

Part 1 ^{On Sale} ^{TO-DAY} Harmsworth's Children's Encyclopedia.

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Every Wednesday.

October 21st, 1922.



"WELCOME, Mr. YORK!"

(Tomplins' uncle accepts the hospitality of the Chorus of St. Jim's to a feed in Study No. 6.)

EDITORIAL CHAT.

The Editor would like to hear from his reader chums. Address all letters to Editor, "The Gem Library," The Festivity House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

My Dear Chums,—

Every morning as I go through my budget of correspondence, I find increasing evidence of the immense popularity of Cardew. This being the case no surprise need be felt that next week's yarn of St. Jim's centres round the dry, amusing fellow who has figured in such a number of good stories.

The title of next week's tale is "The Cardew Cup!" Cardew has been ragged a bit because of his inattention to footer, so to make all square he says he will offer a valuable cup to be played for by St. Jim's teams. Here is a great opportunity for the display of enthusiasm, of which there is plenty at St. Jim's.

The notion opens up a whole vista of brilliant possibilities. It sets one wondering whether by any chance the great Baggy Trimble will have a try for the substantial reward. Perhaps this would be going a bit too far. Baggy has never precisely shone at the winter game. He may have eyes on that cup, and, again, he may not; we shall see what we shall see. Baggy's running powers are exceptional when he is spurred on by the goad of grim necessity, say on those occasions when George Alfred Grundy, the big foot champion, is after him with ideas of vengeance prompt and sure. Maybe we shall have to leave Baggy out of the question, for even the stoutest runners have their

limitations. Somehow one cannot picture the scion of Trimble Hall as a champion. And yet one has known of heroes who have been fashioned out of the most unpromising material. The hour has struck, and they have responded to the call. Here, as usual, you find yourself right up against the unexpected, and we get such a lot of the unexpected in this world.

Through it all, Cardew is just himself—calm, inscrutable and slightly mocking. He is always the most imperturbable fellow in the school, and he is always a certain draw. The reason for this unsought-for popularity is not hard to seek. It is to be found in part in the fact that a chap like Cardew never does look for popularity. He is more inclined to avoid it. He would say he had no use for anything of the kind. We have not forgotten the role Cardew played in the magnificent series of yarns about the trials of Ernest Levison. Cardew was often chipping in with the idea of helping a fellow whom he really liked, but he acted in a curious offhand manner, and once got badly left, though he did have the satisfaction of using the ineffable Baggy as a foot-rest during a certain motor-car ride.

But you will like Cardew just as much in next Wednesday's fine story as ever you did. He is a splendid chap, though Tom Merry may dub him a chump.

Anyhow, don't miss the yarn next week. There will be something to rub one's eyes about and ask whether dreams are coming true. Mr. Martin Clifford shows himself quite equal to tackling a subject beset with thorny problems.

We get sidelights, of course, on many of the best-known characters at St. Jim's. The more one knows these fellows the better one likes them. They

are all so real, so much in earnest about life, and since the recent series it seems to me this has been more the case than ever. We never had a better impression of Dr. Holmes, for instance, and what he stands for—a fine man, immutable on matters of principle, and with a real understanding of the difficulties which cross a chap's path.

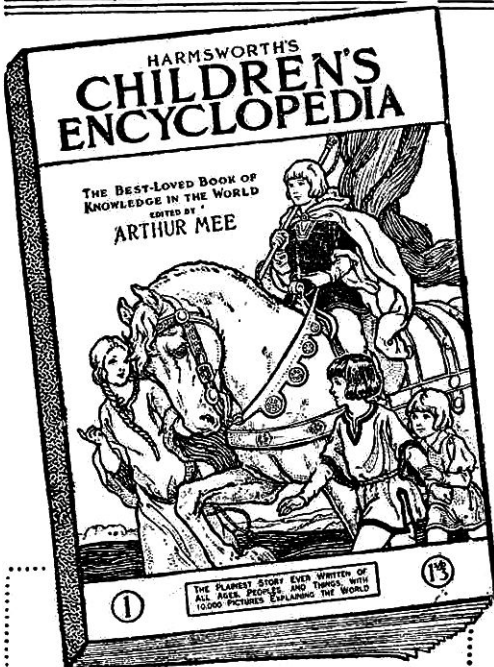
Now, as to other features, you will find on page 11 the results of the Head 'Em Competition, while on page 11 you will see the details of our grand new competition, which will, I think, be one of the best-liked of any we have had. The new test is complete each week, and football enthusiasts will have a splendid chance, and the prizes amount to £10.

Another portrait in the famous gallery will appear next week. The GEM portraits continue to grow in popularity. Meantime, Tuck Hampers are still plentiful, and our cheery Corner of Storyettes must not be overlooked.

Just a word for our serial which is running its grand course, and winning all the way.

A chum wrote to me this week to point out that it was a great mistake to run down the winter season. Who ever did? I have no recollection of doing so. Considering that some of our summers are so much inclined to liquidation, as it were, and to get mixed up with the winter in the way of low temperature, it would be an error to depreciate more than half the year. Besides, the winter is the season for the best game that was ever played. But my correspondent suggests that the winter is really just as good for biking and other pastimes as the summer, and, come to think of it, I fancy he is right. There need be no closing down outdoor pleasures.

YOUR EDITOR.



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Tompkins on Trial!



A Grand, Long Complete School Story of the Chums of St. Jim's, telling how Clarence York Tompkins carries off full honours in a test put to him by his uncle, who is supposed to be down on his luck.

BY

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

A Slight Surprise!

"BLESS my soul!" Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, uttered that ejaculation in tones of great amazement.

He gazed from his study window into the quad, or, to be more exact, he stared—stared blankly.

There was a ripple of laughter in the quad, and it had reached the doctor's ears in his study. From his window he could see a dozen grinning faces.

But his astonished eyes were fixed upon a very striking figure that was approaching the School House, walking between Arthur Augustus D'Arcy on one side and Clarence York Tompkins on the other.

The figure was that of a rather burly man, with a rather chubby face. He was dressed in a way that could only be considered remarkable, considering where he was.

His ancient coat, mended in a dozen places, was frayed at every seam; his boots looked as if they had been carefully cleaned after being rescued from a dust-heap; his old silk hat had obviously seen better days, and seen the last of them long ago.

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head.

If that excessively shabby gentleman had called at the back door, with the object of purchasing left-off wearing apparel, it would not have been very surprising.

But he was walking the quad, with a Fourth-Former on either side of him, and was evidently a visitor to the school. He was such a visitor as the Head had never beheld before.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, and the son of a noble lord, was treating him with great respect. Tompkins of the Fourth was equally attentive and respectful—indeed, his manner might have been called affectionate.

The three came on towards the School House and disappeared into the great porch of the building.

Then the Head remarked, for the third time:

"Bless my soul!"

After the shabby gentleman had disappeared with his conductors, there was a louder sound of chortling. Baggy Trimble of the Fourth seemed to be almost doubled up with merriment. His unmusical cachinnations came quite loudly to Dr. Holmes' ears.

The Head threw open his window.

"Trimble!"

"He, he, he!" chortled Trimble. "Oh, my hat! Oh, my aunt! What a jolly old merchant! He, he, he!"

"Trimble!" repeated the Head, raising his voice.

Baggy Trimble spun round. His merriment died away suddenly at the sight of the doctor's stern face at the window.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" stammered Trimble.

"Who is that—that gentleman, Trimble?" inquired the Head in severe tones.

"Tompkins' uncle, sir."

"Wha-a-t?"

"Tompkins of the Fourth, sir—his uncle, Mr. York!" said Trimble. "He's come to see Tompkins, sir! He, he, he!"

Dr. Holmes drew a rather deep breath. Certainly he would never have suspected that shabby and rusty gentleman of being a relative of a St. Jim's fellow. On his looks, Taggles, the porter, would scarcely have owned him as a relation; Toby, the page, would undoubtedly have turned up his nose at such a connection. It was a surprise for the Head.

"What are you laughing at, Trimble?" the Head proceeded further to inquire.

"W-w-was I, sir?" stammered Trimble.

"You were, Trimble!"

"N-n-not at all, sir!" said Trimble, rather alarmed by the Head's expression. "The—the fact is, sir, I—I—"

"Is it possible, Trimble, that you have ventured to be guilty of lack of courtesy towards a visitor at the school?" demanded the Head in a terrifying voice.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Trimble. "I—I wasn't laughing, sir! I—I was coughing!"

"What?"

"I—I've got rather a cold, sir," said Trimble. "I—I—I always cough like that, sir, when—I've got a c-c-cold."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "Trimble, you will take a hundred lines for discourtesy to a visitor—"

"Oh!" gasped Baggy.

"And two hundred lines for prevarication!"

"Oh dear!"

"I shall speak to your Form master, Trimble!"

The Head closed his window. Baggy Trimble was not feeling inclined to laugh now. He rolled away in a very serious mood. Tompkins' uncle might be a screaming joke, but three hundred lines certainly was no joke. Baggy wished from the bottom of his podgy heart that he had restrained his refined merriment.

Dr. Holmes returned to his desk with a very thoughtful expression on his face. He touched a bell, and Toby the page appeared at the door.

"Request Mr. Railton to step here," said the Head.

"Yessir!"

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, entered the study in a few minutes. There was a rather odd expression on the Housemaster's face.

"You have seen the—the somewhat unusual visitor, Mr. Railton?" said the Head.

"I have spoken with him, sir," said the Housemaster. "I was—was a little surprised."

"I was greatly surprised," said the Head. "It is very extraordinary. One of the junior boys tells me that it is the uncle of Tompkins of the Fourth Form."

"That is so, sir!"

"I cannot quite understand it," said the Head. "You are sure there is no mistake—it is Mr. York?"

"So I understand, sir. He told me so, in the presence of Tompkins of the Fourth Form."

"Then there can be no mistake," said the Head. "But I fail to understand. I have never met Mr. York, but I have been in communication with him on the subject of his nephew, and my impression was—was very different from this. However, no doubt it is his intention to call upon me—"

There was a tap at the door of the study, and Toby reappeared.

"Mr. York, sir!"

"Show Mr. York in!" said the Head.

And Clarence York, Tompkins' remarkable uncle, entered the Head's study.

CHAPTER 2.

No Larks!

"YOU fellows seen him?" gasped Trimble.

Tom Merry & Co. were coming away from the football ground, looking very ruddy and cheery after the House match. School House juniors had beaten New House by three goals to two, so they were feeling very satisfied with themselves and things generally. "Seen whom?" asked Tom Merry carelessly.

In the keen interest of the House match Tom Merry had quite forgotten the unimportant existence of Tompkins of the Fourth Form, and of Tompkins' uncle, who was expected at the school that afternoon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had stood out of the football to help Tompkins look after his uncle, but the rest of the St. Jim's footballers had dismissed the matter entirely from their minds.

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"That giddy guy!" chortled Trimble.
 "A giddy guy?" repeated Monty Lowther. "Any of your people here this afternoon, Trimble? Or are you talking about yourself—as usual?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Oh, don't be an ass!" snapped Baggy Trimble. "You know whom I mean—Tompkins' uncle."

"Oh, has he come?" asked Blake, with some interest.

"He, he, he! Yes, rather!"

"What's he like?" asked Manners.

"He, he, he!" howled Trimble. "He looks as if he's picked himself up off a dustheap!"

Some of the footballers grinned. As a matter of fact, some of them had caught sight of Tompkins' weird uncle when that gentleman had looked in at Little Side during the game, and they had not failed to be struck by his looks.

"His clobber!" gasped Trimble. "Oh, his clobber! Never seen anything like it outside a ragshop! And his hat!" Trimble almost suffocated with excess of merriment. "His hat! A silk topper that looks as if it dates from early-Saxon times! He, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Tom Merry did not join in the laugh, however. He frowned.

"Do you mean that Tompkins' uncle looks poor, Trimble?" the captain of the Shell asked quietly.

"Poor!" chortled Trimble. "He looks as if he would be glad if a chap gave him twopence!"

"Is that a laughing matter, you fat boulder?"

"He, he, he!" Trimble exploded again. Apparently Baggy considered that it was a laughing matter.

"I saw him, Tommy," murmured Monty Lowther. "He looked rather—rather weird, you know. In fact, very weird!"

"Poverty isn't a crime," said Tom.

"Not at all, old top! Nevertheless, the gentleman was somewhat weird."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poverty isn't funny, either!" said Tom, a little crossly.

"Not for those who have it," assented Lowther. "Don't I know it? Haven't we been on the rocks ourselves? All the same, I maintain that the old gentleman was a trifle weird."

"He, he, he!" chuckled Trimble. "I say, Tompkins has taken him into the House. He wants to get him out of sight, I fancy. I say, let's all go to Tompkins' study and ask to be introduced to his uncle. He will take it as a compliment, you know, and we can pull his leg a treat!"

"Rot!" said Levison.

"Keep off the grass!" said Blake.

Tom Merry knitted his brows, and looked round at his comrades.

"Look here, you chaps," he said, "it's known all over the school that Tompkins' uncle has lost his money, and is hard-up—owing to Racke of the Shell spying into a letter. From what we hear, he's a very decent man, and was no end of a jolly old uncle to Tompkins while he had his money. If he's a bit out of the ordinary, that's his own bizney, and nobody else's. I think it's up to us to see that no rotten cad hurts his feelings while he's here."

"Hear, hear!" said Blake.

"Good egg!" said Monty Lowther. "I still maintain that the respected gentleman is a trifle weird. But as for pulling his leg—that's quite a different matter. I suggest bumping Trimble for suggesting it!"

"Here, I say—" roared Baggy, in alarm.

"Good! Collar him!"

"Yaroooh! I—I say— Yoooooooh!"

Bump!

For the second time that afternoon Baggy Trimble's merriment was cut short. He gave a terrific roar as he sat on the cold, unsympathetic ground. This was worse than three hundred lines!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Now, are you going to pull the giddy visitor's leg?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Ow! Wow! Yes!" roared Trimble. "I'm going to— Yaroooh! Leggo! I—I meantersay— Yooooop!"

Bump!

"Now, what about the jolly old leg-pulling?" asked Monty Lowther genially, as Trimble sat and roared.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"That isn't an answer! Give him another!"

Bump!

"Gooogh—grooogh—mmmmmmmm!" spluttered Trimble. "No good talking German to us!" said Monty Lowther.

"What price the merry leg-pulling, dear man?"

"Ooooooh! Grooogh! Nunno! Never! I was only j-j-j-joking!" wailed Trimble. "Keep off, you beasts!"

"Then don't j-j-joke any more, fatty!" said Monty Lowther warningly. "Your j-j-jokes aren't appreciated!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Tom Merry & Co. walked on towards the School House, leaving Baggy Trimble sitting on the earth and spluttering

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wildly. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy met the juniors as they came into the House.

"How did it go, deah boys?" he asked.

"Why ask?" said Tom Merry. "Didn't I tell you we should beat the New House if you stood out of the team?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Have you deserted Tompkins and his giddy uncle?" asked Monty Lowther. "Aren't you sticking to the old Obadiah and the young Obadiah?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard your expressions as fwivolous, Lowthah, and vewy neahly wibald!" said Arthur Augustus severely.

"Fan me, somebody!" murmured Lowther.

"Mr. York, the respected uncle of my fwriend Tompkins, has gone to the Head's study to see Dr. Holmes," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "He is an extwemely wespectable gentleman, for whom I have a vewy gweat wespect. Tompkins is standin' by him like a weal bwick. I twust you fellows are not goin' to judge a man by his clobber!"

"Dash it all," said Manners, "he may be a good chap—and I've no doubt that he is—but it would have been more considerate to Tompkins not to visit him here looking like a rag-bag!"

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"A fellow is judged a good bit by his relations," remarked Blake. "It's rough on poor old Tompkins!"

"Yaas; but—"

"How is Tompkins taking it?" asked Herries.

"Like a weal bwick, Hewwies! His uncle has been awf'ly good to him, and Tompkins is standin' by him. I wathah think that Wacke and Twimble, and any of those wottahs, would think twice about ownin' a shabby wrelation befoah all the school."

"I rather think they would!" said Tom Merry. "Good old Tompkins!"

"I have an ideah, deah boys," continued Arthur Augustus.

"I have asked Tompkins to bwing his uncle to tea in Studay No. 6."

"Oh, my hat!" said Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass severely upon Jack Blake.

"I twust you have no objection, Blake?" he said coldly.

"Oh, not at all! Bring him if you like. Bring Toby, the page, if you like! And Taggles, the porter! Let 'em all come!" said Blake generously.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Gussy always was an ass!" remarked Herries thoughtfully.

"Weally, Hewwies, I should be glad to know what there is asinine in askin' a wespectable gentleman to tea?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Herries. "Only the study is stony, and there's nothing for tea but half a loaf and a few sardines. Perhaps the giddy visitor will enjoy whacking out two sardines and a half with half a dozen fellows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Just like Gussy!" remarked Digby.

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"That is all wight, deah boy! My fiver has come. There is goin' to be a wippin' spwead in Studay No. 6!"

"Now you're talking!" said Blake heartily. "Gussy, you're the goodest little ass that ever played the giddy goat! I've got an appetite like Fatty Wynn, or a Polar bear. Bring the whole giddy clan of Tompkins, if you like, with the Clarences and the Yorks thrown in, if there's enough tuck to go round!"

"I twust you fellows will come?" said Arthur Augustus, addressing the Terrible Three.

"Your twust is well-founded!" said Monty Lowther gravely. "Never shall it be said that Studay No. 10 refused to come to a spread!"

"Never!" said Manners solemnly.

"We'll be jolly glad to meet Mr. York!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Let's hope the Head won't keep him long. I'm ready for that spread."

And seven cheery juniors proceeded to Studay No. 6 in the Fourth to get the festive board ready for the distinguished visitor—and for their distinguished selves.

CHAPTER 3.

True Blue I

CLARENCE YORK TOMPKINS sat in his study, No. 4 in the Fourth.

He was alone.

His study-mate, Mulvaney minor, was gone out on a bike spin; and possibly Mulvaney was prolonging that bike spin a little. As he was Tompkins' study-mate, and rather friendly with him, he would have been under some obligation to stand by Tompkins' uncle, if he had been indoors. And Mulvaney minor had heard enough about that uncle not to want to know anything more about him.



Racke and Crooke were utterly helpless in Samuel York's grip. Holding one in either hand, Tompkins' uncle brought their heads together with a resounding concussion. Crack! "Yaroooh!" roared Racke. "Oh! Ow! Oooooh!" shrieked Crooke. "Uncle!" gasped Tompkins of the Fourth, looking on. (See page 6.)

But for the kind heart of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Tompkins would have been quite deserted that afternoon, and left to stand his terrible uncle on his lonely own.

In that case, it was quite probable that the diffident, irresolute youth would have failed under the strain. Diffident, with little to say for himself as a rule, Tompkins was keenly sensitive to ridicule. He was even sensitive on the subject of his grandiloquent front names, about which he was frequently chipped. On only one topic had Tompkins ever ventured a little mild, timid swank—and that was the topic of his rich uncle, Samuel York, of Australia.

Now his uncle was fairly "on his uppers," apparently. It was understood that he had landed in England with what he stood up in, and little more. And what he stood up in certainly was not worth very much in the way of coin of the realm.

And, doubtless anxious to make the acquaintance of the nephew whom he had never seen, but upon whom he had lavished many kindnesses, Mr. York had come to the school to visit Tompkins.

He was shabby, he dropped his h's, he did not cut nearly so respectable a figure as Taggles, the porter!

Everybody agreed that it was awful for Tompkins. Many of the fellows thought it funny, some of them thought it tragic; all of them thought it extraordinary.

Left to himself, it was quite possible that Tompkins would have "bolted" for the afternoon, simply unable to find the courage to face the ordeal his uncle had inflicted on him.

Arthur Augustus' generous support had saved him from such an act of wretched cowardice.

Gussy had determined to see him through, and he was seeing him through manfully. If Mr. York grated on the noble nerves of the fastidious Gussy in any way, Gussy did not reveal the fact. He regarded Mr. Sam York as a kind and good man, whose little peculiarities were to be tolerated and left unobserved.

It was just like Gussy! Blake had remarked that it seemed to be Gussy's mission in life to help lame dogs over stiles.

With Gussy's noble support, Tompkins had screwed up his courage to sticking-point, and he was glad of it now. He liked and respected his uncle, and he tried not to care what the other fellows would think of him.

Mr. York was gone now to see the Head. Tompkins waited in the study for him to return. Determined as he was to be a dutiful and grateful nephew, Tompkins could not help wondering what effect Mr. York would produce on the Head—what Dr. Holmes could possibly think of him. St. Jim's fellows really weren't supposed to have relations like that dropping in at the school. It even appeared possible to Tompkins that the Head might wish him to go, after seeing his uncle. Well, if the Head wanted him to go he would go, and stick to his uncle, who had stuck to him!

He wouldn't be a snob, and he wouldn't be ungrateful. Gussy had made a friend of him, and he would be worth Gussy's friendship. Under the stress of this trial Tompkins' diffident irresolution seemed to have disappeared. He was quiet, cool, and determined. And when the study door opened, and Racke and Crooke of the Shell grinned in, Tompkins looked at them calmly and grimly. He was quite prepared to deal with any fellow who ventured upon open insolence.

"Where is he?" grinned Racke.
"Where's uncle?" smiled Crooke.

"Gone to see the Head!" answered Tompkins quietly.
"Oh, my hat! You're letting the Head see that scare-crow?" ejaculated Aubrey Racke.

Tompkins rose to his feet, a glitter in his eyes.
"We came to be introduced," simpered Crooke. "We've never seen a bushranger at close quarters before, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Racke.

"Has Gussy deserted you?" chuckled Crooke. "Is he fed up with the rag and bone merchant?"

"D'Arcy's gone to speak to his friends," said Tompkins still quietly.

"He won't come back, I fancy!" grinned Racke. "We'll
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stay and see you through, Tompkins! We're going to be introduced to uncle."

"Yes, rather!"

"I'm going to give him half-a-crown," continued Racke. "I suppose he can do with it, Tompkins?"

"Looks like it!" said Crooke. "Dash it all, I'll shell out a shilling myself. I suppose he won't be offended, Tompkins?"

"Why should he be offended?" asked Racke. "He needs the money! Those trousers will have to go back to the rag-heap he picked them off, before long."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tompkins was pushing back his cuffs. Certainly he was not a match for the two Shell fellows; he was not much in the way of a fighting man. But it was evident that he meant to attack.

He advanced on the cads of the Shell without saying another word, but with his hands up and his eyes gleaming behind them.

"Don't play the goat," grinned Racke. "Oh, would you?"

The next moment they were fighting.

Racke staggered back from a drive full upon his prominent nose with a yell of rage and pain. Crooke closed with Tompkins, and they struggled. Racke came to his aid the next moment.

"Rag the cad!" he said between his teeth.

"You rotters!" panted Tompkins.

He struggled fiercely with the two Shell fellows. There was a step in the passage.

A man in a shabby coat, still more shabby trousers, and ancient, patched boots, stepped into the study. It was Tompkins' uncle.

Mr. York did not speak, he acted. His hands fell upon Racke and Crooke, grasping them by the collars.

They were jerked away from Clarence York Tompkins. Mr. York was shabby and threadbare, but apparently he was a very muscular man. The two Shell fellows were utterly helpless in his grip.

Holding one in either hand, Samuel York brought their heads together with a resounding concussion.

Crack!

"Yarooooh!" roared Racke.

"Oh! Ow! Ooooooh! Ow!" shrieked Crooke.

"Oh!" gasped Tompkins, staggering breathlessly away.

"Uncle! Did—did—did you hear—?" he stammered.

"Yes, I 'eard what these young fellers was saying as I come along the passage," said Mr. York cheerfully. "Bad manners, I call it."

"Let me go!" shouted Racke furiously.

"Take your filthy hands off me, you ruffian!" hissed Crooke.

"I ain't 'olly satisfied with you being at this 'ere school, Clarence," said Mr. York, still holding the hapless Shell fellows in a vice-like grip. "I was give to understand that the fellers at this 'ere school was gentlemen. 'Ow is it that fellers like this 'ere are admitted?"

Clarence York grinned.

"The 'ead is too easygoing, that's what it is," said Mr. York, shaking his head. "Chaps of this kidney ought not to be 'ere."

"You blackguard!" howled Racke. "You—you bush-ranger! Let me go—"

"I'll take these fellers out," said Mr. York. "You ain't missed anything from your room, Clarence?"

"M-m-missed anything?" gasped Tompkins.

"Yes. They look to me like a pair of young pickpockets," said Mr. York.

"Oh, my hat!"

Racke and Crooke were almost choking with rage. They wriggled helplessly in the muscular grasp of the man from Australia.

"Well, out you go!" said Mr. York. "I 'ope that by taking my nevvly Clarence as a model, you young fellers may learn better manners."

And Mr. York lifted the wriggling juniors into the passage, and, with a swing of his powerful arms, sent them spinning.

Racke and Crooke sprawled along the floor, breathless and dizzy. Mr. York closed the study door. The two Shell fellows sat up dazedly.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Crooke.

"The ruffian!" hissed Racke. "I—I—I'll—"

"No more ragging him for me!" groaned Crooke, staggering to his feet. "He's too jolly hefty for me! Ow, ow! Wow!"

And Crooke limped away. After some hesitation, Aubrey Racke followed him. He was thirsting for vengeance; but it was clear that Tompkins' uncle was too "hefty" to be negotiated, and Racke decided that discretion was the better part of valour. So he limped away, gasping, and Tompkins and his uncle were left to themselves.

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CHAPTER 4.

Tea in Study No 6!

SAMUEL YORK sat down in the study armchair, and fanned himself with a red-spotted handkerchief, after his exertions. Tompkins eyed him rather dubiously.

He was determined to stand by his uncle, as in duty bound, and he tried not to wish that Mr. York would catch an early train. His uncle smiled at him.

"You—you've seen the Head, uncle?" asked Tompkins.

"Yes. Very pleasant and affable ole gent," said Mr. York.

"Oh!"

"Ad quite a pleasant chat with 'im and with the other chap, Mr. Railton," said the Australian uncle. "Good fellers they are, Clarence."

"Ye-e-es."

"And 'ere I am at your school, boy," continued Mr. York. "Often and often I've thought about you out there in Australy, me being a man without a family of my own. I was going to leave you all my money, Clarence, and a tidy sum it was."

"Never mind that, uncle."

"But it's 'ard on you, boy," said Mr. York, eyeing him curiously. "It'll make a lot of difference to you."

"Can't be helped," said Tompkins bravely. "I—I suppose I shall have to leave St. Jim's, uncle. I know that it was you who footed most of the bills."

"It's 'ard," said Mr. York musingly. "What will you do if you 'ave to leave school, Clarence?"

"Work, I suppose," said Tompkins, rather helplessly. "The pater will be able to give me a start, at least. And—and if I get on, uncle—I mean to get on somehow—then—then perhaps I may be able to help you in my turn."

"Help me?" repeated Mr. York.

"Yes, uncle. You've done enough for me—before you ever saw me, too," said Tompkins. "Anyhow, whatever luck I have, there'll always be a share for you, whatever it comes to. You'll have some sort of a home in your old age, anyhow."

The rugged face of Mr. Samuel York softened a good deal. "You're a good lad, Clarence," he said. "And you ain't ashamed of your rough-and-ready old uncle, among all these nob's?"

"Of course not, uncle," faltered Tompkins, glad at that moment that he was able to reply truthfully.

"Course, I've made myself pretty respectable to come 'ere," said Mr. York. "But poverty will show, Clarence."

"Never mind that, uncle. I say, D'Arcy has asked me to bring you to tea in his study, to meet some friends of his. Visitors often have tea in the study here, you know. You'll come?"

"You want me to come, Clarence?"

"Certainly!"

"Then I'll come with pleasure," said Mr. York. "I do say that I could peck a bit."

Clarence York led his uncle along to Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

That study already had a festive appearance.

The table was laid with a spotless cloth, freshly borrowed from the House dame, and it was spread with numerous "crocks" borrowed up and down the passage, clean and shining, though of many various patterns.

"Twot in, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, as Tompkins looked into the study rather timidly. "Pway come in, Mr York."

Seven juniors were in the study.

Mr. York had already made the noble acquaintance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and now Blake and Herries and Dig, Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were presented to him.

The juniors were grave and polite.

If they noticed anything about Mr. York that marked him off from the usual run of visitors at St. Jim's, they did not betray the fact.

Even Monty Lowther contrived to keep his humorous proclivities wholly concealed, and did not dream of pulling the distinguished visitor's leg.

Mr. York was evidently in great spirits.

Undoubtedly he was aware of how the St. Jim's fellows regarded him; he could not have been blind to the view taken by Racke and Crooke. But that did not seem to affect his spirits in any way.

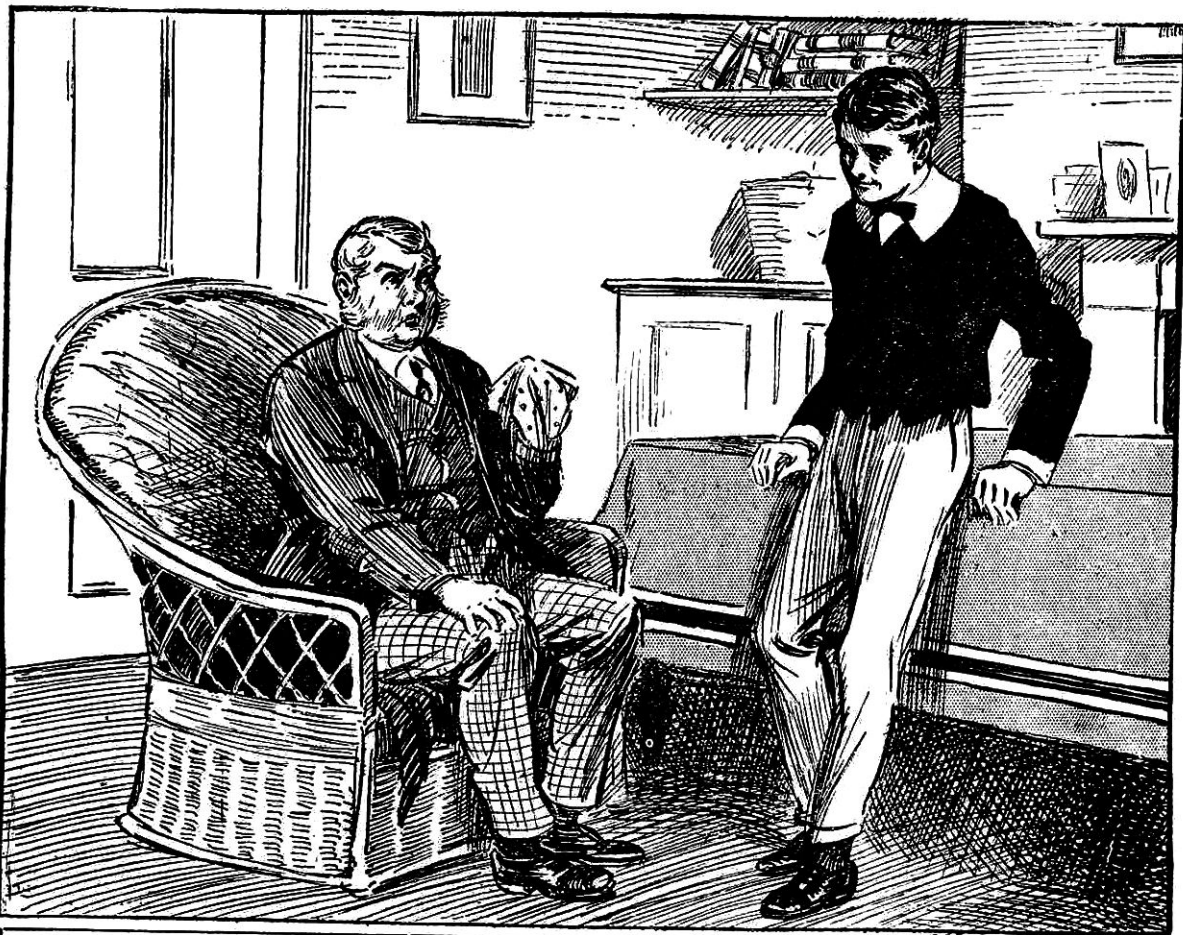
Perhaps he was not sensitive. Perhaps he had reasons of his own for not being disconcerted.

At all events, he talked cheerily, and his ruddy face beamed over the festive board.

When he poured his tea into the saucer to cool it, every face remained elaborately unconscious, excepting poor Tompkins', which became very red.

Only Arthur Augustus, however, rose to the occasion in a truly Chesterfieldian manner.

With perfect gravity Arthur Augustus poured his own tea



"It's 'ard on you, boy," said Mr. York. "What will you do if you 'ave to leave school, Clarence?" "Work, I suppose," answered Tompkins, rather helplessly. "The pater will be able to give me a start, at least. And—and if I get on, uncle—I mean to get on somehow—then perhaps I may be able to help you in return." (See page 6.)

into his saucer, as if he were in the habit of doing so, thus keeping the distinguished visitor in countenance.

Tea was going strong when there was a tap at the door of No. 6, and it opened to reveal the fat face of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

Arthur Augustus turned a stern eye upon him.

"Pway wetire, Twimble!" he said.

"I say, Gussy, old chap—"

"You are not welcome in this studay, Twimble!"

Trimble sniffed. He had scented out the feed, and he had put his aristocratic prejudices in his pocket, for the time being. He was prepared to swallow Tompkins' uncle whole for the sake of the spread. But there was no spread for Baggy.

Jack Blake rose, and picked up an Indian club from the corner of the study.

"Where will you have it, Trimble?" he inquired.

"I—I say, I don't mind joining you," said Trimble. "I mean it. Nothing snobbish about me, you know."

"Pway biff him with that club, Blake."

"You bet!"

"Yow! Keep off!" roared Trimble, backing into the passage. "Look here, you rotters—Yah! I wouldn't come to tea, if you asked me, with that blessed rag-bag—Yarooooooh!"

Trimble fled as the Indian club came to close quarters. Blake closed the door, and turned back into the study with a rather flushed face. Mr. York undoubtedly had heard himself referred to as a rag-bag. It was rather a painful incident. Arthur Augustus threw himself into the breach, as it were, by hurrying on the conversation.

"You were tellin' us about huntin' the—the gum-trees, sir," said Arthur Augustus, a little confused in his haste.

Mr. York grinned, and went on chatting cheerily, apparently wholly unaffected by Trimble's remarks.

Blake kept the Indian club handy, in case there should be any more visitors to the study. And when the door opened,

and Scrope of the Shell looked in with a sneering grin, Blake came to action before Scrope could come to words.

Biff!

Scrope yelled and fled, and Blake shut the door again. After that there were no more callers.

When tea was over, Mr. York consulted a big watch, which had apparently cost about three shillings and sixpence.

"Stopped!" he said. "These 'ere cheap watches ain't any good. P'r'aps you can tell me the time. I got to catch the six train."

"Half-past five, sir," said Tom Merry. "That's time to walk to the station."

Mr. York rose from the table.

"Many thanks to you young fellers for your 'ospitality," he said. "You walkin' to the station with me, Clarence?"

"Yes, uncle, of course."

"Right-ho! I've quite enjoyed myself at this 'ere school this afternoon," said Mr. York. "I shall come down and see you agin on Saturday, Clarence."

"I'm very glad, uncle," said Tompkins simply.

"Yaas, wathah, sir!" said Arthur Augustus bravely. "It will be a gweat pleasuah to see you agin, sir."

"That's very nice of you," said Mr. York. "I'll come. Now we'd better get moving, Clarence."

"We'll all come as far as the gates," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the whole party of juniors escorted Mr. York out of the School House. As a matter of fact, Tom Merry & Co.'s intention was to act as a sort of bodyguard, lest any thoughtless youths should think of rotting or ragging the visitor as he departed. In a compact array Tom Merry & Co. marched down to the gates with the Australian gentleman, and saw him and his nephew safely out.

Clarence York Tompkins was rather silent as he walked to the station with his uncle. But he was feeling satisfied. He was glad that he had played up, under his ordeal, like a man, and had not surrendered to any snobbish weakness.

At the station, as they waited a few minutes for the train to come in, Clarence detached his watch from the chain, and pressed it into his uncle's hand.

"Eh—what's that?" asked Mr. York, in surprise.

"I want you to have it, uncle," said Tompkins timidly. "A—schoolboy doesn't really need a watch, you know. And yours doesn't go."

"Well!" said Mr. York, with a deep breath.

He held the watch in his hand, looking oddly at Tompkins.

"You mean that, boy?" he asked.

"Of course, uncle! I—I want you to have it."

Mr. York put the watch into his pocket.

"I'll take it, Clarence," he said. "And p'r'aps—one never knows—p'r'aps, when I come on Saturday, I may be able to bring you another watch in place of it."

Tompkins shook his head.

"I really don't need one, uncle. Really, you know! Don't spend your money on me now you've so little."

"I'll think about it," said Mr. York.

Then the train came in, and they parted. Mr. York shook hands with his nephew from the carriage window, and Tompkins watched the train go out.

He stood gazing after it for some little time after it had disappeared. His uncle had come—and gone! The junior turned at last and left the station. He was glad that he had played up, glad and grateful that Arthur Augustus had helped him to play up. Whatever results the visit might have for him, at least he had kept his own self-respect. And Tompkins' face was fairly cheerful as he walked back to St. Jim's in the autumn dusk.

CHAPTER 5.

The Trials of a Swot!

"SWOTTING!"

Mulvaney minor uttered that exclamation in tones of mingled wrath and indignation.

Mulvaney came into Study No. 4, in the Fourth, after tea on the day following Mr. York's visit. Reilly of the Fourth followed him in, and after Reilly came Kerruish and Jones minor.

Clarence York Tompkins was seated at the study table with quite a stack of classical volumes round him. He had a pen in his hand, a sheaf of foolscap before him, and a spot of ink on his nose, not to mention a worried frown on his brow.

It was not yet time for prep, so Tompkins was not at prep. It was not "lines," for he did not need a dictionary and a grammar and several other volumes for lines. The only explanation was that he was swotting, which naturally moved

the ire of Micky Mulvaney. Swotting had never been heard of before in Study No. 4. Mulvaney minor did exactly enough work to escape the pointer in the Form-room, and poor Tompkins, who was generally near the bottom of his class, found that mental efforts made his head ache, and he was, in fact, almost the last fellow at St. Jim's to think of taking up swotting. Yet there he was, mugging over volumes with a wrinkled brow, the swot complete.

He looked more worried than ever as the four juniors tramped into the study. Mulvaney threw a bunch of boxing-gloves on the table, nearly hurling the inkpot over Tompkins' foolscap. Tompkins rescued it just in time.

"I'm working, you know," said Tompkins diffidently.

"Chuck it!"

"Look here, Mulvaney! A chap can work in his own study," said Tompkins.

Mulvaney chuckled.

"Oh, go ahead if you like!" he said. "The table's got to be shoved into a corner, anyhow, and we're going to have a four-handed mill. If you can swot at the same time, I don't mind."

"Go into the gym for your blessed boxing!" said Tompkins warmly.

"Go into the Form-room for your blessed swotting!" retorted Mulvaney.

He dragged the table into a corner of the study, leaving Tompkins sitting minus table and books. There was a chortle from the other juniors.

"I tell you I'm going to work!" shouted Tompkins.

"And I tell you we're going to box!" said Mulvaney.

"Look here, chuck up playing the goat, and we'll give you a turn with the gloves. Better for you than swotting."

"What's the game, Tompkins?" asked Kerruish. "What's the good of you swotting? You're a dunce, you know."

"I'm going in for a scholarship," said Tompkins.

"You!" yelled Mulvaney.

"Why not?" snapped Tompkins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The four juniors roared. The idea of Clarence York Tompkins seeking to bag a scholarship was too rich.

"Oh, that chap'll be the death of me, with his jolly old uncle and his scholarships!" roared Mulvaney. "Sure it's too funny to live, you are, Tompkins."

"I'm going to put my name down," said Tompkins. "I—I'm just trying to work out what I can do, you know."

"Sure you needn't trouble. I can tell you. You can get the lowest possible number of marks in any exam you butt into," said Mulvaney. "You can make yourself look a bigger ass than you do at present, though that will take some doing. Now, don't be funny any more. We're going to box."

"A fellow ought to have a chance to work in his own study!" mumbled Tompkins.

"Reilly against me," said Mulvaney, without bestowing any more of his valuable time upon the insignificant Tompkins. "Kerruish against Jones. Stack the chairs on the table, and let's begin."

"How am I to work with the chairs stacked on the table?" howled Tompkins.

"And up-end the fender in a corner," continued Mulvaney.

Clarence York Tompkins looked on as the boxing began. Obviously study was out of the question. He began to gather up his books. Tramp, tramp, tramp! Reilly sent Mulvaney whirling back with a hefty drive, and he crashed into Tompkins, and sent him flying. Books and papers were spread over the carpet in a shower.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

The boxing went on at a great rate, without much science, but with plenty of vim.

Tompkins made wild efforts to rescue his books and papers from amidst the trampling feet.

Jones minor tripped over him as he reached for his dictionary, and went to the floor. He jumped up and turned in great wrath on Tompkins.

"You thumping ass, what did you trip me for?" roared Jones minor.

"I want my die—"

"You thumping chump! Take it!" howled Jones, as he grabbed up the big volume and smote Clarence York on the head with it.

"Turn the silly spalpeen out!" shouted Mulvaney.

"Yarook! Gimme my books, then!"

"Chuck them after him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tompkins found himself sitting in the passage, without any clear idea as to how he had arrived there. His books came after him in a shower. He was scrambling breathlessly up, when Virgil caught him on the ear, and he went sprawling again. The Latin dictionary landed on his chest as he sprawled. Latin Syntax and "Limen" dropped on him next, and then came his foolscap like a shower of snowflakes. The boxers mercifully refrained from following it up with the inkpot. Mulvaney slammed the door, and the boxing

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and trampling and gasping and ejaculating were resumed in great style.

“Oh dear!” gasped Tompkins feebly.
 “Bai Jove! What’s the wow, deah boy?”
 Arthur Augustus D’Arcy looked out of Study No. 6, and turned his celebrated eyeglass upon Tompkins in astonished inquiry.

“Oh dear! Grooogh! Ow!”
 Arthur Augustus kindly came out and gave Tompkins a hand up. With great kindness he helped him to gather up his books and his papers. With both arms full, Tompkins leaned on the wall and gasped for breath.

“They’re boxing in the study,” he gasped. “They—they don’t want me to swot there.”

Arthur Augustus jumped
 “You swottin’, deah boy?” he said faintly.
 “I’ve got to!” groaned Tompkins. “I—I sha’n’t be able to stay at St. Jim’s now, unless I can bag a schol. See?”

“I—I see!” murmured Arthur Augustus sympathetically.
 “I suppose I’d better go down to the Form-room!” mumbled Tompkins.

“No, you won’t, deah boy! Come and work in my study.”

Arthur Augustus led him into Study No. 6. Tompkins settled down to work there, till Blake and Herries and Dig came in. The three juniors seemed rather surprised at the sight of Tompkins working in their quarters. Arthur Augustus explained.

“Oh, my hat!” said Blake.
 “I—I’ll clear now!” said Tompkins hastily.

“Don’t, old turnip!” said Blake politely. “We’re going to rehearse a scene from the ‘Merchant of Venice.’ If it won’t bother you—”

“Thanks very much! I—I think I’ll chuck now!” faltered Tompkins, perhaps thinking that a rehearsal was likely to interrupt the processes of his intellect.

He carried his books rather dimly down to the Form-room. There he worked in quiet, though not in great spirits, for a time—till Baggy Trimble discovered him. The discovery of Tompkins swotting was, of course, too good for Baggy to keep to himself; he rushed off to share the good news with others.

Five minutes later, Racke and Crooke, Scrope and Mellish, and three or four other fellows returned with Trimble in a hilarious mood. Clarence York Tompkins dolefully stacked up his books and departed, seeking fresh fields and pastures new, followed by howls of laughter from Racke & Co.

“Swotting” did not seem to be prospering with Tompkins of the Fourth. He found a refuge at last in Study No. 2 in the Fourth—Wildrake’s study. Wildrake’s study-mates, Trimble and Mellish, promptly raised objections. Wildrake, with equal promptness, knocked their heads together—after which they were heard to object no more. In Study No. 2 Tompkins swotted, with a hapless feeling that he was about as likely to win a “schol” as he was to win the Derby; but, sticking to it, in spite of his forebodings, with plucky determination.

CHAPTER 6.

A Change of Front!

KANGAROO of the Shell looked puzzled. The Australian junior had a letter in his hand, which he had just been reading; and he glanced several times at Tompkins of the Fourth, who was looking over the rack. Kangy crossed over to Tompkins at last.

“Look here, Tompkins!” he began.
 Clarence York looked round.
 “Your giddy uncle is named Samuel York, isn’t he?” asked Kangaroo.

“That’s his name,” said Tompkins.
 “And he comes from Sydney?”
 “Yes.”

“I suppose there’s not a whole crowd of Samuel Yorks in Sydney?” said Kangaroo. “I reckon it is the same merchant. I say, is your jolly old nunky a practical-joker?”
 “Not that I know of,” said Tompkins, staring. “I—I suppose there isn’t anything about my uncle in that letter of yours, is there?”

“Looks to me as if there is,” answered Kangaroo. “This is from my uncle in Sydney. Sure your merry old uncle isn’t a practical-joker, and given to pulling his relations’ legs?”

“I—I don’t know,” stammered Tompkins. “What are you driving at, anyhow?”
 Kangaroo considered.

“I’d show you the letter,” he said. “But I dare say your uncle knows his own business best, and it’s not for me to butt in. Sorry I spoke!”

And with a nod, Kangaroo strolled away, leaving Tompkins of the Fourth staring blankly. Baggy Trimble, who was hovering round the letter-rack—perhaps in the hope of bagging a handhome cheque from Trimble Hall—blinked very

curiously after Harry Noble. Kangy’s remarks had excited Baggy’s inquisitiveness—never very difficult to excite. If there was anything about Tompkins’ famous uncle in that letter, Baggy Trimble meant to know what it was.

Trimble had quite enjoyed the episode of Tompkins’ uncle, and he wanted more, as it were. Any fresh details were welcome. And after that little talk by the letter-rack, Baggy kept an eye on Kangaroo—quite without the Australian junior’s knowledge. And when Kangaroo changed for footer practice after lessons, the astute Baggy contrived to get within reach of his jacket—and the letter came into his fat paws. And Baggy devoured that letter with eyes that grew wider and wider with astonishment.

“My only aunt!” gasped Trimble, in utter amazement.
 “Oh dear! Oh, my hat! Who’d have thought it?”
 He blinked at the letter.

Then, remembering that he was in danger of being caught, he shoved it back into the pocket of the jacket, and beat a strategic retreat.

He was grinning as he rolled away.
 “Who’d have thought it?” he said, half a dozen times at least. “That shabby old blighter—that old scrap-heap merchant—that old, frightful frump! But it’s true all right—Kangy’s uncle knows! Oh, what a surprise for Racke—if he knew!”

Evidently he had derived startling information from Kangaroo’s letter from “down under.”

Equally, evidently, he did not intend to impart it to his friends. He did not seek Racke & Co. this time; apparently, the worthy Baggy’s worthy pals were to be left out in the cold. The fellow he sought was Clarence York Tompkins.

He found that youth in his study. Tompkins was trying to “swot,” and Mulvaney minor was making toffee at the study fire, and keeping up an innoesant conversation the while. The conversation was rather one-sided, but Mulvaney did not mind that; in fact, he preferred to do all the talking. Tompkins toyed with a pen and his books, not caring, in his diffident way, to ask Micky Mulvaney to shut up; not that Mulvaney would have done so. Trimble looked in at the doorway with an agreeable grin on his fat face.

“Looking for you, Tompkins,” he remarked.
 “Well, now you’ve found me!” said Tompkins sourly.
 “Get out!”

“Swotting, what?”
 “Mind your own bizney!”
 “I—I mean—” It was rather difficult to change front

all at once, but Trimble had to manage it somehow, after the wonderful information, whatever it was, that he had derived from Kangy’s letter. “I—I mean, old chap, that it must be a bit difficult swotting here, with that fathead interrupting you! Come into my study!”
 “Eh?”

“I hear you’re going in for the King’s Scholarship,” said Trimble affably. “Of course, you’ll bag it—a clever chap like you! But you’ll have to work a bit, so come to my study. Wildrake won’t mind, and Mellish is out. Besides, I wouldn’t let Mellish interfere between me and my friends.”
 Tompkins fairly blinked at him. Mulvaney stared round from his toffee-making.

“Is it potty ye are, Trimble?” inquired Mulvaney.
 Trimble did not heed that impertinent question.

“I’ll help you look out words in the dic, Tompkins,” he said. “I’m quite a dab at that.”

“You’re making a mistake intirely, Trimble,” said Mulvaney ironically. “Tompkins’ uncle’s lost his money, not come into a fortune.”
 Trimble sniffed.

“I dare say that makes a lot of difference to fellows like you, Mulvaney,” he said loftily. “But I can stand by a pal whether he’s up or down in the world, I hope.”

“A—a pal?” said Tompkins dazedly.
 “Yes, old chap.”

“You and your gang chivvied me out of the Form-room yesterday, when I was trying to work!” said Tompkins hotly.
 Trimble coughed. His change of front was very sudden, and required some explaining away.

“That—that was a joke!” he explained, at last. “I—I was really against it. I said to Racke it was rotten. Let the chap alone, I said to Racke.”

“I didn’t hear you.”
 “Well, I did, you know,” said Trimble. “And—and I apologize. I was thoughtless. I played the goat! I’m sorry!” said Trimble handsomely. “Fellow can’t say more than that, I suppose.”

“I—I suppose not,” said Tompkins, still blinking at him in great astonishment. “But what’s your little game? I haven’t any money to lend you, Trimble.”
 “Oh! I say, you know—”

“I can’t even stand you a ten,” said Tompkins. “What are you trying to pull my leg for, you fat spoofer?”

(Continued on page 12.)

The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited by TOM MERRY.

More Polo!

FAGS ON ROLLER-SKATES.

By Reginald Talbot.

A FEW weeks ago a polo match on bicycles, played between members of the New House and School House by junior teams, was reported in these columns. A large number of fags were present as spectators upon this occasion, and they were greatly impressed by the proceedings. One suspects, also, that they were probably disappointed by the limited number of casualties that occurred during the game. Nothing is quite so welcomed by the ink-lingered band of Third-Formers as trouble, whether they are themselves entertaining it as a guest, or witnessing other people doing so. The edict of Mr. Railton, forbidding any more games of that character was even more unwelcome to them than it was to the players. They assured themselves that there was no likelihood of the game being resumed after the departure of the Housemaster, and then vanished from the scene in turn.

But they took the great idea with them. They had been talking it over, I imagine, while they were watching the game. If the Shell and Fourth could play polo, why not the Third? It might have been argued that Mr. Railton had been at pains to make it abundantly clear to the Shell and Fourth Forms that they could not play. But matters of that kind carry little weight with Wally D'Arcy and his band of faithful adherents. They occasionally find it convenient to adhere to the strict letter of the law, and in pursuance of this policy they would have argued that the ban did not extend to the Third, Mr. Railton having omitted specifically to allude to that Form. Of course, there was the difficulty of mounting the players. There are a certain number of bicycles, certainly, in the possession of the Third; but unfortunately the supply is strictly limited, and decidedly inadequate.

The Great Idea.

The fags, however, were not relying upon them. They had already devised a substitute. That was the great idea, and the credit of having devised it is to the account of Joe Frayne. In a word, it was roller-skates. This method of locomotion is very popular in the Third, and some of them are very adept at it. One day, with the approval of the editor, I may have something to say with regard to the roller-skating activities of the fags, more especially with reference to their custom of swirling about the corridors upon occasion, heedless of the convenience and safety of mere pedestrians. But for the present I shall confine myself to their essay at polo.

They played in the Common-room with the same kind of impedimenta as the Shell and Fourth—a cricket ball and hockey sticks. It was manifestly impossible to roller-skate on grass. But roller-skate polo is not an indoor game, especially if the room happens to boast a good supply of windows, and the players are numerous, energetic, and determined.

As for numbers, Wally D'Arcy despised the economy in players practised by the cyclist teams. His mottoes were "Let 'em all come!" and "The more the merrier!" Whether the swarm of players was conducive to merriment is doubtful, but that it made for excitement is incontrovertible.

Within five minutes of the commencement
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of the game the ball had twice been retrieved from the quad. In its passage it had upon each occasion proved beyond question that if a certain force is applied to a hard object the resisting power of a sheet of glass will be insufficient to retard its progress, and the windows of the Common-room bore witness to the fact. Regarded as a problem in dynamics, it was interesting; regarded as authority would doubtless regard it—as a couple of broken windows—it was likely to be the subject for some unpleasantness, and the text for a disquieting irony, with a sequence of forfeited pocket-money.

Little recked the players of that, the more especially as directly after the ball had been brought back into play after its second defection, Wally D'Arcy's team secured their first goal.

Whiz! Crash! Tinkle-tinkle! Bump! That was the gasolier, with three incandescent burners and globes, brought down by an enthusiastic and excited fag, wilfully disregarding the rule that a hockey stick should never be lifted above the shoulder.

The heedless players skated over the wreckage.

A bust of Francis Bacon, looking down with mild disapproval from a bracket on the walls, went to join the gasolier. (Well, wasn't he ever a boy himself? And, anyway, serve him right for his rotten essays!)

Another goal! This time Joe Frayne's team. Hurray!

Crash! The third window. Curly Gibson skated to the door on his way to recover the missing ball. He arrived there exactly as it opened to admit Darrell. There were several very helpful cries of "Look out, Curly!" But in this case it was deeds, not words, that were wanted. Gibson discovered that he was incapable of perform-

ing the essential deed—that of arresting his progress voluntarily—so he besought the aid of Darrell. He did it by the simple means of clinging round the prefect's neck, and as the newcomer was unprepared for the shock, the manoeuvre was not entirely successful. He sat down with disconcerting suddenness, and two or three fags who had glided up with a dim idea of rendering assistance tripped over his outstretched legs.

What Darrell, who had been yelling "Fag!" down the corridor for about five minutes, in the hope of attracting the attention of Wally D'Arcy, said when he recovered his feet, and saw the state of the Common-room, is not relevant to the story of the polo match. It belongs to the sequel, which is much too painful a history to be recorded in print.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

G. Figgins (New House).—Thanks for letting us see your "rollicking, roaring sea yarn" entitled "Captain Swigg's Revenge," or, "Yanked to the Yard Arm." The story reeked so strongly of the good old briny that it made us feel quite sea-sick and after the second spasm we felt compelled to abandon the attempt to read it. You describe it as "a story to be devoured by old and young." Try it on the rats in the school cellars—they usually devour anything!

J. Lennox (Fourth).—Sorry to hear of the further grub raids on your study. Yes, there ought to be a campaign to make Baggy Trimble toe the line. Meanwhile, we advise you to toe Baggy when next you see him!

R. Talbot (Fourth).—So you are another complaining of the depredations of Baggy Trimble. He evidently believes in the freedom of the seize.

G. Pratt (New House).—Thanks for information that the crown of England is worth over £150,000. At that rate we shouldn't mind living on half a crown a week!

M. Reilly (Fourth).—You have our sympathy. But you should be more careful in repeating the correct number when speaking on the telephone. Can you wonder at Mr. Lathom giving you a hundred lines when, asking you to ring up the village doctor to let him have something for the "flu," you got on to the chimney-sweep instead! A fine-brush and a bundle of drops are of no earthly use, and we think you quite deserved the job of carting them back to the sweep!

Kangaroo (Shell).—Yes, Skimpole has great literary acquirements. He has, in fact, a whole library of books he has borrowed from us and forgotten to return.

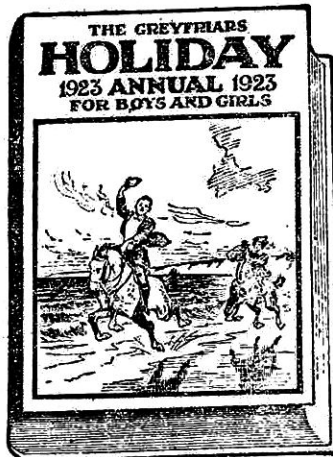
Curly Gib-on (Third).—No, thanks; we haven't any superfluous becks to spend on cheap, leak, fountain-pens. And you don't catch us, either, when you boast of your pen that it will "rite in any language."

J. Blake (Fourth).—We cannot trace any original photographs of the notorious Bill Sikes; but, judging from his shady career, we should be inclined to say that he was a dark man.

Wally D'Arcy (Third).—Yes, there may be "room for improvement" in our magazine; but there's jolly well no room for that horrible alleged detective story of yours! There was, however, just room for it in the W.P.B.

A. A. D'Arcy (Fourth).—I'm frightfully stumped on a weally wippin' gal—Maisie May, of the village bazaar. Do you considah that I stand a chance with her as a suitor? That all depends, Gussy, on whether you suit her! (This is one of Monty Lowther's, and the rest of the editorial staff absolutely refute any connection with this pun.)

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"GREAT HEAD 'EM" COMPETITION.

RESULT.

In this competition five competitors placed the heads correctly. The first prize of £5 has therefore been divided among:

Eileen W. M. Halls, 39, Madras Road, Ilford, Essex; J. E. Moultrie, Springfield Hall, St. Helier, Jersey; Agnes Mandeley, 70, Pugin Street, Kirkdale, Liverpool; D. J. Davis, 91, Cambridge Street, Rotherham; and Charles S. Baker, 35, Shirburn Road, Upton, Torquay.

The five prizes of £1 each and the ten prizes of 10s. each have been added together and divided among the following twenty-eight competitors, whose efforts came next nearest with two errors each:

Alfred Alger, 109, Leslie Road, Park Village, Wolverhampton; Tina Marini, 44, Cours de Vincennes XII arr., Paris, France; N. Tomlinson, Rockside, Okehampton, Devon; L. A. Kershaw, 95, Central Avenue, New Basford, Nottingham; A. Maxfield, 191, Meridale Street, W. Wolverhampton; R. R. Hooper, 258, Moor Road, Chorley, Lanes; Nora Spreckly, 6, Dam Street, Lichfield, Staffs; H. B. Gibson, 53, Danes Drive, Scotstoun, Glasgow; Percy Palmer, 17, Baker Street, Sparkhill, Birmingham; Frank Peet, 123, Brushfield Street, Hyson Green, Nottingham; T. Trewin, 1a, Oak Street, Kingswinford, near Dudley; Mrs. W. Wilson, 5, North Green Street, Hotwells, Bristol; Miss E. Thain, 207, Villa Street, Lozells, Birmingham; Frederick Wilson, 68, Deacon Street, Walworth, S.E. 17; Miss F. Butcher, 29, Stanley Road, Cheriton, near Folkestone; May Matthews, 115, Norbury Crescent, Norbury, S.W. 16; N. F. Parbury, 147, Marlborough Road, Coventry; C. G. Harvey, 19, Wyatt Road, Highbury, N. 5; Leslie Flynn, 1, Blythwood Villa, Lysons Avenue, Ashvale, Surrey; Miss M. F. Puddicombe, Rouison Cottage, London Road, Bushey Heath, Herts; Albert Dowling, 25, Zennor Road, Balham, S.W. 12; Miss M. Drake, 63, London Road, Brentford End, Middlesex; R. A. Straight, 4, Railway Cottages, Rainham, Essex; Alfred G. Targett, 160, Newhampton Road, W. Wolverhampton; R. J. Bond, Millgate Street, Aylsham, Norfolk; George Hinchley, 17, Lord Street, Mansfield, Notts; D. Kimmings, 36, Ritches Road, West Green, N. 15; Edith Bollon, 6, Low Moor Side, New Farnley, Leeds.

We regret that, owing to pressure of space, we are unable to reproduce the correct pictures, but a set may be seen on application at this office.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

- "THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday
- "THE MAGNET" Every Monday
- "THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday
- "CHUCKLES" Every Thursday
- "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly

"HISTORIES"

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Here is a splendid new competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Manchester United Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears under the puzzle, pin it to your solution, and post it to "HISTORIES No. 1" Competition, GEM Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, October 26th.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to

add together and divide the value of all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Boys' Friend," "Magnet," and "Popular," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

I enter "HISTORIES No. 1" Competition and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

"TOMPKINS ON TRIAL."

(Continued from page 9.)

"Hem! I—I want you to come to tea in my study, Tompkins, old chap. I—I'm standing a spread," said Trimble.

"Gammon!"

"Look here, you know, I mean it! I always was your friend," said Trimble. "There's been misunderstandings. But I'm willing to let bygones be bygones. Can't say fairer than that. Come and swot in my study, and I'll help you with the giddy dictionary, and—and I'll get the tea while you work. There!"

Tompkins rose to his feet. At first he was simply astounded by this sudden change of front on the part of Baggy Trimble. He did not understand it in the least. He could only conclude, after some reflection that Baggy was seeking to pull his innocent leg with ulterior motives—that perhaps Racke & Co. were in Trimble's study waiting to rag him. Without taking the trouble to inquire further, Tompkins rushed at the friendly Baggy, and seized him by the collar. There was a roar from Trimble, and then a bump in the passage.

"Now clear!" said Tompkins, glaring out of the study after him. "Put your fat chivvy in here again, and I'll take a ruler to you."

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Trimble.

Slam!

Clarence York Tompkins returned to his work, and Mulvaney resumed his interrupted flow of entertaining conversation.

The door opened again, and Trimble blinked in cautiously.

"I say, Tompkins, old fellow—"

"Clear!" yelled Tompkins.

"But, dear old chap—"

Tompkins grabbed a ruler, and rushed for the door. Baggy backed away in haste, still protesting.

"I say, dear fellow—I say, it's all right! Honest Injun! Dear old Tompkins— Yaroooooh! Yoocoop!"

Baggy gave a fiendish yell as the ruler cracked on his fat person. He fled, and Tompkins pursued, with brandished ruler. Trimble bolted into his study and slammed the door; and Tompkins, breathing hard, returned to his own quarters, to work, and to the entertaining and unceasing flow of conversation from Mulvaney minor.

CHAPTER 7.

Dear Old Tompkins!

"O LD fellow!"

Tompkins looked round.

He was coming down to the Common-room that evening when a very friendly and cordial voice hailed him in the passage. It was the voice of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

Tompkins glared at him.

Apparently Baggy was keeping up his amazing new stunt, of displaying the most fulsome friendship towards the junior who was down on his luck. But there was a plentiful lack of appreciation on Tompkins' part.

He knew Baggy pretty well; and though he failed to understand the reason of this surprising new development, he was quite well aware that the fat and fatuous Baggy had some axe to grind. What purpose Trimble could serve by flattering so insignificant a person as Tompkins was a deep mystery. But obviously he had some purpose, mysterious as it was; and Tompkins, though not a bright youth, was not to be taken in. Baggy was about the unlikeliest fellow in the wide universe to stand by a chap who was down on his luck; indeed, until this very afternoon, he had wholeheartedly backed up Racke & Co. in their persecution of the hapless Tompkins. Racke & Co. had observed the change, and were amazed by it; other fellows had seen it, and were amazed; and Tompkins, who was most amazed of all, was more angry than amazed. He did not want Baggy's fat flattery, and he made that clear.

"Dear old Tompkins," said Baggy affectionately, while Clarence York glared, "I say, you're expecting your uncle to-morrow, ain't you?"

"Yes, you fat toad!"

"Hem! I say, would you like to have him to tea in my study?"

"No!"

"Um! Look here, old fellow—"

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Tompkins.

He turned his back on Trimble, and stalked into the Common-room.

There was a chuckle in the corridor, as the Terrible Three came along.

"Anybody in want of a loyal and devoted pal?" called out THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 767.

Monty Lowther. "Here's a romantic friendship going begging!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is that fat ass sucking up to Tompkins for?" asked Manners, in astonishment. "Everybody knows that Tompkins hasn't any money."

"Some fellows aren't mercenary," said Baggy Trimble, with lofty disdain. "Tompkins may be down on his luck; but I'm standing by him. I like the chap."

"Well, my hat!" said Tom Merry.

"His uncle is all right, too," said Baggy. "I never saw an old gentleman I respected so much. Run him down if you like—I say that he is one of the best."

"But we haven't run him down—you have!" said Tom Merry mildly.

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy warmly. "It was you who nicknamed the old gentleman the Wag-bag, Twimble!"

"That—that was yesterday—" stammered Trimble.

"Was he a rag-bag yesterday, and a respected old gent to-day?" asked Lowther. "Has he changed his clothes? Has he come into a fortune?"

"Run him down!" said Trimble. "I'm standing by the dear old fellow."

"The dear old fellow?" ejaculated Tom.

"Yes, I admire him! Fine old English gentleman!" said Trimble.

"My only hat!"

Tom Merry & Co. walked on in great surprise. They simply could not make out this amazing new departure on the part of Baggy Trimble. Racke was in the passage, and he listened with astonishment, and came up to Baggy when the Terrible Three were gone.

"What's the meaning of this?" he snapped.

"Of what?" asked Baggy defiantly.

"This rot about Tompkins!" said Racke savagely. "What are you blowing his trumpet for?"

"I suppose I can speak up for a friend," said Trimble. "Now he's down on his luck, it's time for his real friends to rally round. That's me all over!"

"You fat idiot!" roared Racke. "Do you think he's got some money after all, or what is it?"

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Baggy independently. "The fact is, Racke, I'm fed up with your rotten chivvying of my pal Tompkins! It's rotten; in fact, low! You're a low fellow, Aubrey Racke, not fit to clean dear old Tompkins' boots! Yah!"

And Baggy rolled away to the Common-room, leaving Aubrey Racke fairly rooted to the floor in amazement.

In the junior Common-room Baggy looked round for Tompkins at once. That diffident youth was sitting in an obscure corner, as he generally was; he had a book open, and Baggy, as he rolled up to him, saw that it was Virgil. Even after prep, Tompkins was trying to improve the shining hour by a "dig" into Publius Vergilius Maro.

"Bit stiff without a crib—what?" asked Baggy.

"Yes," grunted Tompkins.

"Let me help you, old chap."

"You!" snorted Tompkins.

"You'd get licked in class every day if you didn't use a crib. Go and eat coke!"

"I say, old fellow, I mean it! Look here—"

"Let a chap alone, for goodness' sake!" said Tompkins.

"You couldn't help me if you wanted to, and I don't believe you want to. Leave off telling lies and let me alone."

"Going to the station to meet your uncle to-morrow?" asked Baggy, changing the topic.

"No!"

"Like me to go, old chap?"

"No!"

"Not coming by train, perhaps?" asked Baggy, with a smile. "May be coming down by car—what?"

There was a chuckle from some fellows who heard Baggy's suggestion. The "Rag-bag" was not likely to come down to the school by car.

Tompkins flushed crimson. He could only take Trimble's remark as a gibe at his uncle's poverty. He snapped his book shut, and jumped up.

"Look here, you rotter, that's enough!" he exclaimed.

"Put up your paws!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Baggy. "I mean—"

"Thwash him, deah boy!" sang out Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

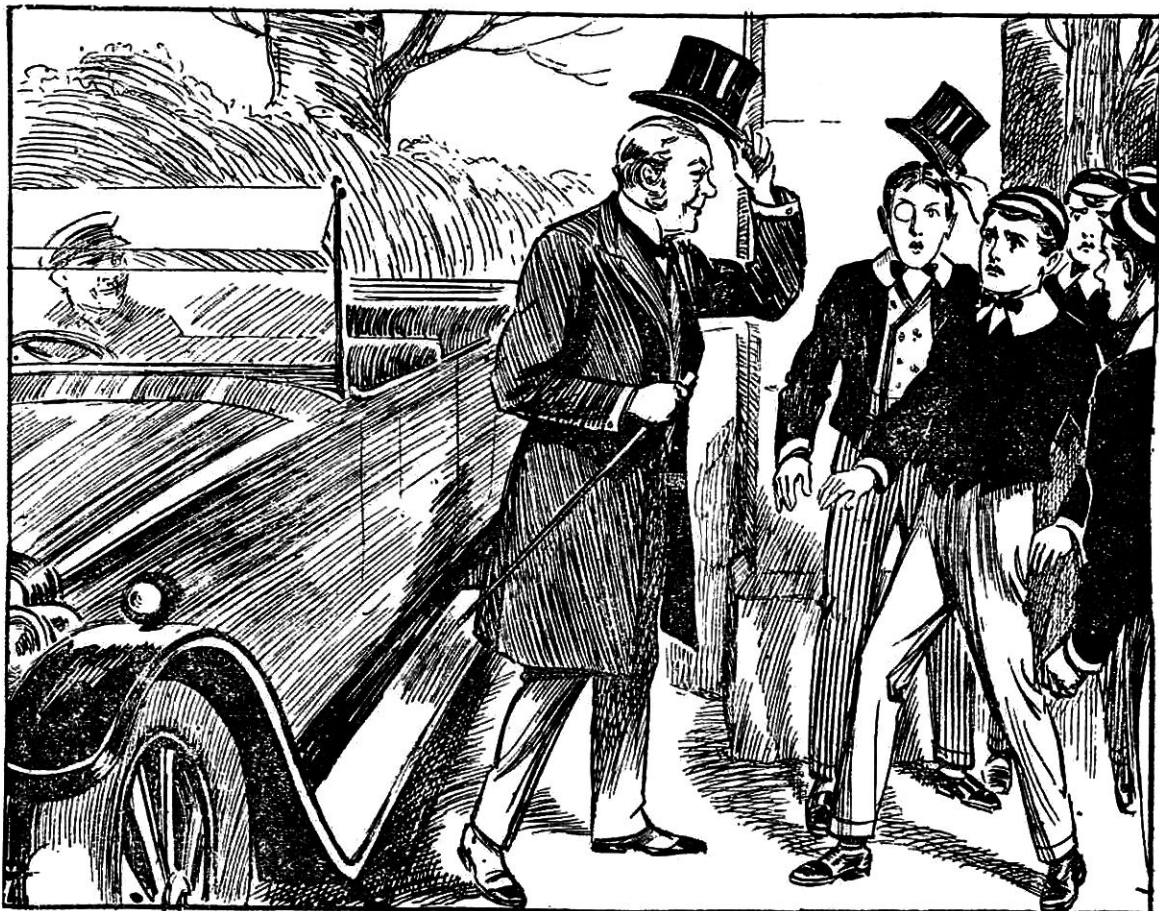
"I'm going to!" roared Tompkins, in great wrath. "If my uncle's hard up, I'm not going to have that fat cad poking fun at him!"

"But I—I didn't—I wasn't—I wouldn't—I never—" stuttered Baggy, dodging round the chairs as Tompkins started for him. "I assure you—I—I—dear old Tompkins— Yaroooooh!"

Baggy fled round the big table, with dear old Tompkins in pursuit. There was a roar of laughter in the Common-room.

"Go it, Baggy! Put it on!"

"Go for his scalp, Tompkins!"



The big car stopped at the gates, and Mr. Samuel York alighted. Clarence York Tompkins could not move or speak. He could only stare at his amazing uncle. Mr. York raised his hat, and smiled. "Well, Clarence?" he said. "Uncle!" stuttered Tompkins. "Is—is it really you, or am I only dreaming?" (See page 15.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here we go round the mulberry-bush!" sang Monty Lowther, as Baggy raced round the long table.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep off!" shrieked Baggy. "I tell you—oh dear!—I'm your friend—I am really! Oh crumbs! Grooogh! Dear old Tompkins—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dear old Tompkins was close behind now, and he smote with P. Virgilius Maro, and Trimble caught that great classic poet with the back of his head. There was a fearful howl from Trimble. The keenest "swot" would scarcely have cared to have the beauties of Virgil impressed upon his mind in that manner; and Baggy did not like it a little bit.

"Well hit!" roared Wildrake.

"Bai Jove! Don't bwain him, deah boy!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Can't be done!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "Brains lacking!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble made a wild break for the door. He was dashing out of the Common-room, when Kangaroo of the Shell came in. There was a collision in the doorway; and the sturdy Australian junior gripped Trimble by the collar and held him.

"You fat dummy—"

"Yarool! Leggo! Oh dear—"

"I've got a bone to pick with you," said Kangaroo cheerily, and he dragged the fat junior back into the room. "Keep off, Tompkins; I'm going to slaughter this fat rotter!" "Yoop! Help!"

Tompkins grunted, and returned to his seat and P. V. Maro. Kangaroo held Trimble by the collar, in a vice-like grip, in the middle of the Common-room.

"Now, you fat loafer," he said sternly, "what do you mean by reading my letters?"

CHAPTER 8.

Still Dear!

BAGGY TRIMBLE blinked at the Australian junior in alarm and amazement. How Kangaroo knew that he had read the letter from Sydney was a mystery to him. He was quite certain that he had not been seen purloining the letter from Noble's pocket, while the Cornstalk was on the football-field.

"Weadin' your lettahs, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Bai Jove, the fat boundah is always up to some wotten twick like that! I should wecommend givin' him a feahful thwashin'."

"I didn't!" roared Trimble. "Leggo! I didn't—I never—I wasn't—"

Kangaroo looked round.

"You fellows know I had a letter from home this afternoon," he said. "I left it in my jacket-pocket when I changed for footer. When I looked at it again, a while ago, I found a jammy thumb-mark on it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Trimble. "I—I never—my thumb wasn't jammy—I mean, I never touched the letter at all!"

"Pway do not be in a huwwy, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy judiciously. "Even a wottah like Twimble is entitled to justice, you know. A thumb-mark is weally not conclusiv evidence."

"Yow-ow!" gasped Trimble. "I never, you know! I suppose you ain't a finger-print expert, are you, you beast? Leggo!"

"That isn't all," said Kangaroo. "I hear that Trimble has been sucking up to Tompkins, trying to pal on with him, since I had that letter."

"That's true," said Tom Merry. "But the letter couldn't have anything to do with that."

Kangaroo chuckled.

"Couldn't it?" he said. "That's all you know! When I heard that Trimble was pulling on to Tompkins, I knew whose jammy thumb had made that mark on my letter."

"I—I say!" stammered Trimble. "I—I didn't—"

"He hasn't palled on to me," said Tompkins, with a sniff. "I wouldn't touch the fat beast with a barge-pole!"

"Oh, I say, Tompkins, old chap—"

"If you call me old chap, I'll biff you again!" yelled Tompkins.

"Yaas, wathah! I should certainly biff you, Twimble, if you addressed me in terms of such familiawity."

"Oh, you go and eat coke, D'Arcy!"

"Bai Jove! I—"

"Somebody lend me a ruler!" said Kangaroo. "This fat villain has got to learn to leave other chaps' letters alone!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Here's the poker," said Monty Lowther, handing it over.

"Good! Now, stand still, Trimble!"

Kangaroo seized the poker, releasing Trimble at the same time. Baggy did not stand still. He made a wild jump for the door, and vanished in the twinkling of an eye. Kangaroo chuckled, and tossed the poker into the fender.

Baggy was not seen again till bed-time. When the Fourth Form went to their dormitory, he turned up, and gave Tompkins a friendly smile. His sudden and amazing friendship for Tompkins was evidently not dead yet, little encouragement as it received.

"Like me to pull your boots off, old fellow?" he asked.

"I'll buzz them at you, if you come near me," grunted Tompkins.

"My dear old chap—"

"Shut up!"

"Bai Jove, this is weally vewy mysteriow, you fellows!" said Arthur Augustus. "What could there possibly have been in Kangy's lettah fwom Australiah, to make that howwid fat boundah turn ovah a new leaf in this wemarkable way? Do you know, Tompkins, deah boy?"

"Haven't the slightest idea," said Tompkins, who was very much puzzled himself. "I suppose the fat idiot has misunderstood something."

"Nothing of the kind," said Baggy. "It said quite plain—ahem!"

"Then you weally have wead the lettah, you howwid, spyin' wottah?"

"Certainly not!"

"But you just said—"

"I didn't! I mean, I meant to say—that is, of course, I should disdain to read a fellow's letter. Besides, my thumb wasn't jammy—I remember sucking it after I had the jam-tart, so it couldn't have left a mark on the letter. Not that I touched the letter; in fact, I didn't know Noble had had a letter from Australia at all. I hope you fellows believe me!" added Trimble, with dignity.

"Oh cwumba!"

"Believe you!" gasped Blake. "Oh, my hat! Why did they send that chap to St. Jim's? Wasn't there a vacancy in any lunatic asylum?"

"Think what you like!" said Trimble loftily. "I can afford to despise your rotten insinuations, so long as dear old Tompkins trusts me."

Whiz! Crash!

There was a wild yell from Baggy Trimble, as one of dear old Tompkins' boots smote him under his podgy chin. Baggy sat down with a bump that almost shook the dormitory.

"Now, if you want the other boot, call me dear old Tompkins again!" said Clarence York ferociously.

"Yow-ow-wooop!" roared Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Baggy Trimble seemed to have had enough: the boot was the last straw. He turned in without any more demonstrations of friendship towards Clarence York Tompkins.

But in the morning Baggy had recovered from the effects of the boot evidently, for he greeted Tompkins with a beaming smile when he turned out of bed.

"Looks like being a fine day, Tompkins," he remarked.

Grunt from Tompkins.

"Nice day for your uncle to come down!" said Baggy. "I hope he'll enjoy the journey. Splendid old chap, isn't he, Tompkins?"

"Yes; though you don't think so, you fat rotter!" said Tompkins ungratefully. "Dry up, or you'll get this soap!"

"I say, Clarence—"

"What?"

"Clarence, old chap!"

The soap whizzed through the air, and narrowly missed Baggy. And Baggy gave it up till breakfast-time, when he insisted upon passing Tompkins things, whether he wanted them or not; and Tompkins could not "biff" him in the presence of Mr. Lathom. But, in spite of the fact that

Baggy was fairly bursting with friendship for Clarence York, nothing but the Form master's presence saved him from getting the marmalade—applied externally.

CHAPTER 9.

Something Like a Surprise.

"WALLY wound, deah boys!"

"It's all very well—" grunted Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Gussy, old man," said Blake, "you're a good little ass, as I've said before, but you're liable to overdo it!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"I was thinking of going out with my camera," remarked Manners.

"Stay in, and photograph Tompkins' uncle!" suggested Monty Lowther. "He is worth putting on record!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"You see, a half-holiday is a half-holiday!" said Digby argumentatively. "Tompkins is a good sort, in his fat-headed way, and I sympathise with a chap who's down on his luck. And you can't help feeling sorry for a fellow who's going to tackle a scholarship exam, with a brain like Tompkins' to do it with! Still—"

"Still—" agreed Manners.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy adjusted his eyeglass in his noble eye, and surveyed his friends severely, but more in sorrow than in anger.

"Weally, deah boys, it is up to us to wally wound!" he said. "When a chap's down on his luck, othah chaps ought to wally! And those cads Wacke & Co. have been givin' Tompkins a lot of wowwy. And his uncle is weally a vewy worthy old chawactah, though certainly owiginal in some wespets."

"He oughtn't to butt in here again, in the cires!" said Manners. "It's rotten for Tompkins!"

"All the finah of Tompkins, deah boy, to stand it without failin' in wespct and affection towards his wemarkable uncle!"

"Well, yes, that's so. There's more stuff in Tompkins than anybody ever thought!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! And so—"

Jack Blake gave a deep groan.

"We'll rally round," he said. "We shall be jawed to death by Gussy if we don't, and bored to death by Tompkins and his uncle if we do. Let's choose the lesser of two evils!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's wathah a wotten way of puttin' it, Blake! Howevah—"

"In future," said Monty Lowther solemnly, "we will make all our arrangements with a special regard for Tompkins' uncle. Football fixtures shall be arranged for the days when he doesn't come. We will spend all half-holidays within gates, on the offchance that Tompkins' uncle may trickle in. Will that satisfy you, Gussy?"

"I wegard you as an ass, Lowthah! Howevah, if you wally wound, it is all wight!"

And Tom Merry & Co. manfully resolved to rally round Tompkins, and let his celebrated uncle find him once more surrounded by cheery pals.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy led his flock down to the gates, where Clarence York Tompkins, like Sister Anne, was watching the road. Tompkins was in rather a perplexed mood. His uncle had stated that he was coming that afternoon; but had not mentioned a train, so Tompkins could not proceed dutifully to the station to meet him. Yet it seemed very unlikely that he would come down from London by road. Motor-cars surely were too expensive for a gentleman in Mr. York's faded and eclipsed financial condition.

Trimble was there, friendly as ever, but keeping at a safe distance, for Tompkins had kicked him once, and was ready to kick him again as soon as he came within kicking distance. Racke & Co. were there, to make themselves as unpleasant as possible, though they were not likely to venture very far when Tom Merry and his comrades arrived on the scene.

"Well, old scout, where's nunky?" asked Monty Lowther.

Tompkins turned a perplexed face on the juniors.

"I suppose he'll be here soon," he said. "He told me about half-past three. But there's no train to get in for that time, so I really don't know—"

"Hoofing it, perhaps!" suggested Crooke, with a grin.

"Not likely!" said Racke. "His boots wouldn't stand it!" Tom Merry glanced round.

"Any more of that, and we'll fill in a few minutes mopping you up!" he said. "Better shut up!"

Racke & Co. sneered, but they decided to shut up. There was a sudden howl from Baggy Trimble:

"Here he comes!"

All eyes turned on the road.

A big Rolls-Royce car came sweeping up the road, driven by a plump and prosperous-looking chauffeur. Tompkins clenched his hands—prepared to punch Baggy for,

as he supposed, another gibe. Then he caught sight of his uncle sitting in the open car, and unclenched his hands. He blinked at Mr. Samuel York in blank wonder.

There he was!
His chubby, good-natured face was much the same; but everything else about the Australian gentleman was marvellously changed.

He was exceedingly well dressed—quietly, but elegantly. His silk-hat would have satisfied the uttermost requirements of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was an authority on such matters. He looked—as no doubt he was—a wealthy and respectable middle-aged gentleman.

Tom Merry & Co. blinked. They had "rallied round" Tompkins to help him through with his poverty-stricken uncle—to make the poor gentleman feel as much at home as possible at the school. And, apparently, it was not a poor gentleman, but a very rich gentleman, whom they had to deal with.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.
"Has the old beggar been pulling our legs?" asked Monty Lowther, in utter wonder.

There was a chuckle from Kangaroo of the Shell, who had joined the group at the gates.

"You've hit it!" he said. "I knew it, when I got that letter from Sydney! My uncle told me about Samuel York, one of the richest merchants in Sydney. Mentioned that he had a nephew at St. Jim's. Nothing about his losing his money. Tompkins' uncle is a giddy practical joker!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "So that's what Trimble found out from your letter."

"Just that!" grinned Kangaroo. "I wasn't going to let on; it's his bizney, not mine, what game he chooses to play. I suppose he's got some object, and it wasn't for me to butt in."

"Quite wight, Kangy," said Arthur Augustus. "You have acted with great tact and judgment, deah boy!"

Kangaroo took off his hat, and bowed low to the swell of St. Jim's in grateful acknowledgment. The juniors chuckled.

"But why—" stuttered Blake.
"Here he is!"

The big car stopped at the gates, and Mr. Samuel York alighted. Clarence York Tompkins did not move or speak. He couldn't! He was so astounded, that he could only stare at his amazing uncle, with his mouth open, like a fish out of water.

Mr. York raised his hat slightly to the amazed juniors, and smiled.

"Well, Clarence?" he said.
"Uncle!" stuttered Tompkins.

"Weren't you expecting me, my boy?" asked Mr. York.
"I think I told you I should arrive about half-past three."

Tompkins could only blink. His uncle was speaking in a quiet, well-cultivated voice, hardly recognisable as the voice he had used on his last visit to St. Jim's. Why he had been playing the part on that occasion of a rough, uneducated man was a mystery to poor Tompkins. He was too astonished even to feel pleased or relieved.

"Have I surprised you, my boy?" asked Mr. York.
"Oh, yes!" gasped Tompkins. "I—I suppose I'm dreaming? D-d-did somebody lend you that car to-day, uncle?"

Mr. York laughed.
"It is my own car, Clarence," he said.

"Great gad!" murmured Racke of the Shell. That big car was handsomer and more expensive than the "whacking" car in which Racke's pater, the war profiteer, came down to the school. The man who owned that car certainly was not hard up.

"I owe you an explanation," said Mr. York. "But let us go in, Clarence. I have been looking forward to tea in the study, you know. Perhaps your young friends will be your guests on this occasion. I should like them to hear what I have to tell you."

"Yaas, wathah, sir!" said Arthur Augustus.
Tompkins, still dazed and open-mouthed, walked in with his uncle, Tom Merry & Co. going with them Racke & Co. blinked at one another. Baggy Trimble rushed after Tompkins & Co. Blake dropped behind the party, to take Baggy by the collar, whirl him round and kick him hard. Then he followed the others, leaving Baggy Trimble howling with anguish, convinced at last that he was not to be "on" in the scene, and that he had no earthly chance of "palling" with dear old Tompkins.

CHAPTER 10.

Ripping!

TOM MERRY & CO. gathered in Study No. 4 in the Fourth in a state of great astonishment while Tompkins went with his uncle to see the Head. Tompkins came into the study a few minutes later.

His face was still amazed, but very bright.

"Well, old scout, it seems that your jolly old uncle has been pulling our legs all round," said Tom Merry, with a smile.

"I—I can't understand it!" gasped Tompkins. "It seems to me that I shall wake up in the dorm presently. I—I say, my uncle's tipped me a tenner for a spread in the study!"

"Bai Jove!"

"It—it seems that he told the Head last time he was here. I knew he went and had a jaw with him," said Tompkins.

"He's been spoofing me, somehow. Blessed if I know why."

"Certainly he is a very remarkable old gentleman!" said Arthur Augustus. "The most remarkable thing is that he has appawntly pulled my leg! Fancy anybody takin' me in, you chaps!"

"Only fancy!" grinned Blake.

"I'm to ask everybody I know to the spread," said Tompkins. "It's to be a celebration. You fellows will help me out, won't you?"

"Dear old Tompkins!" said Monty Lowther affectionately. "We're the very fellows to help a chap spend a tenner! We'd make any sacrifice to rally round on such an occasion!"

Tom Merry & Co. played up manfully, and great preparations were soon going on. Chairs and "crock" were borrowed or bagged right and left. The study soon presented a wonderfully festive aspect, and arrangements were made for an overflow meeting in the passage. Orders at the tuck-shop were given carte blanche. Dame Taggles had seldom done such a roaring trade, and nearly every fellow in the Lower School resolved to rally round on that great occasion. Figgins & Co. came over from the New House with a crowd of fellows when the news spread. Even Racke & Co. turned up, and were allowed to stay, and even Baggy Trimble was not denied. The astonishing development of Tompkins' uncle from such a shabby chrysalis into such a gorgeous butterfly was the one topic.

When Mr. York came along he found some difficulty in getting through the press to his nephew's study. But way was made for him, and there was a loud cheer for Tompkins' uncle. The place of honour at the festive board in the study was reserved for Mr. York, and as much room as was available was allotted to special guests, such as the Terrible Three, and Study No. 6, and Wildrake and Talbot and Levison and Cardew and Clive, the rest being accommodated in the wide passage outside. Every eye was on Mr. York as he took his seat at the table.

It was difficult to believe that that elegantly dressed gentleman with polished manners was the "Bushranger" and the "Rag-bag" of whom Racke & Co. had made such merciless mock. The feed was already beginning in the passage—the juniors not being given to standing on ceremony—but in the study they were more select, and they waited for Mr. York.

"I wathah think, sir," said Arthur Augustus gently, "that you owe us some explanation, sir. It appears that you have pulled our legs."

"I confess," said Mr. York. "And I hope that you will all forgive me. Especially my dear nephew Clarence. If you will give me a few minutes I will explain."

"Pile in, sir!" said Tom Merry.

"I came back to England," said Mr. York gravely, "a stranger to the country I had left more than twenty years before. I had never seen my nephew, and it was my intention, if he proved worthy, to make him my heir—the heir to a large fortune. I am a business man, and do not take persons or things on trust. What I had heard of my nephew pleased me. But I decided to leave nothing to chance before taking a very serious step. After a good deal of thought I decided to return in the character of a poor relation, and to judge Clarence by the way he greeted me in that character."

"Oh!" gasped Tompkins.

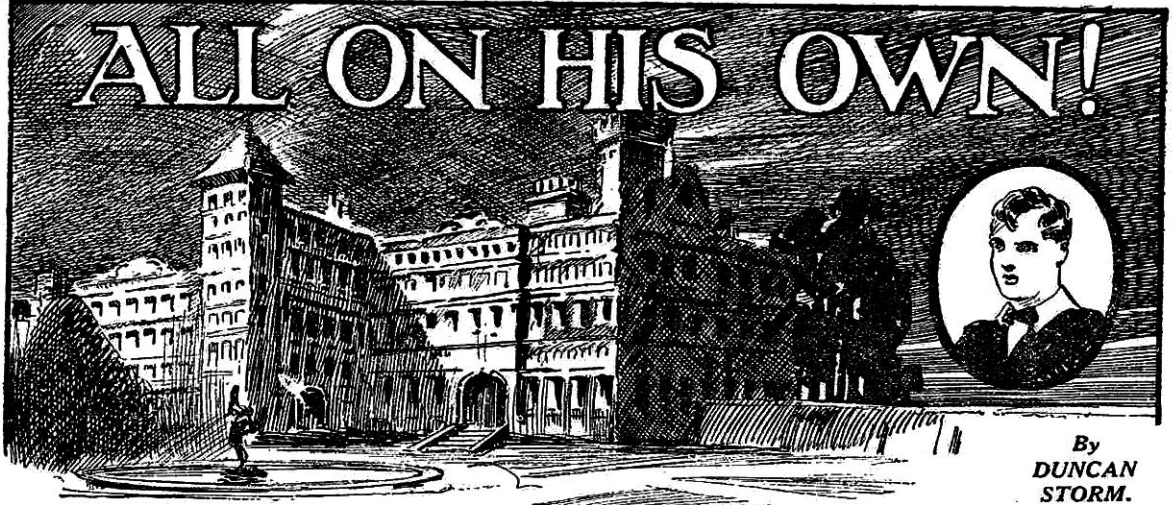
"I have endeavoured to be a kind uncle to Clarence, without having known him personally, while in Australia," continued Mr. York. "If the appearance of a poor and somewhat rough-and-ready relation from whom nothing further was to be expected had made him turn his back on me, I should have known what to think of him. I put him to a very severe test. I fear that my poverty and assumed manners brought a great deal of mockery upon him, which is very hard for a boy to bear. But pure gold can be tried in the fire with impunity."

"Oh!" gasped Tompkins again.

"He received me," said Mr. York, "like a brave and manly lad. He believed that nothing further was to be expected from me in the way of benefit, and his only thought was to make any possible return for past kindnesses. He stood by me, believing that I was down on my luck, and that I should be a burden upon him when he grew up. He turned out, in fact, the very lad that I hoped to find

(Continued on page 20.)

BE SURE AND READ IT!

By
**DUNCAN
STORM.****THE OPENING CHAPTERS.**

JIM READY, a sturdy lad of fourteen, having seen his last friend laid to rest, is left all alone in the great world. He is leaving the cemetery gates, when he butts up against John Lincoln, the principal governor of St Beowulf's, who hands him a free pass into the great school.

He finds a friend in Wobbygong, a plucky lad from Australia, and the master of a pet kangaroo, Nobby.

Nobby bolts one night, but the boys give chase and capture him. On their return to St. Beowulf's they find that members of a burglarious gang have broken into the school. The ruffians are captured, Wobby commanding their car and hiding it in the Haunted Barn.

From a pocket-book he had confiscated, Wobby learns of the scoundrels' intentions of smuggling their ill-gotten gains out of the country. He plans to capture the plunder. At the dead of night he and his pals steal out of the school. Boarding the commandeered car, they are soon hot on the trail. They meet further members of the gang, two of whom they capture, and then drive on to Whitchurch Castle, where they find some of the stolen plunder hidden in a well. They are shadowed and attacked; but, by the timely arrival of John Lincoln and a party of men, their assailants are captured. Mr. Lincoln is interested in the lads' exciting adventures, and becomes a member of their party. Promising to send for them later, he takes them back to the school.

The next day, Mr. Teach, one of the masters, organises a paper-chase. Wobby and his chums are detailed off as the bares. Wobby's interests are centred upon Lady Castlewood's jewels, so, to suit his purpose, he lays a stiff trail by entering the haunt of a fiery bull to scatter his paper. Plunging through the thick undergrowth, he gets on the trail again, which leads him to a pool.

Submerged beneath its waters, the boys find a packet containing the jewels they had been seeking. On reaching the bank with their find, they are confronted by four more rogues who had been watching their movements. They make a dash for it, and are only just able to effect an exchange of bags with Nobby before their pursuers catch them up. The rascals are clused off, however, by the arrival of the harriers. Returning to the school, the boys meet Mr. Lincoln, to whom they hand over the jewels.

Supper that evening is interrupted by the sudden appearance of Dr. Brackenbury, accompanied by Mr. Lincoln and a distinguished-looking elderly lady.

(Now read on.)

An Uncomfortable Situation.

BUCKLEY and the whole of the Sixth Form rose at her entrance, and Monsieur Paux de Blaquieres, who was supping in Hall, nearly doubled himself up in his magnificent bow.

For all recognised in the lady none other than
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the Countess of Castlewood, of Castlewood Manor, one of the patrons of the school.

The countess' visits to the school were few and far between. She came generally to give the prizes at the annual sports, and to hear the speeches on speech-day.

So there was quite a turmoil when she sailed into the Hall with her gold-rimmed, quizzing glasses to her eyes.

"Tell me, dear doctor," she exclaimed, in a high, clear voice. "Are the dear boys having their suppers?"

The doctor mumbled something to the effect that the young lions of St. Beowulf's were feeding.

"How awfully interesting! And what a nice lot of boys!" exclaimed the countess.

"Who's this swell Jane?" asked Wobby, as curious as the rest.

"Hush, you fool!" whispered Stickjaw, under his breath. "It's the Countess of Castlewood!"

"Crumbs!" muttered Wobby. "Then it's the old bird whose shiners' we rescued this afternoon?"

The countess, attended by Dr. Brackenbury and Mr. Lincoln, advanced between the tables of the crowded Hall, smiling amiably upon the awed boys.

"Now, doctor," she exclaimed, "where are

these three dear children who saved my jewels for me?"

Wobby's face was a blank.

Stickjaw turned pale, and Jim Ready felt as if he were glued to his seat with cobbler's-wax, as, piloted by the doctor, the great lady advanced towards them.

"Here are the three boys, Lady Castlewood," said Dr. Brackenbury, smiling. "John Wabby, Sweet, and James Ready."

The three stood up, reddening furiously under the gaze of hundreds of curious eyes. Even as evil deeds will find us out, so do our good deeds. And their good deed for that day had come home to roost speedily.

The countess surveyed them through her glasses.

She was a distinguished-looking lady, and she made them all feel as though she was looking at them through the wrong end of a telescope.

A dead hush fell upon the school.

Wobby would gladly have given a month's pocket-money to have been able to disappear through the floor as the demon king disappears through the stage in pantomime.

But the floor of the Hall was solid as stone flags could make it.

"What dear little boys!" exclaimed the countess. "And these brave little fellows saved my jewels all by themselves! I must kiss them all!"

The high, clear, ringing voice sounded plainly through the Hall, where a silence prevailed in which a pin might have been heard to drop.

The ears of the Lower School were simply flapping on their heads in their intense curiosity, and Wobby was speechless with anguish as this high-tone lady, who, surrounded by a cloud of violet scent, stooped over him, and kissed him heartily.

It was a dreadful situation for Wobby as she laid two white-gloved hands on his shoulders, and, having kissed him on both his blushing cheeks, kissed him again, as though she liked it.

To be kissed in front of the whole school was agony. Wobby was half dizzy with the scent of violets, and remembered that he'd bagged half a bottle of pickled onions earlier during supper.

He held his breath, and nearly fainted. "Poc' darling!" exclaimed the countess. "So this is Master Jack Nobby?"

"No, your ladyship," corrected Dr. Brackenbury. "This is Master Wabby. Nobby is the name of his kangaroo!"

"How quaint!" exclaimed the countess. "And he comes from Australia. Do you come from Australia, dear boy?"

She patted the horrified Wobby on his rocky cheek.

"Yes, madam," stammered Wobby. "I'm from Queensland!"

"How very interesting!" exclaimed the lady, in that strange, aristocratic voice that seemed to cut the air like a knife. "I had to come straight away to see you dear boys. I asked Mr. Lincoln to drive me here at once in his car, so that I could thank all three of you. It was so brave and sweet of you to save my jewels! And this is Jim Ready?"

**WHO IS
RIVINGTON SPEED?**

Mysterious — all powerful — a master of intrigue — Rivington Speed is the baffling character who figures "behind the scenes" in every dramatic situation in "Helen of London" — the greatest of all serial stories ever published by "ANSWERS." The opening instalment will appear on Monday next and no one should miss it.

Jim was as horrified as Wobby when the tall lady graciously stooped and kissed him. He had not been eating onions like Wobby. He was glad now that Wobby had scoffed the only onion out of the pickle-bottle.

"And what do they call you, dear boy?" she asked, taking Stickjaw's chin in her gloved hand, and lifting his face.

"Stickjaw, madam," sighed Stickjaw, almost inaudibly.

"How very quaint! Kiss me, Stickjaw, you dear, brave child!" exclaimed the countess, who was greatly taken by Stickjaw's innocent and cherubic countenance.

There was nothing for it. Stickjaw kissed her. He was nearly frightened out of his wits.

"Dear boys," said the countess, regarding them with affectionate interest, "I hardly know how to thank you for the great service you have done me! I have only these few jewels in the world, and you have saved them from those dreadful burglars! You must come and stay with me soon at Castlewood Manor. I want you to meet Waffington—my nephew, Viscount Waffington. You are just the sort of boys I want him to meet—a tender, delicate child, so sensitive, so much soul! You will do him good; he is so very delicate and shy and retiring."

Then she turned with sudden inspiration to the doctor.

"Doctor," she exclaimed, "I must really borrow these three dear boys to meet Waffington to-morrow. I will send the car over for them at ten, and they can have a nice long day with dear Waff. And, to celebrate their deed, I want you to grant me a favour."

Dr. Brackenbury bowed.

"Your ladyship is a governor of the school," he answered. "Any favour you may ask is already granted!"

"Dear man!" gurgled the countess, tapping him with her gold-rimmed glasses. "Then I ask for a whole day's holiday to-morrow for the whole school."

There was no getting out of it for the doctor.

He was as badly nailed as Wobby had been, for every word was audible through the silent Hall.

There was nothing the good doctor disliked more than snap holidays of this sort, which upset the whole of the routine and studies of the school. But the countess had got him fixed, and Buckley did not allow him a chance to wriggle out.

"Three cheers for the countess!" shouted Buckley, his voice ringing through the Hall.

The great groined roof shook to the thundering cheer that went up.

"Three cheers for the doctor!" called Buckley.

Three thundering cheers rolled through the Hall for the doctor. The whole day holiday was inevitable now.

"Three cheers for Wobby and Stickjaw and Jim Ready!" piped a small boy of the Lower School, who, with all the innate justice of the small boy, gave credit where credit was due.

The cheers that followed were simply deafening. In the midst of them, Wobby had a vague consciousness that he was being kissed again by this gracious lady.

"Till to-morrow, dear boy!" she said. "Dear Waff will be so charmed to meet you! The car will call for you at ten. And do bring that dear kangaroo!"

She kissed Jim and Stickjaw again, and, with a wave of her gloved hand to the cheering school, sailed out of the Hall.

"Here, chaps," cried Wobby to his chums, "let's get out of this quick!"

He made for the door.

The boys were laughing and cheering all round him.

"Good old Wob!" cried one.

"Kiss me, Stickjaw you dear, brave child!" called another.

"Dear boys, you must meet Waffington!" called a third.

Wobby rushed out of the Hall, and cut across the quad as fast as his legs would carry him. His chums followed him closely.

There was a cheering rush of boys after them, but they escaped, and tore up the steps of the Pirate's Den to their study, which was known as the Glory Hole.

It was dark as pitch as Wobby hurtled himself into it, dragged his companions in, and sported the oak or outer door.

Then he struck a match and lit the candle.

There came a hammering on the outer oak as Wobby cautiously closed the inner door.

"Come out, Wob, and tell us all about it, you sly dog!" exclaimed a voice.

"Let me kiss you, sweet boy!" cried another voice.

Wobby threw himself into the armchair, staring gloomily before him. He waited till the revellers outside got sick of calling their congratulations and their mockeries through the oak and went away.

"Nugs!" he said gloomily. "This is the worst thing that's happened to us up till now. That swell Jane has queered the whole pitch. To-morrow will be Friday. We've got to waste all the beautiful day playing nursemaid to that sickly nephew of hers—Viscount Waffington!"

"What will he be like?" asked Stickjaw gloomily.

"Something awful!" groaned Wobby. "A thing in golden curls and a little Lord Faunterloy suit—the King Pin of the Kindergarten! Take me away and bury me somewhere! Me, kissed like a baby before the whole school! So brave and sweet of us to save her jewels! Crumbs! If I'd only known, I'd have left 'em at the bottom of the pool for those tugs to fish up! And just when Mr. Lincoln's taken a part in the game for Saturday night we are collared by this swell Jane for playmates for her little sensitive nephew! Oh, we've found it! We've hit the mallee scrub with both feet, and our name is Mud! Think of that old bird mugging us before the whole school, and me whiffin' of pickled onions something cruel! The pebs will be poking mullock at us for months. We'll never get over it!"

His friends tried to comfort him, but Wobby was feeling so low about it, that, as soon as he was sure the coast was clear, he crept off to his bed in Dormitory No. 4, and was pretending to be asleep when the rest of the fellows came up to bed.

Rough on Lung!

LUNG was the first to come in.

"Hallo, Wobbee!" he called "Ow are you, you dear leetle boy!"

"You shut up, you Chinese heathen!" mumbled Wobby, from under the bedclothes.

Lung grinned.

"To-morrow you puttee on your best clothes and you go play with Vi'count Waffington," he suggested. "Play with Noah's Ark! Play with doll!"

This was more than Wobby could bear. He sprang from his bed, and leaped upon

Lung, rolling him on the polished floor of the dormitory. Then he grabbed Lung by his pigtail, and started pulling him round the floor.

"Come here, you O-Cedar mop!" he yelled. "I'll teach you to poke mullock at me! Do y'think I'm going to let a yellow-faced Canton peb like you play the kid stakes on me? No, sir!"

"Oh, Wobbee!" cried Lung. "Fain hit! Stop! You pull off my pigtail!"

Wobby had dragged his victim to the fire-buckets in the passage outside Dormitory No. 4. There were big buckets for water and a small, long bucket for sand.

There was no sand in the small bucket. It was impossible to keep sand in that particular bucket, because the boys always used it for sprinkling between the sheets of anyone obnoxious to them.

Wobby snatched up the small bucket, and banged it down on his pal's head.

"There you are, you tug!" he said.

Now this particular bucket which had long served as a football had been severely dented.

Wobby, with a smash of his fist, sent it well down over Lung's shoulders. Then he stood back and surveyed his victim with a grin.

"Pon my word, Lung," he said, with a smile, "if you don't look the very double and spit of Ned Kelly the bushranger in that helmet! Come and let me show you to the boys!"

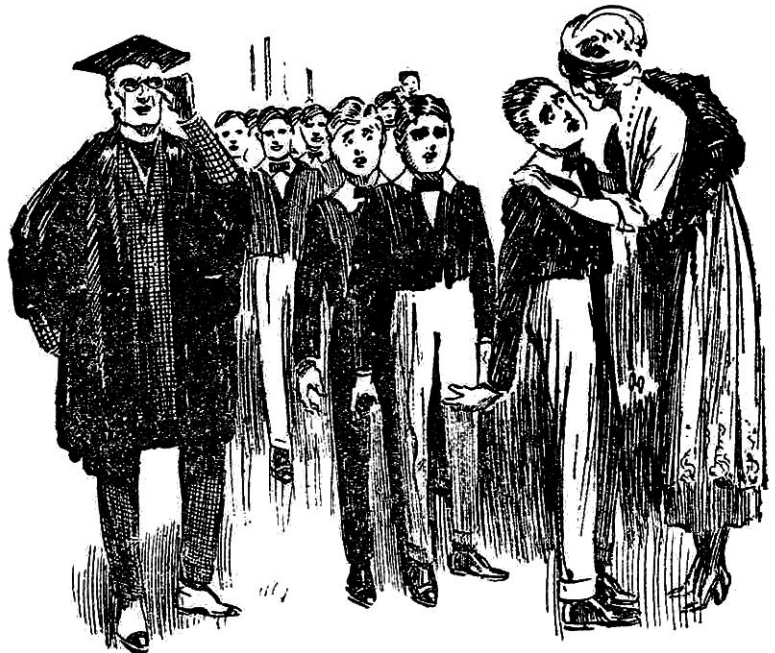
"Please don't play at goats, Wobbee!" pleaded the unhappy Lung, as Wobby dragged him back into the dormitory. "I cannot see, because of this pail, and it presses on my skull!"

"That's all right!" pleaded Wobby. "There's nothing inside your block for it to press on! You are only a bone head!"

Great was the laughter in the dormitory when Wobby paraded his Chinese friend round the beds, informing his chums that he had captured Ned Kelly, the famous bushranger.

The laughter stopped, though, when Lung, trying to remove the bucket, discovered that it was firmly fixed on his head. It was a queerly-shaped bucket, and Wobby had somehow managed, by a lucky chance, to bang it down on Lung's shoulders, and it had taken a twist which had locked it on Lung's head.

In fact, Lung's queer-shaped nose fitted the dented, ill-used bucket just as a Yale key fits a lock.



A dead hush fell upon the school as the Countess of Castlewood laid two white-gloved hands on Wobby's shoulder, and then kissed him on both his blushing cheeks. "You dear, dear boy!" she exclaimed.



Wobby sprang from his bed and leaped upon Lung, rolling him upon the polished floor of the dormitory. Grabbing his pigtail, he pulled him along the floor. "Come here, you O-Cedar mop," he cried.

"What's the matter?" asked Wobby, as Jim Ready tried to pull the bucket off their clum's head.

"I don't know," replied Jim, in rather troubled tones. "His head seems fixed in the rotten thing, somehow!"

"But if it went on so easy, it must come off!" replied Wobby. "Here you are, Lung-o! Hang on to the bedstead, and we'll all pull!"

But a stout pull on the bucket only pulled a yell out of the unhappy Lung.

"Look o ut, Wob!" cried Stickjaw.

"You'll pull his head off like a shrimp's!"

"Well, what are we going to do about it?" asked Wobby, beginning to look worried.

"He can't go to bed with his head in the bucket like that! A Chink will stand 'most anything, but he might smother in the night! Then I expect I should be pulled up for manslaughter—or Chink slaughter!"

He took another pull on the bucket, but only pulled another howl out of Lung.

"Spare me days, but his block is canned all right!" he said. "Any of you nugs got a sardine-opener?"

"A sardine-opener is no good on that bucket!" said Stickjaw. "I tell you what we might do, Wob," he added. "I've got a drill and a brace. If I bore a little hole in the top we can pour brilliantine and hair-oil through it. That will grease his head well, and perhaps the bucket will pull off!"

"That's a brainy idea!" replied Wobby, in tones of relief. "It's wonderful what a little oil will do! Get on with the drilling, Stickjaw, and mind you don't bore through his skull!"

They seated Lung in a chair, and Stickjaw got to work with his drill.

It was a tough job, but presently he had bored a small hole through the bottom of the bucket.

They poured in all the brilliantine and hair-oil available in Dormitory No. 4. But there was not a great deal of this, as Stickjaw had been using the stuff to oil his bicycle. He said there was nothing like a thin, scented hair-oil for the chain.

"Go and raid Dormitory No. 6," said Wobby. "Those Fifth Form toffs use quarts of the stuff. Posh stuff, too!"

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Crumbs! Don't he smell a treat!" he added, sniffing at the bucket with great relish. "He's like a bed of violets! You'd never think that a Chink could tidley-wink so nice!"

The raiders went off. They returned swift, with a large bottle of hair-oil, pinched from Beau Wall, the dandy of the Fifth. It was lilac-scented, and the whole lot was poured into the bucket.

It ran through on to Lung's shoulders; but when they tried to give a twist to the bucket, they only extracted a dismal howl from the patient.

Wobby looked round at his chums dolefully.

"No good wasting any more of this sweet-scented jossop on his out, boys!" he said. "We'll have to take him to the hospital and send for the doctor to uncork him. Where's his cap?"

Lung's cap was placed solemnly on top of the bucket.

"I did it," said Wobby. "No need for you chaps to be implicated. I'll take him along and stand the racket!"

But Jim Ready shook his head.

"We'll come with you, Wob," he volunteered—"me and Stickjaw."

They led Lung away through the passage and over the Bridge of Sighs, which was the nearest cut to the hospital.

"We are in for it!" mumbled Wobby dimly. "Everything's going against us! We shall never be allowed to go off to Mr. Lincoln's on Saturday if we get this mark against us. We'll have to rouse out the matron, and there will be no end of a fuss."

But a ray of hope shot across Wobby's leather face as they neared the door of the Pirate's Den.

Blackbeard Teach was there. A soft burring sound showed that he was grinding down microscopic sections of quartz.

"Crumbs!" muttered Wobby. "There's just a chance! Blackbeard's got all the tools in there, and electric current, too. If he takes it good-humoured and matey, he can cut the bucket off this Chinee's head as easy as you cut through the crust of a pie. If we can only make him laugh, it is done. Blackbeard is all right when he laughs. When he don't laugh, you'd better beat it while the going is good. If he takes it all right, we are all right. If he don't, we've done our dash. We are mafesh!"

Wobby knocked on the door. "Come in!" called the voice of Blackbeard.

Wobby pushed the door open slightly and slid into the room. He did not want to break Lung on Blackbeard's sight all at once.

"Hallo, Wobby!" said Blackbeard Teach, looking up from the electrically-driven wheel on which he was working. "What do you want? Why are you not in bed?"

"If you please, sir," said Wobby, "there's been a slight accident in Dormitory No. 4." Mr. Teach started up from his cutting-wheel.

"A slight accident!" he exclaimed.

"What have you young fends been up to now?"

"Nothing much, sir," said Wobby reassuringly. "It's only a little accident. We've got it out, side here. The Chinese boy Lung has got his head in a bucket, and he can't get it out, that's all!"

He swung the door open, and Lung entered the room, led by Jim and Stickjaw, the bucket firmly fixed over his head and his school cap perched on top of the bucket.

Blackbeard started at the strange sight. Then, with a shout of laughter at this droll apparition, he tumbled back into his armchair.

Wobby breathed a great sigh of relief. Blackbeard had taken it all right. Their expedition against the robbers was safe!

Blackbeard to the Rescue!

BLACKBEARD TEACH laughed till the tears ran down his face at the absurd sight of Lung with the bucket jammed down on his head and his school cap perched on top of the bucket. Wobby, Jim, and Stickjaw smiled respectfully. All was going well. When Blackbeard laughed he was as easy to handle as a kitten.

"How did this happen?" asked Blackbeard, as he dried his eyes.

"Well, sir, Lung somehow managed to get his head in the bucket," began Wobby, in non-committal tones. "And we couldn't get it out, though we've hair-oiled him till he's as greasy as an eel."

Blackbeard examined the bucket carefully.

"I shall have to cut the bucket off, or the boy will kick the bucket," he said. "By the way, Master Wobby, does he not remind you of that national hero of your country, Ned Kelly, the bushranger, with the cylindrical helmet that he made for himself out of ploughshares?"

"Just what I said, sir!" said Wobby, warming up to enthusiasm at the mention of the name of the famous bushranger. "My dad knew Ned Kelly, sir. He once shook hands with him on the top of a stage coach."

"Did he, indeed, Wobby?" replied Mr. Teach somewhat dryly. "I suppose you have read his life?"

"Rather, sir!" replied Wobby with enthusiasm. "I had all the Ned Kelly books, and his dying speech and confession. I lent my library to a chap, though, and he never sent 'em back."

"Perhaps that was just as well," answered Blackbeard, fitting a cutting-wheel to his electrically-driven grinding machine. "Now, Masters Ready and Wobby, if you will kindly hold your Chinese friend's head down gently on this wheel, we will manage to free him from his singular headgear."

The wheel buzzed and cut through the bucket, and soon Lung's head was freed.

"There, boys!" said Mr. Teach rather severely. "Your pocket-money will be stopped now to pay for a new bucket. As the charge will be spread over the whole dormitory, the fine will be about threepence each. I shall assume that you are all guilty and you can settle the degree of guilt amongst yourselves."

"Thank you, sir," replied Wobby gratefully.

"Good-night, sir!" replied Mr. Teach. "And as you have had plenty of fun to-night, don't let me catch any of you awake when I come round in half an hour's time."

The boys slipped off, glad that Blackbeard put them no awkward questions.

"It was decent of old Black to tell us when he's coming round," said Wobby. "But did you notice how the cunning old bird stuck us for a new bucket, when everyone's been playing football with the old one for years. That is the way schoolboys are robbed. Cunning is Black's leading suit."

They led the sweetly perfumed Lung back to the dormitory, where Wobby plumped him into his bed.

"Now you stop there quiet, old Rimmels' scents!" he said. "This dormitory to-night has got to be a dormitory of white-headed boys!"

Profound peace reigned in Dormitory No. 4 when Blackbeard went his rounds that night. Wobby had too many irons in the fire to risk even a reprimand which might upset his plans for the biggest lark he had ever planned.

(An exciting instalment next week.)

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A "BOOT-IFUL" GIFT!

An aeroplane was flying over the countryside, and the pilot was indulging in a little stunting. Absent-mindedly he looped the loop, quite forgetting he had on board a pair of boots in a parcel. Naturally they dropped out, and landed at the feet of an old woman in a cottage garden. The package burst open, and out rolled the boots, much to her astonishment. Picking them up, she hobbled indoors and called out to her husband: "Ere you are, Garge! Them boots you ordered 'ave come. What a wunnerful thing this 'ere wireless is! I thought I heard the buzz of 'em coming through the air."—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to K. T. Sargent, 46, Woodlands Park Road, Harringay, N. 15.

ACCORDING TO ORDERS.

Pat had joined a cavalry regiment, and on his first day was given one of the worst horses to ride, and was told that he must not dismount until he got orders from headquarters. Some time later the colonel passed and saw Pat lying on the ground and the horse out of sight. "Why have you dismounted?" asked the colonel. "Did you get orders from headquarters?" Pat found his breath at last, and replied: "No, sor; from hindquarters!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Beech, 53, Wellington Lane, Beverley Road, Hull.

STORY OF A SIXPENCE.

The cheap-jack was exerting all his delicate subtleties in the science of drawing a crowd, and he wound up by offering a bright new shilling for sale by auction. "Now, gentlemen," he cried, "here is the opportunity of a lifetime! What will you bid for this shilling? This is only one of the bargains I've got for you to-day." Bids came very slowly from the doubting listeners, till at last the childish treble of a small boy's voice was heard. "Sixpence for it!" he cried. "Very well," said the cheap-jack, "it's yours, my little lad. Where's your sixpence?" "Take it out of the shilling and hand me over the change!" replied the smart lad.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Kenneth Whalley, 42, Hawes Side Lane, Blackpool.

SOFT INDEED.

A small boy came home one day in a rather dishevelled state. "Tommy," exclaimed his mother, "you've been fighting again!" "Well," said Tommy in self-defence, "the boy next door was cheeky." "That was no reason for fighting. You should remember that a soft answer turneth away wrath. You should have given him a soft answer." "I did! That's what started the fight. I threw a ripe tomato at him!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss Irene Storr, Uxbridge, 16, Horne Street, East Brunswick, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

A TALL STORY.

Three men were arguing as to which parish had the tallest policeman. "Well," said the first, "our policeman can look over a haystack and tell you who is on the other side." "Well," said the second, "ours can look over a row of houses and see into the next street." "That's nothing," said the third. "Our policeman is so tall that we have to lower him down the colliery shaft to cut his hair!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to T. F. Butler, 57, Wednesbury Road, Walsall, Staffs.

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TOMPKINS ON TRIAL.

(Continued from page 15.)

him—a nephew of whom any uncle might be proud. I was sorry to cause him pain, which I fear has been caused, but I cannot be sorry for putting him to a test which has turned out so successfully. Now I can only ask him to forgive me."

"Oh, uncle!" stammered poor Tompkins. That was all Tompkins could say, but his face was bright and beaming. D'Arcy rose in his most stately manner.

"Gentlemen, I request you to charge your glasses—"

"Hear, hear!" "Pour out the Rhine wine, let it flow!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Forth with the foaming cham!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Gentlemen, I beg to propose a toast: To Mr. York, a gentleman whom we forgive freely for havin' pulled our legs, and his nephew, Clarence York Tompkins, who is one of the best, and a fellow of whom his school is proud!"

"Hear, hear!" "Bravo!" The toast was drunk with ginger-beer and enthusiasm. Then Tompkins was called upon to say a "few words." Poor Tompkins stammered. "I—I—I'm jolly glad—" "Hear, hear!" "I shā'n't have to leave St. Jim's now—" "Bravo!" "I shā'n't have to swot and mug over a rotten scholarship I couldn't have wangled it anyhow—" "Hurrah!" "And—and I feel awfully jolly, and—and it's all due to D'Arcy for backing me up like a real good chap." "Bai Jove!" "Hip, hip, hurrah!" And Tompkins sat down, very red in the face, and feeling the happiest fellow in the three kingdoms.

THE END.

(There will be another rollicking fine complete school story of Tom Merry and Co. next week, entitled, "The Cardeve Cup!" by Martin Clifford. Order it early.)



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