

ONE AGAINST THE SCHOOL!

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Lumley-Lumley and Tom Merry & Co.

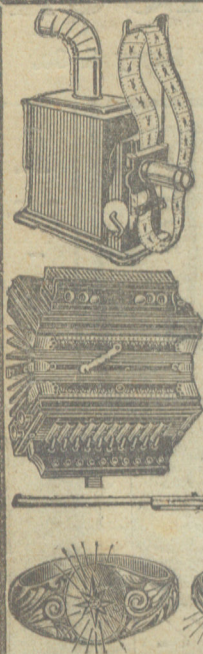
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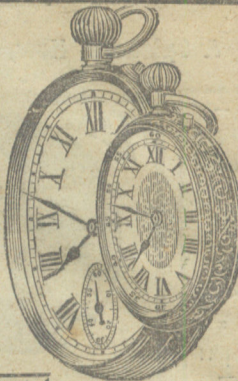
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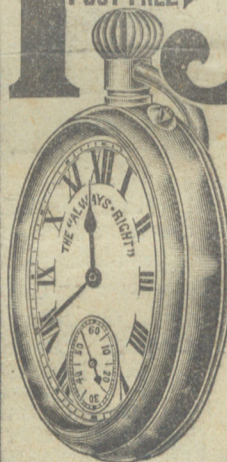
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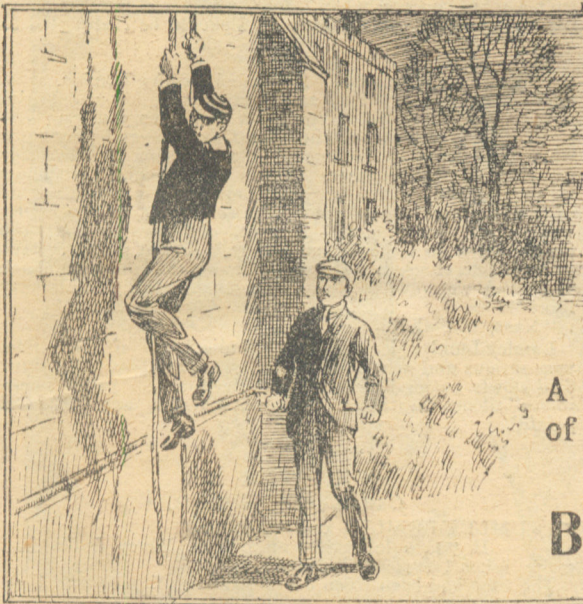
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ONE AGAINST THE SCHOOL!

A Splendid New, Long, Complete Tale
of Lumley-Lumley and Tom Merry
& Co. at St. Jim's.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

CHAPTER 1. All Together.

"ALL here?" asked Tom Merry, looking round the study.

"I think so," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry, of the Shell at St. Jim's, looked over the crowd of fellows in his study.

Tom Merry's study was one of the largest in the Shell passage in the School House at St. Jim's. But there was barely standing room in it now. More than a dozen fellows were gathered there—some of them grinning, and some of them looking very serious.

Lowther and Manners, Tom Merry's chums in the Shell, were there, of course. Blake, and Herries, and Digby, and D'Arcy, of the Fourth, Kangaroo and Bernard Glyn, of the Shell, and Figgins & Co., of the New House, were among the rest. In fact, nearly all the fellows in the Lower School at St. Jim's who were on intimate terms with Tom Merry, had gathered in his study. Evidently it was a most important occasion.

"There's enough of us, I think," remarked Monty Lowther, with a grin. "There isn't much more room in the study, anyway."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a nod.

"Quite enough of us to impress upon Lumley-Lumley the error of his ways," remarked Manners. "Let's march."

"Right-ho! Follow your leader!"

Tom Merry marched out of the study, and the crowd of juniors marched after him. In twos they marched down the passage, into the Fourth Form passage, looking very solemn. Whatever their business was, it was evidently something very serious and out of the ordinary run.

"Hallo!"

A big Fifth-Former, who was coming along the passage, stopped at sight of the procession and stared at them. It was Gerald Cutts, of the Fifth.

"Rehearsing for the Fifth of November?" he asked cheerfully.

The juniors glared at him.

"Weally, Cutts—" began Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Go and eat coke!" said Blake.

"Well, what's the little game, anyway?" asked the Fifth-Former, in surprise.

"Mind your own bizney!" said Tom Merry, very much ruffled. "It's nothing to do with the Fifth, anyway! Buzz off!"

Cutts grinned and walked on.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wegard that chap as a cheekay ass, you know. I have nevah approved of Cutts."

"He ought to be cut!" suggested Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Come on," said Tom Merry. "Never mind Cutts. Our business is with Lumley-Lumley."

Next Wednesday:

"BAFFLED!" & "BIRDS OF PREY!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The procession stopped at the door of a study in the Fourth Form passage, and Tom Merry knocked.

"Come in!" sang out a voice within.

Tom Merry threw the door open.

The juniors marched in.

There were three fellows in the study, sitting round the table and doing their preparation. They were Lumley-Lumley, Levison, and Mellish, of the Fourth. All three of them rose to their feet, and stared blankly at the crowd that poured into the study. Levison and Mellish, who were on the worst of terms with Tom Merry & Co., backed away in alarm. They anticipated a ragging. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley stood by the table and looked at the invaders with a cool grin.

"How many are there of you?" he inquired politely. "All are welcome; but the study wasn't built for a lecture-hall. I guess it's a case of standing room only."

"We've come to see you, Lumley."

Lumley-Lumley nodded cheerfully.

"Well, I'm here, I guess," he said, "as large as life, and twice as natural! Take a good look, and then run away and let me get my prep. done."

"Ahem—"

"Weally, Lumlay—"

"You see, old man—"

Lumley-Lumley looked puzzled.

"No; I'm dashed if I see!" he said. "Is anything the matter?"

"Yes."

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"What is it?"

Tom Merry glanced towards Levison and Mellish.

"You two chaps can clear," he said. "It's not your bizney. Buzz off!"

"We're doing our prep.," said Levison.

"Jolly well not going to be turned out of our own study!" said Mellish.

The two cads of the Fourth were very keen, as a matter of fact, to know what unusual business Tom Merry & Co. had with Lumley-Lumley. But their curiosity was not destined to be gratified.

"Sorry to interrupt the prep.," said Tom Merry politely. "Sorry to have to turn a chap out of his own study. But I must request you to retire for five minutes."

"Rats!"

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, turning to his followers, who were partly in the study and partly in the doorway, "if these two bounders don't get out, kindly chuck them into the passage."

"Right-ho!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Look here—" began Levison savagely.

"Are you going?" asked Tom Merry politely.

The Co. made a forward movement. Levison and Mellish snapped their teeth, and squeezed their way out of the study. Then the remainder of the Co. crowded in, and the door was shut. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was alone with the numerous invaders of his study. He did not look alarmed. Unlike his study-mates, he was on the best of terms with Tom Merry and his comrades. He only looked puzzled.

"Now to bizney!" said Glyn, of the Shell.

"I guess it's about time," said Lumley-Lumley. "What the dickens does all this mean? Have I been getting your backs up without knowing it?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, deah boy!"

"The fact is—" said Jack Blake.

"It's like this—" said Figgins.

"You see—" began Kangaroo.

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"I guess I should get it clearer if you talked one at a time," he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah! Lumley-Lumley is quite wight, deah

Boys. Pway leave the talkin' to me. I will explain to Lumley-Lumley—"

"Cheese it, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to cheese it, Blake! I considah—"

"Order!"

"I wefuse to ordah—I mean—"

"Look here, Lumley—" began Tom Merry.

"You are intewwuptin' me, Tom Mewwy—"

"Yes, I know that, Gussy. Look here, Lumley-Lumley, we're all your friends here. We all wish you well. That's so, isn't it, you chaps?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Therefore, we've jawed it over together, and decided to come and tell you plainly that it won't do!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! It won't do, deah boy!"

"Not at all!" said Blake.

"Not a bit!" said Kerr.

"Not a morsel!" said Fatty Wynn.

"It's got to stop!" said Monty Lowther, with a shake of the head.

"And at once!" added Manners.

"You understand, Lumley?"

Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"Blessed if I do!" he said. "If this is a joke, I'm willing to laugh, though I don't see where the fun comes in. If it isn't a joke, and you mean bizney, would you mind explaining what you are talking about? I should be really glad to know."

"It's got to stop!"

"What has got to stop?" demanded Lumley-Lumley.

"You know very well," said Tom Merry, his eyes beginning to gleam a little. "You know that when you were first at St. Jim's, you were called the Outsider—and you know why. You know you came jolly near being expelled for carrying on rotten games outside the school. You know we've all stood by you like true pals ever since you turned over a new leaf. Well, now you're taking to the wrong road again, we've jawed it over, and considered it the proper caper to come to you and talk to you plainly. We want you to chuck it. If you don't, we shall have to chuck you. But we want to give you a chance first; that's only fair!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Lumley-Lumley looked at the juniors, all of them now very serious and grim, and his face went crimson. The flush died slowly out of his cheeks, leaving him very pale. There was a silence in the study—a silence that was long and painful.

CHAPTER 2.

Called over the Coals.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY did not speak.

It was a long time since Tom Merry & Co. had taken this tone with him.

The time had been when Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had been known as the Outsider of St. Jim's, and had fully deserved the name.

But that time was past.

Lumley-Lumley had come very near being expelled from the school. Since then he had turned over a new leaf, and Tom Merry & Co. had stood by him and helped him. When he had been the "Outsider," he had followed the path of reckless wrong-doing with cool determination; when he had reformed, he had shown the same determination in refusing to allow his old associates to drag him back into the ways of the past. Levison and Mellish, and Crooke of the Shell, had tried it more than once, and they had failed. The Outsider followed his own line.

But now—

Lumley-Lumley clenched his hand, as he regarded the crowd of juniors of the Fourth and the Shell.

Tom Merry broke the silence at last.

"Well?" he said.

"Well?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"What have you got to say?"

"Nothing!"

"I mean, what is your answer?"

"I guess there isn't any!"

"No answer?"

"No!"

The juniors exchanged glances. Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"Then we are to take it that you're sticking to the rotten way—that you don't want to have any more to do with us?"

"Weally, Lumley-Lumley—"

"Shut up, Gussy!"

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(See column 2, page 27 of this issue.)

G

246

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"The seamp," said Lumley-Lumley, holding the paper over the fire. "The awful schemer! Levison wrote this pass in Knox's hand—in invisible ink—and it faded out of sight—and when I looked for the pass in my pocket, I found only a blank sheet!" "What is that?" It was a deep voice at the open kitchen door. Lumley-Lumley swung round, with the paper in his hand. (See Chapter 13.)

"Weally, Blake——"
 "Let Tom Merry do the jawing!" said Bernard Glyn.
 "Weally, Glyn——"
 "If you keep up what you've started again, you'll break with us," said Tom Merry, his eyes fixed upon Lumley-Lumley; "we've all been friendly to you, and you can't say that we haven't stood by you. But we don't want to have anything to say to a fellow who turns himself into a pub-haunter!"
 "No fear!"
 "Wathah not!"
 Lumley-Lumley's eyes glistened.
 "So that's all, is it?" asked Tom Merry.
 "I guess I haven't anything to say, only——"
 "Only what?"
 "That before you jump on a fellow, it would be a good idea to make sure that there's some reason for jumping on him, and to give him that reason."

The juniors started.
 "You know very well," said Monty Lowther.
 "I guess I don't!"
 "Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You weally ought to leave the talkin' to me, Tom Mewwy, deah boy! You have left-out the important bizney. Pway allow me to explain——"
 "Oh, ring off, Gussy!"
 "I wefuse to wing off——"
 "Let him run on," said Lumley-Lumley. "He seems to save more sense than the rest of you put together. He's göing to let me know what's up, anyway!"
 "Look here——"
 "Lumley-Lumley is quite wight," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It may simply be that cires. are against our friend Lumley. Lumley-Lumley, old man, is it twue that you have been takin' to your old ways?"
 "No!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Have you been hangin' wound pubs?"

"No."

"Have you put any money on waces?"

"No."

"Have you been chummin' up with Cwooke of the Shell and playin' cards with him in his study?"

"No."

"Bai Jove! He denies the whole stowf, deah boys."

Tom Merry & Co. looked very uncomfortable. There was silence in the study again, during which Jerrold Lumley-Lumley looked from one to another of the juniors with his keen, searching eyes.

"Well?" he said, "Have I satisfied you?"

Silence.

"Somebody seems to have been piling on yarns about me," said Lumley-Lumley. "I don't know who it is, but somebody has."

Still silence.

"And you fellows, who called yourselves my friends, have believed it?" said the Outsider, with a curl of the lip.

"Bai Jove!"

"And without giving me a chance to know what you've got against me, or to explain, you come here in a body and jump on me like this?"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Who's been running me down to you?" demanded Lumley-Lumley.

"Nobody," said Tom Merry. "I suppose you don't think that we would listen to any cad telling us tales about a fellow behind his back, do you?"

"Then what have you got against me?"

"It's pretty well the talk of the House," said Tom Merry sharply. "If it's all a mistake, it's a jolly queer one, that's all!"

"Jollay queeah, deah boy!"

Lumley-Lumley's eyes gleamed.

"I've told you," he said, "that it's a mistake. I've done nothing to give you any reason for piling on me like this. If you've got anything against me, tell me what it is, and I guess I'll explain it away."

"Bai Jove, that sounds all wight!"

"Very well," said Tom Merry crisply. "If we've taken too much for granted, we'll say we're sorry, and we'll be jolly glad to know that it was a mistake. But it will want a lot of explaining, I think."

"A jolly lot!" remarked Figgins.

"Oh, pile in!" said Lumley-Lumley carelessly. "I think you might have had a bit more faith in me. But I suppose you can't forget what's happened a long time back. You have good memories for a fellow's faults!"

"In the first place, what are you doing with packs of cards, if you don't use them?"

"That's soon answered—nothing! I haven't any cards!"

Tom Merry knitted his brows.

"Do you remember that you lent Blake your coat yesterday?"

"Yes."

"Tell him what you found in the pocket, Blake!"

"Pack of cards!" said Blake. "I didn't find them—they were there, when I put my hand in the pocket."

"Must have put them there yourself, in your sleep, I should think," said Lumley-Lumley. "I certainly know nothing about them. There's the coat, hanging on a nail on the door—look in the pockets now!"

"No good; they won't be there now, I expect!"

"Do you say that the cards didn't belong to you?" asked Tom Merry.

"I guess so."

"You didn't carry them in your pocket?"

"No."

"Then somebody else shoved them there?"

"I guess so."

"Who, then?" asked Blake.

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"How should I know? You all know that there's more than one fellow in the School House annoyed at my chucking the way I used to go on. Cwooke and Mellish and Levison have tried lots of times to chip me into going with them again. Two of the rotters share this study with me; they could put anything they liked in my pockets."

"Yaas, wathah! That's quite true!"

"Anything else on the list?" asked the Outsider coolly.

"Yes. Two cigarettes were picked up under your desk in the Fourth Form-room yesterday, and Mr. Lathom was very ratty about it."

"I guess I heard of that; but they weren't mine."

"You didn't drop them there?"

"No."

"Next item!" said Digby.

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"Next item," said Tom Merry, "a sporting-paper was found in the library last night, and taken to the Head. We all know that you were reading in the library last evening, Lumley. We don't know what you were reading."

"I was reading 'Treasure Island,'" said the Outsider, "and I never saw any sporting-paper."

"It wasn't yours, then?"

"I guess not."

"Next item," said Tom Merry, "a sporting-paper was leaving the Green Man in Rylcombe by the back entrance. Darrel of the Sixth saw him; he knew the St. Jim's cap, but couldn't spot the chap who was wearing it. You were late for calling over, and came in with your boots muddy, as if you'd come along the towing-path—where the back way from the Green Man leads to. Was it you?"

"It wasn't."

"Where were you, then?"

"I had a ramble up the river, and got in late. It's happened before, and to other chaps as well as me."

The juniors looked at one another. The Outsider was explaining every item in the count against him as fast as it was brought forward. He was perfectly cool and collected, and seemed to be telling the truth. But they could not help remembering the old Lumley-Lumley and the wonderful facility with which he had been able to roll out falsehoods that looked like truth. If he had taken up his old ways again, he had probably taken up the habit of lying, along with the rest.

"Last item," said Tom Merry quietly.

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"Heaviest of the lot, I suppose," he said, "as you've saved it till the last?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"Well, get it off your chest!"

"You left a note for Cwooke in his study this morning, making an appointment for to-night to break bounds."

Lumley-Lumley shook his head.

"Do you deny it?" asked Tom Merry.

"I guess I wouldn't take the trouble; only as you seem to have put me on my defence, I may as well. I didn't do it."

"Be careful!" said Tom Merry.

"What do you mean?"

"We've got the note."

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"I guess I don't see how you can have the note, when I never wrote it," he said. "And if there was a note for Cwooke, how did you come to get hold of it?"

"Glyn happened to go into Cwooke's study with him, to see Cwooke's camera, and it was lying on the table, where you had left it. I suppose it never occurred to you that any decent chap would go into Cwooke's study? Glyn couldn't help seeing that it was in your fist, as he knows your fist."

"Just so," said the Liverpool lad; "I couldn't help it. I wasn't going to read it, of course, but Cwooke showed it to me."

"Oh, Cwooke showed it to you, did he?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes, he did," said Glyn.

"What did he show it to you for?"

"To show me that you had been taking us in," said Bernard Glyn. "He said he wasn't going to have you running with the hare and hunting with the hounds; and that's only reasonable, as I take it."

"Yaas, wathah! You ought to choose one or the othah, Lumley, deah boy."

"You'll have to!" said Manners bluntly.

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I guess I can only repeat that I didn't leave any

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note in Crooke's study for him," he said. "He was pulling your leg."

"Weally, Lumley——"

"We've got the note," said Tom Merry quietly.

"Let's see it."

Tom Merry made a sign to Glyn, and the Liverpool junior drew a crumpled paper from his pocket and threw it upon the table.

"When Glyn told us, we made Crooke give it up," explained Tom Merry. "There is it."

Lumley-Lumley picked up the note. His face changed in expression as he read it. It was brief, and ran;

"To-night at the slanting oak at half-past ten.—J. L. L."

"My hat!" ejaculated Lumley-Lumley.

"Is that your writing?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"Did you write it?"

"I must have."

"Then you have been lying only a minute ago," said Tom Merry sternly.

Lumley-Lumley smiled.

"I guess not. I wrote that; it's my writing right enough. Crooke must have kept it. It's a whole term since I wrote that note, and as it isn't dated, he was able to palm it off on you for a note written to-day. You can see the paper's pretty old."

The juniors stared hard at Lumley-Lumley.

"My word! He's got a giddy answer to everything!" said Digby.

"If the note had been dated——" began Lowther.

"It would have had a date last term or the term before."

"Ahem!"

"You don't believe me?"

Tom Merry hesitated.

"I'm blessed if I know what to believe," he said frankly.

"You certainly seem to have an answer ready for everything, Lumley. But if everything's as you say, there have been a jolly lot of coincidences."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Lumley-Lumley's eyes glittered.

"I suppose you're going to remain in doubt," he remarked, "and you're going to condescend to give me the benefit of the doubt, you fellows? You're going to keep your eyes and ears open for proof?"

"I don't see what else we can do."

"I guess I do."

"What is it?"

"You can keep to yourselves, and let me alone," said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "I don't want any friends who are on the look-out to hear things against me. I don't want any lofty condescending. I don't want to have anything to do with you unless you trust me. Unless you believe every word I've said to you, I'll ask you not to speak to me again—not until you think you can believe me, and without reservation."

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Well, what do you say?" demanded Lumley-Lumley.

"I hardly know what to say," said Tom Merry slowly.

"I can't quite believe everything you say, though I'd like to. You can't blame me——"

"I should take your word," said Lumley-Lumley.

"But you've never known me to lie."

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"And you've known me to lie, many a time and oft," he said. "Well, I guess perhaps I don't blame you. But I mean bizney; no half-confidence for me. Either you take me whole, or you let me alone. Every chap here who doesn't believe me, full and fair, can get up on his hind legs and say so, and I won't trouble him any more for his friendship."

"Weally, Lumley——"

"So spit it out, and get done!" said the Outsider.

"I wedged that as a most unweasonable attitude for you to take up, Lumley, deah boy, and I do not approve of it."

"Go hon!"

"I wedged you——"

"I can only repeat what I've said," said Tom Merry steadily. "I hope you're innocent, Lumley, and that Crooke wasn't telling the truth. But there isn't any proof."

"And my word isn't good enough?"

"No," said Tom Merry at last. "I don't like to say so; but it isn't, if you put it to me directly like that."

"Very well, good-evening!"

"But——"

"I guess the matter's finished."

"Weally, Lumley——"

The juniors, looking very angry, trooped out of the study. Lumley-Lumley had taken up an attitude in the matter that surprised and annoyed them, and there were few of them who were not inclined to take him at his word and leave

him severely alone. Indeed, without being unduly suspicious, they might surmise that he wanted to be let alone, to follow his old ways, and that he wished to put the blame of the break upon them. The door closed after the juniors, and the Outsider was left alone in his study.

Alone!

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley stood by the table, his hand resting upon it, his gaze fixed upon the door that had closed after the chums of St. Jim's.

He was the Outsider again now!

The word came into his ears. The cool defiance in his face faded when Tom Merry & Co. had gone; a heavy, troubled look came in its place, and he sighed. In pride and recklessness he had broken with his friends; they had taken him at his word and left him. And now?

Now he was the Outsider!

CHAPTER 3.

The Coward's Blow.

CROOKE, of the Shell, was in his study.

Crooke was sitting in his armchair, with a cigarette between his lips. A curl of blue smoke rose from the cigarette and floated in the atmosphere of the study. Crooke was alone, and when he was alone he was accustomed to these little indulgences.

But he hid the cigarette quickly enough at the sound of a footstep pausing outside his door. It was most likely only some Shell fellow; but there was always the possibility that it was a prefect or even a master, and Crooke, of the Shell, did not want to get an imposition or a caning.

There was a knock at the door, and it opened and Tom Merry came in. The captain of the Shell sniffed, and frowned angrily.

"Smoking?" he exclaimed.

Crooke shrugged his shoulders.

"I have seen Lumley," said Tom Merry, laying the crumpled note on the table. "There's your note, Crooke."

"Thanks."

"Lumley says that note was written more than a term ago."

Crooke laughed.

"I suppose he left it undated so that he could say that," he remarked. "He may have been nervous about its being seen by somebody. He ought to have had more sense than to write, really; but he was always reckless."

"You were a cad to show it to us, new or old," said Tom Merry.

Crooke yawned.

"Have you come here to tell me that?" he asked.

"Yes—and something else. That note's about breaking bounds to-night. You're not going to do it."

"Who's going to stop me?"

"I am, if necessary. There's going to be no breaking bounds at night in the Shell dormitory, so long as I am captain of the Shell," said Tom Merry determinedly.

The cad of the Shell grinned.

"If I had meant to go, you would have seen nothing of this note," he said.

"No; I suppose not."

"I thought it was time Lumley came out in his true colours," said Crooke. "If he wants to keep in with your set, let him keep out of mine. If he wants to belong to you, he can break with you and your gang. It's only fair; I don't see why he should run with the hare and hunt with the hounds."

"He has broken with us," said Tom Merry.

Crooke started.

"My hat! He's taken the plunge, then!"

"Yes. He says it's because he won't have friends who don't trust him—not because he wants to have anything to do with your set," said Tom Merry.

"Good old Lumley! He always has a ripping lie ready," said Crooke admiringly.

Tom Merry turned on his heel and strode from the study. He despised Crooke for having given his associate away; and yet he could not be surprised at it. Crooke and Mellish and Levison and their associates writhed under the scorn that Tom Merry & Co. felt for them, and never took the trouble to disguise. It was not to be expected that, if Lumley-Lumley had really rejoined his old set, that they would allow him to keep in with Tom Merry & Co. at the same time.

Crooke relighted the cigarette when he was alone. But he did not remain alone long. He had just finished the cigarette, and thrown the stump into the grate, when the door was kicked open, and the Outsider of St. Jim's came in.

Lumley-Lumley strode in, and closed the door behind him. Crooke started to his feet, changing colour a little. Crooke was a big, heavy fellow, much bigger than the Outsider of St. Jim's. But he was not of the stuff of which heroes are

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made; and the reckless courage of the Outsider was well-known. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had his faults—indeed, their name was legion—but he did not seem to know the meaning of the word fear.

"Hallo!" said Crooke, with somewhat lame affability. "Have a smoke?"

"I guess not."

"Might as well, now that you don't belong to the goody-goody brigade," said Crooke, with a grin.

Lumley-Lumley looked steadily at him.

"Oh! So you've heard about that?" he asked.

"Tom Merry's just been here."

"You know what you've done for me, Crooke," said Lumley-Lumley. "Ever since I chucked you and the old gang, you've been trying to get me back, or else to make me suffer for having left it. You and Levison and Mellish—you've all had a hand in it. You haven't succeeded in getting me round your way; but you've made me quarrel with Tom Merry & Co. at last."

"Better stick to the old firm," suggested Crooke. "Look here, Lumley, I was always a good pal to you. We had some good times together."

"I don't think them good times now. It was all rotten!"

"What rot! We made money on the races, and we had some jolly nights at the Green Man and the Peel of Bells. Hard-up cads like Levison and Mellish are no good for me as pals; you've got as much tin as I have, and we could both go the pace. You left me in the lurch, and I want you to take up the old line. I'm willing to be your pal again, and say nothing about the past."

"I guess you're the only one that's willing."

Crooke showed his teeth in an unpleasant grin.

"Well, if you won't have me for a pal, you can have me for an enemy," he said. "You've seen already what I can do. You're off with the Good Little Erics already."

"Yes; owing to you finding an old letter I was fool enough to write terms ago, and palming it off as a letter written to-day," said the Outsider of St. Jim's, between his teeth.

"You don't expect me to admit that?" said Crooke.

"I don't see why not, as we're alone," said Lumley-Lumley. "You will keep up your version to Tom Merry, I suppose."

"And he will believe it," grinned Crooke. "They're giving you the cold shoulder now, Lumley. The game is up for you in that quarter. Better come back to the flock."

"I'm not coming back to the flock," said the Outsider. "I'm going to make you pay for telling lies about me to my friends."

"Your friends!" sneered Crooke. "They're not your friends now. Tom Merry told me himself that you've broken with the whole crowd."

"That's so."

"Then you'll be on your lonely lonesome, if you don't come back to your old pals," said Crooke. "Do the sensible thing, Lumley. You'll have to do it in the long run. I'd rather be your pal than your enemy."

"I'd rather have you for an enemy than a pal, thanks," said Lumley-Lumley.

Crooke gritted his teeth.

"Well, if you mean that, I'll make you sorry for it," he said. "You're off with the Good Erics. And I'll make it impossible for you to crawl up to them again, too."

"I guess I'm not crawling up to anybody, Crooke," said the Outsider independently. "I was always able to look after myself—I've hoed my own row and never asked for help—in New York and in Paris. In places you'd be like a lost sheep in, Crooke, my boy. I haven't come here to make terms with you."

"Then what do you want?" growled Crooke.

"I want you to own up to Tom Merry that you lied about that letter!"

Crooke laughed.

"Will you?"

"No fear!"

"If you don't—"

"Well, if I don't?" said Crooke mockingly.

"If you don't," said the Outsider, with cool determination—"if you don't Crooke, I'm going to thrash you within an inch of your life!"

Crooke drew a quick, hard breath.

"Don't be a fool, Lumley-Lumley!" he muttered, his voice coming thickly. "I don't want any trouble with you."

"I guess you should have thought of that earlier."

"Look here!"

"Are you going to tell Tom Merry the truth?"

"I've told him the truth," said Crooke.

"You're going to stick to the yarn you've told him?"

"Yes."

"Then I'm going to make you squirm," said the Outsider, pushing back his cuffs. "You're bigger than I am, but I'll chance that. Put up your dukes!"

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"I—I—I—"

Lumley-Lumley moved round the table, and Crooke backed and sidled away, still keeping the table between him and the Outsider. Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"Chase me!" he exclaimed. "You may as well stand up to it, Crooke; you've got to have it!"

"I—I'll fight you in the gym!"

"Gym's closed."

"To-morrow."

"To-morrow never comes," said Lumley-Lumley. "You're going to own up to Tom Merry, or else take your hiding to-night!"

Crooke made a spring towards the door. But Lumley-Lumley was watching him, and he sprang forward and caught the cad of the Shell by the shoulder. With a swing of his arm he flung Crooke back into the study.

Crooke staggered across the room, and brought up against the window, panting. His face was flushed now with rage, and his breath came thick and fast.

"Hang you!" he muttered. "I—"

Lumley-Lumley advanced towards him.

"Keep back! I—"

"You are in a blue funk!" grinned Lumley-Lumley.

"You've still got the chance of owning up to Tom Merry, if you choose."

"Hang you!"

"You won't?" asked the Outsider.

"No!" yelled Crooke.

"Then come on! There's your coward's blow, as you seem to want something to liveen you up!"

Smack!

Crooke, with a hoarse cry of rage, hurled himself forward at the Outsider. His rush, and the heavy-weight of the Shell fellow, bore the Floor-Former backwards, and it looked for a moment as if he would be swept across the study.

But Lumley-Lumley rallied, and hit out vigorously. Crooke rained savage blows upon him; but Lumley-Lumley, if lighter, was quicker, and for every blow he received he returned two. Crooke hurled himself desperately upon the Outsider, and grappled with him. Lumley-Lumley's arm slid round his neck, and Crooke's head was in chancery.

"I guess you get the gruel now," remarked Lumley-Lumley.

Crooke roared and struggled desperately. He was punching away at Lumley-Lumley's ribs; but the Outsider of St. Jim's was hammering his face, and hammering it hard; and Crooke was getting decidedly the worst of it. Panting and gasping, trampling and struggling, the two combatants reeled to and fro, with a din and uproar that could be heard the whole length of the Shell passage.

CHAPTER 4.

In Doubt.

KILDARE, the captain of St. Jim's, came striding down the Shell passage, with a frown upon his brow, and a cane in his hand. He stopped at the door of Crooke's study, and threw it open, and strode in. A dozen fellows were gathering outside, attracted by the terrific din in Crooke's quarters. As Kildare entered, the two struggling juniors crashed into the table, and it went flying. Books and papers and an inkstand shot into the grate.

"Stop that at once!" shouted Kildare.

Biff! Biff! Biff!

"Yow-ow!"

The captain of St. Jim's lashed out with the cane. The first lash fell across Crooke's bent back, and he roared. The second caught Lumley-Lumley across the legs, and he yelled. The two juniors separated at last. Lumley-Lumley dodged round the table just in time to escape another cut. Crooke staggered against the wall, with one hand to his nose, and the other to his eye, gasping and spluttering.

"Gr-r-r-rooooooh!"

"Now, then, what does this mean?" asked Kildare angrily.

"I'm licking Crooke," explained Lumley-Lumley coolly.

"Yow-ow!" groaned Crooke.

"Do you know you were making a row that could be heard all over the House?" demanded Kildare.

"I guess I'm sorry. But I was bound to lick that cad," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Ow, ow!"

"You seem to have got some of the licking yourself," said Kildare, with a glance at the Outsider's bruised face.

"Yes, I guess so; but that doesn't matter. I think I've made Crooke sorry for himself."

"Ow!" said Crooke. "He came here and started on me because I showed his letter to Tom Merry. He wanted me to break bounds to-night—ow!—and I wouldn't!"

"What's that?" said Kildare sharply.

"It's a whopper," said Lumley-Lumley.

There was a chuckle from the passage.
"There's the letter!" yelled Crooke.

Kildare looked at the note.
"Did you write this, Lumley-Lumley?"

"Yes, a term or two ago."

"Oh! It's an old letter, then?"

"Yes. Crooke showed it to Tom Merry, and pretended that it was written to-day."

"It was written to-day!" howled Crooke. "I found it on my table when I came in. Glyn was with me; he saw it."

"Yes; you'd put it there ready for him," said Lumley-Lumley.

Kildare frowned in a puzzled way. It was difficult to know which to believe of two such conflicting statements.

He glanced at the juniors in the passage. The Terrible Three had come along from their study, and Kildare signed to Tom Merry to come in.

"You've seen that letter, Merry?" he asked.

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"Do you think it's an old letter?"

"I don't know. Crooke says one thing, and Lumley-Lumley the opposite. I'd rather believe Lumley-Lumley of the two—only I don't know what to believe."

Kildare tossed the letter into the fire.

"If there is any breaking bounds, you will hear from me, Lumley-Lumley," he said. "I haven't forgotten your old tricks. I can't settle this matter; but there's not to be any more of this rowing. Do you hear?"

"I guess so."

"Keep out of Crooke's study. Buzz off."

"Right-ho!"

Lumley-Lumley left the study.

Kildare followed him out, without another word to Crooke.

But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked in at the doorway to address a word to the cad of the Shell.

"I wegdah you as a wottah for givin' Lumley away to the skippah, Crooke," he said. "Whethah that was an old lettah, or a new lettah, you have acted like a wotten wottah!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Crooke, mopping his nose. "Ow!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I—"

"Oh, sheer off!"

"If you are lookin' for a thwashin', Crooke—"

"Come on, Gussy!" exclaimed Tom Merry, catching the swell of St. Jim's by the shoulder. "He has had enough lickings for one day!"

"Yaas, that's so. But—"

"Come on."

And Arthur Augustus was dragged out of the study. Crooke closed his door, and sat down to dab his nose with his handkerchief.

Crooke had suffered pretty severely in his struggle with the Outsider of St. Jim's. But he was not feeling wholly dissatisfied.

He felt that he had finished Lumley-Lumley so far as Tom Merry & Co. were concerned, and it looked as if he was right there. The chums of St. Jim's did not speak to the Outsider as he walked away down the passage.

Lumley-Lumley did not seem to mind.

He went back to his study, and continued his preparation as if nothing had happened. Levison and Mellish were in the study, and they looked at the Outsider very curiously, but he did not speak to them.

"It's a wotten biznah altogetherah," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked to Tom Merry & Co. "I wondah which of those wottahs was tellin' us the facts?"

"It's a giddy mystery," said Blake.

Tom Merry frowned.

"Anyway, Lumley-Lumley chose to break with us," he said. "We've got nothing to reproach ourselves for."

"Yaas, that's quite wight."

"I say—" began Bernard Glyn, who was looking rather worried.

"Hallo! What do you think about it?"

"Oh, I'm not thinking about that," said the Liverpool junior. "I've lost my fountain-pen."

"Oh, blow your fountain-pen!" said Blake crossly.

"But it's the fountain-pen with the invisible ink in it," said Glyn—"the one I invented myself, you know—the one Gussy wrote his round robin with."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus frowned majestically. He had not forgotten that peculiar jape, when he had drawn up a round robin in invisible ink, addressed to Kildare, and had pre-

sented the captain of St. Jim's with a sheet of perfectly blank paper.

"Weally, Glyn," he said, "if that wotten pen, and that wotten ink have been lost, I wegdah it as a vevy good thing."

"Oh, rats!" said Bernard Glyn. "I want it. I'm sure I left it on my study table, and some silly ass has borrowed it, I suppose?"

"Are you going to make up any more round robins, Gussy?" asked Monty Lowther.

D'Arcy sniffed.

"I wefuse to weply to fwivolous questions, Lowthah," he replied, and he walked away with his aristocratic nose very high in the air.

The juniors chuckled.

Bernard Glyn went away to look for his famous fountain-pen; but he did not find it. Kangaroo and Clifton Dane, his study-mates, had not seen it. Kangaroo suggested that he should make another, and Clifton Dane remarked that it would probably turn up in the course of time; and Bernard Glyn snorted and let the matter drop.

The Terrible Three returned to their study to finish their preparation.

Tom Merry was wearing a worried look.

He was not satisfied in his mind about Lumley-Lumley. The evidence against the Outsider had satisfied the juniors, and they had gone to Lumley-Lumley to remonstrate with him. The Outsider had explained everything in a plausible way, and yet—

"No good bothering over it," said Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry nodded.

"No," he said. "But—"

"Well, chuck it off your mind."

"Blessed if I can chuck it off my mind," said Tom Merry.

"It looks as if Lumley-Lumley had been playing the giddy ox again, and was simply pulling our leg all the time. But we know, too, that Crooke & Co. have been feeling very savage about his turning back on them; and this may be a scheme of theirs to get him into bad odour with us."

"It may," said Manners doubtfully.

"If it is, it's hard on Lumley."

"I don't see it," said Lowther. "He's no right to throw us over as he's done, simply because we don't take his word for the frozen truth. He used to be a giddy fabricator, and he might have had a relapse."

"A very likely thing, too," said Manners.

"Yes; but—"

"Oh, never mind butting!" said Lowther. "Shove it off your chest, and get your prep. done, or you won't be done before bedtime."

And Tom Merry settled down to work; but the worried wrinkle still remained in his brow.

At bedtime, Crooke looked very much damaged when he came into the Shell dormitory. One of his eyes was closed, and his nose looked nearly twice its usual size.

In the Fourth-Form dormitory, Lumley also showed signs of damage, though by no means so serious. He did not speak to Blake & Co., but when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy said "Good-night, Lumlay, deah boy!" the Outsider responded cheerfully "Good-night!"

He did not seem at all sulky.

Indeed, what he thought about the occurrences of the evening it was difficult to tell; his face wore its usual expression of careless unconcern, and the impression he gave was that he was not thinking about the matter at all.

CHAPTER 5.

No Exit.

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY had the same air of unconcern on the following day.

The break with Tom Merry & Co. did not seem to trouble him in the least.

Other fellows, who were in the habit of following Tom Merry's lead, showed a disposition to fight shy of the Outsider; and so far from trying to propitiate them in any way, the Outsider met them half way in the matter.

It was very evident that he was not in a humour to ask favours of anyone.

After school that day, Lumley-Lumley met Kildare in the Sixth Form passage, as the captain of St. Jim's was going to his study, and stopped to speak to him.

Kildare gave him a rather severe look. The signs of the previous evening's combat had not yet left the Outsider's face.

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NEXT WEDNESDAY: "BAFFLED!" A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bernard Glyn at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Well, what do you want, Lumley?" asked Kildare abruptly.

"Pass out," said the Outsider cheerfully.

Kildare looked at him sharply.

"A pass out of gates?" he asked.

"I guess so."

"Where are you going?"

"To Rylcombe."

"What for?"

"To see a friend."

Kildare pursed his lips.

"Look here, Lumley-Lumley, this isn't the time to ask me for a pass out of gates, especially in the evening," he said. "There has been a lot of unpleasant talk about you in the House lately. You can't expect me to forget that you were once nearly expelled from the school for bad conduct."

Lumley-Lumley grunted.

"I guess that's going to haunt me for the rest of my days," he remarked.

"Very likely; a thing like that takes a long time to live down," said Kildare sharply. "You can't expect otherwise. There's that note Crooke showed me yesterday unexplained—"

"I guess I've explained it."

"Yes, but your explanation doesn't tally with Crooke's; and you can't expect me to believe you before him. The fact is, Lumley, you are under suspicion."

"Oh!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"And so you'd better not ask for a pass-out in the evening for some time to come," said Kildare. "If it were something specially important, and you could give me the details, it might make a difference."

"I guess it is important."

"What do you want to do?"

"I want to see a friend."

"You seem to be on bad terms with your friends here," said Kildare drily.

The Outsider nodded.

"I guess that's not my fault," he said. "They've got their backs up on sheer suspicion; and I'm not going to kow-tow to any johnny in the wide world, you bet."

"Who is this friend at Rylcombe?"

"It's nobody at a pub," grinned Lumley-Lumley. "It's Grimes."

"Grimes!" repeated Kildare.

"Yes."

"Who's Grimes? I think I've heard the name."

"I think you have," agreed Lumley-Lumley. "Grimes is the kid who brings the grocery home from Mr. Sands, the grocer."

"The village grocer's boy!" exclaimed Kildare, staring.

"Yes. He's a friend of mine."

"Look here, Lumley-Lumley—"

"He stood by me when I was in trouble with my pater," said Lumley-Lumley. "He's one of the best, and I don't care whether he's a grocer's boy or the Prince of Wales. I know he's a good pal."

Kildare laughed.

"There is no harm in your being pally with Grimes," he said. "I dare say he is all right. But you can't have a pass-out this evening, and that settles it. Your friendship with Grimes can stand over for the next half-holiday."

"But I say, I'm getting fed up here, you know. I want somebody to jaw to," said Lumley-Lumley. "The fellows have all got their ears up, and I want to see Grimey."

"Oh, nonsense!"

Kildare went into his study and closed the door. Lumley-Lumley remained in the passage, looking dismayed and exasperated. He could see that Kildare did not trust him, and that the St. Jim's captain was more than half-inclined to think that the story of wishing to see Grimes was an excuse to cover some other intention.

"I guess this is getting too thick!" growled Lumley-Lumley. "Still, Kildare ain't the only pebble on the beach, there are others."

He knocked at Darrel's door. The deep voice of Darrel of the Sixth came from within the study.

"Come in!"

Lumley-Lumley entered the prefect's study. Langton and Rushden, two other prefects of the Sixth, were also there.

"Well, what do you want?" asked Darrel abruptly.

"Can I have a pass-out this evening?" asked Lumley-Lumley meekly.

"Ask Kildare."

"Ahem!"

"Buzz off; Kildare's in his study," said Langton.

"Ahem!"

"Shut the door after you," said Rushden.

"Ahem!"

"What are you waiting for?" demanded Darrel.

"I—I guess I'd rather have a pass from you, Darrel, if

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you don't mind," said Lumley-Lumley. "I don't want to bother Kildare."

Darrel looked at him sharply.

"Does that mean that you have asked Kildare already, and have been refused?" he demanded.

"Ahem!"

"You cheeky young rascal!" exclaimed Darrel indignantly.

"Do you mean to say that you've been refused by Kildare, and you've come to ask me over his head?"

"Ahem—"

Darrel rose to his feet, and caught up a cane. Lumley-Lumley promptly retired from the study, shutting the door after him.

"My hat!" he murmured. "The Sixth won't hand out any passes. I wonder whether I could stick old Lathom for one."

The Outsider walked away to Mr. Lathom's study. The master of the Fourth Form was there, and he blinked at Lumley-Lumley in his benevolent way over his spectacles.

"Ah! You have brought your lines, Lumley-Lumley?" he asked.

The Outsider clicked his teeth. He had forgotten the fact that he had received a Latin imposition from Mr. Lathom that day.

"No, sir, not—not exactly," he said. "I—I came to ask you for a pass out of gates, sir."

"H'm!" said Mr. Lathom. "Have you done your lines?"

"Not yet, sir."

"If you go out you will not have time to do them this evening, Lumley-Lumley."

"I guess I'll make time, sir."

"What do you want to go out for, this cold evening?" asked Mr. Lathom.

"I want to see a friend at Rylcombe, sir."

"Indeed! Whom?"

"Grimes, sir."

"One of the Grammar School boys?" asked Mr. Lathom. Lumley-Lumley smiled.

"No, sir; the grocer's boy."

The master of the Fourth started.

"Nonsense, Lumley!" he said, with some asperity. "Go and do your lines."

"If you please, sir—"

"You may go!"

Lumley-Lumley left the study. His brows were contracted as he walked away. He paused at the end of the passage to think it out. When Jerrold Lumley-Lumley once had an idea in his head, he was very tenacious of it; it was very seldom that he gave up any plan he had made up his mind about. He wanted to go down to Rylcombe to see Grimes, and he was determined to do so; the only question was, the means. He realised that breaking bounds, under the present circumstances, would not do. He was already under suspicion, and breaking bounds would turn suspicion into certainty. But how was he to get permission to leave the school?

"Hallo!" A hand fell upon Lumley-Lumley's shoulder, and startled him out of his reverie. "What's the trouble?"

The Outsider looked round; it was Cutts of the Fifth. The Fifth Former was regarding him with a peculiar grin. Lumley-Lumley frowned a little. He thought he understood the cause of Cutts' sudden cordiality. Cutts of the Fifth was a fellow very like what Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had been when he first came to St. Jim's. More than once he had made overtures of friendship towards the Outsider, but Lumley-Lumley had held aloof. Now it was evident that Cutts had heard the talk about him, and his manner very plainly indicated that he looked upon himself and Lumley-Lumley as birds of a feather.

"Oh, nothing in particular!" said Lumley-Lumley shortly, in reply to the Fifth-Former's question.

Cutts grinned.

"It seems that the Good Little Erics are all down on you," he remarked. "You've broken with that lot at last. It was a sensible thing to do."

"Do you think so?" said Lumley-Lumley grimly.

"Yes, rather! Absolutely!" said Cutts. "Look here, now you've finished with them, you may as well drop spoofing altogether. What do you say to a run down town?"

"A run down town?" repeated Lumley-Lumley.

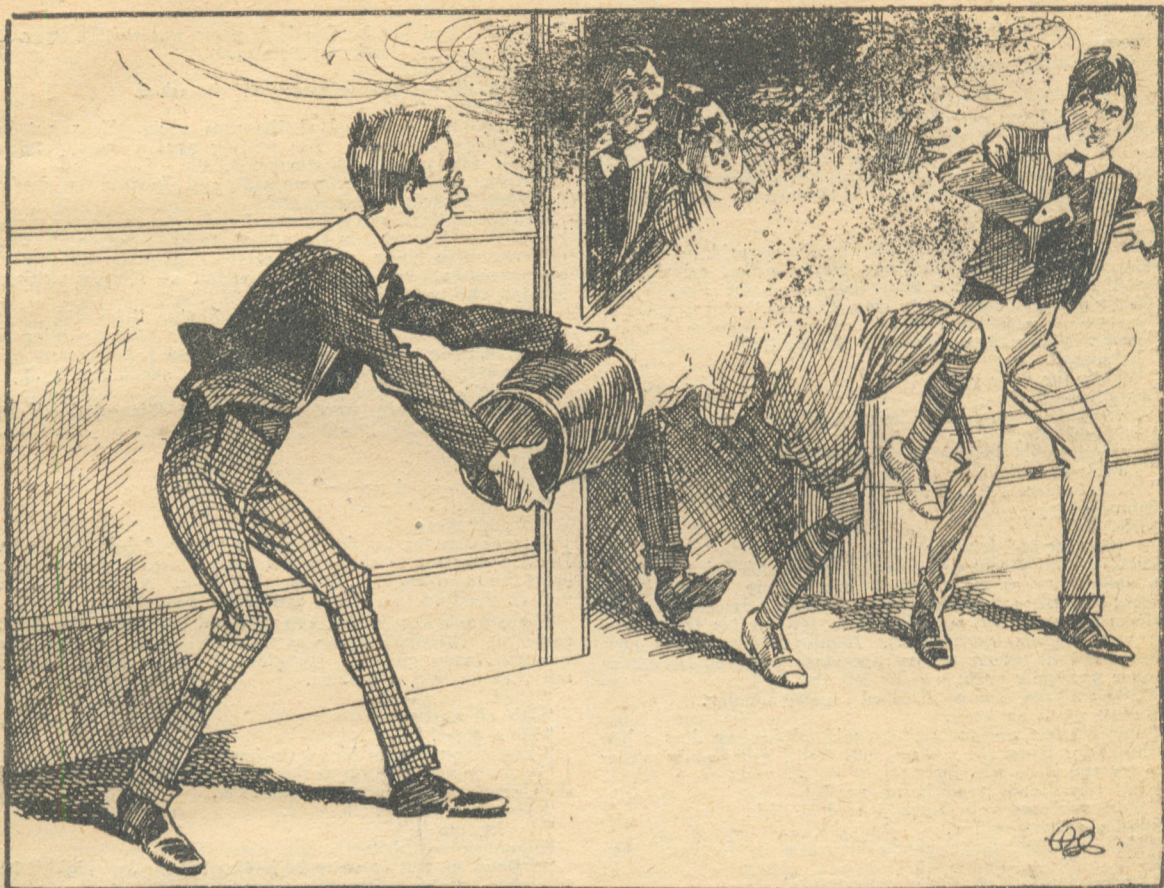
Cutts nodded.

"I can get a pass from Knox," he said. "Knox, the prefect, is a good pal of mine. I'll get a pass for two, and we'll get down to Wayland, and have a good time."

Lumley-Lumley was silent.

It was a great temptation. His friends at St. Jim's had given him the cold shoulder, on the suspicion that he had taken up his old ways. His friend Grimes was far off, and he was forbidden to go to him. Cutts' offer came just as Lumley-Lumley was feeling angry, depressed, and exasperated generally—just in the mood for reckless things.

But if the Outsider hesitated, it was only for a moment.



As Coker flung open the door of the study, Theophilus did his duty, and the contents of the bucket swooped down upon the three Fifth Formers. Coker staggered back wildly! "Oh, groooo—" (An amusing incident from the splendid complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "THE TERROR OF GREYFRIARS!" by Frank Richards, which is contained in this week's issue of our popular companion paper, "THE MAGNET" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.)

"Thanks!" he said. "No; I'm done with that kind of thing."

Cutts stared at him.

"Tom Merry & Co. don't think so," he remarked.

"They're mistaken."

"Oh, rats!" said Cutts, with a sniff of contempt. "You can spoof them, but you can't spoof me. How long are you going to keep this up?"

"Quite a long time, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "All my life, in fact. So-long!"

He walked away, leaving Cutts of the Fifth staring after him, angrily.

CHAPTER 6.
The Pass.

TOM MERRY passed Lumley-Lumley on the stairs, and he paused a moment. There were very painful doubts in Tom Merry's mind as to whether justice had been done to the Outsider, and he wanted to be fair. But although the captain of the Shell paused, Lumley-Lumley did not. He went directly on; and Tom Merry, flushing red, continued on his way. If the Outsider did not wish to speak, Tom Merry would not force him to do so.

Lumley-Lumley went into his study. Levison and Mellish were there, and they greeted the Outsider with ironical smiles. Levison and Mellish always knew everything that was going on; they both had a wonderful gift for finding things out. Lumley-Lumley could see that they knew about his fruitless quest for a pass out of the gates.

"Got it?" asked Levison.

Lumley-Lumley stared at him.

"Got what?"

"The pass."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lumley-Lumley threw himself into a chair.

"Oh, shut up cackling!" he exclaimed. "I know you two fellows are pleased to see me in a rotten hole. You two are hand-and-glove with Crooke in fixing a lie to me to make me quarrel with the fellows."

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"I would be a great pal—at least, if you would let me," he said.

"Well, I won't!"

"We used to be good friends enough," said Mellish.

"Br-r-r-r!"

"We made a good foursome—Crooke, and you, and Levison, and me," said Mellish. "You were the one to break it up."

"Jolly good thing I did, I guess!"

"Well, your new friends haven't done you much good," said Levison spitefully, "and they seem ready to turn on you at a moment's notice."

"Oh, bosh!"

"What do you want a pass out for?" asked Levison, after a pause.

"See a chap."

"Is it important?"

"I guess I want to see him if I can," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'm fed up with sulky faces. Grimes is a good pal."

Levison's lip curled.

"You want to go and see the grocer's boy?" he asked.

"I guess so."

"Pretty friend for a St. Jim's chap!" sneered Mellish.

"Better than some I could find here," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Look here, I could get you a pass, if you like," said Levison.

Lumley-Lumley started.

"You?"

"Yes."

"How could you get one?"

"Well, I'd try. There's Knox, you know—he can give a pass out quite as well as Kildare can; and I'm on good terms with Knox. I fag for him, for one thing; and I do him little services, for another. I believe he would hand out a pass if I asked him."

Lumley-Lumley hesitated.

"Well, I guess I should like one," he said. "Knox wouldn't give me one. He's had his knife into me since I refused to get cigarettes into the school for him. He wouldn't give you the pass for me, Levison."

"He would as a favour to me."

"And what would you want for getting it?"

"Nothing."

"What's the little game, then?"

Levison laughed.

"There's no little game," he said. "I'm willing to do it out of friendship."

Lumley-Lumley looked at him suspiciously.

"You don't believe me?" asked Levison.

"Well, I guess I'll believe you when I see the pass," said Lumley-Lumley.

"I'll try."

Levison rose and left the study.

Lumley-Lumley cast a puzzled glance at Mellish. He did not understand at all. Levison was not in the habit of making himself useful to anybody, even to a friend; and to perform a service for a fellow who refused his friendship was very curious on his part. Lumley-Lumley could not believe that he would receive the pass; and yet Levison's manner was quite earnest as he left the study.

"Is this a jape, Mellish?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

Mellish shook his head.

"No; it's fair and square," he said. "Levison does a lot of things for Knox the prefect, and Knox will give him the pass for you if he asks for it."

"But why should he do it for me?"

"Well, you used to be his pal," said Mellish.

Lumley-Lumley sniffed.

"That wouldn't make much difference to Levison," he said.

"I must say I think you're ungrateful."

"Oh, rot! I suppose, as a matter of fact, Levison is pulling my leg. He won't come back to the study at all."

"I'll go and look for him," said Mellish.

Mellish left the study.

Lumley-Lumley yawned.

He was quite sure by this time that Levison was simply "pulling his leg" and wasting his time, and he was annoyed with himself for having paid any attention to the cad of the Fourth at all.

But if Levison failed him—as Lumley-Lumley was now sure he would—how was he to get the pass out of the gates for the evening?

Should he break bounds?

He shook his head at the thought. When he was missed at calling-over, he would be searched for; the prefects might even come down to the village and bring him back by force. They would never believe that he had gone out with innocent intentions; and to break bounds immediately after being refused permission to go out would be a very serious offence. It would probably mean a flogging; indeed, it was quite on the cards that he might be expelled for thus setting authority at defiance.

But it was very hard. This evening, as he knew, Grimes left his work early, and he would have the evening free. The two lads might have spent a pleasant evening together, and no harm would have been done. Lumley-Lumley, though he prided himself upon being sufficient unto himself, was sociable, and liked company. He did not want to spend the evening "mooching" about the school with nobody to speak to.

He was thinking the matter over glumly enough when Levison came back into the study. Lumley-Lumley looked at him sourly.

"It's all right," said Levison.

"What's all right?"

"About the pass out of the gates."

Lumley-Lumley started.

"You don't mean to say you've got it?"

"Yes, I have."

"Let's see it."

Levison threw the paper on the table. Lumley-Lumley picked it up and looked at it. It was quite in order—permission to stay out of gates till nine o'clock, written in the small, cramped hand of Knox of the Sixth, and signed "G. Knox,

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Prefect." And Lumley-Lumley's name was written upon it.

"My hat!" said Lumley-Lumley.

Levison grinned.

"Well, do you believe me now?" he asked.

"I guess so."

Lumley-Lumley looked at the pass again. Even yet he had a lingering doubt. The writing was in some peculiar shade of ink, and he remarked upon it.

"Knox used his fountain-pen," said Levison carelessly.

"Well, I guess it's all right."

In the old days, when Lumley-Lumley was a hearty member of the "fast set" in the school, he had been on the best of terms with Knox, and the prefect had given him passes often enough. He knew every detail of Knox's writing. He put the paper in his pocket.

"Well, I'm much obliged to you, Levison," he said.

"Don't mench," said Levison airily. "Always willing to do anything to oblige you, old man. And I don't want you to do anything for me in return, so you needn't worry."

The Outsider flushed a little.

"Well, I specially wanted a pass out this evening," he said. "I'm really grateful, Levison. I guess you're not such a bad sort."

"Thanks!"

"If you're hard up—"

"Thanks! I'm not."

"Oh, all serene."

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley took his cap, and left the study. Levison stepped to the window, and watched the Outsider cross the quadrangle in the October dusk. A sarcastic smile was on the thin lips of the cad of the Fourth.

There was a step in the doorway, and Crooke, of the Shell, came in. Crooke's face was keen and eager, and he was breathing very quickly. He glanced round the study and saw that Levison was alone.

"Well?" he asked.

"It's all serene."

"He's gone?"

"Yes. You can see him from here."

Crooke joined Levison at the window. He caught sight of the Outsider disappearing in the dusk.

"Then he's bitten?" he said.

"Looks like it."

Crooke gritted his teeth.

"I fancy he will be sorry he hammered me last night," he remarked. "And after this, Levison, I don't think there'll be much chance of his ever making friends with Tom Merry & Co. again."

Levison chuckled.

"I fancy not," he said.

"He will have to come into the old gang, or stand alone for the rest of the time he's at St. Jim's," said Crooke, with a grin. "He'll know that it's not safe to quarrel with us. And if he gets a flogging—"

"It'll pay him for the cheek we've stood from him for the last term," said Levison.

"Exactly."

"Mum's the word, you know. Not a whisper."

"What-ho!"

And the two black sheep of St. Jim's chuckled softly. Levison's face, however, became serious again, and he wrinkled his brows a little.

"It's safe enough," he said, in a low voice. "After all, it can't come out. I don't suppose even Lumley will suspect how it was done."

Crooke shook his head.

"No. Does he know about your little gift of imitating anybody's fist—"

"Hush!"

"It's all right; nobody can hear us. But—"

"He knows about that," said Levison. "I suppose the whole school does. You remember the trouble there was the time I wrote a letter in Brooke's hand?"

"And nearly got sacked for it," said Crooke, grinning.

Levison frowned.

"Well, yes. But this is safe enough. When Lumley has to produce the pass, it won't be forthcoming, and that will see me clear."

"Of course it will! It's as safe as houses! I—"

"Hush!"

Levison caught Crooke's arm, and the Shell fellow swung round. Bernard Glyn, of the Shell, had just looked into the

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study. He glanced curiously at the two juniors standing by the window.

"What do you want?" demanded Levison.

"Nothing," said Glyn cheerfully, "only to tell you that I've found my fountain-pen. I was beginning to think that it had been pinched for good; and as you had been in my study just before I missed it, Crooke—"

Crooke smiled unpleasantly.

"Yes; you asked me whether I had taken it," he said. "You fancied that I had stolen your rotten fountain-pen."

"Well, I thought you might have borrowed it, or hidden it for a jape," said Glyn, "so I thought I'd tell you I'd found it—that's all."

"Where did you find it?"

"It was lying in the passage. Kangaroo found it, as a matter of fact, and picked it up. I'm blessed if I know how it got there. Somebody must have taken it out of the study. But it's all right; it's not damaged."

And Glyn nodded and walked away. Crooke and Levison exchanged a grin.

"All serene," murmured Crooke.

"Yes; all serene," said Levison.

CHAPTER 7. Not Present!

"LEVISON!"

"Adsum!"

"Lorne!"

"Adsum!"

"Lumley-Lumley!"

No reply. Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, who was taking call-over in the big hall, paused, and repeated the name:

"Lumley-Lumley!"

There was no answer.

All the boys had answered to their names so far; but when it came to the turn of the Outsider of St. Jim's, there was no voice to reply "adsum."

Lumley-Lumley was absent.

"Lumley-Lumley!" repeated Mr. Railton for the third time.

Silence.

Mr. Railton marked Lumley-Lumley down as absent, and went on with the roll-call. The fellows in the Fourth looked at one another. Lumley-Lumley was certainly not in his place with them. Tom Merry glanced over from his place in the ranks of the Shell. The Outsider was missing call-over. The chums of St. Jim's wondered where he was. It was not likely that he had a pass out. If he had had one, one of the prefects would have told Mr. Railton as much. Kildare was frowning darkly. It was only too clear to the captain of St. Jim's that Lumley-Lumley had defied his authority, and absented himself in spite of express orders to remain within gates.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "The silly ass has gone out without permish., you know! He is a weekless ass!"

Blake grunted.

"He's chosen a bad time to play the giddy goat," he remarked. "There will be trouble for him when he comes in."

"Serve him right!" growled Herries.

The roll-call finished.

The boys trooped out of the hall, most of the juniors discussing the absence of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. Mr. Railton spoke to the prefects before they went.

"Lumley-Lumley is absent," he said. "I suppose he has not had permission to stay out?"

"He asked me for a pass to go down to Rylcombe, sir," said Kildare. "I refused him."

"He asked me," said Darrel, "and I refused also."

"He asked me, too," said Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth. "I refused, as he had lines to do. Can he have had the efrontery to go out after that?"

Mr. Railton frowned.

"Apparently he has done so," he said. "None of you gave him a pass, then?"

"I certainly did not," said Knox, and the other prefects shook their heads.

"Very well. Will you see that he is sent into my study when he returns, Kildare?"

"Yes, sir."

Kildare kept his eyes open for Lumley-Lumley. But the missing junior seemed in no hurry to return. Most of the fellows had finished their preparation, and gathered in the common-room before the Outsider put in an appearance. Tom Merry, and Manners, and Lowther were playing chess when Lumley-Lumley came in. Tom Merry was playing Manners, as a matter of fact, and Lowther was giving

impartial advice to both sides, with a most exasperating effect upon both players.

"Move the rook, old man," said Lowther judiciously, as Manners paused to think. "Move the rook to king's fourth."

"And leave the king in check!" snapped Manners.

"Ahem! I should have said the bishop. Move the bishop."

"And leave Tommy's bishop on my queen!" growled Manners.

"Ahem! I should say—"

"Oh, dry up!" said Manners. "You can't play chess for toffee!"

"Why, you ass—"

"Move the knight—king's knight to bishop's fourth," said a quiet voice. "That will be mate in two."

The Terrible Three looked up. Lumley-Lumley had come in, and was standing beside the chess-table, looking on at the game. Manners sniffed.

"Oh, you go and eat coke!" he said. "You can't teach me how to play chess!"

Lumley-Lumley smiled.

"Look at the board!" he said.

Manners frowned at the board. Lumley-Lumley's statement was quite correct. The move he recommended placed Tom Merry in mate in two. Manners grunted and moved the knight.

"That settles you!" he remarked.

Tom Merry nodded.

Manners did not seem very grateful for the Outsider's good advice. Manners was a keen chess-player, and a game of chess was the only thing that ever disturbed the serenity of his temper.

"You're going to get into a row," he remarked. "Kildare is looking for you."

"Oh, those blessed lines!" said Lumley-Lumley. "I forgot all about them. I suppose Lathom will double them now."

"Lines!" said Tom Merry. "It's not a question of lines! You've missed roll-call!"

"I guess that's all right; I had a pass out," said Lumley-Lumley easily.

"Oh!" said Tom Merry, in surprise.

"Have you seen your excellent friend Grimes?" asked Crooke sarcastically.

Lumley-Lumley shook his head.

"No," he said; "he had gone out for the evening when I called on him. I've been round the town on my own. Much pleasanter than sticking here and seeing your chivvy, Crooke, old man!"

Crooke's eyes glittered.

"You'll have to pay the piper now," he remarked. "If you had a pass out, it's jolly queer one of the prefects didn't say so when you were marked down absent. Who gave it to you?"

"Knox."

"Hallo! Here's Kildare."

The captain of St. Jim's looked into the room and beckoned to Lumley-Lumley.

"You're wanted," he said abruptly.

"What's the trouble, Kildare?"

"You missed calling-over."

"I had a pass."

"Nonsense!" said Kildare. "I refused to give you one, and so did the other prefects, and your Form-master as well."

"I had a pass from Knox."

"You can go and tell Mr. Railton that," said Kildare grimly.

"But—I say—"

"You're to go to Mr. Railton's study at once."

"Oh, all serene!"

Lumley-Lumley followed the captain of St. Jim's. Kildare did not speak a word on the way to the Housemaster's study. He knocked at Mr. Railton's door and opened it, and Lumley-Lumley preceded him into the study.

Mr. Railton fixed his eyes upon the Outsider, with a frown.

"Ah! You have returned?" he said.

"Yes, sir," said Lumley-Lumley respectfully.

"You have absented yourself from the school until nine o'clock after being expressly ordered to remain within bounds," said Mr. Railton.

"I had a pass out of gates, sir."

"What!"

"I guess I shouldn't have gone out without one, sir."

"I understood, Kildare, that Lumley-Lumley had been refused a pass?" said the Housemaster.

"Quite so, sir."

"Who gave you the pass, then?" asked Mr. Railton. "Did you have the efrontery to ask the Head for one, after you had been refused by the prefects?"

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"Oh, no, sir!"

"Then who—?"

"It was Knox, sir."

"Knox! Knox explicitly stated that he had not given you a pass," said Mr. Railton sharply. "How dare you make such a statement, Lumley-Lumley?"

The junior looked bewildered.

"But he did give me one, sir," he exclaimed. "That is to say, he sent it to me by another fellow. I've got it now."

"I cannot understand this, Lumley-Lumley. Do you state that you received a pass out of gates from Knox, of the Sixth, and that you have it about you?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"The matter is easily decided, then. Show me the pass."

"Very well, sir."

Lumley-Lumley felt in his pockets. Mr. Railton and Kildare looked amazed. Lumley-Lumley's manner certainly indicated that he was speaking the truth, and it seemed very extraordinary that he should tell a falsehood which must be exposed in a few minutes at the furthest. The Housemaster and the prefect waited in puzzled silence.

Lumley-Lumley turned various papers out of his pockets and glanced at each of them in turn. Among the other papers was one that was entirely blank; but that, of course, the Outsider did not specially notice. He looked over the papers, and then went through his pockets again.

"You cannot find it?" said the Housemaster grimly.

"I—I—it must be here," stammered Lumley-Lumley.

"I put it into this pocket, among these old letters, and I can't have lost it. I couldn't lose one paper out of the pocket without losing the others, I guess."

He searched his pocket again, feeling the lining very carefully. But the lining was intact. He was looking bewildered and somewhat alarmed now. There was angry impatience in the faces of the Housemaster and the St. Jim's captain now. Lumley-Lumley's action seemed to them simply a comedy, and they did not believe for a moment that he would succeed in finding the paper.

"Well?" said Mr. Railton at last, in an ominous voice.

"I—I can't find it, sir."

"I did not expect you to find it, Lumley-Lumley. I think you may as well admit now that you had no pass. I cannot see your object in telling me this falsehood."

Lumley-Lumley flushed crimson.

"It was not a falsehood, sir," he exclaimed indignantly.

"I had a pass from Knox, and I can't imagine what has become of it. But it's all right. You can ask Knox, and he will remember sending it to me."

"Lumley! This impudent effrontery—"

"Ask Knox, sir."

"I asked Knox, and he said he had not given you a pass."

Lumley-Lumley staggered.

"He—he said he hadn't given me one, sir?"

"Yes."

"I—I can't understand that. He must have forgotten. Send for him, sir, and ask him before me," Lumley-Lumley exclaimed eagerly.

"I think it is quite useless," said Mr. Railton coldly. "However, I will send for him. Kildare, will you have the kindness to ask Knox to step here?"

"Certainly, sir."

Kildare left the study. The Housemaster, without another glance at Lumley-Lumley, turned to his table and resumed writing. Lumley-Lumley stood silent, his face pale and disturbed for once. This unexpected happening had shaken the cool self-possession even of the Outsider of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 8.

Levison's Lie.

THERE was silence in the study, broken only by the faint scratching of the Housemaster's pen. It was only a few minutes, but it seemed an age to Jerrold Lumley-Lumley before the footsteps of Kildare were heard returning. Knox, of the Sixth, followed Kildare into the study. There was an expression of surprise upon Knox's hard face. The Housemaster laid down his pen.

"Knox," he said, plunging into the subject at once.

"Lumley-Lumley states that you gave him a pass out of gates for this evening. Is that statement correct?"

"No, sir," said Knox.

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure, sir."

Mr. Railton fixed a frowning glance upon the Outsider.

"Have you anything more to say, Lumley-Lumley?"

Lumley-Lumley almost staggered.

"I—I have, sir. Knox must have forgotten."

The prefect stared at the junior.

"Have you the nerve to say that I gave you a pass?" he exclaimed. "Why, you did not even ask me for one."

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"I—I—you sent me the pass," said Lumley-Lumley. "I did not say that you gave it to me with your own hand. You sent it by another fellow."

"I did not."

"Come," said Mr. Railton, "it is surely useless to persist any longer in this absurd tissue of falsehoods, Lumley-Lumley."

"But Levison will bear me out, sir," exclaimed the Outsider. "Levison asked Knox for the pass for me, and brought it to me in my study. I think Knox must have gone dotty if he doesn't remember it. Levison will tell you that I am speaking the truth, sir."

"I should not take Levison's word against that of Knox, Lumley-Lumley. Levison is known not to be a truthful boy. However, I will send for Levison and question him. May I trouble you once more, Kildare?"

"Certainly, sir."

Kildare quitted the study again. Knox remained. The prefect was looking at Lumley-Lumley with undisguised contempt. Knox was not a very scrupulous fellow himself, and he was not surprised that a fellow should lie himself out of a scrape; but he was amazed that a lie so useless should have come from the usually keen and clever Lumley. If this was the best the Outsider could do, it would be wisest for him to stick to the path of truth, Knox considered. He had never heard such a lame story in his life.

Kildare returned with Levison, of the Fourth.

"Here is Levison, sir," he said.

"Come here, Levison!"

The junior advanced to the Housemaster's table. Mr. Railton fixed his eyes upon him. Levison bore the scrutiny well.

"Lumley-Lumley states that you brought him a pass signed by Knox, of the Sixth," said Mr. Railton.

"When, sir?"

"This afternoon."

"He is mistaken, sir. I certainly did not," said Levison, with perfect coolness.

"Levison did not ask me for a pass for Lumley-Lumley," said Knox. "I should not have given it to him if he had."

"Well, Lumley-Lumley?"

Lumley-Lumley stood petrified.

The prefect's denial he could not understand, but he had still believed that when Levison came into the Housemaster's study the matter would be cleared up.

When he heard Levison utter his cool denial, the Outsider of St. Jim's could scarcely believe his ears.

He stared at Levison as if the latter had been a ghost.

"You—you must be mad!" Lumley-Lumley exclaimed huskily. "Don't you remember? You told me you'd ask Knox for the pass, and you brought it to me in the study."

"I don't remember anything of the sort. It's not a thing I should be likely to forget, either," said Levison.

"But—you—you—"

"I don't think I ever heard such a clumsy falsehood," said Mr. Railton. "Surely you could not expect Levison to back up an untruthful statement, Lumley-Lumley?"

The Outsider gave a hoarse gasp.

"It—it's true!" he exclaimed.

"Nonsense!"

"Levison! You're mad—or you're lying! Don't you remember—"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"No, I don't!" he said.

"You cad!" shouted Lumley-Lumley, his dismay turning to sudden rage. "You rotten cad! This is a plot of yours—along with Crooke and Mellish!"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

Lumley-Lumley panted.

"It's all fixed up to ruin me," he said. "I remember now—you can imitate anybody's handwriting. Mr. Railton! You remember what Levison did before—he imitated Brooke's hand, and nearly got Brooke expelled from the school."

"That has nothing to do with this matter, Lumley-Lumley."

"I guess it has, sir. I know now that Levison didn't bring me the pass from Knox—he was lying when he said he would ask Knox for it," the Outsider exclaimed excitedly. "He can imitate anybody's writing. He wrote the pass himself in Knox's hand."

"What!"

Levison changed colour a little.

"I hope you won't believe anything of the sort, sir," he said. "It was only a joke, what I did in the case of Brooke, though it turned out seriously. This is a very different matter. If Lumley-Lumley has a pass that I wrote, let him show it!"

"Yes, show it," said Knox; "that will prove it, one way or the other."

"I—I've lost it!"

"Lost it!" said Levison.

"Well, I can't find it!"

Levison laughed.

"I think you have said enough, Lumley-Lumley," said Mr. Railton quietly. "I do not believe the slightest tittle of the tissue of falsehoods you have told."

"Mr. Railton, I—"

"You declare that Levison brought you a pass from Knox. Knox denies sending you one, so you declare that Levison forged the pass. You ask me to believe in its existence, though you cannot produce it. You ask me to believe that Levison has committed a crime for which he would be expelled from the school, and you offer not the slightest evidence. I am amazed at your impudence."

"I did not take him a pass from Knox, sir," said Levison.

"I am sure of that, Levison. You may go!"

"Yes, sir!"

Levison turned to the door. Lumley-Lumley's eyes blazed; he made a sudden spring at Levison, and grasped him by the throat.

Levison reeled back in the desperate clutch of the Outsider of St. Jim's.

Crash!

"Oh, help!"

Levison was on the floor, with Lumley-Lumley upon him.

"Now tell the truth, you villain!" yelled Lumley-Lumley.

"Tell the truth, or I'll choke it out of you!"

"Groo! Oh, help!"

The prefects and the Housemaster had been taken by surprise so much, that for a moment not a hand was raised to aid Levison. But it was only for a moment. Then the three of them sprang forward at once, and Lumley-Lumley was seized and dragged from the junior. Levison lay panting on the floor.

"Oh!" he groaned. "The murderous villain! Oh!"

"Secure that boy!" said Mr. Railton.

"Got him, sir!" said Knox.

Kildare and Knox were grasping Lumley-Lumley by either arm. The Outsider, his fit of fury past, stood panting, with heaving chest.

Mr. Railton helped Levison to his feet. Levison was fumbling at his throat, where the desperate fingers of the Outsider had left black marks.

"You may go, Levison," said Mr. Railton.

The cad of the Fourth went unsteadily from the study. Mr. Railton fixed his eyes upon Lumley-Lumley, with a gleam in them that boded no good to the junior.

"Lumley-Lumley," he said, "you have acted like a criminal. You have broken the rules of the school and defied authority. You have lied, and taken advantage of an old story against Levison in order to discredit him. You have attacked him in a savage manner, in my presence. It is only too clear to me now that your pretended reform was a pretence, a lie from beginning to end; and that it would have been a good thing for the school if you had been expelled when Dr. Holmes spared you. I trust the error will be made good now. I am going to the Head; you will go to the punishment-room to await your sentence. Take him away!"

"Sir! I—I—"

"Not a word! Go!"

"I—I guess I'm sorry I broke out like that, sir," stammered Lumley-Lumley. "But—but to hear that cad lying about me—"

"I could understand your anger if you were innocent, Lumley-Lumley. But you are not innocent—you are guilty. Take him away!"

"Oh, sir! I—I—"

"Go!"

Kildare and Knox marched the condemned junior out of the study.

CHAPTER 9.

The Prisoner.

ALL St. Jim's knew what had happened in ten minutes.

There was an excited crowd in the junior common-room when Levison came in. Levison was not popular, as a rule, but he was surrounded by an eager crowd now, eager for information. Levison told as much as he chose.

"So he's in the punishment-room?" said Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

"And he'll be expelled!" said Crooke of the Shell, with a grin. "Well, he has been asking for it for a long time, and now he's got it!"

"Oh, shut up, Crooke!"

"He was bound to come to it, sooner or later!" said Mellish.

"And the sooner he's gone, the better," said Levison.

"Bai Jove! I suppose there's no doubt about it now," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked thoughtfully. "I thought it was wathah steep when he said he had a pass out."

Tom Merry nodded.

"But I can't help thinking—" he said.

"What?"

Tom Merry coloured a little.

"I've been shut up in the punishment-room myself, and I was innocent," he said. "The same thing might happen to Lumley-Lumley."

"Yaas, wathah!"

There was a general shaking of heads.

"This case is different," said Monty Lowther. "If Lumley-Lumley has told the truth, Knox and Levison are lying. That wouldn't be surprising—"

"Nothing at all surprising in that," said Kangaroo.

"They've both done it before, many a time," Bernard Glyn remarked.

Levison scowled.

"Only, if Knox really sent the note, or if Levison really forged it, where is it?" said Monty Lowther. "If Lumley-Lumley could produce a paper in Knox's hand, or an imitation of Knox's hand, it would be all right—we should believe him then. But he can't!"

"He says he's lost it."

"Well, if he's had it, and lost it, he's jolly unlucky," said Blake. "But he can't expect anybody to believe it. Fellows don't lose their passes!"

"Of course they don't!"

"Wathah not!"

"He said it was in a pocket with a lot of other papers," said Levison. "The other papers were there all right, only the pass was gone. Kildare saw him turn them out, and sort them. How could he lose one paper out of a pocket without losing the rest?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He's not a careless ass, always losing things, like Gussy, for instance, either," Digby remarked.

"Weally, Dig—"

"It's too steep!" said Manners. "Too steep altogether. If he had the pass, he didn't lose it. He can't expect such a yarn to be swallowed."

"I suppose not!"

"It's only a proof of what we've been expecting for some time," Bernard Glyn remarked. "We all went to him yesterday to tell him what we knew. This only bears it out. He says he went out to see Grimes, and Grimes was out. He can't even produce a witness from Rylcombe to prove that he spent his time decently."

"Well, if Grimes had been in, I don't know that his evidence would have weighed much with the Head," said Tom Merry. "The Head doesn't know anything about the village kids. But it's unlucky all the same."

"The chances are, that he had a razzle in his old style," said Blake. "I don't want to be hard on a fellow who's down, but that's what it looks like to me."

"Yaas, wathah!"

It was bedtime now, and a prefect came in to see the juniors off to their dormitory.

Tom Merry paused as he went upstairs, and made his way to the door of the punishment-room—Nobody's Study—as it was called. He tapped at the door.

"Hallo!" came the voice of Lumley-Lumley from within.

"You're there, Lumley?"

"I guess so. Is that Tom Merry?"

"Yes!"

"What do you want?"

"Only to speak to you," said Tom Merry.

"The door's locked."

"Yes, and the key's gone. I can speak through the door."

"I guess we're not on speaking terms, when I come to think of it, Tom Merry."

"That doesn't matter now that you're in trouble, old man."

There was a pause.

"You're a good sort, Tom Merry," came back Lumley-Lumley's voice after some moments. "I wasn't going to say a word to you fellows, but I guess I will now. It's all lies against me. I had a pass out, just as I told you."

"Where is it now, Lumley?"

"Lost!"

"That's very unfortunate."

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The Outsider laughed.

"I guess so. I can tell by your voice that you don't believe me, Tom Merry. But I guess I don't blame you; it's very steep. I don't know that I should believe such a yarn if I heard it from anybody else."

"Is there anything I can do for you, Lumley?"

"Do you want to do anything?"

"Yes, if I can. I've been in this fix myself, and I had good pals to stand by me," said Tom Merry.

"And I haven't any—except Grimes, the grocer's boy!" said Lumley-Lumley, with a chuckle. "Well, you could do me a favour—only—"

"What is it?"

"It's asking too much."

"I'll do it if I can."

"I should like to send a message to my pal Grimes, in Rylcombe."

"Oh!" said Tom Merry.

Lumley-Lumley laughed again.

"I know it's too much to ask," he said. "Never mind. Good-night."

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry. "How would it help you to send a message to Grimes?"

"I guess it would, but it doesn't matter. You'd better buzz off to your dormitory, before a giddy prefect finds you talking through the door of the punishment-room."

Tom Merry hesitated.

What the Outsider asked was indeed a serious thing; if Tom Merry did what was wanted, it meant leaving the dormitory after lights out, and breaking bounds.

"How would it help you, Lumley-Lumley?" he asked, after a pause.

"I guess you can leave that to me."

"Does Grimes know anything that would help to clear you?"

"I guess not."

"Can he prove how you spent your evening?"

"I never even saw him."

"Then how can he help you?"

"That's my bizney."

Tom Merry was silent. The voices of Manners and Lowther were calling to him from the dormitory passage, but he did not heed.

"Still there?" called out Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"Good-night."

"I'd like to help you if I could, Lumley," said Tom Merry. "But breaking bounds at night is a serious bizney, as you know—especially after what's happened to-day."

"I guess so. Look here, I could get Toby the page to go; I'd tip him half a quid," said Lumley-Lumley. "Tell him to come round under my window, and I'll pitch him a note."

Still Tom Merry hesitated.

"Well?" said the Outsider, through the keyhole.

"It's against all the rules, Lumley."

Lumley-Lumley grunted.

"Well, don't do it, then. I guess I don't want to get anybody into trouble, and I don't want to beg for favours, anyway. Go and eat coke—I mean, good-night."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I'll do it, Lumley," he said. "I'll tell Toby to come round, and he can please himself. He can go out if he likes, anyway, without breaking bounds, and if he chooses to take the message, I don't see any harm in it."

"Right-ho!"

"Good-night."

"Good-night, and thanks!" said Lumley-Lumley.

Tom Merry went upstairs. He did not stop at the Shell dormitory, but went on to Toby's room. He found the page there. Toby was sitting on his bed, reading a volume entitled "Deadwood Dave's Deadly Danger; or the Dusty Demon of the Dreary Desert," a thrilling volume imported from America. Several interesting volumes of that kind had been left in the room by Binks, the former page, and Toby frequently gave himself bad nightmares by reading them before going to bed. Toby started as Tom Merry

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came into the room. He had been too deeply absorbed to hear the Shell fellow's knock on the door.

"Oh, Master Merry!" he exclaimed. "You startled me!"

"Did you think I was the Dusty Demon?" asked Tom Merry, with a glance at the book. "Or did you take me for Double-Barrelled Dave?"

"It ain't Double-Barrelled Dave, Master Tom; it's Deadwood Dave."

"My mistake," said Tom Merry blandly. "I suppose you know that Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth is in the punishment-room—Nobody's Study, you know?"

"Yes, Master Merry," said Toby, laying the book on the bed. "I'm sorry, sir. Master Lumley-Lumley 'ave been very generous to me."

"He wants a note taken to Rylcombe," said Tom Merry.

"If you like to go round under the window of the punishment-room, he'll chuck it out to you. It's to be taken to Grimes, the grocer's boy—you know him?"

"Yes, I know Grimes, Master Tom."

"It will mean a good tip, Toby, if you like to do it."

"I'll do it without the tip, Master Tom," said Toby.

"Good for you!" said Tom Merry.

"I'll go at once, Master Tom."

"Good egg!"

And Tom Merry said good-night to Toby, and went to the Shell dormitory. He found all the Shell in bed, and Kildare frowning. He was very late.

"What do you mean by keeping me waiting?" exclaimed Kildare.

"Sorry!" said Tom Merry.

"I suppose you have been talking to Lumley-Lumley through the keyhole?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry, wondering whether it meant a caning or lines. It turned out to be neither.

"Well, go to bed," said Kildare gruffly.

And Tom Merry went to bed.

Kildare extinguished the lights, and left the dormitory. There was a buzz of voices in the room the moment the prefect was gone. The Shell fellows discussed the case of Lumley-Lumley; there was no other topic in all the School House—or the New House, either, for that matter.

"Is Lumley going to sleep in the punishment-room?" Bernard Glyn asked. "Anybody know?"

"Yes," said Manners. "Taggles and Toby put a bed in there, Mellish says. He saw them."

"He seems to have gone for Levison in Railton's study," said Monty Lowther. "If he slept with the Fourth as usual he might go for him again, or—"

"Or what?"

"He might bolt!"

"Phew! Run away from school, do you mean?"

"Yes. He's quite equal to it—and he will be sacked to-morrow, almost a cert."

"I suppose he will," said Tom Merry, "or flogged, at least. I wish I felt certain about him."

"Well, it's about as certain as anything can be," said Monty Lowther. "Railton doesn't feel sure about him, and that's why he's locked him up in Nobody's Study."

"It's rotten to have to sleep there," said Glyn. "It's the haunted room, you know."

"Ha, ha! Lumley-Lumley isn't the kind of chap to be afraid of ghosts. He's too hard-headed for that, I fancy."

"Still, it's a bit rotten. The Head's forgotten the ghost story, I expect, but—"

"Oh, the ghosts won't hurt Lumley. Besides, it's not time for the ghosts to walk yet; the ghost of St. Jim's never appears till the snow's on the ground," said Lowther with a chuckle, "and we haven't had any snow yet—it's the only thing we haven't had in this giddy summer, but we haven't had that."

"I wonder—" said Tom Merry, and paused.

Lowther yawned.

"Still wondering whether Lumley was telling the truth or not?"

"Yes."

"Well, you'll have to go on wondering, then, unless the paper turns up, and that's not likely if he lost it in Rylcombe. Go to sleep!"

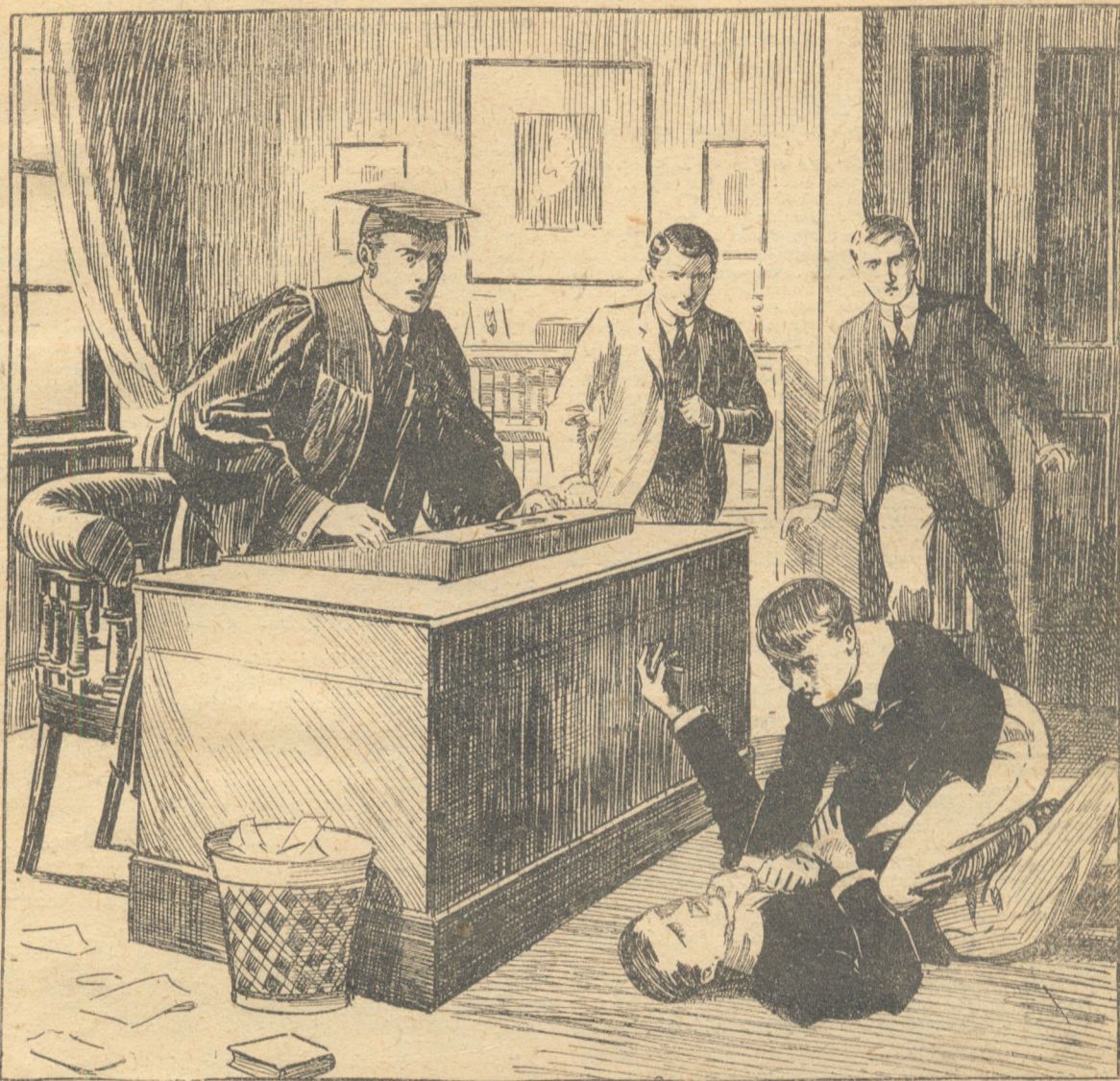
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Lumley-Lumley made a sudden spring at Levison, and grasped him by the throat. Crash! Levison fell to the floor, with Lumley-Lumley on the top of him. "Now tell the truth," yelled the Outsider. "Tell the truth! Tell the truth!" (See Chapter 9.)

CHAPTER 10.

Sentenced by the Head.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY was alone in Nobody's Study. It was a cheerless apartment. The room opened off a narrow entry into the Fourth-Form passage, and it was in one of the oldest parts of St. Jim's. The walls and the floor were of great blocks of stone, and the single window looked out upon a narrow passage between two great blocks of buildings. A bed had been put into the room, and Lumley-Lumley was to pass the night there. The fact that the punishment-room was the "haunted room" of St. Jim's did not trouble Lumley-Lumley. He was too hard-headed, as Lowther had observed in the Shell dormitory, to trouble himself about ghost stories. He did not mind sleeping in the punishment-room; indeed, he preferred it to mingling with his own Form after what had happened. In all the Fourth there was no fellow who believed in him, and under the circumstances it was more comfortable to keep away from the Juniors.

But Lumley-Lumley had no intention whatever of remaining in the punishment-room and going up before the Head in the morning to receive his sentence.

The evidence against him was too conclusive to admit of doubt, and it only remained for punishment to be administered—and that punishment would take the form either of a flogging or a sentence of expulsion. Probably the Head was leaving

the decision till the morning, in order to think the matter over and weigh it well before he decided.

A single gas-jet was burning in the punishment-room.

Lumley-Lumley turned it out, and the room was plunged into darkness. He crossed to the window and opened it.

Below, all was dark.

High buildings shut in the narrow entry without, and shut off the light of the stars that glimmered in the sky.

Lumley-Lumley gazed downwards, and waited.

He wondered whether Toby would come. He was soon put out of doubt. In the silence of the quadrangle he heard a step, and the fat figure of the School House page came dimly through the shadows.

Toby stopped under the window of the punishment-room, and looked up.

Lumley-Lumley whistled softly.

"Ho! You're there, Master Lumley?" called up Toby, in a low voice.

"Yes, Toby. Catch!"

"Right!"

Lumley-Lumley dropped a little packet from the window. Toby did not catch it, and it fell at his feet. He picked it up, and found that it was Lumley-Lumley's handkerchief, with some articles wrapped in it.

Toby untied the handkerchief. Within was a folded paper, and a half-sovereign wrapped in another paper. There were several pieces of silver also to give the packet weight.

"Got it, Toby?"

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"The money is for you. Take the note to Grimes, in the village."

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"Buzz off, before you're spotted."

Lumley-Lumley closed the window.

Toby put the money into his pocket, and cut away across the quadrangle.

Lumley-Lumley relighted the gas in Nobody's Study. His face wore a grin of satisfaction now. He knew that Toby would get the note to its destination. He had written it in pencil upon a blank sheet of paper from his pocket, and it was an appeal that he knew Grimes would not disregard.

Grimes would probably be gone to bed by the time Toby reached his lodging in Rylcombe. Grimes had to be an early riser. But Lumley-Lumley knew that the grocer's boy would leave his bed to come to his aid.

Lumley-Lumley walked to and fro in the room while he waited. He was too excited to think of sleep.

Suddenly he started. Footsteps had come along the passage outside, and turned into the recess outside the door of Nobody's Study. A hand fumbled with the lock.

"Hallo! Who's there?" called out Lumley-Lumley.

The door opened, and Kildare looked in. He gave the Outsider a grim look.

"The Head wants you," he said curtly.

"Oh! To-night! I reckoned it was being left over till the morning," said Lumley-Lumley.

"You're to come to Dr. Holmes now."

"All serene."

"And I should recommend you," said Kildare coldly, "to tell him the truth."

"Thanks," said Lumley-Lumley, with imperturbable coolness. "I will."

Kildare frowned.

"This kind of cheek won't do you any good," he said.

"I guess I'm not cheating you, Kildare. I'm going to tell the Head the truth, same as I did to Mr. Railton."

Kildare bit his lip, and led the way from the punishment-room without another word. The Outsider followed him quietly.

Dr. Holmes and Mr. Railton were in the Head's study together. Kildare showed in Lumley-Lumley, and retired, closing the door. Lumley-Lumley was left alone with the Head and the Housemaster.

He was quite cool now. Dr. Holmes looked at him with a very stern expression. He evidently had received a full account of what had happened, from Mr. Railton.

"You know why I have sent for you, Lumley-Lumley?" said the Head.

"I guess so, sir."

"You have been guilty of disobedience and of wicked falsehood."

"Excuse me, sir," said Lumley-Lumley, quietly and respectfully, but very firmly, "I guess I haven't been guilty of anything of the sort."

"Do you still adhere to the story you told me?" asked Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir."

"You declare, then, that Levison, of the Fourth, brought you a pass out of gates, signed by Knox?" asked the Head.

"Yes, sir."

"Both Knox and Levison deny it."

"I think Knox is telling the truth, sir. I think now that Levison wrote out the pass himself for the sake of getting me into trouble."

"We will go into this," said the Head. "You cannot produce the paper in question."

"No, sir."

"What has become of it?"

"I must have lost it, sir."

"You had it in your pocket?"

"Yes, sir."

"Had you anything else in the same pocket—other papers?"

"Yes, sir, some old letters."

"Did you lose any of them?"

"No, sir."

"Then you lost one paper out of several in the same pocket?"

"I know it sounds queer, sir."

"Further than that," said the Head. "You accuse Levison of having forged Knox's hand in writing out this pass that you declare you received from him?"

"I guess that's the only explanation, sir."

"If you could produce the pass, it would be a clear proof that either Levison, or Knox, or both, had spoken falsely."

"I guess so, sir."

"Then Levison's plot against you, as you call it, would have recoiled upon himself, if you had not lost the paper?"

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"Yes, sir," said Lumley-Lumley slowly. He understood now whither the Head's questions were tending.

"Take care what you say, Lumley-Lumley. Had Levison any reason to suppose that you would lose the paper? Can you say that?"

"No, sir."

"He could not possibly have known that you would lose it?"

"I guess he couldn't, sir."

"Then he must have been depending upon the chance of your losing it, as in case it was produced it would be known to be a forgery by his hand."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"And you have the effrontery, Lumley-Lumley, to tell me that Levison plotted against you, and risked being expelled from the school, trusting to your losing the paper before you came back to St. Jim's this evening?"

Lumley-Lumley was silent.

Put that way, he could see that he had no case. It was only too clear that Levison had not trusted to his losing the paper. Levison could have had no reason to suppose that he would lose it. But if he had produced it, Levison would have been condemned. Either the pass was written by Knox, or it was a wonderfully skilful forgery; and there was only one fellow at St. Jim's who could forge writing so cleverly, and that was Ernest Levison, of the Fourth. What did it mean? Had Levison plotted against him, blind to the practical certainty of exposure, depending upon the merest chance, that Lumley-Lumley might lose the paper, for his safety?

It was impossible.

Yet what was the explanation? If that explanation failed, what other was there?

The Head and Mr. Railton watched the changing expressions in the Outsider's face during several minutes of silence.

"Well?" said the Head, at last.

"I—I don't know what to say, sir," stammered Lumley-Lumley. "I only know that Levison did give me the pass, just as I said."

Dr. Holmes frowned darkly.

"Do you persist in that statement, Lumley-Lumley?"

"Yes, sir. It's true."

"Then," said the Head emphatically—"then I regard you as utterly incorrigible, Lumley-Lumley. The appearances you have kept up during the past term I regard as a lie and a pretence. I regard you as a worse boy than I ever deemed you before."

"Oh, sir—"

"Listen to me! You have disobeyed orders in the most flagrant way, and for that fault I should order you a flogging. You have lied to Mr. Railton and to me, and you have endeavoured to turn against Levison an old fault of his, for which he was punished, and of which I hope he has repented. In spite of the plainest evidence of the facts, you persist in repeating your falsehood. Listen to me! You will be flogged before all St. Jim's to-morrow morning."

"I guess—"

"After you have been flogged, you will be given a chance of confessing the truth," said the Head. "If you confess, you will be let off with the flogging. If you persist in this story, you will be sent away instantly from the school."

"Then I shall be sent away, sir."

"You mean that you will not confess?"

"I have nothing to confess."

"Lumley-Lumley! Are you utterly hardened?" the Head exclaimed, in as much sorrow as anger. "I have shown you how utterly preposterous your story is, and yet you persist in adhering to it with incredible obstinacy."

"It is the truth, sir."

"Enough!" exclaimed the Head, his face flushed with unusual anger. "Mr. Railton, will you take that wretched boy back to the punishment-room? He must pass the night there. After his savage attack upon Levison, I cannot trust him among the other boys. Lumley-Lumley, I trust you fully understand your position. You will be flogged in any case, and unless you confess, you will be expelled from St. Jim's as well. Now go, and may the night bring you repentance."

And the Housemaster dropped his hand upon Lumley-Lumley's shoulder, and conducted him out of the Head's study and back to the punishment-room. Mr. Railton did not speak a word as he went. Lumley-Lumley was taken into the punishment-room, and the Housemaster retired, locking the door after him.

Lumley-Lumley sat on the edge of the bed and breathed hard.

"Phew! I wonder what it all means—I wonder how they worked it? I guess I can't get to the bottom of it, at all. It's a plot of Crooke and Mellish and Levison. I know that."

But how did Levison know I shouldn't be able to show up the paper? That beats me!"

And Lumley-Lumley racked his brains in vain for a solution to that mystery.

CHAPTER 11.

The Outsider's Pal.

NE by one the lights went out in the windows of the School House.

The dormitories were all dark; and the studies, one after another, were plunged into darkness, too.

Eleven o'clock had rung out from the clock-tower.

Lumley-Lumley had extinguished the gas in Nobody's Study, and he was leaning on the sill of the open window. He was watching the narrow opening between the high buildings, where a glimpse was to be had of the starlit quadrangle.

Lumley-Lumley was waiting for his old pal—his only one now.

Half-past eleven.

From the darkness below there came a low whistle. Lumley-Lumley knew it; it was his signal with Grimes. On one occasion, never forgotten by the Outsider, his father had taken him away from the school, and he had had to earn his bread, and Grimes, the grocer's boy, had been a good friend to him. In those days the two had formed a friendship which, in spite of the difference in station and prospects, was never likely to be broken. Lumley-Lumley's face lighted up as he heard the whistle below. He leaned further out of the window.

"That you, Grimey?" he called out cautiously.

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"Good for you, Master Grimes."

Grimes chuckled softly in the darkness below.

"So you got the note from Toby, eh?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes. I was in bed," said Grimes. "I was gorn to bed early, Master Lumley. Toby woke me up. You could 'ave knocked me down with an iron girder when I read your note."

"I guess it was a surprise to you."

"Wotto!"

"Got the things?"

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"Good egg!"

"Ow are you going to get the rope, sir?"

"I've tied strips of my necktie into a string," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'll let it down, and you can tie the rope on the end of it."

"You always was a clever chap, Master Lumley."

"Thank you, Master Grimes."

Lumley-Lumley lowered the improvised cord from the window. Tom Merry had been communicated with in the same way when he was a prisoner in the punishment-room. On that occasion he had drawn up a rope for Monty Lowther to climb up. The reverse was what Lumley-Lumley intended; he was going to climb down. Grimes uncoiled a rope from under his jacket, and fastened the end to the string.

"Ready, Master Lumley?" he said.

"Right-oh, Master Grimes!"

Lumley-Lumley pulled up the cord. He had given Grimes particulars in his note of what he wanted, and Grimes had obeyed his instructions faithfully. Lumley-Lumley passed the end of the rope over the top bar of the firegrate, and pulled it round the bar, and then lowered it from the window again. Grimes caught it, and now held both ends of the rope. It was long enough to reach up into the room from the ground, and back again.

"Got it, Grimey?"

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"Knot it."

"Yes."

"Good! Now wait for me."

Lumley-Lumley climbed out on the window-sill. What he intended to do was dangerous to any fellow less cool-headed than the Outsider of St. Jim's. He grasped the two ropes together in his hands, and held them together firmly as he climbed down. If he had allowed one of them to slip from his grasp, the rope would have passed round the bar of the grate in a flash, and he would have shot downwards to the ground.

But he did not. With a firm grip he kept the two ropes together, and descended. Grimes watched him anxiously from below.

Lumley-Lumley's feet touched the ground.

"Here we are again!" he said cheerfully.

"Oh, Master Lumley!"

"What's the matter, Master Grimes?"

"I thought you was a goner!" gasped Grimes. "My 'eart was in my mouth all the time!"

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"I hope it's got back into its proper place again?" he said. Grimes chuckled.

"But why couldn't you tie the end of the rope, Master Lumley?" he said. "It would have been safer than loopin' it and slidin' down two ropes. They might 'ave slipped."

Lumley-Lumley shook his head.

"No fear of that; I guess I was too careful," he said. "You see, I can pull the rope down now I'm on the ground."

"Yes; but—"

"It will puzzle 'em in the morning, I guess," said the Outsider, with a chuckle. "They'll think that I've got wings and flown away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lumley-Lumley untied the knot Grimes had made in the two ends of the rope. Then it was easy to pull the rope down. He pulled on one end of it, and the rope flashed round the bar of the grate, and the end came whirling down from the window. It fell at Lumley-Lumley's feet, and he picked the rope up and coiled it.

"You're outer that, Master Lumley," said Grimes. "That's the fust thing."

"Thanks to you, Grimes," said Lumley-Lumley, grasping Grimes by the hand.

"Jolly glad to come round and help, Master Lumley," said Grimes. "But wot are you goin' to do now?"

"Bunk!"

Grimes drew a quick breath.

"Run away from school?" he exclaimed.

"No; only beat a retreat," said Lumley-Lumley. "No need to run away; they're going to kick me out to-morrow morning."

"Master Lumley!"

"I guess it's the fact, Grimey, kid. I'm to be flogged, and then if I don't confess I'm to be sacked."

"Oh, my 'at! What 'ave you been doing, Master Lumley?"

"That's the best of it, or the worst," said Lumley-Lumley, with a chuckle. "I haven't been doing anything. Last term I did a good many things to be sacked for, and they never came to light. Now I'm going to be sacked for nothing."

"What is it all about, Master Lumley?"

"I came to see you this evening, Grimey."

"Yes; I was gorn over to Wayland," said Grimes. "They told me when I got back that you 'ad called, Master Lumley."

"You see, I've got on rotten terms with all the fellows here," Lumley-Lumley explained. "It's me against the school, or the school against me, which ever way you like to put it. I was coming down to you for a jaw, to get some sympathy, and you were out."

"I'm sorry I was—"

"Oh, that's all right; only, when I got back, I came into a fearful row. Levison had given me a pass he said was from Knox; but I don't know now whether Knox wrote it, and denied it, or whether Levison forged it—that's a peculiar gift of Levison's, imitating other fellows' handwriting; he's got into trouble for it before. Only, when I got back, I found I had lost the pass, and both Knox and Levison denied knowin' anything about it."

"Oh, Master Lumley!"

"One of them was lying—perhaps both, I don't know."

"You—you really had the pass?" hesitated Grimes.

The Outsider laughed.

"So you doubt me, too, Grimey?"

"No, no, Master Lumley!" Grimes exclaimed earnestly. "Not a bit of it. But it's very queer. 'Spose you hadn't lost the pass, you'd have showed it when you came in, and then they would have 'ad to eat their words."

Lumley-Lumley nodded.

"Yes, that's the most awkward part of the whole story," he agreed. "The Head seized on that, of course. It looks as if the liar, which ever one was lying, plumped out his lie, while all the time I might have had the pass in my pocket to show him up."

"It do look queer, Master Lumley."

"It do!" grinned Lumley-Lumley. "But the queerest thing about it is, that it is true. That cad Levison must have had some reason to suppose that I shouldn't bring back the pass; though why he should be able to guess in advance, I don't know, unless he's in league with the Old One. But whether or no, that's how the case stands. I happen to have told the truth, but all the evidence is against me, and I'm sacked."

"It's 'orrid 'ard, Master Lumley."

"I should guess it is, Master Grimes. But I'm not beaten yet," said the Outsider coolly. "They are going to find that there's a good bit of bite left in me. I'm going to find that giddy pass, somehow, and show them up."

"Find it!" repeated Grimes doubtfully.

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"That's the programme," replied Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "I guess I remember everywhere I went this evening, and I'm going over the ground again to find it. Somebody may have picked it up; and in that case he'd keep it, most likely, and send it to me, as my name was written on it. Any chap who found it would know that the owner might get into trouble through losing it, and would send it to the chap whose name was on it, I guess. Don't you think so, Grimey?"

"I—I shouldn't wonder," said Grimes rather dubiously. "And if it hasn't been picked up, most likely it's where I dropped it," said Lumley-Lumley. "I remember taking some toffee out of that same pocket while I was resting on the stile, on my way back to the school. I might have jerked it out without noticing it. Of course, it wasn't likely; but, you see, the rotten thing is gone, so I must have lost it somehow. You brought the lantern?"

"Yes, Master Lumley." Grimes fumbled in his pocket. "I got your note 'ere, and I got all the things you wanted." He scratched a match and looked at the pencilled paper. "Long rope, lantern, matches, sandwiches. I've got them all." "You're a good sort, Grimey. Don't drop that note about here; your name's on it, and I don't want them to know you helped me out. It might get you into trouble."

"Right you are, Master Lumley!" "How did you get into the grounds, Grimey?" "Over the wall from the road, Master Lumley."

"We'll get out the same way. Come on!" The two lads crossed the dusky quadrangle. Lumley-Lumley glanced back at the School House as he reached the wall. The house was a black mass against the sky, only a single light still glimmering from a window—that of the Head's study. Lumley-Lumley's brow darkened as he looked at the house. There was no one in that great building who believed in him—only one who was doubtful, and that was Tom Merry. The only fellow who was to be relied upon to stand by him through thick and thin was not a St. Jim's fellow at all; it was Grimes, the village grocer's boy. Lumley-Lumley's face softened as he turned towards Grimes, and he placed his hand on his comrade's shoulder.

"I guess I sha'n't forget this, Grimey," he said. "Orlright, Master Lumley."

"Come on!" In a couple of minutes they were over the wall and standing in the road. Grimes extracted the lantern from his pocket, and Lumley-Lumley lighted it.

"Goin' to search the road?" he asked. "Every step of the way to Rylcombe," said Lumley-Lumley.

"My 'at! It will take a time." "I guess I've got plenty." "You'll come 'ome with me to sleep?" "If you'll have me, Grimey." "I'll 'ave you, and glad, Master Lumley. But I ain't goin' in till you come. I'm goin' to 'elp you search for that blessed paper."

Lumley-Lumley shook his head decidedly. "I guess that won't do, Grimey. You've got to work to-morrow."

"That's all right." "I'm not going to keep you up. Buzz off to bed!" "Rats!" said Grimes. "Look here, Grimey—" "Look 'ere, Master Lumley—" "You're an obstinate ass, Grimey!" "Yes; that's all right," said Grimes. "Let's begin the search."

Lumley-Lumley laughed, and they started. The glimmer of the lantern disappeared down the long, dark road.

Two hours later, two tired youths finished a sandwich each and regarded one another dubiously in the starlight. The lantern had burnt out.

"No luck, Master Lumley!" said Grimes. "I guess we're done," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'll keep on if you want to, Master Lumley." "I don't want to, Master Grimes. I'm tired as a dog. Let's get in. I'm done."

And in ten minutes Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the Fourth-Former of St. Jim's, and Grimes, the grocer's boy, of Rylcombe, were sleeping side by side in Grimes's garret.

CHAPTER 12. Vanished.

CLANG! Clang! Tom Merry jumped out of bed in the Shell dormitory in the School House at St. Jim's. As a rule Tom Merry rose with the "shining morning face" of which the poet sings. But on this particular morning his brow was overcast.

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"I wonder how Lumley's got on?" he remarked. "Oh, blow Lumley!" yawned Lowther. "He won't have to get up at rising-bell, anyway. He can stay in bed another hour if he likes."

"I don't suppose he'll feel like sleeping, considering what he's got before him," remarked Bernard Glyn. "I'm going to see him," said Tom Merry; "or to speak to him, at any rate."

And as soon as he was dressed the captain of the Shell hurried down to the Fourth Form passage and turned into the recess which led to the door of Nobody's Study. Early as he was, he was not the earliest there. An elegant junior was tapping at the door of the punishment-room. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Pway answah me, Lumlay, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, through the keyhole. "Are you asleep, deah boy?"

Tom Merry clapped the swell of St. Jim's upon the shoulder. Arthur Augustus started and swung round. He drew a breath of relief as he saw it was Tom Merry behind him.

"Bai Jove! You thwew me into quite a fluttah," he exclaimed. "I was afwaid it was a wotten pwefect. Lumley-Lumley seems to be still asleep, deah boy."

"Pity to wake him, perhaps," said Tom Merry, "considering what he's got to go through this morning, Gussy."

"Yaas, pewwaps you are wight," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "But if he isn't let out of the punishment-woom, deah boy, how is he goin' to have his mornin' bath?"

Tom Merry laughed. "Probably he won't have it at all," he said. "Bai Jove, that's howwid!"

"Well, there are worse things than even that," said Tom Merry. "I wish something would turn up to clear up the doubt about him. It would be fearfully rotten if it turned out that this was really a plot of Crooke and Levison, as Lumley declares."

"I don't see how it could be, deah boy. They couldn't possibly know that he was goin' to lose the papah; and if he had pwoduced the papah, it would have settled them."

"Yes, that's so." There was a step in the passage, and Kildare turned into the recess. He gave the two juniors rather a grim look.

"So you're here?" he exclaimed. "Yaas, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy meekly. "I was only sayin' this moment that some wotten pwefect would come and catch us—"

"Some what?" "Ahem! I mean some pwefect," said D'Arcy. "Are you goin' to wake Lumley up?"

"Yes; Toby is going to bring his breakfast." Kildare unlocked the door.

"I suppose we can say good-morning to him?" said Tom Merry.

"I suppose so, if you like."

The captain of St. Jim's threw the door open and walked into the room. "Lumley—" he began

Then he broke off and stared about the room in blank astonishment.

"Great Scott!" Kildare's startled exclamation was enough to tell Tom Merry and D'Arcy that something was wrong. They ran into the room. They stared about them blankly. The room was empty. The bed had not been slept in, the window was open, and Lumley-Lumley was gone!

"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "Good heavens!" said Tom Merry, in a hushed voice. "Kildare, is it possible—"

Kildare rushed to the window, with a white face. The terrible thought had come into his mind, as into Tom Merry's, that the Outsider had done something desperate. They both knew well that it was impossible to climb down from the window. Below was a bare wall.

Kildare leaned out of the window and regarded the ground below with searching eyes.

"Can you see anything?" muttered Tom Merry.

"No," said Kildare, with a deep breath.

"Thank Heaven!" "Bai Jove, he might have bwoken his neck!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Bai Jove! But how on earth could he get out of the window without bwakin' his neck, deah boy?"

"I—I can't quite understand it," said Kildare. "He's gone, that's a cert. He must have had some assistance—a ladder, or something."

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy, looking very startled. "Is it poss—" He broke off, and the captain of St. Jim's looked at him sharply.

"Is what possible?" he asked. "What do you mean?" "You know this is the haunted woom—"

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"Nonsense!"

"The stowey goes that the old monk disappeared from this room without leavin' a twace behind, nothin' but his wobe," said Arthur Augustus.

"Well, Lumley-Lumley hasn't left his clothes," said Tom Merry.

"No, that's twue. But——"

"He has been helped out somehow," said Kildare; and he left the punishment-room, to report to Mr. Railton that Lumley-Lumley was gone.

In five minutes the news was buzzing all over the school.

Fellows came to look into the punishment-room, which was left unlocked now. Figgins & Co. came over from the New House to look in as soon as the rumour reached them of the flight of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

The School House was in a flutter of excitement over it. There were many surmises as to how Lumley-Lumley had succeeded in making his escape. Tom Merry thought he could guess. He understood now why the Outsider had wished to send the message to Grimes.

Tom Merry looked round the house for Toby. He found him cleaning knives below stairs, and tapped him on the shoulder. Toby paused over the knife-machine.

"Did you see Grimes last night, Toby?" Tom Merry asked.

"Yes, Master Tom."

"Did you give him a note from Lumley?"

"Yes, sir."

"And Grimes came round here, I suppose?"

"I dunno, Master Tom. I didn't know what was in the note, 'cept that there was some money folded up in it, so I 'pose it was to buy somethin'."

"A rope, for instance?" said Tom Merry.

Toby grinned.

"I shouldn't wonder, Master Merry!" he said.

"Better say nothing about it, Toby; there may be trouble."

"Right-ho, Master Tom!"

Tom Merry went upstairs again, and Toby continued cleaning knives. He grinned to himself as he worked. Toby and Tom Merry could have told how the Outsider of St. Jim's had escaped from Nobody's Study; but to the rest of the school it was a mystery.

CHAPTER 13. No Surrender.

"HUM!"

Dr. Holmes made that remark as he opened a letter at the breakfast-table in the morning, and recognised the handwriting of Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth.

The Head had been very much surprised, and very much annoyed, by the report that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had escaped from the punishment-room.

Lumley-Lumley had been shut up there for the night, in case he should escape from the school if left in his usual place in the dormitory. He had escaped all the same. True, he had to leave St. Jim's, anyway, that morning. But the Head had intended to expel him, and to send him home in charge of a prefect. To have the boy wandering at random over the countryside was not what he intended at all. He was responsible for the junior until he was safely delivered at the home of Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley, his father.

"The impertinence!" murmured the Head, as he recognised Lumley-Lumley's writing on the envelope. "He has had the impertinence to write to me."

Mrs. Holmes glanced at her husband.

"A letter from Lumley-Lumley, my dear," said the Head.

"That is all."

He read the letter. The contents of it made him contract his brows. It ran:

"Dear sir,—I have left St. Jim's for the present. I shall return when I have found the missing pass, which will prove to you that I told you the truth, and that there is a plot against me. If I do not succeed in finding the lost paper, I shall remain in Rylcombe until I have hit upon some other way of clearing myself. I don't intend to give in. I am coming back to St. Jim's when I am cleared.—Yours very respectfully,
J. LUMLEY-LUMLEY."

"Goodness gracious!" said the Head. "If the facts did not speak so plainly, one would really imagine that the boy was telling the truth."

He passed the letter to Mrs. Holmes.

"What do you think of that?" he asked.

Mrs. Holmes read the letter.

"I think it is the letter of an innocent boy," she said. "If he were guilty, what object could he have in remaining near the school, as he is doing?"

"Impudence, I fear."

Dr. Holmes showed the letter to Mr. Railton when he met

him a little later. The housemaster of the School House knitted his brows over it.

"What are you going to do about him, sir?"

"Well," said the Head, pursing his lips, "he cannot be flogged now, that is certain. I do not know that I am sorry to be relieved of an unpleasant task. As for expelling him, he is gone already. But he cannot be left to wander in the country; he must return to his home."

"In that case——"

"Someone must go to the village to take him home."

"Do you know where he is, sir? There is no address on the letter. He has evidently anticipated something of the sort."

The Head frowned.

"But he must be found, Mr. Railton. He cannot be left at liberty in this way. His father has a right to expect that he is sent safely home."

"True. I understand that he has a friend in the village, whom, he claims, he went to see on the occasion he was absent without leave. It is very probable that he has taken refuge with this boy Grimes."

"Quite likely," said the Head. "The boy lives in Rylcombe, I suppose?"

"Yes; he is employed by Mr. Sands, the grocer, and, in fact, delivers goods here," said Mr. Railton. "He will probably be at the tradesmen's entrance here this very morning. It would probably be useless to question him, however. Perhaps I had better call on Mr. Sands, ascertain Grimes's address, and call there for Lumley-Lumley."

"Very good, Mr. Railton! But if he is not at home——"

"True; but if he is living with Grimes, he will doubtless be home to dinner, and in that case I shall find him if I call at mid-day. I will go after morning lessons here."

"Thank you, Mr. Railton; that will be excellent!"

Morning lessons at St. Jim's that day did not proceed so sedately as usual.

The Lower School, at all events, were very much excited; and even the high and mighty seniors were keenly interested in the strange case of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

That he had written to the Head was soon known, and that he still declared his innocence, and his intention of returning to St. Jim's when he was cleared. The Head had shown the letter to most of the masters, and it had leaked out, from master to prefects, from prefects to the rest of the school.

Crooke, Levison, and Mellish grinned at the idea; but Mellish, at least, grinned in a very uneasy way. And even Levison, hard and determined as he was, felt a slight inward dismay.

The Outsider was so cool, so keen, so resolute, that he was a dangerous enemy at any time, and when he was down, he was not in the least likely to remain down. It seemed impossible that he could escape from the net that had been drawn so cunningly round him. And yet the plotters felt a tremor. There never was any telling with exact certainty what the Outsider would do. He was not an ordinary school-boy. Before he had come to St. Jim's, at an age when most boys had not passed the Second Form, he had lived a life of wandering and adventure—the dark haunts of many cities in America and on the Continent were known to him—he could tell stories of strange experiences in the Chinese quarter of San Francisco, in the Bowery of New York, in the Latin quarter of Paris. He had brought with him to St. Jim's an experience that falls to the lot of few men, let alone boys; and when his fortune seemed at the lowest ebb, it was always possible that he would find a resource. The cads of the School House had succeeded; but their victory left a bitter taste in the mouth—the taste of fear!

Tom Merry & Co. were troubled enough in mind over the attitude taken up by the Outsider.

They could not help feeling that he had taken the line of a fellow who was innocent; and yet the proofs against him were overwhelming.

They distrusted Levison; and yet, in the face of the facts as they were known, it was manifestly unfair to believe that Levison had plotted against the Outsider, and forged a paper which nobody but Lumley-Lumley had seen—which no one could prove the existence of. If there was a doubt, Levison was entitled to the benefit of it.

Yet the Co. were uneasy. They would have been glad to feel sure about the matter, one way or the other; but it did not seem that it was possible; or ever would be possible.

After morning lessons the juniors gathered in groups in the passages and the quadrangle, discussing the matter with unabated interest.

"He won't be allowed to remain in Rylcombe," Figgins of the Fourth averred. "It stands to reason the Head won't have that! He will be taken up by the prefects."

"Perhaps he will wefuse!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy suggested thoughtfully.

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"BAFFLED!"

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"He is bound to be sent home," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head.

"It's a free country," remarked Bernard Glyn. "He can stay in Rylcombe if he wants to; and he can't be stopped."

"If his pater lets him!" said Monty Lowther. "I shouldn't wonder if we have a visit from Lumley-Lumley major, to give the Head his opinion about the matter."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Levison and Crooke came by, and the group of juniors all turned their heads to look at them.

"Levison, old man, I hear that Lumley is looking for that giddy pass," said Figgins. "Are you afraid that he will find it?"

Levison laughed.

"The pass never existed," he said. "Lumley invented that yarn because of that old affair of my writing a letter in Brooke's hand, for a lark."

Tom Merry sniffed.

"Precious lark!" he said. "You can call it a lark if you like, but we all know what it was, Levison."

"Well, that's an old story now," said Levison.

"Yaas, wathah! We agweed to let the mattah dwop, Tom Mewwy, aftah the way Levison acted afterwards," reminded Arthur Augustus.

"Only if he had played the same trick again——" began Tom Merry.

"So you believe Lumley-Lumley's version?" asked Levison, with an unpleasant smile.

"I don't know."

"If he has the pass, why doesn't he produce it? If he produced it, it would prove his story. I suppose I'm not a giddy wizard to know in advance that he would lose the pass?" said Levison. "The story's altogether too tall, I should think."

"Yaas, it is wathah steep."

"I know that!" said Tom Merry. "All the same, I can't help having a feeling that Lumley-Lumley may be in the right after all."

"And I in the wrong?" sneered Levison.

"That would follow, of course. You can't expect us to trust you."

"Oh, rats!"

Levison walked away. Mr. Railton came out of the School House with his hat and coat on, and crossed towards the gates. The glances of the juniors followed him.

"He's going for Lumley!" remarked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I fancy he'll catch a tartar!" said Tom Merry. "Lumley-Lumley won't come back here to be sacked, and I don't believe he will leave Rylcombe. There will be trouble."

Most of the fellows agreed with Tom Merry's opinion. And they waited with great curiosity for the return of Mr. Railton.

CHAPTER 14.

The Outsider's Triumph.

"WOT luck?"

Grimes asked the question.

Lumley-Lumley shook his head. He was seated in the kitchen of the house where Grimes lodged, and where Grimes took his meals. Grimes had come in for dinner. He lived only a few minutes from the grocer's shop, and always came home to his meals. Lumley-Lumley had waited for him, sitting by the kitchen fire. The change from the handsome old oak-panelled dining-room at St. Jim's to the bare walls of the half-underground kitchen of the little house in River Lane did not seem to worry Lumley-Lumley in any way. Indeed, he had more important matters than that to think about.

He was dirty, and he looked tired. He had spent the whole of the morning in going over his footsteps of the previous evening, in the vague hope of finding the missing paper. He had not succeeded. The longer he searched the more hopeless he felt the search to be; but he had not given up hope. He had inserted a notice in the local paper, describing the lost pass, and offering a reward of five pounds to anyone who should find it. He had enlisted a dozen village lads in the search, giving them half-a-crown each for their day's labour and the promise of the reward if they found the paper. Half the urchins in Rylcombe were buzzing with excitement over the search. He had even sent out four men with the notice on sandwich-boards.



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But it had all come to nothing so far. And indeed, Lumley-Lumley had to admit that it was very like searching for a needle in a haystack. Chance might bring the missing paper to light, but it certainly depended upon chance.

"No luck!" said the Outsider.
"I'm sorry," said Grimes. "It's rotten, old man. I kep' my eyes open while I was takin' out the goods this morning, but it wasn't no use."

"It may turn up," said Lumley-Lumley. "No good worrying about it. If it doesn't, I shall have to think of some dodge for making Levison own up."

Grimes looked very doubtful.
"You ain't giving in, then?" he asked.
"No fear!"

"Wot'll your father say, Master Lumley?"
"I guess he'll stand by me, Grimey. I hope so, at any rate. But it's a bit thick, to ask him to believe the story I've got to tell," said Lumley-Lumley frankly. "Nobody at St. Jim's believes in me. Blessed if I know why you do."

Grimes grinned.
"I knows you, Master Lumley," he said.
"You're an ass, Master Grimes," said Lumley-Lumley. "You're believing in me against all the evidence."

"That don't make no difference to me."
The two boys sat down to the kitchen table to dinner. Grimes looked apologetically across to Lumley-Lumley.

"This is rather rough for you, Master Lumley," he said.
"Don't be an ass, Master Grimes," said Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "I guess I'm jolly lucky to have a pal to stand by me as you're doing. How ripping that stew smells! And I'm frightfully hungry."

"You ain't lost your appetite over the business, Master Lumley," said Grimes, with great admiration.
"I guess it would take more than that to make me lose my appetite, Master Grimey," said Lumley-Lumley.

And he attacked his dinner with a very keen appetite. Grimes, indeed, seemed more troubled in mind about the matter than Lumley-Lumley himself.

"You've given a description of the paper in the advertisement, like you said, Master Lumley?" asked Grimes, after a pause.

Lumley-Lumley nodded.
"Yes. It was a half-sheet of impot. paper—like that I sent you the note on last night, Grimey—just about the same size. It's a queer thing," said Lumley-Lumley. "I haven't the slightest recollection of putting that blank sheet in my pocket, and I clearly remember putting Knox's pass there. But when I turned out the pocket, I found the blank sheet, and the pass was missing."

"You might have left it in your study, and put the blank sheet in your pocket by mistake," suggested Grimes.
"I guess not. I folded it and put it in my pocket immediately Levison gave it to me."

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Grimes, feeling in his pocket. "If it was written in pencil, it might get rubbed out, Master Lumley, and it might be the same sheet of paper."

"But it was written in ink, Grimey—not the ink that's usually used, but ink right enough."

Grimes had taken the note from his pocket, and glanced at it. Lumley-Lumley's pencilled scrawl was still legible upon it, with the list of things he had asked Grimes to bring to St. Jim's the previous night. Grimes sighed, and threw the paper into the grate.

"Well, it ain't that!" he said.
Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"No!" he said. "Pass the dish, old son—I'm hungry."
Lumley-Lumley helped himself again to the stew. Then Grimes turned to the grate to take up the pudding which was to follow, and which his landlady had placed by the bars to keep warm. He uttered a stifled exclamation as he stooped over the fender, and Lumley-Lumley glanced at him.

"Burnt your finger?" he asked.
"No! Oh, crumbs!"
"What's the matter?"
"My heye!"
"What on earth—"

"Look, Master Lumley!"
Grimes caught Lumley-Lumley's arm with one hand, in an almost convulsive grip, and with the other pointed into the grate. Lumley-Lumley looked there, very much puzzled by Grimes's queer action, and then he became suddenly pale with excitement.

"Gee-whiz!" he exclaimed.
The paper Grimes had tossed into the grate had fallen upon the ashes underneath the fire. It was not burnt, but it was crumpled up with the heat above. And as it took on a brown tinge from the heat, a strange thing had happened. Instead of Lumley-Lumley's pencilled scrawl, lines of writing in clear black had strangely appeared.

The two boys gazed at the paper dumbfounded.
It was as if black magic had suddenly entered into their

experience. The paper, when thrown into the grate, had been blank, save for the pencil lines. Now, through the faint scrawl of pencil, writing in ink was clearly visible.

Lumley-Lumley understood!
"My hat!" he said, with a deep breath. "There was writing on that paper in invisible ink, Grimey, and the heat has made it show up!"

"But—but look wot's written!" gasped Grimes.
"G. Knox!" read Lumley-Lumley. "Oh, my hat!"

He sprang to the grate and rescued the paper from the ashes. With a firm hand he held it to the bars, at a safe distance, so that the heat was evenly spread over the whole surface of the paper. Then the rest of the writing came into clear prominence.

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Grimes, almost overcome.
Lumley-Lumley set his teeth.
"The pass!" he said.

It was the missing pass!
There was his name upon it—"J. Lumley-Lumley"—and there was Knox's signature, clear to be seen and read. He knew Knox's handwriting again at once.

He understood.
"The villain!" said Lumley-Lumley. "The awful schemer! I remember now that Glyn's fountain-pen, with the invisible ink in it, was missing from Glyn's study. Levison wrote the pass in Knox's hand—in invisible ink—and it faded out of sight; and when I looked for the pass in my pocket, I found only a blank sheet of paper!"

"Oh, Master Lumley!"
"What is that?"
It was a deep voice at the open kitchen door. Lumley-Lumley swung round with the paper in his hand. Mr. Railton strode in.

The School House master had arrived.
"Mr. Railton!" exclaimed Lumley-Lumley.
"I came to fetch you away from here, Lumley-Lumley," said the Housemaster quietly. "I heard what you said as I came in. What is that paper?"

"Look at it, sir!"
Lumley-Lumley passed the paper to Mr. Railton. The School House master took it in his hand, and glanced at it keenly.

"This is a pass written by Knox, of the Sixth, giving you permission to stay out until nine o'clock, Lumley-Lumley, and dated," said Mr. Railton. "Is this the pass that you declared to me was given to you yesterday?"

"Yes, sir."
"Why did you not give it to me then?"
"Don't you see, sir?" said Lumley-Lumley excitedly. "You remember my turning out my pockets in your study, sir. Among the old letters I turned out there was a blank sheet of paper."

"I remember that," said Mr. Railton, with a nod.
"That's the sheet, sir."

"Yes!"
"This, sir!" Lumley-Lumley was quite cool again now. He understood all that this discovery meant to him, and his heart was very light. "Levison brought me the pass, which Knox had given him, or which he had written in Knox's handwriting; but it was written in invisible ink."

"Lumley!"
"Glyn, of the Shell, will tell you, sir, that he missed his fountain-pen that day—the pen he has invisible ink in. Levison or Crooke must have taken it, and used it for this. I remember remarking to Levison, when he gave the pass, that Knox hadn't used the school ink, and he said Knox used his fountain-pen. That invisible ink is one of Bernard Glyn's inventions, sir—it looks like ordinary ink for about an hour or so, and then fades quite out of sight—and it comes up again as soon as you warm the paper. I never dreamed of such a trick. Levison knew that before the paper had been in my pocket an hour, the writing would have faded away, and when I went to look for it, I should find only a blank sheet."

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Railton. "But there is other writing upon this paper, Lumley-Lumley—in pencil."
"Yes, sir; I used the sheet, thinking it was a blank one, to send a note to Grimes last night, to ask him to come and help me get away. Grimes just chucked it away, and the heat of the fire brought up some of the writing; then I guessed."

Mr. Railton gazed at the paper.
The writing was clear and black now; it was either Knox's hand, or else a cunning imitation of it, so cunning that the prefect himself would not have known the difference. There was only one fellow at St. Jim's who could have done that. Levison, who had forged Brooke's hand so well that Brooke himself had almost believed that it was his own; Levison had played the same trick over again to ruin his old associate who had left him.

There was no doubt about it now. Lumley-Lumley could

not have imitated Knox's writing like that to save his life; and, indeed, if he had forged the pass, he would have produced it when he was questioned the previous evening. The accidental discovery had cleared up the mystery of the missing pass and exposed Levison's guilt.

"Are you satisfied, sir?" asked Lumley-Lumley. "If you're not, you'll only have to show that paper to Levison. I guess he will own up to it when he sees it."

"I am satisfied," said Mr. Railton. "Lumley-Lumley, I came here to take you home to your father. Instead of that, I shall take you back to St. Jim's, to reinstate you there and proclaim your innocence to all the school. I think nothing more will be said about your escape, considering the circumstances. Come!"

"Oh, crikey!" said Grimes. Lumley-Lumley grasped his pal's hand. "Grimey, old man, I owe this to you!" he said. "I guess I sha'n't forget it. Good-bye, Grimey, old son!" "Good-bye, Master Lumley! I'm jolly glad!" "So am I, Master Grimes."

And Lumley-Lumley's face was very glad as he walked back to St. Jim's with Mr. Railton.

CHAPTER 15.

An Outsider's Triumph.

TOM MERRY & CO. were at the school gates when Mr. Railton came in, with the Outsider walking at his side. There was a murmur as they came in.

"Here he is!" "Yes, here I am, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "I've come back; turned up like the bad penny, you know. And I've come back to stay."

"What?" "Bai Jove!" "Boys," said Mr. Railton in his deep voice, "a mistake has been made. Lumley-Lumley was quite innocent; the pass has been found."

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Levison wrote it in invisible ink," said Mr. Railton. "Glyn, I should advise you to take more care with those peculiar inventions of yours."

The Liverpool lad jumped. "Oh," he ejaculated—"oh, Great Scott! So that was what Crooke took my fountain pen for!"

"It was a plot," said Mr. Railton; "a most cowardly, cunning, and dastardly plot! Crooke, Levison, Mellish, you will follow me to the Head's study."

"I—I—" stammered Crooke. "Oh, I!" gasped Levison. "I—I—he must have written it himself, sir!"

"Do not add to your wickedness, Levison, by repeating falsehoods," said Mr. Railton. "Follow me at once!"

"I—I had nothing whatever to do with it, sir!" said Mellish feverishly. "I—I simply heard Crooke and Levison talking it over, sir. I—I was against it all the time. I—I told them it wasn't fair on Lumley, and—"

"You lying cad!" muttered Levison bitterly. "You were in it the same as we were, and you've given us away now!"

"There was no giving away needed; the whole thing was quite clear!" said Mr. Railton. "All three of you follow me!"

With downcast faces and drooping heads the three plotters followed Mr. Railton and Lumley-Lumley to the Head's study. They left the crowd in a buzz.

"Lumley's innocent!" exclaimed Tom Merry, almost dazedly. "Well, you'll all remember that I had my doubts."

"Yaas, wathah! And you chaps will distinctly wemem-bah that I said so all along."

"You jolly well didn't!" said Blake indignantly. "I had some doubts."

"So had I," said Figgins. "It really seemed to me—"

"Faith, and to me!" said Reilly.

"And I thought—" began Kangaroo.

"And I!"

"And I!"

Tom Merry burst into a laugh.

"It's a bit late to begin that now," he remarked. "Look here, we've been in the wrong, and all we can do now is to beg Lumley-Lumley's pardon, and give him a rousing reception when the Head's done with him."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

And Tom Merry & Co. crowded into the passage outside the Head's study to wait for the Outsider to come out.

Meanwhile, Mr. Railton had taken the four juniors into the presence of the Head—Lumley-Lumley cool and cheerful; Levison, Mellish, and Crooke so terror-stricken that they seemed hardly to know what they were doing or where they were going. Mr. Railton had laid the scorched paper upon

the Head's desk. Dr. Holmes looked at it, and listened in dazed amazement to the House master's explanation.

When Mr. Railton had finished the Head turned a terrible glance upon the three plotters.

"Well," he said in a deep voice, "what have you to say?"

Crooke tried to speak, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. Mellish stammered unintelligibly. Levison panted.

"You may go and pack your boxes," said the Head. "All three of you will leave the school this morning. Lumley-Lumley, you have been very much wronged. I cannot say how glad I am that the truth has come to light. I am sorry, my lad. And if I can do anything to compensate you in any way for the undeserved suffering you have undergone, you have only to ask."

"Thank you, sir!" said Lumley-Lumley.

He glanced at Crook, Levison, and Mellish. The three terrified and dismayed juniors seemed rooted to the carpet. There was a contemptuous compassion in the glance of the Outsider of St. Jim's.

"I guess I should like to ask you a favour, sir," he said. "Name it!" said Dr. Holmes. "If it is anything in my power, and consistent with my duty, you have only to speak."

"Very well, sir. If you will be so kind—" Lumley-Lumley hesitated.

"Yes, Lumley?"

"Let these three chaps off, sir."

"What!"

Crooke & Co. looked at Lumley-Lumley, scarcely able to believe their ears. Mr. Railton and the Head were almost as much astonished. It was the last thing in the world they had expected Jerrold Lumley-Lumley to ask.

"Are you serious, Lumley-Lumley?" asked the Head, after quite a long pause.

"I guess so, sir. They've acted like awful cads, but I don't want three chaps to be sacked on my account. I fancy their people would give them an awful time, too. And they must have been feeling pretty bad the last quarter of an hour."

The Head smiled slightly.

"I have no doubt that that is correct," he said. "Lumley-Lumley, you are acting very, very generously towards these wretched boys. They have wronged you deeply."

"That's all right, sir. I guess you were telling us in your sermon last Sunday, sir, to return good for evil," said Lumley-Lumley calmly. "That's what I want to do. I guess it will be a lesson to them, too."

"Yes, I think so." The Head paused. "Lumley-Lumley, if you ask this seriously I will reconsider my decision, and will not expel them. They must be punished, but they shall be flogged instead."

"Thank you very much, sir!"

"You hear?" said the Head sternly, turning to Crooke & Co. "You owe it to this lad, whom you have cruelly wronged, that you are not expelled in disgrace from the school. I hope you will remember it. Lumley-Lumley, you may go, and the school will learn that you are innocent—that you are a boy worthy of the noblest traditions of St. Jim's."

And the Head shook hands with the Outsider.

"The school knows it already, sir," said Mr. Railton.

"I think there is a reception preparing for Lumley-Lumley outside."

Mr. Railton was right. The moment Lumley-Lumley stepped from the Head's study he was surrounded by a crowd of juniors. They seized him and bore him away shoulder-high. From the Head's study sounds of anguish were heard—the ends of the School House were paying the penalty. But no one listened; no one was thinking of Crooke & Co. at that moment. Lumley-Lumley, surrounded by a cheering crowd, yelling and waving their caps, was carried round the old quadrangle in triumph.

"We're all awfully sorry, dear boy, and we're all awfully pleased," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy lucidly. "And if evah any silly ass says a word against you again, dear boy, I shall give him a fearful thwackin'. Huwway!"

And that afternoon Lumley-Lumley took his place in the Form-room again with perfect coolness, quite as if nothing had happened.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete school tale of Tom Merry & Co. next Wednesday, entitled: "BAFFLED!" by Martin Clifford. Order your copy of the "GEM" LIBRARY in advance. Price One Penny.)

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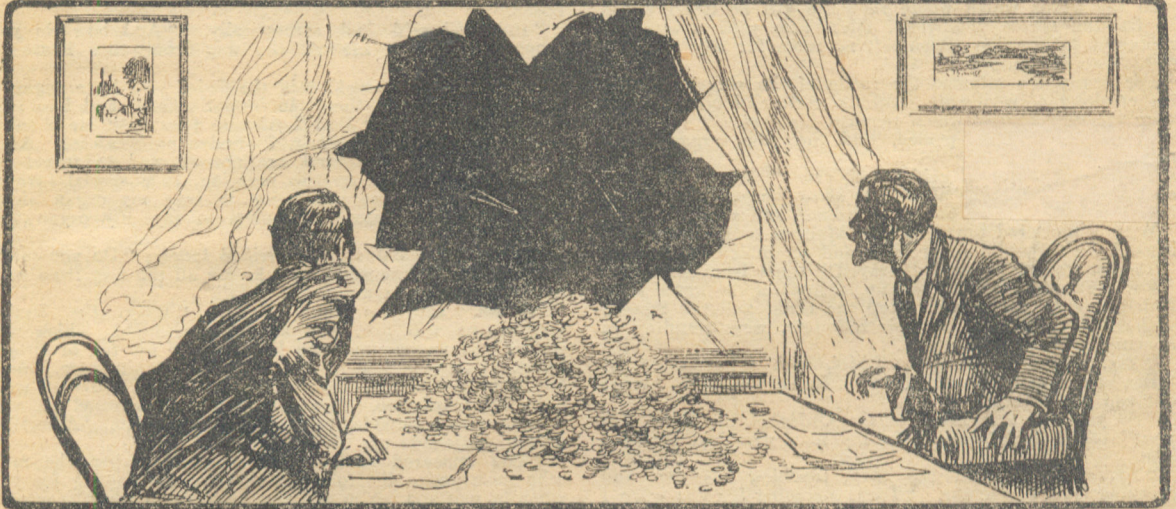
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By **MAXWELL SCOTT.**

THE FIRST INSTALMENT BRIEFLY RE-WRITTEN.

On the bleak November afternoon when we first make the acquaintance of Jack Langley, the famous consulting electrical engineer, he is sitting in his office, writing out a report, when his clerk ushers in a man dressed entirely in black, who tells Jack that he is a member of the Sheffield Town Council. Something has gone wrong with the electric machinery, and he asks Jack to accompany him to the town to attend to the matter.

Jack Langley agrees, and the two enter the Sheffield train. A little while before the train is due to steam into Sheffield Station, the Man in Black offers Jack a drink from his flask. Suspecting nothing, Jack drains it off at a single draught; but the moment he has swallowed the stuff he knows that he has been drugged, for numbness begins in his legs, and mounts rapidly towards his head.

"What have you given me? You've drugged me, you— you—"

The rest of the sentence dies away in an inarticulate moan, and, after swaying to and fro like a drunken man, Jack sinks back to the seat, and lapses into unconsciousness.

The Man in Black then quickly opens the carriage door, and flings the insensible body of Jack Langley out on to a tarpaulin held by four masked men stationed on the side of the line.

When the young engineer recovers consciousness, he finds himself in an enormous coiners' den—a miniature Royal Mint. He is told by the man who successfully duped him, and who appears to be known as the Squire in this infamous den, that if he repairs one of the coiners' dynamos he will be allowed to go free.

He does so, and on finishing it is taken to the Chief of the great secret society, known as the Order of the Ring, and is told that unless he becomes a member of the society he will be killed. During the conversation Jack learns that his fiancée is in the hands of the society also, and makes a bold dash for freedom in order to rescue her. He jumps through the window, hotly pursued by the Chief and one of his subordinates. He eludes these, however, and gains the road. "And now to wire to Scotland Yard!" he mutters, dashing off in search of a post-office.

(Now go on with the story.)

Betrayed!

For nearly half a mile Jack ran along the deserted road without encountering a single human being. Then a farmer's waggon hove in sight, drawn by a pair of powerful horses, and driven by a red-faced, honest-looking rustic. The waggon was empty, except for a litter of straw and a tarpaulin sheet, and the driver was sitting on one of the shafts, smoking a short clay-pipe.

"How far am I from a telegraph-office?" shouted Jack, as the waggon lumbered past.

The man pulled up and eyed him with a curious stare. "Bout a mile and a 'alf, sir, as near as I can tell," he replied.

"In which direction?" asked Jack. "That," said the man, pointing back in the direction from which Jack had come. "You're running away from it. You'll 'ave to turn back, sir."

Jack groaned aloud. Turning back meant passing the park, where his pursuers were still searching for him. It also meant that he would have to run the gauntlet of the second man whom the Squire had set to watch the road.

"Of course, I needn't go back by the road," he muttered to himself. "I could creep back through the fields on the opposite side of the road to the park. But that means wasting valuable time, and every minute that passes brings Ethel nearer her doom!"

He pondered for a second or two; then a bright idea occurred to him.

"Look here!" he said, addressing his informant. "I want to get to the telegraph-office as quickly as I can. You say that I must go back along this road and past the park. But there are men in that park who would murder me without a moment's hesitation if they saw me, and they've planted a man by the side of the road to look out for me. If you'll hide me in your waggon, under that sheet, and drive me to the telegraph-office, I'll give you twenty pounds!"

"Twenty pounds?" gasped the man, as though he could scarcely credit his ears.

"Yes; and you shall have the money in advance," said Jack, pulling out his purse and thrusting a couple of ten-pound notes into the fellow's hand. "If you meet anybody on the road and they ask you if you've seen me, you must tell them that you haven't. If they try to stop and examine the waggon, you must whip up your horses and gallop past them. Is it a bargain?"

"Rather!" said the man, his eyes sparkling with delight. "Jump in, sir, and I'll land you at the door of the post-office afore you know where you are!"

Jack scrambled into the waggon, and threw himself down at full length in the bottom. The man first covered him up

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"BAFFLED!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bernard Glyn at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

with the straw, leaving only his face exposed, and then spread out the tarpaulin sheet on the top of him.

A moment later the waggon was lumbering down the road at something between a canter and a gallop. It was anything but a pleasant ride for the young engineer, who was smothered in straw and buried beneath the tarpaulin sheet; but the thought that he had given his captors the slip, that he was on his way to the telegraph-office, that soon the words which would save the girl he loved would be flashing across the wires, filled him with a sense of rapturous satisfaction which left no room for any thoughts of his own discomfort.

For nearly ten minutes the rattle of the waggon-wheels, the creaking of woodwork, and the clatter of horses' hoofs were the only sounds which reached his ears.

Five more minutes passed, and then the waggon once more came to a halt.

"Here we are, sir!" said the driver. "This is the post-office. You needn't be afraid to show yourself, for there's nobody in sight but a couple of women and a boy."

With a muttered prayer of thankfulness to Heaven, Jack heaved the tarpaulin sheet aside and scrambled to his feet. Then a wailing cry of "Betrayed!" burst from his lips.

For the waggon was drawn up in front of the house from which he had just escaped, and the Chief and the Squire, with twenty or thirty of their followers, were standing in a grinning circle round him.

"Yes, betrayed!" said the Chief, with a mocking bow. "But you've only yourself to thank for it, you know. What else can you expect?"

"So you are a member of the Order of the Ring, are you?" asked Jack, turning to the man who had betrayed him.

"Ay, ay, sir!" said the man, touching his cap, and grinning from ear to ear. "I was a-coming for you when I met you, and—"

"You were coming for me!" gasped Jack. "What do you mean?"

"You'll understand what he means by-and-by," said the Chief, breaking in. "For the present, it is quite enough for you to know that your plucky attempt to escape has failed. Once more you are completely in our power. Will you surrender quietly, or must we—"

Before he had time to finish his sentence, Jack leaped from the waggon with a ringing shout of defiance. He knew that he had not the slightest chance of escaping, but, nevertheless, he was firmly resolved to sell his life as dearly as possible. With this end in view, he sprang at the Squire's throat; but almost at the same instant the Chief stuck out his leg and tripped him up. The next instant the rest of the cowardly scoundrels flung themselves upon him in a body and endeavoured to hold him down, whilst the Squire produced a coil of rope and set to work to bind him.

In spite of the odds, the young engineer fought long and hard to keep his assailants at bay. But it was a hopeless fight from the first, and at last, bruised and bleeding, but still defiant, he was overpowered and bound. He was then carried into the house and laid on a couch in the drawing-room. The servants were then dismissed, and for the second time that morning Jack found himself alone with the Squire and the Chief.

The Sleeping Draught.

"It is no use asking you to reconsider your decision, I suppose?" said the Chief, addressing Jack. "You are still determined not to join us?"

"I am," said Jack firmly.

The Chief bowed, and turned to the Squire.

"Is the packing-case ready?" he asked.

"Quite," said the Squire. "I've told them to bring it round at once."

"Good!" said the Chief. "Have you the sleeping-draught?"

"No," said the Squire. "I left it on the table in my room. Shall I fetch it?"

"Please," said the Chief. "It's nearly ten, so we haven't too much time."

The Squire accordingly left the room, and the Chief turned to Jack.

"Before I sentence you to death," he said, "I'm going to take you for a pleasant little trip across the Channel. I have already told you, I believe, that the Order of the Ring has an establishment in France for the manufacture of spurious banknotes? One of our employees there has invented an ingenious method of reproducing banknotes by means of electricity. At present, however, the process is far too costly and complicated to be of any practical use; so I'm going to take you over to France, in order that you may inspect the machine and give us the benefit of your advice."

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"But I won't go!" said Jack stubbornly.

"Oh, yes, you will!" said the Chief pleasantly. "You will doubtless remember that I told you at our previous interview that the Order owns a small steam-yacht, which is used for the purpose of conveying stolen property abroad. This vessel, which is named the Dolphin, is at present at Southampton. At seven o'clock to-night she will sail for Dieppe, and when she sails both you and I will be on board."

"Indeed!" said Jack sarcastically. "And how do you propose to convey me all the way from this house to Southampton?"

"By train, of course!" said the Chief. "I have engaged a private saloon on the 11.16 from Sheffield, and I've told the railway company that I wish to take with me a small American organ, enclosed in a wooden packing-case. As a rule, articles of this kind are not allowed to travel by passenger train; but on this occasion, as a special favour, they have given me permission to take my organ along with me in the saloon. Needless to say, my organ will be you!"

"What!" cried Jack, in horrified tones. "Do you mean to say that you are going to take me all the way from here to Southampton in a wooden box?"

"I am," said the Chief calmly. "When the Squire returns, he will give you a sleeping-draught, which will render you unconscious and keep you so for ten or twelve hours. You will then be placed in the packing-case, which has been carefully padded on the inside and provided with holes for ventilation. The lid will then be screwed on, and a label affixed outside, bearing the inscription, 'American organ. This side up. With care!'"

You appeared to be rather surprised when the man who gave you a lift told you that he was coming for you when he met you. You will now understand what he meant. He was bringing the waggon to convey you to the station. I have wired to the captain of the Dolphin to have steam up by a quarter to seven, and I have arranged for one of our members to meet the train and convey the packing-case aboard. Everything, therefore, has been carefully arranged and provided for."

"Except one thing," said Jack. "Up to a certain point your arrangements are perfect; but you have quite overlooked the fact that even when you have succeeded in smuggling me over to France you will still be unable to compel me to do as you wish. Take me to France, by all means, if you wish; but, as Heaven is my witness, I will neither inspect any machinery nor assist you in any way whatever!"

"I think you will," said the Chief significantly. "You may be sure that I have not forgotten to make arrangements for compelling you to do as I wish."

Before Jack had time to reply to this scarcely veiled threat, the Squire re-entered the room. He had a small bottle in his hand, and was followed by four of the servants bearing the empty packing-case.

"Here's your sleeping-draught," he said, uncorking the bottle and advancing to the couch on which Jack lay. "Will you take it quietly, or must we treat you like an unruly child?"

Jack made no reply, but clenched his teeth and regarded his captors with a look of unflinching defiance.

"Stop his nose!" said the Squire savagely.

The Chief obeyed, but for nearly a minute the young engineer resisted all their efforts to compel him to open his mouth. At the end of that time, however, the pangs of impending suffocation forced him to unclench his teeth, and in the twinkling of an eye the Squire thrust the neck of the bottle into his mouth and poured its contents down his throat. The next moment the young engineer had emitted a long-drawn sigh and lapsed into oblivion.

Outwitted.

For fourteen hours Jack Langley lay in a deep and death-like stupor. Whilst he was in this condition he was taken to Southampton and conveyed on board the Dolphin, which soon afterwards put to sea. As soon as the vessel was clear of port he was lifted out of the packing-case and freed from his bonds. He was then placed in a bunk in the chief mate's cabin, and the mate was told off to keep watch on him.

Shortly after midnight he began to show signs of returning consciousness, and a few minutes later he opened his eyes. No sooner had he done so than the mate, who was sitting by the side of the bunk, sprang to his feet, and thrust a revolver into his face.

"Lie still, or I'll put a bullet through your head!" he growled, in a harsh, forbidding voice. "I don't want to hurt you unless I'm forced, but the Chief has given me warning that if you escape he'll have me shot! Under these

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PAPER,

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circumstances, you'll quite understand that I'm not in the humour to stand any nonsense; so I tell you straight that if you attempt to sit up, or to raise your hands from under the clothes, you'll have half an ounce of lead inside you before you know where you are!"

Jack stared at the man, and took mental stock of him. Now that he had recovered the use of his limbs, he was firmly resolved to make another attempt to escape from his captors' clutches; and he argued to himself that if he could only outwit the mate, and render him incapable of raising an alarm, he would then be able to steal on deck, and quietly drop overboard.

In a crowded waterway like the English Channel, it would not be long before some passing vessel picked him up; and even if his flight were discovered, and his captors lowered a boat, the darkness would effectually hide him from their view and baffle their attempts to recapture him.

All this flashed through his mind in a thousandth part of the time it has taken to set it down, and almost before the man had finished speaking the young engineer had arranged his plan of action.

"All right! I understand!" he said. "I'm not to sit up, and I'm not to raise my hands. May I talk?"

"Oh, yes; you can jaw as much as you like!" said the mate, still covering him with the revolver.

"Then would you mind telling me where I am?" asked Jack.

"You're on board the Dolphin, of course!" said the mate.

"Are the Squire and the Chief aboard?"

"The Squire isn't, but the Chief is."

"Where is he?"

"Writing letters in his cabin."

"Do you think he will come and see me soon?"

"He might, and then, again, he mightn't."

"I sincerely hope he will."

"Why?"

"Because I want to ask him if I can have a drink. That beastly stuff which the Squire gave me has made me as dry as a limekiln!"

"If that's all you want," said the mate, "you needn't wait till the Chief comes. I've a flask of brandy-and-water in my pocket, and I'll give you a drink with all the pleasure in the world. But, remember, you mustn't sit up, and you mustn't raise your hands. You must just lie quietly on your back, and keep your arms down by your sides, and I'll hold the flask to your lips."

Without waiting for Jack's reply, he dived into one of his pockets and pulled out a spirit-flask. Still keeping his revolver on a level with Jack's head, he unscrewed the stopper with his teeth, and applied the flask to the prisoner's lips.

After swallowing a couple of mouthfuls, the young engineer pretended to be seized with a violent fit of choking. For nearly half a minute he lay on his back, coughing, spluttering, and gasping for breath. Then he suddenly thrust one hand from under the clothes, and frantically pointed to his collar.

Suspecting nothing, the mate bent down to unfasten it, and in the twinkling of an eye Jack snatched the revolver out of his hand, and hurled it across the cabin. The next instant, before the mate had time to draw back, he flung up his arms, and fastened his hands in a vicelike grip on the scoundrel's throat.

The mate made a wild but fruitless attempt to wrench himself free; then he doubled his fists, and dashed them into Jack's face with all the strength he possessed. Again and again he repeated this performance; but the young engineer neither flinched nor relaxed his grip. And at last, finding that he could not shake his assailant off, the mate puf forth a superhuman effort, and dragged him out of the bunk.

A terrific struggle then ensued on the cabin floor. Over and over the two men rolled, first one and then the other uppermost; but never for an instant did Jack loose his hold on his adversary's windpipe. No one knew better than he that a single cry from the mate would ruin all his plans; and, in spite of bites and scratches, he clung to his man with grim and desperate tenacity.

At the end of two minutes the mate began to show signs of impending strangulation. For a little while longer he continued to struggle; but now his blows grew gradually feebler and feebler, and at last, after a final and abortive effort to tear Jack's hands from his throat, a convulsive shudder passed through his frame, his limbs grew suddenly stiff and still, and he lapsed into unconsciousness.

Quivering with excitement, Jack leaped to his feet and secured the mate's revolver. Having taken off his boots, he glided across to the cabin door, and stealthily opened it. He then discovered that the cabin in which he stood was situated at the end of a dimly-lighted alleyway, which led

to the Dolphin's quarter-deck. Both the alleyway and the quarter-deck were deserted; but on each side of the alleyway were three or four cabin doors, and one of these was slightly ajar.

"If there's anybody in that cabin, I'm bound to be seen as I pass the door!" he muttered to himself.

And the thought had scarcely crossed his mind ere the door was suddenly flung open to its widest extent, and the figure of the Chief appeared.

For one brief instant Jack hesitated how to act; then he raised his revolver and fired—at least, he tried to fire. But the moment he pressed the trigger he found that the mate had been bluffing him, for the revolver had never been loaded, and the only result of his action was a sharp, metallic click.

Seeing this, the Chief gave vent to a mocking laugh, and whipped out his own revolver. Before he could fire, however, Jack flung the useless weapon into his face, and then, like an arrow from a bow, he darted down the alleyway, seized his opponent round the waist, and, with one prodigious effort, hurled him back into his cabin.

By this time the uproar in the alleyway had attracted the attention of the watch, and when Jack dashed out on to the quarter-deck he found his progress barred by the second mate and four of the Dolphin's crew.

Nothing daunted, he charged into the midst of them, and in less time almost than it takes to tell, the second mate was felled to the deck with a rasping straight-from-the-shoulder blow, which loosened half his teeth. Two of the crew were swept off their feet, and flung into the scuppers. The third went down with a dislocated jaw, and the fourth received a crack on the skull which temporarily stunned him.

In the meantime the Chief had scrambled to his feet again, and had picked up his fallen revolver. He rushed out on to the quarter-deck in time to see Jack making a dash for the vessel's side, and, quick as thought, he levelled his weapon and fired. The shot rang out as the young engineer was clambering over the taffrail; and the next instant, with a wailing cry, he flung up his arms, and pitched head foremost into the sea.

Revolver in hand, the Chief rushed aft and peered into the inky void astern. For a second or two a dark and shapeless object was discernible bobbing up and down in the tumbling foam of the Dolphin's wake. Then the hungry waves closed over it, and it vanished from his view.

Out of the Frying-pan into the Fire.

It has already been explained that the Order of the Ring was governed by a council of three—the Chief, the Squire, and the Doctor. Each of these had his own particular duties to perform, and each was in charge of a separate branch of the Order's operations. The Chief was in charge of the burglary branch, the Squire had charge of the underground mint, and the Doctor ran the Firefly.

The Firefly, as already explained, was a large and handsomely-appointed steamer, which belonged to the Order of the Ring, and was manned by a crew of its members. She was chiefly used as a pleasure yacht, and her cruises in the South were extensively patronised by invalids in search of health or tourists in search of pleasure. The Doctor, who accompanied her on all trips, was supposed to be on board for the purpose of attending to the invalids; but this, as the reader knows, was merely a blind.

Every voyage that the Firefly made there was one passenger at least whom the Order of the Ring had been paid to "remove"—in plain English, to murder—and it was the Doctor's duty to "remove" them by poisonous drugs and disease-producing germs.

The Firefly was to have sailed for a three months' cruise at ten o'clock on the very morning that Jack Langley was recaptured in the grounds of the underground mint. Just as she was about to slip her moorings, however, the Doctor received a telegram from the Squire, stating that he was coming to London by the first available train, and that on no account was the vessel to sail until he arrived. No reason was given for this unexpected order, but its terms were so imperative that the Doctor dared not disobey. The pilot was accordingly sent ashore, and the passengers were informed that, owing to the non-arrival of certain stores, the Firefly would not sail until the following tide.

The Squire arrived about five o'clock in the afternoon. The Doctor met him on the gangway, and at once conducted him to one of the state-rooms on the upper-deck.

"You were surprised to receive my wire, weren't you?" said the Squire, as soon as the Doctor had closed the door.

"I was," said the Doctor. "I couldn't think what had happened at first, but it struck me afterwards that most likely you had got us another passenger—another victim to be removed—and that you wanted us to wait until he arrived. Was I right?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 246.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"BAFFLED!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co, and Bernard Glyn at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"You weren't," said the Squire, with a chuckle. "You were just as wrong as wrong could be. Instead of bringing you a new victim, I'm going to rob you of one you've already got—at least, I'm not going to rob you, but the Chief is."

"The dickens, he is!" said the Doctor. "Who is it?"
"Miss Ethel Aylmer," said the Squire. "You know, of course, that Sir Philip Aylmer has paid us a thousand pounds to remove her?"

"Of course," said the Doctor. "Miss Aylmer came aboard this morning, and is at present in the music-saloon. I haven't started operations yet, but I was going to give her a preliminary dose at supper-time to-night."

"Well, you're not to," said the Squire.
"Why not?" demanded the Doctor.
"Chief's orders," said the Squire, shrugging his shoulders. "Miss Aylmer, it appears, is engaged to young Jack Langley, the electrical engineer. Do you know him?"

"Not by sight; but I've heard of him, of course."
"Well, the Chief has set his heart on forcing Jack Langley to join our ranks. We've already made a prisoner of him; but, in spite of all we can say or do, he refuses to take the oath of membership. If I'd my way, I should shoot him, and have done with him; but you know what a demon the Chief is when he's thwarted, and he swears he'll make him join if it takes him twenty years!"

"But what has all this to do with Miss Aylmer?" asked the Doctor.
"This," said the Squire. "The Chief has got it into his head that if he could only get Miss Aylmer into his clutches, he could force Jack Langley to join us by threatening to torture her."

"I dare say he could," said the Doctor. "But how's he going to get hold of Miss Aylmer?"

"In this way," said the Squire. "The Chief and Langley are now on their way to Southampton, and at seven o'clock to-night they'll put to sea in the Dolphin, and cruise about the Channel until daybreak. If the Firefly sails about ten o'clock to-night, she'll be south of the Pelican Lightship at half-past seven to-morrow morning. The Dolphin will be waiting for you, and as soon as you come in sight the Chief will signal you to heave to. He'll then come aboard, and tell Miss Aylmer that Sir Philip has sent him to inform her that he has met with a serious accident, and wishes her to return at once. Miss Aylmer, no doubt, will readily consent to go back with him, and when once he gets her on board the Dolphin—well, there you are, don't you know!"

"Splendid!" said the Doctor, rubbing his hands. "I couldn't have planned it better myself!"
"Then I may wire to the Chief that his orders will be duly carried out?"

"Certainly!" said the Doctor. "Tell him that I'll be on deck myself as soon as it's daylight to-morrow, and that I'll also see that a couple of men are specially told off to look-out for him."

For some time longer these fiends in human shape continued to discuss this villainous plot for luring Ethel Aylmer to her doom. Then the Squire took his departure, and at half-past ten the Firefly sailed on her fateful voyage.

Day was breaking, and the grey light of a wintry dawn was creeping across the heaving bosom of the Channel. Most of the Firefly's passengers were still asleep in their bunks, but one of them—an elderly, white-haired man, with stooping shoulders and wrinkled face—was already on deck, and was leaning over the taffrail, lost in thought.

"How will it end?" he muttered to himself. "Shall I find the clue for which I have sought so long, or will it once again elude my grasp? Have I really picked up the scent at last, or am I simply wasting time by chasing a will-o'-the-wisp?"

He gazed at the rippling wavelets racing past the vessel's side, as though he were trying to find in them an answer to his questions. Then he suddenly became aware that he was not alone, and on turning round he found himself confronted by the Doctor.

"Good-morning!" said the Doctor, with a pleasant smile.
"Good-morning!" said the old gentleman. "Have I the pleasure of addressing Dr. Sholto?"

"You have," replied the Doctor. "And whom have I the pleasure of addressing?"
"My name is Grundy," said the old man—"Mr. Theophilus Grundy."

"Ah, then you are the gentleman who wrote to the purser and insisted upon having the cabin next to mine," said the Doctor.

(Another long instalment of this thrilling serial story next week. Order a copy of "The Gem" Library in advance. Price one penny.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 246.

BUY No. 2 "THE PENNY POPULAR,"

THE SCHOOL UNDER CANVAS!

CONCLUDING CHAPTERS.

The Two Othellos!

The audience jumped. So did the actors. Frank Monk imitated Gordon Gay's dramatic voice, as he delivered those truly remarkable lines, which certainly Shakespeare had never dreamed of.

"What!" gasped Wootton major.

"My hat!" ejaculated Cassio.

"It is zat he has been drinking somezing," said Mont Blong, who was on the stage now as Fourth Gentleman, the Doge of Venice not being wanted any more. "Oh, my shum!"

"How many thousands of my poorer subjects
Are in six parts, and every part a ducat?"

Thus Frank Monk.

"Great Scott!"

"Gay, you ass—"

"Oh, my shum!"

The audience were amazed—so amazed that they forgot to laugh. Dr. Monk rubbed his chin, and Mr. Hilton stared. Delamere stood up and sat down again. Carker burst into a chuckle, and that started it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sweet Desdemona, and my honoured friends!" said Othello II., making up blank verse as he went along.

"Methinks the audience may require a change.

And after all the piffle you have spotted,

'Twill be the proper caper for Othello

To cheer the drama with a song and dance!"

"What!" yelled Wootton major.

"He's potty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The audience were all on their feet now, yelling and shrieking with laughter. Dr. Monk was laughing as loudly as anybody. Whether Gordon Gay had gone suddenly insane, or whether it was an extraordinary jape, no one knew—but certainly the effect was very funny. The group of characters on the stage were simply dumbfounded. Othello II. dodged those who would have seized him and helped him off, and proceeded to give a coon dance. He danced very well, too, and the audience laughed and cheered. As a matter of fact, a very large proportion of the audience—especially the younger part—greatly approved of the change from heavy drama to comic business.

"Go it, Othello!" shrieked Punter of the Fifth. "Buck up!"

"Bravo, Inky!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The play's simply mucked up!" groaned Wootton major. "We'd better collar the silly ass, and yank him off the stage!"

He tried it. But Othello closed with Iago, and levelled him on the sand, and danced round him with undiminished vigour. The audience were almost in convulsions. They yelled encouragement to Othello II.

"Go it, Othello!"

"Hurrah!"

There was a sudden rush of footsteps outside, and a weird figure burst through the wings, and dashed upon the stage.

The audience roared.

"My hat! Here's another of 'em!"

"Another Othello!"

"Great Scott!"

"Twins, by Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The new Othello rushed right at the old Othello, and closed with him. Two black-faced Venetian generals struggled and reeled on the stage. The Cornstalk Co. simply gasped.

"Who is it?"

"It's a jape!"

"Help me chuck him out!" yelled Gordon Gay. "It's Frank Monk! It's a rotten jape!"

Then the theatrical company understood.

So did the audience. They yelled again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Monkey!"

Othello I. and Othello II. reeled about the stage, trampling up the sand, and bumping wildly into Iago and Roderigo and Cassio and Desdemona. Dr. Monk, with tears of mortification streaming down his face, retired from the auditorium, and the

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PAPER.

NOW ON SALE!

other masters followed him. The audience remaining stood on the seats, and yelled and cheered.

"Go it, Othello! Give him one in the eye!"

"Let 'em alone, Iago! Fair play!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ring down ze curtain!" gasped Mont Blong.

The curtain came rattling down.

The amazing scene was screened off from the eyes of the public at last; and the two Othellos were left to settle matters between them—with costumes torn and rent, and faces as black with punching as with grease-paint.

The audience dispersed, yelling. It was pretty clear that the play would not continue after that amazing climax. But the general verdict was that Frank Monk's interference as Othello II. had made the entertainment a much greater success than it could possibly have been otherwise.

Back to Rylcombe!

The next day the tents were struck, and boxes were packed; and the school under canvas bade farewell to the encampment by the waves of the North Sea.

By that time Gordon Gay & Co. had recovered from their wrath, and had forgiven the Old Co. for the jape that had so thoroughly "mucked up" the farewell performance of Othello.

When the Grammarians crowded into the special train at Netherby Station, the Cornstalks and the Old Co. occupied the same carriage, on the best of terms.

The Grammarians crowded the windows of the train as it started from the station, and looked back upon the village of Netherby, and the wide-stretching sands of the seashore, and the blue waves rolling beyond.

"Well, we've had a jolly time there," said Gordon Gay cheerfully; "and perhaps next summer we'll be under canvas again."

"Good!" said Frank Monk. "And we're going back to school without Herr Hentzel; and that's a clear gain. The new German master is much better."

"Heaps!" said Gordon Gay. "Herr Hentzel is in chokey, which is a very suitable place for him. And we owe it to Mont Blong; if it hadn't been for Mont Blong, he might still be doing his beastly spying!"

"Good old Mont Blong!" said Wootton major. "I zink zat he take ze cake, n'est-ce-pas!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My shums—" began Mont Blong.

"Hear, hear!"

"My lofed shums—"?

"Bravo!"

"My beloved shums, ve have had ze good time by ze sea, but as your lofely English vezzer is so fond of ze rain, I zink zat it is a good zing to get under ze roofs again," said the French junior. "I zink zat ven we get to ze Grammar School, ve give ze ripping house-warming, and ask over zose garçons from St. Jim's, and have ze high old time. Vat is it zat you zink, my shums?"

"I zink it's a ripping wheeze," grinned Gordon Gay. "Hurrah!"

When the train rolled into the old station at Rylcombe, there were juniors on the platform to meet the returning Grammarians—Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's. They shook hands with much cordiality. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, had a bandbox in his hand. He opened it, and took out a silk topper, which he presented to the astonished Mont Blong.

"Vat is zat?" asked Gustave Blanc, in amazement.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "Don't you wemembah, deah boy? You left your toppah behind on the station when you went away!"

"Mon Dieu!"

"I werged it as my dutay to mind it for you," explained D'Arcy; "and here it is, deah boy. I assure you that I've taken the greatest care of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gordon Gay. "Good old Gussy!"

"Weally, Gay—"

"I zank you, my shum!" said Mont Blong. "My shums, I zink zat ve make all our shums come to ze school for ze celebration, n'est-ce-pas?"

"Hear, hear!"

And Tom Merry & Co. accompanied the Grammarians to the Grammar School, and cheerfully helped them to celebrate their home-coming; and they parted quite late, on the best of terms. And Gordon Gay & Co. resumed their old life under the roof of the Grammar School, with many pleasant recollections of their experiences in the School under Canvas!

THE END.

A NEW FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns will be from those readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

Colonists sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondent is required—boy or girl, English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons. One taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

J. W. Paton, 2817, Hutchinson Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl-reader, age 14-15, living in England.

K. C. Lenggner, Khoo Cheng-Quee, Posts and Telegraphs, Seremban, N. S. Fed. Malay States, wishes to correspond with a reader over 20 years of age. Collectors of postcards and stamps need not write.

F. L. Norris, age 23, 248, Ontario Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with girl-readers of the same age.

Miss G. Jenkins, Belmont, Hornsby, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with a reader living in England; age 13-14.

R. Giddes, 4, Douglas Street, Woodstock, Cape Colony, South Africa, wishes to exchange picture-postcards with a boy or girl reader living in England.

J. Chalmers, 19, Fox Street, Johannesburg, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a boy-reader in Canada; age about 15 or 16.

H. Marshall, Pottinger Street, King William's Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl-reader; age 17.

C. C. Gaward, 47, Syringa Avenue, Durban, Natal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl-reader of about 15 or 16 years of age.

C. R. Lovell, Box 2662, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, would like a girl-reader, age 17, to correspond with him.

A. W. Smith, 26A, Jeppe Street, Johannesburg, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a boy-reader, with a view to exchanging duplicate foreign stamps.

G. J. Leslie, Seman Road, Exeter, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a Catholic reader.

P. Robinson, General Delivery, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers living in England.

J. C. Marais, Army Service Corps, Roberts Heights, Pretoria, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl-reader, age 17-18, living in England.

H. B. Sleeman, 38, Roland Terrace, off Roland Street, Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a boy or girl reader in England.

J. Chew, 233, Caroline Street, N., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers living in England.

J. McKee, 10, Rideau Street, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers living in England.

A. Cook, Kroonstad, Orange Free State, South Africa, wishes to correspond with his cousin Miss R. Hill, living at The Terraces, Truter Street, Millicent, South Australia.

S. Uter, 100, King Street, Kingston, Jamaica, wishes to correspond with a boy or girl reader, age 17, living in England.

G. Peters, 50, Greig Street, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with girl-readers, between the ages of 16 and 18.

L. McDonald, Russell Street, Geelong, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with boy or girl reader living in England.

W. Young, c. o. Messrs. Pizer & Co., Geelong, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with girl-readers of "The Gem," living in England.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 246.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"BAFFLED!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. and Bernard Glyn at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



THIS WEEK'S CHAT.

For Next Wednesday.

"BAFFLED,"By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

This splendid story of St. Jim's centres round an amazing incident, the circumstances of which are so puzzling that the interest of the whole school is concentrated upon the task of unravelling the mystery. Masters, seniors, and juniors put forth their utmost efforts, but have to confess themselves completely

"BAFFLED!"

The mystery remains unravelling, and the mysterious end elusive "X," the acknowledged author of the outrages, remains as much of an enigma as ever.

OUR LATEST SUCCESS.

Nothing succeeds like success, 'tis said, and the truth of this saying is wonderfully exemplified in the case of our latest success—that is, of course,

"THE PENNY POPULAR."

The reception given to Number One of this wonderful new paper exceeded all expectations, and the rush for Number Two is so enormous, and the demand so clamorous, that it is as much as the printing-presses can possibly do to cope with it. Such a triumph has even satisfied me, your Editor—who am by no means easily satisfied—and I thank from the bottom of my heart all my friends whose loyal support can alone have made this great success possible.

Replies in Brief.

"Two Loyal Readers" (Hampstead).—Thanks for your letter. The reason I closed the Correspondence Exchange was given in "The Gem" and "The Magnet" at the time.

"Cheshire" (Somerville).—Thanks for your letter and suggestion, which I will make a note of.

R. L. Mair (Natal).—Thanks for letter and suggestion. I will bear this latter in mind, though I can make no definite promise that it will be carried out.

"Old Reader" (Isle of Ely).—Thanks for postcard. If you buy a good stamp catalogue you should be able to find out all about the rarest stamps and their values.

G. J. F. (Highgate Road, N.W.).—Thanks for your letter. The answers to your queries are: 1. It is necessary to have a bed division in a rabbit-hutch if you wish to breed rabbits successfully. 2. The mistiness which you complain of in photographic plates after drying, is due to the fact that they have not been thoroughly washed after immersion in the fixing-bath. Consequently, the hypo that remains on the film of the negative becomes crystallised, leaving the plate misty. Negatives should be washed for at least an hour—two hours or more will not hurt them.

A letter, written in answer to one received from a number of West Hartlepool readers, has been returned marked "Address unknown." If the reader who signs himself "The President" will let me have his correct address, I will reply by post.

S. D. (Grimsby).—The best method of reducing your weight is to go in for plenty of outdoor exercise and other branches of physical culture. This will take off the spare fat and give you good, hard muscles.

"A Reader" (Stoke Newington).—In reply to your question, I must tell you that you can obtain both the things you require from a chemist much cheaper than you can make them.

"Joan of Arc."—I am afraid I cannot see my way clear to carry out the idea you suggest at present.

F. Hill (Battersea).—I am sorry the numbers you require are out of print. Will you kindly write direct to Miss Everette, as I cannot conduct readers' correspondence through the medium of this office?

An Interesting and Profitable Hobby.—Papier-Mache**Work.**

A third profitable hobby for the winter evenings is making ornaments with papier-mache. Most readers are no doubt familiar with papier-mache, which is like a mixture of cardboard and paper.

To make various ornaments out of a sort of papier-mache is a fairly simple process, requiring only a small amount of care and patience, and very little outlay. The things required are: First, some suitable moulds—which can be bought cheap at any colour-shop—and plenty of paper, which should not be too stiff. Next, go to the chemist with a bottle and obtain some strong ammonia—known to the chemist as "ammonia, specific gravity .880"—and after that visit a coppersmith's or a large ironmonger's, and buy some copper-turnings. Great care should be exercised in handling the strong ammonia. It is quite possible to make the moulds out of plaster of Paris, but it requires a person who has some artistic taste and experience in that line.

A suitable mould to start with is an empty jam-jar, which can be used as a foundation for, say, a fancy papier-mache flower-pot. If this should prove a success, other cheap earthenware articles can be sacrificed for the hobby. The chief substance of which the ornament is to be made is, of course, paper, after it has been chemically treated as follows:

Put a handful of the copper turnings into about half a pint of ammonia, and leave the whole to stand for twelve hours. After this, gently shake the bottle. Don't shake it hard, or the disturbance inside will most probably shoot the cork out, and the liquid will be wasted. Let it stand for another three hours or so, and then shake gently again, and keep up this treatment for a day or two. When the ammonia, instead of being almost colourless, as in the first place, has become a deep blue in colour, it is ready for use.

Transforming the Paper into Pulp.

During the time this solution takes to prepare, all the paper you have should be cut up ready for use to the size of a penny. These have to be placed in a solution, which should be poured into a fairly shallow saucer. While these are soaking, the time can be employed by cleaning the outside of the jam-jar thoroughly. The time taken for the paper to turn into pulp largely depends upon the strength of the liquid, which depends in its turn upon the amount of copper turnings dissolved in the ammonia. When pouring the ammonia into the saucer, keep your head well out of the way, as otherwise the strong ammonia will make your eyes water badly. When the paper rounds show signs of becoming pulpy, they should be taken out and plastered on to the side of the jam-jar, which is used as the foundation.

Plastering the Jar.

Each round of paper must be so plastered as to overlap the previous one, and so on until the whole jar is covered. When the whole is covered, go over it again, and yet again, if you think it is not thick enough. When you think you have put sufficient paper into the work, the jam-jar should be turned upside down, and the new flower-pot be allowed to dry, which it must do without the aid of artificial heat.

When dry, it will be found to have become a hard cake of paper, from which it is quite impossible to peel any one of the rounds used in the making. This substance is as strong as cardboard, and is not so easily spoilt by water.

Removing the Foundation.

The only thing that remains to be done is to get the flower-pot off the jam-jar. If it will not come out easily, you must break the pot by giving one or two sharp taps with a hammer on the outside papier-mache covering, when it will be easy to remove the pieces without injuring it.

The ornaments made in this way may be coloured or decorated in any way to suit the taste of the maker. A coat of varnish gives the whole a good finished appearance.

THE EDITOR.

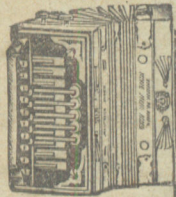
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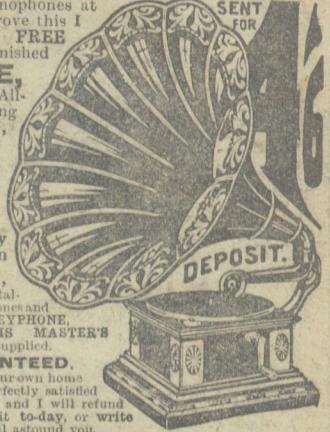
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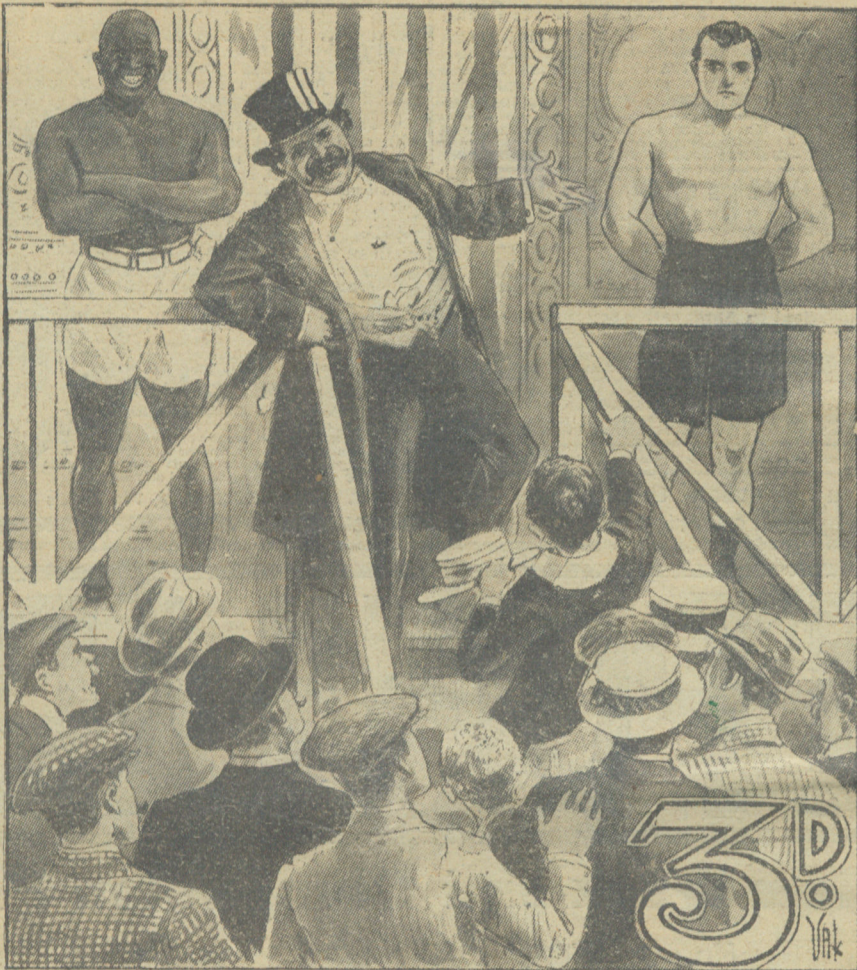
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