



BAGGY TRIMBLE'S BRAINWAVE

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

A humorous story of popular Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's, starring Baggy Trimble, the fat and fatuous Fourth-Former

THE FIRST CHAPTER BAGGY IN A FIX

"**N**OTHING!"

There was a world of disgust in Baggy Trimble's voice as he finished scanning the letter-rack in the outer hall at St. Jim's.

There was nothing in the pigeon-holes for Baggy. There very rarely was—at least, not a letter containing a remittance.

Big remittances never came Baggy Trimble's way.

Still, Baggy was a hopeful youth. Twice a day, six days a week, Baggy visited the letter-rack as regularly as clockwork, and almost as regularly was he disappointed.

Baggy's life, accordingly, was one continual round of disappointments.

"Nothing!" he repeated dismally. "Not even a blessed postcard! Other fellows have whacking great remittances from paters and maters and

uncles and aunts, but nobody ever sends me any. It jolly well isn't fair. Why—hallo!"

Baggy broke off as his roving eyes fell upon a little pile of parcels on the rack reserved for the masters. All of them were addressed to Mr. Railton, Housemaster of the School House.

"Jolly queer!" mused Baggy, shaking his head. "Now, why should old Railton get a pile of parcels and letters at once like this?"

He proceeded to investigate. Baggy possessed a large bump of inquisitiveness. He jerked down one of the parcels and examined it. The string happened to have worked loose at one end. By slipping open the brown paper, Baggy was able to see inside.

He was rewarded with a glimpse of a silver photo-frame. In this was the portrait of a pretty girl whose face held a likeness to Mr. Railton's own features. Further poking by Baggy's fat fingers brought to light a slip of cardboard on which was inscribed the following:

"To dear Victor, with all good wishes for a happy birthday. From his affectionate sister, Clara."

The mystery of the numerous parcels and letters was solved. It was Mr. Railton's birthday.

It had never occurred to Baggy that even Housemasters are human, and have birthdays like ordinary mortals.

But he had little time to reflect upon this truth, for just then a footstep sounded behind the fat junior. It startled Baggy so much that he dropped the photo-frame, and there was an ominous crash of breaking glass.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Baggy; and he gasped in greater alarm as he recognised the newcomer as Mr. Linton, the Shell master.

Mr. Linton might have passed on, but the guilty confusion on Baggy's fat face was too obvious to mistake. While Baggy stood gasping, Mr. Linton picked up the smashed photo-frame, and it took him just three seconds to discover to whom it belonged.

"Why, what is this, Trimble?" he demanded sternly. "Boy, how dare you interfere with other people's property? Bless my soul, you—you have dared to open a parcel addressed to Mr. Railton! Upon my word, boy——"

"Nunno, sir! Not at all, sir!" Baggy's fat wits were well accustomed to manufacturing "whoppers" on the spot, and they did not fail him now. "Nunno, sir! You—you see, sir, Mr. Railton sent me to get his p-post from the rack. You—you made me jump and drop it, sir."

Baggy hoped this explanation would satisfy Mr. Linton, and he was not disappointed. Mr. Linton's frown disappeared.

"Ah! That alters the case, of course, Trimble," he said, smiling. "In the circumstances, you can

hardly be blamed. You had better explain to Mr. Railton just how the accident happened, my boy."

"Oh, yes, sir," said Baggy.

He was grinning now, but Mr. Linton's next words wiped the grin from his face, so to speak.

"At the moment, Mr. Railton is over in the New House, I believe," he added. "But I myself will explain the matter when I see him, Trimble."

With that Mr. Linton passed on.

Baggy Trimble groaned—a deep, hollow groan. Matters were a thousand times worse now. Mr. Railton would immediately deny that he had sent Baggy for his post, and then—well, the fat would be in the fire with a vengeance.

Dismally, Baggy wrapped up the broken remains of the photo-frame and replaced the parcel in the rack. He had no intention of taking it along to Mr. Railton, and he rolled away.

In the School House doorway, he met Levison of the Fourth. Levison noticed Baggy's dejected look at once.

"Hallo, fatty, what's the matter?" he demanded. "You look absolutely ghastly, old bean!"

In his desperate plight, Baggy was ready to grasp at any straw.

"I—I say, Levison, I'm in an awful hole!" he groaned. "You might try to help a fellow out. You're rather a tricky chap, I know."

"What?"

"I—I mean, you're awfully cute—clever, you know," amended Baggy hastily. "I say, I'm booked for an awful licking if something isn't done."

And he related his unfortunate position to Levison, in the despairing hope that Levison might perhaps help him out. But Levison wasn't very sympathetic.

"Serves you jolly well right, you prying, sneaking little beast!" he

said candidly. "Still, if you really want me to help you out——"

"Yes, rather! If you can think of something, Levison, old fellow——"

"I can't think of anything," said Levison grimly. "But I can help you out, Trimble—like this!"

Levison grabbed Baggy by the coat-collar, twirled him round, and helped him out of the House by planting a vigorous kick behind Baggy's fat person.

Baggy sailed through the open doorway, landed with a heavy bump on the top step, and rolled down to the bottom with a series of heavy bumps and fiendish howls.

Evidently that was all the "helping out" Ernest Levison intended doing for Baggy Trimble!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

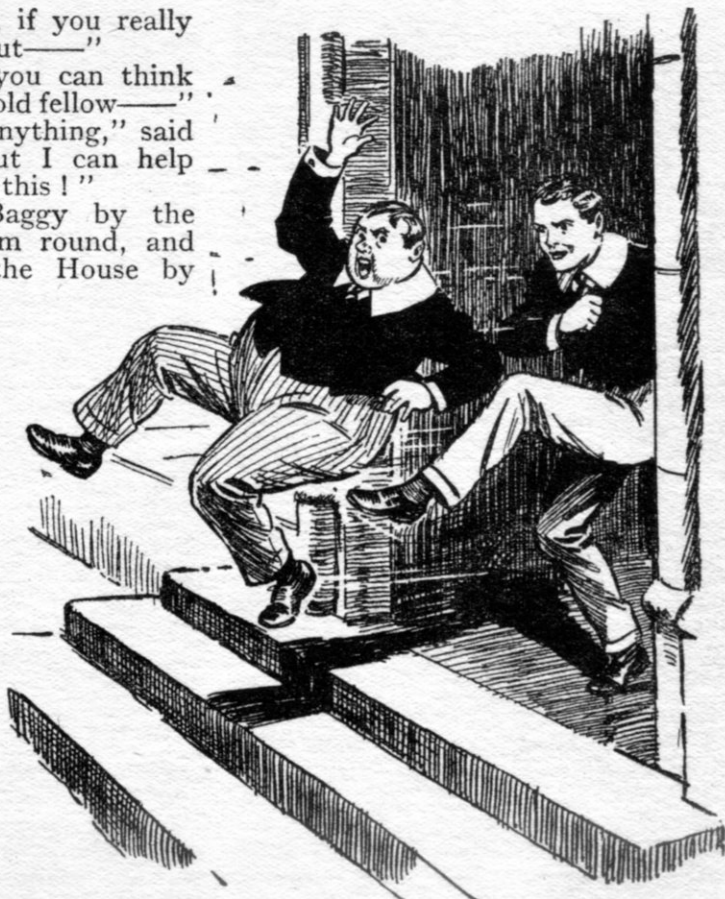
A BRAINWAVE

BAGGY scrambled up at last, groaning.

He dusted himself down, nursed his aches and pains for a few moments, and then began to consider the matter. It was serious; there was no doubt about that. Baggy thought so, and he knew perfectly well that Mr. Railton would also look upon it as serious.

Baggy Trimble was booked for a record licking unless something were done.

He rolled away through the gates, his face doleful, but his fat wits working overtime upon the problem. Hardly had Baggy reached the lane outside, when he came upon some-



"I can help you out," said Levison grimly—"like this!" He grabbed Trimble by the coat-collar, twirled him round, and helped him out of the House by planting a vigorous kick behind Baggy's fat person.

thing that brought his thoughts to a momentary full stop.

It was a small parcel, rolled in brown tissue-paper, lying in the road, and it had rather the appearance of a bar of chocolate. Baggy hoped it was, anyway. He picked it up. The paper was clean, and it was evident the parcel had recently been dropped by someone. As Baggy's thoughts always revolved round grub, he imagined it felt like a bar of chocolate, and he was quite disappointed when he opened the package

and found it was a pipe. It was a beautiful new pipe, and it was in a handsome leather case, inscribed in gold lettering on the inside of which was the name of a Rylcombe tobacconist.

"Must have cost a quid, easily," reflected Baggy, his disappointment giving place quickly to glee. "M-my hat! I'll take it to the village, blowed if I don't! If I can't raise ten bob on it, I'll—phew!"

Almost on the heels of the first thought came another, a better one; in fact, a real brainwave!

Why not give the pipe as a birthday present to Railton? Great idea! The Housemaster smoked a pipe, and, dash it all, any pipe-smoker would be delighted with such a ripping present! Even a beast like Railton couldn't possibly be so ungrateful as to lick a fellow who had presented him with such a handsome and magnificent birthday present!

"M-mum-my hat! I'll do it, blowed if I don't!" breathed Baggy, his eyes glimmering. "I'll do that interfering beast, Linton, down, after all! I'll be well in with Railton after this!"

The thought was a pleasant one. With the pipe safe in his pocket, Baggy rolled indoors cheerily. In the Hall he met Tom Merry, Monty Lowther and Manners, and they stared as he gave them rather a vaunting glance.

"Hallo, what's the joke, Baggybus?" demanded Monty Lowther. "Don't say you've at last met someone with a worse-looking chivvy than your own!"

"Now I've met you fellows—yes!" grinned Baggy. "He, he, he! Think you're clever and funny, don't you, Lowther? I say, you fellows, care to see my birthday present to Railton?"

"Eh? Is it Railton's birthday?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes, old chap. Look at this! What d'you think of it, eh?"

And Baggy hauled out the pipe-case, opened it and revealed his "birthday present." It was a chance to swank that Trimble simply couldn't resist.

"Rather decent, what?" he observed, a trifle loftily. "Cost me a quid!"

"You mean you've burgled Stimson's shop?" gasped Monty Lowther, eyeing the handsome pipe blankly. "Where the dickens could you get a quid from, Trimble?"

"Where on earth have you got this from, Trimble?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Aren't I telling you I bought it for a quid?" said Baggy warmly. "A quid my pater sent me this morning! I'm handing this to Railton now. He, he, he! I'll be well in with Railton after this, and no mistake!"

"You fat idiot!"

"No good you fellows feeling jealous," said Baggy. "Still, if you'd care to be in with me on this I've no objection. Lemme see; four into a quid would be five-bob apiece, wouldn't it? If you chaps would like to hand me fifteen bob I'll tell Railton you're in it with me, That's fair enough."

"Why, you—you——"

"Jolly cheap way of getting well in with Railton, if you ask me," said Trimble. "Think what it'll mean. After accepting a jolly decent present like this from us, he'll never be so ungrateful as to lick any of us again. And he won't like to refuse favours like exeats and things, either. I tell you, we'll be in clover with that beast Railton when—— Here, what—why—ow! Yarooooop!"

Bump!

Trimble sat down hard on the floor, hardly knowing how he got there.

Nor did he know which of the three grabbed the pipe-case from his fat fist and rammed it down between his collar and the back of his fat neck.

He sat up dizzily and saw Tom Merry & Co. walking away.

"Beasts!" he gasped. "Ow, ow, ow! The awful beasts! Fancy turning down a splendid offer like that! Ow! Beasts!"

But it was only too painfully clear that the Terrible Three had turned his offer down, generous as it was. Apparently Tom Merry & Co. did not want to be "well in" with Railton on those terms.

For a few moments Baggy struggled desperately, and by turning himself into a human pocket-knife, he managed to regain the pipe. Then he staggered to his feet, dusted himself down, and proceeded to the House-master's study. Forcing a cheery smile on his fat, grubby face, Baggy knocked at Mr. Railton's door.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

PAINFUL FOR BAGGY!

MR. RAILTON was in. Apparently someone had brought along the post, for the parcels and letters were on the table. Baggy trembled as he noted that the Housemaster had just opened the parcel containing the smashed photo-frame, and was frowning over it.

Obviously Mr. Railton was annoyed about it, for he gave Trimble anything but a pleasant greeting.

"Well, Trimble," he snapped, "what is it?"

"I hope you won't think me pre-presumptuous, sir," said Baggy nervously, "but I've ventured to bring you a birthday present. Many happy returns of the day, Mr. Railton."

With that Baggy brought out the parcel, opened the case and revealed the glimmering new pipe.

Mr. Railton almost fell down.

"Bless my soul!" he gasped. "How—how did you know it was my birthday, Trimble, my boy?"

"Oh, I'm not likely to overlook the birthday of a master I admire so much, sir," said Baggy. "Other fellows might forget or ignore it, but not me, sir. I admire your splendid qualities too much, you know. I—I hope you'll accept it in the spirit in which it is given, sir."

"Dear me," gasped the astonished Mr. Railton. "Your—your kindness overwhelms me, Trimble. You—you've brought this to me as a birthday present, my boy?"

"Certainly, sir."

"But, really," said Mr. Railton, examining the pipe. "It is an expensive present for a junior to give, Trimble. Really——"

"A mere nothing, sir," said Baggy airily. "The pater happened to send along a pound, and I hope I'm not too mean to lavish it on a present for a master I admire like I do you, sir."

"Bless my soul! Really, Trimble——" Mr. Railton was at a loss to know what to do. But he was too good-natured to hurt Baggy's feelings—if that was possible—by refusing. So, after a moment's reflection, he nodded and smiled. "Very well, my boy, I will certainly do as you wish—accept it in the spirit it is given. Thank you very much, Trimble. It is really an exceptionally nice pipe. One moment, my boy; you must have a slice of birthday cake."

Trimble's eyes had already fallen upon the big birthday cake lying opened on the table; possibly Mr. Railton had noted his rather hungry glance. At all events, he picked up a knife and started to cut a slice—to Trimble's immense delight.

But Trimble's delight didn't last long—nor was his hunger to be

satisfied. For just as Mr. Railton was about to hand the slice over, a tap came on the door and Mr. Linton walked in.

"Oh, lor'!" groaned Trimble.

His sudden fear was amply justified. Mr. Linton got down to brass tacks at once.

"Ah! I see Trimble has explained about the smashed photo-frame, Mr. Railton," he began, his glance going from the photo-frame to Baggy. "It was purely an accident, as Trimble will have told you, and I assure you that if anyone was to blame, it was myself, Mr. Railton."

"I fail to understand you, Mr. Linton," said the Housemaster. "What can Trimble know about this—this photo-frame?"

"Dear me! Then— However, I will explain," said Mr. Linton.

And he did. Trimble didn't enjoy listening to the explanation, nor did he like the growing look of wrath on Mr. Railton's face.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed the Housemaster at last. "But I did not send Trimble for the post, Mr. Linton. The boy most certainly had no right whatever to interfere with the parcels. Trimble!"

"Oh, dear! Y-e-es, sir!"

Baggy's fat knees knocked together. But once again came an interruption—this time in the form of Dr. Richard Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's. The Head entered the Housemaster's study, and, after looking at Mr. Linton and Trimble, turned to Mr. Railton,

"Ah! I am glad to find you in, Railton," he exclaimed genially. "No, no, pray do not go, my dear Linton. I will not keep Mr. Railton a moment. I have merely looked in to perform a small, but to me a very pleasant ceremony. Allow me to congratulate you upon your birthday, my dear Railton."

He shook hands warmly with Mr.

Railton. There had always been a deep bond of regard between the Head and his youthful Housemaster.

"I only remembered it half an hour ago," resumed the Head, smiling. "I immediately walked to the village, and I have brought you a small token of my regard for one who is, to me, not only a valued colleague but a friend."

Having made his preliminary speech, the Head started to go through his pockets—apparently in search of the "small token." He felt in one pocket after another, growing rather red as he proceeded. A rather uncomfortable silence followed. He went through his pockets, and then did so again—in vain.

He was in quite a flustered state when he gave it up at last.

"Dear me!" he frowned. "Really, how very annoying! I am afraid, my dear Railton, that I have lost the small present I had bought for you. It must have fallen from my pocket during my walk from the village. It was merely a pipe, and—good gracious! There it is!"

The Head's eyes had suddenly fallen upon the pipe lying in its velvet-lined case on the table.

"Oh!" groaned Baggy Trimble involuntarily. "Oh lor'!"

Quite suddenly he understood. But Railton didn't understand—yet!

"I—I do not quite understand, Dr. Holmes," he gasped. "This pipe has just been presented to me by this boy Trimble!"

The Head jumped.

"Indeed!" he exclaimed, bending a grim glance upon the shivering Baggy. "Then obviously the boy must have found it in the lane. It is undoubtedly the pipe I selected from Stimson's in the village."

The Head looked at Baggy—they all looked at Baggy. That scheming junior felt like a cornered rat.

"Trimble!" rumbled Mr. Railton. "Did you find this pipe in Rylcombe Lane this afternoon?"

Trimble groaned.

"Nunno, sir!" he gasped. "Nothing of the k-kik-kind, sir! M-m-my Uncle Joe sent me a pound, and I bought it out of that as a pup-present for Mr. Railton."

"Trimble!" said Mr. Railton sternly. "You distinctly stated to me that you bought the pipe out of a pound sent by your father."

"Dud-did I, sir? Oh, yes, sir! You—you see, they both sent me a pound—the pater and my Uncle Joe. And I spent ten shillings out of each pip-pound on the pip-pipe. That's it, sir! It was really seventeen-and-sixpence, and I b-bought it in Wayland, sir."

"Then," said the Head, in grinding accents, "how do you explain the fact that the name Stimson is gold-lettered on the case, Trimble?"

That was rather a poser, but Baggy was equal to it.

"It was like this, sir," he gasped. "The pip-pipe I bought in Wayland was a curved one, and—and as I thought it might not suit Mr. Railton's f-face, I got it changed at Stimson's for a straight one. That—that's just how it happened, sir! K-k-can I go now I've explained the matter, sir?"

"No, you may not go, Trimble!" thundered Mr. Railton. "It is quite clear to me now that this pipe is the one Dr. Holmes lost while returning to St. Jim's. Upon my word! Such audacity—such impudence—"

"Oh, dear!" gasped Baggy, quite losing his head then. "It—it's quite a mistake, sir!

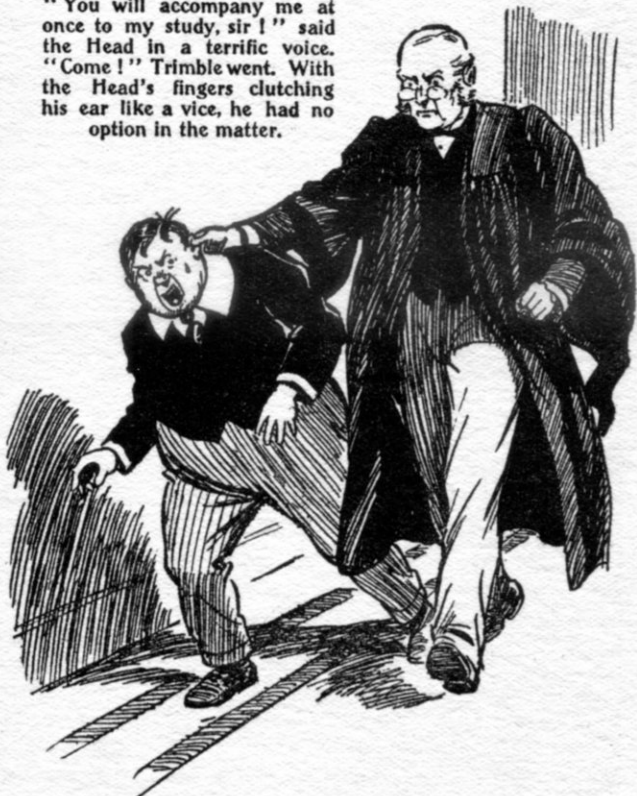
Not at all, sir! I didn't find the pip-pipe in the lane at all, sir. You see, having bought it in Lexham, I—"

"What?"

"I—I mean in Wayland, sir!" gasped Baggy hastily. "I assure you, sir, that it never even entered my head to pretend I'd bought it and to present it to Mr. Railton so he wouldn't lick me for smashing his photo-frame. S-such a wicked idea never even occurred to me, s-sir. You—you see, it was like this, sir—"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Railton. "Enough, Trimble! Do not add further absurd falsehoods to your gross deceit, boy! The matter is now quite clear, Dr. Holmes. This afternoon Mr. Linton caught Trimble interfering with a parcel belonging to me

"You will accompany me at once to my study, sir!" said the Head in a terrific voice. "Come!" Trimble went. With the Head's fingers clutching his ear like a vice, he had no option in the matter.



in the post-rack. Trimble told an untruth then, stating that I had sent him for the parcel. I had done nothing of the kind. Apparently Trimble anticipated punishment from me, and having found that pipe in the lane, he brought it to me as a birthday present from himself, hoping thereby to save himself from punishment by his deceitful action."

" Bless my soul ! " gasped the Head. " Such unscrupulous deceit, such abominable duplicity, I have never known from a boy ! Upon my word ! Trimble ! "

" Ow ! Oh, dear ! I sus-say, sir, shall I go and sus-search for your pip-pipe in the lane now, sir ? "

Trimble fairly trembled as he asked the ludicrous question in a last vain hope to save his skin. Even to the fat and fatuous Fourth-Former it must have been obvious that he was " for it " with a vengeance.

He realised now that his last plight was far worse than his first. Baggy's brainwave had led him into serious trouble instead of getting him out of it.

If he cherished any hope of escaping punishment, however, it was dispelled by the Head's answer.

" You will do nothing of the kind, Trimble ! " he said in a terrific voice. " You will accompany me at once to my study, sir. Come ! "

Trimble went—with the Head's fingers clutching his ear like a vice he had no choice in the matter. A few minutes later howls of anguish were echoing far and wide in the School House at St. Jim's. Tom Merry & Co. heard the sounds from afar, and when they heard all about the affair later, they felt thankful that they had not shared in the results of Baggy's brainwave to get " well in " with Railton on his birthday.

THE END

ST. JIM'S JINGLES

BAGLEY TRIMBLE

(the Paul Pry of the Fourth)



MOST cheery schoolboys at St. Jim's
Are active, blithe, and nimble ;
They lack the plump and lazy limbs
Of Master Bagley Trimble.
Some chaps are sturdy, some are spare,
And just a few are scraggy ;
But only Wynn can you compare
With the inflated Baggy !

He is the Falstaff of his Form,
And his colossal figure
Would take a music-hall by storm,
And make its patrons snigger.
He turns the scale at fourteen stone
(Although he's oft denied it) ;
His bed begins to creak and groan
When Baggy gets inside it !

A worm, a toady, and a sneak,
Is Baggy's reputation ;
He's always running to a " beak "
With secret information.
He " listens-in " at every door,
And likes it more than wireless ;
He gleans news items by the score—
His energy is tireless !

The appetite that he can boast
Would rival that of Bunter ;
He tackles tarts and buns and toast,
And he's a keen tuck-hunter.
The helpings he consumes in Hall
Fill us with consternation ;
And yet he says, to one and all,
" I'm sinking with starvation ! "

He fancies he is brave and bold,
A valiant son of Britain ;
Yet, if the honest truth be told,
He's timid as a kitten.
If Baggy ever saw a spook,
A phantom fierce and frightening,
He wouldn't take a second look—
He'd streak away like lightning !

The decent fellows in the school
Detest him and despise him ;
They never scruple, as a rule,
To capture and chastise him.
A cad, a glutton, and a sneak,
They cannot suffer gladly ;
He gets a bumping twice a week,
And needs that bumping badly !