

HAVE YOU SEEN THE LATEST "HOLIDAY ANNUAL"?

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EVERY
WEDNESDAY.



"I Want to be a Fine, Straightforward Fellow like you, Gussy!" says Trimble.



The Heavy- weight Hero!

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD

CHAPTER 1.

A Lesson for Baggy!

"WE'VE stood it long enough," said Tom Merry.

"Too long!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Too long have we put up with Trimble's tricks!" went on Tom, growing eloquent. "We have been patient—we've been long-suffering and easy-going with the fat rotter! We've—"

"Oh, really, Tom Merry!" gasped Trimble indignantly.

"Why, aren't you always kicking me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've booted the fat worm right enough—times without number!" admitted Tom Merry grimly. "It's been for your own good, Trimble; but it's never done you any good. It hasn't stopped your grub-raiding, and you're growing a bigger nuisance than ever. As I say, we've

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been patient and long-suffering. But our limit is passed—the time has come to try other methods of reform."

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Trimble.

There was a roar of voices in the Junior Club-room at St. Jim's. Baggy Trimble, looking somewhat like a fat, cornered rat, glared about him apprehensively at the excited faces, some of them grinning, certainly, but most of them grim and wrathful.

He had need to be apprehensive. Baggy Trimble—cave-dropper, tale-bearer, incurable fibber, shameless borrower, and, last but not least, grub-raider—was up before the bar of justice. It was a bar composed of both Shell and Fourth Form fellows, and Baggy saw no mercy in their faces. Too long had he practised his knavish tricks, feeling secure, save for occasional kickings, in the easy-going good nature of his victims. But now, at long last, the worm had turned. A general meeting had been called to deal

And Good-Natured Gussy Falls for the Flattery of the Falstaff of the Fourth!

Can The Leopard Change Its Spots?

NO!

Can Trimble, The Worm, Become Trimble,
The Hero?

NO! BUT . . .

Wait! Now read this side-splitting, long,
complete yarn of the Chums of St. Jim's!

with the general nuisance; a combined effort was to be made to put an end to the tricks of Baggy Trimble.

The fat junior had been told he was wanted in the Common-room. So he had hurried along to the Common-room, hoping it was a feed. But now he knew that it wasn't a feed. It was retribution at long last.

"Oh—oh dear!" he gasped. "I—I say, it's all right, you fellows! I'll—"

"Silence, prisoner at the bar!"

"But—but it's all right!" gasped Baggy. "I—I'm going to turn over a new leaf, you chaps—honour bright! So—so that's all right! N—now I'd better be off, you know. Sorry I can't stop, and—and chat, but I've an appointment with Railton."

And Baggy started for the door. But there was no escape for Baggy. A dozen hands grabbed him at once, and he was hauled back again.

"No you don't, you fat grub-stealer!" bawled Grundy. "We're fed-up with you, you fat grub-stealer! My cake! It was only yesterday he boned my cake!"

"And my jam-tarts!" yelled Clarence York Tompkins.

"He bagged my tarts yesterday, too!"

"And my chocolate this morn—"

"And my toffee last night—"

"And my birthday cake last week—"

"Silence!" hooted Tom Merry, banging on the table before him with a ruler. "Silence, you born idiots! This is a court of justice, not a thumping monkey-house. Now, Trimble—"

"Yaroooooobop!" howled Trimble in dire alarm. "Leggo! I tell you it wasn't me—I'm innocent—"

"Silence! You've been found guilty of regular and persistent grub-raiding, Trimble, and it now remains—"

"I didn't, I haven't!" shrieked Baggy. "Isn't my word enough—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm the last fellow in the world to sneak anybody's

grub!" howled Trimble. "As for Grundy's cake, I didn't even know he had a cake. Besides, there were scarcely any plums in the beastly thing, and it wasn't worth kicking up a fuss about. As for Tompkins' jam-tarts—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling rotters! I tell you I'm innocent as a babe!" hooted Trimble. "Leggo! I've got to see Lathom—"

"We'll take you to see Lathom when we've finished with you—on an ambulance!" bawled Grundy. "Get on with the washing, Tom Merry!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Smash the fat worm!"

"Get on with it!" roared Grundy. "Dribble the fat rotter round the room to begin with, and then—"

"That's the idea! Go it!"

There was a roar of angry voices, and Trimble shrieked as the juniors surrounded him. But Tom Merry jumped up.

"Hold on, you asses!" he roared. "Order—order! This is a serious trial and not a riot, you idiots!"

"Yaas, wathah! Pway give Trimble a fair twial, deah boys!" cried Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The good-natured Gussy had suffered, perhaps, more than any other fellow from Trimble's depredations and trickery. But he was already feeling quite sorry for the hapless fat prisoner. "Let us hear what the fat wottah has to say, you know!"

"No need to hear what he has to say!" snorted Tom Merry. "We know he'll only tell whoppers, as usual. We know he's guilty, and we've given him chance after chance to change his rotten ways. It's time something was done, and we mean to do it. But we're doing it in an official and a proper manner. Trimble's got beyond a joke. Still, we'll give him every chance, as you say, Gussy."

He looked at the quaking Baggy Trimble.

"Now, Trimble, before I pronounce sentence you can say what you've got to say. If you've any excuse—"

"Oh dear! I—I say, it's all a mistake!" gasped Baggy, almost tearfully. "I've done nothing—I'm innocent as a baby! If somebody pinched Grundy's cake, for instance, it was Mrs. Taggles' cat!"

"You fat rotter!" gasped Grundy. "Could a cat break open a cupboard with a poker? Besides, I saw you with it, and chased you out of the School House!"

"Yes; but—but it was all a mistake!" said Trimble.

"The—the truth of the matter is—"

He paused.

"Now for a whopper!" murmured Lowther.

The pause was not a long one—Trimble was never at a loss for long.

"It—like this, you fellows," he went on hopefully. "You see, I happened to be passing Grundy's study, and—and on looking in I saw the cat at the cupboard. So—so I grabbed the poker and flung it at the cat, and it must have burst the cupboard door open. See?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Then—then the cat rushed out—"

"With the cake?" yelled Lowther.

"Exactly! And I rushed after it to save Grundy's cake!" said Trimble, eyeing Grundy reproachfully. "Grundy thought I was running away, but I wasn't; I was chasing the cat to recover the cake! So—so that's all right, and I suppose I can go now, you fellows—now I've cleared the matter up."



If Trimble really hoped that, he was an optimist. There was a howl, mingled with laughter.

"And—is that all the defence you can put up?" gasped Tom Merry.

"Eh? Oh, yes—excepting that I'm not the fellow to raid anybody's grub," said Trimble with dignity. "If you fellows refuse to take my word, then I've no other course than to retire from this room!"

And Trimble started to retire—hastily. But his desperate break for the door was stopped before he covered a foot. There was no escape.

"That's enough! Haul him here!" snapped Tom Merry. "We've wasted enough time on the fat idiot! Now, Trimble, you've heard what's been said, and you've had a chance to defend yourself! We're fed up with your tricks, and were going to stop them, once and for all. You're going to have a House whacking—twenty of the best with a cricket-stump!"

"Yarrooop!"

"And you're to be in Coventry for one week," resumed Tom grimly. "During that period every time you attempt to speak to any fellow you're to be kicked hard by that fellow! If you show signs of reform by the end of the week, we'll consider the lifting of the ban. If not, the sentence of Coventry will go on until you do. Got that?"

"Oh crikey! I say, you fellows—"

"Shave the prisoner over a form!" ordered Tom Merry.

"Over with him!"

"Yarrooop!" shrieked Trimble apprehensively. "Leggo! Oh crikey! I say, Tom Merry, I'll reform—honour bright! I'm sorry, and— Yarrooop!"

Bang!

Trimble was spreadeagled over the nearest form. Tom Merry grasped the cricket-stump. Trimble wriggled and shrieked. But he wriggled and shrieked in vain. Too many times had they given the crafty Baggy a "last chance," to no avail.

Whack!

"Yooooooooooooop!"

Baggy's yell was carsplitting as Tom brought the stump down for the first whack. But there were nineteen more to come, and Trimble's howl did not stop them coming.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Trimble shrieked and roared with anguish. As a rule, Tom Merry was the fellow to spare the rod. But he did no such thing now. Trimble had passed the limit, and he had to be taught a lasting lesson—for his own good and the good of the community.

So Trimble went through it. He did not go through it with fortitude or restraint; Trimble was no hero. He was fairly bellowing when at last Tom Merry laid down the stump.

"There!" said Tom, as Trimble rolled off the form, still howling with anguish. "That should be a last lesson, at all events, old fat man. Now remember, you've got a week to show signs of reform. If in that week you show no reasonable signs, then you'll stay in Coventry until you do. And that's that!"

The meeting broke up. Leaving the hapless transgressor doubled up in anguish on the floor, raising the echoes with his howls, the juniors streamed out, feeling that justice, for once, had been done to Baggy Trimble of the Fourth. Baggy Trimble, possibly, was feeling that it had been overdone!

CHAPTER 2. Dear Old Pal!

"Gussy, old fellow—"

There was a world of pathos and pleading in the tones of Baggy Trimble.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, halting in the quad, eyed him coldly, sternly. But the look of unutterable woe on the fat and flabby face of Baggy Trimble was enough to move a heart of stone. Gussy's heart was not of stone; indeed, it was a very soft heart—too soft, in the opinion of Blake and his chums.

Obviously Baggy Trimble was not enjoying life.

Baggy had been afraid of the whacking. But the rest of his punishment—the sentence of Coventry—he had not been at all afraid of. He had not taken it seriously.

Now he was taking it seriously—very seriously. It was nearly driving Trimble frantic. Trimble enjoyed talking, he enjoyed hearing his own voice. But he enjoyed still more letting other people hear it.

But other people wouldn't listen to him now. They were, perhaps, never keen to hear Baggy speak. Now they simply refused to hear. They walked away in dead silence. If Baggy did attempt to insist upon being heard, he got a hefty boot for his pains.

Since the sentence of Coventry, Baggy Trimble had collected more kicks in one day than he usually collected in a fortnight.

Being in Coventry was simply torture to such a garrulous fellow.

Arthur Augustus paused.

Every Shell and Fourth fellow had strict orders not to speak to Baggy—he was to be shunned. Though admitting that the sentence was a well-deserved one, Arthur Augustus had not approved of it. In his opinion, Baggy Trimble should have been given another chance after that record whacking.

And now that woe-begone expression on Trimble's fat features proved too much for Gussy's kind heart. His stern expression changed, his coldness melted, so to speak.

"Well, Twimble?" he said kindly. "If you wish to speak to me you may."

"And—and you won't kick me?" mumbled Baggy, ready to leap for safety.

"Bai Jove! No, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, eyeing Baggy now with compassion. "I twust, howevah, that you do not desiah to bowwow money—"

"Nunno!" gasped Baggy. "Nothing of the kind, old chap! I'm never going to borrow money again, D'Arcy!"

"Bai Jove! I am vewy glad to heah that, Twimble!"

"I'm turning over a new leaf," said Baggy. "I'm really going to reform, Gussy. I've had my lesson, and I'm going to try to be a decent fellow in future—like you!"

"Gweat Scott! I am vewy glad indeed to heah you say that, Twimble!" said Arthur Augustus, with an approving smile. "You were always a feahful little beast—"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"But it is nevah too late to mend, you know!" said Gussy kindly. "I twust you will stick to your wresolve, Twimble!"

Arthur Augustus was strolling on again, when Trimble clutched his arm desperately.

"I—I say, you might listen to a fellow, Gussy!" he gasped, almost with a sob in his fat voice. "You might stop and talk to a chap a bit."

"Bai Jove! I am wathah in a huwwy, Twimble—"

"But you might give a man a bit of encouragement when he's trying to reform!" said Trimble pleadingly. "I've had an awful time lately. Everybody kicking me, and no-body speaking to a fellow! Not a word of kind encouragement from anyone!"

Arthur Augustus came back. He was not the fellow to kick a man when he was down. On the contrary, he was always ready to lend a helping hand to the fallen.

"Cawwy on, Twimble, deah boy!" he said encouragingly. "I wathah think the fellows have been a twife too hard on you. If I can help you in any way, I shall be glad to do so!"

"It's hard—turning over a new leaf," said Trimble. "But a word of encouragement now and again—a hand held out in friendship—"

"Bai Jove! Oh! Yaas, exactly, deah boy!" gasped Gussy.

"A kind, friendly hand to guide one's faltering footsteps," said Trimble pathetically, "is all I ask and expect. I've been punished—"

"You weally deserved it, Twimble, you know!" said Gussy.

"I know! I know! I've been thoughtless and selfish!" said Trimble sorrowfully. "I've been greedy and—and dishonest, I'm afraid!"

"Bai Jove! That is the first time I've evah heard you admit anything, Twimble! You are already impvoved by—"

"Yes, yes! And I mean to improve more and more until I'm a fine, straightforward fellow like you, Gussy," said Trimble hurriedly. "I know my faults—I know I've been in the wrong all along. I deserve what I've got. I admit

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that I bagged Grundy's cake. I own up that I boned Tompkins' jam-tarts and Lumley's toffee. I've also been untruthful. I admit it. And I want to turn over a new leaf. But—but the fellows won't give a chap a chance."

"Weally, you have had hundweds of chances, Twim—"

"I'm shunned on all sides—treated like a Pharaoh—"

"A whattah?" gasped Gussy.

"A Pharaoh, you know—like a dog!" said Trimble tearfully.

"Oh! Bai Jove! You mean a pawiah, deah boy!"

"That's it," said Trimble, with a tear in his eyes and a sob in his fat throat. "It's awful being shunned like this



It was a wild shot. The master of the Fourth met the ink-pellet in full flight.

when a fellow wants to reform. Not a friendly hand—not an encouraging word!"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, very uncomfortable and disturbed. "I am vewy sowwy, Twimble. But you may count on me as a fwiend, deah boy. If I can help you in any way, I shall be vewy glad. Pway do not give way, old fellow!"

"I'll try, Gussy. But—but it's hard. Still, if you could tell the fellows that I really mean to reform, it would help!" said Trimble, glancing up at Gussy quickly.

"Oh!"

Arthur Augustus understood now. Trimble wanted him to intercede with the fellows on his behalf—to get the sentence of Coventry cancelled.

Had the innocent Arthur Augustus been a trifle less innocent he might have suspected more—that Trimble's tears were crocodile tears, and that his pathos was not quite so sincere as it might have been.

Arthur Augustus, however, was not a suspicious fellow—far from it.

"Bai Jove! I am afwaid that you will have to stand your punishment for this week!" he said, shaking his head. "It is up to you, howevah, to see that it does not last longah than a week. If the fellows wealise you weally mean to weform, they will let you out of Coventwy, you know."

"I know—I know! But it's hard!" mumbled Trimble. "Alone and friendless—every man's hand against a fellow! I—"

"Yaas—yaas, deah boy! I am vewy sowwy for you," said Gussy hastily. "But you may vely upon one fwiend—myself, you know. Keep a stiff uppah lip, Twimble, and when in need of encoiwagement or advice, pway wun along to me at Study No. 6."

"I—I will, old fellow! You're not so bad as the other beasts! You're softer—I mean, not so hard and heartless!" gasped Trimble. "I—I say, I'll come along with you now, if you like. As it's near tea-time—"

"Tea-time! Weally—"

"I—I mean, I'm feelinz awfully discouraged just now!"

said Baggy hastily. "A few kind words of encouragement now might save a fellow from losing heart, you know!"

"Ah! Oh, yaas, that is quite twue, deah boy," said Gussy, frowning thoughtfully. "Vewy well, Twimble. As a mattah of fact, I am wathah inclined to take you undah my wing, you know—twy to make a decent fellow of you. I wathah flattah myself on bein' tho wight man for the job. Pway come along, Twimble, and if Blake— Bai Jove! Heah is Blake now!"

Blake, Herries, and Digby appeared in the offing. They glared as if scarcely able to believe their eyes as they sighted their chum in affable conversation with the outcast.

"Gussy, you fearful dummy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You know that fat rotter's in Coventry?"

"Oh, yaas! But—"

"Then come away from him!" snorted Jack Blake wrathfully. "If you're asking for a Form licking, you ass—"

"You dummy!" snorted Herries. "Come away—"

"I uttably wefuse to come away, Hewwies!" said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"But that fat rotter's in Coventry!" hooted Digby.

"Not so far as I am concerned, Digby!" said Gussy icily.

"I did not approve of Twimble bein' sent to Coventwy, and I shall speak to him if I wish!"

"You—you frightful ass!"

"I wefuse to be called a fwightful ass, Jack Blake!" said Gussy warmly. "And I wefuse to be intimidated in this mattah! I wposose to use my own judgment as weguards speakin' to Twimble!"

"Leave him alone!" roared Blake.

"I wefuse to leave Twimble alone, Blake. Twimble is my fwiend—"

"Your whatter?" yelled Blake.

"My fwiend!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I have decided to give Twimble the benefit of my advice and pwotection for the wemaindah of this week, at least!"

"Fathead! Chump! Blockhead!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"The fellows will scrag you baldheaded for speaking to that fat worm!" howled Herries.

"I should wefuse to allow anyone to scrag me bald-headed, Hewwies!" said Gussy disdainfully. "Twimble has convinced me that he weally does desiah to weform, an' I ppropose to do my utmost to help him. I considah you fellows have tweated Twimble wathah wottenly, on the whole!"

"You—you—" Blake choked. "Are you going to leave Trimble, or not, Gussy?" he gasped at last.

"Most certainly not!"

"Then we'll jolly well make you!" roared Blake wrathfully, and he made a rush at Arthur Augustus.

Herries and Digby followed suit at once. Trimble was sent rolling away as Gussy's fond chums grasped him and waltzed around with him.

"You—you feahful wuffians!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, as his gleaming topper went rolling over and over in the mud. "Oh, Gweat Scott. Blake—Hewwies—Digby, welease me this instant, you wascals!"

Bump!

Gussy's chums obeyed rather suddenly, and Gussy sat down with a bump in a puddle.

"Yawwoogh! Oh cwums!"

"Your own fault!" gasped Blake. "You would insist upon talking to a fellow in Coventry. We don't want you scragged by the House!"

"You—you!"

"Are you coming with us or not, you idiot?"

"I—I uttably wefuse!" spluttered Gussy.

"But if you're seen gassing to that fat worm—" hooted Digby.

"Wats! I wefuse to be—"

"Oh, let the silly owl rip!" snorted Jack Blake wrathfully. "Let him stew in his own juice, then!"

And Blake, Herries, and Digby walked away, leaving Arthur Augustus sprawling on the ground. Trimble had scuttled to a safe distance, but now he came back, and very kindly helped Arthur Augustus to his feet.

"Bai Jove! Thank you vevy much, Twimble, deah boy!" gasped Gussy, seething with wrath. "The—the feahful wuffians!"

"Awful beasts!" said Trimble.

"Wascals!" choked Gussy, his noble eye gleaming. "My toppah—wained! My twousahs and jacket—wained! This settles it! I wefuse to be intimidated by such weekless wuffians! I will show them that I have a wight to choose my own fwends! Come along, Twimble!"

"Yes, old fellow!"

Baggy Trimble went along with Gussy—beaming. When Blake happened to look round a moment later he saw Arthur Augustus arm-in-arm with Trimble—and he nearly fell down!

CHAPTER 3.

Study-mates!

"I—I think I'd rather not, old fellow!" said Baggy Trimble.

Baggy Trimble and Arthur Augustus were in Study No. 6 on the Fourth Form passage.

Thinking things over, Arthur Augustus came to the conclusion that the only way to prevent Baggy back-sliding was to get him as an inmate of Study No. 6. There he would be under his eye and care constantly. Gussy's valuable advice and encouragement would be at hand. There he would also have the inestimable benefit of daily example—the example of the manners and customs of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to study at close quarters.

But Baggy Trimble had not exactly jumped at the suggestion.

From one point of view it appealed to him no end. Study No. 6 was a land flowing with milk and honey to Baggy Trimble. On the other hand, it was a land in which dwelt unpleasant giants—in the form of Blake, Herries, and Digby. Trimble, occasionally, had felt the weight of their boots as an outsider. He did not want to study the weight of their boots at such close quarters as an inmate of No. 6.

"I—I think I'd rather not, old fellow!" he repeated, with another apprehensive glance at the door of Study No. 6. "You know what those beasts are—always kicking a fellow for nothing!"

"I should wefuse to allow them to kick you, Twimble! As my guest heah—"

"But there's three of the beasts!" groaned Baggy. "I should have an awful time of it, Gussy. I—I say, let's have tea quickly, before the beasts come in!"

"Tea? It is wathah early yet for tea, Twimble!"

"Yes, but I'm hungry! And those beasts may come in THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,184.

any minute! I say, let me help you get it ready, old fellow!"

And Trimble opened the doors of the study cupboard and blinked eagerly inside.

Arthur Augustus frowned. Tea, in his opinion, was nothing like so important as the good advice and encouragement he was about to expound.

Still, Trimble was his guest, and the expounding could be done over tea just as well.

He rose and started to help Trimble get tea ready.

Trimble worked in great haste—with one eye on the door all the time. His one hope was that Blake, Herries, and Digby would refrain from butting in until tea was over.

It was a forlorn hope. Footsteps and voices sounded, and Blake, Herries, and Digby came in.

They stared as if thunderstruck. Arthur Augustus was slicing bread-and-butter. Baggy Trimble was just carrying a cake from the cupboard to the table. Baggy's mouth was full of cake—he was taking no chances as regards the cake, at all events.

"What the thump—" ejaculated Blake.

"Oh, you—you—"

"Twimble is here as my guest at pwesent!" explained Arthur Augustus stiffly. "I intend, howevah, to ask Mr. Lathom's permission for Twimble to move into this study."

"What?" howled Herries. "Trimble—in this study?"

"Yaas! But pway do not speak to me, Hewwies, as I no longah wegard you as a fwend!"

"You—you born idiot!"

"I wefuse to be called a born idiot, Hewwies!" said Gussy heatedly.

"You—you burbling cuckoo!" shrieked Blake.

"Pway don't wear at me, Blake—you know well enough that I object strongly to bein' woreated."

"You—you actually mean that you think Trimble's going to join us in this study?" choked Blake. "That—that fat outsider?"

"I wefuse to discuss the matter with you, Blake, as we are no longah on speakin' terms! Kindly leave this study and allow Twimble and myself to pwceed with tea!" said Gussy frigidly.

It was too much. Blake, Herries, and Digby gaped at the frigid Gussy and at the apprehensive Trimble, and then they acted.

As one man they fell upon Trimble, and that fat youth gave a fearful howl as three hefty boots clumped home on his rear.

"Yarrrrroooooop!"

What happened next to him Trimble scarcely knew. But thirty seconds later he found himself sitting in the passage outside in a dizzy, breathless state, and feeling as if he had just emerged from an earthquake.

As he sat there another figure flew out of the study and bumped into him, rolling him over. It was the raging Arthur Augustus, and the two new friends rolled over together in a sudden, desperate embrace.

"Ow, ow, ow!" gasped Arthur Augustus, sitting up dizzily.

"The—the fwightful wuffians! Ow, ow, ow!"

"Ow, ow! I say, shall we go and have tea in the tuckshop?" said Trimble.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.

If anything had been needed to strengthen his resolve to "back up" Trimble—to take the fat outcast under his wing—Blake's action provided the need.

"No—wathah not; I uttably wefuse to do anything of the kind, Twimble!" he snorted.

"But—but what about tea?" grumbled Twimble. "I'm hungry!"

"That will be quite all wight, Twimble!" said Arthur Augustus, his noble eye gleaming behind his eyeglass. "I have a weally wippin' ideah. I will ask Lathom to let us two have the use of the empty studay—No. 13 at the end of the passage heah!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Trimble.

"I will show those wottahs in No. 6 that I can manage vevy well without them," said Arthur Augustus darkly. "Howevah, wait here one moment, deah boy!"

"The 'deah boy' waited, a fat grin on his face, as Arthur Augustus strode away towards Mr. Lathom's study. Trimble, in fact, was fairly beaming now. Study No. 13, with only the "soft" and wealthy Arthur Augustus for company, would be a land flowing with milk and honey indeed. Probably neither Baggy nor Gussy was superstitious, or they might have wondered if No. 13 would not prove an unlucky study!

Arthur Augustus soon came back, looking very satisfied.

"All right?" asked Baggy eagerly.

"Quite all wight, of course!" said Gussy. "Lathom was wathah surprisid, but he agweed eventually. Now you had better wush off to the tuckshop for some gwub, Twimble."

"Oh good! Hand me some money, old fellow!" said Trimble.

"Bai Jove! I have none on me at the moment. How-evah," said Gussy, "tell Mrs. Taggles to put it down to my account, deah boy!"

"But Mrs. Taggles won't serve me without the cash," said Trimble. "You know what a suspicious old cat she is—won't trust a fellow, you know!"

"Bai Jove! I never thought of that," admitted Gussy, nodding. "That is quite true! I will come and explain to her, Twimble."

"Oh good!"

The strangely assorted couple went down to the tuckshop. Dame Taggles gave Trimble a grim glance, but she beamed at Arthur Augustus.

"Good-afternoon, Master D'Arcy!"

Outside in the quad he blinked about for a moment, and then he scuttled behind the tuckshop with his big packages of grub. Not a soul was in sight here, and the elms screened the spot nicely. Trimble sat down on a bench and opened one of the packages.

Then he got busy—very busy. A bag of jam tarts went first—disappearing one after the other into Baggy's interior with amazing rapidity. Cheese cakes went next—disappearing with the same speed. Chocolate biscuits and cake, chocolate and sausage rolls went the same way at record speed, even for Trimble.

But Trimble had waited a long time for tea, and he was hungry.

He finished the contents of the parcel to the last crumb. Then he stuffed the paper and string under the bench and grabbed the other parcel.



"Here you are, old man," said Tom Merry, and two half-crowns dropped into the box.

"Good-afternoon, ma'am!" said Gussy, raising his hat gracefully. "I wish you to serve Twimble with some gwub, Mrs. Taggles. Twimble will tell you what is needed, and—"

"Oh! Ah! Ye-es, Master D'Arcy, but is Master Trimble paying now for the goods, or—" began Dame Taggles, eyeing Trimble suspiciously.

"That is quite all wight, ma'am!" said Gussy hastily. "You may put the things down to my account, you know."

"Oh, very good, Master D'Arcy! That will be quite all right, sir!"

"Yaas. Twimble is now my studay-mate, you see," explained Gussy. "So if I send him for anythin' at any time, ma'am, it will be quite all wight! Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, very good, Master D'Arcy!" said the surprised Dame Taggles.

Arthur Augustus raised his hat again and hurried off to prepare Study No. 13, leaving Baggy Trimble to order the goods required for tea.

It was a job after Baggy's own heart.

He ordered stuff right and left. He ordered Dame Taggles to pack the good things up into two parcels. Then he left the surprised tuckshop dame and marched out with a parcel under each arm.

"He, he, he!" he giggled. "I'm in luck and no mistake. I rather like this reformin' stunt! Now for having another tea with that ass Gussy!"

And Trimble rolled away indoors to have another tea with the innocent and trusting Arthur Augustus. If Trimble's reform lasted very long it looked like being an expensive business for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy!

CHAPTER 4.

Improving!

"THAT ass—" said Digby.

"That born idiot—" said Herries.

"That footling fathead—" said Blake.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were wrathful.

They were referring to Arthur Augustus.

"Well, he's all that!" laughed Tom Merry. "Old Gussy's a prize packet! And a prize ass! But if he can reform Trimble—"

"Bunkum!"

"Bosh!"

"Fiddlesticks!"

"Well, Trimble looked different this morning, at all events!" smiled Tom Merry. "If he keeps on improving we'll drop the Coventry, of course! He looked quite smart at brekker this morning!"

"A new suit on!" chuckled Manners. "And a clean collar and a new necktie!"

"And after brekker there wasn't a suggestion of egg or marmalade on his waistcoat!" said Lowther. "Fancy that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fat scheming rotter's fooling Gussy!" grunted Blake.

"You never know!" said Tom Merry. "Even Baggy's fat carcass holds possibilities of reform, I suppose. Gussy must have been lecturing him already on his giddy appearance. He looked—Hallo, here he is!"

There were grins as Arthur Augustus came along with Baggy Trimble. Arthur Augustus looked his usual elegant self—excepting for a frowning brow. Trimble did not. Instead of being untidy, with clothes showing visible signs of recent meals, Baggy looked quite smart—and clean. His hair was brushed; his collar was clean, likewise his necktie—quite a natty necktie, it was. His clothes looked almost new—though they were certainly a very tight fit. His shoes were natty shoes, and polished.

"Is it really Trimble?" murmured Lowther. "Or do my aged eyes deceive me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy, old chap—" called Blake anxiously.

"Kindly do not address me, Jack Blake!" said Gussy laughingly. "I no longer look upon you as a friend!"

"Gussy, you silly owl—" said Herries heatedly.

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus passed into the Fourth Form room with the grinning Baggy Trimble.

Obviously the sun had risen on the wrath of Arthur Augustus.

The Terrible Three went along to their Form-room smiling. Blake, Herries, and Digby followed the crowd into the Fourth, scowling. They did not like seeing their chum—or former chum—making a fool of himself like this.

Baggy Trimble was the centre of a good deal of attention that morning. Nobody spoke to him, but all eyes were upon him. The change in his appearance was certainly striking.

Blake sat near to Gussy and he tried his luck again.

"Gussy, old fellow, don't be an ass!" he said. "That fat—"

"Wats!" Arthur Augustus turned his lofty head away.

Blake breathed hard.

"The—the stubborn idiot!" he breathed to Herries.

"Oh, let the fathead rip!" snorted Herries. "Here, I'll give him something to wake him up!"

He rolled a lump of blotting-paper, dipped it in the ink, and let fly. The ink-pellet missed Gussy. It was a wild shot. The missile went wide and soared in the air. It would have struck the partly closed door had not the door been pushed open just then, and it struck Mr. Lathom instead.

The master of the Fourth met it in full flight and stopped it with his august chin.

"Oh!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Herries.

He had "done it." There was a sudden silence. Mr. Lathom was a very mild-tempered gentleman, but he could not be expected to be mild-tempered after that.

Mr. Lathom entered the room and closed the door quietly. Then he took out his handkerchief and mopped his inky chin.

"What boy," he hooted wrathfully, "threw that pellet—that abominable ink-pellet?"

Silence!

Herries did not jump up and claim the honour. It was a Wednesday-half-holiday. A caning would not meet such a crime—Herries knew that. Detention for the afternoon was obviously indicated—if he owned up. So Herries did not own up. He was playing goat that afternoon for the School House against New House, and the Form would have ragged him had he owned up.

He kept silent.

"Very well!" snapped Mr. Lathom grimly. "The whole Form will remain in detention this afternoon—until the culprit does own up!"

"Oh!"

It was a series of dismal groans. Still—hoping against hope that a miracle would cause the master to relent—Herries had remained silent.

"I did it, sir," he admitted, after a while, "but it was not intended for you."

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"Herries," said Mr. Lathom severely, "you should not play such childish games in the Form-room. As, however, you have had the courage to own up rather than allow innocent boys to suffer in your stead, I will not detain you this afternoon. Hold out your hand!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Herries.

He was only too eager to hold out his hand—for once. Anything was better than being detained. Mr. Lathom reached for his cane and gave him two on each hand. Herries scarcely felt them. He apologised to the master for the accident, and then he returned to his place.

"We will now proceed with lessons, boys!" said Mr. Lathom.

And the Form proceeded with lessons.

CHAPTER 5.

A Training Spin!

"TWIMBLE!"

"Yes, old fellow!" said Trimble.

"You are much too fat, deah boy!"

Never had Arthur Augustus spoke truer words.

But the truth does not always please. Trimble frowned—having heard that truth rather too often from Gussy during the last day or two.

Baggy Trimble's reform was going great guns.

Even Jack Blake had to admit that Arthur Augustus was succeeding—or appeared to be succeeding—in his Herculean task of reforming Baggy Trimble. Blake & Co., were still not on speaking terms with Arthur Augustus. They had decided to give him his head, knowing he would come round sooner or later. They knew that time would come when Trimble got fed-up with reforming, and started his old games again.

But so far Baggy did not seem like getting fed-up—not with reform at all events. He was a different Baggy. He did not attempt to borrow money. There was no record during the past few days of any study cupboard having been raided, or of any grub being pinched, or found missing. A great and glorious feeling of security appeared to have fallen upon the fellows in the Fourth and Shiel. Soon, they felt, it would not be necessary to lock cupboard doors or study doors. At present they were taking no risks, and they still locked them—excepting when they happened to forget. But when that happened they found the supply of foodstuffs just as they had left it.

Moreover, Baggy's habits and customs in other respects were changing for the better. Baggy did not pry or peach. Gussy's noble example was having its due effect in those respects also. And Baggy's appearance was quite astonishing Mr. Lathom, as well as the juniors.

Each morning he appeared in public quite spick-and-span. He appeared to have extended his wardrobe—a surprising thing in itself. Certainly his suit—towards evening—usually began to show signs of the meals of the day. Still, each day he started well, with a clean collar, spotless tie, and spotless, uncreased clothes. And that was something—for Baggy!

Arthur Augustus was quite proud of his pupil. Certainly he was surprised at the unexpected extent of Baggy's wardrobe, but he was highly gratified at Baggy's desire to follow his noble advice and example. Arthur Augustus was not exactly enjoying life these days. Baggy's company was not fascinating nor his conversation enlightening. Gussy hated and detested Baggy's insistence upon walking out arm-in-arm with him. But he stood it—because Baggy was, undoubtedly, improving under his tuition.

Still, Gussy was by no means satisfied. He was not satisfied at the fact that Baggy did not quite fit into his clothes, especially the clobber he had been wearing this last few days. It seemed very curious that, though no grub was raided, and though Baggy was not now greedy at meals, he seemed to grow fatter, if anything.

"You are much too fat, Twimble!" repeated Arthur Augustus, shaking his head and staring very hard indeed at the suit Baggy was wearing. "If you go on gowin' fattah, you will not fit into your suits at all soon, deah boy. Who is your tailah?"

"Oh! Ah! My—my tailor!" stammered Baggy. "You—you see this suit was a—ready-made. Lots of people wear ready-mades now, you know."

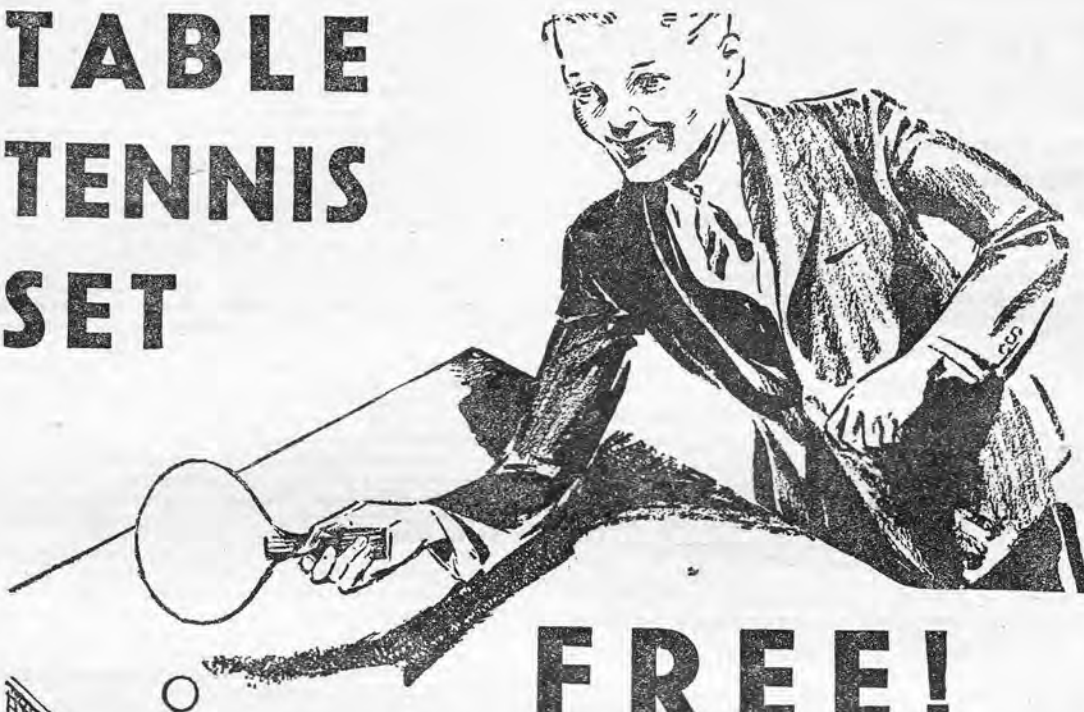
"Bai Joye! That is certainly much too small for you, though it is a vewy good suit, Twimble!" said Gussy. "I will give you the address of my Bond Street tailah some time. Wemind me!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes; exactly!" said Baggy. "I say, it's a half this afternoon, Gussy. What about a stroll down to the tuckshop in Rylcombe? Or we could hire a car—"

"Gweat Scott! A car to wun us into Wylcombe! What

(Continued on page 10.)

TABLE TENNIS SET

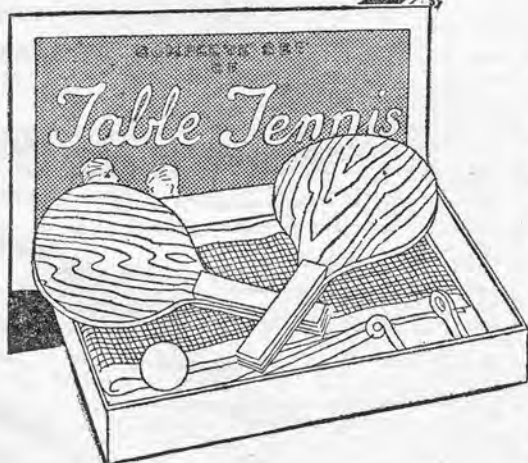


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The Heavy-weight Hero!

(Continued from page 8.)

"wubbish, deah boy! I have a bettah notion, Twimble! As I say, you are much too fat, if you will forgive my mentionin' it, Twimble. What you need is more exercise! You must take up sports!"

"Sports! No fear—I mean, I'll think about it, old chap!"

"I have already thought about it, Twimble!" said Gussy, in a firm, decided tone, "and I have made up my mind to put you in twainin' and to work some of that fat off, deah boy!"

"Oh! Oh, really, Gussy!"

Trimble paused, and looked sulky. Dash it all, why should Gussy start this game now—just when all was going swimmingly? It was too thick! Arthur Augustus would be wanting him to fast next!

"I—I say, Gussy, I'm all right, I tell you!" he gasped. "Fit as a fiddle, you know! I—I don't need any training! I'm one of those fellows who're always fit!"

"Oh, yaas; fit enough as we regards feedin'," assented Gussy. "But I am goin' to insist upon your takin' up sports, Twimble! An hour's run each day!"

"Oh, crickey! Why, you beast!"

"Twimble!"

"I—I mean, I'll take up sports, of course," said Baggy. "But not this term! You see, I—I sprained my ankle—I mean, my knee—during the summer vac, and the doctor said I mustn't exert myself. Said it would be fatal, you know! Now what about a car, old chap?"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.

Though not a suspicious fellow, Arthur Augustus could not help suspecting Baggy. After a day or two in his company as a bosom pal, Gussy had seen too much not to suspect. Certainly Baggy was improving, but he was still Baggy in many ways.

"I am afraid I cannot accept that statement, Twimble!" said Gussy, a gleam in his noble eye. "Your knee is not injured at all. If I am to remain in Studay No. 13 as your friend then I must insist upon bein' allowed to pweess this mattah. You have improved in many ways, but you are still lazy and a howwid slackah, you know! You must come out for a wun wound Wayland with me this aftahnoon, Twimble!"

"Oh dear!"

Trimble very nearly said "beast" again. But he refrained. He was having much too good a time as Gussy's pal to want to end the friendship. He didn't mind how long he stayed in Coventry so long as Gussy was his pal.

He knew he only had to refuse now and Arthur Augustus would be only too glad, probably, to walk out and wash his noble hands of him for good and all!

"Oh dear!" grunted Baggy. "I—I say, it's all right, Gussy. I'll come, of course, old man! Look here, I'll tell you what." Trimble paused, his fat brain working at express speed. "I've got it, Gussy! Let's make it a bit sporty, you know. I take one route and you take another, and we'll see who gets home first. How's that?"

It was a bright idea. And it appealed to Arthur Augustus much more than Baggy dreamed it would. Gussy was determined to do what he believed was his duty—to make Trimble take exercise. But he was actually shuddering at the thought of a four-mile run in Trimble's charming company, with Trimble grousing all the time.

"Bai Jove! That is a vewy good ideah, Twimble," he said with enthusiasm. "I will take the woute acwoss the moor, you know, and return by woad, and you take the shorter woute and cut through Wylcombe."

"Just what I was about to suggest," grinned Baggy, truthfully enough. "I say, you'll give me a start, of course!"

"Oh, yaas—as far as Wylcombe, deah boy, if you like," smiled Gussy, who was one of the best runners in the Lower School. "That is settled, then, Twimble. You'd bettah get into your wunnin' things now, and start at two o'clock."

"Right-ho, old fellow! I say, supposin' I miss you in Wayland, what about something to drink? A chap gets awfully hungry and thirsty!"

Arthur Augustus looked at Trimble, and silently took out half-a-crown and passed it over. Trimble grinned and pocketed it. In the circumstances, Gussy couldn't call that a loan!

"Thanks, old fellow! I'll cut off and change at once, Gussy!"

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Trimble rolled away to change. He did not take long, and Arthur Augustus saw him start at the gates, and gave him final instructions regarding route and other details. Trimble rolled away along Rylcombe Lane, going strong. A little crowd of fellows lounging there gave him an ironical cheer as he went.

Arthur Augustus went indoors to change. He knew Trimble's running and staying powers, and he had plenty of time. It was really a very self-sacrificing act on Gussy's part to devote the afternoon to taking Trimble in hand. Though not taking part in the House match, Gussy had been very anxious indeed to see it played. But duty was duty with the noble Gussy. He had set his hand to the plough, and there was no turning back—until Trimble was reformed to his satisfaction.

Meanwhile, Trimble jogged along at quite a good speed, but he soon dropped to a walk. Baggy was not out out for running, and he was already perspiring freely and panting noisily.

"Beast!" he mumbled, as he rolled on breathlessly. "Making a fellow do what he doesn't want to do! Like his cheek, the beast! But I'll do him one this time!"

Baggy broke into a jog-trot again, being very anxious to get to the village before Gussy did, at all costs. And the reason was soon clear. Reaching the village tuckshop Trimble gave a cautious blink about him, and then slipped inside the little shop. He gave an order to Mother Murphy, and then slipped behind the curtained partition, and made himself comfortable by the fire there.

For once, Baggy Trimble made half-a-crown last a long time—for the whole of the afternoon, in fact. As he sipped ginger-beer and toyed with jam-tarts, Baggy found great satisfaction in reflecting on the fact that Arthur Augustus was getting what he wanted—plenty of exercise—while he, Trimble, was getting what he wanted—plenty of rest, warmth, and enough refreshment to keep him going for the afternoon, at all events.

CHAPTER 6.

The Accident!

TRIMBLE left Mother Murphy's establishment just as the early dusk was falling. He was feeling cheery and contented with life. He was rather hungry, the half-crown having vanished long ago. But he had the pleasant reflection that soon he would be seated at tea with Arthur Augustus, relating incidents of the chase, as it were.

He had it all cut and dried, ready for the innocent and confiding Arthur Augustus. The long, desperate run, and then the unfortunate moment when his gammy knee had given way. The painful trudge homewards—the short cut he had taken to account for not having seen Gussy—Baggy rehearsed his story of the run as he walked homewards from the village.

There was only one thing that worried Baggy. Several fellows had seen him in Mother Murphy's. That beast Grundy, for instance, with Wilkins and Gunn, had seen him there at three o'clock and when they called in again at four-thirty. Still, they had not spoken to him, and they were not likely to mention the matter to Gussy.

Trimble hoped they wouldn't, at all events.

He trudged on cheerily.

At the cross-roads, where the Lantham road joined the lane, Mr. Lathom almost barged into him. He nodded and smiled genially to Baggy.

"Well, my boy, and have you been for a run?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"I am very glad indeed to find you taking an interest in physical exercises, Trimble!" said Mr. Lathom kindly. "I have noticed a very satisfactory change in you lately, my boy. If only your scholastic studies would show signs of an improvement— But we will not refer to that now, Trimble."

"Oh no, sir! I always do my best, of course, sir, and I'm glad to have earned your approval lately, sir!" said Trimble.

"Ah! Yes, my boy. Quite so. But—but there is room for great improvement, Trimble. Still, I am bound to say that, of late, you have shown little improvement in your—ahem!—personal appearance, and in other details, and—"

Mr. Lathom broke off abruptly. From behind had sounded the soft hiss of cycle tyres on the wet road, followed by the scraping of hastily applied brakes.

Trimble jumped aside with remarkable agility for his bulk—not because he had heard the cycle behind, but because he had heard a sudden rumble of heavy wheels from the Lantham road, just behind the hedge.

As he jumped, the front wheel of a bike just caught his heel, causing him to stumble and plunge, tripping into the hedge.

"Yarrooooo!" roared Trimble. "Why, you—"

Trimble's yell was followed by another youthful yell of warning from behind. It came from Grimes, the grocer's boy. Grimes had been scorching, and only the rapidly applied brakes had saved him from dashing into Trimble and Mr. Lathom.

"Look hout!" he bawled.

He had no need to shout, for he had seen now what Trimble had only heard. It was a heavy, lumbering motor-lorry, and it swung round from the Lantham road just then.

There was the sudden blare of a horn, and then the squealing of desperately applied brakes.

Trimble was safe enough, but Mr. Lathom quite lost his head. He half turned, and almost fainted as he saw the lorry bearing down upon him.

Crash, crash!

Grimes' tradesman's bike went crashing into the hedge, scattering the contents of the tradesman's basket. Grimes himself gave another startled yell, and then made a flying, desperate leap.

His outstretched hands thumped into Mr. Lathom's back, and Mr. Lathom went headlong—just missing the heavy wheels, which, but for Grimes' desperate action, would have rumbled over his body.

Grimes himself leaped aside with youthful agility, the mudguard of the lorry just catching him on the shoulder and sending him sprawling—but safe.

"Oh crumbs!" he gasped.

The grocer's boy scrambled to his feet, muddy and panting. Baggy Trimble was in the hedge roaring with

wrath and pain. Grimes did not look at him, however—his scared glance was upon Mr. Lathom.

That scholastic gentleman lay still on the roadside. His head was touching a slab of stone—a milestone, it was. He was obviously stunned—not by the lorry, but by collision with the milestone.

"Is the bloke hurt?"

The lorry was at a standstill now. The driver had leaped into the lane, his face showing strained and white.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Grimes again. "I—I did it, I pushed the old gent over, and he must have hit his 'ead against that stone!"

"Well, you saved 'im from somethin' worse than bein' knocked out, kid!" said the driver hoarsely. "Blow me, but you was smart! We got to get help some— Blow me! What luck! Here's old Short!"

A small two-seater came buzzing up and stopped. Out leaped a little gentleman with a keen face and eyeglasses. It was Dr. Short, a familiar figure in Rylcombe. He was the school medico as well as the village doctor.

Obviously he had seen what had happened, for he asked no questions, but knelt by Mr. Lathom's side.

Trimble glared at Grimes as he looked on. Trimble was hurt. He had had his face scratched by the hedge. He had had his sacred person badly shaken—and all through that cheeky beast Grimes. Now Grimes wasn't even looking at him! Mr. Lathom might be hurt, probably he was. But so was Trimble—muddy, too!

"All right, driver!" Dr. Short nodded grimly to the lorry driver. "I will see to this gentleman. Just help me to lift him into my car."

"Yes, sir!" gasped the driver.

He started to help the doctor with his heavy burden. Mr. Lathom had come round now, but he was dazed and still anything but himself. Seeing the master was in safe hands, Grimes picked up most of the scattered articles from the basket. The eggs were beyond picking up, likewise the jam and sauce and sugar.

Having salvaged all he could, the grocer's boy placed the basket on the bike again, and trudged away dismally back to the village.

Trimble glared after him. Trimble had been hurt and covered with mud, and the beast had gone off without saying he was sorry!

The doctor buzzed off in his car with Mr. Lathom. The lorry driver, still looking white behind his grime, slowly boarded his vehicle, which rumbled on again—at a much slower speed now. Trimble growled and grunted, and began to trudge on, rubbing mud from his running togs and his smarting features.

"Beast!" he said. "And old sawbones is a beast, too, not even asking a fellow if he wanted a ride, or if he was hurt! He could easily have opened the dicky-seat for a fellow! Beast!"

In rather a cross mood now, Baggy rolled homewards. His only comforting reflection was that Gussy—after his long run round Wayland—would be hungry himself, and would see there was a good tea.

CHAPTER 7.

Amazing Indeed!

"THAT fat wottah—" "Eh? That which?" asked Lowther, staring.

"That fat wottah—that feafful fat wascal—"

"Do you mean Trimble, Gussy?"

"Yaas!" almost shouted Arthur Augustus wrathfully. "I certainly do mean Trimble! That fat wascal!"

"But—but I thought Trimble was your pal?" inquired Lowther gravely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus glared. He was still on friendly terms with the Terrible Three. But he was not in a mood to be affable with anyone just then.

Gussy, in fact, was raging.

He had trotted to Wayland cheerily enough, and he had returned cheerily enough, though not a little surprised at having seen nothing of his partner, Trimble. He had not expected great things from Trimble in the running line. But he had thought to see something of him. He had scarcely expected to find him home before himself.

Nor was Trimble home first.

So Arthur Augustus had begun to inquire after him, anxious for details of Trimble's training run. He got the details, or as much as was available, from various fellows who had seen Trimble in Mother Murphy's tuckshop.

Grundy & Co. finally had assured him that they knew for a certainty that Trimble had spent the whole of the afternoon in Mother Murphy's back room.

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The news came as a thunderbolt to the trusting Gussy. It gave his faith in human nature a rude shock. Gussy had claimed, all along, that there was a spark of decency in Baggy Trimble, that it only wanted bringing out, and that he was the fellow to bring it out. But this news filled Arthur Augustus with great and overpowering wrath.

"The—the fat wottah!" he gasped. "It is nothin' to cackle about, you wibald idiots! That fat wottah has spoofed me, you know!"

"Not really, old chap! Trimble—that angelic youth?" ejaculated Lowther. "Trimble spoof anyone? Perish the thought!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is no laughing mattah!" hooted Gussy. "You fellows saw Twimble start out on a wun—you know he awwanged with me to wun wound Wayland! The fat wottah suggested that we should go by diffahwent routes, and I agreed, not wantin' his silly chattah! But—but—"

"Ha, ha! I see!" chuckled Tom. "Trimble's route led to the tuckshop, and no farther, what?"

"Bai Jove! Then you know about it, Tom Mewwy?"

"Only what you've told us, old dear—we've guessed the rest, knowing Baggy! Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom.

"He's been in Mother Murphy's all the afternoon!" roared the justly incensed Gussy. "All the time while I was pluggin' wound Wayland and hangin' about lookin' for the wottah, he was sittin' in the tuckshop spendin' my half-crown! I'm goin' to smash him!"

"Then now's your giddy chance, Gussy!" chuckled Lowther, pointing.

It was Trimble. The fat youth had been up to the dormitory to change, and he looked almost spick and span, being dressed in a new—or nearly new—suit, with a clean collar and tie on. Undoubtedly Trimble was improving as regards his personal appearance.

But Arthur Augustus was not in the right mood for praise or approval just then.

"You—you fat wottah!" he gasped, rushing up and grasping Trimble by the collar. "So you have returned at last, Twimble!"

"Oh crumbs! I—I say, leggo, Gussy!" gasped Baggy. "If you think I didn't go round Wayland you're mistaken, you know. And I never went near Mother Murphy's, you know. And—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then Gwunday was quite wight!" hooted Gussy. "You have twicked me, you fat wottah—"

"Eh? Nothing of the kind, old fellow!" gurgled Trimble in great alarm. "Didn't I tell you I hadn't? If Grundy says he saw me in Mother Murphy's, don't you believe him, old fellow. Because I never went near there. I've been looking all over Wayland for you, you know."

"Bai Jove! You fat sibbah—"

"I'm surprised at you playing such a trick, Gussy!" said Baggy reprovingly, thinking attack was the best defence. "Fancy you giving a fellow the slip like you must have done and then charging me with— Here, what— Yoooooop!"

Bump!

Trimble sat down hard on the linoleum, and Arthur Augustus shook a fist in his fat face. He was still doing so when a shuffling footstep sounded behind him.

"G-good gracious! Boys—D'Arcy, how dare you! Leave that boy—that gallant boy—alone at once!"

It was rather a feeble voice, but it was Mr. Lathom's voice all the same. Mr. Lathom, his forehead bandaged, came ambling along the passage leaning on Mr. Linton's arm. Mr. Lathom, in point of fact, had just left the sunny after being attended to by Dr. Short and Nurse Rivers, and the little Fourth Form master had insisted upon returning to his own House afterwards.

The juniors stared at him, quite scared, for only Trimble knew of the accident in Rylecombe Lane.

Trimble also stared—probably looking for the "gallant boy!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus allowed Baggy to scramble to his feet. Mr. Lathom and Mr. Linton stared indignantly at him until his aristocratic features grew pink.

"How—how dare you assault Trimble in that ruffianly manner, D'Arcy!" said Mr. Lathom indignantly but weakly. "I—I am surprised at you! Is it possible that you have not heard what Trimble has done for your Form master this evening?"

"Bai Jove! Nunno, sir!" gasped the astonished Arthur Augustus.

"Trimble," said Mr. Lathom impressively, eyeing the equally astonished fat youth kindly and affectionately, "has, without a possible doubt, saved my life this evening. I am surprised you boys have not heard of it!"

"We—we've heard nothing, sir!" gasped Tom Merry faintly.

"Then I will explain," said Mr. Lathom, resting a kindly hand on Trimble's fat shoulder. "This evening I was walking homewards, and had just overtaken Trimble when a lorry almost knocked me down—a motor-lorry travelling at a good speed. It was at that dangerous corner at the Lantham cross-roads."

"Oh!" gasped Baggy.

"It was an exceedingly narrow escape!" proceeded Mr. Lathom thankfully. "But for Trimble—but for this plucky boy—I should undoubtedly have been killed. In the nick of time—and at great risk to himself, for the lorry was almost upon us—he leaped forward and pushed me from under the wheels!"

"Oh!" gasped Trimble again.

He understood now.

Mr. Lathom, of course, had not seen his rescuer. He was short-sighted, and his hearing also was not of the best. Moreover, he had quite lost his head in the sudden emergency and had become flustered and dazed. Dr. Short probably had seen him, and he had obviously not mentioned the name of the rescuer but had merely referred to "that plucky boy," believing Mr. Lathom was aware of his identity.

At all events it was quite clear that Mr. Lathom believed Baggy Trimble to be the hero of the occasion.

The thought thrilled Baggy Trimble.

He gasped and gasped like a stranded fish, but he soon regained possession of himself, and beamed back at Mr. Lathom.

"And—and Trimble did that, sir?" gasped Tom Merry, eyeing Baggy's fat, satisfied face in wonder.

"He certainly did, my boy! It was a remarkably swift

Potts, The Office Boy



If the rubbish won't go in the basket—

and plucky action, as Dr. Short has admitted to me. He says the boy deserves recognition, and I shall see that he gets what he deserves!" said Mr. Lathom, smiling at Trimble. "Unfortunately, when I fell I struck my forehead on a milestone. But that does not in any way lessen the value of the great service you have done me, Trimble, my dear, dear boy!"

"Oh, bai Jove!" Trimble swelled—he swelled visibly as if anxious to rival the frog in the fable.

And as he swelled he grew lofty—growing outwards and upwards at once, as it were. He blinked round him with great satisfaction.

After all, there was no harm in a fellow accepting what was simply thrust upon him. Lathom was thrusting this great honour upon him—he hadn't asked for it. It was a great and glorious opportunity to shine—as he had often wanted to shine—as a hero. Coventry! Baggy saw that unpleasant situation fading away before his eyes. The fellows now had clear proof that he had reformed—or was reforming.

He spoke at last, having thought swiftly and hard, and found that he was on good ground! Dr. Short was not likely to mention the matter again—and who else could? Grimes never visited the school itself—only the servants' quarters. And Grimes was a silly ass, anyway—not the sort of fellow to see a good thing when he had it thrust on him. Grimes would not make a song about it.

Trimble had no such scruples—in fact, Baggy Trimble had very few scruples indeed. He intended to make a very big song about it.

"That—that's all right, sir!" he gasped.

"What—what!"

"Nothing to make a fuss about, sir!" said Trimble cheerily. "I'm only sorry I had to push you over like that! But it couldn't be avoided, sir—you could see that!"

"My dear, dear boy, of course—of course!"

"It was either that or getting squashed to a jelly, sir!" said Baggy. "There the crisis was—right before me. I had to think quickly. The rumbling monster of the road was almost upon us. I had to think and act swiftly. I fancy I did that. No fellow could have done more, sir!"

"Oh! Ah! No, indeed!" gasped Mr. Lathom.

"It was nothing, sir—I'd rather you said no more about it, Mr. Lathom!" said Baggy, knowing perfectly well that Mr. Lathom would do no such thing. "It was what few fellows could have done, I know! I'm well aware of that. But I hope I'm not the chap to make a fuss about it."

"Oh! Ah! Exactly!" said Mr. Lathom. "Er—er, quite so, Trimble! But I shall, of course, insist upon making the facts public! Your plucky and commendable action shall not be forgotten, my boy. But your face, my dear, dear boy—"

"A mere nothing, sir!" said Trimble, smiling. "Just a few scratches—after pushing you clear I fell in the hedge, you know, sir! Luckily I did or I should have been a squashed tomato now!"

"Bless my soul! Yes, yes—you certainly had, like myself, an exceedingly narrow escape, Trimble! I—I will see you again, my boy, and I greatly desire to publicly acknowledge your great pluck before your Form-fellows in the morning."

Mr. Lathom patted Trimble on the shoulder, shook him warmly by the hand, and ambled on, Mr. Linton also stopping to shake Baggy's hand before following him. From his face Mr. Linton didn't quite enjoy the experiment!

Trimble—the hero—was left surrounded by a staring, gaping, flabbergasted crowd of juniors.

"Oh, Gwreat Scott!" gurgled Arthur Augustus.

"Twimble—"

"Trimble—" gasped Tom Merry.

"Trimble!" gasped Blake. "Is—is that true—is it true that you actually saved Lathom's giddy life?"

"I thought I was in Coventry, Jack Blake!" said Trimble loftily and cuttingly.

"You silly owl!" laughed Tom Merry. "D'you think we'd let you stay in Coventry one minute if we thought you had saved Lathom's bacon?"

"If you doubt Lathom's word—" said Trimble coldly. "I'll refer you to Dr. Short, who witnessed the accident!"

With that Baggy Trimble walked away, with his head in the air. He knew quite well they were extremely unlikely to speak to Dr. Short on the subject. He left behind him a crowd of astonished fellows excitedly discussing the latest happening to Baggy Trimble. And soon the whole School House—and New House as well for that matter—was buzzing with the startling, almost unbelievable news, that Baggy Trimble, the despised outcast, the fellow cast into the outer darkness of Coventry by his schoolfellows, was, after all, a hero!

It was news that wanted some getting used to—as Lowther put it!

CHAPTER 8.

In Trimble's Honour!

"WALLY wound!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Wally wound?" ejaculated Monty Lowther. "Is that Esperanto, or Siamese, or Chinese, or what, Gussy?"

"Weally, Lowthah, you know vewy well what I mean," said Arthur Augustus, rattling the collecting-box under the noses of the Terrible Three. "I said 'Wally wound,' and I mean wally wound! Tweasahwy notes or silver pweferred, you know!"

"Oh!" said Tom Merry, with a laugh. "You mean 'rally round,' what?"

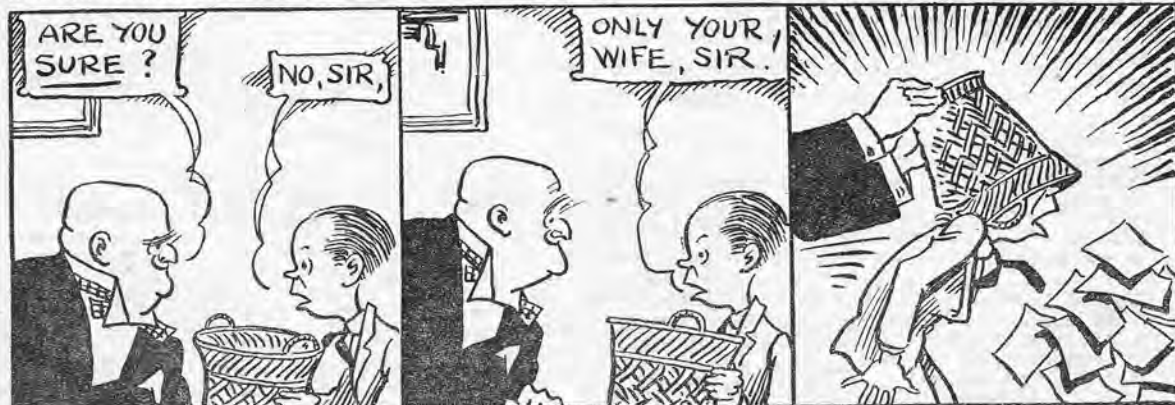
"Bai Jove! Didn't I say 'Wally wound'?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus innocently. "You fellows are gettin' wathah dense or deaf, you know! Howevah, wally wound! It is up to us to encourage old Twimble! I think it was weally wippin' of him to save Lathom's life. Don't you fellows think so?"

The Terrible Three smiled.

But they agreed with Gussy on that point. Had any other fellow done an heroic action the fellows would have approved and admired it, of course. But there would have been no fuss made either by the hero or his admirers. But—Trimble was Trimble!

It was so entirely unlike Baggy Trimble—so utterly unexpected, and almost unbelievable. Yet it was true. Hadn't Mr. Lathom himself said so? There could be no

The "No-ing" One!



Put the basket on the rubbish!

doubting it. Trimble, the fellow recently in Coventry, an outcast, had proved himself a hero and worthy of their respect and praise.

And Trimble got both now. Coventry was a thing of the past. Even Grundy went out of his way to speak a kind word of praise to Baggy Trimble. Even Kildare of the Sixth stopped Baggy to ask about it, and patted the fat youth on the back after hearing the story. Fellows who usually kicked Trimble on sight, now stopped to offer him toffee or chocolate.

It was all very pleasant for Baggy Trimble.

Naturally he did not err on the side of modesty. And he invented artistic details which made the fellows smile. But the plain fact was there, that he had saved Lathom's bacon, and they gave him full credit for it.

They were prepared to do more, in fact. It was an idea that had originated in Baggy's own fertile brain, and it had been insinuated gently into Gussy's innocent mind by Baggy—though Gussy was far from realising that! At all events, Gussy claimed the idea of making a presentation to the hero of the hour.

It was generally agreed that Trimble deserved to be encouraged in a practical way, and the fellows subscribed willingly. Gussy's collecting-box was already nearly full.

Mr. Lathom had approved of the idea, and had been pleased to subscribe a pound note. Gussy himself had subscribed a pound. Altogether, the collection was going great guns.

"Here you are, old man!" said Tom Merry willingly. Chink, chink!

Two half-crowns dropped into the box. Lowther and Manners followed Tom's example, and there were more chinks.

"But what's the presentation to be?" asked Tom Merry. "A giddy gold watch, or what?"

"If it's a gold watch, better not have it inscribed," said Lowther, shaking his head. "Baggy won't find it easy to pawn it when he's hard up, then!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bell was ringing for dinner when Gussy finished collecting, having been busy at work with his collecting-box since the previous evening. But the box was very heavy now, and Arthur Augustus was more than satisfied with the results. Certainly it was annoying to have Baggy at his heels all the time, trailing him like a great, fat ghost. But it was only what might be expected of Baggy Trimble.

He placed the heavy box on the mantelpiece in Study No. 13 and turned to the door—to find Trimble hovering there.

"Will—will it be safe there, Gussy?" gasped Baggy anxiously.

"Oh, yaas!" said Gussy stiffly.

"But supposing a burglar or someone—"

"Wubbish!" snorted Arthur Augustus. "It will be safe there until after dinnah, when Tom Mewwy is goin' to help me count the money, Twimble!"

"Oh crikey! And then I'm to be presented with it, I suppose?" said Baggy anxiously.

"Certainly not, Twimble! We shall then ask Mr. Lathom's advice as to the form of presentation. If there is enough we shall probably buy a gold watch—"

"Look here! It's my money, and I ought to say what's to be done with it!" snorted Trimble warmly. "Who wants a thumping gold watch? A man can't eat a gold watch, can he? Dash it all—"

"Weally, Twimble—"

"It's my belief you've got some game on, Gussy!" grunted Trimble. "Look here! Just you hand me that money now. It's mine, and it'll be safer with—Yarrocoop!"

Trimble yelped and vanished as Arthur Augustus rushed at him in great wrath. Trimble was getting just a little too much for Gussy.

It was noticed at dinner that Trimble did not make a very good meal, and he was one of the first out of the Hall. Arthur Augustus—not at all a suspicious fellow—could not help noticing this and wondering. In fact, the significant action of Trimble's made him hurry over his dinner, and he made straight for Study No. 13.

It was as he had half suspected. Baggy Trimble was there.

He had the collecting-box on the table before him. The lid had been burst open. On the table also was a poker—the instrument by means of which Trimble, obviously, had burst open the collecting-box.

And Trimble was busy. He was just cramming the last few coins from the box into his bulging pockets.

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Arthur Augustus fairly blinked at him.

"Twimble!"

"Oh!" Trimble jumped. "Oh, you—you beast, Gussy! You—you quite startled me, you know. I—I say—"

"Twimble, you feahful wascal—"

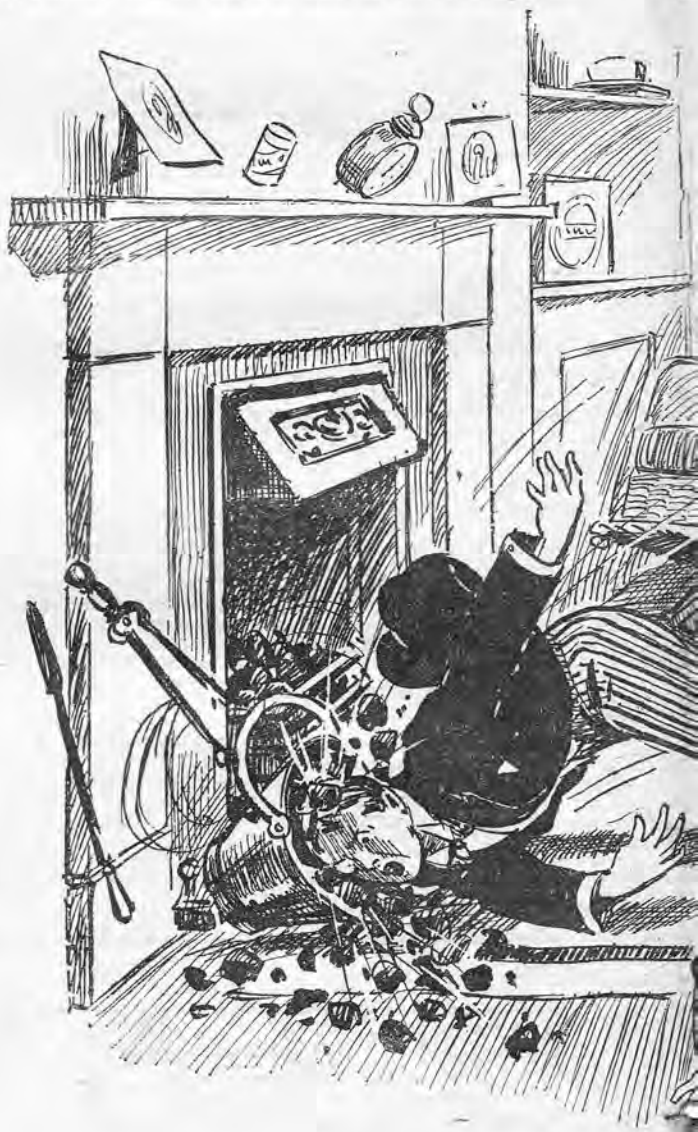
"Oh, really, that's a bit thick, Gussy!" said Trimble, with dignity. "Ain't it my own money?"

"You—you—"

"Can't a fellow do what he likes with his own money?" snorted Baggy Trimble. "Hasn't a fellow a right to see nobody gets a chance to collar any of it, you cheeky beast?"

"Twimble, you—you ungwateful wottah!"

"Aren't I entitled to the money—after saving Lathom's life?" said Trimble warmly. "Look here, just you clear out, you beast! Cheek! Looks to me as if you had some game



on yourself, D'Arcy. I don't like to be distrustful, but—I—I say, keep off, you beast! Yoooop!"

Trimble made a mad leap for the door as Gussy rushed at him. But he forgot the weight of the money in his pocket, and he stumbled over the carpet.

The stumble saved him from Gussy's wrath, however, for Arthur Augustus sprawled over him and went headlong into the coal-scuttle amid a crash and clatter of fire-irons.

Crash!

"Yawooooop!"

Trimble scrambled up, and bolted desperately, his pockets weighed down with the boodle. He vanished with it.

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet, groaning, and

started to dust himself down. His collar and tie were adrift, and there was a big rip in his elegant jacket where he had caught it against the corner of the fender.

He was still examining the damage in a state of towering wrath when the tramp of feet sounded and the Terrible Three marched in.

"Here we are, Gussy!" began Tom Merry cheerily. "Ready to count the boodle any ti— Oh, great pip! Where's the money? What's happened, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus gasped.

"What—what has happened?" he stuttered, choking. "Cannot you see what has happened? That—that fat wascal—"

"Trimble?"

"I came in and caught the fat boundah bweakin' open the box!" shrieked Gussy. "He's cwammed ewevy penny.

Baggy Trimble stumbled over the carpet and D'Arcy, unable to stop himself, went sprawling over him headlong into the scuttle amid a crash and a clatter of fire-irons!



into his pockets, and wushed off with it! I tried to stop him, and he caused me to fall in the beastlay fendah! Look at me!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry.

"I am goin' to change my jacket, and then I'm goin' afah that fat wottah!" hooted Gussy. "I am goin' to thwash him. Besides, Mr. Lathom made me wespensible for the collection, and he will blame me for it!"

"Well, that's so!" said Tom Merry, frowning. "Buck up, and we'll help you find the silly fat owl! We must get that money back somehow, or Lathom will be frightfully waxy. We'll wait here, old chap!"

"Wight!"

And Arthur Augustus rushed off upstairs to change.

CHAPTER 9. More Revelations!

"OH!"

Arthur Augustus halted.

He was dumbfounded; he was flabbergasted; he was horrified!

He stared and stared, horror, mystification, and wrath growing visibly on his eloquent features.

Arthur Augustus had rushed upstairs, and he had reached his destination—an upper box-room. Arthur Augustus had a very extensive wardrobe. Space being limited in dormitory and in study, the noble Gussy was obliged to keep a lot of his clothes—most, in fact—in the box-room, stored in trunks, and in a hanging wardrobe there. Other fellows kept odds-and-ends of superfluous clothing there. But Gussy had the monopoly of the space, as it were.

Spare suits, socks, collars, ties, and all sorts of articles of attire, including a supply of toppers, Gussy stored in that box-room.

Gussy was a very neat and tidy fellow. His best suits were either folded neatly in the trunks, or hung carefully on hangers in the wardrobe—at least, they had been.

Now they were not!

The sight Gussy beheld as he blinked through the doorway of the box-room made him doubt the evidence of his own eyes.

There wasn't a suit in Gussy's wardrobe. Trunks were open wide. And scattered about carelessly were suits on the floor and on the open trunks. Trousers had been flung anywhere, and they were rumpled badly, and they bore egg marks, cocoa stains, jam stains—all sorts of stains. They had, in fact, been very badly used indeed—the same with jackets.

Arthur Augustus blinked at them. He knew they were his clothes—the empty wardrobe and the open, half-empty trunks told him that without any other evidence.

"Oh, Gweat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus, horrified. "Who—who has done this feahful thing? What wuffian—what scoundwel—oh!"

The answer did not dawn upon Gussy, it fairly hit him. There was only one fellow at St. Jim's capable of making such a mess of clothing—only one fellow quite so untidy, slovenly, and careless.

"Twimble!" breathed Arthur Augustus. "That—that feahful wottah, Twimble!"

He fairly trembled with great and growing wrath. He was beginning to understand a lot now.

So this explained Baggy Trimble's remarkable "reform" in dress and appearance. This explained why Baggy had managed to turn out each morning spick-and-span, smart and natty. This explained why each night he had retired with messy, untidy clothes, yet managed to turn out the next morning spotless and without blemish!

All was clear now. Trimble had been wearing his, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's, clothes! Each morning he must have taken a new suit—one of Gussy's best suits—and the same with collars, ties, and socks. Each evening he had discarded the rumpled, soiled suit, and each morning had donned a new one.

No wonder he had earned Gussy's praise, Mr. Lathom's praise, and the wonder of the Fourth and Shell in general! Gussy saw it all now.

"The scoundwel!" breathed Arthur Augustus.

He remembered only too well that the suits had scarcely fitted Trimble—how remarkably tight they had been on him. He remembered more than once giving Trimble the address of his tailor. How the fat little beast must have grinned!

"Oh!" gasped Gussy. "The—the feahful little scoundwel! My clobbah—uttahly wuined! I—I—"

He rushed off downstairs again. At the bottom of the stairs the Terrible Three were waiting. They stared at the excited Arthur Augustus.

"What the thump—what on earth's the matter, Gussy? You look as if you've seen a ghost!" said Manners.

"Or had your head punched by Trimble!" said Lowther.

"T-t-twimble!" choked Gussy.

"What—why—"

"Come and look!" shrieked Gussy.

He simply hauled them upstairs to have a look.

The Terrible Three stared blankly at the sad sight of Gussy's rumpled, damaged clobber. But they soon understood what it meant.

"Trimble!" gasped Tom.

"So—so that's how he managed to keep himself spick-and-span!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Lowther. "Oh, my—ha, ha, ha!"

"It is nothin' at all to laugh about, Lowthah!" shouted Arthur Augustus in great wrath and excitement. "Look at

it—wined! Mucked up with cwumbs and jam and egg, and—and—and—” Gussy choked.

“So that’s it!” said Tom Merry. “The fat worm’s been using Gussy’s clobber—a giddy fresh suit every morning! Oh, my hat! Isn’t he just the outside—”

“I—I’m going to smash him, hewo or no hewo!” shrieked Gussy frantically. “This is t-t-t-too much! My patience is exhausted, bai Jovo! I’m goin’ to find that fat wottah and w’ing his fat neck!”

And the justly irate Gussy tore out and down the stairs. “Come on!” grinned Tom Merry. “After him, or there’ll be a funeral in the Trimble family!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Manners and Lowther roared with laughter as they followed Tom Merry hot-foot down the stairs. They rushed after Gussy through the House and across the quad to the tuckshop. Gussy seemed to know where to find Baggy Trimble. Indeed, Tom reflected—too late—that they might have gone straight there after Trimble.

But it was too late. Trimble was not there.

“Oh, yes, Master D’Arcy, he has been here!” explained Dame Taggles, eyeing the raging Gussy in flustered alarm. “He—he was here some moments ago, and took away a lot of foodstuffs with him!”

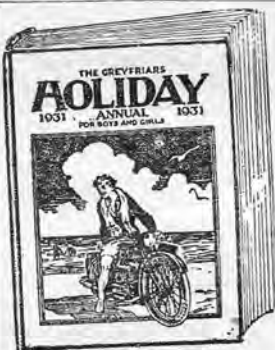
“Grub! Well, my hat! The crafty rotter knew we’d be after him!” said Tom Merry. “He’s gone to scoff the grub in hiding somewhere. Did he pay for it, ma’am?”

“Oh, yes, Master Merry; he appeared to have a great deal of money with him!” said Dame Taggles nervously. “I—I do hope it is all right, sir. Knowing what Master Trimble is—”

“Nevah mind the gwub, ma’am!” spluttered Gussy. “Do you know where he has gone?”

“He went off in the direction of the ruins, Master D’Arcy! But—but I do hope—one moment, Master D’Arcy, please! I—I was wanting to see you about your account, sir!” said Dame Taggles, who seemed rather uneasy as regards Trimble’s affairs.

Arthur Augustus was about to lead the way out with a rush, but he paused.



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“My account! That is all wight, Mrs. Taggles! It is only a few shillings, and I will settle it, ma’am. I’m in a feahful huiwuy—”

“Good gracious! But your account is much more than a few shillings, Master D’Arcy,” exclaimed Dame Taggles, raising her hands. “It is nearly ten pounds!”

Gussy jumped.

“Wha-what?”

“Almost ten pounds, sir!” stammered the old dame, more uneasy still at the expression on the noble features of the swell of the Fourth. “I thought I’d better mention the matter to you before the account gets any bigger!”

“Oh Gweat Scott!”

“I know the account is all right, of course!” said the old lady. “I know you can settle any time, Master D’Arcy. But the headmaster does not like junior boys running up such big accounts!”

“Ten pounds!” gasped Tom Merry faintly. “Oh, ye gods!”

Arthur Augustus looked on the point of fainting.

“But I have only had a few shillings’ worth of gwub, ma’am!” he gasped. “I sent Twimble on thwee occasions, I think, for a few things for tea—”

“Good gracious! Why, Master Trimble has been here dozens of times for things to be put to your account, Master D’Arcy!”

“Wha-at?”

“He has scarcely been off the doorstep during the last few days, sir!” said Dame Taggles. “I—I was wondering why you suddenly seemed to require such a lot of stuff, Master D’Arcy; but you told me yourself—”

“And—and Twimble has been gettin’ gwub all the time!” said Gussy faintly.

“Yes—your account is now not quite ten pounds, Master D’Arcy!”

“But I only sent him thwee times,” gibbered the astounded swell.

“Gracious me!” gasped the old lady in great alarm. “I—I was suspicious, but—but you ordered me to supply him with anything you sent him for, sir.”

“Oh!” groaned Gussy.

He understood all now.

So—so this explained why Trimble had done no borrowing lately! So this explained why he had done no grub raiding, and no cadging or sponging! This explained why, though he was not greedy at table, though he did not raid, borrow, or beg, he never got any thinner. If anything he had got fatter.

This explained it. He had been feeding at the tuckshop—or getting grub from the tuckshop to eat in secret somewhere. And he had been telling Dame Taggles to put it all down to the account of Arthur Augustus, his generous and trusting study-mate.

And the raging Arthur Augustus rushed out of the tuckshop—on the trail of Trimble.

“Hold on, Gussy!” called Tom Merry, trying hard not to laugh. “There’s the giddy bell, old fruit! Better leave vengeance until after lessons!”

“Besides, you can’t kill a giddy hero!” chuckled Lowther. “Lathom won’t allow his giddy rescuer— Oh, my hat! There he goes!”

The bell had gone for lessons already, and the juniors were just going in when they sighted Trimble. The fat youth was wiping crumbs and jam from his mouth, and looking very fat and contented with life.

Then he sighted Arthur Augustus—and Arthur Augustus sighted him.

“Stop, you fat scoundwel!” shrieked Gussy.

Trimble did not stop. It was clear he was heavily loaded by the way he staggered off as he sighted Gussy bearing down upon him. But it was surprising how he put on speed as he heard the fury in Gussy’s voice. And Trimble did not wait to discover what Gussy wanted him for. Possibly he guessed.

At all events, he rolled indoors at top speed.

Arthur Augustus, yelling with fury, scudded after him, and the two vanished into the House. Blake, Herries, and Digby, with several other fellows, were standing at the top of the steps, just about to go in. They had heard Gussy yelling, and now they were staring blankly after pursued and pursuer.

“What on earth’s the matter?” demanded Jack Blake.

“Has that ass Gussy fallen out with his new pal so soon?”

“Ha, ha, ha!” roared Lowther. “Tell him about it, Tommy! I—ha, ha, ha!—can’t!”

Tom Merry told the sad story and Blake and the rest doubled up and yelled as they heard how Trimble had kept himself smart and staved off thinness! And they were still yelling with laughter when they went into their Form-rooms for afternoon classes. Blake & Co., at all events, saw humour in the situation.

CHAPTER 10.

Visitors!

"YARRROOOOOOP!"

"What the thump—?"

"Woocooop! Keep him off! Help!

Yarroocogh! Whoop!" yelled Baggy Trimble.

He rushed into the Fourth Form room.

Arthur Augustus, wrath fairly sparking behind his monocle, came charging in after him.

The room was nearly full of juniors. Fortunately, Mr. Lathom had not arrived yet. The Fourth blinked as Trimble rushed round and round the desks with the raging Arthur Augustus on his track.

"Keep him off!" shrieked Trimble. "I've done nothing—Yoooop!"

Trimble yelled as Arthur Augustus lunged with a boot and caught him as he turned round a desk. But Trimble did not stop, nor did Gussy.

"Go it, Baggy!"

"Go it, Gussy!"

What it was all about the Fourth did not know, but they were enjoying the desperate chase. Hunted and hunter tore on, knocking forms and desks over amid an uproar.

"Stop him!" shrieked Trimble. "Oh crikey! He's mad! Yooocooop! Stop—Oh!"

Trimble saw the door open, and made a mad break for it. But just then Blake, Herries, and Digby walked in, and he wheeled off again, dodging frantically as Arthur Augustus made a rush at him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Go it, Gussy! Give the fat rascal socks!"

"What's it all about?" demanded Lovison blankly. "What's the giddy hero of the hour done to Gussy?"

Blake explained, and there was a howl of laughter. The Fourth should, perhaps, have been shocked at Trimble's baseness, but they were not. They howled with laughter. Meanwhile the chase was going on—hotter and hotter.

Trimble's face was a sight. It was streaming with perspiration and almost green. Trimble, besides having his pockets stacked with cash, which hampered his movements considerably, had taken quite a load of grub on board. Jam-tarts, cheese-cakes, sausage-rolls, chocolates—Baggy since spending two pounds at the tuckshop had managed to get through at least a pound's worth, and he was feeling the effects of it now.

As his speed slackened, Baggy made one last desperate effort. In the middle of the room there hung a gas-bracket, shaped like an inverted "T." Baggy leapt on to a desk, kicking a pile of books all over the floor as he did so, and as Gussy followed him, he took a flying leap on to the gas-bracket. His wildly waving arms embraced the stem, and for a moment his fat feet rested on the two arms, but only for a moment. Baggy was no light weight, and with the sound of tearing plaster and snapping metal, the whole fixture, complete with Baggy, came crashing to the ground. A wild shout from Baggy mingled with a roar of laughter from the Form, and a yell of pain from Arthur Augustus as he leapt backwards, his eyes filled with powdered plaster. With a colossal bang which seemed to shake the whole building, Baggy and the bracket hit the floor, the two glass globes broke into a thousand pieces, and plaster in quantities descended on Baggy's head.

Fortunately for all concerned, the gas was turned off at the main.

"Yarrooooooo!" wailed Baggy. "Oooooooooh! Don't touch me, you b-beast! Oooooooooh!"

Gussy, panting and still furiously rubbing his eyes, stayed his hand as he sighted Trimble's face and expression. Obviously Trimble was not in a fit condition to be punished just then.

"You—you fwightful little wascal!" gasped Gussy. "I will not thwash you now, Twimble. But when you have wecovahed—"

"Yarroooo! Go away, you beast! Oooooooooh!"

"G-good heavens! What is the matter here?" D'Arcy, Trimble!"

It was little Mr. Lathom. The master of the Fourth still wore a bandage over his brow, and he still looked far from recovered. He stared at Arthur Augustus, still crouching over the yelling Baggy. He stared still harder at the sight of Baggy sitting among the ruins of the gas-bracket.

"Bless my soul, D'Arcy, what has been happening here? What have you been doing to this unfortunate boy? Leave him alone this instant!"

"Bai Jove! I—I have scarcely touched him yet, sir!" panted Gussy.

"But—but he looks ill—positively ill!" said Mr. Lathom. "This—this is too much, D'Arcy. Only yesterday I found you ill-treating this boy!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus shook with wrath. This was too much—after all Trimble had done.

"I have scarcely touched him, sir!" he said indignantly. "But he has deserved anythin' I could have given the fat wascal!"

"What, what? D'Arcy!"

But Gussy was not in the mood to mince his words.

"He is an ungwateful wottah, sir!" he said heatedly.

"He has wuined sevahwal suits of my clobber, not to mention collars and ties! He has been weawin' my clothes daily! That is why he has been so clean and tidy lately. The—the fat wascal!"

"Bless my soul! D'Arcy, are you mad? What are you talking about?"

"Nor is that all—wathah not!" gasped Gussy excitedly. "He has taken advantage of my kindness and has won up a big bill at the school tuckshop in my name. The—the—"

"Oh dear! I say, sir, don't you believe him, sir!" gasped Trimble, blinking up apprehensively. "I—I haven't even touched his clobber! Besides, they can easily be cleaned up again, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" gasped Mr. Lathom, wiping his brow dazedly.

"What—what— Blake, kindly explain what this means!"

Blake explained the sad facts. It was no good trying to hide them now. Besides, Trimble, hero or no hero, deserved it for his ungrateful treatment of the good-natured Gussy. Trimble's peculiar method of reforming needed some explaining.

Mr. Lathom blinked at Trimble as he listened.

"G-good gracious! I—I am surprised—shocked, Trimble!" he ejaculated. "I, also, was under the impression that you were improving, especially as regards your personal appearance. But this—this would explain somewhat—"

"Oh crikey! I—I say, sir, don't you believe D'Arcy!" gasped Trimble, quaking. "I haven't even touched his clobber. As for getting grub off Mrs. Taggles, why, he told me I could—you can ask him!"

"Trimble—"

"He's jealous—that's what it is," said Trimble warmly.

"He's jealous because I saved your life, you know, sir! Catch him doing a plucky thing like that! I—I—you haven't forgotten so soon that I shaved your wife—I—I mean saved your life, sir, have you?" gasped Trimble hopefully, and anxious to change on to a more pleasant subject. "That shows I've reformed, you know, doesn't it?"

"Bless my soul! Trimble—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"After my pluck—my noble self-sacrifice!" gasped Trimble. "That—that terrible moment when—when the lumbering monster of the road loomed above us, and—and your life hung by a—hairbreadth, sir! I—I hope I'm a modest chap, sir, but I hope you've not forgotten all I've done for you, sir! The desperate leap to the rescue—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trimble was getting eloquent in his desperate attempt to change the subject from purloined clobber and grub to life-saving!

Mr. Lathom waved his hand for silence, and gasped like a stranded fish. Really he was in an awkward position. Trimble had acted in an abominable manner, and deserved the severest punishment for his wicked imposture upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He had taken advantage of the innocent Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's kindness of heart, and his actions were deplorable.

But Trimble had no need to remind the little Form master that he had saved his life. Mr. Lathom realised it, or thought he did. He was grateful. From the bottom of his heart Mr. Lathom wished that it had not happened at all, or that someone other than Trimble had been the hero of the occasion. But he was bound to feel grateful to Trimble.

It was a difficult matter in such circumstances to punish a fellow who had saved his life! And Trimble deserved severe punishment.

Really, it was very awkward for Mr. Lathom. But help was at hand; he was about to be delivered from his predicament in a startling manner. Just then there came a knock at the door.

Tap!

It proved to be Toby Marsh, the School House pageboy.

"Which there's a gent to see you, sir!" said Toby.

"Leastways a man from the villidge!"

"Who is it?" said Mr. Lathom testily.

"Which it's George Grimes' father from the village, and young George is with 'im—'im as works at Sands, the grocer's, sir!"

Evidently Toby took it for granted that Mr. Lathom would know Grimes, the grocer's boy!

There was a stir in the room. Trimble had given a startled gasp.

"What on earth does Grimes want?" murmured Blake.

He was soon to know.

"Send him in!" snapped Mr. Lathom.

A few moments later Mr. Grimes and his hopeful son were shown into the Form-room, and the Form blinked at them curiously.

CHAPTER 11.

The Fallen Hero!

MR. GRIMES stood nervously before the Form, twisting his cap in his hand. Grimes, the grocer's boy, did likewise, though not so nervously. Grimes was well known at St. Jim's, and popular with Tom Merry & Co. and all the decent juniors there. He was a Scout, and a footballer and cricketer, too, and more than once had his team of village youths met Tom Merry and his stalwarts on the sports field and at Scouting games.

But what he could be doing at St. Jim's with his father was a mystery to the juniors—at least, to all but Baggy Trimble!

That junior's face was greener than ever now.

He had a horrid suspicion as to what Grimes was doing at St. Jim's. The unexpected had happened.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Baggy.

He palpitated.

Mr. Lathom blinked over his spectacles inquiringly at Mr. Grimes.

"You wished to see me?" he mentioned. "I am Mr. Lathom!"

"Y-y-e-s, sir!" gasped Mr. Grimes, far from at his ease. "I—I hope you'll forgive us coming here about it, sir! My lad didn't intend, of course, to make any sort of fuss about what happened, sir. In fact, the lad didn't even tell me about it until he'd bin sacked by old Sands! I—I hopes as you'll understand that the lad don't think he's done anything out of the way. He's a good lad and he's a Scout, and knows his duty, like!"

"Bless my soul! What ever are you talking about, my good fellow?" gasped Mr. Lathom.

"About—about what happened yesterday afternoon, sir!" stammered Mr. Grimes, taken aback. "You—you ain't forgotten what young George here did—pushed you out of the way of that there motor-lorry!"

"What—what—"

"Bai Jove!"

There was a buzz.

Trimble shivered.

"I—I knows that I oughtn't to have come about it, sir!" said Mr. Grimes, who obviously disliked his errand. "But—but it happens that I'm out of work, and we can't afford for young George to be out of work, too. If you'd just be so kind as to write to Mr. Sands and explain just how them things got smashed up—"

"What—what ever do you mean?" ejaculated Mr. Lathom, a curious expression appearing on his face. "Mr. Sands—your son—what have I to do with them, my good fellow? If you are in need of help of any sort I shall be glad to do anything in my power. But you should not have come here—"

"Well, I did what I thought was right!" said Mr. Grimes, his voice somewhat indignant now. "After all, the lad saved your life. Dr. Short called at the house this morning and said so. He had a bit of praise for the lad, anyway, sir. I'd have asked him to speak to old Sands, but I didn't think about it—"

"G-good heavens!" gasped Mr. Lathom, interrupting him. "Am I to understand—are you claiming that it was this boy, your son, who saved me from that motor-lorry yesterday, Mr. Grimes?"

"Of course I am! Dr. Short knows it was him as did it!"

"Bless my soul! But—but, really, my good fellow—"

"It's like this, you see, sir," said Mr. Grimes gruffly. "Arter the lad had pushed you outer the way he found as the eggs and jam and stuff in his basket had all got smashed up. And when he tells Mister Sands how it happened, the old hunks wouldn't believe him. He thought as he'd bin skylarking, and he's sacked him—paid him up and sacked him!"

"G-good gracious!"

"So I came along hopin' as you'd be so kind as to write to Mister Sands and explain how it happened," said Mr. Grimes hopefully. "He wouldn't listen to me if I went; he's rather a grumpy old gent—see! And—"

"But—but this is amazing!" stuttered Mr. Lathom. "A boy in my Form has already claimed to have done this plucky action—the action to which you refer, Trimble, stand out, my boy!"

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Baggy Trimble groaned and staggered out from the Form. His fat little knees were knocking together. If the juniors had needed any proof as to Grimes' story, Baggy's appearance now provided it!

"Ow! Oh dear!" he groaned. "I—I say, sir, don't you believe Grimes! It wasn't him—it was me! Don't you believe him!" he gasped, glaring at Grimes. "He's telling awful untruths! Everyone knows I d-d-did it! Besides, if Grimes hadn't done it I should have done! I should—I—I mean I did it, of course. I sp-sprang to the rescue like a—a—like a—"

"Trimble!"

Mr. Lathom's voice resembled rumbling thunder.

"Oh dear! I say, sir, don't you believe that chap. He's heard about my heroic rescue, and he's after a reward, you know. Be-sides, how could he have done it when I did it? Ask Dr. Short— Oh crikey! I—I mean, don't ask Dr. Short, he might easily say it wasn't me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whole Form roared at that. Even Mr. Lathom had no doubts as to the truth now.

"I—I, this is astounding, Mr. Grimes!" he gasped. "One—one moment. I will just speak to Dr. Short on the phone! I—I had no idea that your gallant son was the boy who saved me!"

"Oh, really, sir—after my gallant action—"

"Silence, Trimble! I will deal with you presently!"

"Ow! Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It—it's nothing to laugh at, you fellows!" gasped Herries, as Mr. Lathom, considerably flustered, hurried out. "That fat beast—that swindling scoundrel! He's spoofed us—made fools of us! He's got money out of us! We've shaken his beastly hand; we've stood him tarts and things! I contributed five bob to the presentation fund. We'll smush him for this!"

"Yaas, wathah! Gwecat Scott! The—the feahful fwand!"

There was a murmur of agreement to that. The laughter ceased. Smiles vanished as the fellows realised just how much they had been spoofed by Baggy Trimble. The Fourth did not like being spoofed—especially by a fat frog like Trimble.

Trimble shivered as he met the glances of his Form-fellows.

Mr. Lathom soon returned. His face was crimson with anger as he came in and banged the door behind him.

"I—I have ascertained that your story is perfectly true, my boy," he said, shaking hands warmly with the blushing Grimes. "Good heavens, that—that wretched boy Trimble has deceived me—has deceived the whole school! How he could have dared—how he could have— But I will deal with him presently. Mr. Grimes!"

"Sir?"

"I shall be only too delighted to write to Mr. Sands and explain the matter fully," said Mr. Lathom gratefully. "I am only sorry you have been occasioned such worry and trouble! In fact, I will see Sands personally, and, of course, I shall insist upon paying for the damage done."

And, after shaking hands once again with Grimes and with his father, Mr. Lathom led his visitors out.

Then he returned, closed the Form-room door, and looked at Baggy Trimble.

It was a look that made Baggy shiver in his shoes.

"I—I say, sir, I—I hope you don't believe that—that designing fellow, sir!" stammered Baggy. "You see, sir, it was like this. I'll explain just how I rescued you, and—"

"Silence!"

"After saving your life, sir—" gasped Baggy.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Lathom. "Enough! Not another word! Do not add lies to your rascally behaviour!"

"Oh dear!"

"I intend to punish you with the utmost severity for your monstrous deception, Trimble!"

"Oh—oh dear! I—I'd rather you didn't, if you don't mind, sir!" gurgled Baggy, in terror. "I—I'd rather the whole matter were dropped, sir. I—I don't wish to claim any credit for my heroism, you know!"

"Bai Jove! That fellow—"

"Silence! Trimble, be silent! D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir."

"You have made a collection on Trimble's behalf, I believe?"

"Yaas, sir."

"The money must, of course, on no account be given to this wretched impostor! Mr. Railton must decide what is to be done—"

"Oh cwums! But Twimble alweady has the money, sir!"

"Wha-at?"

"You see, the fat wascal bwoke open the box in my absence and pocketed the lot, sir!" faltered Gussy. "I believe he's alweady spent two pounds of it in the tuckshop."

That is why he was lookin' so feahfully ill when he came in. He had been gorgin' the gwub somewhere, you know!"

"Bless my soul! G-good gracious! That—that young rascal! Trimble!"

"Ow! I—I say, sir, I feel awfully ill! C-can I go and lie down, sir?" gasped Baggy hopefully.

"No, you cannot, Trimble!" hooted Mr. Lathom. "You will turn out your pockets this instant! Every penny left of the money must be handed to Mr. Railton for him to decide what is to be done with it! In my view, it should be handed to that plucky boy Grimes!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear, sir!"

Every fellow appeared to agree to that.

"But—but— Oh dear! After my gallant action——"

Trimble was still making a fight for it. But Mr. Lathom had had enough.

He grabbed Trimble and his cane.

"Now, Trimble," he snapped, "are you going to empty your pockets here and now, or am I to take you before the headmaster? Such depravity—such wickedness should be punished by expulsion! But——"

"Ow! Oh dear!"

The threat was enough for Trimble. Hastily the fat youth started to turn out his pockets.

Chink, chink, chink!

The coins rattled on the master's desk. Treasury notes were added to them. The pile grew and grew, and as it grew Baggy's pockets grew lighter. Baggy showed the linings of his pockets at last, and Mr. Lathom was satisfied.

Baggy groaned as he blinked at the pile—so near, and yet so far from him now! He groaned and groaned. But Mr. Lathom was by no means satisfied yet.

"That is all, Trimble? You are sure?"

"Ow, ow! Yes, sir!"

"Very good! Now bend over that form, Trimble!"

"Oh dear! Wha-what for, sir?"

"I will show you that without further delay, Trimble!" hooted Mr. Lathom. "You have deceived me—your master! You have imposed upon me and upon the school! You—you have made your master appear foolish! You have also treated D'Arcy with scandalous ingratitude! For these things I now propose to cane you with the utmost severity!"

And he did!

Mr. Lathom was usually a most mild-tempered gentleman. But Trimble had exceeded that gentleman's limit. Mr. Lathom was now like a raging lion. He did not wait for Trimble to "bend over." He bent Trimble over with one hand, and he bought his cane into play with the other.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Mr. Lathom had not yet recovered from his accident, but it did not appear to have impaired the muscles of his arm in any way, or his energy. From Trimble's wild howls, he was laying it on remarkably soundly. Nor did Mr. Lathom look like stopping for some time.

Trimble roared and roared, and bellowed with anguish.

"Bai Jove! I nevah knew Lathom had so much muscle, deah boys!" Arthur Augustus confided to Jack Blake. "I weally do hope he will leave some of Twimble for us to deal with!"

"Phew! Yes, rather!" said Blake.

And that was the general fear—that Mr. Lathom might whack Baggy Trimble into extinction, so to speak. They wanted their "go" at him yet—especially Arthur Augustus.

There was no forgiveness in Gussy's gleaming eye, no pity or mercy. Trimble had done it this time!

But Mr. Lathom finished at last. Trimble flopped into his seat, springing up again with a yelp. Mr. Lathom kindly allowed him to stand, if he wished, for the remainder of the lesson.

To the Fourth that afternoon's lessons seemed endless. But they were nothing like too long for Trimble. From the looks cast at him from all sides, Baggy knew exactly what to expect, and he shivered. Afternoon class could have gone on for ever for Baggy.

But it ended at last.

Baggy was the first out.

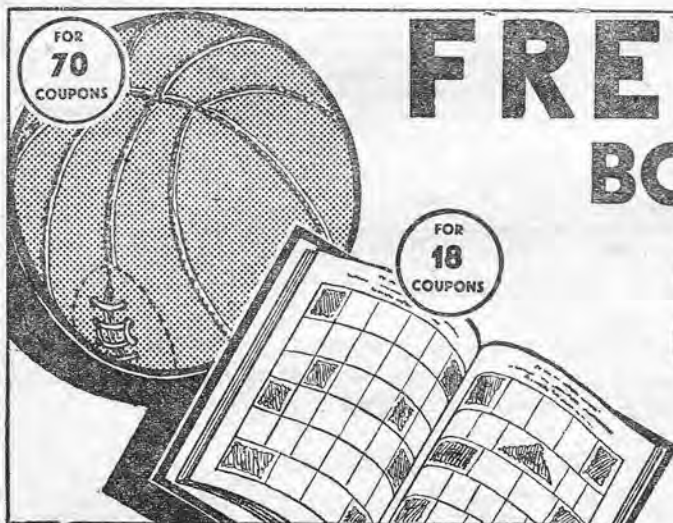
He jumped up and flew almost before the word of dismissal was out of Mr. Lathom's mouth. Mr. Lathom stared and stared transfixed as the whole Form sprang up as if worked by the same spring and went stampeding after Baggy Trimble.

Never had Baggy Trimble been so sought after.

A swarm of yelling Fourth—led by Arthur Augustus—went after the fleeing Baggy.

The Shell fellows were already out of their Form-room,

(Continued on page 28.)



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DICK AND DANNY ARE STILL ON THE DOLLAR TRAIL!



The Dollar Hunters.

By
PERCY A.
CLARKE

PROSPERITY WHARF.

A Fishy Business!

"I'VE found something!" cried Dick Yates, rushing up to Danny Malone and grabbing his arm.

It was in the street at Hoboken, and Danny Malone regarded his British pal with some doubt.

"Say, buddy," he retorted, "when you've quite done with my arm, kindly let go. My fingers are numb."

"Sorry, Danny," said Dick. "But it's a real bonanza I've hit up against."

"You don't say?" queried Danny. "Something like Plenty Bay, or the Inter-State Investment Trust, or the Honduras Loan?"

"Backing out of the partnership?" asked Dick sharply.

"Nix on that, buddy," replied Danny. "But after what we've been through a guy is entitled to be cautious, I guess."

"You come and look at it, then, and bring your cheque-book," urged Dick.

Danny complied, but there was a frown on his freckled face. A lot of his enthusiasm for dollar-hunting had been sadly damped, and he felt discouraged. Dick, however, refused to lose hope. He took Danny over the bridge and along by the riverside amongst the docks and warehouses that lined the Hudson.

Dick was keen. He was a Britisher who believed that there were far more opportunities of making a fortune in America than in Great Britain. His parents had died and left him a little money, and having received an invitation from his uncle, Sam Schuster, a New York policeman, he had arrived in the United States plumb full of hope and ambition.

But his efforts had not been too successful, and had he not been quite so smart as he actually was he would have lost what little money he had started with. He had fixed up a working partnership with Danny Malone, born and bred in New York City, and they had done their best to start their first million dollars on Wall Street; but a profit of barely fifty dollars on their first outlay was the utmost they had received, and high finance had lost its charm for them.

From the very first they had fallen foul of an unscrupulous solicitor, Van Duren, Dick's first boss, and some of their misfortunes had undoubtedly been due to his efforts at getting even with the pals who had frustrated his roguery more than once. But Danny took the view that Van Duren wasn't all to blame for their failure at dollar hunting.

"If you ask me, buddy," he said, "this fortune stunt

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is sure a wash-out. Get me a birth in a cosy office with so many dollars per week, and I do know where I am."

"That may be," replied Dick. "But you get so many dollars a week and no more. You're in a rut. You have security, but you have no variety, no adventure. You take no risks, therefore your profits remain fixed. But if you're willing to take risks then there is no telling what you may gain."

"Sure, it may even be nixes," growled Danny.

"Quitting?" asked Dick.

"Nope! I'll stick at it as long as you," retorted Danny. "Where's this bonanza? Hot diggity, I can't see nothing on this location 'cept grime and dirt!"

That was true enough. Any docks area is dirty and grimy. There was plenty of work going on. Trucks were pulled up under the bare walls of wharves and warehouses. Cranes creaked and groaned, chains rattled, men shouted hoarsely, and bales and barrels and crates, all sorts of merchandise that had come from the ships on the other side of the buildings, were lowered to the waiting trucks.

But one wharf was deserted. The big gates were closed and barred. The windows

were boarded up, and the rusty cranes were swung flat to the wall out of the way, unused. A large board was fixed high up on the wall bearing dirty white letters that spelt a cryptic announcement.

"For Sale. At knockdown price. Apply J. Vassoni, 79, East Ninety-Nine Street."

"That's it," said Dick, his eyes gleaming. "It's been up for sale so long, so a man told me, we'd get it for a mere song."

"What sort of a song?" asked Danny cautiously.

"A thousand dollars down, and so much a year. That's how those things are done," explained Dick.

"And what do we do with her once she's ours?" asked Danny.

"Aw, have a heart and look pleasant!" said Dick. "Just look at all those trucks being loaded up. Look at all those trucks waiting their turn at all those other wharves. And now step this way, doubting Thomas, and I'll give you the low down on this outfit."

He took Danny down a narrow passage beside the empty wharf and out along a crumbling jetty that jutted out a little way into the river. He waved his arm at the shipping. At every wharf a steamer was moored, and the air was a medley of noise plus a mixture of smells. Out in the stream other ships were moored waiting their turn at the wharves.

The boys try to buy a warehouse,
but find they've been sold again!

"You see," cried Dick excitedly. "There are more ships waiting to discharge goods than there are wharves to accommodate them. We buy this show and open her up, and we get ships alongside, and trucks waiting in the street. And we make a profit on every crate, barrel, hogshead, and bale that passes through from the river to the street. What more d'you want?"

Danny was beginning to understand.

"Sounds okay, buddy, and looks okay. But, say, why hasn't some other smart Alec bought this show long ago? Why is it that this place is empty when all the others are sure working to full output?"

"Don't know," said Dick. "Maybe Vassoni wants too much, and we'll have to call his bluff and beat him down. Anyway, I reckon it's worth trying. Are you game?"

"Sure, let's go!" cried Danny.

It looked so simple. One just had to buy the wharf and set it working, and the money made itself. A staff would have to be hired to handle the merchandise, but the goods were there out in the river in the moored ships at the buoys, waiting to be handled. There was the chance of making money.

The pals left the docks area and went in search of East Ninety-Nine Street. They frowned a bit when they saw it, because it was by no means a nice street. There were shabby shops on either side, with tenements over them, and in the gutters swarms of swarthy children were playing merrily. Obviously the local population was of Italian descent.

They found the offices of J. Vassoni. He called himself a solicitor and real estate agent, which might mean anything; but from the grimy, dusty appearance of his office he didn't do much business. He had no office boy, and sat in his shirt-sleeves in the outer office, staring up at the flies that walked across the dirty ceiling. He was swarthy and fat, and sported a jet black moustache. His beady eyes glittered at the sight of the pals.

"What you want, eh?" he asked abruptly.

"Mister Vassoni," said Dick.

"Youse looking at him," said Vassoni.

"We've come about that empty wharf," said Dick.

"Prosperity Wharf?" said Vassoni, and his jaw dropped, his eyes bulged, and he came to his feet with a bang.

"What's the big idea?"

"We want to buy it," said Danny. "Gee, but does it scare you?"

Vassoni stared at them as if they had gone mad.

"I don't want to sell it—not in a hurry," he said lamely.

"That's for sale," said Dick. "You're the agent. You can't refuse to listen."

"Ten thousand dollars," said Vassoni curtly. "But what's it worth to you?"

"We reckon there's money in the game," put in Danny. "Providing the right guys work it. But ten thousand is a heap o' dollars."

"Make it eight thousand and call it a deal," said Dick. "But—why—I not want to sell—not so quickly."

"Then why advertise?" retorted Dick. "You're stalling, Vassoni. Name your lowest price. We're busy, we are. We offer eight thousand."

"You kids haven't got that much jack," said Vassoni.

"Never said we had," replied Dick. "We'll arrange a mortgage. A thousand dollars on the nail and the rest per year."

A cunning gleam came into Vassoni's eyes, but the pals didn't notice the change in him. He rubbed his fat hands together as he sat down at his dirty desk.

"Si—yes—of course. No doubt I could fix it for youse. One thousand dollars down, right now, gents!"

"But we're not fall guys," said Danny. "We don't buy blindfolded. Give us the keys and let's have a looksee at the shack."

Vassoni laughed and rubbed his hands.

"Youse smart Alocs! But—listen. There is another guy been talking about buying the Prosperity Wharf—oh, for weeks. He's stalling till I get impatient, isn't it? I did say I let him have keys to-day. But you gents put down the thousand dollars and you got keys now."

"But suppose we don't like it, after all?" asked Dick.

"Then you get your money back," said Vassoni. "I fix him! And I fix the mortgage."

He turned to his desk and wrote out a rough and ready agreement and signed it, including the receipt for one thousand dollars, on account. Dick read it and approved.

"Will a cheque do?" he asked. "Guess it ought to in a business deal like this."

There was something like disappointment in Vassoni's eyes. He preferred the cash, but he dared not argue about it.

"Quite okay with me," he said gruffly.

Dick wrote out a cheque for a thousand dollars and handed it over. Vassoni felt in his pocket and gave him a bunch of keys.

"They're all there," he said. "You tote down and take a looksee, and if youse like her we'll fix the mortgage. So?"

"Smart work," said Danny.

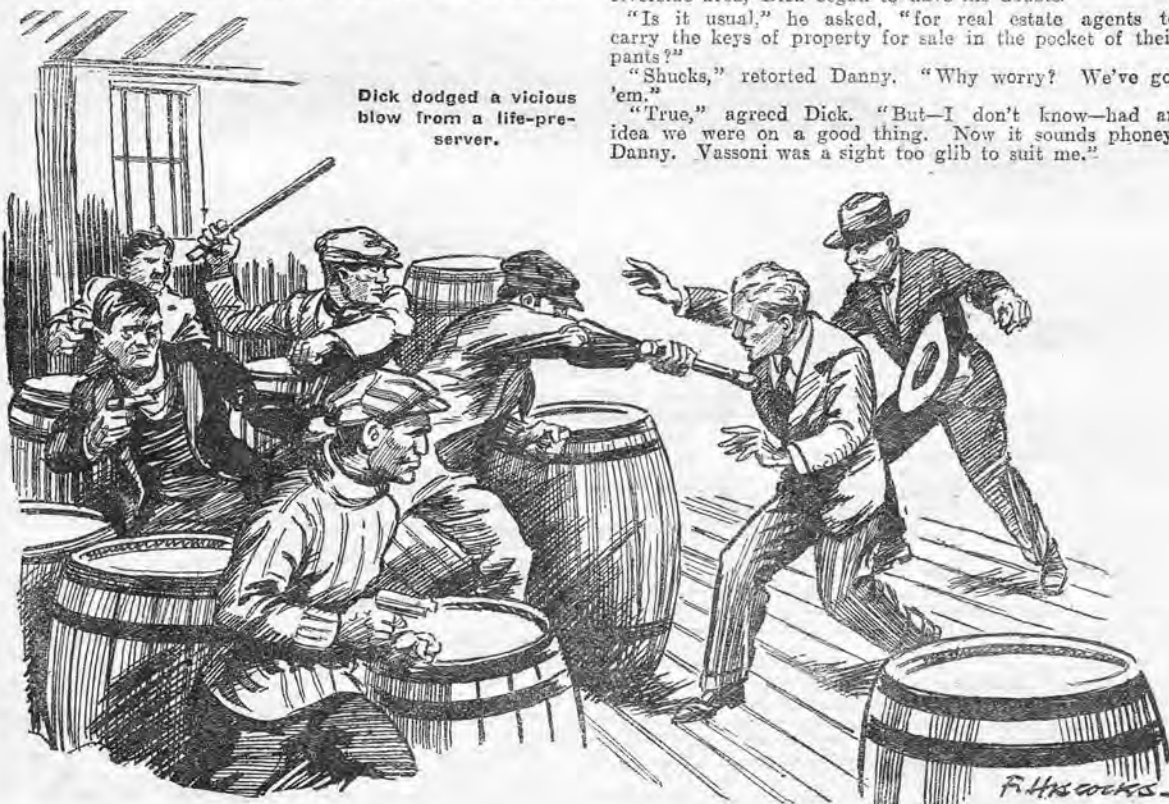
But as they walked along the street, back towards the riverside area, Dick began to have his doubts.

"Is it usual," he asked, "for real estate agents to carry the keys of property for sale in the pocket of their pants?"

"Shucks," retorted Danny. "Why worry? We've got 'em."

"True," agreed Dick. "But—I don't know—had an idea we were on a good thing. Now it sounds phoney, Danny. Vassoni was a sight too glib to suit me."

Dick dodged a vicious blow from a life-pre-server.



"Well, hot diggity, if you aren't the cat's pyjamas!" exclaimed Danny. "You drag me all this way to lamp your bonanza and now you're laying down on it! And since we've got so far with the deal, I vote we carry on and see all there is to see."

"But we'll look out for a dirty deal," said Dick. "I'm not going to be fooled if I can help it."

An Old Enemy!

"HERE we are," said Danny. "Open the doors and we'll walk in."

There was nothing about Prosperity Wharf to excite undue suspicion, although it was remarkable that it should remain empty and deserted in the midst of so much commerce and activity.

Dick fumbled with the bunch of keys, trying first one key, then another, until he found the one that fitted the rusty padlock on the main gates. They entered the dismal buildings. The first store was festooned with cobwebs and looked as if it had not been used for years which was what they had naturally expected to find. But on climbing the wooden stairs to the first floor they stared around with surprise. The place was stacked with hogsheds and barrels, and reeked of cheap spirits. There were signs of recent use, and a man's jacket rested on top of a barrel as if it had been flung there, carelessly, barely a moment ago.

"Hooch!" said Danny, in a husky whisper.

"We might have guessed," said Dick curtly. "This is the snag, and before—"

There was a slight scuffle behind him, and he spun round sharply. Danny let rip a cry of alarm. Men were rising all round from behind barrels. Leering, hefty, armed men were rushing at them.

"Slap 'em to sleep!" yelled somebody. "Don't shoot. They've got to talk!"

One man aimed a vicious blow at Dick's head with a life preserver. Dick dodged it neatly, and fought back with all his might. His bunched knuckles crashed on the brute's jaw and dropped him in a heap. But another tough stepped forward to take his place. Dick set his back against a hoghead and fought for his life.

He had not had time in which to think out what it all meant. It was obvious that these Bowery toughs were dangerous and he fought in self defence without question. What had become of Danny he did not know. All he could see were unshaven, glowering faces, and he hit out at them frantically.

But the odds were too great and the unequal combat could not last. One hefty brute threw a life-preserver and it struck him on the shoulder, numbing his arm to the fingertips. He stumbled and half fell. Strong hands gripped him, pinioning his arms to his sides, and an enormous man faced him menacingly.

"Pack it up, kiddo!" he snarled. "Kin youse fight twenty grown men?"

"You've no right in here!" snapped Dick.

They laughed at him hoarsely, raucously.

"Come to that, youngster," said the spokesman, "what might you be doing here, and where's your pardner?"

Dick gazed round. He couldn't see much for Bowery toughs, but there was no sign of Danny.

"Don't you know?" he asked.

"No, we don't, but you're going to tell us!" snarled the gangster.

"How can I?" queried Dick. "Hang it, you set on us, and before I knew where I was you were all doing your best to hand me the kayo. How do I know what happened to him?"

Then a gangster came shouldering his way forward to the leader.

"Clean gone, boss," he said. "The rat led us a fine dance amongst them barrels and then we lost him."

A grin of triumph was on Dick's face, but the gang boss snarled at him.

"Nothing funny about it!" he said angrily. "There's going to be trouble over this for youse, and for that pardner o' yours when we catch him."

"But what have we done?" asked Dick. "Dash it all—"

"That's enough!" snarled the boss. "You can tell the chief all about that as soon as he arrives. Tie him up, boys, and some of you looksee round for the other rat!"

It was useless to protest. Dick was trussed up hand and foot and deposited, none too gently, amongst the evil smelling barrels, while the gangster hunted high and low for Danny.

Dick had time in which to think. It was plain that

Vassoni had either been guilty of double-crossing in order to enrich himself to the tune of a thousand dollars, or he had deliberately pocketed the money and laid the trap for the two boys.

In any case, it was obvious that Prosperity Wharf had never been sold because it was never intended to be sold. The board and the air of emptiness and desertion were all blinds. The place was nothing more nor less than a bootlegger's stronghold and storehouse.

But that did not solve the mystery of Danny's disappearance. How he had managed to get away it was impossible to say, but Dick was hoping that he would effect a rescue very shortly as bootleggers have a knack of getting rid of people who stumble on their secrets.

Dick lay there for the best part of an hour, then the gang began to assemble again around the spot where he was, and from what was said he gathered that Danny had completely fooled them.

"But the guy couldn't have got clear," said one fellow. "There's been a guard on every door and window, pretty well. He must still be in here, somewhere."

"Find him, then," growled another man. "Sure, I've hunted the show and searched in every blessed corner till there ain't a beetle in the shack I don't know by his front name! And I tell you the slippery rat ain't to be found!"

"He's got to be found!" snarled the gang boss.

"The chief!" hissed somebody, and awed silence fell on all the assembled toughs.

Dick heard the thud of heavy feet on the planks, then through the crowd of gangsters came Vassoni, grinning nervously, and behind him was Van Duren!

Dick gasped, but his amazement was not worse than Van Duren's. He stared at Dick and his eyes flashed.

"You—you rat!" he snarled. "What d'you keep cluttering up my path for? I'm getting plumb tired of your ugly face!"

"Don't let that worry you," retorted Dick. "If I'd have known you were connected with this show I'd have known it was crooked!"

"No back chat from you," hissed Van Duren. "What's the big idea, anyway, you trying to buy Prosperity Wharf?"

"It looked like a paying proposition to me," said Dick. Van Duren grinned, then he laughed outright.

"Shucks, he's still hunting dollars! Hold me, somebody, and let me laugh! Here, boys, take a look at Rockefeller's kid brother hard at work on his first million! Say, what d'you know about that? A couple o' kids trying to buy a hooch store so's they can run it to unload the Leviathan!"

The gangsters burst out into roars of laughter, and Vassoni, laughed louder than anybody. But, suddenly, Van Duren's mood changed and he spun round fiercely on Vassoni.

"Snap out of it, you wop!" he hissed. "Hot diggity, but you brought this on us! You'll laugh the other side of your face before long!"

"Not my fault," said Vassoni, fear in his beady eyes, his fat cheeks ghastly pale. "They come and want to buy. The board has my name on it. I could not say 'No.' Aw, have a heart, chief! I told you about it, anyways!"

"You could have stalled. You could have told 'em to call some other time. But you sent 'em here, and they've seen everything!"

"What could I do? You've cotched 'em," said Vassoni. "You tap 'em on the head and throw them in the river—so!"

Van Duren glared down at Dick.

"Who sent you to buy the wharf?" he asked.

"Nobody," returned Dick. "I tell you I saw it, and reckoned I could make it pay."

"You're not spying? 'Cause if you are—hot diggity—in the river you go!"

Dick didn't like the prospect, but he tried bluff.

"Better be careful, Van Duren!" he retorted. "We're not spies. We were out on business, pure and simple. But you kill me, and there'll be trouble!"

"Who's to know?" sneered Van Duren.

"You seem to forget that my pardner got away. He'll know, and he'll know where to bring the p'lice to look for me!"

The gangsters looked worried, and Van Duren scowled darkly. There was a hurried discussion, but obviously only one thing to be done, and Van Duren snapped out his thoughts.

"If you say you kept a guard, how could he have got away?"

"We kept a guard on every door and window in the place," said the gangster boss. "There ain't a way in or out o' the show but what it was guarded, and no one has seen that fellow go in or out."

"Then he's still in here somewhere!" snarled Van Duren. "One of you stay here, and the rest of us will scatter and pull the show to bits. That kid's got to be found, and then we'll snuggle the pair of 'em aboard a rum-runner!"

"Drown 'em!" suggested Vassoni. "It's safer!"

"No!" snapped Van Duren. "I've done lots o' things in my time, but murder don't figure on my docket yet, and I aim to let it stay that way as long as I can. Scatter now and find that kid!"

One man sat down facing Dick. He took his clasp-knife from his belt and felt the edge with the ball of his thumb, grinning at the prisoner suggestively. But Dick refused to show fear, and refused to say a word. He was thinking.

A Close Call!

DICK realised that their visit to Vassoni had put the bogus real estate agent in a fix. To gain time he had collected their thousand dollars and given them the keys, and had then warned the gang of their visit to Prosperity Wharf, with the result that the pals had walked into the trap. But Danny had so far escaped. In that fact lay Dick's one and only hope.

He could hear the gangsters ransacking the great warehouse, but there was no indication of their success. In that vast place, littered as it was with barrels and hogsheads, some full, some empty, Danny could lead his hunters a merry dance. Not for one moment did Dick think that Danny would desert him. If there was a chance of rescue Danny would seize it.

And as Dick lay there he suddenly became aware of a shadow behind the gangster who had been set to watch him. He did not move, and was careful to make no sign that he had seen anything unusual. But the shadow moved, and then Danny shot up from behind a barrel. In his hands was a barrel stave. It rose in the air and came down viciously, humming as it did so. It crashed on the gangster's head, and the man rolled from his seat with barely a grunt, insensible.



Two fists shot out, two men fell down, and the boys were through.

Danny darted from behind the barrel. He picked up the man's clasp-knife, and with several deft strokes severed the cords that bound Dick's hands and feet.

"Good man!" whispered Dick. "I knew you'd come back!"

"Save your breath!" hissed Danny. "We've got to get clear! You can swim?"

"Yes."

"Fine! That may be our only chance. But we'll try the roof first. This way! And be quiet!"

Dick followed him, crawling along amongst the barrels on hands and knees to the far end of the floor, where

crates, barrels, and hogsheads were piled up to the dim, dusty ceiling. Danny took Dick round to the rear of that great pile, then began to climb from barrel to barrel right to the very top. The pals paused for a moment, crouching within a few inches of the ceiling. Dick noticed a hole in the ceiling, and understood how Danny had remained hidden while the gangsters searched for him in vain. He had been lying between the ceiling and the floor above!

Danny poked his head in the hole, then, motioning to Dick, clambered through. Crawling along a little way amongst the dusty cobwebs, with Dick close behind, Danny popped his head through a hole in the floorboard of the upper story. He jerked his hand as a sign that all was clear, and then wriggled through.

Pausing to listen, they heard the gangsters going down, and then a hoarse cry from below told of the discovery of Dick's escape.

"Hot diggity!" exclaimed Danny. "That's fixed us, unless we can get out! Come on!"

He scorned secrecy after that. It was time that mattered. Dick raced after him, up the wooden stairs from one storey to another until they came to the very top. But Danny's idea of gaining the roof was not so easy as they had at first thought. There was a ladder leading up to a skylight, but a gangster stood at the foot of it, toying with a revolver, and through the glass of the skylight they could see the shadow of another man pacing the roof.

They dodged behind a pile of barrels so that the man at the foot of the ladder should not see them. He glanced up as if he suspected something. The noise of their steps

mattered little, for the gangsters below were making enough row for an army.

Danny headed straight forward and came to a doorway that opened out on the river, with a sheer drop below. On the wall to one side was a rusty crane that, years ago, had been used to haul up the goods from the holds of steamers.

"We've got to do it together," said Danny. "If one stays up here he'll be caught again. Are you game?"

"Our only chance!" said Dick. "But it's got to be snappy!"

They grabbed the great hook that dangled at the end of the rusty chain. Danny kicked off the guard brake, and together they allowed themselves to step off the platform into space.

If that crane had been well oiled and in continual use the chain would have roared off the drum; the weighted hook would have shot down like a plummet to the turbid waters of the Hudson. But, fortunately for the pals, the crane was rusty and practically jammed. Their weight certainly caused the hook to descend, but it dropped in great jerks, dropping, jamming, and dropping again.

The pals felt as if their arms would be torn from their sockets, but they were dropping towards the Hudson River. The gangsters came rushing to the platform, high overhead. There was the crack of a gun, and a bullet whined close to the dangling boys; but that was all. It was broad daylight, and if the gangsters made too much racket, it would bring all the New York police that way.

One of the men jammed on the brake, and the old crane stopped working, but by that time the pals were level with the ground floor, swinging at the end of the rusty chain. Dick reached out with one hand as they swung in towards the wharf, and managed to grip a rope that dangled from a bollard on the wharf. He hung on while Danny leapt to the planks and hung on to allow Dick to land. Inside the warehouse the gangsters were rushing down the old staircases in hot pursuit. There was not a moment to lose.

The pals sprinted along the wharf to the far end, where the way was barred by a fence. They clambered over, and jumped to the rotting timbers of the ramshackle jetty, then raced to the shore, along the narrow passage between Prosperity Wharf and the next warehouse, to the street.

A few of the gangsters had already reached the street, but the pals, arriving before they were expected, crashed into them. Dick floored one man with a neat uppercut. Danny smashed his fist into the leering face of another, and dropped him. Then they were through and away, running for dear life towards the main thoroughfare.

But Van Duren had impressed upon his gang the importance of capture, and the gang were keen. Danny led the way. He knew the district. The toughs had cars close at hand, and they could hear the staccato roar of the powerful engines.

Consequently, Danny left the streets and dived into a labyrinth of dingy alleys. Dick followed without question. They went round a block, and came back to the riverside close to Prosperity Wharf, dived down a passage to the waterside, and, seeing an empty barge moored close by and unattended, they went aboard and crouched in the great iron hold, out of sight, while Van Duren and his men chased phantoms through Hoboken.

"Hot diggity!" panted Danny. "That was a close call, I guess. But we're clear of that hooch outfit."

"Thanks to you!" said Dick. "How did you get away from the first attack?"

"Simple," grinned Danny. "A guy hit me a beauty, and I went over backwards amongst the barrels. Then I rolled, and they couldn't find me. I had time to recover; and finding I was hidden I stayed hidden, and dodged 'em. Then I found that hole in the ceiling, and lay doggo. The rest you know, buddy."

"Yes, I know," said Dick grimly. "And I know that Vassoni has got my cheque for a thousand dollars. How long do we stay here?"

"Say, one hour," suggested Danny. "Things ought to quieten down in this neighbourhood by that time."

He was right, and after an hour in the evil-smelling barge, they clambered out and went ashore. They gave Prosperity Wharf a wide berth, and walked swiftly and cautiously through the side-streets, heading all the time for East Ninety-Nine Street.

But they never got there. They were in the main thoroughfare when Dick grabbed Danny's arm and brought him to a sudden halt.

"Look!" he hissed. "Straight ahead!"

Danny looked, and saw Vassoni waddling towards them, but not noticing them. Then from a side-street came a policeman. It was Sam Schuster, Dick's uncle, twirling his baton idly and grinning at them.

"Say, what are you dollar-hunters doing in my location?" he asked.

"Never mind that," snapped Dick. "Oblige me by staying right where you are and looking fierce! Come on, Danny! If I don't even up with Vassoni, call me a freckle-faced nigger!"

Schuster stayed where he was, because he was too amazed to do anything else. Dick and Danny stepped forward as Vassoni came to a halt by the portals of a bank.

"Now, you crook," hissed Dick, "I'll thank you for my cheque!"

Vassoni's face was ghastly and his eyes bulged. But, his first fears overcome, he laughed, hoarsely and raucously.

"Come off the roof!" he retorted. "You paid her, and I put him in the bank."

"You dirty wop!" said Danny. "F'r two pins I'd bust you on the nose!"

"You lay a finger on me and I summons youse kids f'r assault, and shoot you up afterwards!" threatened Vassoni.

"Lay off the bluff!" put in Dick. "That Prosperity Wharf stunt is phoney, and you know it! We don't want to butt in on any bootlegging business. That's nothing to do with us, and we're not interested. Tell Van Duren that from me. But you pay that cheque in and you're due for the lock-up. Just glance along the street a-ways, Mister Vassoni."

Vassoni glanced, and saw Schuster standing there, twirling his baton.

"Curse you!" he hissed.

"By all means!" grinned Dick. "But hand over my cheque and this deal is finished. If you don't—well, I squeal to the police everything I know, and what will Van Duren say to that?"

The threat was effective. Vassoni handed over the cheque, spun round on his heel, and strode away as fast as his fat would let him, being careful not to pass too close to Schuster.

"That's that!" said Dick.

"But," objected Danny, "won't Van Duren try to get even?"

"He won't know about it," said Dick. "I reckon Vassoni told him and the gang we were viewing the wharf with a view to purchase, but he kept quiet about the thousand dollars, hoping to grab all that for himself. And he'll keep quiet now to save his own dirty hide. I should worry! We got out of that jam very well."

"Sure, so we did," agreed Danny. "But many more stunts like that and I quit dollar-hunting! Gee, buddy, I always thought you Britishers had nerve; but for bluff, I take off me hat to you! All the same, if Van Duren sits down under this I miss my guess, that's all!"

"Can't help it!" retorted Dick. "I'm out to find a fortune, if it's here to be found, and I'm not quitting yet!"

(Dick and Danny don't seem to have the best of luck, do they, boys? But they're full of grit, and they're bound to have another man-size adventure next week! Don't miss it!)

Here's the contents of NEXT WEEK'S BUMPER PROGRAMME, BOYS!

"THE ONE-MAN REBELLION!"

A priceless, long, complete yarn of St. Jim's.

"GREEN CABS!"

Another complete, thrilling adventure of Dick and Danny, the Dollar Hunters.

POTTS, the inimitable Office Boy, in another humorous episode,

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SOS! SOS! SOS! Help your Editor! Can't anyone catch the Oracle out? He's getting so swelled-headed that he can wear my hat! Send in your question, and please, someone, stump him!

WELL, chums, what with bonfire night, and Christmas coming along, I've been having a pretty busy time of it lately, believe me. The Editor had us all in on the old sanctum carpet this morning, and we thought he was going to give us something. We found we were right. He said: "Now I've got you all here, I'm going to give you all a piece of my mind." The office boy asked me if I thought the old Ed. could afford to do that, but luckily for him—the office boy, I mean—the Ed. didn't hear him. After the Ed. had looked us all over with his searching optics, he addressed us as follows:

"The 'Fifth' is coming along soon, and I don't want the office littered with burnt squibs and guys. There are quite enough guys here already. ('Hear, hear!') And you, Whiskers," the Ed. continued, "I want you to brighten yourself up a bit as well. What about a bit of pink ribbon on that hairy appendage of yours? And a few candles would look rather effective on the old cranium, what?"

Of course, I didn't wax over enthusiastic about the candle business, because, as I explained to the Editor, when the wax melted it would run down over the old think-box, and that wouldn't do at all. "Never mind," said he, "a little fat won't do the old dome any harm; you always were a bit of a fathead, anyway."

The Editor brushed all my objections to one side; then he brushed the mud off his trousers and started on the jolly old queries, of which there were many basketfuls by his desk. "Robert Birch, of Basingstoke," said he, "wants us to tell him what an alligator apple is? Now, my lad, what is an alligator apple?"

"That, sir," I said, thinking hard and parking my whiskers on the mantelpiece, "that is a product of South America and the West Indies. It is valued for its wood. In fact, sir, the wood of this curious plant is very much like cork, and is called corkwood. It would be, of course. The fruit, though, is not eaten by the natives, as it is supposed to send one to sleep."

"Really," said the Ed.; "and might I ask if that's what you have for breakfast?"

"No, sir," I replied, "I do not. My breakfast usually consists of a few loose hairs out of the old toothbrush and a look through the morning paper. What's the next question, sir, please? I'm all of a dither, waiting to get the old noddle to work."

"The next query, my lad," said the Editor, "concerns cricket. George Kirshaw, a Clapham reader, says he's been thinking this one out all the

hand above the shoulder in delivery of the ball."

"Very instructive, my lad. Now our friend George has not finished with you yet. He also asks, when was the first inter-county cricket match played in England?"

"The first English inter-county match which is recorded was played in 1730," I replied. "It was played on Richmond Green between Surrey and Middlesex. County cricket was not put on an organised basis until 1872, when the M.C.C. offered a cup for county competition."

"Good! I see you know quite a lot about cricket," said the Editor, giving me a friendly smile and one of his cigarettes. "I wonder if you can answer this question, sent in by Pat O'Keefe, of Belfast. He wants to know what a lemming is?"

"A lemming is a furry-coated animal found in Scandinavia. It is about five inches in length, and belongs to the mouse tribe. The lemmings have a peculiar habit of crossing the country in great numbers every two or three years, and eventually walking into the sea, where they are drowned."

"Can you explain what ice-blink is?" "Yes, sir; ice-blink is the reflection of starlight on an iceberg."

"Leonard Hurd asks us if we can tell him what the record is for the standing high jump."

"Six foot is the record, made by J. Darby, in 1892."

"What is the cannon-ball tree?" "That is a tree found in tropical South America. It bears round, woody fruits."

"What is the bourse?"

"The Paris Stock Exchange is known as the bourse. The word bourse comes from a Latin word, bursa, meaning a purse."

"Bill Stevens, of Sidecup, wants to know what a bumboat is."

"The name for a small boat, sir, that carries vegetables, provisions, and so on, to ships lying in port or off the shore."

"Can you tell Fred Kelly why the Dutch farmers in South Africa are called Boers?"

"That's from the Dutch, and means husbandman."

"What are collards?"

"Collards, or coleworts, is the name given to cabbages grown late in autumn and in the beginning of winter."

"What is a caftan?"

"Caftan, sir, is a Turkish word, also used in Persia. It is the name given to a tunic or underdress with long, hanging sleeves, tied with a girdle at the waist, and worn by both men and women in the East. At one time the

summer. He wants to know when overhand bowling first came into use. Come along, now, answer that one, if you can!"

"That's quite simple, sir," I told him. "Overhand bowling in cricket was made legal for the first time on the tenth of June, 1864, after a lot of opposition. Before that date, the laws governing bowling did not permit the player to raise the

caftan was worn by the upper classes in Russia."

"George Meaks, a Maidstone 'Gemite,' wants us to tell him when dominoes were invented."

"About three hundred years ago, sir, in Italy. Owing to the fact of them having ebony backs, they were called dominoes, a domino being the name for a black cloak in Italy."

"K. Wilkinson writes to ask this query: How long can a camel go without a drink?"

"Twenty-five days, sir."

"That seems a long time," said the Ed.

"You're right, sir, it is. None the less, it's true, but only in the cooler weather, when there is greenstuff in the jolly old desert."

"Do you know anything about speedways?" asked the Editor.

"Yes, sir," I replied. "I'm a fan."

"A fan, are you? Well, it's strange that you never make me feel cool. You usually make me hot and bothered."

"Ha, ha, ha!" I laughed.

"Stop that noise," snapped the old Ed., "and answer this question: Who is the finest rider in this country to-day?"

"Victor Nelson Haxley, the Australian, captain of the Harringay league team. He is generally considered to be the greatest speedway rider in the world."

"The same reader wants to know who is the finest English rider."

"That is not a very easy question, as opinion differs, but it lies between Frank Vary and Squib Burton. Burton is the more consistent."

"Frank Gibbons, of Chelsea, wants to know which is the champion team in England."

"There is no official championship of the country, but Wembley, champions of the South, have met and beaten Belle Vue, Manchester, champions of the North, both at home and away. They are, therefore, considered to be the champion team."

"Jack Snell, of Oldham, wants to know the result of the first Test Match between England and Australia, and where it was played."

"Wimbledon was the venue of the first Test Match, and Australia won by 35 points to 17. This was a six-a-side match, while the other four were eight-a-side."

"A Wokingham 'Gemite' asks when and where speedway racing originated."

I paused for a moment to think, and immediately a beaming smile, such as I had seldom seen, appeared on the Editor's face.

"Ha!" he shouted. "Got you at last. That's a shilling off your salary!"

And he reached for the phone to tell the cashier.

"Don't count your chickens before they're hatched," I replied. Then I cleared my throat and began: "Speedway racing was first started"—the smile began to disappear from the old Ed.'s face, and he put down the phone—

"by John S. Hoskins, now manager of the Wembley Stadium, in the Hunter River Valley, in 1923. The track belonged to the Agricultural Society of West Maitland."

When I had finished my little so-say the Editor was frowning and I was beaming.

"Well," said the Editor, "I think that's all for this morning. If your whiskers get much longer, my lad, we won't have to have the carpet cleaned."

"Well," I said, "what about putting a shilling on to my salary?"

"What?" he roared. "Get out!" And I got.

LIVELY ADVENTURE YARN OF THE ROYAL NAVY!

The FIGHTING MIDDY!

By

DAVID GOODWIN.



Smiler Goes into Action *

AFTER returning to the *Victorious* and recounting his thrilling adventures, Ned and his pal Jinks sought a quiet spot for a chat, and, sitting under the davits where the second pinnace was slung, Ned learned all that had taken place on the *Victorious* since he went on leave.

"Have you heard any more about the spying game?" asked Ned.

"No; but there's a lot of it in the air. I've been thinking a heap of what you told me," said Jinks, "and I'll bet that pal of yours, Mr. Elking, knows what he's talking about. He's in the Secret Service, I reckon. Of course, he couldn't say much to you, but I think we both ought to back him up."

"I'm going all out for him," answered Ned emphatically, "and I count on your help, old chap."

Next morning both Ned and Jinks, feeling that the fate of nations hung on them, and that legions of spies were plotting their undoing, found the three hours' instruction in the school-room decidedly dull. When they came on deck after lunch, however, the *Victorious* had settled down to her regular routine.

"We're relieved of the responsibility of looking after the Old Man, anyhow," said Jinks, as he saw the captain's galley called away; and that great personage, who had invited the captain of the *Vengeance*—the next ship in the line—to lunch with him, left with his guest and went over to *Cowes*. "Doesn't old Mulberry look tight about the belt?" he added irreverently, as the *Vengeance's* captain lit a cigar, and settled himself in the stern cushions. "The skipper's done him well."

"I wouldn't let him smoke in my galley," said Ned critically. "Doesn't look smart, if you ask me."

"Ah, the old birds are off on a holiday, you see!" said Jinks leniently. "Nobody misses 'em. They're only figure-heads. It's efficient officers like you and me that keep the Navy going. Have you fed my dog Smiler yet?"

"Just going to. Come along and help!"

They found Smiler very ready for his rations, and he put away about a pound and a half of biscuit and gravy with solemn relish. The bulldog had settled down very comfortably to his life on the *Victorious*. He was a

the bluejackets' pet goat, Billy Fitzwilliam.

"You'll have to do a bit more walking and swimming, my lad," said Ned to the dog as he fed him. "You're growing a tummy like the Port Admiral's. First duty of a son of the Empire is to keep himself fit, mind that!"

Smiler grinned from ear to ear as if he understood, while he licked his chops over the remainder of the meal, and the two middies left him to it, and, being off duty—knowing, besides, that the captain was ashore—they went forward to see if they could glean any news about the prisoner and his coming trial.

"It always feels queer to me on this ship," said Jinks, with an air of having served on every vessel in the fleet, "to be going forward to the ward-room and the skipper's quarters instead of aft. Fancy having your quarter-deck for'ard of the funnels! You see—Hullo! I say, didn't you tie the dog up?"

Ned looked back and saw Smiler, his tongue hanging out, making for him along the deck at a lumbering gallop.

"What d'you mean by it, you ruffian?" said Ned, as Smiler grinned like a port-manteau opening, and nearly wagged himself in half. "He must have slipped the hook

of his chain. Confound it, I must go an' tie him up!"

"Oh, never mind—he won't hurt," said Jinks, taking Ned's arm and pulling him along. "Everybody knows him now, though he's never been up here before. Skipper's away, you know. Well, as I was saying—Hi, hallo! Stop him!"

Just at that moment the captain's steward came out of the alleyway from the cabin with a tray loaded with cold viands and used plates, the remains of the repast. And at his heels, anxious to get his share of the broken meats, came the captain's big brindled bull-mastiff, Solomon, which had been left behind when his owner went to *Cowes*.

No sooner did Smiler see the mastiff than every hair on his back bristled up on end, and with a growl like eternal thunder he bared his fangs. Solomon, hardly able to believe his eyes at seeing a rival on his sacred quarter-deck, gave a deep snarling bay, and the next moment the two dogs launched themselves at each other like thunder-bolts.

The captain's dog was half as big again as Ned's, but

Every dog has his day, but it isn't
every dog that has his day on the
quarter-deck of a battle cruiser!

Smiler went in with such a hearty good will that he pinned the mastiff by the neck, and the two went rolling over like a cannon-ball. An instant later there was a howl and a crash as they knocked the steward's legs from under him. He dropped the luncheon-tray, and wildly embraced a passing bluejacket round the neck in an effort to save his balance, and down they both came with a heavy bump.

"Go astern, you blamed fool!" gasped the seaman, as he fell headlong with his face in a blanchmange that was wobbling across the deck. "Can't you steer a straight course?"

"Take me out av it! I'll be et!" spluttered the steward.

There was a wild struggle among the dishes, and the two dogs, revelling in such a battle as they had not enjoyed for a year, rolled over and over in the melee, Smiler silent and holding on like grim death, and the captain's dog snarling like a brass band, and chewing Smiler's shoulder. Two Marines and a carpenter close by were so doubled up with laughter that they could do nothing.

"Here's a giddy mix-up!" said Jinks, making a dash for Smiler's collar. "Stop him, for goodness' sake. If he eats the skipper's dog there'll be the deuce to pay."

The steward struggled to his feet, covered with jelly and sauce, and frantically seizing the bull-mastiff by the tail, tried to haul him off, while Jinks pulled at the gun-room pet's collar. Smiler and Solomon were much too busy to notice such trifles, however, and the tug-of-war had no more effect on them than if they had been anchored. The row was terrific, and suddenly Solomon began to yell as if he were being murdered.

"Do something, for goodness' sake!" gasped Jinks. "There'll be a blessed court-martial over this!"

Ned wasted no time in trying to pull the warriors apart. Close by, the paymaster, a Scotsman who was noted on the ship for preferring snuff to tobacco, stood transfixed by the sight, his snuffbox in his hand, and a pinch arrested halfway to his nose as he stared at the dogs. Here was a providential remedy. Ned dashed at him, and, snatching the snuffbox from the astonished man's hand, hurriedly clapped a dose of the stuff over Smiler's snorting face.

It was the one thing on earth that could have made the bulldog let go; he was forced to open his jaws or suffocate. Instantly the two dogs were hauled apart, and the mastiff dragged back into the alleyway. Ned and Jinks holding the frantic and indignant Smiler.

"You was a piece o' gude luck for the captain's dog, I reckon," said the paymaster, calmly picking up his snuffbox. "Laddie, you're owin' me for an ounce an' a half o' the best brown rappee, an' the value's one-an'-tenpence."

"Put it down to the gun-room damage fund!" said Ned, struggling with Smiler. "Hold still, will you? I say, steward, is he slaughtered?"

"No. His collar's saved him," said the steward, examining the ruffled Solomon. "My word, there's teeth-marks on it as if it had been in a man-trap," he added, turning round the great, brass-studded band of thick leather that guarded the bull-mastiff's neck. "I'll bet he owes his life to that bit o' stuff."

"Thank goodness!" said Jinks, with a sigh of relief. "You grinning imp of sin, what d'you mean by it? Can't you keep your teeth out of your superiors? Call that discipline?"

"He's jolly well mauled," said Ned, with much concern, examining Smiler.

"I'm thinkin' it's nothin' to what ye'll be yourself when the captain comes back," said the paymaster, trying to scrape a pinch of snuff out of the empty box.

"Great Scott! Yes, I suppose so," said Ned, in consternation. "I say—"

"Look here! There's no need to shout about it! Why should he know? The commander couldn't have seen us, and you beggars aren't going to report?" said Jinks hurriedly.

"We won't say anything, o' course, sir. Hush it up!" said the bluejacket, and the Marines echoed him.

"See here, Hoppy," added the seaman, taking hold of the steward with a capable fist, "if you open your mouth about Mr. Jinks or Smiler—"

"Course I won't!" said the steward, scraping the jelly off his coat; "but there's all these plates smashed, an'—"

"I'll pay for those," said Ned, slipping a ten-shilling note into Hoppy's hand. Don't get old Smiler into a row. You won't say anything, Mr. McVittie?"

"Me! What d'ye take me for?" said the paymaster. "A dogfight like you isn't seen

every day, an' I'm obliged to ye for the entertainment. But I'm thinkin' that if it happens again there'll be a short end to one o' ye. The captain doesn't know you toy terrier o' yours is on this ship at all yet."

The three or four men who had witnessed the brief fight—for the whole thing was over in less than a minute—were only too willing to keep the matter quiet, for both Ned and Smiler were prime favourites already. The two middies hastily took the bulldog below and dressed his wounds, for he had some pretty sharp bites on the shoulder, which, however, did not trouble him in the least. He smiled more than ever.

"He knows he had the best of the round," said Jinks, "according to Queensberry rules. We can thank that thick collar of Solomon's that we haven't got into a thundering row. All the same, it'll be jolly awkward if this happens again. Can't you do something to stop it?"

"Of course I can, if that mongrel of the skipper's has got breeding enough to make it up," said Ned, who was rather put out. "Old Smiler'll make friends with any dog if you put it to him properly, especially with one he's licked. We'll try him as soon as he's quietened down."

They did try him, and Ned showed the peculiar knack he had of understanding dogs by the way he brought the two fighters together again and induced them to take to each other. It had to be done carefully, and there was some growling at first, but in twenty minutes' time Solomon and Smiler not only put up with each other, but bade fair to be very good friends.

"That's all right," said Ned, as he chained the bulldog up again. "We shan't have any more rumpuses."

"I think you've done the trick. Only just in time, too," added Jinks. "Here comes the owner's galley, and he looks as if his joints were tingling a bit. We're well out of it."

Within two hours of Captain Raglan's return, the *Victorious*, as the shades of night began to fall, weighed anchor and stood out to sea, past the Warner Light. Such sudden departures and arrivals were common to her, and this time she went alone. Where she was bound not a soul except her captain and, possibly, her commander knew; and when Ned turned in after doing duty in the first watch, the battleship was steaming westwards, somewhere off St. Alban's Head.

Short as the summer night was, when the dawn broke the *Victorious* was under the shadow of the Eddystone, and before Ned came on deck she steamed past the breakwater into Plymouth, and anchored in the Hamoaze.

"What the dickens are we here for?" said Ned to Jinks. "Don't know. Rippin' fine place, though, Plymouth. Two of my best girls live here. I hope we stay a bit and get some shore leave."

"Well, I don't. I want to get that spy business settled!" said Ned impatiently.

"It's just possible that the admiral may settle it without asking your leave," said Jinks. "But I shouldn't wonder if that's the business we're here on. There goes the owner; making for the dockyards, too."

Captain Raglan went ashore, and returned in about two hours' time, looking very grave. Not a man on the ship, nor officer, either, was allowed to go ashore that day, and about midnight, when the moon was full, the *Victorious* put to sea again and turned up Channel. The chums were more puzzled than ever, for it was not usual for a battleship of her size to leave port in the middle of the night unless something important was in the wind.

"We shall know what it means after we get back to Pompey, I expect," said Jinks. "The worst of a ship like this is, she does such a lot of things that only the owner understands, or thinks he does; but I believe it is something to do with the spy affair. It's a pretty big business finding a foreign sneak like that on duty at the captain's cabin door; there may be more of 'em, for all we know."

"I vote we apply for leave, anyhow, if she drops anchor in the Solent again," said Ned.

Jinks agreed, but both of them had a tolerably rough time of it before that happened. The *Victorious* made a slower passage of it homewards, for she stood over towards Havre, and waited there thirty miles off shore till she was able to speak to a cruiser squadron that came down

Channel, and, receiving a message from her, passed on. Meanwhile, the sea and wind both rose, and when the ship stood towards England again, rolling strongly, Ned went off duty, and ran up against a new experience, which the middies of the *Victorious* had to undergo.

"Scuttles!" Lieutenant

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

MIDSHIPMAN NED HARDY, son of a line of sea captains, is appointed to the *Victorious*, the same ship from which his brother Ralph has been cashiered in connection with a robbery. Misfortune soon befalls the new ensign, for he is made the scapegoat of a Russian plot to wreck the British *Narvik*. Thanks to a warning note from Ralph, Ned succeeds in establishing his innocence and bringing his enemy to book. Granted leave, Ned joins his cousin Rourke aboard the fishing protection gunboat *Speedwell*, bound for duty in the North Sea, and plays a great part in the capture of a Danish pirate caught fishing in forbidden waters.

(Now read on.)

Grimshaw roared, as he came below. "All four juniors!"

"Hurry!" said Jinks, as he darted to his post. "You take the first scuttle!"

Ned ran to the place indicated, though at first Grimshaw's order was Greek to him, till he saw what the others were doing. The "scuttles," which were the side-windows, or portholes, of the gun-room, could not be left open when there was a heavy sea, or the water would come in when the ship rolled or a wave ran high up her side. But if the scuttles were all kept shut the gun-room became stuffy, which their lordships, the sub-lieutenants, did not like. So they posted the four youngest midshipmen at the four scuttles, to hold them open and shut them swiftly when a wave threatened to come in, opening them again when it passed.

"If any snottie lets as much as an eggcupful of water in," announced Grimshaw, "I'll skin the hide off him!"

Ned found no great difficulty in the job, and every now and again he snapped his scuttle tight, and a wall of green water swept across it outside. He balanced himself neatly, and noticed in a side-glance that Mayne, at the next porthole, had been less lucky, and he had let a quart or so of water in.

Grimshaw did not seem to notice this, however, for Ned was aware that it was himself who was being watched most closely over the newspaper Grimshaw was reading.

Ned's scuttle, however, was not so tight as some. Though he shut it at the right time, a trickle of water oozed through with each wave, and let a drop or so run down into the seat. Ned saw there was no way of helping this, when suddenly a savage, stinging blow from a malacca cane assailed him from behind, and Grimshaw was standing over him.

"You clumsy young dog! Look at that water!" snarled the senior, with another vicious swipe.

"I can't help it!" said Ned. "The scuttle leaks!"

"Don't answer me, you little beggar! If you let another bucketful in like that last, I'll ram your head into the porthole and tie you there!" said Grimshaw, with three more ferocious cuts.

Ned flinched under the cruel blows from the malacca cane, for the burly Grimshaw had put every ounce of his strength into those blows. It proved only too conclusive to Ned Hardy that in the senior sub-lieutenant he had found a very bitter enemy and one ready to "down" him whenever the slightest chance offered itself. But what was the reason for it all? Ned puzzled his brains as he walked back to his post at the scuttle, but he could not find a solution.

True, Grimshaw objected to his bulldog, Smiler; but, then, Smiler strongly objected to the senior sub-lieutenant!

"I'll make the rotter sit up!" muttered Ned to himself, as another wall of green water swept across the outside of the scuttle. "It's a rare pity I can't cock him one on the nose!"

(Ned knows only too well that he mustn't hit out at his superior officer. But there's more than one way of getting even with a bully—and Ned'll prove it in next week's instalment of this great yarn of the British Navy.)

The Heavy-Weight Hero!

(Continued from page 19.)

and when they learned the astounding news of Baggy's spoof, they joined in the chase with a will.

"There he goes!"

"After the fat rotter!"

Arthur Augustus, his eyeglass streaming behind him in the breeze, led the way on Trimble's heels. Through the Cloisters and round behind the chapel the chase went, hot and furious. Round the old tower, past the gym, Baggy went like a streak of lightning.

But he was nabbed at last.

"Yarrooooo!" shrieked Baggy, before he was touched. "Lemme alone! I tell you it was all a mistake! It was both Grimes and me that saved that beast La—Yoooo!"

"You fat rotter!"

"You fat spoofah! My clobber—ruined! I have been twicked and wobbled by that feahful scoundwel!"

"What about us?" roared Grundy. "I gave a quid—a quid to that fat twister! Not that a fellow cares about a quid! But I'm not being swindled by that fat spoofah!"

"Not likely! Smash him!"

"Yarrooop! I tell you it's all right!" roared Trimble. "I shall pay every fellow back—out of my next cheque from Trimble Hall! Besides, can't a fellow do what he likes with his own money? And if I hadn't collared it, that beast D'Arcy would have done—perhaps boned the lot!"

"Bai Jove! You—you—"

It was enough—more than enough—for the sorely tried Arthur Augustus!

He rushed at the grovelling Baggy, and, as if worked by the same spring, the rest of the avengers joined in.

He disappeared from view as they flowed over him like a gigantic tidal wave.

What happened to Baggy Trimble next he scarcely knew. He only knew it was something horrible, terrible. He shrieked for mercy, but he shrieked in vain. And when at last the crowd drew off, tired but satisfied, it was the wreck of Baggy Trimble that crawled away, and the spoofah of St. Jim's had good reason to wish, from the bottom of his fat heart, that he had indeed reformed, in deed as well as word.

Nor was that all. It was agreed on all sides that the sentence of Coventry should go on for another week, at least, and that during that week every fellow should kick Baggy whenever they met him.

Which sentence was carried out to the very letter, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Trimble's late pal, breaking the record as regards kicks bestowed on Baggy's fat person during that—to Baggy—exciting week!

THE END.

(Look out, chums, for another rollicking fac yarn of St. Jim's in next week's GEM, entitled: "THE ONE-MAN REBELLION!" You'll vote it a real corker!)

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