

The GEM

2^d

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"TRIMBLE TRIES IT ON!"

Telling how the fat junior of St. Jim's tries to make himself a small fortune.

"THE GREAT FIRE AT GREYFRIARS!"

In which the Remove Form is burnt out on the first day of the new term.

In addition, YOUR FORTUNE FROM THE STARS, STAMP ARTICLE, FUN COLUMN, PEN PALS, POEM, and ILLUSTRATED JOKES.



The BOOT for BAGGY!



HOW'S YOUR LUCK THIS WEEK?

Read what the stars foretell,
by PROFESSOR ZARRO.

HERE are this week's horoscopes for all readers. Look at the section in which your birthday falls, and you will read what luck the stars forecast for you during the next seven days.

January 21st to February 19th.—An excellent week for all outdoor sports. A setback to one of your most important plans, probably through interference from someone else. Those born in this period always have the best of intentions, but must make sure they carry those good intentions out.

February 20th to March 21st.—You are born under the sign of Pisces, which means that you always "land on your feet," so don't worry too much about exams and other tests—you will always get through. Someone will ask a big favour of you during the next week—grant it; you will never regret it. An unexpected prize or reward for those born between March 1st and March 7th. It might be anything, from a copy of "Eric, or Little by Little," to oodles of hoodle!

March 22nd to April 20th.—The "Tom Merrys" and "Harry Whartons" of this world. Born leaders, impulsive, and independent. A tendency to become a rebel, however, is especially dangerous this coming week, probably through a false sense of injustice. A new venture, such as changing school, moving your home, going out to work, will be discussed.

April 21st to May 21st.—A very eventful week lies ahead, except for a quiet period between Saturday and Monday. You have artistic talent; develop it. You will probably find your firmest friends among those born under the sign of Capricorn. December 23rd to January 20th. Are you jealous of someone? Forget it—you will prove yourself much the better man in a day or two.

May 22nd to June 21st.—Happy-go-lucky people, these! You shine best when doing steady, useful work, rather than brilliant solo performances. For this reason, you will probably be a better half-back than forward at football, for instance. At school, you are likely to be always near the middle of the class. You will be luckiest on Wednesday. Avoid making fun at the expense of others, as you are sometimes inclined to do; you hurt them more than you realise.

June 22nd to July 23rd.—You who are born in this period, under the sign of the Crab, do everything outdoors best. For this reason, you will shine at sports

this week. People may misunderstand you because you do not show your true feelings freely.

July 24th to August 23rd.—You will make a new friend during the coming week. Chief drawback to your success is that you try to have "too many irons in the fire." Your luckiest time will be at the week-end. Over-enthusiasm may lead you into overlooking an important detail—as the ref told the footballer who scored into his own goal!

August 24th to September 23rd.—Hard-working, clever, fond of animals, inclined to be fussy—these are the chief characteristics in your make-up, and all will be well in evidence. You will have to make an important decision this week. Don't spend too much time weighing up the pros and cons or you will miss a big chance. Your friends will rely on you, because they know you will never let them down.

September 24th to October 23rd.—You enjoy life to the full, because you are easy-going and do not worry over trifles. You are clever, too, but this week may be a troubled one, because you feel disinclined to use your brains over a problem that will arise. Save some of your pocket-money for the middle of the week; you will get a chance of spending it on something really worth-while, which you will miss if you don't curb your natural extravagance.

October 24th to November 22nd.—There is no "happy medium" for you; you believe in all-or-nothing! It's a good fault, however, because you only go after the worth-while things. This determination of yours may lead you into a quarrel during the next seven days. Expect a letter or message with good news.

November 23rd to December 22nd.—A quiet week for you Sagittarians, as astrologers call you, and signs of luck indicate girls rather than boys as the fortunate ones. Good fortune is most likely to come on Thursday. A lucky week for collectors and others with "quiet" hobbies. Because you like always being "on the go," you will imagine you are being bored this week, but it is really only a rest before exciting times.

December 23rd to January 20th.—You have a terrific but controlled temper. You will have to fight yourself to keep that temper on at least one occasion this week. You are going to be taken to a place of amusement, such as the theatre, by a friend. You will be asked an important question this week, and on your answer may depend a great deal of your future life.

BIRTHDAY INDICATIONS.

WEDNESDAY, December 29th.—Concentrate on the things that you know will matter in the long run. There are several disappointments ahead for you in the coming year, but much happiness, too. Money luck is good.

THURSDAY, December 30th.—You will find your influence over your friends increasing. Try to overlook setbacks that will come in the early part of the year; everything will turn out all right if you don't let your troubles worry you.

FRIDAY, December 31st.—The best birthday of the week. A year of great promise lies ahead. Success in work, and plenty of fun in your spare time. If you are at work, expect a rise early in the year.

SATURDAY, January 1st.—Tackle new ventures with confidence. A good year for taking up a fresh sport or pastime. Reading will give you useful new ideas. In the past, you have unknowingly been providing for the future; this year, you start to reap the harvest.

SUNDAY, January 2nd.—Favourable to sportsmen and anything connected with machinery. Those whose health has not been too good will find their condition improving. Five will be a lucky number throughout the year—the fifth day, the fifth month, five o'clock, and so on.

MONDAY, January 3rd.—Rather a topsy-turvy year, with the unexpected happening all the time. Probably a certain amount of travel. There may even be a journey abroad for some of you. Luck will come in the things you have been used to rather than in ventures which you start during the next twelve months.

TUESDAY, January 4th.—All round, you will be better off in a year's time than now. An old quarrel patched up. A happening in the spring which will affect your whole mode of life. Make use of the new ideas which will come thick and fast to your mind.

PROFESSOR ZARRO.

**BAGGY TRIMBLE HAS NO SCRUPLES ABOUT FLEEING HIS FORM-
FELLOWS WHEN HE SETS OUT TO MAKE MONEY IN A HURRY!**



Many hands grasped the bogus wig-sellers as they attempted to run. Three wigs came off in a twinkling, revealing three heads of short dark hair. Trimble, Levison, and Mellish were recognised in a moment. "The swindlers!" exclaimed the juniors. "Rag them! Bump them!"

TRIMBLE TRIES IT ON!

**CHAPTER 1.
Not Wanted!**

"MY only aunt!"
"What the merry dickens—"
"Wherefore this thustiness?"

The Terrible Three made those surprised inquiries all at once, in a sort of chorus. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther were looking into Study No. 6.

The three had intended to ask Blake & Co. to tea in their study. But they forgot all about tea as they looked into the celebrated apartment which was numbered "6" in the Fourth Form passage in the School House.

Blake & Co. were all at home. There was nothing extraordinary in that, as it was nearly tea-time. It was the aspect of Blake & Co. that was extraordinary.

Jack Blake was sitting on the corner of the table, with a cricket stump in his hand. Digby was in the armchair, with a cricket bat resting across his knees. Herries had a dogwhip in his hand. Herries never used that dogwhip upon Towser, his bulldog; but his expression showed that he was quite

prepared now to use it on somebody. D'Arcy had a malacca cane in his hand, and he was making wild swishes with it in the air.

Study No. 6, evidently, were prepared for war. Their eyes were fixed upon the doorway, and as the Terrible Three appeared, the stump, the bat, the dogwhip, and the malacca cane were all gripped and lifted—only to be lowered again as the visitors were recognised.

Evidently the Terrible Three were not the enemy.

"Oh, it's you!" said Blake.

"Little us!" agreed Tom Merry. "I hope those deadly weapons are not for our benefit. If they are, we'll get our cricket bats and start fair."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, you are vewy welcome," said D'Arcy. "Pway do not misunderstand. Twot in, deah boys."

"You're as welcome as the flowers in May!" assured Digby. "You may find it amusing, too; only keep out of the way."

"Yaas, wathah!"
"But what's the little game?" asked Tom Merry, mystified. "Who the merry dickens is it you're waiting to slaughter?"

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By
**MARTIN
CLIFFORD.**

*Visions of a small fortune
lure Baggy Trimble into
trying out a shady scheme
on St. Jim's. But the net
result of his efforts is—
misfortune!*

"Trimble!" said Blake.

"Twimble, the wottah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Trimble, the cad!" said Digby.

"Trimble, the boulder!" said Herries.

The chums of the Shell chuckled. Trimble, the rotter, cad, and boulder, seemed to be booked for a lively time when he came into Study No. 6. All four of the Fourth Formers looked as if they meant business.

"What's he done?" asked Tom Merry.

"Done!" hooted Blake. "What hasn't he done, you mean? He's got himself planted in this study, and turned out such a rank outsider that we had to turn him out. This study has a reputation to keep up, and we can't have it disgraced by a rotter like Trimble. So we kicked him out and told him never to put his fat chivvy into this study again!"

"I told him quite plainly that he was nevah to darken our door again, the feahful wottah!" said D'Arcy.

"Yes, Gussy put it in high-falutin language, and I put it in plain English," said Blake. "Gussy told him never to darken our door again, and I told him I'd wring his neck if he ever crawled in here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Any fellow with a rag of decency in him would have changed into another study after that," said Blake indignantly. "But not Trimble. Of course, nobody wants him in his study. It's not to be expected. But we won't have him here—that's flat! He's a liar and a spoofer, and a cad and an outsider, and a lot of other things, too numerous to mention. But he says he's coming back. He's coming to tea in this study. Well, it's tea-time, and we're waiting for him. I'm going to break this cricket stump on him!"

"I'm goin' to thwack him with this cane!"

"I'm going to make him hop with this dog-whip!"

"I'm going to brain him with this bat!"

"Then we'll come in," said Monty Lowther.

"You'll want somebody to collect the pieces when you've finished."

The Terrible Three, grinning, entered the study. They took up a strategic position by the window, in order to be out of reach of the stump, the bat, the dogwhip, and the malacca cane, when the warlike operations began.

"Coming here, you know!" said Blake, with growing indignation. "After we've kicked him out—as hard as we could, too. He's actually told Levison he's coming back, that he's not going to be turned out of his own study. His study, you know—a blessed new kid, who's not been here a week! We'll show him whether it's his study!"

"Yes, wathah!"

"Look out—he's coming!" said Herries.

"Ready!" commanded Blake.

"We're weady, deah boy!"

There were footsteps in the passage; the heavy tread of Baggy Trimble, the fat and flabby new boy in the Fourth. A fat and flabby face looked in at the open doorway.

Trimble paused on the threshold.

The sight of the bat, the stump, the whip, and the cane seemed to discourage him.

He blinked at Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy in turn, and received only stony stares in return.

"I—I say, is tea ready?" he remarked.

No answer.

"I—I say, I'm coming in, you know."

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"You can come in," said Jack Blake. "What's stopping you?"

"I—I say, what are you going to do with that stump?"

"Brain you!"

Trimble grinned feebly.

"I—I say, this is my study, you know. You can't turn a chap out of his own study. Mr. Raiton put me in this study."

"And we put you out," said Blake. "And you'll stay out!"

"I won't stay out!" hooted Trimble.

"Well, come in, and see what you'll get."

"Yaas, wathah! Twet in, you wottah!"

"I know you're only joking, of course," said Trimble, edging a few inches into the study. "I wouldn't think of deserting old chums like you, Gussy especially—"

"If you allude to me as Gussy, Twimble, I will thwack you like anythin'!"

"The fact is," said Trimble, "I'm willing to let bygones be bygones. I don't bear any malice. I can take a joke, too. Now, is tea ready?"

"Tea's ready," said Blake cheerily.

"Then I'm coming in."

"Do!"

Trimble hesitated a few moments, apparently unable to make up his mind whether Study No. 6 was in earnest or not. His eyes fell upon a cake and a jar of jam on the table, and apparently that decided him. He came in, keeping wary eyes upon the four juniors.

"Now the band begins to play!" murmured Monty Lowther.

The four Fourth Formers made a rush at Trimble. The dogwhip curled round his legs, and the cane caught him across the shoulders, what time the cricket bat bumped on his plump chest. Blake, unfortunately, had no time to get to work with the stump, for Trimble, with a yell, made one wild bound into the passage and vanished.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"Bai Jove! He's gone!"

"And I didn't even get a lick at him!" exclaimed Blake wrathfully. And Jack Blake rushed out into the passage, flourishing the stump, in the hope of yet getting the missing "lick."

But Trimble had gone.

His footsteps died away down the big staircase, and Blake returned disappointed to Study No. 6.

"Well, he's gone," grinned Tom Merry. "If you always receive him like that, he will get fed-up with this study in time."

"Yaas, I wathah think that lesson will settle the mattah, deah boys."

"Yes; I think we've done with him," said Blake, pitching the stump into the corner. "There won't be much left of him soon, if he doesn't keep out of this study. Now we'll have tea. Cousin Ethel has sent Gussy this cake, and you Shell boulders had better stay to tea."

"Well, we came to ask you, but the cake settles it," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Done!"

And Study No. 6 sat down to tea, satisfied that they were rid at last of the obnoxious Trimble.

CHAPTER 2.

Trimble's Great Wheeze!

"HALLO!"

"Trimble, by gum!"

It was an hour after the stirring scene in Study No. 6.



ST. JIM'S JINGLES

No. 12.

TOM
MERRY.

SING hey, the Skipper of the Shell !
A great and gallant leader,
Whose winning ways are known full well
To each devoted reader.
His smile is sunny and serene,
And thus it is not curious
That when Tom comes upon the scene
The fun rules fast and furious.

In every branch of sport he ranks
Among the first and foremost ;
And when on foes he plays his pranks,
He always seems to score most.
A couple of courageous chums
With Tom became united,
And now when storm or sunshine comes,
They stand in honour plighted.

From time to time the rival Co.'s
Unfurl their mighty banners,
And fall before the furious blows
Of Monty, Tom, and Manners.
A reputation of renown
Surrounds the three so famous ;
And he who thinks to put them down
Is quite an ignoramus !

*In one respect our hero can't
Be termed exactly lucky ;
For, lo ! he has a maiden aunt
Who calls him " darling ducky."
Pronounced in private, such remark
No doubt is sweet and winning ;
But Merry's chums enjoy the lark,
And will persist in grinning.*

*A pile of boxes packed with pills
For persons weak and ailing,
Are sent to Tom to cure the chills
Supposed to be prevailing.
While yards and yards of flannelette
The doting dame despatches,
In case her charge, in getting wet,
Acute pneumonia catches !*

*When Tom is faithfully infused
With treatments sound and drastic,
His schoolmates seem to be amused,
And often wax sarcastic.
The incensed junior lashes out
With most amazing quickness,
And proves to them beyond a doubt
That he is free from sickness !*

*Brave sons of Briton, when forlorn,
With spirits sunk to zero,
Adopt the actions which adorn
This curly-headed hero !
Extend to each the sunny smile,
And all their burdens banish,
That, acting in this splendid style,
Your own regrets may vanish.*

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther had returned to their study in the Shell passage, after doing full justice to the feed in Study No. 6.

They were at work upon "copy" for "Tom Merry's Weekly" when the door opened, and a fat face and form were insinuated into the study.

The Terrible Three looked up from their work. They were surprised by Trimble's visit. They had supposed that it had been made clear to the new junior that his room was preferred to this company.

But Baggy Trimble was not easily repulsed. Probably no measures would be efficacious short of those adopted by Study No. 6.

Trimble nodded genially to the Shell fellows.

"Busy?" he asked, in the most amicable tone.

"Yes."

"Awfully!"

"Good-bye!"

Those three replies ought to have disposed of Trimble, but they didn't. He came farther into the study, smiling blandly.

"Sorry to interrupt!" he remarked.

"No need for sorrow," said Monty Lowther. "Leave off interrupting, that's all."

"If you're doing the 'Weekly,' I can help you," observed Trimble. "I've seen the last number, and I don't think much of it. I dare

say you'd like to get some really good stuff in that paper."

"My hat!"

"But I didn't come here to speak about that," added Trimble. "You see, I've been turned out of my study. You saw what those fellows did."

"Yes; we'd have lent them a hand if they'd needed it."

"Ahem! You see, I've got no study," explained Trimble. "I'm really awfully chummy with Gussy, but they've talked him round. They're up against me. The reason, really, is that they all owe me money."

"What!"

"I'm a generous chap, and, being wealthy, I've always been free-handed with cash," Trimble explained. "They've borrowed of me, right and left, and this is the result."

"You lying worm!" said Monty Lowther. "They haven't borrowed a cent of you."

"Ahem! You see, I'm always lending money to chaps," Trimble explained. "It leaves me rather short of cash sometimes, and at Trimble Hall I was accustomed to have all I wanted, and more. I'm short of money now."

"Nothing doing," said Tom Merry tersely.

"What I was going to suggest was that I should share this study," said Trimble. "If you

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fellows would like to have me here, it could be arranged with the Housemaster, though it's unusual for a Fourth Form chap to dig with the Shell. You could ask Mr. Railton as a special favour."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think it's a good idea," said Trimble fatuously. "I should be useful in a lot of ways. For instance, I could help with editing the 'Weekly.' I'm a humorous chap, and I could supply some good jokes, instead of the piffle you put in the comic column at present."

"What!" ejaculated Monty Lowther. Lowther was wholly responsible for the comic column. He looked at the new boy as if he would eat him.

"Then there's the leading article," said Trimble. "It's weak—very weak. I could take that on, too."

"Could you?" said the editor-in-chief grimly.

"Certainly. Then I should suggest a serial by me, in the place of those rotten photographic articles the fellows yawn over."

"You cheeky ass!" roared Manners.

"Look here, you know—"

"Get out!" shouted Manners.

"But I haven't finished yet," said Trimble. "I've got a ripping idea to carry out, and I don't get any support in my own study. I suppose you fellows have heard of the waifs and strays?"

Manners, who was picking up a ruler, put it down in surprise. The Terrible Three looked blankly at Trimble, who was rubbing his fat hands.

"The waifs and strays?" repeated Tom Merry.

"Yes."

"But what the merry dickens—"

"Wouldn't you like to help them?"

"Help them?" repeated Tom Merry.

"Yes; that's the idea."

"Are you potty?" demanded the captain of the Shell, in perplexity.

"N-no."

"Go on!"

"My idea is to help them with cash," explained Trimble. "They held a flag day in London some time back, raising tin to help them. I read about it in the papers. Well, my idea is to hold a flag day at St. Jim's."

"Great pip!"

"Sell flags, you know, at a bob each, and collections ad lib," said Trimble eagerly. "You see, a lot of money could be raised that way. The whole matter would be in my hands, from start to finish. With my organising ability—"

"Your whatter?"

"My organising ability, I should carry it through with tremendous success. We might raise five, ten, fifteen quids. Who knows? This money would be absolutely in my hands—"

"Would it?"

"Yes. And I should forward it to the proper quarter."

"Dame Taggles' tuckshop?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Yes—I mean no—certainly not! What do you fellows think of the idea?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"The idea isn't a bad one," he said. "But you're not the chap to carry it out. I don't think any chap in the School House would trust you farther than he can see you, Trimble."

"If you mean to insinuate—"

"I'm not insinuating—I'm talking plain English," said Tom Merry coolly. "You've been

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about a week at St. Jim's, Trimble. In that time you've borrowed right and left, and never repaid a single bob. You've told lies about fellows owing you money, and you've been ragged and kicked out of your study for it. I wouldn't trust you with a red cent."

"Look here, you know, I'm open to accept contributions now."

"Bow-wow!"

"And if you fellows don't give me something, I can only consider you slackers and shirkers—"

"You want us to give you something?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Certainly," said Trimble. "Anything you like, you know—the more the merrier—but all subscriptions thankfully received."

"Anything we like?" said Lowther thoughtfully. "But then you mightn't like it."

"Oh, yes, that's all right! Hand over anything you like, and I'll take it as a beginning."

"Well, it's up to us," said Lowther, looking at his chums.

"Why, you ass—" began Manners.

"It's up to us," repeated Lowther. "We ought to give Trimble something, and I'm going to. Mine's a thick ear!"

Biff!

"Yaroooh!" roared Trimble, staggering back towards the door. "Wharrer you at, you silly idiot?"

"Giving you something," grinned Lowther.

"Now, you fellows, play up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mine's a dot on the boko!" chuckled Manners, and he suited the action to the word, and Baggy Trimble roared again with a terrific roar.

"And mine's a goal-kick!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

Trimble was spun round in the strong grasp of the captain of the Shell, and Tom Merry's boot came into violent contact with his fat person.

The new junior shot out of the study like a stone from a catapult.

Bump!

"Oh crumbs! Yaroooh!"

"Come back when you want some more!" grinned Lowther. "We'll always have something for you, Trimble, when you come into this study. Don't forget to call on us when you want some more."

"Yow-ow!"

Trimble sat in the passage and roared.

Monty Lowther chuckled and closed the door.

The Terrible Three went on with their editorial work, uninterrupted.

Baggy Trimble did not come back for anything more.

CHAPTER 3.

Checkmate!

"Gussy, old man!"

Arthur Augustus did not turn his head.

Evening preparation was over, and most of the School House juniors were in the Common-room when Trimble came in.

Trimble, as a rule, wore a fat and self-satisfied expression. Contempt, which it is said will penetrate the shell of a tortoise, had no effect whatever upon Baggy Trimble. His complete armour of self-satisfaction made him proof against such

trifles. But at the present moment he had a somewhat forlorn look.

He had "planted" himself in Study No. 6 when he first came to St. Jim's, on the strength of a chance acquaintance with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Arthur Augustus, in his well-known chivalrous way, had stood by him at first. But Arthur Augustus, patient as he was, had become fed-up in the long run.

To do Trimble justice, he could not understand why Study No. 6 could not stand him. He was undoubtedly an unscrupulous young rascal, but he was as obtuse as unscrupulous, and all his enormities appeared to him trifles light as air.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face was frigid as Trimble addressed him. He seemed to be quite unaware of the existence of the unfortunate Baggy.

"Look here, you know, Gussy!"

Gussy gazed at him vacantly. Some of the juniors grinned.

"Gussy, old son!"

Arthur Augustus moved at last. He extracted his celebrated monocle from his waistcoat pocket, jammed it into his noble eye, and turned it upon Trimble with a withering stare.

"Are you addressin' me?" he asked icily.

"Yes, Gussy."

"I am Gussy to my friends," said the swell of St. Jim's. "I will thank you not to address me as Gussy, Twimble!"

"Look here, you know——"

"Pway do not address me at all, Twimble. I decline to know you!"

"Yes, but look here!"

Arthur Augustus rose, turned his back upon Trimble, and walked across the room.

Trimble blinked after him in surprise. Apparently he could not understand the Honourable Arthur Augustus' attitude at all.

"I say, Blake——"

"Don't talk to me, you worm!" said Jack Blake politely.

"Herries, old chap——"

"Do you want your silly head shoved into the coal-box?" asked Herries.

"N-no!"

"Then don't call me Herries, old chap!"

"Digby, dear boy——"

Digby picked up a cushion. Baggy Trimble beat a hurried retreat just in time. A chuckle followed him. The new junior halted at a table where the Terrible Three were playing chess. Tom Merry and Manners were playing, as a matter of fact, but Lowther was bestowing advice upon both sides, and seemed to be having most of the game.

Trimble paused to look on, with a beaming and ingratiating smile.

"Knight to king's fourth, Tommy," said Lowther.

"Bow-wow!" said Tom ungratefully.

"You'll bag a pawn that way."

"And what about leaving my bishop uncovered?"

"Hem! I forgot the bish."

"Better move the bishop," said Trimble. "I should recommend bishop to rook's square."

"What on earth for?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Ass!" said Manners.

"Well, then, rook to bishop's square," said Trimble cheerfully.

"You silly duffer!"

Tom Merry moved a pawn.

"That does it!" said Manners joyfully. "Mate in three."



"Yaroooooh!" roared Trimble, as Tom Merry smote him with the cushion. Crash! The fat junior staggered back, bumped into the chess-table, and pieces and pawns went to the floor in a shower.
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"Rats! I don't see it."

"You wouldn't," agreed Manners.

"Bosh! I've got you mate in four, I know that!" said Tom Merry warmly. "And you jolly well can't get out of it, either."

The two chess players wrinkled their brows over the game, and Monty Lowther mercifully forbore to give advice. But Baggy Trimble was not merciful.

"Bishop to king's fifth, Tommy," he said.

"Don't call me Tommy!"

"Fathead!" said Manners. "If Tommy puts his bishop on king's fifth, I nail him with my queen."

"Then I should suggest king to the rook's square."

"Shut up!"

"Look here, you know——"

"Will you dry up?" yelled the exasperated chess players. "You know as much about chess playing as about footer! Cheese it!"

"Try the rook on the queen's square," said Monty Lowther, as Trimble was silenced for a moment.

"I'll try my knuckles on your nose, if you give me any more advice!" said Tom Merry. "You're as bad as Trimble."

Monty Lowther chuckled and strolled away. Chess does not, as a rule, improve the temper, and both the juniors were getting a little excited

To "GEM" Readers All Over the World—

HAPPY and PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

—THE EDITOR.

over the game. Manners was certain that his opponent was mate in three, while Tom Merry was convinced that he had Manners mate in four, so the game evidently required care. Danger-point had been reached, and Monty Lowther gave up the role of adviser; but Trimble was not so judicious.

"My idea is that Merry has got the game if he moves his rook to the queen's knight's second," he said confidently.

Tom Merry glanced at the suggested move, and discovered that it would leave him mate in one.

"You open your blithering mouth again and I'll jam something into it," said Tom Merry.

He returned to his survey of the board.

Tom Merry was simply determined to discover a move which would knock his opponent's game sky high. To discover it, he needed all his concentration of mind. Chatter from Trimble was unendurable in the circumstances. But the cheerful Baggy never knew when to stop.

"Try the rook on the king's square!" he suggested.

Tom Merry jumped up. There was a cushion on a chair near by, and he seized it and smote Trimble with a mighty swipe.

"Yaroooh!" roared the surprised Trimble.

"What the thunder——"

Crash!

"Look out!" shrieked Manners.

But it was too late. Trimble crashed into the chess-table, and the table danced on its four legs. Pieces and pawns went in a shower to the

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floor. Trimble sat down on them, gasping. Then he yelled—pieces and pawns were not comfortable to sit on suddenly.

"Oh my hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Yaroooh!"

"Hallo, game over?" asked Monty Lowther, looking round. "Who's won?"

"It isn't finished," howled Tom Merry. "That silly ass has upset the table."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Practically finished," said Manners. "You were mate in three, you know."

"You duffer, you were mate in four."

"Of all the asses——"

"Of all the chumps——"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Tom Merry and Manners ceased their dispute and turned to Trimble. Who had won that game could never be settled now, but Trimble could be settled for "mucking" it up, and they proceeded to settle him.

Baggy Trimble jumped up as a boot and a cushion smote him simultaneously, and fled. He made a wild break for the door, roaring, followed by a howl of laughter from the juniors. He rushed fairly into Kildare of the Sixth, who was coming in to announce bed-time.

Crash!

"Yow-ow! Leggo!" shrieked Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare staggered, but he grasped Trimble by the collar and shook him ferociously.

"You young ass, what the dickens——"

"They're after me!" yelled Trimble.

"Eh? Who are after you?"

Kildare cast a puzzled glance round the Common-room. The Terrible Three were chatting together in a calm, unconcerned way. Tom Merry sitting on the cushion he had wielded with such effect. The captain of St. Jim's smiled a little.

"Cut off, you young ass! Bed-time, you youngsters!"

"Right-ho, Kildare!"

And the juniors marched off to bed.

CHAPTER 4.

Flag Day!

"WHAT'S the little game?"

Levison of the Fourth asked the question the next day, after morning lessons.

Levison was surprised.

Trimble of the Fourth was coming down the passage, presenting an extraordinary appearance. Before him a tray was slung. It was an old tea-tray, and had apparently been rescued from a dustbin. Several holes had been punched in it, and string tied to it, which held it in a horizontal position in front of Trimble's form. On the tray were arranged a number of tiny flags. In Trimble's hand was a money-box. He rattled it as he saw Levison. There was a loud clink as the box was rattled.

"Buying a flag?" he asked.

"Buying a which?" ejaculated Levison in astonishment.

"It's flag day!" explained Trimble. "I'm selling these flags for the benefit of the fund."

"My hat!"

"I've bought up these flags with my own money. I'm selling them at a bob each."

"And I suppose they cost you about a farthing each?" said Levison.

"Well, I got the lot rather cheap," confessed

Trimble. "But, of course, it isn't the value of the flag. The money goes to—the fund."

"What fund?"

"Oh, the fund, you know," said Trimble, somewhat vaguely, "the fund for the waifs and strays, you know. Don't you think it ought to be encouraged? Are you buying a flag, Levison?"

"Not this time," grinned Levison.

"Look here, you know, as a special concession, I'll let you have a flag for a tanner!"

"You can keep it," grinned Levison.

And Levison walked on, grinning.

Trimble snorted, and, catching sight of Blake & Co. in the passage, he hurried up to them.

Study No. 6 gazed at Trimble and his weird paraphernalia in astonishment.

"What does this mean, you chortling ass?" asked Blake.

"Flag day!"

"Bai Jove!"

"St. Jim's flag day for the benefit of the waifs and strays. These flags are a bob each. All money guaranteed to remain in my hands—"

"Eh?"

"Till forwarded to the waifs and strays, of course. Rally round!"

"Bai Jove, it's not a bad idea, deah boys. I wathah think I will have a flag!" said Arthur Augustus, feeling in his pocket.

"Cheese it, fathead!"

"Weally, Blake, I twust you approve of waisin' funds for this cause."

"Myes, but not Trimble's fund," said Blake. "It will go as far as the school shop, and not a step farther, I fancy."

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that! Are you authorised to make this collection, Twimble?"

"I suppose any chap can be generous if he likes," snorted Trimble. "Now then, you're going to have a flag each! I've started the collection with ten shillings."

"Where's the money?"

"In the money-box," said Trimble, rattling it.

Clink, clink, clink!

"Bai Jove, that is vevy genewous of you, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "You are not such a feahful wottah as I supposed. In the circs, Blake—"

"In the circs, we'll see that ten bob," said Blake, jerking the rattling box away from the collector.

"Let that box alone!" roared Trimble, in alarm.

"Rats!"

There was a slit in the lid of the box for coins to pass through, but the lid was easily removable.

Blake jerked it open, and the chums of the Fourth looked into the box.

Two marbles, an old key, and the half of a dis-used spoon were revealed.

"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "Where's the ten shillings?"

"Ahem! I mean I was going to put in ten shillings!" said Trimble. "I've lent most of my money to Grundy of the Shell, as it happens, and I'm short of tin. I'm going to put in a pound when Grundy squares up."

"You feahful swindlah!"

"Gimme my tin!"

Blake, with a snort of disgust, banged the tin box on Trimble's head, and the chums of the Fourth walked away. Trimble rubbed his head

and snorted, and jammed the lid on the money-box. Flag day at St. Jim's was not very successful so far, but Baggy did not give up hope.

The Terrible Three came down the passage from the Form-room, and the enterprising collector intercepted them.

"Bob for flags!" he announced. "Flag day, you know. Are you buying a flag, Tom Merry?"

"Not from you!"

"Look here, don't be mean!"

"Hallo, what's the little game?" asked Kangaroo of the Shell, coming up with Dane and Glyn.

"St. Jim's flag day for the waifs and strays," said Trimble. "Bob for flags, you know. Are you going to buy a flag, Kangy?"

"Ask me another!" grinned Kangaroo.

"I say, Glyn, you've got lots of oof—"

"And lots of sense," said Bernard Glyn.

"You're not bagging any of my oof, I know that!"

"Dane, old man, as a Canadian you're bound to be generous. Hand over a bob for a flag, to start the ball rolling."

Clifton Dane chuckled.

"I won't start the ball rolling," he remarked.



"How many times have I to tell you about gossiping?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Winnett, 25, St. Stephen's Square, Paddington, London, W.2.

"But I'll start you rolling, you cheeky young spoofer!"

"Oh, I say! Leggo! You rotter! I'll mop you up! Oh scissors!"

Bump! Crash! Clink! Clink!

Baggy Trimble went over with his tray and his money-box. Flags were scattered right and left. The Shell fellows, with loud shouts of laughter, dribbled the podgy junior along the passage, to an accompaniment of terrific yells from Trimble.

When they left him, Trimble sat up and gasped. "Oh dear! Yow-ow-ow-ow! The rotters! Oh crumbs! Oh, my hat! Yow!"

Flag day had not started well.

CHAPTER 5.

Very Profitable!

"ENTREZ!" called out Monsieur Morny. Monsieur Morny, the French master of St. Jim's, was in his study. He was reading the latest number obtainable of the "Figaro," when a tap came at his door.

Trimble of the Fourth came in, and Mossoo eyed him curiously.

Trimble was looking a little dusty and rumpled, and he was breathing hard. His tray was dented.

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in many places, and half the little flags had disappeared. But he was still going strong. Trimble had his weaknesses, but he was a stickler. "Mon Dieu!" ejaculated Monsieur Morny.

"Vat does zis mean, Trimble?"

"St. Jim's flag day, sir!"

"Vraiment?"

"Yes, sir, flag day!" purred Trimble. "It's for the waifs and strays, and we are holding a flag day for the benefit of the organisation which looks after them."

Monsieur Morny smiled with a beaming smile. He was not a suspicious gentleman, and he did not know Trimble.

"Zat is good—tres bien!" he said. "I shall hope zat you shall have ze great success, my young friend!"

"We hope so, sir," said Trimble modestly. "I'm the chief collector, sir. I've got some pretty good contributions." He rattled the spoon and the marbles in the money-box. "If you would care to make a contribution, sir—"

"Parfaitement!" said Monsieur Morny. "I am very glad to assist, mon garçon!"

Trimble's eyes glistened as Monsieur Morny extracted a half-crown from his pocket, and dropped it into the slit of the money-box.

It was a beginning.

"Thank you, sir! Will you have a flag?"

"Zank you, my boy!"

Mossoo selected a flag, with a smile, and Trimble quitted the study, his fat face beaming. He had broken his duck, so to speak. Among the juniors, flag day was not likely to be a success—in the hands of Trimble, at all events. But a half-crown was a half-crown.

Trimble paused in the passage, his thoughts wandering to the tuckshop. For days Trimble had been in a state of "stony" penury, and since he had been ejected from Study No. 6 he had not tasted a jam tart. But he manfully overcame the temptation. It was wiser to strike while the iron was hot, and enlarge the collection. Trimble had decided to let the juniors alone; but the masters seemed likely to "pan out" better.

Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, came along the passage, and he stared in astonishment at Trimble and his tray.

"I say, Kildare, would you care to buy a flag?" said Trimble. "A bob a time, you know, to assist the waifs and strays—"

Kildare stared at him.

"Are you asking fellows to give you a shilling for a halfpenny flag?" he exclaimed. "Are you off your rocker, you young ass?"

"It's flag day!" explained Trimble.

"Flag day!" ejaculated the St. Jim's captain.

"Yes, that's it! All funds collected go to help the waifs and strays—I'm getting the subscriptions like wildfire. You don't want to be left out, Kildare."

"You young rascal!" said Kildare sternly.

"Eh?"

"You can't make collections without the authority of the Head or the Housemaster," said Kildare. "And, from what I've seen of you, I doubt very much whether the cash would be sent by you. So you're getting subscriptions like wildfire, are you? Open that box!"

"That—that box?"

"Yes; at once!"

"I—I meant to say I haven't got any collections

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yet!" stammered Trimble. "A—a slip of the tongue, you know—"

"Open that box!" thundered Kildare.

Trimble uttered a deep groan and opened the money-box.

Kildare stared as he saw the spoon, the marbles, the old key, and the half-crown.

"Well, that's a queer collection," he said.

"Who gave you the half-crown?"

"I—I put it in myself—"

"Who gave it to you?" asked Kildare, taking Trimble's fat ear between his finger and thumb.

"Yow-ow! Mossos!" wailed Trimble. "I really meant to say, Mossos—wow!—wow!"

Kildare picked the half-crown out of the box.

"I'll take this back to Monsieur Morny," he said quietly. "You can please yourself about the rest of the collection. And if I catch you starting flag days again, Trimble, I'll warn you; remember that!"

Trimble blinked at Kildare in utter dismay as he turned away towards the French master's study with the half-crown in his hand.

"I—I say, Kildare," he stammered, "that's—that's my half-crown! I say, hold on a minute! I'll tell you what, Kildare—halves!"

"What?" ejaculated Kildare.

"Halves!" said Trimble eagerly. "That's fifteenpence each for the two of us. Here, I say, wharrer you at?"

"You young rascal!" shouted Kildare, shaking Trimble till his teeth rattled. "You unscrupulous little scoundrel! If I didn't think you were too big an idiot to know what a rascal you are, I'd march you into the Head at once! Take that, you fat little beast—and that!"

"Oh groooogh! Hooch! Groogh!" gurgled Trimble. "What's the matter? Oh dear!"

Kildare gave him a final tremendous shake and left him. Trimble staggered against the wall and gasped for breath.

"Groogh! Rotter! Oh crumbs! My half-crown!"

St. Jim's flag day had come to a sudden end. The net result was a key, a spoon, and two marbles in the money-box—not to mention a bumping and a shaking which Trimble had bagged for himself. The way of the transgressor was hard.

CHAPTER 6.

A Good Day for Study No. 6!

"B A! Jove! Here's that wotah again!" Study No. 6 were at tea.

They were in high good-humour, discussing a forthcoming visit from Cousin Ethel, when Trimble put his head in at the door.

He put it in doubtfully, somewhat like a tortoise putting its head out of its shell to see the lie of the land.

Four distinct and ferocious glares were turned upon him.

It was some days since the drastic dealing with Trimble, which had been supposed to convince the new junior that his presence was not desired in Study No. 6. Since then he had steered clear.

Nobody else in the Fourth wanted the pleasure of Trimble's company. He was without a study.

He had to do his preparation in the Form-room, which did not trouble him so much as it would have troubled most fellows, for he always "scamped" it in any case. He felt the loss of his study chiefly because of the feeds he missed. The cosy tea-table in Study No. 6 was no longer for him; the lion's share no longer fell to his lot.

And this was a serious miss, for Trimble was stony broke. He had an allowance, but he always spent it immediately in the school shop in a huge "gorge," and the day after he would be as hard-up as ever. He had borrowed on all sides during his first week at St. Jim's; but since he had never repaid a single loan, naturally that source soon dried up.

The school fare at St. Jim's was wholesome and plentiful, but it was not nearly enough for Baggy Trimble. He had an appetite compared with which that of Fatty Wynn of the New House was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine.

He had a cheerful way of inviting himself to tea with fellows he hardly knew, and good-natured juniors sometimes let him "rip." But the most good-natured soon tired of seeing the greedy "bounder," scoff the best of everything on the table, and the lion's share at that.

Perhaps the agreeable scent of fried rashers had attracted Baggy to Study No. 6 just now, and he had resolved to risk a hostile reception. Hostile his reception was certain to be. One look at the Fourth Formers was enough to show that.

Blake reached out for the poker.

"Look here, you know," said Trimble, "don't be a beast! This is my study."

"I thought we'd cured you of that," said Blake, "but if you want some more, come in and have it. You're welcome!"

"Yaas, wathah! Where's my cane?"

Trimble hesitated on the threshold.

"Look here, if you don't let me come into my own study I shall jolly well appeal to the House-master."

"Go ahead! That won't prevent us from squashing you whenever you come in," said Herries.

"You'll get licked, you know."

"We'll chance that for the pleasure of licking you, you worm!"

"As a matter of fact, I've come here to do you a favour," said Trimble.

"Bow-wow!"

"Honest Injun!"

"Wats! We are quite aware how honest your Injun is, you boundah!"

"How would you fellows like to make a lot of money?" said Trimble.

"Hallo! Are you suggesting coining?" said Blake. "Just in your line, if you had brains enough."

"I don't mean that, fathead! Look here, I can tell you chaps how to make pounds and pounds," said Trimble eagerly. "I could do it, only the fellows don't trust me, for some reason."

"For some reason!" echoed Blake. "Now, I wonder what the reason can be?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But you fellows are trusted, and if you put up a flag day the flags would sell out like anything, you know."

"They might," said Blake. "How should we make pounds and pounds out of that? All the money would go to the fund."

"It needn't, you know."

"Wha-a-at!"

Trimble came a step farther into the study and lowered his voice cautiously.

The chums of Study No. 6 stared at him dumb-founded. That Trimble had come to propose a scheme of dishonesty to them seemed too incredible for belief.

"You see, suppose we form a committee in this

(Continued on next page.)

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Happy New Year, Everybody!

When fasting for health, says a medico, see that you still enjoy a joke. Even if your laughter is a little hollow?

Believe this or not: Wally D'Arcy says, during the vac. he was fishing, and caught quite a large trout. An elderly angler approached him and offered to buy it. "But I don't want to sell it," protested Wally. "Well, then," said the angler, "let me measure it, so that I can truthfully say how big the fish was that got away from me!"

Billposters are the most loyal of men, we read. Always sticking up for the firm.

A man who lets out canoes at Rylcombe tells me that last summer he had a good turnover. But George Gore holds the record for the season with seventeen turnovers.

"Yus," said Old William, the Rylcombe oldest inhabitant, "I be ninety-seven to-day, sir, and I reckon if it weren't that they've been putting the clock back all these years, I'd have been a hundred and more by now!"

Herries has taken up playing the piano. "Well, Gussy, what did you think of that?" he asked, after giving a selection. Gussy paused tactfully before replying. "At least, Herries, dear boy, I like the way you do not bang down the lid!"

"Armament Race Progresses." The nations seem to be putting more faith in good battleships than in good fellowships.

Remember, many hands make light work—but too many cooks spoil the broth. What does that mean? You tell me!

Money goes very fast, but not very far. Money may talk, but it never gives itself away.

A Wayland butcher who had read about milk from contented cows wanted to be up with the times, so he put up a notice: "Sausages from pigs that died happy."

True One: "Any letters for me to-day, begorrah?" Reilly asked the postman. "What name, sir?" asked the postman. "Sure, an' I think the name will be on the letter," replied Reilly seriously.

That's all till next Wednesday. Cheer-ho, chaps!

study," pursued Trimble. "We collect the money, and have it all in our own hands. Well, we send some to the fund, just to keep up appearances."

"Appearances!" gasped Blake. "Only to keep up appearances?"

"Yes, it's always done, you know, in fund collecting. A bit goes towards the object of the fund to keep up appearances, and then we bag the rest for expenses."

"Expenses?"

"Exactly! Only as the fellows mightn't approve of that, we keep it dark and say nothing outside the study."

"My word!" murmured Dig, overcome.

"You see what a ripping scheme it is," pursued Trimble eagerly. "You fellows being trusted, it would work all right, and we might have pounds and pounds to divide as—as expenses. I should claim a good whack, as originator of the idea."

Blake jumped up with a roar.

"You beastly little scoundrel——"

"Here, I say, what's the matter? If I've said anything to offend you, Blake, I'm sorry!"

"I—I'll slaughter him!" gasped Blake.

"Hold on, deah boy!" Arthur Augustus rose, caught his excited chum by the shoulder, and dragged him back. "Pewwaps you had better let me speak to Twimble."

"He doesn't want speaking to; he wants smashing!" yelled Blake.

"Yaas, he is an awful wottah, but pway leave him in my hands. As a fellow of tact and judgment——"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Lemme go, ass! I'm going to scalp him!"

"Pway leave him to me," said D'Arcy firmly.

"I feah that the wottah is off his wockah, or somethin', or has a kink in his bwain. I'm goin' to talk to him and bring him to a sense of his howwible wottenness. Leave him to me."

"Leave him to Gussy," chuckled Digby. "A lecture from Gussy is worse than a hiding any day."

"Weally, Dig——"

"Go ahead, then, you fathead!" growled Blake.

"Only don't let the beast come near me. He makes me ill."

"Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, in his most stately manner, "you have made a shockin' pwoposition."

"Blessed if I know what you're making a fuss about!" said Trimble indignantly. "I've come here to do you a favour, and show you how to make pounds and pounds, and you turn on me like this. I call it ungrateful!"

"Bai Jove! Twimble, what you have pwoposed is dishonest!" said Arthur Augustus impressively.

"Oh, rot! If you have any insinuations to make against my honesty, D'Arcy, I'll ask you to step into the gym with me."

"I am perfectly weady——"

"Only, of course, I wouldn't think of licking an old pal like you, Gussy," said Trimble affectionately.

"You uttah young ass——"

"But to come to the point," said Trimble calmly. "There's pounds and pounds to be made, if you fellows——"

"You shockin' young wepwobate!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Can't you see that to make money by waisin' subscriptions is dishonest and howwid and infamous?"

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"Oh, don't be funny!" said Trimble peevishly. "I'm generous!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Generous!" said Trimble scornfully. "I know you're not very generous in this study. But I am."

"You want to spend the money in the tuckshop, you podgy little beast!"

"The labourer is worthy of his hire," said Trimble loftily. "I am entitled to a whack for my trouble."

"Twimble, I feah that you are even a biggah fool than wogue. I feel that I am bound to be patient with you, and wesist the inclination to give you a feahful thwashin'. Pway listen to me, deah boy. Keep your hands fwom pickin' and stealin'. Don't be a gweedy and dishonest little beast. If you should waise any money by a flag day, you would be bound in honah to send ewvery penny to the fund. Now, Twimble, I twust you will wesslect on this."

Trimble nodded.

"All right," he said.

"There, deah boys, I was sure that a good talkin' to would do him good!" said Arthur Augustus triumphantly. "You can always leave it in the hands of a fellow of tact and judgment. Twimble sees the ewwah of his ways now, don't you, Twimble?"

"Oh, certainly!" said Trimble cheerfully. "But now, to come back to the matter in hand, will you fellows back me up? We might have pounds and pounds to divide——"

"What!"

"It would be a ripping good thing for this study. I should claim one quarter, as originator of the idea, and you chaps would divide the rest. What do you say?"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to laugh at, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, looking distressed. "I am afraid that Twimble is incowwiggible!"

"A beautiful mixture of idiot and rascal," said Blake, looking at Trimble's fat and self-satisfied face in wonder. "Blessed if I don't think he's got a screw loose. If you're done talking to him, I'm ready to begin with this poker."

"Look here, you know—— Oh, my hat!"

Trimble made a bound from the study as Blake made a bound at him. The poker landed on the doorstep with a terrific crash.

Blake had not intended it for Trimble, of course, but Trimble heard the crash, and let out a yell of terror, and vanished into the Shell passage like a fat rabbit.

Blake turned back, grinning, into the study.

"I fancy we've done with him this time."

"He's an awful wascal," said Arthur Augustus reflectively. "But he is weally more fatheaded than anythin' else."

Blake grunted, and sat down to finish his tea, and the chums of the Fourth resumed their discussion of the celebration which was to greet the arrival of Cousin Ethel. They soon forgot about Trimble. But Trimble had not forgotten them.

CHAPTER 7.

The Chopper Comes Down!

KNOCK!

"Come in, fathead!" sang out Blake.

The door of Study No. 6 opened, and Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, stepped in.



Taking Trimble by the back of the neck, Gore rubbed the greasy plate in his face. "Gro-ooogh!" gurgled Trimble. "There!" panted Gore. "You'll leave me out of your blessed lies next time, perhaps!"

The juniors jumped up, Blake with a crimson face.

Mr. Railton, however, did not appear to have noted Blake's words. Blake had not guessed that it was so awe-inspiring a personage as a Housemaster who was at the door.

Baggy Trimble followed the Housemaster in. There was a lurking grin on his fat face.

"Blake," said Mr. Railton severely, "it appears that you have turned Trimble out of his study, and refused to allow him to share this room."

Blake looked daggers at Trimble.

"Yes, sir!" he said firmly.

"We weally can't stand him, sir," said D'Arcy.

"It was at your request, D'Arcy, that I assigned Trimble to this study!" said Mr. Railton sternly.

"Yaas, sir; but—"

"There's more room in Study No. 8, sir," ventured Herries. "Now Blenkinsop's left, there's only three in Study No. 8."

"Study No. 8 is a smaller study," said Mr. Railton. "I understood from D'Arcy that he desired Trimble to be placed here, because he knew him."

"Yaas, but—"

"It is somewhat hard upon a new boy, D'Arcy, for you to change your mind in this way," said the Housemaster. "It is very fickle and not what I should have expected of you."

Arthur Augustus turned red.

"I did not know what a feahful boundah he was, sir."

"I suppose you have had some trivial dispute," said Mr. Railton. "If Trimble should request me to change him into Study No. 8—" He looked at Trimble.

"Bai Jove! The fellows would object."

"If you think the fellows would object, you have no right to ask me to place him there. But if Trimble wishes—"

"Not at all, sir," said Trimble cheerfully. "We've had some little disagreements in this study, sir, but I never bear malice. I'm not going to desert an old chum like Gussy. It will all blow over, sir."

"That is a very proper view to take," said Mr. Railton. "I trust, Blake, that you and the others will show the same conciliatory spirit towards Trimble. In any case, he shares this study, and if there is any further unpleasantness, I shall look into the matter. In case of any violence being offered to Trimble, there will be severe punishment for the delinquent. He is to be allowed the free use of the study in every way. Remember that. Trimble, remain here. I trust that you will all strive to pull together, without any more foolish quarrels!"

Mr. Railton quitted the study, leaving Trimble there.

The chums of the Fourth looked at him with feelings almost too deep for words.

"You utter worm!" gasped Herries. "You've sneaked to the Housemaster!"

"I felt bound to call Mr. Railton into the matter," explained Trimble. "I've acted from a sense of duty."

"A—sense of duty!" said Blake dazedly.

"You!"

"Certainly! Now, I don't mind you fellows cutting up a bit rusty, though I'm blessed if I understand why. My offer's still open, and if you like to go in with me, we can make pounds and pounds—"

"Shut up!" shrieked Blake.

"Oh, all right! It's your loss!" said Trimble. "I may as well have my tea, as I'm here. I say, that cake looks prime!"

"I'm going to smash him!" breathed Herries.

Blake jerked him back.

"You heard what Railton said!" he growled. "We can't back up against a Housemaster. We've got to stand it."

"We won't!" roared Herries.

"There must be some way of gettin' wid of the wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If we were sneakin' beasts like Twimble, we could tell Wailton about his pwoposin' a swindle to us. But we can't do that."

"If you call me a sneak—" began Trimble.

"You are a wotten sneak!"

"I won't quarrel with an old chum like you, Gussy. You might pass the rashers, will you, Herries?"

"No, I won't!"

"Well, I can help myself; but this isn't what I call civil!" said Trimble peevishly.

"Let that grub alone!" roared Herries.

"It's tea-time," said Trimble. "I'm going to have my tea, I suppose. If you're mean enough to be thinking about the money, I'll pay my whack!"

"Pay it, then, you lying worm!"

"I happen to be short of money at the present moment owing to lending Talbot a quid; but when he squares—"

"Hallo! Who's taking my name in vain?" said a cheery voice at the door; and Talbot of the Shell looked in.

Blake burst into a chuckle.

"You're just in time," he remarked.

"Good!" said Talbot. "Just in time for what?"

"To pay Trimble his quid."

Talbot looked astonished.

"Trimble's quid! What quid?"

"Trimble says he lent you a quid."

"Does he?" said Talbot grimly, coming into the study.

"Look here, I—I meant to say Gore!" stammered Trimble. "A—A slip of the tongue. I meant a chap in Talbot's study—Gore, you know—"

"Gore's in the passage," grinned Talbot. "Gore, come in a minute, will you? Trimble wants that quid he lent you."

Gore of the Shell came in, red and wrathful.

"Lent me a quid, did he?" he exclaimed. "So you lent me a quid, Trimble—what?"

"N-no! I—I meant Skimpole! It was Skimpole—"

"Skimpole, was it?" said Talbot. "Well, I'll call Skimpole—"

"I—I meantsay it was Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth—"

"You mean to say any silly lie that comes into your head!" said Gore. "And you've got to learn to leave me out when you're telling lies, my pippin! And here's a lesson for you!"

"Look here, hands off! Stoppin'!" yelled Trimble, as George Gore seized him in his muscular grasp.

But nobody stopped Gore. They looked on. Gore grasped Trimble by the hair with his left hand, and with his right dabbed the plate of juicy bacon into his fat face. Then, taking the podgy junior by the back of his neck, he rubbed his face into the plate.

"Gro-oogh!" gurgled Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yurrrrg! Help! Grooogh!"

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"There!" panted Gore. "I've heard of your blessed lies before! You'll leave me out next time, perhaps!"

And Gore quitted the study, followed by the grinning Talbot.

Trimble dabbed furiously at his face.

"Groogh! You rotten funks! Why don't you back up a fellow in your study?" he hoofed. "Groogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Blake & Co., somewhat comforted, left the study, leaving Trimble still dabbing.

CHAPTER 8.

Lowther to the Rescue!

TOM MERRY looked sympathetic.

Manners looked grave.

Monty Lowther looked as serious as it was possible to look.

It was a council of war in Tom Merry's study. Blake & Co. had come for advice.

Generally Blake & Co. did not need advice; they were a law unto themselves. But matters were getting desperate.

Trimble was planted in Study No. 6 again, under the special eye of the Housemaster. Drastic measures were forbidden. For three days now it had lasted.

Herries had lost his temper once, and chased the podgy youth forth from the study with a brandished pair of tongs. And the fleeing Trimble had rushed right into Mr. Railton. Spotting Herries and the tongs, the Housemaster marched him into his study, caned him there and then, and gave him a severe warning as to the future.

Since then they had tried no other means of getting rid of Trimble.

"And it made Railton think that we were bullying a new kid!" groaned Blake, as he poured his troubles into the sympathetic ears of the Terrible Three. "Of course, old Railton doesn't know what a crawling worm he is, and we can't tell him."

"Yaas, wathah! And he thinks I'm a chap given to choppin' and changin', because I don't want the beast in my study!" said Arthur Augustus dolorously. "It lowahs me in old Wailton's opinion!"

"And the horrid beast scoffs everything in the study!" snorted Herries. "He's found a key to fit the study cupboard. There's never anything for tea, unless we bring it in at the last moment!"

"And then he mops up nearly all of it; and if we say anything, he says we're being mean and haggling over money!" said Digby ferociously.

"Hagglin' ovah money—us!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"And he gave us a lecture on being high-minded and—lofty-thoughted like him!" stutered Herries. "That was the time I went for him with the tongs."

"No wonder!" grinned Tom Merry. "It's a hard case. It's all through Gussy being ass enough to ask him to share the study in the first place!"

"I didn't know what a beast he was, deah boy. I have repented, I assuah you."

"We've bumped Gussy for that," said Blake. "We'd bump him black and blue if it would do any good!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"And the fellow's such an awful liar," said Digby, "and a dishonest beast, too!"

"Why not send him to Coventry?" suggested Manners.

"We've tried that. He doesn't mind. He talks



An Austrian wartime surcharged stamp for her forces fighting Italy.

These Stamps Tell World History.

What do overprinted and surcharged stamps mean to you? Events that shook the world are reflected in many of them!

DO you get mixed up between the terms "overprint" and "surcharge"? Lots of people do, so let's make matters clear here and now.

When new wording has to be added to a stamp for some reason, it is known as an overprint. If, however, this wording alters a stamp's face value, it is known as a surcharge, or additional charge.

From this, you'll see that a surcharge must always be an overprint, for it is certainly an addition to a stamp—but an overprint is not necessarily a surcharge.

A peculiar glamour seems to attach to most overprinted and surcharged stamps, for very often we see history itself written in them—particularly war history.

A WARTIME RARITY.

When Germany overran Belgium in fateful 1914, she brought with her conquering armies stocks of current stamps overprinted "Belgien" and surcharged in Belgian coinage—an error of colour amongst these issues provided a fair wartime rarity. When the War ended, Belgium had her own back on the Germans by overprinting some of Germany's stamps for use by her forces occupying the Rhineland.

On the Eastern front we find the Germans more wholesale in their overprinting. In the Rumanian sector, German and even Rumanian stamps were overprinted "M. vi R.," or "Rumanien." Poland received German specimens overprinted either "Russisch Polen"—"Russian Poland"—or "Gen. Gouver. Warschau," while the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian sectors of the front were served by stamps bearing the overprint "Postgebeit Ob. Ost."—"Postal Service of the Eastern Command."

Germany's allies—Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey—all followed her example, and on the left-hand stamp shown here we see how the

Austrians dealt with their stamps for one sphere of their wartime influence—Italy.

THE CONQUEST THAT DIDN'T COME OFF.

One set of would-be Turkish war stamps are very interesting. The powers that were in Turkey were convinced that they would easily become masters of Egypt, so they had a set of stamps prepared in anticipation of the conquest.

On one of these is shown a column of soldiers marching towards the Land of the Pharaohs. Unfortunately for the Turks, they didn't take Lawrence of Arabia and the British Army into consideration, and when peace came the Turks were as far from occupying Egypt as they were when the War started.

Rather than waste the stamps, the Turkish postal authorities decided to issue them in 1920. But they took good care to obliterate all mention of dreams of a Turkish Egypt by heavily overprinting all the original lettering!

The close of the War saw vast changes in the map of Europe, changes which our stamp-albums were swift to reflect. Kingdoms came toppling—as our second stamp illustration shows. Until 1918 much of present-day Jugo-Slavia had formed part of the mighty Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Austrian defeat was the signal for revolt for everyone discontented with the chaos into which monarchy had led them.

Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes joined forces to form the Jugo-Slovak republic. At the outset they commandeered Hungarian stamps, and, to show their contempt for the Hapsburgs, well and truly covered the likeness of their one-time king and queen with their own monogram, S.H.S.—standing for Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.



The Jugo-Slavs blot out the memory of the Hapsburgs.

Only I warn you that if you're going to be funny, you'll get this cushion in your neck."

"Yaas, watah! This fearful extwernity is no time for humorous remarks."

"Serious as a judge!" said Lowther. "Or rather, more serious than a judge, considering that judges are such humorous beggars nowadays. My idea is that you should make the outsider glad to change out. Make Study No. 6 too hot to hold him. Railton is down on ragging him, but there are ways and means. F'rinstance, you could start Gussy singing his tenor solos—"

"You uttah ass—"

"I admit that would be a desperate expedient, as you would suffer as much as Trimble, and might even expire first," said Lowther. "That idea had better be left till the very last."

"Lowthah, you uttah ass—"

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nineteen to the dozen himself, and he likes it all the better if he's not interrupted!"

"I have a wathah good ideah," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "If othah fellows pwessed him to come to their study, he might go."

"Good! Get some fellow to do it!" said Tom.

"Pewwaps you fellows wouldn't mind—"

"Us?" ejaculated Manners.

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "You see, he makes our study f'ightfully uncomfy."

"And what about our study?" demanded Tom Merry warmly.

"Gentlemen," said Monty Lowther, "if Gussy has done talking out of his neck, I have a suggestion to make."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Oh, go ahead!" said Blake. "I don't suppose you can suggest anything useful, but pile in."

"But there's a good dodge," said Lowther, unheeding. "This Trimble-bird is a rank outsider, and a mean cad, and a funk, isn't he—especially a funk?"

"He'd let a Second Form fag pull his nose!" growled Blake. "Fancy that—in Study No. 6!"

"Good! Well, then scare him!"

"We can't scare him without licking him, and Railton would be on our necks for that," grunted Herries.

"I'm going to tell you the way, fathead!"

"Go ahead," said Blake, gripping the cushion. "Mind, none of your funny jokes!"

"Well, go mad!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Weally——"

"Go mad!" repeated Lowther. "That would be sure to scare him out of the study, as he's a funk—yah! Oh! You villain! Yoop!"

Bang!

The cushion whisked through the air, and caught the humorist of the Shell fairly under the chin. Monty Lowther shot backwards over his chair, which went to the floor with a crash.

"Yaroooh!" said Lowther. "Yow-oo!"

"I warned you!" said Blake grimly. "We came here for advice, not for scraps from the comic column in the 'Weekly.'"

"Yow-ow!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard you as havin' asked for it, Lowthah."

Monty Lowther scrambled up, and charged ferociously at Blake. Tom Merry and Manners dragged him back.

"Hold on, Monty——"

"Lemme gerrat him!" roared Lowther. "I've bumped my head! I've cracked my funnybone! Let me gerrat the silly idiot!"

"Well, you shouldn't be so funny, you know!" remonstrated Tom Merry.

"You silly ass, I wasn't being funny. I was giving good advice!" hooted Lowther.

"If you call that good advice, you fathead——" "Weally, Lowthah, I wegard it as a wotten joke!"

"You burbling chump!" shouted Lowther, rubbing his head. "I don't mean you to go mad really—not that you'd have far to go. But pretend to, and scare Trimble out of his wits. He's idiot enough to believe it, and funk enough to be frightened."

"Oh!" said Blake. "I see!"

"Oh, you see, do you?" snorted Lowther. "Time you did!"

"My hat! It isn't a bad idea," said Blake thoughtfully. "Sorry, Lowther; I thought you were being funny, as usual. I withdraw that cush."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you withdraw this bump on my napper, you howling ass?"

"I leave you that as a make-weight. I say, you chaps, this is really a good wheeze. We'll make Trimble's blood curdle, and he'll clear out of his own accord. We'll all make out that we're dangerously potty——"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the kind. I should wegard it as detwactin' f'wom a fellow's personal dig."

"Well, you needn't," said Blake. "You're potty enough already. We three'll put it on, and you can act quite naturally, so Trimble will think that four of us are off our rockers."

"You fwabjous ass, Blake——"

"Come on!" said Blake, rising. "Thanks for the tip, Lowther. Perhaps you'd better keep out, after all, Gussy, as you'd be bound to muck it up."

"I wefuse to keep out, Blake. If you are weseolved upon this widiculous ideah, I had bettah see it through, I suppose, othahwise you fellows will make a muck of it."

"We'll try it, anyway," said Herries. "It may work. The fellow's an utter funk and a silly idiot. Come on, you chaps."

The chums of the Fourth quitted the study, leaving Tom Merry and Manners grinning, and Monty Lowther rubbing his head.

CHAPTER 9.

The Lunatics!

"TEA ready?" Trimble came cheerfully into Study No. 6.

Blake & Co. were there, at the tea-table. The four juniors were fully prepared to carry out the scheme suggested by the astute Lowther, and they had arranged their plans.

Trimble stared at the tea-table in astonishment. Blake was busily engaged in mixing sugar with the sardines.

"I say, you're spoiling those sardines," said Trimble.

"Sardines?" said Blake, looking up with an expression of astonishment. "What sardines?"

"Those sardines," said Trimble.

"These are not sardines, fathead!"

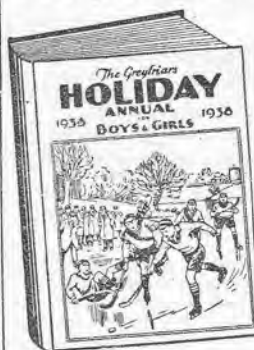
"Eh! What are they, then?"

"Whales!"

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered Trimble.

"Don't you know a whale when you see one?" demanded Blake scornfully. "Tell him what they are, Dig, if he doesn't know."

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"Whales, of course," said Dig. "Wippin' whales, bai Jove!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You ought to know all about whales, Twimble, as you are a wotten jonah."

"I suppose you're joking," said Trimble, mystified.

"Joking! Where does the joke come in? Do you seriously mean to say that you take those whales for sardines?" demanded Blake. "It looks to me as if you're mad! You've got a look in your eyes, too, that I used to notice among the other patients when I was in the asylum."

"The—the asylum!" stammered Trimble.

"Didn't you know I was in a lunatic asylum before I came here?" asked Blake. "We all belonged to the same asylum. That's why they put us in this study together. We were all accustomed to the same padded room, you know."

"M-my hat!"

"Have—some of those whales, old chap," said Digby. "Whales are very nice with preserved ginger."

"That isn't ginger—that's sugar."

"Don't be an ass, Trimble. I say it's ginger!" roared Digby.

"All right—all right! Ginger, if you like!" said Trimble hastily. "But, I say, I can't eat sardines with sugar."

"Have some of these coconuts, then," said Blake, pushing a plate of biscuits across the table.

"Eh? Those biscuits—"

"Coconuts, fathead! Don't you know a coconut when you see one?"

"Mum-mum-my word!" gasped Trimble. "I—I say, is it true about your being in an asylum, you know?"

"It was lovely there!" said Blake dreamily.

"A beautifully padded room, you know. When a chap got violent, and banged his napper against the wall, it didn't hurt a bit. Now, when I bang my head on the study wall here, it does hurt. Of course, I don't get violent very often. You remember the time I went for you with the carving knife, Dig?"

"The kik-kik-carving knife?" stuttered Trimble.

"I'm jolly glad Dig got out of the way that time," said Blake reflectively. "Have you ever been insane, Trimble?"

"N-no."

"It's very curious to feel it coming on," said Blake reminiscently. "You feel a sort of queer feeling, and then you snatch up a carving knife—like this!"

"Oh!"

"And spring at a chap like that!"

Trimble jumped behind the armchair.

"Keep off!" he roared.

"It's all right; I'm not violent now!" said Blake reassuringly. "It might come on any minute, but it's all right at present."

"Oh dear!"

"Come and have tea, old chap!"

"P-put down that knife."

"I'd rather keep it handy, if you don't mind, in case one of my attacks comes on," said Blake.

Trimble stared blankly at the chums of Study No. 6. If they were pulling his podgy leg, there was no sign to indicate as much. Their faces were perfectly serious. Blake's expression was a little mournful, as if he found the burden of occasional insanity rather trying to his nerves.

"I—I say, I know you're only joking, you know," murmured Trimble.

"Oh, come and have tea! We've been keeping these whales especially for you."

"You know they aren't whales, you ass!" "Do you mean to say they're sharks?" exclaimed Blake, in alarm, backing away from the table. "Lock 'em up in the cupboard, quick!"

"Look here, you know—"

"Lock 'em up!" shrieked Blake, in terror.

"Don't you know that sharks are dangerous? Lock 'em up!"

Arthur Augustus seized the plate of sugared sardines and placed it in the study cupboard and locked the door. Blake put the key in his pocket.

"Safe!" he gasped in relief.

"Yaas, wathah; safe now, deah boy!"

Herries was shaking pepper over the biscuits.

Trimble watched that operation as if mesmerised.

"Have some of these coconuts," said Herries.

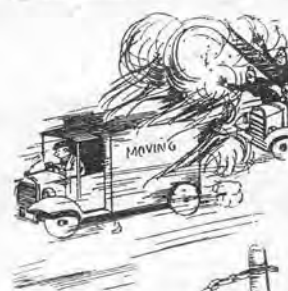
"I've sugared them for you."

"I—I say, you know—"

"Don't you want any tea?" asked Blake. "It's quite safe now those sharks are locked up."

Trimble blinked at the tea-table in dismay. There was nothing there to eat but the biscuits, which were now thick with pepper. Trimble had a good appetite, as usual, but he was not prepared for peppered biscuits.

"You've spoiled those biscuits!" he exclaimed.



"So those crazy firemen think they can pass me?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Pannell, 58, Lake Road, Portsmouth.

"What's the good of putting pepper on biscuits, you duffer?"

Herries gave him a pitying smile.

"This isn't pepper; this is sugar," he said.

"Smell it!"

He shook the pepper castor over Trimble.

"Atchoo-choo-choo-choo-ooooh!"

"Isn't it sugar?" demanded Herries. "Try some more."

Trimble fled wildly round the study.

"Choo-choo-atchoo!" he sneezed violently.

"Atchoo-choooh! Oh dear! Oh scissors!

Yow-ow-ow!"

"How do you like it, old chap?"

"Groogh! Keep off! Atchoo-choo-choo!"

"That's a waste of good sugar, Herries," said Blake severely. "You shouldn't waste sugar like that. We were never allowed to waste sugar in the asylum."

"It isn't sugar!" roared Digby. "It's molasses."

"It's sugar!" roared Blake.

"It's molasses!" bellowed Digby.

"Sugar!"

"Molasses!"

Blake's eyes rolled wildly, and he seized a cup from the table and made a ferocious rush at Digby.

Digby dodged round the table, with Blake after

him, brandishing the cup in the air and uttering blood-curdling howls.

Trimble stood rooted to the floor in terror. "Save me!" shrieked Digby, grasping Trimble in fierce frenzy.

"Leggo!" stuttered Trimble. "Help! Rescue! Ow!"

"Get out of the way, Trimble!" roared Blake. "Let me get at him! I'll teach him whether it's molasses or not!"

"It is molasses!" yelled Dig.

"Tisn't! Come here and be slaughtered! Get out of the way, Trimble, or I may cut your head by mistake."

"Yaroorh!"

Trimble tore himself away from Digby and bolted for the door. But Herries was standing at the door, with his back to it. There was no escape for the terrified Trimble.

Blake and Digby closed, apparently in terrific combat, and rolled on the floor. The cup crashed into the fender.

Bump! Crash!

Yell!

"Lemme get out!" shrieked Trimble, grasping Herries, and seeking to drag him away from the door.

"Hands off!" shouted Herries, in tones of alarm. "Don't touch me, you ass! Do you want to break me?"

"Wha-at?"

"Hands off! Don't you know I'm made of glass?"

"Yaas, wathah! Don't touch Hewwies, Twimble. He's made of glass!"

"Good heavens!" stuttered Trimble, backing away.

"There is nothin' to wun away for, deah boy. Let's stand wound and watch Blake killin' Dig."

"Gimme a knife!" roared Blake.

"Mercy!" gasped Dig.

"Rats! Don't you know I'm mad? Blood must be shed!" said Blake hoarsely. "Get me a pick-axe! Blood must be shed!"

"What about Twimble's blood, deah boy?"

"I leave it to the study to decide. Blood must be shed. Hands up for Dig's or Trimble's!"

"Trimble's!" said Herries, putting up his hand.

"Twimble's!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Trimble's!" yelled Dig.

"Oh, all right!" Blake rose from his victim and gathered up the bread knife from the table.

"Are you ready, Trimble?"

"Help!"

"Don't yell, you duffer! Haven't I told you that blood must be shed? Come here, and I will do it as mercifully as possible. Kneel down and close your eyes."

Trimble did not kneel down and close his eyes. He dragged Herries away from the door, tore it open, and fled wildly down the passage.

The door slammed behind him, and the four lunatics of Study No. 6 burst into a terrific yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 10.

No Go!

"HALLO!"

"What the dickens—"

"What's the matter?"

"Is he dotty?"

There were a dozen or more juniors in the Lower Hall, and they all exclaimed at once, as

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Trimble of the Fourth came tearing down the stairs.

Trimble's face was pale and his eyes bulging, and he was panting for breath.

"Help!"

"Phwat's the row intirely?" demanded Reilly of the Fourth.

"Off his silly rocker!" said Kerruish.

"Help! They're mad!"

"Shut up, you ass! Here's Kildare!"

"Help!" Trimble rushed up to the astonished Sixth Former. "Help! Save me, Kildare! They're mad!"

"Hallo! What's the game?" demanded Kildare, taking Trimble by the collar and shaking him. "Now, what is it?"

"Yow! They're mad!"

"Eh? Who are mad?"

"Study No. 6!" gasped Trimble. "On dear! It's awful! Blake is killing Digby with a pick-axe—I mean a bread-knife—and—and Herries says he's made of glass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare frowned, and grinned, too. He shook the gasping Trimble vigorously, which made him gasp the more.

"You young ass, I suppose it's some joke," he said.

"Yow-ow! I tell you they're raving. They think the sardines are whales—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I want to change my study. I'm not going to stay there with those maniacs. My life isn't safe there!" shrieked Trimble.

"Hold your silly tongue!" said Kildare sharply.



"It's very curious to feel insanity coming on," said Blake a chap like that!" Trimble bolted across the study and

"Come with me! I'd better see into this, I suppose, you troublesome little idiot!"

Trimble resisted frantically as Kildare marched him towards the stairs.

"I won't go! They're mad! It's dangerous! Blake is raving! Oh dear!"

"Come with me, and if you don't shut up I'll lick you!" exclaimed the captain of St. Jim's angrily.

"Yow-ow! Leggo! I won't go! Yow-ow-ow!"

Kildare tightened his grasp upon Trimble's collar, and half carried him up the stairs. Trimble had to go. He was followed by a yell of laughter from the juniors. It was plain to everybody but Trimble that Study No. 6 had been pulling his leg, but the podgy junior approached that celebrated apartment in fear and trembling.

Kildare threw open the door of Study No. 6.

Trimble blinked with astonishment as he looked in.

There was no sign of lunacy in the study now. Four cheerful and smiling juniors were seated round the tea-table. Blake & Co. were beginning tea. They jumped up, looking a little dismayed, as Kildare strode in.

"Now, then, what does all this mean?" demanded Kildare gruffly.

"Bai Jove!"

"They're mad!" mumbled Trimble. "They're putting this on. Look out for his knife, Kildare!"

"Hold your tongue, you young idiot!" growled Kildare angrily. "Have you been playing an idiotic joke on this utter fool, Blake?"

"Ahem!"

"As a mattah of fact, Kildare—ahem!"



You snatch up a carving-knife like this, and spring at him behind the armchair. "Keep off!" he roared.

"Will you answer me, you young rascals?" roared Kildare. "This young idiot has come down shrieking, and trying to alarm the whole House. What have you been doing?"

"Oh, the silly beast!" groaned Blake. "The best jape is wasted on him. Why couldn't he keep his silly head shut?"

"Have you been japing him?"

"Well, perhaps we have—a little," admitted Blake cautiously. "But—but it was only a little joke, you know. No harm done. Trimble doesn't want to stay in the study now. Let him change out, and it's all right."

"Yaas, wathah, and the mattah can dwop."

Trimble understood at last. His little piggy eyes glittered.

"Oh, you rotters!" he said. "So you were playing tricks to get me out of the study, you rotters? After the way I've chummed with you, and lent you money, and stood nearly all the feeds—"

"Why, you lying worm!" howled Herries.

"We can't stand him here, Kildare," said Blake appealingly. "Why can't he be put in Study No. 8 now Blenkinsop's gone? He would get on rippingly with Levison and Mellish. They're his sort."

"That's not for you to settle," said Kildare. "It seems that you've been frightening this born idiot. You can't play tricks like that. You'll take two hundred lines each."

"Oh deah!"

"And if there's any more trouble in this study I'll report you to the Housemaster," said Kildare sternly.

"I say, Kildare—"

"That's enough!"

The captain of St. Jim's strode from the study. Trimble remained behind. He was quite reassured now. He grinned at the discomfited chums of the Fourth.

"Rather pulled your leg, didn't I?" he remarked cheerfully.

"What?" roared Blake.

"Of course, I knew you were spoofing all the time."

"You—you knew!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"Yes, rather! Of course I knew! You can't take me in. I thought I'd play up by pretending to believe it, you know."

"You lying toad!" yelled Blake. "You were frightened out of your silly wits, and you know it."

Trimble laughed.

"My dear chaps, you couldn't take me in," he said. "Now let's have tea. I don't mind a joke, especially as the laugh is against you chaps. What have you got for tea?"

The chums of the Fourth looked expressively at Trimble.

The great scheme, after promising the most satisfactory results, had been a ghastly failure. Trimble was still fixed in the study, and the four juniors were the richer by two hundred lines each. Their feelings were almost too deep for words.

Blake proceeded in silence to clear the table, and the provisions were placed in the study cupboard—a proceeding that Trimble watched in astonishment.

Blake locked the cupboard door.

"I—I say, aren't you going to have tea?" demanded Trimble. "It's too late for tea in Hall, you know."

Blake did not speak. He grasped Trimble, and

jerked a key out of his waistcoat pocket. It was Trimble's duplicate key to the study cupboard.

"Come on, you chaps!" said Blake.

"What about tea?" said Herries.

"We're not going to have any tea."

"Look here, you know—" began Trimble, in dismay.

Blake led the way from the study, and his chums followed him.

Baggy Trimble remained alone, blinking at the bare table.

"Oh scissors!" he ejaculated.

"Well, what luck?" asked Monty Lowther, meeting the chums of the Fourth in the passage.

"Did you try the wheeze?"

Blake looked at him.

"Yes," he said sulphurously. "We tried it."

Lowther chuckled.

"What results?" he asked.

"Two hundred lines each."

"Oh!" ejaculated Lowther.

"But I think we ought to show our appreciation, all the same," said Blake. "Collar the silly ass!"

"Here, I say—"

Bump!

Study No. 6 went on their way, leaving Monty Lowther sitting on the floor and gasping.

Tom Merry and Manners looked inquiringly at Lowther when he came back into the Shell study. The humorist of the Shell was not looking humorous.

"Well, how did it go?" asked Tom Merry.

Monty Lowther snorted.

"If you ever find me helping Fourth Form kids out of a fix again, you can use my head as a football," he said. And Monty Lowther vouchsafed no further information.

CHAPTER 11.

Kindred Spirit!

"OH scissors!"

Baggy Trimble uttered that exclamation in disconsolate tones as he looked into Study No. 6 at tea-time, two or three days later.

The study was empty. The table was like the cupboard of the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard—quite bare.

Trimble crossed over to the cupboard.

The lock was broken. Trimble had been unable to obtain another key to fit the lock. But necessity is the parent of invention, and necessity knows no law. Trimble had opened the cupboard at last, with the assistance of a chisel from Blake's tool-chest.

The lock remained broken.

Blake & Co. had ceased to use the cupboard. Every day, and several times a day, Trimble prowled in the study in search of provender, like a lion seeking what he might devour. But there was nothing to devour.

Blake & Co. had taken to having their tea in Hall.

It was a great sacrifice, and they missed the cosy tea in Study No. 6. But they stuck to their guns.

It was the last desperate resource.

The chums of the Fourth had determined to starve Trimble out.

They missed tea in the study, but not quite as much as Trimble did.

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Trimble was accustomed to bagging the lion's share; but he had never made any contribution towards the study funds. It was no wonder that Study No. 6 had become fed-up.

He was still a member of the study that had barred him. But there was not much satisfaction in that, when there were no feeds in the study. Blake & Co. had even taken to doing their preparation in the Form-room, or in other fellows' studies. They were welcome in any study they chose, for that matter.

They, instead of Trimble, were without a study now. It was hard, but it was better than "digging" with Trimble. So the study was not only foodless, but fireless, for Trimble was far too much of a slacker to look after the fire himself.

Study No. 6 had become, in fact, a very comfortable abode. Trimble found it so. Excepting when he was in funds, he was driven to tea in Hall. Tea in Hall, certainly, was ample enough, but not ample enough for Trimble. The fare was good, but plain. And under Mr. Lathom's eye, Trimble could not overeat himself to the extent he would have liked.

Trimble was sometimes in funds; but his funds never lasted long. They all went the same way—to Mrs. Taggles' little shop in the corner of the quad. And Study No. 6, hitherto a horn of plenty, had run dry.

No wonder Trimble ejaculated, "Oh scissors!" in tones of profound discomfort, as he stared into the study he had rendered desolate.

He had already had tea in Hall, but he was far from satisfied. And his latest remittance had vanished. He scowled into the study and turned away.

In the next study Kerruish, Ray, and Reilly were at tea. They all looked round as the door opened, and Trimble's fat face looked in.

"Shut that door!" said Reilly.

Trimble came in and shut the door behind him. "Ye silly goosoon, put yerself on the other side of it," said Reilly.

"Look here, you know—"

"Are you going out on your feet, or on your neck?" exclaimed Kerruish.

"The fact is, I'm rather hard up," said Trimble. "But if you fellows like, I can put you on to a dodge for making pounds and pounds—"

"And phwat's the dodge, ye spalpeen?"

"It's a jolly good idea!" said Trimble eagerly.

"Having a flag day for the waifs and strays, and—"

Trimble had no time to get further.

Kerruish picked up the poker and made for him.

The door slammed, and Trimble's footsteps died away down the passage.

"Oh scissors!" groaned Trimble. "Oh dear! What the dickens am I going to do for tea? Rotters!"

He stopped at Study No. 8 and looked in.

Levison and Mellish were there. Lumley-Lumley, their studymate, was at tea in Tom Merry's study.

Trimble came in, and Levison and Mellish gave him unpleasant looks.

"Nothing doing!" said Levison at once.

"Nothing at all," said Mellish. "This isn't an institution for free feeds for the poor, you know."

Trimble blinked at them. The idea of a flag day, of which he was to pocket the proceeds, was still running in his mind. To do Trimble justice,

he was really too stupid to realise the dishonesty of his precious scheme. But, by a sort of instinct, he knew that Levison and Mellish were more likely to regard it favourably than the other fellows in the Fourth.

"I—I haven't come to tea, you know—" he began.

"Good-bye!"

"Still, I'll try that cake as I'm here—"

"Let that cake alone!" roared Levison.

Trimble jumped back in alarm.

"Oh, all right! Don't get ratty, you know! The fact is, I can put you fellows on to a dodge for making pounds and pounds."

"Whose pounds?" grinned Mellish.

"It's a simply ripping scheme. You see, we hold a flag day for the benefit of the waifs and strays, you know. Then we keep ninety per cent of the takings for expenses. Of course, we should have lots of expenses—time we put into it—and necessary refreshments, and all that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you think of the idea?"

"Rotten!" said Levison. "The fellows would all guess that we had an axe to grind, and they wouldn't shell out twopenny!"

"Yes, that's the worst of it," confessed Trimble.

"I wanted the fellows in my study to take it up, because they are trusted. But they won't, for some reason. D'Arcy actually said I was dishonest. Me, you know! I'd have knocked him down if he hadn't been such an old chum of mine."

Levison looked at him curiously.

"Still, we might try it," said Trimble. "I jolly nearly made a success of it when I tried it last time. It would have been all right, but for that beast Kildare! Besides, I've thought of a dodge. The chaps in my study were saying that Cousin Ethel is coming on Wednesday. Well, I'm going to ask her to help."

Levison jumped.

"Ask Cousin Ethel to help?" he ejaculated.

"Yes—why not? They generally have girls as collectors on flag days, you know. Pretty girls can collect lots of tin. I'm going to ask her. I don't think she'd refuse me," Trimble smirked. "I've got rather a way with girls, you know, and they generally like me no end."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see where the cackle comes in! If you fellows like to help me, we'll whack it out—pounds and pounds, very likely."

A thoughtful expression came over Levison's face. He was quite rascal enough to adopt Trimble's plan, if it promised any chance of success, and he had not the excuse of Trimble's stupidity.

Trimble's mention of Cousin Ethel had put a new thought into his mind. That D'Arcy's cousin would lend herself to such a scheme was, of course, impossible. Levison was not thinking of that; but a cunning idea was evidently working in his brain.

Mellish watched him curiously, wondering what rascally scheme was in the process of formation.

"By gad, it could be worked!" said Levison at last. "Three girls—collecting for the waifs and strays—good!"

"Three girls?" exclaimed Mellish.

"Yes. The fellows wouldn't hand us a cent, and Railton would be down on us, too. But three girls—"

"What girls?" demanded the puzzled Mellish.

"Us—in girls' clobber."

"Oh, my hat!"

"We could hire the clobber in Wayland," pursued Levison, evidently very much taken with the idea. "We could dress up there and make up our chivvies, and put on wigs. I'm a dab at that sort of thing, better than the silly asses in the Junior Dramatic Society, anyhow! I could work it; the fellows wouldn't know us from Adam! Oh, my hat! What a wheeze!"

"And suppose we get bowled out?" demanded Mellish.

"How could we get bowled out, fathead, when nobody would recognise us?" said Levison impatiently. "We're hard up, aren't we? I've been stony since Christmas—"

"The giddy geegees?" grinned Mellish.

"Well, I'm stony, and I owe some money I've got to pay pretty soon, or there'll be trouble. We might make quids out of it—a dozen quids, I shouldn't wonder!"

Mellish's eyes glittered greedily. He was impecunious, too, and the mere thought of a dozen "quids" roused all the cupidity in his nature.

"It could be worked," said Levison decidedly.



"Give him a whiff of gorgonzola—looks like we'll have to amputate!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to L. Arbuth, 163, Usher Road, Bow, London, E.3.

"We'll try it next half-holiday. If anything came out, we'd say it was a jape—"

"Oh, good!" said Mellish.

"Look here, you know, it's my idea!" said Trimble. "I should claim half the profits, you know, as originator—"

"Equal whacks," said Levison curtly. "And don't give me any of your rot. And mind you keep your silly head shut. If a whisper of it got out, the fellows would rag us baldheaded."

"That's all right," said Trimble. "I'm an awfully cautious chap. I say, this is a good cake!"

"Let that cake alone!"

"I suppose we're pals now," said Trimble, taking another slice of cake. "Upon the whole, Levison, I think I'll come into this study. I really can't stand those fellows in Study No. 6. They're not quite my class, really."

"You won't plant yourself in here, I can tell you that!" growled Levison.

"If we're not pals, Levison—"

"I don't pal with born idiots!"

"Oh, very well, you know! On second thoughts, I don't quite approve of this idea of disguising yourself as a girl and collecting funds. It seems to me to savour of deception."

"What!" ejaculated Levison.

"I'm a rather particular chap, you know."

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There are very few fellows in this school so particular as I am. Upon the whole, I don't think I could descend to it."

"You spoofing worm!" shouted Levison.

"If you call me names, Levison, I shall refuse to share this study with you. And I'm sorry to say that I feel in duty bound to ask advice about this scheme of yours."

"Of mine?" hooted Levison.

"Yes. If it's all right, all serene. But I feel bound to ask a prefect's advice about it."

Levison stared blankly at Trimble. He knew what would be the result if a prefect became acquainted with the precious scheme.

"You spoofing rotter!" said Levison, in measured tones. "If you say a word outside this study, I'll skin you!"

"Of course, I shouldn't say a word if I belonged to the study. Otherwise, I feel bound to ask a prefect's advice."

Levison set his thin lips tight. His mind was set on that cunning scheme, which promised relief from the financial troubles his own rascality had brought upon him. Trimble held the upper hand.

"You can move into the study if you like," he said.

"Good!" said Trimble cheerfully. "That's settled, then. When I've finished the cake, I'll go and speak to Railton."

"If you finish that cake, I'll—"

Levison picked up a toasting-fork.

Trimble eyed him grimly.

"I hope you won't force me to go to a prefect for advice about that scheme of yours, Levison."

Levison gritted his teeth and laid down the toasting-fork.

Trimble cheerfully finished the cake and rolled out of the study.

"Are we going to have that beast planted on us, then?" demanded Mellish.

"Can't be helped. I tell you there's quids and quids in this idea, if we work it properly. We can get rid of him afterwards," said Levison.

"They've been trying to get rid of him from Study No. 6, but he's a stickler!" grumbled Mellish.

"We'll get rid of him—fast enough when he's served our purpose!" snapped Levison. "Besides, he's no worse than that idiot Blenkinsop in this study. And Lumley-Lumley will be wild, too."

Mellish chuckled. The idea of making Lumley-Lumley wild reconciled him to the prospect of having Trimble in Study No. 8.

CHAPTER 12.

Luck at Last!

"COME in!" said Mr. Railton.

Trimble entered the Housemaster's study.

Mr. Railton looked a little impatient. He had heard enough of the troubles in Study No. 6. But as it happened, Trimble had not come with a complaint of his studymates.

"If you please, sir, can I change my study?" he asked.

Mr. Railton elevated his eyebrows.

"Certainly, Trimble, if you wish."

"I do wish, sir."

"Have your studymates been exerting any undue pressure upon you?" the Housemaster asked, frowning a little.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Trimble cheerily. "The

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fact is, Blake begged me to stay, almost with tears in his eyes, and D'Arcy's looking awfully down in the mouth about it. But I really can't stand those fellows, sir. I've been accustomed to very much nicer friends, and really—"

"Which study do you wish to enter, Trimble?" asked the Housemaster abruptly.

"Study No. 8, sir. I've got chums there, and they're anxious to have me."

Mr. Railton looked at the junior very doubtfully. He had had a wide experience of boys, but he had never encountered a fellow exactly like Trimble before, and the worthy Baggy puzzled him considerably.

"Very well, Trimble, you may change into Study No. 8."

"Thank you, sir."

Trimble retired from the study, grinning.

Blake & Co. were chatting with the Terrible Three in the Hall, and Trimble paused to address them.

He shook a podgy forefinger at Jack Blake.

"I'm done with you!" he announced.

"Are you?" said Blake. "I only wish we were done with you!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Trimble sniffed disdainfully.

"You won't see me in that mouldy old study again in a hurry!" he said. "I've got pals who want me to come into a better study than that—where fellows aren't so mean with their grub, either!"

"You're changing?" ejaculated Blake.

"Yes, I am!"

"Hurrah!"

"Hip, pip, huwvah!"

"And I shan't come back in a hurry, either!" said Trimble impressively. "I've stood you fellows long enough!"

"But who on earth's taking you in?" asked Tom Merry, in astonishment.

"I'm going to dig with my chum Levison!" said Trimble loftily.

"Levison! My hat!"

"What's Levison's little game?" exclaimed Blake, puzzled. "You haven't any money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I expect to have plenty of money shortly!" said Trimble, with a sniff.

"Some of those enormous loans you've made coming home?" asked Monty Lowther, with a chuckle.

"You'll see. Pounds and pounds, I expect," said Trimble; "and I warn you plainly that you're not going to have any of it!"

"Weally, you wottah—"

"You've treated me rottenly because I happen to be short of money sometimes, owing to my own free-handed generosity. Well, when I'm rolling in oof, you won't see any of it, so you can take my tip about that!"

"Who are you going to rob?" asked Manners blandly.

"I know what I'm going to do," said Trimble mysteriously. "It may be connected with a flag day, and it may not. That's telling. It may amount to dozens of quids, or it may not. I'm not telling you anything."

"So it's the same old swindle?" exclaimed Blake. "I warn you that if you start any of your blessed flag days again, you'll get it in the neck!"

"That's all you know!" chuckled Trimble. "I'm not going to tell you anything. We may get in dozens of quids on Wednesday afternoon, or we may not. It's my business, not yours!"

"And Levison's in it, is he?" said Tom Merry.

"He's having you in his study because he's going to be a partner in your spoofing?"

"I'm not going to tell you anything. I've promised Levison not to say a word outside the study—my study—and I'm not going to. I'm rather particular about a promise. Not like some chaps."

"You fat idiot——"

"You needn't call me names because I won't stay in the study with you, Blake. You can't expect it after the way I've been treated there."

"Look here, you duffah——"

"I decline to listen to you, D'Arcy. You should have thought of all that before. Now it's too late."

"You uttiah ass——"

"'Nuff said!" said Trimble, with a lofty wave of the hand. "Once and for all, I've done with

"My only Aunt Semphronia!" ejaculated Blake at last. "That fellow does take the cake! Did you ever hear of such a blithering idiot? But he's out of the study; we're done with him, and that's a comfort. My hat, we'll celebrate this!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Looks as if Levison has taken up his idea of a swindle," said Digby. "It ought to be stopped."

"It jolly well will be stopped!" said Tom Merry, frowning. "Let me catch 'em flagging!"

"Levison isn't such an ass," said Lowther. "He knows he would be stopped. If he's taken up the wheeze, he's got something awfully deep on hand. He ought to be watched."

"We'll keep an eye on him, deah boy, and fwustwate his knavish twicks!" said Arthur Augustus. "But isn't it wippin' to have no more Twimble? Study No. 6 will be like home again."



"You will kindly not address me again," said Trimble. "I regard you as stingy. For the future I shall decline to take the slightest notice of any of you!" And the fat junior walked away with his pug-nose in the air, leaving the chums of Study 6 gasping.

you! I've shaken the dust of Study No. 6 from my feet, metaphorically speaking! I shouldn't come back if you begged me on your bended knees!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will kindly not address me again!" pursued Trimble, still more firmly mounted on the high horse. "I decline to know you! I regard you as mean—stingy, in fact! For the future I shall decline to take the slightest notice of any of you!"

Trimble walked away, with his pug-nose in the air, leaving the chums of Study No. 6 simply gasping.

The Terrible Three chuckled joyously.

Trimble's farewell to the study struck them as funny.

It is vewy fortunate that I have had a wemittance to-day. Gentlemen, may I request the pleasuah of your company in the study to a little celebration in honah of Twimble's departuah?"

And all the gentlemen said enthusiastically:

"Hear, hear!"

CHAPTER 13.

Flag Day!

LEVISON of the Fourth received many curious glances from the chums of the School House during the next day or two.

That the rascal of the Fourth had some scheme on foot, they were assured. Baggy Trimble's

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fatuous remarks had revealed as much; and, besides, they knew that Levison would not have taken in Trimble as a studymate without an object.

But that so cute and astute a youth as Levison would take up Trimble's absurd idea of a "spoof" flag day seemed incredible. Baggy himself had made a ghastly failure of it, and Levison would know that it was no use.

It was impossible to guess what Ernest Levison had in his mind—but whatever it was, Tom Merry & Co. were prepared to nip it in the bud.

Meanwhile, Trimble was installed in Study No. 8.

Levison and Mellish, who were very keen on the new scheme, received him there with a good grace. Lumley-Lumley was not quite so gracious. In fact, he was wrathful when he found that Baggy was his new studymate. But he was out-voted on the subject, and Trimble was there, anyway.

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders and put up with him. He steadily declined to lend him any money, much to the disappointment of Trimble, who knew that Lumley-Lumley was a millionaire's son, and had expected quite a harvest.

Trimble passed Study No. 6 with nose upturned; he was quite at home now in Study No. 8—at least, till Wednesday. And if after that Levison should seek to get rid of him, he was likely to discover, as Blake had discovered, that Trimble was a stickler.

Certainly Trimble had no chance of getting back into Study No. 6. Blake & Co. were extremely determined on that. They had not been able to get rid of the intruder; but now that he had gone of his own accord, they were quite within their rights in keeping him out. If Trimble had presented himself in Study No. 6 he would have had the warmest of warm receptions.

But Trimble was quite comfortable at present with Levison and Mellish.

He did not find these youths quite so indifferent to considerations of a financial nature as Blake & Co. had been. The first time he presented himself at tea in the study, he was met with a demand for his "whack."

Trimble explained that he was short of money, and would pay his whack when he had collected in certain loans, which his generosity had led him to make to certain persons unknown.

Levison and Mellish had heard of those loans before, and they informed Trimble that they weren't taking any.

To which the podgy junior rejoined that his conscience was troubling him a little on the subject of the precious flag day scheme, and that he really felt that he had better have a prefect's advice about it.

With the result that Trimble was given the free run of the tea-table, as the only way to keep his mouth shut—Levison mentally promising him all sorts of things at a more convenient time.

Lumley-Lumley was not often in the study, as he did not pull with his studymates, and the precious trio generally had the room to themselves. They discussed the flag day with great keenness, and Levison went ahead with the preparations.

The rascal of the Fourth had planned the scheme carefully from beginning to end. On Tuesday, after lessons, he conveyed a bag to a secluded spot in Rylcombe Wood, all ready for the imposture on Wednesday afternoon.

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As it happened, Tom Merry & Co. had little attention to bestow on Levison on Wednesday, as Cousin Ethel was expected.

D'Arcy's cousin was coming on a visit to Mrs. Holmes, and, of course, there was to be tea in Study No. 6, and the chums of the School House congratulated themselves on having rid that famous apartment of its bugbear before Ethel's visit.

Early after dinner on Wednesday, Arthur Augustus appeared on the steps of the School House in his best tie and glossiest topper. His chums joined him there, to walk to the station.

Figgins came over from the New House, with a gorgeous necktie and a topper, to be greeted by a somewhat frigid glance from Arthur Augustus, which Figgins did not appear to notice.

"All ready?" he asked cheerily.

"Ready, ay, ready!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Lots of time to walk to the station. Come on!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Come on, my infant!" said Blake jovially, slapping Arthur Augustus on the back.

"Wow! You wuff ass, you're wumplin' my jacket!"

"You're keeping us waiting, Gussy. Put that pocket-mirror away and trot!" said Blake severely. "You look beautiful—a thing of beauty and a joy for ever."

"Wats!"

And the party started.

Levison, Mellish, and Trimble were going out of the gates together as Tom Merry & Co. came down.

Trimble glanced at them and chuckled.

"You fellows going out?" he asked.

"Yes," said Blake, quite amiably. He could feel quite amiably to Baggy, now that Baggy was no longer desecrating Study No. 6 with his obnoxious presence.

"Coming back soon?" asked Trimble anxiously.

"Yes; why?"

"You mustn't miss the—yow-ow! Leggo my arm, Levison; you're pinching me!" howled Trimble.

"Come on, you fathead!"

"I was only going to tell Blake not to miss the—yarrooh! All right, I'm coming!"

And Trimble went.

"What the merry thunder does that mean?" ejaculated Blake, gazing after the three in wonder.

"Trimble was going to let something out," grinned Lowther. "Levison shut him up fast enough. There's some game on this afternoon."

"Can't be that giddy flag day; they're going out."

"Goodness knows!"

Tom Merry & Co. sauntered down the lane.

Levison, Mellish, and Trimble were ahead of them, on the way to the village. They turned off into the wood, however, and disappeared from sight.

The chums of St. Jim's arrived at the station in good time for the train. They soon forgot about Levison & Co.

"Here's the twain, deah boys!"

There was a rush across the platform to the carriage from which a pretty, girlish face looked out.

"Here you are, deah gal!"

It was Figgins who helped Cousin Ethel to alight. Figgins always seemed to be first on these occasions.

Ethel gave the juniors a bright smile.

"How good of you to come and meet me!"

"Wats! I—I mean, don't mensh, deah girl!" said Arthur Augustus. "Awfully glad to see you. I will cawwy that bag, Figgins."

"It's all right," said Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

Figgins settled the matter by marching off with the bag.

Cousin Ethel left the station with the juniors; D'Arcy remarking to Blake in a sulphurous whisper that that boulder Figgins always seemed to regard Ethel as his cousin, and not D'Arcy's at all—a remark which caused Jack Blake to chuckle.

It was a clear, cold afternoon, delightful for a walk.

Cousin Ethel & Co. started for the school in great spirits.

As they arrived at the gates of St. Jim's they met with a surprise.

Taggles, the porter, had come out of his lodge, and he was regarding, with a most peculiar expression, three young ladies.

Tom Merry & Co. paused to regard them, also.

The three young ladies had evidently just arrived. They were somewhat short and stout, and had heavy features for the feminine gender. Their complexions were high, and their hair golden, and short, and fluffy. They were dressed in frocks of quiet colours. Each of them had a tray, which was loaded with flags.

"Hallo!" said Blake. "There's going to be a flag day for the waifs and strays, after all!"

"Bai Jove!"

"What a good idea to make a collection at the school!" said Cousin Ethel brightly. "I will buy a flag to begin."

"Yaas, wathah! We'll all do the same."

The three young ladies were deeply veiled, though their florid complexions showed through the veiling.

One of them, much fatter than the others, emitted a fat chuckle as the juniors came up.

One of the others stamped on her foot, and the chuckle changed into a gasp.

"I s'pose there ain't nothin' agin it!" said Taggles, rubbing his nose perplexedly. "I don't bolder with these 'ere flag days myself. And you'd better ask the 'Ead!"

"Don't you worry," said the thinnest young lady. "Your Head won't object to us selling flags for the waifs and strays."

"Don't know what you mean with your wasting trays, ma'am," said Taggles. "But you can go in. Only ask the 'Ead's permission."

"Thanks."

"All right!" said Taggles. "In you go!"

"Hold on, miss," said Tom Merry. "May we have some of the flags?"

"Yes, sir. One shilling each, and all the money is to go to the waifs and strays."

"Right-ho!"

The whole Co. purchased flags, including Cousin Ethel, and then walked on into the quadrangle.

The sight of the three beflagged young ladies attracted general attention at once, and they were soon surrounded by a crowd in the old quad. And business was brisk.

CHAPTER 14.

Nipped in the Bud!

Cousin Ethel took leave of her chums on the steps of the Head's house, after promising to come to tea in Study No. 6.

Blake generously invited Figgins to come, and bring Kerr and Fatty Wynn, a generous invitation, for which Figgy gave him a deeply grateful look, though it was not the feed George Figgins was thinking of.

"Somethin' wathah extwa-special!" Arthur Augustus remarked, as they walked away from the Head's house. "We must do honah to the occasion, deah boys. How awfully lucky that Twimble is out of the study—what?"

"Awfully!" said the chums.

Tom Merry chuckled.

"It will be rather a surprise to Trimble & Co. to find a flag day going on, when they come in!" he remarked. "The girls are doing a jolly good trade."

"Yaas, wathah! It's a good cause, you know."

"What are you looking like a boiled owl for, Monty?" asked Tom Merry.

Monty Lowther seemed plunged in thought.

Manners slapped him on the back.

"Wake up, fathead!"

"Yow-ow!" Monty Lowther came out of his deep reverie. "I say, you chaps, doesn't this look rather suspicious?"

"What does?" asked Tom Merry, puzzled.

"To-day's Wednesday—"

"Yes, it's in the calendar," assented Blake.

"Don't be funny! It was on Wednesday, according to that babbling ass Trimble, that Levison was going to work that flag day wheeze."

"He's dropped it," said Manners. "The three of them went out before we did, and I don't see them about now."

"Sure you don't?" asked Lowther.

Manners looked round the quadrangle.

"They're not here," he said. "They may be indoors. What are you getting at, Monty?"

"I told you that if Levison took up that swindling scheme, he would work it in some awfully deep way, so that he could be spotted!" said Lowther.

"But he hasn't done it!"

"That's what we're jolly well going to find out," said Lowther. "I've got my suspicions—tons of them! Look at that fat girl's feet!"

"Lowthah, it is uttaly bad form to allude to a lady in that mannah!"

"Go hon! But look at her feet! Aren't they a size?"

"I wefuse to look at her feet!"

"They're a good size, certainly!" assented Blake, in wonder.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Taggles told them to ask the Head's permission to make the collection," said Monty Lowther, "but they haven't done so."

"It is weally quite unnecessawy, Lowthah!"

"Bow-wow! Let's go and have a look at them!"

Lowther walked towards the three flag-sellers, and his chums followed him in astonishment.

Tom Merry & Co. were quite prepared to stop any flag-selling by Levison & Co., but, so far as they could see, the three precious young rascals were not within the school walls at that moment.

Lowther stopped in front of the fattest young lady and looked at her.

"Take off that veil, Trimble!" he said, with a grin.

"Oh dear! I'm not Trimble!"

"What?"

"I—I assure you that I'm not Trimble!" yelled the fat young lady, as the juniors closed round her. "I've never heard the name before. Look here, Lowther, you know——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Baj Jove! It's Twimble."

"Trimble, you spoofing cad!"

"I'm not!" shrieked the flag-seller.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm Levison's sister—I mean, I'm her sister and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You swindling young villain!"

"Collar them!"

Crash went the tray of flags to the ground.

Two of the flag-sellers started to run, but they were promptly collared.

Many hands dragged off the veils. High-complexioned faces were revealed, and so skilfully was the make-up applied, that even then it was impossible to recognise the impostors.

But a jerk at the fluffy hair settled the matter.

Three wigs came off, revealing three heads of short, dark hair.

"Gwreat Scott! The swindlahs! So that was Levison's ideah!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Wag the wottahs!"

"Bump them!"

"Oh dear! Look here, you know, it's only a joke!" shrieked Trimble. "It was Levison's idea, and I never meant to keep any of the money. I hadn't the faintest idea of making pounds and pounds. Ow-wow!"

"Leggo!" roared Levison, struggling in the grasp of Reilly, Kerruish, and Figgins. "Hands off, you duffers! Yow-ow-ow!"

For Next Wednesday

"TOM MERRY EXPELLED!"

By Martin Clifford

A powerful long complete yarn in which Tom finds himself in the shadow of disgrace—thanks to Baggy Trimble!

"BURNT OUT OF SCHOOL!"

By Frank Richards

What will happen to the Greyfriars Remove, who have been burnt out of their quarters by the disastrous fire? Don't miss the fun and excitement in this gripping yarn.

"How's Your Luck This Week?"—Monty Lowther's latest jokes and wise-cracks, another full - of - hints stamp article, and Pen Pals and illustrated jokes complete this ripping number.

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"Let me go!" raved Mellish. "Only a joke. Yarooop!"

Bump, bump, bump!

"What is all this?" Mr. Railton came striding through the crowd with a frowning brow. "How dare you touch these young ladies? Why, bless my soul, who—who are they—what are they?"

"Yow-ow-ow! Only a joke!" yelled Trimble.

"I meant to pay up every penny, excepting my expenses—I mean, including my expenses. Yaroooh!"

"Trimble!" exclaimed the astounded Housemaster.

"Oh, no, sir, I'm not Trimble, and those chaps aren't Levison and Mellish."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Trimble, Levison, Mellish, what does this ridiculous masquerade mean?" demanded the Housemaster sternly.

Levison pulled himself together. His heart was black with rage, but there was danger of expulsion looming before him, and he had need of all his wits.

"If—if you please, sir——" he stammered.

"It was Levison's idea," whined Mellish. "I—I never meant——"

"Levison, explain yourself at once!"

"Certainly sir!" The rascal of the Fourth was quite cool now. "It was my idea, sir, to hold a flag day in aid of the waifs and strays. As it was a very good cause, we—we felt that it would be all right."

"And you intended to forward all the money you collected to the proper quarter, Levison?" asked Mr. Railton, with a very searching glance at Levison's made-up face.

"Certainly, sir," said Levison promptly. "I hope I am honest."

Mr. Railton coughed.

"I hope so, Levison. I will take your word for it, as I should be very sorry to think that a St. Jim's boy could be guilty of the detestable dishonesty of keeping money collected for a charitable purpose. Understand, however, that you are not allowed to play such tricks, and each of you will take five hundred lines. The money you have collected may be brought to my study, and I will see that it is dispatched to the proper quarter. You will be expected to account for every farthing. Follow me!"

With feelings too deep for words, Levison & Co. followed the Housemaster to his study.

Flag day at St. Jim's had begun and ended, and it was likely to be a long time before Levison & Co. started another.

"The awful wascals!" said Arthur Augustus, with a deep breath. "They were goin' to keep the tin, you know. It's howwid, but I am sure it is the case."

"Go hou!" grinned Blake.

"I don't think there'll be any more flag days in a hurry," chuckled Monty Lowther, "and, but for your Uncle Monty, they'd have made a regular harvest. Gentlemen, I suggest a vote of thanks to Montague Lowther, my esteemed self! Passed unanimously—good! Gentlemen, I thank you!"

A couple of hours later, there was a merry tea-party in Study No. 6—Cousin Ethel, and all the Co.

The door opened to reveal the fat and insinuating countenance of Baggy Trimble.

(Continued on page 36.)



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging views on matters of mutual interest. Readers wishing to reply to notices published here must write to the *Pen Pals* direct. Notices for publication should be accompanied by the coupon on this page, and posted to The GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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PEN PALS COUPON

1-1-38

A DISASTROUS FIRE MARKS THE OPENING OF THE NEW TERM AT GREYFRIARS—AND IT'S ALL BUNTER'S FAULT!

The Great Fire at Greyfriars!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

Reprint from Magnet

No 48 (1909)

Back to School!

THERE were faces at all the windows in the train and a deafening din proceeding from most of the carriages. The express swept on through a snowy landscape, leaving a trail of black smoke and an echo of shouting voices behind.

The boys of Greyfriars School were returning after the Christmas vacation, and the special train was crammed from end to end. Although by no means glad that the holidays were over, the train-load of juniors seemed in high spirits, and they were celebrating their return to the old school in the most vociferous way possible.

From one carriage especially the din was terrific. It was a carriage occupied by fellows belonging to the Remove—the Lower Fourth Form. The Removites of Greyfriars generally made their presence heard wherever they were, but on the present occasion they were excelling themselves.

The carriage was crammed. Every seat was taken, and fellows were standing at the windows or sitting on one another's knees.

Frank Nugent was playing the "Grand March" from "Tannhauser" on his mouth-organ. The effect, from a musical point of view, was somewhat spoiled by the fact that Bob Cherry was whistling a jazz tune at the same time. Bulstrode, Skinner, and Stott were telling some unknown person, at the full force of their lungs, to love them, and the world was theirs.

Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, was singing a song in Chinese, which had an apparently endless refrain of "Ko, ke, ko, ke, ko, ke, ko, ke!"—or something that sounded like that. Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Hindu junior, not to be outdone, had burst into an unintelligible melody celebrating the heroic deeds of Rama, in a language known only to himself. Harry Wharton was almost the only one who was not singing something, and he was stopping his ears.

"Hold on, you chaps!" exclaimed Nugent, suddenly breaking off his stirring march. "You're offside! Can't you keep quiet and listen to the music?"

"That's what we want to do," said Bulstrode. "I wish you'd shut up that unearthly instrument. Go it, Skinny! Buck up, Stott! 'Lo-o-ve me, and the world is mine!'"

"I say, Bob, old chap, do back-pedal with that whistling!"

"Rats! I must whistle something, or I shall hear Bulstrode sing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, from his corner, where he was eating sandwiches at express speed—"I say, if you'd like to shut up that row—"

"Don't interrupt! Go it, Skinny!"

"But, I say, you fellows, if you'll shut up, I'll give you a little ventriloquial entertainment till we get to Friardale! I can throw my voice—"

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"I wish you could throw Bulstrode's voice!" said Bob Cherry. "I'd get you to throw it out of the window!"

Bulstrode broke off again to glare at Bob Cherry.

"What's that, Cherry? What's the matter with my voice?"

"Blessed if I know, but it must be something serious, to judge by the sound!" said Bob cheerfully.

"If you're looking for a thick ear—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Friardale!"

The little country station was in sight. Some of the singers and players stopped their performances, but others kept on merrily, and the train swung into the station with a roar of mingled melodies. Before the train had stopped the doors were flying open, and juniors were jumping out. Bulstrode was the first, and he stumbled on the platform, rolled over, brought up against a trolley, and gave a yell.

"Yaroor!"

There was no sympathy for Bulstrode; only a yell of laughter followed him from the carriage. The juniors poured out, and the long wooden platform was alive with boys in a few seconds.

Bob Cherry thumped the sleepy Friardale porter on the back.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! How are you, Freddy? How is Mrs. Fred and all the little Freddiees?"

The porter grinned. His name was not Freddie, and he was a bachelor, but Bob was disposed to be humorous. But on the first day of the term there was a regular harvest of tips at the station, and the porter was all smiles. There was a terrific bumping of luggage on the platform, but the Removites paid no attention to that. They knew their luggage would be sent on without trouble for them.

Harry Wharton & Co. linked arms and marched along the platform, clearing a way through the crowd by the sheer force of their shoving. They were not in any particular hurry, but they were in high spirits, and so they shoved their way along, cheerfully disregarding loud objections on the part of the shoved.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Dab," said Bob Cherry—"Temple and Dab and little Fry! Shove them along!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth had stepped out of a first-class carriage, and Temple was arranging his necktie by the aid of a pocket mirror held by Dabney. The heroes of the Upper Fourth were somewhat particular in their persons, and they usually held themselves up as shining examples to the rowdy Remove.

Consequently, Bob Cherry's suggestion was hailed with delight by the Removites. Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, and Hurree Singh marched on with linked arms and the force of a steam-roller, charged into the Upper Fourth trio, and bumped them over.

Temple, Dabney & Co. went down helplessly and

CUT OFF BY A BURNING BARRICADE, HARRY WHARTON IS FACED WITH A PERILOUS CLIMB TO SAVE THE HEAD'S DAUGHTER!

sprawled on the platform, and they were very dusty and dishevelled when the Removites had passed. The pocket mirror was in fragments, and Temple's necktie was hanging out over his crumpled jacket.

Temple sprang to his feet in a rage.

"You young rotters!" he roared. "I'll—"

"Oh, rather!" gasped Dabney.

But the four Removites were gone. They tackled the crowd on the platform like Rugby forwards in a scrum. Fellows who got in the way went sprawling on the platform, and the Famous Four went marching on.

Near the exit was a thick crowd, with some big Fifth Form fellows in it. The Remove usually reserved their favours for the Upper Fourth, and let the Fifth alone. A senior Form was a little too strong for them to tackle. But on the opening day of the term they were capable of anything.

"Right on!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Right-ho! Here goes! Shove!"

"The shovefulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And they shoved.

"Look out!" roared Blandell of the Fifth.

"You cheeky young beggars! Where are you shoving—eh?"

"Keep off, you sweeps!" yelled Bland.

"Shove!" said Wharton tensely.

And they shoved again. And Blandell went one way and Bland another, and a couple more fellows rolled on the planks, and the Famous Four squeezed through.

"The cheek!" gasped Blandell.

"The nerve!" howled Bland.

But the Famous Four were through and marching on, laughing heartily. They came out of the

station into the street, where the snow was thick on the ground, and feathery flakes were still lightly falling. The school bus was waiting, with the driver in his seat.

"Bag the upstairs seats!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

The school bus had accommodation upstairs as well as inside. The Famous Four captured the front seats on top. Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad, was the next out of the station, and he joined them up there. Harry Wharton leaned out of the window, waved his cap, and shouted:

"Buck up, Remove!"

And Removites came scrambling on the bus from all sides. They were first, and the top of the bus was soon crammed with juniors, while the more slow and stately Fifth and Sixth Formers occupied the seats inside. Most of the fellows preferred to walk, as the school bus had to make four journeys at least to and fro to get the whole lot to Greyfriars.

Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, looked up at the crammed top, with a grin.

"You cheeky young beggars!"

"There's room for you, Wingate!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"No, thanks! I'll walk!"

"Here, make room for seniors!" called out Carberry, the prefect, coming out of the station. "Get down, some of you cheeky young sweeps! Do you hear?"

"Get off, Jim," said the conductor to the driver. "The bus is full now."

"Stop! Get off, you young rotters!" howled Carberry.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Wingate. "Why can't



With fast-beating hearts, the juniors in the Close watched anxiously as Harry Wharton, with the Head's daughter in his arms, edged his way along the narrow stone ledge. Behind him a volume of flame and smoke rolled from the window he had just left!

you let them alone? They bagged the places first."

"I suppose the kids have got to make way for a prefect?" snarled Carberry.

"Rats! What's the matter with walking?"

"I'm not going to walk! I—"

Wingate shrugged his shoulders. He did not mean to interfere. The bus was already moving, and Carberry ran after it, yelling to the conductor to stop. But the conductor made it a point not to hear him.

"Stop, you scoundrel—stop! Do you hear? I— Yarooogh!"

Carberry broke off and gave a yell as he slipped in the snow and fell headlong, burying his nose in the snow.

A yell of laughter rang from the bus, and the last the juniors saw of the prefect he was sitting up in the snow, shaking his fist.

First Day of Term!

"H A, ha, ha!"

The shouts of boyish laughter rang merrily through the crisp winter air.

The bus was crammed inside and out, and the vehicle rolled swiftly on through the snowy lane to Greyfriars.

A little fat gentleman with a good-natured German face was walking along the lane, and the bus overtook him. He glanced up and smiled at the Greyfriars juniors, and hats were swept off in a salute to Herr Rosenblum.

Herr Rosenblum was the headmaster of the New Academy—Greyfriars' closest neighbour—where the sons of foreigners resident in England were instructed.

Herr Rosenblum was very popular at Greyfriars, where he had once been the German master, and the rivalry that existed between the Greyfriars juniors and the "aliens" did not make any difference to the respect the "Friars" felt for the German master.

The bus rolled on, and the little fat gentleman disappeared behind. He had evidently lately arrived at the station, and was walking to the New Academy. The foreign boys did not commence their term till the next day, Herr Rosenblum having thoughtfully made that arrangement when he opened the New Academy. Had the aliens opened on the same day as the British school, and arrived at Friardale at the same time, it is pretty certain that riots would have been the result. There were rows enough already.

The tower of Greyfriars loomed up, white with snow, in the distance over the leafless trees.

"There's Greyfriars!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!"

"Here we are again!" grinned Nugent. "Same old spot! Same old Gosling, with the same old red nose!"

Gosling, the porter, was looking out of the gates, not with a pleasant expression on his face. The opening of the new term meant to him renewed work, and Gosling did not love work. His nose was certainly very red, but it might have been with the cold—though it probably wasn't.

The bus rolled up to the ancient gateway and rolled in, and the juniors saluted Gosling with more or less politeness.

"Oh, Gossy, Gossy!" said Bob Cherry sadly. "Didn't I warn you when we broke up to leave that bottle on the mantelpiece alone?"

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"I'm shocked at you, Gossy!" said Nugent solemnly.

"The shockfulness is terrific!"

"Me shockee allee samee," murmured Wun Lung. "Me tinkee Gossee velly naughty!"

"Young himps!" said Gosling. "Why they don't make a law to 'ave all boys drowned at birth puzzles me!"

The juniors alighted from the bus. The old Close was white with snow, and the snow lay thick in a white mantle on the roofs and walls and chimneys. The juniors stamped their feet to keep them warm. The bus driver turned the bus round and drove back to the station for the next load. The Removeites poured into the school, and awoke a thousand echoes in deserted rooms and corridors with their shouts.

"I say, you fellows," exclaimed Billy Bunter, "I find that dinner won't be ready for a quarter of an hour!"

"Horrid!"

"Hadh't we better have a feed? Mrs. Mimble has her shop open, and she's got a ripping lot of new grub there!"

"Certainly! Come on, you chaps—Bunter is standing a feed to celebrate the new term."

"Oh, don't be funny, Cherry! Of course, you fellows will have to stand the feed! I should be very glad to do so, but I've been disappointed about a postal order. I expected to find some remittances here waiting for me, but there seems to have been some delay in the post. This has happened to me before."

"Ha, ha! More than once, I think!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at, though! Are you going to stand a feed?"

"Yes; when I grow up and get rich. At present the dinner Mrs. Kebble is getting ready will do for me," said Bob Cherry.

"I don't like a fellow to be mean. I don't see why you chaps can't stand—"

"There's one thing we can't stand, Bunt, and that's you! Buzz off!"

"Oh, really, Cherry?"

Bob Cherry took Billy Bunter by the shoulders, turned him gently round, and helped him to start with his knee. Bunter started.

"Let's go and have a look at the study!" suggested Nugent. And the chums of the Remove went upstairs to Study No. 1.

They were glad to see their old quarters again. Their vacation at Harry Wharton's home had been a jolly one, but they had had many merry times in Study No. 1 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

There was coal in the locker and the fire was laid. Mrs. Kebble, the housekeeper, saw to the comforts of the juniors—or, at least, to those of the juniors whom she liked. The room looked very neat after the cleaning given it lately, and the chums of the Remove glanced round it with considerable satisfaction.

"Ripping!" said Nugent. "I can't say I'm sorry to get back again. We shall want a new square of carpet this term."

Wharton nodded thoughtfully.

"Yes, I thought of that when we broke up. This carpet has never really looked decent since the whitewash pail was spilt on it. I asked my aunt about it, and she's going to send a square from Wharton Lodge."

"Good! That will come cheaper," grinned Bob Cherry. "I think there's something in Bunter's idea of standing a feed—though not ten minutes

before dinner. There isn't much work this afternoon, and it's jolly hungry weather. Suppose we do some shopping after dinner, and have a good feed about tea-time? Bunter can cook it for us, while we have a run in the Close."

"Good!"

Dinner was taken in the great hall at Greyfriars. Half the school was there; but on the opening day of the term, dinner was a meal almost indefinitely prolonged, and latecomers found plenty of food left.

Billy Bunter enjoyed that dinner. He was first at the table and last to leave it, and he was eating most of the time. There was a shiny smile of satisfaction on his fat face when he left the hall at last.

There was little more than a pretence at work on the opening day of the term—only a little preparation, ready for work which would begin in real earnest on the following day. But masters and pupils had plenty to do in getting settled once more in their old quarters.

Billy Bunter hailed with delight the idea of a feed in Study No. 1. He suggested that it should be something on a rather grander scale than usual, and generously offered to do all the shopping and all the cooking.

"Well, we want it to be rather ripping," Nugent remarked. "We'll come with you and do the shopping, Bunt."

"I could manage it alone, Nugent. I don't want you fellows to be put to any trouble in the matter," said Bunter.

"You're too kind, Bunter. But if you do the shopping alone, I'm afraid you'll have so many snacks that there won't be any feed left!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"So come on, and don't jaw, old chap!"

The Famous Four paid a visit to Mrs. Mimble in force. They were overflowing with pocket-money at the beginning of the term, and their purchases were generous. Billy Bunter's fat face beamed as the pile of goods mounted up, and the five juniors were all laden when they left the school shop.

"Hallo, starting in the grocery and provision line?" asked Hazeldene, meeting the chums as they came upstairs.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No; we're having a feed. Will you come?"

"Yes, rather!"

Before they reached the study, Harry had asked Ogilvy and Desmond, who both accepted. Bunter pulled his sleeve as they went in.

"I say, Wharton, I like to be generous, but you needn't ask all the Remove, you know. We want the grub to go round."

"Why, you young cormorant, we've got enough here for fifteen or sixteen fellows!" exclaimed Harry.

"Yes, but there's supper to-night."

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I'm going to ask two or three more fellows."

Bunter blinked disapprovingly, but he knew that it was useless to argue with Harry. He opened the parcels and prepared to do the cooking, while the chums of the Remove went to make up their list of guests.

They looked in at Russell's study to ask Wun Lung the Chinese, and as Russell was there, they asked him, too. They met Mark Linley in the hall, and asked him, and the Lancashire lad willingly accepted. But as they walked on,

Linley came quickly after Wharton and tapped him on the arm. Harry stopped, with a smile.

"Excuse me, Wharton!" Linley was very red. "I—I'm awfully obliged to you for your invitation, but I—I—"

"Don't you want to come?"

"Yes, of course. But—well, you know that some of the Remove fellows have made a set against me because I came to Greyfriars with a scholarship and used to work in a mill."

"I understand you, Linley, but it's all right. You'll be guest in Study No. 1, and I wouldn't ask anybody to meet you who couldn't be relied upon to behave himself."

"Well, I—I thought I'd speak—"

"That's all right—it's all serene."

And when the little party of invited guests gathered to march into Study No. 1, Mark Linley was among them. He was looked at rather curiously. Most of the Remove wondered why Wharton had taken him up. But as a matter of fact, Mark's quiet, pleasant ways were already winning him friends in the Remove.

Wharton came along the passage and found his guests arriving. He joined them with a cheery smile.

"Come along, you chaps—it's close on feeding-time!"

"My hat," said Russell, "there's a jolly strong niff coming from your study! Your chef is burning the grub."

Harry Wharton sniffed. There was a strong smell of burning proceeding from Study No. 1. Wharton looked in at the door.

Billy Bunter—in his shirt-sleeves, with an apron round him—was hard at work. The grate was crammed with coal, and a fire was roaring half-way up the chimney. Bunter's fat face was streaming with perspiration. He had a frying-pan in one hand and a fork in the other, and on the fire was a rasher of bacon which had apparently escaped from the pan.

"Phew!" said Hazeldene.

Billy Bunter turned round.

"Don't come in yet, you fellows. The feed's not ready, and I'm busy!"

"You look it," said Mark Linley, smiling.

"I can't do everything at once, you know. I'm cooking bacon and sausages, and frying potatoes, and boiling the kettle and warming the rabbit pie. Run away for another ten minutes."

"Don't have such a big fire, Bunter," said Harry Wharton anxiously. "It's dangerous, you know. We shall get into a row if the chimney catches!"

"I'm going to let it down when the cooking's done."

The juniors left the study, and Billy Bunter went on with his herculean labours. A childish voice called out to Harry Wharton, and he stopped and looked round.

Bunter Causes a Catastrophe!

"MISS MOLLY!"

Harry Wharton greeted the little girl with a smile. It was the Head's little daughter, Molly Locke, a great favourite with the Greyfriars juniors. Miss Molly was only eight years old, though she sometimes had a grave and serious manner that seemed more suitable to a lady of sixty or so.

"I want you to help me," said Miss Molly.

Harry Wharton smiled.

"What can I do for you, Molly?"

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"Look!" The child held up a broken doll. "Will you mend her?"

Wharton took the doll doubtfully. It had evidently suffered from a severe fall, and the china head was smashed. The face was missing, and the neck was cracked, and the hair hung by a little bit of glue.

"I'm afraid it's rather far gone, Molly," said Harry. "You see, there's a lot of it missing."

"I've got the pieces," said Molly promptly; and she showed a chubby little fist full of fragments of china. "You stick them together again. Daddy said he could not stick them; I thought you could."

Harry Wharton smiled at the idea of the grave and reverend Head of Greyfriars sticking the shattered face together again.

"I'll do my best," he said. "But you mustn't expect much, Molly. You'll hardly know your dolly again."

"You stick it with glue," said Miss Molly. "It will be all right if you stick it with glue."

"It's rather badly broken."

"Yes, but you can stick it with glue."

Miss Molly evidently had an exaggerated idea of the efficacy of glue in case of a breakage.

Wharton carefully took the pieces and assured the Head's daughter that he would do his best.

"You mend her now," said Miss Molly.

"Yes, as soon as I can."

"I will come and fetch her," said Miss Molly, with a grave nod. And she walked away down the passage, leaving Wharton with the broken doll in his hands, and a rather rueful look on his face.

But it was impossible to disappoint Miss Molly. Wharton had his doubts about making the doll look as of old by the aid of glue. But whatever he did, he could hardly make matters worse. He carried the wreck into Study No. 1, and Billy Bunter looked round peevishly.

"I say, you fellows, the feed's not ready yet."

"All right, Bunt!" said Harry, laughing. "I haven't come for a feed. Have you room there for the glue-pot?"

"You can stand it on the hob, Wharton, if you like. It's nearly red-hot."

The glue did not take long to melt. Harry Wharton took the doll between his knees, and glued the shattered face together, stuffing rags inside the hollow head to give the glue a hold. The result could not be called beautiful. But at least all the fragments were united in one piece with some resemblance to a face.

"Don't knock this over, Owl," he remarked, as he laid the doll on the shelf to dry. "And if Miss Molly comes here for it, tell her that it will take some time to dry, and I'll bring it to her when it's all right."

"Certainly, Wharton," said Bunter absently. "Jolly hot in here, isn't it?"

"Yes; I hope you won't set the chimney on fire."

Harry Wharton left the study. Billy Bunter perspired on. The study was extremely hot, though the window was open to let in the cold air of the winter evening from the Close.

Mark Linley's door was open as Harry passed it. The Lancashire lad was seated at the table, with an open Homer before him, and a Liddell and Scott at his elbow. His face wore a somewhat worried look. Wharton stepped in, with a cheery nod.

"Can I help you?"

"You can, if you like," said Mark, with a rueful grin. "But it's a shame to make you fag at Greek when—"

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"Stuff! It helps me as much as it helps you. Where are you stuck?"

"Here you are—Hector and Andromeda."

Wharton seated himself at the table and the two juniors were soon busy. Greek was an extra in the Greyfriars Remove, and the lad from Lancashire had taken it up on his own. Hence his difficulties, in which he found a ready help in Harry Wharton. In the keenness with which he tackled the subject, Harry soon forgot the feed that was being prepared in Study No. 1.

It was Mark Linley who first looked up from the work and sniffed.

"I say, there's something burning!"

"Oh, it's only Bunter! He's cooking. I suppose he's dropped some more bacon in the fire. He's got a fire going like a furnace."

"But listen!"

A wild yell rang from the passage. Wharton sprang from the table and ran out of the study, and a cry of astonishment left his lips.

There was a terrific burst of flame from the doorway of Study No. 1, and Billy Bunter was fleeing down the corridor, with a scared face. An empty frying-pan was still convulsively gripped in his hand.

"Fire! Fire!"

"You young ass!" roared Wharton. "What have you done?"

"I—it wasn't my fault! The chimney caught, and—then I was startled and upset the frying-pan. Then the grease caught fire. Oh dear!"

There was a roar of flame in the study, and the blaze from the door burst out and licked the opposite wall. There was a crackling of burning wood. A pan full of grease had been spilt over the fire, the hearth, and the floor, and it had instantly caught alight. The carpet was ablaze, and the study was filled with fire and smoke. The draught through from the open window to the door fanned the outburst.

Wharton, with the wild idea of getting the fire out, made a rush forward towards the study door; but a rolling volume of smoke and flame drove him back.

Mark Linley grasped his arm and pulled him away.

"You can't get in."

"No. There'll be a fearful row over this!"

Fellows were crowding into the Remove passage from all quarters, yelling "Fire!" at the top of their voices.

Billy Bunter made a break for the Close, to get into safety, while other fellows stood around, scared and helpless.

Harry Wharton was prompt to act.

"Buckets—quick!" he exclaimed.

There was a row of fire buckets in the upper corridor, but they were empty and dusty. There was a tap above on the box-room stairs, but to reach it one had to pass the flames bursting from the blazing study. Harry Wharton would have attempted it, but Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was now on the scene, and he forbade him to do so.

"All of you get out into the Close!" said the Remove master sharply. "The fire is spreading. Get buckets, pails, anything, and you can get water from the fountain."

The whole school was alarmed now. Fellows thronged up from all quarters to lend a hand, and articles of value were hastily carried out of the studies, and water soused on the fire—without much effect. Fifth and Sixth, Remove and Shell, worked together like giants.

Mr. Quelch hurried off to the Head, who,

startled as he was by the news, acted quickly and calmly.

He telephoned immediately to Friardale for the local fire brigade. Then he hurried to the scene of the conflagration.

Wingate and several other Sixth Formers had a hose working now, and were pouring water through the window at the end of the Remove passage. It was all they could do, but it did not touch the seat of the fire. The flames were spreading along the Remove passage.

Billy Bunter stood with a scared face, the frying-pan still in his hand. There was a red glare of flame on many windows now, and the glass, here and there, was cracking.

The Remove passage was in one of the oldest portions of Greyfriars, and the rambling nature of the building made it difficult to get at the fire.

Fellows were streaming in and out, carrying furniture, books, and other articles, and piling them in the Close.

Mark Linley had a Greek lexicon under his arm. Nugent was feeling in his pockets to ascertain whether he had left his mouth-organ in the study. Dr. Locke's face was anxious and alarmed. If the fire should spread to the rest of Greyfriars, the loss would be irreparable.

"There is not much danger of the fire spreading," said Mr. Quelch. "The Remove passage has a wall of solid stone towards the rest of the buildings; and besides, it is easy to flood the upper floor from the tank above in case it spreads. The big staircase is already flooding from the tap in the Fifth Form passage, and cannot burn."

The Head breathed a little more freely.

"You are right, Mr. Quelch, but I am afraid this portion of the building will be gutted. Is it known how the fire started?"

"In one of the studies, I believe."

"Ah, this must be inquired into."

Billy Bunter heard the words, and he shook in his shoes.

Dr. Locke called to Hazeldene.

"Go to Mrs. Locke and tell her that there is no immediate danger," he said. "But request her to come into the Close with Miss Molly, in case of accidents."

"Yes, sir!" said Hazeldene.

He cut off, and in a couple of minutes came back. Mrs. Locke, looking very much alarmed, was following him.

"Where is Molly?" asked the Head hastily.

"Is she not with you?"

"With me? No, I thought—"

"Then I do not know," said Mrs. Locke. Her gaze turned towards the red glare on the windows. "It is not possible that—that—"

"Impossible! Why should Molly be in the Remove passage? There is no cause for alarm."

Harry Wharton heard the words. His face went pale.

Why should the little girl be in the Remove passage? He remembered that Miss Molly had promised to return for her doll. Whether she had done so or not, he did not know; but if she had—

"Great Scott!"

The words broke involuntarily from his lips, and the Head looked at him quickly, as he caught the horrified exclamation.

"What is it, Wharton? Have you seen Molly?"

"Yes, no; I don't know, sir. But—ah, there's Bunter! He will know. Bunter!"

"I say, I couldn't help it!" muttered Bunter.

"The chimney caught, and then the frying-pan upset, and—"

"Bunter! Did Molly—"

"It wasn't my fault! I—"

Wharton grasped him by the shoulder and shook him savagely.

"Bunter, did Molly come to the study?"

"I wish you wouldn't shake me like that, Wharton. You might make my glasses fall off, and if they broke you would have to pay for them."

"Will you answer me? Have you seen Molly?"

"Molly? Yes, she came for her doll. I gave it to her. I told her what you said about the glue—"

"Did she leave the study before the fire broke out?"

"She was just going."

"Ah! Then she was not in the study!" exclaimed Wharton. And Mrs. Locke, who was listening feverishly, gave a sob of relief.

"Of course she wasn't!" said Bunter. "She ran out before me when the fire broke out."

"Thank heavens!" muttered Mrs. Locke, and the Head gasped with relief.



"You ought to be more careful. Supposing I'd fallen down that hole?"

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But Harry's face was white and hard. His grasp tightened on the fat junior's shoulder.

"Bunter, think, you fool! I met you in the passage when you ran out of the study, but Molly was not with you."

"Wasn't she? Then she must have run the other way, towards the box-room."

Mrs. Locke gave a shriek.

Harry Wharton knew the worst now. Miss Molly was in the burning building, cut off by fire!

Fighting the Flames!

HARRY WHARTON went very pale under the shock.

If Miss Molly had not run with Billy Bunter towards the stairs, she must have run up the passage towards the upper stairs to the box-room. In her fright the child had doubtless not noticed where she was running. But from the upper end of the passage there was no escape. The fire cut off the only path, and as it spread it must reach the child.

In that terrible crisis, Wharton, after the first shock, thought rapidly. He saw it all, and there was not a moment to lose. He ran towards the door.

"Come back!" commanded the Head. "You can do nothing."

But for once the captain of the Remove passed a command of the Head unheeded. He dashed in at the door and up the stairs. The great staircase was smouldering in places, but it could not catch fire, for a stream of water was pouring down it from a tap turned on above.

Harry reached the top of the staircase, untouched by flame but blinded by the rolling volumes of smoke. He could see nothing, and he kept his eyes closed to allay the smart of the smoke.

But well he knew the way. To the left; and his rapid footsteps rang on the Remove passage, on the flagstones that lay under the linoleum. The floor, at all events, was secure.

But the studies on both sides of the passage were ablaze, and the roof was burning. Flame and smoke rushed upon him, and he felt the scorching tongues licking at his skin; but in the excitement of the moment he was scarcely conscious of pain.

Before him lay the Remove passage, thick with smoke, blinding with flame. He had to pass through it to reach where Miss Molly must be crouching away from the fire.

He paused one moment to tear off his jacket and wind it about his face. It would save him from the flame to come extent—save him, perhaps, from suffocation. Already his senses were reeling in the fumes and the terrific heat. Could he get through? Grim death was mocking him from the gulf of smoke and fire; but Harry Wharton never faltered.

Right on he went, and he felt the scorching flame on his hands, on his arms. It was like walking into a furnace, but it was only for seconds.

Then he was through! Smoke was still billowing around him, but he knew that he had passed the flames. The fire had not yet reached the end of the passage. Wharton staggered on to the end, and stumbled on the box-room stairs. Where was the child? He tore the jacket from his face, and put it on again.

He turned back the way he had come for a moment. Could he pass that blazing furnace again? He knew that he had got through it once only by a miracle. Could he pass it again, burdened with the child?

The crash of falling timber answered him. Myriads of sparks flew through the blinding smoke. Wharton set his teeth hard. It was a fall of burning walls in the passage, and the way was blocked. A fiercer rush of flame came up to the very end of the passage. He staggered up the box-room stairs.

There was no way back!

He opened the box-room door and closed it behind him. The room was full of smoke, but it was not so thick as outside. He breathed again. The window offered him a chance of air. He flung it up, and held the child's head out, and then put out his own.

Glorious was the feel of the biting winter wind on his scorched face. Miss Molly's eyes opened again: her frightened glance turned on him.

"Take me away!"

"Yes—yes, Molly. Don't be afraid!"

"I'm so frightened!"

"I'll look after you!" muttered Wharton. "Don't be afraid."

He was racking his brains to think of a means of escape. The window was high up, and looked out over the green at the back of the chapel. He could see nothing of the crowd in the Close. How was he to escape?

The smoke was becoming thicker and thicker. It was creeping under the door, and the door itself was scorching, and would soon be alight. The box-room stairs, up which Harry had so lately passed, were ablaze.

The boy gazed from the window. There was a ledge of stonework under the window, and it ran along and met the slope of a slate roof. Alone he might have managed the climb; but, burdened with the child—

"I am so frightened!"

The child's voice was broken and weak. She was fainting in the suffocating smoke. Wharton made up his mind. To creep along the ledge and gain the roof of the chapel was his only chance of life, and he knew it.

"Molly"—his voice was quick, but very kind and gentle—"let me cover your face from the smoke. I am going to take you away."

The child made no resistance. He fastened his handkerchief tightly over her eyes, blindfolding her. He knew that if she saw her danger she would struggle, and then both of them would fall.

"Molly, will you keep still, and I can save you?"

"Yes," whispered the child.

Wharton opened the window wide and gathered her in his arms.

"Keep still!"

It was not difficult to clamber out on the ledge. Then, holding the little girl in his arms, and with his back to the brickwork, Harry Wharton edged sideways along the ledge, between earth and sky. Behind him a volume of flame and smoke rolled from the window.

In the Shadow of Death!

FACES in the Close were white and scared. Harry Wharton had not been seen again, and all feared that he had succumbed. Bob Cherry and Nugent had made a dash up to the Remove passage, but they had found it blocked with flaming and smoking woodwork, and had had

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"Molly! Miss Molly!"

A frightened cry from the box-room stairs answered him. The child was crouching there, too terrified to move, the damaged doll still clasped in her arms. Wharton groped his way to her.

"Molly, don't be afraid!"

She was sobbing convulsively. Wharton tried her up, and she clung to him. He was trying to think. To dash through the flames and reach the child had been his first thought—but now, how to escape?

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to retreat. The way was barred. They knew that Wharton could not return, if he still lived, and their hearts were heavy as they emerged, gasping for breath, into the Close.

Mrs. Locke had fainted and had been taken away. Dr. Locke was white as a sheet. The child he loved was doomed, and the brave junior who had gone to her rescue was doomed, too. The Head, almost overcome, leaned his trembling hand against a frosty tree for support.

There was no sign yet of the fire-engine from Eriardale. The boys had desisted from their efforts. They had taken care that the fire did not spread to the main building, but the Remove rooms were utterly gutted.

Flowing water and stone walls kept the flames from the rest of the building. The firemen would be too late. Nothing could now save Wharton and Molly, unless Wharton could save himself and the child.

"He's done for!" muttered Nugent. "Poor old Harry! He can't get out now!"

"Ma tinkee p'laps he gettee in box-room," murmured Wun Lung, the Chinese, in his soft voice. "Suppose we lookee at window?"

Nugent started.

"Good! Come on!"

The Removees raced round to the chapel green. From that point they could see the window of the box-room.

Smoke, tinged red with flame, was pouring from the window and a dozen others. They could see nothing else at first.

"There's the secret passage," muttered Bob Cherry; "but that's been bricked up. But for that, Harry could have—"

Nugent gave a cry:

"Look! It's Harry!"

"Great Scott!"

Nugent had first discerned the figure creeping sideways along the narrow stone ledge, high up in the dusky air.

In the darkness of the night and the thick, rolling smoke, the figure was barely visible, but there was no doubt it was Wharton, and they could see that he had a child in his arms.

The juniors watched anxiously, with fast-beating hearts. Word soon spread that Wharton had been seen, and the crowd thronged round to look at him. Dr. Locke came, and he staggered as he looked up and saw the figure on the narrow ledge. Looked at from below, it seemed to be inevitable that Harry must lose his balance.

Nugent pulled Bob Cherry's sleeve.

"He's making for the chapel roof, Bob!"

"If he reaches it how can he climb up the slates?"

"That's what I was thinking. We know how to get on the roof from the end of the chapel, Bob. Come on! He will have to climb up to the ridge. We can help him there."

"Right!"

The two juniors tore off. Bob stopped as they reached the chapel.

"You go on, Frank. I'll cut into the gym for a rope; we shall want it."

"Good!"

Five minutes later the two venturesome juniors were clambering from a window upon a ledge under the chapel roof, and thence to the slates. It was risky work, more so as the slates were frosty, but they never faltered for a moment. Bob Cherry had a strong rope looped over his arm. They gained the ridge at the top of the roof and looked down anxiously for Harry.

He had reached the end of the ledge, and was taking breath there. His position was terribly perilous. On his right the brickwork rose to the edge of the roof, the edge being above his reach. On his left was a sheer drop.

But he had reached the slates of the chapel, which ended at a couple of feet's height above the ledge he was following. He rested his hand on them and slowly lifted Molly upon the slates. A single false movement, and the child would have slipped; he would have slipped himself.

And a slip meant a fall of a hundred feet to hard earth!

His heart was beating quickly, his teeth were set like a vice, his face white and rigid.

His nerve did not fail him. The little girl was placed on the slates, but the slope was considerable, and only his support kept her from sliding off. To climb on the slates himself, and, with his burden, to reach the ridge a dozen yards distant, seemed impossible.

Had he come so far to fail now?

"Harry!"

It was a whispering, nervous voice from the roof of the chapel.

Wharton looked up. There was a glimmer of starlight on the slated roof, and on the stone ridge along the centre sat two forms, astride. He gave a sigh of relief.

"Bob! Frank!"

"Hold on, old chap!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"We're here—we've got a rope!"

"Thank goodness!"

"Keep a stiff upper lip. Look out! I've made knots along the rope, and made a loop at the end. Catch it as I slide it down."

~~~~~

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The rope came slithering down the slates; Harry Wharton caught the loop at the end with an almost convulsive grasp.

"Got it?"

"Yes. I'll fasten it to Molly. You pull her up," Harry whispered to the child. "It's all right now, Molly."

But there came no reply from Molly. The child had fainted. Wharton was glad of it; she was spared the horror of her perilous position.

It occupied him but a few moments to knot securely the rope round her under the arms. Then he called out to Bob.

"Pull up!"

The juniors pulled. Molly slid up the sloping slates at the end of the rope, and Wharton watched her anxiously. Her weight was nothing to the two sturdy juniors. In a minute or less they had pulled her up to the stone ridge in the centre of the chapel roof.

On the other side of the chapel the end of a ladder came into view against the slates. Wingate of the Sixth was mounting it, and his head rose to sight. He looked up the sloping roof at the juniors on the ridge.

"It's Wingate!" muttered Nugent. "Wingate, old chap—"

"Are you safe there?"

"Yes, yes. We've got Molly. Will you take her if we lower her down?"

"Yes—quick!"

Nugent lifted the little girl over the ridge and allowed her to slide down on the other side of the roof, towards the ladder. Wingate, standing on the ladder, took her into his arms.

"Unfasten the rope, Wingate. We want it for Wharton."

"Good!"

The rope slithered up the slates again. Wingate descended the ladder with the insensible child in his arms. Dr. Locke ran forward with a gasping cry and took her.

"Where is Wharton?" he asked anxiously.

"He's coming, sir."

Meanwhile, Wharton waited patiently on the ledge while Miss Molly was lowered to Wingate. He breathed a sign of relief as he saw it coming. He caught the rope as it slithered down to him.

"Hold it fast!" he called out. "I'll climb up by the rope."

"Right you are!"

Wharton clambered up the slates with the assistance of a grip on the rope. He reached the ledge, and Bob Cherry grasped him.

"All right now!"

To descend to the ladder and reach the ground was the work of a couple of minutes. But Harry Wharton would probably have fallen then if his chums had not taken care of him. He was utterly spent with his efforts, and as he touched the ground he reeled like a drunken man. Bob and Frank held him tight, and Harree Singh dashed up to lend a hand.

"Wharton!" Dr. Locke came up. "Wharton, my dear lad, you have saved Molly!"

"She is all right?"

"Yes, save for the shock. But for you—" The Head shuddered. "I shall never be able to thank you enough for what you've done! Greyfriars is proud of you, my boy!"

"Hurrah for Wharton!" shouted Hazeldene.

There was a ringing cheer at once. Up till now the anxiety had been so keen and intense that every lip seemed frozen.

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

But Harry Wharton did not hear it. He had fainted.

*(Harry Wharton's all right again next week, however, when he is leading the Remover in lively "rags" against their rivals of the New Academy! Read all about it in "BURNT OUT OF SCHOOL!")*

"Ethel, will you excuse me if I hwaain Twimble in your pwesence?" he asked.

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"Certainly!" she said.

Twimble did not stay to be brained. His astute calculations were evidently offside. He made one jump into the passage as Arthur Augustus flourished the poker, and that merry tea-party went on without the assistance of the rank outsider, whose shady scheme for enriching himself had had such painful results.

*(Sucked from St. Jim's! It is an overwhelming blow to Tom Merry! But what's he done? Look out for next Wednesday's great yarn—"TOM MERRY EXPELLED!")*

## TRIMBLE TRIES IT ON!

*(Continued from page 26)*

The juniors stared at him in astonishment.

It seemed incredible that even Trimble would have the astounding nerve to present himself again in the study, but evidently he had.

Trimble was astute in his way. He calculated upon the presence of Cousin Ethel to save him from the order of the boot.

"Tea ready, old fellows?" he said cheerfully.

"All right. Sorry I'm a bit late. Mind if I take a chair, Blake—thanks! Pass the cake, Figgins. For goodness' sake, don't scoff all that cake, Fatty Wynn!"

Arthur Augustus rose and picked up the poker.

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