

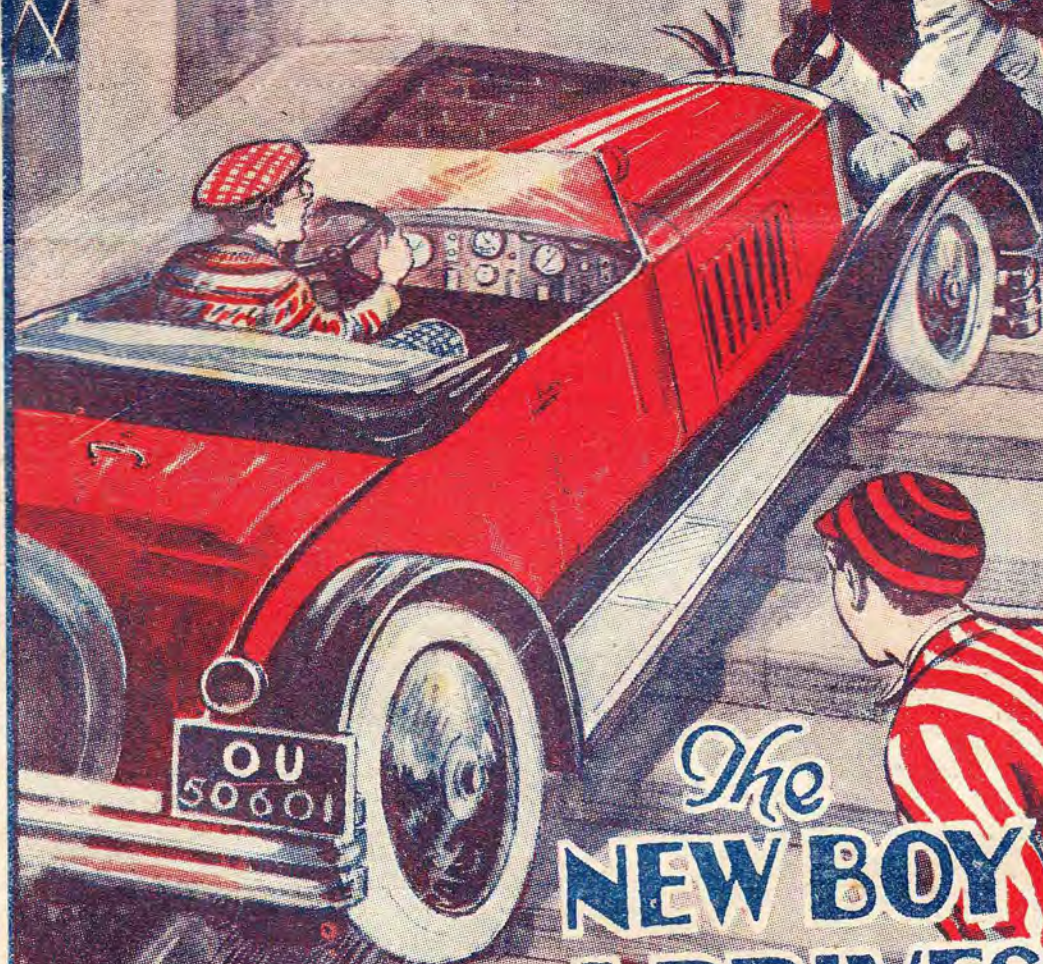
Meet Cyrus K. Handcock, The Amazing, Hustling Boy from New York!
IN THIS ISSUE!

THE GEM

EVERY
WEDNESDAY.

SCHOOL
HOUSE

2^d



The
**NEW BOY
ARRIVES!**

CYRUS K. HANDCOCK, SON OF A GUM KING—

CHAPTER 1.

Baggy Learns Something!

"**H**E, he, he!" Baggy Trimble, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, sniggered.

There was a great deal of satisfaction in Baggy's snigger. Baggy had just peeped into Study No. 10 of the Shell passage, very cautiously, hopeful that it was empty. It was empty. Hence Baggy's snigger of glee.

"Good egg!" muttered Baggy.

He rolled quickly into the study and shut the door.

It was after dinner, and afternoon lessons would be beginning shortly. Baggy was not surprised at finding the study empty, for the Terrible Three, who occupied No. 10, usually snatched the opportunity of the after-dinner break to enjoy the sunshine in the quad. And Baggy had a very particular reason for not wishing to be disturbed during his little visit to the famous study.

A big plum cake—one of Mrs. Taggles' extra-specials—was the bait that had attracted Baggy to the Shell passage. The Falstaff of the Fourth had seen it carried into No. 10 before dinner by Monty Lowther: evidently Tom Merry & Co. were having a bit of a spread for tea that day. And although he had just eaten a dinner so big that Falbot of the Shell had remarked at the table that Baggy must have hollow legs, Baggy still felt that he wanted to sample that gorgeous cake!

Baggy's mouth was fairly watering as he rolled across the study to the cupboard.

"Greedy beasts!" growled Baggy to himself. "I know jolly well they'd never ask me in to tea to share their blessed cake! Meanness is a vice I despise! I consider it my duty to teach the rotters a lesson!"

With which pious observation, Baggy opened the cupboard door.

His eyes lit up greedily.

Reposing on a large plate on the lower shelf was the cake! It was certainly extra-special. Baggy was an expert on cakes, and he recognised at a glance that Mrs. Taggles, who kept the tuckshop under the elms, had put all she knew into the making of it. It was big, and adorned with icing, and evidently full of large raisins. It was the kind of cake that Baggy often dreamed of, but very, very seldom had an opportunity of sampling!

Although the fat Fourth-Former had already eaten enough dinner to satisfy four ordinary persons, consumed a bag of tarts belonging to Kid Wildrake, his study-mate, finished up with a packet of toffee taken from Mellish's jacket pocket, his hunger was far from being appeased.

Baggy could eat almost anything, and at any time. "What's yours is mine, and what's mine's my own," was the policy adopted by the fat junior.

Time and again he had been soundly thrashed for raiding other fellows' studies, but all to no avail.

"My hat!" breathed Trimble, his eyes opening wide at sight of the luscious cake.

He smacked his lips, and reached out a greedy hand.

But there is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip! Baggy had actually picked up a large knife that was lying in the cupboard, to cut himself a huge slice, when suddenly he turned his head, listening.

Footsteps were tramping along the passage. The next moment they had halted outside the door.

"Oh lor!"

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PEP for the 'SAINTS'!

A Rousing New Long Complete School Story of
Tom Merry & Co., the Cheery Chums of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Baggy gave a frightened squeak, and his face turned a peculiar shade of yellow.

For some reason or other, the Terrible Three had come in from the quad! In a few moments, it looked as though Baggy would be caught red-handed. And if he were caught raiding that cake, there would be decidedly painful consequences for Baggy!

Terror lent Baggy speed! With an alacrity astonishing in one of his bulky frame, the Falstaff of the Fourth made a wild dive under the table, and disappeared beneath the

—STARTLES THE SCHOLARS OF ST. JIM'S!

low-hanging cloth just as the door crashed open, and Tom Merry, Monty Lowther, and Harry Manners came striding into their study, whistling cheerily.

Baggy scarcely breathed.

Still clutching the cake-knife, he cowered, quaking, in his hiding-place, the perspiration standing out in beads on his clammy brow.

Baggy was beginning to wish very heartily that he had never been tempted to venture into Study No. 10 that afternoon!

"Ow!" moaned Baggy. "Oh lor'! If those beasts find me here—"

He heard a sudden exclamation from Tom Merry.

"Hallo, hallo! The cupboard's open!"

"My hat, yes!" The ejaculation came from Monty Lowther. "I'm certain we left it shut!"

"Blessed as if doesn't look as if someone's been in here!" cut in Manners sharply.

Baggy trembled as he heard the Terrible Three cross towards the cupboard.

"Rummy!" It was Tom Merry's voice. "Wonder if that fat rotter Baggy's been in here?"

Baggy gave a stifled exclamation.

"The—the rotten, suspicious beast!" he gasped to himself.

"No; can't have been Baggy," said Monty Lowther. "That cake's still all right. If Baggy had been nosing round in here, the fat pirate would have scoffed the lot, like the blessed fat thief he is."

"Beast!" sniffed Baggy indignantly to himself. "Of all the suspicious rotters, they take the bun! Oh dear!"

"P'raps it was Baggy, though," went on the voice of Manners. "What if the fat frog's hiding somewhere?"

Baggy gave a startled squeak. Luckily it was not loud enough to reach the ears of the Terrible Three.

"Ow!" moaned Baggy. "Oh crumbs!"

"Have a look behind that screen, Monty," suggested Tom Merry, and Baggy heard Monty Lowther move across to glance behind a screen standing near the cupboard.

"No, he's not here," came the voice of Monty Lowther.

"If it was Baggy, he must have scooted before we got here, after he heard us coming."

"P'raps he's under the table!" suggested Manners.

Baggy's heart seemed to stand still. If he had had a thousand pounds at that moment, he would have given it willingly to sink through the floor. But unfortunately Baggy had not the slightest chance of sinking through the floor! The floor was too solid—and so was Baggy.

"Oh!" groaned Baggy. "Yow! Oh lor'! Help!"

He heard one of the three chums of Study No. 10 moving

across towards the table, evidently with the intention of raising the cloth to look underneath. Baggy trembled like a jelly, and waited helplessly for his fate.

That he was in for it, with a vengeance, seemed as certain as the fact that his name was Bagley Trimble!

But Baggy's luck was in, after all.

There was a sudden tap on the door of the study. It swung open, in answer to an invitation from Tom Merry, and the voice of Eric Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, came to the ears of the quaking fat junior under the table.

He heard the footsteps cross towards the table and halt, and gasped with relief—so loudly that he feared for a moment or two that he might have betrayed his presence. But evidently he had not. Kildare was speaking.

"Hallo, kids!" came the cheery tones of the skipper of St. Jim's. "I've been wanting to see you, Merry."

"Here I am, then!" returned Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Heard about Hancock?" asked Kildare, stepping into the study.

"Hancock?" echoed Tom, in a puzzled tone. "Who's he?"

"A new chap, coming into the Shell," explained Kildare. "He's an American, coming here straight from New York. The Head wants you to meet him at the station when he turns up. He lands here on the four-forty. The Head has spoken to your Form master, and you'll be let out of school this afternoon a few minutes earlier, to get to the station in plenty of time."

Baggy had pricked up his ears. From Tom Merry's exclamation, it was clear that the captain of the Shell, too, was astonished at Kildare's news.

"A new chap?" ejaculated Tom Merry. "A giddy American?"

"Yes," said Kildare. He laughed. "Ever heard of Hancock's chewing-gum? The new kid is the son of old Hancock, the chewing-gum king!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Monty Lowther.

Baggy was listening now with all ears!

Though gum-chewing was not a common pastime at St. Jim's, both Baggy and Tom Merry & Co. had all heard of Hancock's gum. They had heard, too, in a vague way,

There are umpteen flies on a condemned fly-paper, but there aren't any flies on Cyrus, New York's Gum King's Son.



of Hiram Q. Hancock, of New York City—the chewing-gum millionaire, whose great wealth almost rivalled that of Henry Ford.

And the son of the chewing-gum millionaire was coming to St. Jim's!

"My hat!" breathed Baggy excitedly.

The bell for afternoon classes clanged out.

"There's the bell!" came Kildare's voice. "You'll do that, then, Merry? Buzz along to the station and meet this American kid on the four-forty—Mr. Linton will let you off a bit early, as I say. Better buck up and get along to your class-room now, or you'll be late, kids."

The captain departed.

Baggy heard Monty Lowther draw a deep breath.

"My giddy aunt! A blessed American—coming into the Shell! What a scream!"

"The son of a giddy millionaire, too!" ejaculated Manners. "Wonder what he'll be like?"

But there was no time to wonder about the new boy from U.S.A. just then!

The Terrible Three took their books and hurried off to classes utterly forgetful, in the excitement of Kildare's news, of their suspicions regarding Baggy Trimble and the cake! Baggy crawled out from under the table as the door closed behind them, and drew a deep breath of relief.

"Yah! Beasts!" muttered Baggy.

He cast a longing look at the cupboard. But the door was closed now—probably locked into the bargain. In any case, even for the sake of that gorgeous cake, Baggy dared not risk being late for the class-room! He opened the door cautiously, and found that the coast was clear. He scuttled away along the passage rapidly, bound for the Fourth Form room.

"An American!" Baggy was gasping excitedly to himself as he squeezed into the class-room just as the door was being closed. "The son of a giddy millionaire, too! My hat!"

Even though he had failed to sample the cake he had set his heart upon, Baggy's visit to Study No. 10 was not going to be without result, after all!

Baggy had learnt what no one else in the Fourth so far knew—that the son of the fabulously wealthy chewing-gum king, Hiram Q. Hancock, of New York City, was on his way to St. Jim's: that the American schoolboy was arriving that very afternoon!

And already Baggy was quite determined to turn that exciting knowledge to advantage!

CHAPTER 2. Nothing Doing!

"TRIMBLE!"

Afternoon lessons were in full swing in the Fourth Form room.

For some time past, Mr. Lathom had been eyeing Baggy very keenly, though Baggy had failed to notice the fact. And now the master of the Fourth had suddenly rapped out Baggy's name.

But there was no reply from Baggy.

"Trimble!"

This time Mr. Lathom's voice was very grim.

Baggy jumped.

"Oh! Y-yes, sir?"

"Trimble! You are not attending to the lesson!" barked Mr. Lathom, with a glinting eye. "I have been observing you for some minutes, and I am convinced that your thoughts are not fixed upon the work!"

Baggy blinked at Mr. Lathom very nervously. It was true enough that his thoughts had been far away. He had been thinking about the arrival of the new American boy, the son of the chewing-gum king, racking his fat brains for a way of benefiting himself at the expense of the millionaire's son. With a fellow as wealthy as Hancock coming to the school, it would be surprising, Baggy felt, if there was no way by which some of that wealth could be induced to gravitate towards Baggy Trimble!

Baggy met Mr. Lathom's gimlet gaze uneasily.

"I repeat, you were not attending, Trimble!" barked Mr. Lathom fiercely.

"Oh!" gasped Baggy. "Oh dear! I—I was, sir! I was thinking very deeply about the lesson, sir."

"Nonsense, Trimble!"

"I—I can assure you I was, sir," said Baggy, blinking at his Form master. "I always attend to the lesson, sir. I'm a conscientious sort of chap, sir, and I would consider it—hem—dishonourable not to attend to the lesson—"

"Ass!" muttered Jack Blake, the leader of the Fourth.

"Oh, really, Blake!" muttered Baggy, with a sniff.

"In that case, Trimble," said Mr. Lathom, with a

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gleaming eye, "perhaps you will be so kind as to inform me with which portion of the lesson we were dealing!"

Baggy's jaw fell. He glanced wildly round. The Fourth-Formers were grinning. He glared at them, and coughed.

"Hem! Lemme see, sir—"

"I am waiting, Trimble!"

"Y-yes, sir! Ahem!" Baggy gulped nervously, and took a wild plunge. "You—you were telling us about the Norman Conquest, sir! About—er—William the Conqueror burning the cakes in the shepherd's hut, sir—"

Baggy broke off lamely. Something in Mr. Lathom's expression had frozen him up.

Mr. Lathom's face was set in very grim lines!

"Trimble!" rasped the Form master, his eyes seeming to bore clean through the fat squirming figure of the Falstaff of the Fourth. "You appear to be under the impression that the subject in hand is English history! Even so, your knowledge of the rudiments of that subject appear to be utterly wild and senseless! But pray allow me to inform you," went on Mr. Lathom, with heavy sarcasm, as he reached for his pointer, "that the Form is dealing this hour with geography!"

Baggy jumped.

"G-g-geography, sir?"

"Geography, Trimble!" thundered Mr. Lathom.

"Oh lor!" gasped Baggy. "Ow! I—I say, sir, that was only my little j-joke, sir, about William the Conqueror! I knew it was geography all along, sir! I had been attending very closely all the time, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth-Formers yelled. They could not help it. But a glare from Mr. Lathom silenced them abruptly.

"Trimble! Stand out before the class!"

Baggy obeyed, with a glare at the grinning Fourth. Very nervously he held out his fat hand, at Mr. Lathom's command, and took two stinging cuts on each of his podgy palms. It was a sadder, if not a wiser Baggy, that returned to his place, with his hands squirmed under his armpits.

The lesson proceeded. For some minutes, Baggy attended. But soon his thoughts began to wander, returning greedily to a mental picture of the dollar-lined pockets of the new boy from U.S.A.

"Fancy letting that beast Merry off early to meet the chap!" grumbled Baggy inwardly. "Why didn't they send me? If I was the first chap to meet this blessed American, I'd jolly well make the chap stand me a whacking feed in Rylcombe! Dare say he'd lend me a quid or two, too—must be wallowing in cash! He'd lend it to an honest-looking chap like me, I expect—"

"Trimble!"

"Ow! Y-yes, sir?"

"Were you attending?" barked Mr. Lathom fiercely.

"Oh! Rather, sir! Of course, sir!"

"Then where is Nice, Trimble?" snapped Mr. Lathom, in a very grim tone.

Baggy blinked at the master of the Fourth.

"Whose niece, sir?" inquired Baggy, thoroughly puzzled.

It was Mr. Lathom's turn to jump. As for the Fourth, they yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you chaps! Nothing to cackle at!" grunted Baggy, eyeing Mr. Lathom nervously. "You were asking me about somebody's niece, sir—"

"Nice—the French town on the Mediterranean!" thundered Mr. Lathom. "Trimble, you ridiculous boy, if I did not consider you to be lacking in normal brain-power, I should cane you again severely. As it is, you will write me out two hundred lines, and deliver them to me in my study before prayers this evening!"

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Baggy, under his breath. "Oh lor! Lathom's a mean beast!"

"Why don't you attend to old Lathom, Twimble, you dummy?" whispered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, from the next desk.

"Oh, rats!" growled Baggy.

"Bai Jove! Look heah, Twimble—"

The Form were grinning as the lesson proceeded.

"Br-r-r!"

From time to time Mr. Lathom glanced keenly at Baggy, and Baggy shifted nervously beneath his scrutiny. After a while, the deep tones of the school clock chiming the hour came across the quad—four o'clock. Baggy grunted.

Very soon, the son of the chewing-gum king would be arriving at Rylcombe Station.

If only he could have been there to meet him!

Baggy had a great idea of his own fascination and charm. He was convinced that if only he could get a "cut" at Hancock, the boy from U.S.A., before the rest of the juniors, he would be able to sow the seeds of a firm

friendship between himself and the wealthy American—a friendship that would be decidedly profitable for Baggy!

"If he meets the other chaps first, I'll bet they'll try to turn him against me," Baggy told himself, with a sniff. "Merry'll want to make sure I don't cut him out of this blessed American's friendship, knowing what an attractive sort of chap I am—and he's sure to want the fellow for a pal, seeing how rich he is. Mean beast!"

Baggy had a habit of judging other people by himself. He shifted restlessly in his seat. Ten golden minutes were slipping by. Soon his chance would be gone.

Then a sudden gleam came into Baggy's little eyes. An idea had come to him.

Mr. Lathom, in the middle of a discourse on the geography of France and Spain, heard a sudden groan in the class-room. He broke off sharply and glanced up.

"Oh! Grooooooh!"

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Lathom. "Who made that sound?"

ment, grinned at one another. It was clear now what Baggy's purpose was! For some reason, the Falstaff of the Fourth wanted to get away from the Form-room, and was endeavouring to do so in his own inimitable way!

It was quite obvious to the Fourth-Formers—and it was growing equally clear to Mr. Lathom. After his first alarm, Mr. Lathom was beginning to realise that Baggy's groans were far too horrible to be real.

Baggy, as usual, was overdoing things!

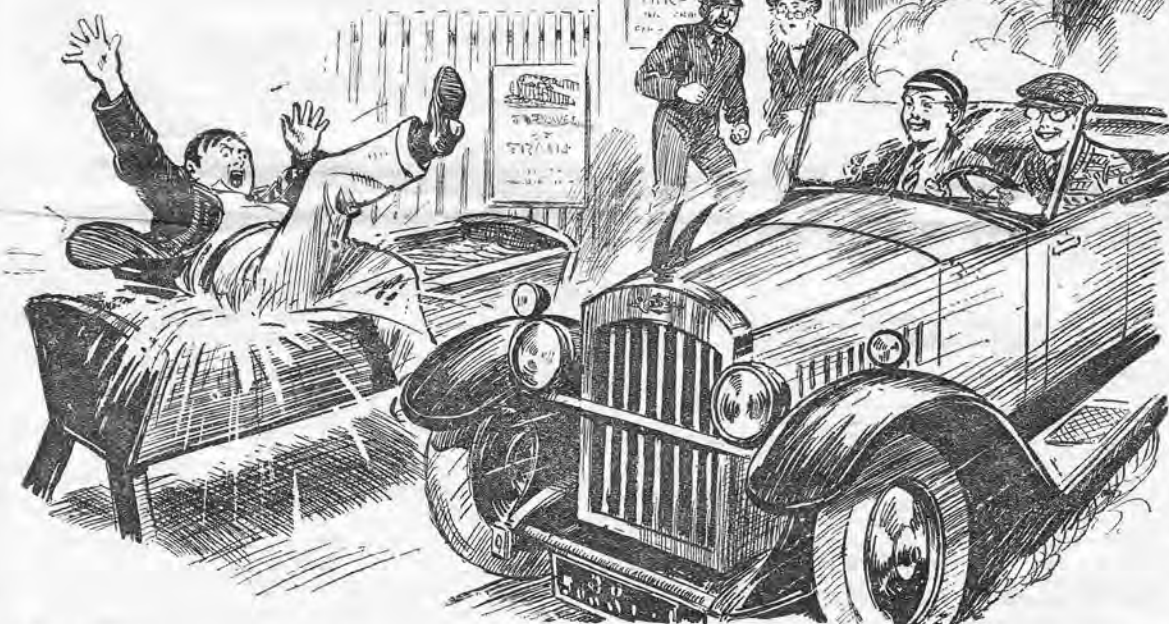
"Yaroooh!" roared Baggy, writhing as if in agony.

"I—I can't stand the pain any longer, sir! Can't I go to—the matron, sir, before I give you all cholera, sir? Oh, grooooh! Yooo-o-ow! Whoops! Lemme go to the doctor, sir! There's a jolly good doctor in Rylcombe——"

"Trimble!"

Mr. Lathom's voice was like thunder. Baggy jumped, and blinked at the master of the Fourth in surprise. It was only too clear to Baggy that there was no longer any sympathy in Mr. Lathom's tone.

Baggy leapt from the path of the thousand-pound auto, and crashed backwards into a horse-trough!



"Yoo-o-o-ow!"

"Trimble!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "Was it you who made that extraordinary sound?"

"Yes!" moaned Baggy, rolling his eyes pitifully. "Oh! Grooooooh! Yow! I—I'm ill, sir! Wow!"

A look of alarm appeared on Mr. Lathom's face. Judging from the groans and moans issuing from the Falstaff of the Fourth, and the way he was rolling his eyes, it certainly seemed as though Baggy must be very ill indeed.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, in alarm. "What is the matter, Trimble? Are you actually in pain?"

"Yow! Oh, yes, sir! The pain's awful!" groaned Baggy. "Grooooooh! Yoooooh!"

Mr. Lathom stepped quickly from his desk, and hurried towards the Falstaff of the Fourth.

"My poor boy!" cried Mr. Lathom anxiously. "Where do you feel the pain?"

"All over, sir!" gasped Baggy faintly. "I must be dying, sir! Ow! It's awful! I fancy I've got cholera, sir!"

"Nonsense! But——"

"Oh, really, sir! I think it is cholera, sir!" mumbled Baggy. "Grooooooh! Yow! The pain's horrible, sir! If it is cholera, I shall give it to everybody, unless I leave the class-room immediately, sir!"

The Fourth, who had been staring at Baggy in astonish-

ment, grinned at one another. He emitted another nerve-racking groan, and writhed horribly.

"Yow! Oh really, sir! I'm in great pain, sir! Grooooooh! Whooooooh——"

"Cease those ridiculous antics!" thundered Mr. Lathom.

"How dare you, boy! Trimble, if you do not cease these abominable noises, which I am convinced are entirely without cause, I shall send you to the headmaster for a flogging!"

"Eh?" gasped the fat Fourth-Former.

Baggy's groans stopped abruptly.

"You utterly foolish boy!" Mr. Lathom's tones were very angry indeed. "You have been trying to deceive me, your Form master! You have actually attempted to persuade me that you are suffering from some painful malady, in order to escape from the rest of the lesson!"

"Oh, really, sir! I—I wouldn't do such a thing!" stammered Baggy faintly. "It wouldn't be honourable, sir! We Trimbles are the soul of honour——"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Lathom fiercely. "Stand out before the class, sir!"

For the second time that afternoon, Baggy Trimble stood out before the grinning Fourth—this time being assisted on his way there by the vice-like fingers of Mr. Lathom fastened on his fat ear.

"Now, sir!" roared Mr. Lathom, picking up his pointer. "Do you still wish to assure me that you are ill?"

"Oh!" gasped Baggy. "Y-yes, sir! That is, nunno, sir! You see, the pain's gone now, sir! It went very suddenly, sir—"

Mr. Lathom smiled grimly.

Baggy was groaning again—this time with cause—as he returned to his seat a minute later. As he passed the window he caught sight of an athletic figure wheeling a bicycle from the cycle shed. It was Tom Merry—out early and off to the station to meet the new junior from New York City.

"Yah! Beast!" grunted Baggy, as he saw Tom jump on the machine and vanish out of the big gates. "Oh lor!"

The rest of the lesson seemed like an eternity to Baggy Trimble. But at last the bell went, and the Fourth crowded out of the class-room. Jack Blake stopped Baggy in the passage.

"You silly chump!" grinned Blake. "What the dickens was the idea in playing the giddy goat like that?"

"Oh rats!" snapped Baggy, and rolled quickly along the passage.

Though his plan to be at the station to meet the American junior had failed miserably, Baggy was still the only member of the Fourth who knew of the arrival that afternoon of the son of the millionaire chewing-gum king! And there was no reason why he should not put his knowledge to account by hurrying to Rylcombe now and tacking himself on to Tom Merry and the new boy as they returned to St. Jim's.

A minute later the fat figure of Baggy Trimble was speeding out of the gates into Rylcombe Lane on a "borrowed" push-bike, the property of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, on his way to Rylcombe!

CHAPTER 3.

Lucky Baggy!

"PHEW!"

Baggy was puffed!

Baggy did not take very much exercise as a rule, and he had been cycling as fast as his fat little legs could go round. Now, as he pushed the machine up a slope not far from Rylcombe village, the Falstaff of the Fourth was beginning to feel that he could scarcely crawl another yard.

But the knowledge that the son of an American millionaire was the prize for his race, so to speak, kept Baggy going, nevertheless!

He reached the top of the slope, mopping his clammy brow. A startled exclamation broke from him.

"My hat!"

Baggy's eyes were fixed in consternation on a group of figures in the lane.

"Grammar School cads!" gasped Baggy.

Gordon Gay & Co., of Rylcombe Grammar School, were old rivals of the St. Jim's juniors. When Saints and Grammarians met there was usually trouble! And already Gordon Gay & Co. had caught sight of Baggy.

In a moment he was surrounded.

"Why, it's dear old Baggy!" chuckled Gordon Gay.

"As large as life, and twice as natural!" grinned Frank Monk.

"Ten times as natural, I should say!" interposed Wootton major, eyeing Baggy's fat figure critically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you chaps!" squeaked Baggy nervously. "No larks, you know!"

Gordon Gay glanced at his three chums significantly.

"We'll stick him in with the other one, eh?" he murmured.

At the moment, what the leader of the Grammarians meant by that cryptic remark was a mystery to Baggy. But he did not like the tone in which it was made—any more than he liked the grin on the faces of the Grammar School juniors!

He glanced round wildly. The lane was empty—there was no help for Baggy.

"Hands off, you rotters!" gasped Baggy desperately. "Hands off! I— Oh lor! Help! Yaroooooh!"

Baggy gave a despairing howl as the grinning Grammarians suddenly seized him. He was yanked off his feet and laid out unceremoniously upon the grass at the roadside. Gordon Gay produced a length of cord, and in another few moments the Falstaff of the Fourth was bound hand and foot. His handkerchief was thrust into his mouth, gagging him, and fastened there.

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"This'll be a pleasant surprise for Tom Merry!" grinned Wootton minor.

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

"Bring him along!" chuckled Gordon Gay. "My hat, the fat elephant's a weight!"

Between them, the four Grammarians raised the helpless fat figure of Baggy Trimble, and bore him across the road, gurgling behind his gag as he went. There was a gap leading into a field on the other side of the lane, with a big barn beyond. Into the barn Baggy was borne.

"Grooooooh! Mum-mum-mmmmm!" gurgled Baggy.

He gave a painful grunt as he was dumped on to the floor of the barn. He struggled to a sitting position—then his eyes almost popped from his head in surprise.

He was not the Grammarians' only prisoner!

Also bound and gagged, another St. Jim's junior was sitting on the hay with which the barn was littered—Tom Merry himself!

Tom was writhing vainly in his bonds, glaring at the chortling Grammarians. Gordon Gay grinned at him cheerily.

"Thought you'd like a companion, Tommy!" chuckled the leader of the Grammarians. "We know Baggy's a great pal of yours! Well, so long! We'll phone up St. Jim's and tell your pals where to find you! Don't suppose you'll have to wait more than an hour!"

Tom Merry gurgled behind his gag. So did Baggy. There was a chorus of chuckles from the delighted Grammarians.

"H, ha, ha! Listen to 'em!" grinned Frank Monk.

"Grooooooh!"

"Baggy sounds like a bath emptying!" chortled Gordon Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Monk fetched Baggy's—or, rather, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's—bicycle, and propped it against the wall beside Tom Merry's. The four Grammarians raised their caps with low bows to their prisoners, and departed, still chuckling, shutting the door behind them. Their footsteps died away outside.

Baggy groaned.

The Grammarians' little joke was a return for many little jokes that the St. Jim's juniors had worked off upon their rivals in the past. But Baggy considered it very hard luck that he had walked into trouble like this—particularly while on his way to meet the son of a millionaire!

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Baggy behind his gag.

He glanced across at Tom Merry. Tom's face was red with his efforts to free himself. Even as Baggy stared at him, he saw that Tom had almost freed the gag from his mouth.

"Oh, my hat!" Tom had freed himself of the gag at last, and gave a breathless exclamation. "Oh, the rotters!"

"Grooooofff!" rejoined Baggy.

Tom Merry grinned ruefully.

"Of all the luck—when I was off to meet Handcock!" he muttered, half to himself. Then suddenly his face lit up. "Baggy, I'll see if I can undo your hands with my teeth!"

The captain of the Shell squirmed across towards Baggy, and set to work. Baggy's heart leapt.

He felt Tom dragging at the cord that bound his wrists, with his teeth—felt them loosen in a few moments. A few more moments and Baggy's hands were free.

"There!" gasped Tom. "Buck up and let me loose!"

Baggy tore the gag from his mouth, with a breathless, gleeful chuckle. Hastily he unknotted the fastenings round his ankles, and scrambled to his feet.

He grinned down at Tom Merry, and sniggered.

"So long!" chuckled Baggy.

"Th?" gasped Tom.

"He, he, he!" There was a crafty gleam in Baggy's eyes. "Bye-bye!"

He rolled across towards the door and opened it. Tom Merry stared after him dumbly. Only when Baggy seized one of the bicycles did the astonished captain of the Shell find his voice.

"You—you fat rotter!" roared Tom. "Come back!"

"Rats!" sniggered Baggy. "I'm off to meet the giddy American! He, he, he! So long!"

"You—you—you—"

Baggy hurried out of the barn with his bike and shut the door. In a few moments he was cycling rapidly away in the direction of the village. There was no sign of Gordon Gay & Co.

Baggy was in luck's way at last!

The train had only just about arrived at Rylcombe now—he would be sure to meet Handcock, the chewing-gum millionaire's son, on the road, he felt sure. And Tom Merry was safely trussed up in the barn!



Taggles' broom went flying through the window of his cottage, while the school porter himself flew through the door!

It was with a contented smirk on his fat, perspiring countenance that Baggy pedalled on towards Rylcombe. He had a clear field now, thanks to Gordon Gay & Co. There was no one to interfere with his intended exploitation of the wealthy new boy from New York City!

CHAPTER 4.

Handcock Arrives!

BAGGY TRIMBLE chuckled. The Falstaff of the Fourth was standing outside the booking-office, surveying the sunny station-yard at Rylcombe.

He had arrived there, on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's machine, very hot and perspiring, without having seen so much as a sign of anyone who could possibly be the new boy from America. An inquiry at the booking-office had explained the reason—the four-forty was late!

Baggy's run of luck was continuing in his favour in a really astonishing way. It seemed that a coal-truck had been derailed somewhere along the line, and all the railway traffic had been held up. The four-forty would not arrive till after five o'clock in consequence.

"Good egg!" grinned Baggy. "What a bit of luck!" He thought of Tom Merry, securely bound and a helpless prisoner in the barn where he had been dumped by the cheery Grammarian raggers, and a gleeful snigger escaped him.

"He, he, he!" Baggy's eyes went longingly across to a little confectioner's on the other side of the road. His mouth watered.

Unfortunately, Baggy had no money on him—unless one could count a battered halfpenny and a threepenny-bit with a hole through it that he had found in the quad that morning.

Baggy had already learnt from bitter experience with Mrs. Taggles at the little tuckshop at St. Jim's that threepenny-bits with holes in them were not legal tender.

"Oh, blow!" grunted Baggy. He was hungry—very hungry. There would still be some time to wait, so he had been told, before the delayed train could arrive. A "snack" in the meantime would have appealed to the Falstaff of the Fourth immensely. But what could he do without funds?

Leaving his bicycle propped up against the station wall, Baggy rolled across to the little confectioner's, and halted outside the window, staring in with greedy eyes.

Tarts and doughnuts and eclairs met his hungry gaze. Baggy's mouth watered madly. Suddenly his eyes glinted.

After all, when the American boy arrived, Baggy did not mean to let him set off for St. Jim's without first getting a handsome feed out of him! Why not begin the feed now—and let the wealthy American youngster foot the bill for the lot at the finish?

Baggy pushed open the door of the little shop and rolled in.

He dumped his fat figure in a chair by one of the little tables set near the window. A lean man with a walrus moustache and a white apron appeared from behind the counter. Baggy ordered tea and jam and cakes with a lordly air.

A minute later Baggy Trimble was tucking in with a will. Bread-and-jam and doughnuts and French pastries began to vanish at an amazing speed, as Baggy's fat little jaws champed like one o'clock.

That he was doing a very risky thing in devouring that meal without having the money to pay for it did not worry Baggy, even if it had occurred to him. Baggy had a way of shutting his eyes to unpleasant facts. In any case, he was relying upon the arrival of Handcock, the boy from U.S.A., to pay up when the reckoning came!

"Another plate of doughnuts!" gasped Baggy.

"Yessir!"

"And some more of those eclairs!" gasped Baggy.

"They're prime!"

"Yessir!"

"Gimme another pot of tea, too."

"Yessir!" said the man with the walrus moustache.

Baggy tackled the second instalment of good things with slightly less alacrity than the first. Already his face was shining greasily. But the doughnuts and eclairs began to vanish steadily before his onslaught.

The sudden rumble of a train entering the station across the road caused Baggy to turn his attention at last from the table in front of him.

The long overdue four-forty had arrived!

Baggy scrambled heavily to his feet, wiping a smear of jam from his mouth. He glanced at the man with the walrus moustache, who was standing behind the little counter watching him.

"Bill, sir?" queried the man, coming forward round the end of the counter.

Baggy coughed.

"H'm! Nanno! Not just now. I'm expecting a—a pal of mine on the train. I'll bring him over here for a snack. We'll settle up for the lot together."

He rolled towards the door.

"'Alf a mo'!"

There was a grim note in the voice of the man with the walrus moustache. He put himself suddenly between Baggy and the door.

"If you want to leave this shop, you pay the bill first. See?" sniffed the proprietor.

Baggy jumped. Rather a sickly expression came into his fat face.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Pay up!"

"Look here!" snorted Baggy. "Don't be a rotten Shylock! I tell you—"

"Five-and-nine it is!" said the man with the walrus moustache.

"I'm only just going across to pick up my pal!" howled Baggy. "I'll be coming back—"

"I've been 'ad that way before!" said the proprietor grimly. "You don't leave my shop till you've paid me. It's five-and-nine!"

Baggy glanced despairingly at the door. But the lean figure of his creditor barred the way completely. Through the window he could see people already appearing from the railway station—evidently passengers from the train.

"I've not jolly well got five-and-nine, you silly ass!" hooted Baggy.

"Ho!"

The man with the walrus moustache began to roll up his sleeves in a very businesslike way. Baggy watched the operation with alarm.

"I—I say, you know, no need to get crusty!" stuttered Baggy uneasily. "It's all right, I tell you! I—I happen to be a bit short, that's all. But my pal'll pay. He's a frightfully rich chap—"

"Ho!"

"I'll miss him if you aren't jolly careful!" urged Baggy nervously. "Lemme buzz across to the station—"

"I don't think!"

"Don't be a mean beast!" stammered Baggy, with increasing alarm. "I—My hat!"

He broke off with a sudden exclamation, gaping through the window in utter consternation.

A familiar figure had appeared on a bicycle. It was Tom Merry.

Tom jumped off his bike in the station-yard, and vanished into the booking-hall.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Baggy.

How Tom came to be there, he could not imagine. Perhaps someone had happened to visit the barn, and had freed him. But, however it had happened, there was no doubt that Tom Merry was there—and Baggy was not!

He was near, perhaps; but it looked like being a case of so near and yet so far for Baggy Trimble.

The man with the walrus moustache had finished rolling up his sleeves. There was a very grim look on his face as he surveyed the quaking figure of the Falstaff of the Fourth.

"Now," he said huskily, "are you going to pay me?"

"I—I can't!" squeaked Baggy. "I—I happened to come out without my—ahem—my notecase. But it'll be all right if you'll let me find my pal! He's arriving on that train—"

"I don't think!" rasped the proprietor. "So you'd try and get away with it, eh? You come in here and have a blow-out, and then try to sneak off without paying! If you've not got any money, you'll give me something instead of it. See?"

"I—I—"

"Hotherwise," said the man grimly—"hotherwise, I'm going to give you a hiding. See? Then call the police!"

"The p-p-police?" stuttered Baggy feebly. "Ow! I say, d-don't be a beast, you know—"

He broke off. Through the window he had a good view of the station-yard, and he had seen a surprising sight.

The gate that had opened on to the railway sidings had been opened, and a magnificent car had come gliding out into the yard. Evidently there had been a motor-van on the train, for the benefit of some wealthy passenger who had brought his car down from London by rail.

It was an open car, gleaming with silver, the body a dazzling yellow. Even Baggy, who sometimes looked longingly at motor-car advertisements, realised as he stared at it through the window of the cafe that the car in the station-yard must have cost every bit of a thousand pounds.

A youngster was sitting at the wheel—rather an unusual-looking youngster, to English eyes. He wore large horn-rimmed spectacles and a violently-coloured sports cap. A grey sweater took the place of a coat, and as he jumped out Baggy saw that he wore plus-fours that hung almost to his ankles. Black-and-white shoes adorned his feet. Altogether there was no possible doubt that he was an American.

"Handcock!" gasped Baggy.

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There could be no doubt about it. The youngster in the plus-fours, with the thousand-pound car, could only be the new boy from New York, the son of Hiram Q. Handcock, the chewing-gum millionaire!

Baggy made a dive for the door.

"Yarooooop!"

A wild yell broke from the Falstaff of the Fourth as he felt a finger and thumb close upon one of his fat little ears, hauling him back.

"No, you don't, my beauty!" sniffed the man with the walrus moustache. "I want my money—or its value! Ho, yes! Or shall I send for the police?"

"You silly jay!" roared Baggy, almost weeping with helpless fury. "Lemme go! That's the chap, out there! The chap with the car! He'll settle up—I'll jolly well make him, unless Tom Merry interferes! I—I mean—that is, I know he'll stump up, because he's an old pal of mine—"

"I don't think!"

Baggy wriggled wildly; but he was helpless to escape from that vicelike grip upon his ear.

He glanced despairingly out of the window again.

Tom Merry had appeared now, and was standing by the car, chatting with the astonishing-looking new boy. Even as Baggy watched, he saw them place Tom's bicycle in the back seat and jump into the car. The roar of a forty-horse-power engine shattered the peaceful silence outside.

And in that moment Baggy had a sudden brain-wave.

His watch!

It was not a very good watch, perhaps. It was battered, and one of the hands was broken in half. But its value was just about enough to be left as security for his unlucky feed. He dragged it out.

The man with the walrus moustache took it, with a sour grin, and stood aside from the door at last. Baggy plunged out of the shop.

There was just time yet!

Tom Merry was with Handcock, unfortunately; but, even so, if Baggy could tack himself on, he would be one of the first St. Jim's fellows the American would meet, and that should be a big chance for pulling up to the new school-boy with the dollar-lined pockets!

"Hi!"

With a breathless shout, Baggy sped across towards the station-yard as fast as his fat little legs could carry him.

But already the blazing yellow car was gathering speed, while half a dozen porters, evidently lavishly tipped by Handcock, touched their caps respectfully on all sides. The car came sweeping out into the road just as Baggy reached the entrance of the yard.

"Yarooooop!"

There was a wild yell from Baggy as he found himself full in the path of the thousand-pound car! He gave a frantic leap, and collapsed backwards into a horse-trough that stood there. There was a terrific splash.

"Whooosh! Yarooooossssh!"

Baggy, floundering in the horse-trough, raised a dripping countenance just in time to see the grinning face of Tom Merry looking back at him. Then, with a rush and a roar, the huge car thundered away in the direction of St. Jim's, with the son of the chewing-gum millionaire at the wheel.

Baggy scrambled out, drenched and miserable, and shook a dripping fist after the vanishing car.

"Yah! Oh, the beasts!" groaned Baggy.

Baggy had failed after all to be "in at the kill" when the wealthy American had arrived!

It was a soaked and chilled Baggy that cycled off, leaving a trail of water in the road, and followed by the laughter of the porters and loafers in the station-yard.

But though his scheme of ingratiating himself at the very start with the son of the New York millionaire had failed so miserably, there was a greedy gleam in Baggy's eyes as he pedalled back in his wet clothing to St. Jim's.

The sight of that thousand-pound car had made Baggy realise more than ever what terrific wealth the American junior had behind him. And it would certainly not be Baggy's fault if some of that wealth did not find its way eventually into the empty pockets of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth!

CHAPTER 5.

The Junior from U.S.A.!

ZOOOOOOOOOM!

The shattering roar of a forty horse-power car in Rylcombe Lane, travelling at breakneck speed, caused old Taggles, the school porter, to turn his head in surprise.

He saw a big yellow car thundering along the road towards the school, at nearer fifty miles an hour than forty, and gave a grunt.

"Road 'ogging!" snapped old Taggles fiercely. "I don't 'old with it!"

Manners and Lowther, who were standing near, together with Blake & Co. of the Fourth, grinned.

They were waiting for the return of Tom Merry, with the new American junior, as were several other Fourth and Shell fellows. As yet they, like old Taggles, did not dream for a moment that the car roaring down Rylcombe Lane contained Tom and the son of the chewing-gum king!

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy adjusted his celebrated eyeglass and surveyed the powerful car that had appeared in the lane with a curious stare. "What a wippin' cah!"

"Rather!" grinned Monty Lowther. "And the chap at the wheel must know how to drive, too!"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Blake suddenly. "It's turning in here!"

"My hat!"

"Look out!"

The car had been coming along the lane at such a rate that neither the juniors nor old Taggles had realised that the driver intended to turn in at the gates of St. Jim's. But suddenly the car had slowed down in its mad career, in a way that spoke of wonderful brakes, and came swinging for the gateway.

There was a mad scramble to get out of its way. But old Taggles, holding his broom, was a good deal slower on his feet than the juniors.

He gave a sudden wild howl as he saw the huge car leaping towards him, and gave a mighty jump.

"My hey—"

There was plenty of room for a skilful driver to pass old Taggles. But Taggles did not realise that fact. He imagined that he was looking death in the face—and with a despairing yell he flung himself sideways in a search for safety.

Crash!

Taggles' broom went flying through one of the windows of his lodge, and Taggles himself flew in backwards through the open door.

"B-bai Jove!"

"My giddy aunt—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Zooooooooooooom!

The long yellow car, ablaze with silver fittings, swept into the quad, scattering the crowd of juniors right and left.

The son of Hiram Q. Hancock had arrived at St. Jim's!

"Look out!"

The glittering car was thundering across towards the School House steps. Gerald Knox, the most unpopular prefect at St. Jim's, was standing in its path, watching it in astonishment. As it swept towards him Knox suddenly woke to life.

"Oh, gad—"

Knox leapt for safety. The car swept past him, and came to a standstill.

"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Who the dickens—"

"Look! Tom Merry's in it!" yelled Burkett, the bully of the Shell.

"It must be Hancock!" gasped Kangaroo, the Australian junior. "Great Scotland Yard, it's the American!"

Juniors were rushing up from all sides, surrounding the car. Tom Merry, sitting beside the youngster in the very American-looking cap, grinned at his chums.

Tom Merry had good nerves, and he had enjoyed that breakneck drive from the station. But he knew that there was trouble in store for Hancock! He had done his best to persuade the American to check his mad career before entering the quad. But the new schoolboy did not seem to understand that forty-horse-power cars were not usual objects for juniors to bring into the old quad!

Knox came storming up. His lips were set in a thin, furious line, and his eyes were glittering.

"How dare you!" he panted. "You young hound, you nearly knocked me down! I—I—"

"Say!"

An American voice cut in on Knox's furious words. Knox found himself gazing into a pair of steady eyes that surveyed him coolly through large horn-rimmed spectacles.

Hancock—Cyrus K. Hancock—was a cheery-looking youngster, though of a very transatlantic cast of countenance. He leant back in the driving-seat and surveyed Knox as though the prefect were some strange freak.

"Say! Who's this guy, anyway?" he queried loudly, with a glance at Tom Merry. "Where does he think he gets off, calling me a young hound? I guess he's got a rind! He may be the world to his mother, but he's a pain in the neck to me!"

"You—you young hooligan!" shouted Knox. "How dare you! I am a prefect—"

"Aw, hire a hall!" grinned Hancock. "If you want to

make a speech, buddy, hire a big hall, and let yourself really talk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There were chuckles from the crowd of juniors. Knox's face was a picture.

Tom Merry was already climbing out of the car. Knox swung round on him.

"Who—who is this?" he cried, in a choking voice.

"Meet Cyrus K. Hancock," grinned the American junior, answering on Tom's behalf. "Now you know me, I guess. But what do they call you at home? Put me wise, buddy!"

"Shut up, you ass!" muttered Tom Merry. "He's a prefect—"

"A which?" queried Hancock. "Never heard of one!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors chuckled. Knox gave a gasp of fury.

"I am a prefect!" he rasped savagely. "I—"

"Never heard of 'em," repeated Hancock coolly. "But if you're one, I don't like 'em! You give me a pain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"Clear off!" said Hancock. "I'm tired of you, buddy!"

Knox choked. His face was almost purple.

"How—how dare you!" he panted.

"Not gone yet?" grinned Hancock. "Then I'll have to move you! Look out, big boy! It would be too bad if I knocked you down, I guess—"

Zooooooooooooom!

There was a wild yell of alarm from Knox as the American pressed the self-starter of the car and the engine roared to life. The Sixth-Former was standing full in front of the radiator, and as Hancock slipped into gear and it rolled forward Gerald Knox had the shock of his life.

"Stop!" he yelled.

"Run, buddy!" chuckled Hancock. "I guess I'm after you!"

The car slid forward, and Knox turned and ran. He had no choice, unless he preferred to be run over.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "The American is chasin' Knox!"

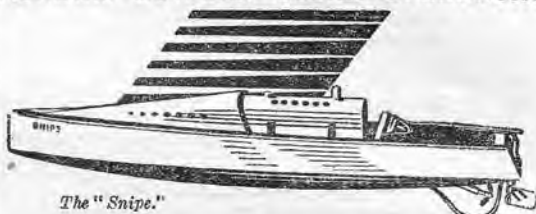
"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Knox, old chap!"

(Continued on next page.)

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The juniors shrieked and yelled with mirth at the extraordinary sight of Knox racing across the quad with the big yellow car speeding at his heels.

Knox dared not stop! If he did, he would be knocked down, he believed, for a certainty. And though he tried to twist and dodge, Cyrus K. Handcock, at the big steering-wheel of the glittering sports car, kept skilfully at his heels.

"Run, buddy!" he yelled encouragingly.

"Stop!" panted Knox. "You young fool! Oh, gad—"

"I'll catch you, Mr. Prefect!" chuckled Handcock cheerily. "Atta boy!"

With the big car pursuing him close to his heels, Knox made a despairing dive for the School House steps.

He imagined, as he sprinted up them, gasping and beside himself with rage, that he was safe there, at any rate!

But he was quite wrong.

There was a yell from the watching crowd of juniors as the American schoolboy put the car at the wide stone steps. The front wheels jumped up them readily enough, and Knox, glancing round, gave a yell of alarm as he saw the gleaming radiator climbing swiftly after him.

"Oh!" panted Knox wildly. "He's crazy! Help!"

Stumbling as he went, in his haste and alarm, Gerald Knox plunged up the steps, with Handcock driving coolly up the steps behind him. The Sixth-Former dived in through the wide doorway at the top, looking very white in the face.

That the American junior was more or less mad he was convinced!

A shriek of laughter rang out in the quad. From all sides fellows were racing across towards the School House.

Handcock was certainly causing a sensation on his arrival at St. Jim's!

In the Hall, Knox halted and turned. His eyes seemed almost to pop out of his head the next moment.

Handcock was still cheerily following him!

Knox stood staring glassily at the front of the car as it climbed over the top of the steps and came towards him steadily. There was room enough for the car to enter through the big doorway, but never for a moment had Knox dreamed that the American schoolboy would dare follow him, car and all, into the House!

"Great pip!" panted Grundy of the Shell, watching from the quad. "That giddy American's off his rocker!"

"Yarooooop!"

There was a wild yell from Gerald Knox, in the Hall above.

The car had mounted the steps in fine style, and kept on through the doorway into the Hall, where the prefect was standing as if petrified with fright. A swarm of excited juniors poured up the steps after it, shouting and chortling. At the top of the steps an amazing sight met their eyes.

Handcock had brought his car to a standstill at last, with the big radiator almost touching the wall by the notice-board. Pinned between the great headlamps, white-faced, and utterly beside himself with rage, was the figure of Gerald Knox.

"G-gweat Scott!" stuttered Arthur Augustus faintly.

"M-my only Sunday chapeau!" gasped Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handcock, from the driving-seat, grinned cheerily through the gleaming windscreen at the furious Sixth-Former.

"Told you I'd catch you, buddy!" chuckled Cyrus K.

Handcock coolly. "I guess this car would climb a tree! What do you think?"

"You're mad!" panted Knox.

He was looking thoroughly scared now. But it was impossible for him to escape from his humiliating position until Handcock chose to back the car away from the wall.

"Mad, am I?" returned the American coolly. "Not on your life! Say, you called me a hound, didn't you? I guess I'm keeping you right where you are till you come across with an apology. I dunno who you are, but I don't like your face, and I guess you've got the wrong idea if you fancy you can call me names and get away with it! And how!"

Handcock leaned back in the driving-seat, and grinned at Knox serenely.

Tom Merry ran into the Hall, and grasped the transatlantic schoolboy by the shoulder.

"You idiot!" he panted. "You can't do this! You'll get it in the neck properly!"

"But the big stiff called me a hound!" exclaimed Cyrus K. Handcock indignantly.

"Yes, but—"

"I want an apology from him!" exclaimed the American calmly. "Nobody calls me a hound and finds it good for his health, I guess!"

"You—you—you—" stuttered Knox incoherently. "I—I'll have you flogged for this! I'll see that the Head knows of this, you young—"

"Aw—hire a hall!" urged Handcock. "And I guess I'm waiting for that apology!"

Knox choked. But he had had a bad fright, and it had rather broken his nerve for the moment. Besides, the Hall was filled with grinning juniors now, who were enjoying his helpless situation immensely. And the only way out of it was clearly to tender the apology the amazing new boy demanded.

"I—I'm sorry I called you a hound!" snarled Knox.

"That's the spirit, sonny," nodded Handcock cheerily. "Stand away, there, you guys! I'm backing out!"

He slipped into reverse, and slowly the big car backed out, and down the steps, leaving Knox trembling with rage in the Hall. And at that moment there was a majestic step on the stairs, and a gowned figure came rustling into view.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "The Head!"

CHAPTER 6.

Up Against Knox.

DURING his long career as headmaster of St. Jim's, Dr. Holmes had had a good many shocks. But he had probably never had a bigger shock in his life than when he came down into the Hall in time to see the American schoolboy backing a huge car out of the Hall, and down the steps into the quad.

Had the Head ever even considered the possibility, he would certainly not have imagined for a moment that it was remotely possible for a car to be brought into the Hall at all. The sight of a youthful figure in horn-rimmed spectacles calmly driving one out, backwards, was as astonishing to the revered headmaster of St. Jim's, as though he had come down to find a herd of blue elephants dancing in a ring.

Potts, the Office Boy!



He looks as if he knew a lot—

His eyes seemed almost to protrude from their sockets. "B-b-bless my soul!" stuttered the Head faintly. A deathly silence had fallen on the crowd of juniors. The hush was broken by the furious voice of Gerald Knox. "Dr. Holmes—Sir—"

"Do I see aright?" gasped the Head. "Was that a motor-car descending the steps?"

He passed a hand across his eyes, dazedly. The Head evidently imagined he had probably been "seeing things."

"Yes!" panted Knox, in a choking voice "I—I—"

"A—a motor-car!" echoed the Head faintly. "In the Hall! Bless my soul!" His face took on a dark frown. "Scandalous! Preposterous! This cannot be allowed!"

The fact that it was rather too late to say that it could not be allowed did not seem to occur to the Head in his perturbation.

"It's the new boy, sir—the American!" said Knox, in a savage tone. "Handcock, his name is, I understand. He deliberately—"

"The—the American boy?" gasped the Head. "I see!"

The fact that it was an American who had done this scandalous thing seemed to appease the Head somewhat. Dr. Holmes did not know very much about Americans, but he had a vague idea that they did extraordinary things—such as building skyscrapers, and chewing gum, and, apparently, driving cars up steps into Halls.

"Yes, sir," went on Knox excitedly, "Handcock drove his car up the steps into here—"

"Trust Knox to sneak!" muttered Tom Merry disgustedly.

The Head was surveying Knox with a deep frown. "You witnessed this amazing procedure, Knox?"

"Yes," panted Knox, with gleaming eyes. "I—I—"

"Bless my soul! You mean to say that you actually allowed this boy to behave in this outrageous manner, Knox?" interjected the Head warmly. "You—a prefect? This is a disgraceful confession on your part—disgraceful, sir!"

Knox's jaw dropped.

Things were not turning out as he had intended. He had meant to get the American junior into trouble. Instead of that, he seemed to have succeeded in turning the Head's wrath upon his own head.

"I—I—" he stammered.

"Silence, Knox!" thundered the Head. "I am shocked at your behaviour!"

"But-but—"

"To aid and abet a new boy, one from a foreign country in addition, who does not understand the enormity of his offence, in behaving in this outrageous manner, sir, is a disgrace to your position in the school," went on the Head, in awful tones. "I am shocked, Knox! I should not have thought this of you. I am astounded and disgusted!"

There was a choking sound from Knox, and another from Monty Lowther. Monty Lowther was doing his best to keep from exploding with laughter at the sight of Knox's face.

"Poor old Knox!" gasped Tom Merry. "Oh, my hat!"

It was certainly rather hard on Knox to be getting the full force of the Head's wrath. But he had no sympathy from the juniors.

There was a sudden step in the doorway. Cyrus K. Handcock had left his car at the foot of the steps, and entered the Hall.

In his horn-rimmed spectacles, his ankle-length plus-fours

and black-and-white shoes, the son of the chewing gum king certainly made an unusual figure to the Head's eyes.

Dr. Holmes stared at the American schoolboy with a very peculiar expression on his scholarly countenance.

"Bless my soul!"

The American junior nodded to him serenely. It was clear to him, from Dr. Holmes' cap and gown, that this was a "big noise" of some sort.

"Afternoon!" said Handcock cheerfully. "Pleased to meet you! My name's Handcock—Cyrus K. Handcock, from Noo Yark, on the other side of the big drink!"

"The—the big d-drink?" echoed the Head faintly.

"Bless my soul! What ever do you mean, boy?"

Handcock chuckled. His round, good-natured face broke into a grin.

"I guess I refer to the Atlantic Ocean," he said airily.

"The pop's sent me over here to sample the education in the Old Country. So here I am, I guess. And how!"

The surrounding juniors chuckled softly at the expression on the Head's face. Dr. Holmes did not approve of English slang. American slang was scarcely likely to meet with his approval, either. But the son of the American millionaire rattled on cheerfully.

"Who's the president of this outfit, anyway?" he inquired. "I guess I'd better have a word with him—tell him I've come. His name's Holmes, isn't it? Where do I find the guy?"

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Monty Lowther.

The Head's face was a study. He found his voice with an obvious effort. He was too astonished to be angry.

"I—I am Dr. Holmes!" he gasped.

"You are?" Handcock surveyed him with a new interest. "Guess that's a lucky break. Saves me the trouble of nosing you out—eh? Glad to meet you!"

He held out his hand, and grasped the Head's warmly. Dr. Holmes allowed his hand to be shaken like a man in a dream.

There was a choking exclamation from Gerald Knox.

"Dr. Holmes, surely you are not going to allow—"

Handcock turned to Knox with a cool stare.

"Who asked you to butt in, you rummy?" he demanded.

"Make a noise like a hoop and roll away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a chorus of delighted chuckles from the watching juniors. Even the presence of the Head could not stifle them. Dr. Holmes frowned majestically.

"Silence!"

He turned to Handcock with a very peculiar expression on his face.

"Handcock, I—I can see that there is a great deal about an English school that you have yet to learn," he said, rather faintly. "Knox, you must understand, is a prefect, and you must curb any inclination to address him in any manner not fitting to his—ah!—station at the school, Handcock."

The American schoolboy stared at the Head in evident bewilderment. He would probably have liked to suggest to the Head that he should "hire a hall," but he did not.

"You mean, I mayn't give this guy the air?" he queried.

"The—the air?" gasped the Head. "I—I fail to comprehend—"

"I mustn't tell him just where he gets off?" explained Handcock. "I mayn't tell him to put a sock in it?"

The Head passed a hand feebly across his brow. The

Pipped on the Post!



—but his brains would be lost in a thimble!

"PEP for the 'SAINTS'!"

(Continued from previous page.)

wonderful American language was altogether too much for his scholarly mind to tackle.

"I—I—" he stammered. "Handcock, perhaps you had better accompany me to my study! We will have a private talk there. Follow me!"

"Sure!" nodded Handcock.

The Head turned and rustled away, looking dazed. The American junior, with a cheery nod to Tom Merry, at present his only acquaintance at St. Jim's, followed him with his hands in the pockets of his ankle-length plus-fours. As he passed Knox, he turned up his eyes expressively. Knox choked.

But he said nothing. Knox did not wish to have another scene with the Head. He could afford to bide his time.

The Head and the new junior disappeared in the direction of Dr. Holmes' study. Knox, with a final glare at the crowd of grinning juniors, swung on his heel and strode away up the stairs to the Sixth Form passage.

There was a glitter in the unpopular prefect's eyes that boded ill for Cyrus K. Handcock in the future!

CHAPTER 7.

Trouble in Study No. 3!

"GOOD egg!"

Baggy Trimble gave that murmur of satisfaction.

The Falstaff of the Fourth was standing in his study—No. 2 of the Fourth—before the mirror. As he gazed at his reflection in the glass Baggy smirked contentedly.

Baggy had returned to the school drenched and chilly some while before, to find the whole of St. Jim's apparently agog over the arrival of Cyrus K. Handcock, from the Sixth to the Second! And Baggy was wasting no time in continuing his efforts to pal up to the son of the chewing-gum king.

At the moment, Baggy was looking a thing of beauty and a joy for ever as he smirked at his reflection in the looking-glass.

Baggy intended to visit Handcock right away. The new boy from U.S.A., so Baggy had learnt, had been put into Study No. 3 of the Shell, with George Alfred Grundy & Co. Baggy was, therefore, bound for Study No. 3—as soon as his appearance was such that it would thoroughly impress the millionaire's son!

"Nothing like a good start," murmured Baggy confidently, surveying his reflection with great satisfaction. "If he sees I'm a well-dressed sort of chap, it's bound to impress him!"

Whether Baggy really looked well-dressed at the moment was a little doubtful perhaps; but Baggy was sure he did.

He had sneaked up to the Fourth Form dormitory, and there "borrowed" a few articles of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's immaculate attire from the swell of St. Jim's wardrobe. The fact that what looked immaculate on Gussy's slim frame might not look quite so immaculate on his own fat one did not seem to occur to Baggy.

With Gussy's jacket tightly buttoned—after a good deal of a struggle—round his fat chest, and Gussy's collar throttling his red neck, and Gussy's patent-leather shoes pinching his large feet, Baggy looked rather like a huge baby bird bursting from its shell. But Baggy thought he looked a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

On the table beside him lay yellow gloves, a silver-headed cane, and a glossy topper. They were all the property of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "borrowed" for the occasion.

"Nothing like a topper to make a chap look immaculate," grunted Baggy, as he jammed the tile on his bullet head. Though he was paying an indoor call, Baggy felt that a topper was just the thing to impress Handcock.

With a final satisfied smirk at his reflection Baggy picked up the gloves and stick and rolled from the study.

He blinked cautiously up and down the passage. It was empty, for most of the juniors were in their studies busy with prep. Baggy drew a breath of relief. He did not want to meet Arthur Augustus D'Arcy just then, whatever happened!

With a fat waddle, for the shoes pinched his feet so badly that his usual heavy roll had been transformed to a gait more like that of a cat on hot bricks, the Falstaff of the Fourth rolled away in the direction of the Shell passage.

There was a very determined expression in Baggy's face. The sight of that thousand-pound car still in the quad

when he had arrived back at the school had made his mouth fairly water. A fellow who arrived at school in a car like that was just the sort of fellow that Baggy had dreamed of pulling up to for years!

He arrived in the Shell passage, and waddled painfully towards Study No. 3.

As he approached Grundy's sanctum a muffled din came to Baggy's ears.

"What the thump—"

Outside Study No. 3 Baggy paused, listening in sudden astonishment.

Weird and wonderful sounds were issuing from within.

Crash! Bang! Crash! Wallop!

"Mum-my hat!" gasped Baggy.

Sounds like those of an earthquake, or a Mexican revolution, were going on within Grundy's sanctum.

Baggy pushed open the door and gazed in, wide-eyed.

A scene of wild chaos met his eyes in Study No. 3.

The table was overturned, and so was the wastepaper-basket. Books and papers and ink were scattered everywhere.

In the middle of it all two struggling figures were waltzing round in what looked at first like a clog-dance, but which was actually anything but such a friendly pastime. Baggy recognised the horn-rimmed spectacles—miraculously unbroken—of Cyrus K. Handcock, and the rugged features of George Alfred Grundy.

Grundy and the new occupant of Study No. 3 were having a little argument.

"Yarooooop!"

Handcock gave a yell as Grundy's fist landed on his nose. Grundy gave an answering yell as the American's elbow caught him on the jaw.

"Whoooooops! Oh! Yow—"

Biff, biff!

"Take that, you blessed boob—"

"Take that, you great Limey—"

Crash!

The two combatants went over, locked in each other's arms, and crashed amid the wreckage of the study furniture, still struggling fiercely.

Baggy gasped.

What the trouble was he could not imagine. George Alfred Grundy, he knew, was a pugnacious individual, however, and probably he had not welcomed the intrusion of the American boy into the study he had shared so long with his two chums, Wilkins and Gunn. Anyway, trouble had arisen!

Crash! Bang! Crash!

Rolling over and over, George Alfred Grundy and Cyrus K. Handcock struggled and pommelled one another vigorously on the floor in the middle of the wrecked study. They took no notice of Baggy. It was doubtful whether they had even seen him.

Biff! Bang! Wallop!

"Ow! Oh crumbs—"

"Yooop! Oh gee—"

Baggy, his face alight with sudden eagerness, rolled quickly into the study.

Here was his chance of ingratiating himself with the son of the chewing-gum king!

If he helped Handcock against Grundy, Handcock was bound to be grateful. There was no doubt about that. Accordingly, Baggy grasped his silver-headed cane—or, rather, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's silver-headed cane—firmly in his fat hand, and waded into the fray!

"Hands off!" roared Baggy, a noble indignation in his voice. "Let him alone, I say!"

Biff!

"Yarooooop!"

Baggy had brought the cane down with a whack on the seat of a pair of bags that should have been Grundy's. Unfortunately, as the two rolled over on the floor, it was Handcock's bags that came uppermost just then—and it was Handcock, not Grundy, who yelled!

"Oh lor!" gasped Baggy.

Again he raised the cane valiantly.

Whack!

"Yoooooops! Oh gee—"

"Oh dear!" gasped Baggy.

Again he made a bad shot. He had aimed at Grundy, but it had been Handcock who had received the benefit of his noble interference.

Handcock, fighting free of Grundy, struggled to his feet. He swung round, glaring at Baggy.

"You—you pop-eyed jay!" he roared. "I'll burst you into pieces!"

He hit out, and Baggy gave a yell as the American's fist landed square on his fat little nose. He sat down with a crash, and his topper—or rather, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's topper—flew. Grundy, scrambling up, put his foot through it, and fung himself again at Handcock.

Once again a wild and whirling struggle took place—

only this time Baggy was wriggling about on the floor, yelling, as the combatants trampled to and fro over him.

"Ow! Stoppit, you asses!" roared Baggy. "Yooops! Chuck it! Yow, help!"

But neither Grundy nor Hancock heeded Baggy. They continued to trample over him—and in a very few moments Baggy's borrowed plumes were very much the worse for wear!

It was really very doubtful indeed whether the swell of St. Jim's would recognise his once elegant articles of attire when Baggy had returned them to the wardrobe.

At last Baggy managed to scramble up, gasping and furious.

He was sore and aching from his exciting few minutes amid the feet of the two combatants—and he was burning to avenge himself for that buff on the nose delivered by Hancock.

In his excitement, Baggy had quite forgotten that Hancock was the son of a millionaire, a fellow to be "sucked up" to! All he knew was that his fat little nose was swollen and painful and battered—and Hancock was the fellow who had battered it.

"You blessed boob!" hooted Baggy. "I'll show you!"

He snatched up a heavy book that was lying in a pool of ink on the floor, and hurled it viciously at the American. Biff!

"Yarooop!"

The book had landed—on Grundy's jaw.

Grundy went over like a sack of coals, and lay gasping on the floor, utterly knocked out. Baggy gazed down at him with dismay. The next moment he felt his hand being wrung warmly.

"Geo! That was great stuff!" grinned Cyrus K. Hancock, wringing Baggy's hand like a pump-handle. "I didn't know you were on my side, buddy! I thought you were out for the Grundy bird! Shake!"

"Why, you — you —" gasped Baggy.

Then a dawning smile appeared on his perspiring countenance. His resentment over that punch on the nose had died away in a flash. He grinned modestly. He remembered in a moment that Hancock was the son of a New York millionaire.

"Rather a good shot of mine, eh?" sniggered Baggy, glancing down at the still groaning figure of George Alfred Grundy. "Thought I'd butt in, old chap—don't like to see a visitor from another country getting lammed by an ass like Grundy, you know. It goes against my better nature."

"Great stuff!" chuckled Hancock. "What's your name?"

"Trimble," smirked Baggy. "I say, we ought to be pals, you know!"

"Sure!" nodded Hancock. "Come on—let's get out of here! I'm gonna quit! I've seen all I want to of this pesky study!"

He swung open the door and strode out, with Baggy at his heels. Baggy had entered that study a thing of beauty and a joy for ever—in his own estimation, at least. But he was leaving it looking like the only survivor of a bad explosion. There would be trouble if Arthur Augustus D'Arcy ever found out who it was that had "borrowed" his togs.

But there was a bland smile on the face of the Falstaff of the Fourth.

He seemed to have succeeded at last in ingratiating himself with the son of the American millionaire—the fellow with the thousand-pound ear, the fellow who was wallowing in cash!

Hancock slammed the door of Study No. 3 behind him.

"Say! Which is the best study in this outfit?" he demanded.

Baggy coughed.

"Study No. 2 in the Fourth, old chap—my study," he

explained modestly. "You see, a popular chap like me—"

"I'm talking about the Shell, or whatever they call it!"

"Oh, I suppose Tom Merry & Co. call No. 10 cock study," sniffed Baggy. "But—"

"Good!" said Hancock briskly. "Then that's the study for me! So long, buddy!"

He strode off along the passage in the direction of Study No. 10. Baggy gave a squeak and scuttled after him.

"Hi! Half a jiff! I—I wanted to stand you a feed at the tuckshop, old chap—"

"Not now, thanks, buddy," said Hancock—who did not realise that even if he had accepted Baggy's kind offer he would have had to pay for the treat himself. "I'm hitting the trail for No. 10!"

He marched away, leaving the tattered figure of Baggy Trimble blinking after him.

Baggy dared not follow the American to Tom Merry's study. It was possible that the Terrible Three might recognise the swell of St. Jim's "borrowed" garments—and that would mean trouble for Baggy!

But as he turned and waddled painfully away along the passage towards the stairs, there was a happy grin on Baggy's fat face.

He had laid the foundation of what, properly handled, he intended to develop into a very profitable friendship for Bagley Trimble!

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CHAPTER 8.

Hancock Butts In!

TAP! "Come in!" Tom Merry, busy with his prep in Study No. 10, glanced up at the sound of a knock on the study door. It swung open, and to the surprise of the Terrible Three the horn-rimmed spectacles of Cyrus K. Hancock appeared in the doorway.

"Hallo, hallo!" grinned Tom Merry hospitably.

"Come right in, Hancock!"

"Sure!" nodded Hancock. "That's what I've come to do, I guess."

He stepped into the study, and closed the door behind him.

"My hat!" ejaculated Monty Lowther, staring at the rather dishevelled sweater and plus-fours of the American. "Don't mean to say you've been scrapping with somebody—already?"

Hancock grinned.

"Sure! I guess so!"

"Great Scott! Not—not with Grundy?" gasped Tom Merry.

"Sure! I guess so!" nodded Hancock. "I couldn't get

on with that guy. No, sir! So I've given him and his study the air! I've quit! I've beat it! See?"

The Terrible Three stared at him in astonishment.

"You're going to change studies already?" cried Tom.

"Have you asked Railton if you can?"

"I guess not," said Hancock indifferently. "But I guess I'm sure changing out of that dump, No. 3!"

"You'll have to get Railton's permission!"

"O.K. with me! I'll get it," nodded Hancock. "See you guys later."

He vanished from the study. A few minutes later he was back again.

"Well?" asked Tom, laughing. "Get permission?"

"Sure!" grinned Hancock, closing the door.

"Where are you moving to?" asked Manners curiously.

"Here!" said Cyrus K. Hancock serenely.

"What?" yelled Monty Lowther.

"I guess I'm moving into this outfit," Hancock explained. "I'm told this is cock study in the Shell. Me for the cock study, I guess! Yes, sir! I guess—"

"Well, you can jolly well guess again!" roared Manners. The Terrible Three had risen to their feet, surveying the cool-looking American junior with very mixed feelings.

Tom Merry & Co. liked Hancock; not because he was wealthy—like Baggy; but because his cheery nature appealed to them. But for the American to decide, without even asking them, that he was going to tack himself on to them in Study No. 10 was a trifle too thick in their opinion.

Study No. 10 had long been the domain of the Terrible Three, and of the Terrible Three alone. Outsiders were barred!

"Look here, Hancock," said Tom Merry warmly, "you're all wrong if you think you're coming in here!"

"That's a lotta balony!" grinned Hancock. "I tell you—"

"Rats!" snorted Monty Lowther. "Outside!"

"I guess—"

Manners crossed to the door and opened it. Tom Merry laughed good-naturedly.

"Sorry, Hancock, but there's nothing doing!" he explained. "We three have shared this study a good while, and we aren't admitting anyone else, however much we like 'em! You'll have to find somewhere else!"

Hancock grinned serenely.

"That's a lotta balony!" he repeated. "I guess I'm signing on in this outfit. You'll get used to having me in here—"

He broke off with an exclamation as the Terrible Three seized him. Despite his struggles, he was yanked across to the door and bundled out into the passage. Tom Merry, grinning, shut the door with a bang.

"Of all the nerve!" ejaculated Monty Lowther, as the Terrible Three returned to the table and sat down to continue their prep. "I like the chap, but he's got too much cheek!"

Monty broke off as the door opened. Hancock stepped into the study and shut the door behind him.

"Hallo, buddies," he grinned. "Don't let me interrupt the work. I'll just sit down quiet."

He crossed to a chair by the window and coolly seated himself. From his pocket he produced a stick of chewing-gum.

"Have a chew?" he inquired. "Hancock's Gum—The World Chews It!"

He inserted a stick of Hancock's famous gum into his mouth, and his jaws began to work rhythmically. He waved his hand in an airy way.

"Carry on, boys!" he urged. "Don't you worry about me! You'll soon get used to having me in this outfit!"

The Terrible Three gasped. Then, without a word, they rose to their feet and advanced upon Hancock. They seized him.

"Here, hands off. I guess—"

Crash!

"Oh, gee! Yoooooop!"

Hancock landed in the passage with a yell as he was sent flying backwards out of the doorway. Tom Merry slammed the door. Grim-faced, the Terrible Three returned to the table and picked up their pens once again.

The door opened. Hancock's face grinned into the study through his horn-rimmed spectacles.

"I guess a joke's a joke," he murmured plaintively, as he stepped into the study. "But a buddy don't want to laugh all of the time! Nix on the rough stuff now, you guys."

"Mum-my hat!" gasped Tom Merry faintly.

The Terrible Three sat watching dumbly as Hancock returned to the chair by the window and calmly reseated himself. His jaws were still working rhythmically.

Tom Merry, Monty Lowther, and Manners exchanged glances. Very grimly they rose to their feet.

Crash!

"Yaroooooop! Oh snakes—"

Slam!

Tom Merry slammed the door shut once more upon the sprawling figure of Cyrus K. Hancock in the passage. Once more the Terrible Three returned to their prep. Once more the door opened.

Cyrus K. Hancock did not speak this time, however. He merely strolled across to the chair by the window with his hands in his pockets and dropped into it, with a cheerful grin at the three glaring chums.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry suddenly burst into a laugh. Monty Lowther and Manners joined in, despite themselves.

"My giddy aunt!" gasped Tom. "Hancock, you ass, you certainly have got the limit in check!"

"But you're not coming into this study, so you needn't think you are," grinned Manners, rather grimly.

"I guess—"

There was a sharp rap on the door. It swung open, and the unpleasant face of Gerald Knox appeared, glaring into the study.

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"So here you are?" he rasped.

The Sixth-Former stepped into the room. There was an ashplant in his hand.

The Terrible Three jumped quickly to their feet.

"Hallo, Knox!" snapped Tom. "What do you want here?"

"I want that young cub!" said Knox harshly, striding towards the chair where the American was sitting. "I'm going to give him the lesson of his life!"

Tom Merry stepped quickly between Knox and the American junior.

The captain of the Shell did not mean to allow the bullying prefect to touch the new boy from U.S.A. in Study No. 10. Knox had no right to lay hands on a junior in the studies, and Knox knew it as well as anyone.

"Hands off!" said Tom sharply.

Knox halted.

"Stand aside!" he snarled.

"Rats! Get out!" snapped Tom.

"You've no right to bring an ashplant in here, and you know it! Clear out!"

"You impudent young hound—"

"Say!" It was Hancock's American drawl that cut in on Knox's words. "Is all this little trouble about me?" He sat up in his chair. "Why, it's Sonny Boy again!" he added, grinning cheerfully at Knox. "Hallo, sonny!"

Knox choked. He reached out a hand and tried to swing Tom Merry aside by the shoulder. But Tom knocked the prefect's hand away—and the next moment Knox saw red.



Baggy had aimed at Grundy, but once

He hit out savagely, and with a vicious blow sent Tom reeling against the wall, a red weal on his cheek showing where the prefect's cowardly blow had landed.

"There!" panted Knox. "Stand out of my way when I tell you—"

He broke off sharply. Hancock had risen abruptly to his feet, was facing him with blazing eyes.

"Say! You great lop-sided coyote, you! Here's one for you, Sonny Boy!"

The next moment the American's clenched fist had flashed out. It took Knox on the jaw with smashing force, and Knox went down on to the floor with a crash.

He scrambled up, white with rage, panting. Hancock faced him coolly, with fists clenched. Tom Merry recovering from the sickening blow that had staggered him, jumped forward, and so did Manners and Lowther.

Shoulder to shoulder, the Terrible Three and the American boy faced the livid prefect.

For a moment or two it looked as though Knox would rush the juniors. But there were four of them, and he thought better of it.

"You young hounds!" he panted. "I—I'll make you pay for this! Hancock, you'll suffer for that blow, hang you! I—I——"

"Aw—hire a hall!" urged Hancock.

Knox choked. His fingers tightened on his ashplant. But he knew that he dared do nothing. In his excitement he had put himself completely in the wrong by striking Tom Merry, and the juniors would not hesitate to rough-handle him. He would be unable to complain to the House-



he had hit Hancock!

master or the Head if that happened, and he did not mean to risk it.

His jaw was still aching from Hancock's blow, delivered on Tom Merry's behalf.

"You'd better get out of this study, Knox," said Tom, with a dangerous look.

A snarl appeared on Knox's face. But he swung on his heel without a word and left the room.

"He's gone!" grinned Hancock. "I guess he doesn't like us. That's too bad!"

Tom Merry turned to the American and held out his hand. They shook.

"Thanks," said Tom, in a quiet tone. "It was great, the way you knocked the rotter down, after he'd struck me. After that——"

He broke off and glanced significantly at his chums.

"What about it, you chaps? Does Hancock stay in this study if he wants to?"

"What-ho!" grinned Manners.

"Rather!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"Great stuff!" murmured Hancock. "I guess I stay!"

CHAPTER 9. Money for Jam!

"**R**OTTEN!" That was Baggy Trimble's well-considered opinion of the situation.

It was a few days later, and Baggy was rolling to and fro under the elms in the quad during morning break, thinking.

The object of his thoughts was Cyrus K. Hancock, of U.S.A.

Despite an excellent start, Baggy had somehow failed to reap much benefit from the arrival of the son of the American millionaire at St. Jim's. Though he had hung around Study No. 10 like a limpet, Tom Merry & Co. had seen to it that he had not had a chance of "getting at" Hancock. The Terrible Three had been guarding the American from spongers since his arrival in their study, for they knew that such fellow as Baggy and Mellish would be only too eager to toady to the son of the chewing-gum king.

Baggy's glorious dreams of unlimited feeds at Hancock's expense, and of pockets jingling with money borrowed from Hancock—money which there would be no hurry to return—and of long drives in Hancock's thousand-pound car, were all beginning to fade.

Already Hancock had shown that he was wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice. He had stood a feed in Study No. 10, which had been the most expensive feast that study had ever known—or any other junior study, for that matter. But Baggy had not been invited—the Terrible Three had seen to that.

And Baggy was fed-up.

"Blow!" grunted Baggy, as he rolled along with frowning, thoughtful brow. "Tom Merry & Co. are jolly well keeping the blessed American to themselves, for what they can get out of him! Yah! Mean beasts!"

But surely thought Baggy, as he continued to ponder on the problem, there was some way of "touching" the American junior's vast supply of wealth?

Vague memories of "confidence tricks" worked on rich American visitors by unscrupulous rascals, of which he had read now and then in the newspapers, came into Baggy's head.

As he pondered, rolling to and fro in the sunny quad, a fluttering piece of paper came floating down before his face. It came to rest at Baggy's feet, and the Falstaff of the Fourth gave a sudden gasp.

Lying on the gravel was a cheque.

It had evidently fallen from the open window above. It was the window, Baggy knew, of Mr. Railton's room. He almost expected to see the face of the Housemaster of the School House looking out in search of the fallen cheque. But there was no one.

Baggy stooped and picked up the cheque with fingers that trembled slightly.

It was signed by Mr. Railton, and had been made payable to "Bearer" for the sum of ten pounds.

"G-great pip!" gasped Baggy.

He glanced guiltily around. But that corner of the quad was empty.

How the cheque came to have dropped from the open window above he could not imagine. Perhaps Mr. Railton had left the cheque on a desk by the window, and the breeze had whisked it out. But there it was, anyway; and Baggy's eyes gleamed as they rested upon it.

It occurred to him for a moment that there would be nothing to prevent him from going to Mr. Railton's bank and cashing that cheque there and then. But he banished the thought. Even Baggy, unscrupulous though he could be, was not rascal enough for that. Besides, detection might follow, with decidedly unpleasant results for Baggy.

A step somewhere behind him caused Baggy to turn with a start.

The figure of Cyrus K. Hancock, in his long plus fours and horn-rimmed spectacles, was strolling towards him.

In a flash, a sudden wild plan came into the mind of Baggy Trimble.

He thrust the cheque into his pocket, and rolled towards the American junior.

"I—I say! Hancock, old chap——"

"Yeah?" returned Hancock, halting.

Baggy plucked at the American's sleeve eagerly.

"I—I say, old chap. I—I haven't seen so much of you as

I'd have liked, you know," he squeaked. "You don't want to pal up too much with Merry and those asses—"

"Say!" exclaimed Hancock. "What kinda dope are you handing me? I guess—"

"Oh, I wouldn't say a word against Tom Merry & Co., of course!" gasped Baggy hastily. "They—they're great pals of mine, as a matter of fact. But I say, look here, you're a wealthy sort of chap, aren't you?"

"Waal, I guess dough means nothing much to the pop," agreed Hancock. "But—"

"Good egg!" smirked Baggy. "It's like this. I'm running a fund in aid of—the Wayland Hospital! A charity fund, you see. All the masters are subscribing, and most of the seniors. I—hem!—I'm not supposed to collect from juniors, as a matter of fact, but seeing what a rich chap you are, for the sake of the hospital I thought I'd ask you for a sub."

"Oh!" said Hancock.

"It's a jolly good cause," said Baggy wheedlingly. "The Rylcombe Infirmary—"

"I thought it was for the Wayland Hospital, buddy!" ejaculated Hancock.

"Ahem! It is, of course—and the Rylcombe Infirmary," explained Baggy. "They share the proceeds between them."

Hancock did not look very convinced.

"You say all the masters contribute, buddy? I guess if that's so, it's all right. But—"

"Oh, rather!" nodded Baggy. "Old Railton came across with a tenner only to-day!"

"Great snakes!"

"I'll show you his cheque, if you like," said Baggy loftily, and took from his pocket the cheque for ten pounds that he had just picked up.

Hancock surveyed it in evident astonishment.

He was by no means a green youth. He had been inclined to suspect Baggy's bona fides—until the sight of that cheque had apparently proved the truth of Baggy's statements.

"Carry me home to die!" ejaculated Cyrus K. Hancock. "What's good enough for the Railton guy is O. K. with me! It sounds a good cause you're collecting for, buddy. I'll give you five quid for it."

Hancock plunged a hand carelessly into his pocket, and took out a rustling fiver. Baggy's eyes almost popped from his fat little head.

"Here you are—five quid," said Hancock. "That's twenty-five bucks in real money, I guess. Say, I suppose I'll get a receipt for this from the hospital, hey?"

"Oh, rather!" gasped Baggy, thrusting the fiver into his pocket with a shaking hand. "Y yes, rather, Hancock! I say, it's jolly good of you to cough up like this! But don't tell anybody, will you? I'm not supposed to collect from juniors—so for goodness' sake don't tell anyone!"

"O. K. with me!"

Hancock strolled away, while Baggy blinked after him, almost delirious with excitement and joy.

A fiver! Five crackling quid! Money for jam—tarts!

He turned and rolled rapidly across towards the School House. He could now return Mr. Railton's cheque! It had done its work.

But at the foot of the School House steps Baggy paused.

After all, if he kept that cheque a little longer, it might be useful in the same way again! It was not likely that Hancock would realise it was the same cheque, if he showed it him again. And it was not exactly stealing to keep it, for the cheque itself was valueless—barring its twopenny stamp—unless it were cashed. All Mr. Railton had to do, when he missed it, was to write out another, at the cost of another twopenny.

"Hallo, hallo! Why the brown study, Baggy?"

Jack Blake of the Fourth had appeared at the top of the steps, with Herries, and Digby, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Jack Blake's cheery voice it was that addressed Baggy, causing the Falstaff of the Fourth to start guiltily.

At that moment, however, the bell went for next lesson. Baggy rolled into the House past Blake & Co., without a word, and away towards Mr. Lathom's class-room.

That bell had settled it! Mr. Railton would not have his cheque returned yet awhile!

There was an odd gleam in Baggy Trimble's eyes as the lesson started. Once or twice his fat fingers stole to his pocket, where that crackling fiver reposed.

Baggy's hopes and plans with regard to Cyrus K. Hancock had succeeded at last—beyond his wildest dreams!

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CHAPTER 10.

In the Tuckshop!

"ANOTHER plate of tarts, Mrs. Taggles, please!"

"Certainly, Master Trimble!"

"And another bottle of ginger-pop!"

"Yes, Master Trimble!"

Dame Taggles beamed.

It was not often that she beamed upon Baggy Trimble of the Fourth. As a rule, her severest frowns were kept for Baggy. Baggy was anything but a good customer at the little tuckshop under the elms; the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. That is to say, Baggy's appetite could have made him the best customer in the world, but his pockets were always too empty for him to carry out his ideals.

But this afternoon it was very different!

Baggy seemed to be plastered with money. Where it had all come from Mrs. Trimble did not know—but it was there, in Baggy's pockets. And Baggy was spending it lavishly.

Hence Mrs. Taggles' beaming smiles.

"These tarts are prime, Mrs. Taggles!" mumbled Baggy, between mouthfuls.

"I'm pleased to hear it, Master Trimble!"

"I'll have another half-dozen!" gasped Baggy.

"Certainly!"

It was the day following Baggy's "windfall" in the shape of the fiver he had obtained from Hancock. It was a Saturday, and most of the juniors were out at cricket practice in summer sunshine. But Baggy preferred the quiet seclusion of the tuckshop!

A sudden step in the tuckshop doorway caused him to turn his head.

"My hat!" breathed Baggy.

The figure of Cyrus K. Hancock himself was in the doorway, surveying Baggy through his horn-rimmed spectacles, his hands thrust into the pockets of his ankle-length breeches, his jaws working rhythmically as he chewed a stick of Hancock's famous gum.

"Hallo, buddy!" observed Cyrus K. Hancock, strolling in.

Baggy blinked at the American a trifle dubiously. With his guilty conscience he hoped that Hancock would not connect his heavy feasting that afternoon with the fiver that had passed between them the previous day.

"Hallo, Hancock, old chap!" squeaked Baggy. "Not playing cricket?"

"I guess not!" said Hancock emphatically. "I guess cricket and me don't mix! Tom Merry wanted me to play, but after I'd knocked down my own wicket, and had the ball on my chin, and almost broken my ankle with the bat, I guess I'd learnt my lesson! Cricket seems to me about the dumbest game for dumb-bells I've ever struck!"

"He, he, he!"

Baggy sniggered, and pushed the plate of tarts towards the American.

"Have a tart, old chap! Yes, cricket's a blessed waste of time, if you ask me. If I liked, I dare say I could be the finest cricketer in the junior school, of course, but I don't choose to be. Anyhow, it's only rotten jealousy that keeps me out of the eleven."

"Is that so?" murmured Hancock, with a dryness that Baggy failed to notice.

"Absolutely!" affirmed Baggy solemnly, with his mouth full.

Hancock grinned, and surveyed Baggy's fat figure critically. Then he plunged a hand into his pocket and pulled out a pocket case.

"Now, the game that's a real game is baseball, buddy!" he said, with a chuckle. "See here! This is a photo of me, all dressed up for a ball game! What do you think of that?"

Baggy, inwardly, did not think anything of the photograph that Hancock was showing him. His little eyes were suddenly gleaming with a covetous light—for the pocket case lying on the counter, from which Hancock had taken the photograph of himself in baseball kit, was literally bulging with money.

"Mum-mum-my hat!" breathed Baggy.

Fivers and quid notes, and ten-shilling notes were all stuffed into one part of the case in an indiscriminate bundle. Baggy had seldom seen so much money in his life before—certainly not in the property of a junior at St. Jim's!

He had already got a fiver out of Hancock, in his own unscrupulous way, and had planned to get plenty more money out of the good-natured and wealthy junior later on, from time to time. But the sight of all that money right under his fat little nose was too much for Baggy.

He couldn't wait!

"I—I say," he stammered, "you—you know that hospital I was telling you about, old chap?"

"Yeah!" nodded Handcock.

"I had a letter from—from one of the committee this morning!" gasped Baggy. "It seems the hospital is in a rotten bad way! Dunno what to do to raise money, and all that! The committee asked me to make a special shot at getting in a lot more boodle quick, you know!"

"Oh!" Handcock stared at Baggy in rather a peculiar way. "Is that so?"

"I—I was wondering if you could see your way to coming across with another fiver, old chap," murmured Baggy persuasively.

Mrs. Taggles had disappeared into the little room behind the shop, and he was quite safe from being overheard.

"Another fiver or so from you would make a lot of difference, old chap," went on Baggy eagerly. "As a matter of fact, old Railton has given me another cheque for a tenner this morning. I've got it on me now—"

He drew out the "bearer" cheque signed by the House-master, and thrust it under Handcock's nose.

"There you are!" grinned Baggy. "Another tenner from Railton! What about another fiver from you? It's a jolly good cause, and all that. I know you're a generous sort of chap, old Handcock—"

"Lemme have a squint at that cheque, buddy!" said Handcock quietly.

He took the cheque from Baggy's fat fingers before the Falstaff of the Fourth had time to prevent him. Baggy watched rather anxiously as the American scanned it.

"I say, you know it's all right!" squeaked Baggy.

"I sure hope it is!" returned Handcock, rather grimly. "But it seems to me it's the same number on this cheque as on the one you showed me yesterday! I wonder if I was green? I wonder if you're working the good old confidence trick off on me, like a regular smart Alec?"

"Oh, really, old chap—"

"Anyway, I guess I'll make sure you are on the level, buddy!" said Handcock quietly. "I'll tell you what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna show this cheque to Mr. Railton and ask him if it's O.K. See?"

Baggy's heart seemed almost to stop beating.

He saw in a flash that by his greediness he had overreached himself! His second request, coming so soon upon the first, had made Handcock naturally suspicious.

"I—I say, don't do that!" gasped Baggy, with a sickly grin. "I—I'm not supposed to ask juniors for subs to the hospital—"

"Not?" queried Handcock dryly.

Baggy, in sheer desperation, as he saw the American folding the cheque to put it in his pocket, made a sudden wild dive for it. Handcock, with a sharp exclamation, eluded him. And the next moment a shadow fell across the tuckshop floor.

Baggy turned with a guilty start.

The tall figure of Gerald Knox was standing in the doorway, a peculiar gleam in his glittering eyes.

Without a sound, the prefect strode towards Handcock, and held out his hand, his eyes on the cheque.

"Give me that cheque, Handcock!" he rasped, a vicious triumph in his tone. "I recognise it as one that Mr. Railton lost yesterday, and for which a search has been instituted. Give it to me—and follow me to Mr. Railton. You will explain to him, if you can, how it came to be in your possession!"

Handcock stared at Knox as though he could not believe his ears. Then his face went fiery red.

"Say!" he roared. "Are you accusing me of stealing this pesky cheque, you great stiff?"

Baggy gulped. His heart was cold with terror. At any moment he expected to hear himself being accused. He found his voice with an effort.

"I—I say, Knox! That's Railton's cheque all right! Handcock wanted to cash it here. I think—"

"Why, you—you—"

Handcock glared at Baggy, struggling for words. Knox laughed harshly.

"Come along, Handcock! The sooner Mr. Railton knows of this, the better!"

"You're right, buddy!" roared Handcock, swinging round on the prefect fiercely. "The sooner he knows all about it the better! Because I never stole his goldarned cheque—not in a thousand years! We'll clear this up right now! Come on!"

He strode from the tuckshop, Knox following close at his heels, leaving Baggy licking his dry lips, alone.

CHAPTER 11.

A Bid for Freedom!

"GREAT SCOTT!"

"It can't be true!"

"Handcock—the giddy American!"

Blake & Co. and Tom Merry & Co. were standing in a startled group by the foot of the School House steps,

staring at one another in utter amazement. A number of other juniors were gathered round, too—Talbot of the Shell, Levison major, and Clive of the Fourth, Clifton Dane, and Bernard Glyn of the Shell, and several others. They all looked utterly staggered.

The juniors had returned from Little Side after cricket, to learn the amazing news that was already spreading through the school like wildfire.

Cyrus K. Handcock, the American junior, had been found in possession of a cheque stolen from Mr. Railton's room!

"Phew!" breathed Kerruish, of the Fourth. "I can't understand it! I thought Handcock was a decent chap!"

"And with all his money, too!" gasped Herries. "The chap must be off his rocker!"

"Must be a blessed kleptomaniac—a chap who can't resist pinching things!" put in Blake wonderingly.

"Anyway, he's getting sacked!" growled Grundy, who had joined the group. "Sacked—after a flogging before the whole school, in Big Hall this evening. That's what Kildare said."

There was a dark frown on the face of Tom Merry.

Tom liked Handcock. He could scarcely credit that Handcock was a thief. And yet—

"There's no doubt about it, apparently," grunted Blake. "I hear Baggy was in the tuckshop, and says Handcock came in with this cheque, wanting to cash it through Mrs. Taggles, or something. Knox happened to come in, and found him with it. It's pretty clear!"

"Wotten!" muttered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Where's Handcock now?" asked Tom Merry.

"Locked in the detention-room," Blake answered, with a nod at a small window high up near the School House roof, at the end of the wing. "Up there, in Nobody's Study—"

He broke off with a sudden sharp exclamation.

(Continued on next page.)



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THE SCHOOLBOYS OWN LIBRARY Now on Sale 4d.

"Great pip!" yelled the leader of the Fourth. "Look!" The crowd of juniors turned their heads quickly, staring up at the little window under the eaves.

It had opened, and a face was staring down at the group by the steps. It was Handcock himself.

A hush fell on the juniors.

Most of them had taken a liking to the cheery American junior. Despite his wealth, the son of the New York chewing-gum king had not splashed his money round in an objectionable way, as many had expected he would. He had been lavish with it, and generous, however, and there were many juniors in the group in the quad, as well as Tom Merry & Co., who had enjoyed splendid spreads in Study No. 10, as guests of the American schoolboy, and who had been for exhilarating drives in the gorgeous car he owned. To find that he was a convicted thief, under sentence of a flogging, to be followed by expulsion, had been a shock to everyone.

They had to believe it. But there was sympathy in the faces that stared up silently at the window of Nobody's Study, where the American youngster stood looking down.

"Poor old Handcock!" breathed Blake.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus suddenly. "Look! What evah is he up to?"

"He's climbing out!" yelled Monty Lowther.

Handcock was swinging out on to the sill, above the thirty-foot drop!

The window of the detention-room was supposed to be barred. But it was seldom used, and the old bars had fallen into disrepair, and several had been removed and not yet been replaced. The Head had considered there was a danger of them falling from their weather-worn sockets. In consequence, it was easy enough for Handcock to climb out on to the sill.

But there was no means of climbing down from it, and to have jumped would, of course, have meant certain death.

"Handcock, you ass—get back!" panted Tom Merry.

Handcock did not heed, even if he heard.

He rose to his feet cautiously on the narrow sill, and his groping hands caught hold of the gutter above. The American's intention was now plain enough. Handcock meant to swing up on to the roof and gain his freedom!

It was a mad, daring attempt, for a fall would be fatal. If the gutter failed to support his weight he would go hurtling down to a terrible fate in the quad.

But Handcock seemed quite cool as his fingers grasped the gutter, and he swung upwards.

"Gweat pip!" breathed Arthur Augustus hoarsely. "He'll be killed!"

But for that breathless exclamation from the swell of St. Jim's there was not a sound from the group of white-faced juniors as they watched the lithe figure of the American schoolboy swinging over the ridge of slates.

And Handcock did it! He gained the gutter above, and scrambled out of sight over the ridge of slates.

And as he did so there was a sharp ejaculation from the School House steps. Tom Merry turned quickly, and gave an exclamation.

The tall figure of Knox was standing on the steps, his eyes riveted on the window from which Handcock had so daringly made his escape.

The prefect sent an echoing shout of alarm ringing across the quad. Old Taggles, by the gates, turned his head and came hurrying across. The tall figure of Eric Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, came running into view, startled by that shout.

"What's up?" shouted Kildare.

Knox flung up a pointing hand.

"The American!" he yelled excitedly. "He's got out of the window on to the roof! He's trying to escape!"

CHAPTER 12.

Escape!

THAT the game was up for Handcock there seemed to be no doubt!

The American youngster's intention was plain enough to Tom Merry & Co. Handcock had hoped to escape from St. Jim's without the degradation of his public flogging in Big Hall. None of the juniors who had witnessed his escape from Nobody's Study would have raised a finger to prevent his doing so. Handcock would have been safe enough to carry out his plan of escaping by way of the roof, so far as they were concerned.

But now that Knox had seen it and raised the alarm, it looked as though Handcock was done for!

Already Mr. Railton had appeared on the School House steps, attracted by the excited shouts in the quad, and Knox was telling him of what he had seen, in breathless tones. Mr. Railton's brow was dark.

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"Quick!" he exclaimed. "He must not escape! Knox—Kildare—collect as many seniors as you can, and surround the building! Taggles, come with me at once! We must gain the roof through a skylight, and attempt to capture the foolish, reckless boy!"

The Housemaster and old Taggles vanished into the House. Swiftly Kildare, Knox, and several other prefects who had appeared on the scene, together with a crowd of seniors, spread out round the wing of the building.

There was no sign of Handcock on the roof now. Tom Merry, staring up, saw Mr. Railton appear on the flat leads after a while, with Taggles following rather nervously.

The quad was crowded with excited onlookers now.

The news of Handcock's daring bid for freedom seemed to have spread like magic through the school.

"Poor old Handcock!" breathed Tom.

"I suppose he thought he'd get out of his flogging," sniggered Percy Mellish, the sneak of the Fourth! "He'll get flogged all the harder now! He, he, he! Serve him right!"

"Shut up, you cad!" growled Blake.

And then, above the babel of talk, there came a sudden, familiar sound from somewhere at the back of the School House building—the roar of a forty-horse-power motor-car!

"Great Scott!" yelled Manners. "Listen!"

Round the corner of the building, scattering the seniors gathered there, a glittering yellow car came sweeping, heading for the gates.

As the juniors learnt later, Handcock had foiled his would-be captors by entering the building through a skylight, and making his way through the attic regions to another skylight that opened on to a section of roof inaccessible from that part which was being closely guarded. From there, he had gained the yard at the back of the School House by way of the ivy and a water-pipe, and had wasted no time in getting to his car, which was garaged in the outbuildings there.

Zooooom!

With roaring exhaust, the great car came hurtling into view, and across the crowded quad, scattering the fellows in its path like sheep.

"B-bai Jove!" stuttered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, watching the cool figure of the American youngster at the wheel with gleaming eyes. "He's got away!"

There was a shout of furious chagrin from Knox.

Knox had set his heart on seeing Handcock, the junior he was "up against," being flogged in Big Hall that evening. It was the revenge for which he had been waiting with much satisfaction. Now, as he stared after the racing yellow car as it shot towards the gates, his eyes glittered with baffled rage. A snarl of fury broke from his thin lips.

There was a sudden, startled cry from Tom Merry.

Tom had been watching Handcock's breakneck race for the gates with gleaming eyes. Handcock might have taken Mr. Railton's cheque from some mad impulse, but in his heart Tom could not believe the American was a wrong 'un. That Handcock was making his escape had brought a gleam of satisfaction to Tom's eyes. But suddenly that expression had changed to one of breathless dismay.

As Handcock hurtled for the gates in the huge yellow car, a slowly cycling figure had appeared from the road, pedalling in at the gates on an ancient bike. It was the Rylcombe postman, with the evening post.

There was a shout from all sides, as it was seen that a crash was inevitable.

"Great Scott!" panted Blake, white-faced.

Handcock swerved in a desperate attempt to avoid the figure of the old postman. But his mudguard caught the back wheel of the bicycle, and the postman was sent crashing over. The old man lay in a huddled heap.

Already Handcock was out of the gates. He glanced swiftly back, and saw the postman lying where he had fallen. For a second he seemed to hesitate.

Before him lay freedom! If he stopped, the ignominy of a public flogging waited for him.

Only for a second did he hesitate. The next moment he had jammed on the brakes and brought the car to a standstill. He sprang out, and ran back to the figure of the old man.

Tom Merry caught his breath.

"My hat!" he breathed. "He's a white man!"

Running figures were pouring across towards the gates. In a few moments Handcock and the postman were surrounded. Handcock straightened himself, and glanced coolly at Eric Kildare.

"I guess he's not much hurt," he said quietly. "Sorry I knocked the poor old bird over."

He shrugged.

"Waal," he drawled, "I guess the game's up! You've got me! Still, I guess I had to stop and make sure the poor old chap wasn't badly hurt."

Already the postman was sitting up dazedly, rubbing his head, with an almost comical expression of rueful dismay. His bag had gone flying, and letters were strewn all over the ground.

"My heye!" gasped the postman.
"All right?" exclaimed Kildare anxiously.
"Yes, thank 'ee!" grinned the postman ruefully. "No damage done!"

He began to pick up his letters. Kildare dropped a hand on the American's shoulder.

"Handcock," he said quietly, "you'll have to come back to the House with me. But I'll say this—the way you stopped, when you could have got away, is one of the finest things I have ever seen!"

"Aw—hire a hall!" said Handcock, colouring.
"Three cheers for the American!" yelled Blake.
And the cheers were given with a will. Handcock grinned rather wryly. His eyes fell on one of the letters at his feet. He stooped and picked it up.

"Waal," he said dryly, "perhaps it was a lucky break for me, after all! Here's a letter for me, and I guess I'd have missed this mail if I'd got away!"

Coolly he ripped open the envelope. From Tom Merry, standing at his elbow, there broke a sudden exclamation.

His eyes had fallen on the contents unintentionally enough. But he could not help seeing that the letter contained what purported to be a receipt from the Wayland Hospital for a donation of five pounds.

But the "receipt" was in the handwriting of Baggy Trimble.

That Baggy had attempted to disguise his writing was clear. But it was Baggy's scrawling fist, without a doubt. A queer, vague suspicion flashed into Tom's mind.

"Half a jiff!" he exclaimed sharply. "May I look at that, Handcock?"

"Sure!" nodded Handcock, glancing at Tom in surprise. "I guess it's only a receipt for a few bucks I gave that fat guy for the hospital. Seems he handed it across to them, after all. I thought he'd been fooling me, after this business of the cheque." He shrugged. "Well, seems he was straight about that, anyway, though he wouldn't own up he was the guy that had possession of that cheque," he added bitterly.

"Eh?" ejaculated Tom swiftly. "What's that?"

"Why, it was that Trimble bird that had that cheque!" snapped Handcock. "I told the Head so; but Trimble

swore it wasn't true, and I couldn't prove it, I guess. The Head didn't believe me!" he finished, with another nonchalant shrug.

Tom Merry caught his breath.
He turned swiftly to Kildare.
"Kildare, I think you ought to see this," he said quickly. "It looks to me as if there's something pretty fishy here."

He handed the alleged receipt to the captain of St. Jim's. The crowd standing round pressed forward in puzzled interest.

"That's a fake!" snapped Tom. "That's Trimble's fist! I can't quite figure it all out, but there's a good deal more in this business than meets the eye, if you ask me. I—My hat, there is the fat worm!"

The blinking countenance of Baggy Trimble had caught Tom's eye in the crowd. Stepping quickly forward Tom dragged the Falstaff of the Fourth towards Kildare.

"Oh!" gasped Baggy wildly. "Ow! Stop it! Leggo! Yaroop! Hands off, Merry, you beast!"

Kildare surveyed Trimble with a peculiar look on his handsome face. Handcock, at sight of Baggy, had tightened his lips in a dangerous way. Baggy squirmed in Tom's grasp very unhappily.

His insatiable curiosity had led him to join the crowd, but he was wishing now very heartily that he had kept clear till Handcock was safely expelled from the school.

"What is the meaning of this, Trimble?" exclaimed the captain of St. Jim's sternly, thrusting out the faked receipt.

"Ow! N-n-nothing!" gasped Baggy. "I didn't write it! I—I mean, I only wrote it for a joke, if I did write it. But, of course, I didn't write at all—"

"I want the truth!" said Kildare grimly.

"Ow! Oh dear! I—I don't know what you mean!" wailed Baggy miserably. "If you think I tried to swindle Handcock out of a fiver, you're wrong! I—I wouldn't do such a thing! I'm as honest as the day is long, you know. If Handcock told you I showed him that cheque of Railton's, saying it had been given to me, it's not true! I didn't use it to get that fiver out of him! Not at all! Ow! Leggo my arm, Merry, you beast! I—I—I—"

Baggy broke off incoherently.

His face was the colour of putty. Kildare's face was thunderous as he surveyed him.

The captain turned to Handcock.

(Continued on page 28.)

CRACKERS!

Got the blues, or the hump, or the pip? Hard cheese!
Try these face shifters and be cured on the spot!

Waiter: "The customer over there is very fussy, sir."
Manager: "Well, we can't afford to tell him so, so let him fuss."

Waiter: "But he says the soup isn't fit for a pig."
Manager: "Then take it away, and get him some that is!"

A man at a cricket match was very disgusted with the players, and, turning to the man next to him, said:

"Fancy putting on a rotten bowler like that!"
"Well," returned his listener angrily, "it's better than your old straw, anyway!"

Angry teacher, to small pupil, during geography lesson:
"Where's the Baltic? Where's the Baltic? Confound you, boy, where's the Baltic?"

Nervous boy: "P-p-please, teacher, I ain't got it, but I saw Jimmy Figgins stuff summat up his jersey!"

Jack (reading): "Think of those Spaniards going three thousand miles on a galleon."
Jill (not quite catching the last word): "Oh, you can't believe what you hear about these foreign cars!"

Boss: "I never rang for you. I rang once, twice."
Boy: "I thought you rang twice, once, sir!"

Teacher: "How many voyages did Columbus make?"
Stupid Jim: "Four, miss."
Teacher: "Correct. And after which voyage did he die?"
Stupid Jim: "I'm not sure, but I think it was the second!"

Schoolmaster: "Smith, now we have read of the principal reigning monarchs of the world, which ruler inspires the most respect and fear?"

Smith (still thinking of his sore knuckles): "The one on your desk, sir!"

A little boy went to the house of an old lady, and asked her if she would get his arrow for him, as it had fallen into her garden.

"Certainly," she said. "Which part of the garden is it in?"

The little boy hesitated, and then said:
"Plea-pp-please, mum, it's sticking in your cat!"

Two Lancashire weavers were discussing the suggestion to keep boys at school a year or two longer.

"Art, in favour o' childer goin' t' skoo' till they're sixteen?"

"No, I am not," replied his friend. "I'm noane gooin' to have our Bill comin' whocame fro' t' skoo' an' axin' mo for sixpence for a shave!"

A Yorkshireman went into a cafe in London for his dinner, which included meat, potatoes, and peas. Whilst eating his dinner a waiter noticed him picking his peas up with a knife. Going up to him the waiter said:

"I always eat my peas with a fork."
To which the Yorkshireman replied:
"Why, can't tha balance them, lad?"



What do you want to know? Whatever it is, large or small, hard or soft, it makes no difference. Ask Your Editor or the Oracle, the whiskey-wid wonder, who chats with the Editor every week.

HOW MANY BEANS MAKE FIVE?

IF any GEM reader happens to be contemplating the cultivation of a set of flowing whiskers in imitation of yours truly, let him take my advice and desist. Wait, chums, while I tell you what happened to your bewhiskered and brainy friend, I mean me, the other day when I was called into the Editor's sanctum.

The Editor has been feeling the heat of late, and so he has had an electric fan installed in his office. You know the sort of thing—spins round about ten million times a minute and makes a nice, cooling draught that whisks the papers and cigarette-cards and postage stamps and things straight out of the window before you can say "knife."

Well, I barged into the sanctum, quite the little innocent. Round went the fan, and up went my whiskers, neatly entangled in the revolving blades of the aforesaid fan. Did I yell? You'd be surprised the names I thought of for that fan. When the old Ed. pressed the button and the fan stopped, my whiskers were so mixed up with each other, so whisked about, as you might say, that it took us till lunch-time to straighten things out.

But the worst was to come. Having removed the jolly old fan from the end of my beard, I heard the Editor exclaim:

"Ha! So you've come to the office without a tie, have you, my lad?" Then I realised that his gimlet eye was fixed on my shirt-front, which was minus the customary Borstolian colours. As a matter of fact, chums, I had dressed in a bit of a hurry that morning, but in the usual way the absence of neck-wear would not have been noticed. But that fan showed me up properly—I mean, showed my shirt-front up, and the Ed. was properly cross, I can tell you.

I was all of a tremble, but, luckily, the Editor's eye rested on a letter he had on his desk.

"And, speaking of ties," he said, "a reader in Reading wants to know what railway ties are like? Now, come along, my lad, tell me what railway ties are like, will you?"

"Yes, sir," I said. "The guard on the train I travel up in of a morning wears a red one. Most railwaymen do, I believe—red or green. It matches the signals, you see."

"You're quite funny enough," said the Editor, "without trying to be. This

question has to do with railway construction."

"That's different, sir," I answered. "Railway ties are the beams on which the rails are laid; they're sometimes called sleepers. These ties, nowadays, are made from quick-growing wood that has been treated with chemical preservatives, and they are protected from wear and tear by tie-plates."

The Editor picked up another letter. William Lake, of Dalston, would like us to describe a dolphin. I'll have that one in verse, my lad.

"Right-ho!" said I. "The ballad of the dolphin, spasm one. The dolphin is found in the sea or large rivers, and often is seen around ships; but the sight of this fish shouldn't give you the shivers, while it playfully gambols and dips. It has two hundred teeth, and is ten feet in length, and is black on the top and white under; it is noted for gracefulness rather than strength, and—what's the next question, I wonder?"

"What's chaparral? This query is from Tom Fisher, of Newcastle."

"Chaparral is a growth of stunted trees and shrubs, with hard leaves, and is found in regions that have short, wet winters, and hot, dry summers. Chaparral grows slowly to about five feet in height. It is found chiefly in Southern California, along the coast of Chile; also round the Cape of Good Hope, and on the south-western coast of Australia.

"It serves a useful purpose, as the winter rains are stored round its roots, and the shade it gives prevents this from being evaporated. In the Californian chaparral there are about a hundred and fifty different species of plants, the main ones being the scrub oak, the buckthorn, the manzanita, sumac, and sage. In the old days the Indians used the nuts and berries in the chaparral for food."

"Dick Palfrey asks what a merle is?"

"Merle is an old name for the black-bird."

"And what is a joss-house?"

"A Chinese house of worship."

"What is a maharanee?"

"The title given to the wife of a maharajah."

"Who are the Bretons?"

"Natives of Brittany, in France."

"How do groengages get their name?"

"From the man who first made them popular, in the 14th century. His name was Gage."

"Peter White, of Blackpool, wants to know how we get the word pedigree?"

"That, sir, comes from the French for crane's foot, which is 'ped de grue.' Pedigrees, as you know, are shown on genealogical charts, and the French folks thought these charts looked like crane's feet. Hence the milk in the coconut."

"And here's another natural history query," said the Editor, picking up another letter. "Which bird, in proportion to its size, lays the smallest eggs?"

"The cuckoo."

"And can you tell another reader how loofahs are made?"

"The loofah is not made, it grows. There is an Eastern plant which is a

kind of sponge-gourd, and which yields a fruit called the loofah. The loofah we use to scrub ourselves with in the bath is the fibre obtained from this fruit."

"A Liverpool reader wants to know what Hadrian's Wall was like?"

"The Romans built Hadrian's Wall, to defend the northern frontier of the Roman province of Britain. It extended from Wallsend on the Tyne to Bowness on the Solway, and was 73½ miles long. The construction of the wall developed from a series of forts, four miles apart, large enough to hold 500 men. Later these forts were enlarged, and connected up by the wall. Remains of these fortifications still exist."

"A Plaistow reader asks why a haversack is so called?"

"That's not a very difficult point to settle," I said, "if you remember that in Scotland and the North of England they use the word 'haver' for 'oats,' and in the old days the haversack was merely the oat-sack, in which horsemen carried fodder for their horses. Later it was used for the sack in which soldiers carried their rations of food."

"We're getting along nicely," said the Editor; "you can cut yourself off a large slice of cake at tea-time. G. Oswald Arbutnot Bates writes to ask which living bird is the largest?"

"The ostrich, sir, every time. The male ostrich is nearly eight feet high, and weighs 300 lb."

"A GEM reader named Will Paxton writes to ask how fast a man would fall, dropping out of an aeroplane?"

"According to the experts, the greatest speed that a human body can attain when falling is 250 miles per hour. It may interest Will Paxton to know that a man retains consciousness, even when falling at that speed, though a great number of people believe that anyone falling several thousands of feet is killed before striking the ground. The sensation of falling has been described as that of floating, and the earth seems to be coming up to meet the falling body. At least, that's how it's been described, though I've never tried it myself."

"What is the gas called that comes out of a motor-car's exhaust?"

"Carbon monoxide."

"Is it deadly?"

"Yes."

"Can you tell George Capps what a killick is?"

"A killick is the name for a small anchor or stone used for mooring boats."

"Why were German submarines called U-boats?"

"Because the German name for them was Unterseeboote, meaning under-sea boats."

"Dick Loveday, of Luton, wants to know what the Diamond Sculls are?"

"Scullers compete at Henley for the Diamond Sculls, which consist of miniature sculls in enamel, with a pendant diamond."

"What is phossy-jaw?"

"That's a disease affecting the jaw-bones, brought on by phosphorus fumes. People employed in making matches sometimes become victims of it."

"What is a codling?"

"A kind of stewing apple."

"A Glasgow chum is taking up singing, and he wants to know who wrote the 'Coalminer's Song'?"

"Digby Lowe."

"And can you tell him how the 'Wheelbarrow Song' goes?"

"Yes, sir; on wheels."

"Get out!" said the Editor. I got.

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Nick o' the Highway!

CHAPTER 1

A Rival!

"**F**AITH, lad, but this is serious!" frowned Swift Nick.
"Tis the deuce indeed!" Young Roy snapped fiercely. "But what the plague are we to do about it?"

The two masked highwaymen reined in their horses, and glared in bewilderment and fury at the dark woods, into which their unexpected assailants, a crew of yokels and villagers, had just vanished.

Their long riding-coats were plastered with mud; Nick's three-cornered hat had been torn by flying stones, and Roy dabbed at a gash in his cheek.

Furiously had the villagers pelted the two pals, accusing them of holding up and robbing a poor tenant farmer, named Giles Lee. Quite false was the charge. Neither Swift Nick nor Roy ever robbed poor country folk, and it was plain that the villagers had had wrong information.

"None the less, 'tis serious, cully," barked Nick. "For yonder numskulls will doubtless turn all their friends against us."

"Ay," agreed Roy. "And a tidy mess we shall be in then, by thunder!"

In fact, things looked mighty black to the two pals.

Like all gentlemen of the High Toby, they depended for their very existence on their friendly relations with the country folk, to whom they often made gifts from their spoils, receiving in return news of Runners' movements and help when hard-pressed.

If the local country folk suddenly turned against Swift Nick and young Roy, soon would both be run down, and hanged on some wayside gibbet or Tyburn Tree.

But in vain had the pals protested that they never robbed

Farmer Giles. After hurling a volley of missiles, the yokels fled, vowing threats of vengeance. Hence Nick's and Roy's wrath and anxiety.

For some minutes both sat their horses, glaring through the eye-slits in their masks at the dark woods, racking their brains for some means of clearing themselves of the false charge. The thought of flying for their lives from the district they brushed aside instantly.

"We will not be hunted away," Roy declared vigorously.

"Never!" growled Nick. "This is our section of the London road; we know every bolt-hole, and all the country folk were our friends until now. What can be Farmer Giles' game in lying—"

He broke off, excitedly snatching his gauntleted fists together.

"Zounds, cully! I've solved the riddle," he cried.

"Eh?" gasped Roy.

"By my life, we have a rival."

"Another tobyman?" gasped the lad.

"Without doubt," Nick replied, his eyes flashing. "I

warrant some knave has started poaching on our preserves, the London road, to wit. 'Tis he who robbed Farmer Giles, and you numskull villagers put the deed down to us."

"Then—" cried Roy.

"We must swiftly settle our rival and recover Farmer Giles' bag o' guineas," Swift Nick laughed grimly. "But first we must attend to the York mail coach. Come on, cully."

Instantly the pals proceeded on their way, intending to hold up the York mail coach, rival or no rival. The latter must be sought out and dealt with afterwards.

It was a dark night, a good night for highwaymen, and soon they came to the belt of trees, towards which they had been riding when they were attacked by the angry yokels.

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FEUD AMONG HIGHWAYMEN!

Nick pulled up Sultan, his famous black horse, and reined back off the road into the shadow of the trees. He was joined by Roy. Then the two highwaymen pulled bell-mouthed pistols from their deep pockets, saw to flint and priming, then sat their mounts, motionless and invisible to passers-by.

They had some time to wait for the York coach. But they remained alert, every nerve athrill, and staring down the white ribbon of road through the eye-slits in their masks.

Time passed slowly. Once they thought they heard the muffled thudding of hoof-beats, and tensed, wondering if a belated traveller, worth holding up, was coming.

But the southing of wind in the branches above them drowned all other sounds. It seemed the hoof-beats were only heard in imagination, till at last, far away down the road, Nick and Roy saw the yellow glimmer of coach lamps.

Came then the thunder of wheels and roar of hoofs. The mail coach was coming, and the two pals braced themselves, stared excitedly from their cover, to see the galloping coach-horses ridden by postilions.

Up to the belt of trees thundered the swaying coach. Then Swift Nick clapped home his heels, and out from the shadows leapt black Sultan, to bar the way.

"Stand and deliver!" Nick roared threateningly.

In a second Roy was at his side, then arose a din of yells and angry shouts. But sight of the two masked highwaymen with levelled pistols was too much for the postilions. They threw their horses back on their haunches, and the coach came to a halt amidst creak and jingle of harness, clatter of hoofs, and shouts of alarmed passengers.

"Zounds! Tobymen!" The cloaked guard bellowed.

He whipped up his blunderbuss, and a plucky passenger thrust a big horse pistol out of the coach window.

Bang! The passenger's pistol belched smoke and flame, but his bullet went wide, then swiftly all opposition was overcome. With one shot Swift Nick removed the guard's cocked hat, while with another he shot away the passenger's pistol. Then he grimly bade the guard throw down his blunderbuss and descend, and the postilions to dismount.

Right swiftly were the orders carried out, and Nick, laughing delightedly, told Roy to remain at the horses'

heads. Then he rode up to the coach door, to see four passengers inside, and to cover them with the spare pistols he snatched from his saddle-holsters.

"Your money or your life, gentlemen!" he cried gaily. "Four passengers as well as the mails! A rich haul to-night! Ho, ho!"

In fact, it seemed that the two pals were going to make a rich haul, but there came that moment a startling interruption.

From away up the road there sounded a fierce drumming, then a horseman loomed up out of the gloom, spurring and yelling.

"A Runner?" Roy gasped angrily.

But the new-arrival was no Bow Street Runner. In a moment the two pals saw he was masked like themselves, and wore a long riding-coat of rusty-brown and a battered cocked hat. He had a pistol in his right hand, a long sword clapped at his side, and he rode a bony chestnut horse.

"Plague take ye!" he yelled harshly at the pals as he charged down. "Who are you to hold up yon coach, when I was waiting back yonder for it? Hence, ye varmints!"

But Nick and Roy had no intention of being robbed of their plunder by another highwayman.

"By my life, yonder knave must be our rival, Roy!" Nick shouted. "Have at him!"

CHAPTER 2.

On the London Road!

WITH a shout Roy wheeled his horse, and his pistols flashed and roared. Came a howl of pain and fury from the rival highwayman, but he was charging down at full gallop, and his mount's shoulder struck Roy's broadside on, to send the lad and his horse crashing to the dust.

"How now, ye varmints!" rang out an exultant yell.

Bang, bang! The new arrival blazed at Nick, who ducked swiftly and fired in reply. But Nick missed, and charged forward with an angry shout as a drawn sword flashed in the gloom.

"Faith, I know you now, Cap'n Blakeny!" cried Swift Nick. "You're our rival, are you? Not for long, by thunder!"

But even as Nick made at the rival highwayman with pistol clubbed, the postilions and guard of the coach saw their chance to escape.

"Let dog eat dog, lads!" roared the rusty-cloaked guard. "Now's t' chance for honest men! Mount and ride through 'em!"

At that, pandemonium broke loose. The postilions swung to their saddles; the guard snatched up his blunderbuss and scrambled swiftly to his perch. Yells burst from the passengers and the coach horses snorted and plunged forward.

Boom, went the guard's blunderbuss, and a sheet of flame roared through the night. But, what with the choking dust, clouds of smoke, and the general uproar, it was almost impossible to tell friend from foe. Actually all the guard did was to blow one of his lamps to smithereens, and away rolled the coach, creaking and swaying, amidst a thunder of hoof-beats.

"Thunder! The hold-up is ruined!" Swift Nick roared in fury. "But 'tis the last time you poach on our preserves, cap'n!"

With that Nick launched himself at the rival highwayman, who parried the clubbed pistol with his sword, however, then lunged fiercely. Nick dodged, but felt a stab of pain as the sword point flicked across his shoulder, then he attacked again.

Things looked black for Nick, however, against a better armed assailant; but that instant Roy found his feet and came dashing forward.

"Stand, fellow!" the lad shouted. "Drop your weapon, or I'll put a ball through you!"

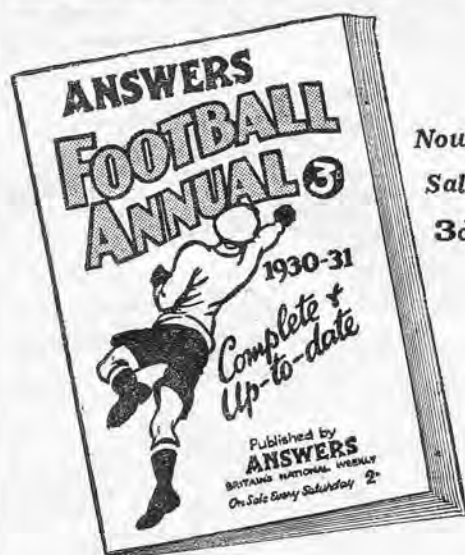
To tackle two opponents at close quarters was more than the rival highwayman seemed to care for. With a shout he ducked, whirled his horse away, then charged into the trees.

"But I'll drive you varmints off this road yet!" he yelled over his shoulder at the pals.

Vainly Roy blazed after him, for his rusty-brown coat was almost invisible and he vanished in the gloom. Roy remounted, and he and Swift Nick fiercely gave chase, but got no more sight of their quarry. The pals followed the sound of hoof-beats some distance into a wood, but at last all sounds ceased, and they drew rein in a glade, gasping for breath, angry and mighty disappointed.

"But we must catch him right soon, cully!" snapped Swift Nick. "I warrant he's the knave who robbed Farmer

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Giles, which dirty deed was put down to us! Captain Blakeny is his name."

"You know him?" gasped Roy.

"Ay, for a swashbuckling villain!" nodded Nick. "I've seen him before, and heard he rode the high toby down near London. But o' course the country folk down yonder would ha' none of him, for he robbed right and left, rich and poor alike, and so it seems he has come North. I recognised his brown coat, and his hawk face under his vizard."

"Faith, we'll soon clear him out o' our country," cried Roy. "We must! He's set our friends against us already."

Nick nodded.

"Ay, we'll hunt him out, and recover yon farmer's guineas, cully!" he laughed grimly. "But he's a noted swordsman and as cunning as a fox to boot! We must think of some trap to snare him."

Roy agreed vigorously.

The captain was known to Swift Nick as a treacherous, swashbuckling villain. And he was a mighty cunning and experienced rascal as well as a fine swordsman. How on earth was he to be lured into some trap?

"'Twas his horse's hoofs we heard, after all, when we were waiting for you coach," barked Nick.

He broke off, and suddenly laughed grimly.

"Faith, cully, I've hit on the plan that will scupper Cap'n Blakeny!" he cried, wheeling his horse.

"Out with it!" grinned Roy.

"We shall need the aid of our good friend John Dunn, landlord of the Fox and Hound Tavern," chuckled Nick. "Come on!"

With that, both clapped home their heels, galloped out of the wood, then went racing across dim meadows, clearing ditches and hedges at mighty bounds, with their coat-tails flying in the wind.

There was no time to lose in striking a blow at Captain Blakeny, and they headed full tilt towards the Fox and Hound Inn. On their way, however, Swift Nick told Roy something of his plan, which made the lad gasp, then utter a roar of delighted laughter.

"'Twill be a merry jest, Nick!" he cried.

"That it will," Nick laughed grimly, and soon they came to the Fox and Hound Inn.

No lights showed at the diamond-paned windows of the old, thatched posting-inn, for the hour was late. After hiding their horses in a barn at the back, Nick and Roy entered stealthily by a secret door, to find burly John reading in his oak-panelled parlour.

Swiftly Nick told burly John of the dangers threatening them through the activities of Captain Blakeny, telling how the rascal had roused the country folk by robbing Farmer Giles, and how he had vowed to get rid of them.

"Will you help us, John?" Nick ended.

"That I will, Master Nick!" boomed the burly inn-keeper. "But have a care! I know this fox Blakeny by repute. Be wary how you go to work."

"Find out for us when he means to make his next hold-up," Nick laughed easily. "You have many ways of gaining information, John. Nay, I neither mean to ambush nor betray him—leave him to me."

In fact, burly John had many ways of discovering the whereabouts and plans of highwaymen. So, although wondering what Nick's game was, he set his servants to work forthwith, telling them to get in touch with Captain Blakeny.

This proved difficult.

Neither that night nor all next day did the two pals get news of their dangerous rival. Meanwhile, they kept close in the tavern, actually not daring to emerge, since all the country folk had become set against them. With the following dusk, however, burly John brought news to the pals.

"Cap'n Blakeny will hold up t' Lunnon coach to-night, Master Nick," he breathed excitedly. "He will lie in wait for it two miles below t' Grey Goose Inn."

"How d'you know?" gasped Nick eagerly.

"Because an ostler of mine found t' cap'n at yon inn," grinned burly John. "And told him that the coach



Nick fought gamely until a ragged coat was flung over his head and he was flung to the ground!

carries bullion, which it does. He also told him that the best place for t' hold-up would be at the bottom of that steep hill down yonder, seeing that the coach horses ha' to slow down for the climb."

"Well done, John! We'll ha' the captain trapped!" Nick laughed gleefully. "Come on, Roy."

And shortly afterwards, the two pals, their pistols primed and loaded, went trotting down the moonlit road towards the Grey Goose Inn.

They rode quietly past it, but drew rein a mile beyond. For Nick had no intention of riding on to Captain Blakeny's hiding-place, for the rascal might expect them to do this, and would be ready and waiting, to shoot the pals down from his cover. Nick's plan was a deep one, involving the hold-up of the London mail coach before it reached the hidden captain.

Breathlessly, the masked pals awaited the coach. At last they saw and heard it coming, then spurred forth from the shadows to bar the way.

"Stand and deliver!" thundered Nick.

Brief was the opposition at sight of two masked highwaymen with levelled pistols. The coach halted amidst pounding hoofs and shouts, and the postilions and guard clambered wrathfully down as ordered.

Then Swift Nick, bell-mouthed pistol in hand, bade the passengers descend. There were three of them. To their delight and surprise, however, Nick did not demand their money.

"Keep your purses, gentlemen!" he laughed gaily. "To-night we seek bigger game. But you, sir"—he pointed to a bewigged, cloaked passenger—"be good enough to hand me your hat and fur cloak."

Swiftly were the garments handed over at pistol-point, then Nick bade the passengers and guard walk back to the Grey Goose Inn, and there await the next day's coach. They vanished, grumbling, and vowing vengeance; then Nick promptly donned the borrowed cloak and hat and made to enter the coach.

"Faith, Roy, I'm going to give Captain Blakeny a surprise." He grinned over his shoulder. "I am now the
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passenger. Bring Sultan and your horse along, but keep well in rear and out o' sight, cully."

"Ay, Nick!" grinned Roy.

The lad knew that Nick's plan was to leap from the coach with levelled pistols when Blakeny held it up, and thus have the rival highwayman at his mercy. It seemed that nothing could go wrong with the plan.

So thought Nick, as he clambered into the coach and menaced the bewildered postillions with his pistols.

"Mount, lads, and ride on!" he ordered. "And no harm will come to you this night!"

Relieved, the postillions again swung to the coach-horses' backs. They cracked their whips, then on rolled the London coach once more, but with Swift Nick now for its sole passenger, his blue riding-coat hidden under the borrowed, fur-trimmed cloak.

As he swayed to and fro on the cushions Swift Nick laughed grimly to himself. Captain Blakeny would little dream who was in the coach!

It rolled on, with Roy riding some distance behind, leading black Sultan. And Nick glared out through the windows to see dim trees and hedges sliding past. He recognised landmarks, and abruptly tensed as he felt the horses slow down. They were nearing the foot of the steep hill. Would Captain Blakeny be waiting?

He was! Nick uttered a gasp of glee as he suddenly heard a rattle of hoofs, glimpsed a brown-coated horseman spurring from the shadows, and heard the hoarse command:

"Stand and deliver!"

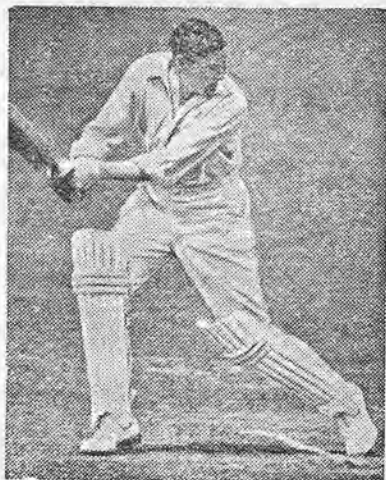
Instantly the coach stopped. The enraged postillions, held up twice in one night, swung to the ground. Through the coach window Nick saw Captain Blakeny covering them, and even as Blakeny swung towards the coach door Nick threw it open and leapt out.

"How now, cap'n?" Swift Nick laughed. "Well met!"

Captain Blakeny gasped, and his hawk face under his mask went white with rage and amazement. He could not imagine who was the masked, fur-cloaked passenger, who covered him with two bell-mouthed pistols, even while his own were still pointed at the postillions.

"Who t' plague are you?" he roared harshly.

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"Swift Nick! I ha' you covered, cap'n!" came the grim reply. "Drop your weapons!"

CHAPTER 3.

The Duel!

HARDLY could Captain Blakeny believe his ears. He gulped in fury, but there was no arguing with the steady pistols in Nick's hands, and he let his own weapons clatter to the ground.

"Tricked, by thunder! But I'll ha' you yet, Swift Nick!" he raged.

"Nay, 'tis I who have you, cap'n!" Nick retorted gaily. "I and my cully mean to take you to London, and there place you on an out-bound ship, in charge of a trustworthy skipper. You shall never poach on our preserves again!"

"Ho! Won't I?" sneered Captain Blakeny.

"Never again!" Nick laughed cheerfully. "But first throw down the bag o' guineas you took from Farmer Giles, thus setting all our pals against us!"

Captain Blakeny tuned, but seemed about to obey. He made to feel in the deep pockets of his brown riding-coat, but suddenly from his lips rang out a shrill whistle, and loudly he bellowed:

"Out with you, lads! Seize this rascal! 'Tis Swift Nick!"

Astounded, Nick swung round. To his astonishment there burst forth a chorus of hoarse yells from the darkness. Then sounded a tramping rush of feet, and through the hedge came dashing a score of evil-looking poachers and footpads.

Too late, Nick realised that these ruffians had been hiding behind the hedge all the time—were, in fact, allies of Captain Blakeny's, who had come stealthily to the hold-up scene to share in the spoils.

Shouting a furious warning, Nick blazed over their heads, but on charged the ragged scamps, brandishing knives, bludgeons, and even swords. In a split second Nick was surrounded. He fought gamely, but a ragged coat was flung over his head from behind, and he was flung to the ground half-suffocated.

He could dimly hear shouts, the thunder of hoofs and wheels, and realised the postillions were seizing their chance to make off with the coach. The same instant Nick heard other shouts, hoof-beats, then shots.

Roy, coming behind with his pal's horse, had heard the uproar, guessed something had gone wrong with Nick's plan, and came charging down to effect a rescue. But the plucky lad was himself surrounded and dragged off his horse.

In a few minutes both Swift Nick and Roy were helpless prisoners, bound hand and foot. The pals had been caught in their own trap!

"Away with them to the caves, cullies!" Captain Blakeny croaked triumphantly. "Swift Nick's king o' the road, is he? He made a mistake in defying me!"

In truth, it seemed there was no trapping or defeating Captain Blakeny, who had obviously quickly made friends with the gang of footpads and poachers who lived in Hanley Woods. The bound pals struggled in vain. They were snatched up and carried roughly away, while ragged ruffians brought along their captured horses in the rear.

Soon Nick and Roy were dumped down, their legs unbound, and were ordered to proceed afoot. There was nothing for it but to obey, seeing they were hopelessly outnumbered by their armed captors; and there followed a gruelling march through dark woods, the pals urged on by knife and sword-points.

Several times they were struck with bludgeons. But at last the whole party emerged into a moonlit forest glade, where the black mouth of a cave was visible in a hillside. Then Captain Blakeny dismounted, and had his prisoners placed before him.

"How now, Swift Nick?" He grinned, his eyes flashing evilly through his mask slits. "I told you and your young cully I would rid the road o' ye!"

"You have not done so yet, villain!" Nick retorted boldly. "You a tobyman? Nay, you're a slinking cut-throat!"

"Ha! done!" thundered Captain Blakeny. Then to his wolfish followers: "Hola there! Bring a rope! We'll settle the careers of Swift Nick and his young cully for good and all, and save the public hangman a job! Ho, ho!"

At that, several ruffians darted into the cave, to reappear with a length of rope. One end of the rope they flung over the branch of an oak tree amidst a chorus of hoarse laughter. All the time Nick's and Roy's brains were working furiously, but there seemed no chance of escape whatever.

"I brought ye here to give ye a chance of working under

me," sneered the hawk-faced captain. "But, faith, 'tis plain you are better hanged, after all!"

"Ride the high toby under you?" Swift Nick laughed scornfully. "Nay—"

He broke off, and suddenly exploded to action. He had been stealthily working his wrist-bonds loose all the time during the journey through the dark forest. And suddenly he tore his hands free, and leapt at the nearest footpad and wrenched away his sword.

It was all done as quick as lightning. In a twinkling there stood Nick, with a drawn sword flashing in his hand and his back against a tree.

Arose a storm of howls and yells, and several footpads made a rush at Nick, brandishing knives and bludgeons, but the sword point flickered in their faces, and back they fell, snarling and shouting. As for Captain Blakeny, he uttered a bark of fury and whipped a pistol from his pocket.

"Hold, cap'n!" cried Nick. "A crack swordsman, are you? Faith, you are nothing but a swashbuckling braggart! I lay I could spit you here and now in three minutes!"

At that Captain Blakeny snarled scornfully, and his thin lips parted to reveal his teeth. But he fell for the trap. Just as Nick intended, the challenge stung his pride.

"Bah!" he sneered. "Dost know I have killed three men in duels, numskull, and worsted many others?"

"But you dare not fight me!" taunted Nick.

Captain Blakeny bristled with wrath.

"Will I not?" he shouted. "Back, lads!" he roared at the footpads and poachers. "I'll show you some sport, by thunder!"

"Right!" cried Nick. "A duel to the death, cap'n! A duel for the right to ride high toby on this section of the London road. But do your men promise to let me and my cully go free if I win?"

"Ay, ay!" went up a storm of mocking laughs. "If ye beat t' captain, Swift Nick!"

It was plain that the ragged ruffians thought Nick had no chance against the swashbuckling captain, a duellist of repute. The latter thought so, too, hence he readily accepted Nick's challenge, thinking to show off his skill and raise his prestige in the eyes of his raffish crew.

"On guard!" he cried mockingly, and whipped out his blade.

In a moment the two masked combatants faced each other in the moonlit glade, and about them the ragged rascals formed a ring, laughing and cheering. Roy's heart beat fast. On this duel of Nick's depended both their lives, and it seemed Nick could not win. Nick also felt his pulses throb with something like anxiety, but he clenched his teeth, determined to win if it were possible.

"Have at you, cap'n!" he cried.

Clash, clash! The glittering blades met, locked, then disengaged, then the pair were at it hammer and tongs.

It seemed impossible for human arms to work so fast. Gaps of excitement rose from the onlookers, as the combatant's feet thudded on the grass; as their blades flashed and twirled in thrust and parry.

Clash! Sparks flew from the steel, and after a minute of fierce action it was seen that there were two rents in Nick's blue riding-coat. A second later blood flowed from a cut in Nick's cheek.

"Hurrah! First blood to t' cap'n!" roared the wolfish onlookers.

"Have at him, Nick!" yelled Roy. "He's the knave who set all our cullies against us."

But Swift Nick had already discovered himself out-matched in swordsmanship. In vain he lunged and lunged, to find his blade repeatedly parried, to see ever before him the mocking grin of his adversary. But he had also discovered that he was much fitter than Captain Blakeny, who seemed short-winded and slower on his feet.

Obviously Nick's only chance was to wear the fellow down, so he went on the defensive, fighting coolly, parrying and dancing back out of reach a dozen times.

Quickly was Captain Blakeny's temper roused. He fell upon Nick with a perfect storm of thrusts, fighting fiercely and recklessly and driving Nick backwards. For five full minutes the duel raged in the glade, and the ragged audience howled with glee.

"Enough, cap'n!" bawled a big, bearded fellow at last. "Finish him! Faith, you've played with him long enough! Ah! T' cap'n wins! Swift Nick's finished at last, by thunder!"

There went up a perfect storm of whoops and cheers, for suddenly Nick slipped on the trampled grass and dropped his sword-point. As in a nightmare, young Roy saw his light-hearted, dashing cully at the other's mercy. He saw Captain Blakeny shorten his sword for a final mortal thrust. All seemed up with the two pals.

"At him, Nick!" yelled Roy. "Jump for your life, cully! Spit him!"

Somehow Nick did it. With a marvellous twist he escaped the deadly thrust, felt it slither across his ribs, then his blade was up again, and he was now the attacker.

Whoops of admiration burst even from the ragged poachers, and then again the duel was raging fiercely. And Nick could see his opponent was breathless, was playing for time to recover his wind. Now or never was Nick's chance. The duel could only have one end if Captain Blakeny was given time.

Hotly Swift Nick pressed his attack. He could feel the other weakening, see his parted lips. Three more



Captain Blakeny shortened his sword for a final, mortal thrust!

minutes of furious sword play, steel striking sparks from steel, then all at once a hoarse cry rent the night air.

Nick had lunged home. His point sped through the captain's brown coat, and, with a cry of despair, the man flung up his arms, dropped his sword, spun round, then fell flat on his back. He never moved again.

For a few seconds the ragged onlookers could hardly believe their eyes as they gazed at the prone figure, then at the gasping Nick leaning on his sword-point. Then they swarmed round Nick with cheers of admiration, while some hastened to cut Roy's bonds.

"Hurrah for Swift Nick!" they yelled. "Zounds, he beat t' cap'n in fair fight! Hurrah for him and his young cully!"

And, to their surprise and delight, Swift Nick and Roy found themselves elected leaders of the Hanley Woods rascals, and offered the safety of the secret cave if ever they found themselves hard pressed by Runners. But what gave them greatest glee was being able to return Farmer Giles' guineas a few days later, and the fact that the country folk, getting wind of the duel and learning who really robbed the farmer, rallied round the pals again. Once more they were without a rival on their section of the High Toby.

(Now look out for next week's GEM and another yarn of Nick o' the Highway. It's a real thriller, boys!)

Conclusion of Our Great Adventure Serial.

CHICK CHANCE—Adventurer!

By Robert Murray.

The Last of Matturis!

MASSED four abreast, a dozen of the giant blacks broke away from the main body and charged recklessly up the steps, spears bristling over the top of their lion-skin shields.

Reluctantly Chick Chance toppled a massive boulder over the lip of the shelf. With a grinding, grating noise it went bounding and bumping down the steep steps amid a shower of dust and loose stones.

The Amazeli realised their peril, but they were unable to avoid it. Some flung themselves flat, others pressed close against the face of the rock. Howls of terror and dismay rent the air.

Herbert closed his eyes, and shuddered when he at length opened them again. The pathway had been swept clean, save for two mangled black figures. The remainder of the Amazeli had been hurled into space, and were dropping like plummets to the rocks and the river, thousands of feet below!

"It had to be done! It was our lives or theirs!" muttered Chick huskily. "Perhaps that'll teach the rest of them a lesson."

Jessie Latimer uttered a gasp of alarm, and clutched at her father's arm. The solid rock beneath them seemed to shudder and sway, as though the gigantic pinnacle of basalt was rocking on its foundations.

"Good lor', what's happening?" cried Herbert, his eyes popping in their sockets. "It—it don't seem safe to me up here!"

The air seemed to vibrate, as though to the roll of distant thunder. Then came a rumbling roar as a huge fragment of rock that had formed the jutting snout of the lion's head broke away from its place, and plunged downwards past the mouth of the cave.

It shattered in a thousand pieces as it struck the winding steps, fifty feet below, and like a miniature landslide swept on to engulf the horde of terrified Amazeli who stood helpless in its path.

It was all over in an instant. Steps, stones, and howling natives were hurled into space like a handful of cosmic confetti and disappeared into the depths!

Professor Latimer's calm voice broke the aching silence that followed.

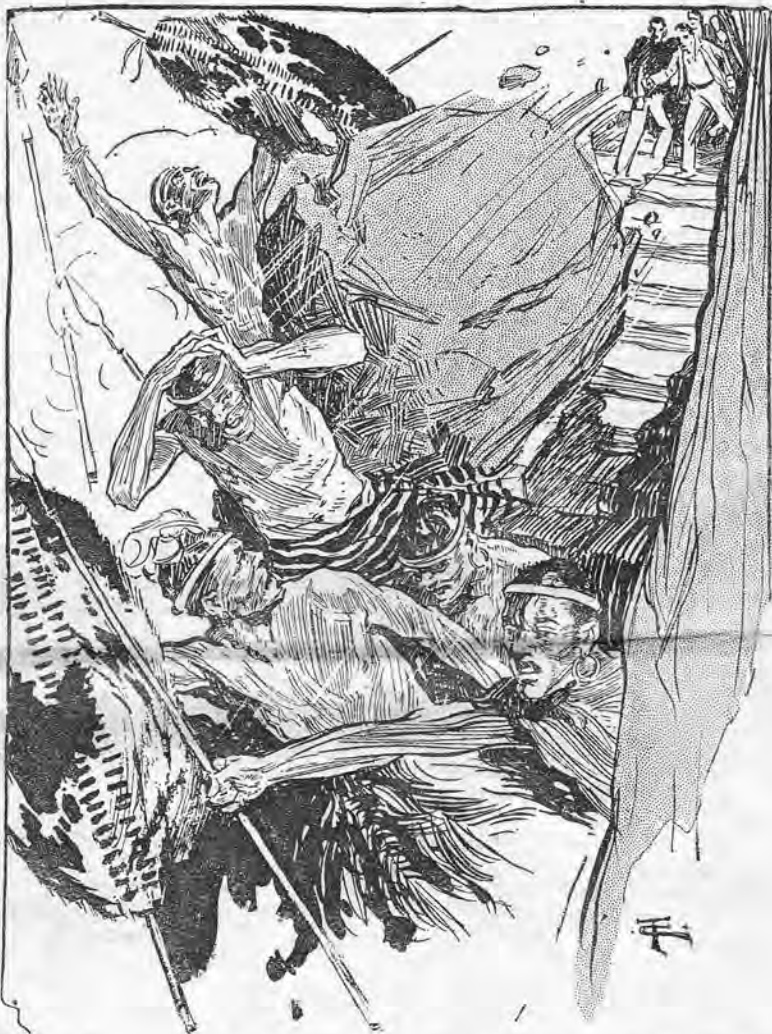
"An earthquake!" he declared. "I felt no less than three distinct shocks!"

"Sh-sh-shocks is the right word!" jerked Herbert through his chattering teeth. "I—I wouldn't be surprised if it ain't the end of the world! See how dark it's getting!"

Chick stared uneasily at the sky, and a shiver of awe trickled unpleasantly down his spine. The blinding glare of the tropical sun had turned to a dull, copperish glow that flung lurid beams of light across the wide valley below. The temperature had dropped at least thirty degrees in as many seconds, and an uncanny shadow of gloom was creeping across the heavens. Yet there was not a cloud in the sky.

In the Black City, far below, there sounded faintly a weird wail of terrified voices.

"Ha!" Professor Latimer suddenly snapped his fingers as he drew a ragged notebook from his pocket and flipped over the pages. "Most extraordinary! How did I come to overlook such an interesting and infrequent event as this? There is nothing to be alarmed about. In another



twenty minutes we will be fortunate enough to witness a total eclipse of the sun."

"An eclipse of the sun!" echoed Horace, staring doubtfully at the old man. "A minute ago you were talking about an earthquake! What about them shocks we jest felt?"

"A not unnatural phenomena," explained Latimer blandly. "An eclipse of the sun is often accompanied by mild seismic disturbances. Ah, there is another slight earth tremor!"

The great pinnacle of rock shuddered and shook from top to bottom. The hush and gloom of twilight was gradually creeping over the earth.

"I fancy this will have a strong moral effect on these unfortunate, superstitious savages," declared Latimer. "No doubt it would be easy enough to convince them that we are responsible for what is happening. I suggest we make our way to terra firma and attempt to reach your plane."

"I certainly don't feel inclined to remain up here!" jerked Chick grimly, as another alarming tremor made itself felt. "I'd sooner face the Amazeli any old time."

"But we can't get down!" gasped Herbert, in sudden horror. "That last chunk of rock that fell has smashed a great gap in the stairs. We're trapped!"

Latimer smiled reassuringly.

"We can get down the same way as we came up," he said, lighting the old-fashioned oil-lantern and leading the way towards the tunnel at the back of the cave. "I don't think we will have any more trouble with the Amazeli. The darkness of the eclipse will put the fear of death into them."

"It's properly put the wind up me," admitted Horace candidly, as the little party commenced the long descent through the heart of the rock. "I reckon we've had enough excitement for one day, and nothing to eat on top of it."

It was not a pleasant journey. Tremor after tremor ran through the great rock, accompanied by eerie groans and creakings, and clouds of fine dust dimmed the light of the professor's lantern.

Though it seemed like hours, actually it was just ten minutes later when they descended a final flight of winding stone steps and emerged on the terrace that overlooked the spacious square at the base of the rock.

Jessie Latimer caught her breath and laid a trembling hand on Chick's arm. The sunlight had fled, and everything was enshrouded in a cold, grey gloom. The eclipse had started, and the shadow of the earth already half-obscured the face of the sun.

The Amazeli were huddled together like cattle in the streets of the Black City. Evidently they thought the end of the world had come. Spears and shields had been flung to the ground, and their eyes were rolling in terror as they stood wailing and moaning, and staring up at the darkened sun.

Chick almost tripped over the body of a man who lay sprawling at the head of the last flight of steps. His head was crushed, and close by was a jagged fragment of rock that had evidently fallen upon him from the heights above.

"Humph, it's Matturis!" exclaimed Latimer unemotionally. "He won't trouble us any more—he's stone dead. The murder of King Zernes has been speedily avenged. And he was the last of the original inhabitants of this strange and wonderful city."

The earth seemed to rock and quiver beneath them as they descended to the city square, and walked boldly towards the bridge that spanned the rushing river. Pistol in hand, Chick and Herbert flanked the little party, staring watchfully at the Amazeli, who were huddled on all sides.

Eustace Latimer suddenly halted, and, flinging his hands impressively above his head, roared out several sentences in the native tongue.

"I have told the Amazeli," he explained a moment later, "that once we have been allowed to depart in peace the light of the sun will return to brighten the sky. That is not strictly true, for it would happen in any case."

The End of Black City!

NOT a hand was raised against them as they marched across the swing-bridge and headed straight for the open fields where they had left the monoplane. It was now almost as dark as night, and shock after shock quivered and stabbed through the bowels of the earth.

"By gosh, let's get up in the air, where it's safe!" panted Herbert, breaking into a run. "I've seen enough of this blessed place to last me for the rest of my life."

Chick shouted aloud in relief and delight as they came in sight of the big monoplane, standing exactly as they had left it. Horace and Herbert worked feverishly, but it took them a good ten minutes to replace the missing parts that they had removed from the motor.

"We're almost safe now," assured Chick, as he assisted Jessie Latimer into the saloon. "You won't be sorry to see the last of the Black City?"

The girl shuddered, and allowed her dainty hand to rest gratefully in the young airman's tanned palm.

"I thought we should never get away! How can my father and I ever repay you for all you have done for us?"

Chick smiled.

"We'll talk about that some other time," he answered meaningly. "I haven't quite finished my job as yet; it won't be completed until Howard Paige hears that you and your father are alive and safe."

Horace swung the prop, and the roar of the powerful motor thundered across the silence of the darkened valley. Chick opened the throttle and watched the rising needle of the tachometer. His practised ear told him that there was not a fault in the engine.

"All aboard!" shouted Horace; and he scrambled into the cockpit. "Give her the gun, Chick, old son."

The darkness was increasing. In another few minutes the eclipse of the sun would be complete. Eustace Latimer sighed regretfully as he threw a last glance towards the

Black City. He had most of his precious notebooks stowed away in his pockets, but he knew that the full history of the first inhabitants of that strange place would never be written.

Buzzing like a giant dragon-fly the monoplane sped across the open ground and soared gracefully into the air as Chick pulled back on the stick. Up and up she swept, climbing in wide circles, until she had reached an altitude of ten thousand feet.

"Great Christopher, look at that!" shouted Horace, his face sudden white as he clutched his companion by the arm and pointed downwards over the edge of the cowl. "The whole blinking place is crumbling to pieces! Look! Look at the Lion's Head!"

Chick kicked hard on the left rudder and put the plane into a steep bank. The spectacle that was revealed to him was one that he never forgot—one that no living soul would ever see again. High up as they were, the air quivered to several violent shocks, that opened a yawning chasm in the earth that ran swiftly across the width of the valley below.

The field from which they had risen was swallowed up in an instant. Where the river had coursed a cloud of steam spewed up out of the bowels of the earth, and the towering pinnacle of the Lion Rock swayed backwards and forwards like a sapling in a gale.

Slowly, almost gracefully, the rugged, rough-hewn lion's head broke away and crashed straight down upon the gleaming roofs of the Black City. An instant later the entire rock seemed to crumble in the centre and subsided amid an eruption of earth, stones, and steam that spread out like a mushroom, and sank gently in a hanging cloud.

Boom! There was a noise like a thousand thunders as the huge monolith collapsed, burying the Black City and its unfortunate inhabitants beneath hundreds of thousands of tons of pulverised rock and other debris!

The monoplane was flung here and there like a leaf by the terrible displacement of air. Chick's face was white as he wrenched his fascinated gaze away from the awe-inspiring sight below and concentrated all his attention on the jerking controls. The next time he glanced down there was nothing to be seen but a rolling cloud of vapour, that spread swiftly until it had covered the entire floor of the rock-walled valley.

(Continued on next page.)

ALL HANDS ON DECK!



Here is a wonderful new serial, which starts next week. David Goodwin, the author of this gripping yarn of the Navy, has written it specially for "GEMITES." David Goodwin is one of the finest authors of boys' stories in the world. Here, in this tale of a boy who fought his way up in the face of adversity, he has surpassed himself. It is a story which will add to a reputation already world-wide.

YOU must not miss this great story! Here is a feast of adventure and mystery surrounded by the romantic glamour of the sea!

The Lion Rock had vanished. The Black City of the Amazili was no more, and Bark Roscoe and Dr. de Selvas lay buried amid the millions of pounds worth of jewels and gold that had lured them to their fate.

"Straight home, Chick, old son," said Horace, a trifle faintly. "I've had enough of Africa, and I reckon we've earned our pay for this little job."

Chick Chance nodded in grim agreement as he glanced at the map on the instrument-board and headed the plane due east, where lay British territory and safety.

"If our luck holds good we should land at Mambosa before nightfall," he declared hopefully. "From there Latimer and his daughter will be able to catch a boat unless they prefer to save time and fly back to England with us."

Twelve hours later a messenger-boy arrived at the office of Mr. Howard Paige in London, and delivered a marconigram that occasioned the lawyer the greatest thrill he had ever experienced in all his life.

The wireless message had been relayed on from the seaport of Mambosa, in British East Africa. Paige's hands trembled with excitement as he adjusted his spectacles, and read the words on the yellow form.

"Everything O.K.," was Chick Chance's cheerfully laconic message. "Latimer and daughter fit and well. All flying back together. Expect to arrive Croydon Aerodrome Tuesday morning. All further news on arrival."

Perhaps the most unexpected item of news that Chick Chance had to announce when the big monoplane landed at Croydon two days later was the fact that he had made arrangements—with the connivance of pretty Jessie Latimer—to accept Professor Eustace Latimer as his future father-in-law.

"Chick is welcome to all I've got," said the old explorer resignedly. "If it hadn't been for the bravery and determination of him and these two loyal fellows, Herbert and Horace, Jessie and I would not be alive to-day."

The perils we survived, our amazing experiences in the unknown Africa! Our flight back! But you will be able to read all about them for yourself in my next book, which I hope to publish in a few months' time." Chick Chance flushed. It was good to be back in England, at the lure of adventure still burned strong within him.

THE END.

There's an end to all good things—hence the winding-up of this great adventure serial. But why worry? Next week's GEM will contain the opening chapters of other equally good serials, particulars of which appear page 27. You'll read it and enjoy it—of course you will.

"PEP FOR THE 'SAINTS'!"

(Continued from page 19.)

"Handcock," he said quietly, "I am beginning to think that a very great injustice has been done to you. But we will not go farther into the matter here. Come with me to Dr. Holmes. And you, Merry, kindly bring Trimble with us."

"Certainly!" said Tom grimly. "Come on, Baggy!"

"Yaroor! Leggo! I won't go to the Head—"

But with Tom Merry's hefty grasp upon him Baggy had no choice. He went, despite his fat struggles.

"Bai Joye!" breathed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "So Twimble was the culprit all along!"

Cyrus K. Handcock did not get a public flogging in Big Hall that evening, after all.

But Baggy Trimble did.

For in the Head's dreaded sanctum, under Dr. Holmes' stern cross-examination, Baggy gave away the whole truth, despite his terrified efforts to save himself. And Handcock was cleared completely.

Baggy would have been not only flogged, but expelled into the bargain, had it not been for Handcock. But the American schoolboy, like the sportsman he was, put in a plea for him which the Head, to make up for the wrong he had so nearly done to Handcock, granted to the American.

Baggy, of course, had to return all he could of the ill-gotten fiver to Handcock, and the Head commanded that Baggy should return the difference—sixteen shillings—by regular weekly instalments out of his pocket-money. And the Head would undoubtedly see that his orders were carried out.

It was a sadder, if not a wiser, Baggy that went to sleep in the Fourth Form dormitory that night, after the Fourth had made him run the gauntlet once or twice, just to show what they thought of him.

And Cyrus K. Handcock, after all, spent another night under the roof of St. Jim's—and many more lay before him, as a junior at the school which had so very nearly wrongfully expelled the American junior.

THE END.

(Now look out for another grand long story featuring Handcock, the hustler, in next week's GEM, entitled: "COUSIN ETHEL'S CHAMPION!" Boys, you're on a real peach of a yarn here, so make sure you order your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)

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