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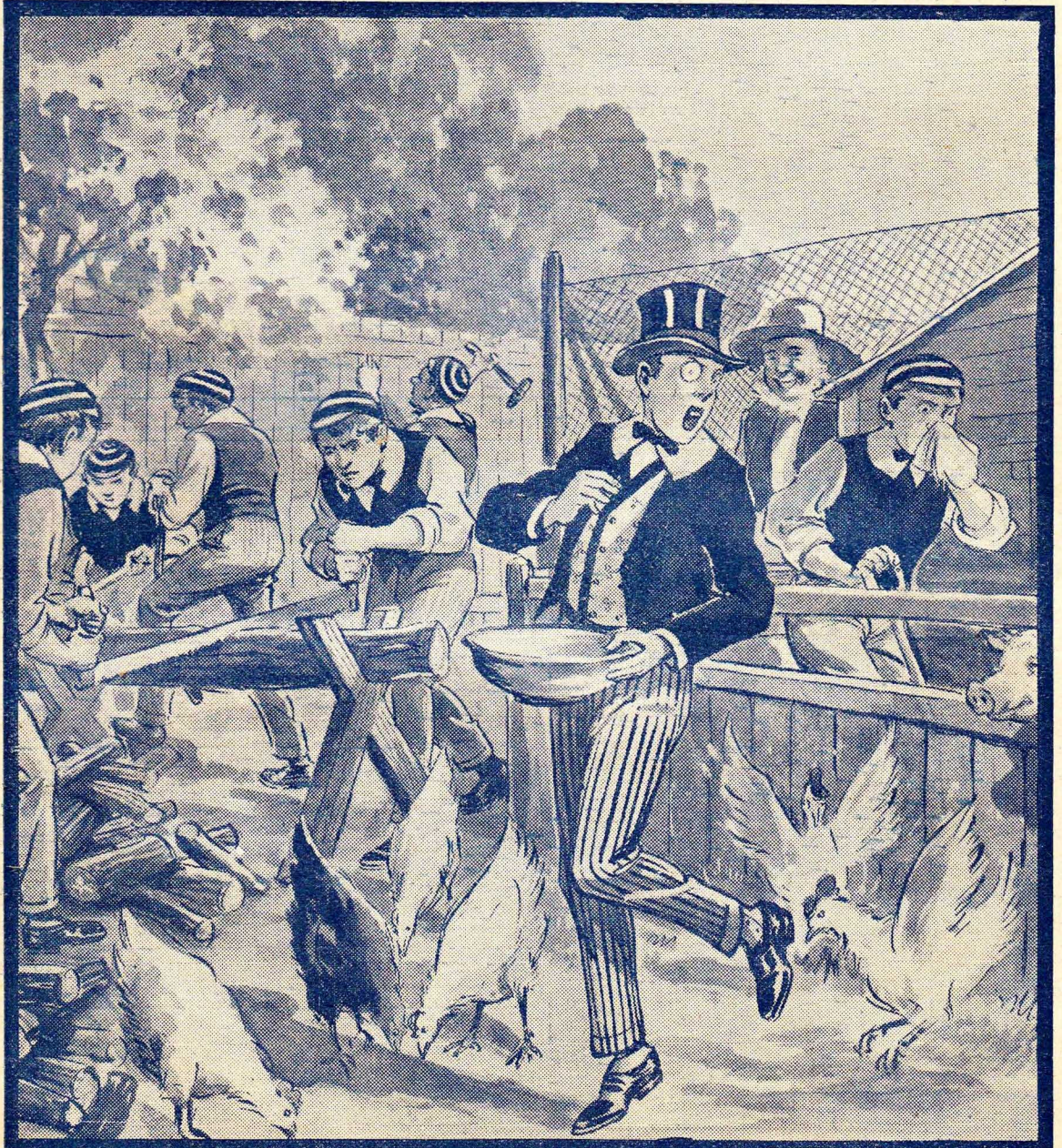


B. FLETCHER
(Barnsley F.C.)

No. 750. Vol. XXI.

Every Wednesday.

June 24th, 1922.



A STRENUOUS TIME FOR THE STONY SEVEN!
(An Amusing Scene in the Grand Long Complete School Story Inside.)

TWO PLAYERS OF NOTE!

FRANK ROBERTS. & **BROUGH FLETCHER.**
Bolton Wanderers F.C. Barnsley F.C.

A Splendid Leader.

IN these times of centre-forward scarcity, Bolton Wanderers are lucky in the possession of a leader of the attack who is entirely satisfactory. His name is Frank Roberts, and those best able to judge a promising player are confident that with any sort of luck this centre-forward is pretty sure to gain real honours in the football world in the near future. In fact, last season he played in one of the International trial matches, but is still just a bit lacking in the art of ball control, though there is nothing amiss with him in either the dash or the shooting business. Doubtless a little more experience will see him cure the one defect in his play. Frank Roberts should not be confused with Walter Roberts, the centre-forward of Preston North End, for the two men are not related to each other at all. Frank, though, has a younger brother on the books of the Burnden Park club. The Trotters' centre did not cost the club anything in the way of transfer fee, for he was picked up when playing as a youngster with Sandbach, in the Cheshire League, and this, incidentally, is the place where he was born. In those days he was considered to be best at inside-right, and it was in this position that he first appeared in the Bolton Wanderers' first team in 1914. It was soon evident, though, that his fearless rushing tactics would be of more use in the centre-forward berth, and though the war came to interrupt his progress, he has done extremely well since the conflict was over, and had a record of playing in eighty consecutive matches for the Wanderers. Is already well on the way to a century of goals for the Burnden Park side. Not once throughout the season before last was he absent from his place in a League match, and a good motto for the future would be: "Watch Roberts."

A Real Trier.

THIS Barnsley man must be included among the captains courageous. He is really a half-back, but in the early part of the present year his team was playing an important Cup-tie, and was a goal down a few minutes from the end. In fact, the match seemed as good

as lost, but Fletcher decided that while there is life there is hope, so he made a bold move, going himself from his place at half-back to centre-forward. And in this strange position he put such new life into his team that they scored two goals in the last few minutes of the contest, Fletcher himself scoring one of the vital points. The success of the captain of the team that day led the Barnsley people to persevere with Fletcher as a centre-forward, and he played well in the position to the end of the season. He went to Barnsley from the Shildon Athletic Club—the same side from which the Yorkshiremen secured Downs in the long ago. In 1920 he played for the North against England in an International match, and is a real trier all the time, no matter in what position he appears. He stands only five feet seven, but turns the scale at 12 st. 4 lbs.

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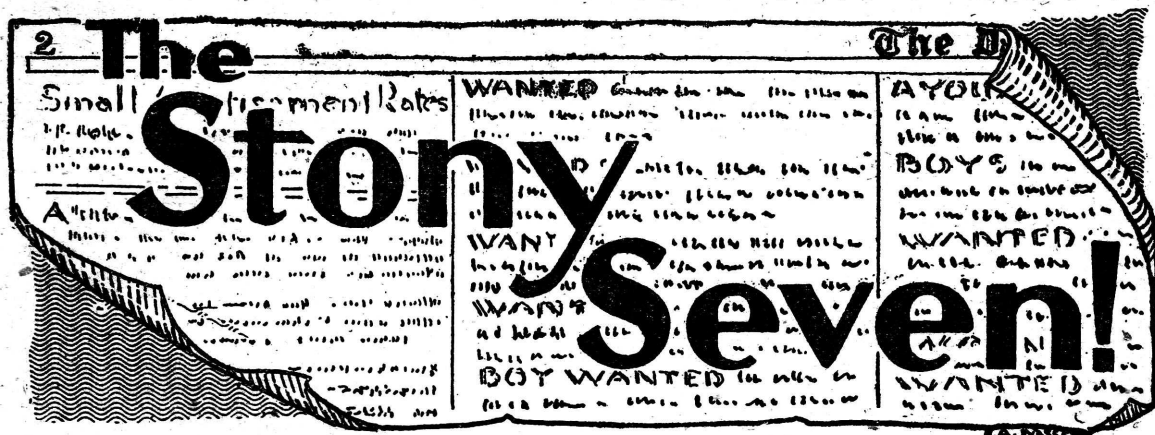
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A Grand Long Complete School Story of St. Jim's, telling of Tom Merry & Co's. efforts to lift themselves from the depths of insolvency.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1. Seven in a Scrape!

"CARDEW, bai Jove!"
"Oh dear!"
"C-c-c-come in, old fellow!"
"Oh crumbs!"

Ralph Reckness Cardew of the Fourth Form glanced round Study No. 6 in surprise. His welcome in that celebrated apartment was a peculiar one.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyeglass dropped from his eye in his agitation. As Cardew was a distant relative of the noble Gussy, the noble Gussy ought really to have been glad to see him. Perhaps he was; but he didn't look glad. He looked utterly dismayed.

Blake and Herries and Digby looked sheepish and uncomfortable. All four of the owners of Study No. 6 seemed struck all of a heap, as it were, by the entrance of the elegant Cardew.

There were three other juniors in the study—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther of the Shell.

The Terrible Three seemed as discomfited as the Fourth-Formers.

Tom Merry turned red. Manners coughed. Even Monty Lowther, famous for his humorous disposition, looked serious—awfully serious.

No wonder Cardew was surprised. He was welcome in most studies—unwelcome in some—but certainly it was rather unusual for his arrival to have the effect of a bomb-shell dropped into the room.

"C-c-c-come in!" stammered Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"S-s-s-sit down, old fellow."

"Oh crumbs!"

Cardew raised his eyebrows. He looked from one to the other of the seven juniors, and each of them coloured under his gaze.

"I seem to have dropped in at an unlucky moment," Cardew remarked.

"Not at—at all."

"I'll call another time—"

"No, no! Pway come in, Cardew."

"Here's a chair, old scout!" said Herries.

"Welcome as the flowers in May," said Jack Blake, with all the heartiness he could muster. "J-j-jolly glad to see you!"

"J-j-jolly glad!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

"Is there anythin' alarmin' about me, this time?" inquired Cardew. "Has anythin' happened to my features and made them look anythin' like Lowther's?"

"Why, you ass—" began Lowther.

"Well, what's the row?" asked Cardew.

"Row!" repeated Tom Merry vaguely.

"There isn't any wow, old scout. Nothin' of the sort."

"Nothin' the matter?" asked Cardew.

"Hem!"

"I suppose I haven't dropped into a private lunatic asylum by mistake," remarked Cardew.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"I seem to have had the effect of a high explosive dropped

in," said the dandy of the Fourth. "You look like a set of moultin' fowls in a flabbergasted state."

"Bai Jove!"

The seven juniors looked at one another. Their looks were glum, not to say sickly. Whatever the reason might be, there was no doubt that Ralph Reckness Cardew's visit had dismayed the whole septette.

"However, as there's no row, and nothin' the matter, and everythin' in the garden is lovely, I'll come to business," continued Cardew. "It was really D'Arcy I came to see."

"Oh deah!"

"Do you always groan like that when a relation drops in, Gussy?"

"Bai Jove! D-d-d-did I gwoan?"

"You did!"

"I weally beg your pardon, Cardew. I certainly did not mean to gwoan."

"Well, if you don't mind my mentionin' it in the presence of the whole happy family, I've called to collect a little account," said Cardew.

"Ow!"

"I've got a little bit of paper here, with your signature on it, Gussy," said Cardew. "Have you forgotten givin' me an I O U last week, when I lent you a fiver?"

"Nunno."

"You were goin' to square in a week. The week's up. I've looked in for the fiver."

"Oh deah!"

Cardew grinned.

"I begin to catch on," he remarked,—"You can't square. Is that it?"

"I—I—I—"

"Better have it out," said Tom Merry desperately. "The fact is, Cardew—"

"No need for you to worry; it's Gussy who's the merry debtor."

"It's all of us," said Tom ruefully. "We all owe you that five quids, and—and we shall have to ask you to wait."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Dear me!" said Cardew. "I was countin' on it as an absolute certainty. But if you can't settle, you can't!"

Seven crimson faces looked ruefully at Cardew. Tom Merry & Co. had really never been in such a position before. It was distinctly uncomfortable, now that they were in it. If they needed a lesson about borrowing, and getting into debt, they had it now.

"I'll explain," said Tom. "We—we were all stony last week. We had an idea of earning some money by starting a teashop for cyclists in Pepper's barn. It—it was a failure—"

"No need to mention that," said Manners. "Just mention that it was Gussy's idea. Same thing."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Oh, I remember Gussy told me somethin' of the sort!" said Cardew, with a nod. "But he told me it was a scheme for makin' money, and he was goin' to hand back my fiver and have five or six left."

"I weally thought it would turn out like that, Cardew, othahwise I should not have bowwowed the money. But it

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turned out quite differently. It is weally a howwid thing not to be able to meet an engagement, but—

"How much left of the fiver?"

"Nothin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cardew. "You'd better keep out of business, Gussy. But don't all of you look like a crowd of insolvent debtors with the bailiffs on the doorstep. I dropped in for the fiver because it was the date, but I can survive without it. Let it rip!"

Cardew turned to the door again. Tom Merry & Co. breathed more freely. Cardew had his faults—their name, indeed, was legion—but certainly he was a very accommodating creditor. Still, the position of the Co. was a very uncomfortable one.

Assuredly they had hoped to make profits out of their venture into business. Instead of which, they had lost their capital. Instead of being merely stony—which was bad—they were in debt, which was worse. They had meant well. They had put plenty of hard work into their venture. They really could not blame themselves for the result. Luck had been against them. Luck often is against people who butt into things they do not understand.

"I know it's rotten," said Tom Merry. "Of course, the money's all right, Cardew—if you can wait. We can raise it later—"

"Profits in a business?"

"Nunno. We're going to set aside our allowances to make it up. We owe old Pepper a pound, too. And—and we're in a fix about it. We've had tea in Hall for the past week. If you can wait a bit—"

Cardew chuckled.

"You'd better let me lend you a quid, to settle with old Pepper," he said. "He's a bit of a crusty customer."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Thanks awfully!" he said. "But we've made a special rule not to borrow any more tin. Thanks all the same!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"No good borrowing from Peter to pay Paul!" said Manners.

"Such a dodge, in the long run, would pall on Peter!" remarked Monty Lowther, evidently recovering his spirits.

"Bai Jove! Is that a pun, Lowthah?"

"Yes, ass, and a jolly good one!"

"This is weally not a time for punnin', when we are plunged in the howwid depths of insolvency," said Arthur Augustus seyerely. "We have got to pay old Peppah, and we have to square Cardew somehow—"

"Don't worry!" said Cardew.

"But we must wowwy, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus firmly. "It is howwid to be in debt. It was a mistake to bowwow money to start the teashop in the barn. I see that now. Neithah a bowwowah nor a lendah be! I twust this will be a lesson to you fellahs!"

"To us?" yelled Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Why, you dummy, it was your idea!" howled Blake.

"Pway don't wear at a chap, Blake! I have wemarked a lot of times how I dislike bein' woreed at!"

"Order!" said Tom Merry. "If you don't mind hanging on another week or so, Cardew, it will be all right. I know it's rotten."

"Not at all," said Cardew politely. "May I make a suggestion?"

"Yes, rather!"

"You're really stony?"

"Broke to the wide!" said Digby plaintively.

"Busted!" said Blake.

"How lucky I'm in funds, then. Let me lend Gussy another fiver. I've two—"

"Bai Jove!"

There was a general shaking of heads in Study No. 6. Cardew's offer was a generous one, but the juniors did not mean to accept it. Being in debt was too uncomfortable a state.

"Thanks awfully, but there's nothing doing," said Tom. "We'll square up the fiver as soon as we can, and we're much obliged."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Cardew laughed.

"Just as you like! Ta, ta!"

The dandy of the Fourth strolled out of Study No. 6, leaving the stony seven rather relieved. But their relief was brief. A few minutes later the voice of Toby, the page, was heard in the passage, and he was saying:

"This way, Mr. Pepper!"

"Oh cwikey!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "Old Peppah's called for his money!"

And dismay fell once more upon the insolvent seven.

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CHAPTER 2.

Peppery!

ERASMUS ZACHARIAH PEPPER stepped into Study No. 6, and removed his ancient hat, and ducked his head to the assembled juniors. Mr. Pepper was freely bedewed with perspiration after his walk in the hot sunshine, and he fanned himself with his old hat. Mr. Pepper's garments—of which not one article matched another—were very dusty; indeed, they looked as if they had been gathered on a dust-heap years ago, and had seen hard service since.

Tom Merry & Co. rose to their feet, greeting Zachariah Pepper with politeness. Politeness was all that they could offer him; it remained to be seen whether Mr. Pepper would be satisfied with that in lieu of the pound he had evidently called for.

"Arternoon, gents!" said Mr. Pepper affably.

"Good-aftahnoon, my deah sir!"

"Sit down, Mr. Pepper!"

"I don't mind if I do," said Mr. Pepper, squatting on the chair Blake offered him. "Though I ain't stayin' above a minute or two. I've only looked in to collect the account."

"Oh deah!"

"Bein' as how you forgot to call, Master Merry, as it was understood, I thought I'd drop in as I was passing," said Mr. Pepper genially. "But I won't waste your time. I've got the receipt here."

"Have you, weally, Mr. Peppah?" asked Arthur Augustus faintly.

"And 'ere's the watch!" added Mr. Pepper, laying a rather battered silver watch upon the table, and smiling at the juniors. "Master Herries' ticker, I think."

"That's so," said Herries.

George Herries made no movement to take up the watch. It had been left with Mr. Pepper as a guarantee for the pound owing to him; Mr. Pepper not being of a trusting disposition. Herries had been able to spare his timekeeping as it was not at present a going concern.

Mr. Pepper looked at the juniors with pleasant inquiry.

"Jest a pound," he said. "I'll take it in notes or gold, jest as you like. Ha, ha!"

"The fact is—" began Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! The—the fact is—"

"I—I think—" stammered Blake.

"You think I didn't charge you enough?" said Mr. Pepper, with a nod. "I agree—I didn't! The way somebody drove nails into them planks I lent you was a caution—a fair caution. Must have spent a small fortune on nails, I think. Ardly think the takings of your teashop—ha, ha!—would 'ave covered the cost of the nails. But I'm a man of my word. I said a pound, and I'm taking a pound. Where is it?"

Tom Merry coughed.

"You—you see—" he stammered.

"I don't quite see!" contradicted Mr. Pepper.

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged desperate glances. They almost wished now that they had borrowed another pound from Cardew. Mr. Pepper was a very hard nut to crack.

"Well, time's going!" said Mr. Pepper.

Seven voices began to explain at once in halting tones. Mr. Pepper listened patiently, shaking his head from time to time. Tom Merry & Co. were feeling inclined to kick themselves and to kick Zachariah Pepper. They vowed fervently to themselves that when they were once safe out of this scrape they would never owe any money again. But they were not out of the scrape yet.

Mr. Pepper's look was quite uncompromising. He wanted his pound—his pound was due, and he wanted it. Shylock of old was not keener after his pound of flesh than Mr. Pepper was after his pound in coin of the realm. Mr. Pepper had indulged in a good many deep chuckles over the schoolboys' scheme of starting a teashop in the barn. He had quite enjoyed the joke. But he wanted his little account all the same.

There was quite an excited buzz of voices in Study No. 6, as seven hapless juniors all explained to Mr. Pepper at once. In the midst of the buzz a fat chortle was heard outside the half-open door.

"Bai Jove! Twimble!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

A fat face looked in at the doorway, grinning.

"Hallo! Good-afternoon, Mr. Pepper! I say, you chaps seem to be up against it—what?" chuckled Baggy Trimble.

"Weally, Twimble—"

"Outside, you fat rotter!" snorted Blake.

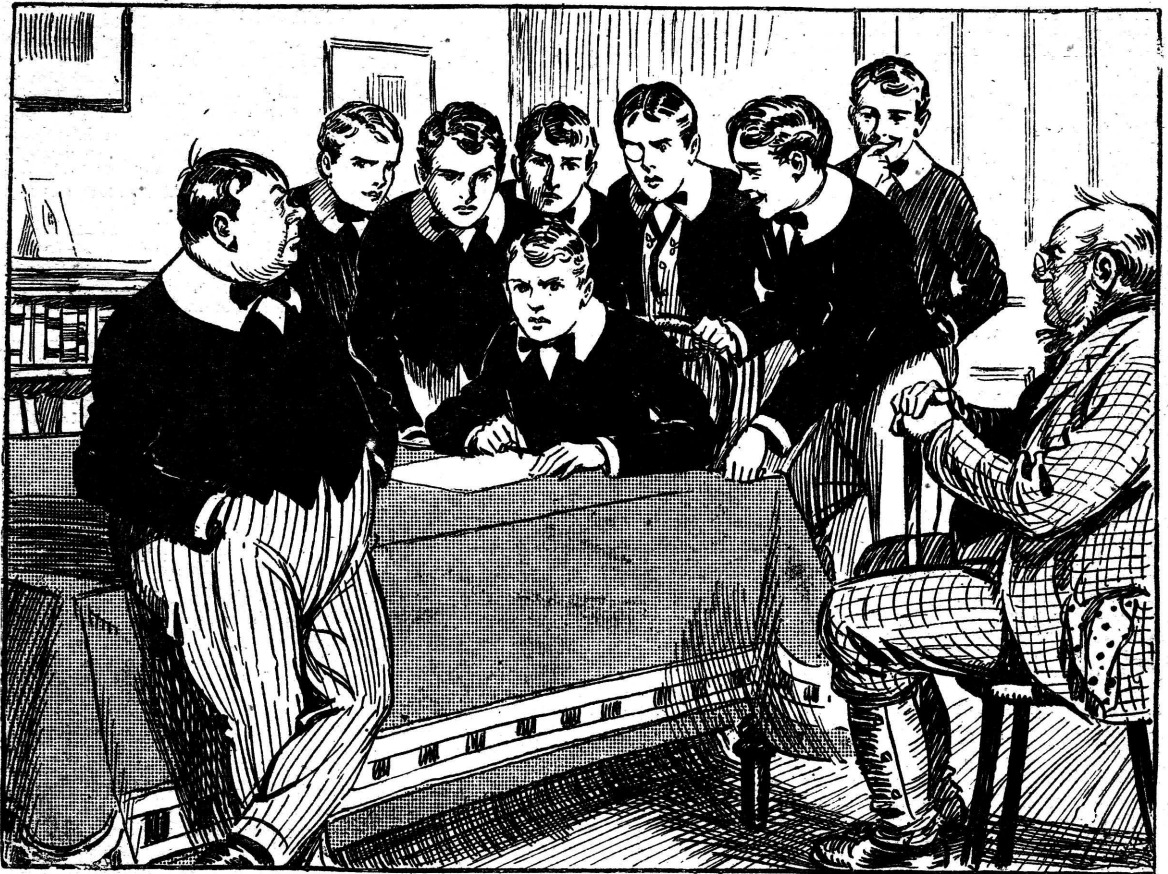
"Don't get ratty!" urged Twimble. "I've looked in to do you fellows a favour. I happened to hear Mr. Pepper asking for his money—"

"You happen to hear a lot of things," growled Tom Merry.

"You'll happen to get a boot, if you don't clear!"

"Well, I like that!" said Baggy Trimble indignantly.

"When I've looked in to offer to help you out of your scrape."



Baggy Trimble shoved a fat hand into his trousers-pocket, and there was a metallic jingle. "Now, you fellows," he said, "put your heads together and figure it out exactly what I owe you." Tom Merry produced a stump of pencil, and Blake pulled out a sheet of impot paper. Seven juniors gathered round and began to make hasty calculations. Mr. Pepper sat patient, with both hands leaning on his stick, waiting for his money. (See this page.)

"Rats!"
 "You've sometimes lent me small sums, D'Arcy—"
 "Yaas, wathah! I nevah expected you to settle them, Twimble, and I do not expect it now; so pway cleah out, and don't butt into a chap's studay when he's talkin' business."
 "If a pound would be any good—" said Trimble loftily.
 "We don't want to borrow money of you!" grunted Herries. "And you haven't any, anyhow."
 "Hold on!" said Blake. "Trimble owes us all money. We haven't kept count, as he never squares, but it's a good bit over a pound to Gussy alone during the term. If Trimble's in funds, we don't want to borrow his money, but there's no reason why he shouldn't square Gussy."
 "Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "Somethin' in that. I shall be vevy much obliged, Twimble, if you will squah!"
 Baggy Trimble shoved a fat hand into his trousers-pocket, and there was a metallic jingle. Tom Merry & Co. brightened up. Certainly they would not have accepted a loan from Trimble, but there was no reason why he should not pay his just debts.
 Trimble eyed them in an airy, lofty way. Mr. Pepper sat patient, with both hands leaning on his stick, waiting for his money.
 "How much is it exactly?" asked Trimble.
 "I weally do not know, Twimble."
 "Do you mean to say you haven't kept count of the trifling sums you've lent me, D'Arcy?"
 "Nevah taken the twouble, deah boy."
 "Call it a pound," said Digby.
 Trimble shook his head.
 "Can't call it a pound unless it is a pound," he said. "I want to know the precise amount. Same with you other fellows. I've had a cheque from my pater at Trimble Hall, and I'm prepared to square up all round. I'm not the fellow to remain in debt—not like some fellows I know. Now, then, what's the total? Give it a name."
 "We'll take a pound to square the lot!" growled Herries.
 "You won't!" said Trimble. "You'll take all I owe you—nothing more and nothing less. You've often called me names for not squaring. Now I'm ready to square, you're not ready to take the money." Trimble jingled his cash

resources again in his trousers-pocket. "Now, then, put your heads together, and figure it out."
 Tom Merry & Co. exchanged glances. If Trimble, for once, was in funds—a sufficiently rare happening—and if he was prepared to pay what he owed—a rarer happening still—certainly it was up to them to make the best of that windfall. Tom Merry produced a stump of pencil; Blake pulled out a sheet of impot paper. Seven juniors gathered round and began to make hasty calculations.
 Trimble eyed them loftily, occasionally jingling his cash. The fat junior owed more or less to every fellow present—as indeed he did to nearly every junior in the School House, and a good many in the New House as well. Trimble was a wonderful borrower; he could extract a shilling from a fellow almost before the fellow knew what was happening. There was a hurried whispered consultation in Study No. 6.
 "Mine's three-and-six; I know that."
 "Two bob, here."
 "Seven-and-six, at least."
 "About thirtay shillin's this term, deah boys. I have quite forgotten the amount last term."
 "Ninence, here."
 "Two shillings—"
 "Don't forget any of the items," said Baggy Trimble loftily. "You can put down interest for the loans, if you like. I've had a handsome cheque from my pater, and I'm prepared to square to the last brown. Go it!"
 The juniors "went it," and the complicated arithmetic was done at last. Tom Merry added up the column.
 "Two pounds seven shillings and sixpence," he said.
 "Right-ho!" said Trimble.
 He groped in his pocket, and there was another jingle. The juniors watched him eagerly. Two pounds seven shillings and sixpence would have been a terrific windfall just then; it meant settlement with Mr. Pepper, and something over towards Cardew's debt, and tea in the study, over and above. For once, seven of the most important members of St. Jim's School House were deeply interested in Baggy Trimble, the least important member of that happy community.
 "Let me see, I had three pounds left," murmured Trimble.

"That's right! I paid one fellow a pound, and one ten bob, and lent Talbot a couple of quids, and Figgins two quids, and thirty shillings to Crooke. That leaves me three out of the tenner."

He drew out an empty hand, and fumbled in another pocket. Then he gave a sudden dramatic start.

"By George! I'm awfully sorry, you fellows!"

"Well, what are you sorry about?" snapped Blake.

"I quite forgot—"

"Forget what?"

"In my thoughtless, generous way, you know, I lent the last three quids to Kangaroo," explained Trimble. "Too bad, isn't it? I sha'n't be able to square, after all."

"What?" roared seven infuriated voices.

"Unfortunate, isn't it?" said Trimble, blinking at them.

"At the present moment I'm stony—absolutely stony!" Tom Merry & Co. gazed at Trimble. Apparently the fat junior expected them to believe his statements. He shook his head seriously.

"Awfully sorry!" he said. "Another time, you know. I'll tell you what, I'll write to my pater for another cheque! What?"

Tom Merry & Co. did not reply. Seven infuriated juniors jumped at Baggy Trimble at the same moment. Fortunately for Trimble, he jumped for the doorway a second before they reached him. The door slammed, and Baggy Trimble went down the Fourth Form passage as if he were on the cinder-path. Blake tore open the door, and the enraged seven rushed out in furious pursuit. Zachariah Pepper jumped up.

"Ere, I say!" he bawled.

But the juniors did not heed. They had forgotten even Mr. Pepper and his claim in their yearning to get hold of Baggy Trimble. Mr. Pepper stared out of the doorway of Study No. 6, and bawled:

"Ere, what price this? I'm waitin', I am."

A handsome junior, with merry dark eyes, looked out of the next study. Mr. Pepper's unmusical voice had brought him out. It was Dick Julian of the Fourth Form.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" he asked.

Mr. Pepper explained volubly. He was prepared to explain to all St. Jim's, if necessary, from the headmaster down to the cook, that a pound was due to him—a pound that was not forthcoming.

"Don't shout!" suggested Julian.

"I'll shout a bit louder, if I ain't paid my pound!" retorted Mr. Pepper wrathfully. "I come 'ere for a pound! That's what I want—a pound! 'Ere's a receipt, fair and square. Chasin' orf, and leaving a man a-standing, as you might say, when he's called for what's doo to him. Why, I'll— What? Thank you, sir! Will you take the receipt? Thanks! I'm off!"

Mr. Pepper shambled away, and Dick Julian looked after him with a grin. Mr. Pepper had a pound-note in his pocket, and Julian of the Fourth had Mr. Pepper's receipt in his hand. When Tom Merry & Co. returned—rather breathless after their chase—they found the passage and Study No. 6 vacant, and no sign there of Erasmus Zachariah Pepper. For which they were duly thankful.

CHAPTER 3.

The Problem of the Unemployed!

TOM MERRY & CO. were not looking happy the following morning.

They had troubles on their youthful minds.

Being in debt was a horrid and worrying state of affairs, and they realised it to the full. That unhappy venture of the St. Jim's teashop had fairly landed them. Before that venture their allowances had been mortgaged a fortnight ahead. The teashop had been designed to set them up in funds. It had left them with a debt of six pounds, which they had absolutely no prospect of meeting unless they could earn some money. Their first essay at earning money had turned out disastrously. But their thoughts were still running upon that desperate resource.

Dick Julian had handed over Mr. Pepper's receipt. The Co. owed Julian a pound instead of Zachariah Pepper. It was a change for the better, for the Jewish junior was one of the richest fellows at St. Jim's, and could wait for the money as long as they liked. But the trouble was that they didn't like owing money. Julian had to be paid, Cardew had to be paid, and how it was going to be done was a mystery to the stony seven.

Work was the way, according to Arthur Augustus, and his THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 750.

chums agreed with him. There was a half-holiday that day, and they were prepared to spend it in work, if there was any going. But there was, as Lowther said, no market for Latin verse, especially Lower School Latin verse. Blake remarked that people were paid for giving French lessons, but it was very doubtful whether any pupil wanted to learn Lower School French. It was amazing that seven sturdy and willing workers, receiving an expensive public school education, seemed to be of no value whatever in the labour market, even as hewers of wood or drawers of water. But there it was. They were not only unemployed, but seemed actually to be unemployable.

Jack Blake remarked sagely that the Governing Board would act wisely in substituting plumbing for French in the school curriculum, and carpentry for Latin. Then a fellow would have a chance when he was stony. But the governors were not likely to do so, especially not in time to relieve the necessities of the stony seven.

It was not only that the load of debt weighed on the seven juniors, but they were suffering hardships. Tea in the study was a thing of the past. Study No. 6 in the Fourth, Study No. 10 in the Shell, were no longer fragrant with tea and muffins at tea-time, or with the scent of rashers and chips. Those two famous apartments were empty and desolate, what time their owners were taking tea in Hall. The hapless seven would have been reduced to tea in Hall permanently, but for kind invitations they received sometimes up and down the passages.

For all the School House knew of their predicament. All the House had chuckled over the St. Jim's teashop; and all the House heard Baggy Trimble's description of Mr. Pepper's visit to the study. All heard that the unhappy Cardew owed five pounds—Trimble had learned that, and Trimble was always generous with information he acquired—he passed it on to everybody who would listen to him.

Kangaroo & Co. of Study No. 11 in the Shell, offered to keep open house for the Terrible Three during the stony period. Talbot of the Shell offered loans to the full extent of his resources. More kind offers came from Levison and Clive and Cardew, and from Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth; even Grundy of the Shell rolled up with a generous offer. But those offers the stony seven felt bound to decline, with thanks. They could not pay, and they would not borrow. Sparingly they accepted invitations to tea, even accepting hospitality they could not return smacked off sponging, if carried too far, and they had no desire to class themselves with Baggy Trimble.

Two or three small debts had come in, but that resource was soon exhausted.

Trimble was waiting for a cheque from his pater before he could settle, and that cheque was likely to arrive along with the millenium, not earlier. Skimpole of the Shell was another debtor, and he expressed his deep regrets that shortness of cash made it impossible to square. His regrets were sincere, and expressed at considerable length, but they had no cash value.

So that morning Tom Merry & Co. were thoughtful, with a deep thoughtfulness that was not caused by their lessons.

In the Fourth Form room, Mr. Lathom found Blake & Co. a little inattentive; in the Shell, Mr. Linton had the same fault to find with Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther.

Insolvency was a most agitating state to be in; seven worried juniors realised it more clearly than ever before. Indeed, Arthur Augustus had almost resolved to "pop" his gold watch, but he hesitated, chiefly from a blissful ignorance of how it was done. He knew that there were persons called pawnbrokers, who gave you loans, and a little ticket, but his knowledge on this abstruse subject was naturally very vague. However, in the discussions on ways and means, which were frequent, Gussy always held it out as a last resource that he could "pop" the watch.

"It's weally pawnin' it," Gussy explained to his chums. "But it's called poppin', I weally don't know why. Theah's a spout, or somethin', and you pop the watch in the spout, you know. It's called puttin' it up the spout. I wemembah heavin' a fellah talkin' about it, and he called it puttin' it up the spout. But why a pawnbwokeh, or a poppah, should keep a spout for puttin' things in when you pop them, I weally do not know."

In reply to which, Gussy's chums generally called him an ass; and Blake added once or twice that if he caught him near a pawnbroker's he would scalp him. But Arthur Augustus did not give up his heroic plan; everything else was to be tried first, but if everything else failed, he was going to "pop" that famous ticker.

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—:—

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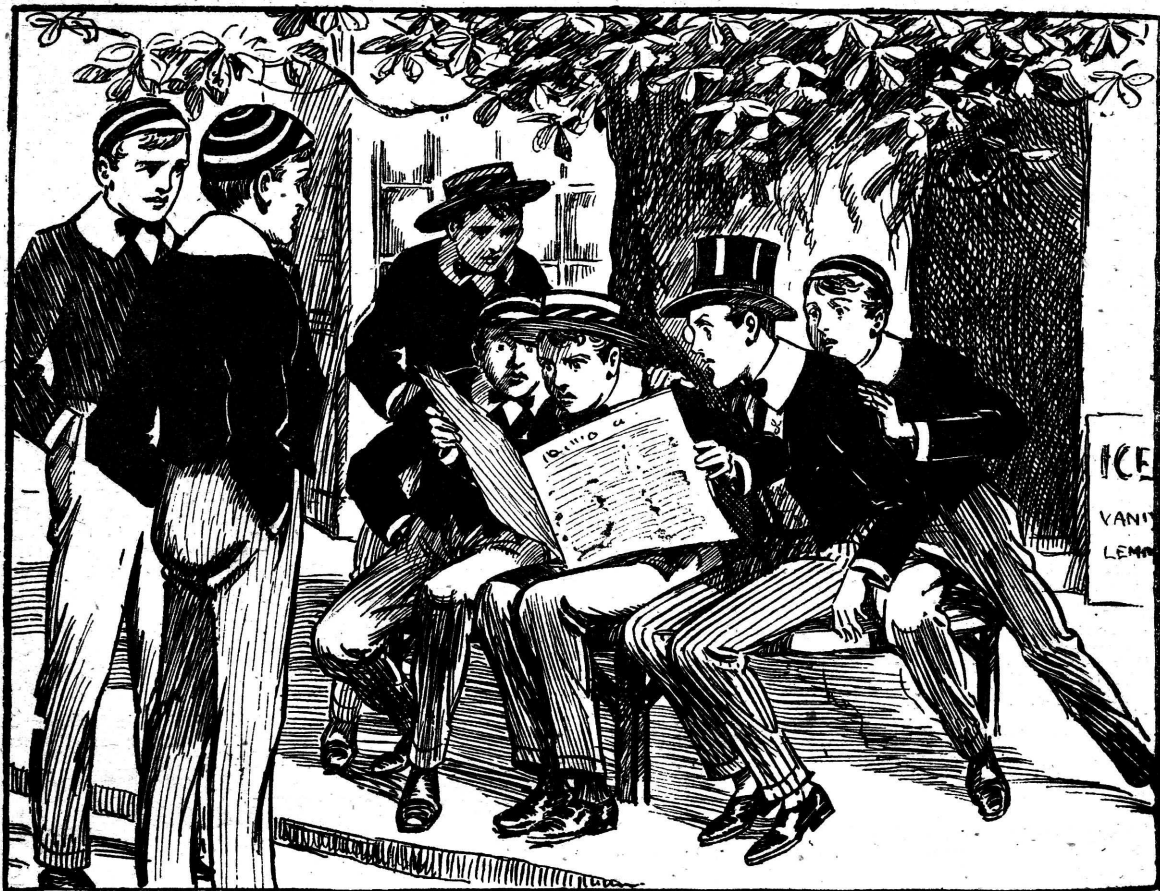
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"Hallo!" exclaimed Tom Merry suddenly. "Look at this! 'Strong, willing lad wanted. Apply E. Z. Pepper, Rylcombe.' That's old Pepper!" The seven juniors all looked at the advertisement, and then looked at one another. "One of us ought to suit!" said Herries. "It seems the only thing going, so let's call on Pepper!" (See page 8):

Tom Merry & Co. were glad when lessons were over. It was a half-holiday that day; and they wanted to look for work. After dinner, they held a brief council of war. Dick Julian kindly gave them some advice; Arthur Augustus opined that Julian, as a Jew, ought to know about business inside out, and therefore was the proper person to consult. Julian grinned when he was consulted; certainly he was a keen enough youth, but the problem was too big a one for him. The first suggestion was that he should make the forlorn seven a loan till the fat years returned; but that suggestion was negated nem. con. Then Julian advised them to look down the advertisements in the papers, if they wanted a job—there were always advertisements in the "Rylcombe Gazette."

"Bai Jove! The vevy thing!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I told you fellahs that Julian was the chap! Let's walk down to Wylcombe and get the papah, and apply for the jobs on the spot. Part-time, you know. We can't vevy well ask to be let off lessons."

"Not very well!" grinned Blake. "I can't quite see Latham letting us off."

"Nor Linton!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "But there are odd jobs to be done in a half-day; and, besides, we can put in a couple of hours after lessons every day if we can get anything to do. It's just a question of that."

"Just!" agreed Monty Lowther. And the seven walked down to Rylcombe, and from among the few remaining coppers, twopence was expended on the local paper. On the bench under the tree outside the village tuck-shop, the juniors sat, and scanned the advertisement columns hopefully.

Surely somebody could do with the services of seven sturdy, willing chaps?

CHAPTER 4. Boy Wanted.

"COB for sale—"
"That's no good!"
"Skeggles' Chicken Food—"
"Here's the place! Situations vacant!" said Blake eagerly.

There was quite a long list of situations vacant, the mere sight of that column encouraged the unemployed St. Jim's juniors. Apparently quite a number of people wanted willing workers.

"It's a jollay odd thing!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked thoughtfully.

"What is, Gussy?"

"Evevy papah you pick up has a long list of situations vacant," said the swell of St. Jim's. "But when you turn to the othah part of the papah, you wead that the unemployment problem is still feakfully severe. It is vevy odd indeed. Why don't the unemployed bag those vacant situations, which are offahed in hundreds and thousands evevy day?"

Tom Merry rubbed his nose.

"Blessed if I know!" he confessed. "It is rather odd! There seem to be a crowd of chaps wanting employment, and another crowd of employers wanting workers, and they never seem to meet. But we're not out to solve that giddy problem, Gussy, we're out for a job ourselves. Why, there must be fifty or sixty situations vacant in this little local paper alone. Must be at least one part-time job in that lot, I should think."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"General servant required, ten in family; that won't suit us. Young man wanted to drive Ford car, attend to garden, and act as valet and golf-caddie in spare time—hem! Hoppickers wanted—hem! Experienced bacon cutter—oh, my hat! Millinery, dress-making—dear me! We can't do dress-making, even Gussy couldn't! Here you are—Boy Wanted!"

"That sounds bettah."

"Boy, just left school preferred, wanted to drive trap, wait at table, clean knives and boots, mind shop, and help in housework—"

"Bai Jove! That boy will have to be a diwect descendant of Hercules, I wathah think."

"Well, all that couldn't be done on half-holidays!" grinned Lowther. "Next man in."

"Opening for smart boy in garage. Wages after two years—"

"Gweat Scott! That wouldn't help us over this week."
 "Hallo! Look at this! 'Strong, willing lad wanted, apply E. Z. Pepper, Rylcombe.' That's old Pepper!"
 The seven juniors all looked at that advertisement. Apparently Mr. Pepper, their stern creditor, required a strong, willing lad. All the seven were strong, and more or less willing. They looked at the advertisement, and they looked at one another.

"Doesn't say it's a part-time job," said Tom. "But it might be. Anybody want to work for old Pepper?"
 "Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus firmly. "We are unemployed, you know, and we have no wight to turn up our noses at anythir'."

"One of us ought to suit!" said Herries. "It seems the only thing going—so let's call on Pepper."

"One at a time," suggested Manners. "Then if one doesn't suit, another may. See?"

"Good!"
 "The job may be filled," remarked Tom Merry. "This paper is nearly a week old. Next number comes out tomorrow, and there may be something better in it. We'll try the Pepper-bird to-day."

Tom Merry & Co. walked down the lane and crossed the footpath over the field to Mr. Pepper's cottage.

Six of them remained at a distance, and sat down to rest in a clump of firs, while the chosen one proceeded to apply for the job. The chosen one was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Arthur Augustus marched on to the cottage with a bold step. He looked rather an elegant sort of applicant for a job at Mr. Pepper's tumble-down cottage, with its untidy garden and scraggy-looking field. Mr. Pepper was working in the garden with a hoe, and he paused in his labours to look up as the swell of St. Jim's dawned upon him. Arthur Augustus raised his shining silk hat politely.

"Good-afthahnoon, sir!" he said.
 "Arternoon!" answered Mr. Pepper briefly, mopping his manly brow with a red-spotted handkerchief.

"Please I've come for the job!"
 "Wot?"

"You are advertisin' for a boy, Mr. Peppah. If the houahs of labah can be awwanged satisfactorily, I should be vevy glad to take the job!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Pepper.
 Arthur Augustus eyed him loftily.

"I see no weason for that outbweak of untimely mewwiment, Mr. Peppah," he said coldly. "I am applyin' for the job. I twust I shall suit!"

"Don't you come wasting a man's time with your little jokes," said Mr. Pepper.

"I am quite sewious, Mr. Peppah. I am lookin' for a job for half-holidays and an houah or so aftah school each day. I twust you will find me useful."

Mr. Pepper blinked at him, grinning.
 "Mean business?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "Ow many hours could you put in?" asked Mr. Pepper, as if considering the matter.

"Four houahs each half-holiday, Wednesday and Saturday, and an houah vevy aftahnoon!"

"Willin' to work hard?"
 "Oh, yaas!"

"Ever sawn any logs?"
 "Nunno! Not yet! I'm weady to begin!"

"Ever handled a saw?"
 "I can learn!"

"What wages will you want?"

Arthur Augustus reflected. This was a rather delicate point. He knew that Erasmus Zachariah Pepper was close with money, and not likely to be a liberal employer. On the other hand, the stony seven were badly in need of money. Arthur Augustus determined to be moderate, and to state only his exact requirements.

"Six pounds a week!" he suggested.

Mr. Pepper leaned on his hoe and roared. Arthur Augustus looked at him in cold surprise. This merriment on the part of his prospective employer struck him as being remarkably ill-timed and in the worst of taste. It was really not the way an employer of labour should have received an unemployed person looking for work.

"Six pounds a week!" gasped Mr. Pepper, wiping his eyes with the red-spotted handkerchief. "Haw, haw, haw! You don't mean six 'undred?"

"Certainly not! I should wegard that as vevy excessive," said Arthur Augustus. "Six pounds a week is the figah. You see, we are badly in need of six pounds by next week, and I should vevy much like to earn it!"

Mr. Pepper gurgled.
 "I'm giving fourpence an hour!" he remarked.

Arthur Augustus jumped.
 "Are you sewious, Mr. Peppah?"

"Haw, haw, haw! Yes!"
 "Bai Jove! I wathah think I begin to see why the unemployed do not jump at those situations vacant!" exclaimed

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 750.

Arthur Augustus. "I should wefuse to work for fourpence an houah, Mr. Peppah. I should wegard it as dewogatory to the dignity of labah!"

"Go hon!" remarked Mr. Pepper.
 "Wats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned loftily on his heel and walked away. Mr. Pepper, chuckling, returned to his hoe.

The swell of St. Jim's rejoined his comrades in the fir clump, his noble brow much ruffled.

"Got the job?" asked six voices.
 "Nunno! The howdid old curmudgeon wefused to pay me six pounds a week!"

"What?" yelled Blake.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"He offahed me fourpence an houah," said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard that as an insult to my dignity as a workah. I pwefer to remain unemployed!"

"That's all very well!" said Blake. "But fourpence is fourpence. That's a bob in three hours, two bob in six hours. If we all got jobs like that the total would be fourteen shillings for an afternoon. That would help!"

"Now that we belong to the workin' classes, Blake, we must considah the dignity of labah. We must not sell our birthwight for a mess of pottage!" said Arthur Augustus with dignity. "I wegard Mr. Peppah's offah with scorn!"

"Pepper's a hard nut to crack!" said Tom Merry. "But even two bob would get something for tea. Beggars can't be choosers. One of us had better go and bag that job!"

"Let's all go!" suggested Lowther. "Three hours each would make a total of twenty-one hours—seven shillings. I don't see why Pepper can't have all a week's work done in one afternoon. Let's try!"

"But, weally, you fellahs—"

"Don't be a slacker, Gussy!" said Blake severely.
 "I am not a slackah, you ass! But think of the dignity of labah—"

"Think of tea in the study!"
 "Come on!" said Tom Merry.

And the St. Jim's unemployed started in a body for Pepper's cottage, Arthur Augustus bringing up the rear and shaking his head very seriously.

CHAPTER 5.

Something Like Work!

MR. PEPPER rested on his hoe and regarded the stony seven with a crusty grin. Tom Merry proceeded to explain to him the views of the St. Jim's unemployed. Mr. Pepper grinned and listened. Undoubtedly there was plenty of work to be done at Pepper's cottage. The garden was in a shocking state. Every fence in sight was in need of repairs, and there was a huge stack of logs waiting to be sawn. The situation, too, was still vacant. Obviously there had not been a rush for that vacancy. Perhaps Mr. Pepper's munificent scale of remuneration accounted for that.

Seven willing workers were ready to begin, under Mr. Pepper's superintendence. Each was ready to put in three hours of solid work. Mr. Pepper, though he chuckled rustily all the time, realised that it was a good chance to get the work done at bargain prices, and after a series of explosive chortles, he closed with the offer. Seven juniors took off their jackets and prepared to pile in.

Having settled the matter, Mr. Pepper ceased to chuckle, and became a grim and unbending employer of labour. He rapped out orders to his new employees. Tom Merry and Manners were accommodated with saws, and started on the logs. Lowther and Blake, with a spade and a garden fork, started on the garden. Herries began to clean out the pig-gery, a task that made George Herries feel that he was earning his fourpence an hour and a little over. Digby, with a hammer and nails, set to work at repairing fences. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was first set to feeding the chickens, and then to repairing the wire on the chicken run.

In a remarkably short space of time Mr. Pepper's labourers were all at work and going strong.

It was a hot afternoon, and Tom Merry & Co. earned their fourpence an hour literally by the sweat of their brows. Pepper, having so many labourers at his command, took a rest himself, and sat on the edge of the water-butt and smoked.

Tom Merry had sometimes seen men at work sawing logs, and he had thought it was rather a pleasant occupation, in the open air, with healthy exercise thrown in. Actually sawing the logs, however, he found was rather hard work. He soon had a terrific ache in both arms, and when he stopped to rest, Mr. Pepper's voice hailed him across the garden.

"Get down to it, there! I ain't paying you to stand about, am I?"

"Oh dear!" gasped Tom Merry.
 "Not used to work, what?" asked Mr. Pepper pleasantly.

"Get down to it! You'll get used to it in time. I expect you two to get through that 'ole stack this arternoon."

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Manners.

The saws began to grind again. Mr. Pepper refilled his pipe, and smoked with complacent ease. He had his eye on all his workers excepting Arthur Augustus—the chicken-run being on the other side of the cottage. About an hour had passed, and Tom Merry & Co. were beginning to wonder whether life really was worth living, when Arthur Augustus came round the cottage in his shirtsleeves. He was crimson with exertion, and his natty trousers showed dust and mud.

"Well, 'ow are you gettin' on?" asked Mr. Pepper.

"First-wah, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, with resolute cheerfulness. "I have nevah mended a chicken-wun befoah, but I am gwadually pickin' it up, you know. I have now taken down all the old wiah—"

Mr. Pepper gave a convulsive start.

"You've done what?" he hissed.

"Taken down all the old wiah," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "I am weady now to put up the new wiah, and I have come to ask you where the new wiah is, sir."

Mr. Pepper seemed on the verge of a fit of apoplexy.

"You—you—you've pulled down my chicken-run!" he stuttered.

"You diwected me to wrepair it!" said Arthur Augustus, in surprise.

"I meant you to repair the holes in the wire, you young idiot, not to pull it down!" shrieked Mr. Pepper.

"Bai Jove! I weally think that stwaggin' old wiah was past wrepair, Mr. Peppah. I have dwagged it all down now, and I am goin' to wreplace it with new wiaff. I suppose you have some new wiah?"

"Where's the fowls?" shrieked Mr. Pepper.

"They are in the field somewhah, sir."

"You've let my fowls wander!"

"I weguarded it as bettah for them to be out of the way while I was wrepairin' the chicken-wun, sir. Pwobably they will come back."

"You—you—you—"

"I have unfortunately twodden on sevewal eggs that happened to be theah, but I suppose little things like that always happen when a chicken-wun is bein' wrepaired."

Mr. Pepper, with an extraordinary expression on his face, slid off the water-butt, and started round the cottage at a frantic run. Arthur Augustus mopped his perspiring brow.

"What evah is the matter with Peppah?" he asked. "He seems feahfully excited about somethin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Pepper came tearing back. He had found his wired run level with the ground, and his fowls gone—apparently on voyages of discovery in other parts. He did not speak to Arthur Augustus, to tell him what the matter was. It was a time for actions, not for words. He rushed at the swell of St. Jim's and smote.

"Yawoop!" roared Arthur Augustus, as he sat down.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll smash him!" roared Mr. Pepper. "All my fowls gorn! I'll never see 'arf of them again! I'll spifficate 'im!"

"Oh cwumbs! If you dare to kick me, you howwid, cheeky wottah—"

Mr. Pepper did dare. Arthur Augustus wriggled frantically out of the way of Mr. Pepper's dusty boots, and took a flying leap over the garden fence. There he shook his angry fist at the infuriated old gentleman.

"You—you—you—" burred Mr. Pepper.

"I wefuse to work for you any longah!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "You are a wascally old wuffian! You will pay me my wages for what I have done, and I will wetaiah from your service, Mr. Peppah!"

"I'll pay you for what you've done!" gasped Mr. Pepper. "You wait till I get 'old of a stick!"

Arthur Augustus decided that it would be prudent not to wait. Obviously Mr. Pepper was in an unreasonable frame of mind. Arthur Augustus had earned fourpence already, besides doing a couple of pounds' worth of damage to Mr. Pepper's property. As Mr. Pepper grasped a big stick and rushed out of the gate, Gussy determined to relinquish all claim to the fourpence, and he started across the field at a great rate, with Erasmus Zachariah Pepper raging on his track.

Tom Merry & Co. quitted their labours—they were in need of a rest, anyhow—and stood in a grinning group, watching the hot chase across the field.

"Two to one on Pepper!" chuckled Blake.

"Gussy wins!" roared Tom Merry, as the swell of St. Jim's cleared a hedge with a frantic bound, and vanished.

Mr. Pepper—who had reached a time of life when it was not practicable to clear hedges at a bound—was left brandishing his stick.

He came back to the cottage at last, his crusty face purple with wrath. Tom Merry & Co. set to work industriously at once. But Mr. Pepper called them all off their labours, and set them to setting up the chicken-run again. Herries was not sorry to leave the piggery. Mr. Pepper carefully watched his labourers at their work—leaving nothing now to their initiative. He glared round occasionally, apparently in the hope that Arthur Augustus might return; but the swell of St. Jim's did not appear in sight again. At six o'clock, Tom Merry & Co. struck work. They had put in three hours, and they were fairly worn out with hard and unaccustomed labour. They were ready to go now—after drawing their pay. Mr. Pepper glared at them as they laid down their tools.

"Wot's this?" he demanded.

"Time's up, sir!" said Tom Merry cheerfully. "That's the three hours, and a little over."

"That there chicken-run's got to be put up!"

"Takes longer to put it up than to pull it down!" remarked Digby. "The wire really isn't much good, either. Keeps on breaking. We'll come along to-morrow after lessons, and put in another hour."

"We could manage two," said Lowther. "We're quite keen on work, now we've started."

"Oh, quite!" said Manners.

"That's six bob, Mr. Pepper," said Tom Merry. "D'Arcy isn't turning up for his money, but you can give us his bob for him, if you like."

"And wot about my fowls?"

"Fowls?"

"Them fowls have got to be caught and driven home!"

"Good!" said Tom Merry heartily.

"That will be a pleasant change. We'll do that to-morrow, after lessons."

"Certainly!" said Herries.

"To-morrow!" roared Mr. Pepper. "They'll be miles outside Sussex by to-morrow!"

"By Jove! Of course we can't go very far afield to-morrow, Mr. Pepper; but on Saturday—"

"Saturday?"

"Yes; Saturday's a half-holiday, and we'll bring our bikes, and go as far as you like."

Mr. Pepper looked apoplectic.

"You'll bring in them fowls this evening!" he roared. "Think I can afford to lose my fowls! That young idiot—"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Can't be done," he said. "Sorry, but we've got to get in for call-over. Shilling each, please."

"Ow much damage do you thing that young fool has done?" howled Mr. Pepper. "Think I'm going to pay you for setting up what he pulled down?"

"What?" exclaimed Tom Merry warmly. "Certainly! We're not responsible for mistakes made by other—other workmen!"

"Certainly not," said Manners. "Precious state of affairs, if one workman had his wages stopped because another made mistakes!"

"I ain't payin' you a stiver!" roared Mr. Pepper. "And you'll 'ave to find them fowls and drive them 'ome!"

"Why, you cheeky duffer—"

"Pay up!" roared Herries, in great wrath. "We've done our three hours' work, haven't we?"

"That young idgit—"

"Never mind D'Arcy!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "You took him on—we didn't. That's your affair. If you engage a bad workman, it's your own look-out; you don't pay the wages of a good one, anyhow. We've done our bit, and we want our fourpence an hour."

"You can want!" said Mr. Pepper ferociously. "You've all done more damage than you were worth. My fowls—"

"Pay up!"

"Them fowls—"

"Look here, are you going to pay our wages?" roared Mr. Pepper's labourers, in a furious chorus.

"I ain't payin' a penny till you've repaired all the damage that young idiot has done, and brought home my fowls!"

"Blow your fowls!"

"Bother your fowls!"

"Pay up!"

"Yah! Welsher!"

TOM HAMILTON

(Preston North End F.C.)



Look Out for the REAL ACTION PHOTOGRAPH OF THIS MUCH-DISCUSSED PLAYER GIVEN FREE NEXT WEEK.

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"Yah! Welsher!"

Mr. Pepper shook his knuckly fist at his labourers. They gathered round him in an excited crowd. Not to be paid for an afternoon of really hard labour was too bad. Certainly Mr. Pepper had not profited by the whole transaction—Gussy had done more damage than the other fellows had been able to repair. But it was quite clear—it was good law—that one workman was not responsible for the mistakes of another. Six juniors had put in a good afternoon's work, and they wanted their wages. It was plain, however, that no wages would be forthcoming.

For some time there was a heated argument in Mr. Pepper's garden—but there was no payment of hard-earned wages. Mr. Pepper put an end to the argument by shaking his fist at the juniors, ordering them off his ground, and then striding away to his cottage. And then there was something like an earthquake.

There was no money to be had from Mr. Pepper. That was clear. The St. Jim's unemployed had laboured in vain. The next best thing was to take it out of Mr. Pepper's hide, so to speak. Six enraged employees rushed on Mr. Pepper and seized him.

"Bump him!" roared Herries.

"Yaroooh! 'Elp!"

"Duck him!"

"This way!" yelled Tom Merry. "The water-butt—"

"Good!"

"'Elp! Police! Oh, my heye! Yooop!"

Splash!

Tom Merry & Co. walked out of the garden, leaving Erasmus Zachariah Pepper sitting in the water-butt. The voice of Mr. Pepper followed them for quite a considerable distance, and some of the things he said were scarcely suitable for youthful ears to hear. Six fatigued fellows almost limped in at the gates of St. Jim's, tired to the bone, with blistered hands. And Monty Lowther remarked that there was just one thing more dreadful than losing work. That was—finding it!

CHAPTER 6.

A Golden Opportunity!

DICK JULIAN of the Fourth looked into Tom Merry's study after lessons on Friday. He had a newspaper in his hand, the latest number of the "Rylcombe Gazette." He found the Terrible Three busy. Two days had elapsed since their Herculean labours in Mr. Pepper's service; but the blisters on their hands still required attention. While they attended to those blisters, the Terrible Three discussed the financial situation rather hopelessly. There had appeared as yet no silver streak on the clouded horizon; and after their essay at labour with Mr. Pepper, they felt discouraged from further attempts to butt into the labour market. They contrived to nod cheerily to the Jewish junior as he came in, however.

"Seen the local paper yet?" asked Julian.

"Not going to waste twopence on it," answered Manners.

"Twopences are jolly rare birds, these days."

"I've got it," said Julian. "There's something in it I thought might be some use to you chaps."

"Thanks, old top," said Tom. "We'll look at it, at least. Fact is, we're beginning to have doubts whether we're worth our keep as honest workers. But let's see it."

Julian opened the paper, and indicated a paragraph in the advertisement columns. The chums of the Shell read it with some interest. For once there was an advertisement that looked hopeful. It ran:

"FRENCH TRANSLATION.

"Good pay for good work.—Apply 'X,' office of this paper."

Tom Merry considered.

"French translation is pretty easy," he remarked. "We can translate the 'Henriade,' and 'La Terre Avant le Déluge,' and things like that. We've done it in class for Monsieur Morny. Blessed if we oughtn't to have a shot at it."

Manners nodded.

"I'm pretty good at French," he remarked. "Of course, a thundering scientific work would be outside our radius, but anything like a novel or a newspaper article—"

"There's always the dic," said Lowther.

"Might be something in it," said Julian. "Anyway, one of you fellows could buzz down to Tiper's on a bike, and see."

Tom Merry jumped up.

"Good egg! No end obliged, Julian. I'll go."

"Better let me go," said Manners. "The chap may want to see a sample of French, you know."

"Well, my French is all right, isn't it?" demanded Tom.

"A bit Lower-Schooly!" said Manners, shaking his head.

"Ass!"

"I was thinking I'd better go," said Lowther, while Dick

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Julian grinned and strolled out of the study. "You see, they may want really good French—"

"Fathead!"

"Cheeky ass!"

"Bai Jove! You Shell boundahs seem to be slangin' one another wathah tweely." Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eye-glass gleamed in at the doorway. "What's the wow, deah boys?"

Tom Merry held up the advertisement. Arthur Augustus read it, and nodded his noble head with great satisfaction. "Wippin'!" he exclaimed. "I'll go!"

"You!" ejaculated the Terrible Three.

"Yaas, wathah! My Fwench twanlation is wathah good, you know. Mong intwaduction is tway bong!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cela n'est pas une chose pour wire," said Arthur Augustus, plunging recklessly into French. "Je vous wegarde comme des—des—des fatheads!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three. "Go it!"

"Si vous pensez that you can twaduce Fwench mieux que moi, vous êtes trois dufers—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If the merry advertiser heard that he would bar out St. Jim's," remarked Monty Lowther. "Better put Gussy on a chain while I go."

"While I go, you mean," said Manners.

"I don't mean anything of the sort. I mean—"

"Ta-ta!" said Tom Merry. "I'm off!"

And the captain of the Shell trotted away, and two minutes later he was wheeling out his bicycle. It was a case of the race being to the swift; and it was Tom Merry who arrived at the office of the "Rylcombe Gazette" to apply for the easy job of French translator. Of course, it was understood that the fees—if any—were to be whacked out among the whole of the stony seven.

Mr. Tiper, the printer and publisher of the "Rylcombe Gazette," was an old acquaintance—he had the honour of printing "Tom Merry's Weekly," whenever that enterprising, but rather irregular, journal appeared in print.

Tom Merry found him in his office, and Mr. Tiper smiled a broad smile when he referred to the advertisement of Mr. "X."

"Oh, that?" said Mr. Tiper, with a grin and a nod. "All right, Master Merry. The gentleman has left that in my 'ands. You want to take it on?"

"That's it," said Tom.

Mr. Tiper took a volume from a drawer in his bench. It was "Le Roi des Montagnes," a volume with which Tom was sufficiently familiar. Part of that story had been used in class with Monsieur Morny, the French master of St. Jim's; and Tom, finding it entertaining, had finished reading it "on his own," with considerable advantage to his French.

"Can't read it myself," said Mr. Tiper. "I s'pose you can, Master Merry?"

"Yes," said Tom, with a smile.

"Well, the gentleman's instructions is this 'ere," said Mr. Tiper. "You take that book, and translate Chapter Three where it's marked. Bring the translation along as a sample as soon as you've done it, and I'm to show it to Master—I mean, Mister—the gentleman I'm speaking of. If it's satisfactory, you get took on. Is that clear?"

"Quite!" said Tom. "I'll do my best."

"The job ain't a long one," further explained Mr. Tiper. "Jest a little job, in fact. If you're took on, the gentleman is willing to pay a pound a page for translation, and there'll be about six pages. That's ail. Sorter job for a chap's spare time, it seems to me."

"Just exactly what I want!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Chuck over the giddy volume, Mr. Tiper. I'll be along immediately after lessons to-morrow with the sample."

"Right you are, Master Merry."

Tom Merry felt as if he were walking on air as he went out of the printer's office with the volume under his arm. Mr. Tiper blew a cloud of smoke from his pipe, stared after the happy junior, and chuckled. But what Mr. Tiper had to chuckle about was really a mystery.

Tom Merry raced back to St. Jim's on his bicycle as if he were on the cycle-track. He jumped off at the gates breathless. Two juniors were standing there chatting—Cardew and Julian of the Fourth.

"Hallo! What's the giddy excitement?" asked Ralph Reckness Cardew.

Tom Merry laughed breathlessly.

"Bagged a job!" he answered.

"Great gad!"

"Not the translating?" asked Dick Julian, with interest.

"Well, I'm going to do a sample; and, as it happens, the sample is the very section of About's novel that we did in class with Monsieur Morny," said Tom. "Looks like a fairly good thing."

"Congratulations, old top!"

"Run my bike in, there's a good chap, Julian. I want to tell the fellows."



"You are advertisin' for a boy, Mr. Peppah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If the houahs of labah can be awwanged satisfactorily, I should be vevy glad to take the job." "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Pepper. "I see no weason for that outbweak of untimely mewwiment, Mr. Peppah! I am quite sewious, you know!" (See page 8.)

"Certainly!"
Leaving his machine in Julian's hands, Tom Merry scudded across to the School House. Julian and Cardew looked at one another.

"The giddy bait's taken!" yawned Cardew.

"Keep it dark," said Julian.

"Dark as Erebus!" said Cardew.

And the two Fourth-Formers chuckled, just as Mr. Tiper had done in his dusky office, and just as mysteriously.

CHAPTER 7. Going Strong!

"WIPPIN'!"

"Topping!"

"Hurrah!"

"We're in luck!"

It was a joyous gathering in Study No. 6. The Terrible Three and Blake & Co. were in great spirits. Tom Merry had related the result of his interview at the local paper office, and the news was more than delightful to the stony juniors.

"Why, it's as easy as rolling off a form!" exclaimed Digby. "You fellows know what a dab I am at French—"

"Weally, Dig—"

"We'll all work at it, as we're going to whack out the loot," said Blake. "Jolly odd coincidence that 'X' should want just six pounds' worth of translating, when it's just six pounds we're in need of. That shows that our luck's turned. We're going to bag that six quid."

"Yaas, wathah."

"The sample has got to be simply perfect," said Manners. "Better leave it to me."

"We'll all translate it together, and help one another," said Tom Merry. "Must make it a really first-class, polished translation. There's only a single paragraph marked for translation. We shall do it easily enough this evening. Prep can go."

"Yaas, wathah! Can't wowwy about oween at a time like this."

"No fear!"

"Clear the table, and begin," said Blake.

Seven eager juniors sat down round the table in Study No. 6, with "Le Roi des Montagnes" in their midst, and plenty of ink and impot paper. Monsieur-Morny had never known his hopeful pupils so keen on translation as these seven juniors now were. If the book had been the latest number of the "Boys' Friend," Tom Merry & Co. could not have been keener on it.

"Now, here goes for the first sentence," said Tom. "Les etudes de ma jeunesse ont developpe en moi—"

"The studies of my youth have developed in me," said Manners.

"Yaas; but that is wathah too litewal, Mannahs. I should put it, 'My youthful studies.'"

"Stick to the original," said Manners. "Keep as near as you can. That's a good rule in translation."

"On the othah hand, deah boy, waviety is charmin'. I should suggest—"

"Ring off!" said Tom Merry. "Let's get on. 'Ont developpe en moi une passion qui a fini par empieter, sur toutes les autres.'"

"The studies of my youth—"

"My youthful studies, deah boy."

"Have finished by developing a passion which has—"

"Have developed a passion which has finished by—"

"Must put a translation into the English idiom," said Tom Merry. "We must say: 'Which has at length—'"

"Or 'finally,'" said Herries.

"Par empieter sur toutes les autres," said Manners thoughtfully. "By getting the better of all the others—"

"Overcomin' all the othahs."

"C'est le desir de savoir," resumed Manners. "The desire of know—"

"That won't do, Manners."

"I know it won't, ass. Read the French idiom first, and then put it into the English. 'The desire of knowledge,'" said Manners.

"Yaas, pewwaps that will do, Mannahs."

"No perhaps about it, fathead; it will do."

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"Weally, Mannahs—"
 "Jusqu'au jour ou je partis pour Athenes," murmured Tom Merry. "Up to the day when I parted for Athens—"
 "French idiom," said Blake. "Better say 'started.'"
 "Or 'set out,'" said Digby.
 "Mon seul plaisir avait ete d'apprendre—"
 "My hat! That chap would have pleased Lathom!" said Blake. "Let's see. Mon seul plaisir—my only pleasure was—"
 "'Avait ete d'apprendre'—was of to learn!" said Herries.
 "Was learning—"
 "Had been learning—"
 "Better say studyin'."
 "Nothing of the sort."
 "Ass!"
 "Weally, Mannahs—"
 "Gussy, old man, what you don't know about translation would fill the French dic. from end to end, and run over the covers."
 "Wats! I considah—"
 "I think—" roared Herries.
 "Wats!"
 "Order!"
 "Shut up!" roared Tom Merry. "How the thump is a chap going to translate French in a giddy Babel?"
 "Leave it to me."
 "Better leave it to me."
 "Order!" bawled the captain of the Shell. "Each of you silly asses do it on his own, and we'll compare notes afterwards."
 "Yaas, that's not a bad ideah, deah boy."
 Order was restored, and for the next half-hour or so Study No. 6 was the scene of busy industry. By that time seven different translations of the marked passage were ready.
 Tom Merry carried them all off to his own study to compare, and to select the special beauties of each. Six voices inquired what were his special qualifications for the job; but Tom did not trouble to answer. He did it. And by the time prep ought to have been done—but wasn't done—Tom had finished his task of selection, and had a beautiful translation written out ready to take to Mr. Tiper in the morning.
 Morning lessons that Saturday were rather a worry to the stony seven.
 They were thinking about "X" and the French translations, and of the chance of bagging the indispensable six pounds. Immediately after lessons Tom Merry ran his bike out, and scudded away to Rylcombe. He caught Mr. Tiper before that gentleman went to his dinner, and handed over the sheet of translation, nicely written out in his best hand. Mr. Tiper blinked at it, and smiled.
 "Good!" he said. "I'll and this to the gentleman this afternoon, Master Merry. He'll let you know."
 "Can I call on him?" asked Tom.
 "Eh? Ah! Oh, no! He's going to telephone. I s'pose he can use one of the school telephones?"
 "I'll ask Kildare to let us take a call on the one in the prefects' room," said Tom. "What time?"
 "Say four o'clock."
 "Right-ho!"
 Tom Merry returned to St. Jim's for dinner. That afternoon there was no idea of looking for work on the part of the St. Jim's unemployed. They hoped they had found work. There was cricket practice in the afternoon, but it was very desultory. Tom Merry & Co. were waiting eagerly for four o'clock. Kildare of the Sixth had kindly given permission for a call to be taken on the prefects' telephone, and at a quarter to four Tom Merry was in the room ready.
 Tom had the prefects' room to himself, as there was a Sixth Form match on that afternoon. He waited eagerly for the call. Promptly at four o'clock the telephone-bell buzzed. The waiting junior fairly clutched off the receiver.
 "Hallo!" A deep voice came through. "Is that St. Jim's—Master Merry?"
 "Tom Merry speaking. Is that Mr. 'X'?"
 "'X' speaking. I have looked at your sample translation, Master Merry."
 "Yes, sir. I hope you are satisfied," said Tom.
 "Quite!"
 "Oh, good!" exclaimed the captain of the Shell.
 "A very remarkable performance for a schoolboy," went on the deep voice. "You are a schoolboy, I think?"
 "Oh, yes, sir!"
 "Very good! Can you undertake to translate the whole of the third chapter of 'Le Roi des Montagnes'—"
 "Certainly!"
 "Now, about the question of fees. What are your charges?"
 "Oh! Ahem! I—I should like you to make an offer, sir!" gasped Tom.
 "Will six pounds satisfy you?"
 "Oh, yes—yes, rather!"
 "Very good! You will proceed to translate the whole

chapter—it is rather a long one—on the understanding that the work is equal to your sample. When it is finished convey it to Mr. Tiper, and he will be empowered to deal with you."

"Certainly, sir! But—"

"Very good. Good-bye!"

The unknown interlocutor rang off. Tom Merry was left feeling puzzled, but very pleased. Why Mr. "X" should want a translation of the third chapter of a French novel was a mystery to him. Still, evidently he did want it, and was prepared to pay for it. And certainly the St. Jim's unemployed were ready to do the work. Tom Merry left the prefects' room and found his comrades waiting.

"Got the job?" asked six voices.

"Yes."

"Hurrah!"

"Six quids to be had for the earning!" said Tom Merry, his eyes dancing. "It's a bit of a job, a jolly long chapter. But we can do it. All hands to the mill!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But what on earth does the chap want it for?" asked Herries.

"Blest if I know! After all, that doesn't matter."

"Wathah not! Pwobably the man knows his own bizney best, deah boys."

"I hope it isn't a 'catch,'" said Herries suspiciously. "No lark to worry through all that French, and then not get the money."

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Tom Merry confidently. "Mr. Tiper knows the man, and he answers for him. It's straight enough."

"Straight as a string!" said Manners, with a nod. "Let's get going. Many hands make light work."

And, instead of returning to the cricket, the seven juniors shut themselves up in a deserted Form-room, with French grammars and dictionaries galore, and, taking the long chapter in sections, they set to work. And Mr. Railton, happening to look into the Form-room, and finding seven juniors there deep in French, gazed at them blankly.

"Bless my soul!" said the Housemaster. "Is this a task for Monsieur Morny, my boys?"

"Oh, no, sir!" said Tom Merry.

"You are not detained?"

"Wathah not, sir!"

"Are you working at French on a half-holiday without being detained?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

And Mr. Railton walked away, the most astonished Housemaster in the United Kingdom.

The juniors grinned and continued their self-imposed task. Mr. Railton did not know that they were seven insolvent debtors, working their hardest to regain a state of solvency. It was the chance of a lifetime that had come their way, and they meant to make the very most of it. With only a brief interval for tea, the seven translators slaved away at their task, while the summer sun set in the golden west, and the fellows came in from the playing-fields and the river. Fatigued as they were, the seven kept on, each with his section of the long chapter, turning the French into masterly English prose—more or less. The first edition was to be revised and corrected, and revised again. All the seven agreed that Mr. "X" was to have full value for his money. The rough draft was to be done that afternoon; the whole thing was to be read over and corrected on Sunday. On Monday the finished edition was to be written out, delivered at Mr. Tiper's office, and payment received. It was a delightful prospect. Tired as they were, the seven juniors felt satisfied when at last their seven sections were done.

"This will improve our giddy French, at any rate!" said Tom Merry, as he sat back and rested. "We shall astonish Mossoo in class after this."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And now I think we've earned our supper!" yawned Blake.

Crash!

The Form-room door flew open, and Baggy Trimble of the Fourth rushed in. There was a rush of feet, and Cardew and Dick Julian rushed in after him and grasped him, and Baggy came down on the floor with a terrific bump.

CHAPTER 8 Too Kind!

"WHAT the merry dickens—"

"Yow-ow! Help!" roared Trimble.

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry & Co. jumped up at their desks. Baggy Trimble was struggling furiously in the grasp of Ralph Reckness Cardew and Dick Julian. The two Fourth-Formers seemed greatly excited. They gripped the fat junior, and held him fast, and Cardew clapped a hand over his mouth.

"What's the row?" exclaimed Tom Merry.
 "Groogh! Ug-gug-gug-gug!" came in muffled accents from Baggy Trimble as he wriggled and rolled.
 "Keep him quiet!" panted Julian.
 "Gooch! Gooch! Gugggg!"
 "What's the feahful wov, deah boys?"
 "Nothin'!" gasped Cardew. "All serene! We're just—just lookin' after Trimble a bit. Don't you fellows worry."
 "Groooogh!"

The seven looked on in amazement. It was obvious that Cardew was grasping Trimble's extensive mouth to keep him from speaking. Apparently Baggy had rushed into the Form-room with news for the seven French translators, and Cardew and Julian did not want him to impart that news, whatever it was. They were already dragging Trimble towards the door, what time Cardew muzzled him, as it were. Trimble struggled frantically. There was a sudden howl from Cardew, and he jerked his hand away from Trimble's mouth.

"Look out!" gasped Julian.
 "Ow! I'm bitten!"
 "Yarooogh!" roared Trimble. "Leggo! I'm not going to tell them. Yow-ow! Leggo! I won't say a word! I didn't hear you talking in your study, you beast, Cardew! I never heard a word you said to Julian. I didn't mean to tell these chaps— Yaroooggggggg!"
 Julian's hand was on Trimble's mouth now. Both the juniors looked alarmed and exasperated, and the astonishment of Tom Merry & Co. intensified. Baggy Trimble clung to a desk as Cardew and Julian dragged at him, apparently fearful of what was going to happen to him if he was got outside the Form-room.

pulled, you know. And I wasn't listening—I think you ought to know me well enough to know that I'd scorn to do it. I happened to be passing Cardew's study, and happened to stop to look out of the window—"

"There isn't a window near Cardew's door," said Herries.
 "I mean, I happened to stop to—pick up a pencil I dropped, and I couldn't help hearing Cardew tell Julian that the job would be done on Monday, judging by the way you chaps were going ahead; and Julian said it was all right, as the money was left with old Tiper—"

"Bai Jove! What evah have you fellahs been leavin' money with old Tipah foah?" asked Arthur Augustus innocently.

"And Cardew said—" gasped Trimble. "Yah! You needn't make faces at me, Julian! I don't know what you're making out of this, but I jolly well know you're on the make. Yah!"

"I think that's about enough," said Tom Merry quietly. He gave a glance towards the pile of translation on his desk. "You awful spoofers! What have you got to say for yourselves?"

"Don't let them get away!" said Blake.
 "Bai Jove! I do not quite compwehend what is the mattah!" said Arthur Augustus. "What have these fellahs done, deah boys?"

"Pulled our legs!" growled Blake. "They're 'X,' you ass, and the job at French translations is all spoof!"
 "Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus' famous monocle dropped from his eye in his astonishment. Seven infuriated glares were turned upon Julian and Cardew. They stood crimson and dumb. Even Arthur Augustus understood now. The advertisement

**DON'T FORGET OUR SPLENDID
 REAL ACTION PHOTOGRAPH OF
 TOM HAMILTON (Preston North End F.C.)
 FREE NEXT WEEK!**

"What on earth is the game?" exclaimed Manners.
 "That fat wottah has been eavesdwoppin', as usual!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wefuse to listen to anythin' you desiah to say, Twimble. I weward you as an eavesdwoppin' beast!"
 "That's it!" gasped Julian. "The fat rotter heard us discussing a—a—a private affair, you know—"

"Wag the wottah, deah boys!"
 "Yaroooh!" Trimble rolled over, and once more his extensive mouth was at liberty. "Yoooch! Gerroff! I won't tell them anything. I never meant to tell them it was a put-up job! Yarooogh! I don't care whether you advertise in the Rylcombe paper or not, do I? Yow-ow-woop! I'd have done the translation for you for half the money, if you asked me! Yow-ow-ow! I could do it better, if you wanted it done! Yooooop!"

"What's that?" yelled Blake.
 "Bai Jove!"
 "What—what—what!" stammered Tom Merry. "Advertising in the Rylcombe paper—translations—why—what—what—"

"Nothin'!" gasped Cardew.
 "Nothing at all!" babbled Julian. "This—this fat rotter—" Tom Merry crossed to the door and closed it. There was a rather grim expression on his face. A suspicion of the dreadful truth had flashed into his mind.

"On second thoughts, we'll hear what Trimble has to say!" he remarked.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy!"
 "Shut up, Gussy! Go ahead, Trimble!"
 "Bat weally, you know, a wotten eavesdwoppah—"
 "You—you see—" stammered Julian.

Ralph Reckness Cardew burst into a laugh and released Baggy Trimble.

"Game's up!" he said. "Can't be helped!"
 Trimble sat on the floor and roared. He had been very roughly handled, and he was feeling injured.

"Yow-ow-ow!"
 "Cut that out!" said Tom Merry angrily. "What is it you were going to tell us, Trimble?"

"I—I say—" stammered Julian.
 "Chuck it! Go ahead, Trimble, you fat villain!"
 "Well, I like that," gasped Trimble, "when I've come here to give you fellows the tip. I wasn't going to have your leg

in the local paper—which Julian had brought to their notice—that exceedingly easy job, so easily obtained—it was all clear now. It was a little plot of their friends to relieve them of their financial difficulties without their knowledge; and but for the eavesdropping of Baggy Trimble it certainly would have succeeded without a hitch.

Perhaps Tom Merry & Co. ought to have felt grateful. Certainly it was a very kind thought of their schoolfellows. But they were not feeling grateful. They could not possibly accept the six pounds from "X" now that they knew who "X" was, and why he wanted those translations. They had laboured at French most of that sunny afternoon, shut up in the Form-room while the other fellows were at cricket and on the river. So far from feeling grateful, they were in a state of almost volcanic wrath. They gathered round their too-kind friends with sulphurous looks.

"You uttah asses—" said Arthur Augustus.
 "You cheeky chumps—" said Herries.
 "Anything to say before we rag you baldheaded?" roared Blake.

"Sorry!" gasped Julian. "You—you see, we—we thought it a good idea. We stood three quid each! Dash it all, you fellows are becoming a standing joke with your trying to raise the wind, and we thought we'd try to help you out—"

"Just that!" smiled Cardew. "Awful neck on our part, but we figured it out that you'd never know. Old Tiper played up like a little man! Julian, dear old bean, we've put our foot in it!"

"Looks like it," said Julian. "I'll massacre that villain Trimble!"

"Yah!" from Baggy.
 Tom Merry looked round at his comrades.

"Gentlemen, these two silly owls have given us a job at French for the afternoon, and it's all for nothing! I vote that we testify our gratitude for the same!"

"Hear, hear!"
 "Collar them!"
 "He, he, he!" chortled Baggy Trimble, as the stony seven closed in on their kind friends like a tidal wave.

Bump, bump, bump, bump!
 (Continued on page 19.)
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START READING THIS GRAND SERIAL NOW!



The Story of a Lad's Uphill Fight for Fame and Fortune. By DUNCAN STORM.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

JIM READY, a sturdy lad of fourteen, having seen his last friend laid to rest, is left all alone in the great world of chance. He is leaving the cemetery gates, when he butts up against

A KINDLY STRANGER (John Lincoln), the principal governor of the great school of St. Beowulf's, who had been watching him at the funeral.

The two walk along the road together, and Jim tells his new-found friend that he intends starting work at the brickfields in Dennington. The stranger smiles, and tells Jim it is education he needs first. He then withdraws a piece of parchment from his pocket, and, after signing it, hands it to Jim. It is a free pass into the great school. Jim is to take his chance as a Lincoln scholar at St. Beowulf's.

Jim gets a warm reception from the bullies of the school, but the decent fellows welcome him, drinking to his health that night in Hall. After this ceremony Professor Faux de Blanqueres, the French master, enters, carrying two queer-looking portmanteaux. "My model fly-machine," he said. "I show 'im you affaire supper. I am so hungree after ze journey across ze Channel. I must have ze supper first."

(Now read on.)

The Air-Raid!

THERE was great excitement in Hall. The boys, who had finished their suppers, made no move from their tables. Those who knew the French master knew that he always had something worth seeing when he had been working on a new experiment. Those who did not know him were spellbound by this wild man, with his huge black beard and his intelligent face full of animation and excitement.

Collins came staggering in under the weight of a great wooden box.

"Be careful, my Collin!" shouted monsieur. "Ze machine is a bommaire, and 'e 'as got ze bom's attach! I will cause 'im to fly round ze 'all!"

"You wouldn't think it, to look at him," whispered Corke, "but old Guy Fawkes was a big flying-man in the war. He was an 'ace, and he couldn't eat his breakfast till he had brought down a Hun and—Crumbs!"

The exclamation of admiration was wrung from Corke as monsieur unlocked the box and drew from it a model flying-machine that struck a pang of envy and delight into the heart of every model-maker in the school.

It was a fairylike, glittering model, four feet across the wings, a miracle of design and workmanship.

Monsieur de Blanqueres, excited and inflamed by the admiration of the school, displayed the model proudly, and wound up the mechanism.

"Be'old boys!" he cried, holding the model aloft. "My new bommaire! My leetle answer to Germany. I 'ave display 'im before ze Societe Aeronatique de France. It is ze nex' avance in ze science of aviation. Look, I will fly 'im round ze 'all. You shall

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participate wiz me in ze 'oly joy of seein' one of ze first trials of a machin; zat shall keep Germany in 'er place!"

There was a whirring sound, followed by a cry of admiration and delight from the juniors as the lovely model floated into the air and sailed round the hall.

With his mouth full of roast beef, monsieur was directing the model's flight from a small wireless installation which was contained in the box.

"Be'old, my sons, ze control!" he exclaimed. "Wiz zis apparatus I steer, I direct, and I release ze bomb!"

Whirrr-r-r-r-r-r-r!
The droning, musical note of the twin propellers filled the hall. The Lower School cheered with enthusiasm. Suddenly monsieur's jaw dropped.

"Look out, boys!" he yelled.
Those who were looking up saw a small glass ball suddenly detach itself from the undercarriage of the machine as it sailed through the air.

There was a blinding flash on the floor and a report like a cannon. A form-load of fags capsized with a yell.

"Guard yourselves, boys!" yelled monsieur. "I 'ave lost ze control of ze bom'!"

Bang!
Another bomb fell from the machine, splintering a desk into fragments. There was a yell and a rush for the doorway of the hall.

Bang!
The next bomb clipped a corner off the stone mantelpiece of the great fireplace.

"Say," said Wobby, grabbing Jim by the

arm, "we'll beat it while the going's good!" And he shot for the door, dragging Jim after him.

Three tremendous crashes echoed through Hall, and three more gaping holes showed in the floor.

As if by magic, five hundred boys had cleared out of the hall, leaving no one there but monsieur and the table of gaping prefects.

Collins had crawled under one of the great oak tables, and had pulled a big metal dish-cover over his head. Collins was an old soldier, and he knew a thing or two. He stayed under the four-inch table of oak till there was a yell and a crash at the door and a gleam of shining helmets.

The school fire-brigade, with their customary speed, had turned out, and they were unreeling their hoses when the machine floated back to Monsieur de Blanqueres through a haze of blue smoke that filled the hall with its poisonous fumes.

"Do not pomp, boys!" yelled monsieur. "Do not pomp! Ze raid is ovaire. I 'ave made a leetle mistake only in ze adju'sment of ze bom'!"

The fire-brigade were quite disappointed that they were not to have the chance of flooding the hall with water. The Lower School begged monsieur to give the flying-machine another run round Hall, but monsieur shook his head.

"You young rascals 'ave plenty funs for one night!" he said. "It is luck of ze best zat I 'ave not fill ze 'ospital. Never agin will I fly my model wiz ze bom'! Now, off wiz you!"

The boys reluctantly left Hall.

"I like that French master," said Wobby. "I'll get acquainted with him before long, Jim. He's the sort of chap that makes things happen. I thought someone was going to be killed! But spout, my boy!"

Wobby dragged Stickjaw and Jim into a corner behind a buttress in Dark Alley.

"Look out, you chaps!" he whispered. "There's Slurk and his clique making for No. 4. They are after our supper. They have no business up Dark Alley!"

This was true. No. 4 was part of Mr. Teach's House. It belonged to the Spanish Main or the Pirate's Haunt. Slurk and his friends were quartered in the Cowshed, or Oxley's House, which was controlled by Mr. Oxley, the master of the Fifth Form, or the Dirty Fifth, as it was called in the school.

The Pirate's Haunt and the Cowshed were joined by a covered way which was called the Bridge of Sighs.

From behind the flying buttress of the hall Wobby foxed Slurk and his satellites.

"They are making for our stairway," he cried. "They are after our grub. I ought not to have shouted the order in Mother Gum's in their hearing like I did. Now we'll slip through the Cowshed, over the Bridge of Sighs, and into the box-room. Then we shall see some sport!"

They nipped into the door of the Cowshed, and up the stairs.

"Boots off!" whispered Wobby.

Off they slipped their boots, and soft-footed stole across the Bridge of Sighs, making for their own box-room, which opened into the dark dormitory.

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Hidden here, they saw the door from the corridor softly open.

"Come on, you chaps!" whispered Slurk. "The stuff is sure to be stowed away under one of the beds!"

He tiptoed into the dormitory, and as if by instinct made for the hidden tuck.

"Here it is, boys!" he muttered. "Come along, and load up! There's stacks of it! I'd give something to see the face of that dirty Australian when he finds that we've cleaned out his cache! Here you are, Muddy! Here's the sausage-rolls, by the feel of them, and the puffs. I'll lug the boxes of ginger-beer along! Oh, my hat! What a lark!"

Mudd was loaded up, and was about to march off with his load of good things when there was a sudden movement under the neighbouring bed.

In the very dim light Slurk saw a shape that was something like a donkey slide out from under the bed.

He stood paralysed as with a tremendous bound the shape flew through the air, and sent Mudd sprawling to the floor with a sickening thud.

Then he gave a yell, for the shape turned upon him. He tried to dodge it, but a boxing-glove smote from the darkness, and flattening his nose with a punch like a battering-ram, sent him sprawling on the floor.

Truths and Untruths.

SLURK staggered to his feet, with a gasp. Mudd, leaving parcels of sausage-rolls and puffs scattered all over the dormitory floor, crawled to the door, and was off.

Hidden in the box-room, Jim and his new chums, whose position gave them a sight of the bully against the glimmer of light at the doorway, saw Slurk, on his hands and knees, facing the apparition which had attacked him. His jaw was hanging slack, and his eyes were almost starting from his head.

The light in the dormitory was not enough to allow Slurk to see his adversary. He had only a sense of a shape in the dark—a shape which had a head like a donkey, and which appeared to have boxing-gloves on its feet as well as on its hands.

Slurk was not crouching there because he had the intention of breasting up to this strange antagonist. He was simply too frightened to run away. He could hear some heavy object thumping on the floor. This was the tail of the boxing kangaroo, on which Nobby was supporting himself.

Slurk could also hear the slap, slap of boxing-gloves on the parquet floor of the dormitory.

For a moment he thought that it was a boy in a mask who was playing the wag with him; but there was no boy in the school who had a reach that was six feet in radius.

With a sudden yell, he turned and fled. Then the shadowy figure leaped upon him from behind, and two pairs of boxing-gloves slapped upon him with incredible speed, sending him flying out in the passage on his face.

Then Wobby, soft-stepping in his stocking feet, leaped out of the box-room, and seizing his pet by the scruff of his neck, hauled him back under cover.

Nobby was excited, and inclined to go for his master. But a tap on the nose and a muttered warning of "Stouish it, you tug!" made him peaceful again.

The boys were doubled up with laughter as they heard Slurk and his pal flying down the passage and across the Bridge of Sighs.

"Well done, Nobby!" said Wobby approvingly. "You've saved the tucker from those tugs! You shall have a good share of it when the feast commences. Now, back you get into your sack again till the boys are gathered to the feast! I guess those pebs won't disturb us again!"

Nobby secured, they slipped down to chapel. On the way they had a glimpse of Slurk and Mudd stanching their noses at one of the bath-room taps.

"It was that beastly Australian!" spluttered Mudd. "He'd just put that donkey's mask on to scare us!"

"It wasn't!" snarled Slurk. "There were six of 'em up there setting on to me! I don't care! Let 'em keep their rotten grub! We'll take it out of 'em some other time!"

Wobby grinned as he overheard these words.

"Six of 'em, eh?" he muttered. "Wait till my boxing kangaroo is going at full

speed! Slurk will think that he's got sixty setting about him!"

Chapel soon over, Stickjaw led Jim off to Dormitory 4.

"We can do pretty well what we like to-night," he said. "That's the custom of the school. But to-morrow night we'll have to go pretty careful. Blackbeard keeps a pretty sharp eye on the House, and we have to watch out if we are going to have any fun after lights out. Now, I'll just make you known to some of the chaps. They are all Lincoln scholars and good chaps. Hi, Lung, come here!"

It was a yellow-faced Chinese boy who answered the call. He was a very nice-looking Chinese, with long, almond-shaped eyes. He had not the broad Mongol face of a common Chink, and anyone, unless taking a second look at him, would have thought that he was an Italian, a Southern Frenchman, or a Spaniard. But when he pulled off his cap there was his neat pigtail coiled round his head.

Lung always wore his pigtail under his cap, to put it out of the way of his pals, who were very fond of tying kite-tails or other such objects to the end of it.

"Allo, 'Tickjaw!" said Lung smilingly.

"Want to introduce you to a new chum," said Stickjaw. "This is Jim Ready. He takes the next strawyard to you. Jim, this is Lung Chi Chow. He comes from Singapore."

Lung made a low bow, and shook hands with himself as in the Chinese fashion, wagging his head nearly to the ground. It was the grand kow-tow, and Lung did it very well, because he had been properly brought up by his father, Sir Lung Choo Ching, K.B.E., the millionaire merchant of Singapore. Then, recovering his balance, he shook hands with Jim, giving him a friendly smile.

"You belong pal alee same me!" he said.

"Oh, stow that pidgin English, Lung!" said Stickjaw impatiently. Then, turning to Jim, he said: "He's only coddling! He can speak English as well as you and I!"

"Better!" replied Lung promptly. "If I couldn't I would eat my hat!"

"That pigtail is only Chinese swank, too!" added Stickjaw, sitting on the side of his bed. "Lung only grows his pigtail so that he can get an excuse for getting off down town to Sweeny Todd, the barber, to get his head shaved twice a week! He looks an awful brute when his hair starts growing!"

In quick succession Jim was introduced to Soom, a dark, smiling Malay from Java,

Tennessee, an American boy who was reputed to be the biggest liar in the school, Don Diego Garcia, a Spanish boy from Buenos Aires, commonly known as "Onions," and Lal Singh, a Rajput, hawk-eyed, cheerful, and a superb horseman. There were a whole lot more—New Zealanders, Canadians, and one boy from the lonely Cocos Keeling Islands in the South Pacific who answered cheerfully to the name of "Cannibal."

"Gather round, gents!" said Wobby. "This feast is given by Mr. Jim Ready with his Founder's sovereign! There's ham-sandwiches, pies, cakes, puffs, sausage-rolls, fruit, and turkish delight!"

A roar of laughter went up from the crowd as Lung, having hastily undressed, made his appearance in a new pair of pyjamas—magnificent pyjamas of peach-coloured silk, embroidered all over with magnificent Chinese needlework.

"Crumbs, Lung!" exclaimed Wobby, with a grin. "Where did you get those glad-pants from?"

"They are what mother made me," said Lung. "Mother does beautiful needlework. She's sent this for our feast."

A cheer went up as, from a silken bag, Lung produced, as though by a conjuring trick, a magnificent jar of blue porcelain filled with preserved ginger and young cocoanut.

"Shut up, you chaps!" called Wobby. "Don't make so much row, or we'll have Blackbeard the Pirate down on us! I want to give you a magic-lantern entertainment after this do. You've got to go through it, Lung, wearing a pair of swank trousers like that—gold dragons all down your legs; and all! You've no right to wear tony togs amongst a lot of plain chaps like us! Over with him, boys! Two dozen with a tennis-bat for bumping us poor chaps with bong-tong clobber!"

Lung had no time to get away. He was grabbed by his pigtail, hurled upon a bed, then rolled over and given a dozen warming blows with a tennis-racket. Then his chums sat him up, shoved a bottle of ginger-beer in his hand, and gave him a sausage-roll.

"You are a gang of bounders!" said Lung frankly.

"Eat your sausage-roll and don't gass so much, you sahlow-faced heathen!" said Wobby, beaming on him. "Hi, Lal Singh, what are you having? No sausage-roll, of course!"

Lal Singh shook his head and smiled. Pork in any shape was anathema to him, on account of his religion.



Whilst Wobby was looking for his slides, Lung thrust his arms up and threw the shadow of his wrists and hands on the screen. Immediately a turkey appeared. A subdued roar of applause went up from the onlookers.



The boys rushed to the window, and saw Nobby give a leap from the ground and land a couple of heavy punches in the donkey's ribs with the boxing-gloves.

"It's dreadful to be a Mohammedan and not to be able to taste these sausage-rolls of Mother Gums!" said Wobby sympathetically, as he ate Lal Singh's sausage-roll for him. "I'll swap you a raspberry-puff for it, Lal. Like as not there's lard in it. But what the eye don't see the heart don't grieve after! We eat some rum stuff in this old school. I believe that last meatpie we had was made of dead donkey!"

Wobby smiled upon the company. "Tennessee," he continued, "did you ever see such whopping great puffs? Try one!" "Waal," said Tennessee slowly, in his long-drawn drawl, "we got a nigger called Randal at home. Randal cooks for us. He never makes a fruit-turnover that's less than a yard wide!"

Wobby stared at the solemn face of the American youth, affecting to believe him. "Why does he make such whopping great puffs?" he asked. "Waal," answered Tennessee, "a small puff's no good to Randal. Randal's mouth is a yard and a haaf' wide!" "Only a yard and a half?" asked Wobby innocently.

"Except when he smiles," replied Tennessee slowly. "You got to put on another haaf' a yard for the smile!" "Some smile!" said Wobby encouragingly, for he wanted to draw Tennessee out.

"Say, boys!" said Tennessee, warming to his lies. "We had to grow special melons for Randal. A nigger likes a slice of melon that tickles his ears when he eats it. So we grew water-melons six feet in diameter. The niggers used ter cut 'em up with a two-handled saw, and it took two niggers to feed Randal with one slice!"

"Some slice!" said Wobby. "Did Randal ever tell lies?"

"Say, that's just what I was going to tell you about!" said Tennessee earnestly. "That nigger Randal was the biggest liar in Hicksville County. He won the silver cup three years in succession in the Liars' Competition at the county fair. Then the fans brought another nigger up against him—a boy called Black Harry. And Black Harry lied and lied and lied till he'd got himself down and out. He lied till he was blue in the face, and

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Randal had to take the count. And what do you think, boys?"

"I don't think!" said Wobby.

"Why, that Black Harry lied himself so blue in the face that he stopped blue. Now they exhibit him all over the States as the only true and original Blue Nigger!"

Tennessee finished his story without turning a hair or moving a muscle of his lantern-jawed face.

Wobby put his hand behind him, and produced a large dog-biscuit.

"Take it, Tennessee!" he said. "You've earned it!"

"Guess I have!" replied Tennessee unblushingly.

"Now I'm going to start," said Wobby. "What would you say, Tennessee, if I told you that I had got a kangaroo—a living boxing kangaroo—stowed away in the box-room yonder?"

"I guess I should say that you were telling an untruth," replied Tennessee.

"Well, guess again!" responded Wobby. "The heads don't know it, but I've introduced him into the school. His name is Nobby, and he's got a punch on him like Bockett. He's already stonished Slurk and his clique. He's the biggest thing that's ever been seen in this school. He'll make things lively, or my name is Mud! He's a real ribuck, red-hot stiff, and a proper old clobber of mine. Jim Ready, my son, produce the boxing kangaroo!"

Jim and Stickjaw dragged the canvas bag out of the box-room. They unlaced the neck, and folded it down, and there, greatly to the delight of the boys, sat Nobby, blinking at them amiably with his mild brown eyes.

"Ain't he a lad?" said Wobby, with pride. Tennessee sat silent. He was beaten. Even his Blue Nigger would not stand up against this kangaroo.

Nobby hopped gently out of the bag, his boxing-gloves flopping on the floor.

"Shut the door, boys!" said Wobby. "If Nobby gets out there will be trouble in this House. If he were to meet Blackbeard in the passage he might give the Pirate a job in the waistcoat; then the tar would be on the fire!"

Nobby hopped round the dormitory, sniffing at the walls with his dainty twitching nose. He was quite friendly with all the boys, and they fed him with sausage-rolls, puffs, cheese-cakes, and all sorts of things that a kangaroo is not supposed to eat, till even Wobby began to get concerned for his pet.

"Hi, Lung!" he ordered. "Don't you give him any more of that sticky ginger. You'll make him sick!"

The feast was finished in peace, and when Wobby told the full story of how Nobby, the kangaroo, had saved the feast from the raiding bullies, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Nobby, who responded by lifting one of his massive gloved hind-legs and kicking Lal Singh head-over-heels.

The boys then caught him, and dressed him in a sheet, two of which had been pulled off a bed to give Wobby a chance of rigging the screen for his magic-lantern entertainment.

Wobby's Entertainment.

Wobby's entertainments were really good. He was a first-class hand at making lantern-slides, both photographic and by drawing and colouring comic drawings.

Sometimes he would trace a set of pictures from the coloured comics, and stain them up as good as life. He had a magnificent set

of lantern-slides taken in a long voyage through the islands of the Pacific.

Wobby soon rigged up his lantern. It was a good acetylene light he had, and it worked a treat. The sheet was hung across the dormitory, and Nobby was hauled down to sit in the ring of boys on the floor. The lights were then put out.

"All ready, Wobby!" said Tennessee. "Light up the lumination!"

Wobby turned on the acetylene, but all he got was a tremendous fume and no light.

"Pooh! Doesn't it tiddlewink! We'll all be gassed!" shouted Stickjaw.

"Open one of those windows wide!" ordered Wobby irritably. "We don't want that whiff to get down to the Pirate's Den!"

Jim got up and threw the window wide open.

"Just push the door open a little, too, to get a through draught to blow it out!" said Wobby.

The door was set slightly ajar. "That's better!" said Wobby. "Now we can breathe. Here she goes!"

The lamp lit up, and a low buzz of mock admiration went up as a great white circle of light appeared on the screen.

It was when Wobby was looking for his slides that a subdued roar of applause went up, for Lung, thrusting his arms up, had thrown the shadows of his hands and wrists on the screen. Immediately a turkey appeared, gobbling. Lung was a genius at this art of shadowgraphy. The turkey dissolved away with a flicker, and the shadow of an old man, bearing a bundle of sticks on his back, walked across the screen, to be followed by a Chinese policeman. Then Lung threw up the wide sleeves of his pyjamas, and a junk sailed across the white circle, followed by a shark. A sailor fell off the junk, and was swallowed by the shark.

It was a splendid show, for Lung was as clever with his hands as a pickpocket.

Wobby was getting impatient, though. "Come out of it, Lungy!" he said, after a while. "You can give us a show another night. I want to show Jim Ready my home in Australia! That is my home!"

A murmur of approval went up from all the boys as a splendid photo of a fine Australian squatter's bungalow appeared on the screen. Many of their homes were like this, set away far distant in the remote parts of the earth. Perhaps there was a little lumpiness in a few throats as Wobby proudly showed his far Australian home.

"It's like our place in Zululand," whispered a voice of a South African. "We've got blue gums growing round like that."

Everyone cheered up when the next picture appeared on the screen.

"That's my father," said Wobby, who was staring into the lantern, adjusting the light, and sliding the slide into the rack.

A roar of laughter went up from the boys, and Wobby looked up. He had made a mistake.

"No, that's the wrong slide," he said. "That's a nigger from the Solomon Islands, who murdered a policeman, and ate him up in our parts."

"Sure he's not your father?" called Jorkins, a fat boy, looking up at the fierce face, with its boar's tusk thrust through the flat nose and the hideous lips.

"He might be yours, Fatty!" replied Wobby, rather irritably. "Your face always reminds me of him! This is dad, all right!"

The portrait of a bearded, pleasant-faced man appeared on the screen, and it was received with a respectful murmur.

"That's dad," said Wobby, with filial affection. "He's hot stuff! He shot eight niggers for spearing him, when up the Gumbidgee River!"

"Guess my dad shot twenty-five niggers once!" came Tennessee's drawing voice from the darkness.

"What did he shoot 'em with—his mouth?" demanded Wobby. "Dry up, Yankee!"

Tennessee dried up. He was just going to tell the boys that his father had shot the niggers with a cannon all in one shot, and that the ball rebounded from a tree and killed an alligator, but he thought better of it.

"This is my mother," said Wobby, as the next slide was shown.

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Wobby's mother was received with a respectful murmur, which was followed by a queer silence. They wished their own mother's pictures could be thrown on the screen at that moment.

The boys were so absorbed in the show that they did not notice the figure of Blackbeard Teach, who, with his gown bunched up behind him and his mortar-board tipped over his eyes, was watching the scene.

Only Nobby had heard his soft footstep in the passage; but Nobby had showed that he was a wise and worthy kangaroo, for he had crept under Jim's bed, and was hidden.

"Now, boys!" said Wobby, "I'm first going to show you a picture of Blackbeard Teach's Treasure Island."

A murmur of admiration went up at the lovely photo which appeared on the screen, the photo of a coral beach, where the tall coco-palms were reflected in a lagoon that was as smooth as a looking-glass.

"That is Blackbeard Teach's Island," said Wobby, well pleased with the effect of the picture. "I took that myself. You can see the coconuts hanging from the trees. If you could look under the trees there, you would see the coconut crabs running about all wild. They eat the coconuts that fall from the trees. That's what makes 'em so jolly wild—eating coconuts all day long. I shouldn't wonder if old Blackbeard don't eat coconut, too. That's why he's so saucy. Now, this is Blackbeard Teach, the Bloodstained Pirate of the Spanish Main!"

A buzz of delight went up as the next picture slid on the screen. It was a rough portrait of Blackbeard in cocked hat, a red coat, and big sea-boots. Wobby had drawn it himself that morning, and had coloured it.

"I did that!" said Wobby proudly, all innocent that Blackbeard himself was standing in the doorway. "He's a lad, isn't he?"

"Bravo, Wobby!" cried everyone. "This is Blackbeard making the crew of the Betsy Jane walk the plank," said Wobby, showing another highly coloured picture, done in the style of the comics.

Half a dozen miserable sailors were shivering on a plank. One was just diving with a splash into a bright, ultramarine sea. On the ship, at the end of the plank, was Blackbeard, with a knife, three feet long, between his teeth, and two large horse-pistols in his hand.

"It is like old Blacko, isn't it?" said Jorkins. "He looked just like that when he worked me last term for climbing the apple-tree, and I hadn't sneaked any apples, either!"

"That's all I've done of the story of Blackbeard Teach, the pirate," said Wobby modestly. "I'll do some more later. I'll do the picture where he cuts the Spanish captain's throat, and takes his treasure and his beautiful daughter. I can't draw girls very well, but I'll get old Blacko's beak down in school. I can easily draw him as he sits at his desk, and I'll make some good pictures of him, too!"

"Thanks, Master Wobby!" said a sudden voice from near the door.

The boys started, and Wobby turned, stiff with horror, for there in the doorway stood Blackbeard Teach himself!

Wobby was a true Australian, and had enough nerve to carry off anything as large as a house; but this was a facer—a real facer.

"I'm awfully sorry, sir!" he faltered. "I did not know that you were—"

"I'm not here—officially," replied Blackbeard, with his grim smile. "It's all right, Wobby, my boy," he added kindly. "Don't be disconcerted. Listeners never hear much good of themselves. But when you come to do the other slides, don't make my nose quite so red as that last picture showed it. Now go on with your show, and mind you don't blow yourself up with that lamp. Get to bed in half an hour from now. I sha'n't be this way again to-night. Good-night, boys!"

Blackbeard Teach turned and marched away.

"Good-night, sir!" called all the boys, in immense relief.

Wobby wiped his forehead, and was silent for a moment.

"Well," he exclaimed, with enthusiasm, "old Blacko is a toff—a real bonzer toff! He's the real King Pin! There's a lot of masters who would have swished the whole crowd for less than that. My word, but he's a real nugget—gold all the way through! Where's that kangaroo of mine?"

"He's under my bed," said Jim. "I think

he heard Mr. Teach coming, and slid away to hide!"

"Good lad!" said Wobby, with approval. "Fetch him out, Jim! He likes the pictures!"

Nobby knew as well as the boys themselves that Blackbeard had departed, for he popped his head out from under the valance of the bed, and hopped back to his place in the circle.

"I shall have to put him on wheels," said Wobby, as his pet thumped across the floor. "He makes too much noise bouncing about like this."

Nobby nestled himself in the midst of the circle of boys.

"Now," Wobby continued when Nobby was accommodated with a seat on the floor, "I'm going to show you a very interesting portrait. It's the portrait of Dirty Dick, a black who used to hang about our place for what he could steal. He's a real Australian black, and a real hard citizen. He tried to knock Nobby over with a boomerang one day, to put him in the pot. Old Nobby dodged the boomerang, though, and nearly kicked Dirty Dick into the middle of next week. This is Dirty Dick!"

"Crums! What a lad!" was the exclamation that went up from the audience, as the hideous face of a native black filled the screen.

"He ain't Mary Pickford, is he?" said Wobby, with pride. "I think he's about the ugliest—Hi! What's that?"

Nobby, the kangaroo, had given a sudden start. He heaved up from the floor, lifting himself by his enormous tail.

"Hold him, Jim! Hold him!" exclaimed Wobby to Jim, who had got their pet round the neck.

Jim might as well have tried to hold down an earthquake, for, with a great bound, Nobby dragged him across the floor and sent him sprawling. There was a flutter of the white sheet which was tied round Nobby's neck, as, with a tremendous bound, he flew clean out of the window, landing on the lawn below almost without a sound.

The boys rushed to the windows. They saw the white figure leap over a laurel hedge with consummate ease. Then it flew over a wooden fence, nearly frightening the wits out of old Jobbins, the gardener's donkey. The donkey lifted its heels, and kicked at Nobby. Nobby gave a leap from the ground, and landed a couple of heavy punches in the donkey's ribs with the boxing-gloves that covered his sharp-clawed feet. The donkey was rolled over on its back. Then away went Nobby, floating over a neighbouring hedge into a narrow lane like a ghost.

Wobby turned from the window with a really worried look.

"That's put the lid on it, boys!" he said. "The kangaroo's loose! Some of us have got to go after him. Not too many, or we'll scare him into the next county. Who's game for a kangaroo hunt?"

"I am!" said Jim.

"So am I!" said Stick-jaw.

"Me also," chimed in Lung. "Me catches kangaroo!"

"I hunt the kangaroo, too," said Lal Singh.

"I'll take you four," said Wobby. "It means a swishing if we get caught, but I can't leave old Nobby flying round the country all night. He might travel fifty miles before he is caught, or some game-keeper might shoot him. Get your clothes on, quick, boys! Shove 'em over your pyjamas!"

The boys speedily dressed.

"How are we going?" asked Jim. "Same way as Nobby—out of the window!" replied Wobby. "We should be silly if we tried to run through the quad. We'd be pinched for sure. I've got all that tapped up!"

He ran into the box-room, rummaged amongst his things, and returned with a coil of rope, a looped stockwhip with a lash that was thirty feet long, and a queer-shaped curve of black wood.

"That's my boomerang!" he exclaimed. "If I sent that flying round Nobby's head he'll sit down and wait. He doesn't like boomerangs!"

The rope was tied to the leg of a bedstead. Those who were staying behind sat on it while the five kangaroo hunters lowered themselves to the ground.

Wobby bent down. In the dim moonlight he had no trouble in picking up the queer slot left by Nobby's gloved feet. It looked as if an elephant had been walking over the grass.

"This way, boys!" whispered Wobby. "Keep your heads down, in case there's anyone peeping about!"

The party went through the shrubbery and over the fence like steeple-chasers. They dropped into the field with Jobbins' donkey, which went galloping away to the far end. It was plain that Jobbins' donkey was disturbed by the apparition of the kangaroo in its white sheet.

Wobby caught up the trail, and away the party raced over the tail of the field to the lane beyond. They tumbled over the hedge, and found an ancient and muzzy rustic glaring, open-mouthed, down the lane.

"Oi! These be fearsome 'appenin's," he mumbled, leaning on his stick, and trembling.

"What's up?" asked Wobby.

"Oi've seed the ghost o' Spring-Heel Jack!" said the ancient man, trembling violently. (Next week's grand long instalment tells of the exciting chase after Nobby. Make sure of reading the continuation of this splendid story by ordering next week's GEM early.)



Wobby & Co. tumbled over the hedge and found an ancient rustic glaring open-mouthed down the lane. "Oi've seed the ghost o' Spring-Heel Jack!" he cried, trembling violently.

"MY READERS' OWN CORNER!"

Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes Awarded for Interesting Paragraphs.
(If your name is not here this week it may be next.)

This Wins Our Tuck Hamper. TOO CLEVER BY HALF.

The clever young man was wandering up and down the platform looking for a seat in the crowded train. Every carriage was crammed. Assuming an official air, he stalked up to the last carriage of the express, and called out: "All change here. This carriage isn't going." There were angry growls and complaints from the passengers, but they all trooped out and packed themselves into other coaches of the train. The young man smiled as he settled himself comfortably in the empty carriage. "Ah," he said complacently, "it was a grand thing for me that I was born clever, but I wish they'd hurry up and start." By-and-by the stationmaster put his head in at the window. "I suppose," remarked the official, "that you are the smart young man who told the people this carriage was not going? Well, it isn't. The porter thought you were a defector, so he uncoupled the carriage."—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been forwarded to Colin V. Scott, 60, Lancaster Road, West Norwood, S.E. 27.

THE NEEDLE-AND-THREAD TREE.

The Mexican maguery tree furnishes a needle and thread all ready for use. At the tip of each dark green leaf is a slender thorn needle that must be carefully drawn from its sheath. At the same time it slowly unwinds the thread, a strong, smooth fibre attached to the needle, and capable of being drawn out to a great length.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Borissow, 107, Cambridge Road, Seven Kings, Essex.

JUST THE MAN!

"Yes, he has some trouble with his eyes. Every time he started to read he read double," said the celebrated oculist. "Poor fellow!" remarked the sympathetic person. "I suppose that interfered with his holding a good position?" "Not at all," replied the oculist. "The gas company engaged him, and gave him a permanent job at reading gas-meters."—Half-a-crown has been awarded to John W. McAlister, 30, Hope Street, Richmond, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS.

Plants and animals follow emigrants round the globe. Wherever travellers or invading armies go, plants and animals follow the trail. When white men settle in new lands and build houses, the house fly, the sparrow, the big brown rat, and the British mouse soon appear. Apples were unknown in California until 1849, when emigrants from apple-growing States travelled West, taking apples with them. Seeds were dropped, and nowadays some of the finest apples in the world grow in California.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss I. King, 41, Campden Hill Road, Kensington, W.8.

CARLISLE.

Carlisle is the capital of Cumberland. It was an important Roman town, and was destroyed by the Danes about 875. It was rebuilt by William II. Bruce besieged it unsuccessfully in 1315, and it was the place of imprisonment of Mary, Queen of Scots, 1568. It was besieged and taken by the Parliamentarians in 1645, and by the Young Pretender in 1745.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Leslie S. Driver, 76, Albert Road (basement), Blackpool, Lancs.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON

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No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

EDITORIAL CHAT.

The Editor would like to hear from his reader chums. Address all letters to Editor, "The Gem Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

My Dear Chums,

There is no falling off in appreciation of the splendid photos of footballers. The series has scored a record success. Next week's GEM will contain a first-rate action photograph of Tom Hamilton (Preston North End F.C.), and you will say it is one of the best we have had. It is only right to devote a line to next week's "Magnet" photos. There are two of these—namely, F. Hopkin (Liverpool F.C.), and Alan Morton (Glasgow Rangers F.C. and Scotland), while the "Boys' Friend" has another winner in its portrait of Soldier Jones (Canadian Heavy-weight), and a representative the Dominion may well feel proud about.

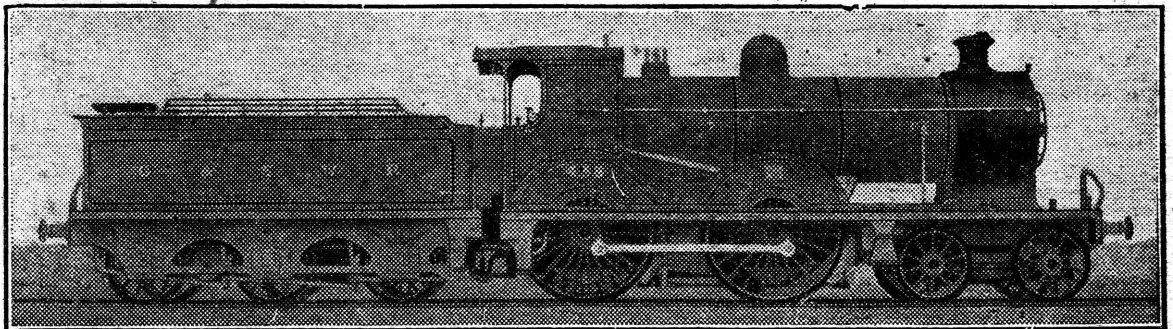
Next week's yarn of St. Jim's, entitled, "Raising the Wind," is prime! It just reveals Mr. Martin Clifford at his breeziest and best.

It worries me no end to have to hold over the supplement of the "St. Jim's News," but I am afraid pressure of space compels me to. There will be extra special articles next week, though.

Life, as we all know, is as full of ups and downs as the merry swifback at the fair, and it seems to me that we get a very accurate notion of how the world works in the rousing serial "All On His Own." Mr. Duncan Storm always goes right to the point, but in this telling narrative he does even better. It contains the pulse-beat of life; it runs up the curtain on many of those trials which help to fashion a man, and make him strong. Read it!

I must say a word about the magnificent coloured plates of railway engines which have scored such a tremendous success in the "Popular." In response to numerous requests from its readers, the "Popular" has arranged to give a splendid plate depicting the new Great Northern Railway express engine, specially built by the G. N. Company, and the finest and largest locomotive in Great Britain. You will all be interested in this beautiful picture, so make sure of getting the "Popular" regularly each week. YOUR EDITOR.

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The Stony Seven.

(Continued from page 13.)

"Oh gad!"

"Yoooop! Oooop! Wooooop!"

Bump, bump, bump!

"He, he, he!"

The French translations—useless now for any other purpose—were stuffed down the backs of the two plotters, and one after another they were kicked out of the Form-room. Baggy Trimble gave a fat chortle as they went.

"Now Trimble!" exclaimed Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Collar the fat rotter!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Trimble. He made a wild rush for the door, and escaped barely in time from the enraged seven. But it was only to fall into the hands of Cardew and Julian in the passage. And the wild and dismal howls that rang out seemed to indicate that Baggy Trimble had fallen out of the frying-pan into the fire.

Seven rather dismal-looking juniors gathered to an extremely frugal supper in Tom Merry's study later that evening. Their hopes had been dashed to the ground; the St. Jim's unemployed were feeling lamentably down on their luck. Manual labour had failed as a resource, mental work had turned out a delusion and a snare. Downstairs in the Common-room the fellows were chuckling without limit over the story Baggy Trimble related to them. The "stoniness" of Tom Merry & Co. was already a standing joke, the St. Jim's teashop had been regarded as a scream; but the French translation business, all the fellows agreed, was a real shriek. But while the rest of the School House derived entertainment and enjoyment from the episode, Tom Merry & Co. found it the reverse of exhilarating.

"There's only one weseource, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus at last. "I shall have to pop the tickah!"

"Br-r-r-r!" said Blake.

"Aftah waggin' Cardew and Julian for twyin' to help us out, we can't go on owin' them money, you know," said Arthur Augustus. "And we weally must have some weady cash. I have not had a new necktie for a week."

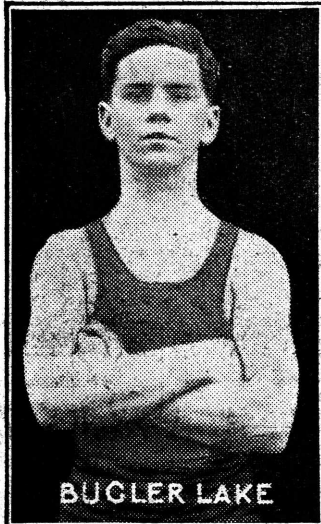
"Br-r-r-r-r!"

"I do not wegard that as an intelligible wemark, Blake. The only weseource now is to pop the tickah," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "We cannot wemain stonay for evah, you know. Our hardships have alweady been tewwible. If nothin' turns up by Monday, I am wesoolved to find a pop-wokah and pop the tickah."

And it really looked as if that last and desperate resource was all that remained to the stony seven!

THE END.

(What will be the next move made by the Stony Seven to obtain the wherewithal to square their debts? Next week's grand long story, entitled "Raising the Wind!" by Martin Clifford, will enlighten you. Make sure of your GEM by ordering EARLY.)



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MR. JAMES W. HALL, of Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, writes:—"Since purchasing your book I have fitted new sash-cords to three windows in my house, repaired two grandfather clocks, fitted a new spring to a cheap German clock, repaired a wrist-watch, fitted rubber soles to my everyday boots, distempered and painted an office, fitted up a bench in my workshop, and am now building a summer-house in my garden from old pieces of wood and old orange boxes, also sundry other repairs too numerous to mention—all from instructions in your work; and I am 64 years of age. You can make what use you like of this letter, as I think you ought to know how I appreciate it. "If ever in doubt, consult the Book."

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MR. W. HOOK, Teddington, writes:—"The Amateur Mechanic" has already been of great use and benefit to me. I have had to work alone, without any guiding hand; I have gleaned many hints and ideas, but they were always short of the finished facts. Your books step in here and supply the necessary details. Three weeks ago I was asked to mend a ceiling; when I saw it it was about 15in. square, with a large bulge at either side. The hole when ready for repairing was about 45in. by 35in.—rather a big job for an amateur, but this is where your 'Amateur Mechanic' came in. The job is completed now, and I am not ashamed of it. This is but one item. . . . It is a pity your books were not published long ago, for I am sure there are many like me who just need the little help they give you. I wish you every success."

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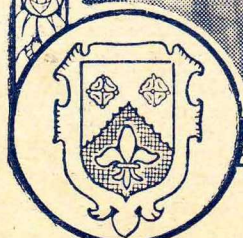
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