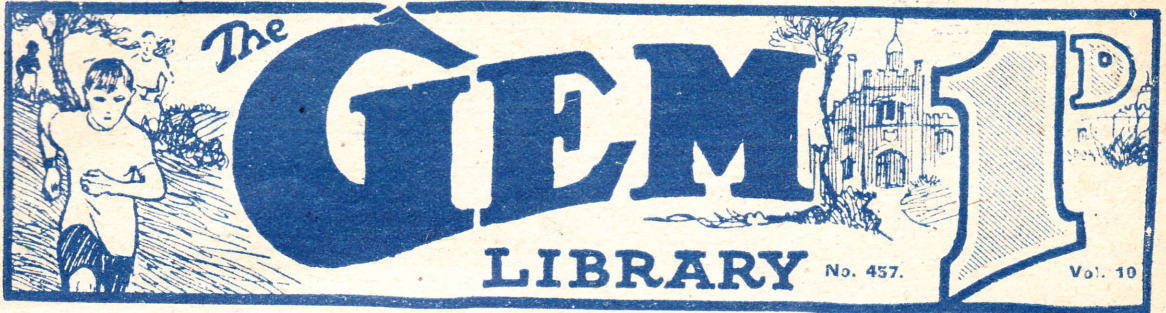


OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB,

Northern Section.

# "ALL THE WINNERS!"

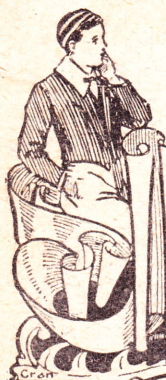
A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.



## TRIMBLE TRIPPED UP!

(An Extraordinary Scene in the Grand Long Complete Story in this issue.)





# THIS WEEK'S CHAT



Whom to Write to — — — — —  
**EDITOR "THE GEM" LIBRARY.**  
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For Next Wednesday :

## "IN THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY!"

By Martin Clifford.

Next week's story is a very special one indeed, as it is of more than twice the usual length, and is the chief feature of our

### GRAND CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

Almost needless to say that it is a holiday yarn, with plenty of the true Christmas atmosphere. This week's story takes a merry party of St. Jim's juniors nearly to Easthorpe. Next week's brings them there, and tells of how, in the absence of Lord Eastwood and his eldest son and heir, Lord Conway, the great Gussy becomes, for the time being, the head of his house, sitting "in the seats of the mighty." But Arthur Augustus is not left quite his own master, though he does not suspect the fact that someone has been appointed to look after him until, by reason of his kicking over the traces, his temporary guardian has to assert himself. Before that many things happen. Levison minor proves his pluck; Tom Merry fights a man twice his age; Horsman's circus, snow-bound, finds quarters at Eastwood House; Wally & Co. play japes; Gussy falls in love again; and—but, really, that's enough as a sample of the good things you will find in

## "IN THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY!"

### ANOTHER SPECIAL ATTRACTION!

The Christmas Number will also contain another feature of the exceeding popularity of which I have no doubt whatever—no less than some pages of extracts from

### "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

### OUR NEW SERIAL.

Week after next, a fine new serial, written by Mr. Peter Bayne, whose great story, "Under the Dragon," most of you will remember. The new story is called

## "FOES OF FORTUNE!"

It is a most thrilling yarn of adventure in the South American forests, and on the broad, grassy plains of the district bordering on the mighty River Amazon. You will all admire the hero, Carton Ross, and his pretty sweetheart Lorna, and her staunch, great-hearted father. The story grips from the outset, and the grip never relaxes.

### A SCHOOL SERIAL IN THE FUTURE.

I have not forgotten my promise to consider the advisability of running a school serial in this paper. The tremendous enthusiasm which has been aroused by the new story in the "Magnet" has gone far to convince me. But "Foes of Fortune" is too good to be kept back, and while it is running its course, someone will be busy with a school yarn to follow it.

### NOTICES.

#### Correspondence, Leagues, &c.

Miss Rose Ferrett, 4, Chattenden Rd., Highbury, N., would like to correspond with a girl reader.

Miss Clare Black, 42, Hanover Square, Bradford, would like to correspond with a girl reader of 16-18.

James S. Ivey, 16, John St., West Pelton, Beamish, co. Durham, would be glad to correspond with other boy readers of about 18.

Miss Kathleen Neill, 58, Derwent St., Belfast, wishes to correspond with a girl reader between 15 and 18.

Ernest Neill and John McDade, both of 58, Derwent St., Belfast, would be glad to correspond with other boy readers between 15 and 18.

J. P. Hess, 7, Oxford St., Kilburn, N.W., wants more members for his Home and Colonial Club. Printed magazine. Stamped and addressed envelope, please.

Private A. Cooper, 17727, 2 Coy., Depot Essex Regt., Warley Barracks, Brentwood, would be very grateful if any reader could let him have an illuminated wrist-watch.

Stanley E. Lawless, 49, Grafton St., London, W. (15), would like to correspond with a boy reader living in Central or South America.

Miss Olga Ivanovna Sergius, 21, St. James Rd., Brixton, S.W., would be grateful for any Russian books or papers for the use of Russian soldiers in British hospitals.

Bert Bashford, 265, Barclay Rd., Warley, near Birmingham, would be glad to correspond with boy readers in Australia or Canada interested in farming.

C. H. Churchard, 2346, 38 Dormitory, R.N. Barracks, Shotley, Harwich, would like to correspond with boy readers of about 17 or 18.

L. Williams, 125, Gt. Tindal St., Ladywood, Birmingham, would be glad to correspond with other boy readers of about 17.

Sidney Kingston, 11, Valley Bridge Parade, Scarborough, wants more members for his "Gem" and "Magnet" League, open to the British Empire and the United States.

Billy Shoyer, Oakhurst Avenue, Rondebosch, Cape Town, South Africa, would be glad to correspond with British boy readers of 16 or over.

Chas. L. Etherington, c/o Mr. Joseph Etherington, 76, Lake St., St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, would be glad to correspond with some boy readers, and also to buy old copies of the "Gem."

International "Gem" and "Magnet" League. Objects: To supply soldiers with books, correspondence, and stamp and postcard exchange. It is hoped to start a magazine soon. Write, enclosing stamped envelope, to E. Henry, 29, Raleigh Rd., Penge, S.E., or P. Trueman, 26, Tintern Rd., Wood Green, N.

Gunner W. H. Heram, Y16, Trench Mortar Battery R.F.A., 16th Div., B.E.F., France, asks, on behalf of his battery, for a football. Will any reader or readers oblige?

### Back Numbers Wanted.

By C. V. B. Lumley, 6, Eaton Rise, Ealing—Nos. 1-400 of both "Gem" and "Magnet"; Nos. 1-160 of the "Penny Popular"; and Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17, 21, 27, and 29 of the "Nelson Lee" Library. Terms to be arranged first by letter.

By Miss Nancy Coulson, 236, King's Rd., Kingston-on-Thames—"Magnet" and "Gem" Christmas Numbers, 1915. Sixpence each offered.

By F. Johnston, 5, Whateley Rd., Beckenham, S.E.—Nos. 10-20 of "Gem."

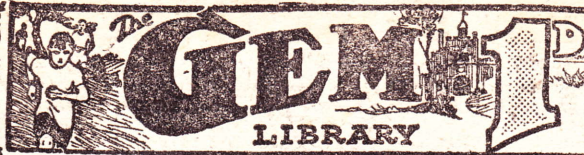
By No. 74463, 36th General Hospital, R.A.M.C., Salonica Force, c/o G.P.O., London—"Gem" and "Magnet" regularly, if any reader will oblige him.

By H. Tyler, 10, Kenilworth Avenue, Harrogate—"Gem" Nos. 1-380, and any numbers of the "Magnet" in the old brown covers.

Your Editor



PUBLISHED IN TOWN  
AND COUNTRY EVERY  
WEDNESDAY MORNING



COMPLETE STORIES  
FOR ALL, AND EVERY  
STORY A GEM!

# "ALL THE WINNERS!"

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.  
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



"You spoofing young scoundrel!" said Kildare, compressing Trimble's fat ear between his finger and thumb, "How dare you tell me lies?" (See Chapter 3.)

## CHAPTER 1.

### The Chance of a Lifetime!

**B**AGGY TRIMBLE of the Fourth came into Tom Merry's study, where the Terrible Three of the Shell were at work on their preparation.

Three hands were raised at once to point to the door, and three voices spoke in unison:

"Buzz off!"

"Cut it!"

"Clear!"

Trimble of the Fourth did not buzz off; he did not cut it; neither did he clear. He came in cheerily, and closed the door behind him.

"Busy?" he asked.

"Yes, ass!" said Tom Merry. "We've left our prep late. Buzz!"

"Sorry to interrupt—"

"Well, leave off interrupting, fathead!" said Monty Lowther.

"But it's rather important—"

"More important than prep?" snorted Manners.

"Yes, a good deal more. I've left my prep for a bit," said Trimble. "The fact is, I'm going to do you fellows a good turn."

"You couldn't do us a better turn than by clearing off," suggested Tom Merry. "Shut the door after you."

"Nothing doing," said Lowther. "Money's tight. Go and try D'Arcy of the Fourth. He's got more money than sense."

Next Wednesday:

"IN THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY!"



"I haven't come here to borrow money, Lowther."  
 "You haven't?" ejaculated Lowther, in astonishment.  
 "No!" roared Trimble.  
 "Then what's the matter with you?"  
 "I've come to do you a good turn," said Trimble, glaring at the Terrible Three. "I think you might be decently grateful. I know you're hard up, and so am I. I suppose you'd like to know how to make a little money easily?"  
 "My hat!"  
 "Suppose you were offered a chance of making a hundred pounds?" said Trimble impressively.  
 "A hundred which?"  
 "Pounds!"  
 "Pounds of what?" asked Lowther.  
 "Quids, you ass! There's a hundred pounds going for any chap who can bag it, and I've come here to put you fellows on to it."

The Terrible Three regarded Trimble in astonishment. Prep was forgotten for the moment. Trimble had succeeded in impressing them.

Trimble of the Fourth was supposed to be the biggest ass in the School House at St. Jim's. Even Skimpole was smart by comparison. Trimble was every sort of a duffer, and a good many sorts of a rascal. When he was not swanking about the splendours of Trimble Hall, his palatial home, he was generally trying to borrow small silver in the Fourth and the Shell. Doing anybody a good turn was not in the least in Trimble's line. It was quite a new departure for Trimble.

"A hundred pounds!" repeated Tom Merry.  
 "Yes; going begging."  
 "And you've come to tell us?"  
 "Exactly."  
 "Instead of bagging it yourself?"  
 "Just so."  
 "Why?"  
 "Because I'm such a generous chap, you know."  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "I don't see where the cackle comes in," said Trimble loftily. "I might have kept this good thing to myself. With my knowledge of the subject, too, I should have been certain of bagging it. But I'm prepared to let you fellows into it, simply out of friendship."  
 "You do us proud!" said Monty Lowther solemnly. "But whose is the hundred quid, and how are we to bag it? Any bagging implements required?"  
 "Of course not, you ass!"  
 "Whose pocket is it in?"  
 "Fathead!" howled Trimble. "It's a competition!"  
 "Oh!"

"That's it," said Trimble. "You have to send in three stamps with every solution, and you can send in as many solutions as you like. I don't know that I should need to send in more than one, from my knowledge of the subject. However, I was thinking of sending in a round dozen, to make sure. That will cost three bob. Of course, it's nothing at all like gambling—an open competition of skill, you know, and the winner bags the hundred pounds."

"And suppose there are a lot of winners?"  
 "Then it's equally divided. Of course, there couldn't be many. It requires a lot of skill and knowledge. I've got the paper here."

The Terrible Three were interested, especially Manners. Manners had won a prize once in an "Answers" picture-puzzle competition. And the Terrible Three were low in funds. Such things happened occasionally. Bagging a prize might tide the study over comfortably till a remittance arrived from somewhere.

"Well, that's all right," said Tom Merry. "We'll look into it, and if there's anything in it, we might try. Manners is rather good at picture-puzzles."

Trimble sniffed.  
 "Tain't picture-puzzles. Something a bit more serious than that," he said, "and the fact is, I can do all the brain work. That's why I've come here—to make an arrangement with you chaps. I happen to be short of money—"

"Not really!" said Lowther sarcastically.  
 "Yes, really."  
 "Why not send a wire to Trimble Hall for a consignment of specie?"

"Ahem! The—the fact is, I've had a tremendous remittance from my pater, but I happen to have lent the money to Blake and Herries—"

"Liar!" said Lowther, cheerfully and politely.  
 "And—and I lent a quid to Julian—"  
 "Prussian!"  
 "And stood a feed to some chaps—"  
 "Don't pile it on!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "We know you never have any money, Trimble."

"Oh, let him run on!" said Lowther. "It would make THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 457.

the Kaiser green with envy to hear him. There never was such a liar outside Prussia!"

Trimble changed the subject hastily.  
 "Well, to come to the point, I happen to be stony, and the answer's got to go in by Friday. My idea is for me to work out the answer—I'm a jolly clever chap at that kind of thing—and for you chaps to find the money. That's a fair division. Then you take a whack in the prize—say five per cent."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Look here, I mean it! I don't mind giving you five per cent. of the prize for advancing the money. You see, without the money I can't enter at all."

"Sure you're not being too generous?" grinned Tom Merry.

"Well, I mean to be generous."  
 "We're not going to take advantage of your generosity," said Tom, with a shake of the head; "so if you'll buzz off, we'll get on with our prep."

"I'll make it ten per cent. if you're going to be mean about it."

"Look here!" said Tom. "You can show us the paper if you like, and if we decide to go in for it we'll stand you a bob to enter as well. Otherwise, you can clear off and let us get our prep done."

"But I should have to find the answers. You fellows haven't much brains, you know," objected Trimble.

"We'll rely on our own poor little brains," said Tom sarcastically. "If you bag the prize with our bob and your own wonderful intellectual powers, we won't grumble, or ask for a whack."

Trimble considered.  
 "Well, that's good enough," he said. "Hand over the bob!"

"Let's see the competition first. Bobs are scarce."  
 "Well, here's the paper," said Trimble. "You have to give the name of four horses—"

"Four what?"  
 "Four winners in four races, you know, run at Newmarket."

"What!" roared the Terrible Three.  
 "What's the paper, then?" gasped Tom Merry.  
 "'Lucky Tips,'" said Trimble—"a racing paper, you know. You have to name the winners of four races, and with my knowledge of the subject I think I can say— Yaroooh! Yooop! Wharrer you at! Leggo! Hah! Yah! Groooh! Yooop!"

Baggy Trimble found three pairs of hands upon him, and went whirling through the air. The study swam round the fat Fourth-Former. The door was opened, and Baggy swept through the doorway and came down in the passage with a terrific concussion.

The study door closed on him.  
 Baggy Trimble sat and gasped.  
 "Groooh! Gerrroooh! Oh, my hat! Yow-ow-ow!"

He blinked at the study door. Within, the Terrible Three had restarted work on their prep. Baggy Trimble decided not to interrupt them again. He shook a podgy fist at the study door, and rolled away, snorting.

## CHAPTER 2.

### A Good Thing Going Begging.

"YOU fellows busy?"  
 "Yaas, wathah!"  
 "Ahem! I wanted to ask your advice, D'Arcy."

Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy were at prep when Baggy Trimble looked in at Study No. 6. Tom Merry's study had been drawn blank, and the enterprising Baggy was in quest of fresh fields and pastures new. But Baggy had reflected, and he had decided to be a little more tactful in Study No. 6. The reception the Terrible Three had given him had been a lesson.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked up from his work, his aristocratic visage relaxing. Any fellow who asked his advice was sure of a polite hearing. Arthur Augustus prided himself upon possessing any amount of tact and judgment, and he was always ready to advise a youngster. Instead of telling the fat Fourth-Former to "t'wavel," as he might otherwise have done, he said cheerily:

"Come in, deah boy!"  
 Jack Blake looked up.  
 "Don't jaw, Gussy!"  
 "Weally, Blake, I cannot give Twimble advice without jawin', as you wathah bwutally expwess it."  
 "Well, shut up!"  
 "Wats!"





"That's the stamp," said Kangaroo cheerily. "Have another?" (See Chapter 6.)

"How's a chap to work when you're jawing?" roared Herries.

"Pway do not woah at me, Hewwies!" said Arthur Augustus. "I have wemarked befoah that it throws me into a fluttah when a fellow woahs at me. Pway what is the mattah, Twimble? You may lay the whole mattah befoah me, and wegard me as an uncle."

"Thanks, awfully!" said Trimble. "I want the other chaps to hear, too—it's rather an important matter. A hundred pounds is a lot of money, isn't it?"

"Yaas, it is wathah a wespectable sum, especially in war time," said Arthur Augustus. "With a hundwed pounds you could send a wippin' lot of parcels to the chaps at the Fwont."

Trimble sniffed. He was not worrying about the chaps at the Front.

"Somebody left you a hundred pounds, Trimble?" asked Blake.

"Bai Jove, that's wippin'! I congwatulate you, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus heartily. "You have come to me to advise you what to do with it?"

"You see—"  
 "You could not have come to a bettah advisah, though I say it myself," said the swell of St. Jim's cordially. "You can wely upon me, Twimble, for some weally good advice. It is quite a windfall, by Jove! I should wecommend you to put half of it in War Savin's Certificates—"  
 "You see—"

"By that means you will be savin' money, and helpin' on the war at the same time. You give fifteen-and-six, and in five yeaahs they give you back a soveveige; and your fifteen-and-six goes towards makin' shells to mop up the wotten Huns. The other half—"  
 "You see—"

"The othah half, Twimble, I should advise you to spend on makin' up some wippin' parcels for the Fwont. I will help you w'ap up the parcels—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake and Herries and Dig. in chorus.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon them in surprise.

"I weally do not see anythin' to woah at!" he remarked.

"I can see Trimble sending fifty quids' worth of tuck to the Front!" chuckled Blake. "I can see him—I don't think!"

"Weally, Blake, as the fellows out there are fightin' for Twimble, I suppose he could not do anythin' bettah with the money?"

"But I haven't got the money!" exclaimed Trimble.

Trimble didn't want advice as to what to do with the money when he got it. That was decided already. It would flow in a steady stream to the tuckshop.

"You haven't got it, Twimble?"

"No. You see—"

"But you said somebody had left you a hundwed pounds—"

"I didn't!" growled Trimble. "No such luck! Of course, I've got heaps of rich relations, and I expect them to leave me millions, very likely—"

"Very likely indeed!" grinned Blake. "When they do, you can settle up the five bob you owe me from last term."

Trimble did not appear to hear that remark.

"You see, it's a competition," explained Trimble. "I happen to have splendid knowledge of the subject, and I can go in and win—if I like."

"Bai Jove!"

"That's what I want you to advise me about," said Trimble glibly. "Of course, you know I wouldn't have anything to do

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NEXT  
WEDNESDAY:

"IN THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY!"

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of  
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with gambling, or racing, or anything blackguardly like that—especially in war time."

"I twust not, Twimble."

"Not so jolly sure about it," growled Herries. "I believe you go in for that shady rot, like Levison and Crooke, when you've got any tin."

"Pway allow Twimble to go on, Hewwies!"

"What about my prep?" growled Herries.

"You are intewwuptin' Twimble, Hewwies, deah boy. Pewwaps you would not mind shuttin' up. Go on, Twimble!"

"This competition happens to be run in a racing paper," explained Trimble. "Of course, it's nothing like betting on horses, or anything of that sort. I'm too upright to dabble in such things—in fact, I regard them with—with horror! I really don't understand how people can bet on horses, or speculate on the Stock Exchange in war time. I really despise them, you know."

"That is vewy wight and pwopah, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, with a nod of approval. "I have asked my governah to get the House of Lords to pass a law shuttin' up all wace-gwounds, and the Stock Exchange, for the duwation of the war. My pater hasn't answahed the lettah—Wewly, Blake, I see nothin' whatevah to gwim at! Go on, Twimble."

"So you'd advise me to go in for it?" asked Trimble.

"Bai Jove!"

"It's a skill competition, you know—they say specially it's a skill competition. It happens to be about horses, but that's simply because it happens to be in a racing paper."

"Wewly, Twimble—"

"You shady young blackguard!" grunted Herries.

"Wewly, Hewwies, you have no wight to say that! Twimble appeahs to be puttin' it vewy weasonably."

"I thought you'd understand me, D'Arcy," said Trimble, brightening up. As a matter of fact, he was relying upon D'Arcy not quite understanding him.

"Yaas, wathah! You can wely on a fellow of tact and judgment, deah boy," said the swell of the Fourth graciously. "So long as the competition is a skill competish, and nothin' to do with gamblin' or bettin', it does not make any difference its being in a wacin' papah."

"Look here—" began Blake.

"Pway don't intewwupt, Blake."

"You silly ass—"

"I wufuse to be called an ass, Blake! What kind of competition is it, Twimble?"

"There's four races picked out for Saturday—"

"Four what?"

"Races. They give a list of the horses entered for each race—"

"Bai Jove!"

"And you select the winners," said Trimble. "Chap who gives the four winners or one coupon bags the hundred quid."

"And that's a skill competition, is it?" exclaimed Dig.

"Certainly. You have to be skilful to pick out the winners. With my knowledge of the subject—"

"And where did you get your knowledge of that subject, you shady rascal?"

"Ahem!"

"Bai Jove! If you have any knowledge of that subject, Twimble, you must be wathah a beastly young blackguard!"

"Ahem! You see—"

"I am afwaid, Twimble, that you have been pweawicatin', said Arthur Augustus severely. "That is a wotten wacin' competish, and without bein' a shady wottah, you cannot know anythin' about the winnahs. Howevah, I will give you my advice. I advise you to have nothin' to do with it!"

"Look here, you know—"

"Pway put the papah on the fiah, Twimble, and dismiss the mattah fwom your mind! That is my advice."

"Will you lend me three bob, then?" asked Trimble desperately. Diplomatically as he had put it, there was evidently no welcome for his precious competition in Study No. 6.

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I cannot lend you any money for a wacin' competish, Twimble."

"Ahem! I—I don't exactly want it for that. I—I was going to send a parcel to the Front—"

"Bai Jove! Have you a weliation out there, Twimble?"

"Lots," said Trimble. "My uncle is a colonel in the—Gordon Highlanders, and my brother is a general in the—the London Scottish. And—"

"And you're going to send them tuck?" grinned Blake.

"Yes; exactly."

"Bai Jove! I should hardly have thought that a colonel THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 457.

and a genewal would care for a thwee-shillin' parcel of tuck!" said Arthur Augustus, in surprise.

"Ahem! I—I've got another weliation—"

"A private this time?" chuckled Blake.

"I hope you don't mean to insinuate, Blake, that any of my weliations are privates!"

"My dear chap, I wouldn't insinuate that any of your weliations are decent in any way at all. They're more likely to be like you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Twimble, I weward you as a disgustin' wottah! Pway wetiiah fwom this study!"

"But I—I say—that three bob—for a parcel, you know—"

"I cannot cweedit, Twimble, that you have any weliations in khaki at all. Havin' a weliation in khaki shows that there is somethin' decent about a chap, and I am uttably unable to perceive anythin' decent about you. Pway wetiiah!"

"You silly ass!" roared Trimble.

"Bai Jove!"

"I—I say, you might lend me three bob. I'll let you have back a pound out of the prize."

"But you do not get a pwize for sendin' a parcel to the Fwont, Twimble!"

"Ahem! I—I—I mean—"

"I gweatly feah, Twimble, that you are pweawicatin'."

"Have you just discovered that, Gussy?" asked Blake sarcastically. "Did you work it out in your head?"

"Wats!"

"Look here, you oughtn't to miss a chance like this," urged Trimble. "There's a hundred quid going beggin', and, with my knowledge of horses, I could bag it as easy as falling off a form. I'll stand you fellows ten per cent. of the prize—fifteen per cent.—there! You lend me three bob—"

"Wewly, Twimble—"

"Now, what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to pitch you out of the study," said Blake, jumping up.

"Look here, you know— Oh, my hat!"

Baggy Trimble dodged for the door—too late! He left Study No. 6 hurriedly, with "Lucky Tips" stuffed down his back and Blake's boot helping him into the passage. Trimble scudded along the passage with feelings that were quite Hunnish.

"Bai Jove, you know," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "That young boundah is a shady young wottah, you know—a wewulah blackguard! Howevah, he was entitled to my advice—"

"You ass! He was pulling your leg!" grunted Blake.

"I wufuse to be chwactewised as an ass, Blake; and I uttably decline to entahtain for a moment the idea that Twimble was pullin' my leg—"

"Bow-wow!"

"That is not an intelligible wemark, Blake—"

"Shut up!" roared Blake and Herries and Dig in chorus.

"Wats!"

And prep was resumed in Study No. 6. The hundred-pound prize so generously offered by the editor of "Lucky Tips" was still going beggin'.

### CHAPTER 3. Nothing Doing!

"IT'S rotten!"

Thus Trimble of the Fourth, in a deeply-injured tone, in the junior Common-room.

Most of the School House juniors were there at that time in the evening, and Baggy Trimble made his remark in loud tones, addressed to no one in particular. Baggy's fat face was glum and indignant.

"Hallo! What are you burbling about, Fatty?" asked Kangaroo of the Shell.

"It's rotten! Just before the holidays, too!" said Baggy. "We break up next week, and a fellow wants a bit of tin in the vac. A hundred pounds would come in very handy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a general chuckle. Most of the fellows had heard of "Lucky Tips" by this time, and Trimble's scheme for getting rich quick. There was hardly a junior in the School House whom Baggy had not tried to stick for the necessary three bob.

But there was nothing doing.

Trimble was so unremitting a borrower that fellows had dropped into the habit of saying "No" before he could fairly ask for a loan.

And most of the juniors, too, had no desire whatever to be mixed up with "Lucky Tips" and its precious horsey competition.



The fellows who were interested in gee-gees, such as Crooke and Levison and Racke, were unfortunately not the kind of fellows who would part with money for nothing. It was quite a difficulty for Baggy. The fellows who were horsey were too mean to lend him anything, and the fellows who were not horsey declined to have any hand in a racing competition.

Visions of untold wealth were floating before Baggy's eyes. His great knowledge of horses had only led him to select, so far, some "also rans," upon which he had dropped some of his rare shillings. But Baggy was quite sure that he knew the game from start to finish. He was quite prepared to spot four winners for the "Lucky Tips" contest, and romp home with the hundred quid, as he expressed it.

Sad to relate, the want of a miserable bob kept him from tapping the horn of plenty. The cornucopia was ready to flow, as it were, and only a few bobs were required—and bobs were not to be had. Trimble fully sympathised with the feelings of Brutus towards those who "lock such rascal counters from their friends." A few rascal counters were wanted to make him roll in wealth, and they were not forthcoming. No wonder Baggy confided to the whole Common-room that it was rotten!

"You can cackle!" said Baggy, glaring at the hilarious juniors.

"Thanks! We will!" said Gore. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"As a matter of fact, Gore, I was going to ask you to come down to my place for the vacation," said Trimble persuasively. "You'd have a good time—huntin', shootin', motorin', you know; and you'll meet titled people. If you could lend me three bob—"

"Bow-wow!" said Gore.

"I say, Talbot, you're not such a mean beast as Gore—"

Talbot of the Shell laughed.

"Nothing doing, Tubby! You'd better let 'Lucky Tips' alone. There would be a row if the Housemaster saw you with it."

"When I want you advice, Talbot, I'll ask for it!" said Baggy.

"Why, you fat rascal—"

"I say, Julian—"

"Go and eat coke!" said Julian of the Fourth. "You fat boulder! You ought to be ashamed of being seen with a sporting paper!"

"I don't want any of your cheek, Julian! I say, Kerruish—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Kerruish.

"Glyn, old chap, you've got lots of money—"

"And lots of sense to look after it!" said Bernard Glyn. "I'd stand you three bob, Tubby, but not for a racing spec."

"What does it matter to you what I do with my own money?" demanded Trimble.

"But it isn't your money. It's my money we're talking about," said Glyn cheerfully. "And you can go and eat coke!"

"I say, Tom Merry—"

"Want another bumping?" asked the captain of the Shell.

"I'm going to ask you down to my place for the vac, Merry."

Tom Merry laughed.

Trimble of the Fourth was full of glowing stories of his palatial home, but the juniors had their own opinion about that. It was quite certain that Baggy was always hard up, and that his people were poor. Monty Lowther averred that the real name of Trimble Hall was the Trimble Arms. Levison affected to know for a fact that Trimble senior kept a corner grocery, while Mellish declared that he knew positively that Mr. Trimble was an insurance collector. Trimble was continually expecting his pater to come down to St. Jim's in a big motor-car—but he never came. Neither did anyone see anything of the whacking remittances which, according to Baggy, he received at short intervals. But the less he was believed the more Trimble bragged, and though his tremendous yarns sometimes contradicted one another, he was not at all put out by that.

"You'd like a vac at my home," said Trimble. "Huntin', fishin', shootin', motorin', and meetin' big guns, you know. Say you'll come!"

"Sorry!" said Tom gravely. "I've promised D'Arcy to go home with him, otherwise, of course, I should simply jump at seeing Trimble Hall."

"D'Arcy can come, too," said Trimble. "Will you come down to my place for the vac next week, Gussy?"

"I object to your callin' me Gussy, Twimble! I am only Gussy to my friends."

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know!" said Trimble. "Make up your mind to come. We'll give you a ripping time. My uncle, the colonel, will be home on leave, and Lloyd George may be down there to see him."

"Thank you, deah boy! I should not care to meet Lloyd George. I do not like lawyahs!"

"And Lord Derby will most likely drop in," urged Trimble.

"Bai Jove!"

"And his Majesty King George the Fifth," said Monty Lowther. "He often drops in to see Trimble when he's at home, doesn't he, Baggy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not at all stand-offish with you, Baggy, is he?"

"As a matter of fact, Lowther, Royalty has often been at Trimble Hall," said Baggy calmly. "We have a special room called the King's Room, where King Henry the Eighth slept the night after the battle of Worcester."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what are you cackling at now?" demanded Trimble.

"Well, old Henry had been dead more than a hundred years before the battle of Worcester," grinned Lowther. "Perhaps it was his ghost, though."

"I—I mean King John, of course."

"My hat! You're sure you don't mean William the Conqueror?"

"Fellows without family connections are always jealous of me," said Trimble calmly. "I don't see why you should have it up against me because I'm related to most of the titled families in the United Kingdom. I don't brag of it. I simply mention the fact."

"The fact!" gasped Lowther. "Oh, my hat!"

"I should like you to see the picture-gallery at Trimble Hall," said Baggy scornfully. "Portraits of my ancestors from the time of Sir Trimble de Trimble, who came over with the—"

"Rothschilds?"

"You silly ass, no! With the Normans! Sir Fulke de Trimble was in the Crusades, too, and we keep his armour in the hall," said Trimble. "I'll tell you what! Come down for the vac, and see for yourself."

Lowther stared at him.

Some of the other fellows stared, too. Nobody believed Trimble's stories of the glories of Trimble Hall, or believed that the Hall existed anywhere outside Baggy's fertile imagination.

"You fat duffer!" said Lowther. "If I came to your place it would bowl you clean out, wouldn't it? How could you tell whoppers after that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, come!" said Trimble. "I invite you!"

"If I wasn't going with Gussy, blessed if I wouldn't!" growled Lowther. "You know I'm booked, or you wouldn't risk it."

"I regard that remark with contempt, Lowther. However, as you say you'd be willing to accept my invitation if you were disengaged, I think you can't do less than lend me three bob!"

"Three rats!" said Monty Lowther. "But I'll tell you what. You're short of tin?"

"I happen to be—temporarily."

"Then ask Blake and Herries for the money they owe you," grinned Lowther.

"What's that?" roared Blake and Herries simultaneously.

"I—I—I—they don't owe me anything," stammered Trimble.

"Why, you told us they did, in the study!"

"You—you misunderstood me," said Trimble. "You know what a silly ass you are, Lowther! You admit that yourself."

"Well, then, ask Julian for the quid you lent him."

"Lent me!" shouted Dick Julian.

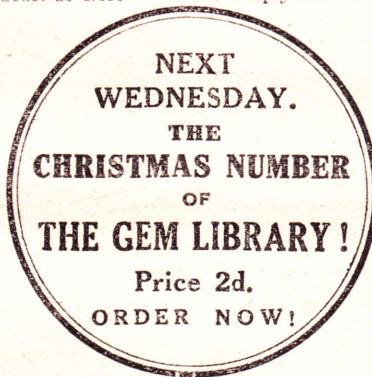
"I—I say, you know—"

Julian advanced on the unhappy Baggy. Trimble was quite a Prussian in some things, he would lie without limit, and the more he was found out, the more he would lie.

"You fat fraud!" exclaimed Julian wrathfully. "When did you lend me a quid?"

"I—I—I meant to say you—you lent me a quid!" gasped Trimble, dodging round the table. "Lowther misunderstood me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"





"Bedtime," said Kildare of the Sixth, looking into the Common-room.

He was just in time to save Baggy Trimble from having his fat features rubbed in the hearthrug.

Baggy Trimble blinked at the captain of St. Jim's. There was certainly no other junior in the school who would have dreamed of trying to borrow money of that majestic person, the head of the Sixth. But Baggy Trimble had nerve enough for anything in a matter of this kind.

"I say, Kildare," he said.

"Hallo!" said Kildare, looking at him.

"Could you lend me three bob?"

"What!" ejaculated Kildare.

"Well, my only hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Blessed if he doesn't deserve it for his cheek."

"Yaas, wathah! Ha, ha!"

Kildare stared at the cheerful Baggy as if he would eat him.

"The fact is, I'm stony, Kildare," said Trimble. "And my cousin's been wounded at the Front, you know!"

"More likely to be wounded at the back, if he's anything like you," remarked Monty Lowther.

"He's lying in hospital now," said Trimble pathetically. "I want to send him a parcel, Kildare. Otherwise, of course, I should never dream of borrowing money. I despise borrowers. It's a thing I never do!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"So your cousin's wounded in hospital, is he?" said Kildare grimly. "What's his name?"

"Trimble, you know. Same as mine!"

"Regiment?" asked Kildare.

"Ahem! The—the Welsh Scottish! I—I mean the London Welsh! That is to say, the Northumberland Fusiliers!"

"Not much difference, of course," agreed Kildare.

"What's the number of his battalion?"

"The hundredth!"

"What?"

"I—I mean the first—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And what hospital is he lying in?" asked Kildare.

"Ahem! The—the—"

"He's certainly lying somewhere," said Lowther. "He wouldn't be a relation of Trimble's if he wasn't lying."

"The—the—the London County and Westminster," stammered Trimble.

"You fat idiot, that's a bank, not a hospital!"

"I—I mean the—the hospital at the base," said Trimble.

"They sent him there to have his leg off!"

"Oh! He's wounded in the leg, is he?"

"Yes. Clean shot off at the battle of—of Neuve Chapelle," said Trimble. "I—I mean, not shot off, of course—not quite off. They've sent him to the hospital to have it off. If you would lend me three bob—"

"So he was wounded in the battle of Neuve Chapelle, and he's only just having his wound seen to?" said Kildare.

"That rather reflects on the medical service, doesn't it, as it's over a year since the battle of Neuve Chapelle?"

"I—I didn't mean Neuve Chapelle," gasped Trimble. "I—I meant the—the battle of—of Brussels!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther. "The battle of Brussels hasn't come off yet!"

"That is to say, I—I mean Amsterdam!" gasped Baggy, getting a little confused. "Yow! Leggo my ear, Kildare!"

"You spoofing young scoundrel!" said Kildare, compressing Baggy's fat ear between his finger and thumb.

"How dare you tell me lies?"

"I wasn't! I didn't—I never— Yaroooooh!"

"Have you got a cousin in the war at all?" asked Kildare grimly. "I'm holding on to this flap till you tell the truth!"

"Yes! Yow-ow! I—I mean no!" howled Baggy. "Not at all! I was only j-j-joking! Yow-ow-ow!"

"You mustn't joke about the war," said Kildare. "It isn't a joking matter!"

"Yow-ow-ow! I—I mean I wasn't joking. Yarooooop! You'll have my ear off, you beast!" wailed Trimble. "Leggo! Ow—ow!"

"You mustn't tell lies to a prefect," said Kildare. "In fact, you mustn't tell lies at all. Understand?"

"Ow—yow! Yes!"

Kildare released the fat Fourth-Former's car, and Baggy rubbed it ruefully.

"Now cut off, all of you!" said Kildare.

The grinning juniors left the Common-room. Baggy Trimble followed them. But he paused and blinked back at Kildare.

"I—I say, Kildare."

"Well?" rapped out Kildare.

"If you could let me have that three bob—"

Baggy Trimble had no time to finish. The Sixth-Former made a rush at him, and Baggy fled for his life.

## CHAPTER 4.

### Fatty Wynn is very Humorous!

**F**IGGINS & CO. of the New House sauntered out after morning lessons the next day with very cheery faces. They were discussing footer in great spirits as they sauntered across the sunny quad, when Baggy Trimble joined them, with a very ingratiating smirk on his fat face.

"You fellows booked for the vac?" asked Trimble.

"Yes; we're going with Figg," said Kerr genially.

"Ah! Sorry!"

"Sorry?" said Fatty Wynn. "What is there to be sorry about, you fat duffer?"

Figgins and Kerr grinned, Fatty Wynn always alluded to Trimble as "fat." As a matter of fact, there was little to choose between them, so far as circumference went. But Fatty was ready to punch the nose of any fellow who hinted that he resembled Trimble in the remotest degree.

"I mean, I was going to invite you down to my place," said Trimble.

"Oh, my hat!" said Figgins.

As the Co. hardly knew Trimble, this was really excessively polite of him.

"You'd have had a topping time," said Trimble regretfully. "Shootin' and fishin' and rowin' on the lake. We've got a tremendous lake in our grounds at Trimble Hall, with trout—"

"Trout in the lake?" asked Kerr.

"I mean in the river. The river flows through the park, you know. It's what you'd call a princely estate. Best part of Hampshire. So sorry you can't come. My pater would be jolly glad to see you."

"I suppose we could help him mind the shop?" remarked Kerr thoughtfully.

"You silly ass!" roared Trimble. "My pater doesn't keep a shop."

"Doesn't he?" said Kerr, in surprise. "I certainly understood that it was his own shop. So he's only employed in it?"

"It isn't a shop—it's a baronial hall!"

"Oh! My mistake!" said Kerr blandly.

"I'd like you to come and see for yourselves," said Trimble. "However, as you're booked, I suppose you can't."

Figgins winked at his chums.

"Oh, Kerr and Fatty aren't so set on my place as all that," he said gravely. "We'll come down to you for the first week of the vac, Trimble, and go to my show afterwards."

"Certainly," grinned Kerr.

"Jolly good idea!" said Fatty Wynn.

Trimble's jaw dropped.

"You—you'll come?" he stammered.

"Certainly. Then we can brag about our topping time at Trimble Hall—huntin', fishin', and shootin', and motorin'," said Kerr.

"Oh! Of course! But—but, I say—ahem!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins.

"Ha, ha!" bellowed Fatty Wynn. "You fat duffer, we're not coming. We wouldn't be found dead in the Trimble Arms!"

"Oh!" said Trimble. "If you're only joking. I—I say, I'd be glad if you'd come, you know. I'll ask the pater to send his car here for us—what?"

"Oh, ring off!" said Figgins. "If you say that again, we'll really come."

"Ha, ha!"

"Ahem! I—I say, the fact is, there's another matter I want to speak to you chaps about," said Trimble hastily. "I'm rather hard up—"

"Good-bye!" said the Co., in unison.

"I—I say, I don't want to borrow anything of you!" howled Trimble. "I've got a fountain-pen I want to sell, that's all."

"Bow-wow!"

"It's a jolly good pen, and cost a guinea," said Trimble. "I'll let you have it half-price. Kerr. You could sell it again at a profit, you know."

Have You Had Your Copy of

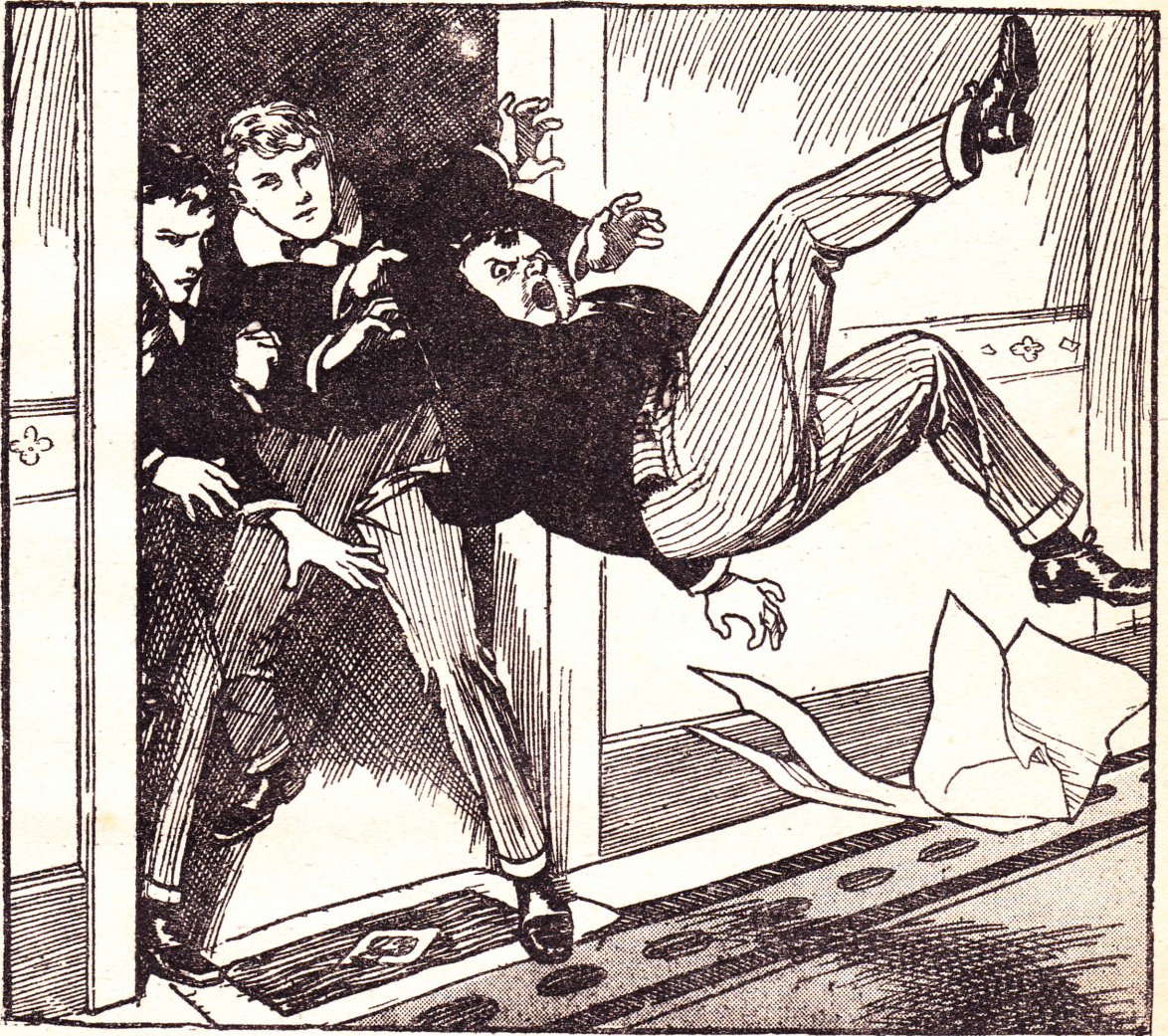
# ANSWERS

The Popular Penny Weekly

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 457.

NEXT WEDNESDAY, THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF THE GEM LIBRARY, PRICE 2D.





Baggy Trimble found three pairs of hands upon him, and he went whirling through the air.  
(See Chapter 1.)

"Go and eat coke!"  
"Well, you might buy it, you know; otherwise I can't send the parcel—"

"Eh, what parcel?" asked Figgins, stopping.

"My cousin in the Welsh Fusiliers, you know," said Trimble pathetically. "He's having rather rotten times out there—rain and things, you know, and he's awfully bucked when he gets a parcel. Considering how the Welsh Fusiliers have been mopping up the Huns, too."

"Blessed if I knew you had any Welsh relations!" said Fatty Wynn. "My brother's in the Welsh Fusiliers."

"Well, you might take this pen off my hands," said Trimble. "Look at it! I'm selling it for ten bob."

"Take it to the owner, and offer it to him cheap," suggested Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ahem! It's a bargain, Wynn, and as a patriotic Welshman, you ought to back up your own regiment, you know."

"If you want to send a parcel to a Welsh regiment, I don't mind making you a loan," said Fatty. "I don't want your dashed fountain-pen!"

"Three bob?" said Trimble eagerly. "I'll settle up next term!"

"Here you are!"

Trimble could scarcely believe his eyes as the three shillings clinked into his fat palm. He bolted with them without stopping to express his thanks, fearful that the Welsh junior might change his mind.

Figgins and Kerr stared at Fatty Wynn.

"You ass!" said Figgins.

"You duffer!" said Kerr.

"Oh, rats!" grunted Fatty Wynn. "I know he won't settle up, but it's rather decent of him to want to send a parcel—"

"You howling ass!" said Kerr. "He hasn't a cousin in the Welsh Fusiliers. He tried to stick me for three bob yesterday for his cousin in the Gordon Highlanders. And he tried it on Reilly, for his cousin in the Irish Rifles."

"My hat!" Fatty Wynn drew a deep breath. "I'll jolly well see that he sends the parcel, then!"

Baggy Trimble had gone into the School House. There, however, he paused to reflect. He wanted three shillings for stamps to send with his answers to the 'Lucky Tips' competition, and he was on his way to his Form-master's study to ask for stamps. But he paused.

It was half an hour to dinner-time, and the shining hour could not be better improved than by taking a snack at the tuck-shop. After all, something might turn up in time for "Lucky Tips" on Friday. And Baggy rolled out of the house again, and headed for Dame Taggles' little shop.

He rolled into the school shop, with Fatty Wynn on his track. Dame Taggles did not seem very pleased to see him. Baggy had been making desperate attempts for several days to obtain credit at her establishment, in vain. But Baggy slapped three shillings on the counter, and the good dame's face cleared.

"Jam-tarts, ginger-pop!" said Baggy breathlessly. "Up to three bob."

"Hallo, Trimble!"

Trimble spun round, and his jaw dropped at the sight of Fatty Wynn's plump face.

"Getting the tuck for your cousin?" asked Fatty pleasantly.

"Ye-es, exactly."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 457.

NEXT WEDNESDAY: **"IN THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY!"** A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



"Can you get the right things here?" asked Fatty Wynn.  
 "Oh, yes; certainly. I think so."  
 "Hallo! Jam-tarts and ginger-beer! Do you send jam-tarts and ginger-beer to your cousin in the Welsh Fusiliers?"  
 "He does on them," said Trimble. "He loves jam-tarts and—ginger-beer."  
 "Then he ought to have them," said Fatty Wynn seriously.  
 "How are you going to pack the jam-tarts, though?"  
 "Pip—pip—pack them!" stammered Trimble.  
 "Yes, you'll want a box, or they'll get crushed. It's a long, long way to Flanders, you know."  
 "Ye-e-es, of—of course!"

Trimble had intended to pack the jam-tarts internally; but he did not venture to do so in Fatty Wynn's presence. He blinked at the tarts, and blinked at the Welsh junior. How on earth was he to get rid of Fatty Wynn?  
 "Perhaps you could find me a box?" he suggested at last.

"Certainly!" said Fatty. "I'll help you pack them, too."  
 "I—I don't want any help."  
 "Then there's the postage—that will be over a bob. Got a bob?"

"Nunno."  
 "Well, I pay the postage, as it's going to a soldier," said Fatty. "Come along, and we'll find a box!"

"C-c-couldn't you go and find a box, and bring it here?" suggested Trimble. "Mrs. Taggles would give us some wrapping-paper and string."

"Oh, all serene!" said Fatty calmly.  
 He made a movement towards the door, and Baggy gasped with relief. His fat hand was stretched out to the nearest tart, when Fatty Wynn turned back. Trimble let go the tart as if it had become suddenly red-hot.

"You'll want a label," observed Fatty Wynn.  
 "Eh! Oh, yes! Certainly. You might get a label, too."  
 "Oh, I'll get one, and write the address on it. It's best to write the address in Roman capitals; I always do. Shall I do it?"

"Yes, please! You're a good chap. Better hurry up!"  
 "Right-ho! What's the address?"  
 "The—the address?"

"Yes, your cousin's address," said Fatty Wynn grimly.  
 Trimble suppressed a groan.  
 "Better leave that to me, on second thoughts," he stammered. "My—my brother—I mean, my cousin, would like to see my writing. Yes, leave that to me."

"Oh, all serene! But I'll look at the label, and see that it's all right. Mustn't risk the parcel going astray, you know."

"Certainly. You buzz off and get the box!"  
 "We'll see about the label first. You've got some labels, Mrs. Taggles?"

"Certainly, Master Wynn."  
 Dame Taggles handed out a label.

"Here you are Trimble! Write it down."  
 "I—I— There's no pen here or—or ink."  
 "There's that fountain-pen you wanted to sell me, you know."

"Oh! I—I forgot! But—but now I come to remember, it—if doesn't work."

"What a pity! It looked all right when you showed it to me. Let's have a look at it! I dare say I could make it work."

Trimble gave Fatty Wynn a Hunnish look as he handed over the pen.  
 "Why, this pen's all right, Trimble! You were mistaken. See, it writes a treat!"

"Sus—sus—so it does!"  
 "Well, go ahead! Come on, I'll write it for you! Name?"  
 "Tut—tut—Trimble."

"Private?" asked Fatty Wynn.  
 "Nunno! General."  
 "You're sending a parcel of ginger-beer and jam-tarts to a general?"

"I—I mean lieutenant. No, when I come to think of it, I—I mean private," said Trimble desperately.

"Good! Private Trimble," said Fatty Wynn calmly.  
 "Number?"  
 "Number? Oh! Nineteen—sixteen."

"What?"  
 "I—I mean—two thousand."  
 "Private Trimble, 2000—good! Battalion?"

"The—the Tenth."  
 "Tenth Battalion, Welsh Fusiliers—what?"  
 "Ex-ex-exactly!"

"All right! Figgy, old chap!"  
 Figgins and Kerr looked, grinning, into the tuckshop.  
 "I'm helping Trimble send off his parcel," explained Fatty Wynn. "Will you fetch the old box out of my study—a wooden box, under the table?"

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"Certainly!"  
 "I—I say!" gasped Trimble. "Ain't you going to fetch the box, Wynn?"

"Oh, no! Figgy will do that."  
 "The—the fact is, I—I think I've got the address wrong," stammered Trimble. "I—I'm not sure about my uncle's number."

"Your uncle?"  
 "I mean my brother—that is to say, my cousin! Upon the whole, I think I'd better leave it till to-morrow, and—send it then, when—when I've looked out my—my cousin's exact address."

"Well, that's a good idea," said Fatty Wynn thoughtfully. "You can't be too careful in matters of this kind. But the tarts will be stale to-morrow."

"Oh, my cousin won't mind!"  
 Fatty Wynn shook his head.

"They'll get pretty stale on the way, anyway," he said. "They ought to be sent fresh, perfectly fresh. It would be better to get a new lot to-morrow. Suppose I lend you another three bob to-morrow, when you've got the exact address?"

"Oh, good!" said Trimble, brightening up. "That will be ripping!"

"It's a go, then," said Fatty Wynn.  
 "I—I say, what are you doing with my tuck?" exclaimed Trimble, as Fatty Wynn gathered up the ginger-beer bottles under his arm, and proceeded to pack the tarts into a paper bag.

"Your tuck?" said Fatty, in surprise. "My tuck, you mean! I'm going to lend you the money again to send the things to your cousin. This tuck can't go."

"But—but I—I—"  
 "It's all right, Trimble. You bring me your cousin's exact address, so that I can help you get the parcel off, and see it posted, and there's the three bob waiting for you," said Fatty Wynn, and he walked out of the tuckshop with the tarts and the ginger-beer.

Trimble blinked after him speechlessly. Figgins and Kerr yelled with laughter as they marched off with Fatty Wynn and the tuck.

"Ow! The rotters!" groaned Trimble. "That—that fat beast was pulling my leg all the time! And—and he's got my tuck! Oh dear!"

That day there were tarts for tea in Figgins' study; and Baggy Trimble, like unto Rachel of old, mourned for that which was lost and would not be comforted.

## CHAPTER 5. A Dreadful Problem!

"G USSY, old chap!"  
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stopped, and jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye, and fixed a withering look upon Trimble of the Fourth.

"Twimble, I have requested you not to address me as Gussy," he said. "I am Gussy only to my friends."

"Ahem! The fact is, I want you—"  
 "I am sowwy, Twimble, but I cannot lend you any money for enterin' wotten wacin' competitions. I am disgusted with you!"

"Tain't that! The fact is, I want you to come down to my place for the vac."

"I am sowwy that I am already engaged, Twimble. Some fellows are comin' home to Easthorpe with me."

"Bring them along!" said Trimble. "The pater will welcome them with open arms. The more the merrier. I'd like you to come, Gussy; and you'll meet some really distinguished people. The Prime Minister may drop in."

"I have no desiah to meet the Pwime Ministah, Twimble! I do not approve of politicians."

"And—and Fisher," said Trimble recklessly. "Lord Fisher's practically certain to come."

"Bai Jove, I should like to see Lord Fishah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard Lord Fishah as our greatest sailah since Nelson. That would be wippin'! I am weally sowwy I cannot come, Twimble."

"And Jellicoe," said Trimble, "and—and Admiral Beatty. They're all old pals of my pater's. I dare say Jellicoe will spin the yarn about licking the German Fleet off Jutland."

"Bai Jove! I should like to heah him! I wegwet vevy much that I cannot come, Twimble."

"Put it to the other chaps, and ask them," said Trimble. "You can bring all your friends; there's lots of room at Trimble Hall. It's really the biggest place in Hampshire."

"Bai Jove! Is your place neah Easthorpe, Twimble?"  
 "About—about twenty miles," said Trimble vaguely.  
 Arthur Augustus looked at him. D'Arcy of the Fourth was



not a suspicious fellow, but he knew how the other fellows regarded Trimble's yarns. But Arthur Augustus felt that he could not doubt a fellow's word unless the evidence against him was absolutely overwhelming. And it was extraordinary, too, that Trimble should tell such amazing whoppers, which would be immediately exposed if any fellow accepted his reckless invitations. True, Trimble extended his generous offers of hospitality only to fellows who he knew were already booked for the vacation.

"If you can't come——" said Baggie. "Sure you can't come, though?"

"Yaas, I am weally sowwy."

"You'd come if you could?"

"Oh, yaas!"

"Well, if you can't accept my invitation, I'll accept yours," said Trimble genially.

"Eh?"

"I'd like you to come with me. But if you can't, I'll come with you."

"Bai Jove!"

"It's a go!" said Trimble.

"Oh! But—but it isn't a go, you know!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in dismay.

The swell of St. Jim's was fairly caught. He felt that nothing on earth would have induced him to take Trimble to Eastthorpe House for the vacation. He simply could not endure that greedy, pushing, untruthful bounder. And he trembled to think of the effect Trimble would have on his noble pater and Cousin Ethel.

But after saying that he would have accepted Trimble's invitation, how could he refuse to invite Trimble? The Chesterfieldian politeness of the great Gussy had landed him in a scrape, as it often did.

"If you change your mind, come to my place," rattled on Trimble. "In that case, I'll ask the pater to send the car here for us. I'd like to make up a party of about a dozen. But if you'd rather I came with you, it's all right—I'll come!"

And Trimble ambled away, leaving Arthur Augustus speechless.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy at last. "Bai Jove!"

That was all the swell of St. Jim's could say.

He was still thinking it over in dismay, when a smack on the shoulder aroused him. The Terrible Three had come up unheard.

"Wow! You wuff ass, Tom Mewwy!"

"Coming down to footer?" asked Tom cheerily. "What the dickens are you going to sleep in the quad for?"

"I was not goin' to sleep, you duffah! I was thinkin' out a dweadful pwoblem."

"Tell your Uncle Thomas!" said the captain of the Shell.

"As a fellow of tact and judgment——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Tell your Grandfather Montague," said Monty Lowther. "No charge for free advice to youngsters in trouble! Has the order gone forth that the Fourth are not to wear toppers on week-days?"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Or that the height of junior collars is to be limited to nine inches?"

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah! It's that awful boundah, Twimble. It appears that he is comin' home with me for the vac."

"My hat! I didn't know you were chummy with Trimble," said Manners.

"I am not chummay with him. I wegard the bare suggestion as oppwobwious. I wegard Twimble as a Pwussian, or vewy little bettah."

"And you've asked a Prussian home for the vac?" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"No."

"Well, if you haven't asked him, he won't be coming, I suppose?"

"Yaas; that's the pwoblem. He invited me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weally do not see any cause for laughtah, deah boys. It was vewy kind of Twimble to ask me, considewin' what awfully distinguished people he has at his place," said Arthur Augustus. "I should not vewy much care to meet the politicians he mentions, but it would be a vewy great honah to meet Lord Fishah——"

"Good old Gussy!" said Tom Merry affectionately, while Manners and Lowther chuckled.

"And, like an ass, I said I would come if I were not booked," said Arthur Augustus, in distress. "I wegard that as only polite. And then the wottah—I—I mean, Twimble, said he would come with me if I could not go with him. Aftah sayin' I would have accepted his invitation, I could not webuff him, could I?"

"Well, I could," said Monty Lowther. "But I'm not a lineal descendant of Lord Chesterfield. You want to know what to do?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, the next time Trimble speaks to you, hit him on the nose!"

"Eh?"

"And hit him on the nose every time he speaks! Then the whole matter will drop!"

"You uttah ass!"

"Jolly good idea!" said Manners. "Still, if you don't care for Lowther's advice, there's something else you could do!"

"What is that, Mannahs?"

"Hit him in the eye!" said Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as an ass, Mannahs! It is a fwightful pwoblem! What would you advise a chap to do, Tom Mewwy?"

"Hit him under the chin!" said Tom Merry reflectively.

"Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus walked off, to solve the dreadful problem by himself; and the Terrible Three grinned, and went down to footer.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Raising the Wind!

"CAN you lend me a stamp, Talbot?"

Talbot of the Shell smiled.

"Certainly, Trimble! Here you are!"

"Thanks! I'll remember this next term, of course!"

"Of course," assented Talbot.

"Perhaps you could lend me another while you're about it?" said Trimble.

"I've got to write home for a tenner!"

"Do you put two stamps on the letter when you write home for a tenner?"

"Nunno! But—but I've got to write to—to my uncle, who's a prisoner in Germany, you know!"

"You don't have to stamp the letters for prisoners in Germany!"

"I—I mean, he isn't a prisoner; he—he's at the Front," said Trimble. "By the way, Talbot, I wish you'd come down to my place for the vac. I've heard that you're going to your uncle, Colonel Lyndon. 'I'd rather you came to me!'"

"Thanks awfully!" said Talbot gravely. "But my uncle will be home on leave, and he will expect me. Ta-ta!"

"I say, that other stamp——"

Talbot laughed, and handed out another stamp.

"If you've got another, Talbot——"

But Talbot was gone.

Baggy Trimble grinned, and opened his pocket-book, and put the two stamps carefully into it. There were already six loose stamps in the book.

"That makes eight," murmured Baggie. "I shall want twenty-eight more to send in the whole three bobs' worth of solutions. I say, Kangaroo!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Harry Noble.

"Hold on a minute! Can you lend me a stamp?"

"Why, I lent you a stamp an hour ago!"

"Did you? Oh, yes! But——"

"And I saw you borrowing stamps of Ray and Kerruish," said Kangaroo. "Have you taken up stamp-collecting?"

"Nunno! But——"

"Well, if you want another stamp, I'll give you one," said the Cornstalk genially. "Come here!"

"Thanks awfully! I say—— Yaroooop!" roared Trimble, as Kangaroo's boot came down on his foot. "Wharrer you at? Oh! Wow!"

"That's the stamp!" said Kangaroo cheerily. "Have another?"

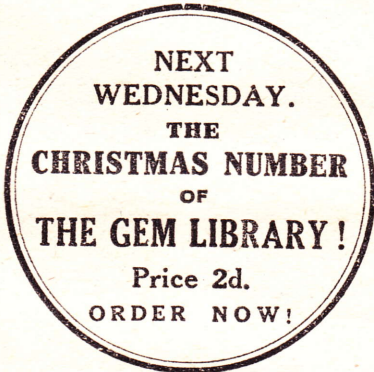
"Yah! Rotter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kangaroo went his way, and Trimble hopped on one foot and nursed the other. Kangaroo had given him a stamp, but not exactly the kind of stamp he wanted.

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"Hallo! What's the matter with you?" asked Glyn, coming along, and pausing in astonishment as he saw the hopping Baggy.

"I say, can you lend me—"

"No!" said Glyn promptly.

"A stamp!"

"Oh, a stamp!" said Glyn. "Certainly, if you'll go up to my study for it!"

"I'll go with pleasure!" said Baggy eagerly. "A penny stamp, you know!"

"There's one on my table," said Glyn. "You can have it. It's stuck on an envelope. I suppose you don't mind that?"

"Not a bit! Thanks!"

Baggy Trimble hurried on to Bernard Glyn's study in the Shell passage. There was an envelope on the table, with a stamp on it. Baggy stared at it. It was an old envelope that had evidently contained a letter once, and the stamp on it was postmarked. Baggy breathed hard through his nose.

"The rotten, joking beast! All the way upstairs for nothing! Br-r-r-r!"

Trimble did not borrow that stamp. It would not have served his purpose.

A sound of laughter in Tom Merry's study told him that the Terrible Three were indoors, and he blinked into No. 10. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were shouting with laughter, apparently over some good joke. At the sight of Trimble they shouted more loudly than ever.

Trimble eyed them suspiciously. He suspected that the merriment of the Shell fellows had some connection with himself.

"Hallo! What's the joke?" he asked.

"You are!" said Monty Lowther politely. "I was thinking of your face, Trimble! Ha, ha!"

"And Trimble Hall!" said Manners. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you know—"

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

They seemed to find the sight of Baggy Trimble irresistible for some reason.

"Oh, don't be silly asses!" urged Trimble. "Can you lend me a stamp? I want to write to General Trimble at the Front!"

"A general can afford to pay twopence on a letter," said Lowther. "Don't bother about stamping it. If it were a private I'd stand you a stamp!"

"As—as a matter of fact, it—it is a private, Lowther."

"Well, of all the Prussians—"

Baggy Trimble held out a fat hand for the stamp; but Lowther shook his head seriously.

"I don't approve of a general officer being reduced to the ranks in this sudden way, Trimble. Good-bye!"

"I say, Tom Merry, you might stand a fellow a stamp to write to a chap at the Front! My cousin, in the Northumberland Fusiliers, is anxious to hear from me. I—I'm going to send him my photograph!"

"You're going to send him your photograph if I lend you a stamp?" asked Tom thoughtfully.

"Yes, yes!"

"Then I'm sorry I can't oblige. I'm not going to be the cause of casualties in the Northumberland Fusiliers!"

"You—you—silly idiot!" roared Trimble.

And he departed from the study and slammed the door, leaving the Terrible Three chuckling.

"That chap must really be a Prussian," said Manners. "I believe he'd rather lie than not. I don't believe he's got any relations in khaki at all, and he's trotted out at least a dozen regiments—all first-class ones, too!"

"We shall see the generals and field marshals of the Trimble family when we go to Trimble Hall!" grinned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Shell roared again. There was a little joke on in Tom Merry's study, and Trimble was shortly to discover what it was. Monty Lowther had been thinking over D'Arcy's little problem, and he had found a solution—a solution which made his chums yell.

But Baggy Trimble had no time to waste thinking about Monty Lowther and his little jokes. He

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was keen on the quest of stamps. The most enthusiastic philatelist could not have sought for stamps more assiduously than did Baggy Trimble that afternoon.

Good-natured fellows gave him stamps, relieved to find that it was only a penny stamp he wanted. Baggy's collection grew. Every fellow he borrowed of was given to understand that it was just one stamp he wanted—to write to his cousin at the Front, or to write to his millionaire uncle for a tip, or to write to his pater to send the family motor-car to take him home for the vac.

Trimble's stories varied a good deal, though he was the kind of fellow that, according to the old proverb, needed to have a good memory.

That evening Baggy Trimble found himself in possession of a large number of loose penny stamps. He counted them in his study.

"Thirty-seven!" he chortled. "That's three bob for the competition, and a stamp to post the letter with. Only—only they won't take loose stamps at the 'Lucky Tips' office. But that's all right!"

The cheerful Baggy made his way to his Form-master's study. Mr. Lathom eyed him with severe inquiry.

"You have brought me your lines, Trimble?"

"Nunno, sir! I—I've been helping young Frayne with his lessons, and I haven't had time to do my lines yet. I—I wanted to ask you to—to help me, sir. I want to send three shillings to the Red Cross, sir, and I've been saving up stamps. But I don't like to send them a lot of loose stamps. Would you take them, sir, and give me a sheet of stamps?"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom. "I am glad to see, Trimble, that you have some thought for the brave men who are doing so much for us all! I will certainly do as you wish!"

Mr. Lathom opened his desk, and cordially handed Trimble a sheet of thirty-six stamps in exchange for the loose ones. He was surprised and pleased. He had not fancied that Trimble was the kind of fellow to send money to the Red Cross fund.

"Thank you, sir!" said Baggy.

He quitted the study in great satisfaction, and returned to his own room. He was provided now with the necessary funds for the "Lucky Tips" competition, and all he had to do was to spot the winners. And Baggy hadn't any doubt about his ability to do that.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Monty Lowther to the Rescue.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was looking very thoughtful at tea-time in Study No. 6. The swell of the Fourth was worried. He felt that he was committed now to taking Baggy Trimble home with him for the holidays—unless he changed his mind and went home with Baggy. That alternative was not to be thought of. Tom Merry & Co. were going home with Gussy, and certainly they wouldn't go to Trimble's. They did not believe in the existence of Trimble Hall, for one thing; and they could not stand Trimble, for another. And of the two alternatives, taking Trimble to Eastwood was better than going to Trimble's. Gussy felt that his nerves would not stand the strain of a whole family of Trimbles.

But he was worried. Blake and Herries and Digby lacked sympathy. Blake & Co. did not see where the trouble came in. Blake & Co. would have settled the difficulty by talking to Trimble in painfully plain English. But the sensitive Gussy could not. Above all, it was necessary to observe the rules of Chesterfieldian politeness. It was, as Gussy explained to his chums, a case of "noblesse oblige." After saying that he would have accepted Trimble's invitation if disengaged, it would be bad form to decline Trimble's company; and Gussy wanted to act with strict punctiliousness in the matter, all the more because Trimble was so utter a bounder. It was simply impossible to give that unspeakable outsider the right to say he was lacking in good taste.

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"Wait for us, Baggy! My hat—he's going! Baggy! Baggy! Baggy! **BAGGY!**" yelled Monty Lowther. But Baggy Trimble did not turn his head. He was fairly bolting from the platform. (see Chapter 12.)

only grinned heartlessly at Gussy's worried brow. They did not see where the difficulty came in, and refused to recognise it.

The chums of the Fourth had finished tea when the Terrible Three strolled in with smiling faces.

"Got it!" announced Lowther.

"Eh! Got what?" asked Blake.

"I've been thinking over Gussy's dreadful problem. We've put our heads together over it, and thought of a way out."

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus brightened up. "If you are speakin' sewiously, Lowthah, I am vewy much obliged."

"Serious as Punch," said Lowther.

"If you are goin' to make wotten jokes—"

"I tell you we've thought it out. Gentlemen," said Lowther, looking round, "you all recognise the fact that Gussy is in a fearful difficulty. He's asked six decent fellows home for the holidays—"

"Hear, hear!"

"And now an awful bounder has fastened on him, taking advantage of the slight aristocratic weakness of his intellect—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah, you ass!"

"Gussy cannot possibly be guilty of anything savouring of bad form. Having told Trimble a whopper—"

"Lowthah, if you insinuate—"

"You told Trimble you'd come home with him if you were disengaged. Was that as near the facts as George Washington would have got?"

"I—I—I was speakin' genewally—"

"Beware, my boy, of the first step on the downward path!" said Lowther solemnly.

"If you are goin' to be a sillay ass, Lowthah—"

"I'm not going to poach on your ground, Gussy. Now, as the matter stands, you've got to take Trimble home with you, unless you and your friends decide to go to Trimble's place instead."

"Yaas, wathah."

"Trimble has invited us all in the most generous and open-handed way. He made sure first that we were all engaged for the holidays—but that's only a detail. But my idea is to give Trimble a joyful surprise!"

"I weally do not see—"

"That's the idea. You're going to accept his invitation."

"Wha-a-at!"

"That lets you out," explained Lowther. "Your friends



all agree to come to Trimble's place for the vac, instead of going to Eastwood."

"We jolly well don't!" exclaimed Herries warmly. "I'm jolly well not going to pal with that lying worm!"

"Shush, dear boy! We can all accept Trimble's invitation, and save Gussy from the awful calamity his politeness has brought upon him. I hope it will be a lesson to Gussy not to be so polished in the future—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"But we sha'n't get as far as Trimble Hall," continued Lowther. "In the first place, Trimble Hall doesn't exist, so it would be impossible to spend a vacation there. I don't know what Trimble's place is like; but I know his people are poor, and they would probably boil him in oil if he brought seven fellows home for the vac. Nothing against Trimble being poor, of course—they may be poor but honest. I've heard of people being poor but honest, though I've never heard of people being rich but honest—"

"I wegard you—"

"But it is against Trimble to be bragging, and lying, and issuing whacking invitations he doesn't mean fellows to accept," said Lowther. "My idea is that, when he finds we are coming, he will be at his wit's end for excuses to put us off. After his wonderful descriptions of Trimble Hall, he won't want any St. Jim's chap to see what his place is like. He would be cackled to death next term if he did. So when we all tell Trimble we've accepted his generous invitation, he will have to wriggle out of it somehow. My idea is to refuse to take any hints, and watch him wriggle."

"Lowthah, do you mean to say sewiously that Twimble is

such an uttah cad as to ask a fellah to come if he doesn't weally mean it?"

"Adolphus Aubrey, I do sewiously mean to say so!"

"Then he must be a shockin' cad! I wufese to believe such a thing of Twimble without the cleavest pwoof."

"Well, you're going to have pwoof if we accept his invitation," chuckled Blake. "I'm on!"

"Hear, hear!" chortled Herries and Dig.

"Pway considah, deah boys. If Lowthah is mistaken, we shall be committed to goin' home with Twimble, instead of goin' to Eastwood. If you don't mind—"

"Not a bit," said Tom Merry. "I don't think it's a big risk to run."

"Ha, ha! No!"

"We'll keep it up right to the finish, and watch the fat boulder wriggling," said Lowther, with great satisfaction. "We have to take the same train, as he lives in Hampshire. Just picture his face when we get to his station!"

The juniors yelled with laughter, and even Arthur Augustus condescended to smile.

"I fancy it will stop him issuing invitations," grinned Manners. "He will be afraid somebody else will accept."

"I am vewy much obliged to you, Lowthah. If I accept Twimble's invitation I need not ask him to Eastwood."

"Exactly!"

"Howevah, I insist upon givin' Twimble the benefit of the doubt. I can hardly cwedit that he has been lyin' to such a feahful extent. If it turns out genuine, we shall be booked for Twimble Hall."

"That's agreed," said Tom Merry.

"Passed unanimously!" said Blake. "Let's go and tell Trimble that we've accepted his generous invitation."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Mind, you're to be jolly serious," said Lowther. "Trimble's a silly ass, but he might smell a mouse and bluff us, if he scents the jape. Make him nice speeches. After all, he's entitled to thanks for his splendid invitations—what with huntin', shootin', fishin', motorin', and meetin' Prime Ministers and admirals."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the seven juniors, in great spirits, proceeded in search of Baggy Trimble, to accept his generous invitations and thank him with gratitude—and to watch his face while they were doing so.

## CHAPTER 8.

### A Very Pleasant Surprise.

**B**AGGY TRIMBLE was busy in his study.

His study-mates, Lumley-Lumley and Mellish and Levison, were at work on their prep. But Trimble had something more important than prep to think of.

"Lucky Tips" was open before him on the table. He was conning over several lists of horses—those entered for the four races in the competition. Baggy had to foretell the winners of those four races in order to bag the hundred-pound prize, or a share of it. Baggy prided himself on his knowledge of horseflesh; but even the fatuous Baggy doubted whether he would "nail" four winners at one fell swoop. But he intended to have a dozen tries, and in a dozen tries Baggy was quite certain of getting the four. "Lucky Tips" obligingly printed a whole sheet of coupons upon which the winners were to be named. "Lucky Tips" did not mind how many coupons were used, so long as the sum of three-pence was sent for every one used. Trimble was going to use a dozen, and he hadn't the slightest doubt that among that dozen coupons one would contain the names of the four winners.

Levison was grinning. Levison was horsey in his tastes, and a good deal of his pocket-money ran away on horses, but he had no intention of entering that precious competition. Levison entertained strong doubts as to whether the generous proprietors of "Lucky Tips" would pay the prize, even if won.

"Got 'em?" Levison asked, as Baggy Trimble paused to chew the handle of his pen.

Trimble nodded.

"Yes, I think I've got 'em. What do you think of Snooker II. for the Mugg's Plate?"

"Oh, ripping!"

"And Bully Boy for the Swindleton Handicap?"

"Topping!"

"And Pinch of Snuff for the Dufferton Plate?"

"Bound to romp home!"

"And Mayflower for the Catchem Stakes?" said Trimble.

"I think that four will pull 'em off, but I'm having a dozen tries. Can't fail to get the winners on one coupon if I have a dozen tries."

"Can't fail—eh?" said Lumley-Lumley, looking up.

"Rather not!"

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"Then everybody who has a dozen tries will win the hundred pounds, I guess?"

Trimble smiled a superior smile.

"Everybody with my knowledge," he said. "You see, I know all about horses—know the game from start to finish!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I shouldn't wonder if one or two other knowing blades get a whack in the prize," said Trimble.

"Knowing blades. Oh, crumbs!"

"Then you're certain of a whack in it?" grinned Levison.

"Are you just as certain of getting it if you win?"

"Oh, yes! The competition is conducted on lines of the strictest fairness."

"How do you know?"

"It says so in 'Lucky Tips.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see where the cackle comes in. Besides, they publish the names and addresses of the winners."

"Ripping for you, if anyone saw your name and address there!" grinned Lumley-Lumley. "I guess it would be the sack."

"Well, the Head doesn't take in 'Lucky Tips,' you know," said Trimble. "I'm risking that. A real gay blade is bound to run some risks. My name will be there, of course. I'm bound to win. This will set me up for the vac. Of course, it would make it safer to send in two dozen coupons. If you like to lend me three bob, Lumley—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Or you, Levison!"

"Rats!"

"If you'd like to lend me three bob, Mellish—"

"Catch me!" grinned Mellish.

"Well, I jolly well sha'n't lend you any of the prize when I get it!" sniffed Trimble. "You'll be after my hundred quid when it comes along, I know that—"

"When!" chuckled Levison.

"Well, anyway, there are consolation prizes for fellows who get only three winners. They get a pound each."

"I dare say some of them are genuine, then," agreed Levison. "It's rather a jump from a hundred pounds to one quid."

"You ass!" said Trimble witheringly. "Suppose I get the four winners on my coupon, they can't help giving me the first prize, can they?"

"Ha, ha! I should imagine so! I should imagine they'd

rather chuck your coupon into the fire than give you a hundred pounds!"

"That would be swindling!"

"A thing never heard of in connection with a paper like 'Lucky Tips!' grinned Levison. "You silly ass, if you must go into a competition, why don't you pick out a paper with a reputation to lose? There are lots of genuine competitions going on."

"Oh, this is all right!" said Trimble. "You see, I know more about these things than you do, Levison."

"My hat!"

"Here goes!" said Trimble, and he slipped his sheet of coupons into an envelope, with the sheet of stamps, and sealed it. "Now to post it. You'll sing rather a different tune next week, when I'm rolling in quids!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble rolled out of the study, and hurried down to the school letter-box. He was careful to keep the letter out of sight until it was posted. Baggy was quite satisfied with "Lucky Tips," but he was aware that the powers at St. Jim's would be far from approving of any dealings with that estimable publication.

Baggy returned quite cheerfully to the study.

He found it crowded.

The Shell fellows and four of the Fourth were there. Tom Merry & Co. were waiting to see Baggy Trimble.

"Bai Jove! Heah you are, Twimble!"

"Hallo!" said Trimble, in surprise.

"We've come to tell you that we accept your kind invitation home for the vac, old chap," said Monty Lowther.

"Eh?"

"We're coming home with you," said Manners. "Don't forget to ask your pater to send the big motor-car."

"Wha-a-at!"

"There'll be rather a party of us," remarked Tom Merry.

"Seven, even if you haven't asked a lot more fellows, in your lavish way."

"I—I— You—ahem!—on the whole," gasped Trimble. "I couldn't think of depriving D'Arcy of his guests. I'd like you to come no end, but as you've promised D'Arcy—"

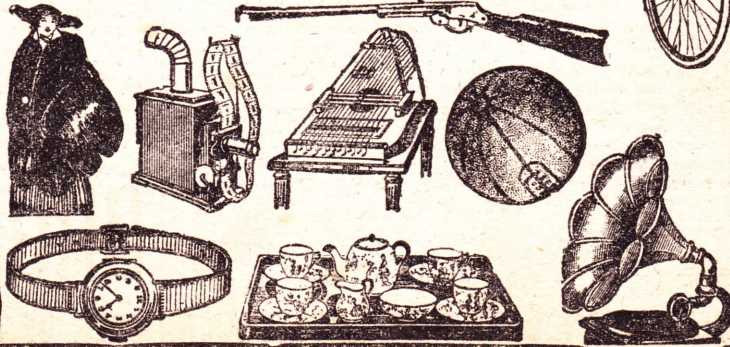
"That's all right. D'Arcy is coming, too."

"Wha-a-at!"

"I have vevy much pleasuah, Twimble, in acceptin' your kind invitation to pass the vacation at Twimble Hall," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in his most stately manner.

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Trimble's jaw dropped.  
"Good-night, old chap!" said Blake genially. "Rely on us, you know!"

"Oh, yes; rather!" said Herries.

"We're looking forward to it," said Digby. "I'm specially gone on huntin' and shootin' in your extensive woods, Trimble."

"I'm rather interested in the old armour from Crusading times," said Manners, "and the portraits of dead-and-gone Trimbles."

"I—I—I say——"

"We shall have a ripping time!" said Tom Merry heartily. "So kind of you to ask us, Trimble."

"So kind of you, Baggy, old chap!" chorused the juniors.

And they streamed out of the study, Lowther pausing a moment to shake hands with Trimble in a very hearty way. Baggy Trimble blinked after them blankly. Then he ejaculated:

"Oh, crikey!"

## CHAPTER 9. Trimble's Guests.

**T**OM MERRY & CO. were not, as a rule, very chummy with Trimble of the Fourth. They were accustomed to speaking in very plain English to the bouncer of the School House when he bothered them. But that attitude had to be dropped now. Since they had accepted his friendly invitations, they had to be friendly. And the next day they were quite genial to Trimble.

Strange to say, Trimble was not very much cheered by their unaccustomed cordiality. He seemed to be in a worried frame of mind.

Even the prospect of bagging the hundred-pound prize from "Lucky Tips" did not remove the worry.

Really, he ought to have been pleased at securing the company of seven such agreeable fellows for the vacation. Racke of the Shell, for example, would have given two or three of his abundant fivers to get Arthur Augustus D'Arcy home with him for the holidays. Trimble, indeed, said that he was very pleased, but he looked worried all the time.

The chums of the School House no longer avoided Trimble's company. In fact, they sought him out, to enjoy pleasant little chats about the coming vac. Herries revelled in the prospect of hunting and shooting in the extensive Trimble woods. Lowther was simply dying to go skating on the Trimble lake. Manners was looking forward to trout-fishing in the Trimble river. Tom Merry talked keenly of the pleasure of seeing the old armour and trophies of dead-and-gone Trimbles. Blake said he was going to make water-colour sketches of some of the old Crusaders in the Trimble picture-gallery. Arthur Augustus declared that he was anticipating a meeting with Lord Fisher, Admiral Jellicoe, and the splendid assortment of dukes and earls who, according to Baggy, were always dropping in at Trimble Hall.

These happy anticipations ought to have made the hospitable Baggy feel quite chirpy, but they didn't.

Every discussion of the coming vacation caused a worried look to appear on his fat brow.

The juniors did not appear to see it. Many times they expressed their gratitude to Baggy for the good things in store, and seemed not to note his stammering replies.

Baggy had ceased to issue liberal invitations to other fellows, too. Even when it was absolutely certain that a fellow was booked for the holidays, Trimble did not ask him down to the Hall. He did not mean to run any more risks.

For a whole day Baggy Trimble seemed to have a weight on his mind; and in private the juniors roared over the swanking fellow's very evident dismay at being taken at his word.

Even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was determined to give Baggy the benefit of the doubt, could not help seeing that the accepting of his invitations had knocked him into a cocked hat, as Blake expressed it.

The juniors were interested to know what device Trimble would resort to for rescinding his invitations.

That he would swarm his home with juniors from St. Jim's for the holidays was impossible. Even if his people would stand such an invasion, the juniors would see what his home was like—that Trimble Hall had no existence, in fact; that the park and the river and the lake and the old armour and the portraits of the crusading Trimbles existed only in Baggy's imagination. It was impossible that the boastful young duffer would give himself away and disprove all his own airy yarns by allowing a St. Jim's fellow to visit his place. But how he would get out of it was an interesting problem. His boasts

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had come home to roost now, and really there did not seem any escape for Baggy.

For the juniors were blind and deaf to hints. When Baggy suggested to Arthur Augustus that his pater would, perhaps, rather have him home for the holidays, Arthur Augustus said that an arrangement was an arrangement, and he was comin' with Twimble. When Baggy told Tom Merry that it would be a ripping idea for the whole party to go down to Huckleberry Heath instead, Tom shook his head seriously.

"Not a bit of it!" he said. "You see, my place is humble in comparison—quite a small show compared with Trimble Hall. Practically nothing doing, in comparison with high life at the Hall!"

And Lowther was equally resolved, apparently, when Trimble suggested that the party might have a better time with Lowther's uncle.

"Hardly," said Monty. "Besides, I'm looking forward to meeting your pater's old pal Fisher. I've a great admiration for Lord Fisher."

"And I want to meet the Prime Minister," said Manners gravely. "I'm not altogether satisfied with the way Asquith is running things, and I'm going to give him a piece of my mind when I meet him at Trimble Hall. Of course, I shall be civil!"

Trimble gave it up.

To the surprise of the merry jokers, however, Baggy Trimble recovered his spirits that evening, and in the Common-room he entered into a discussion of the holiday in tones of hearty anticipation. Tom Merry & Co. were surprised. Some of the other fellows were surprised, too.

"You fellows going home with Trimble for the vac?" asked Kangaroo.

"Yes. Baggy is so pressing," said Tom Merry. "His hospitality is simply unbounded. And he's going to introduce us to Jellicoe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, Kangy, what is there to cackle at?" asked Monty Lowther. "I think it's very kind and generous of Trimble, myself. Some fellows would keep all these good things to themselves. Not Baggy!"

"But is there really a Trimble Hall, then?" asked Kangaroo, in surprise.

"Look here, you know——" began Baggy warmly.

"It's mentioned in the Domesday Book, I think," said Lowther seriously. "Sir Fulke de Trimble was the Trimble of that day, I understand. Isn't that so, Baggy?"

"Exactly!" said Baggy.

"He fought in the Wars of the Roses, in the reign of King John, and died on the deck of his ship," said Lowther.

"After he had said 'Kiss me, Hardy, he never smiled again. That's so, Baggy, isn't it?"

"Just so," assented Trimble fatuously.

"It's the same chap who was in the Crusades, in South America," went on Lowther calmly. "That was in the reign of Alfred the Great. Sir Funk de Trimble—I mean, Sir Fulke de Trimble—was with him when he burnt those cakes. He died in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and his last words were, 'My country, how I leave thee!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They've still got his armour at Trimble Hall," resumed Lowther. "It is real old Crusading armour—gilt-edged, check action, and ball bearings complete."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It dawned upon even Baggy that Monty Lowther was being humorous, and he grinned feebly.

He joined Arthur Augustus as the juniors left the Common-room.

"So glad you're coming down for the vac, Gussy!" he said. Arthur Augustus shuddered at the "Gussy," but he could not very well resent it in the circumstances.

"It's vey good of you, Twimble!"

"By the way, I suppose you could lend me five bob till the vac?" said Trimble. "I'll settle up at Trimble Hall."

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus looked at the cheery Baggy.

But he could scarcely refuse a small loan to his prospective host. Baggy had him there. Five shillings changed hands.

"You might make it ten," said Baggy thoughtfully. "It's all the same, I suppose? I shall have plenty of tin at Trimble Hall."

But Arthur Augustus seemed to be suffering suddenly from an attack of deafness, and he walked on without replying.

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Trimble grinned, and rolled away to the tuckshop, which was just closing. But Dame Taggles did not close till the five shillings had been expended, and Baggy came back looking very fat and shiny.

### CHAPTER 10. Dreadful Doubts.

"ASS!"

"Fathead!"  
"Duffer!"  
"Uttah cwass ass!"  
"Burlbling jabberwock!"

Those remarks were addressed to Monty Lowther the following day. His chums did not measure their words.

The humorist of the Shell was looking a little dismayed.

The great jape was working—but it was working the wrong way. For the first day, the juniors had chuckled gleefully over the fix Baggy Trimble was in. They had debated by what kind of a trick he would seek to rescind his invitations. But a change had come over the spirit of their dream.

Certainly, for a whole day Baggy Trimble had seemed to be knocked into a cocked hat. But apparently he had recovered from that. To all appearance, he had made up his mind to it. Tom Merry & Co. were to come home for the holidays with him, and Baggy openly rejoiced in the prospect.

And as Tom Merry & Co. had not, really, the slightest intention of going to Trimble's place for the vacation, the situation was awkward.

Lowther had declared that Trimble would sneak out of it somehow, and they would relieve Gussy of his difficulty, and give the swanking duffer a valuable lesson, and no harm would be done. The juniors had agreed with him. It had not even occurred to Lowther that Trimble might, for some weird reason of his own, play up, and keep them to their word.

But that was exactly what Trimble was doing!

Hourly he expatiated on the joys of Trimble Hall, and the delight his pater would feel at the arrival of his chums from St. Jim's.

Hence the very plain opinions the Co. expressed to the humorist, who had landed them in this scrape. Even Lowther was puzzled.

"Blessed if it doesn't begin to look as if there really is a Trimble Hall!" he confessed.

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

"How are we going to get out of it, if Trimble holds us to it?" demanded Blake. "Without being as polite as Gussy—I'm not an ass—I can't throw a chap's invitation in his face after accepting it!"

"Can't be done!" said Herries. "We've got to go, if Trimble means it. And it looks as if he does now."

"Yaas, wathah! You fellahs will wemembah that I told you to give Twimble the benefit of the doubt. We are committed now, and I uttably wefuse to hurt Twimble's feelin's by wefusin' to go, aftah all. Besides, in that case, he would come home with me. I could not wefuse!"

"I don't believe he's in earnest!" growled Lowther. "He's spoofing us, I suppose!"

"He says he's arranged for the family motor-car to come for us."

"There isn't any family motor-car!" hooted Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Well, Trimble is an awful Prussian, of course; but why should he tell lies that will be bowled out to-morrow morning?" said Manners.

"He will lie right up to the last minute, of course, and then it will turn out that he's got a dodge," said Lowther.

"Wats!"

"Looks to me as if we're landed," said Tom. "We've got to stand Trimble all through the holidays, and it's your fault, you ass!"

"He—he's putting it on," said Lowther uncomfortably. Monty was beginning to have doubts himself. "He's sticking us all for loans on the strength of it, you know. That's his little game."

"Wubbish!"

"Well, if Trimble means bizney, we've got to go to his place for the holidays," said Digby; "and I know I shall jolly well punch Lowther's head when we get there!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I tell you it's a dodge," said Lowther desperately. "He'll turn up at the last minute with some whopper to shoot us off."

"Wats!"

"Here he comes!" muttered Blake "Shush!"

"Bet you he's got his lie ready this minute," said Lowther confidently.

"Wats!"

Baggy Trimble rolled up to the group of juniors in the

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quadrangle, beaming. Never had Baggy's smile been so genial and expansive.

"It's all serene, you fellows," he said. "The car's coming in the morning."

Lowther's face fell. His chums looked daggers at him.

"We shall have a ripping run down to Hampshire," said Baggy. "I've asked the pater to send his biggest car."

"Lots of cars, of course?" murmured Lowther.

"Well, not lots now, as the pater has sent three or four to the Red Cross," said Baggy calmly. "I think there's only six at home now."

"Oh, my hat!"

"There'll be lots of room for all of us, and our bags," said Trimble. "I think you'll enjoy the run. I'm going to send a telegram to the pater. I suppose one of you chaps could lend me a bob? I shall be in funds as soon as I get home, of course."

Tom Merry silently handed over the bob.

"Thanks!" said Trimble carelessly.

And he rolled away, leaving the juniors looking at one another. His steps took him to the tuckshop.

"I regard you as an uttah ass, Lowthah!" said Arthur Augustus, in measured tones. "I shall wefuse to listen to any more of your wiculous wheezes. I suppose any of you fellahs haven't seen my fountain-pen?" added D'Arcy. "I should like to find it befoah we go home."

"Oh, blow your fountain-pen!" growled Lowther.

Lowther walked away, somewhat dismayed. He still clung to his belief that Trimble was bluffing. But he had to admit that it really looked as if the fat Fourth-Former meant business; and in that case, the Co. were booked. Even Lowther, though he had accepted the invitation for a jape, knew that he could not throw it in Trimble's face after accepting it. If Trimble meant business, the chums of St. Jim's were bound to play their part, and go home with him, and put smiling faces on it. It was not because Trimble's place was probably poor that they objected; but the prospect of a whole vacation spent in Baggy's company was dismaying.

But they were in for it now, and they could only hope that Lowther was right, and that Trimble would turn up with some flimsy excuse at the last minute. If that was Baggy's intention, he was certainly sticking it out.

Meanwhile, Arthur Augustus was a little worried about his fountain-pen. The pen had been a birthday present from Cousin Ethel, so, apart from its value, Gussy was very reluctant to lose it. But it had disappeared for several days, and his friends had seen nothing of it. He wanted to find it if he could, before he left for the vacation, and he decided to make a round of inquiry in the School House.

Nobody had heard anything of the pen till he came to Talbot's study. There, as it happened, he found George Gore writing a letter. He was writing it with a fountain-pen.

Arthur Augustus fixed his eyes on that pen. Fountain-pens, certainly, are very much alike; but D'Arcy knew his own property.

"Bai Jove, that's lucky!" he remarked. "I do not wemembah lendin' you that pen, Goah. But I am vewy glad it is not lost."

Gore stared.

"Lost!" he repeated. "I'm not likely to lose a pen I've given ten shillings for."

"Bai Jove! But that is my pen, Goah!"

"Rats!"

"Weally, Goah—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Gore. "It's my pen."

"Goah, I insist that that is my pen!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, a little excitedly. "Blake and Hewwies and Dig know it, too."

"Bow-wow! I dare say it was yours till you sold it."

"Sold it!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"If you want it back, you can have it at the same price," said Gore. "I don't mind."

"But I did not sell it to you, Goah! You are dweamin'."

"You sold it to Trimble, though."

"Twimble!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, for ten bob, and he sold it to me for the same figure."

"Gweat Scott! I did not sell my fountain-pen to Twimble. I missed it fwom my studay!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

Gore whistled.

"Then the fat beast stole it," he said. "Well, you can settle it with Trimble. I'm sticking to this pen unless I have my ten bob back."

"I am scowwy you will have to lose ten shillin's, Goah, but that is my pen!"

"Nothing to be sorry about," said Gore coolly. "I'm sticking to the pen."

"But it is mine, Goah!"

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"Bow-wow! Settle it with Trimble!"

"Dash it all, Gore!" exclaimed Talbot. "If it's Gussy's pen, you ought to give it to him."

Gore shrugged his shoulders.

"It's my pen, as I bought and paid for it," he said.

"Gussy can have it if I get my ten bob back. Trimble's his chum—"

"He is not my chum!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"Well, you're going home with him for the vac. Perhaps he thinks that gives him a claim to sell your things," grinned Gore.

"Bai Jove! I will speak vewy plainly to that uttah wottah!"

Arthur Augustus rushed out, breathing wrath, and rushed into Trimble's study. The cheerful Baggy greeted him with a genial grin.

"Got your things packed, Gussy?" he asked. "We start pretty early in the morning."

"You have sold my fountain-pen to Goah, Twimble!" Trimble nodded calmly.

"Yes; I knew you wouldn't mind."

"W-w-w-wouldn't mind!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Yes; I knew you'd help a pal who was short of tin," said Trimble calmly. "Of course, I shall make it up to you. When we get to Trimble Hall—"

Arthur Augustus looked fixedly at Trimble. But he restrained his wrath. He could not commit assault and battery upon a fellow who was taking him home for the holidays. He quitted the study without a word, and Baggy Trimble winked at the ceiling.

It cost Arthur Augustus ten shillings to recover his fountain-pen. He did not leave it lying about the study after that. Baggy Trimble had fallen into the habit of dropping into Study No. 6 to discuss the coming vacation, and now that Baggy was so friendly, it was necessary to be very careful with valuable articles.

## CHAPTER 11.

### Too Late!

"HURRAH!"

Thus Baggy Trimble on the following morning—breaking-up day at St. Jim's.

Trimble had the morning paper in his hands, and it was open at the racing column. Baggy's eyes were dancing with delight.

"All the winners?" grinned Levison.

"Yes! Hurrah!"

"My only hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "You don't mean to say you got the winners in your rotten competition?"

"Look at it!" chortled Trimble. "Snooker II., Bully, Pinch of Snuff, and Son o' Mine—and I had 'em all on one coupon. It was a stroke of luck, too—I got 'em rather mixed when I put 'em on the coupon. I had to catch the post, you know, and somehow I left out the horses I intended to put in, and put in the wrong ones. And—and as it happens, they're the winners!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled.

Baggy Trimble, with his wonderful knowledge of horses and races, had made selections for the winners, and with his usual stupidity, had entered the names of the wrong horses on the coupons. He had made that interesting discovery later, conning over his copy of the list. His selections had come in nowhere, but fortunately they were not on the coupons, so it did not matter. The names he had written by mistake happened to be the names of the winning horses. It was, as Blake remarked, fool's luck.

But Baggy could not have been more pleased if he had selected those winning names by sheer skill and wonderful knowledge.

"Look at 'em!" he chortled. "Four winners—that hundred quid is mine! This is what comes of knowing racing from start to finish—ahem!—I—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther. "Why, if you'd put in the horses you selected to win, you wouldn't have got a winner at all!"

"Ahem! I've got the winners, anyway," said Trimble. "Jolly queer it should turn out like that, but there you are."

"Queerer still if you get the hundred quids!" chuckled Levison.

"Oh, you're an ass! My name will be in 'Lucky Tips' to-day."

"We'll see."

Trimble snorted. He had no doubt at all that his name would be in "Lucky Tips" as the winner of a hundred pounds. It did not occur to him that the sporting gentlemen

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who ran "Lucky Tips" might have some other use for their hundred pounds—even if they possessed that sum at all. Baggy Trimble had a good deal to learn about the manners and customs of hangers-on of the Turf.

Baggy was remarkably cheery that morning, but his high spirits were not shared by Tom Merry & Co. According to Baggy, the big car was arriving at eleven o'clock to take them to Trimble Hall. Even Lowther had almost given up hope. His comrades gave him Hunnish looks. Lowther's peculiar sense of humour had landed them, and there was no escape now.

"But there isn't a car," said Lowther desperately, in reply to his chums' look. "It's all bunkum!"

"Wats!"

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

Some of the fellows were going early, and the chums of St. Jim's saw them off. Figgins & Co. started quite early in the morning. Kangaroo and Dane and Glyn went off together. Talbot was seen off at the station. Reilly and Kerruish and Julian went off in a merry band. Tom Merry & Co. waited for the whacking car from Trimble Hall. It was close on eleven when Baggy Trimble came up to the uneasy juniors, and to their unspeakable joy he was looking concerned. Was Lowther right, after all? They ventured to hope.

"I say, I'm awfully sorry, you fellows!" said Trimble.

The juniors breathed more freely.

"I've had a—a telegram," said Baggy calmly. "The pater can't send the car. And—and it turns out that he's agreed to let the authorities put a lot of wounded in the Hall—the whole place is crowded with them, and it won't be possible to go home for the holidays, after all. I shall have to come with you after all, Gussy. You don't mind?"

The juniors looked at Trimble.

Lowther gave a triumphant chuckle.

He had felt dreadful doubts, but he had been right. There wasn't a car, there wasn't any Trimble Hall, and they weren't going home with Trimble for the holidays! After their late anxiety, it really seemed almost too good to be true!

"Bai Jove!" was all Arthur Augustus could say.

"Of course, the pater couldn't refuse," said Trimble. "Lord French came down personally about it—"

"Lord Fwench!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"Yes; he's an old pal of the pater's. And Asquith asked him—"

"Asquith?" said Manners.

"Yes; my father was at school with Asquith, you know, and when Asquith asked him to let French have the Hall for the wounded, the pater simply couldn't refuse. It rather knocks the vac on the head, but we must all make sacrifices in war-time," said Baggy heroically. "I don't mind coming home with you instead, Gussy. Of course, it comes to the same thing—we shall be together!"

The juniors gazed at Trimble speechlessly.

Such colossal nerve took their breath away.

Lowther had predicted—justly, as it turned out—that Trimble would come up at the last minute with some lie on a bigger scale than usual. And here was Trimble, and here was the lie—bigger than even Lowther had thought of suspecting.

But Monty Lowther was equal to the occasion. Baggy Trimble had to pay for the anxiety he had caused. He was not to escape at the price merely of telling a bigger whopper than usual.

"Jolly decent of your pater!" said Lowther, when he recovered his breath. "So the Hall's been turned over to the soldiers?"

"Yes; crammed with 'em!"

"Must want a lot of looking after?"

"Oh, the pater will have a swarm of nurses there, you know. He will stand all that out of his own pocket."

"Still there will be a lot to do," said Lowther thoughtfully.

"Your pater isn't the only chap who can make sacrifices in war-time, Trimble. We're going to follow his shining example. We're coming down to the Hall, all the same!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"We'll help to look after the soldiers!"

"Hear, hear!" chirruped Blake.

Trimble's jaw dropped.

"Help to—to look after the—the soldiers?" he stammered.

"Certainly! We couldn't pass the vac better. Patriotic, you know."

"Yaas, wathah!" grinned Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Not a word, Baggy: we're coming!" said Tom Merry.

"We shall be jolly glad to be useful!"

"Ripping idea!" said Hernes heartily.

"But I—I say, the place is full up, crammed; there isn't any—any accommodation, you know!"

"We shan't want much accommodation. We're simply going to make ourselves useful." Lowther looked at his

watch. "Time to start for the eleven-thirty train, you chaps. Got a move on!"

"Right-ho!"

"But I—I say——" stammered Trimble.

"Come on!"

The juniors rushed away, leaving Baggy Trimble rooted to the ground, his mouth open like that of a newly-landed fish, and his eyes bulging. Not till they were out of Trimble's sight did the Co. break into a yell of laughter.

"What did I tell you?" gasped Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The howwid spoofin' beast!"

"We have to pass through Laxham Station to get to Gussy's place," said Lowther. "We'll keep it up that we're going to Trimble's, right up to the minute we reach Laxham. Laxham's the station for Trimble Hall."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A crowded trap bore the juniors away to Wayland Junction. Trimble almost had to be lifted into the trap. He was speechless with dismay.

He found his voice later, and tried to point out to his comrades that they had better think over it, that Trimble Hall would be decidedly uncomfortable under the circumstances, that—that, in short, Trimble found a hundred reasons why the party should head for Easthorpe instead of Laxham. But his reasons fell on deaf ears.

The juniors boarded the express at Wayland in great spirits.

With the exception of Baggy—he was not in great spirits. He was in the depths of dismay.

But Tom Merry & Co. were determined not to see it.

The fat Fourth-Former had to pay for his swank, and the worry he had caused them; and as the express rushed out of the station, the Co. discussed with great enthusiasm the good work they were going to do at Trimble Hall. And Baggy Trimble listened in unhappy silence.

## CHAPTER 12.

### A Happy Afternoon for Baggy!

**B**AGGY TRIMBLE brightened up a little as the train stopped at a station, and he caught sight of "Lucky Tips" on a bookstall. He whipped out of the carriage, and bundled in with that precious publication in his fat hand. He opened it as the train sped on, and eagerly scanned the list of prize-winners. A prize of a hundred pounds was some consolation for the trouble he had brought upon himself by his swank.

A puzzled expression came over his fat face, as he scanned the prize-list.

"This is jolly queer!" he said, at last.

"What's queer?" asked Lowther, with a grin.

"My name isn't here!"

"Go hon!"

"I had four winners, all right, on one coupon!" said Baggy excitedly. "I've got a copy of it in my pocket. But—but they say the first prize wasn't won!"

"Not really?"

"Yes, they do; and they're giving ten consolation prizes of a pound each, and nobody gets the hundred quids at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing to cackle at!" roared Trimble. "I sent in the winners, and if nobody else got four, I'm entitled to the whole prize."

"And you won't be happy till you get it?" grinned Lowther.

"Weally, Twimble, it was vevy impwob that such a wotten wag of a papah would give the pwize at all!"

"Oh, rot!" growled Trimble. "I'm jolly well going to write to them, and point out that they've overlooked my coupon!"

"And what then?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, then they'll send me the prize!"

"They will—I don't think!" chuckled Lowther. "You shouldn't have made four mistakes and got four winners, Baggy. If you had got only three, you might have got a consolation quid. You were too jolly clever!"

Baggy Trimble snorted. It was really too bad, after having named four winners by a series of lucky mistakes, to find that there was no prize at all! He sat blinking at the paper till the train drew near Laxham.

Laxham was the station for Trimble's home—whether it was Trimble Hall or not. As they drew near Baggy's uneasiness was visible to the eye.

That the juniors did not intend to get out of the train at all he did not guess for a moment. The Co. were keeping it up with great gravity to the very finish. Baggy Trimble was suffering for his sins.

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NEXT WEDNESDAY: "IN THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY!" A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.





"Another ten minutes to Laxham," said Monty Lowther cheerily. "Will the car be at the station, Trimble?"

"Eh? I—I think not."

"Busy carrying the soldiers about, I suppose?" remarked Manners sympathetically.

"Ye-es. Exactly!"

"Splendid for them to be put up at a place like the hall—an old baronial hall, with parks and lakes and things—"

"Weally, Lowthah—" murmured Arthur Augustus, taking pity on the wretched Trimble.

"And ripping of your pater," said Lowther mercilessly. "Do you think we shall find Jellieco there to-day, Baggy?"

"The—the fact is, you fellows," stammered Trimble, "I—I—"

"Yes, dear boy?"

"Under the circumstances—"

"Oh, go on, old chap! Speak out quite frankly, you know."

"We're your guests."

"I—I—I think perhaps my pater—" stammered Trimble.

"He will be—be—"

"Overjoyed to see us?" smiled Lowther. "Very nice of you to put it like that, Baggy. Baggy has such a nice way of putting things, hasn't he, you chaps?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Lowthah, I weally considah—"

"Go on, Baggy! You were saying—"

"My—my pater will be rather surprised—"

"Surprised to find us such nice chaps? You're growing to be a regular flatterer, old fellow!"

"I—I didn't mean—"

"Well, we are rather nice chaps," said Lowther blandly. "No good denying it—we are! Only five minutes to Laxham. I'm feeling quite excited. On a sunny December day like this, it will be a real pleasure to walk up the old oak avenue to the baronial hall."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"There—there's a circumstance I didn't mention to you fellows!" gasped the unhappy Trimble. "There's been a fire—"

"A what?"

"A fire at the Hall!" said Trimble desperately.

"Don't you generally have fires this time of year?" said Lowther. "But that's a matter of taste. I should think that splendid old building is a little chilly, though—massive stone walls from the Dark Ages, and all that."

"I—I mean, there's been a fire, and—and for the present the Hall isn't habitable. So I'm afraid—"

"But what about the wounded who are quartered on the Hall?" asked Lowther calmly. "We can rough it, if they can."

"Yes, rather! Don't apologise, Trimble! We're ready to take the rough with the smooth," Blake assured the miserable Baggy.

"A hearty welcome and unbounded hospitality compensate for any shortcomings," said Manners. "Depend on us to make the best of it, Trimble."

"The—the fact is—"

"Only three minutes to Laxham!"

"Oh, crumbs! I—I say, the fact is, I—I can't ask you fellows to the Hall!" stammered Trimble.

"But you have asked us!" said Lowther, in surprise.

"You see, the—the Hall has been practically burnt to the ground," said Trimble, growing quite reckless as the train drew nearer to the fatal station.

"Then all the wounded must have had to find other quarters," said Monty Lowther sadly.

"Ye-es—just so—they—they have, you know."

"Rather hard on them, after the palatial surroundings of Trimble Hall. So we actually can't stay at the Hall?"

"That's it!" said Trimble, with a gasp of relief at making his guests understand that at last. "I'm sorry, but—"

"Not at all," said Lowther calmly. "The weather's quite mild for the time of year, and we should simply enjoy camping in the park!"

"The—the what?"

"The park—Trimble Park, you know. We'll rig up tents, and camp out in the park!" said Lowther enthusiastically.

"Trimble's face was a study."

"Lowthah, I weally think—"

"Topping!" said Blake heartily. "We can camp out, and thoroughly enjoy all the huntin', fishin', shootin', and motorin'."

"I suppose the hunting and the fishing were not burnt to the ground along with the Hall?" remarked Digby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the fire didn't spread to the lake, did it?" asked Herries. "It would be rather a shock to think of the lake being burnt to the ground. Think of the poor trout!"

"Weally, Hewwies, I wegard—"

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"Nunno!" gasped Trimble. "Not—not at all. But, under the circumstances, the pater is rather cut up, and—and I hardly think it would do to introduce guests at such—such a time, and—"

"What a pity you didn't think of that before!" said Lowther, with deep sympathy. "What a thumping pity it's too late to think of it now, and that you're fairly landed with us, old chap!"

The expression on Trimble's face was almost excruciating. "Look here, you know!" he groaned. "I'm sorry—I've said I'm sorry—but—but you can't come!"

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Lowther considerably. "Under the circumstances, as Trimble says—as the Hall is full of guests up to the roof, and has also been burnt to the ground—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Under those circumstances, we won't inflict ourselves on Trimble—"

Baggy's fat face brightened.

"We'll only walk down to the Hall with him, and have a stroll round the place, then clear off," said Lowther.

Baggy's face fell again.

"Here we are at Laxham," said Lowther, as the train slowed down. "Jump out, Baggy, old man, and wait for us; you've got to show us the way to the Hall, you know."

Baggy Trimble alighted from the train as it stopped. "I—I say—" he murmured.

The rest of the party did not alight. There was a stop of less than a minute, or Lowther would have kept the little joke up longer. But it would not have done to step out of the train.

"Wait for us, Baggy! My hat! He's going! Baggy! Baggy! Baggy!" yelled Monty Lowther.

But Baggy Trimble did not turn his head.

He was fairly bolting from the platform.

"Baggy! I say, Baggy!"

Baggy vanished.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The merry party in the carriage roared. The door was slammed, and the express moved on again.

Baggy's hundred pounds never came along!

THE END.

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Old TOM HILDER, a cattle-farmer of Kaffarit, Australia, is faced with ruin for the want of £1,000. He goes to a friend in Sydney, HENRY NORMAN, from whom he obtains the money, but is afterwards robbed, and, in recovering the notes, becomes mixed up, in the eyes of the police, with a gang of scoundrels.

His son BOB receives the money from his father, and takes it to SUMMERS, the bank manager, who is in league with BOARDMAN, a scoundrel who has plotted to ruin old Hilder.

Bob is afterwards arrested, and charged with passing false notes at the bank, but is liberated from his prison-cell by CAPTAIN DASHWOOD, a notorious outlaw.

Bob learns from him that his father was robbed by a man named SUTHERLAND, the leader of another gang of outlaws, and he sets out in pursuit of him. He traces the villain to an hotel, where he also sees his father. A fight ensues, and the place is burnt down. Bob narrowly escapes with his life, believing his father to be dead.

Later, old Hilder appears upon the scene again, and he and Bob and Dashwood succeed in capturing Sutherland, who had been in league with Boardman. Shortly afterwards Bob finds GELL, another accomplice of Boardman's, who repents of his share in the treachery. In an encounter with Boardman Bob is wounded. He and Gell set out to meet the rest of the party, but Bob is unable to complete the journey owing to his injury. Gell meets Dashwood, who immediately sets off to find Bob where he had been left, but discovers that he has been moved. Dashwood finds that he has been taken to a cottage, and while he is demanding that he shall be handed over, two troopers appear, and he is obliged to flee.

Bob, hearing his voice, struggles out of bed and escapes from the house. He meets BOGONG, Dashwood's black servant, and they ride away together, later meeting Gell, who informs them that old Hilder has been captured and imprisoned.

(Now read on.)

**Farewell to Dashwood.**

Bob sat rigid in the saddle. In the moment when he had thought the end of their troubles had at last come, this terrible blow had fallen. His father in gaol! Gell kept on talking.

"They would have got Sutherland, too, if it wasn't for the old man," he continued. "He and you had promised him that if he ran straight with you, you would do all you could to save him. He was wanted by the police, too, as you know. Your father told him to bolt, and stood where he could attract the attention of the constables whilst Sutherland got away."

"Poor father!" Bob murmured huskily.

"And Dashwood was late, too," Gell went on.

"Dashwood! Is he caught?" the lad cried.

"Not as yet, but his chance of escape is small. He came this way, hotly pursued. I think he must have wanted to warn the old man. His horse was nearly dead-beat, and the troopers had got fresh ones."

"Brave Bess played out! I can hardly credit that," Bob said.

"She was going lame. Dashwood saw me, and shouted as he passed. He told me to lie low, and that he was making for Tallrook."

"Tallrook! Me know Tallrook!" Bogong cried. "Me know where massa is."

"Then is there any chance for him?" Gell asked.

The black tracker nodded.

"If he get time to rest the mare—" he began, but Bob cut in.

"It's up to me to try to save him," he said. "My luck is all out, but, anyhow, I may be able to do some good for him. After that, I don't much care what happens. And we had better clear out of this, sharp, for Boardman is close behind."

"Is Boardman coming this way?" Gell asked, his face growing dark.

"Yes; we saw him only a few miles behind."

"Then I'll stay here on the chance of meeting him," Gell affirmed, "and if I can lay my hands on him, I promise that he won't put his spoke in your wheel any more."

"The wheel is smashed, and the cart upset already," Bob said sadly. "They've got father, and I don't see how he'll be able to clear himself. This has almost finished me, but anyhow, I'm game yet to make one last bid for Dashwood."

"You're looking mortal bad," Gell protested. "I don't know as you'll last out the journey. What's the distance to Tallrook?"

"Fifteen miles," Bogong replied.

"And it looks rough country," Gell continued. "You'd better chuck the idea, Hilder."

"I'm going on!"

"Your horse won't take you!"

"Haven't you got one that is rested?"

"There are two here, for that matter, mine and your father's. Both are tethered half a mile away. The police did not spot them."

"Then we'll take them, and make a start."

"Well, if you will have your own way, stop and eat some grub first."

"There isn't time, and with Boardman coming along—"

"All right. I'll fix up some you can carry with you. But this is a mad venture, I tell you straight! You'll never be able to pull Dashwood out of the fix."

"I'll try all I know. I can't do more, and I can't do less," the lad said firmly. "Dashwood has stuck to me often, and this is the last chance I will have of standing by him. Let us get the horses."

In a few minutes he and Bogong were on the way again. The black tracker rode a little ahead, scanning the country, and easily picking up the track of the troopers following Dashwood. High hills were on all sides, and for most of the time they rode between cliffs.

Up one hill after another they went, and when, for the twentieth time, they turned a corner, a sharp gasp escaped from Bogong. Bob, pressing on after him, pulled up with a cry of bitter pain.

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NEXT  
WEDNESDAY:

**"IN THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY!"** A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



For Brave Bess was lying on the ground!

The bridle and saddle were still on her. She was not dead; but even Bob's voice failed to arouse her. He jumped down, and hurried to her. One glance explained the reason of her collapse.

"She has been shot!" he said. "She fell through weakness!"

"She shot two hours ago or more," Bogong stated.

"And that accounts for the fact that Gell saw her labouring along," Bob explained. "She kept going as long as she had an ounce of strength left, trying to carry Dashwood to safety. This is another drop to my cup of bitterness; everything has gone against me on the same day. Now I've lost one of the most faithful friends man ever had."

"She won't die!" the black tracker remarked. "She come all right in time."

"There may be a chance, if I can get back this way soon," Bob replied. And, to ease her, he began to take off the saddle. He coaxed her to rise, but she could not even lift her head.

"There's nothing we can do for her at present," he said.

"But is there any use going on?"

Bogong had jumped to the ground, too, and was hurrying up and down the road, his figure crouched and his head bent. He clapped his hands together in an ecstasy of delight.

"Massa not caught here," he shouted. "Troopers gone on. Massa scaled the cliff."

He pointed up the rocky eminence. Bob hurried to his side, and tried to discover the signs of Dashwood's ascent; but only a black tracker could detect them. Bogong pointed out a broken twig here and there, where Dashwood had gripped the tufts growing between the rocks. And, as Bogong explained, none of them had given way that he could see, and there were no marks of fresh soil or brushwood on the hard road.

"Then he got safely to the top, and the troopers, thinking he was running along the road, went on," Bob said. "But can he get to Tallrook from there?"

"Massa would try!"

"And why has he chosen to go to Tallrook?"

"Good place to hide."

"Then what had we better do?"

"I go up cliff and look round. You wait," the black tracker said.

As nimbly as a cat he climbed the cliff and disappeared over the ledge. In five minutes he came climbing down again.

"Police riding long way off," he panted after his exertion. "We keep on fast for two miles, then we get straight after massa."

They mounted and rode on swiftly. From the top of the cliff Bogong had been able to study the lie of the country, and he rode with confidence. The danger was that the police might double back and meet them. But they came safely to a gully and went up it, Bogong assuring Bob that the troopers had already passed this spot when he had seen them.

Soon they were on the plateau up to which Dashwood had climbed, and now they galloped fast. They had gone for fifteen minutes when Bogong gave a shout. Wheeling to the left, he galloped fast.

Bob looked in that direction, and at once set spur to his horse. For he saw Dashwood! The latter was running for a thick wood. Two miles to one side of it the troopers were cantering hard. Evidently they also had seen him.

Fortunately, the country was full of valleys and hillocks, and they disappeared for some minutes. Bob, drawing up on Bogong, shouted to him.

"Bear away to the far side of the wood," he cried. "The police won't see us then. Follow me as fast as you can!"

His was the better horse, and he shot ahead. He had made up his mind as to what he intended to do. The gallant animal responded to his call, and, stretching out its neck to its full length, raced over the ground. Bogong, by splendid jockeying, managed to keep fairly close behind, and when the troopers came up out of the valley, the twain had dived into another.

Dashwood by this time was close to the wood. He must have known he was being pursued, for he looked back, and

Bob, rising in the saddle, waved his sombrero. The outlaw stood undecided for some moments. Then he, too, waved his hat, and took to running again.

As he disappeared into the wood the lad was only a quarter of a mile behind. He kept galloping hard, and shot in between the trees.

"Dashwood!" he shouted.

The birds, with shrill cries, rose from the trees in great clusters, but no human answer came.

"Dashwood!" he shouted again.

Then he rode slowly on. Bogong soon overtook him now. "I can't find him," Bob said. "I thought he would have waited here."

"He not far," Bogong answered. "Me find him."

He took the lead, and before long forced his horse through a thick belt of scrub. With a cry of joy he jumped down.

Dashwood, utterly exhausted, was lying on the ground, his breath coming in great gasps, his eyes strained. Bob jumped down, too, and clutched his shoulder.

"Why didn't you wait for me?" he asked.

"I didn't know whether you or the police could get here first. I had lost sight of them," Dashwood managed to reply.

"Well, you have a chance of safety now. It will take them a long time to beat this wood. Make one last bid for liberty, old man. You have come through so much, that you are certain to succeed."

"Brave Bess was winged and fell."

"I know. We came across her. You can take my horse. I'll get back to Brave Bess. She's not dead."

"But you'll be caught!"

"They won't suspect I'm here. Darkness will soon be on, and I'll be easily able to slip away."

"No, no! Your father—"

"Father has been caught!" Bob said. "Our game is up! But our lives are not in danger, and yours is! You'll have to take my horse, Dashwood!"

The outlaw struggled to his feet. His hands and face were almost blue from exhaustion, his powerful figure drooped. Yet a glint was in his eyes.

"They've nabbed your father?" he said.

"Yes."

A tense silence followed. Dashwood was leaning up against the tree.

"I'll take the horse, and Bogong will come with me," he said.

"And you'll make straight for Queensland and clear out of Australia?" Bob urged. "Oh, Dashwood, if in time I could hear that you had got away, that, at least, would be something. Fate threw us together, and I know you as no other can. You made a slip, and you never got a chance to rise. But you'll pull through yet, and show the world the grit that is in you! Promise me you'll go!"

"Yes, I'll go to Queensland," Dashwood replied. "And, before long, you'll hear from me. So they've nabbed the old man!"

He stood deep in thought.

"Mount and ride to the far end of the wood, and be ready for your chance to get out," Bob urged.

They clasped hands. They looked long into one another's eyes.

"Good-bye!" Bob said.

"Good-bye!" Dashwood replied, a trifle huskily. "My lad, you're the greatest brick I've ever met! And the old man, too! We'll never meet again, but—but you'll hear from me! Oh, yes, you will!"

He climbed into the saddle. He passed away between the trees. And Bob slowly turned, a great void in his heart.

### Home Again!

Standing at the edge of the wood, the lad saw the troopers enter it, and he at once ran out. He got away quite safely, and hurried along the road. He came to the spot where he and Bogong had found Brave Bess, and, to his joy, he saw that she had risen. She whinnied as he called, and, putting the saddle on her again, he led her slowly away.

Night soon fell as he tramped along. He was dog-tired and utterly depressed. His life was completely broken up; there was not a ray of hope; he had lost all for which he had lived. Without a friend, with his father in gaol, without the means to prove the old man's innocence, he felt indifferent to his fate. He had become reckless with misery.

He came to a house on the side of the road, and he stopped. Brave Bess could not go much further. He would leave her there, where she would receive good treatment. He had to part with her, but at least he could make sure of her future.

So he knocked. The door was opened by a stern-looking

(Continued on page iv. of cover.)



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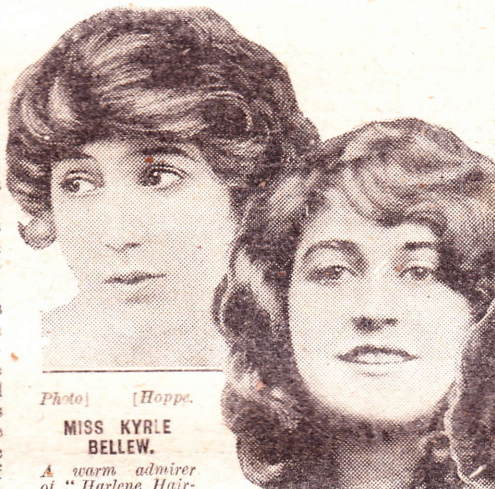


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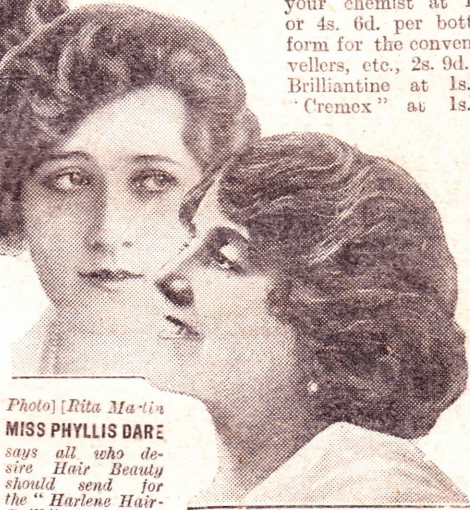


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GEM, November 11th, 1916.



## CORNSTALK BOB!

(Continued from page 20.)

man, who eyed him sharply. Bob began to explain his business.

"My horse is in a very bad way," he said. "I'd be glad if I could stable it here until I can call again."

The man looked at the beautiful mare. He frowned, but in the darkness Bob could not see the expression of his face. For some moments he did not reply.

"Half a mo!" he said at last. "I'll fetch a lantern, and you can take her round to the yard."

He disappeared, and was away some time. When he returned, carrying the lighted lantern, he walked round Brave Bess, examining her. He saw where she had been shot, but did not make any remark about this.

"Come on!" he said. "Lead her along!" Bob walked the mare across the yard. The man flung the stable open, stood to one side, and bade the lad enter. Bob led Brave Bess in and fastened her to a stall. As he walked towards the door again it was closed. He heard the bolt shot home!

He started. He had been trapped! He sprang towards the door, and as he did so a light flashed. Someone else was in the shed. Wheeling round, he saw a small lamp in a corner, throwing its feeble rays round the shed. He heard the rustling of straw, and then a mocking laugh!

He flung himself at the door, vainly struggling to burst it open. Clutched from behind, he shook himself free, and got his back to the wall. He saw three tall, powerful figures in the dim light, and tried to dodge them. But one man seized his arm, and another caught him by the neck. He was lifted up, thrown on to the straw, and there held down.

And now the light came nearer, and once again he saw the evil face of Boardman, his eyes full of malevolence and triumph. And Bob also saw that three troopers had taken him prisoner.

"Good job we were resting in the house when he came along, and that I recognised the mare from the window," the villain chuckled. "That was a smart idea to get first to the stable and wait for him. Make sure of him now, lads! His father is already in gaol. With the two of them caught, there is a big reward for you!"

Three weeks passed—three weeks of complete misery for Bob. A captive in a cell, awaiting certain imprisonment for years, though innocent of any crime, he was unable to get in touch with the outside world.

Then the day of his trial came. He was taken to the court, and for a few moments he was allowed to see his father.

Led up to the court, they found it full. All eyes were turned upon them as they entered the dock, and in no face was there a ray of pity. The judge took his seat, Counsel stood up to prosecute, and the judge asked if the prisoners had a lawyer to defend them.

Then, to Bob's and old Tom's surprise, a man in wig and gown arose.

"I appear for them both, my lord," he said.

They had not had the money to engage a barrister. They could only wonder who was befriending them. In cold, pitiless tones the prosecuting counsel unfolded the case against them. All that they had done was misrepresented, and the fact that they had been seen with Dashwood turned the jury completely against them. If only they could call Gell or Sutherland! But they did not even know where they were.

Their lawyer was called on to refute the terrible charges against them, if he could. His opening words sent a thrill of astonishment through the court.

"My task is an easy one," he said. "I will dispense with a speech, and call my witnesses at once. I call Gell!"

From the back of the court Gell advanced, and stepped into the witness-box. Boardman's face went white. He had lied fiercely against the prisoners. Simply, and with deep sorrow, Gell told how, through hatred of Bob at one time, he had plotted against him with Boardman. The judge questioned him, and nothing could shake his testimony.

Boardman began to tremble. He jumped up, and shouted that the evidence was false; he demanded corroboration.

"And I intend to submit it," the barrister said sternly. "I now call Sutherland!"

All strained their necks as Sutherland walked to the witness-box. He told, faltering sometimes, how he had fooled old Tom Hilder about the banknotes, which had been the cause of all the trouble. He told how Boardman had egged him on to compass the ruin of both the prisoners. He admitted his own guilt, and flung himself on the mercy of the Court.

The judge ordered Boardman back to the witness-box. Never was witness more severely cross-examined. Not once, but twenty times, he contradicted himself; he went scarlet

and white by turns; his hands trembled, his lips twitched. And the judge showed him no mercy. Bit by bit his villainy was dragged into the open light of day. At last he could not stand the terrible ordeal any longer. He reeled, clung on to the box, gave a hollow groan, and fell unconscious.

"My lord," the foreman of the jury said, "we do not want to hear any more! We have arrived at our verdict!"

"And that verdict, gentlemen?"

"Not guilty!"

A cheer rang through the court. Those who had come with horror in their hearts against the prisoners now gave hearty expression of their joy at their release. Men crowded to the dock to shake hands with them. Dazed by this turn of fate, almost unable to understand all that had happened, they stood, until one of the warders tapped each of them on the shoulder.

"Step out of this, and good luck to you!" he said, heartily.

They passed out of the court, surrounded by a cheering crowd, Bob gripping his father's arm.

"Father! Isn't this wonderful?" Bob said.

The old man nodded. He was too deeply moved to speak.

"If it wasn't for that barrister!" Bob went on. "But where is he? I must see him, and thank him!"

He hurried back. The barrister was coming out of the court. He smiled as Bob advanced.

"I want to thank you," the lad said breathlessly. "You've saved father and me! And we didn't employ you! I can't understand how you knew so much about our case, and how you got Gell and Sutherland here, and why you should befriend us, and—"

"I had a friend once," the barrister said. "I liked him better than any man I ever met. He was generous, honourable, and brave. He was accused on a false charge. Alas, he lost his head. Instead of trying to clear himself, he took the law into his own hands. That put him beyond the pale. He fled into the bush, he defied the state, he became an outlaw. But a finer character was never spoilt, and to this day I know the worth that is in him."

A question was trembling on Bob's lips, but the barrister did not give him time to ask it.

"I heard from him recently," he went on. "He wrote about you, and told me all about you; he begged me, for the sake of old times, to help you, and he told me he would make sure that Gell and Sutherland would be in court."

"And that man's name is Dashwood," Bob said, his voice trembling.

The barrister nodded.

"And so he didn't go straight to Queensland, as I begged," Bob went on. "He thought of us again!"

"He wanted to pull you through! That is why he took your horse and escaped, leaving you to get off as best you could, when he heard your father was arrested. He knew then that only a friend outside could work for you until the trial. He told you he would go to Queensland, but he didn't say when he would start. He just said he would go! And he spoke the truth! He is on his way there now!"

"True to the last!" Bob murmured. "But dare I hope he will get away?"

A year had passed, and Bob rode up to the old homestead. It was a lovely evening, and old Tom, standing at the door, looked the picture of health again. He had a letter in his hand.

"The post has just come!" he said. "Read that!"

Bob took the letter. His face shone with joy.

"From Dashwood!" he gasped.

"Yes, my lad," old Tom said. "He is in America, and doing well, running straight, and making a big name for himself. Bogong is with him; they won't part. They had a tough job to get away, but, after many ventures, they succeeded. Dashwood has heard that Boardman got ten years, and that Sutherland and Gell were pardoned on account of the evidence they gave in our case. It is a long letter, full of interest, and you can read it at your leisure. This is a great day! It has brought us all we wished!"

"Yes, here we are again, back in the old home, without anxiety, with the crops good, and money in the bank, and with you in splendid health once more. And even poor old Brave Bess is in great fettle again," Bob went on, as he patted the beautiful mare's glossy neck. "Father, we have come through much, but we are at the end! And Dashwood—"

"Ay, lad, that's the big job," old Tom said heartily. "He's pulled through, too, in all ways! Now, come in! Supper is ready! And we'll write to Dashwood to-night."

THE END.

Don't miss next Wednesday's Double-Length Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's—"IN THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY!" by MARTIN CLIFFORD—in our Christmas Number.