

KICK OFF TO-DAY IN OUR GRAND 'FOOTER-STAMPS COMPETITION!

1,000 FREE—

—FOOTBALLS!

The **GEM** 2^d

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY!

*Read all about him in the Lively Holiday
Yarn of Tcm Merry & Co. Inside.*



OUR NEW STAMP-COLLECTING SCHEME!

JOIN IN
TO-DAY!



1000 FREE FOOTBALLS

for Scoring "Goals" with FOOTER-STAMPS

A LREADY ten readers have won Bicycles and over 4,000 more have received other splendid prizes as a result of our recent stamp-collecting scheme. And NOW—here's another even more thrilling collecting competition—FOOTER-STAMPS! It's great! The offer first appeared last week, and if you have not already started, join in to-day—you can still win a Super Football for the coming season.

This is what to do: Every week in The GEM we are giving "Footer-Stamps"—pictures of six different actions on the football field. The object of this great stamp-game is to score as many "goals" as possible by the end of August, when the first 250 footballs are to be awarded.

**TO SCORE A "GOAL" you must collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements:
KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.**

Easy, isn't it? The more stamps you collect the more "goals" you can score. (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a "goal"; you must get a set of stamps 1 to 6 each time.)

We give ten more stamps this week—five below, and five others on page 35. Cut them out and try to "score a goal"; then keep all your stamps until you get some more in our next issue.

If you want to score some other quick "goals," remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "MODERN BOY" and "MAGNET." There are more "goals" waiting in those papers!

Get busy at once, because up to 250 of the FREE Footballs are going to be awarded in the August competition for the readers scoring the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month. More footballs will be given in the next month, and so on.

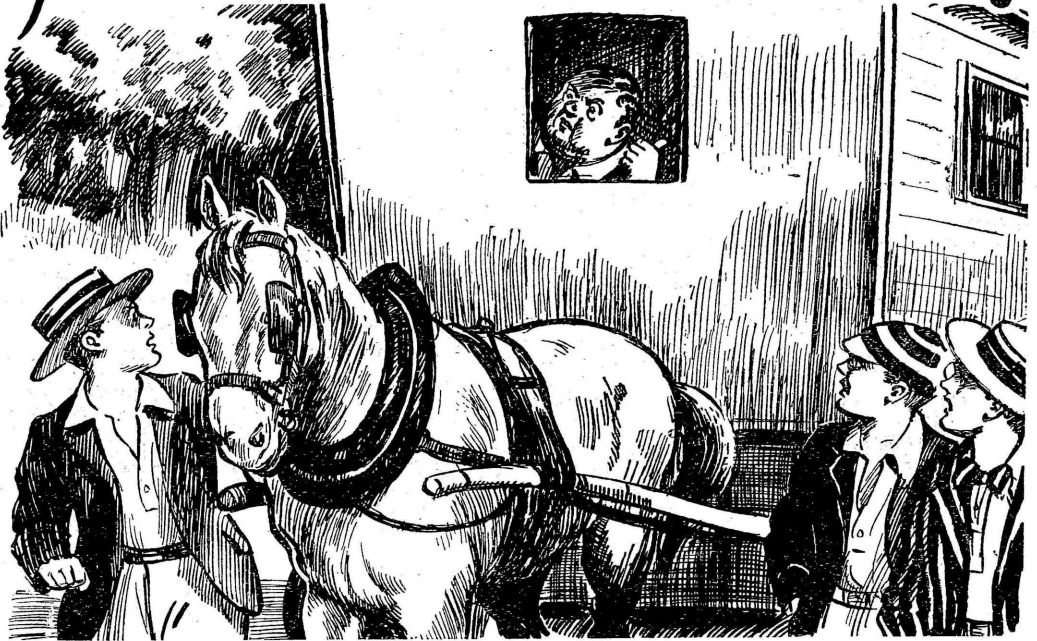
Don't send any stamps until we tell you how and where at the end of August. There's nothing to pay, remember! The rules of the offer are also on page 35.

FIVE "FOOTER-STAMPS" HERE—FIVE MORE ON PAGE 35



LIKE A BAD PENNY, BAGGY TRIMBLE TURNS UP EVERY TIME THE ST. JIM'S CARAVANNERS TRY TO LOSE HIM!

The UNINVITED CARAVANNER!



There came the sounds of smashing crockery inside the caravan. Trimble's head was projected from the front window. "I say, I've let the cups and saucers drop!" he exclaimed. "There's rather a smash. Does it matter?" Tom Merry gasped. "You fat villain!"

CHAPTER 1.

A Narrow Escape!

"WHAT the dickens—"

"What's that?"

"P'wobably a stway pig, deah boys."

On the top of a steep rise in the road over the Sussex Downs a caravan had halted.

Seven caravanners were sitting on it, or round it, resting.

Tom Merry & Co., the St. Jim's caravanners, felt that they were entitled to a rest after an uphill march of a mile or two; and the caravan horse was still more convinced upon the point.

Circumstances, the horse, had set the example of taking a rest. The chums of St. Jim's followed his example. It saved argument; and Circumstances generally had the best of the argument.

Monty Lowther had named him Circumstances because he was circumstances over which the caravanners had no control.

It was a bright and sunny day, and there was a splendid view of the downs from the halting-place.

Jack Blake fetched ginger-pop out of the van for the refreshment of the caravanners; and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, ever thoughtful, provided what he called a "dwmk" for the horse.

Seven cheery youths were enjoying the ginger-pop and the rest when a strange sound fell upon their ears.

It came from the deep, thick grass by the roadside. A wide stretch of open land lay there, and the grass was very long and thick, and dry as tinder in the blaze of the summer sunshine.

Seven pairs of eyes were turned upon it as the strange sound was heard.

There was nothing to be seen there but the waving grass. But from the depths of the grass came that sound of grunting, or snoring, or whatever it was, and it startled the St. Jim's juniors.

"Somebody asleep there, I should think," remarked Blake of the Fourth, staring at the grass.

"Some stway animal, I should say," said Arthur Augustus.

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By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Baggy Trimble is pleased to invite himself to join the St. Jim's holiday party—but the pleasure's all on his side!

D'Arcy. "Some stway pig, most likely, wanded out of the field."

"More likely a tramp!" suggested Herries.

"Bai Jove! A twamp would not make a wow like that, Hewwies."

"It's a snore!" said Digby.

"In that case, it is a vewy remarkable snore. I have nevah heard anybody snore like that, exceptin' Baggy Trimble at St. Jim's. He used to make a feahful wow in our dorm."

"Not likely to meet Trimble here!" said Tom Merry, with a smile. "Now, if that blessed horse will listen to reason, we'll get on."

"If it is a stway pig, Tom Mewwy, we had bettah dwive it into the field before goin' on," said Gussy. "The unfortunate animal might get undah a motor-cah!"

"Which would be a waste of bacon!" remarked Monty Lowther.

"Wats!"

"There's a bike in the grass," said Manners. "Look there—that's the wheel of a bike!"

"Bai Jove!"

The juniors made out the shape of a bike in the thick grass now. Evidently that deep grunting came from a human being—some cyclist who had rested on top of the hill.

Manners rose to his feet, stepped into the grass and came on the sleeper. Then Manners was seen to give a sudden start.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

"What is it?" called out Blake.

To the amazement of his comrades, Manners of the Shell looked round and put his finger to his lips in sign of silence.

"Bai Jove! Whatevah is the mattah?"

"Shush!"

"Better look!" remarked Lowther.

And six extremely curious juniors trod softly through the thick grass to see what had startled Manners.

They came quite suddenly on the scene, and there was a general ejaculation:

"Trimble!"

Stretched in the grass, with a fat cheek resting on a fat arm was a youth of podgy figure, whose ample circumference was unrivalled at St. Jim's even by that of Fatty Wynn of the New House.

It was Baggy Trimble of the Fourth Form.

Beside him in the grass lay the remains of a meal—evidently an ample meal. Baggy Trimble had stopped to rest and feed on the hill, and he seemed to have fed not wisely, but too well. His fat face was flushed, and his breathing was stertorous; and at intervals there proceeded from him the deep and resonant snore which had first startled the caravanners.

"Twimble, bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "Don't wake him up, you fellows, for goodness' sake!"

"Rather not!" murmured Tom Merry.

The same thought occurred to all the caravanners at once.

Before the beginning of the vacation, when the juniors were planning that caravan excursion for the summer, Baggy Trimble had offered to accompany them, and see them through—a generous offer which had been declined without thanks.

The society of Baggy Trimble was much more enjoyable at a distance than close at hand.

"Quiet!" whispered Manners. "If the fat boulder sees us, he'll try to hang on. You know Trimble."

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"Yaas, wathah!"

"What the dickens is he doing here?" murmured Blake. "This is a good many miles from his home. He lives at Lexham; and he's not the fellow to take on long bike rides. He's a jolly long way from Trimble Hall!"

There was a soft chuckle among the caravanners. "Trimble Hall" was a palatial residence that existed only in the fertile imagination of Trimble of the Fourth; but the fat and fatuous Baggy never tired of expatiating upon its splendours.

Blissfully oblivious of seven grinning faces looking down on him, Baggy Trimble snored on.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus suddenly. "Twimble is pwobably here lookin' for us!"

"Looking for us!" repeated Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! He was wesoled to take our wefusal of his company as a joke, you know, so I took the twouble to explain to him that it was quite sewious. I should not wondah if——"

"For goodness' sake let's escape while there's time!" murmured Lowther.

"Quiet!"

The caravanners, with stealthy tread, trod back to the road.

The dreadful possibility that Baggy Trimble was looking for them, intending to join the party, was more than enough to scare them off. Fortunately, Baggy was a heavy sleeper. His deep snore rumbled on as the St. Jim's juniors tiptoed back to the caravan.

Tom Merry took the horse's head. Fortunately, Circumstances was satisfied with the rest he had had. He moved on obediently.

The juniors looked round nervously as the caravan rumbled on the road.

But their luck was in; Baggy Trimble did not wake.

Down the slope the St. Jim's caravan went rumbling, and as the distance increased, Tom Merry & Co. breathed more freely. If Baggy Trimble was looking for the caravan party, he had missed them; but it had been a narrow shave. And as soon as they were out of hearing of Baggy, Circumstances was urged on at a faster pace than ever before in his career as a caravan horse.

CHAPTER 2.

Just Like Gussy!

"HERE we are!" said Herries, about half an hour later.

"Right ahead!" said Monty Lowther. "Better camp here, I think."

"Too dangerous. Baggy Trimble's only two or three miles away."

"Oh, blow Trimble!" said Herries. "I'm hungry. For goodness' sake, let's camp and have some supper! I suppose you don't want to get to the Tweed this afternoon?"

"Well, the Tweed's a far cry from here," said Tom Merry, laughing. "But we ought to get a bit farther. We're on the main road, and if Trimble comes free-wheeling downhill when he wakes up he'll spot us."

"But I'm hungry," said Herries.

"When Herries is hungry, it's a time for serious measures to be taken," observed Monty Lowther. "I notice that the stars in their courses keep on, just as if nothing unusual was the matter; but——"

"You silly ass!" said Herries. "I don't want any of your Shellfish jokes. I want my supper."

"Well, suppose we say another mile?" suggested Jack Blake. "We want to get a bit farther over the downs—"

"More blessed ups than downs, I think!" grunted Herries. "This looks a good place for camping—"

"The washing-up's got to be done before supper," remarked Dig. "It wasn't done after lunch."

"Bai Jove! Suppose we keep on while Hewwies does the washin'-up?" suggested Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I will lead the horse."

"That's a good idea." "And we will halt for camp when Hewwies has finished. I considah that a sportin' offah."

"Hear, hear!" George Herries grunted. He did not seem to consider that he was specially entitled to do the washing-up because he wanted his supper. But the general opinion was against him.

Arthur Augustus went to Circumstances' head and led him onward.

The Terrible Three strolled along the road. Blake and Dig sat on the van. Herries stared at them, and murmured something under his breath, and clambered into the van, yielding to the opinion of the majority.

There was a clinking of teacups and saucers, plates and knives and forks in the caravan as Herries got on with the washing-up.

He put his head out after a time and yelled: "Fathead!"

"Hewwies is callin' to you, Tom Mewwy!" called out Arthur Augustus.

"I'm calling to you, ass!" "Bai Jove!" If you are addressin' me, Hewwies—"

"I'm addressing you, you old owl!" "I wufuse to be called an owl, Hewwies! I should like that to be cleahly undahstood before this conversation goes any furthah."

"How can I wash up while the van is rocking like a dashed lifeboat?" roared Herries, in exasperation. "I've just had a wash of hot water up my sleeve!"

"I am sowwy, Hewwies. I attwibute it to the natuah of the woad. You see, we are on the downs, and downs are wathah steep. You appeal to blame me, Hewwies, but I assuah you that I had no hand in makin' the downs so steep."

"Make that dashed horse go a bit steadier." "I will twy, old top!"

Herries grunted and withdrew his head, and the clattering of the crocks was resumed.

Arthur Augustus took hold of Circumstances' head again, and led him as gently as he could.

But smooth progress was difficult on a steep road.

Herries did his best with the washing-up, but a teacup was heard to fall, and a saucer followed. The crashes were followed by loud snorts from George Herries.

Suddenly Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gripped the bit hard and swung the horse's head round to the roadside.

It was so sudden a turn that Circumstances staggered, but he came round and the caravan lurched round and rocked violently.

Crash, crash, crash-ash-ash!

There was a disaster in the caravan. The Terrible Three, sauntering along the roadside, jumped out of the way just in time, as D'Arcy and the horse whirled round on them.

The half-turned caravan blocked the road from side to side.

Blake and Dig, sitting carelessly on the van, and quite unprepared for that sudden swerve on the part of the horse, were nearly pitched off. They clung on and yelled.

Crash, crash! "Whoa, old hoss!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"What the thump—" yelled Blake. "Crash!"

"What are you up to, you potty ass?" asked Digby.

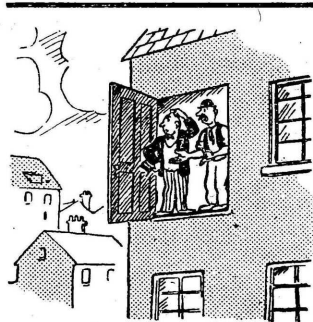
"Whoa! All wight now!" "What did you do that for, Gussy, you crass idiot?" roared Tom Merry. "There's nothing on the road."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—" George Herries' head came out of the little front window. His face was like unto a beet-root.

"Kill him!" he gasped. "Kill him, somebody!"

"Weally, Hewwies—" "Everything's smashed up!" shrieked Herries.

"The whole thumping lot went! I'm smothered



"That's funny! I'm sure it was in the plans!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to "A Reader," Yew Tree Cottage, Walsall Road, Four Oaks, near Birmingham.

with wash-up water! I got the washing-mop in my eye! Kill him, I tell you!"

"Bai Jove! I—" "My only hat! He wants slaughtering badly!"

exclaimed Blake, scrambling off the van, while Herries jumped out at the end. "Collar him!"

"Weally, deah boys—" "What did you swing the van across the road for, you howling chump?" roared Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs!" Six furious caravanners surrounded the swell of St. Jim's. So far as they could see, there was no reason whatever for D'Arcy's sudden action.

The road ahead of the caravan was quite clear of vehicles. Six fists were shaken at Gussy's noble nose.

"You chump!" "You frabjous ass!"

"What did you do it for?" "Were you jazzing, you howling jabberwock?"

"I wufuse to be called a howlin' jabberwock!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I only just turned the van off the woad in time—"

"What for?" shrieked Blake. "There was a fwog in the woad, Blake."

"A—a—a what?" "A fwog. The poor little beggah was hoppin' across in fwont of the van, you know, and we vewy neahly wun him down," answered Arthur

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Augustus innocently. "I dwagged the horse woud just in time."

"You—you—you—" Blake gasped.

"You—you—you—" stuttered Herries helplessly. "I got the washing-mop in my eye and the wash-up water down my neck because there was a frog hopping across the road! You—you—you—"

Words failed George Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies, I twust you would not be bwotal enough to wun ovah a fwog to save the wash-up water fwom goin' down your neck!"

"Oh, you—you— I'll—I'll—I'll—" stuttered Herries.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake.

Tom Merry burst into a laugh. But Herries had too much wash-up water about him to see the humorous side of the incident. He pushed back his drenched cuffs, and hurled himself upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Bai Jove! What the thump—"

Hoot-toot!

A big green car came whizzing up the road behind the caravan. It slowed down and stopped about a yard off. Horse and caravan quite filled the road from one side to the other, and there was no thoroughfare.

A gentleman in military uniform, with a brown face and a white moustache, stood up in the car and roared.

"What, what! Clear the road! Begad! What the thunder! Clear the road! Take that thing out of the way!"

The interruption came just in time to prevent a deadly combat.

Herries relinquished his grasp on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and all the caravanners turned towards the military gentleman in the motor-car.

CHAPTER 3.

Circumstances is Obstinate!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY set his tie straight—Herries had disarranged it a little—and raised his straw hat gracefully to the white-moustached military gentleman.

"Pway excuse us, sir—" he began.

"Clear the road, begad!"

"We are goin' to cleah the woad, sir, but I was about to explain—"

"You are delaying me!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "Do you understand? Delaying me on important military business! Begad! Clear the road, you young rascals!"

"Bai Jove! You have no wight, sir, to apply such an expression to us!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly. "I weward that expwession, sir, as vewy oppwobwious and unjustifable."

The chauffeur grinned at his steering wheel. It was evident that the military gentleman was impressed with a full sense of his own importance. Perhaps he had cause to be annoyed, for Arthur Augustus was holding the horse's head, and keeping the caravan across the road while he endeavoured to explain.

Arthur Augustus' manners and customs were always leisurely.

"Get a move on, Gussy!" said Blake.

"I feel bound to observe to this extremewly iwascible old gentleman, Blake, that he has no wight to chawactewise us as wascals!"

"Will you clear the road?" roared the military gentleman, in a state approaching frenzy.

"Certainly, my deah boy. There is no cause

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for excitement or anghah, and I wecommand you to keep your tempah!"

"Begad!" gasped the old gentleman.

"You are delaying General Gummage, my lads!" murmured the chauffeur. "Please clear the van out of the way!"

"Certainly, my deah chap! But Genewal Gummage has no wight—"

"Johnson!" roared the military gentleman.

"Get down and move that van!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Pway allow me to point out, sir, that your chauffeur has no wight to touch our cawavan!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy warmly. "I am weally shocked, sir, at this display of tempah in a gentleman of your yeahs!"

"Oh, begad! Impudent young scoundrel! Be quick, Johnson!"

"Yes, sir."

"Weally, you know—"

"Let him take the gee, if he likes, Gussy!" murmured Monty Lowther. "This is as good as a circus."

"Oh, vewy well!"

Arthur Augustus smiled as he relinquished the horse. Circumstances—so named because he was not always amenable to control—disliked strangers. He could be a very obstinate horse when he liked—and he often liked. It was highly improbable that he would move to please the chauffeur, as he was agreeably engaged in cropping the grass by the roadside.

The caravanners looked on with smiles as Johnson tackled Circumstances.

"Gee-up! Come on, old hoss!"

Circumstances firmly declined to gee-up or to come on. He shook his head violently, and cropped at the grass again.

General Gummage stood up in the car with a purple face, his white moustache bristling with wrath.

The chauffeur did his best with the horse. But Circumstances was in one of his wilful moods, and he did not move. As fast as Johnson got his head round, he jerked it away and got it back again.

The St. Jim's juniors looked on cheerfully, without offering assistance.

The general had chosen to order his chauffeur to do the job, and they were willing to let him have his way. Even Herries forgot the wash-up water, and forgot that he was hungry, as he watched the entertainment.

Johnson got his head round at last, and hung on to it. But the rest of Circumstances declined to follow. His four feet were planted in the road like rocks, and he did not move.

"Johnson!" roared the general.

"Yessir!"

"Why don't you move that horse, begad?"

"I—I—I'm trying, sir!" gasped the unhappy Johnson. "The—the beast is rather obstinate, sir."

"Nonsense! Drag him round!"

"Perhaps your man had bettah leave the horse to us, sir," suggested Arthur Augustus.

"Hold your tongue, you young rascal!"

"Oh, bai Jove, if you were not old enough to be my gweat-gwandfathah, sir, I should certainly step into the cah and punch your nose for that wemark!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's indignantly.

"P'r'aps you young chaps will 'elp?" gasped Johnson.

"Certainly!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

The juniors took hold of Circumstances, and the caravan horse condescended to move round at last,

perhaps recognising that the odds were against him.

The St. Jim's caravan swung round after him slowly.

"Thank you!" said the chauffeur, as he returned to the car.

"Johnson!"

"Yessir!"

"You are a fool, Johnson!"

"Yessir! Thank you, sir!" said the chauffeur. And he climbed into his seat.

The car moved on, almost grazing the caravan. General Gummage fixed a fiery eye on the St. Jim's juniors as he glided on. His important military business had been delayed for a good five minutes. Probably, however, it was not quite so important as the general imagined.

"Bai Jove! What an extremely bad-tempered old gentleman!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "If I were that chauffeur, I think I should punch his head!"

"Military chauffeurs aren't allowed to punch generals' heads," grinned Lowther. "Dear old man, he's looking at us still."

Monty Lowther kissed his hand to the general as he looked back from the car.

The expression on the general's face as he beheld that affectionate salute was extraordinary, and the St. Jim's juniors burst into a chortle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" came like an echo behind them.

Tom Merry & Co. spun round.

It was Baggy Trimble!

CHAPTER 4.

Nice for the Caravanners!

"TWIMBLE!"

"Oh dear!"

Baggy Trimble nodded and grinned affably. He seemed quite pleased by the meeting—the pleasure being all on his side.

"Fancy meeting you fellows!" he said.

"Only fancy!" grunted Blake.

"I've been looking for you chaps," went on Trimble cheerily. "The fact is, I've been looking up and down and round about for you for a long time—days and days. I knew you were caravanning on the downs, you know, and I knew you'd be glad to see me in the vac."

"Did you?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Isn't it a pleasure, falling in with one another like this?" rattled on Baggy, evidently determined not to read aright the expressions on the faces of the caravanners. "I got news of your van some way back. I think you must have passed me while I was taking a snooze by the roadside."

"Oh!"

"You seen, I've been watching for you from the top of the hill, and knew you'd come up this road," said Trimble calmly. "You were so jolly slow, though; and I had a nap after lunch. But it's all right."

"All right, is it?" snorted Herries.

"Quite. When I woke up I inquired of some cyclists and they told me a red caravan had passed, so I followed on. Might have missed you, though,



The caravan quite filled the road, and the big car had to come to a halt. A gentleman in military uniform stood up in the car and roared: "Clear the road! Begad! What the thunder! Take that thing out of the way, you rascals!"

if you hadn't stopped here. I was getting a bit fagged, and was thinking of giving it up for to-day."

The caravanners looked expressively at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Gussy's tender concern for the frog had had unfortunate results. Not only had it delayed the important military business of General Gummage—which, perhaps, did not matter very much—but it had landed Baggy Trimble on the caravan party—which mattered very much indeed.

Even Arthur Augustus was dismayed. It was all he could do to preserve the polished politeness for which he was famous.

Baggy Trimble was a fellow calculated to put anyone's politeness to the most searching test.

"You came on your bike, I suppose?" said Herries abruptly.

"Yes; just got down, old chap!"

"Get up again!"

"Eh!"

"And let's see you ride off!" said Herries deliberately.

"Weally, Hewwies—" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Rats!" grunted Herries.

But Baggy's feelings were not hurt. It was not easy to hurt Master Trimble's feelings. He burst into a cheery chortle.

"He, he, he! I say, isn't it lucky I didn't miss you again? I've been cycling round this part a week or more, inquiring after you, and stopping at inns, you know. They stuck me for bills, too, I can tell you—but, luckily, once or twice I got away without paying."

"What?"

"Lucky, wasn't it? I've jolly nearly run out of

money one way and another; and if I hadn't dropped on you this evening, I should have had to buzz off home to—to Trimble Hall."

"For a fresh supply of tenners?" asked Monty Lowther sarcastically.

"Yes—exactly! I'll tell you what, you fellows—if you're looking for a good camp, you couldn't do better than come along to Trimble Hall and camp in the grounds."

"Fathead!"

"Ahem! Still, it's twenty miles off, so perhaps you couldn't do the distance. Camping out to-night, I suppose?"

"No; we're keeping on to London. Special invitation to Buckingham Palace!" exclaimed Lowther.

"He, he, he!"

The caravan was in motion again now. Herries had gone inside to deal with the hapless crocks.

Trimble walked on with the van, wheeling his bike. Evidently Trimble of the Fourth was one of the caravanning party now. The "marble eye" had no effect whatever on Baggy Trimble. He was determined to mistake it for the glad eye.

The caravanners had fallen very silent.

At St. Jim's they would have probably spoken out quite plainly to the Fourth Former; but they had not seen Baggy for some weeks, and the effect of him had worn off a little, as it were. They did not feel inclined to give him the actual boot; even Herries hesitated at that—and George Herries was not Chesterfieldian at all. But the prospect of having the talkative, greedy, and troublesome Baggy hanging on was a dismaying one.

All the caravanners agreed that it wouldn't do; but how to break it to Baggy was the question.

It was Monty Lowther who came to the rescue. He joined Trimble as the fat junior wheeled on his bike.

"You're a pretty good hand at shopping for grub, I believe, Trimble?" said the Shell fellow blandly.

Baggy's round eyes glistened.

"Just the man!" he answered. "You try me!"

"Suppose you cut ahead on your bike and do the shopping for supper, then?"

"I'm your man!"

"Eh? What's that?" asked Tom Merry, looking round.

Lowther closed one eye at his chums.

"Greenwood's only a mile ahead," he said. "If Trimble buzzes on he can have all the grub ready for us—see? It won't take long on the bike. And Trimble's a ripping rider—ahem!"

"First-rate!" said the caravanners.

"Ten shillings wanted!" said Monty Lowther.

Baggy's eyes glistened again. Jack Blake looked very expressively at Lowther.

"You ass—" he began.

"My dear chap, we can rely on Trimble," said Monty Lowther.

Herries' voice came from the van window.

"Fathead! If you trust Trimble to get the grub he'll scoff it on the spot!"

"Oh, I say—" began Baggy.

"What rot!" said Lowther. "I'm sure we can rely on Baggy where grub is concerned. Now then, whack out your bobs! Get us something nice for supper, Trimble. Use your own judgment, and—"

"What-ho!"

The caravanners contributed the shillings. Baggy's eyes were almost bulging when ten shillings were placed in his fat palm.

"Rely on me!" he gasped. "If there's one

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"The Schoolboy Crusoes!"

Frank Richards' smashing, 35,000-word school-adventure yarn appearing in this week's issue of

The
MAGNET

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thing I can do, it's shopping for grub. I'm your man. Where are you camping?"

"A bit farther along the road. You can't miss us coming back."

"Right you are!"

Baggy Trimble put a fat leg over his bike, and pedalled on contentedly.

Then the caravanners informed Monty Lowther what they thought of him.

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

"Chump!"

"You silly jabberwock!" howled Herries from the window. "He will blow that ten bob on grub, and we shan't see any more of him."

"Exactly!" assented Monty Lowther.

"Oh, you ass!"

"Isn't it worth ten bob to get clear of Trimble?" demanded Lowther. "He will buy the grub, and he'll scoff every ounce of it—and even Trimble can't show up without it, after having the money. We've got rid of him."

"Oh!" said Herries.

"Understand at last?" said Lowther sarcastically.

"Well, it was worth ten bob," said Tom Merry, laughing. "I didn't want to kick him out; and we couldn't have stood the boulder long."

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard it as a vevy good ideah!" said Arthur Augustus.

"That settles it!" remarked Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Here's a good place," said Herries. "Look here, it's time we camped. I've mentioned before that I'm hungry."

And the caravan stopped.

There was a wide stretch of grass beside the road, shaded on the farther side by trees. It was a good place for camping, and the caravanners decided upon it.

The St. Jim's caravanners were quite accustomed to camping by this time, and they made quick work of it. The Primus stove was soon going merrily, and a saucepan steamed on it, while the kettle sang on the spirit-stove.

Tom Merry & Co. were not depending on the supplies from Baggy Trimble's shopping expedition for supper—they knew the festive Baggy too well for that. And they agreed that Baggy Trimble had been "shunted" cheaply at the price of ten shillings.

"So they sat down to supper in the grass in a contented and cheery mood.

But they did not quite know Baggy Trimble yet.

CHAPTER 5.

Trimble Sticks!

THE round red sun was sinking behind the downs, and shadows were lengthening over the caravan camp.

Supper had finished, and the seven juniors, having done full justice to it, were leaning back against the caravan or the trees, chatting peacefully.

They were talking of St. Jim's, and of the lickings they were going to give Figgins & Co. of the New House next term, and discussing the probable doings of their schoolfellows—quite an interesting topic.

"Kildare will be playing cricket," remarked Monty Lowther. "Monteith and Darrell have gone to Ireland with him for the vac, and they'll be playing cricket there. Cutts of the Fifth will

be backing horses, likewise Racke of the Shell, and dear old Crooke. Let's hope all their horses will come in eleventh."

"Hear, hear!"

"And Talbot's with his uncle," said Tom Merry. "I'd like old Talbot here. But we shall see him again before the new term."

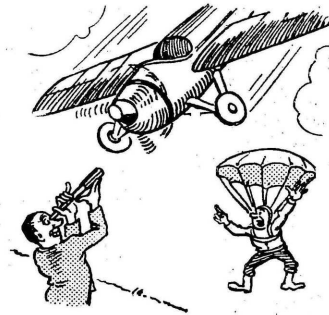
"Lots of the fellows I'd be glad to see," remarked Manners. "But there's one I'm always happy to miss, and that's that dear man Trimble. And it was well worth ten bob to miss him."

"You can make it quids, and still be right on the wicket!" said Monty Lowther.

"Hallo! Here comes somebody."

The juniors glanced round in the gathering shadows at the sound of footsteps.

The stove was still glowing, with the kettle on for the final cup of cocoa. Stars were coming out in the sky. The red rim of the sun was sinking



"Boy! This telescope sure brings things close!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Callaghan, 8, Earl Haig Crescent, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

from sight. In the growing dusk a fat form came into view, and there was a gasp from seven.

"Trimble!"

Baggy Trimble wheeled his bike up and leaned it against the caravan.

The juniors stared at him. They had taken it for granted that Trimble would "blow" the shopping funds on a feed for himself, and after that he would scarcely return to the party. But here he was.

"Well, my hat!" said Monty Lowther, taken quite aback. "The fat villain hasn't scoffed the tuck. Who said the age of miracles was past?"

"Bai Jove! Twimble!"

"Here I am, you fellows!" announced Baggy. The fat Fourth Former looked very podgy and shiny, and there was a smear of jam on his mouth. "I say, I've got some rotten news for you."

"Had a sudden call home to Trimble Hall?" asked Lowther.

"N-no! I got into the town and bought the tuck—"

"Well, dump it down!" growled Blake.

"I haven't got it."

"You said you'd bought it."

"Yes, I bought it; but as I came back I was set on."

"Set on?" howled Lowther.

"By a gang of hooligans," said Trimble, blinking at the staring juniors. "I fought like a lion—"

"Bow-wow!"

"I felled three of them, but the rest got me down," said Trimble. "I'm a pretty good fighting-man, especially when my blood's up. But six fellows were too much for me. They got me down, and they collared the grub."

"They collared the grub?" repeated Tom Merry dazedly.

"Every bit of it," said Trimble sadly. "Then they bolted. I rushed after them, of course; but they gave me the slip. And—so I've come back with nothing—simply nothing!"

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry & Co. blinked at Baggy Trimble. The first part of Monty Lowther's little scheme had certainly worked well. Evidently Baggy had "scoffed" the tuck. But, instead of keeping away afterwards, as the juniors naturally expected, he had turned up with this astounding yarn.

The nerve of it took their breath away. They could only stare at the egregious Baggy as if he fascinated them.

"Too bad, wasn't it?" said Trimble, breaking the silence, which was growing painful. "I—I think I ought to go to the police about it. Only—I'm afraid I couldn't identify the rascals. That's the worst of it. Of course, I shall consider myself liable for the ten shillings. That's only fair."

"Oh, you—you will?" gasped Lowther.

"Oh, certainly!"

"Hand it over, then!"

"I happen to be nearly stony at the present moment; but I shall settle up next term at St. Jim's. That's what I mean. If it happens to slip my memory, I'd be glad if you'd remind me. It's not easy for a wealthy fellow, handling a lot of money as I do, to remember these small sums. You see that?"

"Oh cwikey!"

Jack Blake looked round.

"Shall we slaughter him?" he asked.

"He, he, he!"

"What are you he-heing at?" demanded Blake.

"He, he! Your little joke, you know. I say, have you fellows finished supper?"

"Yes!" grunted Tom.

"I see you've left some cake. If you've finished, you won't want it, will you? I say, this is rather nice cake."

"Let that cake alone!" said Herries.

"He, he, he!"

Baggy Trimble took Herries' observation as a joke. He had a great capacity for taking jokes—he found it made things easier. He finished the cake.

"I won't bother you fellows for supper," he said. "Next time I'll do the cooking for you. You get up pretty late in the morning, I suppose?"

"No; early."

"What's the good of getting up early on a vac? We have enough of that at school. Take it easy; that's my motto."

"You can take it as easy as you like," said Blake. "But hadn't you better start for home? You'll be late at Trimble Hall, you know."

"Oh, that's all right! The butler would come down for me if I turned up at six in the morning. But I'm not going home."

"Staying at an inn?" asked Manners.

"I'm camping out with you chaps, of course," said Trimble affably. "You didn't think I'd

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desert you, did you? I'm so jolly glad to see you again! It's quite like old times to see you all. But isn't it about time we turned in? Don't put yourself out for me, of course. I can sleep anywhere. A bunk in the caravan will do for me, I assure you."

"You don't want us to wire for a Grand Hotel, with waiters and boots complete?" asked Monty Lowther.

"He, he, he!" Trimble chortled, and then yawned. "I'm a bit tired. I'll turn in, if you fellows will excuse me. Which is my bunk?"

"Any bunk you like, so long as you do bunk!" answered Monty Lowther, unable to resist the opening for a little joke.

But Trimble cheerfully misunderstood.

"Right-ho! I'll pick out the one I like best, then, if it's all the same to you fellows. Nighty-night!"

Baggy Trimble rolled to the caravan.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another eloquently. Herries gave an expressive snort, and Tom smiled.

"I—I suppose we can stand him for a day or two?" murmured Tom doubtfully. "I—I don't like to—to—"

"Well, the fat beast's planted on us now. I suppose we can't kick him out at night!" grunted Blake. "But—"

Trimble looked out of the van.

"The bed's not made!" he said.

"Go hon!"

"Which of you fellows makes the beds?"

"We take it in turns, as a rule!"

"Well, I'd like the fellow whose turn it is to get a move on now!" said Trimble. "I'm waiting to go to bed, you see!"

"Do you want your bed made for you?" roared Herries.

"Eh? Of course! I'm accustomed to having things done for me," said Trimble warmly. "Make my own bed! I like that! Still, I don't mind roughing it! I'll turn in without making the bed. But I must say, you fellows are rather slackers. I must say that!"

Trimble disappeared into the van again. Perhaps he read danger signals in two or three faces.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "I weally think that boundah will weah out a chap's patience in the long run."

"He's not sticking to us!" growled Herries. "I'll punch his head if he starts with us to-morrow!"

"That would be hardly polite to a guest, Hewwies."

"Rats! He's not a guest; he's a dashed leech!"

"We are bound to show a certain amount of hospitality to a St. Jim's chap, Hewwies!"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

"Leave him to me," said Lowther, with a glimmer in his eyes. "I know how to manage him!"

"You've done it once," said Blake. "If that's how you manage it—"

"Look here, Blake—"

"Pway don't begin to argue, deah boys. But I must wemark that Lowthah seems wathah an ass—"

"Ten bob chucked away!" grunted Herries.

"Five bob will do the trick," said Lowther.

"We'll send him shopping for brekker in the morning—"

"And he'll blow the tin, and come back with another thumping lie!" snorted Herries.

"And find us gone!" said Monty Lowther. with

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



The school medico warned Trimble that to eat too many apples might make him ill. Cores and effect?

A Hindu in the Punjab has walked twenty miles every day for seventy years. You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

During last vac., Grundy fixed a weather vane on a summer-house at his uncle's place. "You've made a good job of it, my boy," admitted Grundy's uncle; "but tell me, how do you account for the sun setting in the north-east?" "Gosh, that's funny!" said Grundy. "But there you are, uncle, I never was much good at astronomy!"

A famous London restaurant employs thirteen cooks. That more than accounts for the broth!

Some country hotels make a separate charge for bed and board. In others the board seems to be included in the bed!

Story: "That's good tattooing," said Taggles to an acquaintance. "Yus," said the man, looking at his tattooed arms, "but at times I wish I had never had it done. You see, when I go out for the evening with swell friends and roll up my sleeves, it makes me feel so awkward!"

Overheard on the Wayland golf links: "Can you let me have a caddy who doesn't giggle all the time?" demanded Mr. Ratcliff. "Well, sir," said the caddy-master, "there's old Mac over there. He hasn't smiled for forty years—but, of course, I can't guarantee him!"

Quick One: "I'm so nervous!" gasped the author at the first night of his play. "I've prepared a speech, but it's all gone!" "Don't worry," responded the stage manager laconically: "so has the audience!"

A spider can spin a yarn over 34,000 yards long, says Mr. Linton. Even Mr. Ratcliff, after a fishing expedition, can't beat that!

Story: "But why should you make a special plea?" demanded the judge at the Wayland Assizes. "Is this your first offence?" "No, your worship," answered the prisoner, "but it is my lawyer's first case!"

LATE NEWS: William the Conqueror landed in 1066. Well, I warned you it was late news, didn't I?

Don't be late next week, chaps! Chin, chin!

a grin. "We'll cut brekker, and take the road as soon as the fat bounder is out of sight. He'll come back with the tuck inside him, and a thumping yarn to spin—and we shall be miles away! How does that strike you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!"

"Right on the wicket!"

Monty Lowther's brilliant suggestion was passed unanimously. And this time the caravanners really did not see how they could fail to unloose the grip of the limpet-like Baggy.

CHAPTER 6.

A Strategic Retreat!

"NOW then, slacker!"

"Yaw-aw-aw!"

"Up with you!"

"Grooogh!"

"Turn out!" roared Jack Blake.

Baggy Trimble blinked sleepily from the bunk and rubbed his eyes.

"Wharrer time?" he mumbled.

"Seven!"

"I generally get up at nine in the vac—or ten. Call me in a couple of hours!"

And Baggy Trimble turned his head on the pillow and closed his fat eyelids, and immediately sank into balmy slumber again.

He remained sunk in balmy slumber for about the space of one second. Then he suddenly

emerged from it as a wet sponge was squeezed down his fat neck.

"Groooh!"

Trimble started up, gasping.

Bump!

"Yaroooh!" roared Trimble, as his head came in contact with the bunk above. "Ow, yow, wow! I'm brained! Yarooop!"

"You're not brained, old bird!" said Blake, with a chuckle. "Brains are necessary for that, you know."

"Yow-woop!"

"Do you want this sponge down your neck again?"

"Yah! Gerraway!"

"Better turn out, then, or you'll get it! No slackers allowed in this giddy caravan!"

"Yah! Rotter! Ow!"

Trimble turned out in a hurry. He had gone to bed in most of his clothes, and it did not take him long to dress.

When he rolled discontentedly out of the caravan the Terrible Three were stacking away the tent they had just taken down.

Baggy Trimble blinked round in search of breakfast; but there was no sign of breakfast.

"Hallo! Had a good night?" asked Tom Merry cheerily.

"Somebody was snoring in the van," growled Trimble. "Herries, I suppose."

"It was you, you snoring grampus!" exclaimed Herries.

"What about brekker?" asked Trimble, changing the subject. "What the thump is the good of waking me up before brekker's ready?"

Apparently the new caravanner expected the old caravanners to get his breakfast before calling him. Baggy, feeling himself constituted now as a member of the party, was beginning to display his delightful nature.

Tom Merry smiled.

Many things were to happen before breakfast that sunny morning, of which Baggy Trimble was not yet aware.

"Well, we've got bread here, and some eggs," said Monty Lowther. "But somebody's got to ride into the village for supplies. We didn't know we were going to have a distinguished guest—"

"Look here, I can't be always fetching the grub!" said Trimble. "I'm used to being waited on. I think that may as well be understood from the start."

"It will be a rather thin breakfast," said Monty Lowther, unmoved. "But if you care to fetch something to fatten it a little, Trimble—"

"Well, I don't want to starve," said Trimble. "I'll go. My tyres want pumping up, I think."

"Can't you pump them?" asked Dig.

"Well, I think one of you fellows might do it."

"Why, you—" began Herries.

But he checked himself and walked away.

Monty Lowther pumped up the tyres on Trimble's bike. He would have done more than that to see the fat "bounder" of St. Jim's safely started on his journey.

"I'd better have a snack before I start," said Trimble. "I'm doing a good deal for you fellows. I don't want to starve!"

"Try this cake," said Lowther blandly.

Trimble tried the cake, and finished it. Then he descended to mount his machine.

Five shillings were handed over to him, which he received with a greedy gleam in his eyes. Trimble, at least, was going to have a good breakfast that morning, if one was purchasable for five shillings.

"Now, you'll huck up, won't you?" said Lowther.

Trimble grunted.

"I can't scorch before brekker," he said. "I don't think you ought to expect it. You're selfish!"

"Back in half an hour?" asked Manners.

"I shall be an hour, at least."

"Now, look here, Trimble—"

Trimble waved his fat hand at them.

"You needn't jaw. I shall be an hour—a good hour. In fact, I may not be back in an hour. I'm certainly not going to exert myself!"

And with that, the worthy Baggy pushed his machine out into the road, mounted, and pedalled away.

Tom Merry & Co. stood in the road watching him till he was out of sight. He turned the corner at last, and disappeared.

"Now, then, sharp's the word!" said Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry & Co. had become very handy caravanners. But never had they worked so rapidly as they did now. Almost in a twinkling the tent was packed in, and the other paraphernalia strung on the van; the horse was harnessed, and the St. Jim's caravan rumbled out on the road.

"Which way?" asked Blake, with a chuckle.

Tom Merry considered.

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"We won't keep straight on as we intended. We'll try back, for the last turning we passed yesterday, and take it. It will lead somewhere. It doesn't matter much where it leads so long as it doesn't lead to Baggy Trimble."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The caravan rolled off at a good rate.

Circumstances was made to exert himself for once.

Only a few minutes after Baggy Trimble had disappeared in one direction, the St. Jim's caravan disappeared in the other.

Not until a couple of miles had vanished under the wheels did Tom Merry & Co. think of breakfast. And then they had a cold breakfast, still pushing on; and their spirits rose as the sun rose higher.

At noon many miles lay between them and their night's camp, and there was no sign of Baggy Trimble behind.

Monty Lowther's second scheme had succeeded better than his first. Baggy Trimble was "left."

And the grinning caravanners wondered what Trimble said when he got back to the deserted camp. It was probably something very emphatic.

CHAPTER 7.

A Friend in Need!

"A ND a dozen gingah-beers!"

"Yes, sir."

"And a pound of tea!"

"Yes, sir."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was shopping.

It was the following day, and Tom Merry & Co. were many miles on their way, happily relieved of Baggy Trimble.

The caravan was passing a little village that lay off the road, and Arthur Augustus had dropped into the village on the bike to shop. He was to ride after the caravan with the shopping on his carrier.

Judging by the cargo Arthur Augustus was accumulating on the counter of the village shop, the carrier of the bike would be pretty well loaded when he got it all aboard. But a fellow could not think of everything at once, of course. At present Gussy was shopping. Question of transport could be considered later.

The good dame in the village shop was doing fine business. There was a shortage of some things, but plenty of others; and when there was plenty Gussy ordered plenty.

The stock on the counter was growing; indeed, it was becoming doubtful whether Arthur Augustus was going to leave as much in the village shop as he took out of it.

He was still busily engaged when there was a step in the shop doorway and another customer came in.

Arthur Augustus did not glance at him.

But he jumped when a well-known fat voice spoke.

"Stone-ginger, please!"

"Oh cwikey!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

And the fat voice went on:

"Gussy, by gum! Fancy meeting you!"

Arthur Augustus turned.

Baggy Trimble, as large as life, and with a fat grin on his face, nodded to him affably.

"Fancy finding you in here, when I dropped in for a ginger!" said Baggy agreeably. "Lucky—what?"

"Oh deah!"

"I'm glad you're pleased, Gussy! I'm pleased, too!"



Arthur Augustus drove at the pedals and his bike shot ahead. Baggie Trimble laboured after him desperately. "Gussy!" he yelled. "Hold on, you rotter! You're trying to leave me behind! Yah! Slack down, I tell you!"

"Bai Jove!"

"All those things yours?" asked Trimble, eyeing the stack on the counter as he sipped his ginger-beer.

"Yaas."

"Where's the caravan?"

"Gone on."

"I see! You're following with the shopping for tea?" said Trimble, with a nod. "I'll help you carry them, old chap!"

Arthur Augustus writhed inwardly. His polished politeness was being put to a severe strain again. The meeting was not nearly so lucky from his point of view as from Baggie Trimble's.

"Thank you vevy much, Twimble, but k—" he began.

"Not at all, old fellow! I'm entirely at your service!"

"But I shall not wequiah your aid."

"Eh?"

"I have a bike with me, and I am goin' to put them on the cawwiah. So I will not twouble you, Twimble."

"No trouble at all, old top! You rely on me! I say, I missed you yesterday morning."

"D-did you?"

"Yes; there seems to have been a misunderstanding. I got back with the grub for brekker—"

"Did you, weally?"

"Oh, certainly! And you were gone! You had forgotten to tell me which way you were going!" said Trimble, with a shake of the head. "I was

afraid I had missed you for good. However, I made some inquiries about a red caravan, and I seem to have got in the right direction, after all."

"How much, please?" asked Arthur Augustus, addressing the buxom dame behind the counter.

The good lady was making abstruse calculations upon a fragment of wrapping-paper with the aid of a stump of pencil.

"Four pounds one shilling and tenpence-half-penny, sir."

"Pewwaps you would be kind enough to change this fivah, ma'am!"

"Changing fivahs—what?" asked Trimble. "I say, you fellows are doing yourselves all right! I shall be really glad to join you! I make one condition, though!"

"Weally, Twimble—"

"I shall insist upon standing my share in the exes!" said Trimble firmly. "I couldn't join you in your trip on any other condition!"

"Bai Jove!"

"My share to be settled up at St. Jim's next term, as I happen to be short of tin at the present moment. In fact, you might as well lend me the change of that fiver, Gussy, till I hear from Trimble Hall!"

Arthur Augustus seemed rather deaf at that moment. The change of the fiver went into his pocket, not Trimble's.

Baggy watched it disappear rather mournfully.

"How about getting the things along, Gussy?"

"I can manage, thank you!"

"Oh, I'll help you, old chap!"

Trimble picked up a bundle and started for the door. His own bike was outside with Gussy's, and there was a carrier on it, upon which Trimble carried the very small amount of belongings that accompanied him on his cycling tour. Judging by certain indications about Trimble's fat ears and wrists and neck, Arthur Augustus could not help suspecting that the fat Fourth Former had forgotten to put any soap in his bag.

Baggy proceeded to fasten the bundle on his own carrier.

Arthur Augustus followed him out, with his arms full.

"Bai Jove! You are puttin' that bundle on the w'ong bike, Twimble!" he ejaculated.

"That's all right!"

"But it's not all wight, Twimble!"

"Yes! I'm going to carry this lot for you."

"Oh deah!"

Arthur Augustus was rather nonplussed. Apart from considerations of urbanity, he realised that his cargo could not by any possibility be crammed on his own carrier.

Trimble's aid was, in fact, required, if the whole consignment was to be taken along after the caravan.

As it was quite evident that nothing short of punching Trimble's fat nose would clear him off, Arthur Augustus submitted to the inevitable.

Baggy cheerfully packed his carrier full, and even then Arthur Augustus had quite enough to carry.

Trimble surveyed the two loads, with a fat grin.

"Lucky I happened along—what?" he remarked. "You could never have managed without me, Gussy! I'm really a friend in need, aren't I? Are you ready?"

"I'm weady, Twimble!" said Arthur Augustus with deep resignation.

"Come on, then!"

The two juniors mounted their bikes and rode back to the highway.

Arthur Augustus put on speed on the high road, and the fat Baggy called after him breathlessly.

"Wait for me, Gussy!"

Then Arthur Augustus smiled.

"I am awfraid I am in wathah a huwwy, Twimble," he called back.

And the swell of St. Jim's drove at his pedals, and his bike shot ahead on the high road.

Baggy Trimble laboured after him desperately.

"Gussy!" he yelled. "Hold on, you rotter! You're trying to leave me behind! Yah! Slack down, I tell you! I can't keep up!"

Arthur Augustus whizzed on.

"Will you stop?" shrieked Trimble. "I say, tell me if this is the right road? Are there any turnings? Oh, you rotter!"

Either Arthur Augustus did not hear, or he did not heed. He rode ahead as if he were on the cycle-track, and vanished round a bend in the road.

There were, as a matter of fact, three or four turnings to take. Arthur Augustus knew where the caravan was to halt, but Baggy Trimble didn't. And such an opportunity of shaking off the insistent Baggy was not to be missed.

The swell of St. Jim's drove at his pedals as if for a wager, and the fat Baggy's voice died away far behind.

Arthur Augustus did not slacken, and twenty minutes later he came up to the caravan camp with a whiz.

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CHAPTER 8.

A Slight Oversight!

"HALLO, here's Gussy!"
 "Loaded up, by Jove!"
 "Just in time, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus, with a face pink from exertion, jumped off his bike and gasped for breath.

Tom Merry & Co. had camped on a common. The caravan was drawn up, the horse was grazing, and the oil-stove was going strong. All was ready for tea when Gussy arrived.

"I have had a nawwow escape, deah boys," grinned Arthur Augustus breathlessly.

"Dropped in with a ferocious military old man again?"

"Worse than that, Tom Mewwy. Twimble came into the shop while I was shoppin'."

"Trimble!" yelled the caravanners.

"Yaas; the boundah is still huntin' us down. And the howwid person started back with me."

"Why didn't you punch him?" asked Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

The caravanners looked anxiously along the lane by the common. There was no sign of the Falstaff of St. Jim's.

"Well, if the fat worm started with you, where is he?" asked Blake.

Arthur Augustus chuckled.

"I put on speed, deah boy."

"And Trimble—"

"I left him gaspin' on his bike. And as he doesn't know the turnings, I w'egard it as highly impwob that he will follow us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The caravanners roared.

Jack Blake smacked his noble chum on the shoulder.

"Good old Gussy! Fancy Gussy having as much hoss-sense as that!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Good man!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "I suppose we'd better push on after tea, instead of camping here as we intended, if Trimble is hanging round."

"Yes, rather!"

"I say, I'm jolly hungry," remarked Herries.

"Let's get the stuff unpacked. Gussy's brought enough, and no mistake!"

Arthur Augustus gave a sudden start.

"Oh cwikey!" he ejaculated.

"What's the matter?"

"I—I—I— Oh cwumbs! That howwid boundah Twimble packed half the stuff on his bike!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus in dismay.

"I—I—I nevah thought of that."

"Well, you happy idiot!" said Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Then Trimble's cleared off with half the tuck?" howled Blake.

"Yaas!"

"You—you—you—"

"In the huwwy of the moment, Blake, I forgot that the stuff was packed on Twimble's bike. It is wathah unfortunate—"

"Well, perhaps it was worth it—better than having Baggy Trimble here," said Tom Merry. "There seems to be enough here for a whole battalion, anyway. Did you buy up the whole shop?"

"Not at all, deah boy. There were quite a considerable numbah of things left in the shop."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, let's get this lot unpacked," said Herries. "There looks about enough for a week."



Detective Kerr Investigates

No. 4.

The Missing Camera !

HARRY MANNERS of the Shell had undressed in a clump of willows by the River Rhyl, and leaving his camera with his clothes, had gone in for a swim. Whilst bathing, he noticed Percy Mellish, the cad of the Fourth, passing the willow clump. A woman from Rylcombe village, with a child about six, passed soon after, and then an errand boy on a bicycle. When Manners emerged, his camera was missing. "Detective" Kerr, happening along, suggested that it would be best if he questioned the suspects. They soon found Mellish.

MANNERS: Here's Mellish. He hasn't gone far.
KERR: I say, Mellish, Manners has—ahem—missed something. It looks as though somebody has taken it.

MELLISH (angrily): So you're jolly well accusing me of pinching Manners' camera? Why, I—

KERR: How do you know it's Manners' camera that's lost?

MELLISH: Dash it, it's the only thing of value he has. And I saw it lying in the grass—

KERR: Nobody wants to make an accusation without evidence, Mellish. You've only to say—

MELLISH: I tell you I haven't seen the camera—
MANNERS: But you just said you saw it.

MELLISH: I meant, I haven't seen it since I saw it lying by your clothes. And that's my last word!

KERR: Excuse me, ma'am, I suppose you haven't noticed anybody around here with a camera?

The caravanners unfastened the numerous bundles from the bike carrier.

Tom Merry opened one, and disclosed a large bottle of vinegar. He stared at it.

"That will come in useful, Tom Mewwy. In fact, we shall wequiah it with the cucumbahs."

"What's this?" ejaculated Blake. "Currant-wine, by Jove!"

"And what's this?"

"Ginger-beer."

"And this?"

"Baking-powder! And lemons! And a new kettle! And—and tea—and—and coffee—and soda-water—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And oatmeal—"

"Oatmeal is vewy useful, Tom Mewwy. I believe Scotsmen live entirely on oatmeal, and they are a vewy fine wace."

"Anything else?" howled Herries.

"Gussy, you ass—"

MRS. SMITH: No. My little Jimmy wanted to pick up one he saw in the grass, by those willows, but I told him if he did I'd spank him!

KERR: And you've not seen anybody with a camera?

MRS. SMITH: Oh, unless it was that errand boy. He cycled past a little while ago.

KERR: Thanks, ma'am. We may catch up with that errand boy. Come on, Manners.

KERR: What luck! The towing-path ends here. I expect this kid on the bike thought it was a short cut back to the village. Now he's bound to turn back and meet us. Hey, youngster! I want a word with you.

BOY: I can't stop now—

KERR: Shan't keep you a jiffy. We're looking for a missing camera—

BOY: Well, I haven't got it.

KERR: We're not accusing you. It was lying in the grass by the willow clump half a mile back—you probably noticed it as you cycled past.

BOY: No. I didn't see any camera.

KERR: We were wondering if it might have been picked up by that little boy with his mother—did you notice them?

BOY: Yes. That's very likely. He looked a little sneak, I thought.

KERR: Well, he's only an infant, so he would hardly know what he was doing. A pity you didn't actually see him take it; that would have cleared the matter up.

BOY: No, I didn't actually see him take it. But I did see him dragging a camera by a strap as he crossed that meadow. If you search in the thick grass, you might find it.

KERR: What was the camera he was trailing like? Not an ordinary box camera?

BOY: No, it was quite a posh one—it had a big lens. Would that be it?

MANNERS: Yes, that's mine. And when you passed me swimming, the camera wasn't there?

BOY: I don't know. Didn't I say I didn't notice any camera by your clothes? It looks to me as though that kid took it.

KERR: Well, what do you think, Manners?

(Did the errand boy steal the camera? If so, how did he give himself away? See solution on page 35.)

"I—I am afwaid that is all, deah boys. The othah things were packed on Twimble's bike."

"Oh crickey!"

"I laid in a vewy good supply of cakes, and tartis, and biscuits, and bwead, and butter, and—"

"And where are they?" shrieked Herries.

"On Twimble's bike! And there was a lot of sardines, and some tins of salmon, and a weally nice piece of bacon, and a lot of washahs. Weally nice washahs, but vewy thin—"

"And where—"

"Twimble's bike, unfortunately. And a nice little ham—"

"On Trimble's bike?"

"Yaas! It is wathah unfortunate!"

Tom Merry & Co. gazed at Arthur Augustus. He had brought them plenty of drinks, including the vinegar. But all the eatables, with the exception of the oatmeal, seemed to have been

packed on Trimble's bike; and had been left with Trimble by Arthur Augustus' masterly strategy.

Words failed the unfortunate caravanners.

"So—so—we've got oatmeal for supper!" said Herries, at last. "And it wants cooking."

"Oatmeal is a vevy healthy food," said Arthur Augustus feebly. "I have heard Kerr say that the supewiowity of the Scots is due to oatmeal!"

"We can wash it down with vinegar!" said Monty Lowther, with deep sarcasm.

"Oh dear!"

"Oh Gussy!"

"It is wathah unfortunate!" confessed Arthur Augustus. "Howevah, we shall have to be satisfied with oatmeal. It is quite a healthy meal, you know, and the Scots—"

"Blow the Scots!" roared Herries. "I want some grub!"

"Weally, Hewwies."

"Oh, kill him, somebody!" groaned Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"If Gussy ever suggests going shopping again," said Dig ferociously, "we'll tie him up under the caravan!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I should uttably wefuse to be tied up undah the cawavan, Dig. I weally do not see what you

FIVE MORE BIKES

**And Over 2,000 Other Prizes Won in the June
"Armaments Race!"**

Here's more winning news for thousands of "Armaments Stamp" collectors. The June entries have now been checked and every one of the 2,051 readers who sent in 72 or more Searchlight Stamps has won the prize of his choice, while the following five collectors whose totals were the largest received win the FIVE £4 7s. 6d. "HERCULES" BIKES:

William Creighton, 76, Soudan Street, Donegall Road, Belfast.

John Alcock, 106, Connsbrook Avenue, Sydenham, Belfast.

John Kemp, 10, Kingsley Street, East Kirkby, Notts.

Robert Dunn, 13, Flemington Street, Glasgow, N.

Edward Rollings, 199, Comberton Road, Kidderminster.

All prizes have now been dispatched, and if you have not yet been successful, remember that there's the result of the July contest to come.

AND, of course, there's our Great New Collecting Scheme—FOOTER-STAMPS—on page 2. You must be in that, too!

fellows are gwousin' about, when I have bwrought you plenty of oatmeal, which the Scots—
Yawwoooooh!"

The exasperated caravanners seized Arthur Augustus and bumped him on the ground.

It was the only way they could express their feelings.

"Yawwooh!" roared Arthur Augustus. "You uttah asses—you howwid wuffians—"

"Now for the oatmeal!" groaned Blake.

"You uttah wottahs!" roared Arthur Augustus wrathfully. "I was goin' to cook the oatmeal for you! Now I wefuse to do so."

"Then we shall be able to eat it!" remarked Lowther.

Arthur Augustus made no answer to that. Words were inadequate. He dusted his trousers in silent and dignified wrath.

The hungry caravanners, instead of the "high tea" they had been looking forward to, sat down

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to a light meal—an "oat meal" as Monty Lowther expressed it, with feeble humour.

While they discussed the oatmeal they also discussed Arthur Augustus, and their opinions of his intellectual powers, with great earnestness and candour.

The opinions they expressed were not flattering. Arthur Augustus replied only with an occasional dignified sniff.

After the oatmeal the caravanners took the road again. It was necessary to lay in supplies somewhere for breakfast—their destined breakfast being on Trimble's bike—or more likely, by that time, in Baggy Trimble's ample inside.

CHAPTER 9.

Very Refreshing!

"**B**EGAD!"

"Hallo! I know that sweet voice," murmured Tom Merry.

It was morning, bright and sunny, and the St. Jim's caravan was halted in a deep and leafy lane.

Breakfast supplies had been obtained from a farm, and the caravanners were sitting on the grassy bank beside the lane enjoying themselves.

Arthur Augustus was in the van, engaged in making a further supply of coffee.

A tall and angular military gentleman came striding up the lane towards the high road, and he paused as he saw the halted caravan and the cheery group of caravanners. He jammed a monocle into a red-rimmed eye, and looked again, and ejaculated:

"Begad!"

The juniors all looked round. They had heard that voice before.

"The merry old general!" murmured Dig.

"Dear old Gummage!" breathed Lowther.

"Shush!"

It was General Gummage, who had chanced on the caravanners once more. His brows beetled over his eyeglass as he looked at them. It was evident that he remembered them, and that he had not forgotten their previous meeting.

Tom Merry rose to his feet, and raised his straw hat very politely. His comrades followed his example.

The general gave a grunt, and was about to stride on; but he paused.

The lane was dry and dusty, and the general was athirst.

Whether he was on important military business, the juniors did not know; but evidently he had walked a long way in the hot sun. There was dust on the general's clothes, and dust in his dry throat, and the sight of teacups was a cheering one to a thirsty general.

"Good-morning, sir!" ventured Tom Merry, as the general halted.

General Gummage gave a grunting sound, which might possibly have been construed into "Good-morning!"

"Would you care for a cup of tea, sir?" continued Tom Merry, determined to be hospitable.

General Gummage's stiff brown face relaxed a little.

"I should like a glass of water, if you have any at hand!" he admitted.

"Certainly, sir! Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus was already looking out of the caravan, with a coffee-pot in his hand.

He gave the general a graceful bow—which nearly toppled him off the van.

"Oh cwumbs—I mean, good-mornin', sir!" said Arthur Augustus, generously allowing bygones to be bygones, and full of hospitality towards a thirsty traveller. "Would you care for a cup of coffee, sir? I am just goin' to make it, when that dashed—I mean, when the kettle boils!" "Thank you! I should like simply a glass of water."

"Certainly, sir—but pewwaps you would care for a glass of lemonade, with a dash of soda?"

"You are very kind," said the general, unbending still more.

"Not at all, sir—vewy pleased indeed!"

Arthur Augustus trotted out glass and lemonade in a jiffy.

The general took the glass, and Arthur Augustus extracted a soda-syphon from the van. He gave his chums rather a triumphant look as he did so.

This was a part of the supplies he had laid in the day before, and it was coming in useful now, as Gussy had declared that it would.

General Gummage was smiling now. He held up the glass for soda, with quite a gracious grin cracking the wrinkles on his brown face.

Arthur Augustus handled the siphon very carefully. It was unfortunate that his foot slipped as he was handling it.

It was, in fact, very unfortunate indeed.

But for that unfortunate slip of the foot, for which Arthur Augustus was really not to blame, General Gummage would have gone on his way satisfied, and thinking quite kindly of the St. Jim's caravanners.

But it was written in the Book of Destiny that Arthur Augustus' foot should slip at that unhappy moment.

And the sudden spurt of soda water, instead of streaming into the general's glass, streamed into the general's brown face with startling effect.

Sizz! Squish!

Splash!

"Yoop!" roared General Gummage, starting back. "Br-r-rgh! Yurrrrghh!"

"Oh cwikey!"

Arthur Augustus stood spellbound, utterly horrified by the lamentable accident. He was so petrified that it did not occur to him for the moment to change the direction of the nozzle, or to shut off the soda. He stood with the deadly nozzle aimed full at the general, streaming soda water upon him in floods.

"Gussy!" shrieked Tom Merry.

"Oh cwumbs!"

"You awful ass——"

"Yaroooh! You young scoundrel!" roared the general, scrambling away with undignified haste. "Oh gad! You young scoundrel! Grrrrrooogh!"

Tom Merry jumped on the van and grabbed the siphon away from the swell of St. Jim's. If he had not intervened, certainly the general would have had the whole of it, for Gussy was too paralysed to move a finger.

Tom caught a stream on his neck as he jerked it away.

General Gummage was staggering, puffing and blowing, gouging madly at his eyes and nose, and spluttering frantically.

"Grooogh! Yahooop! Yoooch! Gurrrrghh!"

"Oh deah! I—I—I——"

"Oh, Gussy, you ass——"

"Yurrrrghh!" spluttered the general. "You



PROFESSOR SKIMPOLE'S HOROSCOPE

This Week:
FATTY WYNN

DAVID LLEWELLYN WYNN, known to his friends as Fatty Wynn, was in the tuckshop, just ordering half-a-dozen cream buns, as I entered. Before I could object, Wynn ordered a further half-dozen for me. I pointed out that, whilst it was very hospitable of him, I never ate pastries. "You're missing the cream of life, Skimmy, old fruit," urged Fatty Wynn. "Why not paste into the pastries like I do—they'll do you good!"

Wynn, I found, comes under Taurus, the Bull, which includes all dates from April 21st to May 20th. He was born at a degree which gives the planet Venus a special ascendancy over him. This configuration indicates a jolly, convivial nature, one inclined perhaps to over-eat, though fortunately the subject has sufficient good sense to keep his appetite under control. He likes plenty of excitement, being the very opposite of a slacker, and enjoys whatever he does to the full.

When I called on Wynn to tell him the stars indicated that he will enjoy life, Wynn thanked me very politely, but added that he didn't worry much about the stars—he was usually in bed enjoying a good sleep when they came out!

young scoundrel! Yurrrrghh! Oh! Ah! Yah! Grooogh!"

"I am feahfully sowwy——"

"Quite an accident, sir!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Gurrrrghh!"

"Oh deah! Oh cwumbs! I weally—— Oh, I say—— Wharrer you at?" yelled Arthur Augustus.

The general did not explain what he was at; but he was at it. As soon as he had gouged away enough soda water to be able to see Arthur Augustus, he made a jump at him.

The swell of St. Jim's whirled off the van in a powerful grasp.

What happened next was like a dreadful nightmare.

In the iron grasp of the general, Arthur Augustus was whirled over across a bony knee, and a bony hand rose and fell.

Spank, spank, spank, spank!

The honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was being spanked.

It was like a nightmare; but it was real—dreadfully real! Nothing could be more real than the smites of the general's bony hand.

Spank, spank, spank!

"Yawoooh! Help! Wescue!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, struggling wildly. "You feahful wuffian, wleease me! Yawoooh! Help! Oh cwikey!"

Spank, spank!

"Wescue!"

Then the general dropped Arthur Augustus into the dust, and strode on, without waiting for his refreshment. Evidently the old gentleman believed that he had been the victim of a practical joke. And he did not listen to a word from the caravanners.

Arthur Augustus sat in the lane and roared.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Gussy's done it again!" stuttered Blake. "D-did he hurt you, Gussy?"

"Yawwooh!"

Tom Merry looked after the tall form of the general, disappearing in the distance, and then he looked at Arthur Augustus, and chuckled. And the other caravanners chuckled. It was an unfortunate incident; but it had its humorous side, though for the present Arthur Augustus was unable to see it.

The swell of the Fourth staggered up, gasping.

"Where is that wuffian?"

"Gone!" grinned Lowther.

"Oh cwumbs! I am feahfully hurt!" wailed Arthur Augustus. "Why did you not wush to the wescue, you gwinnin' duffahs?"

"My dear old man, if you squirt soda water at crusty old military gents—" chuckled Lowther.

"It was an accident."

"You shouldn't have such accidents, Gussy. You're liable to be spanked for accidents like that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh deah! If that howwid old wuffian had not cleahed off, I would have given him a feahful thwashin', in spite of my wespect for his years! Ow! I have been spanked—actually spanked—"

"You have," grinned Blake. "Hard, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah to laugh at, you duffahs, in the wuffianly conduct of that unspeakable old person. I have been tweated with gross diswespect!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

When the caravan started again, Arthur Augustus walked with the horse.

It was some time before he felt any inclination to sit down.

CHAPTER 10.

Not Looking for Work!

JINGLEL, jingle! Whir!

Tom Merry looked back.

A bicycle was coming up behind the caravanners in the bright noonday sunshine.

A well-known fat figure was on the bike.

"There's the Old Man of the Sea again!" groaned Blake.

Baggy Trimble jumped off his machine, and joined the juniors who were walking with the horse. His fat face was very cheery.

"Here we are again!" he said affably.

There was a unanimous silence among the caravanners. Really, Baggy Trimble did seem to resemble the Old Man of the Sea, who stuck so tightly to the shoulders of Sinbad the Sailor. Certainly, he was as hard to get rid of.

"Gussy left me behind yesterday," said Trimble.

"Did he?" murmured Tom Merry.

"Yes. Luckily, I had the grub on my bike, and I've been camping out. It lasted me right up to brekker this morning."

"Bai Jove!"

"I've been looking for you," went on Trimble, with undiminished affability. "I knew how disappointed you'd be when Gussy came back without me."

"Oh!"

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"Isn't it a pleasure to be together again?" said Trimble brightly.

"Words couldn't describe it," said Monty Lowther sarcastically.

"I'm so glad you think so, Lowther. You fellows going to halt soon? I'm getting ready for lunch."

"Oh!"

"I'm hungry," said Trimble confidentially.

"Oh!"

Baggy Trimble could not be unconscious of a certain "freeze" in the atmosphere. He coughed.

"I want you fellows to be my guests," he said.



It was unfortunate that Arthur Augustus' foot slipped instead of streaming into the general's glass, str

"Eh?"

"I want you to come on to Trimble Hall," said Baggy. "You could camp in the grounds, you know. You'd like some canoeing on the lake, too, and a run in some of my pater's cars. My pater has four cars. Caravanning is all very well, but you'd like some hunting and shooting for a change. You'd meet some rather decent people at the Hall just now, too," went on Trimble recklessly, safe in the knowledge that the caravan was at least twenty miles from the little villa where he dwelt with his tribe. "The pater's got a house-party on—some big political johnnies are staying for a week—Sir Samuel Hoare and Hore-Belisha."

"Oh, my hat!"
 "Do come!" urged Trimble.
 "Look here, you silly ass——" burst out Herries.

"Hewwies!" murmured Arthur Augustus. Herries gave a snort, and went into the van. He couldn't stand Baggy Trimble—especially on the splendours of Trimble Hall.

Baggy blinked at him.
 "What's the matter with Herries?" he asked. "I say, if you fellows come on to Trimble Hall, I'd rather you dropped Herries somewhere. I don't know how I could introduce him to Sir Samuel Hoare or Hore-Belisha."
 "I don't know how you could, either," re-



handling the siphon. For the sudden spurt of soda-water, the general's face. "Yoop!" roared General Gummage, back.

marked Blake. "You'd have to make their acquaintance first, wouldn't you?"

Trimble didn't seem to hear that remark.

"You fellows couldn't do better than come on to the Hall," he said. "I'll ask my pater for permission for you to camp in the park. There! You'll like the park. Miles and miles of old beeches and oaks, some of them standing when the Conqueror came. I dare say you know that our family was founded by De Trimble, who came over with the Conqueror. Now, if you'll come to the Hall I'll telephone to my pater to——"

"To get the Hall built?" asked Lowther.

"Ahem! To get ready for you. Still, if you won't come, you won't! Where are we going

to camp? What have you got for lunch?"
 Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another helplessly.

A snort was heard from the van. Baggy Trimble seemed fixed on the caravanners once more.

He walked on with them, wheeling his bike and chatting cheerily. Baggy seemed to be in great spirits. Blake had a sudden thought.

"The washing-up isn't done yet," he remarked. "As Baggy's with us he can take his turn."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good idea!"

Baggy Trimble did not seem enthusiastic. Anything in the shape of work was distasteful to Baggy.

"I don't care much about washing-up!" he observed. "Hardly in my line. A fellow accustomed to so many servants at home——"

"Every fellow in this party does his whack in the work!" said Blake grimly.

"The fact is, Blake, I'd rather not."

"Then the sooner you get on your bike, Trimble, and——"

"What I mean is, I'll do the washing-up with pleasure, Blake. I'm rather a dab at washing-up!"

"Oh!"

"Leave it to me!" said Trimble, as he clambered into the moving van.

Tom Merry smiled.

Herries jumped out of the van again.

Baggy Trimble had it all to himself. He put his head out of the front window.

"I say, Merry, what do you wash up in?"

"You'll find a pan."

"Is there a washing-mop?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Look for it."

Trimble grunted, and withdrew his head. But his fat face reappeared a minute later.

"I suppose you wash up in hot water?"

"Yes."

"How do you make it hot?"

"Spirit stove."

"Where is that?"

"Find it."

Grunt!

Trimble withdrew his head again, and the caravanners grinned. Evidently, Baggy's little game was to make his work more trouble than it was worth; but he was not catching the caravanners so easily as that.

He was silent for some time, but sounds were soon heard from the caravan again. And the sounds were the sounds of smashing crockery.

Trimble's head was projected from the front window.

"I say, I've let the cups and saucers drop! There's rather a smash. Does it matter?"

Tom Merry gasped.

"You fat villain! Get out of that van!" he roared.

"Certainly, old chap! I was only trying to make myself useful. It was quite an accident with the crocks, of course. I say, I think I've put rather too much methylated spirits in the stove. It's flaring up round the kettle, and the spout's just dropping off. Does it matter?"

Tom Merry bounded into the caravan.

Baggy Trimble dodged out, or Tom's good manners would probably have failed him to the extent of planting his boot on Baggy's plump person.

Trimble grinned cheerfully as he wheeled his

bike on with the caravan. It was improbable that he would be requested to take his share in the work again—which was what the astute Baggy wanted.

CHAPTER 11.

At Last!

"I'VE got it!"
There was a council of war going on when Monty Lowther announced that he had "got it."

Baggy Trimble, after an ample lunch, was taking his ease in the grass near the caravan. He was asleep, as his unmusical snore testified.

Tom Merry & Co. were very wide awake. They did not refresh their inner men quite so liberally as Trimble, and did not require to sleep after lunch.

A general grin followed Lowther's remark. The caravanners had lost faith in the "stunts" of the humorist of the Shell.

"Rot!" remarked Herries. "If you're thinking of getting off quietly while the fat bounder's asleep, it won't wash. He'll wake up."

"Jolly certain to," assented Dig, with a nod.

"I'm not thinking of that, dear boy," answered Lowther.

"My idea," said George Herries, "is this. Let us tell the bounder we don't want him, and kick him out."

"He won't go!"

"He will, if we kick hard enough!"

"There is such a thing as politeness, Hewwies."

"It's a waste on that fat bounder. He's smashed up nearly all the corks that were left, just as a trick for getting out of any of the work," said Herries, breathing hard. "And if he says any more about Trimble Hall I shall land him on the nose. I won't stand his lies!"

"It's Trimble Hall I'm thinking of," answered Lowther coolly. "Trimble has invited us, several times, to camp in his pater's grounds."

"There isn't any Trimble Hall!" hooted Herries. "His father is more likely to keep a pub."

"We can accept his invitation, all the same."

"How can we, if there isn't such a place?"

"That's Trimble's look-out. My idea is that we accept it. We played a little joke like that on him once before at St. Jim's, and he was fairly dished. He can't take fellows home. Well, let's ask him to guide us to Trimble Hall."

"My hat!"

"He lives at Lexham, and that's twenty miles out of our way."

"We shan't need to do the twenty miles. Long before we get near Lexham Trimble will be missing," said Lowther, with conviction. "Think of his people's feelings when a caravan rolled up with seven fellows to camp in their ten-by-eight front garden!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! That is weally a corkah, Lowthah! If Twimble tells whoppahs he must take the consequences. But we do not want to cause any twouble to his people," said D'Arcy, with a shake of the head.

"We shan't get anywhere near his people. Trimble will take care of that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Done!" said Tom Merry. "We'll try it on, anyhow."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And so the plot was plotted.

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The caravanners put the horse in, and at the jingle of harness Baggy Trimble awoke and stretched himself in the grass.

"Starting already?" he asked.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"I'd rather rest a bit longer."

"Rest as long as you like, old chap. We'll get on."

"Oh, all right!" Trimble rolled to his feet. "I'll take a snooze in the caravan, then. Don't jolt the van more than you can help. I hate being awakened out of a nap."

"You can't take a nap just now, Trimble," said Blake, with owl-like seriousness. "We want you to point out the way. Which is the shortest road to Lexham from here?"

Trimble started.

"Lexham!" he repeated.

"Yes; we're accepting your invitation, you know," said Monty Lowther blandly.

"M-my invitation?"

"Yes; we're going to camp to-night at Trimble Hall."

"Oh crumbs!"

"What did you say, Trimble?"

"Nothing. But I say, Lexham is about a hundred miles from here."

"Sussex must have grown since the last time I saw it on the map, then."

"I mean it's twenty miles distant."

"Well, your pater won't mind if we arrive late, I suppose?"

"The fact is, you fellows, my father has a strong objection to—visitors arriving late!" stammered Trimble. "I—I think it would be better to—head for Berkshire."

"But we're going to Trimble Hall."

"Now I come to think of it," said Trimble, as if struck by a sudden recollection, "the pater's got the decorators in. I'm awfully sorry, but it will have to be put off."

"It must be rather uncomfy for political big-wigs with the decorators in the house," said Digby solemnly.

"The—the fact is, it is rather uncomfy for them," said Trimble; "but—but they don't mind roughing it, you know."

"Well, we'll rough it, too, old chap. Besides, camping in the vast park, we shan't bother the decorators."

"Not at all," said Tom Merry.

"The—the park has been ploughed up for corn. I've just remembered that now," said Trimble.

"Why not try Surrey?"

"My dear man, we're going to Trimble Hall! We've never seen the historic building yet, you know. Which way?"

"I—I've forgotten the direction. I've been cycling about so much—"

"I've got a map," said Arthur Augustus.

"Oh dear!"

"You can have your rap, Trimble. We'll find the way out on our map," said Tom Merry.

"Oh!"

Trimble did not seem to want a nap now. He wheeled on his bike as the caravan rolled down the road, the route having been found on the county map.

Trimble did not speak for the first mile, but the caravanners kept up quite a cheery and busy conversation.

They were discussing how they were going to enjoy themselves at Trimble Hall.

To judge by his dismayed looks, Baggy Trimble was not going to enjoy himself there.

"I—I say, we take that turning," he said suddenly.

"I think not," said Tom Merry, with a glance at the map. "We're right for Lexham, Trimble. That turning would lead us right away from it."

"Look here, you fellows," said Trimble desperately, "my pater has rather a bad temper if he's woke up late at night. I'm sorry to say he mayn't even be polite. And we can't get there early."

"Well, if you really think that, Trimble——"

"I'm sure of it!" gasped Trimble.

"Then we'll camp near the Hall to-night, and go on in the morning to your place."

"Eh?"

"That all right?"

"Oh dear!"

Trimble could not very well say it wasn't all right, but his looks were not happy.

The caravanners wound on cheerily. There was an easy road before them, and they piled into and upon the van, and proceeded at quite a brisk trot. Baggie Trimble had to mount his bike to keep up with them.

A good many miles had passed under the wheels when Baggie urged that it was tea-time.

But the caravanners did not stop for tea. Lowther explained that they wanted to do most of the journey that evening.

Sandwiches and buns were eaten for tea without a halt, and the caravanners trotted on.

The sun was sinking behind the downs, and it was a very pleasant evening, tempting the caravanners to keep to the road.

Monty Lowther consulted the map several times with great attention.

"More like fifteen miles than twenty," he announced. "We shall do it easily this evening if

we keep on rather late. Of course, we won't think of disturbing Trimble's pater. That would never do. We'll camp near the walls of the—the park."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"In the morning Trimble can take us up to the Hall, and his pater will let us wheel the old bus into the park. Then we'll have some canoeing on the lake," said Lowther. "It will be a very pleasant change after being on the road so long."

"Very!"

"It was really very thoughtful of you, Trimble, asking us to your place like this. I suppose we shan't be in the way at all? Seven extra guests will hardly be noticed in such a large house-party."

"N-no!" gasped Trimble.

"Only a few miles more," said Manners. "Do you think Hore-Belisha will be up when we get in, Trimble?"

"I think he—he goes to bed early," mumbled Trimble.

"Does Sir Samuel Hoare?"

"I—I think so."

"Well, we shall see them in the morning," said Lowther. "It's ripping of Trimble to take us among the nobbs like this! Some fellows, with such an exclusive social circle, would keep chaps out of it. Not Trimble."

"Wathah not!"

"I—I say, hold on, you chaps!" said Trimble.

"What for?"

"I—I've just remembered——"

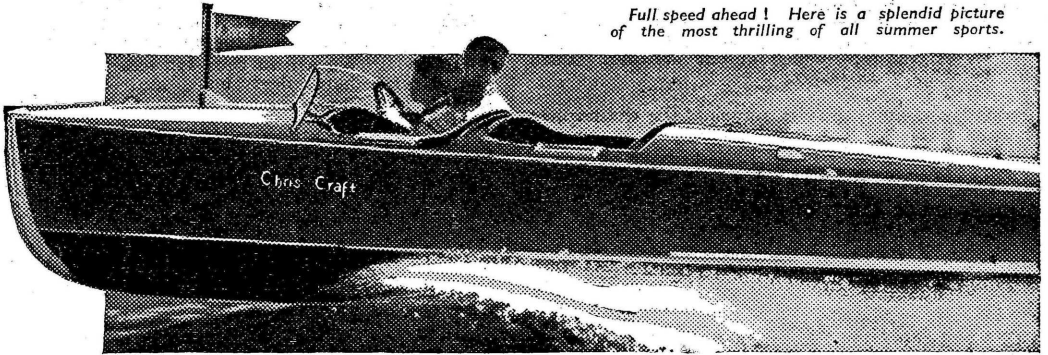
The caravanners suppressed a chortle. They wondered what was coming next.

"Well, what have you just remembered, old top?" asked Blake.

"I—I've just remembered that there was an out-

(Continued on next page.)

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break of influenza at Trimble Hall. I—I'm afraid it won't do for you chaps to go there."

"Lots of people down with it?"

"Ye-e-es."

"We'll help to nurse them," said Lowther. "What do you fellows say? At such a time as this we ought to rally round Trimble—what?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Don't you worry, Trimble. We'll help you through."

"Oh dear!" gasped Trimble.

Another couple of miles were done in silence on Trimble's part. He was getting quite a hunted look on his fat face now. He cast glances to right and left, as if seeking a way of escape. Once, in desperation, he wheeled ahead on his bike, but then Tom Merry called to him.

"Don't get out of sight, Trimble. We want you to point out the Hall to us. Is it close by Lexham?"

Trimble slowed down again. Lexham was not far off now, and it was decided that the caravanners were to camp close by the walls of the park at Trimble Hall. Baggy was needed to point out that palatial residence.

He was growing into a state of hysterics now. Certainly he was not likely to guide the caravanners to the little villa where the Trimbles dwelt. He could imagine his father's face if he did. As for guiding them to the Hall, that was quite beyond the powers of Baggy or anyone else. That splendid abode had yet to be built.

And the caravanners were keeping on.

"I—I say!" gasped Trimble at last.

"Close on the Hall now, old chap?"

"Yes," gasped Baggy. "I—I'll buzz off and telephone to the pater that you are coming."

"Isn't it rather late—"

But Baggy did not heed. He drove at his pedals, and vanished round a turning.

The caravanners looked at one another. Then there was a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble did not return. Like the hapless gentleman who went hunting the Snark, he had "suddenly, silently vanished away."

And there were dry eyes among the St. Jim's caravanners.

CHAPTER 12.

Calling on Aunt Matilda!

"BUCKS!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What about Bucks?" yawned Blake, as he finished his third egg.

It was morning, and the caravanners were breakfasting.

"We have done Sussex pretty well, deah boy, and my ideah is to head for Bucks, for two weasons. It may occur to that boundah Twimble that we have been pullin' his leg and he may look for us again."

"Then the sooner we're on the road the better."

"And the othah weason is that my Aunt Matilda lives neah Twing."

"Where's that?"

"Twing is in Buckinghamshire, Blake."

"Never heard of it."

"Weally, Blake, Twing is quite a well-known place."

"The ass means Tring, perhaps," remarked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, Twing," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "Aunt Matilda has a wathah nice little

place at Twing, and she will be vewy glad to see us. We could camp there for a day or two, and I could have a weal bath."

"That settles it," said Lowther. "If it will cause Gussy to wash himself, we'll go and see Aunt Matilda. Get a move on!"

"You uttah ass—"

The caravanners got a move on. The dreadful possibility that the truth might dawn on Baggy Trimble, and that he might rejoin the party, made them anxious to put a good distance between the caravan and Baggy. And for a whole day they pushed on at a good rate.

After that the journey was taken more easily, but the chalky roads of Buckinghamshire were gliding beneath the wheels of the St. Jim's caravan at last.

It was getting towards sunset, on a pleasant afternoon, when the caravan rumbled through the old town of Tring.

Tom Merry & Co. were a little doubtful as to whether Miss Matilda D'Arcy would be wholly glad to see seven dusty caravanners roll in.

But Arthur Augustus assured them that Aunt Matilda was a "bwick," and no end hospitable. And they would be able to camp in the paddock, and everything in the garden would be lovely.

Arthur Augustus was given his head, and the St. Jim's caravan turned out of the Tring road into the leafy lane that led to Aunt Matilda's mansion.

A handsome house, in well-kept grounds, came into view in the distance.

"That's it, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "The hedge along the woad here bordahs Aunt Matilda's garden. Bai Jove, it looks as if there are visitahs already."

Several figures could be seen in the garden, across the hedge. There were tea-tables under the trees.

"This is wathah lucky," remarked Arthur Augustus. "We are in time for tea, appawntly. Bettah stop here, deah boys, and walk to the gates."

"Right-ho!"

The caravan halted, and seven caravanners brushed off a little of the Tring road dust, and started along the hedge towards the gate.

On the other side of the hedge was a sound of teacups and voices.

"Another cup of tea, general?"

"That's Aunt Matilda!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "How surprised she would be to know we are on the othah side of the hedge—what? This will be a vewy pleasant surprisew for Aunt Matilda."

"I wonder!" murmured Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah— Oh, bai Jove!"

A deep voice came from the other side of the hedge.

"Thank you, I will take another cup of tea."

The juniors looked at one another. They knew that voice. They had last heard it on the occasion when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had had an accident with a soda-siphon.

"Oh cwikey!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"We're going to meet an old acquaintance!" grinned Lowther. "Oh, my hat!"

The deep voice went on, General Gummage little dreaming upon what ears it fell. The hedge was thick between.

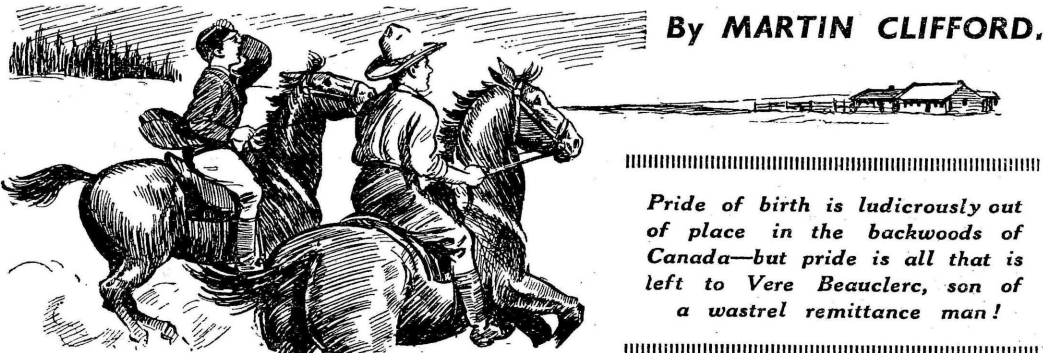
"Yes, madam, as I was telling you, a party of caravanners—schoolboys, I think—"

"Dear me!" said Aunt Matilda. "My nephew

(Continued on page 36.)

FRANK RICHARDS FINDS HIMSELF ON FIGHTING TERMS WITH THE FELLOW WHO SAVED HIS LIFE!

The Snob of Cedar Creek!



By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Pride of birth is ludicrously out of place in the backwoods of Canada—but pride is all that is left to Vere Beauclerc, son of a wastrel remittance man!

Good Samaritans!

“HOLD on, Bob!”
“What’s the row?”
“Look!”

School was over at Cedar Creek. Frank Richards and his cousin, Bob Lawless, were trotting along the trail homeward, chatting as they rode.

Frank suddenly pulled in his pony as a figure came in sight on the trail ahead. It was that of a man in shabby clothes and dilapidated boots, with a ragged stetson hat on the back of his untidy head. As he came plodding up the trail, he was lurching strangely from side to side, with a curiously unsteady gait.

Bob Lawless looked at him and his lip curled.

“Come on, Frank!” he said curtly.

“Hold on!” said Frank. “What’s the matter with that fellow, Bob? He must be ill. Do you know him?”

“Yes,” said Bob shortly. “I’ve seen him often enough. He hangs out at Cedar Creek town.”

“Who is he?”

“Nobody you want to know. His name’s Beauclerc.”

“Well, I’m going to stop.”

“He’s a remittance man,” growled Bob. “And if you weren’t a howling tenderfoot you’d see what’s the matter with him.”

Frank had halted his pony, and Bob did likewise, though with evident unwillingness. The two boys watched the man as he came slowly towards them.

“What’s a remittance man?” asked Frank. It was the first time the English lad had heard of that curious and well-known character of the Far West.

Bob grunted.

“A man who lives on remittances from home,” he said. “There’s a good many of them spoiling the landscape of British Columbia, I can tell you. Shiftless wasters, who come out to try their luck in the Colonies, you know. The way they try their luck is to hang round the stores, playing poker with the cattlemen, or drinking, or putting on side.

“When their remittance arrives from some ass in the Old Country they sport new clothes and put

on more side. When it doesn’t they loaf about in tatters, and beg, borrow, or steal. That chap is a good specimen. He’s supposed to have no end of big connections in England, and they’re glad to give him a handsome allowance to keep him a few thousand miles away.”

“Oh!” said Frank, rather blankly.

“But if he’s got a handsome allowance from his relations in England, he doesn’t seem to thrive on it,” said Frank, with a pitying glance at the remittance man’s wretched clothes.

“Because he gambles it away as fast as he gets it,” said Bob. “I’ve seen him painting the town red in Cedar Creek and the other camps. He gets a job of sorts sometimes, but he’s too lazy to work, and too aristocratic.” Bob sniffed. “That’s not the kind of man the Canadians want to see arrive from the Old Country, Frank; but they come, all the same.”

“He looks ill, Bob.”

“Oh, you champion duffer!” growled Bob. “He’s only suffering from an overdose of tanglefoot.”

“Of—of what?”

“Tanglefoot—whisky.”

“Oh, my hat!”

Frank felt his compassion simmer down very considerably. He was about to set his pony in motion again to ride past the approaching remittance man, when the latter gave a sudden lurch, and pitched over heavily among the larches beside the trail. He made an effort to rise, but sank back again.

“Bob, we can’t leave him there,” said Frank. “He’s an awful beast, but—hang it all, it will be dark in an hour or two, and he can’t get home like that!”

“Let him sleep there, then!”

“And wake up with pneumonia, perhaps,” said Frank. “Look here, Bob, you can get on to the ranch if you like. I’m going to lend the poor chap a hand.”

Bob Lawless gave his cousin a rather impatient look, but his good nature conquered and he grinned.

“Oh, all right! If you want to, I guess I’ll help. Jump down!”

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"I knew your bark was worse than your bite," said Frank, laughing. "Let's get him home. I suppose he doesn't live far away."

"About six miles."

"Oh!"

"He lives in a shack outside the town, on the creek," said Bob. "He's not at home much, for that matter—not when he's got any money, at all events."

"Does he live alone?"

"Except for his son, yes."

"He has a son?" said Frank.

"Yes; not a specially nice chap, either," said Bob. "Proud as Lucifer, and poor as a church mouse."

"Must be a pretty hard life for him."

"He doesn't make it any easier by his customs and manners," Bob laughed. "He dresses in tatters, and puts on airs of superiority that make a fellow want to punch his head. If we take his father home he will most likely insult us, and we may have to pull his nose."

"We'll chance that," said Frank, laughing.

The cousins had dismounted, and they approached the wretched figure sprawling in the larches. Now that he was closer, Frank Richards did not need telling what was the matter with him. The man looked up at him with glassy eyes.

In spite of his degraded state, Frank noted that his features were handsome and well-cut. There was an air of what had once been refinement about the man.

"Lemme alone! Can't you keep your hands off a gentleman?" he muttered, in husky tones, which yet had a trace of culture left. "Let me alone!" "You can't stay here," said Frank.

"Turn me out, will you?" muttered the remittance man. "Ah, you low scoundrel, it would be an honour to you to brush my clothes!"

"What on earth does he mean?" said Frank.

Bob grinned.

"He thinks he's talking to some saloon-keeper who's turned him out," he said. "Not before it was time, I should think. Hallo, he's gone to sleep!"

"We'll stick him on the pony," said Frank. "I can walk."

"Right-ho!"

The remittance man said nothing further. He was unconscious. He did not even open his eyes as the two lads lifted him and placed him on Frank's pony. It was a strange enough procession, following the trail under the trees in the sunset.

The Son of the Remittance Man!

"HERE we are!" exclaimed Bob Lawless at last.

Some distance from Cedar Creek town, on the bank of the creek, stood a log shack on half-cleared ground, surrounded by patches of bush. There was no sign of life about the place as the boys halted outside and lifted their charge to the ground.

"This is the place?" asked Frank.

"Yes. The kid must be somewhere about. Get him inside."

Lascelles Beauclerc was lifted by his shoulders and his feet and carried into the shack, of which the pine door stood wide open.

There were only two rooms in the shack, one the living-room, and the other the bed-room. The furniture consisted chiefly of old packing-cases and boxes and a rusty stove.

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But the bed-room into which the man was carried was very clean and tidy. There were two beds, made up of old cases spread with buffalo robes. On the larger one the insensible man was laid.

"Vere doesn't seem to be around," remarked Bob. "Working out in the fields perhaps."

"Vere?" repeated Frank.

"Yes. The kid's name is Vere Beauclerc."

"What a stunning name!" said Frank, with a smile.

"I guess we can leave him here," said Bob. "The kid will find him when he comes in. Hallo, here he is! Talk of angels!"

There was a step in the outer room, and a lad of about fifteen came striding across.

He stood in the doorway of the inner room, looking at the two intruders with a flash in his eyes. Frank Richards regarded him with interest. He was somehow very much interested in this scion of a noble family in the Old Country, who found himself among such strange surroundings in the great West.

Vere Beauclerc was somewhat tall for his age, slim, and gracefully built. His face was extremely handsome, but it was marred by an expression of haughtiness which seemed strangely out of place there, for he was dressed with painful shabbiness.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, and his voice was sharp and haughty. "You have no right here."

For the moment Beauclerc did not see the still figure on the bed. His dark, flashing eyes were fixed on the boys.

Frank felt his cheeks flush at the tone of the remittance man's son. Bob's eyes gleamed.

"Do you think you can enter this house as you please?" Beauclerc went on passionately.

"Oh, cheese it!" broke out Bob. "Do you think we want to enter your blessed old shack? We came along to bring your father home."

Beauclerc started.

"My father!"

Bob made a gesture towards the bed.

"Oh! Is my father ill?"

"Er—er—that is—you see—"

Bob broke off suddenly. Vere Beauclerc understood, and a crimson flush dyed his face to the ears as he went hastily to the bedside.

Bob touched his cousin's arm.

"Come on, Frank; let's get out!"

Frank followed him from the shack. They caught the ponies that were browsing outside, and were about to mount when Vere Beauclerc came hastily out of the shack. His handsome face was still flushed, but his manner was changed.

"I am sorry I spoke to you as I did," he said. "I—I did not know you had brought my father home."

"All serene!" said Bob carelessly. "No bones broken."

"I am very much obliged to you." The words almost seemed wrung from the boy. It was plainly an effort to him to curb his proud and passionate temper and speak civilly to the two strangers who had seen his father in such a state of degradation. "I thank you very sincerely."

"Not at all," said Frank, speaking for the first time. "I am very glad we found Mr. Beauclerc in the wood."

Beauclerc gave him a quick look and turned back into the shack.

The cousins mounted and rode away down the creek, heading for the distant Lawless Ranch. "Popper will be wondering what's become of us," said Bob, as they set their ponies to the gallop. "Get a move on!"

The sun had almost disappeared now, and the comrades rode on in the growing dusk.

Frank Richards' face was very thoughtful. He could not help thinking of the lonely lad in the shack, friendless in the country, and repelling by his foolish pride the kind-hearted people who would have been his friends.

"That's a rotten life for that chap, Bob," he said, at last. "Couldn't something be done for him?"

Bob shrugged his shoulders.

"He would probably want to knock you down if you proposed to do anything for him," he said. "He's as proud as Lucifer, I tell you! Sort of wraps himself up in a mantle of pride, you know. His father would take a drink from a half-breed hobo, but that kid wouldn't accept a meal if he were starving!"

"I think I can understand him a bit," said Frank. "I—I suppose he doesn't go to school?"

Bob's lip curled.

"No. The lumber school isn't good enough for him, I dare say."

"The poor chap's got nothing left but his pride, Bob. You can make allowances for that."

"Oh, yes!" said Bob carelessly. "Of course, he'd have to swallow his pride and go to school if the district was more settled. But as it happens he can do as he likes, and he doesn't like."

The subject was dropped, but Frank Richards was still thinking of Vere Beauclerc when they rode up to the ranch at nightfall.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Mr. Lawless as they came in. "Where have you been all this time?"

Bob Lawless explained.

"It was Frank's idea," he added. "After all, we couldn't leave the poor old hobo in the wood, dad."

The rancher nodded.

"You did quite right, my boys," said Mrs. Lawless. "It was a very kind act. Now, have your supper."

And Frank and Bob were very glad to sit down to a substantial meal. But when they went to their room Frank was still thoughtful. He sat up in bed a little later.

"Bob!"

"Yaw-aw! Hallo!" came Bob's sleepy voice from the other bed.

"I've been thinking about Beauclerc."

"Oh, bother Beauclerc! Go to sleep!" yawned Bob.

And Frank Richards, warned by a deep snore that further conversation was barred, decided to go to sleep.

Over the Rapids!

"LOOK out for squalls!"

"It's all right!"

"Pride goeth before a fall!" grinned Bob Lawless.

It was the next day, and morning classes had finished at Cedar Creek School. Frank Richards was standing in a birch-bark canoe on the creek, and Bob was watching him from the bank—a little anxiously.

Frank had done a good deal of canoeing with

his cousin, and had picked up the use of the paddle. But he was ambitious to handle a birch-bark canoe on his own, and he was trying his luck.

"It's all serene, Bob!" he said, laughing. "Easy as falling off a form!"

"Easy as falling out and getting drowned!" grinned Eben Hacke, from the shore.

"Oh rats!"

"I say, old chap, do be careful!" said Bob. "If you get out into the rapids—"

"I'm not going near the rapids."

"You mayn't be able to help it when you get into the current," said Bob. "There's been a lot of rain and the creek's swollen. You can see that."

"All serene!"

"Better let me come. You can try it on your own on the lake at the ranch."

"I'll try it here," said Frank.

"Well, a wilful ass will have his way," said



"Do you mind? I shoot better at a target!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss I. Cooper, 1, Abbots Place, Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent.

Bob. "Keep her head to the current, anyhow, if you get carried down."

"I shan't get carried down," said Frank cheerfully. And the canoe shot out into the creek.

Bob watched the English boy anxiously. He knew that there was danger for an inexperienced canoeist—a fact that Frank did not realise. He ran along the bank as the canoe glided along.

It seemed plain sailing enough at first, and Frank was glad that he had made the venture alone. But he discovered soon that the trees on the shore were fleeting by with great swiftness, and that Bob, running along the bank, was left behind. He was shouting, but his voice was lost in the distance.

Frank decided to turn back. The swiftness of the water warned him that he was getting near the rapids.

The rapids on the creek were not of a dangerous character to one who knew the ropes. Eben Hacke would have cleared them with ease, or Bob himself. But they were very new to a lad fresh from the Old Country.

Frank had persuaded himself that he was quite a master of the paddle. To his surprise the canoe refused to come round. Instead of doing so, the light little craft rocked broadside on the swiftly flowing river, and was very nearly capsized.

Frank paddled desperately, and the canoe righted, but with her nose on the current, gliding swiftly downstream.

"My hat!" muttered Frank, in dismay.

He had made the discovery that he could not round the canoe in the swift current. There was nothing for it but to run with the stream and get ashore as best he could. The canoe was light enough for him to carry it, or drag it, at least, back to the school landing.

But even getting ashore was not easy for the inexperienced paddler. The rain-swollen waters were rushing on, and ahead Frank could hear the deep, threatening murmur of the rapids.

He remembered Bob's advice, and as he drew nearer and nearer to the rapids he kept the canoe's head to the current. The banks were fleeting by now at what seemed express speed to the boy in the birch-bark canoe. The lumber school had long vanished behind.

Frank still kept his head, and kept the canoe steady as he rushed into the rapids. By luck more than anything else, he kept to the main channel and avoided the dangerous snags that rose on both sides from the swirling water.

The din of the waters seemed deafening to his ears. Foam curled round the bow as the canoe swept on.

Then the speed slackened. The rapids were behind him now, though the water was still running fast. The worst of the danger was over. From somewhere on the bank he heard a sudden shouting. It was a warning, he knew; but before he quite realised it there came a stunning crash.

The canoe had crashed into a floating log, and in a twinkling it was capsized, and Frank was struggling in the water. His head struck something as he struggled. It was the bottom of the overturned canoe. His senses were leaving him, but he still struggled to swim.

The water flooded over his head, but he came up again, bravely fighting for his life in the heavy swirl. But his head went under again.

The last thing he knew was that a sudden grasp was fastened on his collar, and he was dragged up.

For a second he caught a fleeting glimpse of a face beside him in the swirling water, and then his senses left him.

Frank's Rescuer!

FRANK RICHARDS opened his eyes. There was a dull ache in his head. He gazed about him dizzily. He was lying in the grass by the shining creek, that rushed and sang by within a few feet of him.

He lay in a pool of water, wet to the skin. Something was supporting his head, and as his senses cleared he realised that it was a strong arm. A face bent over him—a handsome face he remembered.

"Feel better?"

"Beauclerc!" gasped Frank.

The son of the remittance man nodded and smiled.

"Yes, I saw you come over the falls, and shouted to you. You're not used to a canoe, are you?"

Frank laughed breathlessly. He was quickly recovering.

"I thought I was, but I'm not. Thank you for fetching me out. I should have been drowned."

"Well, I suppose you would," said Beauclerc. "You've got a bump on your head. You had a knock."

"You must be a jolly good swimmer," said Frank.

"Yes, pretty fair," said Beauclerc carelessly.

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Something of his old manner was turning now, but Frank was determined not to observe it. He sat up, Beauclerc still supporting him.

"Bob will be anxious about me," said Frank. "I shall have to get back as fast as I can. Am I far from the school?"

"A good six miles."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Longer than that by road," said Beauclerc. "And I suppose you couldn't paddle back, could you?"

"Not much good if I could," said Frank ruefully. "I suppose Bob's canoe is at the bottom of the creek?"

Beauclerc laughed.

"Not at all. I brought it ashore after I'd landed you. There it lies."

Frank looked round. The canoe was out of the water.

"By Jove!" said Frank. "You're awfully good, Beauclerc! You've learned to be more handy than I have out here."

"I've been out here a good many years," said Beauclerc quietly.

"You're not much older than I am," said Frank, looking at him.

"No."

"You remember England?"

"Oh, yes; very well," Beauclerc smiled. "I was at school in England before my father left the Old Country and brought me with him." His face clouded again as he mentioned his father, and his manner became more reserved. "Do you think you can get up now?"

Frank rose to his feet, with Beauclerc's assistance. He was feeling a trifle giddy, but otherwise, little the worse for his plunge. His chief concern was for Bob, whose anxiety for him he could guess.

"Poor old Bob," he said. "He'll think I'm drowned."

"He shouldn't have let you start alone in the canoe," said Beauclerc. "It was dangerous for a newcomer."

"He didn't want me to," confessed Frank. "I was a pig-headed duffer, and I deserve all I've got. How on earth am I going to get back? I suppose school will be over by the time I arrive. Bob will be no end worried."

Beauclerc hesitated a moment.

"Would you like me to paddle you back?" he asked.

"I say, you're awfully good," said Frank gratefully. "If you've got the time to spare. But you're as wet as I am."

"I shall soon get dry in the sun. And I've plenty of time. There's little enough for me to do in the shack."

"But the clearing—"

"We don't work the land. Father hasn't taken up cultivation, of any sort." He frowned a little. "I dare say you've heard about me," he added bitterly. "Father's a remittance man."

"I—I know."

"We live on an allowance my father gets from his elder brother in England," said Beauclerc, with a sarcastic curl of the lip. "We belong to a good family, and we're too aristocratic to work. Not much use wasters of that kind coming to Canada, eh? But lots of them do, and lots of them go to the bad." He shrugged his shoulders again. "But never mind all that. Lend me a hand with the canoe. It will have to be portaged to the other side of the rapids. Can't paddle uphill, you know."

"I suppose not," assented Frank.

The two boys picked up the birch-bark canoe between them and carried it up the steep bank. The "portage" was a long one, and the canoe had to be carried some distance before it could be launched above the rapids.

Beaulerc led the way, Frank trusting to his guidance. They lost sight of the creek two or three times as they went on. But Beaulerc evidently knew every foot of the way.

"Here we are!" he said at last. The canoe was set down and slid into the creek. Frank was glad enough to sit down. Beaulerc took the paddle, and the canoe glided upstream. He paddled with great skill and untiring strength. The rough life of the backwoods had done much

"Perhaps," said Beaulerc. "You'd like the school all right," said Frank. "Dash it all, you ought to be at school, oughtn't you?"

"Plenty of fellows of my age are at work here," said Beaulerc.

"Yes, but you're not at work. How do you kill time?"

"Anyhow." "I wish you'd come to Cedar Creek," said Frank. "You'd find the fellows right as rain. My Cousin Bob——"

"I've met your Cousin Bob," said Beaulerc. "You'll excuse me if I say I don't like him."

"Oh!" said Frank, taken aback.



From the bank Frank heard a sudden shout. But before he realised that it was a warning there came a stunning crash. The canoe smashed into a floating log, and in a moment it capsized, and Frank was struggling in the water.

for Vere Beaulerc, so far as physical strength and endurance went.

His face was set now in its usual expression of almost arrogant calm. Frank could easily understand how good-natured, happy-go-lucky Bob Lawless had no liking for the haughty, reserved boy.

"Beaulerc," said Frank, breaking the silence. Beaulerc looked at him.

"Excuse me!" Frank coloured a little. "Why don't you come to our school? You could, if you liked."

"I don't like."

"Your pater would let you."

Beaulerc laughed.

"That's the first time I've heard a chap's father called his pater since I came west of the Rockies," he said. "Of course, you're English?"

"Same as you," said Frank. "You don't like the life out here?"

"No."

"I do," said Frank. "I think it's splendid. Perhaps you made up your mind not to like it?"

"And I shouldn't like the fellows at your school," said Beaulerc. "Do you?"

"Yes."

"Tastes differ," said Beaulerc.

Frank was silent. He understood that the Beaulercs, father and son, were the very last persons to get on in any way in the breezy West. Pride of birth was ludicrously out of place in the shadow of the mighty Rockies, where every man was valued for what he was, and not what his ancestors might have been.

Frank knew, too, that plenty of Canadians were descended from good families in the Mother Country, and did not put on the least vestige of "side" on that account. And certainly, so far as the conduct of the remittance man went, it was not calculated to inspire Western democrats with any great respect for "blue blood." The roughest cattleman in the section felt only contempt for the remittance man.

Beaulerc had saved his life, and Frank felt cordial and friendly towards him. It came as a

shock to feel that his new acquaintance was a snob, for that was what it amounted to. He did not speak again as Beauclerc paddled on untritingly. He was glad when the lumber school came in sight at last.

There was a shout from the bank as the canoe came gliding up.

"Here he is!"

Bob Lawless fairly dragged Frank from the canoe, almost hugging him in his relief.

"Frank! You duffer! I reckoned you were a goner! Thank goodness you've got back! Come on. You're 'ate for school." He paused and looked curiously at Vere Beauclerc, who had stepped from the canoe and made it fast. "What's happened, Frank?"

The New Boy!

VERE BEAUCLERC did not glance at Bob Lawless. He methodically made the canoe secure, apparently ignorant of the Canadian's presence. Bob's eyes were beginning to gleam.

"I came to grief in the rapids," said Frank hastily. "Beauclerc fished me out of the water, Bob. I should have been drowned."

"Oh, by gum!" ejaculated Bob.

"He's paddled me back. Goodness knows when I should have got here if he hadn't. I say, Beauclerc, how are you going to get home?"

"Walk," said Beauclerc laconically.

"It's a jolly long way."

"That's nothing!"

Beauclerc paused a moment, and then held out his hand to Frank Richards.

"Good-bye!" he said.

"Good-bye!" said Frank, as he shook hands with him. "And thanks again!"

"Not at all."

Frank coloured with vexation as Beauclerc turned away. He had not taken the slightest notice of Bob's presence, even by so much as a look. Bob's good-natured face was flushed and his eyes were gleaming.

"You say Beauclerc saved your life, Frank?" muttered Bob.

"Yes. I should have gone under but for him."

"Well, that was decent of him, I suppose. I won't pull a fellow's nose who did that for you," said Bob. "Let him clear!"

"Bob!" muttered Frank.

Beauclerc was turning away, but he turned back, his lip curling in the sarcastic smile Frank had learned to know already.

"Don't let that stop you, dear boy," he said, with cool insolence. "My nose is at your service—if you can touch it!"

Bob clenched his hands and made a stride towards him. Frank Richards hastily stepped between them.

"Bob, old chap! Hold on! He saved my life."

Bob Lawless dropped his hands.

"Oh, all right! Let him go! I don't want to row with him. You'd better come in, Frank. You're jolly late already."

He grasped Frank's arm and hurried him away to the schoolhouse. Vere Beauclerc stood looking after them for a few minutes, the sarcastic smile on his face, and then he turned and disappeared among the trees along the creek.

"That's a queer fellow, Bob!" said Frank, as they entered the schoolhouse.

Bob grunted.

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"Too queer for my taste. He's got the manners of a grizzly bear, if you want to know what I think of him! The son of a drunken waster, turning his nose up at everybody in the section!" growled Bob.

"He can't help his father!"

"He can help being a silly snob, I suppose?"

"Well, I suppose so," admitted Frank. "But—but I believe he isn't a bad sort in the main, Bob. He ought to be at school here. He would get the rot knocked out of him in next to no time."

"Well, I'd help!" said Bob, his face relaxing into a grin. "He wouldn't be here a day without three or four fights on his hands, and I should be one of the first. Come on. You want a rub-down before you go into school."

Ten minutes later the cousins entered the school-room. Afternoon lessons were nearly half over, and Miss Meadows gave them both a severe glance. But the schoolmistress was placated by Bob's explanation, and they took their places for the remainder of the lessons.

Frank Richards was generally one of Miss Meadows' best pupils. But this afternoon he could not help his thoughts wandering.

It was no light service that Vere Beauclerc had performed for him, and Frank was not likely to be ungrateful. He knew that Beauclerc, however good a swimmer he was, must have run considerable risk in plunging into the water for him below the rapids. He had plenty of pluck, at all events; and he must have a good heart to run so much risk for a stranger.

Frank Richards would have been glad to welcome him as a schoolfellow, and he was wondering whether it could be done.

After school, when the cousins were riding home together, he broached the subject to Bob Lawless.

"Couldn't your pater chip in, Bob?" he asked.

"Mr. Beauclerc ought to send his son to school, you know."

"I'm getting rather tired of your new chum, Frank!" said Bob, quite roughly for him.

"Well, he's not a chum," said Frank. "I hardly know the chap. But it seems rotten for him to be wasting his life as he is doing. If your father spoke to Mr. Beauclerc—"

"Oh, rats!"

Frank was discouraged and he dropped the subject. But Bob himself raised it again as they came in sight of the ranch.

"What are you bothering about that fellow Beauclerc for, Frank?" he asked.

"Well, I wish something could be done for him."

"He would feel like punching your head if he knew that you were suggesting doing something for him."

"I dare say he would," admitted Frank. "All the same—"

"Still, I agree with you," said Bob unexpectedly. "His father's a regular wastrel. I don't believe he ever gives the kid a thought in any way. And the poor chap's got no mother." Bob knitted his brows. "Look here, Franky, we'll tackle dad about it after supper."

"Right-ho!" said Frank.

And after supper, in the ranch-house, when Rancher Lawless was enjoying his evening pipe, he was duly tackled. The rancher listened quietly, blowing out big clouds of smoke the while. He nodded at last.

"I guess you're right," he said. "I'm afraid Mr. Beauclerc is a hopeless case. But I've thought about the boy several times. As a matter of fact, I've spoken to Beauclerc about it, and so have



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others. It hasn't done much good. But I'll ride over in the morning on my way to town."

And with that Frank Richards had to be satisfied. Bob Lawless burst into a chuckle when they went to their room.

"You'll get your cheery Beauclerc as a school-fellow," he remarked, "and you'll be fighting him the next day, and so shall I the day after."

"I shan't fight him," said Frank quietly. "And I hope you won't, Bob. Why not give him a chance? You've often called me a tenderfoot, but Beauclerc is a bigger greenhorn than I ever was, in some ways. He hasn't learnt yet that class distinction doesn't count at the foot of the Rocky Mountains: his head's full of nonsense he learned in the Old Country. But give him a chance, and he'll turn out right enough."

"Anything you like!" yawned Bob.

And Bob went cheerfully to sleep, evidently quite indifferent as to whether the remittance man's son came to Cedar Creek or not.

On the following morning Mr. Lawless rode away from the ranch with the schoolboys after breakfast, and they parted with him at the fork of the trail. Mr. Lawless rode on to town, while his son and nephew trotted off to school.

During morning lessons Frank Richards could not help wondering how the rancher's visit to the remittance man's shack had prospered.

He wondered, too, whether he had done right in asking the rancher to intervene. Yet he could not feel sorry if it resulted in the wayward lad being taken away from the half-savage life he was condemned to by his wastrel father's indifference and selfishness.

After dinner in the school dining-rooms, Bob and Frank went down to the creek to try the canoe again, Frank having realised quite clearly that he was in need of more instruction from his Canadian cousin.

The canoe kept them busy till the bell rang for afternoon lessons.

"Lessons again!" yawned Bob. "No rest for the wicked! Make her rip!"

The canoe was rushed to the bank, and the two chums jumped ashore. The Cedar Creek

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PEN PALS COUPON

13-8-38

fellows were going into the schoolhouse. Bob Lawless caught his cousin's arm suddenly.

"By gum! Look here, my son!"

"Beauclerc!"

The remittance man's son was coming towards them. His handsome face was flushed, his dark eyes gleaming. There was a deep, suppressed anger and resentment in his look.

"You've joined the school?" asked Frank cordially.

Beauclerc's lip curled.

"Yes; my father has decided to send me to school. There is no choice about my coming here, as there is no other school. Mr. Lawless visited him this morning, and I fancy I owe it to him. It is very kind of him to take an interest in me." Beauclerc's eyes gleamed at Frank. "It was you put it into Mr. Lawless' head to speak to my father?"

"Well, and why not?" demanded Frank hotly. "If I had been in your place I should have been glad—"

"So would any chap with any sense!" growled Bob.

"So I owe it to you, Richards?" Beauclerc set his teeth. "It is not enough for me to be poor, dependent on my people—I am to be sent hither and thither at a stranger's word, like a pariah dog!"

"I—I thought we might be friends," faltered Frank, taken aback and dismayed. "I—I thought—"

Beauclerc made a scornful gesture.

"You were mistaken! I shall make no friends here. I have come against my will, and all I ask of you is to let me alone."

"Confound your cheek!" broke out Bob Lawless angrily. "You'll be let alone enough! I can assure you of that."

"Please yourself, Beauclerc," said Frank Richards, his own anger rising. "I think you are a pig-headed fool, and it may do you good to be told so. That's plain English, at any rate!"

(Continued on page 36.)

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WHILE THE SCHOOL-SHIP SLEEPS, JACK DRAKE, HIS NEW RESOLUTIONS
TO MAKE GOOD FORGOTTEN, BREAKS BOUNDS FOR—



Drake swung himself down the rope from the window and Daubeny followed him. Below, the boatman was waiting with the boat, to convey the breakers of bounds to the Lobster Pot.

THE FINAL FLUTTER!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

"I say, there might be a remittance in it. Your mater used to send you whacking remittances last term. Open it, old chap. I'll lend you a pen-knife."

"Give it to me."

Drake's expression changed a little as he took the letter. The talk in Study No. 8 had been running on "gee-gees"—as talk generally did when Daubeny of the Shell was present. But the sight of his mother's handwriting on the envelope brought other thoughts into Drake's mind.

It was a week since St. Winifred's fellows had gathered for the new term on board the Benbow, and during the time Drake had not heard from his people. And somehow or other the new resolutions he had made on leaving home had been growing dim in his mind.

It was not exactly Drake's fault. Among his old associates, he had insensibly dropped into the old ways. More than once he had made an

The Letter From Home!

"LETTER for you, Drake, old chap!" Tuckey Toodles came into Study No. 8 in the Fourth Form quarters on the old Benbow, with a letter in his hand.

There were three fellows in the study—Drake of the Fourth, and Daubeny and Egan of the Shell. Drake was seated on a corner of the table, and the two Shell fellows were lounging elegantly by the window, beneath which ran the ripping waters of the Chadway.

Drake glanced impatiently at his studymate as he came in.

"Bother!" he answered.

"I say, the post's in, and I've brought you your letter, dear old boy," said Toodles, in an injured tone. "Is that your way of thanking a chap?"

"Chuck it on the table!"

"And cut off, Toodles," said Daubeny of the Shell. "We're talkin', and you're interruptin'."

Tuckey Toodles gave a sniff.

"Talking about the chances of Brown Boy for the race on Saturday, I suppose?" he remarked.

"You want a prefect to come along and hear you."

"Drake, old man," yawned Daubeny. "Do you mind if I pitch your studymate out on his neck?"

"Not at all."

"Oh, I say!" ejaculated Toodles, backing away to the door. "Look here, Drake, I've brought you a letter—"

"Put it on the table, then, and clear."

"But aren't you going to open it?" asked Tuckey anxiously. "It's from home, you know."

"How do you know, you grubby bounder?"

"Oh, I know your mater's fist," said Tuckey.

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Hopelessly in debt to the "Bucks" of the Benbow, Jack Drake gambles for the last time to retrieve his losses. If he should fail . . . Drake dare not think of it!

effort to settle down to work, but always something had turned up to make it unavailing.

Tuckey Toodles, keeping one eye warily on Vernon Daubeny, watched Drake eagerly with the other, as he sat turning the letter over in his hands, with the colour deepening in his cheeks.

"Open your letter, old scout," said Daub. "We'll excuse you. If you've got a fiver there it will come in useful."

"I haven't!" muttered Drake.

He opened the letter slowly and took out the enclosure. He glanced over it with a gloomy brow.

Tuckey Toodles watched him anxiously. Tuckey was in a chronic state of hard-up, and he had found his studymate generous in money matters the term before. And he did not know that circumstances had changed in Drake's home.

But the expression on Jack Drake's face told plainly enough that whatever there was in the letter, it was not a remittance.

Tuckey gave a discontented grunt. He had fagged down to the study with that letter, and

evidently he had fagged for nothing. Tuckey felt that he had been "done."

"You used to have jolly good tips last term," he said.

"Oh, dry up!"

"Not even a postal order?" asked Tuckey.

"No, you grubby ass!"

"Oh, rats!"

Tuckey Toodles grunted again and rolled out of the study. His interest in the letter ceased suddenly and completely.

Daubeny and Egan looked rather curiously at Drake's gloomy face as he read the letter.

"Lectures?" asked Daubeny.

"No."

"You don't look very bucked."

"I'm not feeling bucked," grunted Drake.

There was a paragraph in the letter that still seemed before his eyes as he crumpled the sheet in his hand.

"Now that our circumstances are so changed, my dear boy, you can help your father, you can help me, by doing your best to win the scholarship. But you must not work too hard. I know you will keep the promise you made to me; but even to help your parents you must not overwork—you must not neglect your health."

Drake smiled bitterly. He had not run the risk of overwork, so far.

"Well, if you've finished your letter——" yawned Daubeny.

"I've finished it."

"What about the little run we were planning for to-night?" asked the Shell fellow. "You'll come along to my study half an hour after lights out, and we shall be there. The boat will be waiting under the study window, and all we've got to do is to drop into it——"

"I'm not coming——"

"Eh? You'd as good as arranged it when that fat idiot came in!" exclaimed Daubeny.

"I can't come."

"Why not?" asked Daubeny warmly.

"It's not good enough. Look here, I'm going to work."

"Oh, give us a rest on that, old top! You gave us that, and plenty of it, when we came back for the new term," said Daubeny impatiently. "All very well for a stunt, but it's become a bore now, old chap."

"I mean it."

"Bow-wow! By the way, Drake, if you haven't had a remittance——"

"I haven't."

"Well, I shouldn't worry you for worlds, but you know there's a little account outstanding—a few quids, you know. It would come in useful to-night, at the Lobster Pot."

Drake coloured scarlet.

"I can't settle to-day," he muttered.

"Well, I won't worry you, of course—between pals, it's all right. But why don't you ask your people for some tin?"

"It—it wouldn't be any good."

"But a chap must have money," said Daubeny, with a stare. "Your pater's rolling in it, and he can't want to keep you short."

Drake breathed hard. It was upon his lips to tell Vernon Daubeny the truth—that his father was a ruined man, that the horn of plenty had ceased to flow. But the words died on his lips. The confession was too bitter, too humiliating, to the fellow who had always held his own in the most expensive set in the school.

It must come out sooner or later, he knew that.

The fellows would have to know. Rodney, the new fellow, knew already, though he could be relied upon to keep the secret. But—the later the better.

"I think I see," rattled on Daubeny. "The Roman parent—what? Stern old Johnny cuttin' off supplies to bring the merry prodigal son to reason. Dash it all, Drake, couldn't you put in a little repentance and soften the paternal heart? Write a really good letter home. I'll help you."

Drake shook his head impatiently.

"It's no good, I tell you," he muttered.

"Well, if supplies have run out for the present, all the more reason why you should make a bet on Brown Boy, if you can," said Daubeny. "Gentleman Smith, at the Lobster Pot, is your man."

"I've not got the cash to put up, for one thing!" grunted Drake.

"You've got pals here," answered Daubeny. "I could stand a fiver to a pal in distress. So could Egan."

"Oh, quite!" assented Egan, with a nod.

"I'm not going to start borrowing money, thanks all the same."

"What rot! You used to borrow last term."

"I could square then."

"You can square now—when the Roman parent comes round. And he'll come round—I know these Roman parents! I've been there," said Daubeny sapiently.

Drake made no reply to that.

"Anyhow, you'll come to-night, Drake?"

"No!"

"I'll ask you again after tea," smiled Daubeny, and he strolled out of the study with Egan.

Drake kicked the door shut after them. Then he sat down to read his mother's letter again; to read it with shame in his heart and new resolutions forming in his mind, resolutions which he meant to keep—this time.

To Go or Not!

"TEN to one against!"

Dick Rodney, the new boy in the Fourth Form, gave a start, and glanced round as the muttered words reached his ears. Low as the tones were, he recognised Jack Drake's voice.

Rodney was sitting on a camp-stool under the shadow of the poop of the old warship, with an open book on his knee. He was "sapping," as Daubeny & Co. would have called it. He was polishing his Latin. Rodney did not make any secret of the fact that he had come to St. Winifred's to work, and he did what he had come for.

Jack Drake had observed him more than once, with rather envious looks. He had made friends with Rodney coming down to the school, and they had agreed to work together, and if that agreement was not kept it was not Rodney's fault.

But Drake did not observe the new junior at the present moment. He was standing with his hands in his pockets, looking away over the sports ground on the bank. The muttered words fell from his lips involuntarily.

"Ten to one against!"

Dick Rodney coughed loudly. He did not want to overhear any of Drake's self-communings. Drake made a quick movement and looked around, flushing as he saw Rodney near him. He knew at once that Rodney must have heard him.

Rodney gave him a pleasant nod.

"Oh, you're there!" said Drake.

"Here I am," answered the sailor's son cheerfully.

"Swotting, as usual?" asked Drake, with a touch of scorn.

"Exactly!"

"You stick to work."

"Mr. Packe is giving me some extra toot," explained Rodney good-temperedly. "I'm trying to make it worth his while. He's a good sort."

"He made me that offer," remarked Drake. "I was going to, but—dash it all, Rodney, how do you stick to it? I came back to St. Winny's meaning to work like thunder. But I haven't."

"You're down for the Foundation, though," said Rodney. "You'll have to swot a bit if you're going in for the exam."

"Yes, I—I'm going to. But—" Drake glanced round. There was no one quite within hearing. "I suppose you've never kicked over the traces, Rodney—a quiet old foggy like you. You wouldn't understand a fellow's position. I told you in the train—about my father coming a cropper—"

"I've never mentioned it."

"I know you haven't. That's all right. I came down with the very best intentions in the world," Drake smiled bitterly. "And the very first night I got into the old game—banker in Daub's diggings. I owe ten quid."

"My hat!"

"Of course, I've got to pay somehow. The fellows don't know I'm hard-up. It seems almost like deceiving them, somehow, but—but—"

Drake paused. "Of course, I shall pay; only I don't quite see how at the present moment. I'm not going to ask my people for money. I can't. But I've got a chance—"

"Ten to one against?" said Rodney, with a faint smile.

"Oh, you heard me? Well, I was going to chuck up all that rot—make a clean sweep, you know. But—but Brown Boy runs on Saturday, and Daub's had word that it's a regular cert, and—gentleman Smith is willing to lay ten to one against him."

"Who on earth is Gentleman Smith?"

"A racing chap. He hangs out at the Lobster Pot, up the Chadway, you know; he's often there. Some of the fellows go up to play billiards with him. He does a good bit in the bookmaking line. It really seems too good a chance to throw away, doesn't it? It would see me clear."

Drake fixed his eyes on Rodney's face anxiously. Rodney's look was almost compassionate. Strong as his own character was, he could understand weakness in others. The resolution in Drake's handsome face touched him.

"My dear chap," he said quietly, "you told me this, I suppose, because you'd like to hear my opinion?"

"Well, yes."

"Is this man Smith very poor?"

"No fear! I believe he's rather prosperous."

"Looks as if he's rather in the habit of winning his bets, then?"

"I—I suppose so."

"He couldn't very well live on losses, could he?" said Rodney, in a musing tone.

"N-no."

"Then if he's willing to lay ten to one against a certain horse, doesn't it look as if he's pretty certain that the horse will lose? And he knows the business, if he lives on it."

Drake's brow puckered with a worried expression.

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"There's a lot of chances," he said. "Even the keenest bookies get caught sometimes. Daub's had the tip from a man who knows the trainer. Brown Boy is going to be a surprise-packet on Saturday."

"For those who back him, I should say."

"Well, of course, you wouldn't know anything about such things," remarked Drake.

Rodney smiled. If Drake wanted an opinion, the opinion he wanted was evidently the one in agreement with his own.

He was about to speak again when Drake gave him a short nod, and walked away along the main deck of the Benbow. Rodney dropped his eyes to his book again. He liked Drake, in spite of the latter's irresolute weakness—perhaps, indeed, all the more because of it. He would gladly have stood by him and helped him, but it was impossible to help a fellow who would not help himself.

Drake moved along slowly forward to the Shell quarters. Daubeny & Co. were chatting round the doorway of their study, and they greeted him with nods and smiles.

"You're comin' to-night?" murmured Daubeny. "All arrangements made, old top! The Lobster Pot boat will be under my window at half-past ten."

"I've been thinking," said Drake. "Look here, you said it's a dead cert about Brown Boy?"

"Absolutely a sure thing," answered Daubeny confidently. "I'm puttin' every red cent on him."

"It's queer that Smith is willing to offer the odds."

"Simple enough. He doesn't know Brown Boy's form. It's a stable secret, and it's been kept deadly dark. If I hadn't had the tip straight from a man who knows the trainer, I wouldn't touch Brown Boy with a barge-pole."

"Well, I'll come," said Drake.

"Good man!" said Daubeny approvingly. "Dash it all, it wouldn't be like old times without you."

Drake nodded, and walked away to his own quarters. His conscience was troubling him a little.

His mother's letter was in his pocket; and his newly formed resolutions were still strong within him. He meant to work—to do his duty! This was to be the final flutter. His winnings would see him clear; and then he would bid a long farewell to Daubeny & Co.'s reckless proceedings—he would keep friendly with them, but he would never again enter into the worrying and troublesome business of "gee-gees." If he lost—but he would not lose. It was a sure snip; and it was to be the very last time.

Still his conscience was not at ease.

He sat down at his study table and began to work over his books. It was a salve to his conscience to begin working with a view to the scholarship examination—when he was "sapping" the letter in his pocket seemed less of a reproach to him.

But he could not fix his mind upon his occupation.

In spite of himself, his thoughts wandered to Saturday's race—to Brown Boy, the rank outsider who was to romp home, to the astonishment and dismay of the professionals, and enrich the lucky few who knew that precious stable secret.

He rose at last and walked about the study, and stared from the window at the river.

It was a relief to him when Tuckey Toodles came into the study for prep. Tuckey was in a grumbling mood.

"Supper in the study to-night, old chap?" he asked.

"Oh, rats!" was Drake's reply.

Tuckey grunted.

"We haven't had supper in the study since we came back," he said. "I say, you're growing jolly mean, Drake."

"Br-r-r!"

"You know I'd stand supper if I wasn't so hard-up," said Tuckey warmly. "I say, you're not hard-up, are you?"

"Yes," growled Drake.

"You shouldn't back horses, old top!" said Tuckey. "I've warned you lots of times."

"Oh, shut up!"

Tuckey sniffed, and settled down to prep. Drake followed his example; but his prep was not well done that evening, and it was pretty certain not to satisfy Mr. Packe in the morning. But Drake could not help it. His thoughts were elsewhere, and try as he would, he could not fix them upon his work. But he told himself, hopefully, that when that "final flutter" was once over, he would work—he would have a mind free from care, then, and he could settle down to it. For the present it had to "go."

Breaking Bounds!

DICK RODNEY awoke suddenly. The Fourth Form of St. Winifred's slept in hammocks slung under the main deck; and after lights out it was very dark in the 'tween decks. Something had bumped on Rodney's hammock and awakened him.

"Hallo! What the dickens—" he murmured, peering into the gloom.

"Sorry I bumped into you. Don't make a row," came Drake's hurried whisper from the darkness.

Rodney could hear his Form-fellow dressing quickly. His face was a little set in expression as he peered down in the gloom.

"You're not going out, Drake?" he whispered. "Don't ask questions."

Drake moved away quietly among the hammocks. He was fully dressed, and carried a pair of shoes in his hand. It was not the first time the reckless lad had stolen out of the sleeping-quarters after lights out, though it was the first time that term.

At the ladder leading to the main deck, Drake stopped and put on his shoes. Then he crept up, and made his way to the Shell studies. All was dark and silent on board the old Benbow; though there were gleams of light on the river from some of the windows aft. The studies were dark and deserted; but as Drake came into the passage, there was a whisper in the gloom.

"All serene!"

"That you, Daub?"

"Waitin' for you, old top."

Daubeny took hold of Drake's sleeve and guided him into the study. Egan and Torrence became dimly visible to Drake's eyes there, standing by the window, which was open. There was a rope tied to the table, and it dangled from the window to the river below.

Drake looked out. Below, on the swirling water, he could dimly make out the shape of a boat, with a man at the oars.

"All ready," whispered Egan.

Torrence swung himself out and down the rope, and dropped lightly into the boat that swayed on the calm river. Egan followed him.

Drake was about to follow, when Daubeny

uttered a low, suppressed exclamation of alarm. There was a soft footfall outside the study.

"What—what—"

Drake's heart leaped, and a feeling almost of sickness came over him.

The footfall had stopped outside the study, a master—or a prefect—and who else could it be, at that hour? To be discovered breaking bounds at night—

A low voice broke the frozen silence.

"Are you here, Drake?"

Drake gasped with relief. It was Dick Rodney's voice.

"Y-y-you!" he stammered.

"That confounded Fourth Form cad!" muttered Daubeny, his terror changing to rage. "You sneakin' cad, what are you doin' here?"

Rodney, in his pyjamas, loomed up dimly.

"I came after Drake," he said quietly. "I thought I should find him here."

"What the thunder do you want, then?" muttered Drake.

"Only a word or two with you," said Rodney quietly. "You're going out—breaking bounds at this hour. Drake, old chap, I've come to ask you not to play the goat."

"You cheeky cad!" muttered Daubeny. "I—I'd smash you if it wasn't for kickin' up a shindy and wakin' the prefects."

"You've tried smashing me before," answered Rodney contemptuously. "You didn't find it pay, Daubeny. Try it again if you like."

"Look here, Rodney—" muttered Drake.

"Let that rotter go if he chooses," said Rodney. "It's good enough for him; it's not good enough for you. Come back to your hammock like a sensible chap."

"You don't understand, Rodney," muttered Drake. "I'm not exactly playing the giddy goat; I've really got to go. Get back to bed like a good fellow and leave me alone."

"You won't come back?"

"No."

Drake swung himself from the window, to end the conversation. Daubeny of the Shell followed him, leaving Rodney standing alone in the cabin. The new junior looked down after them, with a rather grim face.

The four St. Winny's fellows were in the boat, and the boatman had silently pushed off from the hull of the Benbow. In the deep shadows the boat glided up the Chadway, the oars making scarcely a sound.

Rodney drew a deep breath as the breakers of bounds disappeared into the night. And with a clouded face he returned to his hammock.

Jack Drake sat silently in the stern of the

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boat, with a grim frown on his face. Between dark, silent woods the boat pulled on up the stream, and the black outline of the Benbow faded astern.

"Interferin' cad!" muttered Daubeny, referring to Dick Rodney. "He must have woken up when you got out, Drake."

"I think I woke him."

"That cheeky cad wants a lesson," said Torrence. "Look here, what price giving him a good ragging to-morrow?"

"Nothing of the sort," said Jack Drake curtly. "Let Rodney alone. He's a good chap, and he means well."

"A meddlin' cad, you mean," said Daubeny savagely.

"Let him alone!" growled Drake. "He was giving me jolly good advice, and I was a fool not to take it. Let him alone."

Vernon Daubeny's eyes glistened; but he said no more just then. The boat pulled on up the Chadway in silence.

A Merry Evening!

GOOD-EVENING, young gents!" Gentleman Smith greeted his young friends from St. Winifred's very cheerily. The boat had landed them at the foot of the garden, and the breakers of bounds had skulked through the shadowy trees to the veranda that ran round three sides of the Lobster Pot. Mr. Smith's private sitting-room opened on that veranda, and the bookmaker was standing at the open door to welcome them in.

Gentleman Smith eyed them rather oddly as they came in. The sharper made a good thing gener-

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ally out of the reckless "Bucks" of St. Winifred's, and he was always glad to see them. Daubeny & Co. were under the impression that they were "seeing life" in these little escapades. Mr. Smith was under the impression that they were making life easier for him, and helping to save him from the unpleasant necessity of doing any work. It was Mr. Smith's impression that was well-founded.

Mr. Smith passed round a box of cigarettes, and the Bucks were soon smoking away cheerily, and chatting on the subject of Saturday's race. Jack Drake was silent, but he listened. Mr. Smith was a gentleman with many strings to his bow—and he did a little billiard-sharpening, a little bookmaking, and a little card-sharpening—all was grist that came to his mill. He seemed quite willing to book the bets Daubeny & Co. were eager to make, in blissful unconsciousness of the tremendous possibilities of Brown Boy.

"Ten to one against is the price," said Mr. Smith, "but it's only fair to tell you that that 'orse is a pretty fair outsider."

Daubeny smiled.

"I fancy him," he answered.

"I'm your man, sir," answered Mr. Smith. "I don't know much about the 'orse, as a matter of fact; nobody seems to know much about him. Might turn out to be a dark 'orse, and romp 'ome," added Mr. Smith jocularly.

"Such things have happened," said Daubeny.

"Right you are, sir—and so they might agin," agreed Mr. Smith. "I'm taking the risk."

"Fivers all round," said Daubeny, glancing at his companions.

"I'm on," said Torrence.

"Oh, quite!" chimed in Egan.

"Drake, old man—"

Drake lifted his gloomy face.

"You'll have to leave me out," he said. "I'm stony!"

"Bless your heart, sir, that doesn't make any difference," said Gentleman Smith heartily. "I know you, Master Drake, and you knows me. You give me a bit of writing, and it comes to the same thing."

Drake hesitated.

Mr. Smith was not an over-trustful gentleman, as a rule; but he had known Drake as a wealthy fellow—as wealthy as Daubeny himself. More than once already he had had a "bit of writing" from Drake, and it had always been redeemed.

Circumstances were changed now; but Mr. Smith was not aware of it. Drake hesitated. It was a sure thing; Daubeny said it was, and he had proved his own faith by laying a fiver on his "dead cert." And if it was a sure thing, the bit of writing was only a matter of form. But if— if there was bad luck after all, he could pay the bookmaker somehow—he was not a swindler. It would be difficult, but he could do it somehow. But there could be no bad luck. Brown Boy was going to win on Saturday.

"Say the word, sir," said Mr. Smith, with his little book and a stump of pencil in his fat fingers. "Done!" said Drake suddenly.

And the bet was entered.

"There's a fountain-pen, sir—you just jot down that if Brown Boy don't win on Saturday, you owe me five pounds, sir," said Gentleman Smith. "You'll see me on Saturday evening to settle?"

Drake nodded.

Mr. Smith tucked the "bit of writing" carelessly into a waistcoat pocket, and lighted a cigar.

"The evening's young yet," he remarked.

"What price a round or two of poker afore we say good-night?"

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OVERSEAS READERS. You pals who are far away—in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best "scores" from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you, as well, of course!

"Rippin'!" said Daubeny. Jack Drake rose. "I'll take a turn in the garden and wait for you," he said. "I can't play—I'm stony." "Oh, rot!" said Egan. "We'll stand you a loan." "Sit down, Drake," said Daubeny. "Don't be crabby. We're all stony at times—and they're the times for pals to stand by one another. Borrow a couple of quid of me and get goin'." "I—I'd rather not."

"Rot!" Daubeny shoved a couple of currency notes into the Fourth Former's hand, and Drake found himself sitting at the card table with his friends.

After all, why not, he reflected? In for a penny, in for a pound. He threw other considerations to the winds, and plunged into the poker game. And his face flushed and his eyes glistened when he found himself the winner of a "pot" that contained seven or eight pounds.

He played on. But fortune did not smile on him for long.

Gentleman Smith lost several times, and jovially smiled over his losses. But later—Gentleman Smith being dealer—each of his adversaries found himself in possession of a very strong hand, and plunged on it. And the pot was full of silver and currency notes. Drake was the first to pass out, beaten, when his last coin was in the pot. Egan followed suit, and then Torrence, beaten to the wide. The game remained between Vernon Daubeny and Gentleman Smith.

Daubeny's face was flushed and eager—Mr. Smith seemed to hesitate. The more he hesitated, the more Daubeny was determined to press on, and make a clean sweep of it. It was not till the Buck of St. Winifred's had dropped his last currency note into the pot that he called for a show of cards, and turned up four aces and a king.

Gentleman Smith smiled and showed a straight flush—the only hand that could have beaten Daubeny's. The latter's face was a study as the

sharper reached out to the pot and collected his extensive winnings. Mr. Smith's skill as a dealer had stood him in good stead.

"Oh gad!" gasped Daubeny. He rose rather unsteadily to his feet. "Not going on?" smiled Mr. Smith. "Another time—what? Give you revenge any time, gentlemen. Must you go? Well, good-night!"

It was a subdued and chastened band of Bucks that skulked through the shadowy garden of the Lobster Pot towards the river. They had paid rather high for their evening's entertainment.

Daubeny & Co. stumbled into the boat. The boatman came down from the inn as Daubeny whistled shrilly and angrily, and the boat pushed off with its crew of dispirited sporting men.

"What awful luck!" groaned Egan. "Broke to the wide."

Daubeny muttered something. "Same here! It was Satan's own luck—I thought I had him sure. But luck must change. But—we shall be in a bad box if Brown Boy doesn't pull it off on Saturday."

Drake uttered a sharp exclamation. "Is there any 'if' about it? You said it was a cert."

"Are you going to whine if it isn't?" sneered Daubeny. "Don't give me any of your rot now—I'm not in a mood for it."

Drake did not answer; he sat in stunned silence. If it were not a cert after all—

The boat glided alongside the Benbow, dark and silent in the night. Drake was the first to clamber up the rope. Without staying to exchange a word with his companions he crept away to his quarters. His head was aching, his heart throbbing, as he turned into his hammock. What a fool he had been! He laid his head on the pillow and tried to sleep.

(Next Week: "JACK DRAKE'S DESPAIR!")
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THE SNOB OF CEDAR CREEK!

(Continued from page 29.)

Beaulerc's eyes flashed, and he made a quick step towards Frank Richards. Before Frank could make a movement, Beaulerc's hand had struck him on the cheek.

"Oh!" gasped Frank.

He sprang forward, his eyes blazing, his fists clenched. But Frank Richards suddenly checked himself and lowered his hands. Back into his mind came that scene of the previous day, when he had been sinking under the swirling waters, and a strong hand had dragged him back from death. He drove his hands into his pockets.

"Frank!" shouted Bob in angry indignation.

Frank looked at him quietly.

"He saved my life, Bob. I can't touch him! Come on!"

He walked on towards the school quietly, though his eyes were burning. Bob, with a black brow, went after him.

Vere Beaulerc looked after them, the angry glitter dying out of his eyes, the sullen resentment from his proud face. There was repentance and shame, now, in the handsome face of the remittance man's son, if Frank Richards had looked back. But he did not look back. The school bell had ceased to ring. Beaulerc, with an impatient exclamation, followed the two chums into the schoolhouse.

(Next Week: "LOYAL TO HIS ENEMY!")

THE UNINVITED CARAVANNER!

(Continued from page 22.)

Augustus is caravanning with a party of his schoolboy friends. Perhaps you have met them, general?"

"Perhaps!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"No, I think not, madam. Certainly, this party was not a party of respectable schoolboys. A set of young hooligans, madam!"

"Oh cwumbs!"

"One of them, under the pretence of giving me a glass of lemonade, actually drenched me with soda water."

"How dreadful!"

"Begad! I gave the young rascal some punishment," said General Gummage.

"I am sure he deserved it, general!"

Arthur Augustus' face was a study.

The caravanners looked at him.

"On second thoughts, deah boys," he murmured, "I wathah think we—we had bettah not call on Aunt Matilda, if you don't mind!"

"I think so—rather!" chuckled Tom Merry.

And the caravanners trod softly back to the caravan.

Five minutes later the St. Jim's caravan was rolling on the chalky road to Aylesbury, and Aunt Matilda never knew what a pleasant meeting had nearly taken place in her garden!

THE END.

(Next Week: "RUCTIONS ON THE ROAD!")

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