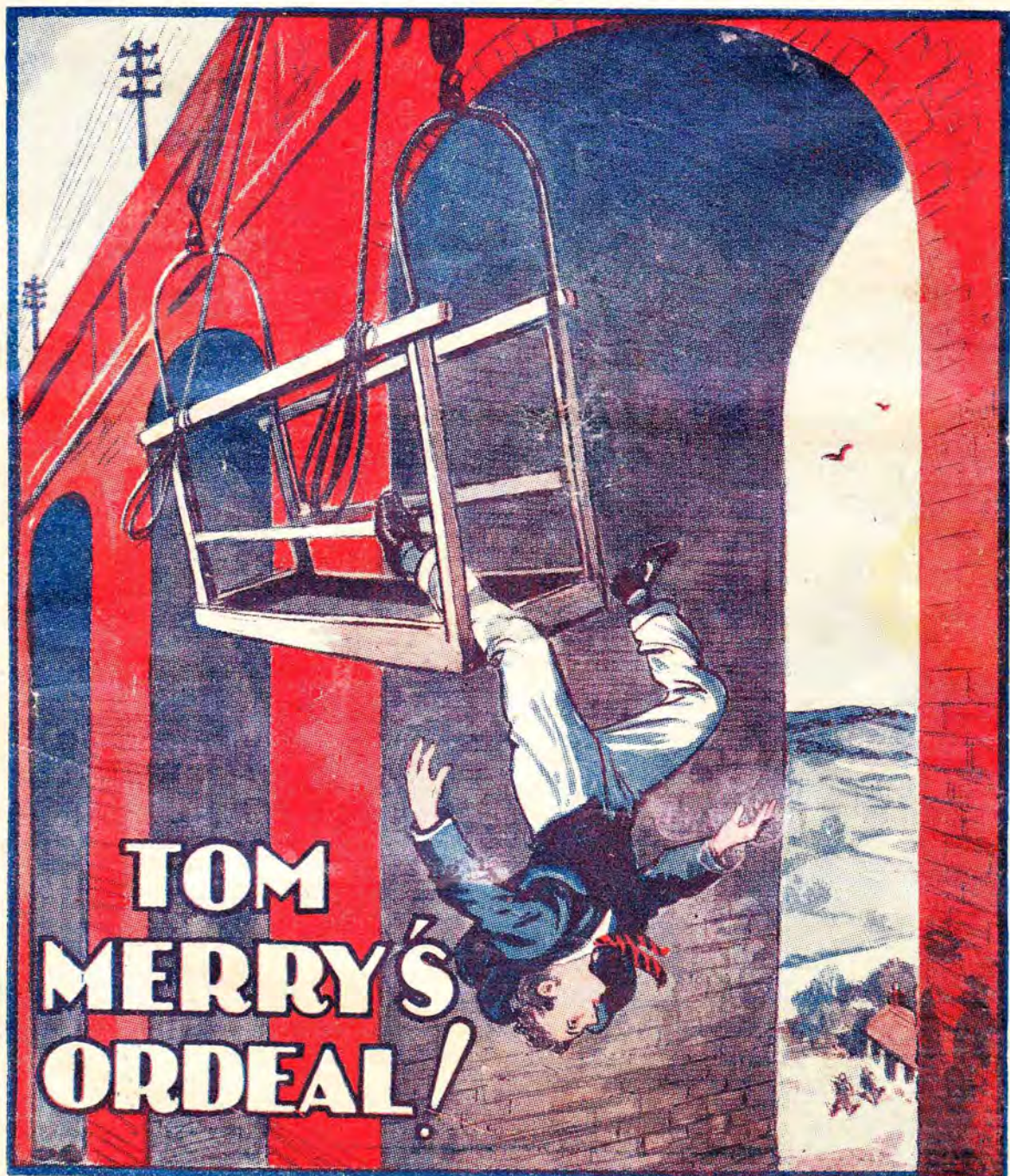


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The **GEM** 2^D



**TOM
MERRY'S
ORDEAL!**

FIGHT ON A PARAPET! TOM MERRY'S HAIR-RAISING ORDEAL!

CHAPTER 1.

—Alarming!

"He, he, he!"
"What the
thump—"
"He, he, he!"

Tom Merry & Co. stopped and stared at Baggy Trimble. Evidently the fat junior was highly amused about something. And as his attention seemed to be bestowed upon them, Tom Merry and his chums halted and eyed him curiously.

"What's the joke, Trimble?" demanded Jack Blake.

"He, he, he!"

"Sounds like an alarm clock running down inside him," said Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! Pway tell us why you are makin' that extraordinary noise, Twimble? I pwesume it is your mannah of expwessin' hilawity."

Baggy Trimble gave vent to another of his remarkable vocal expressions of glee.

"He, he, he! You fellows going out?"

"Yes, but—"

"Going to meet your cousin—what?" giggled Baggy, grinning at Tom Merry.

"Yes; but blessed if I can see what there is in that to make you cackle, old fat man," said Tom Merry.

"He, he! You would if you knew what I know," grinned Baggy Trimble. "Well, it serves you right. You wouldn't let me come with you."

"You fat ass!"

"Going to meet Captain Merry, at Wayland Junction—what?" grinned Baggy. "Well, you refused to accept my offer—I offered to stand you all a spread at the Queen Cafe in Wayland—"

"At our expense—"

"Yes—I mean, no! I should have paid the exes, of course," said Trimble. "I think you fellows are disgustingly mean. Captain Merry's an awfully decent chap—generous and good-natured—"

"You seem to know a jolly lot about him," said Tom Merry. "Been listening at our study keyhole, I suppose."

"Certainly not. You've been doing so much gassing about your blessed cousin, Tom Merry—"

"You cheeky ass!" said Tom Merry. "Why—"

"But that's all right," said Trimble, nodding.

"After all, Captain Merry's come all the way from Burma—"

"Oh, kick that fat ass and let's get on," interrupted Herries.

"You shut up, Herries! Look here, Tom Merry—"

"Oh, buzz off! Come on, chaps!"

"Here, hold on!" hooted Trimble, rolling after the chums and catching Tom by the arm.

"You'll be giving Captain Merry tea in the study, I suppose? Well, lemme join you and I'll tell you what I know."

"Oh, rats! Buzz off!"

"Oh, all right, then!" grinned Trimble, giggling again.

"He, he, he! Serves you right! I hope you enjoy your walk to— Yaroooop!"

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TERROR FROM



Trimble jumped away, just missing Herries' boot. Tom Merry & Co. walked out of the School House.

"Yah! Beasts!" bawled Trimble after them. "Don't say I didn't warn you! Beasts!"

"What the dickens is the fat chump getting at?" exclaimed Tom Merry, turning to stare back at Trimble.

"I suppose he can't have heard news of my cousin—"

"Talking through his hat, as usual," said Blake, with a chuckle. "I bet the fat ass follows— Hallo, there's old Kildare calling you, Tommy!"

Kildare was standing at the open window of his study, overlooking the quad, and the juniors left the gravel path and looked up.

"Calling me, Kildare?" asked Tom cheerily.

"Yes. You're not going to the station to meet your cousin, Merry, I suppose?" called Kildare.

"Guilty, my lord!"

"You young ass! Didn't Trimble give you my message?"

"Trimble gave me no message," said Tom, staring.

"Just as well I spotted you through the window, then," said Kildare. "I told Trimble ten minutes ago to find you

Swiftly, silently, bent on revenge,
the black man follows his victim
to St. Jim's! Comes the time to
strike . . . but the assassin
hadn't reckoned with Baggy
Trimble!

ASTOUNDING ADVENTURES OF THE TERRIBLE THREE AT ST. JIM'S!

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.A Long Complete Yarn of
TOM MERRY & CO. at
St. Jim's.

and to stop you going to Wayland. Captain Merry's phoned through to say he's stopping to lunch with a friend at Lexham, and will be here soon. Coming over by car, I believe."

"Oh—oh, my hat! Thanks, Kildare!"

Kildare nodded and vanished from the window. The chums blinked at each other.

"That fat rascal!" breathed Tom Merry. "So that was what he was cackling about!"

"Would have let us tramp over to Wayland on a hot day like this!" snorted Blake. "The—the fat little worm!"

"Where is he?" gasped Herries. "We'll—we'll smash him for this! Just because we wouldn't let him come! If Kildare hadn't happened to spot us going out—"

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, buck up, you know, or you'll miss Captain Merry. His train gets in at— Oh crumbs! Yarrooop!"

Herries' boot missed Trimble by a foot, and Blake's by less. Trimble, quite obviously, was not aware yet that they knew of Captain Merry's phone message. But he was aware now that Tom Merry & Co. were anxious to kick him for some reason or other.

He bolted, yelling, and the chums flew after him. Trimble had withheld the message from Kildare, intending them to tramp all the way to Wayland and back on a fool's errand, and they wanted to cure Trimble of such mean tricks.

Trimble had just come down the School House steps, but he had no time to go up them again. Digby and Lowther cut him off, and he made a bee-line for the gates, the wrathful juniors whooping after him at a great rate.

"Stop, you young rotter!" yelled Blake. "We're going to smash you to little bits, Trimble!"

Apparently Trimble didn't want to be smashed to little bits. He flew, yelling.

"Yarrooop! Oh crikey! Wharrer you chasin' me for? Yooop!"

A gunning kick from Lowther missed him by inches. The only sufferer from the kick was Lowther himself, who over-shot himself and buried his nose in the turf. The rest kept on Trimble's trail, however.

Round by the tuckshop, and in and out of the old elms, tore Baggy Trimble at a terrific speed. Possibly it had dawned in upon his fat mind by this time that Tom Merry & Co. had tumbled to his little trick. At all events, he wasn't waiting for an explanation. He just flew.

He was near the gates now. Another few yards and he would be through them. Heavy footsteps pounded behind him, and Baggy put on a final terrific burst of speed. And then—

Crash!

It was a violent and unexpected collision.

Trimble rebounded like a football and sat down with a heavy bump and a gasp like a punctured balloon. And the unfortunate person with whom he had collided did likewise—only more so.

He was a lanky, sinewy individual, with a brown, dusky face and dark, gleaming eyes. To see that he was a man from the East only needed a single glance, despite his European clothes.

Tom Merry & Co. pulled up and stared at him blankly as he sat gasping convulsively on the gravel drive. Brown-skinned men from the East were not frequent visitors at St. Jim's, by any means.

But they only had time for a glimpse, for next instant, with a torrent of foreign words, the dusky-skinned man leaped up and flew at Trimble.

That luckless youth was just scrambling up, but he fairly shrieked as he crashed back again with a pair of brown, thin hands clutching at his throat.

It all happened so quickly that the juniors scarcely realised the position for several seconds. The stranger was kneeling now on Baggy's fat chest, his fingers clutching, his face convulsed with passion.

Baggy was shrieking in terror as the black, savage eyes glared into his own.

"Help! Yarrooop! Murder! Draggimoff! Help! Murder! Grrrough!"

The fat junior's terrified shrieks ended in a gasping gurgle. And it was then that the startled juniors awoke to the fact that the matter was no joke; that the brown-skinned man was in deadly earnest, and that Baggy was in grave danger of his fat life.

One glance at the dusky, lean face, with its savagely burning eyes, told them that. A charge from Baggy was far from being a joke to anyone. But the unexpected shock had quite clearly unbalanced the man and released his savage, primitive passions.

"Good heavens!" gasped Tom Merry, suddenly understanding. "He'll kill the fat ass! Quick, you chaps!"

He flung himself recklessly at the man, and instantly his chums followed suit.

The next moment a wild and whirling struggle was in progress in the old gateway of St. Jim's.

The stranger was sent sprawling off the choking Baggy Trimble, who instantly leaped up and tottered away, groaning and gasping.

"Back up!" panted Tom Merry. "Oh, great pip!"

Tom had wrapped his arms round the furious man, and they were rolling over and over in a deadly embrace, Tom's chums helping where they could. And suddenly the man wrenched a dusky hand free, and there was the flash of a knife.

"Look out!" shrieked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Oh, bai Jove!"

He was the first to realise the danger and the first to move. He grabbed the uplifted arm and tore at the hand grasping the knife. Then Blake came to the rescue, and between them they forced the hand open.

Blake grabbed the gleaming knife and flung it far over the grass among the underwood.

"Hold him!"

The struggle was renewed, but from every quarter of the quadrangle figures were rushing to the spot now. There was a startled shout as Kildare of the Sixth came

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running up. He had seen the struggle from his window, and instantly taken a ten-foot drop into the quad.

He came racing up, followed by Baker and Monteith of the New House.

"What the thunder—?"

"Help, Kildare!"

The dishevelled juniors were shoved aside, and between them the seniors soon subdued the raging stranger and pinned him down. And just then a second man came striding through the gateway.

Tom Merry had heard a car stop outside a few seconds before, and one glance told him who the second man was. It was years since Tom had seen his cousin, Captain Colin Merry, but he knew the handsome face with the stern, steely eyes at once.

But the newcomer scarcely glanced at Tom. His eyes were fixed in startled amazement on the brown-skinned man in the grasp of the seniors.

"Good gad! Akyaba!" he stuttered. "What—what—Good gad!"

"You know the fellow, sir?" exclaimed Kildare, who had met the captain before.

"Yes. He is Ramadya Akyaba, my personal servant," said Captain Merry, his eyes still fixed grimly on the man. "What on earth does this mean?"

"Goodness knows, sir! But Merry—" He glanced at the dishevelled, breathless junior.

Almost mechanically the captain greeted his cousin and shook hands, while Tom explained what had happened.

By this time Ramadya Akyaba was on his feet, subdued and quiet under the stern eyes of the Army officer.

"It is most unfortunate, and I am amazed that Akyaba should lose control of himself in this manner," said the captain, at length.

He spoke rapidly and sternly to the dusky-skinned man, who answered him humbly and a trifle sullenly. Both spoke in a language unknown to the juniors; but though Akyaba's answers sounded contrite enough, Tom did not fail to note the faint glitter in the man's eyes as they rested on the captain's bronzed features.

By this time Mr. Railton had rustled to the spot in alarm. He eyed the man curiously and with some uneasiness as the matter was explained, after the two old friends had shaken hands warmly.

"Most unfortunate!" he said, at last. "But do not fret yourself, my dear fellow. If Dr. Holmes has your assurance that such a thing will not happen again, I have no doubt he will allow the man to remain."

The Housemaster called to the staring Taggles, and instructed him to take charge of Akyaba, and the two disappeared into the porter's lodge, Taggles looking anything but easy in the company of the dusky-skinned man.

Captain Merry walked away with Mr. Railton, after the former had promised to have tea with Tom Merry & Co. in Study No. 10, and the staring crowd dispersed.

"Well, my hat!" breathed Tom Merry, shaking his head. "What a rotten welcome for my cousin. As for that Burmese chap—"

"I don't like the look of him, anyway," said Blake grimly. "If we hadn't chipped in he'd have put an end to Trimble's giddy career, and no mistake."

"Anyway, let's get in and prepare tea," said Tom Merry abruptly.

But Tom's face was very uneasy as he led the way indoors to prepare the spread in his cousin's honour in Study No. 10. Captain Merry had spoken highly of Akyaba, and was certain there would be no further outbursts from him. But Tom had not told his cousin that the man from Burma had attempted to use a knife, and Tom wondered what he would say and do if he came to know the fact. Moreover, Tom had not at all liked the glitter in Akyaba's dark eyes as his glance had rested on Captain Merry's own face. It made Tom uneasy.

CHAPTER 2.

Spanked!

BAGGY TRIMBLE grunted. The fat junior was hovering round in the passage outside Study No. 10 in the Shell. From inside the study sounded the cheery rattle of cups and saucers, and the hum of voices. Tom Merry & Co. were busy preparing for the great feed to welcome Captain Colin Merry to St. Jim's.

Besides being an old St. Jim's boy, Captain Merry was a great friend and an old Army comrade of Mr. Victor Railton. It was he, in fact, who had invited Captain Merry to stay for a few days at St. Jim's as his guest. Dr. Holmes had been very pleased to give his approval, and he had also made arrangements for the captain's Burmese servant to have a room at Taggles' lodge.

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Though not exactly his cousin's host, Tom Merry, naturally enough, was delighted with the visit, and he and his chums were proud to welcome Captain Merry to St. Jim's. They were quite "bucked" that the distinguished visitor had so promptly accepted their invitation to tea—apparently in preference to tea with the Housemaster.

Luckily the study was in funds, and the table already "groaned" under the load of good things.

And Baggy Trimble was only too well aware of this. He had seen the Terrible Three, aided by Handcock, the American junior, and Blake & Co., cart a pile of foodstuff to the study, and his heart yearned for even a sight of the grub.

But the cost of poking his fat, little nose into Study No. 10 was the hearty application of several boots, and so far Baggy had deemed the cost too great.

"Beasts!" he mumbled, in disgust. "Mean beasts! Won't even let a fellow have a squint at the grub! I'll show 'em, though!"

Trimble was determined to "show 'em." Tom Merry & Co. had not had the decency to invite him to the spread, but he was determined to go all the same. It was imperative for Baggy to plant himself at the festive board; only, it had to be done with no danger to his fat self.

That was the problem. Somehow, he had to wedge himself into the party, with or without permission.

Eager even to get a mere sight of the good things, Baggy suddenly stooped down and applied his eye to the study keyhole. He could not see much, but what he did see of the table made his mouth water.

Trimble was still in this undignified position when a quiet tread sounded on the carpeted corridor. Baggy was far too engrossed in his proceeding to hear, until the newcomer was almost upon him.

"Good gad!"

It was Captain Colin Merry, and that astonished gentleman blinked at the stooping "Peeping Tom" of St. Jim's.

Trimble, suddenly startled by the strange voice, gave a convulsive jump and bumped his nose violently against the door knob.

"Yoooop! Ow, ow, ow!"

"You'll be getting a nasty cold in your eye, young man!" exclaimed Captain Merry dryly.

"Ow, ow!—Wow! You've jolly well made me bump my nose!" snorted Trimble, glaring. "I—I wasn't looking through the keyhole, you know. I—I say, if you're looking for Study No. 10 this is it. I—I was just about to enter myself."

Baggy suddenly forgot the pain in his nose as inspiration came to him. He ceased to glower at the captain, and his fat face beamed affably. He had solved the great problem, and it was amazingly simple. All he had to do was to follow the captain in, take a seat at the festive board, and make himself at home. In the captain's august presence Tom Merry & Co. would never attempt to evict him.

That was Trimble's idea, and he acted upon it instantly. Opening the door he marched inside, a fat grin on his face. There was a sudden yell.

"Hallo! Here, outside, Trimble!"

"Get out, you fat frog! Why, you cheeky— Oh crumbs!"

Blake had reached for the poker, but he suddenly sighted the captain's tall form.

"Hallo, here we are, you fellows!" grinned Baggy cheerfully. "I've brought Captain Merry along. I see the feed's all ready—good! Shove a chair up for the captain, Herries! Don't stand there staring like a boiled owl!"

There was an awkward silence. Tom Merry & Co.'s faces wore extraordinary expressions as they tried to beam a welcome at the captain and glare at Trimble at the same time. Herries hastily placed a chair for the distinguished guest. Trimble planted himself next to the captain.

"You—you're just in time, Cousin Colin!" gasped Tom Merry. "Tea's almost ready. What's happened about that chap—your servant? Is the Head allowing him to stay?"

"Yes," said the captain, smiling as if he noticed nothing wrong in the atmosphere of the study. The fellow lost his temper, but I'm sure it will not occur again. He is a good servant, and devoted to me—in fact, he begged to accompany me to England. Jove! How well I remember this study!"

"It's a cosy shop, but a bit small when we've a crowd in," said Tom, his eyes fixed on Trimble's fat face. "Trimble, I—I think Wildrake will be wanting you."

"Not at all," grinned Baggy cheerily. "He never does!"

"But you'd better run along, Baggy, hadn't you?" said Blake.

There was an unspoken threat in Blake's words, but Baggy did not appear to notice it. He grinned round at the glowering faces. Tom glanced helplessly at Blake. For one thing, there was scarcely room to stir in the study with

Trimble. Moreover, though there was heaps of grub, it was not likely to last out with Trimble on the job. Further, the juniors could never stand Baggy's fascinating conversation, and they knew the captain couldn't.

Then inspiration came to Tom.
"The—the kettle's not quite boiling yet, Cousin Colin," he remarked desperately. "How—how would you like me to show you the new portrait of the Head in the library while we're—we're waiting?"

"I'd like to see it," assented the captain, smiling.
If he guessed the reason for Tom's offer he did not show it. He rose to his feet, and followed Tom to the door. Trimble grinned and did likewise; he had no intention of losing the captain's company.

But Blake & Co. had other ideas. Trimble had scarcely reached the door when a hand was hooked in his collar, and he was wrenched back. Digby slammed the door behind Tom and his cousin.

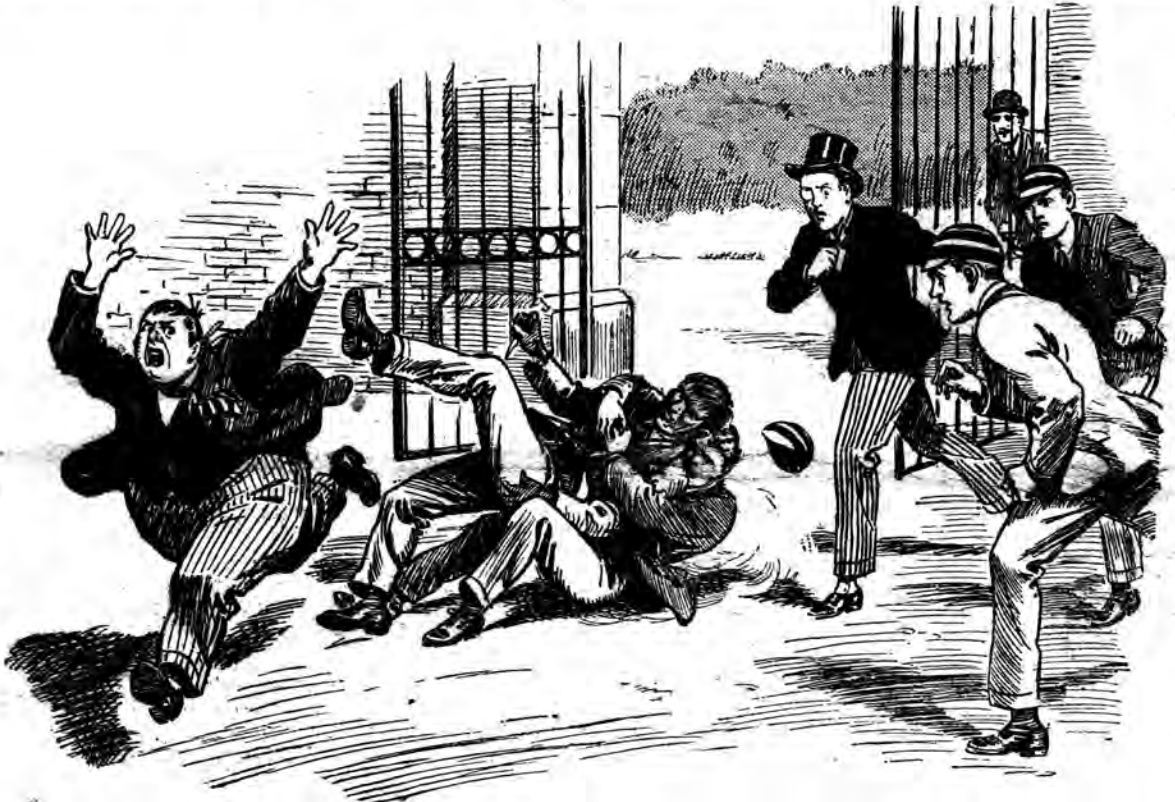
was held down while Lowther sat on his fat chest, ramming a jam tart into his open mouth. Trimble gurgled and choked, but his yells ceased.

Blake blinked cautiously out into the passage. The captain and Tom Merry had gone on, but Mr. Pilbeam was still there chatting with Mr. Selby. It was a full three minutes before Blake gave the word.

"All clear!" he grinned, after a final glance out. "Yank the fat worm up and rush him along quickly!"
"Yarooop! Leggo!" gasped Trimble, spluttering. "I tell you I'm jolly well not—"

He gave a sudden wrench, and then made a wild break for the door. Digby cut him off, and Trimble bowled over Arthur Augustus, sending him crashing into the fireplace, and then bolted round the table.

"Collar him!" yelled Blake.
But Trimble meant business. There was a rush for him, and it was a case of too many cooks over again. Trimble



Tom wrapped his arms around the furious man. Suddenly a dusky arm wrenched free and a knife flashed in the air!

"Leggo!" roared Trimble furiously. "Why, you cheeky rotters—"

"No you don't, you pushing fat boulder!" snapped Blake. "We'll teach you to shove yourself in where you're not wanted like this!"

"Rush the fat worm along to the end box-room and lock him in!" gasped Lowther ferociously.

"Yaas, wathah!"
"Leggo!" roared Trimble again.

Several hands fastened on Trimble. Blake waited until he deemed Captain Merry was well away and then he gave the word and the door was flung open and Trimble rushed into the passage.

Then the juniors halted.
"Oh, bai Jove!"

The captain and Tom Merry were still there. They had evidently met Mr. Pilbeam and Mr. Selby, and stopped to chat with them.

"What—what—" began Mr. Pilbeam, staring at the group.

The juniors backed hurriedly into the study, dragging the struggling, yelling Baggy Trimble with them.

"Hold the fat chump until the coast's clear!" snorted Blake. "Stop that row, Trimble, or you'll have Pilbeam here!"

"Yah! Beasts!" roared Trimble. "Leggo!"
Trimble refused to stop yelling or struggling. So he

charged through them and made another desperate break for the door. He reached it and leaped out, just as Blake grabbed a loaf of bread and flung it after him.

Biff! Biff!

The loaf missed Trimble's head by an inch, but it found a billet none the less—as did Trimble's head.

For the second time that afternoon Trimble collided violently with an animate object. This time it proved to be Captain Merry's waistcoat, the captain just returning from the brief visit to the library in time to receive Trimble.

He also got the loaf. Trimble's head he took in the waistcoat, and the loaf he took under the chin.

Crash!

The captain sat down hard with a startled yelp.
"Oh, bai Jove!"

Blake almost fainted in that dreadful moment.

There was a rush to help the distinguished guest to his feet. The utterly dismayed Blake grabbed Trimble, flung him spinning away, and lent a hand.

"I—I say, sir, I'm awfully sorry," he gasped—"dreadfully sorry! I—I hope you're not hurt, Captain Merry."

Undoubtedly the captain was very much hurt, and not a little wrathful—which was scarcely surprising in the circumstances.

He was almost dazed as they led him into the study.

"Good gad! What—what was it?" he panted. "Good gad! What hit me—"

"I—it was a loaf of bread, sir," faltered Blake, crimson in the face. "I'm terribly sorry, sir. I aimed it at that—that fellow Trimble!"

"An accident, sir—a weally unfortunate accident!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dismally. "Pway accept the apologies of us all, my deah sir."

"Good gad! I thought it was a shell, at least!" gasped the Army man, glaring at Baggy Trimble, who seemed uncertain whether to bolt or stay. "You young rascal! I am not surprised that these boys do not seem anxious for you to join them! You have—poof!—hurt me considerably."

"It wasn't my fault!" groaned Trimble. "These beasts chucked the loaf and rushed me out!"

"And I do not blame them!" snapped the captain heatedly. "You appear to be a very troublesome young scamp, and you have already caused no little trouble this afternoon over that affair in the quadrangle."

"May we kick the fat little rotter out, sir?" said Tom Merry eagerly. Any qualms Tom had had regarding Baggy were gone now. "You see, sir, the fat chump's come here without being asked—he's an awful nuisance all round."

"So far as I am concerned I shall be very pleased to see you do so," said Captain Merry grimly, wagging his chin.

"Oh, really, that's a bit thick!" hooted Baggy. "What about me being nearly throttled by that beast of a heathen of yours—jolly nearly stabbed me to death, too, the awful ruffian. Look here—I say, keep off you—Yarroooop!"

Tom Merry & Co. did not keep off. The captain's views obviously agreed with theirs where Trimble was concerned. They rushed at the fat youth as one man, and Trimble roared and leaped to escape. He had banked on the captain's presence saving him, and now that slender reed, so to speak, had failed him.

He dodged and doubled, and then he made a dive beneath the study table.

"Look out! Oh, great pip!"

Crash!

Trimble's bulk was against agile acrobatics, and the table was not built to withstand a charge made by the fat junior. There was an alarmed yell as the table reared up, while Trimble's fat form dragged the cloth violently.

There followed the crash of breaking crockery, and a sudden gasp from Captain Merry as the teapot shot off the table into his lap, spurning scalding tea right and left.

"Good gad! Groooogh! Ow, ow!" almost yelled the captain, quite losing his poise, as the scalding tea soaked in. "You—you young villain!"

He mopped frantically at his clothes with his handkerchief, then he dropped it suddenly and made a dive for Trimble.

Trimble was beneath the table now, but a fat leg showed, and, making a grab at it, the distinguished guest hauled the yelling Baggy forth.

Tom Merry & Co. stared, quite alarmed, fully expecting the irate Army man to plant a boot behind the fat youth and kick him from the study. But the captain had other intentions.

He whirled the squirming Baggy over his knee, and then, greatly to the juniors' glee, started to spank him—hard.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yarroooop!" roared Baggy. "Why, you— Oh crikey! Yooooooop! Leggo, you awful beast! Yarroooogh! Help! Murder! Fire! Stop it!"

Whack, whack, whack!

If the captain had been wrathful before, he was decidedly more so now, for he laid it on as if he was beating a carpet. Baggy roared and howled, while the juniors looked on, quite enjoying the scene. Blake hurriedly fetched a fives bat, but the captain seemed satisfied with his flat hand and shook his head at the offer.

Baggy was far from being satisfied, to judge by his howls. But the punishment ended at last. The captain, breathing hard, twisted him over and placed the fat junior on his feet. Then he took Baggy by the ear, and, while Digby jumped to open the door, he led the wriggling gate-crasher out and released him.

"There," gasped the captain, starting to mop his trousers again, "I trust that will be a lesson to the young rascal! I do not think he will return in a hurry."

And Tom Merry & Co. grinned and agreed with him on that score. Baggy Trimble was extremely unlikely to visit Study No. 10 again—not while the Army man was there, at all events.

The door was closed upon Baggy Trimble, and the table put to rights again, and fresh tea made in a spare teapot, and the broken crockery cleared from the carpet. Then the unwanted guest was dismissed from the minds of the tea-party, and they settled down to tea, even the captain joining in the laughter now. Evidently that terrific spanking meted out to Baggy Trimble had restored the honoured guest's good humour.

CHAPTER 3.

Revenge!

"G R O O O O O G H ! Oh, the awful beast! Ow, ow, ow!" Baggy Trimble was still hungry, but now he was also hurt in mind and body.

He wriggled and groaned as he tottered away from Study No. 10.

Baggy had banked on receiving the captain's protection, but he had got a sound spanking instead. And Baggy was raging and seething with fury.

He ambled on dismally; and then, quite suddenly, he paused and bolted into the nearest study. Someone was coming along the corridor towards the stairs. First came old Taggles carrying a suitcase. Behind him came Ramadya Akyaba, the captain's Burmese servant, carrying a big, strapped travelling bag.

Trimble waited, palpitating, until the Burmese had followed Taggles up the staircase, and then he emerged and ambled on. Captain Merry might be satisfied that the dusky-skinned man would not have another outbreak, but Baggy was not risking it.

"Beast!" grunted Baggy. "The Head must be potty to allow a blessed dangerous madman here like this. I shall write home to the pater about it."

Musing thus on his wrongs, Baggy went on up the staircase. He met Taggles coming down, and he fairly leaped up the few remaining stairs, fearful of meeting Ramadya Akyaba. In the passage at the top of the stairs a door of a room stood open, and, as he was passing, Baggy got a glimpse of the interior.

He stopped suddenly.

A glance had showed him the Burmese servant in the



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room beyond. And something in the man's attitude had aroused Baggy's curiosity. Evidently Captain Merry had been given that room, which was on Master's corridor, for the Burmese servant was stooping over the big leather bag.

There was something so furtive and stealthy about the fellow that, despite his fears, Baggy could not help stopping to watch.

Through the partly opened door he saw Ramadya Akyaba take something from an outside pocket. It looked like a flat cigar-box of cedar-wood, and the man handled it with great care. What he did Trimble could not see, but it only took him a brief moment. The moment after, the Burmese had slipped the box back into his pocket, and was fastening the straps of the bag again.

"Beast!" murmured Trimble, his eyes round with curiosity. "Wonder what the beast's up to? Pinching the beast of a captain's cigars, I bet, the beast!"

The man turned just then, and Trimble bolted along the passage on tiptoe. There he stopped until he saw the Burmese emerge from the captain's room and go downstairs, and then Baggy breathed freely and crept back again.

An idea had come to the fat junior—a scheme of revenge on the beast of a captain!

It was quite a simple scheme, and Trimble dismissed Akyaba and his furtive conduct from his fat mind and concentrated on his revenge.

He tiptoed into the room, grabbed the big bag, and started to drag it out on to the landing at the top of the stairs. The bag was too heavy to carry, but Baggy managed the job easily enough that way. He reached the head of the stairs, and then he undid the straps, keeping a wary ear and an eye wide for interruptions.

Next moment the job was done; and, unfastening the clasps, he tipped the bag up and sent it toppling downstairs.

But, even as he did so, disaster overtook the vengeful schemer.

Scarcely had Baggy let go of the bag when a voice sounded behind him.

"Trimble! What—what ever are you doing, boy?"

It was Mr. Railton's voice, and the effect on Baggy was electrical and disastrous. Baggy jumped convulsively, lost his balance, and went head-over-heels downstairs after the bag.

Bump, bang, crash!

"Yarooooooooooooogh!"

Trimble's yell was ear-splitting as he took that unexpected header down the stairs. Further yells escaped him as he went bumping down to end in one final howl as he reached the bottom.

"Yooooooooooooop!"

"G-good heavens!"

The startled Housemaster ran down the stairs in great alarm. On all sides of the Shell passage below doors opened, and fellows came rushing out to see what the row portended. From Study No. 10 emerged Tom Merry & Co., followed by a startled Captain Merry.

Like the juniors, he stared at the grovelling, howling Baggy Trimble, and then at the opened bag and the corridor floor strewn with suits of pyjamas, underclothing, and various personal articles belonging to the visitor to St. Jim's.

"Good gad! What—what—"

The captain broke off abruptly. Into his eyes came a sudden, horrified look, while his lean face paled visibly. His eyes had noticed something on the floor.

Had the juniors been near enough they would have seen it also—a little black, slug-like creature crawling like a piece of black ribbon over one of the crumpled-up suits of pyjamas.

"Good heavens!"

With staring eyes the captain eyed the moving creature as it transfigured, and then, with a tense cry of alarm, he jumped forward. Lifting his foot swiftly, he brought it with a vicious stamp down upon the ugly-looking reptile.

Then he leaped to Baggy Trimble, sprawling scarcely a yard away, grabbed him by the scruff of the neck, and sent him spinning away along the corridor.

"Stand back!" he yelled to the astonished juniors. "Boys, for Heaven's sake stand back! There is death here!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

The juniors wondered if the Army man had taken leave of his senses. Mr. Railton must have wondered the same, for he came rustling up, almost treading on the scattered articles.

"Captain Merry, my dear sir, what—what—"

"Mr. Railton, for Heaven's sake keep away from those clothes!" gasped the captain, clutching the Housemaster

by the arm and whirling him away with a powerful swing of his arm. "Order those boys away instantly—clear the corridor! Boys, close those doors—quickly!"

"Bless my soul! My dear fellow, why on earth—"

"Because there may be death among that litter of clothing!" snapped the Army man tensely. He pointed to the black ribbon-like object, now still. "That dead reptile you see there is a karrit—one of the most deadly reptiles in Burma, Railton! How it got among my baggage, Heaven knows! But there may be more of the ghastly things there. Don't you understand?"

"Good heavens!"

The Housemaster grasped the position in a flash now. There could be no doubting the captain's earnest alarm and fear. The corridor at that spot was dusky and ill-lighted, and if there were more of the deadly reptiles about the danger was real and acute. Kildare came hurriedly down the stairs just then, and the Housemaster called to him.

"Kildare, guard the stairs at once! Do not allow any person whatever to come down!"

"What—"

"Do as you are requested, Kildare! Boys, close those doors at once!"

This was scarcely necessary; most of the scared juniors had already slammed their doors, alarmed by the attitude of the captain. Those outside the studies crowded together farther behind the Housemaster, along the corridor.

There was a buzz of startled voices.

Captain Merry had recovered himself somewhat by this time. Swiftly he folded his trousers at the bottom and dragged his socks over them. Then he called for a pair of gauntlet gloves and a stick, which were hurriedly fetched, while another senior rushed away to hunt for Akyaba.

The Burmese servant arrived, and the captain spoke rapidly to him, and his black eyes showed something more than fear as he understood the position. His eyes seemed to glitter as he prepared himself as the captain had done.

While the corridor was guarded the captain and his servant thoroughly searched the clothing, and cautiously repacked the bag. Two or three times the captain gave alarmed exclamations and brought his cane into play. Not until the bag was packed and the walls and passage floor thoroughly searched did the captain cease operations. And his face was grim as he approached the Housemaster at last.

"There were two live reptiles, one dead one, and several unhatched eggs there," he said quietly. "How they got there I have no idea. I opened the bag during the voyage across, and I am almost certain they could not have been there then. Yet it seems probable the eggs were placed in before leaving Burma and have hatched out since. I simply cannot understand it, Railton."

"You think they got there by accident, Merry?"

The captain's stern features went hard.

"I do not. Such a theory appears impossible. I am afraid they were secreted there by an enemy—an enemy who desired my death," he answered grimly. "However, I will have the bag taken up to my room and carry out a more thorough examination there. In the meantime—"

He paused.

"You—you think the passage may be used now, Merry?"

"I do not—not for the present, at all events. I think the studies on this corridor, at least, should be placed strictly out of bounds until they have been thoroughly searched. In the gloom it is quite possible that one of the ghastly reptiles crawled through one of the open doorways."

"It shall be done," said the Housemaster, pursing his lips. "The risk is certainly great, Merry. I will issue the necessary orders at once."

And Mr. Railton did so. To their disgust the excited juniors were cleared out of the Shell studies near the spot, and then the corridor was cleared and, like the studies, put strictly out of bounds. And that evening all St. Jim's buzzed with the strange affair.

CHAPTER 4.

No Danger!

"ALL rot!" That was the undisguised opinion of George Alfred Grundy.

It was also the spoken opinion of many St. Jim's juniors, though it was noticeable they themselves took great care to keep at a respectful distance from the Shell corridor. Though they deemed it "all rot" for the Shell passage to be placed out of bounds, they were taking no risks of meeting any dangerous reptiles there.

The ban, in fact, caused plenty of grumbling. Prep, for

the Shell, had to be done in the Form-room, and supper in the studies was out of the question. And supper in Hall was not at all popular.

Still, it was exciting and rather a lark.

It was gleaned that the captain and his servant, aided by seniors suitably garbed and armed with canes, were at work making a thorough search of the studies. And so far no more of the deadly karrits—either eggs or reptiles—had been found.

Meanwhile, in the junior Common-room, Grundy gave his views of the situation.

"All rot!" he observed, with a sniff. "Utter tosh and piffle, in fact! Who's afraid of the blessed things, anyway? I'm not! A man could easily slosh the things if he spotted 'em. I believe that Army man's talking through his hat. Trying to impress us, you know!"

"Fathead!" said Tom Merry.

"Look here, Tom Merry—"

"It's you who are talking through your silly head-gear," said Tom. "If Railton considers there's danger, then you can bet there is. And my giddy cousin isn't the sort of man to talk rot, either. He's a hard case—next to the head of the military police in Burma; the A.P.M., you know. It takes a lot to scare him, anyway."

"Rats! I tell you—"

"Oh, dry up!" said Manners.

"If you tell me to dry up, Manners, you cheeky owl—"
"I do, and also to cheese it, and ring off, and go and boil your silly napper! If Railton considers there's danger, then I'm keeping clear."

"Hear, hear!"

"Funks!" jeered Grundy. "Of all the rotten funks! Afraid of blessed insects, or whatever they are! Supper in Hall just because of some rotten snails! I've a jolly good mind to show Railton what's what and go back to my study."

"Do, old chap! A good licking is what you need—take some of the cocky bounce out of you, Grundy!"

"You cheeky ass!" hooted Grundy. "Why, I'll—I'll—"

Grundy rushed at Manners, obviously bent on assault and battery. Tom Merry, Lowthers, and Manners closed in on him, grasped him on all sides, and deposited him with a resounding crash in the Common-room fender.

Crash!

While the great George Alfred was still howling with fury and pain, Tom Merry & Co. marched out, smiling.

Outside the room Monty Lowther suddenly halted and chuckled.

"What's the joke?" demanded Manners.

"Grundy is," said Lowther. "I'll be back in a few ticks, you men."

"Where are you going, Monty?" demanded Tom, eyeing his chum suspiciously. "No larks—"

"Like the little boy in the giddy song, I'm going fishing," said Lowther. "Or, rather, gardening, old chap! So long!"

He trotted away, and it was not until the juniors fled into the dining-hall for supper that they saw Monty again. To their surprise, he was seated quietly in his place at the supper table.

"Where the dickens have you been to, Monty?" whispered Tom.

"Gardening!" smiled the practical joker of the Shell. "I say, keep your eyes on the gallant Grundy, you fellows. Here he comes."

Grundy marched in in his usual lordly way and took his place at the table. The master on duty was Mr. Pilbeam of the Shell, and he sat at his usual place at the head of the Shell table. Grundy was talking loudly—likewise as usual!

"Piffle!" he was snorting. "Bread and cheese when we might have had a decent feed in the study! Tosh and footling bosh!"

"Silence, Grundy!" snapped Mr. Pilbeam. "How dare you! Kindly be seated!"

Grundy sat down, still snorting like a war-horse. His eyes instantly fixed on his plate, which was upturned.

"Hallo! Who's been monkeying with my plate? Wilky, have you been monkeying with my dashed plate?"

"No, you ass! Why should I?"

Grundy snorted again, and turned his plate over. Little details always did upset Grundy. The next moment another detail fairly did upset him, literally and figuratively.

The turning over of the offending plate disclosed to view two crawling creatures on the white cloth.

Had Grundy waited to make a closer examination, he might have deemed them to be mere ordinary or garden

slugs. But Grundy did not stop to make a closer inspection, nor did anyone else then.

The sight of the crawling, slimy creatures brought a stifled yelp from his wide-open lips and made his eyes bulge.

"Yarrooop! Oh, crikey! Look out!"

He jumped up convulsively. His elbow caught Wilkins' arm, sending a stream of cocoa flooding over that junior's face and clothes. Then Wilkins, Gunn, and several other juniors suddenly sighted the slugs.

"Yarroop! Look out!" shrieked Grundy.

The form crashed over as the terrified juniors leaped backwards.

"Good gracious!" Mr. Pilbeam looked up. "Boys, what—what— Good heavens!"

Mr. Pilbeam had sighted the slugs.

The master, like the juniors, had heard all about the karrits. He had heard all he wanted to hear, and now he had seen all he wanted to see.

Like the juniors, he leaped back convulsively.

Crash!

The master sprawled backwards over his chair, his legs wagging desperately. By this time the news was whipping round, and there was a general stampede for the door amidst an uproar of alarmed yells. Apparently, the juniors imagined the Burmese karrits were something in the nature of Derby winners.

At all events, they fled, taking no risks.

And the gallant George Alfred took the lead!

In the doorway he barged full into Mr. Railton, brought rushing to the scene by the outcries.

"Poof! What—what— Grundy! Why, what ever is the matter here?"

A score of excited voices enlightened him. Two of the deadly karrit reptiles, brought from Burma, were at large on the dining-room tablecloth!

Naturally, the Housemaster was disturbed—exceedingly disturbed. But he was brave, and regardless of danger to himself. While the scared crowd swarmed round the doorway he marched into the room towards the table.

At a respectful distance away he peered at the cloth. Then he gave an alarmed gasp. A moment later he gave another gasp—much less alarmed. To the general dismay, he went right up to the table and peered at the slugs still adorning the cloth.

Then he spoke—grimly and tartly.

"Mr. Pilbeam, come this way, please! Are these the—the reptiles which have caused this commotion?"

Mr. Pilbeam approached—very gingerly indeed.

"If I am not mistaken," said the Housemaster, "these are merely harmless garden slugs. But, to make quite sure, will you kindly— One moment!"

Mr. Railton decided to make quite sure for himself. He hurried to the fireplace, grasped a poker, and went back to the table.

Crash, crash!

The poker came down on the hapless slugs, ending their earthly career, also smashing a plate and a saucer in the process.

Just then Captain Merry pushed through quickly into the room. The crowd edged nearer on his heels, excited and tense still.

"Ah, I was about to send for you, Captain Merry!" said Mr. Railton. "Will you kindly tell me if these—these reptiles I have just killed are dangerous creatures, or merely garden slugs, as I strongly suspect?"

The captain gave one glance at the unfortunate slugs, and then laughed.

"They are merely slugs, my dear Railton!" he announced, very definitely. "It—it is evidently a practical joke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was an involuntary yelp of laughter from Monty Lowther. That youth was quite unable to bottle up his merriment any longer.

"Lowther—boy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Other fellows laughed, and then the laughter became a roar.

"Silence!" shouted the Housemaster.

Like Mr. Pilbeam, Mr. Railton went pink. His bravery, his plucky assault on the harmless slugs, regardless of his own danger, now appeared merely ridiculous.

The laughter subsided. Mr. Railton glared around him, his scholastic eye ferocious.

Then the eyes settled on the grinning face of Monty Lowther. Monty's grin faded abruptly.

"Lowther!" boomed the Housemaster.

"Y—ye-es, sir!"

"I noticed particularly that you were the first boy to break out into unseemly merriment; indeed, you appear to see more humour in the situation than anyone else!"

"Oh, sir!"

"I am also well aware," resumed Mr. Railton grimly,

"that you are strongly addicted to practical joking. In the circumstances I must ask you if you placed those—those creatures on the table? Answer me at once, Lowther!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Lowther groaned. Somehow suspicion always seemed to settle upon him. Possibly this was because Lowther's little failing was well known. But it was a direct question, and there was no escape.

"I—I—I—" he mumbled.

"Yes, or no, Lowther?" said Mr. Railton remorselessly.

"Oh dear! You—you see, sir—"

"Lowther!"

It was a warning rumble, and Lowther decided to hide his light under a bushel no longer.

"Yes, sir!" he gasped.

"You played this absurd practical joke?"

"Y-es, sir!" stammered the unhappy joker.

"It was only a lark, sir!"

"A joke played upon your Form master, I presume, Lowther!"

"Oh, no! Not at all, sir!" gasped Lowther hastily.

"You—you see, it was Grundy. He was saying he wasn't afraid of karrits, and I—I wanted to prove he'd bolt like a rabbit if he saw one. He did, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!"

Kildare, kindly hand me that cane! Thank you! Hold out your hand, Lowther!"

Mr. Railton was polite, but his voice was deadly.

"You have caused a disgraceful commotion, Lowther! You have caused great alarm and annoyance! You have also caused Mr. Pilbeam personal hurt and distress of mind! I am going to punish you severely!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Lowther held out his hand, and Mr. Railton proceeded to keep his word—though Lowther would undoubtedly have much preferred that he did not keep his word. While the crowd looked on, with grinning faces, the practical joker went through it, his own face growing more and more agonised as Mr. Railton laid it on.

Captain Merry slipped from the room, his hand over his mouth. He saw the humour in the affair. But Mr. Railton apparently did not. Nor did Monty Lowther by the time the Housemaster had finished with him!

CHAPTER 5.

Trimble, the Vengeful!

"LOOK out, Trimble! Here's the captain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was bed-time, and Baggy Trimble had allowed the sun to go down on his wrath.

Had he been left alone, this possibly might not have been the case. But Trimble was not allowed to forget that spanking at the hefty hand of Captain Colin Merry, from Burma.

The story had gone round, and had caused great hilarity in the School House. Even New House men had heard it, and Trimble was chipped unmercifully about it.

Naturally, it kept the matter fresh in Baggy's fat mind.

Nor was that all. Mr. Railton had been an astonished witness of Trimble's strange proceeding in pitching the captain's baggage down the stairs. Trimble, in fact, had caused the whole trouble.

That Trimble had also unwittingly saved the captain's life was nearly certain. The captain admitted that he would have donned those actual pyjamas that night. Had he been

allowed to do so the result must have been death for the military man from Burma. But Trimble's action, wicked as it was, had undoubtedly saved him from a sudden, shocking death.

That was agreed upon. Mr. Railton must have known it. Yet, instead of being grateful, instead of treating Baggy as the hero he was, the Housemaster had given him a record licking for his little act of revenge. Mr. Railton had not taken into account the happy result, but only the premeditated act of revenge.

Nor was that all. Instead of being decently grateful, of shaking him thankfully by the hand, and of treating him as a hero, Captain Merry had simply ignored his very existence.

Trimble was disgusted. It was too thick. And his wrath against the captain grew and grew in consequence. And,



Grundy leapt to his feet, with a howl, sending Wilkins' cocoa all over him. "Stand back!" he cried. "Stand back!"

seeing the effect of growing wrath the chipping had upon Baggy, the juniors naturally kept it up. Blake & Co. passed him on the stairs going up, and they chaffed him smilingly.

"Look out! Here's the captain, Baggy!"

"Yah! Beasts!"

"Got over the spanking yet, Baggy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's what Baggy requires," remarked Digby. "A spanking every night before bed. The captain's set us a good example to follow."

"Beasts!" sneered Baggy.

There was a chorus of chuckles as Baggy rolled into the Fourth dormitory. Baggy was asked, sympathetically, if the captain was going to put him to bed after spanking him. Other fellows also asked him various questions regarding his spanking, and the fellows undressed amidst a continuous series of chuckles.

Baggy was too fed-up to answer or heed by this time. He was hurt and he was raging. Through attempting to join the tea-party in Study No. 10, he had missed tea in his own study, and tea in Hall as well. On arriving at his own study he had found the home cupboard bare, and he had been obliged to go without food until supper. At supper he had only his own official share, and the shares of several other fellows which he had managed to annex during the excitement after Lowther's jape. But this had only served to increase his hunger.

He was hungry now—hungry, angry, and vengeful. The painful effects of the spanking still lingered, and his hands still tingled from the caning at the Housemaster's hand.

But his eyes gleamed with resolve. Baggy had determined upon a dark deed of vengeance that night—though only he was aware of it. When the other fellows climbed

into bed, Baggy followed their example, but with most of his clothes still on.

Wildrake noticed this and pointed it out with a chuckle. "You fat ass! You're not half undressed yet! What's the game, you fat galoot?"

"Mind your own business!" snarled Baggy. "You've got some game on," remarked Wildrake, sitting up in bed. "What is it, you fat chump? A raid on the pantry?"

"No; I mean, yes! That is, nothing of the kind, Wildrake, you beast!" snapped Trimble. "Mind your own business!"

"My dear man, you're my study-mate, and I'm not allowing you to get sacked," said Kit Wildrake grimly. "I guess I'm going to hoof you out of bed and make you undress, Trimble!"

He started to get out of bed, but Baggy did not wait to be yanked out. He scrambled out, seething.

"Beast!" he sneered.

"You've got some game on, I guess——"

"I haven't!" hooted Trimble ferociously. "I—I forgot to undress properly, that's all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Amidst laughter and much curiosity Baggy Trimble rolled from the bed and finished disrobing. He dare not refuse without arousing more suspicion. He clambered into bed at length, refusing to answer curious questions, and at last they left him alone, even Wildrake feeling satisfied the fat junior had abandoned whatever lawless project he had had in mind.

But Baggy hadn't. As a rule he was asleep almost as soon as his head touched the pillow, but this was not the case now. He lay awake, watchful and listening. Silence fell on the dormitory at last, save for the soft breathing of his sleeping Form-fellows.

Even hunger could scarcely have kept the fat and lazy youth awake and watchful for so long, but the burning desire for vengeance on the "beast of a captain" did.

He sat up in the bed at last, listened again for a long minute, and then slipped from bed and donned slippers.

This done, he went to the nearest washstand. A filled enamelled waterjug stood there, and Baggy cautiously lifted it out of the basin and rolled out of the dormitory with it.

The dark scheme of vengeance was all cut and dried and ridiculously simple. The hated captain's room was on the next floor. All Baggy had to do was to creep down, enter the room, and then to tip the big jug of cold water over the sleeping guest. This done, Baggy would bolt back to bed before an alarm could be raised.

That his desire for vengeance was now known to Mr. Railton did not occur to Baggy. The Housemaster was certainly likely to suspect him at once. But Baggy did not think of that, nor was he the fellow to look before he leaped.

Carrying the jug of water carefully, Baggy rolled away along the passage and started down the stairs. On the lower landing the draught from an open casement window struck him, but he attached no significance to the fact. He went on to the guest's room.

To his surprise the door was slightly open.

Baggy pushed it wider, took a deep breath, and entered.

Then he halted, rooted to the floor at the amazing scene he beheld.

The blind was undrawn and the bed and part of the floor were bathed in silvery moonlight, flooding the counterpane and the face and form of the sleeping Captain Merry.

But that was not what caused the vengeance-seeker's hair to rise on end and rooted him to the floor. It was something else—something far more thrilling and terrifying. For, standing by the bed of the sleeper, with arm upraised to strike, was a dark, ominous figure.

And in the figure's hand gleamed a long, ugly knife. Trimble caught a swift glimpse of the moonlight gleaming upon the polished steel.

It was like a ghastly nightmare, yet the fat junior knew it was real enough—only too real. For a single instant he stood motionless, his heart almost ceasing to beat, and then he acted.

Amazing as it was to anyone who knew Baggy Trimble's character, the fat youth did act. In that dreadful, terrifying moment, Baggy Trimble did not think of himself, but of the sleeping man on the bed, helpless and unconscious of the death that hovered over him.

With a sudden, desperate resolve, Baggy clutched the jug tighter, raised it, and flung it with all his strength.

Water showered across the room, but the jug struck its billet.

It struck the unknown in the side, and the sudden impact made him reel even as the knife descended, and plunged harmlessly into the tangled bedclothes.

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Crash!

The jug crashed to the floor, and from the unknown came a startled, savage exclamation in an unknown tongue.

The next moment Baggy let out a terrified shriek as the man leaped at him, sending him crashing backwards into the passage beyond.

Then the dark figure vanished, while the terrified Trimble shrieked and shrieked on his top note.

"Help! Murder! Police! Help! Burglars! Yarrooop! Help!"

CHAPTER 6.

Gratitude at Last!

"WELL, if that fat galoot ain't the limit! Now what's he up to? I guess this wants looking into!"

Thus Kit Wildrake of the Fourth.

Wildrake was not the fellow to want to poke his nose into other people's affairs. But as Trimble was his study-mate he felt, to some extent, responsible for him—on the principle that Baggy was not fit to look after himself!

At first, on noting that Baggy had only half-undressed, Wildrake had suspected a grub raid. But upon reflection he had decided otherwise, remembering Baggy's burning desire for vengeance upon the visitor to St. Jim's. That Baggy's strange actions had some connection with Captain Merry, Wildrake now felt certain. Baggy had some game on—some weird and wonderful scheme of revenge which he intended to carry out when the dormitory slept.

Wildrake determined not to sleep, but to keep an eye on Baggy Trimble. Despite his resolve, however, he actually had dropped off when Baggy left his bed, but the noise of the closing dormitory door had roused the Canadian junior at once.

A glance showed him that Trimble's bed was empty, and with a whistle, Wildrake slipped from bed and shoved slippers on. If Trimble was determined to seek trouble, Wildrake, as a loyal study-mate, was equally determined to save him.

There was a movement from Blake's bed—the noise of the closing door had also wakened him. He sat up and blinked about him.

"Who's that?"

"Only little me," said Wildrake, grinning in the gloom. "That fat chump, Trimble's, just sneaked out, Blake. The fat galoot's got some game on against Captain Merry, I guess! I'm off after him!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Blake was out of bed in a flash, remembering Trimble's ferocious vows of vengeance that evening. As the leader of the Fourth, Blake deemed it up to him to chip in also.

A moment later he had caught up Wildrake, and the two hurried from the room. They had scarcely reached the passage when, from below, sounded a sudden crash and then a howl. It was followed instantly by shriek after shriek in Trimble's well-known accents.

"Oh, great pip! That's Trimble, anyway!"

"I guess so!"

They fairly shot down the stairs, dim as the light was. And as they reached the bottom a strange, dim-looking form came rushing soundlessly towards them.

Blake glimpsed a dark face and glittering eyes, and then the unknown, terrifying figure was upon them.

"Look out!" yelled Blake.

Crash!

The next moment the three were mixed up in a struggling heap on the floor. Blake got a grasp on the unknown, but instantly his fingers slipped off, and he realised, with a thrill of amazement, that not only was the man almost naked, but that his body was greased as well.

Wildrake had also made a clutch, but his grip had slid off the man's body.

Only for an instant did the three struggle together, and then the unknown scrambled free and leaped to his feet.

"After him!"

They were up on their feet in a flash, but the man had gone. Wildrake rushed recklessly along the passage towards the landing window. He was just in time to see a dark form, clad only in a loin cloth, vanish over the sill of the window.

From the guest's room shrieks from Baggy Trimble were still coming, and suddenly a pyjama-clad form appeared and ran towards them.

"What's the matter here? That boy Trimble——"

"The man's just gone—through the window!" panted Blake. "He came out of your room—a burglar, I suppose, sir!"

Captain Merry gave a startled exclamation and ran to the window and leaned out. From below came up a rustle of disturbed ivy, and he just glimpsed a figure fleeing into the gloom of the quad.

"Useless to follow him, I'm afraid," he said. "Tell me what has happened, boys. That boy Trimble is too terrified to speak."

"Goodness knows, sir! We—we heard Trimble shrieking and rushed down just in time to see that fellow rush out of your room. Then he bowled us over. The brute had scarcely any clothes on, and his body was greased or something. We couldn't hold him."

"I guess that's right!" said Wildrake. "The galoot was like an eel!"

"Good gad!"

The captain gave a startled exclamation on hearing that, and just then Mr. Railton, in a dressing-gown and carrying a lighted candle, came rustling downstairs. He was followed by a crowd of startled seniors and juniors.

Blake explained what he knew, and Mr. Railton led the way to the captain's room. They found Baggy Trimble seated on the floor, gasping and panting.

"Trimble—"

"Ow, ow! Oh dear!" gasped Baggy. "Has—has he gone? Oh crikey!"

"What ever has happened, Trimble?" exclaimed the Housemaster, helping the fat youth to his feet.

Trimble gasped, obviously frightened out of his fat wits.

"I—Oh dear! I—I—I—Has that awful black man gone? Ow!"

"Black man! What ever are you talking about, Trimble? One moment!"

Mr. Railton switched on the electric light. In the doorway a startled crowd blinked in on the scene. The Housemaster's eyes grew grim as he noted the jug and the flooded floor.

"Now, Trimble! In the first place, why are you out of bed at this hour, and what does this mess of water mean?" demanded the master sternly.

"Ow, ow! It wasn't me, sir! I know nothing about that. If any fellow came down to drench Captain Merry with water it wasn't me," gasped Baggy. "I know nothing—"

"That is quite enough, Trimble!" said Mr. Railton sternly. "It is quite clear that you have had the audacity, the reckless effrontery, to attempt a disgraceful outrage upon my guest. For that you will be punished very severely in the morning."

"Oh, really, sir! If you doubt my word—"

"Silence! That matter, however, must wait. Kindly explain at once exactly what has happened here."

"Oh, yes, sir! And after telling you how I saved the captain's life, I hope—"

"Nonsense! Kindly keep to the facts, Trimble!" thundered the Housemaster.

"Well, I did save his life—for the second time to-day!" said Trimble sullenly. "That awful villain was just going to stab him to death—"

"What—what—"

"With a knife—a frightfully long knife!" went on Trimble, with some indignation. "He was just bringing the knife down to stab the beast—I mean, the captain—to the heart, when—"

"Trimble!"

"But it's true, sir!" gasped Trimble. "He was just going to stab him when I chucked the jug at him. Then the beast rushed at me and got away."

"Trimble—"

"Well, I'll prove it, sir," said Trimble, and he stepped to the bed and pulled aside the clothes which the captain had tossed over as he leaped from the bed.

There was a startled gasp as the long, evil-looking knife was revealed, sunk almost to the hilt in the bed.

The captain drew it out, his lean face white.

"The boy is undoubtedly speaking the truth, Railton," he said quietly. "This is an Eastern knife, and sharp as a razor. Did you see the man, Trimble?"

"I hadn't time to see much, sir, but I'm certain he was a black man—black face, you know, and awful eyes!"

"He wasn't English, anyway, I guess, sir," put in Kit Wildrake quietly. "Blake and I tried to grab him. But he was nearly naked, and his body was greased with something. We came downstairs just as the fellow rushed from this room. He escaped from the landing window."

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Mr. Railton, eyeing the captain strangely. "This is the second attempt on your life, Captain Merry. What can be the meaning of it?"

"I do not know. I certainly have many enemies in Burma—evildoers whom I have been obliged to bring to justice!" was the grim reply. "But why any enemy should follow me to England is beyond me. I am exceedingly sorry to be the cause of so much commotion and alarm, Railton—"

"My dear fellow, the fault is not yours. But we must make some attempt to apprehend that villain without further delay," said Mr. Railton. "Captain Merry, would

you be good enough to organise a party of seniors to search the grounds while I phone to the police at Wayland. It would be madness to allow such a dangerous ruffian to roam around the school."

"Most certainly! Had I known the matter was so serious I would have followed the villain!" snapped the captain. The Housemaster glanced round.

"You junior boys return to bed at once!" he said. "Trimble, I will see you in the morning."

"Oh, really, sir! After saving the captain's life—"

"Be quiet! Return to bed at once, you stupid boy!"

Grunt!

The juniors went to bed again, buzzing with excitement.

Trimble rolled after them, seething with indignation and disgust. As the Fourth crowded into their dormitory Trimble blinked about him.

"Well," he remarked, his voice almost crackling with wrath, "what do you fellows think about that? Talk about the serpent's tooth—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm used to ingratitude from you fellows," said Trimble.

"I'm used to it, and make allowances for your rotten ill-bred behaviour to me! But I didn't expect it from an Army man. I'm disgusted—positively disgusted! Twice I've saved that rotter's life. But for me he'd now be lying cold and stiff, poisoned by one of those beastly reptiles, and killed by a stab to the heart!"

"Killed twice over!" assented Digby. "Still, you did save him, Baggy—no giddy doubt about that!"

"Yaas, wathah! The first time Twimble deserved no credit, but the second time he has done, you fellows. Give credit where credit is due: Pway allow me to shake hands with you, Twimble!"

"Certainly, old chap!" Trimble bucked up at that, and he shook hands warmly with the praise-giving Gussy. "I fancy few fellows would have acted as I did—none, in fact! I say, have you any choc or toffee in the dorm, Gussy? I'm frightfully hungry!"

"Bai Jove!"

Evidently Trimble wanted something more substantial than a handshake as a reward.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Trimble, glaring round. "There was that awful villain—a frightful-looking savage. He had the knife raised, poised to sink to

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the hilt into the captain's heart. What would you fellows have done?"

"Gone for a bobby, I expect!" yawned Cardew. "You'd have bolted like rabbits!" sneered Trimble. "Luckily I'm made of sterner stuff. I stood up to the brute, gave him a right-hander to the jaw, a straight left between the eyes, and chucked the jug at him. He jumped up again—"

"Look out!" came a terrified gasp from Wildrake, near the door. "Here he comes again, Trimble!"

"Yarrooooo!" Trimble gave one mad leap and vanished from sight beneath the nearest bed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Yah! Beasts!"

Evidently Trimble realised Wildrake was only pulling his leg. He scrambled out again, flushed and furious. And just then Baker of the Sixth looked in.

"Get that light out—sharp!" he snapped. "Another whisper from this dorm to-night and I'll go round with a slipper!"

Baker was a hefty senior and a fellow who always kept his word. Not wanting his slipper, the Fourth turned in for the second time that night, and there was no more whispering. Even Baggy Trimble had to smother his indignation—and his hunger—for the remainder of that eventful night.

CHAPTER 7. Unmasked I.

"IT'S queer!"

"Jolly queer! And you really think that chap Akyaba knows something about it, Tommy?" asked Lowther.

Tom Merry nodded slowly. His face was overcast and puzzled.

It was the next morning, after breakfast. The excitement had died down somewhat. But the whole school were still discussing the two attempted attacks on Captain Merry's life. The night before, the seniors, led by Captain Merry, had searched the school grounds thoroughly, but to no purpose. They had seen nothing whatever of the dark-skinned man in the loin-cloth who had made that daring, desperate bid on the captain's life in his bed-room.

Baggy Trimble was a much-sought-after personage that morning, for once in his fat life! Fellows wanted to hear the story, and Baggy only too willingly obliged them—with the true story and a goodly number of embellishments that were far from true.

The fat youth was feeling very bucked that morning. For, after all, the captain had proved not ungrateful. Trimble had been sentenced to a flogging for his attempted crime, but the captain had begged him off. He had also shaken hands with the fat junior and thanked him, and Baggy had borrowed seven-and-sixpence from him on the strength of his gratitude.

But Tom Merry & Co. were more concerned at the attack made upon Tom's cousin. In their view everything pointed to the theory that an Eastern enemy of the Army man was responsible. And the only Eastern man known to be in the vicinity was Ramadya Akyaba, the captain's Burmese servant.

The chums had already had evidence of the man's savage disposition when he had attacked Trimble in the quad. Moreover, Tom could not help remembering the glint of

hatred in the man's dark eyes when he looked at his master. Still further, Akyaba was the only stranger who could possibly know the whereabouts of his master's room at St. Jim's.

The evidence, in fact, pointed to that theory. And Tom knew the police were suspicious of the man—very suspicious. And yet Captain Merry himself would not hear of it. His faith in his personal servant was complete and unmoved.

And there was another point against that theory. Taggles had heard no sound of any movement in his lodge that night. The seniors, with Captain Merry, had visited the lodge immediately after the affair, and they had found Akyaba in his room. Apparently he had not left it.

Still, Tom Merry was far from convinced.

"I wish old Colin wouldn't be so jolly certain about the brute," said Tom, at length. "I've hinted about the fellow, but Colin won't hear a word said against him. It's rotten! If those beastly eggs were shoved in the captain's bag before leaving Burma, or since, then as likely as not Akyaba did it."

"I say, you fellows—"

Baggy Trimble rolled up to the juniors. Usually a boot would have sent Baggy scuttling away, but after what had happened Tom Merry looked upon the fat junior with a kindly eye. Blake was not so particular, however.

"Buzz off, you fat clam!" he snapped.

"But, I say— Look here, keep that beast Blake off. Tom Merry! I say, it's that beastly nigger trying to kill your cousin, Tom Merry. I thought I recognised the beast last night. Now I know it must have been him, or he wouldn't have shoved those eggs in that bag, you know."

"What do you mean, Trimble?" demanded Tom, grasping Baggy by the arm. "You mean that Burmese chap, Akyaba?"

"Of course. Who else would I mean? He's the man."

"How do you know, you fat ass?"

"Because I spotted him shoving the eggs in the bag—at least, I spotted him shoving something in. I bet anything it was those eggs and the beastly reptiles!" grinned Trimble. "I've been looking for the captain to tell him, but he's gone off playing golf somewhere."

"He's gone over to Lexham to play golf with a friend," said Tom, his eyes gleaming as he looked at Trimble. "But is that the truth, Trimble? Did you actually see Akyaba shove something in that bag?"

"Aren't I telling you I did?" grumbled Trimble. "Trust me to spot anything like that. I'm keen, you know!"

"When did you see him?"

"Yesterday afternoon—just after Taggy had carried the bag up to your cousin's room," said Trimble, with a fat grin. "I could tell he'd something on by the way he sneaked in. I watched him from the doorway. He took a cigar-box, or something, from his pocket and hid something in the bag. Then he shoved the box back in his pocket again. I bet the beastly nigger had those carrots, or whatever they were in that box, and tipped 'em into the bag! Don't you think so?"

"Phew! Is that the solid truth, Trimble?"

"Honour bright! Am I the fellow to tell fibs?" snorted Baggy warmly.

Trimble was just the fellow to tell fibs. But for once Tom and his chums could see that he was speaking the truth.

"Tell us again just what you saw, Trimble!" breathed

Potts, the Office-Boy.



Tom, giving his chums a grim look. "We suspected that fellow."

Trimble grinned, and told them again in detail. Tom's face was excited and grim as he finished. "If he had suspected Akyaba before, he was certain of his guilt now."

"Well, say nothing to anyone of this yet, Trimble!" snapped Tom, at last. "Forget it. I say, I believe Dame Taggles has some fresh twopenny tarts in! If you'd like to sample a few—"

He handed a florin into Trimble's fat palm, and Trimble scuttled away to sample the fresh twopenny tarts. Even his important information faded into insignificance at the prospect of sampling them. Having got rid of Trimble, Tom turned to his chums.

"That settles it!" he breathed. "Akyaba's the man! He shoved those ghastly things in the bag, and he broke in last night. He could easily have got to his bedroom before the search-party started out."

"Yaas, wathah! The sooner we warn Captain Mewwy, the better, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, shaking his head.

"Well, we can't do that until he returns from Lexham," said Tom Merry, frowning. "If only that fat ass had told us earlier— My hat! He's going by the two-thirty from Wayland, and we may see him on the station. Good!"

"Better start off at once, then," said Blake.

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors hurried indoors for their caps. It was a half-holiday, and they had arranged to go to Abbotsford to see a county cricket match there. But they had intended taking a later train. Now they decided to catch an earlier one. With luck they would thus see the captain before he started for Lexham.

They would have to hurry, however, to get the local from Rylcombe, and, getting out their bikes, the juniors raced for the station. They reached the station with scarcely a minute to spare, and, leaving their bikes there, they tumbled into the train as it drew out.

At Wayland their luck failed them. The Lexham express was just drawing out, already three minutes late. Tom glimpsed his cousin leaning out of the carriage window, and the captain waved cheerily to them.

"Blow it!" panted Tom Merry. "Can't be helped! And we might as well catch ours now! Buck up!"

They rushed over to the opposite platform where the Abbotsford train was on the point of starting. Tom was disappointed, but not worried, so far as the captain was concerned. Whether Akyaba was with him or not, the keen and stalwart soldier was well able to take care of himself in broad daylight.

The juniors tumbled aboard the train as it started, and then Tom dismissed the matter from his mind as his chums began to discuss the coming match. But he was soon to be reminded of the man from Burma in a startling and unexpected fashion.

Quite suddenly Tom became aware that another train was running alongside theirs, and as he glanced out he realised it was the Lexham express, evidently slowed down by signals.

For several moments Tom watched it as the two trains ran slowly alongside each other, and then quite abruptly Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave a yell:

"Gweat Scott! Look!"

Then Tom Merry saw it, and his heart gave a sudden leap.

In the carriage opposite two figures were struggling together desperately.

Tom glimpsed the tall form of Captain Merry in his golfing attire, and then he glimpsed the dark face and gleaming eyes of Ramadya Akyaba.

"Good heavens!" gasped Tom.

The juniors were all on their feet now, thrilling with excitement as they watched that deadly struggle taking place in the compartment opposite. For several thrilling seconds they watched, and then Tom Merry acted on a sudden, desperate impulse.

Before his chums realised his intention his hand was through the open window wrenching at the handle. The next moment the door was flying open, and Tom was out on the footboard of the moving train.

"Tom!" shouted Monty Lowther, in horror.

But he was too late. For an instant the plucky junior just hung, clinging on to the brass hold, and then he leaped.

"Tom!" shouted Lowther again; but his shout fell on deaf ears.

The two trains were moving slowly; but the leap was a mad one. Yet Tom Merry's judgment was not at fault. His foot hit the footboard of the Lexham express, and his clawing hand grasped the brass fixture by the carriage window.

He hung on desperately until he got a grip of the door handle, and then he dragged open the carriage door, and tumbled inside.

Captain Merry was on his back on the carriage floor now, and a glimpse showed Tom that he was scarcely conscious, and bleeding from a wound in the head. But he was still struggling feebly with the Burmese assassin, now kneeling on him with lean, cruel fingers clutching the captain's throat.

For an instant the man did not realise what was happening, and, even as he turned his head with a snarl, Tom leaped upon him.

But after that first savage glance round Akyaba ignored the junior, and turned his attention again to his victim. Madly Tom struck and tore at the fellow, striving to tear his head free. But, realising his strength was not equal to the task, Tom suddenly jumped up and reached desperately for the communication cord.

CHAPTER 8.

On the Viaduct!

TOM MERRY wrenched at the communication cord again and again, and then he returned to the attack. "Quick! Tom!" panted the captain. "The—the club!"

Tom understood as his eye suddenly fell upon a golf-club laying on the floor—apparently the weapon the rascal had used on the Army man.

Desperately the junior snatched it up, and made a blow at the Burmese servant's head. The blow struck home; but there was little force behind it, there being little room in the compartment to swing the club. The man merely shook his head, and just then the train, which had begun to pick up speed, began to slow down with a jarring of brakes.

Giving Tongue!



It was a welcome sound to the junior, and gave him renewed courage. He flung himself on Akyaba again madly, hitting out furiously with the club as best he could.

But the Burmese had realised what the slowing down of the train meant, and he turned with a savage exclamation, grasping the club, and tearing it from the junior's clutch.

"Look out, Tom!" choked the captain, in alarm.

Akyaba was on his feet now, his eyes glittering with baffled fury. Before Tom could move the man's hands clawed at him, and the junior was sent crashing against the opposite window, stumbling and falling over the captain's prostrate form.

Then the Burmese was gone, having leaped out of the carriage in a desperate attempt to escape.

It had all happened in a few brief seconds, yet Tom was panting and gasping. He did not hesitate, however. It was the third savage attempt upon the captain's life, and Tom was determined the rascal should not escape.

In a flash Tom had leaped from the train, which was almost at a standstill, scarcely hearing his cousin's warning cry. The junior hit the ground, tumbled over, and then leaped to his feet again.

The Abbotsford train had vanished now. Tom glimpsed Akyaba stumbling along thirty yards away, and he went running in pursuit, confident that his cousin would follow to help.

He heard shouts behind him, but he put on speed as Akyaba began to draw ahead.

The man was running wildly, heedless of direction, and now Tom saw that he had turned off from the main line, and was following a branch line leading across the viaduct to Hexley. Evidently his intention was to avoid the junction and the town.

It was easy running on the cindered pathway alongside the metals, and by the time Akyaba was on the viaduct the athletic junior was overtaking him rapidly. Half-way across Tom was scarcely a dozen yards behind him.

The junior realised he was alone with the rascal, for no footsteps sounded behind. Tom gave a glance back. The train was not in sight. He was alone with the murderous ruffian. But even had Tom decided to drop the chase he was too late.

Just then Akyaba also glanced back, and, as if he realised at last that only the junior was following, he wheeled round and halted.

Tom glimpsed his savage features, dark with hate, and the glitter of rage in his eyes. The next moment the junior was upon him.

His fist shot out, making the rascal reel back with a snarl. And then, knocking the junior's fists away easily, the fellow's arms closed round him like a vice.

Tom felt the man's hot breath on his face, and he struggled fiercely. Backwards and forwards they reeled. Then they tripped against the metals and stumbled, still fighting furiously, on to the up line.

And then Tom's heart almost ceased to beat as he heard the shrill, warning whistle of an engine. Round the bend he glimpsed an express goods train thundering down—and on the up line.

"Look out!" shrieked the junior. "Let go, you fool! We'll be run down!"

He beat madly with his fists at Akyaba's brown face, and kicked frenziedly with his feet at the man's shins. The Burmese obviously did not realise the position, for he clung on blind to all danger in his mad fury.

The thundering engine was almost upon them now.

Then came another shrill whistle, deafening in its nearness, and this time Ramadya Akyaba heard.

Tom found himself suddenly released, and he leaped madly backwards. As he did so he got a swift glimpse of the Burmese lurching back, the iron monster almost upon him.

With a deafening clang and roar the express flashed past the next second, and Tom scarcely knew what happened to him then.

Leaping backwards, he tripped over the rails, and then something struck the back of his legs as he reeled.

In a blinding thrill of horror he realised subconsciously that it must be the low parapet of the viaduct, and he strove madly to regain his balance.

The next moment he was over, clutching convulsively at the stonework. He had a momentary glimpse of the green woods, and of the gleaming waters of the river far below winding away like a silvery ribbon into the distance, and then he was falling.

A terrible feeling of sickness gripped him, but he still clutched at the stonework without knowing it. His fingers grasped a jutting ledge, checking his downward rush, but they instantly slipped off again.

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He was falling again, with the thunder and shake of the goods express above still deafening his ears. And then came a violent shock that almost shook him into insensibility, but he retained his senses.

His body struck something, but was slipping off again, when suddenly his foot caught, and he remained suspended by one leg!

Above him the roar of the express had died into the distance. He stared about him dizzily. A glance showed that he was hanging perilously from a small wooden platform—a cradle slung from the parapet above, and evidently



Tom Merry slipped out of the door on to the running board.

used by workmen in repairing and refacing the stonework of the arches.

The cradle had tilted almost on end, and he was hanging by one foot. The cradle swung and twisted, banging him against the stonework, and it was all he could do to retain his foothold.

But it steadied presently, and he glanced down. Then he shuddered, and shook from head to foot.

If he had had a hope of risking a plunge into the river below he abandoned it instantly.

Instead of being directly over the gleaming water, as he had expected, he was hanging over the towing-path. A

plunge down from that great height would mean certain death!

And then, quite suddenly he remembered Ramadya Akyaba, and he shuddered as he pictured the mangled remains of the brown man lying across the metals above.

But had Akyaba escaped? He remembered seeing the rascal fling himself backwards. If he had, and if the fellow saw him in his terrible predicament—

Tom glanced upwards, almost expecting to see the glittering eyes of the Burmese looking down upon him from the parapet above. He knew he could expect no mercy from the



For a moment he swayed there, clinging to the handle, then he leapt!

would-be murderer. A knife would soon sever the strands of the rope, plunging him to a terrible death.

But no face showed on the parapet above. If Akyaba had escaped, then he was in no haste to discover what had happened to his enemy.

All this flashed through Tom's mind as he hung there, panting and shaking. And then the realisation that he was doomed began to enter Tom's mind.

He knew he could not hold out much longer. His leg was numbed, and the blood was rushing to his head.

He hung there dizzily and groaned as he realised that nothing could save him from death—unless help came quickly.

CHAPTER 9.

Blake & Co. Chip In!

FOR several thrilling seconds after Tom Merry had leaped from the carriage, Blake and his chums stared out through the open doorway, scarcely realising what had happened.

Tom's daring, reckless act had taken them utterly by surprise, and only Lowther managed even to raise a shout.

They saw the plucky junior strike the footboard and get a hold, and then, as he vanished into the carriage opposite, their own train branched away over the points, picking up speed as it did so.

Lowther gasped and recklessly stepped out on to the footboard, holding on to the door jam as he stared back to get a glimpse of the other train. But just as he did so a bunch of trees intervened as the two lines of rails branched away abruptly.

Their own train was in a cutting now, and the Lexham express was out of sight. Yet, even as the Abbotsford train began to pick up speed it almost immediately began to slow down again with a harsh jarring of brakes.

"Good heavens!" panted Blake, gaining his voice at last. "Tom—"

"He did it!" gasped Lowther, climbing into the carriage again. "I saw him get in. But—but you saw what was happening? That brute of a Burmese rotter was attacking Tom's cousin."

"Train's stopping," interrupted the white-faced Manners. "Guard must have spotted something."

The train was at a standstill now. A moment later the guard came hurrying along the train, an angry look on his face. It was soon clear what was the matter. He had seen the open, swinging carriage door, and had instantly stopped the train.

The juniors jumped from the train as he hurried up and shouted to them. Blake explained excitedly, and the guard stared at him, his anger fading.

"Well, we can do nothing yet," he grunted at last. "Jump in again, young gentlemen, and I'll ring up Lexham from the next signal-box."

"We're going back," said Blake, looking at his chums. "We're going back along the line. I'm certain I saw the Lexham train slowing down just as we entered the cutting."

The guard attempted to dissuade them, but Blake's chums agreed with Blake's decision. The carriage door was closed, and, leaving the train to proceed, Blake & Co. started back along the line at a run, watched by scores of curious passengers.

It was a longer run than they had expected, but they emerged from the cutting at last. To their surprise there was no sign of the Lexham express, though they heard a rumble in the distance, a rumble which rapidly died away.

Then Blake sighted a hurrying figure moving along the line in the direction of the junction, and pointed excitedly.

"Great Scott! That's Captain Merry!" he exclaimed. "Either the train's dropped him off and gone on, or else he's jumped out when it slowed down."

"But where's Tom?" panted Lowther.

"And that Burmese brute?" snapped Manners.

"Goodness knows!"

The juniors, very much alarmed now, started after the disappearing captain at top speed. Though they could only see the man's back, they felt certain it must be Captain Merry owing to the suit of plus fours he wore.

The man ahead was hurrying, yet he swayed curiously as he ran, and the juniors easily overhauled him.

And then, when they were scarcely twenty yards behind, something startling happened.

All the juniors saw it—the slinking figure of a man. It crept from behind a low watchman's hut by the line, and stealthily approached the unsuspecting captain from behind.

The Army man was walking now, evidently out of breath. He did not look round. The man behind him drew nearer in a matter of seconds, moving swiftly on the grass bordering the line, and then his arm went up.

"Akyaba!" panted Blake. "Good heavens! Look—"

In the Burmese ruffian's hand was a huge stone, and it was his obvious intention to bring it down upon the unsuspecting Captain Merry's head from behind.

"Look out!"

The juniors shrieked the warning almost together; but Jack Blake did more than that. In a flash he had stooped and dragged up a stone, and it left his hand with almost the force and speed of a bullet.

Crash!

The aim was true—a miracle considering that Blake had no time to judge distance.

But happily it was true. Even as the rascal's hand moved to bring down the heavy stone, Blake's missile struck him on the forehead.

He reeled, and the heavy stone spun from his hand, falling with a heavy thud a yard from the captain's feet.

"Bai Jove! Good shot, Blake!"

The juniors raced towards the spot. The captain had swung round, startled. He sighted Akyaba, and his hand, gripping a golf club, went up.

Akyaba leaped back, bleeding from the forehead where Blake's stone had struck, his eyes glittering with hatred. He glanced swiftly along the line, and then he jumped down the embankment.

At the bottom was a hedge and a fence, and the Burmese forced his way through, and went off across the field beyond at a run.

Even in his bitter rage, the man evidently did not relish a conflict with the juniors and the captain, obviously injured as the latter was.

Blake ran up to the captain. The others were starting after the Burmese when Captain Merry called sharply:

"Come back, boys! Let the villain go now—the police will soon have him in their clutches. Now he is unmasked he—"

"You are hurt, sir!" gasped Digby. "But—where is Tom?"

"This is only a scratch; the fellow bowled me over with this club in the carriage; took me utterly by surprise," said the captain, touching the nasty bruise on his forehead. "As for Tom"—his stern face grew sterner, hard as iron—"if that villain has harmed him—"

"You don't know where Tom is?" stammered Lowther in great alarm.

"No; he jumped from the compartment after Akyaba. I saw him follow the rascal in this direction, over the viaduct there, but I was sick and dizzy, and totally unable to follow for some minutes," explained the captain, his face white with apprehension now. "We had better hurry this way and search, and let us hope that no harm has befallen the plucky fellow."

They hurried on in silence, fully expecting and dreading every moment, to find the body of Tom Merry. After what had happened, they felt sure the rascally Burmese would show little mercy to the junior. That Akyaba was lurking about alone seemed to them terribly significant.

They reached the viaduct and started to cross it. A sudden impulse came to Blake, and he raised his voice in a ringing shout.

"Tom Merry! Tom Merry!"

And then Captain Merry and Blake & Co. got the shock of their lives. They had scarcely expected an answer to Blake's call. Yet one came, almost the next second.

"Help! Help!"

"Good heavens!"

They looked quickly about them, completely at a loss to trace the source of the cries at first. And then, with a startled cry, Monty Lowther rushed across the metals to the parapet of the viaduct. He peered over, and they saw his face go white as he gave a violent start.

"He's here! Quick!"

"Great Scott!"

The Army man and the juniors rushed to Lowther's side. As they grasped the position and peered over, they gave horrified exclamations.

"Help, help!" panted Tom Merry, looking up. "I—I can't hold on much longer!"

The hapless junior was obviously at his last gasp. His strained white face was twitching as if with the agony he was experiencing from his bruised, numbed foot. He stared up appealingly.

"Hold on Tom—for Heaven's sake hold on!" panted Manners.

He moved to the ropes staked to the ground below the low wall. The captain, his stern face set and tense, called to him.

"No; don't touch them yet! Tom," he went on, looking over at the junior, "you must hold on—you must! A little more courage, boy, and we'll soon have you out of that. Listen! Can you possibly hold on while we haul you up?"

Tom shook his head. He knew he hadn't the strength in his numbed leg and foot to do that unaided.

"Then hold on—for your life, Tom!" snapped Captain Merry.

Tom's cousin seemed to have quite overcome his own weakness in his terrible fear for Tom's safety. In a flash

he had issued orders to Blake & Co., explaining to them how to use the tackle which worked the cradle. And while doing so he had fastened a rope round his own waist, fastening the end to the strong framework of the pulley tackle. Luckily, there were plenty of ropes and other materials at hand.

Working swiftly, the Army man lowered himself over the parapet, while Blake and his chums stood by the pulley. It was only a few yards down to where Tom hung, and Captain Merry reached him quickly. Twisting feet round the rope and holding on with one hand, he grasped the trembling junior with the other, passing his arm round his waist.

"Now, Blake!" he called to those above.

Blake and the others knew exactly what to do. One of the pulley ropes had slipped under the sudden jerk as Tom fell, and now Blake proceeded to tighten it, drawing the tilted cradle level.

It was done at last, and then Captain Merry helped Tom into the cradle.

"That's good!" panted the captain at last, as Tom rested on the narrow platform. "Now, Blake, up she goes!"

The rest was easy. With a hand from the captain now and again as he hauled himself upwards, Blake and his eager chums gradually and cautiously pulled on the pulley ropes and hauled up the cradle with its burden.

Soon it was near the parapet top, and then willing hands grabbed the junior and he was hauled into safety.

Tom almost swooned then, and his chums lowered him to the ground, just as Captain Merry swarmed over and joined them, his bronzed face showing his deep thankfulness.

"All clear!" he exclaimed cheerfully, a slight break in his voice. "You'll soon be fit now, Tom."

"Akyaba!" panted Tom, glancing with something of a shudder about him. "The—train was almost on top of him when I went over. Is he—"

"Akyaba is safe enough, and free; unfortunately he has escaped us, Tom," returned his cousin grimly. "Tom, you were right in your suspicions of that fellow," he added quietly. "Though you said nothing definite, I knew you suspected him, also your chums did. I did not, because Akyaba is my personal servant, whom I trusted."

He paused.

"Why he should desire my death is beyond me. Yet it was he, undoubtedly, who entered my bedroom last night, and who secreted the karrit eggs in my bag."

"Trimble saw him empty something from a cedar-wood box into a bag just before it was burst open," interposed Blake grimly.

"Good gad! Then that explains it! I wondered how on earth he could have done it, for he has not had access to my luggage. It was packed by myself in Rangoon, and Akyaba did not join me there until the day of sailing. He had been given leave to visit his people, owing to a death in his family, I understood."

"But on the voyage over, sir? He could have—"

"He was in a different part of the ship; I had my own steward to attend to me on the boat. And yet— The captain's eyes gleamed. "Yet, now I remember that I found him on two occasions about to enter my cabin; and, even at the time, his explanations seemed to me far from being satisfactory. Indeed, though I still trusted him, I had been puzzled by the sudden, unaccountable change in his attitude towards me. However, he had, apparently, relied upon the karrit eggs. And as they failed, owing to Trimble, he is now trying other and cruder methods."

"You've found no more of those beastly things, then, sir?" said Herries.

"None, fortunately. There had been at least twenty-four eggs, only three of which had hatched out—the two I killed, and the dead one I found among the pyjamas. Obviously the villain had planned my death before leaving Burma. However, he is unmasked now, and the guard of the Lexham train has promised to phone the police. Soon I hope we shall have him under lock and key."

"Good heavens! The feahful wuffian!"

"Yes, it is a shock to me, for I had trusted him. However," exclaimed Captain Merry, smiling at Tom, "if you're feeling fit, the sooner we get back to St. Jim's the better, Tom. My golf is off; but I'm afraid I shall have to run over to Lexham none the less, as I am very anxious indeed to see my friend there, both for business and reasons of personal friendship."

"I'm fit enough now," grinned Tom.

And he walked away towards Wayland Junction, with his thankful chums and equally thankful cousin, briskly enough. Yet he could not refrain from glancing about with a deep shudder at the spot where he had so nearly met a terrible death.

CHAPTER 10.
Baggy's Pound Note!

"MEAN beast! He might have made it a bob!" Thus Baggy Trimble communed with himself. The fat junior was rolling along the dusty lane towards Rylcombe. Under his arm he carried a pair of boots wrapped in brown paper. Those boots belonged to Knox of the Sixth, and Baggy was taking them to be repaired at the local shoe-shop.

Baggy was not doing a kindly act for Knox. He was doing the errand under compulsion, with a measly sixpence to soften the pill, as it were. Trimble considered the tramp into Rylcombe was far from being worth sixpence, and had not wanted to undertake the job. But Knox had persuaded him with the aid of his boot—one that was on the senior's foot at the time, not one out of the parcel.

So Trimble had rolled off grumpily, reflecting upon the injustice of mankind in general, and of Knox of the Sixth in particular.

Had it been a bob, Trimble would have considered it worth it. But for a measly sixpence—B-r-r-r!

Trimble was disgusted and wrathful as he tramped along dismally. It was a warm afternoon—too warm for Trimble to find walking comfortable. Moreover, it was getting perilously close to tea-time.

"Beast!" repeated Baggy again. "Just like that beast Knox! Always ordering a fellow about like—like a slave! I've a jolly good mind—"

He broke off and looked round as the sound of a speeding motor-bike came from behind him. Trimble's first thought was that it might be Kildare. The skipper of St. Jim's was a very good-natured fellow, who would not hesitate to offer even a grubby fag from the Third a lift in his sidecar.

A glance showed him that it was not Kildare, however, and Baggy was just sniffing in disgust when he recognised the rider of the machine—a bike and sidecar which he now recognised as Kildare's, after all.

But the rider, to Baggy's astonishment, was Captain Colin Merry.

Evidently Kildare had lent the captain the machine to run over to Lexham on, though Baggy did not know that. Nor did Baggy wonder at all. All he knew was that here was the chance of a lift. After saving the captain's life twice, and honouring him by borrowing seven-and-sixpence from him, Baggy considered that was the least the captain could do.

But the captain had already recognised Trimble's fat form, and before Baggy could even call out the Army man had pulled up alongside.

"Jump in, kid, if you're going to the village!" he called cheerfully.

Trimble squeezed into the sidecar, reflecting upon the fact that Captain Merry was improving, and not such a beast, after all.

In two or three minutes the captain had set Baggy down opposite to the shoe-repairing shop in Rylcombe. But during those minutes Baggy had been thinking. After all, a fellow who valued his life—especially a life that had been saved twice over—ought not to be satisfied by giving his rescuer a lift and lending him seven-and-six. Baggy had, in fact, decided that the captain ought to turn the seven-and-six into ten bob—an even figure.

As he rolled with difficulty out of the sidecar, Baggy hastily began to go through his pockets with an air of concern. Then, just as the captain nodded before going on, Baggy spoke.

"Great Scott! Hold on, sir! I wonder if I've dropped it in the sidecar?"

"Dropped what, youngster?"

"My dashed half-crown!" said Trimble, blinking into the sidecar and turning back the rug. "My hat! It isn't there, so I must have left it behind me. How rotten!"

Captain Merry looked at him. Possibly the worthy captain had heard certain things about Baggy. At all events, he looked at him rather queerly. Then, without waiting for the request for a loan, which he guessed was coming, the captain plunged his hand into his pocket.

"Rather rotten, sir!" said Trimble, noting the action with delight. "That means a tramp back to St. Jim's, and another tramp here again, of course! I wonder—"

"That is unfortunate, Trimble!" remarked Captain Merry dryly. "However, allow me to—to put the matter right. Unfortunately, I have nothing less than a pound note on me. Please do not look upon it as a loan, however."

And, with a smiling nod to the stupefied Trimble, the captain started off again. The motor combination moved away from the pavement and went roaring along the old High Street, leaving Baggy, with goggling eyes, staring at a pound Treasury note in his fat palm.

A pound note! He had hoped for a half-crown, with luck, and he had got a whole quid—not as a loan, but as a tip!

Such tips were so few and far between that Trimble scarcely ever remembered having one. Now he had got one.

Trimble nearly danced in wild delight. But he was not at a loss as to what to do with his quid—not for a single moment. He dashed into the shoe-shop, left the boots there, and made a hasty bee-line for the village tuckshop.

A quid in the pocket was all very well, but a quid's worth of grub inside a fellow was better, in Baggy's valuable opinion. Baggy intended to get outside as many good things as he possibly could as quickly as he could. Possibly he had the fear the captain might return and want his tip back, or possibly he was just merely hungry.

At all events, he went at once. Inside the tuckshop were several St. Jim's fellows, and Dame Murphy was busy. Grundy of the Shell was there with his chum Wilkins.

Trimble rolled in. "Buck up here, Mrs. Murphy!" he called cheerily. "A dozen jam-tarts and a ginger-pop to start with—twopenny tarts, mind!"

The fellows in the shop looked at Trimble. Such an order from the impecunious junior was unusual. Dame Murphy also thought it unusual, and she sniffed.

"Yes, Master Trimble. But have you the money to pay for them? You already owe me—Dear me!"

Dame Murphy made that latter exclamation in surprise as Baggy, with a magnificent gesture, threw the pound note on the counter.

"In funds—eh?" said Grundy, his eyes fixed grimly on Baggy. "This wants looking into, Trimble."

"Oh, really, Grundy—" "Where the thump have you boned that quid note from, Trimble?" demanded Grundy magisterially. "My hat! I bet some poor chap's hunting at St. Jim's for that quid note at this very minute!"

"Oh, really, that's a rotten thing to say, Grundy!" said Baggy warmly. "That quid note belongs—Here—Why, you cheeky cad!"

Trimble howled as Grundy calmly picked up the pound note.

"Here, gimme my pound note back, you cheeky rotter!" roared Baggy furiously. "Grundy, you rotten beast—"

Grundy calmly folded the note and placed it carefully in his pocket wallet. Trimble stuttered and stared, stupefied with fury and alarm.

"I'm taking charge of this for the present!" said Grundy, raising a hand sternly. "I don't want a shindy at St. Jim's, and I don't want even a fat little worm like you sacked for boning other people's Treasury notes, Trimble. I don't say you've stolen it, of course. I know you've found it somewhere and stuck to it on the principle that findings are keepings. That idea will land you in choky yet, Trimble!"

NEXT WEEK'S GREAT PROGRAMME!

"THE CONWAY CUP!"

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A Thrilling Long Complete Sports Yarn of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

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"Oh! Oh, m-my hat!" choked Trimble.

There was a chuckle in the tuckshop. It was just like Grundy to chip into another fellow's business like this. Grundy never could realise that he was not placed in a position of authority at St. Jim's, and that his high-handed methods were anything but right and just. Certainly Trimble's character was known, and, as likely as not—so the juniors thought—the note did belong to someone else. Still, Grundy had no right or authority to interfere.

"Grundy—" began Wilkins. "Dash it all!"

"You shut up, Wilky!"

"But, dash it all, if the note does belong to Trimble—"

"It doesn't. Think I can't see that?" snorted Grundy.

"Who ever heard of that fat rotter having a quid note to spend? Rot! He's picked it up somewhere. It's somebody's property at St. Jim's. I can't allow the fat idiot to spend it until there's been a thorough investigation!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Trimble fairly sizzled, almost weeping with wrath and indignation.

"You—you—you—" he started to splutter; and then, in sheer desperation, he acted.

With one hand he snatched away Grundy's wallet, and with the other hand he gave Grundy a vicious push. Then—

Crash! Clatter, clatter! Crash, crash!

"Yarrooooooop!" roared Grundy.

For Grundy had staggered backwards into a stack of bottled, tinned, and packeted goods, bringing the lot crashing down upon him.

A small bag of flour struck Grundy's head, immediately bursting and flooding flour over his head and features. With it came a tin of pineapples, which raised a howl as it struck Grundy on the nose. A tin of salmon hit his left ear, and then Grundy disappeared under an avalanche of good things as he sat down in a box of tomatoes.

Squash!

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a howl of laughter in the tuckshop, and a sequel of horror from Dame Murphy. During the commotion Baggy Trimble easily managed his getaway.

But outside the shop Baggy paused a second. For the moment Grundy was fixed safely, and Baggy didn't want Grundy's wallet. He only wanted his pound note. So he took it from the wallet, opened the door again, and pushed the wallet inside. The wallet went straight to its owner—flying Grundy on the nose just as he was staggering dizzily to his feet, a mass of squashed fresh tomatoes clinging lovingly to his nether garments.

Then Trimble fled while the fleeing was good.

Two minutes later Baggy was safely ensconced in the tuckshop in one of the back streets—a place clean and pleasant enough, but which the St. Jim's juniors rarely patronised. Baggy started to patronise it now to the extent of a quid.

An hour later the fat junior started back for St. Jim's. In his pocket was about two shillings change, and inside him was the rest of the pound in grub. He was feeling a trifle more than comfortable in consequence, but he was quite cheery.

Baggy rolled back to St. Jim's, fat, sticky, and satisfied. Once or twice as he rolled along he glanced behind him—not in case Grundy might be on his trail, but in case Captain Merry came along with the sidecar. Baggy felt he needed a ride with the load he had inside him.

Yet it was Grundy that he saw on one of his careless, hopeful blinks behind him—Grundy and Wilkins cycling homewards on their bikes.

Dh!" gasped Baggy as he sighted them. "Oh! Oh, crickey!"

He gave one more blink round, and then he darted into the hedge like a frightened fat rabbit.

Grundy and Wilkins passed the spot where Baggy crouched, hiding, and they disappeared in the distance.

Baggy moved to emerge into the open. But a slight sound close at hand made him turn.

Then he gave a violent jump—in fact, he nearly jumped out of his fat skin at what he saw.

It was a brown face with glittering, burning eyes—the face of Ramadya Akyaba, the Burmese!

The man was crouching scarcely a yard from him—quiet and watchful. Only the faintest of sounds had he made. But Trimble had heard it and had seen.

And as he realised he was seen, Ramadya Akyaba gave a savage exclamation, and with a leap he came crashing through the hedge towards Trimble.

But Trimble did not wait for him. He stood as if frozen to the ground for one brief, horrible instant, and then Baggy woke up and flew.

He flew as if he were on the cinder path, running a race for his life—as, in fact, he believed he was. Despite the load he was carrying, despite his tiredness and lack of wind, Baggy fairly skimmed the road, nor did he stop until he fell, and almost collapsed, in the School House doorway at St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 11.

Saving an Enemy!

"I SAY, you fellows, I've seen that beastly Burmese again!"

Baggy Trimble met Tom Merry & Co. with that announcement as the chums of the School House entered the gates that evening. As they had been obliged to give the match at Abbotsford a miss, the juniors had, rather than waste the whole afternoon, taken a boat up river, and had had tea at the lock-keeper's cottage.

It was close on lock-up, and the juniors were hurrying; but they stopped as Trimble said that.

"Bai Jove!"

The chums looked at each other in alarm as Baggy proceeded to tell of his adventure. The thought occurred to them at once that the Burmese meant mischief—that he was lying there in wait for Captain Merry. Possibly he had seen the captain speeding on Kildare's motor-bike along the lane, and was waiting for his return. If so—

Tom Merry whistled.

"Have you told anyone of this, Trimble?"

"Eh? Oh, no—only a few chaps," said Trimble. "I should have gone back and given the brute a hiding only—"

"You didn't," said Blake. "Cut that out, Baggy! You ought to have told Railton, and he'd have rung up the bobbies, you fat ass! The police are hunting for him now, I believe."

"We'd better trot in and get 'em on the job at once, Tom!" said Manners in alarm. "The captain said he'd be back early, didn't he?"

"Yes, but—" Tom Merry frowned. To get the police on the job would take time—and time was precious. With the murderous ruffian lurking in wait, Captain Merry's life was in deadly danger, he knew. A rope stretched across the road, or a stone flung with deadly aim would be enough.

Tom made up his mind in a moment.

"Run indoors at once and tell Railton, Baggy," he said

Would You Believe It?

The First Submarine!

Designed by Robert Fulton, 1780-90. In it the famous engineer descended to a depth of 25 feet & remained under water 4 hours. This submarine had no motor or engines, but appears to have been propelled by a screw turned by hand.

A Volcano of Mud!
In 1901, a forty-acre morass near Adrigole, County Kerry, Ireland, exploded in the night with a noise like thunder, throwing up thousands of tons of liquid peat to a great height.



Zebras in harness.
A Johannesburg firm of tea merchants has a smart four-in-hand team of zebras.



quickly. "Railton will know what to do. Come on, you fellows!"

"Bai Jove! You mean—" began Arthur Augustus. "I mean it's up to us to find the chap and tackle him before he has the chance to do harm," snapped Tom, his eyes gleaming. "You say it was just past the gates of Rylcombe Grange, Baggy?"

"Yes, old chap. I say—" "Then cut off to Railton—sharp! Tell him also that we've gone after the brute. Come on!"

Tom Merry's face was tense and white, and he led the way at a rare pace, his chums panting at his heels. On nearing the spot Baggy had mentioned, they turned on to the grass lining the roadway. Here the running was harder, but they wanted to catch the ruffian, though they realised it would mean a desperate fight if they did find him.

Quite suddenly Blake gave a muttered exclamation. "Motor-bike coming!" he panted.

In the lane, far ahead, came the roar of a motor-engine. And suddenly, round the bend a hundred yards before them, a bike and sidecar whizzed into view. The rider wore plus fours, and they knew it could only be Captain Merry.

"Oh, good!" breathed Tom Merry. "Another few seconds and—"

Tom never finished his words, for just then it happened.

From the thickets lining the lane they suddenly sighted a figure springing out into the road. His arm went up, and just as the motor-cyclist roared up something whizzed from his hand.

It was a thick cudgel—the juniors could see it clearly even from that distance—and the aim was deadly.

But the keen-eyed Army man was too quick for the Burmese.

He glimpsed the whizzing cudgel, and he ducked on the instant.

The whirling stick went harmlessly overhead, but the rider lost control in the sudden emergency, and the bike and sidecar swerved violently.

"Good heavens! Look out!"

Tom Merry yelled an instant too late. And Ramadya Akyaba sprang aside an instant too late.

The bike and sidecar crashed into him and went over with a fearful crash and clatter, flinging the captain head over heels over the handlebars. He came down on all fours in a heap on the grassy bank lining the lane.

The bike and sidecar crashed over, and Akyaba was underneath it.

Nor was that all. Almost instantly there came an explosion from the machine, and next moment a sheet of flame shot up as the petrol caught fire.

The juniors, scared beyond measure, rushed up to the spot. But someone else was before them. Captain Merry, his face and clothes covered with mud, was on his feet in a flash. He reeled drunkenly for a brief instant, and then he jumped to the bike and sidecar.

He tore at the machine, heedless of the spurting flames. Then he stooped, dragged out the shrieking Akyaba, and, raising him aloft with a surprising strength, sent him flying into a ditch a yard away.

The Burmese, his clothes burning, shrieks of pain coming from him, went splashing into a foot of mud and water, and the captain jumped after him.

With desperate haste he rolled the yelling ruffian over and over in the muddy water until every spark was extinguished. Then he dragged him out—a limp, unconscious figure. The man's brown face and hands were horribly blackened, his hair was singed, and his clothes burned in a score of places.

The captain, panting and exhausted with his desperate efforts, laid him down on the grass and examined him. Then he shook his head.

"Badly burned," he said quietly. "But the crash did more than the burns, I'm afraid. We must get him to the hospital at once. Tom, never mind the bike—run off to the police—Ah, gad! What luck!"

A car had come speeding along, and a glance showed helmeted figures in it. Evidently Mr. Railton had believed Trimble without question, and had acted promptly.

"What—what—" Inspector Skeat, followed by a sergeant and two constables, tumbled from the car as it pulled up.

"Here is your man, inspector," said Captain Merry, pointing to the limp form at his feet. "But I'm afraid you will not have your prisoner long. Get him to the nearest hospital—quickly. He's in a bad way. I'll come along with you."

Five minutes later the burned and blackened skeleton of Kildare's motor-bike and sidecar had been dragged to the side of the lane and then, while the car sped away with the police, Captain Merry and the hapless man from Burma, Tom Merry & Co. returned to St. Jim's. Even they realised that the danger hanging over Captain Merry's head was gone—for ever.

They were right, as events proved. When Captain Merry returned from Wayland that night his face was quiet and grave.

"Yes, Akyaba will be a danger to me no longer," he said, as the juniors eagerly questioned him. "He is dead—the burns, combined with shock and the injuries he sustained in the crash, killed him. I—I'm sorry, for the fellow was a good, loyal servant until—"

He paused. "You've found out why he wanted to kill you?" breathed Tom, eyeing his cousin curiously.

"Yes, I have. He confessed before he died," said the captain quietly. "And it is simple. As you know, I am obliged, in the course of my military duties, to bring murderers to justice, and, in fact, to order their execution. The motive is revenge."

"But—" began Tom.

"Just before I went to Rangoon I was instrumental in the execution of a notorious murderer—a bandit who terrorised a certain district on the Irrawaddy. That man—though I did not know it until to-night—was Ramadya Akyaba's own father. That was the meaning of Akyaba's visit home owing to a death in the family—the execution of his father. To put it briefly Akyaba swore a fanatical oath of vengeance on me. It had been pointed out to him that British justice meant a life for a life, and—well, Akyaba swore that I myself should suffer the same—my life for his father's life. It was his queer, twisted idea of justice. That is all. Crude reasoning—but it very nearly succeeded."

"Phew! Yes, rather!" breathed Tom Merry. "But—but thank Heaven it did not succeed. Trimble—"

"And you fellows," said Captain Colin Merry, "have saved me!" Then he laughed grimly. "I'm rather glad I gave the young rascal that pound note now. Jove! He'll expect another after this!"

And Trimble did—and got it!

THE END.

(That was a thrilling yarn, wasn't it, chums? Just wait till next week, and then read our great sports yarn, THE CONWAY CUP!)

Facts from Far and Near.



An old Chinese proverb says there are as many useful properties in the coconut palm as there are days in the year; in fact there seems no limit to its uses. The tree begins to bear fruit when it is eight



Capt. Hawthorne C. Gray, of the U.S. Army Air Corps, lost his life trying to beat his own altitude record of 8 miles above the earth.

ANOTHER NEW COMPLETE ROOKWOOD YARN!

THE ROOKWOOD "SCREEN" STAR!

By OWEN CONQUEST.



CHAPTER 1.

Lovell All Over!

VALENTINE MORNINGTON stared into the end study at Rookwood.

"You men at prep?" he ejaculated.

He stared at Jimmy Silver & Co., gathered round the table in the end study, busy with books, pens, and ink. The Fistical Four of the Fourth seemed very busy.

Never, probably, had Jimmy Silver and Lovell, Raby, and Newcome been less interested in Latin verse. But they looked as if it enthralled them. It was time for prep, and the end study seemed to be setting a shining example to all the studies in the Classical Fourth. They looked as if the one desire of their young lives was to mug up Virgil. No wonder Mornington stared!

The rest of the passage, and, indeed, the whole House, buzzed with excitement. Something had happened which thrilled all Rookwood from end to end. Both Houses throbbed with it. Yet the end study seemed to pass it by like the idle wind which they regarded not.

Jimmy Silver glanced round with elaborate carelessness.

"Prep," he repeated. "Of course! Time for prep, isn't it?"

"But you've heard—" exclaimed Mornington.

"Heard what?" asked Raby.

"About the Head!"

"Nox erat et terris animalia somnus habebat," murmured Newcome, and yawned. "What about the Head, Morny?"

"The House is humming with it," said Mornington. "Some awful ass has ragged the Head! Haven't you heard?"

"Oh, we've heard!" said Jimmy Silver. "Muffin gave us the glad news. Have they got the man?"

Lovell gave a sort of jump as Jimmy asked that question. "I fancy they're getting him!" said Morny.

Lovell gave another jump.

"Fancy you men sticking to prep with this terrific row going on," said Morny, in wonder. "Every other man's out of his study. It's jolly serious the Head being ragged, I can tell you!"

"Serious for him!" agreed Jimmy. "What's happened exactly?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,216.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN!
But Silver finds it mighty costly
when he tries to screen Lovell!

Only too well the end study knew what had happened, as a matter of fact. But they had reasons—powerful reasons—for assuming an attitude of calm detachment. The fellow who had ragged the Head was booked for the "sack," and the fact that he had ragged him by mistake in the dark was not likely to save him. Had Morny seen Lovell's face, he might have guessed who the hapless ragger was. But Lovell's face was not to be seen.

"Some howling ass perched himself in the beech over the path in the quad," said Morny. "He seems to have waited deliberately for the Head to come along, and then he mopped some awful muck over him—ink and soot and gum and water, and all sorts of stuff. Old Manders was coming over from his House a few minutes afterwards, for a masters' meeting, or something, and he seems to have picked the Head up and rolled him home. He came in looking a perfect picture!"

"Awful!" said Raby. "Still, prep's prep. We've got to go through this stuff with Dalton in the morning, you know!"

"But what makes you think they're getting the man?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Well, they're bound to get him," said Morny.

"If it was anybody else the man might have a chance of lying doggo; but they'll root through Rookwood to its jolly old foundations for a man who's had the nerve to rag the Head.

All the masters and prefects are on the trail like a lot of giddy bloodhounds. And they've got a clue."

A shower of blots dropped from Arthur Edward Lovell's pen.

Jimmy Silver's jaw dropped. Raby became quite pale. Newcome gave a sort of gurgle. Already, in their mind's eye, the Co. could see the hapless Lovell leaving Rookwood under the escort of a prefect, to take the train home. Lovell's face was quite ghastly.

"A—a—a clue?" stammered Jimmy.

"Yes. The silly ass, whoever he was, climbed the beech over the path to wait for the Head. He dropped something—"

"Dud-dud-dropped something! What was it?"

"A penknife!" answered Morny. "Bulkeley of the Sixth found it. It was lying in the path where the Head got his medicine."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Newcome.

"Man might have dropped it there during the day!" said Jimmy faintly.

"No fear! You see, the stuff that was mopped over the Head left a pool in the path, and the penknife had dropped in it. Plain enough it dropped from the tree. They've only got to find out whom that penknife belongs to and they've got the man!"

"Oh!" gasped Lovell.

He looked up at last. The expression on his speaking countenance made Valentine Mornington jump.

"You!" gasped Mornington.

Lovell nodded.

"Mum's the word!" breathed Mornington. He stepped in and closed the door, staring blankly at Lovell's ghastly face. "Lovell, you born idiot, what did you want to rag the Head for? What's he done, you chump? Didn't you know it would be the sack?"

"It was a mistake!" groaned Jimmy Silver. "Lovell all over, of course! He was there for Manders, and the Head came along unexpectedly and got it! Lovell thought it was Manders in the dark! We never knew till Muffin came in and told us it was Dr. Chisholm got it! Keep it dark!"

"Poor old Lovell!" said Mornington. "I suppose they'll send him to a home for idiots when he's bunked out of Rookwood."

Morny quitted the end study, chuckling. But the Fistical Four were not feeling disposed to chuckle.

"We left it to Lovell!" moaned Raby. "He insisted on its being left to him! And—and he got the Head instead of Manders, and—and he had to drop his penknife to give them a clue! Jever hear of a fellow sitting up and begging for it like Lovell?"

Lovell opened his mouth—and shut it again. For once the argumentativeness of Arthur Edward seemed to have deserted him. He had nothing to say. There was a dreary silence in the end study. The chums of the Classical Fourth were up against it, and the outlook was dark and gloomy for that celebrated study.

CHAPTER 2.

Rough on Uncle James!

CLANG, clang, clang!

The rising-bell rang out at Rookwood School in the sunny summer morning.

The Classical Fourth turned out, four members of that Form looking as if they had not slept well.

Jimmy Silver & Co. did not greet the rosy morn with their usual cheery spirits. The shadow of the "sack" hung over the Co.

So far from suspecting the end study, the Classical Fourth generally believed that some Modern man had done the trick. It was frightfully bad form to rag the Head—and the Classics agreed that bad form was a monopoly on the Modern side at Rookwood.

"Hallo, here's Dicky Dalton!" murmured Putty of the Fourth, as the dormitory door suddenly opened, while the rising-bell still clanged.

The juniors stared round at Mr. Dalton, standing with a very grave face in the doorway.

There was a thrill of excitement. Many fellows guessed that that unusual visit, in the early morning, had some connection with the startling episode of the evening before. Lovell kept his face turned away. He did not want to meet Mr. Dalton's keen eyes.

"G-g-good-morning, sir!" faltered Jimmy Silver.

"Good-morning, my boys!" said Mr. Dalton gravely.

"Silver, I have a question to put to you."

Jimmy Silver looked deeply relieved. He had feared that Mr. Dalton had a question to put to Lovell.

"Yes, sir!" answered Jimmy brightly.

"Did you leave the House, Silver, after lock-up last evening?"

"I, sir?" The captain of the Fourth jumped. "No, sir!"

"You remained in your study during preparation?"

"Certainly, sir."

Mr. Dalton's keen eyes were fixed on Jimmy's face with a very penetrating look.

"Very well, Silver. After prayers you will go to the Head's study," he said; and he left the dormitory.

Jimmy stared after him blankly.

"What the thump am I to go to the Head's study for, I wonder?" he ejaculated; and then, as the only possible explanation rushed into his mind, he jumped again. "My only hat! They can't think—they can't suppose——"

"Looks as if they do," chuckled Peele. "My hat! Was it you, Silver?"

"Don't be a silly ass, Peele!"

"Dash it all, they want you for something, Silver," said Gunner. "I say, if it was you——"

"Fathead!"

"They're on the wrong track," remarked Erroll. "All the better for the man who did it."

"Something in that," agreed Jimmy.

Many curious glances were cast at the captain of the Fourth. That summons to the Head's study could scarcely mean anything but that suspicion had turned on "Uncle James," of Rookwood. Peele and Lattrey and Gower chuckled openly—the black sheep of the Fourth were greatly entertained. Jimmy Silver & Co. left the dormitory as soon as they could.

"What the thump does it mean, you men?" asked Lovell uneasily.

"Goodness knows!" said Jimmy. "Looks as if they're on the wrong track. All the better if they are!"

After prayers Bulkeley of the Sixth called to Jimmy Silver, and that youth followed him to the Head's study. The Rookwood captain was looking very grave, and he gave Jimmy one grim look, and did not look at him again. Jimmy was feeling very uneasy by the time he was taken into Dr. Chisholm's study.

The Head was there—calm, lofty, majestic, and unusually grim. Mr. Dalton was present. On the Head's table a glimmer caught Jimmy's eye; it was a penknife, of the stainless steel variety. It caught the glimmer of early sunshine from the window.

So that was the penknife. But a dozen fellows at Rookwood, at least, had such penknives—which could be bought at Mr. Isaacs' shop at Latham for two or three shillings each. Jimmy wondered uneasily why he was there.

"Silver, sir!" said Bulkeley.

"Thank you, Bulkeley! Silver!" The Head adjusted



his glasses and fixed a stony stare on the captain of the Fourth. "Silver, I have to question you. Mr. Dalton tells me you deny having been out of the House during lock-up last evening?"

"Yes, sir!" said Jimmy.

"Do you deny that you are the individual who hid himself in a beech-tree over the path, and drenched me with—with a vile and atrocious compound of—of soot, and gum, and—and ink, and other ingredients, as I passed below?"

"It was not I, sir."

"Very well—we shall see!" said the Head grimly. "We shall see! Look at that penknife on the table, Silver! Is it yours?"

"Mine, sir!" exclaimed Jimmy in astonishment. "Certainly not!"

"That penknife, Silver, was found on the spot, lying in the pool of—of atrocious compound that had been hurled down on me. It was obviously dropped by the person in the tree—on that point there is no shadow of doubt. You possess such a penknife, Silver—your Form Master is aware of it."

"I have seen you use such a penknife, Silver," said Mr. Dalton quietly.

"That is so, sir," said Jimmy. "A dozen fellows have these stainless steel penknives—twenty fellows, very likely."

"But not the same initials," said the Fourth Form master coldly.

Jimmy Silver started.

"The—the initials, sir? I—I don't understand—"

"Where is your penknife, Silver, if that one on the table is not yours?"

Jimmy started again, his heart giving a jerk.

"I—I lent it to a—fellow—," he stammered.

His face flushed crimson, and he broke off. It came into his mind with a rush that he had lent the penknife to Arthur Edward Lovell.

Jimmy stood rooted. He understood now.

Dr. Chisholm's grim face became grimmer as he scanned the crimson, confused junior. "If he had doubted before he doubted no longer. But the Head was a just gentleman. He was going into this serious matter carefully and thoroughly."

"Take up that penknife, Silver."

Jimmy picked it up with a hand that shook. He was utterly dismayed by this unexpected turn of events.

"Is it yours, Silver?"

There was no denying it. On the smooth steel exterior the initials J. S. had been cut, graven there by Jimmy's own hand. Any Classical junior at Rookwood would have known that that was Jimmy's penknife.

"It—it's mine, sir! I—I never knew—"

"That penknife was dropped by the boy in the tree last night," said the Head, in a grinding voice. "It was dropped by you, Silver."

"No, sir!" gasped Jimmy. "Oh, no, sir! I wasn't there, sir! I—I was in my study at prep—"

The Head glanced at Richard Dalton. The young master's face was troubled and distressed.

"I have always known Silver to be a truthful and honourable boy, sir," said Mr. Dalton. "His statement that he had lent the penknife is quite probable."

"In that case he has only to give the name of the boy to whom it was lent, and that boy shall be questioned in turn," said Dr. Chisholm.

"Quite so, sir! Silver, to which boy in the Fourth Form did you lend this penknife?"

There was a dead silence in the study. Dr. Chisholm looked at the junior grimly; Mr. Dalton anxiously; Bulkeley dubiously. All three waited for his reply.

But the reply did not come. Jimmy Silver did not speak.

CHAPTER 3.

Leave it to Lovell!

JIMMY'S face was pale now.

His heart beat unpleasantly. He realised only too clearly the position in which he stood.

He was bound to give the name. But he could not give it. For to give the name of the fellow to whom he had lent the penknife was to betray Lovell. Once Lovell was questioned the whole thing would come out. Lovell was not the man to lie—even if falsehoods could have passed current under the stern, searching eyes of the headmaster. If Jimmy gave Lovell's name, Arthur Edward Lovell was as good as sacked.

The silence became painful.

Dr. Chisholm broke it at last.

"I am waiting, Silver."

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Jimmy could have groaned. That ass, Lovell—that fat-head, Lovell—that born idiot, Lovell—had landed him in this! He had insisted upon taking into his own hands the punishment of Mr. Manders—he had ragged the Head by mistake—he had dropped Jimmy's penknife on the scene of the disaster! It was Lovell all over, and just like Lovell! But Jimmy Silver, to save his own skin, could not betray his chum.

"Silver!" Mr. Dalton spoke quietly. "You cannot refuse to give your headmaster the name he requires. If you do Dr. Chisholm will be driven to the conclusion that you have spoken untruthfully, and that it was indeed you who committed the outrage in the quadrangle last night."

"It was not I, sir!" muttered the hapless Jimmy. "I was in my study, sir. My friends can prove that I was there; they—they know—"

He broke off again wretchedly. If his friends were questioned, only Baby and Newcome could bear witness that Jimmy had been in the study. Arthur Edward Lovell had been absent at the time of the "outrage," having been in the branches of the beech in the quad, committing that very outrage.

"I command you to answer me, Silver!" came the deep voice of the Head. "If you, in fact, lent this penknife to another boy, give me his name immediately."

Jimmy did not speak.

"You have no answer to make?" thundered the Head.

"N-n-no, sir!" faltered Jimmy.

"Then the matter closes," said Dr. Chisholm. "You are adjudged guilty of the outrage, Silver! Mr. Dalton, take this boy—"

"One moment, sir!" said Mr. Dalton, in distress. Silver, it is clear that you know the name of the culprit, if you are not the culprit yourself. If some feeling of schoolboy honour prevents you from giving that name, reflect in time. This is not a light matter—it is a very serious matter. A disrespectful assault was made on no less a person than the headmaster of this school. The boy concerned is a young ruffian, underserving of consideration. If you have spoken the truth, Silver, give the name of the boy in whose possession your penknife was last night."

Jimmy did not speak.

"The case is clear!" boomed the Head. "The matter closes."

"You have nothing to say, Silver?" asked Mr. Dalton anxiously.

"I—I— Yes, sir!" stammered Jimmy. "The—the fellow—he never meant to touch the Head, sir! It was all a mistake—an awful mistake!"

"What do you mean, Silver?"

"I—I mean, sir, he—he was after somebody else! He never knew that Dr. Chisholm was out of the House at all—he never knew till afterwards that the Head got it, sir!" stammered Jimmy. "He—he's rather a fool, sir!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head blankly.

"Certainly that, if true, lessens the enormity of the offence," said Mr. Dalton. "But the boy must answer for his conduct. If this is true, Silver, give Dr. Chisholm the name."

"I—I can't, sir!" said Jimmy desperately.

"You cannot?" said the Head, in a formidable voice. "You cannot obey the direct command of your headmaster? Are you in your senses, boy?"

Jimmy was silent.

"Mr. Dalton," said the Head, "take this boy to the punishment-room. I will write a letter to his father, which he will take home with him, explaining why he is expelled from Rookwood. During first school, Bulkeley, you will take this boy to Latham and see him into his train for home."

"Very well, sir!" said the prefect.

"You—you're going to send me away, sir?" gasped Jimmy.

Dr. Chisholm waved his hand, dismissing the matter.

"You are expelled from Rookwood!" he said. "Take him away, Mr. Dalton!"

"Come, Silver!" said Mr. Dalton quietly.

Jimmy Silver blindly followed his Form master from the study. His face was white, and his heart like lead in his breast.

Expelled from Rookwood!

What would his father say? What would the mater say? He followed Mr. Dalton like a fellow in a dream.

Many eyes were turned on them as he was taken to the punishment-room, a room seldom used at Rookwood.

In that secluded apartment Mr. Dalton stood, with the key in his hand, regarding the hapless junior gravely.

"Silver," he said, "I cannot believe—I can hardly believe—that you were guilty of this outrage! If you

are, indeed, guiltless, give the name of the culprit while there is yet time."

"I—I can't, sir."

"In an hour," said Mr. Dalton, "you will leave Rookwood—for ever! Think of it, Silver! Your breakfast will be brought here. Think it over, my boy, and if you have anything to say, say it before it is too late."

"I did not do it, sir."

"You must prove that, Silver."

No reply.

Mr. Dalton, with a sigh, left the punishment-room, and locked the door after him. Jimmy Silver was left alone, with black thoughts as his only companions.

But he did not falter. Whatever happened, he could not betray his chum. His mind was fixed on that.

Tupper, the page, brought Jimmy's breakfast, and gave the white-faced prisoner of the punishment-room a compassionate glance. In Hall there was a vacant place at the Fourth Form table.

The news had spread that Jimmy Silver was confined to the punishment-room.

To most of the fellows that was conclusive proof that the perpetrator of the outrage in the quad had been discovered.

Three faces at the table in Hall were dismal—Lovell's, however, least so.

That Jimmy could be condemned as guilty did not seem possible to Lovell. Yet Jimmy had been shut up in the punishment-room, and there was a rumour spreading that he was going to be "bunked." They could not bunk a fellow for nothing, Lovell told himself—that was unthinkable. Jimmy had not done it, so how could they bunk him?

After breakfast the three chums went out into the sunny quad. Raby and Newcome were giving Lovell rather expressive looks.

To their surprise, they found Lovell quite impervious to them. They did not want Lovell sacked, of course; but if the course; but if the fellow who had done the trick and the fellow who had not done it, there was only one step to be taken—Lovell had to own up.

So long as any doubt existed, "mum" was the word. But Raby and Newcome could not see any room for doubt now. Apparently Lovell could.

To their increased surprise they saw a grin dawn on the face of Arthur Edward Lovell.

"This is rather deep of Jimmy!" he said.

"Eh?" ejaculated Raby. "What?"

"They're on the wrong track, and Jimmy's keeping them on it," explained Lovell. "That keeps them off me, see? I should hardly have expected Jimmy to be so deep—after all, he's not a brainy chap."

"Oh!" gasped Newcome.

"You fellows know who's the brainy man in our study," remarked Lovell.

Raby and Newcome looked at him. After what had happened, and in the present terrible crisis in the history of the Fistical Four, Lovell still regarded himself as the

brainy man of the study! Raby and Newcome could not speak. Their feelings were too deep for words.

"I fancy," continued Lovell complacently, "that I know why they've jumped on Jimmy. You fellows remember I tied that can of mixture on the rope, getting down from the study window last night. I borrowed Jimmy's penknife to cut the string, and slipped it into my pocket, you know. I had to cut it again when I took the can off the rope. Well, that's the penknife I must have dropped when I was in the tree."

"Oh!" gasped Raby and Newcome together. Lovell nodded sagely.

"That's how it is," he said. "They think it was Jimmy, at present, and he's letting them think so, to keep them off the right track. By the time they find out it wasn't Jimmy, it won't be so easy to get after the right man. They'll be a bit timed of the hunt, and the beak will have got over it to some extent. The jolly old trail will be cold, you know. That's Jimmy's game, and I'm bound to say that I never thought he had so much finesse."

Lovell's comrades gazed at him.

"You benighted idiot!" said Raby, in measured tones. "If they think it was Jimmy they'll sack him!"

"Rot!" said Lovell.

"You'll have to own up!" yelled Raby. Lovell laughed.



Jimmy Silver & Co. poured the milk over Lovell and then mixed the marmalade in his hair!

"Yes, I can see myself asking for the sack, and spoiling Jimmy's game at the same time!" he said. "For goodness sake, you fellows, have a little sense and leave it to me!"

"Leave it to you!" babbled Newcome.

"Yes," said Lovell firmly, "leave it to me. You can't do better than leave things to me, as you know."

It was too much! Mr. Manders had been left to Lovell, with the result that the Head had been ragged, and Jimmy Silver, to all appearance, was going to be sacked! Leaving things to Lovell did not appeal to the Co. in the circumstances.

Words were wasted on Lovell. Fortunately, his comrades were feeling more disposed for actions than for words. They proceeded to actions.

They seized Arthur Edward, jumping at him as if moved by the same spring. The complacent grin faded from Arthur

Edward's face as his head established sudden contact with the trunk of one of the old Rookwood beeches.

Bang!

"Whooooooop!" roared Lovell.

"Give him another!" gasped Raby. "Give him a dozen! Give him a hundred! Give him jip!"

Bang, bang!

"Yaroooo! Hooop-ooooooooop!"

Lovell struggled frantically, in surprise and rage and indignation. But he struggled in vain. Bang, bang, bang! went Arthur Edward's fatuous head on the beech, and he yelled and roared wildly.

"There!" gasped Newcome. "Perhaps that may knock some sense into your silly head!"

"Yarooooooop!"

"If Jimmy's sacked, you silly chump, we'll never speak to you again!"

"Yow-ow-ow! W-woooooop!"

Raby and Newcome stalked away. Lovell sat at the foot of the beech rubbing his head with both hands and gasping and spluttering, in a state of indignant wrath that could have been expressed in no known language.

CHAPTER 4. All's Well!

MR. DALTON'S face was very grave when he came into the Form-room to take his Form that morning. There were many grave faces in the Fourth. Jimmy Silver was not present, and all the fellows knew where he was, and had no doubt that the punishment-room was a preliminary to prompt departure. Arthur Edward Lovell, in fact, was the only fellow who doubted it. The banging of his head on the beech had not knocked any sense into it. Really, that was not to be expected.

Fellows like Peele were rather entertained by the prospect of "bunking" for the captain of the Fourth. But they were few. Most of the Fourth were deeply concerned, though they had to admit that, if Jimmy really had ragged the Head, he had asked for it and deserved it.

Valentine Mornington gave Lovell an expressive look as he passed him going to his place. He knew the facts, and he had taken it for granted that a fellow like Lovell would own up when the beaks got hold of the wrong man. He whispered to Lovell as he passed.

"Jimmy's up for the sack, Lovell!"

Lovell glared at him. The banging of his head had not improved his temper.

"Don't be a fool, Morny!" was his reply.

"Are you going to own up?"

"Don't be an idiot!"

"You're not?" breathed Mornington.

"Don't be a cheeky ass!"

Mornington compressed his lips and went to his place. Raby and Newcome were looking at Lovell. Their looks were expressive. Lovell stared back at them grimly and defiantly.

First lesson commenced in a subdued and rather depressed atmosphere. Jimmy Silver's vacant place worried nearly everybody except Lovell.

Many times Mornington glanced at Arthur Edward. When the sound of a taxi was heard on the drive without, the juniors started and exchanged glances. Everybody but Lovell guessed what that taxi had come for.

Mornington rose to his feet.

"If you please, sir—"

Mr. Dalton glanced at him. His face was troubled. The sound of the taxi that had arrived to take Jimmy Silver away from Rookwood was not agreeable to his ears.

"What is it, Mornington?" he asked.

"Isn't Silver coming into class, sir?"

"No!" said Mr. Dalton briefly.

"May I ask, sir, whether he is leaving Rookwood?"

The juniors hung on Mr. Dalton's reply. Lovell shot a contemptuous glance at Mornington. As if Jimmy could be leaving Rookwood! What the thump could he be leaving Rookwood for?

"Yes," answered Mr. Dalton gravely. "Silver is expelled from the school for the outrage in the quadrangle last night. Please say no more!"

Lovell's jaw dropped.

He sat thunderstruck.

For a moment or two he doubted whether he had heard aright. Mornington looked at him. Raby and Newcome looked at him. Lovell did not see them. His eyes, almost starting from his head, were fixed on Richard Dalton. He seemed frozen to his form.

"You will go on where Gunner left off, Raby," Mr. Dalton was saying. "Nox era—"

Lovell jumped up.

"Mr. Dalton!" he gasped.

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"You may sit down, Lovell."

"D-d-d-did you say Jimmy was bunked, sir?" gasped Lovell. "I mean, sacked—that is, expelled?"

"Yes. Sit down!"

Lovell stared at him. He was not likely to sit down. He jumped out of his place and ran to the door of the Form-room.

Mr. Dalton stared after him.

"Lovell!" he thundered.

Lovell tore open the door.

"Lovell, what does this mean?" Mr. Dalton made a stride after him. "Lovell, go to your place! Lovell—"

Lovell was gone.

He fairly raced away from the Form-room, down the passage. The sunshine streamed in at the open door of the House. A taxi stood by the steps, and Jimmy Silver and Bulkeley of the Sixth were descending the steps to it. Lovell raced after them.

"Stop!" he yelled.

Bulkeley stared round.

"Go back to your Form-room, Lovell! Go—"

"Don't be a fathead, Bulkeley!" That was not the way to talk to the head of the Sixth; but Lovell was excited. "Jimmy, you fool—" He grabbed Jimmy Silver's shoulder. "Jimmy, you dummy—"

Jimmy looked at him. Perhaps he had wondered why Lovell had left him to his fate. But it was obvious now that Lovell was not going to leave him to it.

"You idiot—" gasped Lovell.

"Lovell—" roared Bulkeley.

"Oh, cheese it!" shouted Lovell. "You're not taking Jimmy to the station! Jimmy never did it! I did it, see?"

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Bulkeley.

"I'm going to the Head to tell him so."

"You-you young ass—you—" stuttered the Rookwood captain.

His words were addressed to Lovell's back. Lovell was speeding away to the Sixth Form room, where the Head was taking the Sixth.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bulkeley. He looked at Jimmy. "Silver, you young ass, was it Lovell?"

Jimmy nodded. The secret was out now. Bulkeley made the taximan a sign to wait, and led Jimmy back to the House. Obviously he had to wait for further instructions from the Head before taking the expelled junior to the station.

Meanwhile, Lovell was doing the passages as if he were on the cinder-path. He reached the Sixth Form room, and hurled the door open. Into that solemn and sacred apartment Lovell hurtled like a cannon-ball.

There was a gasp from the Sixth. Dr. Chisholm, in amazement and wrath, glared round at the crimson, excited junior. His wrath at this sudden irruption was Olympian.

"Lovell! You—you—what—what—" Dr. Chisholm gurgled. "How dare you! How—"

"I did it, sir!" panted Lovell.

"What? You did what? Are you insane?"

"I—I did it! I mopped that stuff over your napper in the quad, sir! It wasn't Jimmy! It was me!"

"What?"

"I—I never knew Jimmy would be bunked!" panted Lovell. "I'd have owned up before! The silly owl ought to have told you! I never knew! I did it, sir! It was a mistake—an awful mistake! I meant it for another beast, sir! I mean, I meant it for a Modern beast! I mean, I did it! Jimmy never did it! I own up, sir! You—you can bunk me instead, sir!"

Dr. Chisholm stood rooted to the floor of the Sixth Form room, staring at Lovell. The Sixth stared at him. The Head and the Sixth had been deep in Sophocles. That ancient Greek gentleman was quite forgotten now. There was an awful silence after Lovell had panted out his breathless words.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head at last.

"I'm awfully sorry, sir!" gasped Lovell. "I never meant it for you! I—I'd have swallowed it rather than let you have it, sir, if I'd known. But Jimmy never had anything to do with it. He ought to have told you—"

"Follow me to my study, Lovell!"

The Sixth were left in a buzz. They had an unexpected rest from Sophocles. They felt quite grateful to Lovell.

Arthur Edward Lovell had recovered by tea-time. A tea, in the end study, Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome looked merry and bright; but there was a thoughtful cast on Lovell's countenance. He uttered his great thoughts at last.

"That's over!" he remarked.

"And thank goodness it's turned out so well!" said Jimmy.

(Continued on page 28.)

STRANGE HAPPENINGS ON A DESERT ISLAND.

THE ISLAND CASTAWAYS!

(Opening Chapters
re-told on page 26.)



The Man From the Air!

WE were all of us in the shelter of the fort. Dad, who had been sweeping the sea with binoculars from the moment of our departure for the walk along the sands, had spotted the canoes a long way out. That had forced his hand, and he had had to tell mother, who had apparently taken the news of the danger jolly well. Whilst dad was carrying in ammunition, she had been preparing emergency rations, which Sunday had carried into the fort, together with a paraffin stove and some bedding.

On getting back, Jill and I had got in a supply of water, and my sister was not worrying a bit. She said that all we should have to do was to fire over the heads of the savages and they would promptly make for home, but she admitted that if they had poisoned arrows the fort was quite a bright idea.

"If they're all as windy as the specimen we've got," she said, as she stood with me, gazing at the canoes from a loophole in the wall facing the sea, "I should say a couple of barrels of dad's gun would be enough to send them to the other side of the Pacific."

Sunday certainly did not shine. He crouched on the sand, trembling in every limb, and looking a picture of misery.

"Twenty in each canoe," said Dad, looking at the long canoes through binoculars. "They evidently intend landing on this stretch where, according to our heroic friend in the corner, they've landed for donkeys' years. There's an ugly-looking old sportsman with feathers in his hair jabbering away to the bit of bad work in mahogany in command of the other boat."

"I expect our camp puzzles them," said dad.

"Perhaps they'll turn back," said mother hopefully, but after resting on their paddles for a few minutes whilst the two chiefs conversed, the paddles glinted in the deep blue

of the water again, and the two canoes were making for the white swirling, swishing surf which broke upon the firm yellow sand.

"I'll give them a hint," said dad. "I'll fire both barrels into the air. That ought to scare them!"

He elevated his gun and pulled both triggers together. Bang!

The explosion sounded terrific in our small wooden shelter. Poor old Nigger howled miserably and crouched in the opposite corner to that occupied by the equally terrified Sunday.

But the boats kept on into the surf, and then from one of them came a sharp explosion, a puff of smoke, then a ping, and a bullet embedded itself in a baulk of timber unpleasantly close to the loophole from which Jill and I were watching the proceedings.

I don't think I ever saw a man look so staggered as dad did at that moment. He'd wasted a couple of cartridges with the idea of putting the

breeze up a lot of ignorant savages, and some wretched, ignorant savage had replied with a quite modern sports rifle, and a distressingly good aim.

"They must have pinched it from their neighbours who do some trading with a tramp steamer. The thing is, how many have they pinched?" said Dad; and his mouth was thin and tight, and his eyes were narrowed. "It's the bad bit of work in the stern who fired that shot, and I'm going to try to put him out of action. Get out of it, Jill!"

Jill was a little pale, and there was a snap in Dad's voice which brooked no argument. She went meekly and sat on the sand beside mother, who had put her hands to her ears.

I heard the sharp crack of the rifle, and the next instant I saw the man in the stern of the canoe sway, and his rifle drop into the swirling surf.

"Good shooting!" I said mechanically. But I was thinking

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**AIRMAN ARRIVES IN TIME FOR TEA
and saves the Island Castaways from
becoming the cannibals' dinner!**

of what would happen if those brown men, leaping on to the sand, made a determined rush upon our fort. No shooting would stop them!

And then I saw the whole crowd staring upwards, heard wild shouts, the paddlers in the second canoe were rowing out of the surf back to the sea, and the men who had landed were screaming and tumbling into the canoe which others, up to their waists in the surf, were pushing off.

And there was a whirling in the dazzling blue sky above, an excited shout came from Jill, and down from the blue came an aeroplane, its engine silent, planing down for the stretch of sand between our fort and the brown men!

The engine of the plane swooping down from the sky suddenly broke into life with a terrific roar. The man called Sunday was face downwards on the sand inside our rough-and-ready fort, his brown body quivering, and Nigger was barking wildly.

I could only stare fascinated at the plane. At home one had scarcely troubled to glance upwards unless it was a machine travelling exceptionally low. But an aeroplane swooping down over this tiny, lonely island in the Pacific, appearing suddenly, unannounced by any drone from the gleaming blue sky above us, was startling.

"Look!" cried Jill.

The two canoes were rowing away from the island at an almost incredible speed, and I could understand the fear and horror of the brown men. Through some racially trader, who must have bled the more civilised of the inhabitants of their island in bartering, they knew about firearms—had even become more or less expert in their use.

But it was pretty safe to say that they had never seen an aeroplane, and to their ignorant, superstitious minds, the thing must have seemed some horror from another world, and their one idea was to put as big a distance between themselves and our island as they possibly could.

I know that, apart from my curiosity about the machine landing perfectly on the hot yellow sand, I felt a great relief. I didn't want to kill savages, still less did I want savages to kill me. From the moment that bullet had plunged into the woodwork of our fort, and I had realised that the brown men in the canoes would not be scared by our fire, I had known it would be all up with us if they had made a determined mass rush.

Dud put down the sporting tifle.

"We'd better go and do the honours, Barry," he said. "We don't get many visitors calling on us, but they all seem to have dropped in at once."

Jill followed us out, and we hurried towards the plane, from which a man in leather coat and helmet was climbing, and then he came towards us, bringing a gauntleted hand up to his helmet at the sight of Jill. I was surprised to see that he looked little more than a boy, and there was quite a boyish grin on his face when he spoke.

"Good-afternoon," he said in a quiet, drawing voice. "I guess you haven't got a petrol dump here?"

"No," said Dud, "only little more than a gallon, but we could fill your tanks with paraffin if that would be any good."

"It wouldn't, but thanks for the offer. I suppose you were shipwrecked here, and I guess I'm mighty glad not to find myself on a deserted island. My name is Matt Kay Lee, junior, though I don't suppose that conveys anything to you. I'm on the last hop of a flight round the world."

"Oh, how fine!" cried Jill enthusiastically, and then Dud more or less formally introduced us, and I turned eagerly to the young American.

"How far will your wireless carry?"

"I couldn't carry the wireless?" he replied, with a somewhat wry smile. "I left it behind on the Fiji Isles to take on extra petrol for a big hop. You see, it wouldn't have been much use to me on this stretch, but every gallon of petrol counted. As it happens, I backed the wrong horse. I've about thirty gallons of petrol in the main tank, which are of no use to me now, as they wouldn't get me anywhere, and no wireless, which would be worth a fortune here."

"Barry's fixed up the ship's wireless here," said Jill.

"I guess that's real bright of Barry!" said Matt Kay Lee, junior, and he gave Jill that boyish sort of grin, but his face looked older and shrewder as he turned to me. "How far can you carry?" he demanded, and there was a sharp, almost authoritative note in his voice.

I told him that I could only guess, but it was probably somewhere about fifty miles at the most, dependent upon the conditions prevailing at the time.

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the time, and the strength of the set on a passing ship, plus the alertness of the operator.

The young American nodded.

"We're all right, then. In a few hours I shall be expected over the American coast, and when I fail to turn up they'll send out destroyers to search the Pacific like a small tooth comb. I guess the old dad was sore at me setting out, but he'll sure be sorer at me not turning up. If Matt Kay Lee gets stirring up the Navy Department of the U.S.A., well, they have my sympathy; but it's a safe bet that a destroyer will be picking up your signals, so perhaps I'll be a bit of use to you."

"You have already," said Dud, and explained about the savages. Then Nigger came dashing up, followed by dad.

Dad had changed into a clean suit of white drill and wore a sun helmet. He walked in quite a stately way towards the young airman, and really looked quite dignified.

"His Excellency the Guv'nor!" said Dud, with a grin. "Dad, this is Mr. Matt Kay Lee, junior, who is flying round the world, but has taken the wrong turning!"

"We have had a volcanic eruption here, and I dare say that caused bad weather in adjacent zones, Mr. Lee," said dad, shaking hands with our visitor from the sky.

"I could put it stronger than that, Mr. Mayne. I guess I struck a bit of the world's worst weather this morning! I used gallons of petrol trying to fight against it, but was blown right out of my course, so I decided to go before the wind, conserve petrol, and hope for the best. An hour ago I was completely lost over the Pacific, with petrol almost gone, and expecting a nasty wet, messy end, when I spotted your island, and was planing down for it when the shooting started. I was beginning to think I'd chosen a most unhealthy spot, and was just going to get out my own gun, when the firing ceased, and your brown visitors put to sea."

"The sight of your plane thoroughly scared them," said dad. "I am delighted to welcome you to Necessity Island. And now you must come along and have some tea. My wife is waiting for us."

Young Lee had unbuttoned his leather coat and pushed his helmet and goggles well back on his fair head. He was rather good-looking, I thought—clean-cut features, shrewd grey eyes, and a strong jaw. He was clearly a little dazed after his fight with the gale and this strange meeting on the little island in the Pacific.

He walked with Jill and me, and spotted our tame native standing at the entrance to the fort, regarding him with curiosity and awe.

"I see you're complete with Man Friday and all," he said to Jill.

"Man Sunday!" she corrected; and told him of what had happened.

I saw Lee look at her admiringly, and say something about her pluck, and for the first time it really dawned upon me how plucky Jill had been, and how wonderfully she had stood up to things which would have had many men down and out.

Mother was waiting for us in the big tent we called our dining-room. Like dad, she had changed, and it was rather a scream really to see her dressed in a frock which would have been quite all right at a swell garden party.

I could see that she had the young American airman gasping, and I've never seen a man look more staggered than he did as he drank tea from a delicate china cup, and munched quite tempting sandwiches.

He seemed to think that we had dug ourselves in jolly well, and he listened with interest to our story of what had happened on the Maglo.

"I don't remember reading anything about it," he said. "But I was busy preparing for my world flight at that time, and wasn't taking much interest in the news. You can bet she was put down as being lost with all hands, and as she didn't carry passengers in the ordinary way I don't suppose there was much in the papers about it. But the papers will soon be full of us, and your yarn will be so interesting that my flight will be shoved into the background."

Mother beamed upon him.

"Do you mean you think we shall soon be taken off, Mr. Lee?" she asked eagerly.

"Sure thing," replied the young American. "I guess I don't want to hand you hot air about myself, but I'm much in the news just now. Your little old country made quite a fuss of me when I flew from New York to

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Young BARRY MAYNE, in company with his mother and father, his elder brother, DUDLEY, and his sister, JILL, are wrecked on a Pacific island, which they christen Necessity Island. Salvaging a car, together with some provisions, Barry and Dud tour the island and discover a skeleton buried in the sand. After many unsuccessful attempts, Barry succeeds in getting a transmitting wireless set working. Later, during the eruption of a volcano on the island, the Castaways come across a native who informs them that a cannibal tribe may arrive at any moment. Sure enough, soon after the warning, two canoes of savages come paddling into the bay.

(Now continue the story as told by Barry himself.)

Croydon as the first hop. Crossing the Pacific was the big stunt with the greatest risk, and when I don't turn up the wireless will get busy, the old dad will get a jerk into the U.S.A. Government, and I should say that in three or four days, or possibly less, there'll be a moving job!"

He spoke with such confidence that we were all bucked, except perhaps dad, who looked round a little regretfully. After all, it hadn't been half bad on the island, and there was a reasonable probability of freedom from eruption for some time.

And in a way I knew I should be sorry to leave. I wouldn't have minded another few months on the island; but, all the same, there was that big longing to get back to civilisation, to do something in the world, and not merely vegetate on a desert island.

After tea we showed Matt—it was at his suggestion we called him that—round our camp, and he was frightfully interested in the Moonbeam.

"We'll take you for a run in the morning," said Dad; and then we got busy fixing him up comfortably in a tent of his own, and we wheeled the plane into a sheltered spot. The man called Sunday had moved into the fort. He seemed to regard himself as safer there, and he managed to convey to dad that he was going to watch through the night in case his fellow-countrymen should attempt a night surprise. Though we did not regard that as the least likely, it was rather comforting to know that we had a sentry on duty whose fear for his own skin would keep him wakeful and alert.

Matt went off with Jill to fetch the water that evening, and they were a precious long time about it. I was just going off to find them when they rolled up, and Matt said he'd been admiring the wonderful flowers in the jungle. Jill looked very pretty, and she'd got a bit of a flush. Dad grinned at me.

That night when we turned in Dad sat on the edge of his bunk, smoking.

"Look here, old lad, if we're to be taken off in two or three days, or something of that sort, it's time we got busy hunting round that spot where we found the shoe and the cutlass. If there is any treasure buried on this island we've got to look shippy in finding it. Dad won't want to plough and sow and all that sort of thing now. Matt is a hefty sort of chap, and will put his back into it, so to-morrow morning I vote we set off in the Moonbeam for that spot near Crocodile Creek, and get busy."

"Right!" I said with a yawn. "But you must remember Matt is a bit of an optimist, Dad. Only a giddy optimist would set out to fly solo round the world, and though there may be a bit of a shindy over his disappearance it doesn't follow that a U.S. destroyer, or any other vessel, is going to locate us."

Dad puffed hard at his cigarette, and then a serious expression came to his lean, tanned face.

"I don't know whether it has struck you, Barry, that if we're not found now, with the Press of the world screaming about the missing young airman, lost in the Pacific, it's heavy odds on us remaining here for the remainder of our lives."

And with that grim and highly disturbing remark my brother rolled over on his bunk and presumably went to sleep.

It was a long time before I did.

Two Discoveries!

THE next morning I disconnected the accumulator from the wireless set and fixed it in its old position on the running-board of the Moonbeam to get it charged up ready for the heavy work it would have, once there had been time for the hunt for Matt to get somewhere near us.

Matt knew a good deal about cars, and was interested in the adjustments Dad had made to get the engine to run on paraffin; but he knew that no similar adjustment could be made on his own engine.

"And even if I could persuade my bus to run on paraffin you wouldn't have enough on the island to fill my tanks, and when you're doing ocean flying you're not a bit keen on running short," he said as we set off in the car for Crocodile Creek.

Jill came with us, and we had spades and picks, and also our revolvers in case any inquiring crocodile should appear upon the scene.

We left dad, with Sunday to help him, getting together things which it would be essential we should take off the island—the ship's papers and log book, certain personal property of the skipper and crew, as well as our own property. I thought he was looking a bit gloomy about the job, but I thought it was a lot more sensible than old Dad's wild idea of treasure hunting. Matt was no more

enthusiastic about it than I was, and I think it was only Jill's keenness on the quest that made him join us.

The ground in the neighbourhood of where we had found the old shoe and cutlass had certainly been badly tumbled about in Sunday's earthquake. What had last time been sand was now hills and chasms, and the hole we had dug, and which in the ordinary way would have marked the spot, had been filled in. We dug away all that morning, and returned as soon as the worst of the afternoon heat was over, and had another go, and the next day we repeated the performance, but found nothing.

"I'll have one more go to-morrow, and if nothing happens then you can wash me out as a treasure hunter," Matt said in his lazy drawl as we drove back in the comparative cool of the evening of the second day. "You see, things should be getting busy pretty soon now, and Barry and I will have to take turns of duty as wireless operators."

I felt that I should certainly prefer sitting at the transmitter to digging away in the glare of the sun, but Dad's confidence in there being treasure on the island was unabated. I could see that he intended scratching round in search of it even if he became a working party of one.

As Matt Kay Lee's clothing was quite unsuited to life on Necessity Island we'd lent him some white ducks and a sun helmet. Although he was an open air man, and his face was tanned and weather-beaten, he looked almost pale when compared with the deep brown we'd all acquired in our stay on the island.

On the third morning we left the Moonbeam running as usual, with the double purpose of keeping the engine hot enough to start on paraffin after a short rest, and of charging up the accumulator. Jill, whom we noticed had been taking more thought about her appearance since Matt had landed, went off to prospect in a shallow chasm. Dad resumed work where he had left off the previous evening, and I scratched around with a shovel, with little or no hope of finding anything, and precious little interest in the job. My eyes were constantly straying seawards now, and I was looking forward to the thrill of getting into wireless communication with some ship at sea.

Mother carried on cheerfully, but dad seemed at a loose end. He did not feel like settling down to planting more wheat and potatoes, nor of carrying out his plans for improving our home, so with Sunday in attendance and Nigger at his heels he took his gun into the jungle and the result was that we were enjoying a more varied menu.

"Oh!"

The sharp exclamation came from Jill, and I looked up from my leisurely digging.

"Say, Dad—Barry! Come here quickly!"

Matt was calling, and his voice was sharp and strained.

We both ran towards them down in the chasm. Jill had removed little more than six inches of sand in a hole such as a kid might dig at the seaside, and she was looking rather sick. Down in the hole were some curved bones, and one didn't have to think twice before realising that Jill had started to dig up a skeleton.

"I told you there was treasure buried here!" cried Dad excitedly.

He seemed to care nothing about those gruesome bones, but began digging quickly round them. But Jill moved hastily away, and Matt would have followed her but she waved him back.

Matt and I dug without enthusiasm.

"I don't see how you can be so certain about treasure," said Matt. "I guess I'm ready to admit that this skeleton, taken with that shoe and the cutlass, goes to suggest that a pirate was buried on the island. But men might bury a body without burying treasure."

"Not pirates on an island in the Pacific, old lad," said Dad, digging, round a horrible skull in which was an ominous crack, as though, perhaps hundreds of years ago, a sword had gone clean through it. "Would men not fond of work dig hard to bury a body in a climate like this, when vultures would have carefully cleaned up after them?" If they didn't want to leave the body about

(Continued on the next page.)



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they would have taken it out to sea and dropped it overboard. But suppose a hole was already dug for the treasure, and then two or three started a row, and one was done in? It would be easy enough to push the body into the hole so that it left no trace of the "secret hiding-place."

Matt was not impressed. He said he should think the row was much more likely to arise after the treasure had been dug up, and the body left in the hole where the treasure had been—and that seemed sense to me. But Dud said he had read of cases where the discovery of a skeleton had led to the discovery of treasure.

And then the horrible thing we had intended lifting reverently out of its grave fell to pieces at our touch, and I think even old Dud felt a bit qualmy. But we'd gone so far that we had to go on, and presently Matt's spade struck something with a resounding clang.

"What's that?"

Jill had come back, and I was glad I'd covered the skull and bones with sand before we resumed our digging.

It took us precious little time to find out, for, scraping away the sand, we saw the end of a large, iron-bound chest, and with flushed faces and sparkling eyes we dug furiously, forgetting the glare of the sun and aching muscles. In half an hour we had the chest clear of sand. It must have been four or five hundred years old, but it was in wonderful preservation, with two great hasps fastened by heavy padlocks.

It was as much as the four of us could do to lift it out of the chasm, and we were so excited that if a crocodile had strayed away from the swamp and came upon us I'm sure he would have bagged at least one of us before we were aware of the danger!

(The Island Castaways have certainly found treasure—but what good will it do them if they're not rescued? Will help come their way? Don't miss next week's instalment, it's full of thrills!)

THE ROOKWOOD "SCREEN" STAR!

(Continued from page 24.)

"Yes; but we haven't made Manders sit up, after all! The Head got it, not Manders! I'll take jolly good care next time—"

"Next time?" gasped Jimmy.

Lovell nodded cheerfully.

"Yes. We're going to make Manders sit up, of course! But don't you fellows bother about it. Leave it to me!"

"Leave it to you?" said Raby, like a fellow in a dream.

"Yes. Leave it to me, and—"

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome rose from the tea table. They did not need to consult about what was necessary. It was a case of three souls with but a single thought, three hearts that beat as one. They seized Arthur Edward Lovell. They slammed him down on the floor of the study. They bumped him there; they poured the milk over him; they mixed the marmalade in his hair, and pushed the jam down his neck.

"You'll make Manders sit up, will you?" gasped Jimmy. "We're to leave it to you, are we? You've nearly got me sacked, and nearly got yourself sacked, and you want to begin again, do you? Put his head in the coal-box!"

"Grooooooh!" came from the coal-box, in muffled accents. "Ooooooh!"

After which, Arthur Edward Lovell said no more about making Manders sit up. For some reason—inexplicable to Arthur Edward—his comrades seemed tired of leaving it to Lovell.

THE END.

(Lovell's certainly got out of his scrape, but he's not finished with Manders yet! Don't miss next week's exciting developments at Rookwood, whatever you do, chums.)

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