

£10 A WEEK MUST BE WON!

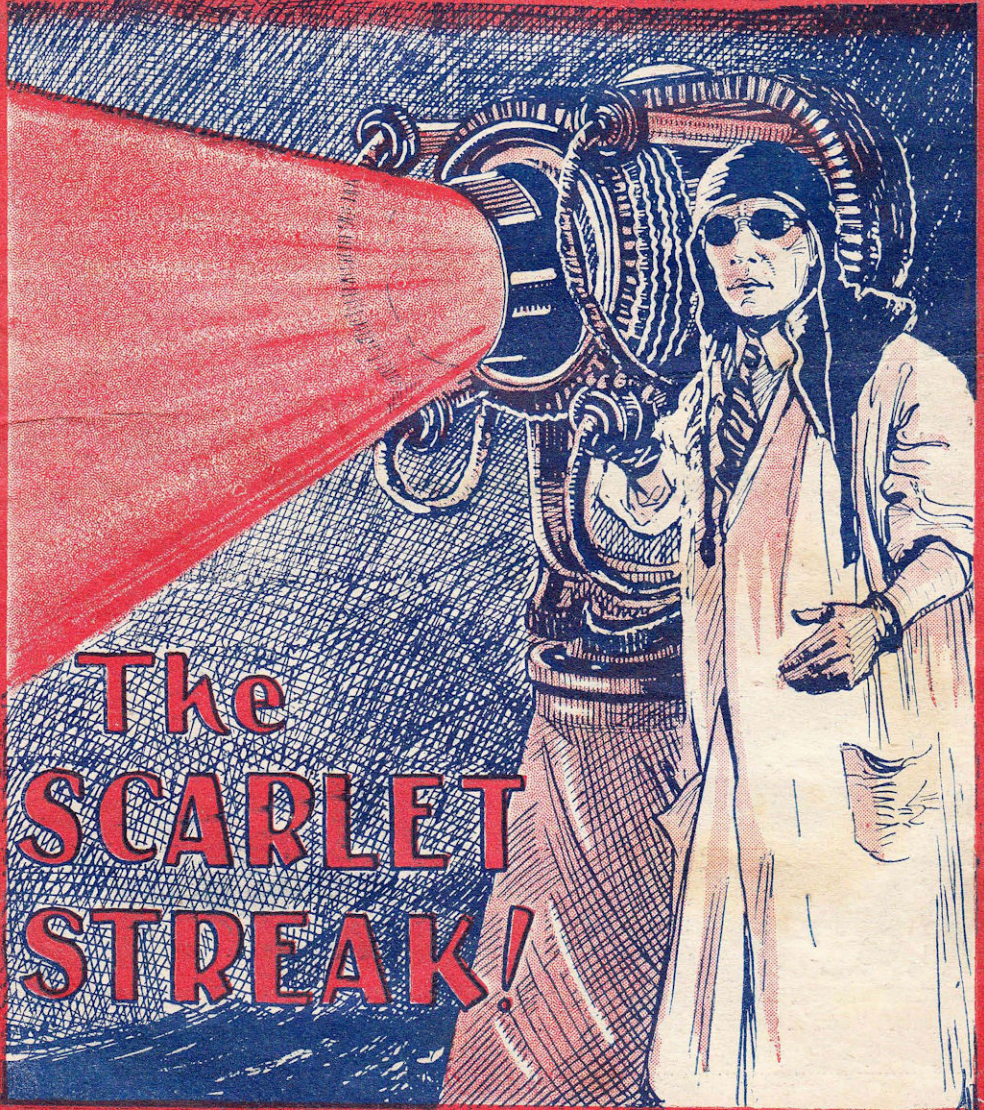
ENTER THE
SIMPLE COMPETITION
INSIDE!

The GEM 2^d

LIBRARY

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

No. 938.
Vol. XXIX,
April 10th,
1926.



THRILLING NEW SERIAL STARTS TO-DAY!

OUR "SCARLET STREAK" COMPETITION

First Prize £5.

AND FIVE PRIZES OF £1 EACH.

YOU MUST NOT MISS THIS, BOYS!

HERE we are, you fellows, with a really topping new one-week competition. You will enjoy it, because it is a novel idea, with some jolly good prizes which simply *must* be won.

You have all heard about our great new serial, "The Scarlet Streak." Well, we have written a paragraph about it, which the artist has put into picture-puzzle form.

This, by the way, is the first of a series of one-week contests, and with each new puzzle there will be more splendid prizes.

In attempting to solve the puzzle it will help if you read the story *and* see the film; also, the sense of the sentences will assist you. But you should remember each picture or sign may represent part of a word, one, two, or three words, but not more than three words.

Try your hand at solving the paragraph—you can see that the opening words are: "The 'Scarlet Streak' is a wonderful . . ." and then write your solution IN INK on a sheet of paper. Cut out the puzzle and the coupon together; attach your solution to the

tablet, and, having signed and addressed the coupon IN INK, post your effort to:

GEM, "Scarlet Streak," No. 1,
Gough House, Gough Square,
London, E.C. 4 (Comp.).

so as to reach there not later than FRIDAY, APRIL 16th. Any efforts arriving after that date will be disqualified.

RULES WHICH MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.

The First Prize of £5 will be awarded for the correct, or most nearly correct, solution. The other prizes will follow in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to divide any of the prizes should it be necessary in the case of ties.

You may send as many efforts as you like, but each must be complete in itself, and must consist of a solution, a puzzle, and a signed coupon. Solutions containing alternatives will be disqualified. The decision of the Editor will be absolutely final.

No one connected with the staff or proprietors of this journal may compete.

Our Grand Story, "The Scarlet Streak," has been filmed by the Universal Co. Read the story *and* see the film.

"THE SCARLET STREAK" NO. 1.

I enter "Scarlet Streak" Contest No. 1. and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....

1

GEM. Closing Date, Friday, April 16th.

BEGIN THIS AMAZING SERIAL TO-DAY!

A WEAPON OF DESTRUCTION! The movement of a lever, a livid ray of leaping light, a sullen, muttering roar, and a whole town is wiped out! Such is the terrible power of—



The Opening Chapters of a Sensational Story of Romance and Adventure based upon the Death Ray—the greatest scientific discovery of modern times.

CHAPTER I.

The Message in Cipher!

HIGH above the busy street loomed the massive tower of the "Daily Times" building. The giant bulk of grey-stone, frowning down on lesser erections, was symbolic of the power and might of the great newspaper which it housed.

In the basement printing-presses thundered and boomed, shaking the very foundations of the stately edifice with their clatter and vibration. Through the uproar a boy made his way, glancing about him quickly.

"Seen Bob Evans?" He put the query to a hurried machinist, shouting to make his voice carry above the thunderous uproar about him.

"Upstairs—doin' his copy," came the answer, and the boy shot towards the steps at one side of the basement.

He was looking for the "Daily Times" star reporter. The chief editor—Mr. Harley—wanted him, and he wanted him in a hurry. There was something big in the wind, and Bob was the youthful reporter who always handled the big jobs for the "Daily Times." Throughout the newspaper world he was known as "the man who always gets his story."

The boy found him in the main office, seated at a typewriter, banging swiftly at the keys. Bob was big and broad-shouldered, with keen-looking grey eyes and a jaw that, in its squareness, showed something of why he had made good with the "Daily Times."

His was a fighting face; his straight-looking eyes were fearless, and the speed with which he hammered at the typewriter gave something of a clue to the quick-hitting strength of arms and shoulder muscles.

Just as the boy who sought him came up behind, Bob tipped his hat off his forehead, plucked the paper out of the machine, and sat back with a contented grin on his face.

"That's a good job jobbed!" he muttered to himself. "Now for a little peace!" On the typewritten sheet were the last words of a newspaper story upon which he had been working for three days; one of the nights between he had spent entirely without sleep, and—now that the job was done—he was looking forward to something of a rest.

"The chief wants to see you in his office, right away!"

Bob whirled round as the boy came up to him, and his smile died. He knew what that summons meant.

"Lightnin', you're like bad news! Just when I'm getting ready to enjoy a well-earned rest, you butt in!" He leaned forward, picked up his notebook, and slipped it into his jacket-pocket. "Don't know what he wants, I suppose?"

The boy shook his head.

"No; 'cept that it's in a hurry!" he answered. "He don't half keep you on the hop!" And he grinned as Bob rose, rammied his hat on his head, and made for the chief's office. He tapped on the door and entered.

Mr. Harley was seated at his desk, scribbling furiously. He glanced up as Bob stepped towards him.

"Shan't keep you a minute, Evans. I'm just checking this cipher. Here you are—read it!" He passed up a slip of paper. On it Bob read:

"TELEGRAM MANLICK DUNCAN PARAPHER-NALIA TO-MORROW.—EVANS EOPHIPPIUS."

"What the deuce!" gasped Bob, as he read it.

"Here you are! Here's the translation!" And the chief flung down his pencil as he passed to Bob a slip of paper upon which he had been working:

"SPIES SEARCHING FOR OBJECT PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED. TOO DELICATE FOR STATE INTERFER-ENCE. ASSIGN EVANS GET STORY AT ANY COST."

Bob read the message twice, then he looked at the chief.

"What's it about?" he asked, as he seated himself on the arm of a chair near the desk.

"I'll tell you," said Mr. Harley. "Listen! This is going to be one of the biggest things that you have ever handled. That message is a tip from the Government—and a tip is about all that it is! I haven't got any definite particulars except this. Somebody has invented a machine with a destructive ray that will blast anything out of existence! Turn it on a mountain, and the mountain'll go up in smoke! Let it rest on a battleship, and the next second the battleship isn't there!"

The chief leaned forward. He was desperately in earnest; his very seriousness made Bob give him all his attention. The chief went on:

"We want you to find out who it is that's invented this machine, and you've got to get to him in front of a bunch of international crooks who're after the machine and the plans!"

Bob's eyes widened. He whistled softly. He glanced at the message again, while the chief went on:

"That's all I know. But of this the Government is certain—the machine is in existence, and it will do what I've just told you—i'll blast holes in mountains. Think what might happen if a bunch of crooks get hold of the thing. And think what it'll mean to the 'Daily Times,' and to yourself, if you can land the story."

Once more Bob glanced at the paper in his hand. His eyes narrowed as he glanced reflectively across the room. This wasn't the first rumour he had heard about the mysterious machine, but it was the first time he had ever thought about what might happen if it ever got into wrong hands.

If crooks had it, they could menace the whole world. With the throwing of a switch they could wipe a whole town out of being—they could decimate armies—annihilate navies—become kings of the world!

And he was being asked to take on the job of thwarting them! Not only was the inventor of the machine unknown, but the crooks who were after it were unknown, too! Bob

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was being asked to locate the invention and the gang. "Some job!" he thought to himself.

"Well, chief," he said; "I'll do my best!"
"I knew you would, Bob. Bring it off, and—well, you'll be made, if ever a young fellow was!" He leaned forward again, and his voice came slowly and impressively: "Drop everything—work day and night—find this inventor—run down these crooks—and we'll scoop the world with the news, and do the country a good turn into the bargain!"

Bob slipped off the arm of the chair.

"It's a good job for Sherlock Holmes!" he said, with a grin. "But I'll get that story, chief!"

"I know you will. If you don't, it'll be the first time you've ever failed!" answered Mr. Harley. He stood up and extended his hand. Bob gripped it. "Well, good luck, Bob!"

"Thanks, chief! I'll start on the job right away!"
Bob took his hat, as Mr. Harley handed it to him. A minute later, and the young reporter was standing in the street, looking at the moving traffic.

Slowly a smile spread on his lips, as he thought of the stupendous task which lay before him. Then the smile died as he squared his shoulders and strode off on the amazing quest.

CHAPTER 2.

The Test!

A BIG house stood in lonely grounds on the outskirts of the town. Broad steps led up to the entrance, and at one side of the house was a room from which the dark curtains were seldom drawn. That room was a laboratory, and on a bench at one side worked the inventor whom Bob Evans sought.

Richard Crawford was a grey-haired, slightly-built man; his face was lined and seamed—imprints left by ceaseless scientific labour. The bench before him was clustered with instruments—the rounded dial of a pyrometer led from a small furnace; there were retorts and electrical apparatus, coils and fittings upon which he had been working.

All round the room was evidence of his pursuits, and the overall that he wore was stained and marked with acids and burns that it had sustained.

He worked with fierce, concentrated energy, for the next few minutes would see the last touch put to the machine on which he had been labouring for so many years. Since its first, half-satisfactory tests, he had been haunted by a gang of crooks. Because of them, he had dropped his real name of John Carson, and now called himself Crawford.

Behind the curtain that showed at one side of the room, was the shrouded figure of his invention—he called it the Scarlet Streak.

Near him, his daughter Mary was polishing a broad, heavy lens. She was his only confidante in his secret work, and the deft manner in which she handled the lens showed that she was but little less skilled than her father. She was working quickly, eagerly; her blue eyes were shining, and her shapely lips were curved to half a smile.

She knew that, very soon now, her father would test the Scarlet Streak once more. If this final test proved successful, she hoped to talk him into allowing himself a little relaxation from his labours.

It was not for himself that her father worked. He hoped that the terrible power of the destructive ray would enforce peace on a war-ridden world.

Mr. Crawford glanced over to his daughter.

"Is that lens ready, Mary?" he asked quietly.

"Yes."

She lifted it and examined it as her father stepped to her side. He took the heavy disc from her and scanned it closely, then laid it gently down.

"I think it will do."

"And now—the test?" she asked.

Mr. Crawford nodded.

"If you'll put a plant in the open there, by the window, we will see what happens to it," he answered. "You know, Mary, I'm almost dreading the next few minutes! Suppose the Scarlet Streak is a failure! For years I have looked forward to this hour—and now I am almost afraid to put the machine to the test!"

Mary slipped an arm about his shoulders.

"It won't be a failure!" she exclaimed. "Come on, let's get it over! I'll help you get the machine out."

And together they crossed to the curtains which shrouded the alcove in the wall.

Mary pulled the curtains back, and her father entered the recess. Mary got a glimpse of the great bulk of the Scarlet Streak, with a cloth enfolding its upper part. That cloth lent the instrument a terrifying appearance, accentuating its massive, ugly lines. In appearance it was something like a giant searchlight. Below the fabric, she could see

switches and levers, set above the armoured base, heavy and solid.

Her father bent behind the machine, pushing it forward; she gripped the metal handles at one side and helped to pull; between them, they dragged it to the centre of the laboratory.

Now that the fatal moment had come, the inventor became quick-moving and alert. He plucked the cover off the instrument, and, with a deft touch, set a glittering pointer to a mark on a small dial at one side.

The bulbous head of the Scarlet Streak was pivoted atop the tapering base; at the front was a heavy lens, at the back were controls and more switches. There was a suggestion of immense power in the strange instrument—a bull-like, fierce strength in its mysterious lines.

"Get the connection, Mary—that armoured cable!" the inventor's words came crisp and staccato, and Mary brought him the double-ended length of cable. As her father bent to connect up the cable he went on: "Set that plant in the window—open the window wide!"

Mary obeyed, pulling back the dark curtains that covered the window. She stepped out to the lead flat beyond, lifting a big-potted shrub that stood there. She set it on the window-sill, then stepped back into the room.

"I think that will be all right, won't it?—the ground is quite clear beyond."

The inventor nodded.

"I sha'n't use the ray at its full power—it would be too risky. Now get the helmets, there may be danger!"

From where they hung on the wall at one side of the laboratory, Mary brought two pairs of blue-lensed goggles and two helmets of thick rubber. She handed her father one of the masks and a pair of goggles.

"Shall I throw the main switch?" she asked.

Her voice held a timbre of excitement as she spoke, and she moved to the wall as her father nodded. She reached up, and her white fingers wrapped about the ebonite handle of a big switch. For the fraction of a second she hesitated, then she pressed the switch down.

Instantly, from the lens of the Scarlet Streak there came a dazzling beam of light. From the top of the machine there curled a thin wisp of azure smoke, and from its interior there sounded a low, vibrant note.

Mr. Crawford was smiling as he swung the machine round on its axis.

"So far, so good!" he said. "The sighting beam is stronger than we have ever had it! Now—the masks!"

His hands were trembling a little as he slipped the blue-lensed goggles over his eyes, and then pulled on the rubber helmet. Mary adjusted her own, while her father directed the beam of light on to the plant in the window. A moment later and he moved towards the plant, then paced out the distance from it to the Scarlet Streak.

"We don't want to make a mistake," he said. "I want to be sure that the distance is right, as we are going to use a weak ray—but, weak though it is, it will be strong enough to destroy this house if anything goes wrong!"

He laughed a little grimly, then knelt behind the machine. Mary bent at his side, her hands gripping his shoulders. The inventor's fingers sought and found the row of switches, one clicked down with a little splutter of blue sparks.

He pressed the second over, and as the thick copper conductors met, blue streaks struck out, licking viciously at his hand. He did not heed them as he gripped the black handle to the third switch.

Both watched the plant. He hesitated a moment, and Mary patted his shoulder.

"Now for the destructive ray!" he whispered, and slammed the switch home.

From the lens of the Scarlet Streak, there tongued a livid ray that seared their eyes. There was a sullen, muttering roar, and the window was cloaked by a gout of grey smoke that surged upwards. The atmosphere was charged with the acrid reek of electrified air; the burning streak of red from the machine seemed to die ere it was born.

The smoke swept away—and the plant on the window-sill had gone!

All that was left was a strip of blackened woodwork at the base of the window-frame; beyond where the plant had stood was a hole in the sill, fringed by crumbling masonry!

The inventor and his daughter plucked off their helmets as they jerked to their feet.

"It works—it's a success!" he cried.

They rushed to the window and examined the mark that the ray had left. The plant itself had vanished completely—utterly destroyed. It was as they turned back into the laboratory that Mr. Crawford's gaze fell on a blue-print lying on the table behind the Scarlet Streak. He stepped quickly towards it and picked it up.

"This holds the secret!" he exclaimed quickly. "Now we know that the thing is a success, this print becomes vital.

It carries the whole secret. I must hide it. We must not forget that the Monk will stop at nothing to possess it!"

"The Monk!" All the excitement died from Mary's face as she spoke that dread name. The man who called himself the Monk was the leader of the gang from whom her father was hiding; the Monk knew enough of the Scarlet Streak to realise that possession of it would make him master of the world, and the inventor knew that nothing would stand in the arch-crook's path once he located the hiding-place of the secret of the Scarlet Streak.

"But, father—after all these years—there cannot be any danger from him!"

"You don't know the Monk as I do," answered the inventor. "When we feel most secure, then is when the Monk will strike! At any moment he may—"

Abruptly his voice died. From somewhere in the house below them sounded the shrill peal of an electric bell.

"Who can that be?" gasped Mary, for callers were few at that lonely house. "I'll go down and—"

Her father caught her arm.

"It's probably only a tradesman—or it may be the Count. But listen—remember that anyone may be an enemy, in the Monk's pay. We must guard our secret with our very lives, if necessary!"

A moment longer they stood looking at one another, then the bell pealed again, and Mary hurried from the room. As she went, her father folded the blue-print swiftly, then reached out for a small metal box. He slipped the sheet that carried the secret of the Scarlet Streak into it, then turned a key in the lock. A moment later and he doffed his overalls, slipped on his coat, then, with the box under his arm, he left the laboratory.

Mary, descending the stairs, met the butler at the foot. He handed her a card, and scanning it, she read the simple inscription:

"COUNT K."

She smiled as she saw it, then hurried forward into the room beyond. Count K. was a friend of the Crawfords. He was a soldier of fortune, and he chose to disguise his real name; why, the Crawfords did not know. He was a tall, well-dressed man who moved and spoke with the ease of one accustomed to high circles.

Mary, almost the whole of her life spent at her father's side, could not read through the insincerity of his manner; she did not notice that his lips were thin, that his smile was sardonic, or that his dark, glittering eyes held more than a hint of evil.

He came to meet her as she stepped towards him, one hand outstretched in greeting. He took it and lifted it to his lips with an elaborate gesture.

"Miss Mary, I have just received the invitation to your masked ball," he said. "I thought that, as I might not recognise you when you are wearing a mask, you might tell me what your costume will be."

"That's something you'll have to find out for yourself!" Mary answered. "It's the first ball that my father has ever given, and I'm not going to spoil things. But, in any case, I shall have to receive the guests, so you will easily recognise me."

The Count said nothing as he slipped to the couch on which she had seated herself. He looked at her finely chiselled features, and he reflected that it was due to his persuasion that, for one night, at any rate, Mr. Crawford was throwing his big, lonely house open to his neighbours.

It was time, the Count had told him, that Mary enjoyed something of the pleasures of other girls, and if the Count had any sinister design, nothing of it showed during the half-hour that he remained with Mary, discussing details of the coming ball.

CHAPTER 3.

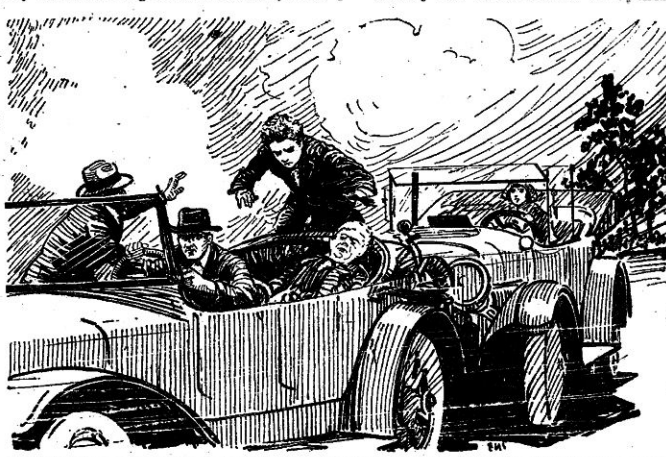
The House of the Closed Shutters!

ON the other side of the city, standing where pedestrians were few and traffic was infrequent, was a house, the windows of which were never seen. Every window was heavily barred by wooden shutters; wisps of straw and bits of paper—debris of the streets—whirled and fluttered about the steps below the heavy, seldom-opened door.

The whole air of the house was gloomy and mysterious. Its black shutters lowered ballfully at the infrequent pedestrians, and its iron railings, before the windows thwarted those who might have been curious enough to try to peer through the chinks of the wooden barriers.

This house was the headquarters of the Monk, the man who sought the plans of Richard Crawford's invention. Outside it, a woman stood, a flat, wicker basket filled with flowers suspended from her shoulders. Her face was fringed with straggling, graying hair; she wore a tattered shawl, and there was a whine in her voice as she proffered flowers to two passers-by. They shook their heads, and the moment they had gone, the woman slipped around the corner at the side of the house, moving quickly through a gate to a wooden door that showed beyond—a door that was quite bare, lacking either lock or handle.

Swiftly her hand darted to bushes that grew beside the door, and from their depths she plucked a metal spike. With a deft movement she stabbed it through a tiny hole in the door, pressing the side of the spike against a latch, that, lifting, let the door move inward. She thrust the spike back, and slipped into the house.



For an instant Bob hung in mid-air between the two cars. Then his fingers found a grip on the hood of the Monk's car, and a moment later he had swung into the tonneau. (See page 7.)

It was as she entered that she heard a faint snap at the top corner of the door, and she nodded to herself, glancing up to the wires ran from the door through the ceiling. In the room above was the Monk—the man who sought the plans of Richard Crawford's invention. The opening of the door below made an electrical contact that fired a powder

in the head of a small statue in one corner of the room in which the Monk stood; a puff of smoke gouted out, and at sight of it the Monk frowned.

He was a big, wide-shouldered man, with a straggling beard and hairy eyebrows that almost met. His face was squat and ugly, almost saturnine, as he plucked a watch from his pocket and glanced at it.

The house with the closed shutters was his headquarters. It was from here that he directed the search for Richard Crawford and the plans of the Scarlet Streak. Once he had them in his hands he knew that he could terrorise the world.

On one side of the room a panel snapped upwards with a click, and in the aperture appeared the figure of the flower-seller from the street outside. She stepped into the room, pressed a button, and the panel dropped down.

"Well, Leontine, any news?" asked the Monk, as she crossed the room to him. He rested a hand on her shoulder as he looked down at her. She shuddered a little at his touch and pushed his hand away.

"No; I've found no clue to his whereabouts!"

The Monk scowled at her. Leontine was one of his aides in his search—one upon whose craft he could rely. If she confessed to failure, he knew that finding the inventor was a task indeed.

"We must find him!" the Monk said harshly, and his voice was rasping and hard. "He mustn't slip through our fingers again. We all but had him once before this!"

Leontine laughed a little.

"After that scare he may be living under another name, but if ever I see him I'll know him!"

The Monk nodded grimly.

"I'm expecting the Count," he said. "He might have had more luck!"

"He's coming, is he?" Leontine asked. "Well, I'd better get this make-up off!" And she moved out of the room to another across the passage outside.

There she plucked off her wig and kicked it away. She set down the stick she carried and the basket of flowers, and it was as she removed her shawl that she was revealed as a girl of not much more than Mary's age; but she lacked Mary's charm and sweetness.

Leontine was dark, with black eyes that could flash fury when she chose; even the Monk was a little afraid of her.

It was as she changed her costume that she heard a knock on the great door below. On the step stood Count K, fresh from his meeting with Mary Crawford. Below the knocker a small panel slid back, and through the grille beyond an eye examined him for a moment or so, then the door was opened, and he entered.

One of the Monk's gang led him to where the bearded man awaited him, and it was as he entered that Leontine came into the room from another door. She smiled as she saw the Count; he kissed her hand with the same effusive grace as he had shown to Mary.

Scowling, the Monk watched them. "Cut all this out!" he snarled. "Let's get down to business. Have you found our man?"

"Not yet," answered the Count. "Not yet—oh?" growled the Monk. "But we'll get him! He's in this city somewhere, and we'll comb the streets until we find him!"

"If we knew what name he had adopted," said Leontine, "it would be easier. And you're not much help, Count; you've never seen him!"

"I won't forget him once I do!" the Count answered. And Leontine laughed as she looked at him.

The Monk slammed his fist on the table. "Quit fooling!" he snarled. "If we can't get him the way we've been trying, we must think up some other scheme!"

And under his scowl the other two bent their heads and listened while he suggested fresh plans.

CHAPTER 4.
The Face in the Crowd!

ELSEWHERE in the city Bob Evans was pursuing his quest—sifting clues, following up rumours, working night and day to get on the track of the inventor of the Scarlet Streak.

While Bob worked, Richard Crawford was taking a little

relaxation from his labours. Two or three days after the final test of his invention, Mary went out on a shopping expedition, having arranged with her father to meet her in the city with his car.

It was while she was waiting for him that she met a friend. The two stood talking, and neither noticed the bent, dragged-haired figure of a flower-woman, who stood with her basket of flowers at the back of the pavement.

It was Leontine, and she stood staring at Mary, seeing in the girl's face some resemblance to the features of the man whom the Monk sought. Leontine watched her keenly, then she started as a car drove up to the kerb; from it alighted a grey-haired man, who wore dark glasses. It was Mary's father, and those glasses were worn as a help to disguise him on his infrequent excursions from the lonely house.

Leontine stepped forward as Mr. Crawford raised his hat to the girl and spoke.

"Oh, here you are, father!" she heard Mary exclaim. "I'm glad you've come, and—"

"Flowers, lady? Buy a bunch o' pretty flowers!" Leontine proffered her wares, and from the corners of her eyes she peered intently at Richard Crawford's features. Abruptly she turned to him, as Mary shook her head.

"Buy some flowers, sir! Smell 'em! They're—!" She lifted a bunch with a sudden movement, sweeping them at the inventor's face. The flowers lifted high, and, with a swift jerk, Leontine hooked off the dark glasses that he wore.

She gained a momentary glimpse of his features without the disfiguring spectacles, and she recognised him for John Carson, the man whom the Monk was seeking!

Startled, the inventor hurriedly replaced his glasses. He slipped a coin into Leontine's hand, and took a bunch of flowers, never dreaming that he had been recognised, that Leontine was thrilling as the thought of the success that had attended her long search. She knew that the Monk was waiting close by in a car, and she hurried towards it.

The Monk was making a close search of the city, and he had arranged to meet Leontine there, so that he might give her orders to watch any house that he suspected might conceal the inventor.

"Clumsy woman!" muttered the inventor, as he moved away with Mary, after bidding her friend good-bye. "I wonder if she—"

He broke off as he glanced at Leontine's receding form. He stopped dead, as he saw her speak to a man who was getting out of a car at the kerb. Leontine spoke quickly, and the man looked up. For one moment his eyes met those of the inventor.

"The Monk!" he gasped. "The Monk's face—after all these years!"

Clearly the inventor saw him through the passing crowd. Mary stifled a cry.

"We must get away before he has a chance to follow!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, across the road, quickly!" Her father caught her arm, and they plunged blindly into the traffic that swept up and down the broad road.

A car bore down on them, brakes squealing. Both jumped to clear it, to leap full into the path of another!

The radiator struck the inventor fully, pitching him headlong to the ground. Mary was knocked down by the front of one wing, half stunned.

From all sides people rushed to their assistance, traffic pulling up all around them. A dozen people bent above Mary's form, and through them Bob Evans came plunging.

"What's the matter? What—?" He saw Mary lying there, moving a little as she tried to sit up. Instantly the arms of the "Daily Times" star reporter went about her, and he lifted her from the ground, turning to a car that stood near.

He dropped her into one of the rear seats, then climbed into the machine beside her, fanning her with his hat. Her eyes opened and she looked up at him.

"Where—where's my father?" she whispered.

"Over there—he's all right! They're looking after him!" Bob reassured her, and he nodded to the crowd grouped about the inert form of the inventor.

But Mr. Crawford was not all right! The Monk, standing twenty yards away, had seen the accident. He came pushing through the crowd, only to be balked by the burly figure of a policeman.

"He's a friend of mine!" the Monk exclaimed. "I'll rush him in my car to a doctor! I'll see to him!"

READ THE STORY!

"THE SCARLET STREAK"

WILL BE SHOWING AT THE FOLLOWING CINEMAS, APRIL 3rd—10th, INCLUSIVE.

THEATRE.

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ARCADE.

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PETERBORO'.
WALWORTH, LONDON.
WISBECH.
OXFORD.
OSWESTRY.
SWINTON.
ROCHDALE.
MIDDLESBROUGH.
S. SHIELDS.
GATESHEAD.
GREENOCK.
COWDENBEATH.

SEE THE FILM!

A dozen willing hands helped him to raise the still form of the inventor, while the policeman made notes in his book. Mr. Crawford was swiftly carried to the Monk's waiting machine; as he went, the policeman crossed to Mary.

"I'll want your name and—"

"Where's my father?" Mary asked.

"He's all right, missie!" the policeman answered. "He's being taken to a doctor. Now, you're not hurt, are you? Sure you—"

"But my father—"

"A friend's got charge of him," the policeman told her. "He'll be all right!"

Mary half rose from her seat as she looked ahead. She saw the Monk, her father in his arms, just placing the inventor on the rear seat of the car and getting in beside him. She turned to Bob, clutching his arm.

"My father—he's in the hands of the Monk and his gang!" she exclaimed.

"The Monk!" Bob stared at her. Too well did he know the name of that power in the underworld.

"He's after the secret of my father's ray machine!"

Mary told him desperately. "He's— Please help me save him! He—"

"The Monk—ray machine!" Bob repeated her words, staring at her in blank amazement. By a gigantic stroke of luck he had come upon the very people he was seeking. He looked down the road. Already the Monk's car was streaking away!

In a single jump, Bob leaped from his seat—beside the girl. A word to the two girls who occupied the front seats of the car, and they slipped out. Mary came swiftly to the seat beside Bob, and before the constable could stop them, the car was roaring away.

Ahead, the Monk's car swept round a curve; Bob was after them, foot hard down on the accelerator, skidding as he took the bend. He could see the Monk looking back at him, and he could just glimpse the top of the inventor's head as he lay back against the cushions.

The Monk's machine leaped to the lines of a tramway-crossing, and as Bob bore down on it he saw a tram roaring towards the intersection of road and lines.

"I'll beat it!" he muttered, and he set his teeth as the tram came at them.

At his side, Mary clung in her seat. She saw the tram bearing down, rattling and roaring at the top of its speed. Bob pulled the car across the road, the fraction of a second later and they were streaking in front of the tram—with a foot to spare, both flung high in their seats as the car bumped on the rails.

They gained on the Monk as the two powerful cars began to draw clear of the town. The crook's car slowed, then turned off the road and dived down the slope beyond an abrupt bend. As Bob shaped to take it, he saw a lorry coming up the hill. With a deft twist of the steering-wheel, he skidded clear of it, then roared on in the whirling dust that rose from the threshing wheels of the leading machine.

"We'll get him!" Bob exclaimed. "But he won't let us pass! We'll be up with him when we get to the bottom of the hill!"

Rapidly they bore down on the Monk's car. A curve loomed up on the road ahead, with a big omnibus hugging the middle of it. Bob didn't slow; he pulled across the road and cut in on the wrong side of the bus, while the Monk roared round the other; when the road straightened out, they were bare yards behind the other machine, with the Monk looking back at them, shouting to his driver to go faster.

"Take the wheel!" Bob yelled above the roar of the engine. "I'll get 'em!"

He slipped sideways from his seat, the car slowing a little as Mary slid into his place. Over the side of the car Bob clambered, hanging on to the footboard.

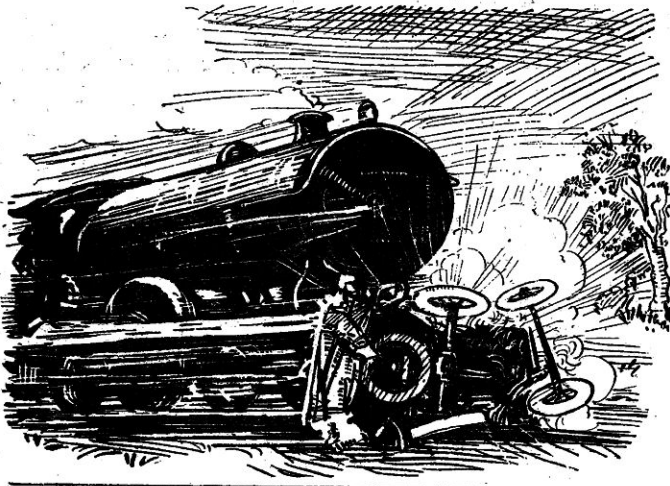
"Get up close as you can!" he shouted to Mary. "I'm going along the wing!" As he spoke, he lowered himself, then, with a swift movement, got a grip on the warm front of the car's radiator, pulling himself along until he could swing a leg astride the engine cover.

The radiator was hot to his touch, but he clung there, swaying to the leaping of the machine, while Mary nosed up to the rear of the Monk's car.

Bob dropped his feet to the inside of the off wing, crouched, measured the distance as, with a final surge, they roared to within feet of the other machine.

Desperately Bob leaped. For an instant he hung in mid-air between the two hurtling cars, then his fingers found a grip on the hood of the Monk's car, and a moment later he swung into the tonneau.

The Monk slammed at him as he landed; Bob scrambled to his feet and plugged a fist under the crook's jaw. The



There was a shattering crash—debris of the utterly wrecked car showered high as the front of the locomotive hit it. (See this page.)

Monk willed beneath the punch, falling half across the door and slipping the catch. The door swung open as the man launched himself at Bob again. Fighting madly, they dropped to the floor of the machine, while the inventor—conscious now, and loosed from the Monk's restraining hands—tried to get to his feet to aid Bob.

Even as he did so, a wild lurch of the car pitched him forward. A moment later and he was shot head-first out of the machine.

Mary, in the car behind, saw him fall. She braked hard, and brought her car to a skidding halt.

"Father, are you hurt? Father—"

and dragged him into her machine, then sent the car forward again.

She could see Bob still struggling with the Monk. She saw the crook take another smashing blow under his bearded chin, and he dropped like a sack. Bob scrambled over the side of the machine and tried to knock the driver from behind the wheel.

A line crossed the road ahead, and an express train was bearing down. The crossing gates were closed; the man who guarded them stood beside the track, shouting as he waved a red danger-flag at the car.

Again and again the whistle of the engine sounded, Bob, smashing at the brutal features of the crook behind the wheel, heard nothing of it—straight for the crossing roared the wildly lurching car!

One last punch to the jaw, and Bob saw him drop limp in his seat, then—

A glimpse he had of the locomotive looming down on him. The fraction of a second later the front of the car splintered the flimsy gate of the level crossing, and the machine plunged full across the line.

There was a shattering crash—debris of the utterly wrecked car showered high as the front of the locomotive hit it.

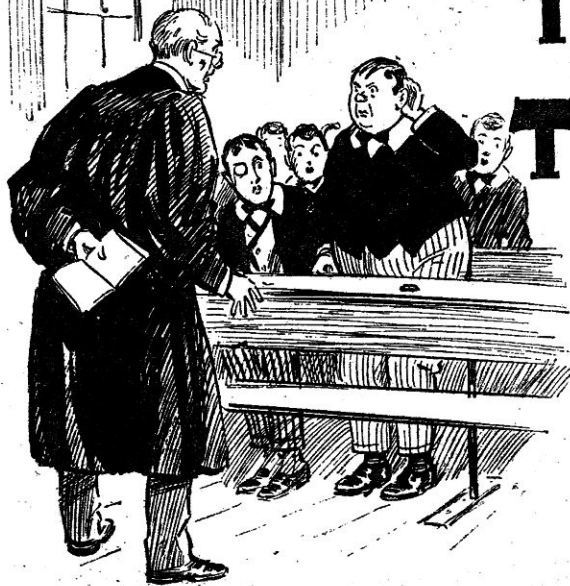
Then the engine plunged on, carrying the remnants of the car.

And, on the road behind, Mary and her father watched the disaster with horrified eyes.

(What fate has befallen Bob Evans, the plucky, youthful reporter and the arch-spy, the Monk? On no account should you miss reading next week's powerful instalment of this most thrilling serial story. Meanwhile, tell your chum all about it—he'll thank you for the tip!)

THE ARTFUL DODGER! Trimble, the fattest and laziest junior at St. Jim's, spends most of the time he should be devoting to lessons in thinking out wheezes for dodging them. And his latest wheeze is a corker!

TRIMBLE THE TRICKSTER!



A Rollicking Long Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co., the Cheery Chums of St. Jim's.

By
Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 1.

A Surprise for Study No. 6!

YOU fellows being my pals—"

Baggy Trimble, of the St. Jim's Fourth, paused. Four separate and distinct glares were fixed upon Trimble of the Fourth as he spoke, and they seemed to have a discouraging effect upon him.

Blake glared, and Herries glared, and Digby glared. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his celebrated eyeglass into his eye as if to glare more effectively.

Certainly, judging by their looks, no casual observer would have supposed that Study No. 6 were pals of Trimble's.

"You fellows being—" resumed Trimble.

"Bai Jove! Did you say pals, Twimble?" inquired Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Yes, old chap!"

"I wepudiate the insinuation, Twimble!"

"Look here!" hooted Trimble.

"There's the door!" remarked Jack Blake. "You're interrupting us, Trimble, and we've no time now for your funny stories. Now, you fellows, what about tea?"

Having glared at Trimble, Study No. 6 bestowed no further attention upon him.

Matters much more important than Trimble occupied the minds of the chums of the Fourth.

It was a time of dearth.

Blake & Co. had come in too late for tea in Hall, and in Study No. 6 the cupboard, like that of the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard's, was bare.

The question of tea was pressing and important, and Baggy Trimble had interrupted that important discussion.

"What about Tom Merry?" asked Herries. "We stood him tea last week, and one good turn deserves another!"

"Yaas, wathah!" assented D'Arcy.

"Tom Merry's gone out with Manners and Lowther," said Blake. "I've looked into their study."

"What about Levison?" asked Herries.

"Nothing about Levison. He's gone to tea with Figgins in the New House."

"It never rains but it pours!" said Digby dismally. "I say, I really can't hold out till supper. I'm hungry!"

"Same here!" said Herries feelingly.

"If you fellows will let a fellow speak—" hooted Trimble.

Blake looked round.

"You still there?" he exclaimed. "Kick him, Herries! You've got the biggest feet!"

Baggy Trimble eyed Herries warily. Herries' feet were large and solid, and Trimble had sampled them before.

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"I say, do listen to a chap!" he exclaimed. "If you really don't want a whack in my birthday-cake—"

"What?"

Four voices uttered that ejaculation together.

Blake & Co. stared at Trimble. This time they stared instead of glaring. They did not like Trimble. Nobody really could like Trimble. But the mention of a birthday-cake had a grateful and comforting sound to the ears of four hungry juniors who were late for tea in Hall and were in the sad financial state known as stony. Study No. 6 barred Trimble. But—

"My birthday-cake," said Trimble. "It's a ripper, I can tell you! Weighs about six pounds."

"Phew!"

"Marzipan on top."

"Oh!"

"Stacked with plums."

"Good!"

"And you fellows being my pals, I thought I'd like to share it out with you," said Trimble modestly.

"Bai Jove!"

This time Trimble's claim to palship was not so emphatically repudiated.

"Well, my hat!" said Jack Blake slowly. "Mean to say you've got a big birthday-cake, and you're asking to whack it out with this study?"

"You fellows being my pals—"

"But we are not your pals, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wegard you with somethin' like aversion, personally."

"Oh, draw it mild, Gussy!" said Blake. "Might as well be civil to a chap who offers to whack out a birthday-cake."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Trimble isn't what you'd call a pal," went on Blake. "But, after all, he's in the same House and the same Form. Of course, we have to admit that he's a frightful worm!"

"Look here!" hooted Trimble.

"But perhaps we've been a bit hard on him," said Blake magnanimously. "After all, Trimble must have his good points if he offers to whack out his birthday-cake with a stony study."

"Hear, hear!" said Herries.

Robert Arthur Digby nodded assent.

Baggy Trimble had risen very much in the estimation of Study No. 6. Whether it was his generous offer to whack out the cake, or whether it was the cake itself, certainly they seemed to think better of him.

"I don't see why we shouldn't accept Trimble's offer," said Blake, looking round at his chums. "The fact is, it's decent of Trimble!"

"Quite decent!" assented Digby.

"Oh, quite!" said Herries.

"Yaas, wathah! But I wealdy do not see, Blake, how I can accept such an offh from a fellow whom I wegard with aversion."

"That's all right," said Blake. "Leave off regarding him with aversion. Regard him with your eyeglass instead!"

"Weally, Blake——"
"I'm surprised at you, Gussy! It's not like you to make the most of a fellow's faults," said Blake severely. "Look on the best side of any chap. Make the best of him. Trimble's got some good about him!"

"His cake, for instance," suggested Dig.
"Don't you be frivolous, Dig. Trimble," said Blake; turning to the fat Fourth-Former, "you're generally the wrong man in the wrong place. On this special occasion you're the right man in the right place. Trot out your cake, old man, and we'll help you get rid of it. I can't say fairer than that!"

"Yaas; but——"
"Dry up, Gussy!"
"I weally considah——"
"I've often told you, Gussy, that you talk too much! Don't make me keep on telling you," said Blake. "Where's the cake, Trimble? I'll tell it in for you, if you like, and we'll whack it out here!"
"Done!" said Trimble eagerly.
"Well, where is it, then?"
"In Knox's study."
"Eh?"

Again Study No. 6 stared at Baggy Trimble. His reply took them wholly by surprise.

"Knox of the Sixth?" asked Herries.
"Yes. You know what an awful bully he is," said Trimble. "He—he's bagged my birthday-cake, and confiscated it!"

"What a neck!" exclaimed Digby indignantly.
"Bai Jove! That is weally wathah thick even for Knox," exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"You fellows being my pals, I knew you'd stand by me, you know," said Baggy Trimble. "It's in Knox's study, on his table, where he—where he put it. One of you fellows can nip in and bag it as easy as falling off a form. See?"
"Why can't you nip in and bag it?" asked Dig.
"Well, you see——"

"Oh, Trimble hasn't nerve enough for anything!" said Blake. "But this study has lots of nerye. Trimble's come to the right shop for that. It's a bit too thick, bagging a fellow's birthday-cake—even for a bully like Knox of the Sixth. Scandalous, when we've nothing for tea—I mean, it's scandalous anyhow. If Knox isn't in his study, I'll jolly soon bag Trimble's cake for us—I mean for him!"
"He's gone over to the New House!" said Trimble eagerly. "My belief is that he's gone to ask Poyning's of the Fifth to tea, and they're going to scoff the cake!"
"Just like Knox!" agreed Blake. "I know what happens to tuck when Knox confiscates it. You fellows wait here for me."

And Jack Blake hurried out of Study No. 6. Herries and Digby and D'Arcy waited for his return with much more cheerful faces. Baggy Trimble looked the most cheerful of all; his fat, sly face positively beamed with satisfaction. And there was a general smile of contentment when Jack Blake came back into the study, with a grin on his face and a parcel under his arm.

CHAPTER 2. Whose Cake?

TOM MERRY stopped at the door of Study No. 6 and looked in. Manners and Lowther stopped also, and looked in over the shoulders of the captain of the Shell.

"Hallo! It looks as if we're just in time!" remarked Tom.

"Just!" said Monty Lowther.
Blake, standing at the study table, was unwrapping a cake. It was a large cake, and a handsome cake, and it was so fragrant that its fragrance reached the three Shell fellows at the doorway. They sniffed appreciatively.

"What a ripping cake!" said Manners. "And what a happy thought to look in here at tea-time!"
Blake glanced round with a chuckle.

"You fellows up against it, too?" he asked.
"If cakes like that were going at twopence each," said Monty Lowther sadly, "we could only buy half a one—and then only if the cake merchant would take a French penny."

"We were going to make a round of the studies," explained Tom Merry. "We singled you out for the honour of the first call. We seem to be in luck!"

"Yes; but——"
"Don't 'but,' old man," implored Lowther. "If you want three distinguished members of the Middle School to

tea; here we are. Dash it all, you seem to have Trimble to tea!"

"It's Trimble's cake."
"Wha-at?"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "It is Trimble's cake, and he has vewy generously offahed to whack it out with us."

"Great Scott!"
"Oh, you're welcome!" said Baggy Trimble. "Welcome as the flowers in May, in fact!"

The Terrible Three of the Shell eyed Baggy in amazement. Never before, in all his fat career, had Baggy Trimble been known to whack out so much as a monkey-nut. Whacking out a cake of such size and fragrance was really amazing on Trimble's part.

"Do I sleep, do I dream, or are visions about?" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Look here, you know——"
"Trot in!" said Blake, laughing. "It's Trimble's cake, and he says you're welcome. There's enough to go round, even with Trimble in the party. Knox of the Sixth had the cheek to confiscate this cake—Trimble's birthday-cake, you know. I've bagged it from his study, and here it is."

And Blake plunged a knife into the cake, and proceeded to slice it. The Terrible Three exchanged glances, and came into the study. They did not like Trimble, but this generosity on his part disposed them to think better of him than usual. No doubt the cake had its influence also; the chums of the Shell had come in hungry, and late for tea.

"Many happy returns, Trimble!" said Tom Merry cordially.

Trimble blinked at him.
"Eh?"

"Many happy returns of the day!" said Tom. "It's your birthday, isn't it, if this is a birthday-cake?"

"Eh? Oh, yes! Of course! Thanks! Have some, old chap!"

"Here you are, old beans!" said Blake cheerily, slicing the cake in big slices. "Help yourselves!"

The juniors helped themselves willingly. Undoubtedly it was a lovely cake, and they were hungry enough to do it full justice. Baggy Trimble bagged the first slice—a substantial slice. It did not look so substantial when Baggy had taken one bite at it.

"How do you fellows like it?" asked Trimble, with his mouth full.

"Ripping!"
"Yaas, wathah!"

"Lots to go round," said Trimble. "Some fellows would keep this cake all to themselves, you know. Not me! I like whacking a good thing out with my friends, you know—what?"

"Hear, hear!"
"Besides, you fellows will stand by me if Knox makes a fuss," said Trimble. "You know what a beastly bully he is."

"That's all right!" said Tom Merry. "It was too jolly thick, confiscating a birthday-cake. Mr. Railton would never allow it."

"Wathah not."
"Nunno! But—but—but Knox might make out that it was his cake, you know," said Trimble. "He's not truthful. It's a shocking thing, you know, but Knox isn't truthful."

"That's all wight, deah boy. Knox would nevah have the neck to pwetend that your birthday-cake was his cake."
"No; there's a limit, though Knox is all sorts of a beast," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Well, he may get after me," said Trimble. "If he does, I shall expect my friends to rally round me, of course."
"Rely on us, old fat bean!" said Monty Lowther. "I think I'll have another slice."

"Do!" said Trimble. "I want to finish the cake, you know. I don't want to keep any of it. Make hay while the sun shines—what?"

"Hear, hear!"

Trimble was rising still higher in the estimation of Tom Merry & Co. In the first place, it was amazing for the fat and greedy junior to "whack" out his cake at all with other fellows. In the second place, it was extremely surprising that he was willing to let it be finished on the spot, instead of keeping back a portion for a future feast. Baggy Trimble had become amazingly generous all of a sudden; which looked as if the old proverb was unfounded, and as if a leopard could change his spots and an Ethiopian his skin.

There were footsteps in the passage, and Levison, Clive, and Cardew, of the Fourth, came along past the open doorway of Study No. 6. Ernest Levison glanced in with a smiling face.

"Heard the row?" he asked.

"Row?" repeated Tom Merry. "No; we've been busy with this cake. What's the row?"

"Knox of the Sixth is raising Cain," said Levison. "He makes out that somebody has raided a cake from his study."

"Huh?"

"No end of a giddy shine," drawled Cardew. "Knox is simply ragin'. It seems that he laid in a whackin' cake for tea, and went over to the New House to fetch Poyninge, and while he was gone somebody raided his cake. Bit of a nerve, raiding a Sixth Form study—what?"

"Trouble for somebody," said Clive, laughing. "Was it you, Trimble? It's just in your line."

Seven fellows in the study laid down unfinished slices of cake and exchanged queer looks. Baggy Trimble, on the other hand, gobbled away faster than ever. Baggy seemed to be smitten with a sudden fear that that beautiful cake might slip through his fat fingers after all—what was left of it.

"What—what sort of a cake was it, Levison?" asked Blake in a halting voice.

"A big cake," said Levison. "One of Dame Taggles' fifteen-shilling cakes, with marzipan and no end of things. If you go down you'll hear Knox quite eloquent on the subject. He's raging!"

"Simply wild," said Cardew. "Quite entertainin', in fact. You fellows know anythin' about it?" Cardew's eye lingered on the cake on the study table, and he grinned.

"Nunno!" stammered Blake. "But—"

"Of course not," agreed Cardew. "But if you'll take a friend's tip, you'll keep your study door locked till you've finished that cake, dear men. Knox is a suspicious sort of a bird, and he might fancy that that was his cake if he happened to butt in just now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison & Co., laughing, went on along the passage. Tom Merry & Co. gazed at one another. Then they gazed at Baggy Trimble.

CHAPTER 3.

Tricky Trimble!

"TRIMBLE, you fat villain!"

"Twimble, you wotiah!"

"Trimble, you spoofer!"

Baggy Trimble, with his mouth full of cake, blinked at the seven juniors. His fat jaws did not cease to work. The cake, whether it was Trimble's or Gerald Knox's, was a wreck now. And Trimble was in a hurry to clear up the wreckage.

"My only hat!" said Tom Merry. "You fellows have been done, and no mistake! Trimble—"

"It—it's all right," gasped Trimble, speaking with some difficulty, as he was negotiating cake at the same time. "It's all serene, you fellows. Don't you worry."

"Is this your cake?" roared Herries.

"Yes; my birthday-cake, you know. It came this morning from Trimble Hall," gasped Baggy. "I—I can prove it. I—I've got the label in my pocket."

"Bai Jove! That is all right, then," said Arthur Augustus, in great relief. "I weally began to think that you had been pullin' our legs, Twimble, and that this cake does not belong to you at all."

"Look here, you know. I think you might take a fellow's word when he's whacking out his birthday-cake with you," said Trimble warmly.

"Show us the label," said Blake.

"Certainly!"

Baggy Trimble jammed a fresh wedge of cake into his capacious mouth, in order to lose no time, and then he rummaged through his pockets. One pocket after another was searched, but Trimble's fat hands came out empty.

"Well!" said Blake.

"Must have lost it," said Trimble. "It doesn't matter."

"Bai Jove!"

"It's Knox's cake, of course," said Tom Merry. "What made you fellows think it was Trimble's?"

"He told us it was!" gasped Blake.

"That was rather evidence that it wasn't," remarked Manners.

"He—the said Knox had—had confiscated it, and—and got me to bag it from Knox's study," stammered Blake. "And—and it was Knox's cake all the time. Trimble, you fat scoundrel!"

"Well, I like that!" said Trimble indignantly. "Calling a fellow names after he's whacked out his birthday-cake with you!"

"Weally, Twimble—"

"It's not your birthday, and it's not your birthday-cake!" shrieked Blake. "It's Knox's cake, and you've spoofed me into raiding it!"

"Well, Knox is a beast!" argued Trimble. "He's always cuffing a chap, or caning him! He's a rank rotter! Serve him jolly well right to bag his cake!"

"Then you own up that it is Knox's cake?"

"No, I don't!" said Trimble promptly. "It's my cake. My Uncle Montague always sends me a whacking cake like this on my birthday. Money's nothing to him. He's rich."

Blake stared helplessly at the cake. Three parts of it were gone. It was evidently hopeless to think of returning it to the owner. Nobody in Study No. 6 had any doubt now about the ownership.

"Suppose—suppose we explain to Knox?" asked Tom Merry, after a long and tragic pause.

"There was a howl from Trimble.

"Don't you go sneaking to Knox! Why, the beast would give me six!"

"If it is your birthday-cake, Twimble, you need not be afraid of Knox," said Arthur Augustus sternly. "Mr. Waitton would nevah allow him to confiscate it."

"I—I'd rather not make a fuss about it," said Trimble. "Besides, if you tell Knox, you'll all get licked. Blake raided it from his study—remember that."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You know you did, Blake!" said Baggy, wagging a fat forefinger at Jack Blake. "You can't deny that you bagged it from Knox's study!"

"Didn't you tell me that it was yours, and that Knox had confiscated it?" shrieked Blake.

"I may have said something of the sort," admitted Trimble cautiously. "That was a—a figure of speech, you know. What I really meant to say was that Knox is a beastly bully, and it would serve him right to bag his cake."

"Great Scott!"

"Anyhow, we've got the cake," pursued Trimble. "Let's finish it and keep our mouths shut. I'm not going to give you away, Blake."

"Give me away?" said Blake dazedly.

"Yes. Rely on me. I'm not a sneak. I know that you raided Knox's cake from his study—"

"You—you know—"

"Yes, and I'm keeping it dark loyally. You're a pal of mine, you know, and I'm not giving you away. Rely on me."

Jack Blake seemed at a loss for words, and indeed for breath. He could only glare speechlessly at the loyal Baggy. Trimble went on industriously with the cake. Tom Merry & Co. had ceased, but it looked as if the big cake would be finished all the same. Baggy Trimble was a great man in his own line.

"We've been fwithfully done, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "That feahful fibbin' wotiah spoofed us into waidin' Knox's cake. We had bettah explain to Knox."

"Rats!" grunted Herries. "We shall get six each for raiding a prefect's study. Knox won't believe we were taken in."

"I twust, Hewvies, that Knox of the Sixth would not pwesume to doubt my word," said the swell of St. Jim's, with dignity.

"You're a silly ass, old man!"

"Weally, Hewvies—"

Monty Lowther broke into a laugh.

"Least said, soonest mended," he said. "The best thing we can do is to rag Trimble for telling lies—"

"Look here, you know—"

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"And kick him out, and chuck what's left of the cake after him," said Monty.

"Hear, hear!" "I—I say—" gasped Trimble. "I—I keep on telling you that it's my cake! My pater sent it to me this morning from Trimble Hall—"

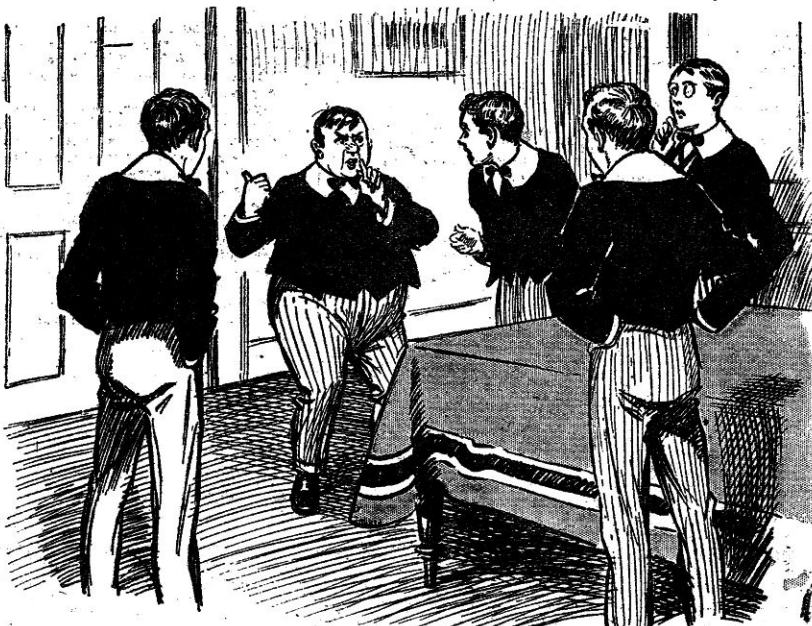
"Cheese it!" roared Blake.

"I think you might be decent, after the way I've stood you a feed with my birthday-cake!" said Trimble indignantly. "Lot's of fellows wouldn't have whacked it out as I've done!"

"And you whacked it out, to get another chap to bag it from Knox, because you hadn't the nerve!" hooted Blake.

"Well, I suppose I've a right to my own cake, that was sent specially for my birthday by my Uncle Herbert—"

"Collar him!" "Yaroooh!"



"Trot out your cake, Trimble, old man," said Jack Blake, "and we'll help you to get rid of it. I'll fetch it for you if you like, and we'll whack it out here!" "Done!" said Trimble sagely. "Well, where is it, then?" "In Knox's study!" "Eh?" The chums of Study No. 6 stared in surprise at the fat Fourth-Former. (See Chapter 1.)

At this stage of the proceedings Baggy Trimble's statements were not likely to be believed. It was fairly obvious that that cake had not been sent to Baggy by his pater at Trimble Hall, or his Uncle Montague, or his Uncle Herbert. Tom Merry & Co. had all those statements to choose from, but they were a little contradictory. Obviously it was Gerald Knox's cake, and the fat Fourth-Former had coolly used Study No. 6 as his catspaw to get possession of it. Really, knowing Trimble as they did, Blake & Co. might have guessed something of the sort—as they realised rather too late.

Seven pairs of hands grasped Baggy Trimble, and he was swept off the study floor.

"Bump!" "Yooop! Crooooh! Gug-gug-gug!" "Open the door, Dig!" Dig threw the study door wide open. "Now, then, all together!" gasped Blake. "Yow-ow! Help!"

Baggy Trimble was slammed into the doorway, and seven boots were jammed at him at the same moment. There was a roar from Trimble and a yell from D'Arcy, who received Herries' boot on his noble ankle. But a sufficient number of boots landed on Trimble to give him a good start.

"Yaroooh!" Baggy fairly flew into the passage. He rolled there in a dazed and dizzy state. Blake grabbed up the remaining chunk of cake from the table. He hurled it at the sprawling Baggy with a deadly aim.

"Ooooooh!" The cake squashed on Baggy's fat little nose, and floored him again as he was scrambling up.

"So much for Trimble!" grinned Monty Lowther, and the Terrible Three walked away to the Shell passage, leaving Baggy roaring. Blake stepped out into the passage to jam a last chunk of cake down the back of Trimble's neck, and then went into Study No. 6, and slammed the door. And Baggy Trimble—thus ungratefully handled by the fellows with whom he had whacked out Gerald Knox's cake—sat on the floor, and roared and spluttered, and spluttered and roared.

CHAPTER 4.
On Trimble's Track!

KNOX of the Sixth, as Levison & Co. had said, was raging.

Raging, indeed, was a mild word for it. Gerald Knox's temper, at the best of times, never

was good. Generally it was bad. Now it was absolutely Hunnish.

Knox had expended the considerable sum of fifteen shillings on one of Dame Taggles' largest and best cakes. That cake was to have graced his tea-table; it had been left there in readiness, while he called for his friend Poynings of the New House, and his other friend Cutts of the Fifth, of the School House. Knox and his friends arrived in the study in cheery spirits, to enjoy a handsome spread, with cigarettes and a game of nap to follow—that being the pleasant custom of Knox and his friends. And the cake was gone!

It really was incredible. Knox could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes. That cake, which he had carried into the House from the tuckshop under his own arm, and placed on his study table, was gone. It had been raided—taken bodily away; some venturesome junior, evidently, had done the deed—an almost incredible deed. Knox was a Sixth Form man—a prefect of the School House—a great gun in every way, besides being a bully of the first water. That the most reckless and venturesome junior in the House should select his study for a grub-raid, was almost beyond belief.

But there it was! The impossible had happened. And so Knox of the Sixth raged.

Cutts and Poynings grinned at one another and walked away; the feed in the Sixth Form study was evidently off, and they were no longer interested in the cake that had vanished. But Knox of the Sixth was deeply interested in it; and in discovering the identity of the raider.

Up and down and round about went Knox of the Sixth, inquiring for the purloiner of his cake.

He inquired right and left, with a red and angry face—growing redder and angrier as he found that most of the fellows saw something entertaining in the incident.

"My dear man," said Kildare of the Sixth, when Knox shouted an inquiry into his doorway, "I'm not interested in cakes. Really, I don't know anything about it."

"You've been in your study—"

"Yes." "Didn't you see any fag hanging about the passage?" "Not being able to see through an oak door, old bean, I didn't," said the captain of St. Jim's urbanely. "By the way, speaking of the door, shut it after you."

Knox slammed the door as he went, leaving Kildare laughing.

"Not guilty, my lord!" said Darrell of the Sixth, when the angry prefect looked into his study.

"You silly ass! Have you seen—"

"Nothing."

"Have you seen—"

"Nobody."

Slam!

Darrell of the Sixth also was left laughing.

Knox stamped along to Mulvaney major's study, of which the door stood wide open. Mulvaney grinned at him, evidently having heard already of the missing cake.

"Not found it yet, Knoxy?" he asked.

"No. I—"

"I fancy you'll need the X-rays to find it now," said Mulvaney sympathetically. "It's tucked under some fag's waistcoat by this time."

"You've been sitting here with your door open," said Knox. "Did you see anyone pass while I was gone over to the New House?"

"Faith, I did."

Knox's eyes glittered.

"I don't mean a Sixth Form man, of course. Somebody else?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Good! Who was it?"

"I don't think he took your cake, Knoxy," said Mulvaney major, shaking his head.

"I'm jolly certain he did. Who was it?"

"Well, if you really think so—"

"I do!" howled Knox. "Who was it? Tell me so that I can get after him before he's scoffed it all."

"Mr. Raiton," said Mulvaney cheerfully.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Our jolly old Housemaster. But, as I said before, I don't think he had your cake," said Mulvaney major gravely.

Knox gave the humorous Mulvaney a glare, and slammed the study door and tramped away. And Mulvaney major was left laughing. Indeed, the episode of Knox's fifteen-shilling cake seemed to be causing unusual merriment all through the Sixth Form of St. Jini's.

Information on the subject seemed to be scanty. Knox of the Sixth decided at last to pay a visit to the junior quarters, and make an inspection from study to study, in the hope of unearthing the delinquent. True, the raider had had plenty of time to dispose of the cake. But it was a large cake, a very large one, and it was probable that some remnant would be left to furnish a clue to the perpetrator.

Knox tramped up the stairs, and headed for the Fourth Form passage. He had many enemies in the Fourth—in fact, the unpopular prefect's enemies were almost as numerous as the whole Lower School. He remembered, too, that Trimble of the Fourth had been in the tuckshop when he bought the cake, and had eyed it hungrily. Trimble, certainly, was very unlikely to possess sufficient nerve to raid a Sixth Form prefect's study. But any clue was better than none.

Knox came tramping along the Fourth Form passage, intending to look in first at Study No. 2, which was Trimble's study.

But he did not, after all, stop at the door of Study No. 2; for as he came into the passage he spotted Baggy Trimble himself.

Baggy was sitting with a dazed and dizzy look on the floor of the passage near the door of Study No. 6.

There was a large chunk of cake on the floor near him, there were crumbs of cake all over him, and he was extracting fragments of cake from his collar with both hands.

Knox rushed up.

He scarcely needed any more proof. Here was Baggy, and here was what was left of the cake.

"You!" roared Knox.

Baggy leaped up as if electrified.

"Eh! What? No! I never did!" he gasped. "It wasn't me, Knóx! I never knew you had a cake. Honour bright!"

"Why, you—you—you lying fat villain, here's the cake on the floor, what you've left of it!" roared Knox.

"I—I didn't—I haven't—I—"

Knox made a grasp at him with his left hand. His ashpant was in his right.

Baggy Trimble, as a rule, was not an alert or active fellow. The cargo of cake he had taken on board made him less alert and active than ever. He was loaded well over the Plimsoll line. Nevertheless, Baggy Trimble displayed remarkable alertness and activity at that crucial moment. The look on Knox's infuriated face, the ashpant ready in his hand, were more than enough for Trimble. He made one wild jump back, and Knox's outstretched hand just missed him. Then he spun round like a fat humming-top and fairly flew.

"Stop!" roared Knox.

Baggy Trimble did not stop. He put on speed, and flew

along the Fourth Form passage as if it were the cinder-path.

Knox rushed furiously in pursuit.

But fear lent wings to the terrified Baggy; he dodged and he ran and he twisted, and turned the corner into the Shell passage, going strong. Knox came round the corner after him like a racing-car in full career.

It was that moment that Skimpole of the Shell chose for stepping out of his study in the Shell passage.

Certainly, Skimpole knew nothing of Knox, of Knox's cake, or of a headlong chase that was going on at that moment.

Skimpole, the genius of the Shell, would not have heeded such trifling things if he had known of them.

Skimpole had a book under his arm—a ponderous volume, which bore the light and entertaining title of "A Dissertation on the Entomological Remains of the Miocene Period, with Special Reference to the Origin of Species and Extraordinary Variations in the Law of Natural Selection."

Gore of the Shell made too much noise in the study, for Skimpole to enjoy this light literature in peace.

So Skimpole was sallying forth in quest of a quiet spot, where he could fix his spectacles uninterruptedly on the precious pages, and absorb in peace the wisdom and knowledge of Professor Balmyrumpet.

He did not find a quiet spot.

What he found was Knox of the Sixth, careering along the passage at top speed. And he found him quite suddenly.

Crash!

"Oh!"

"Ow!"

Skimpole flew in one direction, and the Dissertation flew in another. Knox sat down with a bump.

"Dear me!" gasped Skimpole of the Shell. "Upon my word! What has happened? Was it an earthquake?"

"Oh!" gasped Knox. "Ow!"

Skimpole groped for his spectacles and jammed them on his bony nose and blinked at Knox of the Sixth.

"Dear me! It's Knox! Did you feel a terrific shock a moment ago, Knox—a really terrific— Yaroooooh!"

Really, it was not Skimpole's fault that the collision had taken place. Any reasonable fellow would have admitted that. But Knox was not a reasonable fellow.

He jumped up, grasped his ashpant, and proceeded to lay it round Skimpole's shoulders.

Skimpole roared and wriggled.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"There!" gasped Knox. "Now perhaps you'll look where you're running another time!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Skimpole.

Whack!

"Yooooop!"

Knox stayed for only one more whack; then he rushed on, eager to get to close quarters with the fleeing Trimble. Skimpole sat in a quite dazed state for several minutes, gasping and blinking, till he felt sufficiently recovered to pick himself up, field the entomological volume, and limp away.

Meanwhile, Knox was raging on the track of Baggy Trimble.

He had lost only a few minutes on Skimpole. But those few minutes had been enough for the elusive Baggy.

Knox hunted him high, and hunted him low; he hunted him up and down and round about.

But Trimble was gone.

And Knox had to give it up at last, and tramp back to his study in the Sixth, in a mood compared with which the temper of a Prussian Hun might be considered amiable.

CHAPTER 5.

Doggo!

"PREP!" said Tom Merry.

The Terrible Three came into their study, No. 10 in the Shell, later in the evening. The study was dark; but as they came in Tom Merry heard a movement within.

"Hallo! Who's there?" he asked in surprise. Manners turned on the light.

The chums of the Shell glanced round the room. Nobody was to be seen there, and Tom looked puzzled.

"I thought I heard somebody move," he said.

"Fancy, old chap," said Lowther. "Nobody's here. Let's get going. We're boxing with Study No. 6 after prep."

The three juniors sorted out their books, and sat down to prep. They were soon working away industriously.

Tom Merry looked up presently from the pages of P. Virgilius Maro.

"Lowther, old man," he said, "if you want all the floor for your feet—and I dare say you do—"

Lowther looked up.

"What do you mean, ass? I haven't moved my feet."
 "Then it's you, Manners?"
 "Eh! What's mo?" asked Manners, deep in his task.
 "Urbs antiqua fuit— What's me, old chap?"
 "Spreading your hoofs over the whole room, old man."
 "Fathead!"
 Tom Merry worked again. The next interruption came from Monty Lowther.
 "For goodness' sake, you fellows, keep still!" he said.
 "If I puts me out when you jam your hoofs about."
 "What's the matter with you, Manners?" asked Tom.
 "Can't you keep still for a minute at a time?"
 "Ass! I haven't moved!"
 "Oh, draw it mild!" said Lowther. "Mean to say that isn't your hoof showing my boot at this blessed minute?"
 "Yes, ass; I do."
 "Then it's yours, Tom—you ass! What the thump are you larking for, in prep?"
 "Tain't mine," said Tom. "My feet are over here."
 "What? Well, if it isn't yours, and it isn't Manners, I'll jolly well stamp on it, and then neither of you will mind."
 And Lowther suited the action to the word.
 "Yarooop!"

A sudden fearful yell followed the stamp of Lowther's boot, and it proceeded from under the table.

"What the thump—" howled Tom Merry.
 The Terrible Three jumped to their feet. As if moved by the same spring, they stooped and stared under the study table.

"I—I say, keep it dark, you know—"
 "Trimble!" yelled the three together.

Baggy blinked at them imploringly.
 "Shush! Keep it dark! That villain Knox is after me! I'm dodging him!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry.
 "I—I thought it was him when you fellows came in!" gasped Trimble. "Oh dear! I believe he's searching the studies. I say, if he comes along, tell him I'm not here, won't you?"

"Eh?"
 "Tell him you saw me going over to the New House, and you think I'm having supper with Figgins—see?"

"Oh crumbs!"
 "He's after me," said Trimble, almost tearfully. "He thinks I had his cake, you know. Suspicious beast!"

"And didn't you?" roared Manners.
 "Well, I whacked it out with you fellows!" gasped Trimble. "Blake really had it, you know; but I'm no sneak. I'm not going to tell Knox that Blake raided his cake. Too honourable, you know."

"Great pip!"
 "Besides, it was my birthday-cake, you know—specially sent to me by my Uncle Robert," said Trimble. "I hope you fellows can take my word."

"Phev!"
 "My Uncle Herbert always sends me a whacking big cake. He's rich, you know."

"Come out from under that table!" hooted Manners.
 "Get out of the study, you fat villain!"

"I—I say, I believe Knox is in the passage!"
 "All the better! Get out!"

"You might stand by a chap after he's whacked out Knox's cake with you—I mean a splendid birthday-cake," wailed Trimble. "Knox may forget all about it if I give him time. He may find out that Blake had it, and let me alone. I'm not going to tell him that Blake had it. I'm too honourable. Besides, he wouldn't listen. He would just grab me as soon as he saw me, and start in with the ashlants. I—I say, Tom Merry, as—as junior captain of the House, don't you think you ought to set Knox right on that point? Duty, you know, and all that?"

"Set him right?" repeated Tom, staring blankly at Trimble.

"Yes. Blake being the guilty party, to your knowledge, don't you think you ought to tell Knox—go to Knox now, and say— Yaroooop!"

Baggy did not mean to finish his suggestion in that remarkable way. The yell was caused by a lunge from Tom Merry's boot, which caught him in his fat ribs.

"Isn't he a corker?" said Manners. "Isn't he a cough-dropper? Get a poker, Monty, and root him out!"

"Good!"
 Monty Lowther picked up the poker from the fender. As he did so, there was a heavy step in the Shell passage, a bang at the door, and it flew open. Knox of the Sixth appeared in the doorway.

Baggy Trimble sat tight under the table, without a sound, making himself as small as possible. And the Terrible Three gathered at once between the table and the door, to screen him from possible observation. They had been about to eject Baggy on his fat neck. But as soon as the bully of the Sixth came on the scene, their intentions were changed at once. It was no business of theirs to hand over the

"THE PHANTOM OF THE DOGGER BANK!"



A Grand New Detective Story, featuring

FERRERS LOCKE,

the famous private investigator, and his clever boy assistant,

JACK DRAKE.

STARTS IN THIS WEEK'S

MAGNET.

GET A COPY TO-DAY, BOYS!

offender to justice—especially to such rough justice as Knox was likely to mete out. Knox's cake had been worth fifteen shillings, but Knox was pretty certain to take about fifteen pounds' worth out of Baggy Trimble's fat skin.

"Hallo, Knoxy!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "Do you always come into a study like that when you're visiting your betters?"

Knox glared round the study, and glared at the Terrible Three. Monty took a tighter grip on the poker. He had picked it up for use on Baggy Trimble; but he was prepared to use it on the bully of the Sixth if occasion arose. Manners, in a casual sort of way, picked up the inkpot from the table, and Tom Merry lifted the Latin dictionary. Knox had swished his ashlant, as if keen on using it; but perhaps the poker, the inkpot, and the Latin dictionary helped him to change his mind.

"I'm looking for Trimble!" he snapped.
 "Trimble of the Fourth?" asked Tom.
 "There's only one Trimble at St. Jim's, isn't there?" growled Knox.

"My dear man, I'm not interested in Trimble," answered the captain of the Shell cheerfully. "Anyhow, Trimble doesn't come trimbling in the Shell passage as a rule. Did you expect to find him here?"

"I'm searching all the studies for him. He's hiding somewhere, and I'm going to root him out before dorm."
 "Search away!" said Tom.
 "If you haven't seen him—"
 "I saw him at dinner."

"You cheeky young idiot!" howled Knox. "I don't want to know whether you saw him at dinner!"
 "Still, I did see him at dinner," said Tom gravely. "Mr. Linton, our Form master, says that all knowledge is useful. As he's our Form master, we're bound to believe him. I did see Trimble at dinner, and I'm passing the knowledge on to you for what it is worth."

Knox gripped his ashlant hard.
 Really, this was not the way to talk to a prefect of the Sixth, and Knox was powerfully inclined to impress that fact on the Shell fellows by means of the cane. But again the poker, the inkpot, and the Latin dictionary caused him to change his mind.

"Is not here, then?" asked Knox, breathing hard.
 "You're welcome to look," said Tom. "Look up the chimney, and in the table-drawer, and behind the screen, and in Manners' camera case; and there's my hat-box you can look into as well, if you like—and—"

"Slam!"
 Knox was gone!
 Tom Merry laughed.



THE St. Jim's News

EDITORIAL!

By TOM MERRY.

NEXT to being on holiday, there's nothing more jolly than writing about holidays. So it is in a very cheery mood that I take up my pencil this week, Baggy Trimble having "borrowed" my fountain-pen!

We are about to break up for the Easter vacation, and sunny smiles may be seen on every face at St. Jim's, except the sour visage of Mr. Ratcliff. The New House master doesn't approve of holidays. If he had his own way, he would keep our noses to the grindstone all the year round. Fortunately for St. Jim's, Mr. Ratcliff can't have his own way!

The Easter Holiday has a special charm of its own. Spring has got well into its stride, and the great out-of-doors is beckoning its votaries. The cyclist is polishing up his "jigger" in readiness for some glorious spins; the camper-out is getting his equipment together; and the footballer is looking forward to a series of strenuous holiday matches. Easter means much more to most fellows than it means to Baggy Trimble, whose thoughts are simply and solely for hot-cross buns and Easter eggs! Incidentally, Cardew of the Fourth has written an amusing yarn dealing with Baggy and Easter eggs, and I'm sure you will all chuckle over it.

I shall picture my reader-chums spending a thoroughly happy Eastertide in various ways. Some will be camping out, others will be caravanning, and others will be "footing it" on the King's highway, striding cheerily along with haversacks on their backs. Certainly almost everybody will be out of doors in defiance of the weather, which I hope, however, will be perfect. Perfect weather and a perfect holiday, and an Eastertide that will linger long in the memory, that is what I wish all my chums throughout England's green and pleasant land.

Cheerio, everybody! TOM MERRY.

MY EASTER HOLIDAY!

By Monty Lowther.

I MEAN to have a MERRY Easter, with that NOBLE youth D'ARCY, renowned for his good MANNERS, as my companion. We shall bathe in the BROOKE; we shall fish in the RIVERS for TALBOT; we shall take a GUNN and shoot wild ducks on the MARSH (though I don't suppose much GORE will be shed!). Then we shall RACKE our brain for fresh pleasures.

I must re-FRAYNE from being too optimistic about our holiday, however; for we may have to suffer what Hamlet the DANE calls "the CUTTS and KNOX of outrageous fortune."

I've just been chatting to BAGGY TRIMBLE, and he tells me that he would like to spend his Easter Holiday in a HAMMOND-beef shop!

Supplement I.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 943.



BREAKING-UP!

A Cheery Holiday Ballad
By
DICK BROOKE.

THE jolly sun, he shines like fun,
And all is bright and gay;
So pack your traps, you eager chaps,
We're breaking-up to-day!
No tiresome Greek for one long week,
No dull and dreary swotting;
But fun and glee, on land and sea—
Footer, and walks, and yacHTing!

The quad's alive, a human hive,
A hustling, bustling throng;
The Sixth Form "stars" depart in cars,

Their friends exclaim, "So-long!"
Kildare is there, with not a care
To line his handsome chivvy;
They've gone from view, and bade adieu
To Homer and to Livy!

And Gerald Cutts, with all the "nuts,"

Comes strutting on the scene;
It's their desire to proudly hire
A handsome limousine!
They drive away, with faces gay,
And smiling smiles superior;
For we, alack! are in the hack—
A vehicle inferior!

Then Gussy comes, with all his chums,

And boxes by the score;
His Sunday best is in a chest,
"Toppers" he brings galore!
To see the pile would make you smile,
And you would vaguely wonder
If the school toff was setting off
On a World Tour, by thunder!

With joyous cheer, they disappear,
This happy schoolboy throng;
On every dial a cheery smile,
In every heart a song.
For Easter-time is simply prime,
One long gay week of leisure;
Good-bye to care and dark despair!
Fill high the bowl of Pleasure!

£10 MUST BE WON!

See the Simple Competition
on Page 2 of this issue.

ARE HOLIDAYS TOO LONG?

Varied Views on a Vital Topic.

MONTY LOWTHER:

Holidays too long? Perish the thought! To my mind, we don't get nearly enough holidays. Now, if I were the giddy head-master—and I may be one of these days—I should map out the following programme of holidays:

Spring Vacation.—Easter to Whitsun.
Summer Vacation.—Whitsun to August Bank Holiday.

Autumn Vacation.—August Bank Holiday to Christmas.

Winter Vacation.—Christmas to Easter. This scheme might be objected to, on the grounds that it doesn't leave any margin for scholastic pursuits. Quite right, too! Latin and Greek are luxuries, but holidays are a necessity! When the Millennium arrives perhaps my dream of twelve months' holiday a year will come true. Until then I suppose we must put up with the existing arrangements!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY:

I do not considah, deah boys, that our holidays are too long. And I do not think they are too short. I think they are just right. If they were any longer we should get bored with games an' amusements; an' if they were any shorter we should get fed-up with Form-work. But I do think that every fellow ought to be given a day off once a week in ordah to wan to town to interview his tailah. That would not be a holiday, howevah; it would be a vewy necessawy an' important awwangement. I sometimes have to go a whole month without interviewin' my tailah—which is perfectly monstwow, bai Jove!

MR HORACE RATCLIFF:

Holidays are much too long, in my opinion. Time and again I have communicated with the school governors, requesting them to curtail the holidays and to restrict them to one fortnight per annum. The governors, however, refuse to see my point of view. I think it a scandal that the boys should spend half their school lives holiday-making. Now, when I was a boy—
(Tut, tut, sir! You were never a boy. You must have jumped the boyhood stage and grown direct from babyhood to manhood! Everybody agrees with me that you are a killjoy, and I believe the governors must be of the same opinion.—Ed.)

HERBERT SKIMPOLE:

I do not believe in holidays at all. Not only are they unnecessary, but they encroach on the valuable time which should be devoted to earnest and indefatigable study. Why should we fritter away the golden hours of youth in senseless holiday-making when we ought to be broadening our minds and improving our intellects? Professor Balmly-crumpt, in his latest treatise, "NOSES TO THE GRINDSTONE," declares that holidays are a pestiferous disease, undermining the mentality of modern youth, and sending the British Empire to the er—bow-wow. I heartily agree with the learned professor.

(If the learned professor came to St. Jim's we should have great pleasure in rolling him down the school steps! —Ed.)



BAGGY'S EASTER EGG!

A Holiday Comedy

By
RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW.

BAGGY TRIMBLE was spending Easter at that magnificent old-world mansion, Trimble Hall.

Nobody has ever seen Trimble Hall. Probably nobody will ever see it, unless it's one of those clairvoyant chappies who can see things which have no material existence! For Trimble Hall exists only in Baggy's fertile imagination, and it has no more substance or solidity than a castle in Spain.

However, Baggy was spending Easter at his humble home, which I believe is situated in Grub Street, or Mincing Lane, or Bunhill Row. I know the name has a sort of "tuck" flavour, anyway. Baggy's cousin Bella, who was a sort of Baggy Trimble in petticoats, being just as plump and rubicund as Baggy himself, was spending Easter at his place.

There was a certain amount of friction between Baggy and Bella. When the dinner-gong sounded, they used to have a sort of Rugby scrum to see who could get into the dining-room first. They would become wedged in the doorway, struggling for entrance. Baggy would pull Bella's plait, and Bella would tweak Baggy's nose, Baggy thought Bella the greediest girl he had ever met, and Bella declared that if ever Baggy went in for a gluttony competition, he would pass with honours. Finally, Mr. Trimble would come on the scene and separate the pair, and proceed to pour oil on the troubled waters.

On the morning of Easter Sunday Baggy stole a march on Cousin Bella. He was up with the lark, and had performed his ablutions, and decked himself out in his Sunday best, long before the breakfast-gong sounded. But Bella, who had been to a dance overnight, had the misfortune to oversleep.

Consequently, there was no Rugby scrum that morning — no unseemly scramble to get to the breakfast-room first. Baggy arrived alone, and he had the breakfast-table at his mercy.

There was a salver of eggs-and-bacon, and another salver of steaming sausages, done to a turn, and a pile of hot rolls—in fact, all the ingredients of the perfect breakfast.

Baggy Trimble sat down, his fat face beaming like a full moon. Then he observed, to his delight, that there were two Easter eggs beside his plate. They seemed identical in size, and both were wrapped in silver paper. Presumably, they had arrived some time the previous day, and Baggy's mater had wisely reserved them for Easter morning.

"Oh, ripping!" murmured Baggy, squeezing his plump hands together. "I wasn't expecting any Easter eggs this year. It isn't often that people think of me like this!"

He picked up one of the eggs and fondled it in his chubby hands.

"I think I'll explore this one, and see what's inside," he mused. "Chocs, I expect. A few chocs will give me an appetite for brekker."

Baggy was still alone in the breakfast-room. There was a banging and bumping going on overhead. The gong had awakened Cousin Bella, and she was dressing in frantic haste. Baggy grinned as he heard her; then he started to unwrap the silver paper which surrounded the Easter egg.

It proved not to be a chocolate egg. It was made of wood, and it unscrewed in the middle. Baggy was naturally disappointed; still, he anticipated that the interior of the wooden egg would be crammed with chocolates.

Feverishly he unscrewed the egg. He lifted the top part; then there was a sudden whizzing and whirring, as an internal spring uncoiled itself, and shot out like a jack-in-the-box, catching Baggy fairly and squarely on his snub nose.

"Yaroooh!"

With a scendish yell, Baggy Trimble fell back, overturning the table, and crashing backwards on top of it.

"Ow-ow-ow! Yowp! I'm hurt! Grooh! I believe my back's broken!"

For a moment Baggy floundered helplessly on the floor. Then he managed to scramble to his feet, snorting with fury.

"Some rotten practical joker—" he began.

Then he caught sight of a slip of paper which had fallen out of the egg at the time of the calamity. He picked it up and blinked at it quite ferociously. The following message greeted Baggy's gaze:

"WITH MONTY LOWTHER'S
COMPLIMENTS!"

"So I've got to thank Lowther for this!" roared Baggy. "The — the cheeky rotter! Wait till we get back to St. Jim's; I'll jolly well pulverise him!"

Baggy caressed his nose, with which the end of the spring had come into painful and violent contact. Already, it seemed to Baggy, his nasal appendage was beginning to swell.

"I suppose the other egg's just the same!" he growled. "Well, I'm not going to be caught napping a second time. One shock's enough for me!"

Suddenly a bright idea came to Baggy. Why not inflict the other egg upon his cousin Bella, with whom he was at daggers drawn? He had only to place the egg beside Bella's plate, and she would conclude it was for her.

"He, he, he!" chortled Baggy. "That's what I'll do. I won't be greedy and have both eggs for myself. I'll be generous, and let Bella have one. Share and share alike's my motto!"

And Baggy gathered up the two halves of the egg which had given him the shock, and stowed them away out of sight. The other egg, wrapped in

its silver paper, he transferred to Bella's plate.

Scarcely had he done so, when hurrying footsteps approached the breakfast-room, and Cousin Bella burst in.

"You haven't started, Bagley?" she gasped, as if unable to believe her eyes.

"Of course not, Bella! I shouldn't be so bad-mannered as to start gorging before my guest arrived. Shall I help you to some eggs-and-bacon?"

"Thanks!" said Bella breathlessly. "Oh, I say! Somebody's sent me an Easter egg!"

"Good luck!" said Baggy, his little round eyes gleaming mischievously. "P'raps you'd like to open it before you start brekker?"

Bella nodded. Already she was peeling off the silver paper. Baggy watched her in gleeful anticipation.

He was surprised to see that the egg was not a wooden one, like his own had been, but was made of chocolate. But he did not doubt that the egg was from Monty Lowther, and that it contained a compressed spring, which, when the egg was opened, would leap out and smite Bella on the nose.

Bella unscrewed the egg, and lifted the top off. Baggy Trimble waited for the shock, and the subsequent yell of anguish. But he waited in vain.

There was no shock; there was no yell of anguish. Cousin Bella was investigating the interior of the egg; and her eyes danced with delight.

"A sovereign!" she exclaimed. "A golden sovereign!"

"What!" shouted Baggy. He was amazed, dumbfounded; he was almost overcome.

Cousin Bella's hand dived inside the egg and was withdrawn, with a gleaming coin clasped between thumb and forefinger.

"What a lovely Easter present from somebody!" she exclaimed.

Baggy Trimble was on his feet, spluttering with rage and mortification.

"Gimme that quid!" he commanded. "It's mine!"

"Nonsense!"

"Give it me!" roared Baggy. "That Easter egg was mine in the first place. It was alongside my plate."

"Then why did you put it beside mine?"

"Never mind that. Gimme my quid!"

But Cousin Bella refused to "part up." There would probably have been an unseemly scuffle in the breakfast-room had not Mrs. Trimble entered at that moment. She inquired what the trouble was about, and, after hearing both sides, she gave judgment in favour of Bella, much to that young lady's delight, and to Baggy's chagrin.

"The egg was certainly yours, originally, Bagley," said Mrs. Trimble. "It was a present from your Uncle Robert. But as you had two eggs, and Bella had none, you generously decided to give her one. Now that she has found a sovereign inside it, you are regretting your generosity and want the egg back. That would not be fair, as I think your father will agree. He is coming down now."

Mr. Trimble came ponderously into the breakfast-room, and, having heard the evidence, he also ruled in favour of Bella. So that the egg became Bella's, and the sovereign became Bella's; and Baggy Trimble's only consolation in the matter was that Bella stood him a handsome feed next day at the local bunshop!

THE END.



TRIMBLE THE TRICKSTER!

(Continued from
page 13.)

"Oh dear!" gasped Trimble, under the table. "I—I say, now that beast's gone, I'll come out and sit in the armchair, if you don't mind. I'm getting cramped here. I say, you fellows can lock the door in case that frightful beast Knox comes back—"

The door opened, and Gerald Knox looked into the study again.

Trimble was half out from under the table, and the prefect was in time to hear the flattering description of himself.

"Oh!" gasped Trimble.

He popped back under the table like a jack-in-the-box.

"So he's here, is he?" said Knox grimly, as he strode into the study. "I thought he might be. Come out of that, Trimble!"

"Ow! I'm not here!"

"Come out!" roared Knox.

"Oh dear! I—I mean—"

"Drag him out from under that table. Tom Merry!"

"Drag him out yourself, if you want him dragged!" said Tom disdainfully.

Knox snapped his teeth.

"Get him out at once, or I'll up-end your table!" he said.

"Go and eat cake!"

Knox grasped the edge of the table, and up-ended it without further ceremony. Books and papers flew to the floor in a shower, and the table-drawer came out and crashed on the carpet, with a scattering of innumerable odds-and-ends.

"You cheeky cad!" roared Tom Merry, in great wrath.

Trimble sat disclosed, but only for a moment. The next he was leaping for the door.

Knox leaped after him; but he had counted without the Terrible Three. Tom Merry's study-table was not to be up-ended with impunity. Tom grasped it as it stood on one end, and hurled it over towards Knox. It crashed into the bully of the Sixth, and sent him spinning. Knox collided with a chair, stumbled over it, and rolled on the carpet.

"Man down!" chuckled Lowtner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you—" spluttered Knox. "I—I—I'll—"
He leaped up, and his cane flourished in the air. "I—I—I'll—"

"Back up!" sang out Tom Merry.

"What-ho!"

Knox gave the Terrible Three a furious glare, and rushed out of the study in pursuit of Trimble.

He had a glimpse of a fat form vanishing in the direction of the staircase, and dashed in pursuit.

But Baggly Trimble had a good start, and he made the most of it. By the time Knox of the Sixth reached the staircase Baggly vanished—his luck still in. The fat junior had vanished as completely as if he had been a Booby; and Knox was compelled once more to give up the quest, and defer his vengeance till the morrow.

But if Baggly Trimble hoped, as he had told Tom Merry, that Knox would forget the episode of the cake, if given time, Baggly was likely to be woefully disappointed. It was much more likely that Knox's wrath, like wine, would improve with keeping.

CHAPTER 6. A Knoek from Knox!

"G USSY, old chap—"

"Wats."

"Blake, old fellow—"

"Seat!"

"Dear old Dig—"

"Hook it!"

It was the following morning, and Study No. 6 were strolling in the quadrangle while they waited for the bell for first lesson. Baggly Trimble came up to the four with his most ingratiating smile. He received grim glares in response. Blake & Co. walked on heedless of Trimble;

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 348.

their replies to his affectionate addresses were short, but not sweet.

Baggy rolled after them.

Baggy was looking very uneasy that morning. He had thrice received messages from various fags to repair to Knox's study in the sixth Form passage.

He had not repaired thither.

As a Fourth Form junior, Baggly was bound to obey the summons of a prefect of the Sixth. Any junior who neglected such a summons was liable to a licking.

But Baggly was liable to a licking, anyhow, so that didn't matter very much. He was assured beforehand that Gerald Knox was going to give him a licking that would constitute a record when he laid hands on him. So he had nothing extra to expect for disobedience; and he declined to obey Knox's summons, as if he had been the most reckless junior at St. Jim's, instead of the most funky.

The sun had gone down on the wrath of Knox of the Sixth; and had risen upon it again. It had not weakened; it had intensified. Twice Baggly had spotted Knox prowling about, and he knew for what and for whom Knox prowled. He had dodged Knox; he had disregarded messages delivered by grinning fags; so far he had escaped the reward of his misdeeds. But how long was his luck to last?

Really, it stood to reason that he could not dodge Knox for ever. But it was something, at least, to put off the evil moment as long as possible; so Baggly walked the quad, keeping his eyes well about him; and, for the first time in his fat career, longed for lessons to begin. Once in Mr. Latham's Form-room he would be safe from Knox—till morning break, at least.

Blake & Co. walked on faster, as Baggly Trimble persisted in keeping them company. They were more than fed-up with Baggly; indeed, it was only the knowledge of what he was to get from Knox that restrained them from collaring the fat junior and tapping his head against a tree. But Baggly was not to be shaken off easily. He wanted company, till classes—he felt safer in company.

"Don't hurry, you fellows," he said. "We are all in the same boat, you know; and I want you to stand by me if that beast turns up."

"Weally, Twimble—"

"Knox makes out that it was his cake, just as I told you he might—"

"It was his cake!" said Blake in a sulphurous voice.

"Well, suppose, for the sake of argument, that it was his cake," said Trimble—"only for the sake of argument. Well, you fellows had it as much as I did, and you're bound to stand by me if the beast comes after me!"

"You uttah wottah, you deceived us into scoffin' Knox's pwoperty!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sternly. "I despise you, Twimble—I regard you with uttah despision—I mean contempt."

"You didn't talk like that when I whacked out my birthday-cake with you?" said Trimble bitterly. "Now you can turn on me. Ur-er-er! I call it! My Uncle Fitzroy gave twenty-five shillings for that cake, and I whacked it out with you fellows—"

"Sheer off!" hooted Blake.

"You needn't hoot at a fellow, Blake; I haven't told Knox that you raided his cake—"

"Your Uncle Fitzroy's cake, you mean," said Blake, with deep sarcasm.

"Ye-es—exactly!" stammered Trimble. "I'm not going to mention it to Knox. You would get a licking."

"I should explain to Knox how it happened," said Blake. "Tell him as soon as you lie. Tell him also that I kicked you."

"Yaroooh."

"Yaas, wathah! And tell him that I kicked you also, Twimble."

"Wow!"

Baggy Trimble rolled hurriedly away. Whether he was safe from Knox, or not, in the company of Study No. 6, he was not safe from Blake & Co. He departed from them in haste.

The Terrible Three were next honoured with his company. But they were not honoured with it long. Tom Merry took Trimble by the back of the neck, and tapped his head gently against an elm.

"Is that enough?" he asked.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"If you want some more, keep within reach!" said Tom, and he released the fat Fourth-Former.

Trimble did not keep within reach. Evidently he did not want any more. He rolled dismally away; and the sight of Gerald Knox coming out of the house sent him scuttling round the gym.

He was skulking in obscure corners when he heard the bell ring for classes. In fear and trembling, the hapless Baggly took his way to the School House; looking this way and that way, like Moses of old.

It was but seldom that Baggy repented of his misdeeds, but he was beginning to repent very seriously of his raid on Knox's study. He was finding this hunted existence rather wearing.

It really was unfortunate that his scheme had turned out so badly. He had planned well. Not himself but Blake had actually taken the cake from Knox's table; Blake, therefore, ought to have been suspected and pursued. But the best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft a-gley; and the same applied to the schemes of Baggy Trimble. Just because Knox had found him sitting in the Fourth Form passage surrounded by the remnants of the cake, he had jumped to the conclusion that Trimble was the raider—and inquired no further. Inquiry, indeed, could only have led to the same conclusion, if he had learned the facts. But Baggy felt that luck had been very much against him. It really was not worth the mental effort to turn out masterly schemes, if they resulted like this.

Knox was not to be seen as Baggy picked his cautious way to the School House for lessons.

That was a relief, at least; once more in the Form-room he was safe. But he was not in the Form-room yet.

Levison & Co. were in the Form-room passage, and they grinned at the sight of Trimble coming cautiously along, blinking to right and left, a good deal like a pickpocket who suspected that a detective might be in the offing.

There was a shout from Cardew.

"Look out, Trimble!"

"Eh, what?"

"Cave!" shouted Levison.

Trimble blinked over his shoulder.

Right behind him was Knox of the Sixth—he had turned a corner and sighted Trimble. Knox was on his way to the Sixth Form room, and so he had left his asphlant in his study. But as he spotted the fat junior he made a rush.

"Hook it, fatty!" grinned Levison.

Trimble did not need telling.

He bolted for the open doorway of the Form-room, hoping that Mr. Lathom was already there—in which case the Form-room would be a safe refuge.

But fast as Trimble went, Knox was faster. He overtook the hapless fugitive in the doorway of the Fourth Form room.

Baggy Trimble felt a hand grabbing at his shoulder, and let out a yell of terror.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Now, you fat rascal!" gasped Knox.

Baggy jerked himself away and scudded into the Form-room. But Mr. Lathom had not yet arrived there. The room was empty, save for Hammond and Wildrake of the Fourth, who had come in early. There was no help for Trimble there. In desperation, he dodged round among the forms and desks, with Knox on his track.

"Stop!" roared Knox.

He ran among the desks, and Baggy twisted and dodged like a hunted rabbit. Knox leaned over a desk as Baggy dodged round it and smote.

Smack!

It was a terrific box on Baggy's ear, and it rang through the Form-room like a pistol-shot.

"Ooooooooooooooh!" gasped Baggy.

He spun round and sprawled on the floor.

It was a heavy blow, a fierce blow—such a blow as even a bully would not have thought of dealing, except in a moment of hot haste and intense exasperation. Baggy lay on the floor under the desks in a dizzy state, helplessly blinking. His fat ear was crimson, his head was singing and buzzing.

"Shame!" shouted Wildrake.

Knox glared round at him.

"What? What did you say?"

"I said shame, and I mean shame!" exclaimed the Canadian junior. "How dare you hit a kid like that?"

"Wildrake! Do you know you're talking to a prefect?" shouted Knox.

"Prefect or not, you sha'n't touch him again!" exclaimed Wildrake hotly. "Let him alone! You might make a kid deaf, thumping his head like that!"

Knox was moving round the desk, to get at the sprawling Baggy. Wildrake caught up a ruler and came towards him. Levison & Co. ran into the Form-room and joined him.

"Hands off, dear man!" drawled Cardew. "Trimble's a little beast, but you're not touching him again!"

"You brute!" exclaimed Clive indignantly.

Knox glared at them. The four juniors gathered round Trimble, who still sprawled helplessly. The fat Baggy was not shamming this time; he was quite dizzy and dazed and helpless.

"Get out of the way, you cheeky fags!" said Knox between his teeth.

"I guess not," said Wildrake. "You're not going to touch him again, you bully!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Bully!" said Wildrake. "One of you fellows cut off and call Mr. Lathom, and we'll ask him what he thinks of a Sixth Form man thumping a kid's head like that!"

Knox quailed.

As a matter of fact, he realised that he had gone too far. The asphlant he could have used liberally; but what he had done was against all the rules of the school. He knew what to expect if Dr. Holmes should hear that he had thumped a junior's head and knocked him down. Had the Head witnessed the occurrence, Knox would not have remained a prefect a minute longer—if he had remained at St. Jim's at all.

He hesitated, glaring at the Fourth-Formers.

"Trimble, you shamming rascal! Get up!" he rapped out.

"Ow, ow, ow! I'm hurt! Wow, I can't get up! Wow!" "Come to my study after class," said Knox. "Do you hear? You cheeky young sweeps take a hundred lines each!"

And having thus "saved his face" so far as he could in the circumstances, Knox of the Sixth tramped out of the room. And as soon as he was gone Baggy Trimble found that he could get up.

CHAPTER 7.

Something Like a Brain-wave!

BAGGY TRIMBLE grinned.

The Fourth were all in the Form-room, and Mr. Lathom had come in to take the Form. Blake was on "con," and the rest of the fellows were, as usual, hoping that the Form master's eye would not fall on them next.

But Trimble was not thinking of "con"—though, really, it behoved him to think of it, for he had done no prep the previous evening, having been too busily engaged in dodging Knox of the Sixth.

But he was not thinking of it. He was thinking of something much more important.

Knox had told him to come to his study after class. Trimble knew what that meant, and he did not mean to go. But he knew also that Knox could not be dodged for ever. That one whack at Trimble's bullet-head, reckless and emphatic as it had been, had not satisfied Knox; there was much more in store for the fat junior who had given Knox so much trouble. And it had occurred to Baggy's fat brain that there was a way out.

A way out of his danger at Knox's hands—a way out of being called upon to construe by Mr. Lathom—really, it was quite a brain-wave. Hence the fat grin on Trimble's podgy face.

Wildrake's words to Knox had put the idea into his fat mind. Wildrake had told Knox that he might have made a fellow deaf thumping his head. That was enough to start Baggy's fat intellect working.

Knox had struck him on the head. Knox would never dare to let that come to the knowledge of the headmaster or the Housmaster. But the blow had been delivered with the open hand. There was no bruise to show for it, though Baggy's head was still singing. Knox, if taken to task, would be able to explain plausibly that it was only a light smack—only a flick, in fact—as there was no damage done. But suppose there had been damage done—not external, but internal? Suppose serious damage had been done—very serious damage indeed? Upon those lines Baggy's fat brain was working, and working hard.

It was the privilege of a prefect to order a junior to bend over or to cane him upon the hands. But even a master was not allowed to box a fellow's ears; no master at St. Jim's would so far have forgotten himself as to have done so. Punishment might be administered, even severe punishment, but not in a way that might cause injury. It was true that Baggy had not been injured. But he might have been injured. And he was thinking now of what might have been.

Such a terrific smack on the head might, in unfavourable circumstances, have given such a shock to the ear-drum as to make a fellow deaf. Suppose it had made Baggy deaf?

It hadn't. But as he sat there grinning, Baggy thought it out, and made up his fat mind to pretend that it had. After class, instead of having to dodge Knox, he would merely have to let Knox know what had happened—or, rather, what hadn't happened. Already in his mind's eye Baggy could see the bully of the Sixth imploring him to keep the incident dark. He could see Knox trembling with fear at the prospect of being called before the headmaster to answer for what he had done—or what he hadn't done. True, if Knox disbelieved—if he made Baggy see the school doctor—the spoof would be shown up. Baggy in that case would have to make a remarkably sudden recovery. But it was worth chancing. Baggy liked that mental picture of

Gerald Knox cowering—yes, actually cowering before him—begging him not to betray him to the Head.

That mental picture was more than enough to make Baggy Trimble grin. His head was still buzzing from that emphatic smack, but he was not sorry now that it had happened—now that this brain-wave had come along.

"Trimble!" Mr. Lathom had spoken twice, and Baggy, deep in thought, had not heeded. The Fourth Form master spoke again, blinking sharply at Trimble over his glasses.

"Trimble!" Mellish nudged the fat junior. Baggy Trimble looked up with a start. Quite unconsciously, he had started to play the peculiar game he had marked out.

"Eh? What?" "Trimble, I have spoken to you three times!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom sharply.

Baggy breathed quickly, and his fat heart thumped a little. He had made up his mind to try it on.

"Did you speak, sir?" "What? What?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "Certainly, I spoke to you, Trimble! What do you mean? Are you going to sleep in class?"

Baggy was about to answer "No, sir!" when he checked himself in time, and blinked at the Fourth Form master without reply.

"You will go on from where Blake left off," snapped Mr. Lathom.

"Eh?" "You hear me, Trimble?"

"Did you speak, sir?" "What?"

"Did you speak?" All the Fourth Form fellows turned their heads to look at Baggy Trimble.

There was quite a sensation in class. The only possible explanation of Baggy's amazing conduct was that he was pulling the Form master's leg. But that really was very amazing, for Trimble was not a fellow with nerve enough to rag in Form. Yet if he was not ragging, it was difficult to guess what he was doing—unless he had gone out of his fat senses.

The Fourth did not suspect yet that Baggy was deaf!

Mr. Lathom came a few paces nearer to Trimble and peered at him over his glasses. He was as astonished as the Juniors.

"Trimble!" he rapped out. "What does this mean?"

"Eh?" "Are you deaf, boy?"

It was on Baggy's pocky lips to answer "Yes, sir." Again he stopped himself in time.

He bent his head and put a hand to his fat ear.

"Did you speak, sir?" he asked.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in amazement. "Is this a wag, or has Trimble gone off his wockah?"

"Beats me!" said Blake, equally amazed. "What on earth's the matter with the fat duffer?"

"Trimble!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, raising his voice. "I demand to know what this means."

"Did you say beans, sir?" "Beans!" gasped Mr. Lathom.

"I don't seem to hear, sir, very well. I feel as if I were a little deaf this morning, sir."

"Upon my word! Do you mean to say that you cannot hear me speaking to you, Trimble?" exclaimed the Fourth Form master.

"Yes, sir," answered Baggy. This time it slipped out before he could check himself.

"What? What? You say that you cannot hear me, and yet you answer my question!"

"Oh, dear! I mean—"

"What do you mean, Trimble? If you are in your right senses, what do you mean, you absurd boy?"

"—I mean, sir—did—did you speak?" "Wha-a-t?"

"It comes and goes, sir!" gasped Trimble, feeling that some explanation was due, as it were. "I hear you one minute, sir, and don't hear you the next. I had a fearful shock this morning, sir—a blow on the head. I think it's affected my hearing, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom, staring at him.

"Oh!" murmured Levison of the Fourth. "That's it, is it? My hat! That will be trouble for Knox."

"Serve him right!" muttered Clive. "If he's injured Trimble, he ought to be jolly well bunked from the school, the brute!"

Cardew grinned.

"Has he injured him?" he whispered. "Trimble seems to be deaf on the instalment system—and I fancy he's pulling Lathom's leg."

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"I guess so!" murmured Wildrake. "He can hear all right if he likes."

"Silence in the class!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "Trimble, come out here before the Form."

Baggy Trimble did not move. His fat wits were about him now. He blinked at Mr. Lathom as if unaware that that gentleman was speaking.

"Trimble!" "Did you speak, sir?"

"What? What?" "I saw your lips move, sir," said Trimble. "If you were speaking to me, sir—"

"I was speaking to you, Trimble."

"I don't seem to hear you, sir."

"Bless my soul! This is extraordinary!" said Mr. Lathom. "If you really have an attack of deafness, you must see the doctor at once, Trimble."

"Eh?" "You must see the doctor!" almost shouted Mr. Lathom.

"What proctor, sir?" "Proctor? I said doctor. The school doctor."

"I'm sure you're speaking to me, sir, because I can see your lips move," said Baggy. "I wish I could hear you, sir. I—I feel that I'm wasting your time, sir. I'm so sorry, Mr. Lathom."

"This is extraordinary," said the Form master, watching Trimble's face sharply. "I cannot understand this. You say you had a blow on the head this morning?"

"Eh?" "A blow on the head!" shrieked Mr. Lathom.

"Oh! I heard you then, sir. Yes, sir, a blow on the head. It was an awful blow, sir."

"Is there any bruise on your head, Trimble?" "Did you speak, sir?"

Mr. Lathom gasped.

"Repeat my words to him, Mellish," he said.

Mellish, who was sitting next to Trimble, repeated the Form master's words, fairly roaring into Baggy's fat ear.

"Oh! No, sir!" said Baggy. "There's no bruise, sir! I think the injury is internal, sir—"

"What?" "I mean internal. Internal injury, sir, to the ear-trumpet—I mean the ear-drum, sir! It was a blow on the ear—a fearful blow, sir. I'd rather not mention the name of the fellow who hit me on the head, sir—I don't think he really meant to injure me. I—I hope it will pass off, sir, in time."

"If you really are injured, Trimble, you must have medical attention at once," said Mr. Lathom.

"Eh?" "Medical attention at once!" roared Mellish into Trimble's ear.

"Oht! Aht! Yes."

"But if it is a trick on your part, Trimble, a miserable excuse for escaping from lessons—"

"Doesn't he know him?" murmured Blake.

"Bai Jove!"

Mr. Lathom evidently was a little suspicious. He knew Trimble of old. Trimble and truth were strangers—they had not even a nodding acquaintance. And Baggy's devices for eluding work of any kind, were many and various.

"Did you speak, sir?" asked Baggy calmly.

"Bless my soul! Trimble, I shall send you down to Rylcombe to see Dr. Short at once. Excepting for this deafness, you are, I presume, in your usual health, and able to walk to the village?"

"Did you say tillage, sir?"

"I did not say tillage," gasped Mr. Lathom. "Mellish, tell Trimble what I said."

Mellish yelled in Baggy's ear again.

"Oh, yes, sir," said Trimble. "Quite all right, sir, except that I don't seem to hear. I can walk to Dr. Short's, sir."

"Very well, Trimble. I will write you a note for the doctor."

"Thank you, sir," said Baggy inadvertently. Baggy could not keep on remembering that he was deaf; he had been deaf for so short a time, so far.

"Oh! You heard me, then!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom.

"Eh?" Trimble remembered himself.

"You heard Mr. Lathom, then!" yelled Mellish in his fat ear.

"It comes and it goes, sir," said Trimble. "One minute I hear all right—the next everything is a blank, sir!"

"I will write the note."

"I—I don't know anything about a goat, sir!"

"A—a goat?"

"Did you say goat, sir?"

"Bless my soul! I said nothing about a goat! Oh—a note—I said note, Trimble!"

"I haven't one, sir. I never use a thimble."

"A—a thimble?"



Crash! "Oh!" "Ow!" Skimpole flew in one direction, and the Dissertation flew in another. "Dear me!" gasped Skimpole, of the Shell. "Upon my word! What has happened? Was it an earthquake?" "Oh!" gasped Knox. "Ow!" (See chapter 4.)

"Didn't you say thimble, sir?"

Baggy was warning to his work now, so to speak. Baggy had a relative at home who was hard of hearing, and he recalled that relative's trick of catching the wrong word, and put it into practice on his own account.

Mr. Lathom did not answer his question, he wrote a note at his desk, handed it to Baggy, and dismissed him with instructions to walk down to Dr. Short's house in the village at once.

Baggy Trimble slipped the note in his pocket, and left the Form-room. His fat face was very serious as he went. It was not till the Form-room door had closed behind him that he grinned. Then he grinned widely.

It was a pleasant, sunny morning. Baggy was not fond of exertion; but he would have preferred walking to working, any day. He showed his note to Taggies and was let out of the gates, and sauntered away to Rylcombe in cheery spirits.

Baggy felt that he was prospering.

At the very least, he had escaped from first and second lesson—and that was all to the good. He had only one regret—that he had never thought of so easy a dodge before. Often and often had he invented a headache, or a pain in his podgy inside; but this easy and simple method of dodging classes had never occurred to his fat brain. Still, it was better late than never.

While the Fourth Form of St. Jim's pursued their tasks in the Form-room that sunny morning, Baggy Trimble enjoyed an easy stroll, which did not take him in the direction of the school-doctor's residence.

CHAPTER 8.

Deaf!

KNOX of the Sixth stared. He could scarcely believe his eyes.

Morning classes were over, and the St. Jim's quad swarmed with fellows out of the Form-rooms.

Knox, not in the least satisfied with a single smack at Baggy Trimble's head, was glancing about the quad in search of the fat junior—intending to walk him off to his study, when caught, and there give him such a liberal allowance of aspland that Baggy would not find it easy to

sit down for a week afterwards. With those kindly intentions towards Baggy, Knox naturally expected that the fat Fourth-Former would continue his elusive tactics, and keep out of the way if he could.

Instead of which, the fat figure of Baggy Trimble came rolling down the path directly towards Knox of the Sixth. Knox stared at him.

Trimble undoubtedly saw him. He was blinking at Knox as he rolled towards him. Yet he did not seem alarmed.

Gerald Knox compressed his lips. His wrath had improved with keeping; he was prepared to make Trimble understand that life was not worth living for a St. Jim's fag who raided a Sixth Form man's study. And here was the elusive Baggy walking right into his hands.

"Trimble!" he rapped out.

Trimble stopped a few feet away and blinked at him with a glimmer in his little round eyes.

"Did you speak, Knox?"

"You know I did, you young scoundrel," growled Knox, staring at him. Knox of the Sixth did not yet know anything about Trimble's affliction. "Follow me to my study."

"Did you say muddy?"

"Eh?"

"What's muddy?" asked Trimble.

Knox, who was moving off towards the House, swung back and stared at Trimble. His look was surprised and very unpleasant.

"Is that a joke, Trimble?" he asked.

"Coke?" asked Trimble. "What about coke, Knox?"

The bully of the Sixth stared harder. He was quite taken aback by these extraordinary remarks from Baggy Trimble.

"I was looking for you, Knox," went on Trimble.

"What a coincidence. I was looking for you, too," said Knox, with an unpleasant grin.

"Did you speak?"

"What?"

"I can't hear you."

"Can't hear me?" repeated Knox.

"No, I'm deaf!"

"Deaf?"

"Practically stone deaf, Knox, owing to that brutal, savage blow you struck me on the head in the Form-room."

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this morning," said Trimble, blinking at him. "Before witness, too!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Mr. Latham has sent me to the doctor about it," said Trimble. "He is very much alarmed."

"You—you—you—" stuttered Knox. "You—you spoofing young scoundrel, do you think you can pull my leg like that?"

"Did you speak?" asked Trimble.

"You cheeky rat—"

"Whose hat?" asked Trimble calmly. "Did you say hat?"

Knox did not answer that question. He strode at Trimble and dropped a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Come with me, you rotter," he said, between his teeth.

"I'll give you something to cure all that."

"What did you say, Knox?"

Knox did not answer; he marched Trimble off towards the School House. Trimble went quite cheerfully.

"Are we going to the Head?" he asked.

"You're going to my study to be licked!" growled Knox.

"And you can get ready for the licking of your life!"

"Did you say knife? I haven't a knife. I lent mine to Lumley-Lumley."

"Come along, you young rascal!"

"I want to go to the Head," said Trimble. "I may have to be sent home to see a specialist about my injury. Let's go to the Head at once, Knox, please. I'm sorry to have to give you away, and I hope you won't be expelled, Knox, but, of course, I must tell the Head the truth."

Knox glanced down at him with a beginning of uneasiness.

He remembered that terrific smack he had bestowed on Trimble's head, and he knew that the fat junior must have been a good deal hurt at the time. It had not occurred to him that there had been any real injury. But it occurred to him now that there was at least a possibility of it.

"Will you take me to the Head, Knox?" asked Trimble.

"No!" snapped Knox.

"Then I shall ask Kildare. Will you let go my shoulder, Knox? If you don't I shall have to shout for help!"

Knox looked down at him again. He was feeling uneasy; but anger and malice had the upper hand, and he jerked Baggy onward. Kildare and Darrell of the Sixth were chatting in the big doorway of the School House, and Trimble promptly yelled to them.

"Kildare! I say, Kildare! Darrell! Help!"

The two prefects stared round in amazement.

"I want to go to the Head!" shouted Trimble. "Knox won't let me go to the Head and tell him about my injury, Kildare."

"What the thump—" exclaimed the captain of St. Jim's in astonishment. "Where are you taking him, Knox?"

"To my study to lick him for stealing my cake yesterday!" growled Knox. "I caught him with the cake on him."

"He says something about an injury. Hold on a minute," Kildare was head prefect, and his word was law. Knox unwillingly held on. "Now, what are you driving at, Trimble?"

"Will you speak louder, Kildare?" asked Baggy meekly.

"I can't hear you."

"Eh? Why can't you hear me?"

"I'm deaf."

"Deaf?" ejaculated Kildare.

"Yes. Mr. Latham sent me to the doctor this morning about it," said Trimble.

Kildare stared at him.

"It's all lies, of course," said Knox savagely. "He makes out that he has been injured by—by—" Knox broke off.

"By what?"

"Oh, only some of his spoofing! You know what a born liar he is."

Kildare did, and he eyed Baggy very suspiciously.

"So you're deaf, are you?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"Can't you hear me now?"

"I don't know anything about a plough?"

"Plough!" ejaculated the captain of St. Jim's. "Who's talking about a plough?"

"Speak louder, will you?" asked Trimble. "I'm awfully sorry, Kildare, but I can't hear anything since I had that blow on the head this morning."

Knox's hand had slid from Trimble's fat shoulder. He was beginning to be alarmed now.

"You had a blow on the head?" asked Kildare.

"Eh?"

"A blow on the head—what?" shouted Kildare.

"Yes—a fearful blow."

"How did it happen?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 948.

"Would you mind speaking louder, Kildare? I'm so sorry to trouble you, but I can't help being deaf, can I?"

"How did it happen?" roared Kildare.

"A cowardly brute struck me on the head!" said Trimble. Gerald Knox set his teeth.

"And who was it?" demanded Kildare.

"I don't want to give him away," said Trimble. "He would be sacked if the Head knew."

"Very likely, if the blow has had the result you say," said the St. Jim's captain. "But we shall see about that. You say your Form master sent you to the doctor?"

"Eh?"

"Your Form master sent you to the doctor?" raved Kildare.

"Oh, yes!"

"I shall ask him. Wait here while I ask."

"What task?" inquired Trimble. "I don't think you ought to give me a task because I'm deaf, Kildare. Do you mean a detention task?"

Kildare gave him a look.

"Keep him here, Knox, while I speak to Mr. Latham," he said. "If what he says is true, the matter is serious."

"It's not true—not a syllable of it!" growled Knox savagely. "It's a yarn to get out of a caning."

"Very likely; but I will ask Mr. Latham," said Kildare. And he walked away, leaving Trimble waiting with Knox.

He came back in a few minutes, with a grave expression on his face. Knox gave him a look of apprehensive inquiry.

"What does Mr. Latham say?" he snapped.

"He says that he sent Trimble to the doctor this morning, for an attack of deafness," answered Kildare.

"Trimble told him that he had had a blow on the head. Trimble brought back a message that he was to rest, and to call upon the doctor again to-morrow."

"Oh!" said Knox, quite taken aback. "My belief is that it's all spoof. He's pulling Mr. Latham's leg, and the doctor's too."

"I shouldn't wonder. But, in the circumstances, you'd better let his licking stand over for a bit. It will keep."

"Can I go to the Head?" asked Trimble meekly.

"Of course you can," answered Kildare. "There's nothing to stop you. The Head's in his study."

"Can you tell me where the Head is now?" asked Trimble, apparently not having heard a word.

"In his study."

"I had them cleaned as usual this morning, Kildare."

"What?" roared Kildare.

"Didn't you say my boots were muddy?" asked Trimble innocently.

"My hat!" murmured Darrell. "If that fat young rascal is spoofing, he's doing it well!"

"I don't see that they're very muddy," said Trimble, looking down at his boots. "But I'll ask Toby to give them a rub if you think they're muddy, Kildare."

"The Head's in his study, and you can go to him if you like!" bawled Kildare.

"Oh! Thanks!"

And Trimble rolled on into the Head's corridor. Kildare and Darrell stared after him, puzzled and dubious. Knox stared after him, too—and then followed him.

CHAPTER 9. The Upper Hand!

"TRIMBLE!"

Knox's voice was quite gentle.

He had overtaken the fat junior in the corridor before the Head's door was reached. His hand dropped on Trimble's shoulder, but it dropped quite gently.

"Is that you, Knox? What do you want? I want to see the Head before he goes to lunch."

Knox breathed hard.

He was still doubtful—very doubtful. But he realised that if Baggy Trimble's tale was true, he had to make terms with Baggy.

That angry thump in the Fourth Form-room could be explained away, if it had left no serious results behind it. But if it had left such a very serious result as deafness, how was it to be explained away? Four or five juniors had witnessed the incident, and Knox could not possibly have squirmed out of it. With no resulting injury, he could have explained that it had been merely a flick—merely a tap—practically nothing! But if it had caused so severe an injury that deafness had resulted—

Knox almost trembled at the thought, and at the thought of the Head's stern face. Not only his prefectship, but his whole career was at stake. If it was true that Baggy was deaf—that his deafness was caused by that angry blow—and if the truth came to Dr. Holmes' knowledge, the game was up for Knox at St. Jim's. It was the "long jump" for him, and he knew it.

"Come along to my study, Trimble! It's all right—I'm not going to lick you. I—I just want a little talk with you."

Baggy Trimble's eyes glimmered. "Did you speak, Knox?" he asked. Knox breathed hard.

"Come along with me," he said. And he drew the fat junior back along the corridor.

Baggy went with him cheerfully enough. He knew that there was no licking to be looked for in Knox's study now—for the present, at all events.

He had Knox where he wanted him, so to speak. More and more he congratulated himself upon that brilliant idea that had flashed into his fat brain. It was "some" brain-wave!

Knox did not speak till he was in his study in the Sixth and Baggy had followed him in and the door was closed. Then he eyed Baggy savagely, as if he could eat him.

"You're trying to pull my leg."
"Eh? Did you say peg? What peg?"

Knox's hand strayed towards a cane on his study table, but he did not touch the cane.

"Of course, I know that this is jolly serious for you, Knox," pursued Trimble. "It means the sack if the Head knows, doesn't it? You are a beastly bully, Knox—"
"What?"

"A disgrace to the school, and all that," said Trimble. "But I'm no sneak. You've injured me fearfully, but I'm not going to sneak about you to the Head if I can help it. I shall have to let the Head know I'm deaf, of course—that can't be helped. But I shall try not to mention your name."

"I don't believe a word of it!" hissed Knox.
"Eh?"

"You're not deaf!" roared Knox. "You're putting it on, you young scoundrel, and you can't fool me!"



St Jim's Jingles!



No. 31—GEORGE FRANCIS KERR OF THE NEW HOUSE.

YOU'VE often heard of Sexton Blake,
And Ferrers Locke the famous,
Who cause the criminals to quake;
Their daring deeds inflame us
With zeal to follow in their train,
And win big reputations;
Alas! their cleverness makes plain
Our own poor limitations!

But in the New House you will find
A sort of schoolboy Tinker;
A fellow with an active mind,
A shrewd and clever thinker.
His name is Kerr; his fame has spread
Far from this seat of learning,
To everywhere the GEM is read
By youngsters most discerning!

Born in the land of Bruce and Burns,
So famed in song and story,
His ardent, boyish spirit yearns
To win renown and glory.
By tracking criminals with zest,
Like a pursuing Nemesis;
And giving fugitives no rest
Till safe on prison premises!



An Impersonator of great skill.

Apart from his detective aims,
Kerr's an outstanding figure;
He joins in all the sports and games
With sturdy boyish vigour.
He partners Figgins on the field,
When footer's on the tapis;
They play with pluck, and never yield—
A splendid pair of chappies!

Impersonation is an art,
Clever beyond comparing;
And Kerr has often played a part
With most delightful daring.
He is a master of disguise,
Whether as "Aunt" or "Granny";
Soon he will spring some new surprise,
This junior cute and canny!

Some gage imposture he'll rehearse,
And make us all with fun dance;
And I will wish him nothing worse
Than good luck in abundance!
For Kerr is quite a ripping sort,
True to the best traditions;
May he excel in work and sport,
And gain his high ambitions!

NEXT WEEK:—EDGAR LAWRENCE OF THE NEW HOUSE

"Now, you spoofing rascal—"
"Speak louder."
"You can hear me well enough!" hissed Knox, torn between doubt and apprehension. Never had he so longed to give any fellow the thrashing of his life; but he knew that he dared not lay a finger on Trimble till he was sure.
Baggy put a hand to his ear and bent his head a little. He had seen his deaf relative at home do that.
"Speak a bit louder, will you, Knox?" he asked.
"Do you really mean to say you're deaf?" breathed Knox.
"Eh?"
"Really deaf?" shouted Knox.
"Yes. Frightfully."
"What caused it?"
"That brutal blow you gave me this morning," said Baggy, blinking at him. "You remember you struck me a fearful blow on the head, Knox."
"I did nothing of the kind!" hissed Knox. "I smacked your head—just a smack."
"Half a dozen fellows saw you," said Trimble. "Not that it makes any difference. I'm not going to give you away."

"Do you mean that you don't mind if I tell the Head exactly what happened?" asked Trimble.
"You can tell him what you like."
"Right-ho, then!" said Baggy, moving towards the door. "If you really don't mind, Knox, I'll tell the Head all about it. Of course, I prefer to be quite frank. I've a frank nature."
Trimble's hand was on the door-knob. Knox oscillated painfully between disbelief and terror of the outcome if, by some dreadful chance, Trimble should be telling the truth for once. He dared not risk it.
"Hold on, Trimble!" he exclaimed luskily.
"Did you speak, Knox?"
"I—I did! I don't think you—you need bother the Head about it," said Knox haltingly. "I—I shouldn't go to Dr. Holmes if I were you, Trimble."
"Speak louder."
"Don't go to the Head!" gasped Knox.
"If you ask me as a favour, I will think it over," said Trimble loftily.
"You cheeky young scoundrel—"
THE GEM LIBRARY.--No. 948.

"What?"

"I—I mean, I do ask it as—as a favour!" stuttered Knox, the words coming out with great difficulty, almost like teeth at the dentist's.

"Well, if you put it like that, Knox, I don't mind being kind to you," said Trimble. "I'm a kind-hearted chap."

Knox ground his teeth with helpless rage.

"I suppose you're sorry you struck me that brutal blow?" asked Trimble.

"I—I—I don't admit—"

"Did you say you are sorry?" Trimble had the upper hand now, and he was the fellow to use the upper hand ruthlessly when he had it. He had trembled at Knox's frown. Now it was time for Knox to tremble at Baggy's frown.

"Yes!" gasped Knox.

"Do you apologise?" asked Trimble.

"I—I—"

"Speak up!"

"Yes!" articulated Knox.

"Well, if you're sorry, and you apologise, I'm prepared to treat you as a friend," said Trimble.

Knox's look was not exactly friendly. Indeed, it was almost homicidal. Trimble grinned at him cheerily. There was a good deal of the funk in Gerald Knox, as is often the case with a bully. Fellows like Kildare or Darrell certainly would not have placated Trimble like this, whatsoever might have been the consequences. But Knox was not made of the same stuff.

Not one drop of the cup of humiliation did Trimble intend to spare the bully of the Sixth. He had been under dog, and now he was top dog, and he meant to make the most of it.

"You want me to treat you as a friend?" he asked categorically.

Knox seemed to struggle for speech.

"Yes!" he gasped at last.

"You want me to keep your cowardly attack on me a secret?"

Knox nodded; he could not speak.

"You admit that it was a cowardly attack, Knox?"

Another nod. Knox was prepared to admit anything rather than face the consequences of what he had done.

"Well, I'll do my best for you," said Trimble airily.

"Mind, you're a beastly bully, Knox, and I despise you! I feel bound to mention that I despise you!"

Knox seemed on the point of choking.

"I'll try to keep it dark," said Trimble generously. "It may pass off, you know; the doctor says that if I'm careful it may pass off. He says there may not be any permanent injury. I hope he's right, for your sake, Knox. It would be awful to be sacked from the school, wouldn't it? What would your people say? But I suppose they wouldn't really be surprised, knowing you as they do."

Knox clenched his hands convulsively, and unclenched them again.

"Leave it to me to do the best I can for you, Knoxy," said Trimble. "If it comes out you must take the consequences—I can't help that. But I'll try to keep your brutal conduct dark. I'll try to screen you, Knox, and save you from being expelled. So long as you're civil, Knox, I'll have mercy on you."

With that, Baggy Trimble rolled out of the prefect's study. Knox kicked the door shut after him, and remained alone, in an unenviable frame of mind.

Baggy Trimble rolled away, happy and satisfied. More and more the fat junior congratulated himself. Knox of the Sixth—the bully of the School House—the fellow from whom he had fled, whom he had dodged and eluded—Knox—was under his thumb! In that extraordinary position there was joyful satisfaction for Baggy Trimble, whatever there might be for Gerald Knox. Knox's frame of mind was unenviable after Trimble had left him, but Baggy considered his own position very enviable indeed.

CHAPTER 10.

A Friend in the Sixth!

"POOR old Trimble—"

"Poor old hats!" said Jack Blake cheerily.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Poor old spoof and bunkum!" said Herries.

"Weally Hewwies—"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye and gazed at his study-mates.

He was shocked.

"In the howwid circumstances, deah boys—" he remonstrated.

"Which?" asked Dig.

"Twimble bein' afflicted with deafness—"

"Well, it's horrid if true," admitted Blake. "Horrid for

anybody who wants to talk to him, at least. But nobody does."

"Weally, you know—"

"Now, if he were dumb instead of deaf," said Blake meditatively, "it might be looked on as a good thing all round. Fancy never hearing Trimble's cackle again!"

"I wegard that as heartless, Blake, or else as implyin' that you do not believe that Twimble weally is deaf at all."

Blake gazed at his noble chum in admiration, and then looked at Herries and Dig, as if calling for their admiration also.

"How does he do it?" he asked. "How does Gussy read a fellow's thoughts like this? It's plain enough for a cow with one eye to see. But then, Gussy isn't a cow with one eye; he's a donkey with two!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When it comes to seeing the obvious," went on Blake, "give me Gussy! When it comes to seeing a thing that's as plain as the nose on your face, give me Gussy! When—"

"I wegard these remarks as twivolous, Blake. Poor old Twimble is in a weally bad way. Knox struck him bwuntally on the nappah, and appeals to have injahed his yahs. I have asked some fellows who saw it happen—Levison and his friends saw it. Wildwaks saw it, and he chipped in and made Knox chuck it. Twimble had a wealful blow on—"

"Some smack, from what I heard!" agreed Blake.

"It has wendahed him deaf—"

"Perhaps!"

"There is no perhaps about it. Twimble is a wealful fabwicath, I am awah; but he would not have the nerve to stand up in class and tell Mr. Lathom such whoppahs."

"Trimble would have nerve enough to do anything to get out of class. And he seems to have got out of his licking from Knox, too. I saw Knox pass him in the quad after class, and he never touched him, or looked at him," grinned Blake. "Trimble made him believe that he's done some damage."

"Yaas, wathah! Poor old Twimble is deaf—"

"Well, there may be something in it," admitted Blake. "Accidents do happen. So it's possible that Trimble may have told the truth for once. I don't believe it myself; but it's possible. What about it?"

"We tweated Twimble wathah wuffly yesterday, Blake—"

"Not so roughly as he asked for, fathad!" said Blake warmly. "The fat little beast planned to bag Knox's cake and to get me into a row for the bagging of it. It was just luck that Knox spotted him as the grub-raider. Trimble meant him to spot me if he spotted anybody. I ought to have given him a few more kicks."

"Hear, hear!" said Herries.

"I admit that Twimble's conduct was wevay wepwehensible," said D'Arcy. "The fact is, he is wathah a wascal. But now he is suffewin' fwom such a wealful affliction, we are bound to ovahlook his wotten conduct, and wally wound him a little."

Blake grunted.

"I twust you agreee with me, Blake," said the swell of St. Jim's gently. "If Twimble doesn't wecovah, he may have to undahgo an opevation—which means a medical Johnny goin' for him with a carvin' knife, or somethin'. In the circus, we're bound to treat him kindly."

"Oh, go ahead!" said Blake resignedly. "Take him to your best waistcoat and weep over him, if you like!"

"That would not be any good to Twimble," said D'Arcy. "I was thinkin' of askin' him to tea in the studay."

"Cut it out! We don't want Trimble."

"I have had a vermittance fwom home this mornin'," went on Arthur Augustus. "We will have wathah a spread, and ask Twimble, to show him how deeply we sympathise. I am suah that Twimble would pwefer our sympathy to take a pwactical form like that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am not jokin', deah boys. I am suah of it. Now, if you fellows are agreeable, I will look for Twimble and ask him."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass inquiringly upon his chums.

"Oh, all right!" said Blake. "There's a bare possibility that Trimble isn't spoofing this time. I admit it's queer that he seems to have taken in Dr. Short—old Short's a keen sort of a merchant. Go ahead, Gussy, and we'll stand Trimble."

"Wight-ho, deah boy."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, having gained his point, left Study No. 6 in search of Baggy Trimble.

Generally, it was easy enough to find Baggy at tea-time. Indeed, for a fellow who had a feed on in his study, it was rather difficult not to find him.

But Baggy was not in evidence now. Arthur Augustus looked into his study—No. 2. Wildrake and Mellish were there, but they did not know where Trimble was. The swell of St. Jim's went downstairs, and looked round the House, and looked in the quad. He asked five or six fellows, but

no one seemed to know where Trimble had gone. But at last Arthur Augustus learned that Julian of the Fourth had seen him going up the dormitory staircase.

"Going to lie down, perhaps, poor chap," said Arthur Augustus sympathetically. "I dare say he is feelin' wathah had, and is lyin' down."

"Lying, at any rate," assented Dick Julian, with a grin. "Wherever he is, he's probably lying."

"Oh, wats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy ascended to the Fourth Form dormitory. There he found Trimble. But the fat Baggy was not lying down. Judging by the unaccustomed cleanliness of his face for the time of day, Baggy had indulged in an unusual wash, and now he was sorting out a clean collar from his box. He blinked round at D'Arcy.

"Bai Jove! I've been lookin' for you, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, in his most gracious tones.

"Have you?" said Trimble indifferently.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, now you've found me," said Trimble, with the same indifference. He went over to a

dresser and proceeded to put on the clean collar.

"We're goin' to have a bit of a spread in our study," Twimble, said Arthur Augustus. "I came along to ask you to come, deah boy."

Baggy Trimble's fat face ought to have lighted up at that. But it didn't. He did not even take the trouble to turn his head as he replied:

"What rot!"

"Eh?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, in astonishment.

"I may give you a look in another time," said Trimble carelessly. "I don't promise, but I may."

"Bai Jove!"

"At present, I have an engagement to tea," said Trimble.

"I happen to be tea-ing in the Sixth this afternoon."

"Weally, Twimble—"

"A friend in the Sixth has asked me to tea," said Trimble.

"I'm not likely to turn him down for a fag spread in your study, D'Arcy. You can scarcely expect it."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy breathed hard.

He was the least suspicious of all fellows; but he could not help being a little suspicious now.

"Is your fwiend in the Sixth Knox?" he asked.

"I don't see that it's any business of yours," answered Trimble distantly. "But it happens to be Knox. I've made it up with Knox. We're quite friends now!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus gazed at the fat junior. Trimble, the grub-raider, the fellow who invited himself to any spread that was going, and displayed on such occasions a skin of the thickness of that of a rhinoceros—Trimble was presuming to turn up his fat little nose at an invitation to Study No. 6!

Trimble had other sources now. Trimble had a friend in the Sixth! Trimble had an opportunity for swank, and, as was natural to Trimble, he indulged it to the fullest extent. It was a sheer pleasure to Trimble to turn D'Arcy's kind invitation contemptuously down.

He grinned at his reflection in the glass. Beside his own reflection, he saw the picture of Gussy's face, with an extraordinary expression upon it. Trimble considered that he had taken Gussy down a peg or two.

He glanced round loftily.

"Perhaps I'll give you a look-in at supper," he said. "I've a lot of engagements, and may not be able to. But we'll see."

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.

"If you give me a look in at suppah, Twimble, I shall kick you out of the study," he said.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Trimble derisively. "I'm not taking any more swank from your study, I can tell you, D'Arcy. I happen to be on pally terms with a Sixth Form



"Come out of that, Trimble!" shouted the infuriated Knox. "Ow! I'm not here!" Knox grasped the edge of the table and up-ended it, without further ceremony. Books and papers flew to the floor in a shower, and the table drawer came out and crashed on the carpet. "Wow!" wailed Baggy Trimble, as his fat form was revealed. (See Chapter 5.)

perfect, and I can tell you that you'd better mind your P's and Q's. You may find yourself licked if you don't! I can jolly well tell you that Knox will do anything I ask him."

"Will you kindly explain one thing, Twimble?"

"What's that?"

"How is it you are able to hear me, if you are deaf, you spoofin' wascal?"

Trimble jumped.

It was said of old that a certain class of persons should have good memories. Trimble belonged to that class of persons, but he had not a good memory. He had quite forgotten that he was deaf for the moment.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. "You see—"

"I see that you are a spoofin' wottah, and that you have taken me in, and taken Mr. Lathom in, and appawntly taken Knox in," said Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"Eh?"

"You can hear me, you fat wascal!"

"Speak louder!"

"What?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Speak louder!" repeated Trimble. "I'm deaf."

It was rather late in the day, so to speak, for Trimble to be deaf. But now that he had remembered himself, he was deaf again. Arthur Augustus stared at him speechlessly.

"Were you speaking?" asked Trimble.

"You—you—you—" gasped D'Arcy. "You swabjous ass! Do you think I'm goin' to believe that you are deaf, when you have been heavin' me perfectly well all this time?"

"What crime?"

"Eh?"

"Did you say something about a crime?" asked Trimble calmly.

"Gweat Scott!"

"I'm sorry I can't waste any more time on you, D'Arcy."

Trimble had finished his collar and tie, and turned from the glass. Evidently these unusual preparations were made on account of the fact that he was "tea-ing" in the Sixth. "I have to go along to the Sixth Form passage now—Knox will be expecting me. Did you speak?"

"I wergard you as a spoofin' wottah, Twimble, and I have a gweat mind to give you a feahful thwashin'!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

Trimble's fat lip curled.

"You needn't get waxy because I've turned you down, D'Arcy," he said. "A fellow who has friends in the Sixth Form—prefects, too—can't be expected to waste his time in fag studies. Rather like your cheek to ask me, if you want to know my candid opinion. I can jolly well

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tell you, D'Arcy, that you're not going to stick on to me, and make out that we're pals, now that I've got a friend in the Sixth Form. And if you're hinting to come along with me, you can forget it! I'm a bit particular, whom I take with me to tea in a Sixth Form man's study."

And with that, and his fat little nose in the air, Baggy Trimble marched out of the dormitory.

Arthur Augustus stood rooted to the floor for a moment, gazing after him. Then, as if a spring had suddenly been released, D'Arcy got into motion, and jumped after Trimble.

Baggy was making a lofty and dignified exit. The loftiness and dignity were a little impaired, however, when a boot was planted on his light trousers. Baggy Trimble gave a fiendish yell and flew forward, alighting on his hands and knees.

"Yaroooh! Ow!"

"Now get up, and I will thwash you!" roared Arthur Augustus, pushing back his cuffs.

"Ow! Wow! I'll tell Knox!" howled Trimble.

"What?"

"I'll tell Knox. You'll jolly well get six for this!" bawled Trimble. "Ow! Leave off kicking me, you beast! I mean, I won't tell Knox! Yaroooh! Oh, my hat!"

Baggy Trimble scrambled up and fled for his life.

A few minutes later Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked into Study No. 6—alone. Blake and Herries and Dig looked at him inquiringly.

"Well, where's Trimble?" asked Blake.

Arthur Augustus' noble countenance was pink.

"Trimble is not comin' to tea," he said. "Pway do not mention that fat wasgal to me, Blake! I wegard him with scorn. He is no more deaf than I am."

"Go hon!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! He is simply spoofin'!" said D'Arcy.

Blake gazed at him admiringly.

"You've found that out?" he asked.

"Yaas."

"What a brain!" said Blake.

"Wats!"

And Study No. 6 sat down to tea—without Trimble.

Trimble was enjoying tea in the study of his friend in the Sixth. Whether his friend in the Sixth was also enjoying it was another matter.

CHAPTER 11. The Chopper!

BAGGY TRIMBLE was an object of great interest in the School House that evening, among the juniors, at all events.

His sudden affliction of deafness made him so.

A good many fellows had been sympathetic towards Trimble at first, like the noble Gussy. Sympathy, however, had soon petered out. Arthur Augustus was not the only fellow who had discovered that Trimble's affliction was a delusion and a snare. As a matter of fact, it would have required a fellow of alert intelligence to play such a part successfully for any length of time. Baggy Trimble was not alert; and his intelligence was limited. It was hardly necessary to find him out—he gave himself away at every turn.

Fellows would go up to him and address casual remarks in an ordinary tone of voice, and Trimble would answer without thinking. Cardew of the Fourth dropped a half-crown behind him, and Trimble spun round at once to the sound. Most of the fellows had doubted the genuineness of Trimble's sad affliction; now they no longer doubted—they knew.

True, after giving himself away, Trimble would make



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belated attempts to maintain the imposture. After answering one remark, he would affect not to hear the next. But naturally that did not carry conviction.

"Don't tell Trimble I've put a pin in that chair!" whispered Monty Lowther, as Trimble rolled into the junior Common-room that evening, and was about to sit down in his favourite armchair.

Trimble jumped out of the chair just in time.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors, as Baggy blinked into the chair for the pin that was not there.

"Congrats, Trimble!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "I see you've got your hearing back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trimble blinked at the captain of the Shell.

"Black!" he said. "What's black?"

"My only hat! Is he still keeping it up?" exclaimed Tom. "You fat fraud, you heard what Lowther said!"

"Red?" said Trimble. "What's red?"

"You silly owl!" exclaimed Manners. "Can't you see now that that chicken won't fight?"

Trimble could not or would not.

"White?" he said. "What's white? Blessed if I can make out what you fellows are saying. Speak louder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Trimble. "Cackling at a fellow's fearful affliction. I call that unfeeling."

"Bai Jove! Is Twimble more fool than wogoe, or more wogoe than fool?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in wonder.

"If you're speaking to me, speak louder," said Trimble. "Being deaf, I can't hear you when you mumble."

"I wefuse to speak to you at all, Twimble. I wegard you as a spoofin' wotah!"

"Yah!"

Baggy Trimble sat down in his chair, quite contented with himself and things generally.

He considered that he had reason for contentment. Whatever his Form-fellows believed or disbelieved, Mr. Lathom had been imposed upon—and Baggy was looking forward to quite an easy life in class for some time to come. Knox of the Sixth had been imposed upon, and he was compelled, much against the grain, to be civil to Trimble. Baggy had gone to tea in his study that afternoon, and had promised to look in again on the morrow—a promise that made Gerald Knox grit his teeth. But he had contrived to grin and tell Trimble that he would be glad to see him.

Life looked quite rosy to Trimble now, in fact.

The fellow who had haunted junior study doorways at tea-time now had the run of a Sixth Form study and could afford to turn up his fat little nose at fag spreads. The fellow who had led a hunted life with Knox of the Sixth on his trail now had the Sixth Form bully under his fat thumb. He could walk up to Knox, the prefect—Knox, the bully—in open quad and say "Hallo, Knoxy!" in the presence of staring Sixth Form men. And Knox dared not kick him, as he deserved.

The only question was, how long would it last? Baggy hoped that it would last a long time. The school doctor could not give him away, because he had not seen the school doctor at all. And on Dr. Short's next regular visit to the school he could either have a sudden recovery or else make an attempt to take in the medical gentleman. On that point Baggy decided to be guided by circumstances. He felt that this required thinking out.

In the meantime, he was a pig in clover.

The fellows could laugh or sneer or deride as much as they liked. Baggy knew what he was about, or flattered himself that he did.

That evening he had done no prep. In the morning deafness was to save him from the results of his laziness. In the afternoon there would be tea in Knox's study. Really, the morrow at least looked very bright to Baggy.

He felt a slight tremor, however, as the figure of little Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, appeared in the doorway of the junior Common-room. Baggy guessed that he was the cause of that unaccustomed visit of the Form master to the junior room. And he guessed aright.

Mr. Lathom came in and looked round over his spectacles.

"Is Trimble here?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. There he is," answered Blake. "Trimble, Mr. Lathom wants you!"

Trimble had his fat wits about him now. He gave no sign.

"Trimble!" called out Tom Merry.

No answer.

"The poor boy is deaf," said Mr. Lathom, in his benignant way. "I hope, my dear boys, that you are treating Trimble with every possible consideration in this sad, afflicted state?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Blake. "We're giving Trimble all—all the consideration we feel that he deserves, sir."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mr. Lathom unsuspectingly.

He crossed over to Trimble's armchair. Baggy rose respectfully to his feet.

"Trimble, my dear boy, do you feel any better?"

"Did you speak, sir?" asked Baggy.

"Do you feel any better?"

"Letter, sir? What letter?"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom. "I see there is no improvement. How very, very sad, my poor boy!"

"Have you lost a letter, sir?" asked Trimble. "I shall be very glad to look for it, sir, if you have. What sort of a letter was it?"

The juniors looked on at this curious conversation in silence. It was not for them to give Trimble away; but certainly they would not have been displeased had the fat young rascal given himself away. But Baggy was very much on his guard now.

"I did not mention a letter, Trimble," said Mr. Lathom mildly. "I asked you if you were better? Better! Better!"

"Oh! Better? Yes, sir," said Trimble. "I—I feel a little better, sir! I hope it may pass off, sir. What worries me chiefly, sir, is that I may give you a lot of trouble, being deaf, sir. I hope you will excuse me, sir, if I do. I can't help it, sir!"

"Do not mention it, Trimble; that is nothing. You will see Dr. Short again to-morrow."

"Oh, no, sir, I never borrow," said Trimble. "Neither a borrower nor a lender be, you know, sir." "Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, almost overcome. The other fellows stared at Trimble, amazed at his nerve.

"Poor, poor lad!" said Mr. Lathom feelingly. "I am afraid your deafness is a little worse instead of better, Trimble. You will be very careful, my boy, to carry out all Dr. Short's instructions to you?"

"Would you mind speaking louder, sir?" asked Trimble meekly. "I'm so sorry to trouble you, sir; but, being deaf—"

"You will carry out all Dr. Short's instructions carefully, Trimble!" repeated Mr. Lathom loudly.

"Oh, yes, sir! Dr. Short told me to take plenty of rest, sir!"

"Quite so." "He said that I was not to exert myself in any way, sir, especially at class work."

"Very good!"

"And—and"—Trimble grew bolder—"I didn't mention it before, sir, as—as I was afraid of seeming to be idle, sir. But the doctor told me that if I felt tired in the morning I was not to get up at rising-bell."

"My dear Trimble, you should have told me that!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "I shall give the necessary instructions for Dr. Short's directions to be carried out."

"Thank you, sir!"

"I am very anxious about you, Trimble."

"You are very kind, sir!"

"If this affliction is not cured without delay, your parents must be informed!"

"Oh, I—I shouldn't like to worry my people about it, sir!" said Baggy, in alarm.

"That is very right and proper, Trimble; but it is a serious matter," said Mr. Lathom kindly. "I shall, however, see the doctor first and consult him. I am now going to telephone to Dr. Short."

"Eh?"

"And ask him to make an appointment to see you early to-morrow."

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"And then we shall know the worst," said Mr. Lathom.

And with a kind nod the Form master walked out. Baggy Trimble sank back into his chair. His fat limbs refused to support him.



"If you don't mind, then," said Trimble, "I'll tell the Head what I know." The fat Fourth-Former's hand was on the door-knob when the terrified Knox called him back. "Hold on, Trimble!" he exclaimed huskily. "I shouldn't go to Dr. Holmes if I were you!" (See Chapter 9.)

Blake burst into a chuckle. "Did you really see the doctor to-day, Trimble?" he asked.

"Oh dear!" groaned Baggy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Groan!

A few minutes before Baggy Trimble had been feeling eminently contented and comfortable. Now he could only express his feelings by a deep, deep groan.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Do you mean to say, Trimble, that you never went to the doctor's at all?"

Groan!

"Didn't he tell you not to exert yourself in any way?" chortled Levison.

Groan!

"And to stay in bed after rising-bell?" roared Blake.

Groan!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "I weally think that Twimble has done it this time!"

"It really does look as if he has been and gone and done it!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

Groan!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The junior Common-room was in a roar. Baggy Trimble was the cause of the merriment; but he could not join in it. Baggy Trimble was not feeling merry. While the other fellows chortled, Baggy Trimble could only groan. He groaned in dire apprehension, and his apprehensions were well-founded.

CHAPTER 12.

A Happy Recovery!

"KNOX!" Mr. Lathom was looking out of his study doorway with a frowning brow.

"Yes, sir!" grunted Knox, coming up.

Knox came up to the Fourth Form master with a feeling of trepidation. If Trimble had betrayed him—if Trimble had told his Form master whose hand had struck the blow that caused the fat junior's deafness—

"Knox," said Mr. Lathom, "will you have the kindness to bring Trimble, of my Form, here?"

"Trimble, sir?" stammered Knox.

"Yes, Knox! Bring the young rascal here at once!" Mr. Lathom's usually kind face was quite dark with anger. "He is in the junior Common-room now. Kindly fetch him here!"

"Very well, sir."

Knox of the Sixth hurried away.

In a couple of minutes he was looking in at the doorway of the junior room. To his surprise, he found all the fellows in the room chortling—with one exception. Baggy Trimble sat limply in an armchair with a woebegone expression on his fat face—a look that might have touched the heart of a stone statue.

"Hallo! Here's somebody for you, Trimble!" murmured Blake.

Groan!

"Trimble!" called out Knox.

Baggy blinked at him.

"Mr. Lathom wants you in his study, Trimble," said the prefect. "I'm to take you there."

Baggy Trimble did not say "Eh?" or request Knox to speak louder. He had realised, at long last, that that chicken would no longer fight.

With a dismal countenance, Baggy detached himself from the armchair, and limped after the prefect.

As they traversed the corridors, Knox glanced at him several times, very curiously. Baggy emitted several groans on his way to his Form master's study. He seemed at the lowest spirits.

Knox tapped at Mr. Lathom's door and opened it. He marched Trimble into the study.

"Here is Trimble, sir."

"Very good! Trimble!" said Mr. Lathom sternly.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Baggy.

"I have telephoned to Dr Short."

"Ow!"

"He tells me," said Mr. Lathom, with growing sternness, "that you did not call upon him to-day, Trimble."

"Oh dear!"

"So far from having given you the instructions which you repeated to me—or, rather, which you invented—he has not seen you at all."

"Oh, sir!"

"I can only conclude, Trimble, that your pretence of deafness was a mere imposture—a paltry trick to escape from class, and that you dared not attempt to deceive a medical man as you had deceived your Form master!" thundered Mr. Lathom.

Trimble quaked.

Knox was grinning now. That grin was a warning to Baggy of what was to come after Mr. Lathom had done with him!

"I—I say, sir," gasped Trimble. "Let me—let me explain, sir! I—I had a blow on the head, sir—"

"Nonsense!"

"I was frightfully deaf, sir—"

"Trimble!"

"But—but it passed off, sir—"

"What?"

"It—it passed off, sir, as—as I was going to the—the doctor's, sir, and—and so I—I didn't go, sir!" gasped Trimble. "It—it came on again afterwards, sir. It—it—it comes and goes, sir! That—that's how it is, sir. I—I—I hope you—you believe me, sir."

Mr. Lathom stared fixedly at Trimble. If Trimble lied, as he said, that Mr. Lathom believed him, it showed that Trimble had a remarkably sanguine nature.

"Upon my word," ejaculated Mr. Lathom, "this boy's prevarication passes all belief! Do you venture to say now that you are deaf, Trimble?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Baggy. "Frightfully, sir! Stone deaf, sir!"

"What! Yet you hear what I say!"

Trimble jumped.

"Oh, no, sir! I—I can't hear a word!"

"What?" stuttered Mr. Lathom.

"Not—not a syllable, sir!" gasped Baggy. "It—it's all a blank to me, sir! I—I didn't hear you say you'd telephoned to the doctor, sir—"

"Trimble silence! Knox, will you hand me my cane?"

"Certainly, sir!" grinned Knox.

"Trimble!"

"Oh dear!"

"Bend over that chair, Trimble!"

"Ow!"

"You need not wait, Knox."

Knox of the Sixth left the study, grinning! Mr. Lathom had told him that he need not wait; but Knox waited at the corner of the passage. His turn came after Mr. Lathom's.

Whack, whack, whack!

The whacking of Mr. Lathom's cane was accompanied by frantic yells from Baggy Trimble. It was not often that Mr. Lathom administered a severe licking. But there were occasions that required severity; and Mr. Lathom felt that this was one of the occasions. The cane whacked, and whacked, and whacked, till Mr. Lathom's arm was tired—and Baggy Trimble was more tired than Mr. Lathom's arm.

"Trimble, you may go! And if ever you attempt to deceive me again—"

Mr. Lathom did not finish; he left the rest to Baggy's imagination. Baggy tottered from the study.

"Waiting for you!" said an agreeable voice.

"Yaroooh!"

And history repeated itself!

In the Fourth Form dormitory that night there was a sound of groaning. It was quite a long time before Baggy Trimble groaned himself to sleep.

On the following day Baggy was no longer groaning, though he still looked very dismal. But he was no longer deaf. He had lost his sad affliction; and at the same time he lost his friend in the Sixth.

His friend in the Sixth still looked for him occasionally, however, though not with friendly intentions. For some days Baggy Trimble's chief occupation was dodging kicks and eluding cuffs—what time the other fellows chortled over that lamentable outcome of Baggy Trimble's brain-wave.

(You've all heard of Grimes, the cherry grocer boy—and you've all heard of Racke & Co. the shell-trio of the Shell. Well, all these characters are prominently in next week's extra-long story of St. Jim's, which is entitled: "HIS HONOUR AT STAKE!"—the most powerful and dramatic yarn Martin Clifford has ever written. Don't miss it, chums, whatever you do!)

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A BIT OF LANCASHIRE!

Belated Traveller: "Hey, mester, how far is it from here to Owdham?" Passer By: "Aw cannot tell thee, lad; but there's a mile-stun dahn yonder." Belated Traveller: "But aw cannot read." Passer By: "Well, it'll just suit thee, then, 'cos there's nowt on it." —Half-a-crown has been awarded to Edgar Walker, 17, Binfield Road, Meerbrook, Sheffield.

UNAVOIDABLE!

Two youths, who imagined themselves budding authors, were discussing a certain paper and its editor. "He certainly is terribly slow at reading manuscript," remarked the one with the long hair. "Do you think so?" asked the other. "Why, I know the time when he went through six stories in less than a minute." "Goodness, when was that?" asked his companion in some surprise. "When the lift broke!" came the answer.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Ware, 90, Priory Road, Hornsey, London, N. 8.

MORE THAN ENOUGH!

Two City workers returning home late from business, were looking into the window of a ham and beef shop. "I say," said the younger of the two, "what about taking home a piece of tongue for supper?" "Not me!" returned the other. "There'll be plenty waiting for me on the doorstep!" —Half-a-crown has been awarded to Albert Gabbitas, 4, Drake Road, Maltby, near Rotherham.

GAVE HIMSELF AWAY!

Two workmen were whiling away their lunch hour playing cards, when Pat suddenly asked: "What was the last card I dealt you, Mick?" "A spade," answered Mick, without looking up. "Just what I thought," said Pat. "I saw you spit on your hands before you picked it up!" —Half-a-crown has been awarded to Herbert Walker, 53, Seaham Street, New Seaham, near Sunderland, co. Durham.

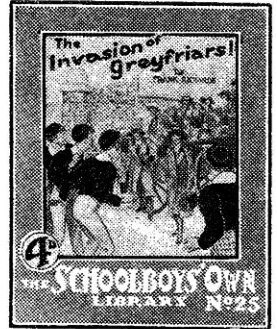
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IN THE "GEM"—AND ON THE FILMS!

BY this time, doubtless, you will have read the opening of our brilliant new serial story, "The Scarlet Streak!" and are now anxiously awaiting next week's instalment. Well, it's something worth waiting for, believe me, chums! Meantime, some of you will be seeing this sensational story on the screen at your local cinema. Splendid! Also between now and next week you will be able to devote a little time to the solving of the simple picture-puzzle based upon the story and film which appears on page two. Don't forget!

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Bear that well in mind when you come to that part of the puzzle which, catching you in an impatient mood, might appear a little more difficult than the rest of it, and take comfort. Strictly speaking, though, there's very little difficulty to be encountered in solving the puzzle, and I wager that every Gemite reading this par is quite capable of solving it on his head, so to speak. In any case, the handsome prize award is offered afresh every week, so there are plenty of chances in store.

THE GROCER'S BOY!

Several requests for a St. Jim's yarn featuring Grimes, the grocer's boy, have reached me recently, so a fair

number of Gemites will be exceedingly pleased with themselves when I let on that next week's story does deal with Grimes. And without a doubt, those who haven't particularly wanted a "Grimes" yarn will receive it well, for the story shows Martin Clifford in good form. It's an extra-long one, too, chums!

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