to think of money.

The man worked like one possessed. His assistants became exhausted and were relieved by others, but he went on unresting and unfatigued.

Through the night he laboured without cessation.

And then, in the early hours of the morning, he was disturbed in his labours by the sudden, unannounced appearance of Gonzales, the Spaniard.

The man's face wore a scared expression, and he was trembling, but the professor, absorbed and excited by his own achievements, did not notice this.

On perceiving his faithful servant the half-crazed man of genius uttered a cry of exultation and triumph.

"Gonzales!" he exclaimed. "All our troubles are ended! Now we can go forward to the real triumphs of which I have only dared to dream. One more day such as this and we need think no more of money!"

"That is good news, master; but the news I bring is bad," said Gonzales tremulously.

A look of ferocity came into the professor's face.

"Bad? Is the English boy dead?" he snarled.

"No, master; he is well and strong, and full of courage."

The professor's expression changed again with startling suddenness, and he smiled once more.

"Then there is no bad news!" he retorted contemptuously. "To-day the boy will go once more down the radium pit and bring back another such prize as this! That will be all I need."

"He will not go to-day, master," said Gonzales.

His voice was tremulous, but his words were emphatic.

"Will not?"

A tigerish gleam flashed from the cold, grey eyes, and the Spaniard shrank back a pace instinctively.

"It is impossible, master. I beg you to hear me," he said humbly. "A great disaster has befallen us. It is well that you got so much wealth from the radium pit yesterday, for you will get no more. There has been a new discharge of the gas. The accursed hole will have to be filled up and sealed or we shall all be killed. As for going down the pit and along the tunnel, that is impossible. No one who attempted it would ever return alive."

The professor became suddenly calm and thoughtful. All his excitement had left him.

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THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Captain Storm, a broad-shouldered man, in company with Teddy White, a middle-aged Cockney, and two youngsters named Jack Carter and Harry Frobisher, set off in search of Professor Rollins, a missing scientist who is reputed to be held in captivity somewhere within the vicinity of the regions through which the mighty Amazon flows. Headless of the dangers ahead, the four plucky adventurers push on into the unexplored forest until they reach a cave in the hillside, where they make camp. Before very long, however, a huge steel monster, formed like a man, suddenly appears, seizes Captain Storm by the waist, and carries him away. Almost immediately following this, Jack Carter comes face to face with Professor Rollins, the inventor of the strange monstrosity known as the Robot. The professor insists on the youngster accompanying him to his quarters in the rocks. Convinced that the professor must be mad, Jack deems it wise to humour him, and enters a brilliantly-lit chamber fitted out with scientific appliances, where he agrees to assist the mad scientist in one of his experiments, on the understanding that no harm will befall his chums. In consequence of this, Captain Storm is allowed to rejoin White and Frobisher, after having arranged to signal to Jack every day at noon as an indication that all is well. The next day the trio are making for the rocky plateau where they had first seen the Robot when they are suddenly fired on by Paul Tench, a former member of the party, who for some mysterious reason has a grudge against Frobisher. Meanwhile, Jack Carter, in the hands of Rollins, declares his readiness to enter a tunnel underneath the ground, at the end of which the mad scientist declares lies a deposit of radium worth untold millions.

(Now read on.)

"Is this true?" he said. "But I need not ask. You would not deceive me, Gonzales. But why do you say the descent is impossible? Have we not proved that the costume and mask are gas-proof?"

"Even so, no one would face the gas as it is now—when the canvas lid is removed it comes up in a cloud. The heat is great—down below it must be stifling."

The professor smiled.

"If we put Carter down the well and refused to pull him up until he had got the stuff I know he would make the attempt, and I think he would succeed."

"He will never come out alive."

"Then we will pull him out dead and see what he has got for us. I will breakfast with him in half an hour. See to it, and while we are at breakfast make all arrangements for a descent."

He made a gesture of dismissal.

The Spaniard bowed low and withdrew in silence.

The Death Signal

"WELL, really, it seems that I am in favour," said Jack to himself, as he was ushered by a deferential half-breed into the big room with the window overlooking the plain.

The table was laid for breakfast, and was laden with good things.

Jack had had a bath, and felt in the pink of condition, and was as hungry as a hunter.

He resisted the temptation to help himself, however, and, walking to the window, gazed out.

The broad plain was bathed in brilliant sunlight, and yet it had a desolate look, for there was no sign of life anywhere. Not even a bird skimmed through the air shimmering in the heat.

Jack's eyes turned to the range of hills on the left. It was too early for Captain Storm's signal. Twelve o'clock noon was the hour they had chosen, and it was not yet ten. But involuntarily the boy's gaze turned to that rocky ledge from which he and his chums had first seen the Robot Man.

Like the rest of the surrounding country, it was bare and deserted, with no sign of life.

Jack wondered if his friends were hiding in the cave which Teddy White had discovered, ready to come out and give the signal at the right moment.

Or had Professor Rollins betrayed him? It was quite possible that the unscrupulous professor had merely released Captain Storm as a blind, at the same time giving instructions to some of his people to follow and seize the whole party.

Well, in a couple of hours he would know. If Captain Storm was alive, and at liberty, he would give the secret signal.

With this thought in his mind he turned away from the window and looked once more, rather hungrily, at the well-loaded table.

At the same moment, Professor Rollins came briskly into the room.

"Good-morning!" he said pleasantly.

"Good-morning, sir!" replied Jack.

"Slept all right?"

"Like a top."

"None the worse for your spell of work yesterday?"

"No, sir, I think not. Though if you want me to do that every day for a month I fancy I shall have had enough by the time the job is finished."

The professor laughed.

"That's true, but don't be alarmed," he said. "I am going to let you off most of the bargain. You have done so well that you will only need to make one more trip. There are millions under our feet, Carter, but I am not greedy. I do not want millions. I take no interest in money, except so far as I need it to carry out my researches. But let us eat. I don't know how you feel. I'm hungry."

They sat down to the table, and during the meal that followed the professor did most of the talking.

He did not, however, return to the subject of the radium pit.

He talked of the wonders of science, and of his many inventions, and so interestingly that Jack was fascinated.

"You will make a bit of a sensation, sir, when you get back to Europe," said Jack admiringly.

The professor, who had been talking with the greatest animation, became suddenly grave, and into his strange eyes there came that dreamy expression which Jack had seen once or twice before.

"Much will happen before then," he said at length, speaking very slowly.

It was Jack who, when the meal was finished, again raised the question which, during its progress, had been ignored.

"You say I am only to make one more journey down that ghastly hole?" he said.

"Yes, only one."

"When will that be?"

"To-day."

"Really? And then am I going to join my friends again?"

"I see no reason why not," replied the professor. "If you are as successful to-day as you were yesterday I shall feel inclined to grant you any request you may care to make."

And his face lit up with a pleasant smile.

Jack was surprised, and a feeling of vague uneasiness took possession of him.

Hitherto the professor had seemed so eager to retain him as a permanent assistant. There must be some reason for this sudden change, and Jack secretly resolved to be more than ever on his guard.

The professor rose from the table.

"And as there is no time like the present we will do it now and get it over," he said pleasantly.

"Not yet," replied Jack. And at the same time he took from his pocket the old silver watch which he had carried with him half-way across the world.

Having consulted it, he turned his back on the professor and walked to the window.

The man's face betrayed nothing of his thoughts, and when he spoke it was in the same smooth and pleasant tone.

"Oh, yes, I had forgotten your signal! We must wait for that, of course."

He moved to Jack's side, and together they looked out of the window.

"We have nearly an hour to wait," said Jack.

"So long?"

"Yes, twelve o'clock noon was the hour I named."

"Very well, then we must— But what's that?"

He pointed towards the forest, to a spot where a thin column of smoke could be seen rising above the trees.

"Looks like smoke," said Jack coolly.

"Isn't that your signal?"

Jack turned his head quickly and looked at the speaker.

"How do you know?" he demanded quietly.

But Professor Rollins was not in the least disconcerted.

"Isn't that pretty obvious?" he said, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"If you have guessed that so easily," replied Jack, "perhaps you lighted the fire, or caused one of your people to light it."

The professor laughed quite naturally.

"I have been too busy to play games," he said. "I am afraid you don't trust me, Carter."

"Not a bit!" replied Jack coolly. "We will wait till twelve. If Captain Storm lit that fire he will put more fuel on it at twelve, so as to make the signal specially obvious at the hour we agreed upon. Until I know that he is safe I do no more work for you, professor!"

Professor Rollins fumbled with something in his pocket, but, glancing at the boy's face and seeing the look of dogged obstinacy there, he merely shrugged his shoulders again and walked back into the room.

Jack remained standing at the window, but his gaze was no longer fixed on that thin column of smoke.

His eyes were now directed to that smooth ledge of rock on the hillside, and as he stared, he recalled the instructions he had given to Captain Storm.

As he waited he made a mental resolve that until he saw one of his friends come out and stand erect on that rocky ledge, indicating that all was well, he would do nothing further for Professor Rollins.

Jack looked at his watch again. Twenty minutes past eleven. Another forty minutes to wait. And then, as he looked again from the window, he gave a slight start, but at once became motionless, his gaze fixed.

Something was moving on the rocky ledge.

At first Jack could not make out at all what it was, and imagined it to be some kind of animal.

It seemed to be crawling slowly and laboriously forward towards the edge of the rocky plateau.

At last it reached the very edge, and for several seconds crouched there in a shapeless heap.

Jack stared, straining his eyes, a vague, nameless fear stirring within him.

And then the thing happened, the monstrous thing which he had told himself again and again could not be, and yet which all the time he had secretly dreaded.

The thing on the rock suddenly took shape. As by a great effort it staggered into an upright position and stood erect.

It was a human being. It was Harry Frobisher!

In a flash Jack recognised his chum.

For one instant Harry stood swaying giddily, and then he raised both arms and held them straight above his head.

The signal! The death signal!

Jack did not move or turn away his eyes, but stood rigid, like a figure turned to stone.

And as he stared he saw Harry suddenly collapse, crumple up, sink into a heap and lay quite still.

Very quietly Jack turned away from the window. His face was deathly pale, but in no other way did he betray his feelings. Indeed, he remained strangely calm.

He found Professor Rollins looking at him. The man stood at the other end of the room. The broad table was between. Jack measured the distance with his eyes, and decided that the time was not yet. At the same moment a

Jack Carter Lets Himself Go!

JACK CARTER, looking into the face of death, stood motionless, his gaze fixed on that glittering tube directed at his breast.

He knew that the professor had only to press that little shining knob on which his thumb was resting, and the flame of death would leap out and destroy.

Yet it was not fear that checked Jack's wild rage and held him motionless.

Believing that his friends had been foully murdered, he did not care whether he lived or died. But not knowing of Paul Teuch's villainous treachery, he held the professor responsible for what had happened to his comrades, and he had a fierce desire to live until he had settled accounts with this monster who had the brain of a superman and the heart of a tiger.

Jack almost flung himself upon the little pile of grey matter at the end of the tunnel. Feverishly he scooped up the sticky stuff and crammed it into the pouch in front of him. The pain in his lungs was overpowering—his head was turning dizzy, and he could hardly breathe. The poisonous gas was slowly killing him! (See page 24.)



single thought formed itself in his brain. The professor had killed his friends, and he would kill the professor!

"I am ready," he said aloud.

The professor looked surprised.

"It is not twelve," he objected.

"No, but I am satisfied," replied Jack quietly. "I have seen the signal, and I know what has happened to my friends."

If the words were spoken with the intention of startling the professor into self-betrayal they failed.

He did not even seem surprised.

"Very well, then," he said. "We need waste no more time. Come! Remember, this is your last job for me, Carter. To-morrow you will be as free as your friends."

Reading in the words a significance which the speaker did not intend, Jack flushed hotly, and a wave of ungovernable anger swept through him.

"You mean that I shall be dead, you monster!" he cried. And even as he spoke he made a wild, reckless rush forward, with the intention of flinging himself upon his enemy.

Quick as he was, however, the professor was prepared.

Leaping back, he whipped out something from his pocket.

"Another step and you die!" he snarled.

Furious and excited as he was, Jack saw that glittering thing pointed at his breast and firmly grasped in the professor's right hand.

He saw it and recognised it.

It was the R.D.R.—the Rollins Death Ray!

"I must not die—not yet!"

That was the thought that flashed across Jack's mind in that moment of peril, and changed his whole demeanour.

Rage still glowed within him, but it was no longer a blind rage. It had suddenly become cold and calculating.

"I am in your power, professor," he said, with amazing calmness, and with apparent resignation. "And I am willing to do what you want me to do. But I shall serve you all the better if you can assure me that my friends are safe and uninjured."

But the patience of Professor Rollins was at an end.

"Your friends!" he retorted contemptuously. "What are they to me or to you? I have already forgotten all about them. You had better do the same. It is your own life that is in peril now. Do as I bid you—and at once—or you die! Quick! In front of me, through that door!"

Jack obeyed in silence.

In the lighted corridor outside another figure suddenly appeared and took him by the hand. It was Gonzales, the Spaniard.

"Hurry!" commanded a voice behind.

It was the professor's voice, now harsh and impatient.

Jack knew he was being covered by that deadly instrument and allowed himself to be dragged forward by Gonzales, who also seemed to be in a state of nervous excitement.

They passed through several passages, down a number of steps, and so descended into the bowels of the earth, and



(Continued from previous page.)

finally reached that grim oblong collar where Jack had been taken on the previous day.

The boy noticed that the air was now hot and stifling, and charged with a peculiarly pungent odour.

The half-breed was already there crouching by the strip of canvas which covered the radium pit.

Jack perceived that a kind of heavy, oily smoke was oozing out at the edges of the canvas. The half-breed's eyes had a wild, scared look in them.

But Jack was given little time to notice this.

"Quick!" snapped the professor, addressing Gonzales. "Get him ready!"

The Spaniard obeyed swiftly, and in a few minutes Jack was clothed in the queer diver's dress he had worn on the previous day.

As Gonzales was about to fix the gas helmet over his head, Jack turned to the professor with a smile.

"I'll get you as much of the stuff as I can, sir, as this is the last time."

The professor nodded, but did not answer. There was momentarily a murderous gleam in his terrible eyes.

He made a sign to Gonzales.

The helmet dropped over Jack's head, and at the same instant the half-breed whipped away the canvas cover from the mouth of the pit.

What followed occurred so swiftly that only Jack could have given an account of it afterwards.

He had been waiting for this moment, for he knew exactly what he intended to do.

As soon as the helmet fell over his head, and before Gonzales had time to secure the fastenings, Jack made his spring.

With one bound, he flung himself on the terrible professor. Unprepared as he was for the sudden attack, the man instinctively raised the tube he held in his hand and directed it at his aggressor.

"Fool!" he smiled, as he pressed the little glittering knob.

Before the R.D.B. could have any effect upon Jack, he seized the professor, and swung him into the air.

The helmet was jerked from his head and fell to the floor of the cellar, and for one split second he saw the scared face of the scientific monster who at last was experiencing the terror he had so often inspired in others.

The professor was helpless, for the deadly tube had been knocked from his hand, and Jack held him in a grip of iron.

"Gonzales!" shrieked the man, in a tone of frenzied rage and terror.

With a laugh that had in it something grim and savage, Jack staggered with his victim to the edge of the radium pit.

What's Jack Carter going to do with the mad professor — hurl him down into the gas-filled tunnel to seemingly certain death? This, and many other things you will discover when you read next week's gripping instalment of this powerful serial.)

"ON THE TRAIL OF TREASURE!"

(Continued from page 23.)

"I hope nothing's happened to the fat ass!" exclaimed Tom Merry, knitting his brows.

"Oh, no!" put in Figgins. "It's simply that he's in a blessed blue funk that we'll slay him when he does show up!"

"Better let him off lightly, you chaps," put in Tom. "If he's been as badly scared as all this, he's had punishment enough!"

"Yes, we'll just give him a good bumping!" grunted Fatty Wynn.

Wynn, with his own huge appetite, had perhaps suffered more than anyone by Baggy's raid on the picnic-basket! The small quantity of bread-and-butter and jam that Baggy had kindly left had been given to the girls, and Wynn had suffered untold agonies of hunger before returning to Penperro House.

"He's bound to turn up soon!" exclaimed Talbot.

But there was a troubled frown on Talbot's good-looking face.

Talbot was a kind-hearted fellow, and, like Tom Merry and some of the others, he was beginning to feel quite sorry for Baggy. It certainly looked as though Baggy had had the fright of his life, to have remained in hiding so long.

"Yess, he'll turn up soon, dear boys!" nodded Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Let's go and look for the gals, shall we? What about putting on the gramophone and havin' a little dance in the music-room?"

"Good scheme!" said Manners heartily.

And the juniors dismissed the mystery of Baggy's disappearance from their minds for the time being, and went to look for Ethel and Doris and Lady Peggy instead.

But when, an hour later, Baggy was still missing, the juniors began to feel alarmed.

Lord Eastwood was equally troubled.

Another hour went by, and still there was no sign of the Fal-staff of the Fourth.

There was real anxiety for him now.

Though Baggy was anything but popular with the other juniors, they had known him so long that he seemed, in a way, part of their very lives at St. Jim's! The thought that perhaps some grave accident had happened to him was enough to make them forget all their annoyance with him, and desire only to know that he was safe.

At Tom Merry's suggestion Arthur Augustus D'Arcy told his father about the 'raided' funk, and the juniors' opinion that Baggy, in consequence, had gone off to hide somewhere. But Lord Eastwood shook his head.

"He may have gone off to hide in the first place," he said quietly, "but it cannot be that he is still lying low, for—er—avoid you youngsters' annoyance, I feel sure. I am beginning to feel very anxious indeed. I think search-parties should be sent out along the cliffs."

The juniors agreed readily.

But the search-parties, including Lord Eastwood himself and Gilbert Rentrow, old Wallington and the footman and the gardener, all returned to the house in the gathering dusk, without having caught a sight of Baggy Trimble, of the Fourth.

It was a very anxious group that gathered in the garden of Penperro House, with the sunset flaring off over the sea beyond the gaunt pile of Penperro Rock.

"Where the dickens can he be?" muttered Tom Merry.

It was a question that no one answered.

Baggy Trimble had vanished as if off the face of the earth!

THE END

(What ever you do, chums, make sure you read next week's exciting yarn in this grand holiday series, featuring Tom Merry & Co., entitled: "THE PRISONER OF THE ROCK!" You'll enjoy every line of it. Order the "GEM" WELL IN ADVANCE.)

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