



A BRAND-NEW ADVENTURE OF  
TOM MERRY & Co. OF ST. JIM'S

# TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE



## Martin Clifford

No.6

BAGGY TRIMBLE'S CRICKET DEBUT  
ROCKS ST. JIM'S WITH LAUGHTER

1/6

# TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE

Martin Clifford



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## **Our Cover Picture**

*(Portrayed by C. H. Chapman—  
the famous Billy Bunter artist).*

The ball came down hot and fast. It crashed into Baggy Trimble's anatomy and onto the wicket. Bails, accompanied by a stump, flew in the air.

"How's that?"

"Ha, Ha, Ha!"

"Oh!" gasped Baggy.

"Wow! I say—Wow!"

"Ha, Ha, Ha!"

He blinked at his wrecked wicket. He blinked at the grinning wicket-keeper. Even Baggy realised that he was out!

# Trouble for Trimble

*by Martin Clifford*

When his handsome box of chocolates was raided and scoffed in his own study, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy saw the handiwork of Baggy Trimble, and he set off after the fat tuck-raider, filled with aristocratic rage

Baggy Trimble was often chased at St. Jim's, with painful results for that fat junior of the Fourth. But this time was different, and many eyebrows were raised when Arthur Augustus returned acclaiming Trimble as a hero, and his life-long friend !

What was behind Trimble's sudden popularity ? And why was this slacker at games suddenly so keen on cricket, and even trying to get into the Junior School eleven ? But the fat and crafty junior's popularity ended when Tom Merry finally learned the truth, and Baggy knew that another opportunity for glory and unlimited tuck was gone, and the future promised only Trouble for Trimble.

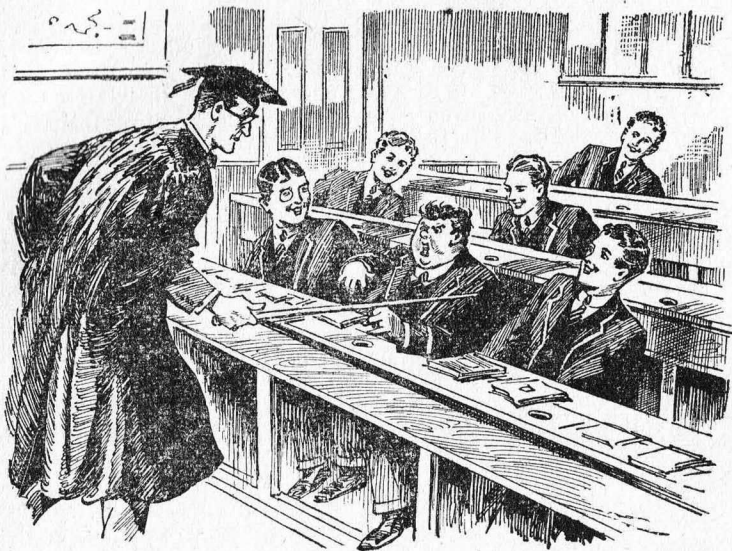


By special arrangement with Frank Richards (Martin Clifford), also creator of Billy Bunter and the Chums of Greyfriars. Other titles in this series are :

TOM MERRY'S SECRET  
TOM MERRY'S RIVAL  
THE MAN FROM THE PAST  
WHO RAGGED RAILTON?  
SKIMPOLE'S SNAPSHOT!

*All characters in this story are imaginary and no reference is intended to any living person. (Copyright 1952.)*

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1

## Beastly for Baggy!

“TRIMBLE!”  
No reply.

Tom Merry, junior captain of the School House at St. Jim's, delivered a kick at the door of No. 2 Study in the Fourth, which hurled it wide open with a crash.

Then he shouted into the study:

“Trimble you fat slacker!”

Still no reply.

Tom Merry stared, or rather glared, into No. 2. He really had no time to waste on Baggy Trimble of the Fourth Form. Games

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

practice on Little Side was scheduled for three: and three had sounded from the old clock-tower. Fellows had to turn up, whether they liked cricket or not. There were few in the School House who did not—but Baggy Trimble was one of the few. And it was the junior captain's duty to round up the slackers.

Trimble had not turned up. He never did turn up if he could help it. His excuses were many and various. On this occasion it did not look as if excuses would avail him, for Tom Merry's face was wrathful, and he had a bat in his hand, which he looked—and felt—very much disposed to handle on the fat and lazy Baggy.

But no Trimble was visible in No. 2 Study.

Tom had looked up and down and round about for the fattest member of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's: and finally had come up to root him out of his study. But no fat form met his gaze in No. 2 in the Fourth.

"The fat tick!" exclaimed Tom. "Where the dickens—!"

He was about to turn away, but on second thoughts, stepped into the study. It occurred to him that Baggy might have heard him coming, and dodged out of sight.

He looked round the study. There was no sign of Baggy Trimble to be seen, at the first glance: neither did there appear to be any likely hide-out in the room. But at the second glance round, the frown on Tom Merry's face was replaced by a grin, as he detected the extremity of a foot protruding from behind the door.

The astute Baggy had backed behind that door as it flew open: and it completely concealed him from sight—with the exception of the toe of a shoe, which Baggy was evidently unaware was still on view.

Tom Merry gazed at that extremity of Baggy Trimble. Then he stepped towards it, lifted his bat, and allowed the business-end to drop—exactly on the portion of Baggy that was in sight.

Thud!

"Yaroooooooh!"

There was a loud yell from behind the door, as the bat dropped on Baggy's foot! It seemed rather to startle him!

A fat figure tottered out, yelling.

"Ow! Wow! Oh, crumbs! Look here, you know—wow!" roared Baggy.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Get a move on, you fat ass!" he rapped. "What were you hiding behind the door for?"

"I—I wasn't!" gasped Baggy. "I—I just stepped there to—"

to pick up a bull's-eye! I—I was just coming down to change. Wow!"

"Come on!" said Tom.

"I—I can't!" gasped Baggy. He tottered to the study armchair, and plumped down in it, the chair creaking loudly, as if in protest against Baggy's extensive weight. He crossed one fat leg over the other, and nursed the toe on which the bat had dropped, his fat face assuming an expression of excruciating anguish.

"My toe's smashed! I—I—I can't walk! I—I shall have to cut games practice this afternoon!"

"I've come up to fetch you, you fat slacker."

"I—I can't come! I—I'd like to!" gasped Baggy. "But—but I couldn't even walk, let alone play cricket—I couldn't even put this foot on the floor! I—I shall have to sit here till it gets better."

"You don't think you could walk?" asked Tom.

"I—I'm sure I couldn't!" groaned Baggy. "The pain in my foot is awful—like burning daggers and red-hot pokers—"

"Worse than the pain of a cricket-bat in your ribs?" asked Tom.

"Eh! I haven't got a cricket bat in my ribs—"

"You're going to have, if you don't get out of that armchair."

"Look here, you know—"

"Jump to it!"

"I tell you I can't!" roared Baggy. "I believe you've fractured the spinal column of my toe with that bat."

"Moving?" asked Tom.

"I tell you I can't—yaroooh!"

Prod!

Once more the business-end of Tom Merry's bat contacted the fat Baggy. This time it prodded in his plump ribs, with quite an emphatic prod.

Baggy had stated that he could not walk. But it was clear that, even if he could not walk, he could jump—for he bounded out of the armchair like an active kangaroo, just in time to escape a second prod. He roared as he bounded.

"Yaroooh! Keep that bat away, will you? Oh, crumbs! Look here. I can't come down to Little Side with this awful pain in my foot—I mean my toe—!"

Prod!

"Whooop!" Baggy dodged round the study table. His damaged foot seemed to serve him quite well, in spite of the burning daggers and red-hot pokers. "Will you keep that bat away, you swob?"



"Not so's you'd notice it," answered Tom, cheerily, and he pursued Baggy round the table, still prodding.

"Oh, crumbs! Oh, crikey! Wow! Stoppit!" yelled Baggy. "I'm coming! "I—I think I—I can walk after all—"

"I think you can!" agreed Tom. "I think you could even run, too! We'll see, anyway." Prod! Prod!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

It transpired that Baggy could run, as well as jump. He flew out of the study at about 60 m.p.h.

Tom Merry, laughing, followed him out.

Baggy Trimble streaked down the passage, and across the study-landing. At the head of the stairs he paused for wind.

But it was a brief pause.

Prod!

"Yoo-whooooop!"

Baggy flew down the stairs. On the middle landing he paused again—but only for a second. A prod in his plump back started him again on his wild career, and he went down the lower flight at frantic speed.

Two Shell fellows, in flannels, were waiting at the foot of the stairs. Manners and Lowther were waiting for Tom Merry to join them. They were expecting Tom—but they were not quite expecting a fat Fourth-Former coming like a bolt from a cross-bow. Baggy did not even see them as he careered, and Manners and Lowther had no time to dodge before he crashed.

"Oh!" gasped Monty Lowther.

"Oooogh!" spluttered Manners.

Lowther reeled to the right, Manners to the left. Between them, Baggy Trimble rolled on the floor, and roared.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Sorry, you fellows! Hurt?"

"Hurt" howled Monty Lowther. "Think a ton of tallow can crash into a fellow without hurting him? Trimble, you mad rhinoceros—"

"Kick him!" gasped Manners.

"I say, 'twasn't my fault," spluttered Baggy, scrambling up. "I didn't saw you—I mean I never see you—that swob Merry was after me—I say—yaroop! Stop kicking me, you swobs! You kick me again, and I'll—yoo-hoop!"

Baggy fled for his fat life.

It was a perspiring and breathless Baggy that turned up on Little Side that afternoon. But he did turn up!

## 2

### Not Funny !

“**H**OWWID !” exclaimed Arthur Augustus D’Arcy.  
“What’s up?” asked Blake.

“Dweadful !”

“What the dickens—?” asked Herries.

“Atwocious !”

“What is he burbling about?” asked Digby.

“Weally, Dig—”

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther did not speak. They gazed at Arthur Augustus, and waited, politely.

Seven fellows had arrived at the door of Study No. 6 in the Fourth. Arthur Augustus D’Arcy had taken hold of the door-handle to turn it and open the door.

Instead of doing so, however, he suddenly snatched his hand away from the door-handle, as if it had been stung by a wasp.

The door remained shut ! Arthur Augustus stood looking at his fingers, with an expression of extreme distaste on his aristocratic face. Then he turned his celebrated eyeglass upon his three chums severely.

“Howwid !” he repeated. “Weally, you fellows, I twust that you are not going to degenewate into sticky ticks like Twimble !”

“Us !” said Blake, staring.

“Yaas, wathah !” said Arthur Augustus, warmly. “This door-handle is sticky, and it has made my fingahs sticky. I shall have to go and wash them befoah we can pwoceed.”

“You silly ass— !” said Blake.

“Weally, Blake—”

"Who made it sticky, if it's sticky?" roared Herries.

"One of you fellows, I pwesume," answered Arthur Augustus.

"I twust that you do not suppose for one moment, Hewwies, that I made it sticky?"

"You cheeky ass—!" said Digby.

"Weally, Dig—"

The four chums of Study No. 6 were very chummy. But at the moment, the looks that Blake and Herries and Dig bestowed on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were decidedly unchummy. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther smiled.

Arthur Augustus gave them an apologetic glance.

"Pway wait a few minutes, you fellows, while I go and wash my fingahs," he said. "They are vevy sticky fwom that beastly door-handle." And Arthur Augustus walked up the passage to the sink at the end.

Jack Blake scanned the door-handle. Undoubtedly, it was sticky. Evidently, it had last been turned by some fellow whose fingers were very sticky indeed. But neither Blake nor Herries nor Dig was disposed to admit that he was the sticky offender.

"The silly ass!" growled Blake. "I expect he's been scoffing some of the chocs, and made his own fingers sticky! Come in, you chaps."

Blake rubbed the door-handle with his handkerchief. Then he turned it and threw open the door.

Six fellows went into the study. Arthur Augustus was busy up the passage, restoring his noble fingers to their accustomed spotless state.

On the study table stood a large cardboard box with a pictured lid. That was, in fact, the cause of the gathering in the study. That large and handsome box of chocolate creams had arrived for Arthur Augustus that day: and his friends had been invited to lend their aid in disposing of its contents—which they were quite willing to do.

The box had been tied by a ribbon. But the ribbon was untied, and lay beside it on the table. Evidently the box had been opened.

"The silly ass!" repeated Blake. "You can see he's been at the chocs! Nobody's touched that box excepting Gussy! So whose fingers were sticky?"

"Gussy's!" grunted Herries.

"That fathead's!" agreed Dig.

"Are we going to wait for Gussy?" asked Tom Merry, laughing. Snort, from Blake.

"Not on your life!" he answered. "We've come up here to

scoff chocs, and we're going to scoff chocs. If Gussy's too jolly long washing his precious fingers, there won't be any left for him."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Go ahead!" said Manners. "Looks like lots!"

"Well, there's plenty to go round, from the size of the box," said Blake. "Gussy must have been at them, as it's opened, but I expect he's left plenty. Here you are, old things."

Blake lifted the lid off the chocolate-box. Then he stared into it. Quite an extraordinary expression came over his face. He stared into that chocolate-box as if he could hardly believe his eyes.

"Oh, crumbs!" he ejaculated.

"What—?" began Tom Merry.

"Look!" roared Blake. "Why, the silly ass! Pulling our leg all the time! He's scoffed the lot, and left us an empty box!"

"Oh, scissors!"

"The ass!"

"The goat!"

"The fathead!"

Six fellows stared into an empty chocolate-box. Not a single chocolate remained in it. There were some sticky smears, but nothing else to tell that that large and handsome box had once been crammed with chocolate-creams.

Tom Merry whistled.

"If that's Gussy's idea of a joke—!" he said.

"What a brain!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Silly ass!" said Manners, shrugging his shoulders.

Jack Blake breathed hard. Herries and Dig glared at the empty box. So far as they could see, this was misdirected humour on the part of their noble study-mate! He had asked six fellows to share the box of chocolates—and not a single choc remained in it to be shared! Gussy, it appeared, was developing a gift for practical joking!

"The goat!" said Blake. "The ass! Asking half-a-dozen fellows to whack out his chocs, and then scoffing the lot and leaving us an empty box! Well, if Gussy's so fond of jokes, we'll give him one to amuse him—we'll crown him with this box when he comes back—"

"Good egg!" said Dig.

Tom Merry laughed.

"I suppose we needn't stay to thank Gussy for this feast of the Barmecides," he remarked. "We'll push off. Cheerio, you men."



And the Terrible Three left the study: surprised, but scarcely amused, by what appeared to be an extraordinary practical joke on the part of the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Blake and Herries and Dig waited. Blake picked up the chocolate-box from the table, ready for use. In a few minutes, there were footsteps in the passage, and Arthur Augustus's eye-glass gleamed in. He followed it into the study, with a cheery smile on his face.

"Bai Jove! Where are Tom Mewwy and Mannahs and Low-that?" he asked. "Haven't they stayed for the chocs?"

"You howling ass—!" hooted Blake.

"What—?"

"You burbling fathead—!" snorted Herries.

"Bai Jove!"

"You blithering cuckoo!" yapped Dig.

"Weally, you fellows—"

Arthur Augustus stared at his study-mates, apparently in great surprise. He was still more surprised when Herries and Dig grasped him by the arms and Blake jammed the chocolate-box over his aristocratic head. It was a large box, but not quite large enough to be used as a hat. It burst as Blake crammed it on.

"Yawooh!" spluttered Arthur Augustus, struggling wildly in the grasp of his chums. "What the dooce—have you fellows gone mad—keep that box away, Blake, you wottah—it is all sticky—you will make my hair sticky—oh, cwumbs! Oh, cwikey! Oh, scissors! Gwoooogh! Have you all thwee gone pottay?"

"There!" gasped Blake. "Now bump him!"

"You uttah wuffians—yawooooh!"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus sat down, suddenly and hard, on the study carpet. Quite a cloud of dust rose from it as he sat. He sat and spluttered.

"Oh, cwikey! Oh, cwumbs! Are you fellows off your chumps?" he gurgled. "Whatevah is the mattah with you?"

"Next time you're going to be funny, just remember that other fellows can be funny, too," said Blake, with a snort.

"Gwoooooogh!"

"Practical jokes ain't in your line, Gussy," said Digby.

"Oooooogh!"

"Asking fellows up to the study to whack out an empty box!" hooted Herries.

TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE !

"Gurrrggh! I—I—I nevah—"

"Not a single choc in the box! And asking those Shell fellows, too!" snorted Blake. "If you think it's funny—"

"But—I—I nevah—I—I—I—!" spluttered Arthur Augustus.

"Oh rats!"

Blake and Herries and Dig tramped out of the study, and Blake banged the door as they went. Arthur Augustus was left sitting on the carpet, gasping for breath, the most astonished and bewildered fellow in the School House, or in all St. Jim's.

### 3

## Where is Trimble?

“TWIMBLE, you wottah!”  
Bang!

The door of No. 2 Study in the Fourth flew open, for the second time that afternoon, under the propulsion of a hefty kick.

Two or three hours ago, Tom Merry had kicked the door open, in search of Baggy Trimble for games practice. But it was not Tom Merry this time. This time it was Arthur Augustus D’Arcy of the Fourth Form. It seemed that he also wanted Trimble, though not for games.

Two fellows were in the study—Kit Wildrake and Percy Mellish. They shared No. 2 with Baggy Trimble, though that fat ornament of the Fourth Form was not present at the moment. And Wildrake and Mellish fairly bounded, as the door crashed open, and an aristocratic face, generally placid, but now red with wrath, stared in.

“What the dickens—!” exclaimed Mellish.

“Say, is that the way the British nobility come into a study, D’Arcy?” drawled Wildrake. “I guess you sorter forgotten your manners, feller.”

It was really surprising, in Arthur Augustus D’Arcy. Always, or almost always, he cultivated the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. It was indeed astonishing for him to kick open a study door. Probably it was the first time it had happened since St. Jim’s had been honoured by his noble presence. Obviously, the swell of St. Jim’s was very much excited.

“Is Twimble heah?” he gasped.

“I guess you’d see he wasn’t if you gave the study the once-over,” said the Canadian junior. “Or can’t you see with that pane in your eye?”

“Weally, Wildwake—”

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"Look here, what the thump do you mean, D'Arcy?" exclaimed Mellish. "Think you can kick a fellow's door open—?"

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus strove to control his wrath. "I am sowwy—I forgot for the moment that there were othah fellows in this study as well as that fat wottah Twimble. I wegwet vevy much that I kicked the door open."

"Well, shut it again, and keep on the other side of it," said Mellish.

"Guess again," said Wildrake. "D'Arcy's welcome in this study, even if he does arrive like a bull buffalo on the rampage. Mosey in, D'Arcy, if you like."

"I am lookin' for Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, breathing hard. "I am goin' to give him a feahful thwashin'. Pway tell me where he is."

Wildrake grinned.

"What's Baggy been up to?" he asked. "Bagging your tuck?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, keep cool! Baggy's bagged tuck up and down the studies more times than a guy could count, and it's nothing new."

"That is not all, Wildwake! You see, I had a box of chocolates in my study, and I asked half-a-dozen fellows to come up and whack it out. But the door-handle was sticky, and I had to go and wash my fingahs aftah touchin' it—"

"A rub on a hanky wouldn't do for you, would it?" jeered Mellish.

"Certainly not, Mellish! Well, while I was washin' my fingahs at the end of the passage, my fwiends went into the study, and when I came in a few minutes latah, Blake and Hewwies and Dig cut up vevy wusty, because there were no chocs in the box, and they thought it was a pwactical joke—pullin' their leg, you know, askin' them to come up for an empty box—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not a laughin' mattah," exclaimed Arthur Augustus, hotly. "Undah that widiculous misappwehension, Blake and Hewwies and Dig bumped me on the floor—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Wildrake and Mellish.

"Oh, stop that cacklin'," hooted Arthur Augustus. "What is there to cackle at, I would like to know? Blake jammed the chocolate box on my head, and it was sticky, and made my hair sticky—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you cacklin' asses—"

"You shouldn't play these practical jokes on your pals," chuckled Wildrake.



## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE !

"It was not a pwactical joke," howled Arthur Augustus. "I left that box full of chocolates, and somebody must have gone into the study and wolfed them, befoah I came up with my fwriends."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wildrake. "If that's so, I guess I could put my finger on the nigger in the woodpile."

"That wottah Twimble!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "You see, aftah I wecovahed my bweath, and thought it ovah, I wemembahed the door-handle bein' sticky—and of course his howwid fingahs would be sticky aftah gwabbin' all those chocs. Twimble's fingahs are always sticky after eatin' stickahs! So it was Twimble, and I am goin' to give him a feahful thwashin'."

Wildrake and Mellish chuckled. They had no more doubt than Arthur Augustus that the contents of the chocolate-box had left Study No. 6 parked inside Baggy Trimble. The clue of the sticky door-handle undoubtedly pointed to Baggy, who was always more or less sticky: it did not need a Sherlock Holmes to follow up that clue. It was just Gussy's bad luck that his friends had taken it for a practical joke and dealt with him accordingly.

It was no wonder that Arthur Augustus was wrathful. Not only had the chocs vanished—but he had been bumped on the floor of Study No. 6, and a sticky chocolate-box had been rammed down on his head, under that unfortunate misapprehension on the part of his friends. It was all Trimble's fault—and Arthur Augustus, this time, was going to make an example of him. Wildrake and Mellish, apparently, thought it funny: but Arthur Augustus did not share that view in the very least.

"If you fellows wegard this as amusin', I cannot congwatulate you on your sense of humah," he snapped. "That wottah Twimble will not cackle, at any wate, when I wun him down. Where is he?"

"Not here," grinned Wildrake. "I guess he will be giving you a wide berth for a time, Gussy. Haven't seen him since games-practice."

"Do you know where he is, Mellish?"

"Looked in the New House?" asked Mellish.

"Bai Jove! Just where he would dodge, to keep out of sight!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus: and he hurried away.

Wildrake stared at Percy Mellish.

"How do you know Trimble cut across to the New House?" he asked.

"I don't!" answered Mellish, coolly.

"You've sent D'Arcy scuttling over to Ratcliff's House for nothing?"

"Not for nothing!" grinned Mellish. "If he ramps into the New House as he did into this study, I expect Figgins and his gang will scalp him! Do him good."

Kit Wildrake frowned, and stepped to the door to call to Arthur Augustus. But Arthur Augustus was gone.

Absolutely regardless, for once, of Vere-de-Vere repose, the swell of St. Jim's was going down the stairs two at a time. He almost rocketed out of the School House into the quadrangle.

Without a pause, he cut across the quadrangle to the New House. It was but seldom that any fellow was anxious to see Baggy Trimble: but there was no doubt that Arthur Augustus was anxious to see him now. In fact, he was yearning to contact the fat Baggy: and hand over the fearful thrashing that that fat youth undoubtedly deserved. Still forgetful of Vere-de-Vere repose, he bolted breathlessly into the New House—no suspicion occurring to his noble mind that Mellish had pulled his leg.

A sharp voice rapped at him. Mr. Ratcliff, House-master of the New House, came out, as D'Arcy shot in at the doorway of the House.

"D'Arcy!" Ratcliff stopped in the doorway to snap, "D'Arcy!"

"Oh! Yaas, sir!" gasped Arthur Augustus, suddenly halting.

"Why are you racing about like that?" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

"I—I—I——" stammered Arthur Augustus. He realised that he could not explain to Mr. Ratcliff that he had come across to hunt out a School House fellow and thrash him! "I—I—I——"

"Well?" snapped the New House Master.

"I—I—I'm goin' to speak to Figgins, sir," stammered Arthur Augustus. Which was quite true: for certainly he was going to ask Figgins of the Fourth if Baggy was in the House.

"Then kindly proceed in a more civilised manner," snapped Mr. Ratcliff. "This is not the School House, D'Arcy!" Ratcliff walked out, frowning.

"Oh! Yaas, sir!"

Arthur Augustus—at a much more moderate pace—went up the staircase, with burning ears. The door of George Figgins' study was open, and three fellows were visible within—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn. A small suit-case lay on the table, and the three were packing it. Apparently one of the three was booked for a journey.

"Lots of time," Figgins was saying, as Arthur Augustus arrived at the door. "It won't take me more than half-an-hour to walk to Wayland."

"You don't want to lose your train, old chap," said Kerr.

"Bags of time," said Figgins, cheerfully.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE !

"Got something to eat in the train, Figgy?" asked Fatty Wynn. Figgins chuckled.

"Trust you to think of that, Fatty," he said.

"Well, a fellow gets hungry—"

"You do, at any rate," grinned Figgins. "I say, it's jolly for my uncle to get me a week away from school, but I shall miss you fellows, and I shall miss the cricket."

"You'll be back in time for the Grevfriers match," said Kerr.

"You bet!" said Figgins. "And I—hallo, what does that School House image want here?"

The three became aware of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, breathless at the doorway. Figgins and Fatty Wynn stared round at him. Kerr went on methodically packing his friend's bag. Figgy was a fellow to lose trains: but his Scottish chum was a fellow to see that he didn't.

"Have you fellows seen Twimble?" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Lots of times," answered Figgins.

"Too often," said Fatty Wynn.

"Pway don't be silly asses!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, testily. "I am lookin' for Twimble to give him a feahful thwashin', and Mellish says he cut acwoss to this House. Have you seen him, Figgins?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, good! Where did you see him?"

"In form this morning."

"You uttah ass!" roared Arthur Augustus. "I have not come heah to listen to silly jokes! I wegard you as an uttah fathead, Figgins."

"So kind and polite of you to come and tell me so," said Figgins. "What about rolling that School House smudge down the stairs, you fellows? Lots of time before I have to go and catch my train."

"Let's!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Don't waste time," said Kerr. "You haven't finished packing your bag—"

"Oh, bags of time," said Figgins. "Come on! What is a School House tick doing on the respectable side of the quad, I'd like to know. Roll him out."

"Bai Jove! Keep off, you New House wottahs! I did not come heah for a House wag—!"

"Your mistake—you did!" grinned Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus certainly had not come into the New House for a House rag. He had come for Baggy Trimble. But it

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE !

was a House rag, not Trimble, that he found there. Perhaps Figgins, as he was going away from the school for a week, fancied a final rag on the School House enemy before he went! Anyhow, the playful New House Co. collared Arthur Augustus, and rolled him along to the stairs, and rolled him down.

It was a dusty, breathless, and still more intensely exasperated Arthur Augustus that emerged from the New House and tottered away. Keen as he was to find the elusive Baggy, Arthur Augustus was disinclined to look for him in the New House again. But his quest was almost over. A Shell fellow coming along from the gates stopped to stare at him as he stood pumping in breath.

"Anything up, D'Arcy?" asked Talbot.

"Yaas, wathah!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I am lookin' for Twimble! Have you seen Twimble, Talbot?"

"Yes. I passed him in the lane ten minutes ago," answered Talbot. "He was turning into the footpath. What—?"

Arthur Augustus did not stay for the rest. He flew for the gates, leaving Talbot of the Shell staring.



## 4

### Desperate Measures !

“OH, scissors!” ejaculated Baggy Trimble.

Baggy turned a fat head, at the sound of running feet, and jumped.

Up to that moment, Trimble of the Fourth had been sticky, happy, pleased with himself and things generally. He had not enjoyed games practice that afternoon: but he had enjoyed the contents of Arthur Augustus D’Arcy’s big box of chocolate creams.

It was but seldom that such a prize came Baggy’s way, in his fat career as a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. He had left Study No. 6 with his pockets crammed, and had been helping himself from those pockets ever since—and he had never been happier or stickier.

Unaware that he had left a sticky clue on the door-handle of Study No. 6, Baggy hoped that the proprietor of the chocolates would not guess into whose fat inside they had disappeared. But it was only judicious to keep at a safe distance when the chocolates were missed. For which good reason, Baggy had gone for a walk, and did not intend to return till “gates.” If suspected—as Baggy often was when tuck was missing—he was prepared to declare that he had been out of gates ever since games-practice, truth and Trimble being complete strangers. In fact, to elude the kicking he deserved, Baggy was prepared, like Mr. Jagers’ celebrated witness, to “swear, in a general way, anything.”

But, if he heard anything about the missing chocs at all, Baggy had not expected to hear anything till he returned to the school. Now, as he stared back on the leafy footpath in the wood, it dawned on his mind that the hour of reckoning was nearer than he had anticipated.

Baggy had reached the spot where the footpath crossed the

woodland stream, a tributary of the Ryll. At that spot he stopped.

The stream was crossed by a single plank, which served as a bridge. And that plank, to Baggy's eyes, did not look any too safe.

Generally, in the summer, the stream was low between high banks. But there had been heavy rain a few days ago, and the stream was high and full, washing over the banks, and lapping over the plank bridge.

Any other fellow at St. Jim's would have walked across, or run across, without a second thought, careless of a wet and slippery plank. But Baggy Trimble, though a careless fellow in many respects, was remarkably careful where the safety of his fat person was concerned. He did not like the look of that wet plank, and he stopped, deciding not to cross.

He was, after all, a good distance from the school—quite a safe distance. So he stopped, leaned on a tree, and contentedly masticated the last of the chocolates from his pockets, until the running feet on the footpath caused him to stare round in alarm.

From the direction of Rylcombe Lane, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared—in a state of very unusual and rapid locomotion.

Baggy stared at him in great alarm.

Whatever might have awaited him when he returned to the school, he had not expected pursuit. But pursuit was on the track, and was already close at hand. And the expression on Arthur Augustus's face revealed what Baggy had to expect when he arrived.

"Oh, scissors!" repeated Baggy. "That swob D'Arcy—oh, crikey!"

It was too late to dodge out of sight—D'Arcy had seen the fat figure on the bank of the woodland stream. His breathless voice floated to Baggy's alarmed fat ears:

"Twimble, you wottah!"

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Trimble.

Baggy had baulked at the wet and slipperv plank. But he baulked no longer. He shot across the plank to the further side of the stream.

"Stop, you wottah!" panted Arthur Augustus. "Stop, you fat wat! I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin', Twimble! Stop, you wascal!"

That was not likely to make Trimble stop!

He rolled off the plank on the further side. He was about to charge on up the footpath: but he paused. In a foot-race he had absolutely no chance against the slim and active Gussy. In another minute Arthur Augustus would be whizzing across the

plank bridge, hot on the track. Baggy turned round, grasped the end of the plank with both fat hands, and dragged at it.

If that plank was tipped into the water, Baggy was safe, with the stream between him and his pursuer.

He dragged at it frantically. In normal circumstances, moving it would have been beyond the fat Baggy's muscular powers. But the lapping water loosened it, and it shifted in Baggy's grasp.

Dragging frantically at his end, Baggy dragged the other end into the water, so that it slanted down in the stream.

A few moments more, and Arthur Augustus arrived on the margin, to find a yard of water between him and the sloping plank.

He halted.

"Bai Jove! Let go that plank, you fat wottah!" he shouted. "Do you heah me, Twimble? I am goin' to thwash you for waidin' my study! Let go that plank!"

"I—I—I didn't!" gasped Baggy. "I—I haven't been near your study! I never touched your chocs."

"You fat wascal! How did you know there were chocs in the study at all, if you nevah went there?"

"Oh! I—I—I mean—I—I—I haven't had any chocs for—for weeks—"

"You fibbin' wascal, your face is all sticky with them."

"Oh!" gasped Baggy.

Baggy, naturally, could not see his own face. But Arthur Augustus could see it, and could see the smears of chocolate round the extensive mouth. Baggy's fat face was, in fact, smeared and smudged with clues to the missing chocs.

"You howwid wottah!" went on the breathless Gussy. "It is not only the chocs, though you are a pilfewin' little beast, but my fwiends thought I was pullin' their leg with an empty box—"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And they bumped me on the floor of the study, thinkin' it was a pwactical joke on them—"

"He, he, he!"

"Why, you fat wottah, do you think that's funnv?" roared Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove! You will not think it so funny when I give you a feahful thwashin'. Leave go that plank."

Baggy did not leave go the plank. He jerked at it with all his energy. It wobbled in the water. Arthur Augustus was prepared to jump on the sloping plank, and cross, if it remained still. But so long as it was wobbling, it was too risky. He did not want a plunge into deep water, to the ruin of his elegant clobber.

"Will you let that plank alone, Twimble?" he shouted.

"No, I won't!" gasped Baggy.

"I am goin' to cwoss—"

"You'll go in, if you do."

"You howwid wottah—"

"Yah!"

Arthur Augustus breathed wrath. He had run the demnquent down, and a fearful thrashing was the next item on the programme—but for the stream between. Baggy was only about twelve feet away—but he might as well have been twelve miles! So long as he kept that plank wobbling, Baggy felt safe.

But the plank was heavy, and Baggy was no athlete. He paused in his efforts, to take breath.

For the moment the slanting plank was still. Arthur Augustus did not lose that moment. He jumped.

He landed safely on the slanting plank, and started to run along it. With a squeak of terror, Baggy wobbled it again. His idea, so far as he had any idea in his fat head at all, was to make Arthur Augustus stop. But the result was that Arthur Augustus's feet slipped on the wet wood as the plank wobbled under them, and he pitched headlong into the stream.

Splash!

"Oh, crikey!" spluttered Baggy.

And his gooseberry eyes almost popped from his fat face, as he stared at the swirling water closing over the head of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

## 5

### To the Rescue !

**BAGGY TRIMBLE** stood transfixed, with popping eyes.

He stared across the stream with a white face. A gasp of relief escaped him, as a head came up and a hand swept the air. That hand contacted a drooping branch of a willow, and held on.

"Oh!" gasped Baggy.

For one dreadful moment he had feared that Arthur Augustus was swept away, under the rushing water, to be carried out into the wide waters of the Ryll, and helplessly drowned. It was an awful moment for Baggy. But there was Arthur Augustus, his drenched face above water, his hand grasping the sagging branch of the willow that kept him up, only six or seven yards from the slanting plank.

"Oooooooooogh!" came spluttering from Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, crikey!" gurgled Baggy.

"Urrrggh! Help!"

Arthur Augustus got both hands to the willow. But it was a long and slender branch, and it dipped into the water under his weight. His head went under again, and came up again. The current was strong in the overflowing stream, and it tore and dragged at him as he clung.

"Help!" spluttered Arthur Augustus, with a mouth full of water. "Oh, cwumbs! Twimble! Help!"

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Trimble.

He realised that Arthur Augustus could not help himself. His clothes were drenched, his shoes full of water, dragging him down. It was impossible to clamber on the willow branch, which dipped under his weight. To leave go, was to be swept away. Arthur Augustus was no bad swimmer, in a swim-suit, in calm

water. In the present circumstances he was utterly helpless. His head dipped again and again as the willow branch sagged and sagged, and the current strove to whirl him from his hold. Bewildered by the rushing of the water in his face, half-suffocated as his luckless head dipped and dipped, Arthur Augustus could do nothing but cling on desperately.

"Help!" came his voice, more faintly. "Twimble! Help!" Baggy stirred.

The bare thought of plunging into the swift stream to help the unfortunate D'Arcy, made him cringe with terror. Such a venture was far beyond Baggy's powers. But even Baggy could not remain inactive. Arthur Augustus was only a few feet out from the further bank, where the willow grew. With a vague idea of somehow helping him from the bank, Baggy made up his fat mind to re-cross the stream—if he could!

Even that was not easy for Baggy. The plank sloped down into the water, its end a yard from the margin. Baggy had to creep along it cautiously and jump the remaining yard. It was not attractive: but he made up his fat mind to it, and made the venture.

"Help!" came faintly again from Arthur Augustus. The faintness of that cry showed that his strength was almost spent, and it spurred Baggy on.

He picked his way carefully along the plank, and stopped, where it dipped in the water. There he had to jump—but he balked at the jump.

"Help!"

"Oh, crikey!" groaned Trimble.

He took his courage, such as it was, in both fat hands and jumped.

"Urrrrrgh!" spluttered Baggy, as he landed, just off the margin of the stream, and the water washed round him up to his fat waist. "Gurrgh!"

He scrambled frantically on the bank, drenched and dripping.

"Help!"

"I—I'm coming!" spluttered Baggy.

He was on D'Arcy's side of the stream now, at any rate.

He pushed through the thickets and reached the willow.

But when he reached it, his vague idea of crawling out on the branch to help D'Arcy vanished at once.

An active and plucky fellow could have plunged in, holding on with one hand, and reaching D'Arcy with the other. Tom Merry, or Blake, or Figgins, or Talbot, or Levison of the Fourth, could and would have done it. But poor Baggy was neither



active nor plucky. His dip at the plank had scared him almost out of his fat wits. To venture into the rushing water, holding on to nothing but a dipping willow-branch, required more nerve than Baggy Trimble possessed. And indeed, had the hapless Baggy done so, he would probably have found himself in the same state as D'Arcy—unable to get back again, and only able to hang on for dear life. A much more courageous and athletic fellow than Baggy was required for such a task.

"Help!" came more faintly from D'Arcy.

It was his last cry. Baggy, to his horror, saw that Arthur Augustus's eyes had closed. He was losing consciousness, though he still clung instinctively to the sagging branch that was all that saved him from being swept away in the rushing water.

Baggy could do nothing. But it occurred to his fat brain that there might be somebody on the footpath who might help. And he shouted at the top of his voice:

"Help! Help! Help!"

Baggy's frantic yell resounded among the trees and along the footpath. To his joy and relief an answering shout came back.

"Hallo! What's up?"

It was a familiar voice: that of George Figgins, of the New House at St. Jim's.

Baggy stared down the footpath.

Figgins of the Fourth was coming up the path, swinging a bag in his hand. Baggy Trimble had heard that Figgins was going away that day, having a week's leave from school to visit an affectionate uncle. Figgins, evidently, was on his way to Wayland station to catch his train: that was why he was there, trotting cheerfully along the footpath. Never had Baggy been so glad to behold the rugged features of George Figgins of the New House.

"Help!" he yelled. "This way, Figgins—help!"

Figgins stared round in surprise. He had left himself none too much time for his train: still, if anyone was in need of help, Figgins was the man to render aid. He stared at Baggy, yelling and waving frantically, left the footpath and ran towards him through the bushes.

"What on earth's up, you fat freak?" he exclaimed.

"D'Arcy—!" gurgled Baggy.

"D'Arcy?" repeated Figgins. Half-an-hour ago he had been rolling D'Arcy across the landing in the New House at St. Jim's. "What about D'Arcy?"

"He—he—Look!" spluttered Baggy.

Figgins's eyes followed a pointing fat finger. He jumped, as he saw Arthur Augustus out in the stream, clinging to the swaying, dipping tip of the willow-branch, almost torn away by the whirling water.

"Oh!" gasped Figgins. He dropped his bag. "You fat ass, couldn't you help him—Hold on, D'Arcy! I'm coming!"

There was no reply from Arthur Augustus. He was too far gone to see or to hear, though his fingers still clung instinctively to the willow. But at any moment that grasp might relax, and the swell of St. Jim's would be swept away in the rapid current. There was not a moment to lose.

But George Figgins did not lose a moment, now that he saw the peril.

What was difficult, or perhaps impossible, for the short, fat, unwieldy Baggy, came much more easily to the long-legged, athletic Figgins. As for peril, Figgy did not give that a thought at all.

He grasped a higher and stouter branch of the willow, that stretched out over the stream, and swung himself out with his left hand. His legs dragged in the water, unheeded. His right hand reached Arthur Augustus, and fastened on his collar with a grip like a vice.

One swing of Figgins's powerful right arm, and the swell of St. Jim's was dragged up, his relaxing fingers letting go as he was dragged. That powerful swing lifted him half out of the water and swept him to the bank.

"Catch hold!" panted Figgins.

Baggy Trimble grabbed at Arthur Augustus as he swung within reach. He got hold of him and dragged.

"Oooogh!" squeaked Trimble, as he tottered and fell on the bank, with Arthur Augustus sprawling over his fat legs.

Figgins clambered back.

Baggy sat up, gurgling.

"Oooooogh!"

"All right now!" panted Figgins. "D'Arcy, old man—by gum, he's gone off—fainted or something—my hat!"

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Baggy. "I—I—I thought he was going to be drowned—oh, lor'—thank goodness you came along, Figgins—"

"Thank goodness I did!" snapped Figgins. "You fat ass,

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

couldn't you have got out on that upper branch and helped him—"

"I—I—I—!" stammered Baggy. "I—I was just—just going to—"

"Yes, I'll bet you were!" hooted Figgins. "You fat funk—"

"Look here, you know—"

"Still, I daresay you couldn't have done it," added Figgins, more placably. "No beef in you—all tallow."

"I—I—"

"Look at my bags!" growled Figgins. "Dripping—and I've got to catch a train. I shall have to dash, and chance it! D'Arcy! I say, D'Arcy."

Figgins had his train to catch. It was the only train that day for his distant destination in Somersetshire. But he hesitated to leave Arthur Augustus in his present parlous state. He wrung water out of his trousers, hoping that they would get dry during his run to the station. Figgins was a hopeful fellow! Arthur Augustus lay motionless, unconscious, in the grass. Between his anxiety not to lose his train, and his concern for Arthur Augustus, Figgins hardly knew what to do. But a mumble from the School House junior came reassuringly.

"Ooooooooooh!" came that mumble from Arthur Augustus. He was coming to.

"He's all right!" said Figgins. "Get him back to the school, Trimble—make him run for it, see? I've got to cut—train to catch."

Figgins caught up his bag, and cut.

"Ooooh!" came again from Arthur Augustus.

Figgins vanished across the plank bridge, and disappeared up the further path at a run. He was going to catch that train.

Baggy Trimble blinked after him, and then blinked at Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's was coming to: he was, as Figgins had said, all right. Baggy eyed him with some uneasiness, rather doubtful whether the "fearful thrashing" might not be the next item on the programme when Arthur Augustus was himself again.

"Wooooh!" mumbled Arthur Augustus.

His eyes opened, dizzily.

Baggy Trimble backed away, warily.

"Look here, you know—!" he exclaimed.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"Oh, cwumbs!" murmured D'Arcy.

He sat up, streaming with water.

For some moments he was too dizzy to realise where he was, or what had happened. He stared round him, and stared at Trimble.

Baggy watched him warily. At the first sign of hostilities, he was ready to bolt. But Arthur Augustus was in no state for hostilities, even if he had thought of them. He sat dizzily in the grass, drenched and dripping, and Baggy, reassured, gave up the idea of flight, and began wringing water out of his drenched trousers.

## 6

### Grateful Gussy !

“TWIMBLE!”

“You keep off, you know.”

“Did you dwag me out of the watah, Twimble?”

“Yes, I jolly well did, and you keep off, you know. I never had those chocs, and it was all your own fault—”

“Bai Jove!”

Arthur Augustus blinked at him. He stared at him. His last recollection, before his senses fled, was of hanging on desperately to the willow branch, sagging in the water. He came to, to find himself safe on the bank, and no one in sight but Baggy Trimble, who was wringing water out of wet clothes. They were alone in the wood: and Arthur Augustus had not the faintest knowledge that anyone else had been on the spot. He had been dragged out of the rushing water, and only Trimble was there—and Trimble was soaked. There was scarcely any but one conclusion to which Arthur Augustus could come. It was Trimble who had saved him. Who else?

“Bai Jove!” he repeated faintly.

“If you’re going to make a fuss about those chocs, D’Arcy—”

“Nevah mind the chocs, Twimble! You are vewy welcome to them,” said Arthur Augustus, gently.

“Oh!” said Baggy. “I never had them, you know—”

“Weally, Twimble—”

“I never went to the study at all, and never saw that box of chocolates on the table. Besides, I left them there when I went away.”

“Oh, cwikey!”

“And I jolly well dragged you out of the water, too,” said Baggy. “So you jolly well keep off, D’Arcy, see?”

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"I am vevy much obliged to you Twimble."

"So you jolly well ought to be," said Baggy. "You mightn't have got out at all if I hadn't lent a hand."

Arthur Augustus gave a slight shiver.

"I wegard that as vevy pwobable, Twimble," he said. "I think I must have had a black-out or somethin', with the watah wushin wound me like that. It was vevy bwave of you to come in for me, Twimble."

"Eh?"

"I am sowwy to say that I should nevah have expected it of you, Twimble—"

"What?"

"I wegwet to say that I have hithahto wegarded you as a watah funkay wat, Twimble—"

"Look here—"

"I am vevy sowwy! You have saved my life, Twimble."

"Have I?" gasped Baggy.

"Yaas, watahah."

Baggy goggled at him, wondering whether Arthur Augustus's noble brain was wandering. Arthur Augustus, apparently, was under the impression that Trimble had saved him—that he had done in fact, exactly what Figgins had done. Then it dawned on Baggy's fat intellect that D'Arcy did not know that Figgins had been on the spot at all. He had, as he had said, dragged Arthur Augustus out—after Figgins had swung him to the bank. It had not occurred to Baggy to claim more than that. As he realised Arthur Augustus's misapprehension, he grinned.

Baggy Trimble could no more have done what George Figgins had done than he could have flown over the tree-tops. But if Arthur Augustus chose to fancy that he had done it, Baggy was willing to let him get on with it, so to speak. So long as D'Arcy had that idea in his head, Baggy was safe from reprisals on the score of the chocolates! And that, at the moment, was the chief consideration, so far as Baggy Trimble was concerned.

Arthur Augustus tottered to his feet. He was feeling weak and spent, and he held on to a tree for support.

Baggy eyed him—but no longer warily. There was no further need to be wary. It was all safe now—for at least so long as Arthur Augustus regarded Baggy as his rescuer. Baggy was prepared to let him go on thinking so as long as he liked!

Arthur Augustus glanced at the rushing stream, and shivered again. Then he glanced at Baggy.

"Weally, Twimble, I cannot find words to expwess my gwatitude for what you have done," he said. "I can hardly imagine now



## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

you did it, Twimble! A chap like Tom Mewwy or Blake or Talbot—but a fat, clumsy ass like you, Twimble—it is weally vewy extwaordinawy.”

“Look here—”

“You cannot help bein’ fat and clumsy, old chap,” said Arthur Augustus. “I only mention it because it makes it so vewy we-markable that you were able to get me out of the watah. How evah did you do it, Twimble?”

“Oh! I—I—”

“You are no swimmah, eithah,” said Arthur Augustus, evidently in a state of great astonishment, equal to his gratitude. “You have always been considahed a duckah funk, Twimble. Yet you must have entahed the watah to wescue me—and you are all wet, too!”

Baggy opened his mouth—but closed it again. It was no time to explain that he had got wet crossing the plank. If D’Arcy supposed that he had got wet in effecting that gallant rescue, D’Arcy was welcome to his suppositions.

Figgins had got hold of D’Arcy from a higher branch, and swung him out. Baggy, obviously, could have done nothing of the kind, but that did not occur to Arthur Augustus. He could only conclude that Baggy had plunged in for him. That was amazing—in Baggy: and it was, perhaps, still more amazing that Baggy, if he had plunged in, had ever got out again alive. It was, in fact, a very astonishing and amazing happening all round—from Arthur Augustus’s view-point, if not from Baggy’s.

“I can hardly expwess my wegwet for havin’ hithahto wegarded you as a wotten funk, Twimble!” said Arthur Augustus, remorsefully. “You are a vewy bwave chap, Twimble.”

“Oh, draw it mild,” mumbled Baggy. As he had done nothing but stand on the bank in a blue funk, and grab D’Arcy when Figgins swung him out of the stream, even Baggy did not feel that he deserved that description.

“I wepeat, Twimble, that you are a vewy bwave chap,” said Arthur Augustus, firmly. “It is not as if you were an athletic chap like Tom Mewwy, or a good swimmah like old Talbot. You are a fat, clumsy sort of fellow—”

“Look here—!” hooted the indignant Baggy.

“And a wotten swimmah! But all that only makes it more plucky,” said Arthur Augustus. “Tom Mewwy or Blake might have done it without a lot of wisk, but you must have risked your life, Twimble, bein’ fat and clumsy and a wotten swimmah.”

Baggy Trimble looked at him. Arthur Augustus undoubtety was feeling very grateful, but the manner in which he was ex-

pressing his gratitude was, perhaps, a little lacking in tact. So far from being pleased with all these encomiums, Baggy was feeling rather inclined to punch Arthur Augustus's noble nose. His own view of himself was very far from being that he was fat and clumsy and a rotten swimmer!

"Pluck makes up for eveythin'," went on Arthur Augustus. "Even for bein' a sneakin, gwub-waidin wat, pilfewin' tuck fwom the studies. I shall certainly nevah wegard you as the wottan I have always considahed you, Twimble."

Baggy breathed hard.

"For the first time," continued Arthur Augustus, happily unconscious of Baggy's thoughts and feelings, "I am able to wegard you with wespect, Twimble. Fwom this moment I shall considah you as a fwriend."

Baggy grinned. He wondered how long that would last—only, it was certain, until it dawned upon Arthur Augustus that it was not Baggy who had saved him from the rushing waters.

"But we are vewy wet," said Arthur Augustus, as that practical consideration occurred to his noble mind. "We had bettah get back to the school as fast as we can, or we shall catch cold. Bettah wun all the way, Twimble."

"Come on, then," said Trimble.

They started down the footpath to Rylcombe Lane at a run. Both of them were in need of a towelling and a change. By the time they reached the stile on the lane, Baggy was out of breath.

"I'm going to walk!" he gasped, as Arthur Augustus restarted at a run up the lane to the school.

Arthur Augustus stopped.

"Bettah wun," he said. "It will keep you warm—"

"You can run if you like," yapped Trimble. "I'm going to walk."

"Weally, Twimble—"

"Yah!" said Baggy.

"Vewy well, I will walk, too!" said Arthur Augustus.

And they walked. And as they walked up the leafy lane, Baggy cast several sly glances at his companion. For the moment, Arthur Augustus, full of gratitude for a supposed service rendered, had overcome his distaste for Baggy, and was regarding him as a friend. That was not likely, Baggy thought, to last long: but so long as it lasted, it occurred to his fat brain that it was worth while to make the most of it. As the school gates came in sight, he squeaked:

"I say, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. It was the first time

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

on record that he had ever addressed Trimble as a dear boy!

"I say, I haven't had a letter from my uncle," said Baggy, eyeing him slyly out of the corner of a sly eye. "He was going to send me a pound note."

"Was he weally, Twimble?"

"Yes, only his letter hasn't come," said Baggy. "I—I wonder if you could lend a fellow half-a-crown, D'Arcy."

"With pleasuah, deah boy."

Arthur Augustus groped in a damp pocket, and a half-crown was immediately transferred to a fat palm.

"Oh! Thanks!" gasped Trimble, hardly able to believe in his good luck.

"Not at all, old chap," said Arthur Augustus, benevolently. "You are vewy welcome."

Baggy could have kicked himself for not having made it five shillings! He was—for the present—an old chap as well as a dear boy! Gratitude did not always extend as far as the pocket: but in Arthur Augustus's case, it evidently did! Baggy resolved to correct his error at once.

"I say, D'Arcy—!"

"Yaas, old fellow."

"I—I—I meant to say five shillings. If you could make it five bob—I'll square when I get that pound from my uncle—"

"I should be delighted, Twimble—"

"Oh, good!"

"It would be a weal pleasure to me, if I had anothah half-crown. But I am sowwy to say that I haven't," said Arthur Augustus, regretfully.

Grunt from Trimble. However, he was half-a-crown to the good. So he was feeling fairly satisfied when they arrived at the school and hurried in to change.

## 7

### A Surprise for Study No. 2

**RAP!**  
"Wow!"

They were at tea in No. 2 Study in the Fourth. It was a frugal tea. Of the three fellows in the study, only Kit Wildrake, the Canadian junior, ever seemed to feel it incumbent upon him to stand his full "whack" in a study tea. Mellish was sometimes hard up: and generally mean. Baggy Trimble was always hard up. So commons were often frugal in No. 2. Frugal as they were, Baggy somehow seemed to consider himself entitled to the lion's share.

On the present occasion there were sardines, to help down the bread and "marger," and a cake to follow. Wildrake only grinned when Baggy helped himself to half the fish supply, though Mellish gave the fat junior inimical looks. But when the cake course was arrived at, and Baggy cut himself half the cake, it appeared that the limit had been reached. A ruler rapped on a fat wrist, and Baggy dropped the cake with a howl.

"Go easy, old fat guy," said Wildrake. "There's three here, you know."

"Ow! wow!" Baggy rubbed a fat wrist. "I'm hungry."

Baggy was hungry. That was his accustomed state. A large box of chocolate creams had not filled Baggy. To that had been added tuck to the exact value of D'Arcy's half-crown. Still Baggy had room for more.

"Think nobody else wants to eat?" inquired Mellish.

"Oh, rats!" grunted Baggy.

That seemed to him quite a frivolous question. Baggy was

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

not bothering about what anyone else might want. He was wholly concentrated upon what he wanted himself.

"Measly spread," he said, disparagingly. "I shall stand something better than this, when I get that pound note from my uncle."

"When!" jeered Mellish.

"Well, I fancy it will come this time," said Baggy. "I pitched it pretty strong in my last letter. You see, the old boy was a cricketer in his time, and he's jawed me a lot about games. You'd hardly believe that Lathom put in my report 'backward in class, not good at games', would you?"

"Quite!" said Wildrake, laughing.

"Well, I expect it will make a difference, now that I've told him how keen I am on cricket, and all that," said Baggy.

"Oh, scissors!" ejaculated Mellish. "You keen on cricket? Tom Merry had to chase you down to Little Side with a bat this very afternoon."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wildrake.

"Well, I'm keen enough, really," said Baggy. "I'd play in a match, if Tom Merry asked me—!"

"I can see him doing it!" grinned Mellish.

"You fat sweep," said Wildrake. "Have you been spinning your uncle a yarn about being keen on cricket to squeeze a tip out of him? You dodge games-practice every time you can."

"I don't need all the practice you fellows do," said Baggy, loftily. "And I fancy it will work, nunky being keen on the game. I say, old chap, suppose you lend me half-a-crown, and I'll square out of that pound—"

"Suppose anything you like."

"Well, will you lend me the half-crown?"

"Nope!"

Snort from Baggy. He munched a slice of cake—exactly one-third of the available supply. It was not much: three-thirds would have suited him better.

Tap!

"Trickle in," called out Wildrake.

The door opened, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared in view. He was hardly recognisable as the drenched and dragged fellow who had been dragged out of the woodland stream. Once more the swell of St. Jim's was spotless, spick, and span: a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

"Twimble heah?" he asked.

Mellish chuckled.

"Got you this time, Baggy!" Earlier that afternoon, Arthur

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

Augustus had been after Baggy, rather like a Red Indian on the trail. Mellish had no doubt that he was after Baggy now with the same hostile intentions. "Didn't you find him in the New House, D'Arcy?"

"I did not, Mellish! I was wagged in the New House by those wuffians Figgins and Co.—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Mellish—!"

"Well, here he is now," grinned Mellish. "You've got it coming, Baggy."

Baggy eyed Arthur Augustus a little uneasily. He wondered whether it had yet dawned on Gussy's noble mind that he hadn't been, and couldn't have been, the rescuer in Wayland Wood.

But the cheery smile that Arthur Augustus gave him was reassuring. It was evidence that Baggy was still a man whom Gussy delighted to honour.

"Had your tea, Twimble, old chap?" he asked.

"Pretty measly one," grunted Baggy.

"I am sowwy I am a little late, deah boy. I had a lot of changin' to do, you know. I should have liked you to honah us with your company at tea in No. 6," explained Arthur Augustus. "But if you have had your tea—"

Baggy jumped up.

"Oh, that's nothing," he declared. "I'm ready for tea."

Wildrake and Mellish stared blankly at the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. This was rather a change!

"You seem jolly pally with Trimble, all of a sudden," said Mellish. "A couple of hours ago you were after his scalp."

"I wegwet it vewy much, Mellish! I have since discovahed what a splendid chap Twimble is."

"What?" gasped Mellish.

"What?" yelled Wildrake.

"Hasn't Twimble told you?" asked Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove! That makes me wespect him all the more. Not a word of bwag aftah doin' such a bwave and splendid thing."

Wildrake and Mellish simply gaped. If Baggy Trimble was a splendid chap, they had certainly never noticed it. If he had done a brave and splendid thing, it was time for the skies to fall. Baggy himself looked a little uncomfortable under Arthur Augustus's praises. Certainly he had not bragged of his exploit: for he would not have expected any fellow to believe a word of it: moreover, when Figgins came back to St. Jim's the following week, the facts would be known anyway.

Baggy had extracted a loan of half-a-crown from Arthur Augus-



tus on the strength of his imaginary exploit, and there it ended—so far as Baggy was concerned. It had not yet occurred to his fat brain that there was more capital to be made out of it.

Now it did occur to him—with the prospect of a spread in Study No. 6. If Baggy had any idea of admitting the facts, he dismissed it from mind. It was, from Baggy's peculiar point of view, well worth while to leave Arthur Augustus in his delusion, for the sake of a study spread.

"We're dreaming this, I guess," said Wildrake. "What brave and splendid thing has that fat clam been doing, D'Arcy?"

"Gammon!" said Mellish.

"As Twimble has, with the pwopah modesty of a vewy bwave chap, told you nothin' about it, I shall certainly tell you," said Arthur Augustus. "It will make you admire him as much as I do."

Baggy wriggled uncomfortably.

"Oh, I say," he stammered. "Don't make a song about it, D'Arcy. I—I—I wasn't going to say anything—"

"That was vewy wight and pwopah on your part, Twimble," agreed Arthur Augustus. "But it is up to me to let evewybody know what a splendid chap you are, and how you wisked your life to save me fwom ddownin'."

"Trimble did!" yelled Mellish.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Been to sleep this afternoon, D'Arcy?" asked Wildrake.

"Certainly not, Wildwake."

"Do you dream things when you're awake, then?"

"Weally, Wildwake—"

"Oh, let's get out of this, D'Arcy," said Baggy, hastily. "Never mind telling these fellows anything—"

"I insist upon tellin' them, Twimble! Honah where honah is due!" said Arthur Augustus, firmly. "I was aftah Twimble this aftahnoon, as you fellows know, and I wan him down at the stwearm in the wood, and fell off the plank—"

"You would!" agreed Wildrake.

"I should have been swept away if I had not caught the extreme tip of a willow bwanch. I was quite helpless, and could only hang on, and somehow or othah the wush of the watah and all the west of it made me lose my senses—"

"If any!" said Mellish.

"Weally, Mellish—!"

"And you haven't found them since?" asked Mellish.

"Oh, wats! I came to, to discovah that Twimble had ventured into the wushin' watah and dwagged me out, pwactically savin' my life at the wisk of his own," said Arthur Augustus, impressively.

Wildrake and Mellish looked at him. They looked at Baggy. Baggy's fat cheeks were generally like ripe apples. Now they were redder than ever. Even the fat Baggy could not feel quite easy under Arthur Augustus's eloquence.

"Trimble did that?" gasped Wildrake.

"Yaas, wathah."

"Well, it was topping, if he did—"

"There is no 'if' about it, Wildwake! He did! It is weally a wondah that he was not ddowned," said Arthur Augustus. "Bein' so fat and clumsy it was weally almost a miwacle that he got out alive, let alone dwaggin' me out."

"Look here—!" yapped Baggy.

"Nobody else on the spot?" asked Mellish.

"Nobody at all."

"Why, that stream in the wood is overflowing, and rushing like a torrent, since the rain," said Mellish. "Trimble wouldn't dare put a toe in it."

"He put more than a toe in it, Mellish, in wescuin' me fwom feahful dangah."

"Gammon!" said Mellish.

"I guess it sounds steep, D'Arcy," said Wildrake. "Sure you haven't got it all wrong somehow?"

"I am quite suah, Wildwake. Twimble played up like a hewo—"

"Oh, draw it mild, D'Arcy," mumbled Baggy.

"I wefuse to dwaw it mild, Twimble! I wepeat that you played up like a hewo," said Arthur Augustus. "Now pway come with me, deah boy. I have asked some fwiends to a tea-party in No. 6 in your honah, and Tom Mewwy and the west will be vewy glad to heah all about it. Come on, old chap."

"What-ho!" said Baggy.

And he came in. He rolled out of Study No. 2 with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, leaving his study-mates staring. Wildrake whistled, and Mellish shrugged his thin shoulders.

"I guess that beats the deck, if it's all true," said Wildrake.

"If!" jeered Mellish.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"Well, D'Arcy believes it," said Wildrake. "I don't see how he could be mistaken about what happened. Only—!"

"Well, if Trimble did all that, it's a giddy mystery."

"It's a mystery how he pulled D'Arcy's leg to that extent, you mean! But that ass was born to have his leg pulled! Think Trimble really did it?"

"Um!" said Wildrake.

Both of them were puzzled. But neither could quite believe in Baggy Trimble as a hero! It was said of old that a prophet is without honour in his own country. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy might be delighted to honour Baggy as a performer of heroic exploits: but Baggy's heroism was sadly at a discount in his own study!

## 8

### Modest Hero !

‘ROT!’ said Herries.  
“Weally, Hewwies—”

“Rot!” repeated Herries.

There was no doubt about George Herries’ opinion, at all events.

Blake and Digby were probably of the same opinion. However, they refrained from saying so, as Trimble was, at the moment, a guest in Study No. 6.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther looked at Arthur Augustus, looked at Baggy Trimble and looked at Blake and Herries and Dig, and at one another. They did not quite know what to say, so they said nothing.

Arthur Augustus coloured a little.

Eight fellows were crowded in Study No. 6 in the Fourth. It was quite a party. The Terrible Three had come along quite cheerfully, hearing that it was a special occasion. There was quite a handsome spread on the table. It was stood by Arthur Augustus in honour of the heroic Baggy. Cash being short—the heroic Baggy having annexed his last half-crown—Arthur Augustus had run up quite a little bill with Dame Taggles at the school shop, to be liquidated later when finances improved. Having no doubt that Baggy had run great risks in saving him from the rushing stream, Arthur Augustus wanted to give honour where honour was due—Baggy was to get the full credit of his exploit. That, in Gussy’s opinion, was only fair and just, especially as most fellows in the House had the lowest possible opinion of the fat Baggy. Over that handsome spread, Arthur Augustus related the heroic exploit—no doubt expecting quite an ovation for the fat hero.

But there was no ovation. In Baggy's own study, the fellows simply couldn't believe it. It seemed to be the same in Study No. 6. Like Mellish, they only wondered how on earth Baggy had contrived to pull Gussy's noble leg to such an extent.

Really and truly, Baggy and heroism did seem poles asunder. Baggy was a games funk, and a ducker funk: and he had been known to flee from Wally of the Third—a mere fag! Where had he found the pluck to plunge into rushing water? And if he had done so, how had he ever got out again? He had come in wet, that was true—several fellows had seen him in a drenched state. And Arthur Augustus firmly believed that Baggy had saved him—and indeed, as D'Arcy certainly had been rescued, the question arose, that if Baggy hadn't done it, who had? Probably, in the case of anyone but Baggy, nobody would have doubted. But Baggy as a hero was altogether too large a mouthful to be swallowed easily.

Only Herries said that it was "rot"—Herries being a rather painfully plain-spoken fellow at times. But it was probable that Herries voiced the general opinion.

Baggy Trimble did not heed Herries' remark. Perhaps he did not even hear it. Baggy was busy. It was seldom that Baggy found himself a guest at such a lavish spread. Baggy was going all out to make the most of it, on the principle of making hay while the sun was shining. He was jammy, sticky, shiny, and intent on provender. He did not care a boiled bean whether the fellows believed D'Arcy's tale of derring-do or not. Indeed, he did not care whether D'Arcy himself believed it or not, once the spread was over. If Gussy's simple faith lasted as long as that, Baggy was satisfied.

Arthur Augustus felt quite differently on the subject. He was pained and indignant. A fellow had done a brave and plucky thing and was entitled to his praise. Certainly Baggy, at the moment, sticky and shiny and wolfing the foodstuffs, did not look much like an heroic figure. But what he had done, he had done—and D'Arcy had no doubt that he had done it. And he fixed George Herries with a stern eye and eyeglass.

"Did I heah you wemark wot, Hewwies?" he inquired.

"Unless you're deaf," agreed Herries.

"If that implies that you doubt my statement, Hewwies, I shall have no wecourse but to wegard you as no longah a fwiend," said Arthur Augustus, stiffly.

"Fathead," said Herries. "How did Trimble pull your leg?"

"Twimble did not pull my leg. Hewwies! And I uttably wefuse to listen to any wemarks dewogatory to Twimble," ex-

claimed Arthur Augustus. "I wegard Twimble as a fwiend. He pwobably saved my life—"

"Sure you've got it right, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry. Tom was willing—more than willing—to give credit where credit was due. But, looking at the fat and sticky Baggy wiring into the jam, he simply could not see him performing heroic stunts.

"Yaas, wathah," answered Arthur Augustus. "How could I get it w'ong, Tom Mewwy? I suppose I know what happened."

"Oh! Yes! But—"

"But you were off your nut for a bit—" said Herries.

"I was not off my nut, as you express it, Hewwies."

"Well, off your chump, if you like that better—"

"I do not like it bettah, Hewwies."

"Off your onion, then," said Herries. "You can't know exactly what happened while you were off your onion."

"If by those wathah cwude expressions you mean that I had a momentawy black-out, Hewwies, that is certainly the case. I had swallowed a lot of watah, and my head kept dippin' undah, and the wush of the stweam was vewy bewildewin', and it is quite twue that I lost consciousness for a moment—a moment or two—"

"And that was when Trimble got you out?" asked Manners.

"Yaas, for I came to and found myself on the bank with Twimble."

"Nobody else there?"

"Certainly not."

"Nobody in sight?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Nobody at all."

"Only you and Trimble?" asked Blake.

"Only Twimble and myself."

"Well, if Trimble did it, it was jolly plucky," said Blake.

"Blessed if I know how he did, if he did."

"If!" grunted Herries.

"I wegard that wemark as insultin' to my fwiend Twimble, Hewwies," said Arthur Augustus, in his most stately manner.

"I wequest you to withdwaw it."

"Oh, have it your own way," said Herries. "I suppose it may have happened—but it wants some getting down. We all know Trimble!"

"I twust that you will know him bettah aftah this, Hewwies."

"Um!" said Herries.

"I wathah expected you fellows to express admiwation of Twimble's vewy bwave action, and wegard him as a cwedit to the House!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, warmly.



## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"Oh! Ah! Yes," said Tom. "If Trimble risked getting into a rapid current, when he swims like a stone, he's a credit to the House all right."

"He certainly did, Tom Mewwy."

"But Trimble hasn't told us anything about it," said Monty Lowther. "Let's hear Trimble's own account. How did you do it, Trimble?"

"Oh! I—I just did it," said Baggy. "Nothing, really! I—I wish you wouldn't talk about it, D'Arcy. It—it makes a fellow feel uncomfortable."

That was true enough. Baggy did feel uncomfortable. Not that Baggy would have disclaimed any credit, due or undue. He would have been quite happy to pose as a fellow capable of heroic exploits. But he could not help remembering that Figgins would be back in the school in a week's time. The facts were certain to come out when Figgins came back. It was not of much use to pose as a hero for a week, and then to be found out and derided as a fibber and a braggart. Baggy, certainly, was prepared to make full use of his brief glory in the way of borrowing half-crowns and sitting in at study spreads. But in view of what would happen when Figgins returned, he would have preferred to leave it at that.

"I—I mean to say, a fellow doesn't want to brag," said Trimble. "Don't say another word about it, D'Arcy, please."

"Well, my hat!" said Monty Lowther.

Unaware of the thoughts in Baggy's fat mind, the juniors could not help being a little impressed. Baggy was plainly in earnest. He did not want D'Arcy to say anything more about his heroic exploit. If that was not the modesty of an heroic fellow, what was it? Even George Herries was impressed.

"Just let it drop!" said Baggy. "I say, pass that cake!"

Blake passed the cake.

"I quite undahstand your feelin's, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "But I shall certainly not let it dwop. I shall certainly tell ewybody what a wippin' thing you did."

"Oh, rot," said Baggy, uneasily.

"I do not wegard it as wot, Twimble! Honah where honah is due," said Arthur Augustus, firmly. "It is vewy much to your cwedit. Twimble, especially as you have always been wegardad as wathah a wottah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I do not see anythin' to laugh at in that wemark, you fellows," said Arthur Augustus, in surprise. "I wegwet vewy much that I have hithahto wegardad Twimble as wathah

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

a wottah, and a study scwoungah, and a vewy unpleasant little beast in evey way—”

“Ha, ha, ha!” yelled the juniors.

“I wish you fellows would not cackle evey time a fellow opens his mouth. I twust that you all wegwet havin’ wegarded Twimble as a wottah.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Baggy Trimble looked at Arthur Augustus across the table. There was a slab of cake in his fat grubby hand, and he was tempted to hurl it across the table, right at the aristocratic countenance of Arthur Augustus. However, he jammed it into his capacious mouth instead, and Arthur Augustus never knew how narrow an escape he had had.

There were still foodstuffs on the well-spread board, and Baggy Trimble was still going strong, when the Terrible Three took their leave. Baggy was not the man to leave anything eatable uneaten. Blake and Co., as hosts, had the pleasure of seeing Baggy through to the bitter end, to the last crumb and the last plum. The chums of the Shell were in a puzzled mood when they went out into the quad.

“What do you fellows think?” asked Tom Merry.

“Um!” said Manners.

“Um!” echoed Lowther.

Tom Merry laughed.

“Well, if Trimble did it, it was jolly plucky, and I don’t quite see how Gussy could fancy he did, if he didn’t,” he said. “He seems jolly modest about it, too—he’s the sort of chap to do a song and a dance about it—at least that was my idea of him! Blessed if I make it out.”

“Same here,” said Lowther.

“And here,” said Manners.

And they had to leave it at that.

## 9

**Trimble Wants to Know!**

“**H**OOK it—no, come in if you like!”

It was Tom Merry who made that rather contradictory remark.

The sight of Baggy Trimble's fat grubby face in the doorway of No. 10 Study in the Shell, naturally led him to say “hook it.” Then he remembered that Baggy—according to Arthur Augustus at least—was a man of heroic stunts: hence the second part of his remark. Baggy rolled in.

It was two or three days since the rescue at the woodland stream. Baggy was still—in D'Arcy's eyes, if in no other's—the plucky fellow who had dared the rushing waters to rescue him.

Baggy, though well-known to be rather given to boasting, had said little or nothing on the subject: for the simple reason that he was haunted by the knowledge that the facts would transpire when Figgins returned to St. Jim's. But if he refused to blow his own trumpet, Arthur Augustus blew it for him: considerably to Baggy's uneasiness. Indeed he would probably have set the matter right, in view of the certainty of being found out in a week's time: but for one important consideration. He found Arthur Augustus a very useful friend.

It was quite a change for Baggy to be treated with distinction by so eminent a member of the School House junior fraternity as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. It was quite a pleasant change. And there were more solid advantages. He was now *persona grata* in Study No. 6 in the Fourth. Blake and Herries and Digby, though very dubious about that heroic exploit, were civil, giving him the benefit of the doubt, as it were: and Arthur Augustus's gratitude was still going strong. Baggy found Study No. 6 a

land flowing with milk and honey, compared with the frugality of No. 2. He envisaged a series of spreads in that study: to last as long as his glory lasted. For which excellent reason, Baggy kept his own counsel about the facts of the case, and he had now been a fat hero for several days.

To do him justice, Baggy had never thought of planning anything of the kind. He had had no idea of claiming the credit for Gussy's rescue, till Gussy himself put it into his mind by his mistake. Even then he had only regarded it as a temporary dodge to escape the punching that was his due for the raid on Study No. 6 and the chocolates.

But second thoughts—not always the best—had over-ruled him. If there was anything to be “made,” Baggy was the man to be “on the make.” So Baggy was “on the make,” and he was going to stay on the make till Figgins came back to St. Jim's and his glory faded.

If only it could have lasted—!

It couldn't! Baggy's brief glory would expire in roars of laughter, when Figgins came back.

But could it not?

A rumour—a very interesting rumour—had reached Baggy's fat ears that afternoon. Fellows had been talking cricket in the day-room. As a rule, Baggy turned a deaf ear—or to be exact, two deaf ears—to “cricket jaw.” But on this occasion it had interested him—indeed, thrilled him! And he had come to Tom Merry's study for confirmation—or otherwise—of that rumour. There was a very sly glimmer in Baggy's gooseberry eyes as he looked into No. 10 at the Terrible Three.

They were at tea. Taking it for granted that Baggy had barged in like a lion seeking what he might devour, Tom Merry, after exchanging a glance with Manners and Lowther, pulled an extra chair to the table.

“Squat down,” he said.

It was quite unusual, but quite pleasant. Like Blake and Co. the Terrible Three were giving Baggy the benefit of the doubt. If he had really saved Gussy from the rushing waters, they were prepared to be quite nice. They did not quite believe that he had. Still, it certainly looked as if he had.

To their surprise, Baggy shook a fat head, and did not sit down.

“Thanks,” he said. “I haven't come here for tea.”

“You haven't?” ejaculated Monty Lowther.

“I'm teasing with my pal D'Arcy in No. 6,” explained Baggy, loftily.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE !

"Oh!" said Tom, and he smiled. He could guess that Baggy was likely to be a fairly frequent visitor in Study No. 6, and that Arthur Augustus's account at the tuck-shop was likely to run up to a rather unusual figure.

Baggy eyed the tea-table.

He was, as he had said, due for tea in No. 6 in the Fourth. He was expecting a good tea there. Still, all was grist that came to Baggy's mill. There was a cake in No. 10, and Baggy liked cake.

"Sorry I can't stop," he said, breezily. "But old Gussy rather likes me to tea in his study, you know."

"Oh! Yes! Quite."

"Still, I'll have a slice of that cake to go on with, if you like."

"Oh! Do!" said Tom Merry, politely.

Baggy helped himself to a slice—a slice that made the cake look rather thin. He stood and munched it, while the chums of the Shell went on with their tea. They rather wondered why Baggy had called at all, if he was not in search of food.

His fat voice came through a barrage of cake.

"What's that about Figgins?" he asked.

"Figgins?" repeated Tom Merry.

"I heard the fellows talking about it in the day-room," said Baggy.

"Did you?"

All three looked at Baggy. Why he was interested in Figgins was a complete mystery to them. Figgins was in the same form, but in the other House: and never had anything to do with Trimble. Yet it seemed that Baggy had come specially to the junior captain to ask about Figgins.

"I mean to say, it's the Greyfriars match next week," said Baggy. "Somebody was saying that he wouldn't be here to play Greyfriars."

"Suddenly interested in our matches?" asked Tom, staring at him.

"Well, yes—no—I mean—I heard that Figgins had a week's leave," said Baggy. "But that would be up in time for the Greyfriars match. Isn't he coming back, after all? You ought to know, Merry, as he's in your team."

Baggy eyed the junior captain quite eagerly as he asked that question. For whatever mysterious reason, he was obviously keenly interested in the matter of Figgins's return to the school.

"Of course I know," answered Tom. "Kerr came over and told me at once, as soon as he knew."

"What did he tell you?" Baggy almost gasped in his eagerness.

"Look here, what the dickens are you asking me about Figgins for?" exclaimed Tom, blankly. "You don't care a boiled bean whether he plays for St. Jim's next week or not, or about the Greyfriars match at all, if you come to that."

"Oh! No! But—"

"But what?" said Tom, testily.

"I—I mean, yes, of course!" amended Baggy. "I—I'm keen on the match, you know—I—I'm rather anxious about you losing a man like Figgins from the team—"

"Gammon!" said Monty Lowther.

"Look here, you know—"

"Yes, I can see you being keen on anything to do with cricket," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Only the other day I had to root all over the House for you and prod you down to games-practice."

"Look here, you can tell me, I suppose, yapped Baggy. "It ain't a secret, is it?"

"Of course it isn't, fathead."

"Well, then, you can tell me, can't you?"

"I'll tell you if you like. Kerr told me that Figgins's uncle had written to the Head, asking for an extension of his leave, as he's taking him on a yachting trip—"

"And the Head said yes?" asked Baggy eagerly.

"Well, I daresay he thought he couldn't say no—anyhow, he said yes. So Figgy won't be back for the Greyfriars game—or any other game this term, for that matter. He's got leave for the rest of the term."

"That's what I heard them saying," said Baggy. "I say, you're sure you've got it right, Tom Merry?"

"That's what Kerr told me."

"Sure Kerr got it right?"

"Of course, you fat ass!" What the jolly old dickens are you driving at?" exclaimed Tom. "What does it matter to you whether Figgy comes back this term or next term?"

"Oh! It—it doesn't, of—of course," stammered Baggy. "Why should it? Only—only I thought you'd know, as junior captain, you know."

"Well, I do know, and I've told you," said Tom.

"You've come here specially to ask Tom about it, because it doesn't matter to you?" asked Manners, staring at the fat Baggy.

"Yes—no—I—I mean, you're sure Figgins won't be back till next term, Merry?" Baggy, whether it mattered to him or not, seemed to want to make assurance doubly sure on that point.

"Quite," answered Tom. "Any more questions you'd like to ask?"



"Oh! No! That's all," said Baggy. He rolled to the door. There he turned and blinked back at the three astonished Shell fellows. "I—I say, it—it doesn't matter to me at all, you know. I don't care whether Figgins comes back this term or not? Why should I? The fact is, I'd forgotten that he went away at all—forgotten all about it."

With that, Baggy Trimble rolled out of No. 10, en route for No. 6 and tea, satisfied in his fat mind, and leaving Tom Merry and Co. quite puzzled.

"What on earth was that fat chump burbling about?" asked Tom, when Baggy was gone. "What can he care whether a New House man stays away the rest of the term or not?"

"He does!" said Manners.

"Yes, that's plain enough—but why?"

"Goodness knows."

It was quite a puzzle. However, it was a puzzle that the Terrible Three soon dismissed from mind. Baggy and his burblings were a matter of infinite unimportance to the chums of the Shell.

But Baggy was grinning a fat grin as he rolled away to No. 6 in the Fourth. The fact that George Figgins of the New House was not returning to St. Jim's that term was a very important matter to Baggy. Baggy the hero, Baggy the gallant rescuer, Baggy the life-saver, was not going to be shown up the following week: he was not going to be shown up at all. Tom Merry had lost a good man from his team when the Greyfriars match came round, but that did not matter. What mattered was that Baggy Trimble could now make the most, the very most, of the gallant deed he hadn't performed. And so far from regretting, like other fellows, that Figgins wasn't coming back that term, Baggy would have rejoiced to hear that he wasn't coming back at all!

## 10

### Trimble Tells the Tale!

“I PLUNGED in—!”

“I’ll bet you did!”

“Look here, Mellish—”

“I can see you doing it!”

“Oh, shut up, Mellish,” said Ridd. “We all know that Trimble did go in for D’Arcy—D’Arcy says so.”

“Dreamed it, I expect,” said Mellish.

“I tell you, I put my hands together, like this, and just plunged in headlong,” hooted Trimble, with an indignant glare at Percy Mellish. “Did I care anything about the danger? I never even thought of it.”

“You wouldn’t!” grinned Mellish.

“Shut up, Mellish” said several voices.

Baggy was going strong in the junior day room. Six or seven fellows were giving ear. Percy Mellish, as Baggy’s study-mate in No. 2, and a fellow who knew him very well indeed, certainly ought to have been aware of the heroic strain in the fat Baggy—if it was there at all. But if other fellows gave credence to Baggy’s tale, Mellish did not. Perhaps that was because he knew Baggy so well.

“Go on, Baggy,” said Tompkins.

And Baggy, after another glare at Mellish, bumbled on.

Quite a change had come over Baggy since he had learned that George Figgins was not coming back that term.

He had been a very modest hero—preferring to say nothing about his exploit. He had even wished that Arthur Augustus would say less about it. But now that it had transpired that Figgins was not coming back, there was no reason—so far as the fat Baggy could see—why he should not spread himself.

Figgins would be back the following term. But by that time, the whole affair would be forgotten, after the holidays. Anyhow, next term was far too distant for Baggy to bother about it. Hitherto only Arthur Augustus had blown Baggy's trumpet for him. Now Baggy saw no reason why he should not blow it himself—and he did. It was really "pie" to Baggy—now that he felt secure in enlarging upon that heroic exploit. And as Baggy's fat imagination had no limit, the exploit was getting bigger and bigger every time Baggy talked of it—and he talked of it whenever he could find listeners.

"Listen-in to this, you fellows," murmured Cardew of the Fourth, as he came into the day-room with Levison and Clive. "This is worth hearin'."

"Don't you believe him?" asked Clive.

"Not a whole lot."

"We've all heard it from D'Arcy—"

"My dear relative would believe anythin'."

"Well, D'Arcy ought to know," said Levison. "He can't have fancied that he fell into the water, and Trimble pulled him out."

"And we saw them come in on Monday, both of them drenched," said Clive. "You remember seeing them, Cardew."

"Oh, yes! We're jolly old witnesses of that," grinned Cardew. "But listen-in—it's amusin'."

"I can tell you fellows, it was touch and go," Trimble was going on. "The water was jolly deep, and it was rushing like—like—like anything, and I was jolly nearly swept away. But I got hold of D'Arcy and held him up—one hand holding him, you know, and the other battling for my life. When my head went under, I thought it was all up with both of us! But I fought on."

"Some swimmer!" said Mellish.

"Well, Trimble isn't much of a swimmer," said Roylance. "But it's all the more credit to him to go into deep water for a fellow when he isn't much of a swimmer."

"Who isn't much of a swimmer?" demanded Baggy. "I could jolly well swim your head off, and chance it! You'd have thought me a pretty good swimmer, if you'd seen me struggling with the mountainous waves—"

"Oh, draw it mild," said Roylance. "Cut out the mountainous waves on a small stream, old fat duffer."

"Well, they seemed like mountains," said Trimble, moderating his transports a little, as it were. "I can tell you that rough water looks jolly different when you're in it, from what it does from the bank. If you'd been in it like I was, you'd know. Struggling

for my life, with the water dashing over my head, I held on to D'Arcy all the time. Never thought even for a moment of letting go. He wouldn't be here now, if I had. How I got him ashore I hardly know. But I did—and fell exhausted on the bank, hardly able to move after my tremendous efforts. It was a narrow squeak, I can tell you. But did I care? Not a bean! I'd saved D'Arcy's life, and that was all I cared about."

"Pile it on," said Mellish.

"Look here—"

"Yes, shut up, Mellish," said Lumley-Lumley. "Trimble may be piling it on a bit, but he did it—D'Arcy says so!"

"I should jolly well think I did!" hooted the indignant Baggy. "I came in dripping—soaked to the skin—lots of fellows saw me! You saw me, didn't you Levison?"

"I did," agreed Levison, and Clive nodded. They certainly had seen Baggy come in wet on Monday afternoon, and were quite willing to bear witness to the fact. Cardew smiled, but did not speak.

"There you are!" said Baggy. "How do you think I got wet through, Mellish, if I didn't go in for D'Arcy?"

Percy Mellish made no reply to that question. He did not believe—in fact he was determined not to believe—that Baggy Trimble had covered himself with glory by saving another fellow at the risk of his life. It really did not seem to fit in with what he knew of Baggy. Still, it was certain that Baggy had come in wet after the adventure in the wood. Even if D'Arcy had made some extraordinary mistake in the matter, there was no doubt about Baggy having come in drenched. His trousers had been clinging to his fat legs, and his shoes squelching water.

"You couldn't have done it, Mellish," went on Baggy, triumphantly. "You wouldn't have tried it on. Catch you going into a raging sea—I mean a raging river—to save a fellow from drowning! I did! I just put my hands together like this, and dived in—headlong! I can see you doing it! I jolly well did! And then I was struggling for my life in the raging water—holding on to D'Arcy all the time, never dreaming of letting him go to save my own life—never gave it a thought!"

"Fine!" said Cardew.

Baggy blinked round at him. He was rather pleased by a word of praise from the dandy of the Fourth. He was a little surprised, too, for Cardew was a fellow with a doubting mind, little likely to be taken in by so tall a story as Baggy's. Even with Arthur Augustus's evidence, many fellows found it hard to believe: and the trimmings Baggy had added to the story made

it harder. Cardew, apparently, was one of the believers. His face was quite serious, and he spoke very heartily.

"Fine!" he repeated. "Nobody knew you were such a swimmer, Trimble. We know it now."

"Do we?" murmured Mellish.

"It was simply splendid," went on Cardew. "I never dreamed what had happened when I saw you come in wet the other day, Trimble. D'Arcy's a relation of mine, and I might have lost him, if you hadn't plunged in for him—you did plunge in, didn't you?"

"I jolly well did! You see, I put my hands together like this—" Baggy put his fat paws together, in illustration, "and just plunged in, head first, without stopping a second. It was jolly risky, but D'Arcy was in danger, and I had to save him—and that's all there was about it."

"Ripping!" said Cardew. "You plunged in, and went right under—"

"Couldn't dive in without going right under," said Trimble. "I fancy I hit the bottom—I felt rather a jar!" But I came up all right! I dashed the water from my eyes, and gripped hold of D'Arcy, and struggled in the raging waters for both our lives. That's how it was."

"And the water washed over your head, too—"

"Lots of times," said Trimble. "I can tell you that several times I thought I was a gonner, and that D'Arcy and I would go down together. But I never let go of him! Not me!"

"Fine!" said Cardew, heartily. Levison and Clive gave him rather suspicious looks. They had a doubt that Cardew was pulling Baggy's fat leg. "Some fellows would have let go—"

"Not me!" said Trimble. "I just held on! I remember thinking at the time, both or neither! And every time my head went under, I struggled up again."

"And that's how it was you came in drenched and dripping," said Cardew. "But there's just one detail that rather puzzles me," he added, musingly.

"Eh?"

"When you came in wet on Monday, only your trousers were wet," said Cardew, blandly. "Your jacket and collar and tie and cap were all dry enough."

"Oh!"

"That's really what makes it so wonderful," said Cardew, gravely. "Plunging headlong into the raging torrent, you know, and struggling for your life with the mountainous waters washing over your head—and all that without getting your jacket wet—!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

Cardew was interrupted by a yell of laughter.

"Oh!" gasped Baggy.

"Wasn't his jacket wet?" yelled Mellish.

"Not at all," said Cardew. "He looked as if he'd been wading, that's all. How did you manage to dive in without getting your jacket wet, Trimble?"

"Oh! I—I—I took it off!" gasped Baggy. "N-n-now I come to think of it, I stopped just a second to take my jacket off! A fellow can't swim in a jacket, you know—so I—I took it off! I—I threw it into the grass, and then, putting my hands together, dived in for D'Arcy—"

"Without wetting your cap?"

"Oh! I—I took that off, too—"

"Or your collar and tie?"

"Oh!" gasped Baggy, pushed into his last corner, as it were. "I—I—I—I took off my collar and tie, too—"

"Did you take your head off?" asked Cardew.

"Eh! Of course I didn't—"

"Then how the dickens did it keep dry when you went under water? D'Arcy's hair was a wet mop when he came in, but you hadn't had a single splash above the waist-line. Are you quite sure you didn't take your head off, along with the jacket and the cap and the collar and tie?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," roared Baggy. "If you're making out that I never went in for D'Arcy—"

"Not at all! I'm only pointing out how wonderful it was to go in for him without getting wet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cardew strolled away, smiling. He left Baggy speechless, and the other fellows laughing.



## 11

### No Help from Gussy!

“Gussy, old chap!”  
Arthur Augustus winced.

He could not help it.

He was grateful to Baggy Trimble. He saw him in an heroic light. He was, perhaps, the only fellow in the School House who so saw him—especially since that little scene in the day-room. But Arthur Augustus, at least, did not doubt that the bold Baggy had saved him from the rushing waters—whether he had plunged in for him or not. Gussy’s gratitude was deep and sincere. He was resolved to see all the good there was in Trimble, to turn a blind eye to the rest, and to treat him as a friend. Nevertheless, “Gussy old chap” from Baggy did somehow get on his noble nerves.

But though he winced involuntarily, he repressed that reaction at once. Baggy, in spite of appearance, in spite of all that fellows had thought of him, was a hero, and he had saved Gussy from the rushing waters. That was enough for Arthur Augustus.

So the involuntary wince was immediately followed by a cheery smile.

“Twot in, deah boy,” said Arthur Augustus.

Trimble trotted in.

Arthur Augustus was alone in Study No. 6. A succession of “howlers” in “con” had earned him lines from Mr. Lathom, his Form-master: so there he was, in the study, writing the same, while his friends were down at the nets. Luckily he was near the finish when Baggy barged in.

“Busy?” asked Baggy.

“Only a few more lines, deah boy.”

“I’ll help you if you like, old chap,” said Baggy, generously. If Gussy had only a few more lines to write, it seemed a fairly safe offer.

Arthur Augustus smiled. Fellows sometimes helped one another with lines: but Arthur Augustus did not want Baggy's scrawl on his paper. Mr. Lathom was not a very observant gentleman, but even Lathom would probably have spotted Baggy's remarkable fist.

"That's all wight, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "Only a few to do! Take a pew, old chap."

"O.K.," said Baggy. "Any toffee in that tin?"

"Yaas, wathah! Pway help yourself."

Baggy Trimble helped himself, liberally, from the toffee-tin, while Arthur Augustus completed his imposition. Baggy was quite content to wait, so long as the toffee lasted.

Arthur Augustus gave a sigh of relief, as he wrote down "*Talia flammato secum dea corde volutans*," regardless of the fact that he was ending in the middle of a sentence. Lathom had said fifty lines: and he couldn't expect a fellow to carry on for the sake of a full stop.

"That's done," said Arthur Augustus, laying down his pen, and rising from the table. "Anythin' I can do for you, Twimble, old fellow?" Arthur Augustus perhaps wondered a little why Baggy had called, as it was not tea-time.

"Well, yes," said Baggy. "You see, I'm writing to my uncle. I told you my uncle was going to send me a pound note, didn't I?"

"Oh! Yaas! I wemembah."

"It hasn't come!" said Baggy, sadly.

"Hasn't it weally, deah boy? I should be vewy glad to lend you anothah half-cwown, Twimble—"

"Good!"

"—if I had one—"

"What?"

"But I am sowwy to say that I haven't."

Baggy gave him a look. He was very glad to be on a footing of friendship with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. But sometimes he did undoubtedly feel a strong urge to punch his new friend on his noble nose.

"Well, about that letter," he said. "I want to pitch it good and strong, and you could help me, old chap. I don't want any bad spelling in it," explained Trimble. "Uncle Bagley's mentioned that more than once, and it gives him an impression that I'm slack at lessons, you know."

"Oh!" said Arthur Augustus. "I shall have gweat pleasuah in helpin' you with the spellin', Twimble, if you like. Suppose you w'ite the lettah heah, and I will give you all the assistance in my powah."

"That's it," agreed Trimble. "Perhaps you could lend me a stamp, too."

"Certainly, deah boy."

Arthur Augustus sorted out a stamp, note-paper, and pen. Baggy sat down at the study table to write. He drew a crumpled sheet from his pocket.

"I've written it," he explained. "But if there's any mistakes in the spelling, you tell me, and I'll write it over again, see? I can't trust Mellish, and Wildrake has gone out."

"I shall be vewy happy, Twimble."

"Here's the letter—"

"Do you wish me to wead your lettah to your uncle, Twimble?"

"Yes, and tell me if there's any mistakes."

"Vewy well."

Arthur Augustus took the crumpled letter, and looked at it. Several blots, and a number of smears, first met his eye. And undoubtedly there were some mistakes in the spelling. But it was not orthographical errors: it was the letter itself that caused Arthur Augustus to start, and stare, as he perused it. It ran:

*Dear Uncle Bagley,*

*I was verry dissapointed not to receeve an anser to my last letter, not bekause I was thinking about a pownd note, but bekause it is sutch a plesure to heer from you being an affeckshunate newew. I wish you could have been heer last half-hollyday to see me playing cricket on wich I am verry keen as I luv the gaim.*

Arthur Augustus paused, at that point, and fixed an astonished eye, and eyeglass, on the fat Baggy.

"That seems wathah queeah, Twimble," he said. "So fah as I wemembah, you were not playin' cwicket on Wednesday."

"What about that?" asked Trimble.

"Bai Jove!"

"You see, old Uncle Bagley's been a cricketer in his time, and he's keen on the game," explained Baggy. "That's to please him! Lathom made out in my report that I was slack at games, and I've got to set that right somehow."

"Bai Jove!" repeated Arthur Augustus, quite faintly.

"Get on with it," said Baggy, briskly.

Arthur Augustus, with quite a bewildered look, got on with it. The letter continued:

*I made fifty-four against the New House, and Tom Merry, who's junior captain, told me that he wood be relying on me for the matches all the rest of the seezun.*

Again Arthur Augustus looked up from the letter. A some-

what severe expression was coming over his face.

"I fail to undahstand this, Twimble," he said. "You are tellin' your Uncle Bagley heah that you play in House matches."

"Why not?" asked Trimble, blinking at him.

"Why not?" repeated Arthur Augustus, almost dazedly.

"I mean to say, he wouldn't know," explained Baggy. "He never comes down to the school—catch him coming three hundred miles to see me! How's he to know?"

"Oh, cwumbs! There is such a thing as the twuth, Twimble," gasped Arthur Augustus. "This is not the twuth. A fellow ought to be twuthful, Twimble."

Baggy grinned.

"Don't you ever stuff your pater, when you want a tip from home?" he asked, with a fat wink.

"Certainly not, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, sternly.

"Gammon," said Twimble.

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"A fellow tells the tale, of course," said Trimble.

"Bai Jove! You fat wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in his indignation, quite forgetting that Baggy was his heroic rescuer. "If you mean to imply that I am capable of spoofin' my governah—"

"Oh, come off it," said Trimble. "And look here, don't you jolly well call me names, when I've jolly well saved your life—"

"Oh! I—I withdwaw that wemark," stammered Arthur Augustus, thus reminded of his obligation. "I am sowwy I uttached the word wottah, Twimble."

"So you ought to be," said Trimble, with a sniff.

"But weally, Trimble—"

"Oh, don't jaw—get on with the letter," said Baggy. "I want to catch the post with it, and you're like a sheep's head, D'Arcy—all jaw."

Arthur Augustus drew a deep, deep breath. But without further remark, he went on reading that precious letter:

*I hope, deer uncle, that you will be pleezed to heer that I am cumming on so well in the cricket bekause of the advice you gave me on the subjick. Your kynd advice has been of verry grate bennyfit to me. I did not know how much I should enjoy cricket when I used to neglect it, and it is a grate plezure to me to be in the junior elleven. I will write and tell you all about the match I play in next week, wich I hope you will like to heer about, so no more at pressent from your affectshunate newew,*  
 Bagley Trimble.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"Oh, cwikev!" murmured Arthur Augustus, when he had finished.

Trimble, sitting at the table, dipped his pen in the ink. Baggy was prepared to take the trouble of re-writing that letter—if there were any mistakes in the spelling—in order to make a proper impression on Uncle Bagley. He thought that there might possibly be a few!

Arthur Augustus gazed at him. Baggy blinked back at Arthur Augustus.

"Any mistakes in the spelling?" he asked.

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah."

"Well, look here, you read it out, and tell me the spelling as you go along, see?" said Baggy briskly. "Go ahead!"

Arthur Augustus did not go ahead. He laid the letter on the table. Trimble gave him an irritated stare.

"Look here, you know, you're wasting time," he yapped. "I've told you I want to catch the post."

"I am sowwv, Twimble, but I am bound to say that I disapwove most stwongly of tellin' such fibs—"

"Look, here, D'Arcv—"

"I wegwet that I cannot have a hand in any such pwoceedin's, Twimble. I advise you not to post that lettah."

"I didn't come here for your advice," snapped Baggy. "I came here to ask you about the spelling. I don't want my uncle to think I can't spell—I tell you he's been quite sarcastic about it. Get on with it."

"I am sowwv, Twimble—"

"Nothing to be sorry about. Just get on with it. To begin with, how many S's in disappointed?" asked Trimble. "Mellish said there were three, but I jolly well know he was pulling my leg. How many?"

"Only one, Twimble! And a double 'P.' But—"

"Sure?" asked Baggy, doubtfully. "I've always spelt it with a double 'S.' Look here, you ain't pulling me leg like Mellish, are you?" Baggy blinked rather suspiciously at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Weally, Twimble—"

"Well, I can trust you," said Trimble. "I'll put in one 'S' and chance it. Now get on with the rest."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcv shook his head.

"I am afwaid, Twimble, that I cannot give you any assistance whatevah in w'itin' a stwing of untwuths to your uncle," he said. "I wefuse to be connected with such twickewy in any way. I wecommand you not to post such a lettah: but if you do, I can

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

have no connection with that mattah whatevah."

With that, and without waiting for a reply, Arthur Augustus walked out of Study No. 6 with his lines for Mr. Lathom, leaving Baggy Trimble staring after him blankly. Why Arthur Augustus objected to "telling the tale" to Mr. Bagley was beyond Baggy's comprehension.

"Well, of all the swobs!" exclaimed Baggy, wrathfully. "Making out he's grateful for a fellow saving his life, and then refusing to help a fellow write a letter, when it may mean a pound note, too! I say, D'Arcy! Look here, you know, you come back and help me with this letter."

But answer there came none! Arthur Augustus was already on his way downstairs with his lines for Lathom.

"Swob!" hooted Baggy.

He picked up the letter that D'Arcy had left on the table. His gooseberry eyes ran over it: but if there were mistakes in the spelling, Baggy was unable to detect them. However, he dropped a blot on one of the S's in "dissapointed," and smeared in an extra p, setting that right at least. For the rest he had to trust to luck. It was not worth the trouble of re-writing it just for that!

"Swob!" repeated Baggy, as he folded the letter, and put it into the envelope. "I expect it's all right—I fancy he can't spell better than I can. Cheeky swob! Making a fellow out to be a liar! That's gratitude! Yah!"

And having attached D'Arcy's stamp to the envelope, Baggy Trimble rolled out to post the letter, and duly dropped it into the school box—hoping that it might produce the proper effect on Mr. Bagley, and result in the arrival of a pound note from his avuncular relative.



## 12

### Boot for Baggy!

“MANNERS, old fellow.”

“Not so much of your ‘old fellow’.”

“But I say—”

“Oh, scat!” said Manners.

“Hem!” murmured Tom Merry.

“Hem!” repeated Monty Lowther.

Manners was busy. His camera was on the table in No. 10 Study in the Shell, and Manners had taken a roll of used film from it, and was about to insert a new roll. This, to Manners of the Shell, was a very important operation, which he performed with due care. Anything connected with a camera was of deep interest to Harry Manners: and when his thoughts were occupied with photography, he had little use for interruptions. Hence his somewhat curt replies to the fat Fourth-Former looking in at the doorway.

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther, not being frightfully interested in cameras, were about to go down after tea, leaving Manners to his happy occupation, when Baggy Trimble materialised. Both of them gave expressive coughs, as a warning to Manners to be civil to the caller. They were still giving the heroic Baggy the benefit of the doubt: though it was certainly a fact that doubts had accumulated more and more since the date of the heroic exploit. The more Baggy talked about that exploit, the more fellows doubted him. Yet they had to admit that D’Arcy must surely know whether he had been saved from the woodland torrent or not, and who had saved him. Really it was quite a puzzling affair: and a fellow hardly knew what to think. Still, the possibility that Baggy had risked his fat life for another fellow, was a reason for tolerating him, at least.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"I came here to speak to you, Manners—!" went on Baggy.

"Well, don't!" said Manners, over his shoulder.

"What is it, Trimble?" asked Tom Merry, hastily. "Like to come down to the nets with us?"

"I'll watch it," said Baggy. "I say, Manners, you might give a chap a minute or two, when I want to ask you something about photography. You're the chap who knows all about it, ain't you?"

"Oh!" Manners' expression changed at once. Even Baggy's remarks were welcome to his ears, if he wanted to talk about photography: which was almost the beginning and end of all things to Harry Manners. "You can trickle in, Trimble. If there's anything you want to know about photography, I'll tell you with pleasure."

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther exchanged a grin, and left the study. Manners' knowledge of photography, like Sam Weller's knowledge of London, was extensive and peculiar. There was no doubt that he could tell Trimble all he wanted to know about photography, and probably more! His friends were quite satisfied to leave him to it, cricket being more to their taste.

They disappeared down the passage, and Baggy Trimble rolled into the study, Manners giving him quite a genial look.

Of the three chums of No. 10, Manners was the least disposed to believe in heroic stunts performed by the fat and fat-headed Baggy. But if Trimble wanted photographic information, Manners was his man.

"Taking it up, Trimble?" he asked. "You couldn't do better. Much better go out with a camera, than loaf about on a half-holiday with your hands in your pockets."

"Well, I ain't exactly taking it up," said Trimble, cautiously. "At least, I might. But there was something I wanted to ask you."

"Go ahead!"

"About faking photographs," said Baggy.

"Do you mean taking them?"

"No. Faking them! I mean to say, sometimes you see queer photographs, man with a donkey's head, and so on—they're faked, ain't they?"

"Of course they are," said Manners. "You can fake all sorts of pictures if you know how to work it with the negatives."

"Could you do it?" asked Baggy.

"Precious little in the photographic line that I couldn't do," said Manners, with just a touch of complacency. "Of course I could."

"You're jolly clever," said Baggy.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

Manners nodded! He was willing to admit that he was jolly clever! Indeed, Baggy's recognition of that fact made him disposed to think that Baggy, after all, might not be such a fool as he looked!

"Well, I've had lots of practice at the game," he said. "You see, you superimpose one negative over another, and so—"

"Oh! Yes! I say, you've taken photographs of the junior eleven," said Baggy. "There's one on the wall here."

Manners glanced up at it.

"Yes, that's my work," he said. "Not bad."

"Jolly good," said Baggy, heartily. "Looks to me quite like professional work."

"A bit better than most professional work, I think," said Manners, calmly.

"Oh! Ah! Yes! That's what I really meant to say," gasped Baggy. "Beats professional work hollow, in my opinion. Beats me how you do it, too. Must be a gift or something."

Manners smiled, thawing more and more. Evidently Baggy was not such a fool as he looked! He knew good photographic work when he saw it, at least!

"Well, the fact is, it is a gift," admitted Manners. "Anyone can learn to handle a camera, and take pictures, of course. But getting the thing just right and making a thoroughly good job of it, that's a bit of a gift." He gave the fat Baggy quite a cheery smile. "Like to see some of my photographs, Trimble? I've got a good few in this drawer." Manners opened a drawer in his desk, where he kept his finished prints. Manners was always willing to show them, when fellows wanted to see them—it was not too often that fellows did!

"Just what I should like," said Trimble, beaming.

"Here you are!" said Manners, genially.

Trimble looked at the photographs. Never before had Trimble displayed the slightest interest in Manners' hobby. A more suspicious fellow than Manners might have supposed that Baggy was pulling his leg. Certainly Trimble seemed deeply interested now.

"This is a jolly good one," he remarked, picking up a photograph of Fatty Wynn, of the New House, in the act of bowling Tom Merry at the wickets. It was one of Manners' cricket snaps, of which he was justly proud.

Really it was a good picture. It showed up Fatty Wynn's plump figure to great advantage—the plump bowler really seemed almost to live. Tom Merry at the other end was small in the distance, and in the background was a crowd of School House and New House fellows mingled. That picture had been taken on the

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

occasion of a House match, and several New House men had asked Manners for copies of it. There was one pinned up on the wall of Figgins and Co.'s study in the New House.

"One of my best," said Manners, modestly. "I did get Fatty just a treat—only a quick snap, too. Snaps sometimes turn out jolly well."

"Topping!" said Baggy, his eyes glued on it. "I say, anybody might think it was me, except for the face, of course."

Manners stared, and then grinned.

"Well, the figure isn't unlike yours," he remarked. "Wynn's jolly nearly as fat as you are. But he isn't a bit like you in looks." Manners politely forebore to add that Fatty Wynn was good-looking, while Baggy's best pal, if he had one, would never have dreamed of saying that Baggy was!

"Only the face," said Baggy. "The rest of him would pass for me—in flannels, you know. You could fake the face."

"Eh?"

"I mean to say, easy as pie for a clever photographer like you," said Baggy. "You could shove the face out of one negative into another—isn't that how it's done?"

"Something like that," said Manners, staring at him. "But I shouldn't be likely to do it."

"But you could?" said Baggy. "You could fix up a copy of that photograph making it look as if it was me bowling instead of Wynn."

"Oh, yes, I could."

"That's all right, then," said Baggy. "I—I say, you'll do it, won't you?"

"Of course I won't!"

"But I say—"

"You fat ass," said Manners, gruffly. "If you want to show off as a cricketer, you'd better play cricket, and not be such a fat rabbit. Do you think I'm going to fake a picture for you to show off?"

"Tain't exactly that," said Baggy. "You see, I want it for a special reason. It's, really important. It's worth a quid to me."

"What?"

"I don't mind telling you," said Baggy, confidentially. "My uncle's jolly keen on cricket. He wants me to be a cricketer. Well, if I could send him a photograph of me playing in a House match, it would please him no end. See? He—he doesn't seem quite to believe all I tell him in my letters. Of course, I pile it on a bit, you know."

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"Oh!" gasped Manners. He began to understand the inner meaning of Baggy Trimble's sudden interest in his hobby.

"But if I could send him a picture like that, it would be all right—right as rain," said Baggy. "Seeing is believing, you know."

"Oh!" repeated Manners, in a gasping voice.

"I'll bet it would be worth a quid to me," said Baggy. "I'll pay for the photograph, too."

Baggy blinked inquiringly at Manners.

Manners' face was quite a study. He stared at Trimble as if he could not quite believe his ears. But as he slowly assimilated the proposition, quite an alarming expression came over his face. Baggy, evidently, had learned nothing, from his experience with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in Study No. 6. Baggy never could get it into his fat head that other fellows might be more scrupulous than himself.

It seemed that Manners could not find his voice, for some moments. Then he found it—in a roar.

"You fat rascal!"

"Oh, I say, you know—"

"You—you—you want me to fake a photograph, to help you diddle your uncle out of a tip!" roared Manners. "You bloated brigand."

"Look here, you know—!"

"By gum! I—I'll—"

"Here, you keep off!" yelled Baggy, as Manners made a jump at him. "What are you getting your rag out for, I'd like to know? I say—yaroooh! Look here—yaroop! Oh, corks!"

Baggy wriggled like a fat eel in Manners' grasp. Why Manners had so suddenly cut up rusty like this, Baggy really did not know. It had seemed to Baggy quite a jolly good idea. Truth and Trimble had long been strangers; and Baggy's fat mind was wholly concentrated on pulling the avuncular leg and extracting the pound note. Manners, it was clear, took quite a different view of the matter.

Heedless of Baggy's frantic yells and wriggles, he slung the fat Fourth-Former round by his fat neck, and kicked.

Thud!

"Whooooop!" roared Baggy.

Thud!

"Yaroooh!"

Baggy wrenched his fat neck free, and bounded for the door. But Manners was not finished with him yet. He leaped after Baggy, and his foot flew out again.

Thud!

"Yooooo-hooooop!"

That kick landed on Baggy in the doorway, and shot him headlong into the passage. Then he rolled and roared.

Manners rushed out of the study after him. Baggy scrambled wildly up and fled down the passage. After him flew Manners, letting out one foot after another, fairly dribbling the fat Baggy down the passage to the study landing. Yell after yell from Baggy woke the echoes as he was dribbled.

Half-a-dozen fellows on the study landing stared round in surprise. One of them was D'Arcy of the Fourth, and Baggy dodged round him.

"Bai Jove—what—?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Keep him off!" yelled Baggy. "He's gone mad! Wow! Keep him off!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

Manners snorted, and tramped back to his study. Arthur Augustus stared after him, and then turned his eyeglass on the panting, perspiring Baggy.

"Whatevah is the mattah?" he asked.

"Oh, crikey! I don't know!" gasped Baggy. "We were having a friendly chat about photographs, and all of a sudden Manners cut up rusty. Wow! I think he's gone crackers! Ow! wow! ow!"

Baggy limped away, spluttering. It had been quite a bright idea, from Baggy's point of view. But he was not thinking of trying it on again! Not for a pound note from Uncle Bagley, or half-a-dozen pound notes, would Baggy have ventured into No. 10 Study again, to propound such a bright idea. It had resulted only in boots for Baggy, and he did not want any more.



## A £5 Note—If—!

“ONE for you, Trimble!” said Blake.

“Oh, good!” said Baggy.

His fat face registered hope, mingled with doubt.

It was Saturday morning, and a number of School House fellows were looking in the rack for letters. Baggy Trimble had rolled along, in the hope of finding a letter from Uncle Bagley. And there was a letter, which Jack Blake handed down to him: and it was inscribed in the avuncular hand. But whether it contained the hoped-for pound note, was still a matter of mixed hope and doubt.

It would have been a cert, in Baggy’s opinion, had he been able to send Uncle Bagley a photograph of himself bowling in a House match. That would have been proof positive—or as good—that he was not merely pulling the long bow in his letters from school. But Manners had let him down in that. And he realised sadly that Uncle Bagley did not seem quite to believe, somehow, that he had a very truthful nephew at St. Jim’s.

Baggy jabbed a fat grubby thumb into the envelope, which was his elegant way of opening a letter, and drew out the missive within.

He unfolded it, hopefully. But hope faded out as he unfolded it. There was no enclosure.

“Blow!” grunted Baggy.

He jammed the letter disconsolately into his pocket. He was not very keen on perusing it. As Uncle Bagley had not enclosed a pound note, the letter had lost its interest for Trimble. He was not in the least anxious to know what Mr. Bagley might have to say in the way of avuncular advice to a lazy, slack, and untruthful nephew. Baggy had had enough of that, and to spare,

in previous epistles. Very likely the old bean would be finding fault with his spelling again: that would be no new thing! Quite possibly he did not swallow Baggy's statement that he had become keen on games, and was a likely man for the matches. Really, he was hard to please: and in point of fact, Baggy would not have bothered about pleasing him, but for the circumstance that he was the happy possessor of pound notes. Baggy liked pound notes, which rarely came his way.

However, on second thoughts, Baggy extracted the letter from his pocket again, bethinking him that, although it contained no pound note, it might possibly contain a reference to one that might be coming later! Even a remote prospect of a pound note was something! There were so many sweet and sticky things that might be had for a pound note. Baggy would have preferred a bird in hand: but a bird in the bush was better than nothing.

So he unfolded the letter once more, and proceeded to read it.

Then he stared at it.

"Oh, crumbs!" ejaculated Baggy.

He blinked at that letter. He goggled at it. Apparently his mendacious communications on the subject of cricket had produced results: though not the results for which the fat junior had hoped. That letter from Uncle Bagley ran:

*My dear Nephew,*

*While sorry to see that your spelling, so far from having improved, appears to be as bad as ever, if not worse, I am very glad to learn that you are so keen on games. It certainly is good news that you have improved to such an extent at cricket that you are now a member of the junior eleven. You appear to have made very rapid progress, if this is indeed the case."*

"Yah!" murmured Baggy, at that point. It sounded to him as if Uncle Bagley was sceptical on the subject of his membership of the junior eleven. It was pretty hard, Baggy thought, if his own uncle couldn't believe what a fellow told him! It was practically making a fellow out to be a fibber!

Having expressed his indignation by murmuring "Yah!" Baggy continued his perusal. The letter went on:

*"I am extremely interested to hear that you are playing in a match next week. It is a real pleasure to me to know that you are playing for your school. But I will be plain with you. More than once I have detected untruthful statements in your letters to me."*

"Well, if that doesn't beat it!" squeaked Baggy, aloud, in his

indignation. "Might as well call a fellow a liar, and have done with it! Yah!"

Baggy was tempted to crumple the letter and stick it in his pocket again or throw it away unfinished. This was not the sort of thing he wanted. However, he went on with the perusal, indignant as he was.

*"If what you have told me is correct, and I trust that it is, I am delighted. I desire to give you every encouragement to keep on this new course, and even though it seems hopeless for you to earn any commendation in class, you may become a credit to your school, and to your family, by winning distinction in games. You could not please me more than by turning out a good cricketer. To come to the point—"*

"Time he did!" grunted Baggy, before he went further. But the next sentence made him goggle at the letter.

*"—if you actually play for the school, in the match you have mentioned, I shall show my approval in a practical way, by sending you a five-pound note."*

It was enough to make Baggy Trimble goggle! It was, indeed, enough to make any fellow goggle! A five-pound note! He had hoped for a pound note—with a dubious hope! But a £5 note!

Few fellows at St. Jim's ever possessed a five-pound note! Occasionally—very occasionally—such a valuable article came for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, from his noble pater at Eastwood House. More often, Ralph Reckness Cardew had one from his indulgent grandfather, Lord Reckness. But in the Lower School at St. Jim's—or in the Upper, for that matter—five-pound notes were few and far between. Baggy Trimble, certainly, had never possessed one, in all his fat career. Obviously, Uncle Bagley was greatly bucked by the idea of his nephew playing for School, to come down handsome like this. A five-pound note!

The mere words dazzled Baggy! Five pounds in a lump sum! It was like a golden dream to think of all the sticky things that could be obtained for five pounds, even in times of scarcity. Jam tarts—doughnuts—cakes—toffee—chocolates—cream puffs—meringues—it was a beatific vision!

For a moment or two, Baggy's thoughts dwelt on that "vision splendid," and his gooseberry eyes danced in his fat face. Five pounds—five whole quids—unlimited tuck!

But the fat face fell again.

The £5 note was to be his reward for playing for School! Uncle Bagley's generosity depended on the truth of what his hopeful nephew had told him. And there was, alas! not a single

word of truth in it. Baggy, to do him justice, never realised what an Ananias he was. He admitted that he stretched a point or two, that he piled it on a little, that he drew the long bow a bit, or perhaps more than a bit. All the same, he was indignant if his word was doubted! Still, even Baggy had to own up to himself that what he had stated in his letter was not in strict accordance with the facts. It was very irritating and offensive for Uncle Bagley to doubt it; still, as a matter of actual fact, it wasn't true. That five-pound note depended on Baggy being picked for the St. Jim's junior eleven: and he had as much chance of being picked to play for St. Jim's, as of being picked for the M.C.C.

"Oh, lor'!" murmured Baggy, dismally.

His fibbing had come home to roost, as it were! It had not extracted a pound note from Uncle Bagley. It had extracted that dazzling promise of a £5 note if Baggy made his words good!

He finished reading the letter with a glum fat face.

*"Write to me again after the match. You will, as a matter of course, enclose some proof that you have actually played for your school.*

*Your Uncle,*

*William Bagley."*

"Rotten!" groaned Baggy, having small hope of earning that £5 note.

## 14

### A Spot of Trouble !

“TRIMBLE !”

No reply.

Mr. Lathom, the Master of the Fourth, raised his eyebrows, and blinked at the fattest member of his form over his glasses. Several fellows in the Fourth-Form room glanced at Baggy.

They were doing history in the Fourth that morning in third school. Mr. Lathom was an easy-going gentleman : and his form did not always give him the complete attention due to a Form-master. In point of fact, Jack Blake and Herries and Digby were whispering about cricket : Kerr and Wynn of the New House were, also in whispers, debating who would take Figgins's place in the junior eleven when the Greyfriars match came off : Cardew was drawing a caricature of Lathom on his blotter, at which Levison and Clive tried hard not to grin : Mellish was pencilling the word “ginger-nuts” on a slip of paper, to be passed along to the new fellow, Ridd, whose hair was red : Wildrake was reading, from under his desk, a letter from his people in Canada : Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was giving deep thought to a new necktie : and various other fellows were thinking of matters quite unconnected with the annals of their native land. Nevertheless, they gave Mr. Lathom sufficient attention to keep him quiet, as it were—with the exception of Baggy Trimble. Trimble gave him no attention whatever.

Trimble, indeed, seemed to have forgotten that he was in form at all, and was apparently quite oblivious of Mr. Lathom's existence ; so much so that he did not answer when his name was called.

There was a wrinkle of deep reflection in Baggy's podgy brow : but he certainly was not thinking of the lesson.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

He neither answered nor looked up as Mr. Lathom called his name: and the Fourth-Form Master stared at him over his glasses and repeated it, in deeper tones:

"Trimble!"

Still no reply.

Baggy, plunged in deep thought on more important subjects than history, did not seem to hear.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Has that fat ass gone to sleep, or what?"

Had he been near enough, he would have drawn Baggy's attention to his Form-master with a nudge. But he was not near enough to the fat Baggy for that.

"Trimble!" said Mr. Lathom, for the third time, in astonishment that was now mingled with wrath. "Answer me, Trimble!"

Baggy did not answer.

He seemed blind and deaf to his surroundings. The fact was, that Baggy was concentrated on Uncle Bagley's letter that morning, and the dazzling prospect of a £5 note—if! The £5 note was overwhelmingly attractive: but the "if" was a very large-sized one! Baggy was going to finger that five-pound note if he played for School the following week! There could scarcely have been a larger size in "ifs."

Somehow, anyhow, Baggy had to annex that £5 note. It had, as it were, been dangled before his gooseberry eyes, and failing to get hold of it would be like the tortures of Tantalus over again, only worse! If he could, somehow, anyhow, push into the junior eleven—!

He couldn't, of course. Really it was a hopeless proposition. A fellow who spent hours in inventing excuses to dodge games-practice, who loathed cricket almost as much as he loathed lessons, who handled a bat like a coke-hammer, and never knew where a ball was going when it left his hand, really was not a promising recruit! But if going in for cricket, and sticking to it like glue, would work the oracle, Baggy was prepared for even that desperate resource. But would it? Could it?

With such a problem on his fat mind, Baggy was not likely to be interested in history. Lathom's voice in class, so far as he heard it at all, was simply a distant irritating drone. How could he bag that fiver? How could he push into the junior eleven in order to bag it? He had to have that fiver, even though the skies fell!

But even if the skies fell, they were not likely to fall on Baggy Trimble wielding a bat for School! That tempting fiver was as tantalizingly beyond the reach of his fat fingers. But he had to bag it, somehow! It was, perhaps, no wonder that Lathom's voice fell on deaf ears.

"TRIMBLE!"

For the fourth time, Mr. Lathom pronounced Baggy's name, crescendo! His voice was louder and deeper.

Fellows stared round at Baggy, for still he did not reply. His gooseberry eyes were fixed on his desk, and he was as oblivious of his surroundings as a fellow in a trance! That fiver—!

Mr. Lathom picked up a pointer from his desk, and came up the aisle between the desks. The expression on his face was extremely expressive! Baggy Trimble no more heeded his approach than he had heeded his voice. That fiver—!

Rap!

"Yaroooooh!"

A sudden roar awoke the echoes of the Form-room. Lathom, unheeded up to that moment, had apprised the fat Baggy that he was still in existence! Even Baggy, deep in his problem as he was, had to heed the rap of the pointer on his fat knuckles.

"Ow! wow!" Trimble, suddenly awakened from his day-dream, sucked fat knuckles, and blinked up at his Form-master like a startled owl. "Wow! Ow! Ooooh! Oh, crikey! Wow!"

"That's woke him up!" murmured Blake. "What on earth's the matter with the fat chump?"

Nobody could guess what was the matter with Baggy. Something, evidently, was out of the usual. But nobody had heard of the avuncular fiver, and certainly nobody could have guessed that Baggy Trimble was trying to think out ways and means of wedging into the junior eleven for the match with Harry Wharton and Co. of Greyfriars. That was not the kind of idea that anyone was likely to attribute to Baggy.

"Trimble!" thundered Mr. Lathom.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Baggy. "I—I—"

"Why are you not giving me attention, Trimble?"

"I—I—I was, sir!" gasped Trimble. "I—I heard every word you were saying, sir! I was—was listening like—like anything, sir."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"I have called your name several times, Trimble," rapped Mr. Lathom.

"Oh! Have you, sir? I—I—"

"If you do not give attention, Trimble, I shall cane you."

"Oh! Yes, sir! Thank you, sir! I—I mean—oh! No, sir! I—I mean, I—I—I" burred Baggy.

Mr. Lathom gave him a very severe look, but, to Baggy's relief, did not use the pointer again. Baggy was left to suck his knuckles.



But he was not left in peace, to resume his deep ponderings on the subject of that elusive five-pound note. Lathom's eye was on him.

"Trimble!" he snapped.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" moaned Baggy. He answered, this time. Irritating as it was, in the circumstances, in fact exasperating, Lathom had to be heeded. Baggy did not want any more pointer.

He tried to give attention. It was not easy, with cricket and five-pound notes jostling in his fat mind. But he tried.

"What can you tell me about the Norman Conquest, Trimble?"

"Oh, lor!" moaned Trimble.

He couldn't tell his Form-master anything about the Norman Conquest. He had not heard a single word of the lesson: and what he had heard in previous lessons had found a very precarious lodging in his fat brain. On the subject of the undesirable aliens who landed in England in 1066, Baggy Trimble's mind was a beautiful blank.

"If you have been attending to the lesson, Trimble—!" rumbled Mr. Lathom.

"Oh, yes, sir," groaned Baggy. "I—I never missed a word, sir."

"Then you will answer my questions, Trimble," said Mr. Lathom, grimly. "To what did William of Normandy lay claim?"

"Five pounds, sir."

"WHAT!"

Baggy really couldn't help it. Five pounds was uppermost in his mind, obliterating practically everything else, and it popped out.

Mr. Lathom gazed at him: or rather, he glared at him. He did not expect much in the way of intelligence from that hopeful member of his form. But this was the limit.

"What—what—what did you say, Trimble?" he spluttered.

"I—I—I mean—"

"Are you not aware, Trimble, that William of Normandy laid claim to a crown?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom.

"Oh! Did he, sir? I—I mean, yes, sir! Certainly! I—I—I meant to say five shillings, sir," gasped the confused Baggy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled all the Fourth.

"Bai Jove! Is Twimble off his wockah?" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence in the form!" rapped Mr. Lathom. "Trimble! Answer me! What do you mean by such a reply?"

Baggy goggled at him hopelessly. In a less confused state of mind, even Baggy might have remembered that William of Nor-

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

mandy laid claim to the Crown of England, in rivalry to Harold the Saxon. But at the moment, the word "crown" only appealed to Baggy's fat mind as a five-shilling piece!

"I—I—I—" he stuttered. "You—you said a crown, sir—and—and that's five bob—I mean five shillings—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Trimble, your obtuseness, your carelessness, are almost beyond belief. You have given no attention whatever to the lesson. You will now tell me all you know of William of Normandy."

"That won't take long!" murmured Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you speaking in class, Cardew? Take fifty lines!" rapped Mr. Lathom. Evidently, his easy-going temper was failing him a little, under the trial of Trimble. "Now, Trimble, tell me all you know of William the Conqueror, and if you fail to give satisfactory answers, you will be detained in Extra School this afternoon."

"Oh, crikey!"

"I am waiting, Trimble."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" Trimble cudgelled his fat brains for something about William the Conqueror. All sorts of mixed and confused items floated in his confused mind. "He—he was called the Conqueror, sir, because—because he was—was William the Conqueror, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Now Trimble—!"

"He—he let the cakes burn, sir," gasped Trimble. "After the Battle of Waterloo, he took refuge in a neatherd's hut and—and let the cakes burn—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fourth.

"And—and he never smiled again!" went on Trimble, desperately, "and—and he said 'Kiss me, Hardy! If I had but served Pontius Pilate as I have served Julius Caesar!'"

Trimble's fat voice was drowned in a roar of laughter. Only Mr. Lathom was not laughing! His face was a study.

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "Silence! If there is any more merriment, the whole form will be detained! Trimble, Extra School this afternoon."

"Oh, lor'! I—I say, sir—"

"That will do, Trimble."

"But, sir—"

"Silence!"

"But—but, sir, if—if you'd let me off, sir—I—I—I'm playing cricket this afternoon, sir—!" gasped Trimble. "I—I'm awfully keen on it, sir, and—and—"

TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"Bai love!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake.

"Phew!"

"Trimble—cricket!" murmured Cardew. "Did you ever?"

Mr. Lathom looked fixedly at Trimble. Knowing nothing of Uncle Bagley's five-pound note, or of Baggy's desperate resolve to plunge into cricket, hoping that it was not too late, Lathom was not likely to believe that statement. Baggy's Form-master was well aware that Baggy was as slack and lazy at games as in class and prep and everything else. It was, in fact, about the lamest story that Baggy could have told.

"Trimble!" Lathom spoke at last. "Stand out before the form!"

"I—I say, sir—"

"Stand out before the form!" thundered Mr. Lathom. "Now bend over that desk, Trimble! I have given you Extra School, Trimble, for idleness, inattention, and ignorance. But for untruthfulness I shall cane you."

"But I—I—I—"

"Bend over that form!"

"Oh, crikey!"

Whop!

"Yarooooop!"

"Go back to your place, Trimble! You will go into Extra School at two o'clock!"

"Wow!"

Trimble crawled back to his place. During the remainder of the lesson he wriggled on his form, and even Uncle Bagley's five-pound note failed wholly to occupy his fat thoughts.

## 15

### Nothing Doing!

"I SAY, Tom Merry!"

"Go it," said Tom, with a smile.

There was a growl from Manners.

"Look here, boot that fat spoofer out! We don't want him in this study." Manners of the Shell, evidently, had not forgotten Trimble's last visit in quest of a faked photograph.

"Easy does it, old chap," murmured Monty Lowther. "Might be civil to a chap, in the circs, you know."

Snort from Manners.

"What circs?" he snapped.

"Well, he did lug that fathead D'Arcy out of the water—"

"Did he?" sniffed Manners.

"Well, D'Arcy says he did—"

"D'Arcy's a silly ass!"

"Granted," agreed Lowther. "But even a silly ass knows whether he fell into water or not, and whether a chap hooked him out."

"That's that, Manners," said Tom Merry, with a nod.

"I don't believe a word of it," said Manners, deliberately. "How he pulled D'Arcy's leg I don't know—but he did! After all, that ass goes about asking to have his leg pulled."

"Look here, you know—!" bleated Baggy, indignantly.

"Rats!" said Manners.

"You jolly well wouldn't have done it, and chanced it," exclaimed Baggy. "I can see you plunging into deep water for a chap—I don't think! Catch you doing what I did!"

"Easy enough to do nothing, which is exactly what you did, you spoofing walrus," said Manners. "Plunged in, did you?"

"Yes, I jolly well did—"

"And Cardew saw you come in afterwards, and you weren't wet

above the waistcoat!" snorted Manners. "Lot of plunging you did."

"I—I—I mean, I—I waded in—"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry, staring blankly at the fat Baggy. "There's a bit of difference between plunging in, and wading in, Trimble. Did you go in at all?"

"Didn't I get D'Arcy out?" hooted Trimble. "Think he's still there, or what? Didn't I shave his wife—I mean save his life? That's all the credit you can give a chap who risks his life to save a fellow from the raging waves—I mean from the roaring water—and that's what I did."

Baggy goggled indignantly at the Terrible Three. He really was indignant. Baggy had "told the tale" about that thrilling exploit so often since it hadn't happened, that he had almost come to believe in his own thrilling tale himself. Truth was not necessary to Trimble. He was satisfied so long as he was not found out, and he had not been found out—and wasn't going to be, as Figgins was not coming back that term. And if he wasn't going to be found out, his tale was as good as true, in the fat Baggy's estimation at least. Baggy's podgy brain moved in mysterious ways its wonders to perform.

"It's gammon from beginning to end," said Manners, coolly. "How did you get D'Arcy out, Trimble, if you did get him out?"

"I—I plunged in—I—I—I mean I—I waded in—that is, I—I got out on a—a—a branch," said Baggy, remembering how Figgins had done it. "D'Arcy couldn't do a thing to help himself, hanging on to the tip of a low bough that kept on dipping! There was only one way of getting him, and he crawled along a branch over D'Arcy's head—"

"He!" yelled Monty Lowther.

"—I mean—!" stuttered Baggy. He had made rather a slip! "I—I—I mean, me—I meant to say me—"

"You meant to say 'me crawled along a branch'?" gasped Tom Merry. "Does Lathom let you get away with grammar like that, in your form?"

"I—I—I mean I—I crawled—"

"You're rather a crawler," agreed Manners. "But you never crawled out on a branch to get D'Arcy out. Who did?"

"I did!" yelled Trimble.

"Who was the 'he'?" grinned Monty Lowther.

"There wasn't any he!" howled Trimble. "It was me all the time! Nobody else within miles! If he—I mean if I—hadn't got out on that upper branch, you'd have seen the last of D'Arcy! It was jolly well touch and go, I can tell you. I was soaked from head to foot—I mean my trousers were soaked—and it

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

jolly well wasn't when I slipped on the plank, either. Nothing of the kind."

"So you got wet slipping on the plank?" asked Manners. "No!" roared Baggy. "It was when I plunged in—I mean when I waded in—I mean when I crawled out on the branch—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle," hooted Baggy.

"Thanks, we will!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cackling at a fellow who splunged headlong into a dream—I mean plunged headlong into a stream—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" said Baggy, bitterly. "I might have been wept away by the slaughter—I mean swept away by the water—it was only my pluck that pulled me through. That's what did it, pluck! That's my long suit! Just pluck! And if you fellows don't believe that I did it—"

"I don't!" said Manners.

"Yah!" retorted Baggy. "Fat lot you know about it! You don't know anything about anything but photographs, and you take jolly rotten photographs, too!"

Manners rose to his feet. Baggy's opinion of his photographic powers seemed to have deteriorated, since Baggy's last call. Manners' expression was so very expressive that Tom Merry hastily pushed him back into his chair.

"Easy does it, old man," he said. "Look here, Trimble, do you want anything? You haven't come here just to tell us what a plucky chap you are, I suppose?"

Baggy's pluck was at a discount in No. 10 Study now—Tom Merry and Monty Lowther rather agreed with Manners on that subject. That unfortunate pronoun that Baggy had let slip was rather revealing. Distinctly he had said "he"—and who was "he"?

"It's about the cricket," said Baggy.

"Cricket?" repeated Tom.

That was about the last subject on which he had expected to hear from Baggy Trimble. Baggy's interest in the summer game, hitherto, had been confined to dodging practice on compulsory days.

However, if the laziest, fattest, and frowsiest member of the School House was beginning to take an interest in healthy outdoor games, Tom Merry was the man to encourage him: either by prodding him with a bat or by gentler measures.

"I mean to say, I'm keen on it," explained Baggy.

"Keen on cricket!" said Monty Lowther. "Is that a joke?"

"No, tain't!" roared Baggy.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE !

"Bit sudden, isn't it?" asked Manners, sarcastically. "What are you trying to pull Tom's leg for, you fat fraud? You're about as keen on cricket, as on going into the water to fetch a chap out."

"Yah! Look here, Tom Merry, you've jolly well called me a slacker, and a frowster, and lots of names—"

"I have!" agreed Tom, "and you jolly well asked for them all. But if you're getting keen on cricket, I'm jolly glad, and I'll do anything I can to help."

"Mean that?" asked Baggy, eagerly.

"Of course I do, you fat ass."

"Might teach him which end of a bat to take hold of, by way of a beginning," remarked Monty Lowther, thoughtfully. "That's the first lesson, Trimble."

"Look here, you swol—"

"Second lesson—you have to hit the ball, not the wicket—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, can it!" howled Trimble. "Look here, Tom Merry, you've just said that you'd do anything you could to help."

"So I will," said Tom. "Any old thing, if you're not pulling my leg."

"Well, what about the Greyfriars match next week?" asked Baggy.

"The Greyfriars match!" repeated Tom. "Well, what about it?"

"Give a chap a chance to play—"

"What?"

"I ain't so jolly bad, if you come to that," said Baggy, blinking at the astonished junior captain of St. Jim's. "I can play cricket! And I'm willing to go all out at practice till the match. I'd have been at the nets this afternoon, only Lathom bunged me in Extra. What about me for the team when Greyfriars come over?"

"What about you for the team when Greyfriars come over?" repeated Tom Merry, in a sort of dazed way.

"You'll want an extra man, now Figgins is gone," said Baggy. "Shove me in, in his place, see?"

"Shove you in, in his place!" said Tom, in the same dazed way. Indeed, he almost doubted his ears.

There were plenty of junior cricketers in the School House, and in the New House, who would have given a term's pocket-money to figure in the team that was to meet Harry Wharton and Co. when they came. It was quite a big fixture in the junior list. The junior skipper had a crowd of good men from whom to pick and choose. Figgins of the Fourth was out of it: and Tom had not yet decided who was to fill Figgy's place: he had



a dozen "probables" in mind. But the name of Baggy Trimble was not among them. Baggy's name would not have been a "probable" or a "possible," if Tom Merry's team had been playing Wally and Co. of the Third Form. Baggy, when it came to cricket, was nowhere. Indeed, up to now, Baggy would hardly have valued the glory and distinction of playing for his school, had it been a practicable proposition. Cricket was a form of exertion, and Baggy loathed exertion in any form. Baggy's proposal to take Figgy's vacant place in the team, almost made the chums of the Shell wonder whether they were dreaming. They gazed at Baggy.

"Shove me in, see?" pursued Baggy, eagerly. "I—I'll play up, you know! I'll stick to games practice every day, if you like! I—I—I'm frightfully keen to play for School! Is it a go, Merry?"

He blinked hopefully at the junior captain. Baggy, certainly, never realised what an utter rabbit he was at the game. Indeed, he fancied that he could play a pretty good game if he chose—the only trouble was that he didn't choose! It was so very, very important for Baggy to play for school, in view of Uncle Bagley's five-pound note, that he persuaded himself that there might be a chance for him!

"Is it a go?" repeated Tom Merry. "Are you awake, Trimble?"

"Eh! Yes! Of course I am! Wharrer you mean?"

"Well, you're dreaming, all the same," said Tom, laughing. "But I suppose you're joking—"

"I'm not!" hooted Baggy.

"You are!" said Monty Lowther. "One of your best, Trimble! You a cricketer! You play for school! Funniest thing I've ever heard."

"You shut up, Lowther," hooted Baggy. "I say, Tom Merry—"  
Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, the answer's no, you fat ass," he said. "We want our best men to play Wharton's crowd next week—and you're the worst cricketer that ever was. You should stick to games practice if you want to play cricket. I can't pick men from fellows who have to be prodded down to Little Side with a bat in their ribs. Look here, Trimble, what are you driving at? You've never wanted to play cricket—"

"It's different now—"

"What's different?"

"Well, I—I—I'm keen," stammered Trimble. He realised that it would be wiser not to mention Uncle Bagley and his £5 note. "I'll jolly well go all out, and play a jolly good game—"

"I can see you doing it!" grinned Manners.

TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"It—it—it's very special," urged Baggy. "Give a chap a chance, Tom Merry. I—I—I'm frightfully keen to play for School."

"Glad to hear it," said Tom. "And if you like to stick to practice, I'll help you all I can, and make a cricketer of you, if it's in you. But don't talk about playing in a big fixture next week. That's too funny."

"Look here—"

"You've done your funny turn, old fat man. Now run away and play," said Monty Lowther.

"And shut the door after you," said Manners.

"Yah!" snorted Baggy.

He rolled out of the study. His hope, perhaps, had been very faint. Such as it was, it had dissolved into thin air now. His fat face was morose as he rolled away down the passage. He left the chums of the Shell laughing. Baggy's new and sudden keenness on cricket surprised them: and while it looked like a sign of grace in the fat and lazy Baggy, his idea that he might be picked to play in the Greyfriars match struck them as the funniest thing they had heard that term. Baggy, as he rolled disconsolately away, was followed by a roar of laughter from No. 10 Study. Really, it looked as if Baggy's fat fingers never would close on that £5 note from Uncle Bagley!

## Reward Required!

“D’ARCY!”

“Yaas, Twimble.”

“I saved your life!” said Baggy.

Arthur Augustus D’Arcy contrived somehow not to wince.

It was break on Monday morning, and Arthur Augustus was strolling in the sunny quad, when Trimble happened. Arthur Augustus was thinking, chiefly of a visit he intended to pay to his tailor at Wayland, and his noble mind was running on the important subject of trouserings. When a fat figure bore down on him, he was tempted to change his direction, and elude the fat Baggy. But he nobly resisted that temptation.

Gratitude has been described as a lively expectation of favours to come. But it certainly did not take that form with the Honourable Arthur Augustus D’Arcy. He was grateful to Trimble, for what Baggy was supposed to have done, and his gratitude was deep and lasting. He was quite determined to make the best of Baggy—though Baggy’s manners and customs did not make it easy for him. So, instead of eluding Trimble, he gave him a cheerv smile as he rolled up.

“Didn’t I?” asked Baggy, blinking at him.

“Yaas, wathah!”

“There you were, hanging on for your life, and going to be washed away and drowned any minute,” continued Trimble. “I risked my life coming in for you! Didn’t I?”

“You must have, Twimble. I assuah you that I have not forgotten it,” said Arthur Augustus, mildly. “I wegarded it as vewy bwave and vewy sportin’ of you, especially as the wisk was much gweatah for a fat and clumsy fellow like you than it would have been for any othah chap—”

"Oh, cut that out!" yapped Baggy.

"Weally Twimble—"

"Well, I saved your life, at the risk of my own," said Trimble.

"Well, one good turn deserves another, see?"

"Yaas, wathah! I should be vewy pleased to save your life, Twimble, if you tumble into a wivah—"

"Oh, don't be an ass," said Trimble. "I'm not fathead enough to tumble into deep water as you did, I hope. Look here, there's something you can do for me, D'Arcy, and I think you ought to do it. see?"

"Pway give it a name, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, at once. "I am undah such a twemendous obligation to you, that I should be vewy glad indeed to do anythin' I could."

"O.K.," said Trimble. "That's all right. You're a pal of Tom Merry's—"

"Tom Mewwy certainly is a fwiend of mine, Twimble. But we are not speakin' about Tom Mewwy—"

"He would do a thing if you asked him, that he wouldn't do for me," said Trimble.

"Possibly, deah boy. But I don't quite see—!"

"You put in a word for me about the cricket," said Trimble.

"The cwicket?" repeated Arthur Augustus, blankly. "Are you takin' an intwest in cwicket, Twimble? I am vewy glad to heah it."

"I'm jolly keen on it," said Baggy.

"Bai Jove! Are you weally?"

"I want to play for school."

"Oh, cwumbs!"

"You remember that letter I wrote to my uncle last week?"

"I wemembah, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, quietly. His face became involuntarily a little severe in expression. "I twust, Twimble, that now you have weflected, you wegwet havin' told your uncle such fibs—"

"Well, my uncle's an old cricketer, and he's keen on me playing up, and I—I want to please him, you know. It's nothing to do with a five-pound note, or anything of that kind," added Baggy, cautiously. "I just want to please him, you know, by getting on with the game."

"That is vewy wight and pwopah, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus, heartily.

"It would please him no end if I played in the Greyfriars match this week," went on Trimble. "That's what I want, see?"

"Oh, cwikey!"

"Figgins is away, and I asked Tom Merry to put me in his place—"

"Oh, scissahs!"

"And he only laughed!" said Baggy, in a tone of deep grievance. "Just laughed, and Manners and Lowther cackled like a pair of chickens, too, just as if it was funny." He gave Arthur Augustus a glare. "What are you grinning at, I'd like to know."

Arthur Augustus controlled his features.

"Was I gwinnin', deah boy? Weally, I did not mean to gwin. But—"

"I can play cricket, I suppose," said Baggy, indignantly. "I've never been given a chance, but I can play cricket. Think I ain't as good a cricketer as that New House swob, Figgins?"

Arthur Augustus gazed at him. That the fat, lazy, clumsy, cack-handed Baggy could fancy himself a cricketer, was quite surprising. But apparently Baggy did! Baggy's conceit equalled his other fascinating qualities. Not for a moment did the fat Baggy believe himself the fat rabbit he was.

"Well, you put it to Tom Merry," went on Baggy. "He thinks a lot of you in cricket. He thinks you a silly ass in everything else, of course—"

"Weally, Twimble—"

"But not in cricket," said Baggy. "Didn't he play Manners in the Carcroft match because you backed up Manners? You've got a lot of influence with him, D'Arcy. You back me up, and it may make a lot of difference, see?"

"Bai love! But—"

"Tell him you think I'm the right man for the place—"

"But—but I don't, Twimble—"

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"It is quite imposs, Twimble! I could certainly not wecommend a wabbit like you for a place in the eleven, and if I did, Tom Mewwy would only think that I had gone off my wockah."

Trimble's fat lip curled.

"That's gratitude!" he said.

Arthur Augustus coloured.

"Weally, Twimble, gwatitude has nothin' to do with cwicket. I assuah you that I am vewy gwateful indeed for what you did for me, and I should be vewy bucked to do anythin' I could, but—"

"Spokeshave says it's sharper than a serpent's child to have a thankless tooth!" said Trimble, scornfully. "I saved your life—"

"Yaas, but—!"

"I plunged into the raging waves to save you! Where would

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

you have been if I hadn't? Did I stop to think of the danger? Did I care?"

"It was vewy bwave of you, Twimble! But—"

"Well, one good turn deserves another, doesn't it?" yapped Trimble. "I ain't asking a lot, considering what I did for you. I saved your life! You get me a place in the eleven! That's fair."

"But—!" faltered Arthur Augustus.

"Look here, will you do it?" snorted Trimble. "What's a cricket match, after all, compared with saving a fellow's life at awful risk?"

"Weally, it is nothin' in compawison with that, Twimble, but—"

"Well, you do it, then," said Trimble. "Tom Merry won't take any notice of me, but he will of you. You put it to him, and get me into the eleven. It's up to you, after I saved your life."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood looking at the fat Baggy, breathing hard and deep. Never, probably, had he felt more inclined to take Baggy by his fat neck, twirl him round, and plant a foot on his fat trousers.

But he suppressed that natural impulse. Baggy had saved him from the rushing waters—at least Arthur Augustus believed that he had, which came to the same thing. Baggy demanded his "quid pro quo"—one good turn for another! A junior cricket fixture was a matter of tremendous importance to St. Jim's juniors: nevertheless, it was a trifle light as air in comparison with a fellow risking his life to save another fellow. Arthur Augustus felt that there was no escape for him. It was up to him to do anything he could for the fellow who had saved his life.

"You jolly well put it to him strong," went on Baggy. "Tell him you'll stand out, if he won't play me. He won't want to lose you. Look here, it's jolly well up to you, D'Arcy, I can jolly well tell you."

Arthur Augustus drew a deep, deep breath.

"If you put it like that, Twimble—!"

"I jolly well do!" said Baggy.

"Vewy well," said Arthur Augustus, quietly. "I will put it to Tom Mewwy, and do my vewy best for you, Twimble. I—I will speak to Tom Mewwy about it to-day, and—and I hope it will be all wight."

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

With that, Arthur Augustus walked away rather quickly, before Trimble could make any rejoinder. He was feeling that he had had about as much of Baggy as he could stand, for the present.

Trimble grinned at his departing back.

There was still a chance—quite a healthy chance, Baggy thought—of contacting Uncle Bagley's £5 note. And that, from Baggy's point of view, was the one thing that really mattered, within the wide limits of the universe! The Greyfriars match might be lost or won: but if Uncle Bagley's fiver came home to roost in Baggy's sticky pocket, all was calm and bright! And Baggy did not even dream of realising that he deserved to be kicked all round the St. Jim's quad and back again!



## 17

### A Chance for Baggy ?

**M**ONTY LOWTHER winked.  
Manners grinned.

Tom Merry smiled, but looked puzzled.

It really was a little puzzling. They all three looked at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and wondered what he was at!

The three were in No. 10 Study, disposing of a bottle of ginger-pop before going down to Little Side after class, when Arthur Augustus ambled in. They gave him welcoming looks. Arthur Augustus was always welcome in that study, as in most studies in the School House. The Terrible Three were always pleased to see him. They would gladly have shared the ginger-beer with him: but it was all gone, so they gave him welcoming looks, which were all that they had available in the way of hospitality. And they naturally expected him to speak. To their surprise, indeed to their mystification, he did not.

Obviously, he had come there to say something! But whatever he had come to say, he seemed to find difficulty in getting out.

He coughed, by way of a beginning! Then he ambled restlessly round the study. Then he came to a halt, and coughed again.

Then at last a remark came:

"I was lookin' for you aftah class, Tom Mewwy."

"Well, now you've found me," said Tom.

"Oh! Yaas!"

Then there was a long pause. Arthur Augustus glanced up at Manners' photograph of the junior eleven on the study-wall, as if deeply interested in the same. Then he glanced at Tom Merry again. Still, however, he did not come to the point.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE !

"Here he is, Gussy," said Monty Lowther, encouragingly, "as large as life, and twice as natural."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Did you come here to say something to Tom, Gussy?" asked Manners.

"Yaas, wathah."

"Why not cough it up, then?"

"Oh! Yaas!"

"Tom doesn't bite," said Lowther, encouragingly as before. "He has his little ways, but on the whole, is a quite good-tempered animal, warranted not to bite."

"Ass!" said Tom.

"You can say anything," continued Lowther, "except that you won't be available for the Greyfriars match this week. If that's it, guard it with your left."

Tom Merry sat up and took notice at that alarming suggestion.

"Gussy, you ass, if it's that—"

"Not at all, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, hastily. "Nothin' of the kind. You can wely on me for cwicket, Tom Mewwy."

"O.K., then," said Tom. "We couldn't spare you, Gussy! You happen to be our best bat, next to old Talbot, as I daresay you know without my telling you. Got anything on your mind?"

"Well, yaas, Tom Mewwy."

"Give it a name," said Lowther. "This is the study to bring your little troubles to. You can look on us as three kind uncles—"

"Weally, Lowthah, you ass—"

"Bottled in Latin?" asked Manners. Gussy's howlers in form were well known to No. 10 Study. "If you've been mixing up the pluperfect indicative with the imperfect subjunctive, and Lathom doesn't like 'em mixed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm your man," said Manners. "I'll let these two get down to the cricket, and we'll worry it out together, old man. What's the spot of bother?"

"Thank you vewy much, Mannahs, but it is nothin' of that kind," said Arthur Augustus. "The fact is—"

"Go it!" said the Terrible Three together, anticipating that the swell of St. Jim's was coming to the point at last, and wondering what on earth the point could be to distress him so much.

But Arthur Augustus did not even yet come to the point. He opened his lips to speak, but closed them again.

He stood looking at Tom Merry with a most unhappy expression on his face. Then he ambled round the study again, and then once more came to a halt—still silent.

TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

They gazed at him, in wonder. Really it began to look as if something was seriously amiss with Arthur Augustus.

"Look here, Gussy, is anything wrong?" asked Tom.

"Not exactly w'ong, Tom Mewwy."

"Everything all right, then?"

"Not exactly wight, deah boy."

"Neither wrong nor right?" asked Monty Lowther. "Betwixt and between, what? The Golden Mean that old Horace talks about, what?"

"The fact is, Tom Mewwy—!" Pause!

"Carry on."

"The—the—the fact is—"

"Spill it!" said Lowther.

"The—the—the fact is, I have come heah to ask you something, Tom Mewwy, which may seem a feahful cheek!" faltered Arthur Augustus.

"My dear chap," said Tom. "That's all rot! Ask me anything you jolly well like, and the answer is yes to begin with. You jolly well know that, Gussy."

"Yaas, but—"

"Hard up?" asked Tom, mystified. "If it's that, no need for a song and a dance, Gussy! I've got a ten-bob note if that's any use."

"Not at all, deah boy! I have been wathah short of cash since I made a fwriend of Twimble—I—I—I mean, just lately—but it is not that! Much more sewious than that."

"Well, you've got me guessing," said Tom. "But we're friends, old man, and you couldn't ask anything to which I wouldn't say yes on the spot."

"It—it—it is vewy awkward, deah boy. I—I hardly know how to put it," said Arthur Augustus. "But—but—you wemembah that Twimble saved me fwom the wushin' watah a week ago—"

"Did he?" said Manners, dryly.

"He certainly did, Mannahs. I twust you are not goin' to expvess any doubt on that subject, as it would be imposs for me to listen to you. I should wegard it as lettin' Twimble down if I did," said Arthur Augustus, warmly.

"Oh, all right!" said Manners. "Not a syllable! You're a good little ass, Gussy, but we all like you as you are."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"But what has Trimble got to do with it, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry, quite blankly. "We'll all agree that he's a jolly old hero, if you like. But that isn't what's worrying you, I suppose?"

"Not exactly, Tom. But—"

"Push on!"

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"You—you see, vewy likely he saved my life, gettin' me out of that wushin' stweam, and a fellow is bound to be gwateful. I do not feel that I can wefuse anvthin' that Twimble asks in weturn."

"The toad!" said Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Sorry—not another syllable! Push on."

"He weally does not undahstand what he is askin' being wathah a fathead," said Arthur Augustus. "But—but he is askin' all the same."

"Anything beyond loans of half-a-crown and spreads in the study?" asked Monty Lowther. "I believe he's done all right in that line lately."

"If you are goin' to wun Twimble down, Lowthah, when I am bound to be gwateful to him, I will wetire fwom the study—"

"I am dumb!" said Lowther. "Dumb as an oyster! I won't say another word, except to mention that Trimble is the finest, handsomest, splendidest fellow at St. Jim's or anywhere else. That all right?"

"Oh, wats! The fact is, Tom Mewwy, what Twimble asks is not in my powah to gwant, but only in yours."

Tom Merry blinked.

"Let's have it clear, Gussy," he said. "Never mind what we think of Trimble—we won't go into that. He's asking something in return for what he did for you, whether he did it or not: and it's something I can do. Is that it—"

"Yaas, old chap!"

"Then you've only got to give it a name. If the little beast—I—I—I mean if Trimble is sticking you for something, and I can help, I'll stand by you to the last shot in the locker."

"It's the cwicket!" sighed Arthur Augustus. "Do—do—do—do you think you could stwetch a point, Tom Mewwy, and give him Figgins' place in the team for the Gweyfwiahs' match?"

Tom Merry almost jumped out of his chair. Indeed, he looked as if he almost jumped out of his skin!

"What?" he yelled.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "Is that it?"

"The cheeky worm!" said Manners.

"Why, the fat ass came along on Saturday afternoon, and asked," said Tom. "I suppose he doesn't know what an idiot he is! Trimble play for School!"

"I—I suppose it's imposs—" faltered Arthur Augustus.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"I should jolly well think so," said Tom. "Dreaming, Gussy? Better got to sleep and dream again!"

Arthur Augustus did not reply. But there was deep distress in his aristocratic countenance. Tom's face clouded. Gladly, very gladly, he would have done anything to help a pal repay an obligation. But there was a limit, when it came to cricket matches.

"My dear chap—!" he said.

"Twimble seems vewy keen, for some reason, Tom Mewwy, and aftah all, it is wathah to his credit that he is keen on cwicket. He has nevah shown any sign of it befoah. If he is turnin' ovah a new leaf, he ought to be encouraged, and—and—and pewwaps he may not be such a wabbit—"

"I'd do anything I could," said Tom. "But—that's the limit, Gussy. We can't let a rabbit like Trimble score a pair of spectacles in a School match. I said just now I'd back you up to the last shot in the locker, but—but—dash it all, Gussy, you know it couldn't be done."

"I should take it as a vewy gweat favah, Tom Mewwy, if you could stwetch a point. Twimble saved my life—and he has asked me—and—and now he is so keen on the game, he may not turn out such a wabbit—"

Tom Merry breathed hard. At that moment, he would gladly have kicked Trimble all round St. Jim's. But he could understand Arthur Augustus's feelings on the subject. It was no wonder that poor Gussy had found it difficult to get out what he had come to No. 10 Study to sav. He knew that he was asking too much: yet how could he refuse the fellow who had, as he believed, risked life itself to save him?

"Well, look here," said Tom. "We'll see what Trimble can do—we're going down to Little Side now. If he can keep his wicket up for a couple of overs, I—I'll think it over."

Arthur Augustus brightened a little.

"Thank you vewy much, deah boy," he said. "That is weally more than I have a wight to expect—I wouldn't dweam of askin' anythin' of the kind if he hadn't saved my life, you know—"

"Leave it at that," said Tom.

"Wight-ho! I'll go and tell Twimble, deah boy."

Arthur Augustus ambled out of No. 10 Study, leaving the Terrible Three looking at one another very expressively.

"The toad!" said Manners.

"The worm!" said Monty Lowther.

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"Well, as Gussy says, it's to his credit that he's got keen on cricket at all," said Tom. "I'd like to encourage him, so far as that goes. But—well, we'll see how he shapes! Let's go and get changed."

Baggy Trimble, when he heard the news from Arthur Augustus, grinned with satisfaction. Baggy was quite prepared to show what he could do at the wicket! He was quite cheery as he changed into flannels. To the fat and fatuous Baggy, it seemed that Uncle Bagley's five-pound note was getting a little nearer! He had plenty of confidence in himself, at least—Baggy did really and truly believe that all he needed was a chance! Though in point of fact, if Uncle Bagley's fiver depended on Baggy's style on the cricket field, it was extremely doubtful whether that fiver would ever be seen at St. Jim's.

## Baggy the Batsman!

“**M**AN in!” said Tom Merry.

“O.K.,” squeaked Baggy Trimble.

And several chuckles were heard.

It was a pick-up game for practice. But with the Greyfriars match only a few days ahead, it was quite serious business for the junior cricketers of St. Jim's. Tom Merry had not yet filled Figgins's vacant place, and a number of likely recruits were to be put through their paces, as it were, and everyone was anxious to catch an approving eye from the junior captain. But the seriousness of the occasion was considerably detracted from by the presence of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

Baggy never showed up on Little Side if he could help it. Nobody, in point of fact, wanted him to do so: but on compulsory days it was the junior captain's duty to see that he did, along with other games-dodgers. So Baggy had played cricket—of sorts—whenever he couldn't get out of it. His cricket, it was true, was a sight for gods and men and little fishes. He knew one end of a bat from the other, but how far his knowledge extended beyond that was a moot question. As for keenness on the game, Baggy had never displayed a sign of it—till now! Why he was keen now, nobody knew—as nobody knew anything about the promised £5 note from Uncle Bagley.

To most of the fellows, it seemed just utter rot to let Baggy roll on the field at all, and they wondered what Tom Merry was at. Baggy as a possible recruit for the vacant place in the eleven only made them laugh. Even Skimpole of the Shell would have been a likelier man.



## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

However, there he was, fat and full of beans, almost bursting out of his flannels, prepared to show what he could do. He rolled out of the pavilion quite cheerily.

He had, at least, two well-wishers. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was extremely anxious to see him shape well, or, if that was hopeless, passably. Gussy could not help feeling that it was rather rotten of Baggy to claim a reward for his heroic exploit: still, a keenness on cricket was at least a sign of grace in the fat Baggy. Tom Merry, too, hoped that Baggy might not prove so utter a rabbit as he had always appeared to be. Tom would have stretched a point as far as he possibly could, to oblige the distressed Gussy. He only half-believed that Trimble really had pulled D'Arcy out of the woodland stream a week ago—but Arthur Augustus believed it implicitly, and that was what mattered. So Tom nourished a hope that Baggy might not prove quite hopeless—though his doubts were much stronger than his hopes. To other fellows Baggy's presence was merely a joke—and not a very amusing one.

"What on earth's this game, Tom Merry?" asked Cardew, as Baggy rolled away to his wicket. "What's that fat slug crawled here at all for?"

"Cricket!" answered Tom.

"Oh, don't be an ass! What does he know—or care—about cricket?"

"Well, he seems to care," said Tom. "Blessed if I quite understand it myself—but he's fearfully keen to play in a match."

"Pulling your leg, I suppose," said Cardew.

"Well, why?" asked Tom. "If he's not keen, why is he here at all?"

To which Cardew could find no reply.

"Weally, Cardew, Twimble is fwightfully keen," said Arthur Augustus. "Whethah he can play cwicket is anothah mattah—but he is vewy keen. I twust that he will keep his sticks up!"

"I can see him doing it!" grunted Blake.

"Rot, I call it," remarked Herries.

"Piffle!" said Digby.

"Waste of time," said Kerr of the New House. "You must be batty, Tom Merry, to let that fat porker roll on the ground at all."

"Oh, give him a chance," said Tom. "You never know, you know!"

"Yaas, wathah."

"Rubbish!" said Gore.

"Bosh!" said Kangaroo. "Think that fat ass will stand up for a minute to Talbot's bowling?"

"I hope so," said Tom.

"Some hope!" murmured Monty Lowther. "You ought to have brought your camera, Manners, old man! Trimble will be worth snapping, when he gets going."

All eyes were on the fat Baggy. The fieldsmen were grinning, but they had their eyes on Baggy. If he wanted an audience, he had one. He arrived at his wicket, and took his stand there with the ease and grace of a sack of coke.

"Now watch!" said Cardew, sarcastically. "This is where we see the fireworks."

Talbot of the Shell had the ball. There was a faint smile on his face as he prepared to bowl to Trimble. Next to Fatty Wynn, Talbot was the best junior bowler at St. Jim's, and Tom Merry did not find it easy to keep his sticks up against him. That Baggy Trimble would succeed in keeping them up was very highly improbable. But perhaps a merciful impulse made Talbot send down an easy one.

It was not easy for Baggy, however. Baggy, swinging the bat rather as if he fancied it a battle-axe, swiped at the ball, and missed it by a yard. But the impetus of that swipe was too much for Trimble, and he spun round as the willow swept the empty air. His fat legs tangled with one another, and he sat down on the pitch, with a heavy concussion.

Bump!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Man down!" chuckled Blake.

"Bai love!"

"Ow!" came a startled howl from the batsman. "Wow!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cwikey!" murmured Arthur Augustus, in dismay.

Where the ball went, Baggy did not know. Luckily it did not root out his wicket, and the fieldsmen were laughing too much to heed it. Baggy sat and spluttered, in rather a bewildered state.

"Ow! ooh! What—oh, crumbs! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy scrambled up. He blinked round him at laughing faces, indignantly. However, his bat was on the crease when the ball came in. Baggy had another chance, though what he was likely to make of it was fairly easy to guess.

Arthur Augustus's aristocratic countenance lengthened. This was the cricketer he had asked Tom Merry to play in the Greyfriars match! He did not dare to catch the junior captain's eye. Tom had said that if Baggy kept his sticks up for a couple of overs, he would think about it! He did not seem likely to have much thinking to do: for even the hopeful Gussy could not venture to hope that Baggy would live through even one over.

"Watch him!" chuckled Blake.

"Worth watching!" grinned Lowther.

"Why didn't I bring my camera?" murmured Manners.

Talbot was smiling as he prepared to bowl again. Baggy blinked along the pitch at him. Baggy had had ill-luck with his first ball. He was going to do better with the second. He gripped the cane handle of his bat with a deadly grip, watchful and wary, prepared to send the round red ball on its travels for three at least, perhaps a boundary.

The ball came down, hot and fast. Baggy swiped, with a swipe that, had it landed in the right place, might certainly have despatched the ball to the boundary. Why the bat hit the earth, instead of the ball, jarring every bone in his fat body, Baggy never knew. All he knew was that it did! He didn't even see the ball. It crashed into the rear of Baggy's anatomy and on to the wicket. Bails, accompanied by a stump, flew in the air.

"How's that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" gasped Baggy. "Wow! I say—wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

He blinked at the wrecked wicket. He blinked at the grinning wicket-keeper. Even Baggy realised that he was out!

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. It was all that he could say.

"Likely man for the eleven!" remarked Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy rolled disconsolately in. Blake, grinning, went out to

take his place. Grinning faces greeted Baggy on all sides. Tom Merry was laughing. He was not, apparently, further considering Baggy as a "possible" for the junior eleven!

"What price duck's eggs?" asked Herries, as Baggy arrived.

"Yah!" was Baggy's elegant retort.

"Thanks for a spot of comic relief," said Cardew.

"Yah!" repeated Baggy.

It was clear, even to Baggy's fat mind, that he could not quite expect to be picked, on his form, for the junior eleven! Unless Tom Merry could somehow be prevailed upon to play the worst cricketer that ever was, Baggy Trimble had to say a long, long farewell to the prospect of the avuncular fiver!

## Last Chance !

“WEGARD it as the weward of pluck, deah boy.”

“Um !” said Tom Merry.

“But—!” said Manners and Lowther together.

“That is how I wegard it,” said Arthur Augustus. “A cwicket match is a cwicket match, I know. But pluck is pluck ! What Twimble did is entitled to wecognition. Wegard it as a weward !” Tom Merry was silent.

It was Tuesday afternoon, the day before the Greyfriars match. That evening Tom had to post up the list, which meant a final decision of the man who was to play in the place of the absent Figgins. He had the list on the study table before him, and a pencil in his hand, when Arthur Augustus D’Arcy blew into No. 10—probably realising that this was the last chance.

There were many claimants for the vacant place—men from both Houses. Tom had to ponder the claims of every one, and decide on the man who was likeliest to make runs for St. Jim’s, and to keep his wicket up against Greyfriars bowling. Trimble’s name was the very last that he was disposed to consider. If he played Trimble, it would not be on his cricket, but on the circumstance that he had pulled Gussy out of deep water—the reward of valour, as it were ! That was not the business of a cricket captain. Tom’s business, as junior captain of St. Jim’s, was to put a winning team into the field, if he could, banishing any other considerations to the four winds.

Yet it was hard to refuse Gussy. Gussy was under a tremendous obligation to the fat Baggy—or believed that he was. To repay such a debt, if he could, he regarded as his first duty. If Arthur Augustus’s earnest wish and influence went for any-

thing, Baggy was going to play in Wednesday's match. It could only mean a wicket thrown away in each innings for St. Jim's, and a dud in the field, dropping the easiest catches: but the grateful Gussy was prepared to pay even that price. Tom, naturally, was not. And yet he felt that he could hardly make up his mind.

"Aftah all," went on D'Arcy, as Tom did not speak, "cwicket is a vewy uncertain game, you know. Twimble might turn up twumps."

"Rot!" said Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Rubbish!" said Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Look here, Gussy, did Trimble hook you out of the water?" said Tom, restively. "If he did—"

"I pwesume that I ought to know whethah he did or not, Tom Mewwy."

"You ought!" agreed Tom. "But do you? It isn't like him! It's utterly unlike him! Could he even have done it, if he'd had the pluck to try? And has he any pluck? He's kept it pretty dark, if he has."

Arthur Augustus knitted his noble brow.

"If you are goin' to wun down Twimble, I have no more to say, Tom Mewwy," he said, stiffly. "But I considah that you might look at the mattah as I do. Twimble has asked for this as a weward for savin' my life, and if you are a fwiend of mine, I wegard it as bein' up to you to help me wepay a deep obligation. If you are not a fwiend of mine," added Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity, "I will wetire and say no more."

"Oh, blow!" said Tom.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I'd do anything I could," said Tom. "You know that! Twimble ought to be satisfied with sticking you for half-crowns and study spreads, and keep clear of the cricket."

"What is he so jolly keen for, anyhow?" asked Monty Lowther. "It's too jolly sudden to be genuine. What's his game?"

"There's something up his sleeve," said Manners, with a nod. "Goodness knows what! But—"

"Wubbish!" said Arthur Augustus. "He desiahs to play for school, to please his uncle, who is an old cwicketah—and I wegard that as bein' vewy cweditable to Twimble—"

"Um—yes—!" said Tom. "But—" He wrinkled his brows. "Look here, Gussy, if Trimble really did all that for you, and if you make a point of it—"

"He did—and I do!"

"Don't be an ass, Tom," said Manners, quietly. "There'd be a spot of trouble with the team if you shove that fat dud in to lose wickets."

"Cricket's cricket!" said Monty Lowther, sententiously.

Tom Merry looked thoroughly worried, as he felt. There was a step at the doorway, and Trimble of the Fourth looked in.

"Merry here?" he asked. "Oh, here you are! I—"

"Oh, don't bother now!" snapped Tom. He was feeling that he had enough on hand with Arthur Augustus, and did not want Trimble too.

Baggy blinked at him with his gooseberry eyes.

"I just came—!" he began.

"I can see that! Now just go," said Tom, gruffly.

"But I say—"

"Oh, let him run on," said Manners. "He's going to tell us how he dived in for Gussy without getting his fat neck wet—"

"And how he's going to help beat Greyfriars by sitting down on the pitch," said Monty Lowther.

"Look here, you know—!" bleated Trimble.

"Shut the door after you," said Tom.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—!" protested Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, can it, Gussy! I'll take it from you, but not from that fat ass," exclaimed Tom. "I'm fed up with him, and his gammon. Pack it up, Trimble."

"But I came here to tell you—"

"To tell us why you're so keen on cricket all of a sudden?" asked Manners. "We'd like to know!"

"To tell Tom Merry—"

"You needn't tell me anything," snapped Tom. "You can't tell me anything I want to hear."

"Oh, all right," said Baggy. "If you don't want to hear—"

"I don't!"

"Well, Railton sent me to tell you—"

"Oh!" It occurred to Tom Merry that Baggy Trimble might have come with a message, not on his own fat account. "What about Railton?"

"He sent me to tell you to go to his study—"

"You fat chump! Why couldn't you say that at once?" howled Tom.

"Did you give me a chance?" howled back Baggy. "You're to go to his study to take a telephone-call. Somebody's rung you up, I suppose, and Railton says you can take the call. Whoever it is, is hanging on the line."



"Oh, you fat ass!" said Tom, and he jumped up, and left the study. The discussion of Baggy's claims had to be postponed.

Baggy Trimble blinked at the paper he left on the table. There were ten names on it. Having blinked at it, Baggy blinked round at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Manners and Lowther.

"Is my name going down?" he asked.

"I twust so, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "You can wely on me to do my vewy best for you, deah boy."

"I should jolly well think so, after I saved your life," said Baggy.

"Weally, Twimble—"

"Oh, get out!" snapped Manners.

"Hook it!" said Lowther.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass on the Shell fellows.

"I twust," he said, in his most dignified manner, "that you fellows do not object to my fwiend Twimble wemainin' in the study till Tom Mewwy returns."

Manners and Lowther made no reply to that: and Baggy Trimble settled the matter by plumping into the study armchair. And as the fat Baggy was, for the moment, at least, a friend of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Manners and Lowther manfully repressed their strong desire to boot him out of the study.

## 20

### Unexpected!

“FIGGINS!”

“What-ho!”

It was rather a surprise for Tom Merry. Mr. Railton had left his study, when Tom arrived there: but the receiver was off the hooks, and Tom picked it up. He had been sent for to take a telephone-call, and the House-master had left him to take it. He wondered rather who had rung him up: juniors were not, as a rule, permitted to take telephone-calls, but Railton apparently considered it allowable on this occasion. Tom jumped when George Figgins's voice came through. He had not even dreamed of a call from the New House junior, who was away from school on a yachting cruise. Except in connection with cricket, he had in fact forgotten all about Figgins.

“Figgins!” he repeated. “Glad to hear your toot, old man! Bother you, all the same.”

“Eh?” came back from the other end. “What the thump are you bothering me for, Tom Merry?”

“Forgotten the Greyfriars match to-morrow?” answered Tom. “What the dickens do you want to go off cruising for just before a School match?”

There was a chuckle over the wires.

“You'd say no to a yachting cruise, what?” asked Figgins.

Tom Merry laughed.

“Well, perhaps not,” he admitted.

“But it's the Greyfriars match I've rung you up about,” went on Figgins. “Guess where I'm telephoning from?”

“Well, where?” asked Tom.

“Brighton,” answered Figgins. “My uncle's put in here with a spot of engine trouble, and we're hung up for a couple of days.”

"Rough luck," said Tom.

"Not so's you'd notice it," answered Figgins. "There's pretty quick trains from Brighton to Wayland Junction, Tommy."

"Oh!" said Tom. He began to understand.

"As soon as I heard that we'd got to stick here over Wednesday, I thought of it!" explained Figgins, from the Brighton end. "I said to myself, why not cut across to St. Jim's for the match, see?"

"Oh!" repeated Tom.

"Filled my place in the team yet? Of course, I don't want to put another man's nose out of joint."

"Not yet. But—"

"That's all right, then! I suppose you want me?"

"Of course, you ass! There's half-a-dozen men I'd leave out rather than you, if you're available," said Tom, at once.

"Good man! I'm available enough," chuckled Figgins. "Look here, I'll cut across by the early morning train—bags of time before the game. Tell Kerr and Wynn that I shall be coming."

"I'll tell them all right."

"You'll see me long before you see the Greyfriars men," said Figgins. "Bank on that! I say, I'm jolly glad I shall be playing after all. Cruising is O.K., but I've been thinking about the Greyfriars match all the time—well, nearly all the time. We're going to send Wharton's lot back to Greyfriars well licked, old scout."

"I hope so," said Tom. "But—"

"No buts about it," said the cheery Figgins. "You'll have New House men in the team, to give it a backbone—"

"You New House ass!"

"Well, you School House fathead—!"

"Mind you're on time," said Tom. "I'll shove your name in the list at once, as soon as I get back to my study."

"I'll be on time all right! How's the team shaping?"

"Fine! But—"

"The one and only all right?"

"D'Arcy! Yes, quite all right: why?"

"None the worse for his ducking last week?"

"Not at all! But how the dickens do you know about his ducking?" asked Tom, puzzled. "You've been away all the time—"

"Hasn't he told you?"

"Eh! What do you mean?"

"Oh! I remember now—he went off," said Figgins. "Still, I suppose Trimble told you, didn't he?"

"Trimble?"

"Trimble was there! I left D'Arcy with him, as I had to rush off to get my train. Jolly nearly missed it—just jumped in as it started—"

Tom Merry gazed at the telephone, blankly. What all this meant was a mystery to him. But he was beginning to see a gleam of light, as it were.

"It was the day you left, Figgins!" he exclaimed. "Look here, did you see anything of what happened?"

"Did I?" chuckled Figgins.

"You've just said that you left D'Arcy with Trimble. Do you mean after his ducking in the stream in Wayland Wood?"

"Of course I do!"

"Then you saw it all!" yelled Tom.

"Eh? Of course I did."

"Did you see Trimble get Gussy out of the water?"

"What?"

"Did Trimble go in for him?"

"WHAT!"

"Trimble hasn't said anything about you being there—"

"He—he—he hasn't?"

"No! And D'Arcy doesn't know. Look here, if you saw Trimble save him from the water—"

"Trimble!" shrieked Figgins. "I can see that fat ass saving anybody from anything! Oh, my hat! Are you pulling my leg? Look here, Tom Merry, what are you getting at? I remember now that D'Arcy was unconscious—just coming to when I had to rush off—I saw that he was all right, but I couldn't stop till he sat up and took notice. He mayn't have known I got him out—"

"You got him out?"

"Of course I did! It wasn't much—I swung on a higher branch and got hold of him and hooked him out, and swung him to Trimble, who grabbed him from the bank—"

"Oh!" gasped Tom. "You did?"

"Yes, I did! Why, hasn't Trimble told you?"

"Why hasn't he told us?" gasped Tom. "Oh, the fat rascal! I know now why he was so bucked to hear that you were'n't coming back this term! The fat sweep! He fancied that made it safe for him! The fat villain!"

"What the dickens—!"

"It was you got D'Arcy out of the water?" gasped Tom.

"You—! You were on the spot, and you got him out—"

"Yes, cutting along by the footpath for Wayland to catch my train. Trimble was on the bank, velling for help, and D'Arcy in the water—"

"Oh, that fat spoofer!"

"But what—?"

"He told D'Arcy he did it!" yelled Tom. "It looked as if he had, as nobody knew you had been there: but we only half-believed it, all the same! But Gussy did—swallowed it lock, stock and barrel—he thinks Trimble saved his life—"

"Oh, my only hat!"

"And that fat sweep has been sticking him for all sorts of things since—and I—I—I—" Tom fairly spluttered with wrath. "By gum! What a jolly spot of luck that you phoned, Figgy! If you hadn't got hung up at Brighton—oh, that podgy piffler! I'll talk to thim! Cut off now, Figgy—mind you're bright and early in the morning!"

"What-ho!"

"Cheerio, old man."

"Cheerio!"

Tom Merry replaced the receiver. He hurried out of Railton's study. He went up the stairs two at a time. For the first time on record, he was eager to see Baggy Trimble!

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## Bad Luck for Baggy!

BAGGY TRIMBLE blinked at Tom Merry, with his gooseberry eyes, as Tom came into No. 10, rather breathlessly.

"I say—!" he squeaked.

Baggy's hopes were high! There was a vacant place in the cricket list on the study table. That vacant place—Baggy hoped—was going to be filled up with the name of B. Trimble. After which, Uncle Bagley's £5 note would, at long last, reach Baggy's sticky fingers. Alas for Baggy—he little dreamed that the happy prospect of that £5 note was about to disappear over the horizon never to return!

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy—!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

Manners and Lowther looked curiously at Tom. His expression revealed that he had heard something of a startling nature over the telephone.

"Anything up?" asked Manners.

"Any news?" asked Lowther.

All four fellows in No. 10 spoke at once. Tom Merry stepped to the table, and picked up the pencil there. All eyes were on him, as he wrote down in the cricket list the name of G. Figgins. He held it up for all to see.

"That's that!" he remarked.

Baggy's fat jaw dropped. He stared at that unexpected name.

"I—I say—!" he stammered.

"Bai Jove! Is Figgins comin' back for the Gweyfwiahs match, Tom Mewwy?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Just that!" answered Tom.



"Oh, scissors!" breathed Baggy Trimble.

"Good luck," said Lowther.

"Yes, rather," said Tom. "They're stuck up at Brighton, and Figgy's coming over early in the morning. But that isn't all he told me." He fixed his eyes on Baggy Trimble. "You fat villain!"

"Look here, you know—!" burred Baggy.

"You fibbing, frabjous, footling, fatheaded freak—!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, if you are goin' to address such extwemely oppwhobwious wemarks to my fwient Twimble—"

"I'm going to address something else to him, as well as remarks!" exclaimed Tom. "So will you, when I tell you what I've heard from Figgins. Trimble, you spoofing, fibbing, bragging bloater, did you pull D'Arcy out of the water in Wayland Wood?"

"I—I—I—"

"He certainly did, Tom Mewwy, and I twust you are not goin' to begin all that ovah again," exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"I jolly well am," said Tom. "You ass, it was all gammon from beginning to end. Are you going to keep it up, Trimble, now you know that Figgins has told me, and that he will be back here to-morrow morning?"

"Oh, crikey!"

"But what—?" exclaimed Manners and Lowther together.

"It was Figgins!" roared Tom. "D'Arcy never knew he'd been on the spot at all—he was unconscious, and Figgins rushed off to get his train, leaving D'Arcy with Trimble—"

"Oh, bai love!"

"Figgins got him out! 'Member that fat villain coming here and asking me if I was sure Figgy wasn't coming back this term? That's why! Figgins hooked Gussy out of the water, and left him with Trimble, and that—that—that slug, that snail, that porpoise, that lump of tallow, made out that had had done it—"

"Oh, cwumbs!"

Baggy Trimble sat blinking in the armchair, quite overwhelmed. Baggy had not expected anything like this. Figgins was safe off the scene till next term—it was, Baggy considered, safe as houses. But it was the unexpected that had happened!

"And to think," gasped Tom, "that I was jolly near letting

Gussy push that fat fibber into the eleven—!

"I knew he hadn't done it," said Manners.

"I suppose we all knew, really," said Lowther. "All except Gussy—Gussy, you ass, do you believe now that Trimble got you out?"

Arthur Augustus did not reply. For some moments he seemed quite bewildered. But a very stern expression was coming over his noble face. He fixed his eye, and his eyeglass, on the fat junior in the armchair.

"Twimble!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"It appeahs that it was not you, Twimble, but Figgins of the New House, who hooked me out of the watah in Wayland Wood!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"You told me that it was you—!"

"I—I—I didn't!" gasped Baggy.

"What?"

"I—I didn't! It was you told me!" stuttered Baggy. "You— you jolly well know you did! I—I'd never have thought of it, but for that!"

"Bai Jove! You let me think so—it was a vewy natuwal ewwah, as nobody else was on the spot—but you let me think so—"

"Think I was going to have you punching me over those chocolates? I—I—I just let you run on—!"

"You uttah wottah!"

"Look here, you know—"

"You indescribable wogue!" roared Arthur Augustus. "You have been takin' me in all along—and I have been wowwyin' Tom Mewwy to give you a place in the eleven as theeward of pluck—oh, you fat wascal! Have you got a stump or somethin' handy, Tom Mewwy? I should like to bowwow it to tnowash Twimble."

Baggy bounded out of the armchair.

"I—I—I say, you keep off," he gasped. "Look here, I'll tell you what! My uncle's going to stand me a fiver if I play for School—"

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry. "That's it, is it?"

"That's it," said Trimble, eagerly. "And look here, you play me—"

## TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE!

"Play you!" stuttered Tom.

"Yes, you play me, and I'll whack out the fiver! What about that?"

Four fellows gazed at Baggy Trimble for a moment. But only for a moment. Then, without a word, they fell on him. They fell upon him with one accord, and smote him hip and thigh.

It was a wildly-dishevelled, panting and spluttering Baggy that escaped, at last, from No. 10 Study, and careered down the passage, yelling. After him careered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, landing kick after kick. For a whole week, Baggy had enjoyed the friendship of Arthur Augustus. But it was painfully—very painfully—clear to him now, that that friendship was a thing of the past.

TOM MERRY and Co. played Greyfriars the following day, and Figgins helped to pile up the runs that sent Harry Wharton and Co. bootless home. Baggy Trimble did not even see the match. It no longer interested him. Uncle Bagley's fiver had faded away like the mirage in the desert, leaving nothing behind but Trouble for Trimble.

THE END

## REMEMBER TOM MERRY ?

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