

THE BEST COMPANION FOR THE HOLIDAYS—The "GEM"!

THE GEM 2¢

EVERY WEDNESDAY.



The SECRET of the CAVE!

THE BEST HOLIDAY STORY OF THE WEEK

Treasure! The very thought of a search for hidden gold quickens the pulses of Tom Merry & Co., and their girl chums on holiday in Cornwall. And the one thought uppermost in every mind is of grim Penperro Rock and the ancient secret it holds. But Lord Eastwood's guests little dream of the amazing adventures into which it is to lead them!

Fun, Thrills & Drama are all contained in this Novel Story of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's on Holiday!

CHAPTER 1.

Gilbert Renfrew!

"NOW for tea, you chaps!"

"Hurrah!"

"Wathah, deah boys!"

It was Tom Merry, the captain of the Shell at St. Jim's, who had mentioned tea. And among his companions there was not one dissentient voice!

Tom Merry had been busily toweling himself down, after an invigorating bathe among the great Atlantic breakers that thundered into the little cove at the foot of the towering Cornish cliffs. Now, as he slipped on his cricket shirt and grey flannel trousers, thoughts of the cheery tea that would be waiting for them all at the big old house on the top of the cliffs were rousing Tom's healthy appetite!

"Buck up, you chaps!"

"What-ho!"

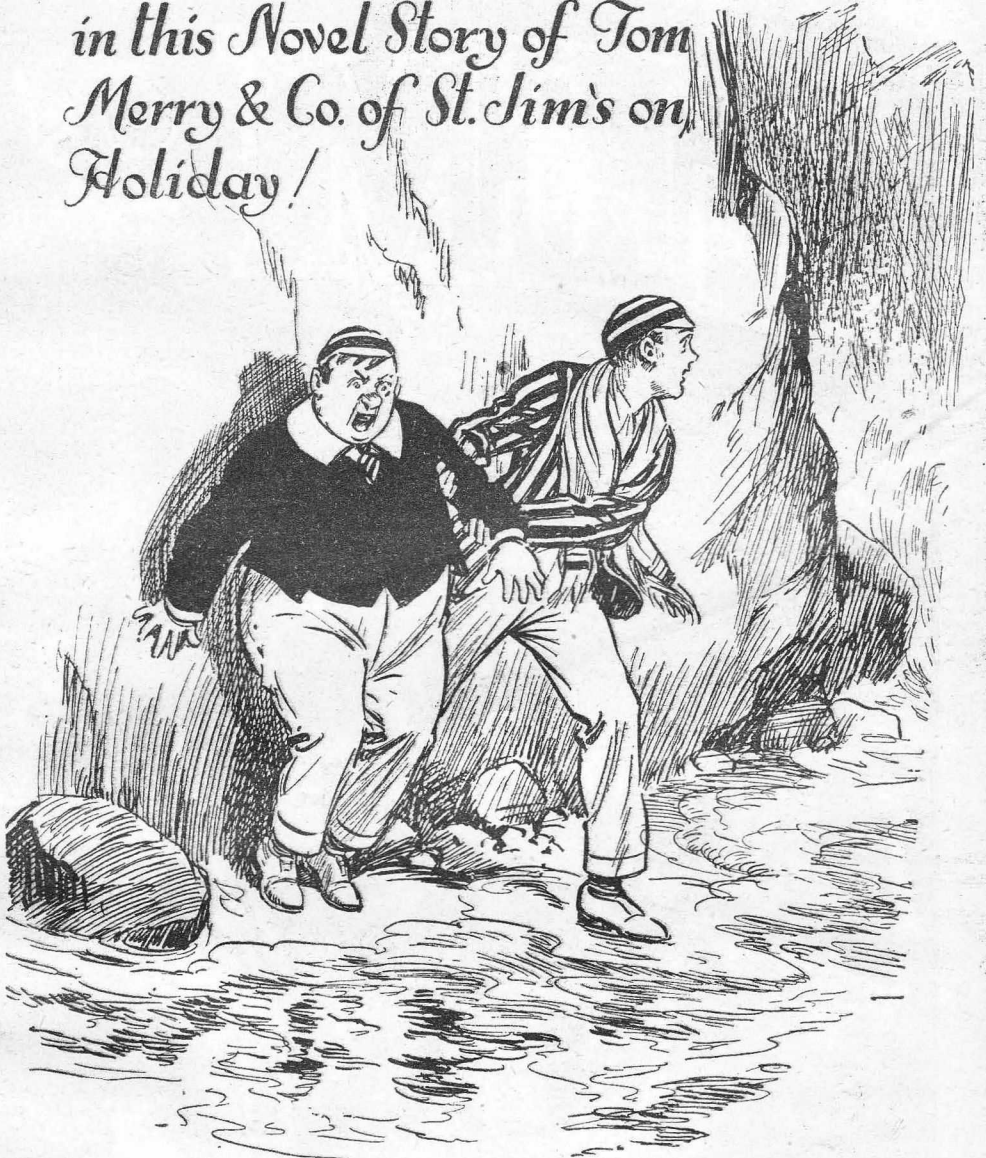
In another minute the party of St. Jim's juniors was tramping up the cliff-path, looking very sunburnt and fit after their bathe.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, and his guests, had been staying for more than a week now at the big, lonely house that Lord Eastwood, Arthur Augustus' father, had taken for the summer.

In addition to Tom Merry and his two chums, Monty Lowther and Harry Manners, the swell of St. Jim's own particular chums, Blake, Herries and Digby of the Fourth, were spending their holidays at Penperro House. So were Levison and Clive of the Fourth, and Figgins & Co. of the New House, and Reginald Talbot of the Shell.

Baggy Trimble, the Falstaff of the School House, had also managed to be included in the party by a "wangle." But Baggy had not been bathing that afternoon. Baggy did not like bathing. He preferred to slack about the house or lie on the cliffs in the sunshine, within easy reach of the dining-room. Baggy was not punctual in many things, but he was always very punctual for meals!

The juniors reached the top of the cliffs, and passed into THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,121.



the big garden of Penperro House through a gate in the old stone wall.

"My word, I can do with my tea!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "I've got an appetite I wouldn't sell for a quid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bathe had quickened the appetites of all, and they did not waste much time as they hurried across the garden towards the rambling pile of the grey old mansion, with its weather-worn stone walls and wind-swept towers, which the gales of years had buffeted and mellowed. On the flagged terrace overlooking the garden and the sea, a footman was placing chairs by a tea-wagon.

As the juniors came on to the terrace, a fat figure rolled into view from the open french windows of the library. It was Baggy Trimble.

"Hallo, you fat slacker!" grinned Jack Blake. "Why didn't you come and bathe, Baggy?"

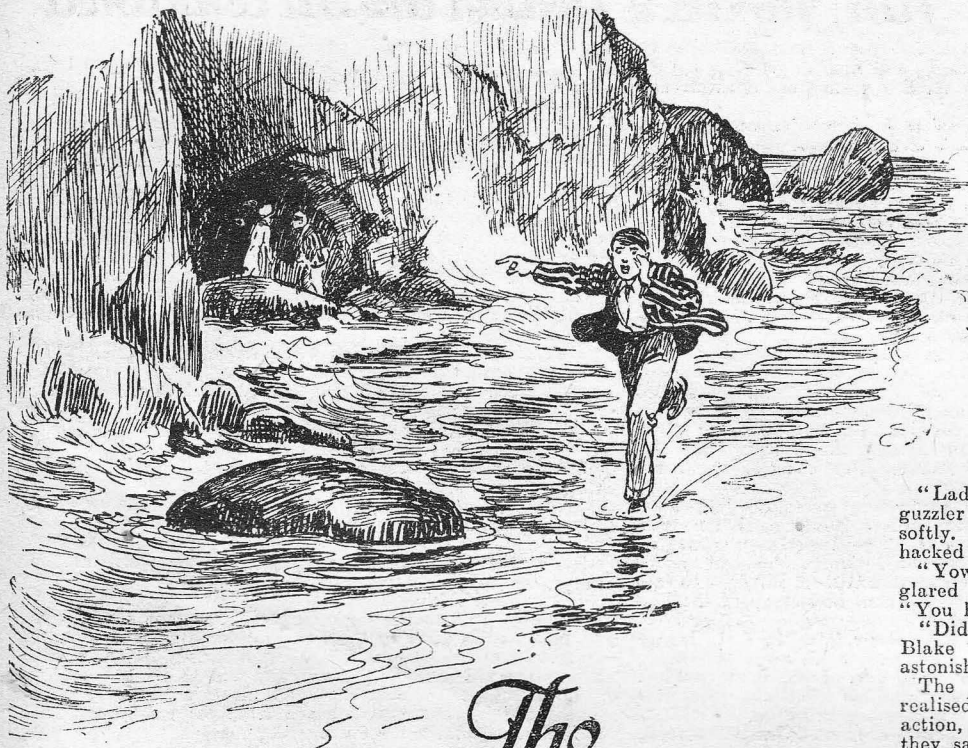
Baggy dropped into a chair, and blinked at Blake.

"Oh, really, Blake! Bathing's not good for me, you know. I've got a delicate constitution, that can only be kept up by constant nourishment—"

"Gammon!"

"Oh, really, Levison—"

At that moment there was another step on the terrace, and the fresh, pretty figure of Cousin Ethel appeared from the



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By
Martin Clifford

french windows, followed by Doris Levison and Lady Peggy Brooke.

Ethel & Co. from Spalding Hall were also spending the holidays under Lord Eastwood's hospitable roof. Though as a rule the three Spaldingites joined the juniors when they went to bathe, they had not done so for once that afternoon. Ethel smiled brightly at the juniors.

"Had a good bathe?" she inquired.

"Rather!" grinned Figgins.

There was a sudden, gasping yell from Baggy Trimble. Baggy's manners were anything but polished, and he had not thought it necessary to rise from the chair into which he had flopped at the appearance of the girls. Tom Merry had therefore taken hold of Baggy's ear and raised the fat Fourth-Former to his feet with a jerk that was decidedly painful for Baggy!

"Ow! Yow! Oh, really, Merry—"

Ethel, Doris and Lady Peggy sat down by the tea-wagon, and Tom Merry let go his hold of Baggy's ear with a grin.

"You can sit down again now, Baggy!"

"Yow! Oh, really, Merry! You've hurt my ear!"

"I meant to!" chuckled Tom.

Baggy glared at him, and sat down again sulkily. But the girls had not noticed the incident—Tom Merry had taken care that they should not. Baggy rubbed his ear and reached out a fat hand to take a buttered scone.

"Yaroooop!"

Baggy had not taken the buttered scone! Instead, he had leapt to his feet with a sudden roar, and was dancing on one foot, clapping his leg.

"O w! O h! Yoooooop!"

"Ladies first, you fat guzzler!" grinned Blake softly. It was Blake who had hacked Baggy's fat shin.

"Yow! Oh! Ow! Ow!" Baggy glared at Blake wrathfully. "You hacked me—"

"Did I really?" ejaculated Blake in well-feigned astonishment.

The other juniors, who realised the reason for Blake's action, chuckled softly as they sat down. Ethel, Doris and Lady Peggy stared at Baggy in surprise, however.

"What the dickens is the matter with you?" demanded Lady Peggy.

Baggy did not answer. He did not like the look in Jack Blake's eye. He sat down again, growling, and this time he waited till the three girls had been helped before he ventured to tackle his own tea!

A few moments later Wally D'Arcy, of the Third, came on to the terrace from the garden, with Reggie Manners and Frank Levison. The three minors had been for a tramp along the cliffs, and brought back appetites that would have done credit to Baggy Trimble.

"Hallo, everybody!" sang out Wally cheerily, as he sat down on the stone balustrade at the edge of the terrace.

"Pass the scones, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus adjusted his celebrated eyeglass and surveyed his minor rather frostily. Arthur Augustus did not approve of Wally's manners at all.

In the opinion of Arthur Augustus, Wally should have said, not plain "Gussy," but "Gussy, please!"

"I beg your pardon, Wally?" he sniffed.

"Pass the scones, Gussy!"

"Gussy what?" snapped the swell of St. Jim's, hinting at the wanted word.

"Eh?"

"Gussy what?" repeated Arthur Augustus stiffly.

"Gussy, you ass—if you like that better!" chuckled Wally.

"Pass the scones, Gussy, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The other juniors roared. The swell of St. Jim's gave a gasp.

"B-bai Jove!"

Herries passed the scones to the three minors, and Ethel poured out their tea. Arthur Augustus glared at Wally speechlessly. But he did not pursue the subject further. He seemed likely to get more than he bargained for again if he did!

Lord Eastwood joined the party a few moments later. Handsome and upright, the soldierly-looking earl came along the terrace with a good-humoured smile on his face. He sat down next to Doris Levison, and glanced round.

"Where is young Renfrew?" he inquired.

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"No ideah, patah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.
 "Here I am, sir!" came a sudden quiet voice

With noiseless footsteps a tall young man in the early twenties, with a dark, thin face and quick, black eyes had stepped on to the terrace from the open french windows.

Gilbert Kenfrew had come to be numbered among Lord Eastwood's guests in strange circumstances.

One wild night, soon after the arrival of the St. Jim's party in Cornwall, Figgins & Co., the New House trio, had seen a small yacht in distress among the raging waters at the foot of Penperro Rock—a high, rocky island immediately opposite Penperro House. Taking their lives in their hands, Figgins, Kerr, and Patty Wynn had dragged a boat down to the water and rowed out through the storm.

From the sinking yacht they had succeeded in rescuing its solitary occupant, a young man, whose death among the waves would otherwise have been certain.

They had brought him to Penperro House, and their heroism had resulted in the healing of a breach between Figgins and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy that had threatened to spoil utterly Gussy's summer house-party.

The stranger from the sea had been in a bad way when Figgins & Co. had brought him, on that stormy night, to the shelter of Penperro House. For a whole night his identity had been a mystery.

But upon his recovery the young man had told Lord Eastwood that his name was Gilbert Renfrew, that he was the son of an old friend of Lord Eastwood's, who was at present abroad. Lord Eastwood, though he had never known his friend's son, had invited Gilbert Renfrew to join the house-party, and the young man had accepted the hospitable invitation with alacrity.

The St. Jim's juniors liked Renfrew from the first, despite his rather silly manners, and he, for his part, had made himself very agreeable to everybody. Lord Eastwood had had no cause to regret the addition of Gilbert Renfrew to the cheery party staying at the big house on the cliffs.

"Ah, there you are, Gilbert!" exclaimed Lord Eastwood, as the young man approached the party, with smiling face. "Tea is ready."

Renfrew tossed away the cigarette that had been smouldering between his lips and seated himself next to his host.

"I have been looking at the island through a pair of glasses," said Renfrew, glancing out over the sea towards the gaunt shape of Penperro Rock, rising black and jagged from the turmoil of seething waters at its base. He laughed. "I feel rather an interest in that island, seeing how near to death I was among those rocks round it," he added, with a quick glance at Figgins.

"A pity the sea keeps so rough," said Lord Eastwood. "If only it were quite calm, it would be possible to row out to the rock and land on it."

"It really is inaccessible, except in the calmest weather?" queried Renfrew, staring out intently at the jagged mass, where the remains of some ancient ruins could be seen black against the blue sky upon the summit.

"Yes, it is impossible to land on the rock till the sea is smooth," nodded Lord Eastwood.

"Yes, blow it!" grunted Wally D'Arcy.

"Let's hope the sea gets smooth one of these days soon!" grinned Jack Blake. "Then for the jolly old treasure hunt!"

"Rather!"

There was a chorus of agreement.

The St. Jim's juniors, like Gilbert Renfrew, felt a very keen interest in Penperro Rock! As soon as the weather was calm enough, they meant to visit the great rock across the intervening channel of sea, to search for a treasure that was supposed to be hidden there.

According to the legend that Lord Eastwood had told them, the monks who in ancient times had occupied the building on Penperro Rock, the ruins of which could now be seen, had concealed a quantity of treasure somewhere on the little island—a treasure that had never been unearthed.

The St. Jim's party meant to hunt for that treasure at the earliest opportunity. Lord Eastwood had told them that in his opinion the treasure was only a legend; but the juniors were more optimistic!

There was an odd gleam in the eyes of Gilbert Renfrew as he stared out towards Penperro Rock. He gave a sudden laugh.

"It would certainly be good fun to land on the island and have a look for that supposed treasure," he said, with a shrug. "But I'm afraid it is not very likely that it really exists—eh, Lord Eastwood?"

"I am afraid not," smiled his host.

"We'll have a good look for it, anyway!" grinned Tom Merry.

"My hat, yes!" cried Lady Peggy eagerly, a dancing gleam of excitement in her brown eyes.

Tea over, Lord Eastwood rose to his feet and glanced at Arthur Augustus.

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"I want you to go to the village and post a letter for me, Arthur."

"Certainly, patah!"

"I am writing to your father, Gilbert," went on Lord Eastwood, with a smile, "telling him that you are here with us!"

Renfrew seemed to start for a moment. Then he smiled.

"Yes?" he murmured. "Well, sir, I want to stroll down to the village myself. Don't bother, Arthur. Let me post it for you."

"That's very kind of you!" exclaimed Lord Eastwood.

Accordingly, it was the tall figure of Renfrew who strode out of the gates of Penperro House five minutes later, carrying Lord Eastwood's letter, while Arthur Augustus joined the rest on the tennis-courts behind the house.

The village was a couple of miles away, along the cliffs. But Gilbert Renfrew had only gone half a mile before he stopped.

He glanced back. The house was out of sight now. With a curious smile on his thin, dark face, he drew from his pocket Lord Eastwood's letter, and glanced at the address:

"W. Renfrew, Esq., Hotel du Rhone, Paris."

"A letter to my father, eh?" muttered Gilbert Renfrew, with a twisted smile.

With a quick movement of his lean fingers, he tore the letter across and across, and scattered the fragments to the wind. He stood watching them flutter down over the cliff edge, down to the waves that crashed and thundered among the rocks below.

He laughed softly.

His eyes rose to the dark shape of Penperro Rock, with its gaunt ruins piercing the sky, and for a minute or more he stood motionless, staring intently at the mysterious island, where the old monks' treasure was said to lie hidden.

Then, with a twisted smile on his thin face, the man whom Figgins & Co. had saved from the sea turned and strolled away down the cliffs.

CHAPTER 2.

Not Wanted!

"READY, Gussy?"
 It was the following afternoon. Tom Merry had put his head in at the door of the bed-room that Arthur Augustus shared with Jack Blake, to find the swell of St. Jim's standing before the mirror, fastening his tie.

Arthur Augustus was looking very gorgeous indeed!

A picnic had been arranged for that afternoon, and Arthur Augustus considered that it would be a good opportunity to bring out his new summer suit—an elegant affair of light grey, with a distinctive style. He had been at great pains to find a tie to match it, and the rest of the party had been waiting downstairs for quite a while in consequence.

"Just comin', deah boy!"

"Thank goodness for that! We thought you were dead, or something!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Buck up!"

Arthur Augustus finished fastening his tie, and surveyed his reflection in the mirror with much satisfaction. He picked up his straw-hat and turned to the door.

As he did so, there was a heavy step in the passage, and the fat face of Baggy Trimble appeared in the doorway behind Tom Merry.

Baggy had been having a snooze after lunch, and he blinked owlishly at Tom and the swell of St. Jim's. The fact that both were carrying their hats showed him that they were going out.

"I say, where are you chaps going?" demanded Baggy.

"We're off to Tregawn Cove," answered Tom Merry guardedly. "Come on, Gussy!"

Tom and Arthur Augustus turned towards the stairs. Baggy plucked at Tom's sleeve.

"Half a jiff!" he exclaimed. "Are you taking grub with you?"

"Yes."

Baggy's eyes gleamed.

"Good! I'll come with you."

Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus looked at one another. They had not the slightest desire for Baggy's company that afternoon!

Not only had Baggy a pleasant little habit of grumbling at the walk, and at the heat, and at everything else when on a picnic; but the juniors and their girl chums were intending to bathe when they got to the cove where the picnic was to be held, and since Baggy would not bathe, that would mean leaving the big tea-basket to his tender mercies!

There would only be one result of such a procedure—

Baggy would scoff the lot! And the juniors certainly did not want the trouble of having to leave one of their number on guard over the tea-things.

"Ahem!" Tom Merry coughed. "I shouldn't come with us, Baggy, if I were you. It's nearly a couple of miles along the cliffs—"

"Rats!" Baggy glared at Tom indignantly. "I tell you I'm coming! I suppose you don't want me to come, 'cause you're afraid you'll be cut out with—"

"Bai Jove! You fat boundah!"

"That's about the size of it," sniffed Baggy. "Well, I tell you I'm coming. See?"

Tom and the swell of St. Jim's hurried down the stairs after Trimble's fat figure. In the hall, Tom caught hold of Baggy's shoulder.

"Look here, Baggy—"

"Leggo!" sniffed Baggy. "I tell you I'm coming, too."

"What?" howled Blake.

"I'm coming with you!" grinned Baggy, rather maliciously. The fact that he was not wanted made Baggy only the more anxious to tack himself on to the picnic-party.

Through the big front door, the last of the other juniors could be seen vanishing on to the cliffs. With an unpleasant grin on his face, Baggy rolled down the steps and hurried



As Tom Merry, Blake, Fatty Wynn, and Lady Peggy reached the top of the cliffs above the little cove, Tom gave a startled exclamation. "Look!" he gasped. Floating in the smooth water in the shelter of the headland was a derelict dinghy, with the fat form of Baggy Trimble in it, apparently fast asleep. (See Chapter 3.)



And with a dogged look on his pasty face, the Falstaff of the Fourth rolled towards the stairs.

"Oh deah!" muttered the swell of St. Jim's. "This is wotten! We don't want Twimble!"

"Rather not," growled Tom. "It would mean no end of bother, guarding the grub!"

They hurried after Baggy, and caught up with him at the top of the stairs.

"Look here, Baggy," said Tom Merry persuasively, "why don't you stick in the house, and have a ripping big tea all by yourself? Lord Eastwood and Renfrew have gone out together, so you'll have things all to yourself—"

"Rats!" snorted Baggy. "I'm coming with you!"

The evident reluctance of Tom Merry and the swell of St. Jim's to see him included in the party aroused Baggy's suspicions. He felt sure now that a very extra-special feed was planned for that afternoon in Tregawn Cove, and he meant to be there.

With a dogged gleam in his little eyes, Baggy rolled down the stairs to the hall, where Blake had appeared in search of Tom and Arthur Augustus.

"Buck up, you dummies!" yelled Blake at sight of the pair at the top of the stairs. "The others have gone on already!"

after them. Blake, Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus stared after him disconsolately.

"Oh, crumbs!" ejaculated Blake. "We don't want Baggy!"

"Wathah not!"

"Can't we get rid of him somehow?" muttered Blake.

"Bai Jove!"

A sudden gleam had come into the eyes of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I've got an ideah!" he exclaimed.

"What is it?"

For answer, the swell of St. Jim's hurried to a cupboard under the stairs, and dragged out a long, closed basket.

"Quick, deah boys!" gasped Arthur Augustus excitedly. "Two of us must cawwy this off to anothah cove! Baggy must see us with it before he joins the othahs—he will be sure to follow what looks like the gwub! Then we'll leave the basket there for him to look aftah! There's a lock on it—he won't be able to open it, so he'll stay with it, waitin' for the west to awwive."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake and Tom Merry burst into a roar of laughter.

Arthur Augustus hastily turned the key in the lock of the big picnic basket.

"Go and join the others, Gussy, and say we'll be with them later!" chuckled Tom.

"Ha, ha, ha! Wathah!"

Arthur Augustus slipped the key into his pocket and ran down the steps from the big front door.

Baggy Trimble, perspiring profusely as he rolled in pursuit of the group of juniors vanishing over the cliffs in company with Ethel, Doris and Lady Peggy, turned his head as he heard hurrying footsteps behind him.

"Hi, Twimble!"

"Well, what is it?" snapped Baggy.

Arthur Augustus halted beside him.

"You weally want to come with us, deah boy?"

"Yes!" roared Trimble.

"Then it is only fair that you share the twouble of cawwin' the gwub," went on the swell of St. Jim's. "You had bettah go and help Tom Mewwy and Blake with the basket."

Baggy glanced round, and his eyes lit up as he saw Tom and Jack Blake emerge from the front door with the big basket between them.

He had not seen the real picnic-basket, since Herries and Digby had been carrying it a little ahead of the others, and so it had been out of sight as Baggy had gone in pursuit of the main body of the picnic party. That the basket borne between Tom and Blake was not the basket that contained the tea never occurred to him for a moment.

"Oh, all right!"

Baggy was not fond of exertion. But he was willing in this instance to help in carrying the basket, since that seemed to ensure his proximity to the splendid tea that the housekeeper was sure to have made up for the picnickers.

His little eyes gleamed greedily as he saw the size of the basket. There were more than a dozen of them in the party, but, even so, it was a big basket for the occasion.

Arthur Augustus hurried on after the others, with a soft chuckle. Baggy turned and waited for Blake and Tom Merry to come up.

"Lending a hand with the basket, Baggy?" inquired Blake gravely. "Good man!"

"Certainly," nodded Baggy loftily. "I'm always a useful, obliging sort of chap, you know. I'll—er—take a turn later."

"Good egg!"

Blake winked at Tom Merry—a wink that Baggy failed to observe! With the basket between them, Tom and Blake passed out through the gate on to the cliffs, with Baggy rolling behind them, his fat face glowing with greedy satisfaction.

"This way, Baggy!"

Tom and Blake turned off to the right. Baggy blinked at them in surprise.

"That's not the way the others went!" he exclaimed.

"They're going the long way round, by the cliffs," explained Tom—truthfully enough. "This is a short cut."

"Oh, good!"

Quite unsuspecting, Baggy turned and rolled along at Blake's side.

He meant to stick by that basket like grim death!

CHAPTER 3.

A Queer Craft for Baggy!

"HERE we are!"

"Oh! Groocoff!"

Baggy gasped wearily.

He had been taking his turn at the basket, and he was feeling just about "done in."

The basket was by no means heavy—it was surprisingly light, in fact. But the tramp over the cliffs, and the climb down the rocky path to the beach below, had left Baggy limp and breathless.

He sank down on the basket and mopped his perspiring features.

"I—I say, what about a snack now?" gasped Baggy.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No, Baggy. Not yet, old chap. We must wait for the others."

"But look here——"

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Blake! I'm hungry! I've got a delicate constitution——"

"I'll tell you what," grinned Blake. "Tom and I'll go and look for the others. You don't mind being left alone, Baggy, to mind the basket?"

Baggy's eyes gleamed suddenly.

"Rather not!"

"Good! Come on, Tom!"

Tom and Blake turned and crossed to the foot of the cliff-path, and vanished up it. Baggy watched them go

eagerly. The moment they had vanished from sight he turned his attentions to the lid of the basket. His fat fingers tried to raise it.

"Oh, crumbs!"

Baggy's face went suddenly blank. He had discovered that the basket was locked.

"The rotters!" he gasped. "Oh, the mean beasts! Fancy locking the blessed basket! Anybody would think they couldn't jolly well trust me to look after the grub without trying to bag some!"

Baggy's face was full of indignation as he tried again to open the lid, without avail.

"Blow!" groaned Baggy disconsolately. "Oh, hang! I suppose I shall have to wait! The mean rotters!"

With a grunt that conveyed eloquently his feelings towards Tom Merry & Co. at that moment, Trimble seated himself on the basket to await the arrival of the picnic-party.

That he would have to wait a very long time indeed was a fact of which he was blissfully unaware! He was equally ignorant of the fact that the little cove to which he had been brought was not Tregawn Cove at all.

It was very warm in the sunshine that streamed into the little cove. The basket was standing on the shingle not far from the lapping water. Beyond the headland, the great Atlantic breakers could be seen rolling by, but in the cove, in the shelter of the high headland, the water was calm and smooth.

The fat junior's wandering gaze fell almost immediately on an old dinghy drawn up on the shingle about a dozen yards away. Baggy rolled over to it and looked inside. Minus oars, old and obviously disused, the dinghy did not look as if it would keep afloat for long, even in the calm water of the cove.

But Trimble had no intention of using the ancient craft for any other purpose than as a comfortable resting-place. He climbed into it, and sat down on the warm, dry boards, resting his head on one of the seats.

For a minute or so Baggy surveyed sleepily the gaunt shape of Penperro Rock, half a mile out to sea, where the waves thundered. Then he closed his eyes.

The roar of the distant waves, the gentle lapping of the water near him, and the hot sunshine, all combined to make Baggy feel very drowsy.

The minutes passed, and still there was no sign of the picnic-party.

"Wish they'd buck up," muttered Baggy sleepily. "If only the mean beasts hadn't locked the blessed basket——"

His voice trailed away.

A minute later a deep, reverberating snore might have been heard in the deserted cove.

Zzzzzzzzzzz!

Baggy Trimble slept.

"Well, I suppose it's time we got back, deah boys!"

Arthur Augustus glanced at his watch.

Tea was over, and a very cheery tea it had been in Tregawn Cove. The juniors and the girls had bathed and played cricket on the sand, and enjoyed themselves thoroughly.

But now, as Arthur Augustus had remarked, it was time they were getting back.

All the juniors knew of the ruse that had been adopted to prevent Baggy from joining the party and spoiling it. But the girls knew nothing of it as yet.

Tom Merry glanced at Arthur Augustus.

"I'll go and fetch Baggy," he grinned.

Arthur Augustus chuckled. So did the other juniors. But Lady Peggy stared at Tom Merry in surprise.

"Baggy?" she queried.

Tom coloured slightly. He had forgotten for the moment that the girls were not aware of the trick that had been played on Baggy Trimble.

"Ahem!" Tom coughed. "You see——"

"It was like this," grinned Blake. "Baggy wanted to come with us, but he went to the wrong cove—er—somehow! I rather fancy he thought we'd all turn up there later. Tom wants to go along and tell him not to wait any longer."

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Talbot.

"Oh, poor Trimble!" exclaimed Doris Levison.

But it was clear from the looks on the girls' faces that they guessed that Baggy's mistake was not entirely due to an accident!

"Well, I'll stroll along to the cove where he's waiting, and bring him along to the house," grinned Tom Merry.

"I'll go with you, if you like," said Blake. "What about you, Peggy?"

"Right-ho!" nodded Lady Peggy.

Fatty Wynn jumped up, too. David Llewellyn Wynn and Jack Blake were rather by way of being rivals for first place in Lady Peggy's friendship.

"Don't bother, Blake, old chap," said Fatty Wynn quickly. "I'll go with Tom and Peggy."

Blake glared at him.
"Rats! You stay with the others, Fatty. I'll go with 'em."

"Look here——"

"I tell you——"

"Oh, shut up, you two!" interrupted Lady Peggy firmly. "You'd better both come, if you're going to row about it."

"That's the idea," grinned Tom Merry, picking up his bathing costume. "Come along! Cheerio, everybody!"

"Tell Baggy I hope he enjoyed his tea," chuckled Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry, Blake, Fatty Wynn and Lady Peggy turned to the path up the cliffs, and climbed up from the cove to the grassy summit.

It did not take the four long to reach the point of the cliffs immediately above the little cove where Baggy had been left with the bogus tea-basket.

Tom Merry stepped to the edge of the cliff and stared down into the cove.

"Great Scott!"

A startled exclamation escaped the captain of the Shell. "What's up?" demanded Fatty Wynn.

Tom Merry flung out a pointing hand.

"Look!" he gasped.

The others stared down in the direction of his pointing finger.

"My hat!" breathed Lady Peggy.

Floating in the smooth water in the shelter of the headland was a derelict dinghy, and reclining in it apparently fast asleep was the fat form of Baggy Trimble.

The tide had come in and borne both the dinghy and Baggy away upon its surface.

Faintly from below there came upon the still air a loud snore.

Zzzzzzzzz!

"My only aunt!" gasped Blake, his expression struggling between amusement and alarm. "Baggy's being carried out to sea!"

CHAPTER 4.

Caught by the Tide!

Zzzzzzzzzzzzz! Zuzzz!

Baggy Trimble's snores rose and fell—as did the boat on the rippling waves.

Baggy was a champion sleeper at all times, and the gentle rocking of the dinghy on the waves kept him lulled in dreamland as effectively as though he were a baby in a cradle.

Zzzzzzzzzzz! Zuzzz!

The fat Fourth-Former was dreaming sweet dreams! He imagined that he was seated on a couch beside a large table on which was piled most of the contents of Dame Taggles' little tuckshop at St. Jim's. There was nothing to pay—Baggy had merely to help himself. And in his dream, Baggy was helping himself with a will!

He was vaguely conscious that the couch on which he was reclining was rocking gently. But he was far too busy helping himself to tarts and meringues and cream buns to wonder why!

"Baggy!"

From somewhere far away the sound of his name being yelled penetrated his dream.

"Baggy! Baggy!"

"Go 'way!" mumbled Baggy sleepily. "Lemme alone. I'm having a ripping feed—go 'way——"

He opened his eyes drowsily, and blinked about him.

"What—where on earth——"

The next moment Baggy's eyes seemed almost to pop from their sockets. He sat up with a jerk that caused the dinghy to plunge wildly in the waves, and stared around him in speechless horror.

A wild yell echoed across the water from Baggy's lips.

"Oh! Help! Yarooooogh!"

Clinging frantically to the sides of the now plunging dinghy, Baggy stared round him with terror-stricken eyes.

The current under the headland was bearing him rapidly out towards the great waves that rolled past the mouth of the little cove. Behind him, on the edge of the water, four gesticulating figures could be seen. He recognised them as Tom Merry, Blake and Fatty Wynn and Lady Peggy.

The Falstaff of the School House gulped and passed a fat hand across his brow.

"Oh, lor! Oh, c-crums!"

Soon the dinghy had floated into rough water by the point, and had begun to plunge madly and roll heavily in the waves. Water was already finding its way through the cracks in the ancient timbers, and Baggy gave a howl of terror.

"Ow! Help! I'm drowning! Help!"

Out past the end of the point the dinghy floated. A

large wave came rolling up, lifted the dinghy high, and Baggy gave another howl.

"Yarooooogh!"

The fat junior, his eyes almost starting out of his head with fright, clung frantically to the sides of the boat as it floundered among the waves.

"Coming, Baggy!"

It was the voice of Tom Merry that reached his ears from the distant beach.

But Baggy scarcely heard Tom's shout. The big waves among which it was now lurching and plunging were carrying the dinghy slowly across the mouth of the cove. Once it passed beyond the second headland, Baggy would be carried straight out to sea.

But Tom Merry did not mean to let that happen.

In ordinary circumstances the sight of Baggy in his strange craft would have been amusing enough. But the three juniors on the beach and their girl chum all realised that Baggy was in real danger.

Already Tom had darted among the rocks, and was swiftly changing into his bathing-costume. A few moments later he appeared again.

"E-ing on, Baggy!" he shouted again. "I'm coming!"

Accompanied by Blake and Fatty Wynn and Lady Peggy, Tom started to scramble over the rocks towards the end of the headland past which Baggy would soon be carried.

He could not reach the point, however, as a deep chasm barred his path. Tom sprang on to a rock at the water's edge and put his hands above his head.

Splash!

With a clean dive Tom Merry had taken the water, and was striking out through the waves.

"Go it!" breathed Lady Peggy.

She and Blake and Fatty Wynn were staring out anxiously at the dinghy, with Baggy crouching fearfully in it as it came floundering through the waves towards the headland. The rising tide was dashing spray into their own faces now, but they did not heed it.

"Tom'll do it!" muttered Blake. "Trust him!"

Baggy lifted his face for a moment, and the sight of Tom Merry swimming towards him with powerful strokes brought a gasp of relief from the fat Fourth-Former.

"Help!" gulped Baggy. "Yow! Oh! Help——"

A large wave lifted the boat and spray dashed into Baggy's face at that moment. Baggy gave a frightened squeal.

"Oh! Whoooooh!"

Tom Merry, cutting through the water at top speed, shot level with the dinghy and caught hold of the bow. The dinghy plunged madly.

"Oh!" gasped Baggy. "Ow! Look out, you'll jolly well upset me, you ass!"

Baggy's nature was not exactly a grateful one.

"Rats!" exclaimed Tom breathlessly. "Hang on, you fat porpoise!"

"Oh, really, Merry——"

Baggy gave another sickly gulp as a wave made the dinghy lurch dangerously, and said no more.

With powerful leg strokes, Tom Merry began to draw the boat and its quaking passenger towards the smooth water in the shelter of the headland. It was not easy work, for there were several inches of water in the dinghy by this time.

Luckily, however, the rocks were not far away, and the willing hands of Blake and Fatty Wynn grasped the boat as Tom towed it alongside.

But it was a very sickly-looking figure indeed that scrambled, with their aid, from the dinghy on to the rocks. Baggy was feeling bad.

"Ow! I feel ill!" gurgled Baggy, with rolling eyes.

"Grooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Now that Baggy's danger was over, Blake and Fatty Wynn were free to double up with laughter. Baggy glared at them wrathfully.

"Oh, really, you chaps——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Lady Peggy——"

"What a scream!" gasped Lady Peggy. "Oh, what a scream! Talk about Moses in the basket——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy glared speechlessly at the grinning faces of the juniors and at the laughing figure of Lady Peggy. Tom Merry, who had scrambled from the water by now, took the Falstaff of the School House by the arm.

"Come on, old fat man!" he chuckled. "You'd better hurry home. You're wet!"

"I'll say I jolly well am!" snorted Baggy.

It was not Baggy's way to show gratitude, and he said no word of thanks to the captain of the Shell. But he had quite a lot to say as the five of them set off back over the rocks to the beach where Tom had left his clothes. Baggy grumbled all the way.

The others waited while Tom vanished among the rocks to change back into his flannels. When he emerged again they set off to walk along the beach to the foot of the path that led up to the top of the cliffs.

But suddenly Blake halted. A strange expression had come into his face.

"Great pip! Look!"

"What's the matter?" asked Lady Peggy quickly.

"The—the tide!" stammered Blake.

The next moment the others realised what Blake meant. During the rescue of Baggy Trimble, the swiftly-rising tide had covered the far end of the beach, from which the path ascended the cliffs. A stretch of churning water lay now between them and the way to safety.

Only a narrow strip of beach was left now, and soon that, too, would be covered by the sea. Behind them rose the sheer wall of cliff, utterly unscalable.

To reach the path was an impossibility. They were hopelessly cut off by the tide—and with every moment the water was rising around them.

"My hat!" breathed Tom Merry, and his face had gone rather pale. "We're caught by the tide!"

CHAPTER 5.

In Deadly Peril!

THE faces of Blake and Fatty Wynn had gone pale. There was dismay in the face of Lady Peggy. But there was sheer terror in Baggy Trimble's eyes as he stared at the churning waste of water that lay between them and the cliff-path.

He gave a gasping cry.

"We're cut off!" he panted in a choking voice. "Oh! We—we'll all be drowned! Save me—you've got to save me—"

"Shut up, you fat coward!" muttered Tom fiercely. "We're all in this, aren't we? Show a stiff upper lip, for goodness' sake!"

Baggy began to whimper. Lady Peggy turned a cool face to Tom Merry.

"Yes, we're cut off all right," she said calmly. "Do you think we could swim it?"

Tom shook his head.

"No," he said quietly. "Only as a last resort, anyway. With the waves beating in like that among all those rocks, one would get a broken leg as likely as not and be done for."

"Then what can we do?"

Tom did not answer. He was staring up the cliffs, searching for some other path. But it was soon clear that there was no other path. The lofty cliffs, undermined at their base by the waves of centuries, offered not the least foothold. Not even a mountaineer could have hoped to scale them.

Already, it seemed to Tom, the stretch of shingle on which they stood was growing smaller as the water rose.

"What about those rocks under the headland?" muttered Blake. "If we got on to the highest of them, perhaps the tide won't reach so high."

In his heart Tom Merry felt sure that none of the rocks was high enough to offer them safety from the rising tide that had caught them in a trap. But he nodded.

"Let's have a look at them," he said, in a voice that he tried to make sound hopeful. "Quick—there's not much time—"

At a run, they started back across the shingle to the rocks at the foot of the headland. Baggy stumbled after them, still whimpering.

But as they came near the rocks, they saw at once that their hope was a vain one.

There were scraps of seaweed on the tops of the highest rocks, proof enough that at high tide they were covered.

Tom Merry, Blake and Fatty Wynn looked at one another in grim silence. It was not of themselves that they were thinking, but of the girl with them.

There was no fear in the face of Lady Peggy. But at the thought of the fate that overshadowed her, with the rest of them, the hearts of the three juniors went cold.

"I'll tell you what," said Tom Merry huskily; "you stay here, Blake, and shout like the dickens. Maybe there is someone within hearing on top of the cliffs who could get us a rope in time. Peggy and I and Fatty will look for a way up the cliffs. It's possible there's some path by which we could climb them—"

"Good!" nodded Blake, as brightly as he could manage. "I'll stay here—with Baggy."

Baggy's eyes were on the rising waters that hemmed in the narrowing strip of beach. He seemed dazed, THE GEM LIBRARY.—NO. 1,121.

stupefied. His breath was coming in gasps. He said nothing as Tom and Fatty Wynn and Lady Peggy turned away to begin their desperate search for some spot at which the cliffs might be climbed.

Blake stared up at the summit of the cliffs. There was no sign of any human being—only the wheeling sea-gulls. "Help!"

Blake's shout echoed among the giant cliffs, seeming strangely weak and powerless. Again he shouted. "Help, help!"

The echoes seemed to mock him in the answering silence. He felt fumbling fingers at his sleeve. He found the ashen face of Baggy Trimble staring into his own with eyes that were wide with terror.

"Are we done for?" Baggy's voice was scarcely more than a whisper. "Are we all going to—to be drowned?"

Blake dropped a hand on Baggy's shoulder, and forced a smile.

"Of course not, old chap!" he muttered. "Someone'll hear us, and bring help. I'll shout again."

Again Blake sent a despairing call ringing out through the evening air.

A wave, higher than those before it, came sweeping up the shingle, foaming round Blake's feet. At the touch of the rising water, Baggy gave a sudden nerve-racking scream.

"Shut up!" cried Blake angrily. "Remember Peggy—if you start yelling like that, you'll make it all the worse for her!"

A second wave broke over their feet. The remaining strip of shingle was very narrow now. Blake and Baggy Trimble moved nearer the cliffs. A wave followed them as if hungrily, and slid back with a rattle of shingle.

Baggy leaned against the smooth rocky face of the great cliff, breathing as if with difficulty. His eyes were wide and filled with horror, fixed up on the foaming edge of water that imprisoned them upon that narrow strip of beach—the narrow strip that would soon be deep beneath a dozen feet of water.

"Help!"

Blake's voice was hoarse as he shouted again. Again and again he sent an echoing cry ringing out above the menacing roar of waves. But they brought no answering shout—only the mournful crying of the gulls.

Farther along the narrowing strip of beach, Tom Merry, Fatty Wynn and Lady Peggy had vanished behind a jutting buttress of rock in their desperate search for a place where some foothold could be found on the smooth cliff-face.

But Blake felt sure that no such place could be found. The foot of the cliffs, for a height of many feet, was a smooth wall of rock, worn to a glassy surface through the years by innumerable tides. Impossible to find a foothold by which to scale that slippery surface.

That they would have to swim for it in the end, he felt sure. But he was convinced, too, that none of them would reach safety by swimming.

The wind had veered round a few points, and was driving huge, angry waves into the little cove that earlier in the afternoon had been peaceful enough. With the rising tide and the strengthening wind, the waves were crashing with ever increasing force against the foot of the cliffs. To swim through that maelstrom of foaming waters to the far end of the cove was a task that the strongest swimmer would probably find beyond his strength.

Blake was a good swimmer, and so was Fatty Wynn. Lady Peggy, too, had shown herself at home in the water. But even so, their chances seemed hopeless enough.

Baggy Trimble was whimpering again as he crouched by the foot of the cliffs. Blake was shouting mechanically with all the force of his lungs. But no one had appeared at the summit of the lonely cliffs.

He wondered where the rest of the St. Jim's party were, and Ethel Cleveland and Doris Levison. Back at Penperro House, most likely, little dreaming of the fearful peril in which Blake and the others were facing death itself!

A long, sullen wave thundered up the shingle to Blake's feet, touching the foot of the cliffs.

"We're done—"

But even as the despairing words broke from him, Blake heard a sudden shout in the voice of Tom Merry.

He turned his head swiftly, and saw Tom running towards him through the water that now lapped the foot of the cliffs at a point a dozen yards away.

"This way!" Tom's voice was hoarse and eager. "Quick! We've found a cave—there's a passage running up into the cliff—we're all right!"

For a moment everything seemed to reel before Blake's eyes—the sea and the cliffs and Tom Merry's eager face. The rush of relief made him feel almost sick.

Already Baggy had started to his feet, trembling in every limb. Tom Merry grasped the fat Fourth-Former by the arm.

"Come on! This way—"

Another wave thundered up the last remaining strip of beach, covering it completely with a foaming swirl of water. Through it the three went splashing in a wild race, Tom Merry half-supporting the trembling figure of Trimble.

Round the great buttress of rock they ran, with the water lapping round their shoes. Among the rocks on the farther side they saw the dark opening of a half-hidden cave. Tom Merry vanished into it, with Baggy Trimble gasping at his heels, and Blake following.

As Tom Merry had said, a sloping passage, hewn out of the solid rock, opened from the interior of the little cave, running up into the heart of the cliffs.

"Hurrah!" cried the voice of Lady Peggy. "Come on!" There was a deep chuckle of excitement and relief from Fatty Wynn, standing near her in the darkness. Blake and Tom Merry scrambled up beside them into the mouth of the passage, and turned to help Baggy up.

With an echoing crash, a giant wave thundered in at the mouth of the cave, green against the sunlight beyond.

Suddenly, as the four juniors and Lady Peggy made their way along the beach, Jack Blake halted. "What's the matter?" asked Lady Peggy quickly. "The—the tide!" stammered Blake. "Look!" He pointed to where the swiftly-rising tide had covered the far end of the beach, cutting them off from safety. (See Chapter 4.)



"Yes, this is a smugglers' cave all right!" he muttered. "Come on, let's see where it leads!"

Peggy had recovered now from her brief breakdown, which had been brought on by the first rush of wonderful relief. She smiled in the gloom.

"My hat! This is ripping luck!" she exclaimed. The relief after their grim ordeal had put her now in high spirits, as it had Tom and Jack Blake and Fatty Wynn. But Baggy Trimble was very silent as he followed the others along the sloping passage.

Now that the danger was over, Baggy was feeling rather ashamed of having shown the white feather.

"I—I say, you chaps," ventured Baggy, after a while, as the little party went slowly along the rocky passage, away from the echoing cavern in which the waves were now thundering continuously, "I hope you don't think I was frightened! I—I knew we should be all right in the end, so I pretended to have the wind-up for fun, you see—"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Blake.

"Oh, really, Blake—"

Blake gave a breathless chuckle. "So we've done the blessed sea in the eye, after all!" he muttered in a voice that was not very steady.

His hand went out to Lady Peggy's, and he gripped it tightly in the darkness.

"Yes!" laughed Peggy. "We've done the sea in the eye all right!"

Then suddenly she was sobbing. Another wave roared in through the sunlit opening, filling the cavern with gurgling echoes.

CHAPTER 6.

An Amazing Find!

"YES, we're all right now," said Tom Merry quietly. "This passage must have been made by smugglers, years and years ago. It looks as if it leads out on to the top of the cliffs somewhere. Anyway, it goes well up above high-water mark!"

He fumbled in his pocket, and found there the small electric torch that he had brought with him, to use in exploring the caves at Tregawn Cove. When he had slipped it into his pocket before leaving Penperro House, Tom Merry had little dreamed of the value it was to prove to be that day!

The bright beam of torchlight cut vividly through the darkness of the rocky passage. It lit up the dry, rocky walls and the shale-strewn floor, and revealed a dozen yards of passage curving up into the heart of the rock.

"Cheese it, Baggy," grunted Fatty Wynn. "We were all scared, I suppose, if it comes to that."

Baggy relapsed into silence, murmuring something that the others did not catch.

In the excitement of their narrow escape, everything else had been forgotten. It did not occur to Baggy to ask how it was that the picnic party had failed to come to the cove for tea, and so long as he failed to ask, no one was likely to offer an explanation.

"This giddy tunnel looks as if it's going on for ever!" said Fatty Wynn suddenly.

But a moment later Tom Merry, leading the way with the torch, turned a corner and found himself at the foot of a flight of steps hewn in the rock.

The steps did not continue for long. At the top of them was a big cavern, with three dark passages leading from it. The little party came to a halt.

"Which way now?" exclaimed Tom doubtfully. It was certainly a problem. Tom Merry realised that unless they struck the way out on to the top of the cliffs which he felt sure must exist, they stood a good chance of becoming hopelessly mazed.

"Toss up for it," suggested Lady Peggy. It seemed the only thing to do. Tom spun a coin a couple of times, and the coin decided on the left-hand passage.

With the torchlight dancing before them on the rocky walls, the little party groped their way on through the darkness of the winding tunnel. Soon they came to yet another fork.

"I—I say!" squeaked Baggy nervously. "I don't like this! If we get lost in these rotten passages——"

"Shut up, Baggy!" said Tom Merry sharply.

He had already realised that danger; but he did not want Baggy to put the thought of it into the mind of Lady Peggy.

Baggy growled something and lapsed into a sulky silence.

"Let's keep left," said Tom. "Come on!"

Again he led the way forward, along the left-hand fork.

They had not followed the dancing ray of torchlight for many yards before there was a sudden excited gasp from Jack Blake, at Tom's side.

"Great pip!"

"My hat!" breathed Lady Peggy, as she, too, saw what Blake had seen.

Tom Merry came to a startled halt.

Just ahead of them the passage turned sharply, with a deep rocky alcove at the turn. It was this dark alcove that the light of the torch in Tom Merry's hand had revealed to the eyes of all.

Lying in the deep recess was a human skeleton, half fallen to pieces, deep in dust. Across its knees lay the blade of a rusted cutlass, and an ancient pistol was lying in the dust beside the yellow bones.

"My hat!"

"Phew!"

"Oh lor!" gasped Baggy Trimble, staring with wide eyes past Tom Merry at the grim contents of the shadowy recess. "Oh! Ow! It—it's a s-skeleton!"

Baggy's voice trailed away into a scared squeak. His words, and the first startled exclamations of the others, were followed by a deathly silence as Lady Peggy and the four St. Jim's juniors stared down at the grim remains shown in the dust by the wavering light of Tom Merry's torch.

At last, Tom took a step forward, and stooped over the yellowed bones. He picked up the pistol. It was an ancient pattern—a hundred years old at least, Tom guessed.

"I wonder who the chap was?" he muttered slowly.

"One of the smugglers, I should think, who used these tunnels," suggested Blake in a low voice.

"That's about the size of it," nodded Fatty Wynn.

He, too, spoke in a low tone. Somehow the presence of that grim collection of bones awed them all into whispers.

"Ugh!" Lady Peggy shivered. "How horrible!"

There was a sudden muttered exclamation from Jack Blake. He stepped quickly forward and stooped over the skeleton, picking something from the dust.

"What's that?" asked Fatty Wynn quickly.

Blake held what he had picked up into the light of Tom Merry's torch.

It was a small metal box, almost eaten through with rust. The lid broke instantly beneath the pressure of Blake's fingers as he tried to open it.

"Anything in it?" muttered Tom interestedly.

"My hat, yes!"

Blake broke away the rest of the lid with eager fingers. His face had gone suddenly excited. The others crowded round him.

"What is it, Jack?" exclaimed Lady Peggy.

Blake shook his head.

"Dunno! But——"

He turned the little box over, and something fell into the palm of his hand. It was a piece of folded parchment, brown-yellow with age. Blake unfolded it carefully, and held it to the light.

Discoloured though it was with the passing of the years, the parchment had been well enough preserved in the metal box that had guarded it. In the bright light of Tom's torch a drawing on the parchment showed up clearly—queer markings that looked like a map or a plan.

"A chart!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "It's a chart!"

"Perhaps it's a treasure chart!" breathed Lady Peggy, and her eyes gleamed with a dancing light of excitement.

"What's this down here?" muttered Tom Merry, pointing to the bottom of the square of parchment.

Letters could be seen traced beneath the plan in the centre—queer, old-fashioned letters, marked in quivering lines.

"Penperro Rock!" read Jack Blake.

He drew a deep breath. His eyes were shining. He turned a tense face to the others, and the hand that held the parchment trembled.

"Great pip!" he panted. "Don't you see? It's a chart of Penperro Rock—a chart that must mark the real monks' treasure! It's not just legend, after all! There really is a treasure on Penperro Rock, and here's the key to it!"

"You're right!" cried Tom Merry, and his voice echoed eagerly down the dark, rocky passage. "Look! See that cross here? That cross must mark the treasure!"

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"Oh, I say!" gasped Baggy Trimble, with an excited squeak. "Let's go shares! Let's——"

"Shut up, Baggy!"

"Oh, really, you chaps——"

"The key to the treasure of Penperro Rock!" repeated Blake hoarsely. "My only aunt! We're on the trail of the treasure!"

CHAPTER 7.

The Key to the Treasure!

"I WONDAH where they are?"

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who spoke, and there was a troubled frown on the aristocratic features of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Hope nothing's happened to 'em!" muttered Manners uneasily.

"Nothing could have happened to them, surely!" put in Talbot quickly.

But Talbot's face, like the faces of the rest, was beginning to look more than a little uneasy.

The juniors who had seen Tom Merry, Blake, and Fatty Wynn go off with Lady Peggy to fetch Baggy Trimble had returned to Penperro House a long while ago, and had expected Tom Merry and the others to put in an appearance at any moment.

But so far there had been no sign of them, and the rest of the juniors were beginning to wonder what had happened. They were standing in a puzzled group on the terrace, looking out along the cliffs for a sight of the missing five. But the cliffs were empty of any human figures.

"Queer!" muttered Figgins.

"Jolly queer!" agreed Clive, the South African junior.

"I vote we go along the cliffs and have a look for them," suggested Kerr abruptly.

"Yaas, wathah!" nodded Arthur Augustus. "I cannot think that anythin' can have happened to them, but you nevah know. I confess I am begiinnin' to feel wathah anxious."

"Oh, they'll turn up all right, of course," put in Monty Lowther optimistically. "But there's no harm in going to meet them, anyway."

In a body, the juniors trooped down the steps from the terrace on to the lawn, and crossed to the gate that opened on to the cliffs.

It certainly seemed queer that Tom Merry and the others with him had been so long in putting in an appearance. As Monty Lowther had said, they were sure to turn up; but still, there was no harm in having a look for them!

And at the back of even Lowther's mind, despite his cheery manner, there was beginning to creep the anxious thought that it was possible that something had happened.

But the anxieties of the juniors were soon put at rest.

They had not gone far along the cliffs before Talbot gave a quick exclamation, and pointed ahead to where five hurrying figures had come into view.

"There they are!"

"Oh, good!"

There was distinct relief in the faces of all as they tramped on to meet the little party of five that was coming towards them.

"Hallo! Hallo!" sang out Monty Lowther cheerily as they drew near. "Where on earth have you been?"

There were looks on the faces of Tom Merry and his companions that puzzled the rest of the St. Jim's juniors as they came up with them and turned towards the house together. Baggy Trimble, in particular, seemed almost to be bursting with excitement.

"What on earth's up?" demanded Figgins.

"Oh, I say!" squeaked Baggy excitedly. "I——"

"Shut up, Baggy!"

"Oh, really, Blake——"

"You've been a feahfully long time comin' back," put in Arthur Augustus curiously.

Tom Merry laughed. It was rather a grim laugh!

"Yes," he said. "We got cut off by the tide."

"What?"

"Luckily we found an old smugglers' cave," went on Tom quietly, "with a passage leading right up through the cliffs. There was a regular maze of passages, and it was a jolly long time before we found our way out on to the cliffs at the top!"

"Yes, but——" broke in Baggy excitedly.

"Shut up, Baggy!"

"Oh, really, Wynn——"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, surveying Tom Merry and Lady Peggy, Blake and Fatty Wynn through his gleaming monocle. "You mean to say——"

"We do!" chuckled Fatty Wynn.

"Cut off by the tide?" cried Talbot. "My giddy aunt! And you got through a smugglers' tunnel?"

"That's it," nodded Lady Peggy, with a dancing smile.

"Great pip!" gasped Monty Lowther.

"But there's something else to tell you," went on Lady Peggy eagerly.

"Somethin' else, deah gal?" ejaculated Cussy, in great bewilderment.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes," he said, "rather! Listen, you chaps! We found a skeleton in the tunnels—the skeleton of an old smuggler, I think it must be. Lying among the poor chap's bones there was a little metal box, and in the box we found a chart—"

"A—a chart, deah boy? Gweat Scott!"

"A chart that looks as though it is the key to the treasure of Penperro Rock!" finished Tom quietly.

Arthur Augustus stopped dead, and his monocle fell from his eye as he gaped at Tom Merry. Figgins halted, too, with a sharp exclamation of wonderment. So did Kerr and Talbot, and Manners and Lowther, and Levison and Olive, and Digby and Herries.

"What!" howled Herries. "A chart of the treasure on Penperro Rock!"

"You're pulling our legs!" gasped Manners incredulously.

"Must be!" cried Levison, grinning doubtfully.

"No, we jolly well aren't!" said Lady Peggy.

"Rather not!" exclaimed Baggy Trimble, fairly swelling with importance. "I tell you it's true—"

"Is it really true?" demanded Lowther. "Honest Injun?"

"Yes," grinned Tom. "It's true enough! It seems to be a plan of Penperro Rock, and there is a cross marked on it that looks as though it shows the position of something. So it must be the treasure!"

The excited little party had come to a standstill not far from the gate that opened into the gardens of Penperro House. In their eager attention to what Tom Merry was saying, no one had noticed a tall figure that had appeared at the gate.

But a sudden startled ejaculation from behind them, at the finish of Tom's words, caused the juniors to turn their heads.

Standing staring at Tom Merry, with a strange gleam in his dark eyes, was the man whom Figgins & Co. had saved from the sea—Gilbert Renfrew.

"What do you say?"

Renfrew came towards the group with a quick, excited stride.

(Continued on next page.)



Shell-scarred battlefields, gaunt, straggled wire entanglements, and the howl and whine of shells. And along the trench, fearless of death that stared him in the face, paced Piper Laidlaw. This is another stirring epic of the Great War, and one which will live in the memories of men for ever!

LOOS!

Shell-scarred battlefields, gaunt straggled wire entanglements, the howl and whine of shells, and the deeper, zooming note of the "coalboxes" lashing the earth to fury far back behind the firing line. Again, the retaliating bellow of a British barrage hammering the enemy lines with relentless fury.

It is early morning, and from the British front trench our soldiers glimpse an ominous, creeping, greeny-grey mist stealing forward with hideous intent. Every man bites his lip and knows what that means. Someone whispers:

"Gas!"

And in a few moments will come the zero hour for those manning that particular section. Even now they await the familiar whistle which will send them leaping over the parapet, cold steel glinting, as they charge relentlessly across that short and deadly boundary between two mighty forces, known as "No-Man's Land."

Nearer steals the gas, nearer and nearer, while men watch its progress, fascinated, horror-stricken, a little dazed. Some breath of wind comes wafting across bearing a temporary salvation, blowing the deadly fumes away, dissolving them, mixing them with great quantities of pure air.

But the front line defenders have caught enough in their lungs to clog their movements and make their eyes water and smart. Then comes the order to go over the top!

No one moves. The gas has paralysed their brains and limbs for fatal moments which may mean the difference between victory and defeat; ground gained and ground lost.

Then Piper David Laidlaw, King's Own Scottish Borderers, and one time Assistant Scoutmaster of the First Alnwick Troop, remembers a tenet of the Scout law—

prompt obedience no matter what the circumstances or the sacrifice.

"Come on, you fellows!" he yells, as he goes over the top. "At 'em, boys!"

Still there is no response. He stands on the top of the trench, alone, unsupported; the others crouching dazedly as they try to collect themselves and follow his courageous lead.

Again remembrance of his Scout training comes to Laidlaw's rescue; that natural resource which years of Scouting has cultivated. He remembers his bagpipes, realises that here is the one thing that will bring these Scotsmen leaping after him, the skirl of the pipes, which for centuries has never failed to stir the blood of the men from beyond the Tweed.

Swinging his pipes into position he begins to play "The Braes of Mar," and paces up and down before the trench, in full sight of the enemy, an easy target for their bullets, silhouetted as he is against the sky.

What courage, what bravery, what stark heroism.

Does that in any measure describe his magnificent feat?

Bullets begin to hiss and whine. Still he paces his deadly path, playing his bagpipes with all the breath and national fervour that is in him.

Five minutes is a long time to act as a human target. Laidlaw, uncared for of his own skin, paces and plays, while the bullets whirl and scream and whine about him, in a leaden accompaniment of death. And still the wild, primitive music dings in the ears of the dazed Jocks, down in the British trench. And they hear and rouse themselves with a mighty cheer for Auld Lang Syne.

Faster and faster Laidlaw pipes; faster and faster he paces, faster and faster the bullets hum, and still he is not hit.

Then his comrades come leaping to

his side, his officer the first. Over the top they come with tense faces and gleaming bayonets, throwing off the stupor that has possessed them.

Forward they hurl themselves, forward with the brave piper playing "Blue Bonnets Over the Border," until they reach the German trenches and scatter the enemy like leaves before the wind.

On they go; on goes the piper, running and playing for all he is worth. Then a shell bursts a few yards away, bowling him over like a ninepin, killing many of his gallant comrades, including his officer, and badly damaging the pipes that have done such great service.

But Laidlaw's job is done. He tries to rise and follow up the attack, but his ankle is crushed and battered; he cannot move a yard on his feet. So he sits and waits until the news comes that the British have advanced and held the position, and until the stretcher-bearers come and bear him back to a field dressing station behind the lines.

In hospital they tell him he has won the V.C. for his valour, and the King presents it to him personally when he returns to Britain.

What a magnificent dare-devil is Piper David Laidlaw, and what great kudos he has given to the Boy Scout movement, that could produce so fine a hero, one so full of resource and ready obedience in the traditional Scout spirit!

Many other great Scouts acquitted themselves nobly and well during the Great War, but David Laidlaw's name linked with that of John Travers Cornwell, V.C., will ever be remembered, and stand as an immortal tribute to the world-wide movement which celebrates its twenty-first birthday this week in a world jamboree.

(Next week our special contributor deals with Captain James Cook, the famous explorer.)

"A chart?" Renfrew's voice was unsteady with excitement. "A chart?" he repeated. "You've found a chart, you say, showing the whereabouts of the treasure on Penperro Rock?"

"Yes, so we think——"
"Gad!"

Renfrew seemed to control his excitement with an effort as he faced Tom Merry. Arthur Augustus chuckled.

"Isn't that wippin' news, Mr. Wenfrew?"

"It certainly is," nodded Renfrew coolly, taking out a cigarette and lighting it.

Cool though he now seemed, Tom Merry noticed that the man's fingers were not quite steady as he held the match.

"Yes, this is certainly interesting news!" smiled Renfrew.

"Come and tell the patah!" cried Arthur Augustus eagerly to Tom. "He will be faithfully interested! Bettah not show us the chart just heah, you know. It's watah windy."

With excited faces, the St. Jim's juniors and Lady Peggy crowded in through the gate into the garden. Renfrew, as he followed, drew a long, deep breath.

He closed the gate and glanced back, out over the edge of the cliffs.

His gleaming eyes were fixed upon the gaunt shape of the great rock that rose from the foaming waves across the intervening channel. He clenched his hand on the top of the gate—clenched it till the knuckles showed white.

CHAPTER 8.

The Safe!

LORD EASTWOOD was in the library with Ethel and Doris as the juniors entered through the french windows in an eager crowd.

"Gad!" he exclaimed with a smile. "Whatever is all this excitement about?"

"We've made rather a big discovery, sir," began Tom Merry quickly.

"Watah, bai Jove! You see, patah——"

"I say, I think we ought all to go shares in the treasure if——"

"Shut up, Trimble! You see, sir——"

"We've found a treasure-chart!" cried Lady Peggy, her jolly-looking red bobbed hair dancing excitedly. "Yes, a treasure-chart!"

"By James!" ejaculated Lord Eastwood sharply. "You are not trying to—er—pull my leg, you young rascals?"

"Rather not, sir!" chuckled Blake.

"It's true enough," grinned Fatty Wynn.

"Here it is, sir," said Tom Merry, taking from his pocket the discoloured parchment and laying it on the table before Lord Eastwood. "Blake found it, in a metal box that was among the bones of some poor chap we found in a maze of caves and tunnels in the cliffs!"

Lord Eastwood bent over the chart in silence. His keen eyes examined it intently. Without speaking he sat down by the table and took a large magnifying-glass from a drawer, and resumed his examination while the juniors and the three Spalding girls crowded round.

The tall figure of Gilbert Renfrew had appeared at the french windows, and stepped into the room, watching.

At last Lord Eastwood laid down the magnifying-glass and leaned back in his chair.

"Extraordinary!" he muttered. "Amazing!"

The old earl's eyes glanced from Blake to Tom Merry, and then, with a smiling gleam in them, round the circle of eager faces.

"Gad!" he exclaimed. "This certainly is a discovery!"

"I was one of the chaps that found it, sir! I——"

"Shut up, Trimble!"

"Oh, really, Wynn! I think the chaps that found it ought to have the biggest shares in the treasure! That's what I think. I——"

"I am afraid, Trimble," broke in Lord Eastwood quietly, "that the treasure, if it is ever found, will be the property of my friend, Emerson, the man who owns this house and the mysterious Penperro Rock. I dare say that he would be generous enough to make a handsome present to all of you who were instrumental in finding it, of course; but the treasure itself would undoubtedly be his property. He is an invalid, and not a wealthy man, and the treasure would be a great boon to him."

"Oh, blow!" muttered Baggy sulkily under his breath.

Baggy did not at all like the idea of handing over the treasure, when found—and Baggy had not the slightest doubt now that it would be found—to its rightful owner!

Baggy was a firm believer in the unprincipled motto that findings were keepings.

But the other juniors did not agree with Baggy. They all felt that it would be splendid to be able to unearth the treasure and hand it over to the invalid from whom

Lord Eastwood had taken the house for the summer, and so revive the failing fortunes of their host's friend.

"Good egg!" grinned Tom Merry. "It would be ripping for Mr. Emerson if we found the giddy hidden treasure!"

"Hear, hear!"

"What-ho!"

"It certainly would," agreed Lord Eastwood. "As I have told you, my friend Emerson has been very worried for some time over the fact that it may be necessary for him to sell this house, although it has been in his family for generations. With the treasure found, that tragic necessity would be averted!"

There was a step behind Tom Merry.

"If the supposed treasure is ever found!" drawled a silky voice.

Renfrew had come forward. The others glanced at him. He shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"This chart may be a false trail," he smiled. "After all, if this parchment was really the property of the old smugglers, and actually marks the position of the hidden treasure, is it likely that the smugglers themselves never made use of it?"

"We can but investigate," answered Lord Eastwood. "As soon as the sea grows calm, we must arrange a thorough search, working on the chart. I confess that till now I have always imagined that the supposed treasure of Penperro Rock was only a legend—nothing more. But I am beginning to think that it may not be only a legend, after all!"

Again Renfrew shrugged his shoulders.

Blake crossed eagerly to the window, and stood staring out at the distant shape of Penperro Rock, with the thundering waves foaming round its base.

"If only the sea would buck up and get calm!" he cried in an impatient, exasperated voice. "It's rotten, not being able to land on the rock till then——"

"We must be patient, my boy!" smiled Lord Eastwood.

He rose to his feet, picking up the old chart, and crossed towards his desk. Set in the wall above it was the door of a small safe.

"This chart is valuable," he said, glancing at Tom Merry and Jack Blake. "With your permission, I will put it in here till we have the opportunity of making use of it, when we visit the rock."

"Good idea, sir," nodded Tom Merry.

The juniors watched Lord Eastwood move the dials of the combination lock and insert a key. He swung open the small steel door, placed the chart inside, and re-locked the safe.

"There!" he said. "That's ready for when we can land on the island and trace the position among the old ruins of that mysterious cross!"

Shortly afterwards Lord Eastwood left the library with Gilbert Renfrew, and the three girls went, too, leaving the juniors alone. Instantly there was an excited ejaculation from Baggy Trimble.

"I say, you chaps, I don't call it fair! When we find the treasure——"

"We haven't found it yet, fat ass!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Oh, really, Lowther! Of course we shall find it now, with that chart showing us just where it is! And when we do find it, I don't think it's fair that we should have to hand it over to that chap, Emerson! Suppose he's a mean beast, and doesn't give us anything?"

"Oh, shut up, you greedy, fat frog!" growled Blake. "You ought to be only too jolly glad of a chance to give the poor chap his due! Mr. Emerson is jolly hard up, Lord Eastwood says, and he's an invalid——"

"Oh, rats!" sniffed Baggy. "I think we ought to have the treasure! At any rate, we chaps who found the chart——"

"Well, you didn't find it," grinned Tom Merry. "It was Blake who found it."

"Oh, really, Tom Merry! I consider we all helped to find it!"

"Hear, hear!" nodded Blake. "I agree with Baggy there. But that doesn't entitle us to rob this chap Emerson of what belongs to him!"

"Rats!" growled Baggy. "I call it a rotten shame——"
"Oh, bump the greedy bounder!" put in Figgins in an exasperated voice.

"Good wheeze!"

"Collar him!"

A dozen hands seized Baggy and whirled him into the air. The fat Fourth-Former gave a yell.

"Oh! Yarcooop!"

Bump!

"Yow! Leggo, you beasts——"

Bump!

"Whooops! Oh!"

"And again!" chuckled Talbot.

"Yarroooh!"

When at last Baggy was released, he was breathless and aching, and feeling anything but inclined to continue his grumbles about sharing of the treasure—if the treasure was ever found!

With a speechless glare at the chuckling juniors, Baggy limped from the library—a sadder, if not a wiser, Trimble!

CHAPTER 9.

Wally & Co. on the Warpath!

LOOK out! I think he's coming—"
"We're ready!"

"Quiet!"

"Look here, young Wally—"

"Sssh! Don't make a row!"

"Who's making a row?" demanded Reggie Manners hotly.

"Now look here, Reggie, old man—"

"Cave!" grinned Levison minor. "Here he comes!"

And Wally D'Arcy, Reggie Manners and Frank Levison ceased arguing, and kept very silent as they peered down from the open window to the terrace below.

Wally & Co. were at the window of their bed-room, which immediately overlooked the french windows opening on to the terrace from the library of Penperro House. It was the following evening after the discovery of the treasure-chart in the old caves.

On the floor beside them stood a pail, and in the pail was a weird and wonderful mixture that looked as though it might have been made up of water and ink and soot—which, as a matter of fact, it was!

At the sound of footsteps crossing the library below, Wally hastily lifted the pail and held it in readiness.

It looked as though some unsuspecting person was going to have the surprise of his life, when he emerged from the french windows on to the terrace!

A figure stepped into view. The three Third-Formers drew back hastily.

"Look out! It's Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry strolled away along the terrace, and vanished out of sight round the corner of the house, little dreaming of the narrow escape that he had had.

"Look out, Wally!" grinned Reggie Manners. "It wouldn't do to catch the giddy butler, or your pater, or somebody."

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Sssh! Here's somebody!"

Once again footsteps had come to their ears from the room below. Wally again raised the pail with its horrible contents.

"I hope it's him!" chuckled Levison minor softly.

"Him" was David Llewellyn Wynn!

Wally & Co. had a little grudge against Fatty Wynn, and they were out to avenge it in full.

That morning Reggie Manners had happened to refer in Fatty Wynn's hearing to Lady Peggy Brooke as "Carrots." Lady Peggy herself was the last person in the world to object to her pretty hair being called "carrots"—but Fatty Wynn did not approve at all of the word. Consequently, Fatty had waxed wrathful and smacked Reggie Manners' head, for which dire crime the chums of the Third were out to exact full payment.

"Here he comes!" breathed Levison minor eagerly.

But this time it was Blake & Co. who came into sight below. Again the three fags drew back hastily.

Blake, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Herries and Digby strolled off into the garden. Wally gave a disgusted grunt.

"Blow the fat ass! What does he want to keep us waiting for?"

In the opinion of Wally & Co., it was inconsiderate, to say the least, of Fatty Wynn to keep them waiting like this.

"He's sure to come out soon," said Reggie hopefully.

"Figgins and Kerr have gone for a stroll along the cliffs, and I heard Fatty say he'd join them."

"Who's this?" muttered Wally suddenly.

"Get ready!" breathed Levison minor.

Wally cautiously raised the pail. But he lowered it again the next moment as a tall figure appeared on the terrace from the open french windows.

"Phew! Look out—"

"Renfrew!"

Gilbert Renfrew was smoking a cigarette as he came to a standstill on the flagstones beneath the window, in complete ignorance of the fact that his movements were being watched from above.

The man whom Figgins & Co. had rescued from the storm glanced up and down the terrace keenly.

There was no one in sight. Tom Merry had vanished some time ago, and Blake & Co. had disappeared, too.

But still Renfrew stood glancing up and down, almost as though he wanted to make certain that there was no one

about. Then he tossed his cigarette away and vanished back into the library with a quick stride.

"Glad he didn't spot us," grinned Reggie Manners. "He might have given the show away."

"Oh, no, he's a sport!" murmured Wally. "I like the chap."

"I wish that fat ass Wynn would buck up!" growled Frank Levison.

The three Third-Formers were growing very impatient. Fatty Wynn did not seem in any hurry to appear on the terrace to receive Wally's patent mixture over him!

"What's that?" breathed Wally suddenly.

A faint click had sounded from below.

"Sounds as if somebody's just locked the door of the library," muttered Reggie in a puzzled tone.

"Can't be," murmured Frank Levison, shaking his head. "Who'd lock the door? Renfrew's in there—he wouldn't lock it."

They could hear Renfrew moving about faintly in the library below. After a while there was another click, and then the sound of quick footsteps crossing towards the french windows.

"Here's somebody!" breathed Reggie excitedly.

"Only Renfrew again, I s'pose," grunted Wally.

But he raised the pail on to the sill, to be ready for an emergency. There was just the chance that it was Fatty Wynn this time.

"Great pip! Look!"

Frank Levison gave that sudden, startled ejaculation. He was staring out across the garden to the cliffs beyond with a very blank expression on his face.

Three figures had come into sight, outlined against the sky on the distant cliffs. Far off though they were, they could be recognised as Figgins, Kerr and Fatty Wynn. The fat figure of the latter was unmistakable.

It was clear to Levison minor in that moment of surprise and disappointment that David Llewellyn Wynn had given them the slip! Instead of leaving the house by the french

(Continued on next page.)

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windows from the library and going out to the cliffs through the gate in the garden wall, he had evidently gone out by the front, and so escaped the booby-trap waiting for him on the terrace.

Wally had not noticed the distant figures on the cliffs. He was too intent upon watching the open french windows below, like a cat watching a mouse-hole.

Frank Levison seized Wally by the arm, to point out the figures of Figgins & Co. At the same moment a tall figure stepped on to the terrace beneath.

Levison minor's action was fatal!

He caused Wally to glance round quickly, and next moment the pail slid from the Third-Form leader's grasp.

Swoooooosh!

The horrid mixture from the pail went streaming down in a raining torrent. There was a wild yell from below.

"Oh! Yaroooooh!"

Gilbert Renfrew had stepped out from the library just in time to receive the full force of the sooty stream that had come shooting down from above!

"Oh! Oh, gad! Whoosh! Groooooh!"

In a moment Renfrew's white flannels and his pale face had been converted into the likeness of a nigger minstrel's. He danced and gasped, gouging the inky liquid from his eyes, and spluttered wildly.

"Oh! Yaroooooshh!"

Wally & Co. stared down in utter dismay at the almost unrecognisable figure of Gilbert Renfrew, as he choked and gasped and gurgled.

"Oh, you ass, young Levison!" groaned Wally. "Look what you made me do!"

"Well, I like that!" snorted Frank hotly. "You needn't have let go the blessed pail!"

From Reggie Manners there broke a gurgle of helpless laughter.

"Look at him! Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

A faint grin appeared on Frank Levison's face, too. But there was only consternation in Wally's face.

"It's nothing to grin at, you cackling hyenas!" he growled. "If my pater hears about this there'll be an awful row!"

Reggie and Frank looked solemn at once. The thought of Lord Eastwood's wrath rather scared them.

On the flagstones below Gilbert Renfrew had wiped some of the mess from his face with a handkerchief. He glared at the pail that lay at his feet, then lifted his head quickly and stared up.

As his eyes rested on the dismayed faces of the three fags, an ugly light sprang into his eyes and his lips took on an almost snarling expression.

It was as though the man's true character had flamed out for a moment with his rage.

But the next instant the look of fury died away. He gave a laugh. It did not sound a very natural laugh, perhaps, but it relieved Wally & Co. tremendously.

"You young rascals!" exclaimed Renfrew, wiping his blackened face with a hand that seemed to tremble oddly. "Ha, ha! A booby-trap, eh? I suppose you youngsters must have your fun!"

"My hat!" gasped Wally. "What a sport!"

"Caught me properly," said Renfrew, with a twisted grin. He gave a quick glance up and down the terrace. A look of relief came into his eyes when he saw that there was no one in view.

"We're ever so sorry, sir!" gasped Reggie Manners from the window.

"Frightfully!" chimed in Levison minor. "You see—"

"We meant it for someone else altogether," explained Wally hastily. "It was just bad luck that you happened to get it—"

"I see!" Again Renfrew glanced up and down the terrace. "Well, look here, youngsters—a joke's a joke, and I hope I can always take one in the right spirit. But I'd be glad if you don't say anything about this. Understand? I—I should only be a laughing-stock, you see. So don't breathe a word about my coming out of the library this evening and catching it. If you promise to say nothing, I won't mention it to Lord Eastwood."

There was something of a veiled threat in the last sentence.

"That's jolly good of you, sir!" said Reggie gratefully.

"You promise, then, to say nothing about this?"

"We won't—rather not!" agreed Wally readily enough.

"Good! And I will say nothing to Lord Eastwood."

Renfrew turned and hurried away along the terrace, apparently making for the garage at the back, where he could clean himself up in privacy. The three fags looked at one another.

"He took it jolly well," grinned Levison minor.

"Rather!" chuckled Reggie.

There was rather a thoughtful look on Wally's face.

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"He seemed jolly anxious for us to keep mum about it," he said reflectively. "I wonder why?"

"Afraid of getting chaffed," grinned Reggie.

The three fags hurried downstairs and retrieved the pail. They spent the next few minutes in cleaning up the mess on the flagstones.

Their attempt to settle their score with Fatty Wynn could hardly be called an unqualified success!

Round the corner of the house, in the garage yard, the blackened figure of Gilbert Renfrew was beginning to resume a more normal appearance as he got to work with water and a sponge beneath a tap. But Wally & Co., who had so admired the "sporting" way in which the man had taken his unlucky treatment at their hands, might have been considerably surprised had they seen the glimmering fury that showed in his eyes now.

"The little hounds!" Renfrew was muttering savagely. "I'd like to flay them alive for that!"

He passed a damp sponge energetically round his ears.

"The little hounds!" he repeated under his breath, and there was a very ugly look indeed in his thin face now. "But it's lucky I've persuaded them to



The tall figure of Gilbert Renfrew stepped from the library. The pail slipped from Wally D'Arcy's grasp. Swoooooosh! The horrid mixture fell on him. There was a wild yell from below.

keep quiet about it. It wouldn't do for it to be known that I was alone in the library to-night!"

And Gilbert Renfrew gave a sudden soft, grim laugh.



the terrace beneath the window; at the same moment the mixture of water, ink and soot went streaming down in a torrent. "Yaroooooh!" (See Chapter 9.)

CHAPTER 10.

The Stolen Chart!

"MAY I have this dance, Ethel, deah gal?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy asked that question. It was an hour or so later that evening, and several of the St. Jim's juniors had gone into the big music-room. There, to the strains of a cheerful gramophone, they were taking it in turns to dance with Ethel, Doris, and Lady Peggy.

Monty Lowther was working the gramophone, and he had just put on a bright fox-trot record.

To the popular air, Arthur Augustus began to sail gracefully over the polished floor with Cousin Ethel.

The swell of St. Jim's rather fancied his abilities on the dance floor. He began to introduce one or two tricky steps as he danced.

"Would you like me to show you wathah a wippin' turn, deah gal?" he murmured.

Ethel nodded, smiling.

"It's done like this, you see. I bwing my foot back like this, cwoss it ovah in fwont—"

But Arthur Augustus never quite finished his "rather ripping turn."

Unfortunately for Gussy, George Figgins was sitting on a chair by the gramophone in the corner of the room in which he was demonstrating his new turn. George Figgins had large feet, and one of them got in the way.

There was a yell from the swell of St. Jim's as he tripped over it; then, as a novelist would say, a dull and sickening thud.

"Yawooooop!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had pitched headlong, and lay sprawling at the feet of Cousin Ethel. Ethel gave a startled gasp.

"Oh!"

"Sorry!" gasped Figgins, in dismay.

Then, at sight of the crimson face of Arthur Augustus as he lay gasping on the floor, Figgins gave a roar of laughter, joining in with the laughs of the other juniors.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Lady Peggy, who had been dancing with Blake. "Gussy, you're funnier than Harold Lloyd! I've always said so!"

"Oh! Oh, gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus sat up dazedly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're right, Gussy," said Talbot gravely. He had been dancing with Doris Levison, but now he stepped forward to help the swell of St. Jim's to his feet. "It was a ripping turn all right. In fact, you've ripped your jacket most of the way up the back!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus' countenance went crimson as he groped in horror at the rent in his jacket. "It's wipped all the way up—"

"That's what Talbot's just said," grinned Manners. "It was a ripping turn! You said it would be."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

Arthur Augustus adjusted his monocle and snorted an indignant snort. He turned apologetically to Cousin Ethel, who was trying hard not to smile.

"I am feahfully sowwy, Ethel, deah gal! I—I think I will just go and change my coat—"

But before Arthur Augustus could go, the door of the room was flung open.

Everyone glanced round. The figure of Tom Merry was framed in the doorway, and the face of the captain of the Shell was set in startled lines.

"What on earth—" ejaculated Herries.

"What's up?" demanded Talbot.

Tom Merry came slowly into the room, and halted in front of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Gussy—"

"Yaas, deah boy? What—"

"Nothing wrong, is there?" put in Levison curiously.

"Yes, there is!" said Tom Merry grimly. "Gussy, your father has just gone to the safe in the library. He has found that the chart is missing!"

"Wha-a-at!" gasped Figgins incredulously.

"Imposs., deah boy!" cried Arthur Augustus breathlessly. "How could anyone have taken it? The safe was locked! It would need a regular cwacksman to bweak it open!"

"It's true, anyway," said Tom Merry quietly. "The chart has gone—has been stolen!"

"My hat!" breathed Lady Peggy.

"It must have been taken since dinner-time," went on Tom quietly. "Lord Eastwood was in the library then, and happened to go to the safe. The chart was there all right, then."

The juniors stared at Tom Merry in dumb bewilderment. It seemed almost too astounding to be true!

There was a step in the doorway behind Tom. The

figure of Lord Eastwood appeared at the door, grave-faced. Behind him could be seen Gilbert Renfrew, looking startled and incredulous.

"Yes, the chart has been taken," said Lord Eastwood quietly. "I cannot imagine who the pilferer can be, but there is no doubt that someone has been to the safe between dinner and now, and stolen it!"

"But who would want to take it?" put in Renfrew, in a bewildered tone. "After all, the thing may be valueless really. We have no proof that it would reveal the whereabouts of the treasure that is said to be hidden on Penperro Rock. Even if the treasure really exists!" he added, with a shrug.

"Whoever took the chart is evidently convinced that the treasure really exists—and that the chart is the key to it!" replied Lord Eastwood grimly.

"But who could have taken it?" cried Blake, in amazement.

"I can only suppose that someone outside this house has heard of the discovery of the chart," said Lord Eastwood, frowning, "and has taken the opportunity of finding the french windows of the library open to sneak in from the garden and break open the safe—possibly while we were all at dinner to-night. But it is a most mysterious affair."

"It's rotten!" put in Fatty Wynn gloomily. "It knocks the treasure hunt on the head! Even when the weather gets calm enough for us to visit the giddy island, our search'll be pretty hopeless without the chart."

"I shall ring up the police!" said Lord Eastwood grimly.

He turned and strode from the room. Renfrew followed him, leaving the juniors and the three Spalding House girls to discuss excitedly the amazing disappearance of the precious chart that they had all hoped would lead them to the hiding-place of the monk's treasure on Penperro Rock.

"Who the dickens can have done it?" muttered Blake again.

"Well, I can prove an alibi all right!" said Talbot, with a faint smile. "I've been with Levison and Clive ever since dinner!"

Talbot, as the other juniors knew, was the only one present who had the ability to "crack" a safe, Reginald Talbot having once been a member of a gang of crooks before his reform and his settling down at St. Jim's.

"Oh, rats!" said Tom Merry. "Nobody would suspect you, anyway, you ass! Lord Eastwood must be right. It can only have been someone who got in from the garden during dinner! No doubt the servants have been gossiping in the village already. They know about the chart, I suppose."

Tom Merry turned to the window, and stood staring out through the deepening dusk at the black shape of the mysterious rock opposite the cliff on which the old house stood.

"There's one thing!" said Tom suddenly. "This shows that somebody knows something—that it must be true enough that there is a treasure hidden out there on the rock! That chart wasn't stolen for nothing!"

"Bai Jove, you're wight there, deah boy!"

In the excitement, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had quite forgotten his ripped jacket.

The swell of St. Jim's stood at Tom Merry's side, with the others crowding round them, all staring out, with troubled frowns, towards the great, gaunt shape of Penperro Rock, with its crown of ruins outlined against the evening sky.

Figgins gave a sudden, grim laugh.

"So we're not the only people out to hunt for the

(Continued on next page.)



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NEXT WEDNESDAY'S TREAT!

What's your opinion of our holiday series, chums? Really, though, that question is unnecessary, for of all the many spanking yarns Martin Clifford has given us few, if any, have held the interest of the reader from beginning to end in the manner of this present series. That this should be so is hardly surprising; the plot is one on which our author can "let himself go" in his very best style. All the essentials for some really first-class stories are there—fun, gripping excitement, and thrills galore—and all are handled in such a way that I found myself so absorbed by each one that, once having started it, I simply could not put it down again. And, so far from losing any of their interest, each succeeding yarn of the series seemed to me to be better than its predecessor. Having said that, I know you'll be looking forward to next Wednesday with even greater eagerness than usual, and expecting a tale of Tom Merry & Co. that will be something to talk about. Well, for all your anticipation, you won't be disappointed, take it from me! "Hats off to Martin Clifford!" will be your cry when you read:

"ON THE TRAIL OF TREASURE!"

and come to the conclusion of the story, all too soon, of the adventures of the chums of St. Jim's and their companions on holiday at Penperro House. As you can guess from the

title, it is round the ancient monks' treasure lying hidden somewhere on Penperro Rock that the story centres and of the party's attempts to locate the hidden gold. Hitherto the rough sea between the mysterious island and the mainland has prevented Lord Eastwood and his guests from making a visit of exploration, but at last this becomes possible and the search begins in earnest! What happens then? Is the long-sought treasure discovered, or—aha, that remains for you to discover for yourselves! There are plenty of unlooked-for happenings in next week's story, and it would spoil everything to disclose them now. Control your impatience till next Wednesday, chums, but—ORDER YOUR COPY OF THE "GEM" TO-DAY!

A fine school story and an equally good instalment of Captain Storm and his companions in South America, as described in THE ROBOT MAN, make really gripping reading. Just hand your copy of the GEM to one of your non-reader pals next week, and if he doesn't think the grand instalment of our serial alone worth the money, then—well, I'll eat my hat!

The next article in our series of FAMOUS DAREDEVILS also reaches the high-water mark of excellence, and then there is our old friend the ORACLE ready—nay, eager—to set you at rest over any puzzler you may have on your mind. Keep him busy, chums!

Just another reminder to my readers on holiday! Keep your copy of the GEM prominently displayed and see what you'll get. LARGE BALLOONS, KITES, WINDMILLS, and SURPRISE PACKETS—among other free gifts—are being distributed to boys and girls who have their copies of the good old paper well in view. Don't forget. And here's wishing you the very best of luck!

DON'T FEEL SMALL!

Here's a letter from one of my readers that I thought might be of general interest. He tells me that he belongs to a cricket club in his district, and goes on: "Our best player's an awfully fine chap. A wonderful bowler and practically as good with the bat. The side would be nowhere without him. I've often thought how ripping it would be to have him for a pal. But I guess he'd laugh at the idea." It struck me that my correspondent was making a mistake that is all too common where shy and retiring fellows are concerned. They imagine themselves to be very "small beer," efface themselves whenever possible, and as a result lose a great deal of pleasure in life. I wanted to grip that chap by the shoulders and ask him this: "Hasn't it ever occurred to you that some fellow you thought was important and that you'd give almost anything to be friends with, but were afraid to make advances to, thought just the same about you?" Don't overvalue yourself, of course, but don't do the other thing. Strike the happy medium!

IN THE "MAGNET!"

I really can't let this chat go by without mentioning something of the Wonderful Free Gift that will be presented with every copy of Saturday's "Magnet." Ah, I see I have got your whole attention at the word Gift. Yes, the entire market will be stirred at the appearance of our grand companion paper on Saturday with its bumper programme of stories—AND STUPENDOUS PRESENTATION. This latter takes the form of a FLYING MODEL AEROPLANE.

I could write a whole page about this wonderful gift—but space does not permit me doing this, so here are a few important facts concerning the "Magnet" Free Gift Aeroplane. The plane measures 11½ ins. from prop. to tail. It will fly from the ground under its own power for 50 yards. If launched by hand it will travel 75 yards. Unbreakable, and coloured in orange and blue. Now, chums, make a point of getting the "Magnet" on sale Saturday; or, better still, order a copy to-day.

Cheerio, chums! YOUR EDITOR.

treasure!" he said. "We're up against somebody else. That's pretty clear! And with the chart, they've got the pull on us!"

"In a way, yes," nodded Tom. "But remember this— whoever it is that's up against us in this giddy treasure-hunt, they can't land on the rock before we can. And as soon as the sea is calm enough for us to make a landing there, we'll be on the spot!"

CHAPTER 11.

Wally Wants to Know!

"It's jolly queer!"

"Rather!"

"It beats the giddy band!"

Wally D'Arcy, Reggie Manners, and Frankie Levison were sitting on their beds in pyjamas. The three minors were supposed to be in bed; but, instead, they were discussing the strange disappearance of the treasure-chart from the safe in the library.

"You see," said Wally, with a deep frown on his face, "the thing is, we three were at this window almost immediately after dinner! Trying to catch that fat ass Wynn—only we caught Renfrew instead—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, we can't tell the pater," went on Wally reflectively, "or we should have to explain about Renfrew, and we promised not to."

"Absolutely," nodded Reggie. "Besides, your pater would be frightfully waxy if he knew we'd chucked all that muck over Renfrew—even though it was a blessed mistake."

"Don't tell your pater, for goodness' sake!" murmured Frank Levison uneasily.

"But it's jolly rum," grunted Wally. "There we were, where we'd see anyone who sneaked in from the garden! It must have been during the few minutes after grub before we got to the window, while we were mixing that giddy mess"—Wally chuckled for a moment at memory of it—"or else just after we'd dropped it on Renfrew. Because it was soon after that that dad found the giddy chart had been pinched!"

"Yes, it must have been just before or after we were at this window," agreed Reggie.

"Unless—"

"Eh?"

"Unless," repeated Wally slowly, "it was Renfrew who pinched it!"

Reggie and Frankie stared at their chum as though they wondered if he had gone suddenly mad.

"You don't really mean that?" breathed Frankie.

"Well, he was in the library, wasn't he?" said Wally defiantly.

"Ye-es; but—"

"Remember those clicks we heard?" went on Wally, and there was a very deep frown on his face now. "It sounded like some chap locking the library door, didn't it! Well, if Renfrew was meaning to open the safe, he'd naturally lock the door while he was doing it!"

"My hat! So he would!" breathed Reggie excitedly.

He and Frank Levison stared at Wally wide-eyed.

"Great pip!" gasped Frankie. "What are you going to do, Wally? Put the police on to him, or what?"

"Ass!" growled Wally. "Don't talk through your blessed hat, young Levison! We don't even know it was him! I don't really think it was, so there. He's too decent a chap! Remember the sporting way he took it when we'd slobbered all that mess over him? He's a sportsman. I don't think for a jiffy he's really the chap who pinched the chart."

"But you said—"

"I only said it was possible, didn't I? Anyway, that's all I meant. It is just possible, though I don't think it's likely."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" persisted Frankie.

Wally frowned.

"I dunno! I don't like to say anything to anybody but you chaps. I shouldn't like to breathe a word about it to my pater, not without proof. Besides, we said we wouldn't. Renfrew's afraid everybody'd laugh at him if they knew he'd walked into a booby-trap by mistake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Reggie. "It was jolly funny, the way he looked when he'd got all that mess over him!"

"Rather!" grinned Frank Levison.

A sudden look of resolution came into Wally's face. He jumped off the bed and slipped on his dressing-gown and slippers.

"I'll tell you what! The only thing to do is to jolly well tackle the chap about it!"

"My hat!" breathed Levison minor. "Have you really got the cheek to?"

"Of course I have!" snorted Wally hotly. "Think I'm a blessed coward, young Levison? 'Cause if so, I'll punch your silly nose!"

(Continued on next page.)



**O-PEE-CHEE
GOLD WATCH
COMPETITION**

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- (B) Ellen Dugdale 37 Witham Road, Skelmersdale, Lancs.
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"I'd jolly well like to see you!"

"I will, if you aren't jolly careful!"

"Oh, chuck it, you asses," grunted Reggie Manners. He chuckled excitedly. "We'll go with you, Wally!"

"Rather!" grinned Levison minor, forgetting his ire in a moment.

"Good!" murmured Wally. "We'll see what old Renfrew has to say!"

Reggie Manners and Levison minor slipped on their dressing-gowns and slippers, and followed their leader from the room.

The passage outside was deserted. From below could be heard the sound of the gramophone in the music-room.

"Come on," muttered Wally, turning along the corridor. "This is the way to his room. We'll find him there, with luck!"

On silent feet the three fags hurried along the corridor in the direction of Gilbert Renfrew's room.

CHAPTER 12.

Baggy Makes a Discovery!

WALLY & Co. were not the only dressing-gown-clad figures that might have been seen moving about in the corridors of Penperro House just then!

Baggy Trimble had gone to bed early, there to sleep off the effects of a heavy dinner. But instead of going to sleep he had lain awake—and, as was usually the case with Baggy—he had not been lying in bed long before the pangs of hunger began to attack him again!

Baggy had not been content to lie there hungry for long. He had put on a dressing-gown and sneaked downstairs. Through the hall into the kitchen-quarters he had stolen like a fat shadow, straight to the big larder.

Here he had collected the remains of a gooseberry pie, a plate of cold sausages, and several slices of ham. Carrying these with loving care, Baggy had hastened upstairs again, praying that he would meet no one.

It was as he was stealing along from the stairs to the bed-room he shared with Levison and Clive—who, he knew, would not be upstairs for another half-hour at least—that he heard footsteps approaching from the opposite direction.

"Oh, lor!" gasped Baggy.

It was impossible to hide the gooseberry pie and the plate of sausages and ham under his dressing-gown, they were too bulky for that! Baggy had been relying on the likelihood that he would meet nobody on his furtive return to his room.

It was very bad luck indeed that he looked like running into somebody!

The footsteps turned the corner, and three shadowy figures loomed up at the end of the corridor. Baggy recognised Wally & Co.

They had not seen him, it was clear, for his end of the corridor was deep in dark shadow. Baggy glanced wildly round for a hiding-place, for he certainly did not want Wally to see that he had been raiding his father's larder!

There was a door near him, and it was the work of a moment for Baggy to push it open and slip inside, closing it noiselessly behind him.

The room was in darkness. He waited nervously behind the door for the three fags to pass. But to Baggy's dismay they did not pass.

Their footsteps halted outside, and there came a tap on the door.

"What the dickens do they want here?" groaned Baggy.

Now that his eyes were growing more used to the dim light, he could make out the shadowy shape of the bed and a tall wardrobe. On a sudden impulse he pulled open the wardrobe door and stepped inside it, carrying his looted delicacies with him. The next instant the door of the room had opened, and a bright stream of light from the passage poured in.

It was lucky for Baggy that he had taken the precaution of concealing himself in the wardrobe—otherwise discovery would have been a certainty.

"What the dickens do the little rotters want here, anyway?" muttered Baggy.

Then a voice came to his ears from the passage. He recognised it as the voice of Renfrew.

"Hallo! D'you want me?"

It was clear to Baggy then that this was Gilbert Renfrew's room. Apparently the three Third-Formers had come to see him for some reason—and Renfrew had come along the passage just as Wally & Co. had been about to go away again on finding the room empty.

"Yes, please," came the voice of Wally. "It's rather important!"

"Oh!" There was a note of surprise in Renfrew's answer. "Then you had better come in."

The three fags entered the room behind Renfrew, Wally closing the door behind them. A flood of electric light filled the room—Baggy could see the bright chink shining in

under the door of the wardrobe where he was squashed among the hanging coats, clasping his stolen tuck.

"Oh, lor!" gasped Baggy faintly, as he heard the door close. "Oh crumbs! I—I hope Renfrew doesn't find me here!"

Baggy kept as still as a mouse, and began to wish very heartily that he had refrained from visiting the larder that evening after all.

From the other side of the door came the muffled voices of Renfrew and Wally & Co.

And as he listened Baggy Trimble began to prick up his ears! After a while, he was straining his ears to miss no word of what was said on the other side of the wardrobe door!

And his eyes, as he listened, grew wide and round!

"Well?" said Renfrew, eyeing the fags curiously. "What do you want to see me about?"

He took out a cigarette-case and lit a cigarette, seating himself on the foot of the bed, his eyes fixed on the fags.

"Wally'll tell you!" gasped Frank Levison, who was looking rather scared now that they were actually bearding the lion in its den, so to speak.

Gilbert Renfrew turned glittering eyes upon Walter Adolphus D'Arcy.

"Well?" he said again.

Even Wally was looking rather confused now.

"Ahem! It's—it's about—about your being in the library this evening, you know," he blurted out.

"What!"

Renfrew's voice cut the air like a knife. He jumped to his feet, and Wally by the shoulder.

"You've not said anything about that to anyone?" he demanded in an almost menacing tone.

Wally shook his head.

"No, we said we wouldn't, so, of course, we haven't. But—"

"Good!" breathed Renfrew.

He let his hand fall from Wally's shoulder, and laughed oddly.

"I don't want anything said about that, you must remember! I don't want to be the laughing-stock of everyone, for having been turned into a sort of nigger minstrel by you young scamps! Ha, ha!"

"No," said Wally awkwardly. "But we were wondering about you being in the library this evening, at just about the time the chart was taken—"

Renfrew's lips tightened to a white line. His eyes seemed to bore through Wally.

"What the deuce do you mean, you young fool?" he cried harshly.

Wally gulped. He was feeling about as uncomfortable as he had ever felt in his life. But he went on doggedly.

"I thought—that is, we wondered if—if you knew anything about the missing chart!" he stammered. "Of course, we don't really think you do, but since you were alone in the library this evening, we—we thought we ought to tackle you about it, just to make sure—"

Wally broke off.

There was a long silence in the bed-room. Renfrew stood with his eyes fixed on Wally in a queer, glittering way.

His glance shifted to Reggie Manners and Frankie Levison. Wally's chums were both looking quite scared now.

Renfrew laughed softly. He shook his head.

"No," he said slowly. "I'm sorry to disappoint you. I'm afraid I am not the thief who took that chart. I can assure you of that fact!"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Wally, with a look of great relief.

"For one thing," went on Renfrew coolly, "I do not happen to know how to open a locked safe! That, as you may know, needs a good deal of experience. Secondly, I personally feel very strong doubts as to whether there is any treasure on Penperro Rock, so that I have no particular desire to get hold of a chart which, in my humble opinion, will only lead its owners on a fool's errand! Thirdly, I don't happen to be such a rogue as you seem to think me, so that I should not have taken the chart even if I had wanted it, and even if I had been in a position to do so."

Again he laughed, on an ironical note.

Wally flushed crimson.

"We never really thought you had," he said quickly. "We didn't think you were a rotter, honest! But we thought we ought to tackle you—it was the decent thing to do, rather than to mention it to other people—"

"Oh, quite—quite!" put in Renfrew hastily.

He dropped a friendly hand on Wally's shoulder, and smiled down at the troubled face of the fag.

"I quite understand," he said quickly. "You did what was best, under the circumstances. But I trust I have



"Would you like me to show you a wippen' turn, deah gal?" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he danced with Cousin Ethel. "I bwing my foot back like this, cwoss it ovah in fwont—" At that moment one of Figgins' large feet got in the way, and there was a yell from Gussy as he tripped over it and pitched headlong. "Yawooop!" (See Chapter 10.)

been able to convince you that your suspicions were utterly unfounded?"

"Rather!" chimed in Reggie and Levison minor.

Wally grinned.

"Absolutely, sir! Anyway, we never really suspected you, as I say," he added quickly.

"That's splendid!" smiled Renfrew. "And now that you know I am quite ignorant of the fate of the chart, you'll still keep mum about my being in the library this afternoon? I should never hear the last of that water and soot episode if it came to be known!"

"We won't say anything," Wally promised.

"Good youngsters! I dare say your father would not like to know that you three poured that mess over one of his guests, either, eh? Ha, ha, ha! Well, we'll none of us say anything about it! Mum's the word!"

He opened the door, and the three fags passed out into the corridor.

"Good-night, young 'uns!"

"Good-night, sir!"

The Third-Formers hurried away in the direction of their own room. Gilbert Renfrew closed the door, and tossed his cigarette into the grate. He stood staring at the carpet, a deep frown on his face.

In his eyes there was a new, ugly light.

"I wonder if I can trust the little hounds to keep quiet?" he muttered.

He reached out a hand and turned the key in the door. Then he crossed to a small desk by the head of the bed, and taking out a bunch of keys he unlocked one of the drawers and drew it open.

There was a faint gasp from the wardrobe behind him, but Renfrew failed to notice it, as he took something from the open drawer and turned with it to the light.

In his hands he held the stolen chart.

There was a glinting gleam in his dark eyes as he stood staring down at it triumphantly—little dreaming that the eye of Baggy Trimble was glued to the keyhole of the wardrobe, watching his every movement.

"Now for the treasure!" he muttered in a voice so low that Baggy, in the wardrobe, failed to hear. "As soon as the weather is calm enough for a landing on the rock—"

His words snapped off.

With a sudden startling crash the door of the wardrobe had burst open. Baggy's weight within, as he had pressed against it to peer through the keyhole, had been too much for the door!

The next moment Baggy Trimble staggered into the room, shedding cold sausages, slices of ham and gooseberries as he came.

Renfrew gave a gasping cry.

Crash!

Baggy collapsed into a chair, and lay there utterly winded. The pie-dish slid from his fingers and smashed on the floor beside him.

"Oh!" gasped Baggy. "Oh lor'!"

CHAPTER 13.

The Bargain!

ANOTHER inarticulate cry broke from Renfrew's lips. He crushed the piece of discoloured parchment in his hand, thrusting it hastily into his side-pocket.

Baggy sat up rather dazedly.

"Oh!" he panted breathlessly. "Ow!" He staggered to his feet, eyeing Renfrew very warily. "I—I—I—"

"You—you little spy!" hissed Renfrew, his eyes blazing.

He took a step towards Baggy, who hastily scuttled round the end of the bed, putting the width of it between himself and the tall figure of Lord Eastwood's mysterious guest.

"Ow! Hands off!" gasped Baggy.

"What are you doing here?" ground out Renfrew savagely. "You were spying on me, eh?"

"Nunno!" squeaked Baggy. "I wasn't, really! I—I came into the wrong room by mistake! I—I'd no idea you were here—"

Renfrew surveyed the scattered food on the floor, and a grim smile gleamed in his eyes for a moment. He took his hand from his pocket. He had every hope that Baggy had not seen that square of parchment that he had thrust it out of sight a moment or two before.

With an effort he regained his composure.

"So you've been raiding the larder, eh?"

"Oh, really——"

"Well, you'd better get out of here!" rapped Renfrew.

He flung open the door. Baggy made a doubtful movement towards it, then hesitated.

He had been thoroughly scared at first at being found in his place of concealment. But now that he was gathering his wits together he was beginning to realise that Gilbert Renfrew was a good deal more afraid of him than he himself was of Renfrew!

"Half a minute!"

There was a malicious grin creeping into Baggy's fat face. He wagged a podgy forefinger at Renfrew.

"I want a word or two with you!" announced Baggy in a truculent tone. "See? Shut that blessed door. You can't fool me!"

A startled gleam sprang into Renfrew's eyes.

He realised that his supposition that Baggy knew nothing had not been justified! He licked his lips, which had gone suddenly dry, and closed the door.

"Well?" muttered Renfrew, rather hoarsely.

Baggy sniffed, and tilted his fat little nose into the air. "If you think I didn't spot that chart, you're jolly well wrong!" he said with a malicious grin. "You can't fool me, I tell you, even if you can fool a parcel of blessed fags!"

Renfrew did not answer.

He stood by the door, his eyes fixed on Baggy with a strange light. For a moment Baggy felt scared again. He drew a hasty step back.

"Don't you lay your dirty hands on me!" he ejaculated nervously. "I—I'll yell out if you do, and have the other chaps here in half a jiff——"

"I'm not going to touch you," said Renfrew thickly.

He took a cigarette from his silver case with an air of jauntiness that he had difficulty in assuming. His hand was unsteady as he lit it. He forced a laugh.

"Now," he said coolly, "what nonsense are you jabbering?"

"It's jolly well not nonsense at all!" said Baggy with great bravado. "You've got that blessed chart—I saw it just now! It's in your pocket, so there! You're the chap that stole it from the safe!"

"Not so loud, you young fool!" breathed Renfrew savagely.

He took a sudden swift step towards Baggy. Again Baggy scuttled round to the other side of the bed, with a squeal of panic.

"Ow! Keep off——"

"I'm not going to touch you!"

Baggy faced the man across the bed, and a cunning grin came upon his fat face. He realised that he held the whip-hand.

"I've a jolly good mind to show you up!" growled Baggy. "You gimme that chart, anyway! See?"

Renfrew faced him, with dark brows.

The man was thinking—hard. And suddenly he smiled. "You think you are very clever, I suppose?" he murmured, and dropped into a chair, with a careless gesture. But it was a chair from which he could easily have intercepted any attempt of Baggy's to dart for the door. "You think you've bowled out a regular villain, eh?"

He laughed softly.

Baggy stared at him in astonishment. The man's new demeanour puzzled him.

"It jolly well looks like it," he said cautiously.

"Would you feel rather small if you knew that you had got hold of the wrong end of the stick entirely?" chuckled Renfrew—"that the whole thing is a hoax?"

"A—a hoax?" echoed Baggy blankly.

"Yes, a hoax!" nodded Renfrew coolly, blowing a cloud of smoke to the ceiling.

"Look here," said Baggy indignantly, "it's no good trying to bluff me, so there! You can't fool me! You've got that chart——"

"I have," assented Renfrew smilingly.

"And you jolly well must have bagged it out of the safe——"

"As a matter of fact, I did!" agreed Renfrew, blowing a smoke-ring.

Baggy stared at him in bewilderment, very much taken aback by the man's smiling admission of his guilt.

"Well, then!" sniffed Baggy, after a pause. "I've a jolly good mind to show you up!"

He dared not profess a definite intention of "showing up" Renfrew till he was safe from the man's anger, out of the room. But Baggy had every intention of telling Lord Eastwood and the others of Renfrew's guilt; not so much in order to see a rascal meet his deserts, as to glory in the limelight that his amazing discovery would shower upon him.

[THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,121.]

"I suppose," said Renfrew, with a quiet smile, "I had better explain everything!"

Baggy sniffed.

"It'll be pretty difficult to explain it to Lord Eastwood—if I were to show you up, that is," he added hastily.

"Not so very," grinned Renfrew. "You see, for one thing, this so-called treasure-chart is not genuine. I—er—made it myself!"

He took from his pocket the yellowed square of parchment, with the lines and markings upon it, and the significant-looking cross in the heart of what seemed to be a plan of the ruins of Penperro Rock. Baggy stared at it wide eyed, then at Renfrew's coolly smiling face.

"A fraud?" gasped Baggy.

"Yes," nodded Renfrew. "Just a little joke of mine, you see."

"I don't believe it!" muttered Baggy, but his voice was very doubtful.

"But it is true," laughed Renfrew. "I drew this supposed chart myself, and put it in that rusty box with the skeleton for a joke. I happened to find those smugglers' tunnels and the skeleton in them myself a day or two ago. I intended to pretend to find the chart there myself, just for fun, to pull the legs of all you youngsters. The fact that some of you found it before I had time to work the joke myself helped the hoax tremendously, of course!"

"My giddy aunt!" breathed Baggy.

"Of course," went on Renfrew easily, "I never thought for a moment that Lord Eastwood would be taken in by this bogus treasure-chart! I certainly never intended that. Lord Eastwood is a gentleman for whom I entertain a very deep regard, and I would not dream of attempting to fool him. No, it was simply to play a joke on you youngsters that I worked the little hoax! And when, to my amazement, I found that Lord Eastwood was actually deceived, I can tell you that I was very worried indeed. You see, I should hate to see Lord Eastwood make a fool of himself!"

He flicked the ash from the end of his cigarette.

"To prevent Lord Eastwood from making a fool of himself," went on Renfrew, his eyes fixed keenly on Baggy Trimble's. "I determined to get the chart back somehow or other, without saying a word to anyone. Well, I succeeded. I happen to know a little about combination locks, and that one in the library is an easy one. A child could have opened it!"

He laughed.

"You see, by taking the chart back, I have prevented Lord Eastwood from making himself ridiculous, as he would have done had he tried to locate the legendary treasure of Penperro Rock by means of it. No one need ever have known, I imagined. I meant simply to destroy this fake chart; then everything would have been all right."

There was a long silence in the room.

Baggy Trimble was staring at Renfrew with various emotions struggling for expression in his face.

That Renfrew's story was true, Baggy did not doubt. The man's calm, smiling manner was too convincing for doubt.

Baggy felt that he had been done!

All his glorious visions of being the hero of the hour, after revealing to Lord Eastwood and the others the thief of the treasure-chart, had vanished.

Then a last faint doubt returned to him.

"Look here," said Baggy, with a cunning gleam in his eyes; "if your yarn's really true, you're going to destroy that chart, eh?"

"Certainly!"

"Well, let's see you do it!" growled Baggy suspiciously.

"Only too glad, if it will convince you," drawled Renfrew.

There was a candle standing on a little table by the head of Renfrew's bed. He rose to his feet and lit it. With a light laugh, he held a corner of the parchment to the flame.

Baggy gave a disconsolate grunt as he saw the supposed treasure-chart go up in spluttering flame, held in Renfrew's long fingers. The man tossed the burning parchment into the grate, and watched it as it was consumed. Then he put a heel on the charred remains.

"I hope that satisfies you," he observed laconically.

Baggy's last doubts had gone now. He argued that if Renfrew was really on the track of the treasure, he would never have destroyed the chart showing its whereabouts. He would have gone to any extremes before doing that.

"Well, why did you tell that blessed parcel of lies to young Wally & Co.?" he grumbled sulkily.

"Naturally, I had to put them off somehow," grinned Renfrew. "Had I told them the truth—as I have just told it to you—they would have been bound to chatter about it. Sooner or later it would have come to Lord Eastwood's ears. And I am most anxious for him not to know that he was taken in over that bogus chart!"

A sudden, cunning gleam came into Baggy's eyes. "I can understand that," he nodded, with a snigger. "He, he, he! Lord Eastwood would be jolly wild to know how you'd fooled him! Well, what about making it worth my while to keep mum about it?"

Renfrew smiled sardonically. "Blackmail, eh?" "Oh, really, you know!" Baggy blinked at him in an injured way. "I think it's my duty to tell Lord Eastwood—I jolly well do!"

Renfrew put a hand into his inner pocket and took out a wad of paper money. Baggy's eyes lit up greedily.

"Very well," said Renfrew quietly. "I am willing to buy your silence. If I give you five pounds, you swear to keep silent about this?"

"Rather!" gasped Baggy covetously. Renfrew counted out five pound notes on to the table. Baggy's fat fingers gathered them up excitedly, and thrust them into the pocket of his dressing-gown.

"I won't say a word!" he grinned, "about how you fooled Lord Eastwood!"

Renfrew's hand shot out, and grasped Baggy's shoulder in a vice-like grip. His eyes gleamed fiercely.

"You swear?" he muttered.

"Ow! Yes! Leggo!" Gilbert Renfrew took his hand away, and Baggy moved back quickly, rubbing his shoulder.

"If you keep your promise, maybe there'll be some more pound notes coming your way," smiled Renfrew. "Remember that! But if you split—"

His eyes glittered dangerously. "I won't!" squeaked Baggy. "I swear I won't!"

Had Baggy been less obtuse, he might have realised that it was strange, to say the least of it, that Renfrew was willing to pay so much for silence over what had only—so he professed—been a harmless joke! But Baggy was not very "quick on the uptake!"

The man turned to the door and opened it softly, glancing up and down the passage outside.

From below, the sound of the gramophone could still be heard, and distant talk and cheery laughter.

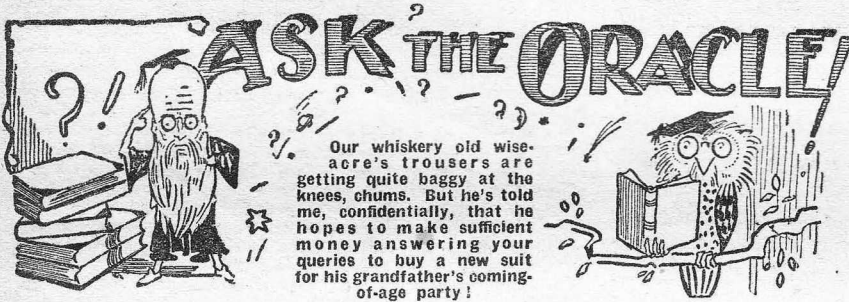
"All clear," muttered Renfrew, half to himself. "Scat!" Baggy scuttled from the room.

"Oh, half a jiff!" he ejaculated. "I want my tuck—"

"Get out!" snarled Renfrew. Baggy, despite the sight of the tempting-looking cold sausages that still lay scattered on the floor by the wardrobe, turned away hastily, scared by those glittering eyes.

He scuttled away along the passage in the direction of his own room—with his fingers clutched in the pocket of his dressing-gown around the folded notes.

(Continued on next page.)



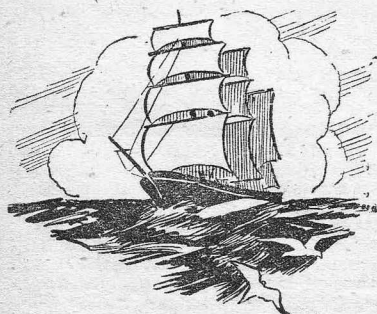
Our whiskery old wise-acre's trousers are getting quite baggy at the knees, chums. But he's told me, confidentially, that he hopes to make sufficient money answering your queries to buy a new suit for his grandfather's coming-of-age party!

Q. What is the meaning of the nautical terms "scud," "scull," and "scuttle"?

A. This is the query sent in by a Shropshire lad who signs himself "Farmer's Son." "Scud" means to run before the wind, and often when the wind is very strong a sailing ship will "scud" before it. "Scull" is to row with two oars of the type known as sculls. "Scuttle" is to cut a hole, and to scuttle a ship means to make a hole in her below the water-line and sink her. The present of eggs that you sent under separate cover through the post as a gift to me, "Farmer's Son," arrived in the form of an omelette. I thank you all the same, even if the office-boy who opened the packet does not!

Q. Why do some chemists have coloured bottles in their windows?

A. Because it is a relic of olden times, C. C. B., and these ancient customs die hard. The apothecaries and alchemists of days gone by, used glass retorts and jars for preparing and keeping their mixtures. Many modern chemists retain



The three-master "scuds" before the breeze.

great glass bottles full of coloured liquid on this account, and as symbol of their calling.

Q. What is a good cure for face ache?

A. "Growing Lad," of Huddersfield, writes to inform me that his face pains him, in which respect it differs from the face of our office-boy which pains everyone except its owner. But seriously, my chum, I hesitate to advise you to tie a bag of hot boiled onions over it, massage it with margarine, or adopt any of the other good old grandmotherly remedies, as your case appears to be chronic. See the local doctor or dentist.

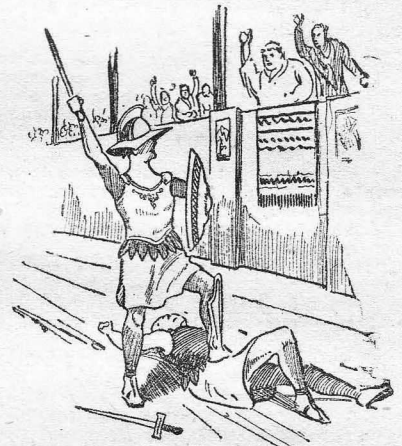
Q. What is peonage?

A. It is the system, Bob Glover, of Shoreditch, of agricultural service—servitude is the better word—that is common in many parts of Mexico and elsewhere. In olden days the peon, a native Indian, in debt to his employer, was made to labour for so many years until the debt was paid off. Officially, peonage has been abolished, but it still survives in slightly different form in some places.

Q. Does music help in getting work done?

A. This is a suggestion sent in to me by a young chum, "Whistling Abe," of Brighton. His argument is that in olden days the sailors always used to sing sea-chanties round the capstan or when heaving on a rope. Also his Uncle Aaron, just back from a holiday in Palestine, tells him that lots of coolies in the East chant songs while working in the fields or carrying burdens along the roads. But just because Abe kept whistling "Sonny Boy" under his breath, to assist himself in English composition during class, his master made him stay in after school and

write out one hundred times: "The wind whistles, trains whistle, some birds whistle, and all policemen have whistles—but I must not whistle in class." No doubt, my chum, music goes a long way toward making some work light, and it is even known to be an inspiration to writers, artists sculptors, and film directors. But obviously class is not the place to test out your theory; and, anyway, "Sonny Boy" has been a bit overdone, hasn't it?



Thumbs up in a Roman Arena in olden times. The meaning of the term, "thumbs up" is supplied by our Oracle.

Q. What is the origin of "thumbs up"?

A. As you state, Stanley Gifford, the modern meaning of this expression is "all serene" or "fit and cheery" if in response to a query as to your health. In the days of ancient Rome the spectators of gladiatorial combats in the arena used to give their decisions regarding the final fate of beaten gladiators with their thumbs. On the victor of a contest appealing to the crowd over his prostrate rival, the Emperor and people would either turn their thumbs up or down as a signal. But, funnily enough, if the beaten man was to be killed, the thumbs would be turned up; and if it were desired that his life should be spared, the thumbs would be turned down.

Back in his room, he closed the door softly, and took out the money. He counted it over, with shining eyes.

"My hat!" breathed Baggy. "What a bit of luck!" He would have been surprised could he have seen Gilbert Renfrew at that moment, however. Had he done so, Baggy would have realised how he had been fooled.

For Renfrew was standing by the desk in his room examining with gloating eyes a sheet of paper on which, earlier that evening, he had traced an exact copy of the treasure-chart!

CHAPTER 14.

The Mystery of a Fiver!

"O H! Wow! Yooooooop!" Baggy Trimble opened his eyes, with a yell—to find himself sailing through the air. He landed on the hard floor with a crash, in a heap of bed-clothes, and gasped dazedly.

It was morning, and Levison and Clive, who shared the bed-room with Baggy, were already fully dressed.

It was they who had hauled the figure of the Falstaff of the School House from his bed, blankets and all!

"Yow! Yah! Beasts!" panted Baggy, struggling amid the blankets that entangled him. "Oh! I'm hurt! I think you've busted my spine—"

"Get up, you fat slacker!" chuckled Levison. "It's jolly nearly breakfast-time! What'll Lord Eastwood think of you if you're late for brekker again?"

Baggy glared at him. "Blow that!" he sniffed. "I think Gussy's pater ought to see that I have breakfast in bed, anyway!"

"Think so?" chuckled Clive. "Well, p'raps this'll change your mind, porpoise!"

The South African junior stepped to the washstand and plunged a large sponge into one of the water-jugs. With a grin, he squeezed it over Baggy's face.

Baggy yelled. "Ow! Grooooooh! Yah! Clive, you beast—"

"Getting up?" inquired Clive cheerily. "Yah! Yes!" gasped Baggy hastily.

"Good! Buck up!" Baggy scrambled to his feet sulkily, and glared at Sidney Clive.

There was a sudden sharp ejaculation from Levison. He was staring in blank amazement at the floor by Baggy's bed.

Clive followed the direction of his chum's gaze, and he jumped.

"My hat!" gasped Clive. Scattered over the floor among the tangle of Baggy's bedclothes were five crumpled pound-notes.

Baggy had put the money under his pillow the night before, and his unceremonious ejection from bed had brought the notes, together with the pillows and blankets, on to the floor.

As he, too, caught sight of those crisp green notes, Baggy gave a gasp, and made a dive for them. But Levison was before him.

"Gimme those notes!" panted Baggy wildly. "They're mine! Gimme them!"

"Half a jiffy," said Levison curtly, glancing from Baggy's excited face to the five notes that he now held in his hand. "Where did you get these from, Baggy?"

"Mind your own business!" roared the fat Fourth-former.

He made a dive for the money, but Levison eluded his clutching fingers.

Baggy stood fairly palpitating with excitement and anxiety. He made another grab for the notes, but again Levison, with a quick movement, put them out of reach.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Clive. "That can't be your money, Baggy!"

"I tell you it is!" gasped Baggy, almost beside himself. "Gimme them, you cad! I—I—"

"All right, don't get excited," said Levison quietly. "If they're yours, you shall have 'em."

He stared at Baggy curiously, and glanced at Clive. Clive's face was equally astonished.

Baggy Trimble was one of the most hard-up fellows at St. Jim's. His attempts to borrow money were frequent. Even since his arrival at Penperro House, Baggy had tried to "touch" the other juniors on more than one occasion—without success.

The St. Jim's fellows knew only too well that money lent to Baggy Trimble was money gone on a one-way journey. It never came back!

To find Baggy with five pounds in his possession was therefore a staggering discovery. It was not surprising that Levison and Clive felt suspicious!

"How did you get hold of this money, Baggy?" asked Levison quietly.

"Find out!"

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Baggy's face was sulky now. But his eyes were fixed on the notes in Levison's hand, and he made another sudden grab at them. Levison pushed him back.

"Gimme my quids!"

"Plenty of time," said Levison coolly. "Five quid is a lot of money, Baggy, and knowing you were broke only yesterday, I think you ought to explain where you got it."

"Hear, hear!" nodded Clive emphatically. "Whose pocket have you been picking, porpoise?"

"Oh, really, Clive—"

There was a sudden tap on the door. The grinning face of Tom Merry appeared.

"Coming down to brekker, you chaps?" he asked cheerily. "Got Baggy up, yet? Good work!"

"I say, half a minute, Tom," exclaimed Levison. "Come in, will you?"

Tom Merry entered the room, closing the door behind him. He looked a little puzzled.

"What's up?"

"We've found this boodle in Baggy's bed!" said Levison, holding out the five green notes. "He says they're his. But I heard him trying to touch Talbot for half-a-crown only yesterday morning—"

"Gimme my money!" howled Baggy desperately. "I'll jolly well tell Lord Eastwood—"

"Five giddy quid!" broke out Tom Merry in great astonishment. "My only aunt!"

He took the notes from Levison's hand, and examined them.

"They're real ones all right, anyway!"

"Of course they are!" roared Baggy. "They're mine, I tell you—"

"That's what made me think they must be duds," explained Tom.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Merry—"

"They're really yours?" exclaimed Tom, staring at Baggy very curiously.

"Yes!" howled Baggy frantically.

"Well, if you really claim them as yours, I suppose you'd better have them," said Tom wonderingly. "But where the dickens did you pinch 'em, Baggy?"

Baggy snatched the notes greedily, and closed his fat hand on them, with a gasp of relief.

"Looks fishy to me," growled Levison.

"Oh, really, Levison! I—I've got lots of titled relatives, you know, who often send me a remittance—"

"I've heard you say so," grinned Levison. "But I'm hanged if I've ever seen any of the giddy remittances!"

"Well, it looks as if Baggy's got one at last!" said Tom Merry in a puzzled tone.

Only the sight of the hard cash could ever have persuaded Tom Merry to believe that it was possible for Baggy to receive such a handsome remittance as five pounds. But the notes themselves certainly seemed indisputable evidence!

Baggy, now that his first fright was over, was thinking hard.

He could not explain the true source of his sudden wealth! But he realised that unless he provided some good reason for it, the suspicions of the other juniors would be strongly roused. They would undoubtedly come to the conclusion that there was something "fishy" about it.

Since Baggy had very little regard for the truth, he was not hampered in providing a reason other than the real one, however!

"I had a remittance from a—a titled uncle last night!" he said loftily. "He often sends me fivers."

"My hat!"

"That's a fib, anyway!" exclaimed Levison. "I saw the post come in last night, and there wasn't a letter for you at all!"

"There was!" howled Baggy. "It must have got mislaid or something, or you'd have seen it!"

"I'm jolly sure there wasn't a letter for you," persisted Levison suspiciously.

"I tell you there was!" said Baggy desperately.

"It certainly looks as though there must have been," cut in Tom Merry quietly. "There's the cash, Levison, old man, for proof! Baggy must be telling the truth for once."

"Oh, really, Merry—"

"Well, perhaps so," admitted Levison doubtfully. "But I'm blessed if I've ever seen Baggy get a fiver sent him before."

From below, the deep tones of a gong sounded.

"Brekker!" grinned Clive. "Good! Come on, you chaps, let's get down. Baggy'll be late again!"

The three turned and left the room, leaving Baggy Trimble glaring after them. In the passage, Tom Merry glanced at the other two.

"Who says the age of giddy miracles is passed?" he ejaculated. "Baggy—with a fiver!"

"I could have sworn there wasn't a letter for him last

night, though," muttered Levison, with a puzzled frown. He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I suppose I made a mistake."

"Must have," nodded Clive. "Somebody must have sent it him!"

The three hurried down to the big dining-room, where Ethel, Doris and Lady Peggy were already gathered, with Blake & Co., and Figgins & Co., Lord Eastwood, and Gilbert Renfrew.

A few moments later Talbot appeared from the garden with Manners and Monty Lowther.

Lord Eastwood glanced along the big table as he sat down.

"Trimble not down yet?" he exclaimed, with a faint frown. "I am afraid he is not at all a good riser."

Breakfast at Penperro House was always a cheery meal. The juniors particularly got to work with a will on the appetising eggs and bacon that George and Henry, the two footmen, placed before them.

"Talking of Baggy," grinned Sidney Clive, "he seems to be in funds! Apparently he had a letter yesterday, with a fiver in it!"

"Wha-a-at!" gasped Figgins, staring across the table at Clive as though he could not believe his ears.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy adjusted his gleaming monocle and surveyed the South African with equal astonishment. "A fivah?"

"G a m m o n!" grinned Blake.

"It's true enough," laughed Tom Merry. "I suppose he'll be off to Truro to blue it!"

The news of Baggy's sudden wealth certainly caused a sensation among the St. Jim's juniors. But there were other more important matters to be discussed.

It was Patty Wynn who spoke first of the missing treasure-chart. Lord Eastwood shook his head.

"I'm afraid the local police are not very much use in an affair of this kind. As you know, the inspector came here last night, but did not seem to be a very likely man to help us."

"I'm afraid whoevah collahed that chart has got away with it for good!" agreed Arthur Augustus disconsolately.

"Well," put in Blake cheerfully, "chart or no giddy chart, we'll have a darned good hunt for that treasure!"

"Rather!" exclaimed Lady Peggy eagerly.

"It seems pretty certain that there is a treasure to be found," said Figgins, glancing out of the window across to the grim pile of the little island that rose from the sparkling sea opposite the house.

"I wonder!" It was Gilbert Renfrew who had spoken.

"There are lots of legends in Cornwall," he went on laconically. "My opinion is, candidly, that the story of the treasure on Penperro Rock is only a legend—nothing more."

"I thought that, Gilbert," said Lord Eastwood. "But I have changed my mind, after the discovery of that chart—and its theft! No one would steal that chart unless he felt sure that he was going to gain by it."

Renfrew shrugged his shoulders without replying.

The door opened, and the fat figure of Baggy Trimble rolled in. With a muttered apology to Lord Eastwood, he flopped into his place, between Figgins and Manners.

Curious eyes were turned on him.

With a sudden startling crash the door of the wardrobe burst open and Baggy Trimble staggered out, shedding slices of ham, cold sausages and gooseberries as he came. Gilbert Renfrew wheeled round with a gasping cry. "Oh!" gasped Baggy. "Oh lor'!"
(See Chapter 12.)



"I say, Baggy, have you been robbing a bank?" queried Blake humorously. "I hear you're rolling in boodle all of a sudden!"

"Oh, rats!" grunted Baggy, not raising his eyes from his plate.

In the presence of Lord Eastwood and the girls, the juniors did not like to question Baggy further about his sudden state of "flushness."

With the meal over, the juniors and the girls trooped out on to the terrace, into the hot morning sunlight.

Tom Merry stared across thoughtfully at Penperro Rock, his eyes roaming over the gaunt ruins that crowned it, seen now through a quivering heat-haze.

Undoubtedly the sea was much calmer to-day than yesterday. Soon it would be possible, if the weather continued fine, for the Penperro House party to row out to the island and land upon it—the event to which they had all been looking forward so eagerly, but which had so far been impossible, owing to the great waves that had thundered and surged among the jagged rocks at its base.

"Chart or no chart, as Blake says, we'll have a darned good hunt for that treasure!" murmured Tom Merry, with an almost grim note in his voice.

"Rather!" chorused the others.

They all stared out across the channel of dancing waves at the grim pile of rock that had once, centuries before, been inhabited by hermit monks.

One thought was in all minds—when the time came that they could at last land on the mysterious island—would they succeed in unearthing its ancient secrets?

Tom Merry drew a long, deep breath.

"I wonder!" he muttered. "I wonder!"

THE END.

(What ever you do, chums, don't miss the next exciting yarn in this grand holiday series, entitled: "ON THE TRAIL OF TREASURE!" You'll enjoy every tine of it.)

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YOU CAN START THIS AMAZING NEW SERIAL OF ADVENTURE TO-DAY!

The Robot Man!

By H. J. ALLINGHAM



It is a very sorry pair of explorers that rest in the deserted hut in the forest by the mighty River Amazon. And their only hope of salvation from the perils that surround them is young Jack Carter! But can he help them, when he is, himself, a prisoner?

The Freedom of Captain Storm!

JACK CARTER watched the professor out of the room in which they had had breakfast together, and breathed a sigh of relief when the door closed on the back of the terrible little man.

Almost at the same moment he heard a sound behind him and, swinging round, found Captain Storm standing before him.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "How the dickens did you get in here?"

The captain jerked his head in the direction of the apparently solid wall behind him.

"I dunno," he said, blinking. "I was in the dark just now. Then something opened in front of me. They gave me a shove, and here I am!"

He wiped his forehead with the sleeve of his jacket. He was very hot. His face and hands were dripping, and his hair clung damply to his scalp.

"Rummy place," commented Jack.

"Ah, you've said it!" muttered the captain, who seemed utterly exhausted.

"Sit down and eat," said Jack.

The man sat down and glanced at the table laden with eatables, but shook his head.

"I have eaten," he said. "They feed me all right now. I have taken your advice and have been working. Pitching muck into a furnace. Goodness knows why. Hot work, anyway."

"You have done your last spell of it, captain," said Jack cheerfully. "You leave here in half an hour!"

Captain Storm, who was sitting with drooping shoulders and bowed head, the picture of depression, suddenly sprang to his feet, his head erect, his eyes blazing, all weariness gone.

"What!" he exclaimed. "We leave this madhouse? You mean it?"

Jack nodded.

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"You leave, captain. I'm staying on for a bit, just to clear up things," he said quietly.

Captain Storm stared, a new look in his pale blue eyes.

"You stay on in this murderer's den and I go alone? Not on your life!" he growled, with emphasis.

"We haven't any time to waste," said Jack, still speaking very quietly. "In fact, this interview ends in twenty minutes from the time you came in, and not a minute later. And as I have a good deal to say, please sit down and listen."

The boy's manner, although he was so calm, was impressive, and his voice had a curious note of command in it.

Captain Storm sat down without a word.

His rugged face, however, continued to wear an unyielding and half-defiant expression.

"I think I am learning how to manage this cranky old professor," said Jack, "and if you help me and do as I tell you, I believe we can both escape from his hands with whole skins. But we shall have to escape one at a time, and if you don't funk it you must go first."

"Go on, I'll hear what you've got to say," muttered the captain, in his rather surly growl.

"It is quite simple," said Jack, with a gallant endeavour to make light of the matter. "Professor Rollins is quite mad, of course, but he has some clever notions. He wants me to help him in one of his experiments, and I have promised to do so if he will set us at liberty. You are to go at once, and I am to follow when the experiment is completed. That will be within a month from to-day at the latest. You will join Harry and Teddy White and wait for me. You must keep within a radius of five miles until I come, and then we will all go back to the coast together."

"That's his promise?" growled the captain.

"Yes."

"Suppose he breaks it?"

"I don't think he will, not during the month, anyway. Our danger will come when we are journeying back to the coast. Still, we will take precautions. Come here."

Jack walked to the window, and Captain Storm followed him.

Below them stretched the broad, desolate plain fringed on their right, in front of them the impenetrable forest, and on their left a range of hills.

Jack pointed away to the left to a rocky cleft cut in the side of one of the hills.

"Remember that?" he said.

The captain gave a savage grunt.

"I'm not likely to forget it," he answered. "That is the

spot where we made our camp, and where we were standing when that iron monstrosity grabbed me."

"Exactly," said Jack. "Well, now listen to me. Every day at twelve o'clock you must light a bonfire in the forest somewhere behind that spot. Make it of brushwood and damp leaves so that a column of smoke rises up above the tops of the trees. But only do it if you are safe and have come to no harm. That will be your signal to me. I shall know you are all right if I see the smoke."

"But how shall we know if you are safe?" objected the captain.

"I'll come to that presently," said Jack. "But do listen, this is important. The professor is a wily old bird and may tumble to the smoke dodge. So we will have another and a secret signal."

He lowered his voice as he went on.

"When you have lit the fire one of you must come out on that rocky ledge just where we stood that day, and must stand there, looking out across the plain for two or three minutes. Make no signal, keep your hands straight down by your sides. Then turn and walk slowly away."

"What's the idea?" demanded the captain.

Jack went on as though he had not been interrupted.

"You must do that if all is well with you. Rollins says he will protect you, and if he wants to he can. If he fails—"

"Well?"

Jack's voice had lost its careless note when he replied and his face was very serious.

"If anything goes wrong, if anything happens to any of you, if you see any sign of treachery, the one who comes out there on the rock must let me know."

"How?"

"By holding his right hand above his head, so!" said Jack, illustrating what he meant.

"And," he added very slowly, "if a certain thing happens the one who makes the signal must put two hands above his head."

He looked very hard at the other as he spoke.

"And what will that mean?" asked the captain.

"It will mean that there has been murder. That Professor Rollins has failed to keep his bargain with me. If I see that signal, I shall know that one of you is dead—perhaps two. In that case I shall deal with Professor Rollins, so be careful!"

Then suddenly Jack's demeanour changed, and when he spoke again, it was in his old confident light-hearted way.

"But all this is only a precaution. I am pretty sure the scientific loony doesn't mean any treachery. Everything will be all right, and I shall be with you in a day or two. Good-bye, sir! Our time is nearly up, and I want to see you legging it across that plain. I bet Teddy White is scared to death, and it is pretty rough on young Harry. It will put new heart into them when they see you. Remember me to them, and tell them I am as fit as a fiddle."

"I don't like it. I don't like leaving you, lad," said the captain sombrely. "It don't seem no ways right!"

"Stuff!" retorted Jack. "You can't help me while you are in here, can you? You may help me a lot when you are free. If I don't join you by the end of the month use your own brains and get busy. Get down to the coast if you can and organise a rescue party. I shall be relying on you then. But I hope to get out of here before that. I understand it is only a little job the old boy wants me to do—"

The door of the room opened and Gonzales appeared, silent as a shadow.

"The gentlemen have finished their talk?" he said smoothly.

"Yes," replied Jack, and he held out his hand to the captain.

The two gripped hands.

"Good-bye and good luck! Cheerio till we meet again!" said Jack.

Without another word, Captain Storm, with bowed head, passed out of the room on the heels of Gonzales.

Jack returned to the window.

He stood motionless, staring out at the brown, burnt grass.

Five minutes passed. Ten! And then, just as Jack was beginning to entertain thoughts of treachery, a man, mounted on a sturdy pony, rode out from the shadow of the hill.

It was Captain Storm.

"So," thought Jack, "they have given him a mount. So far the old loony is doing the thing well!"

He watched the rider cross the plain and disappear in one of the narrow openings of the hill range.

Then with a sigh of relief he turned from the window and found himself face to face with Professor Rollins.

The man was standing in the centre of the room looking at him with that curious hard, scientific gaze.

"You see, Mr. Carter, I have kept my word," he said softly. "Are you ready to keep yours?"

The Column of Smoke!

"STILL thinking of Hammersmith Broadway, Teddy?" asked Harry Frobisher, with a grin.

The two were breakfasting out on the veranda of the bungalow. In spite of their disturbed night, Harry was in high spirits, and feeling very fit, for when he did get to sleep he had slept well.

The breakfast, too, was highly satisfactory and calculated to produce a cheerful frame of mind. The chums had discovered a good supply of stores in the bungalow. There were English biscuits, preserves, coffee, and tinned food of various kinds. A selection of these with fresh fruits from the trees in the neglected garden round the house provided an excellent meal.

Teddy White, however, was silent and morose, and his solemn demeanour had provoked Harry's jocular remark.

The little man looked up from the tin of marmalade which he was laboriously opening.

"No, Master Harry," he replied, with a gloomy sigh, "at the moment I was not finking of 'Ammersmiff, which I never expects to set eyes on no more. I was finking as how we was in a tight corner, and I was wondering if we had a dog's chance of ever getting out of it. I was a-saying to meself, 'Teddy, will you go to bed this night wif a 'ole skin, or is this the last meal you'll ever eat? Will you outlive this 'ere day, or is a cruel and painful death awaiting for you around the corner afore the sun goes down?'"

"Oh, cheer up!" said Harry, laughing. "You are not going to die. I am tremendously bucked now I know for certain Jack is alive. It wouldn't surprise me if he came strolling in here any minute, with half a dozen prisoners. That's the kind of chap Jack is."

"You've got a 'opeful nature, Master Harry," said Teddy, as he scooped out some of the marmalade, "and I likes your spirit; but it's my opinion we won't see Mr. Jack or Cap'n Storm no more."

The smile left Harry's face, and he became suddenly grave. "Captain Storm may be dead," he admitted seriously. "Yes, I am afraid that is true. Rough luck! He was a splendid chap. Before we leave this poisonous country I'd like to have a smack at the beggars who killed him, magic or no magic!"

"I'm wif you there!" said Teddy, almost viciously. "The cap'n was a white man clean through, and now he's dead—'Ullo! Wot's that?'"

He had been staring out across the tangled garden as he spoke, but now he leaped up from his seat and, darting to the edge of the veranda, looked up at the sky.

In a moment Harry was by his side.

"What is it?" asked the boy eagerly.

For answer, Teddy pointed away to the right over the forest through which they had travelled the previous day.

Harry looked in the direction indicated, and what he saw was a thin column of smoke rising above the tree-tops almost perpendicularly in the still air.

"That's queer," he said. "What's it mean? Someone setting the forest on fire?"

"Looks like it," replied Teddy. "He ain't lit it to warm 'is 'ands. It ain't wot you might call chilly, is it?"

And he glanced up at the brazen sky.

It was indeed a terribly hot day, and a merciless sun high in the heavens blazed down on the scorched land.

"Perhaps it is our loony with the gun," suggested Harry. "Let us go and stalk him. If we can only run him to earth we might prevent him from doing any more mischief. He only hit my hat yesterday, but he might aim a bit lower next time and have better luck."

Teddy White shook his head dubiously, and from the shadow of the veranda again looked up at the pitiless sky.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Captain Storm, a broad-shouldered man, in company with Teddy White, a middle-aged Cockney, and two youngsters named Jack Carter and Harry Frobisher, set off in search of Professor Rollins, a missing scientist who is reputed to be held in captivity somewhere within the vicinity of the regions through which the mighty Amazon flows. Headless of the dangers ahead, the four plucky adventurers push on into the unknown regions until they reach a cave in the hillside where they make camp. Before very long, however, a huge steel monster, formed like a man, suddenly appears, seizes Captain Storm by the waist, and carries him away. Almost immediately following this, Jack Carter comes face to face with Professor Rollins, the inventor of the strange monstrosity known as the Robot. The professor insists on the youngster accompanying him to his quarters in the rocks. Convinced that the professor must be mad, Jack deems it wise to humour him, and enters a brilliantly-lit chamber fitted with the finest electrical plant in the world. During breakfast the following morning the professor informs Jack that if he will assist him for one month in one of his experiments he will allow the youngster and Captain Storm to rejoin their chums. Jack agrees to the proposal, little realising that the mad inventor's intention is to make him enter a tunnel bored into the ground at the end of which lies a deposit of radium worth untold millions.

"When we drag the boy out of the tunnel he may be dead," says the professor, addressing his willing slave, Gonzales, when out of Jack's hearing, "but his hands will not be empty!"

(Now read on.)

"I ain't got no objection to 'unting the beggar down and givin' 'im wot 'e deserves," he said, "but why not wait till the sun goes down? It must be nigh on midday. We slept late. We shall be fried like eggs if we go out in this heat. I'm for a hour or two in the shade."

But Harry would not listen.

"If we don't go at once we shall lose him," he said impatiently. "We know where he is now. The smoke is our guide, and by the look of it I should say that fire is not a quarter of a mile away. If you won't come, I'll go alone. If there is any more potting to be done, I am going to have first shot if I get half a chance."

With that he turned and strode into the bungalow.

Teddy White followed wearily, grumbling to himself.

Presently they came out again, each carrying a sporting rifle. Harry's was rather a light weapon, but it held a full charge, and a bullet capable of stopping anything they were likely to meet in the forest, man or beast.

Each wore a sun hat; Harry's was the one with the tall crown in which the two holes made by the unknown's bullet were plainly visible.

Together they crossed the wilderness of a garden and plunged into the still thicker undergrowth of the cottage.

"We must go cautiously and keep quiet," said Harry, in a whisper. "Don't talk, but keep your eyes open."

He moved slowly and cautiously, peering in front of him and on both sides. They had proceeded like this for the best part of half an hour, when Harry suddenly made a warning gesture and sank down silently on his hands and knees.

Teddy, who was close on his heels, followed his example promptly, though he had seen and heard nothing.

Nor indeed had Harry. The cause of his action was the fact that there had suddenly come to his nostrils the strong acrid smell of burning wood or leaves.

Crouching low on the ground he peered through the screen of prickly bushes and tangled vines, and presently he saw the momentary flicker of a flame some way ahead, a little to the right.

Noiselessly he wriggled along on hands and knees, nearer and nearer to the spot.

And then suddenly, on pushing aside the trailing leaves of a great squat palm, he found himself on the edge of a little clearing.

In the middle of the clearing was a heap of lighted brushwood, which showed little flame, however. It was banked up with fresh fuel and a thick column of smoke rising lazily from the summit mounted to the tree-tops.

Bending over the smoking heap with his back turned to Harry was a man.

Feeling very excited, but very triumphant, the youngster rose to his feet and stepped out into the clearing, holding his rifle at the ready.

"Hands up or I fire!" he commanded, in a voice which gave Teddy, who was close behind, quite a thrill.

The man swung round, and Harry found himself looking into the startled face of Captain Storm!

In his astonishment and delight, the boy dropped his weapon and sprang forward to greet the captain.

"Captain Storm! You are alive! You are really alive!" cried Harry excitedly.

"Just!" replied the captain, with a great laugh as he gripped the boy's hand.

"And it is really young Harry!" he went on eagerly.

"And you are all right? Teddy White, too! This is great. Both of you safe? Well, lads, I never expected to see you again, and that's the truth. You saw my signal—eh?"

"Were you signalling to us? Is that why you lit the fire?" asked Harry.

"Well, not exactly; but I'll explain presently. Any chance of a drink of water? I've been roaming about the forest for the last two hours, searching for you. I've been to the cave, but found no sign of you there, and since then I've been trying to follow your tracks. And then, as it seemed about midday, I thought I had better make the signal. But I haven't told you about that. It's for Jack. You see—but it's a long yarn, and the fact is, lad, I'm nearly done!"

And indeed the captain, strong man as he was, seemed on the point of exhaustion.

Harry's eyes lit up at the mention of his chum's name, and he dearly wanted to ask further questions, but seeing the captain's condition, he refrained.

"Come along, sir," he said. "Our new headquarters are a jolly sight more comfortable than the cave. And quite near."

It did not take them long to reach the bungalow, and Captain Storm was amazed at finding such a place in the heart of this desolated land.

After a rest and some food and drink he recovered sufficiently to tell his amazing tale.

His two listeners were astounded.

"Professor Rollins!" exclaimed Harry. "The great scientist? But we came out to rescue him!"

"Ah," returned Storm grimly, "he has other views!"

"Then he has gone mad?" said Harry.

"More wicked than mad, I fancy," replied the captain.

"He's got this science of his on the brain, and he cares for nothing else. Human beings are no more to him than so many rats. Jack Carter thinks he can manage the monster, and Jack's a sharp lad. But I'm afraid—I'm mortal afraid. I'm not at all sure I did right to come away and leave the boy—I'm not at all sure. What do you think, Master Harry?"

There was a note almost of pleading in his voice.

Harry answered promptly.

"You did quite right, Jack knows best. What we've got to do is to carry out his instructions. If we do that he will pull us through. Jack is a wonderful chap!"

The enthusiasm if hero-worship in his voice inspired the others with confidence, and soon they were all discussing the situation calmly.

"The one thing to remember," said the captain earnestly, "is to give Jack that signal every day at noon. We shan't be able to see him, but he will see us. We will stay here to-night, but to-morrow early we will get back up the hill to Rocky Ledge and lie in wait in the cave till the time comes. I don't know what Jack's game is, but he is no ordinary lad, and he's got some notion in that clever head of his. Anyway, he's give his orders, and what we've got to do is to obey."

The Assassin in the Forest!

THE next day, after an early breakfast, the three comrades, now reunited, set out for Rocky Ledge.

This was the name they had given to that platform cut in the hillside, from which they had first seen the Robot man.

Teddy White was by no means happy about the expedition. His own experience of that terrible plateau was fresh in his mind, and he had no desire to repeat it.

Indeed, had he been consulted, he would have urged the advisability of giving the haunt of the Robot Man as wide a berth as possible.

However, the little man had one virtue, and that was loyalty. He would not desert his friends, and as they had decided on proceeding to Rocky Ledge he was forced to go with them.

After some discussion it was decided to make the journey by following the bank of the river till they came to the spot where they had first started to mount the hill on that day when Jack was with them.

It was a long way round, but there was less danger of losing their way, and they had plenty of time.

For the first hour or so it was very slow going owing to the tough native vine which at every step they took barred their path like a network of cord.

At length, however, by taking a small detour inland, they got clear of this, and then for a time their progress was easier.

Captain Storm and Harry found it possible to walk side by side and talk.

Teddy lagged a little behind, but not much. He was careful to keep his friends well in sight.

"Haven't you any idea at all, sir, what is in Jack's mind—what his plans are, I mean?" said Harry.

Captain Storm shook his head.

"Not the least," he replied.

"That maniac may kill him!" suggested Harry.

"That is the thought I can't get out of my head," said the captain. "And yet the queer thing is that Jack himself seems quite certain he is in no danger. He believes he is quite able to manage the professor and take care of himself. That is the idea he gave me. He has no fear for himself. It is us he is anxious about. He thinks we are in real danger. The only time he became really serious in our talk together was when he was telling me how to make the signal if any of our party was killed. You won't forget that signal, lad, if anything happens to me."

The captain's voice became suddenly so grave that Harry gave him a quick, anxious look.

"Why should anything happen to you, sir? If they wanted to kill you why didn't they do it when you were in their hands? Why did they let you go?"

"That's true," replied Captain Storm; but his face did not clear. "It is all very puzzling. I honestly believe Rollins set me free because Jack Carter commanded him to do so. The boy has obtained some power over the maniac—I am sure of that. At the same time, Jack fears treachery, not on his own account but on ours. Well, we can

do nothing but wait and see and carry out instructions. We must keep our eyes open and be prepared for everything. That is why I tell you not to forget the signal. You are only a boy, and you are one of the lucky sort. You may win through when me and Teddy White have gone under. I don't say it to frighten you, lad, but we've got to think of what's possible. If that should happen, and you should be the only survivor, don't get scared. Go straight to Rocky Ledge and give the signal to Jack. It will be your only chance. Stand on the edge of the cliff and hold both hands above your head. Nothing else—just that. Leave the rest to Jack."

He became silent, but Harry Frobisher was in no mood for gloomy forebodings.

"Cheer up, sir," he said, with a boyish laugh. "I have a feeling that we are all going to get out of this with flying colours, and then won't it be something to talk about!"

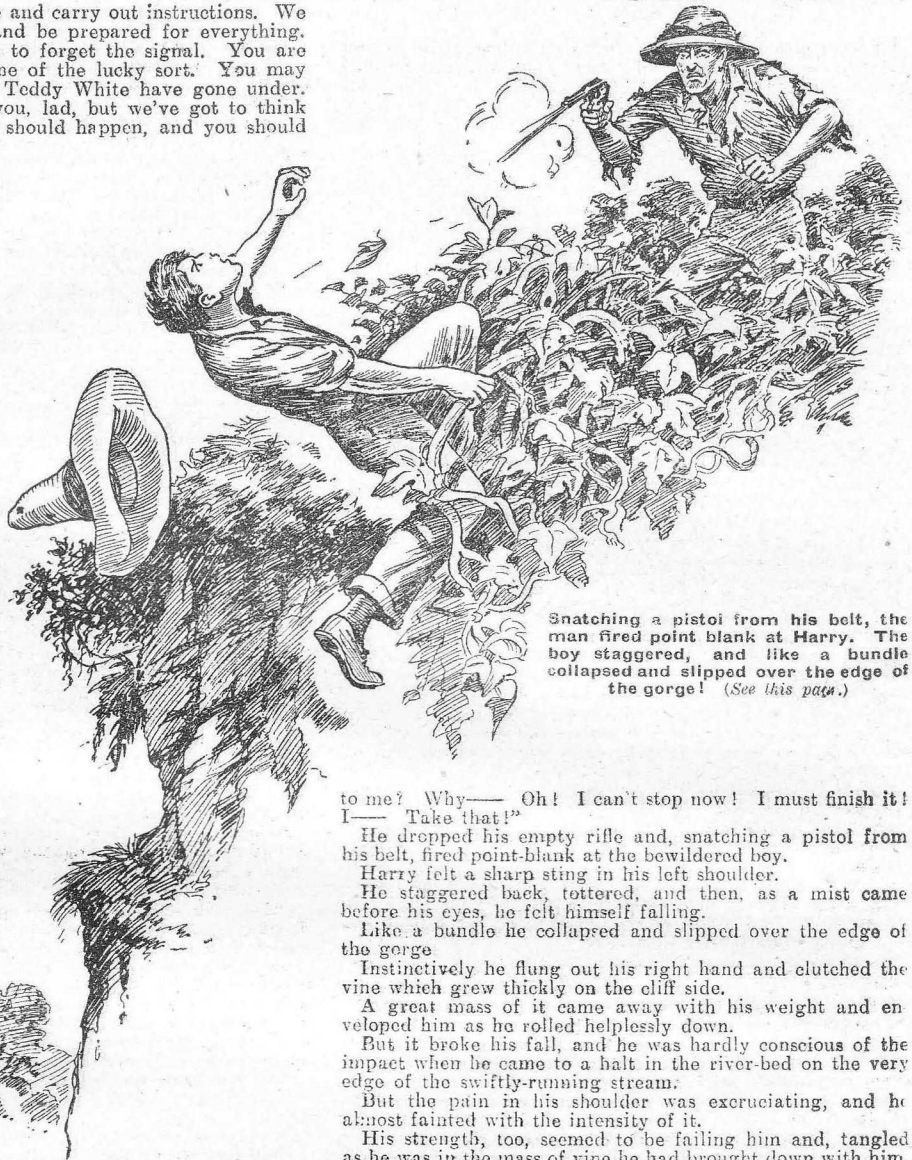
Captain Storm smiled grimly, but made no answer, and they trudged on for a little while in silence.

The ground began to ascend, and for a few hundred yards it was rather a stiff climb.

They were leaving the river below them, but could still see it gleaming silver through the trees.

"I would not go too near the edge," said the captain warningly, as Harry crashed through a patch of undergrowth. "There is rather a steep drop there."

Harry indeed found himself near the edge of a rather precipitous gorge.



Snatching a pistol from his belt, the man fired point blank at Harry. The boy staggered, and like a bundle collapsed and slipped over the edge of the gorge! (See this page.)

to me? Why— Oh! I can't stop now! I must finish it! I— Take that!"

He dropped his empty rifle and, snatching a pistol from his belt, fired point-blank at the bewildered boy.

Harry felt a sharp sting in his left shoulder.

He staggered back, tottered, and then, as a mist came before his eyes, he felt himself falling.

Like a bundle he collapsed and slipped over the edge of the gorge.

Instinctively he flung out his right hand and clutched the vine which grew thickly on the cliff side.

A great mass of it came away with his weight and enveloped him as he rolled helplessly down.

But it broke his fall, and he was hardly conscious of the impact when he came to a halt in the river-bed on the very edge of the swiftly-running stream.

But the pain in his shoulder was excruciating, and he almost fainted with the intensity of it.

His strength, too, seemed to be failing him and, tangled as he was in the mass of vine he had brought down with him, he could not move.

He was lying on his back staring upwards, as it seemed through a kind of green mist.

And then suddenly the dizziness cleared from his brain and the mist from his eyes, and he was able to think and to see with almost startling clearness.

In between the broad leaves of the vine which enveloped him he could see the sky, and then the cliff from which he had fallen.

His gaze turned to the spot on which he had been standing, and then he saw again the wiry, crouching figure of Paul Tench.

The man was bending forward and searching the river-bed with his gaze.

He still clutched the automatic pistol in his right hand.

His distorted face still wore that expression of mingled viciousness and fear.

Suddenly, with an agitated gesture, he began firing into the river-bed. But obviously he had failed to locate his victim, for his aim was yards off the mark.

He fired three shots in rapid succession, and then vanished from Harry's view. He could be heard crashing through the undergrowth in a wild, frantic flight from the scene of his crime.

Then Harry must have fainted, for when he again came to his senses he was being attacked by a swarm of flies and other insects.

Making a desperate effort, he staggered to his feet and disentangled himself from the vine which clung to him like cords.

The agony in his shoulder made him wince and turn white to the lips, and he felt sick and giddy. But by an effort of

He peered over and could see the narrow river some forty feet below.

"Are we going right?" he asked. "It seems to me—" At that moment they were startled by the crack of a rifle and a scream of pain.

The sounds were almost simultaneous.

Both swung round and were just in time to see Teddy White, who was some twenty yards behind them, fling up his arms and then drop and vanish out of sight among the undergrowth.

With a shout of anger Captain Storm was dashing to the spot when again there was a sharp report.

To Harry's horror the captain stumbled, and then, without a cry, fell with a thud to the ground.

Before Harry could act or think there was a crashing sound among the bushes, and a figure emerged and came towards him.

It was a man in soiled and tattered white ducks, and he carried a still smoking rifle.

Harry recognised him at once.

Indeed, there was no mistaking now that wiry figure, those black, piercing eyes, and those shaggy, white eyebrows. It was Paul Tench.

His face was now livid and distorted. There was murder in his furtive gaze, but also fear.

He had the desperate look of a man who has screwed himself up to some terrible deed, and whose resolution is failing him before it is completed.

"I had to do it—I had to do it!" he cried hysterically, the muscles of his face working convulsively. "You would all keep together. But I—only wanted you. Why didn't you kill yourself? You've tried hard enough. Why was it left

"THE ROBOT MAN!"

(Continued from previous page.)

will be conquered his weakness, and contrived to collect his thoughts.

Looking about him, he gazed up at the cliff down which he had rolled.

To climb up there was obviously impossible. It was almost as sheer as a wall.

With all his breath he could muster he shouted the names of Captain Storm and Teddy White. But there came no answer.

Fighting back the fear which threatened to take possession of him he began to trudge along the river-bed. He must find a way round.

And then suddenly he halted, recognising the country.

It was the spot where they had left the river on that day when they climbed up the hill and found Rocky Ledge.

There was the thickly wooded hill on the right.

Harry's heart began to beat wildly as he recalled Captain Storm's words uttered barely an hour ago:

"You won't forget the signal, lad, if anything happens to me."

Harry stood motionless for several seconds, and then his lips moved.

"Jack!" was the only word he uttered, but it seemed to give him courage and strength, for he smiled.

And then gritting his teeth, he began slowly to climb the hill.

Jack Carter is Came!

WHILE Harry Frobisher, suffering excruciating agonies from the wound in his shoulder, exhausted by loss of blood, tortured by heat and swarms of venomous flies, was crawling through the tangled undergrowth up the steep hillside, Jack Carter, in the hands of Professor Rollins, was passing through an experience even more unpleasant.

"You see, Mr. Carter, I have kept my word; are you ready to keep yours?"

When on the previous day the professor uttered these words just after Jack had seen Captain Storm gallop safely across the plain, the boy simply nodded.

"Good!" said the man, while a faint, unpleasant smile flickered for an instant in his mysterious, cold grey eyes. "Come this way. I have something to show you."

Jack followed him out of the room, along a corridor, and into a small apartment that looked like an office.

It contained a large table and one chair, but no other furniture.

The walls, however, were lined with shelves containing books and various bundles of papers.

The professor went to one of these shelves and selected a folded paper, which he brought to the table, where he opened it and spread it out.

Then Jack perceived it to be a kind of chart carefully designed and drawn.

The professor leaned over it with a steel pointer.

"You see this cylindrical pillar? It is really a well," he explained. "It goes down thirty feet from the floor of our lowest cellar. At the bottom of the well you observe these lines extending away on the left. They represent a tunnel. That tunnel is exactly forty feet in length. At the end of the tunnel you see this circle. That is a small room or cave which we have excavated. Here in the corner I have made a cross. Note the position of that very carefully. For that is the treasure we are after. All you will see is a heap that looks like clayey mud streaked here and there with very small particles of silver-white metal. You will scoop up as

much of it as you can and put it into a bag which will be attached to your waist. Do you understand?"

"I am to go down that well, crawl along that tunnel and collect the mud which I shall find in the cave at the end. Is that it?" repeated Jack slowly.

"Exactly."

"It seems simple, but may I ask what you want the mud for? And why you have chosen me to get it?"

"It contains radium. By an instrument which I invented nearly two years ago, I was able to locate a large deposit of that rare and precious metal. Last year we drilled the well and made the tunnel and cut away the earth at the end until we reached the radium-bearing clay. Work was suspended for the day while preparations were made for bringing the stuff to the surface. All was ready. In a few hours I expected to be the richest man in the world. And then a disastrous thing happened."

He paused, and for the first time Jack saw on the calm, impassive face a faint sign of emotion.

"The tunnel fell in?" suggested Jack.

"No, no!" replied the professor impatiently. "We had done our work too well for that to happen. There was nothing we had left undone, no precaution we had not taken. Not one! We were beaten by an unforeseen enemy. In the night a poisonous gas working up from some lower level entered the cave, flooded the tunnel, and filled the well. That was eight months ago. Since then we have been fighting that noxious gas day and night, and now, at last, we have pretty well got rid of it. My native boys, however, will not make the journey in spite of my—er—persuasions."

An evil gleam came into his piercing eyes as he went on.

"Two or three made the attempt, and being a little inconvenienced by the gas, lost their nerve and fainted. Since then the others refuse to go down the well. You know how superstitious these half-breeds are. They say a devil is standing guard over the hidden treasure."

He laughed unpleasantly.

"You say you have got rid of the gas?" inquired Jack, with interest.

"Not entirely," admitted the professor carelessly, "but I have invented a mask of an entire gas-proof costume which you will wear. If you are quick, active, and keep your head, even though you feel a certain amount of discomfort, you will be all right."

"It does not seem a very cheery sort of job," said Jack, with a laugh, "but if you say the thing is possible, I am game to have a shot at it."

"Quite possible. I am convinced that even on your first trip you will bring back enough radium to make us both tolerably rich men. The great thing is that you must not lose your nerve and turn back before you have accomplished your task. Now come, no time like the present. The whole thing will be over in ten or fifteen minutes."

"Not yet," said Jack quietly, as he walked to the window and looked out across the plain to the range of hills. "I am not yet ready. You will have to wait till midday."

The professor seemed about to protest, but checked himself, and, standing behind the boy, also looked out across the plain.

So they stood silent and motionless for a long time.

And then at last Jack breathed a deep sigh of relief, for he saw, far away to the left, rising above the forest trees to the clear sky, a thin column of blue smoke.

It came from the fire Captain Storm had made in the forest. It was the signal that all was well.

Jack turned away abruptly from the window.

"I am ready!" he said quietly.

(Come what may, Jack Carter is determined to do the bidding of the mad professor! Read how he fares, chums, in next week's gripping instalment of this powerful adventure serial.)



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