

Story

Wednesday.



Complete Stories for All, and Every Story a Gem



# TOM MERRY'S PROMISE!

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of the chums of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

## CHAPTER I. Very Mysterious!

"**B**AD JOKE!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, uttered that exclamation. He was standing in the entrance-hall of the School House, and he jammed his hands into his right pocket, and covered the door-knob and equally into Tom Merry, of the Third, who had just entered.

"Bad joke, Tom Merry, you are delightfully snubbed, dear boy!" said D'Arcy.

Tom Merry wiped his face vigorously, and shook the drops of water from his cap. Outside in the dark quadrangle, the rain was coming down in torrents. It had been drizzling all day, but at nightfall it had developed into a regular down-pour. The juniors had wisely relinquished lockers, and Jack Blake, Murray, Reeves, and Dight, of Fourth No. 4, in the Fourth Form passage, were considerably surprised to see Tom Merry come in. Blake & Co. had just finished tea, and they stared at Tom Merry wonderingly.

"You're wet!" said Blake. "Where did you get those boots from, you little pig?"

Tom Merry took his cap off without replying, and waved it up and down vigorously. The drops of water came from it in a shower, and splashed all over the elegant face of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Or!" shrieked D'Arcy. "You stink outside, Tom Merry!"

"Merry!" greeted Tom Merry. "Did I splash you?"

"I'm deeply distressed, you awful duffer! But I don't believe you did it on purpose!" jeered Arthur Augustus.

"My collar is wet!"

"Never mind, Darcy," said Blake. "Finds water!"

"Wetly, Blake."

"No, no!" said Tom Merry. "It's coming down into and down! Jolly glad I'm back!"

"Where've you been, you duffer?" demanded Dight.

"Oh, down the road!"

Blake snarled.

"Likely you'd go down the road on a chilly night like this!" he exclaimed. "I reckon it must have been something too hot for you."

"Yes, what?"

"It was," said Tom Merry.

"Was what, good Heaven?"

"Ignorance!"

"I wonder Tom Merry is in 'a silly duffer," said D'Arcy indignantly. "There is a limit to everything that boys, and to ventrils set on a winter night like this is certainly unwise! I should advise keep my little warts' under the coat!"

"Of course, your father's of an importance at all," said Blake.

"It's jolly evident, though, Tom Merry must have gone out for something pretty warm. What's the story, Darcy—where've you been?"

"Oh, out!" said Tom Merry earnestly.

"We know that, duffer!" said Dight. "You haven't been walking round the quadrangle to try and see how wet you could get, have you?"

"No," said Tom Merry. "I had to go."

"But where! An appointment, dear boy?"

"Something like that, Darcy."

"Really, Tom Merry, I see no reason why you should be so unwise," said D'Arcy. "I suggest it is very unwise that you should go out and get drenched, though, on a winter night like this."

And Arthur Augustus adjusted his famous eyebrows, and surveyed Tom Merry with a distinctly bright look. But Tom Merry merely grinned and passed on.

"I got," said Blake, "with a tick—"

"You'd stop!"

"Oh, all right!" grinned Blake. "If you want to make a sport of it you can! Blowed if I want to stick my nose into

Next Wednesday:

"THE THIRD-FORM MYSTERY!" AND "BIRDS OF PREY!"

possibly she's busy. Guss might be right, but I've not."

"I don't expect his account with Blake."  
 "Well, Blake, I consider that without making any more of it."  
 "You mean that I am in the habit of making any more of it than people's heads— if you do not immediately answer that remark, I shall feel compelled to suggest you to put up your hands."

"Oh, yes!" said Blake.  
 "And I am so much obliged you as a friend."  
 "Thank you!"  
 "I have no doubt whatever to interlock with Tom Henry's account," said an old lady warmly. "If you think—"  
 "Dry up, Guss!" said Blake. "If the matter won't dry up, you see!"  
 "I really refuse to dry up!" said Arthur Augustus coolly. "You have passed certain papers upon my character, and I have an alternative but to placinate a hostile tribunal!"

"Oh, you see!" said Blake.  
 "I should actually refuse to be gripped—"  
 "Grip!"  
 "I refuse to yield. I protest—"  
 "You are not, Henry— it's all here!" said Dicky. "We'll get up some of our own evidence before the fact."

And Blake & Co. passed rapidly to study No. 2, where Dr. Henry was largely of about the usual thickness. Meanwhile Tom Henry had walked along the shelf passage to his own study. He opened the door and passed in. Messers and Lawler, Tom Henry's valet, looked up as he entered.

"Oh, how you see!" said Messers.  
 "And here's a list of water, you see!" exclaimed Henry Lawler.  
 "Why, you see, you're making a mistake!"  
 "Couldn't help it," said Tom Henry. "The rain pelted down all the time I was out here. Let me see the list!"  
 "What, you see!" said Messers. "We waited about half an hour, you see, and got no water!"  
 "What, and get no water?" said Lawler.

"Oh, don't try to be funny," said Messers. "Where's your list, Tommy?" "What the deuce do you see, given by clearing of immediately after breakfast, missing tea, and stopping out and out?"

"Oh, nothing," said Tom Henry coolly. "You might just get my list passed and, and I'll have it copied and change my top."  
 "Right!" said Messers. "Where the deuce have you been, though?"

Tom Henry started.  
 "What I go out for that mixture without a word of talkable making me when I've been?" he groaned. "I've been out, and now I'm back again!"  
 "You don't say so!" said Lawler.

"No, I have done it by mistake."  
 "You look as if you've been down a well," groaned Lawler.  
 "And you dry up, you see!" said Messers, glaring at Henry Lawler.

"It need not be so dry up," said the inventor of the Shell. "You might get my list to show Messers. It's not enough."  
 "Well, I've got to change, you see," said Tom Henry.  
 "It's all right, Messers will see you, I'll be back in five minutes." "That's true," said Henry Lawler. "Now, if you'd mind going to look in the kitchen, that would come— Oh! Messers!"

Messers was recognized, and he picked up a list and sent it to all the inventors. Lawler caught it as he went, and it landed all over his face.  
 "You've been behind it," he said.

"Well, dry up!" snapped Messers. "I say, Tommy—"  
 "Why, do you see, you?"  
 "You shouldn't be so impulsive," said Henry Lawler, who was sitting by Henry's bedside. "Go's Tom Henry go out and see what your valet is doing where's he's been? You see, look at the handwriting!"

"Drive you right!"

"Not a bit of it," said Lawler loudly. "It doesn't matter to me."  
 "Oh, of course, if you like your handwriting all over your face—"  
 "I don't!" said Lawler. "The handwriting is gone!"

Messers started.  
 "What?" he asked. "Why, you looking stuff, do you mean to say you've signed that guilty list of your valet on my handwriting? I've been using that to point up my valet?"

"No, he has!" said Henry Lawler.  
 Messers glared at Henry Lawler in open-mouthed indignation. For a second he looked as though there would be war, but the Messers through the door of No. 2, and stepped into Messers. The Messers had returned from being lying about the room, and if it were not for the fact that they would be liable to get damaged.

When Tom Henry returned he was looking cheerful and happy. Messers had passed the tea out, and it was streaming kindly upon the table.  
 "Good day!" said Tom Henry. "Any business left?"  
 "You've got!" replied Messers. "You see, I've had to have to do my paper, and, and we can't have you lumbering on the table all the evening, just because you choose to be polite about it in the rain, and coming back after all respectable people have finished their tea."

"Well, I don't know if it was going to be so fastidious Tom Henry. I say, you take anything for me by this evening's tea?"  
 "Yes, you better," said Messers indignantly. "It's for the satisfaction."

"Oh, good!" said Tom Henry. "Thank it very!"  
 "What's that all your list for, please?" groaned Messers. "You've got to be honest, you see, this evening. There might be something in the list you don't want to be so."  
 "Not!" said Tom Henry. "You're like a guilty man."

"But he didn't expect to explain the cause of his absence tonight. He took the list, opened it, and took out a parchment for a parchment. His eyes sparkled with satisfaction, and he looked up at Henry Lawler.  
 "It's a list!"  
 "What, that?" exclaimed Henry Lawler. "How much?"  
 "A list!"  
 "Well, that's not so bad," said Messers, showing. "I say, Tommy, you might just get a couple of shillings, will you? I've got some more."

"I'm sorry, Messers, I can't!"  
 Tom Henry had started, and he felt extremely uncomfortable under the surprised gaze of his valet. But the captain of the Shell looked determined, and he placed the parchment in his pocket.

"You won't be long at anything!" said Messers coolly.  
 "I'll be back in five minutes," said Tom Henry quietly.

Messers glanced across at Henry Lawler. For a moment there was silence in the study. Then Messers turned to the list, and he took up the list with him. Tom Henry knew what was coming, and he looked at Messers rather indifferently.

"You've got to go down there!" said Messers deliberately.  
 "Yes!" said Tom Henry.  
 "And you won't be long at anything, will you?"  
 "I can't, and I can't," exclaimed Tom Henry, looking distressed.

"I'm sorry, but I want the list for another purpose."  
 "Anything to do with the list?" asked Henry Lawler.  
 "No, it's a private affair!"  
 "The private list or about?" asked Messers sternly.  
 "Yes."  
 "Anything to do with your journey in the rain this evening?"  
 "I'm sorry to do with it," said Tom Henry quietly.

"You were very clever, but I don't want to discuss the matter any more. I'd had my eye on this list," Messers, if I could, but I want it particularly."  
 "Oh, all right!" said Messers. "You can keep your list, but I'll be in this. As long as we three have been together in this study we haven't had any more. If you're going to start being impulsive now—"

"I'm not doing it deliberately, you see!" exclaimed Tom Henry warmly. "I'd be in your list if I could, I could, and I want of the list for a special purpose. You don't think I want out in the rain for this, do you?"

"Are you going to tell us where you went?" Messers demanded.  
 "No!"  
 "Right!" said Tom Henry. "Keep your own secrets!"

And Messers and Henry Lawler walked out of the study. Henry was very angry, but he had to be. He had a disagreement, but they evidently had better not see. Messers indignantly was called. He glared at Lawler angrily as they passed in the hall passage.

"What's that?" he growled.  
 "Nothing," said Henry Lawler.  
 "I don't want to know what the fellow's up to," said Tom Henry, who was looking at Messers with a look of surprise. "But it's a bit too thick when he goes out on a night like this, gets wet through, and then comes back and won't tell us where he's been."

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 One column 2, page 27 of this issue.



"Oh! but my dear boy—or, I mean dear girl," said Arthur Augustus politely, "you must finish up these doughnuts, you know?" (See page 182)

"Really!" said Mopsy. "The silly one ought to be punished!"

"Then, to say that, he gets postcards for a girl, and refuses to lend her three bob," said Mamma indignantly. "I don't care to squab about the three bob as I care about Miss. I don't like it, Mopsy. It looks jolly queer!"

Mopsy Lowther nodded.

"Yes," he admitted, "it is a bit thick. I wonder what gave Tom Merry's up to? It's not like him to keep on in the dark about his affairs, either. Perhaps he'll come round soon, and tell us the whole story."

And Mopsy Lowther and Mamma, looking somewhat worried, descended to the junior common-room.

### CHAPTER 3. Bill Narrative.

**T**OM MERRY was looking rather worried when he fell accidently to their doorway to bed. Mamma and Mopsy Lowther had not returned to his visit to the village. Of course, there was a story. Mopsy's explanation of Tom Merry's jeans in the tub, but he did not offer to enlighten his friends.

He addressed in silence, and Mamma and Lowther were inclined to be a little doubtful.

"What playing the guilty on?" asked Mamma.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, wasn't you going to tell us where you went tonight, and why you refused to lend me three bob when I asked for it?"

"The very, old man—"

"But," growled Mamma, "you're not going to make any more excuses, are you?"

"Excuse be damned!" said Tom Merry. "You know jolly well, Mamma, that I wouldn't keep you in the dark about it unless I was compelled to. I thought that'll put you where I was."

"Why not?"

"Oh, why not?" interrupted Mopsy Lowther. "If the silly one wants to keep it to himself, let him!"

A Jock Mammae stood up. He was considerably ruffled, and got into bed without saying good-by word.

In the Fourth Form chemistry class at St. Mary's, were discussing Tom Merry's strange behaviour. His conduct had raised quite a storm of comment among the Fourth-Formers. It was totally opposed to Tom Merry's nature to act in such a manner, and the juniors were making all sorts of conjectures.

"I regard it as very strange," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully. "Tom Merry is not given to the game. It is in his very nature of any that he should have immediately come to the aid of his friends in such a case."

"Of course," agreed Blake. "It is a bit thick when the silly one goes and is all that pouring rain, and then won't have the money to tell us where he's been. We don't want to know, but that's not the point. The point is why did he get on off?"

"Quite so, dear boy," said D'Arcy. "It really appears as though Tom Merry has been up to something. He doesn't want us to know—more twice or so."

"Of course," said Blake, "I'm sure, Tom Merry is probably as sharp as you to get up to tricks, but he should certainly have considered us before doing so. It may be something up against the law—some rule."

Blake shook his head.

"No, no," he said. "Tom Merry wouldn't go out in all this pouring rain just for the sake of keeping himself dry at St. Mary's. It's something deeper than that. I don't know whether you believe in the old story, but Tom Merry was looking rather white about the girl at supper time."

"Laugh a cold laugh!" suggested Stanley Lumbury.

"But!" it wasn't that," said Blake. "If you ask me, he's up to some jolly game against the New House. If so, he ought to be jolly well helped!" (See next page into the account.)

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"It's not that," said White decidedly. "Why, he even wouldn't tell Stansons and Leather where he'd been. Stansons told me all about it. You know just a post-graduate course for a spell, and when Stansons asked him for three bits he said he couldn't spare 'em."

"But how? There's jolly plenty!" said D'Arny. "I do not approve of this behavior of Tom Merry's. Of course, it is hard to suppose that Tom Merry is doing anything malicious, but he is certainly not playing the game."

Melick was the uncle of the Fourth, and he never let an opportunity slip by to make state among the police.

"I think you're all on the wrong trail," he said emphatically. "It looks jolly queer as if Tom Merry had been up to some mischief game with a bookkeeper down at the Grove Hotel. That would account for his going out in the rain, and returning to say where he'd been."

"But!"

"But!"

"But Mr. Melick!"

"Just, just! I warned Melick's servants at last! Justice had them. They are distinctly disgraced in Tom Merry's character, and there are steady no grounds for such an account as this."

"Quite right, quite right!" said White. "By my own self!"

"Well, it's only saying what I think," said Melick coolly. "If you'd got any sense, you'd know that what I say is jolly well the truth. There's that affair of the quilt, too. Why did Tom Merry return to his Stansons house that last?"

"Because he wants the money to show on a house, I expect," said Lewison, with a grin.

D'Arny walked up to Lewison suddenly.

"Put up your hands, you rotten!" he demanded. "But how? If you do not immediately withdraw your remarks I shall give you a splendid thrashing!"

"But!" said Lewison coolly.

"You mean I shall thrash you, I mean!"

White stepped in between D'Arny and Lewison.

"No good making a row here, Quary," he said. "We shall have a jolly party to keep jolly soon."

"Withdraw me, White!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I am going to give that scoundrel thrashing a thrashing!"

"Put up your hands!" said D'Arny.

"Certainly not! I actually refuse to put up my hands, I don't say!" Lewison had said that very well, and afterwards—

"Did you ever know Justice to act like anything else but a rotter and?" asked White.

"But how, no!"

"Then let him alone. Nobody takes any notice of what he says!" exclaimed Lemley Lemley. "The best thing you can do, Quary, is to think something and get on with it, good."

Arthur Augustus retired down.

"Perhaps you are right, Lemley, dear boy," he said. "Justice is a rotten head!"

And when he returned to the dormitory.

And the justice was certainly correct with regard to Tom Merry's strange way of answering his queries in the passing rain. They could think of no reason for his returning to tell them where he'd been, and anything in the nature of a mystery still lay all day.

Melick's reference to a bookkeeper had certainly had some effect, although most of the justice occurred the idea of a reference. The most likely explanation was that Tom Merry was up to some new game against the New House, and he didn't wish to let the others into it until everything was prepared.

As for the Stansons-Justice was all in the air, and it depended upon what was said and still. Outside the rain had turned down as heavily as ever.

But in the morning, when the rising had changed out, the justice were surprised to find that the sun was shining and the rain had stopped. A few clouds were racing across the sky, but there was every promise of the day being fine.

Stansons and Merry were considerably surprised on getting up to find that Tom Merry was in his bed. Evidently he had been before the rising had started.

"Honest if I can make it out!" said Stansons thoughtfully. "Tom is up to some change, that's certain. Where's he gone to now, I wonder? And he wanted to get up early why couldn't he give us a call?"

Merry had been grinning.

"Because he knew we wouldn't get up, I expect," he said. "But! It's because he didn't wish us to know about it!"

"Well, I don't trouble much," said Lewison. "If we wait long enough we shall see what he's up to."

Which was supposed to be a hint.

Tom Merry had been out for when Stansons and Leather descended to the ground. They cut the expense of the third morning to know the girls.

He looked overcast, and looked when he saw his two friends.

"Where have you been?" demanded Stansons.

"Out!"

Tom One January. No. 222.

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"You—your master! What the mischief is up with you?"

"Nothing," said Tom Merry. "I'm all right!"

"Ah! You're going to tell us where you've been!" roared Stansons.

"I can't!"

Stansons roared:

"You're a silly thing!" he shouted indignantly. "There's what you are, Tom Merry. What do you think of him, Mopsy?"

"I don't tell his own jolly chosen where he's been and what he's up to."

Mopsy Lewison grinned.

"It's not to be guessed," he said coolly. "I expect Tom will let us into the steady secret before long. If he doesn't I shall begin to think he's a common bookkeeper member, or something."

If that is the case, we shall have to look it up, and jolly him to dispose of the jolly business—that is, if there are any persons to dispose of it. He may have checked something in the City."

"You hardly liked it?" roared Stansons wrathfully.

"How, how," said Mopsy Lewison.

"You don't disagree?"

"You're being extra polite this morning, aren't you?" asked Lewison for goodly.

"Of course, I'm just as contented for you are to know where Tom Merry's been, but it's a jolly good thing to know."

"I'm sorry," began Tom Merry.

"I'm to be blamed!" cried Stansons. "I thought Mopsy was with you in his affair, but there he's expecting you against me, I'm afraid."

And Stansons departed in high indignation.

"It's jolly well laid off you, Quary," said Lewison reproachfully. "What the mischief are you making all this mystery for?"

"What's doing that, you see?"

"But! Why can't you look up at your chosen instead of keeping on in the dark as if we were strangers?"

"Can't I go outside a walk before breakfast?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Certainly!" said Mopsy Lewison. "but you can't let me see you just to have a walk! Tom's something else, and I think it's rather of you not to tell us!"

"You can think what you like!" said Tom Merry coolly.

And he walked into the School House with a frown. The Fourth Three were divided, and Mopsy Lewison they hardly said a word to one another. During course, Stansons were still in Tom Merry's room, and the boys of the Hall were the subject of much whispered conversation.

After breakfast Lewison and Melick, of the Fourth, were looking across the entrance-passage, looking down the line towards Stansons. The two ends of the School House were wondering what the boy who was working up the road. It was a very busy, and the justice could see that he held an strange kind of book.

"It isn't a book," said Lewison.

"Of course!" cried Mopsy Lewison. "My hat, it's a good thing that chap didn't stop at the Justice's! My people would have taken me away!"

"Of course!" cried Lewison. "They're as heavy as lead, don't you know?"

"Look here!"

"By my!" This village and will have you!"

The justice came up to the scene and looked at the two Fourth-Formers. How low had White returned his gaze with interest.

"Well, what do you see?" demanded Lewison.

"I've got a letter, see," said the village boy brightly. "I don't know who your young gentleman was, but it's for Master Merry."

Lewison took a glance at Melick.

"Oh, that's all right," he said cheerfully. "Hand it over!"

**A STORY NO**

**"GEMITE"**

**SHOULD MISS—**

See pages 11 and 12, of the Cover.

"THE PENNY POPULAR" Every Friday.

"Do you think Harry?" asked the village lad doubtfully.  
 "Yes," said Levison, "but I can take it to him."  
 The messenger hesitated.  
 "Well, it ain't mine. I was told to give the letter to Master Merry himself!"  
 "Well, you can't give it to Master Merry himself!" explained Levison. "Master Merry himself isn't at present. If you give it to me he'll be all right."  
 "Right you are, young gentleman."  
 And the village youth handed over the letter and departed. Levison turned over the envelope curiously. It was addressed to Tom Merry in a friendly hand, and Mellick looked over Levison's shoulder with interest.  
 "What are you going to do with it?" he asked.  
 "I'm going to send Levison to-day."  
 "I don't think so."  
 "I—I—yes," he stammered, "that's a bit dinky, isn't it?"  
 "That he is!" exclaimed Levison. "Why, the giddy boy's nearly gone now. Besides, I expect it's something to do with the recent letting of Tom Merry's. It's our duty to open it and see what game he's up to."  
 And Levison calmly inserted his thumb into the flap of the envelope and tore it open.

CHAPTER II.  
 Levison Catches On.

LEVISON entered an examination. He had taken the letter out of the envelope, and had glanced through it. He looked at Mellick with glittering eyes.  
 "What is it?" asked Mellick quickly.  
 "Good!" said Levison significantly.  
 The words of the letter flashed on us.  
 "M—my lad!" he gasped, holding the letter back. "What's it mean?"  
 "It means that what you had I will had right was right," explained Levison with relief. "The manly and brave Tom Merry is having dealings with some shady characters at the Green Man. My lad, this'll be an eye-opener for the fellows! I always had an idea that Merry was playing a double game."  
 "What are you going to do?" asked Mellick curiously.  
 "First of all, I'll show it to the chap in the examination-room. I expect the rest of the Five's ready. It won't be anything, anyhow! When it comes to a thing like this it's our duty to bring it to light."  
 "Baker!" agreed Mellick.  
 And he hastened across the quad, to the school house. Most of the fellows were indoors, but Levison would stand before long, and the quad, was mostly out now. Levison and Mellick went straight to the examination-room. A good crowd of juniors were there, including Blake and Co.  
 "Levison, you fellows!" shouted Mellick.  
 "Listen to you!" asked Blake. "Isn't it too much to ask of us, Mellick?"  
 "No, no, no!"  
 "Hold on!" said Levison. "Mellick hasn't got anything to say."  
 "Then what do you mean by handing in like a couple of lunatics?" demanded Dugby of the Fourth. "If you've got anything to say, Levison, you can go and say it in the middle of the quad."  
 "That's a sensible idea!" praised Knapton, of the Sixth.  
 "Yes, without!"  
 Levison looked around readily.  
 "I'm going to give you shops as synopses!" he said.  
 "Good!" exclaimed Monty Leather. "We'll give you an eye-shower in return! There are plenty of flats here ready to do the trick!"  
 "No, no, no!"  
 "All right," said Levison. "No talking!"  
 "No, no!"  
 "You mean!" yelled Mellick excitedly. "Levison's found out Tom Merry's secret secret!"  
 "Oh!"  
 "What's that?"  
 "There was a boy."  
 "Is that right, Levison?" demanded Jack Hain.  
 "You'll see it in a minute," said Levison calmly, producing the letter.  
 "I've got a note here, and I consider it's my duty to read it out."  
 "So it!" shouted Tom.  
 "So the lad!" exclaimed Graham of the Sixth. "Let's have it, Levison!"  
 "It's anything to do with Merry?"  
 "It's a jolly bit to do with Merry!" said Levison. "But when he begins we're bound not to say he'll be out. The letter, gentlemen, is headed 'The Green Man Inn,' and it begins like this—"  
 "Let's have a niplet at it!" exclaimed Tom, peering forward.  
 "All right, I'll give it on the wall!" said the end of the Fourth, and he proceeded to pin the letter to the bottom edge of a

map-board over the fireplace. The fellows around stood eagerly. Blake & Co. do not lose. Levison started by grinning maliciously. About a dozen juniors read the letter aloud at the same moment, but before many minutes had passed they all knew what it contained. It was quite short, and the writing was clear.  
 "I want to see you again about the matter in hand. You know the place, so don't fail to be there. If you can't give me a definite promise about the payment of the money I shall write my own time. Fortunately, I believe you are looking me, and if you can't promise an early date for payment, you know what will happen."  
 "Yours faithfully,  
 "Bened Tom."

For a moment after reading the letter the juniors were silent. They could not quite grasp the evident meaning of it. Then, probably at the same moment, all the boys commenced talking together.  
 "My only lad!" gasped Hain.  
 "What an earth is Tom Merry up to?" said Knapton, in amazement.  
 "It's amazing!" exclaimed Jack Hain, with a worried frown. "My only Aunt being, to wonder Tom Merry's been looking white about the girl!"  
 "But jays, it is really remarkable!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, producing his spectacles into his eye and re-reading the letter once again. "Do you really think, dear boy, that Tom Merry has been up to some serious trick? I certainly believe so, however." "Tom Merry has right as white, and it would be quite unjust for me to take in such a disgraceful manner!"  
 "But it's clear, in black and white!" yelled Dugby.  
 "Well, dear boy!" said D'Arcy. "That black prose looks like it!"  
 "Oh, doesn't it?" said Levison emphatically. "It proves that Tom Merry is in trouble with some disgraceful body at the Green Man!"  
 "Oh, surely," agreed Mellick. "There's nothing else to make of it!"  
 "Nothing else at all?" said Levison. "Why, the letter's addressed from the Green Man, and this chap, Tom, is writing to Tom Merry asking for his! The post is absolutely self-evident."  
 "Selfish of the sort, dear lad, but I mean you ought!" shouted D'Arcy. "I don't believe that letter is from Tom Merry at all! He never let's on it, and that old Levison brought it in to show us! But jays, I believe it's another of his rotten impostures!"  
 "You are!" yelled Levison. "I've got the envelope addressed to the same handwriting."  
 "Course he let!" said Mellick. "The chap from the village gives it to us!"  
 "Baker, however."  
 "Oh, did he?" he said loudly. "Look here, Levison, do you mean to say that you took that letter from some chap and gave it to us?"  
 "Certainly!" said Levison readily.  
 "And was it addressed to Tom Merry himself?"  
 "Yes!"  
 "Then I think you're a rotten, heady, stupid fellow!" exclaimed Blake indignantly. "My lad, I've heard of worse things. A letter comes to Tom Merry, and you deliberately open it and bring it here to show us! We don't want to know anything about Tom Merry's business!"  
 "Of course not!" said Knapton. "Levison ought to be ashamed of himself!"  
 "Same!"  
 "Oh!"  
 "There, what! Levison is a delightful scoundrel!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy excitedly. "I consider that it ought to be stopped for being such a rotten job!"  
 "Same, here!"  
 "Same here!"  
 "Same here till he can't see it!"  
 Levison looked away in shame.  
 "You silly ass!" he shouted, "what do you mean by teasing me like this? I brought that letter in that you could see what underhand game Tom Merry's up to—preventing all the while that he's so honest and upright about his business! Why, the two-faced rascal ought to be hanged out of St. Ann's!"  
 "There was a man."  
 "Oh!"  
 "That's nothing to do with the case!" said Blake grandly.  
 "You didn't know what was in the large letters you opened? It might have been simply an account for a book, or something like that. I think it's simply rotten for me to be charged in connection with Tom Merry's letter."  
 "But I've told you that it was he, and he is," said Levison desperately. "If I hadn't have brought that letter in you'd never have known—"  
 "And we didn't want to know, either!" shouted Hain.  
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"Do you think we're all going to leave Tom Merry's house? You're going to be invited, Lewish!"

"Yes, certainly! Except the whole policy land!"

"Yes, that's it!"

"But Lewish was not given time to expostulate. The angry jokers grabbed him, roughly, and he rose in the air, his legs and arms waving wildly.

"Come with him!" roared Blake.

They descended to the floor with a crash that made the whole room shake.

"Oh!" he howled. "Oh-yes! Emergency!"

"Give him another!" roared D'Arny.

"Yes, certainly, thank you!"

Lewish was brought again to the floor after that. His yells made no difference, and when the jokers released him he stepped on his feet, dazed, dazed, and very. His collar was torn out, his hair flying, and his head bent from top to bottom!

"You've gotten better!" he panted.

"Dear me!" said Blake contemptuously. "If you don't want another beating, Lewish, you'd better make yourself scarce! We've had up with you! Where's Mollie?"

The Mollie had mysteriously disappeared. The crowd jokers looked at one another indignantly. They had thought Lewish for his exuberance, but there was no denying that the latter had had an effect on them.

"Well," said Blake, "what do you think it means?"

"I thought I knew!" said Henry Lewish, looking worried. "It can't possibly mean that Mollie is ready to begin with a fight!"

"What?" said Arthur Augustus slowly. "Lewish, I regard you as a coward! Tom Merry has been some warty!"

"I'm afraid to be in conversation with this fellow, but I certainly will not refuse to be in a league with a serious bookish!"

"I know it's jolly funny!" said Blake thoughtfully. "But what can we think? The boys came from their camp, and they are in the same line, and he says that if Tom Merry can't get up by a certain date, he'll do the deed! It seems good to me that Tom Merry has the brains of this camp!"

"That's it!" said Henry Lewish, unable to contain himself, despite the gravity of the occasion.

"Oh, yes," said Blake. "Isn't you start, Mollie?"

"Well, I'm sorry to mention the whole affair," groaned Henry Lewish. "Of course, I know that thing look rather black against Tom Merry, but we don't know anything definite! Why is this thing Tom, my boy?"

"Oh, yes, I have an idea!" said Arthur Augustus.

"The thing of, Mollie?"

"Mollie, Mollie," said D'Arny. "I really wish to ring off!"

"I wish you would ring off!" said Henry Lewish bitterly.

"If you would off, Mollie, there's no telling where you'd go!"

"Do you think we, Lewish?" said Arthur Augustus.

"Well, if you thought all-I mean, wiped off, we should all be tremendously relieved, you see?" said Lewish kindly.

"That's the idea of you?"

"Yes, certainly, I suggest."

"I suggest we buy it!" said Lewish.

"You suggested nothing!" shouted D'Arny. "It's a jolly good thing! We have read this book of Tom Merry's, and we don't want to take it to him and require him to explain! As matters have gone so far, it is only right that he should get on in possession of the facts, whether a misunderstanding, might arise!"

"Is that a temper-twister?" asked Mollie Lewish.

"Certainly, Lewish, I consider it is within his right to take us back to a general meeting! We are all very much concerned about this thing, Mollie, and we ought to read it with propriety and 'bookish' gravity!"

"That's all nonsense!" said Mollie Lewish. "You can't say that something is becoming gravity! You can say, for instance, that your hair is becoming grave, but to say it's becoming gravity!"

"You can!" shouted D'Arny. "I was speaking in metaphor!"

"Oh, I thought you weren't speaking more at all!" groaned Lewish.

"You'll get bumped the same as Lewish if you don't stop it!" said Blake sternly. "I think you ought to be content with a matter like this, Lewish! You're acting like a little kid, with your big dramatic jumps!"

"My dramatic jumps?" said Lewish. "I'm doing it just to show how much I believe in the system business! Do you think I believe that Young's got mixed up with a bookmaker? Why, the very idea is absurd!"

"Think, think! Did Jerry, Lewish, I consider you have turned up tonight? If you were making those warty jumps to show your indifference to the warty details here, I wouldn't mind my warty!"

"You're too good!" continued Lewish.

"Noting of the kind, dear boy!"

The door opened suddenly, and Tom Merry himself came into the common-room. The jokers were silent momentarily, and gazed at the captain of the third with curious looks. Tom Merry approached to the centre of the room.

"Well," he demanded, "what are you all looking at me this October eve for?"

"There was dead silence in the common room.

CHAPTER 4.  
D'Arny Wants to Fight!

"What are you looking at?" asked Tom Merry pleasantly.

"Well, Tom Merry."

"Oh, you're not all dead!" said Tom Merry, looking round. "I thought if I was wondering what the matter!"

"The bell will go for dinner in a minute or two, and I wanted to speak to you about that match with the Grammar School."

"You'll do another time!" said Blake loudly.

"Why, anything more important on hand?"

"Yes, certainly, dear boy!" said D'Arny. "We want you to explain the whole business! I am quite sure, Tom Merry, you will be able to offer a satisfactory explanation!"

"Explanation of what?" asked Tom Merry, puzzled.

"Did Jerry?" Of course, you know's own the book!"

"Yes, yes, Tom Merry, it's this way," said Blake emphatically.

"You are interrupting me, Blake!"

"Yes, I know that, Jerry!"

"Mollie, Mollie!"

"What are you with me talking about?" asked Tom Merry. "You're looking like a lot of water! What's the matter with a book? And that satisfactory explanation had to be made!"

"Well, you see," said Blake earnestly, "there was a letter sent for you that evening."

"I don't see that."

"And Mollie said Lewish got hold of it," groaned Blake.

"Like the Mollie said they saw, they opened it, though it is here, and what it is up on the wall before us like what they saw us!"

"Tom Merry turned pale.

"You've, you've seen a letter that even for me?" he asked quickly. "Where is it? You're not of course, unless if you're sure!"

"But my dear chap, just to Mollie, we'd do this what Lewish was up to tell it was no use! We've given him a liberal beating and checked him out! Well, then, don't you see that we've seen your jolly letter! It's done a day since that!"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Tom Merry, aghast.

The jokers looked at him with a curious expression. Tom Merry was perfectly white in a very peculiar manner. He didn't look any more frightened, but he certainly appeared to be startled and amazed. He looked round rapidly.

"Where's the letter?" he demanded.

"Here it is, dear boy!" said D'Arny, handing it to Tom Merry.

"He shall follow back it, and read through its contents. Then he looked up with a peculiar smile on his face.

"Well," he said, "what of it?"

"That's just it," said Blake. "What of it? We didn't want to see your letter, Young, but now that we have seen it we expect you to explain it! You must admit it looks jolly funny!"

"I don't admit anything of the sort!" said Tom Merry.

"After all, it's my letter, and nothing to do with you whatever! I feel like looking Lewish, and giving him a beating! Of course, I don't believe you believe in the letter, but Lewish's a fool!"

"Yes, certainly!"

"But that isn't what we want to know!" said Mollie, pushing forward. "Look here, Young, it says in that letter that the chap, Tom, wants some money off you. What for? Why are you in his debt?"

"I'm not!" said Tom Merry calmly. "I don't owe him a thing!"

The jokers looked incredulous.

"But it says—"

"Now what it says! I tell you I don't owe the man a thing!" exclaimed Tom Merry firmly. "If you don't like to believe, you can disbelieve it! This letter is private, and it

# ANSWERS

think with a matter that has nothing to do with any of you boys, as I shall be obliged if you'll say up!"

"You're not going to tell us what it's about, then?" said Tommy-Ketchy.

"No, no, no!"

"Well, then, Tom Merry, don't be so heavily skeptical!" said Nathan.

"You say the least, it looks pretty suspicious! This man looks like the Green Man, and he's writing to you for money. If you say you didn't see him say, I believe you!"

He said sarcastically.

"Oh, what?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Oh, nothing!"

"You're a nice chap!" sneered O'Grady, at the dull. "Why, for very lack of your refusing to explain this shows that there's something fishy about it! I don't like to say, you a liar, Tom Merry."

"You won't like it if you do!" said the captain of the Staff indignantly. "This captain is a private man, and you're not going to discuss him in front of all our boys. You can think what you like, but you can't say so!"

And Tom Merry, with flushed face, jumped the letter into his pocket and walked out of the room. O'Grady looked after him with a sneering smile.

"Isn't that a word to say!" he said indignantly. "Merry was simply misunderstood! It's no plain of anything that he's doing something dishonest! If he had he would have spoken up immediately if he saw me!"

Which seemed absolutely feasible. The justice could hardly think anything else under the circumstances, and they returned together to groups talking sympathetically. "During the time you're in the kitchen, for the kitchen could get between them talking about the strange occurrence. They had ample time to talk over it, however, and when they had some they provided only with the usual, more simple conversation than even that Lavinia's conversation of the case was correct."

A second gathering under the old tree, where the usual was not so much—very different in its traditional and uncorrected appearance of a week before. As the justice was too tired to think of such a walk as usual.

"If you talk me—" began O'Grady.

"I don't see you!" said Nathan. "What up?"

"Well, you ask me," repeated O'Grady. "Tom Merry ought to be taken up before the Staff! I tell it a bit too thick when those who try to speak everybody they're capable of members of the kitchen before and it's not a good idea!"

"What up?" repeated Nathan low-down again!

"Merry's got a word to say with the Green Man!"

"Merry's got?" and O'Grady quickly. "Where had he been when he wouldn't say a word to us last night? Why did he go outside of that rule and take us?"

"Merry's got to see the Green Man, if you'll!" sneered Nathan, from the back of the crowd. "And the fact that he was this chap Tom Merry once proves that he's been talking to me! Tom Merry was talking like when he said he didn't see Tom anything!"

"You could!" sneered O'Grady. "He got me to believe that Tom Merry was talking to me!"

"Oh, what?" said Nathan. "You wouldn't say that if Tom Merry was here himself? I wouldn't it is up to us, then, boys, to give Nathan and O'Grady a thorough talking!"

And Arthur Argus's looked round indignantly.

But the justice was strongly sympathetic to the appeal. They did not really believe that Tom Merry had been up to his eyes in Lavinia had deceived it, but there was no denying that there was something suspicious about the letter from Mr. Tom.

"But don't!" ejaculated O'Grady. "Bring the witness!"

"Oh, I don't!" said Nathan. "You know we're right!"

"Nathan of the staff!" ejaculated Arthur Argus. "I wouldn't that you are a set of lawless wretches! You don't believe that Tom Merry is guilty, but you uphold these wretches in their lawless behavior!"

"Yes, and it looks highly suspicious," said Nathan indignantly.

"I thought if we have to make of it, it's all the same!"

"I wouldn't," said Nathan-Ketchy. "If Tom Merry had only explained to us it would have been all right, but when he saw us ready, and refused to say a word—well, I guess we're not sure when for doubting him."

"That's what I say!" ejaculated Lavinia, of the Fourth.

"That makes an difference whatever, dear boys," said Arthur Argus indignantly. "Under the circumstances, we should take Tom Merry at his word and really regard him. It's entirely reasonable everybody to make all sorts of accusations without proof."

"We've got proof!" said Nathan. "Tom Merry's list!"

"Nathan!" agreed O'Grady. "A hundred times!"

"Oh, right to be looked out!" growled O'Grady.

"The Staff!"

Arthur Argus was obliged in his usual dignified style, but

he was too excited to think about such a trivial matter as clothes. He took off his dirty jacket, and it went rattling across the quad. He coat followed, and he pushed back his coat with indignation.

"Now, then, you witness!" he shouted indignantly. "It's right that that chap who calls Tom Merry a liar! O'Grady, you know, you frightened Lavinia: I'm going to give you a talking!"

"So Nathan!" growled O'Grady.

"The Staff, you're afraid!" called O'Grady, standing up and down indignantly. "I wouldn't that Tom Merry is a liar!"

"If you follow me all down on him just because of that letter, then you are a set of lawless wretches! I wouldn't write to him anything more to do with you!"

"Good!" ejaculated Nathan.

"I shall write you, Mr. Tom!" said Arthur Argus indignantly. "I wouldn't write to him anything more to do with such a set of lawless wretches! I shall stick to my ground to make me loose."

"Oh, that up, then, you're off your rocker!" said Nathan indignantly.

"I wouldn't write to that up, then, and I see out of my pocket!" ejaculated O'Grady indignantly. "If you dare write to him one up, then I shall immediately show you something to make me up!"

"I don't do anything so foolish!" said Nathan. "It's only a matter of you taking up for Tom Merry like this, but you must think of the fact that he's not saying the same."

"Nathan of the Staff, don't you!" ejaculated O'Grady. "Tom Merry has a perfect right to say his own words. It's only because of Lavinia that you know about the matter at all. I do not believe for an instant that Tom Merry has done anything dishonest, and I wouldn't you are likely a witness under advantage of him just because you have seen her list."

"What advantage to show?" ejaculated O'Grady. "The letter was there for us to read, as we read it. I didn't see a bit of advantage at all, because I always thought Tom Merry was a honest chap. Well, I do see, as a matter of fact, but it's not plain as anything that he's in trouble!"

"You don't say, I think that," said O'Grady. "But there is nothing wrong with Tom Merry in a dishonest matter. I wouldn't that he would be any more than Tom Merry and my self help him if he gets in the way!"

"How about the Green Man?" repeated O'Grady.

"The Staff, then, you are all up!" said Arthur Argus indignantly. "The Green Man is an inn, where anybody can stay, and I haven't anything to say. Why, my ground, might stop at the Green Man with certain ones!"

Nathan looked thoughtful.

"There's something in that," he thought. "If so, then, O'Grady, we don't believe anything against Tom Merry—we only say I look suspicious. When he proves that the Staff's all right, we will really regard him. What are we to think, though, if he will promise to keep us in the gilly club?"

"I don't know what you mean," said O'Grady indignantly.

"You mean that you have some witness whatever against Tom Merry in the way of proof, say, witness to O'Grady, Nathan and O'Grady for their lawless behavior. Is that, don't you?"

"I don't know what you mean," said O'Grady indignantly. "I don't know what you mean, you witness!"

And Arthur Argus O'Grady, with his attitude turned slightly into his eye, and his own high in the air, marched off towards the Staff House, strictly adhering of the fact that his shirt-sleeves were pushed up, and that his coat and hat were lying somewhere in the middle quad.

## CHAPTER 8.

### On the Track.

ARTHUR ARGUS'S SPARE, was very much on his mind to-day for the rest of the day. Up to his eyes in the matter of how something would do with the case for the time being. They spoke to him on several occasions, but O'Grady was very not inclined to answer.

With Nathan and Nathan, however, he was quite friendly. Tom Merry's clothes had been thinking over the matter, and had frankly told their minds that they didn't believe his offer with Mr. Tom was anything like dishonesty.

Nevertheless, Nathan and Nathan determined to find out, if possible, what Tom Merry was up to. They found a way and were helped in Arthur Argus O'Grady. The end of the Staff House was very friendly in the observation of the Fourth-Formers. It was O'Grady's intention to go, which had caused Nathan and Nathan to believe in Tom Merry in spite of their own misgivings. Even as it was, they still had a private feeling of doubt as to whether O'Grady was right or not.

Friday & Co., of the New House, came with an offer to attend to the case, and asked to know what the trouble was. Nathan and O'Grady and Green were also there, and the three O's of the New House were just in possession of the fact. They didn't like the look of things at all, but kept their mouths shut.

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the sunny Swedish justice, shook his head doubtfully. "How does Tom Jerry had come to the fact he had proved himself to be a steady, upright, law-loving boy, and it would have been the credit of Mr. Tully's letter to convince you. But the bulk of the New Haven justice was of the usual opinion as the Michael House contingent—that Tom Jerry was playing some game which he was afraid to reveal. Had he not feared the consequences, why had he refused to speak?"

"What is it, were talking the other night with Howard Gray, of the third Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of course, had had the credit, but he had generally retired from the movement. It is Tom Jerry's steady and rather standard, for the Verdict Three retained from making any reference whatever to the matter which filled their minds. In consequence, hardly a word was spoken, and Messers and Missy Lawther took their departure as soon as they conveniently could.

"It's rather!" said Messers miserably, as they walked along the passage. "I think Tommy might mention to me, Missy. He's given us the word that he's doing nothing dishonestly, as, of course, we believe him. But it's jolly queer, all the same."

"Thought you ought to tell us about it," said Missy Lawther. "I'm not certain, but I'm minded if I like to see Tommy with such a heavily long story! We've got to find it out, Messers, old man—we've got to find out what Tom Jerry's up to."

"That's all very well," promised Messers. "It's very enough to talk, but it's not so easy to do the thinking-out Missy! Help give me and Missy's still on his hip."

And Messers and Lawther made their way to Study No. 4. They opened the door and looked in. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was there, sitting up in solitary state. He looked up at the door open.

"Through you come in, dear boy!" said Messers. "It was unexpected that I should be a guest of Howard Gray's, dear boy," said D'Arcy. "But come in the welcome, welcome again, Tom Jerry, I refused to attend. There here, I am here," he said.

"How, Missy?" asked Missy Lawther. "There's nothing whatever to worry about, Lawther. In my opinion Tom Jerry is being very honestly treated."

"Well, the city is in bringing it all on himself," greeted Messers. "We've just left him in the study, and— My hat, dear's his step!"

"The justice glanced at one another as a brief step touched in the passage.

"Did you, I would it be in quite out!" said Messers, stopped by the door, glancing up, and glancing down the passage. Tom Jerry was just turning the corner, and Messers could see that he was sitting in his eye and content.

"My only hope!" he said. "Dear's his step!" "Dear's his step!" said Tom Jerry, as he went out. "Yes, he's got his hat and coat on."

"And then, it's up to us to follow him, dear boys," said D'Arcy, jumping up. "Of course, I should not discuss of people's hats in public, but there is no harm in following him, and then where he goes to?"

"Down on, then," said Missy Lawther. Arthur Augustus grabbed his hat, and the three left the study. They hurried down the passage, and emerged into the study yard. A fine form could be seen near the gates.

"That is he!" said Messers. "That's Tully. He's closing the gates, but by all the rules! Back up!"

"The wind across the open," said Missy Lawther. "Yes, Tully," pursued Messers, "has Tom Jerry just gone out?"

"I don't know whether it was Master Jerry or not," greeted Tully, the warden gates. "Somebody went out—going up! He slipped out after I could find out to watch. I'll tell you when he comes back, though!"

Messers shook the gates vigorously. "That's behind!" he exclaimed. "They are, Master Messers," said Tully loudly. "You don't get out as soon as night. It's just looking up some more, or it's up to the rules to give the warden you've got a"

"Now, do be reasonable, Tully!" "It isn't good," promised Tully. "The gate is locked, and you can't get out!" "But don't, Tully, please bring a message!" "It's no go," said Messers, moving away. "We shall have to search up."

"Search of the gate!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I actually expect to give it up. There's to find out where Tom Jerry—" "Come on, you see!" whispered Messers. "We'll keep over the wall."

"But don't, that's not a bad thing!" "The three justices moved away from the gates, Messers and Missy Lawther accompanying in an odd state. Tully's shouting, "The Gate Locked—No, No."

to himself, and raised his little hedge. He thought that the justice were done.

"Tully's game is," murmured Lawther. "Good! Come on!" said Messers softly.

"The boys, we shall get our vengeance in a twinkling!" said Messers, and D'Arcy.

"You shall be very anxious about your giddy child's this morning!" he advised. "You shall give to look up, you know. It will not be long before the door shall be wide open before he gets to the door."

And they hurried to the open, where it was an easy matter to climb over the wall into Hydrostatic Lane. A big fire alarm clock in the wall, and it was easy to get down that time. It was an easy matter at this particular spot. The wind whistled merrily through the lattice branches, and downed all other sounds in the vicinity.

"You had!" said Lawther to Messers. "All across!" said Messers.

He scrambled up, the other two watching from below. They could just see Messers in the dim light, and suddenly he jumped himself back, and dropped to the ground. Messy Lawther gazed at him in astonishment.

"Well, you looked, what have you dropped for?" he said indignantly.

"What, what's the idea, Messers?" asked D'Arcy. "What?" whispered Messers softly.

"What have we got to do about it?" demanded Missy Lawther. "Tom Jerry's just over the other side of the wall, you see?" murmured Messers. "I was just going to do this when I saw him. He's willing to move on—like Tom, I expect."

"My hat!" "The door!" "Didn't they hear you?" asked Lawther.

"I was the wind was making too much noise," said Messers. "I will see all get up and see what sort of a trap this Tom is. Now we know where just on the other side we can climb up without making any noise."

"Good job," said Lawther. "Up you go!" "Yes, we shall!"

With extreme rapidity this time the three justices appeared to the top of the wall. They clung there a rub, and cautiously looked over. Messers had been right; immediately below them could be seen the house of Tom Jerry and a steeply rising man. In the glass the three justices could not catch sight of his house, although his voice, laugh and occasional hoarse words with the wind.

"That's my hat with the matter," he said, in a loud tone. "That's my hat with me longer than that, he's Tully!" said Tom Jerry, slightly. "Can't you give me his Secretary?"

"No, I can't," snapped Mr. Tully. "Today's Tuesday. If you can't let me know the money by Thursday afternoon, that's the day after tomorrow, you know what it happens. No, I can't do my work, I believe your's looks right—no."

"Yes, you can't do my work," said Tom Jerry, slightly. "I'll do my utmost to get the money. I promise you, Mr. Tully, that I'll pay you every penny by Thursday."

"All right, you've got till Thursday afternoon," said Mr. Tully. "I'm sorry of the Green Man, and if you get the money before the time arranged you can bring it down to me, and we'll settle the transaction then and there. I give you my word, I don't want to bring about this money being worth longer than I can help."

"Suppose I can't raise the money by Thursday?" "Then I'll wait the week."

"I can't," whispered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Isn't this warden the warden's, dear boy?" "Yes, it's a bit odd, and Messers softly. "We'll get down."

And they cautiously hurried themselves to the ground.

CHAPTER 6.

D'Arcy had Cheered.

MISSEY LAWTHERS, Messers, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood at the foot of the wall, with the warden watching in the tree above them, and gazed at one another.

"Well," said Messers, in a content voice. "Well, dear boy!" repeated D'Arcy.

"What do you think of Tom Jerry now?" asked Messers, with a note of dull sneer in his voice. "I'd hoped and hoped, and I don't myself that this money he's asked up is worth anything. But what we've just heard shows that Lawther wasn't far wrong in his first guess. It's simply easy to have to admit it, but Tommy's been getting into real trouble with a heavily steady character."

"Looks like it," admitted Lawther gloomily. "The fact, you see, is that we've got to find out where Tom Jerry has really been to see if we can't find out what Tom Jerry has really



been leaving Anthony with a bookishish? Do you mean to suggest that Mr. Terry is a bookish?"

"What else are we to think?"

"Anthony said that you buried" "buried!" exclaimed Arthur Augustine angrily. "No Jerry, I'm surprised at you. Buried! And buried! You are, Tom, Marvey's special chance, and yet you are ready to wear his shoes at the last opportunity!"

"Great opportunity, eh?" grunted Marvey. "Why, you father's dummy, you couldn't have heard what that fat little fellow said!"

"I heard every word."

"Then, you're a silly dummy for not looking for the hole in the hole," declared Marvey. "Mr. Terry used to place as anything that he'd give Tommy up till Thursday to pay up. What does it look like? Pay up what?"

"I'd have paid his eyes!"

"Perhaps Tom Marvey has been happy some fatish hole, or something like that," he suggested. "That would explain Mr. Terry's demand for money."

"Quite likely," said Marvey sarcastically. "You catch a big writing letter, and coming here after looking for them, to speak to Tom Marvey about the money for a pair of giddy black boots. Besides, it was in a pretty big amount, or Tom Marvey would have paid up. What kind of fat came so suddenly and so much by long-shit?"

"What?"

"And Mr. Terry staying at the Green Man, and talked about nothing but 'buried' with Mr. Marvey." "And he said that if Tommy didn't pay up by Thursday it would mean the end."

"It's nothing involved, but you'll catch," said Marvey. "Naturally I think it's a jolly play," said Marvey loudly.

"That Mr. Terry is a bookishish, and Tom Marvey has, certainly, attacked himself to be drawn into business. If it was anything else a capital's possible means the end. My fat, it's simply money: I've no idea if you are willing to be led as this. You can't say anything to him, either, so he'll leave us over his head."

"You frightened away?" exclaimed Marvey excitedly. "You don't know why you pay them, Tom Marvey is a woman!"

"Indeed, I'll know what to think," said Marvey loudly.

"I caught you in a trap of mine," said Arthur Augustine loudly. "No Jerry, I should have thought that you would have believed in Tom Marvey against all sorts of ground. Why, did last night Tom Marvey was so far from money as any of us! He's never here out the that bookish, which positively proves that this tramp has been spring upon us."

"Oh, rate?" said Marvey. "I'm blessed if I can see why you should believe in him so much! It's perfectly comic to think of Tommy getting into such trouble, but we must look the facts in the face!"

"Naturally," said Marvey loudly.

"Naturally," grumbled Arthur Augustine, with a snarl. "Fat Jerry, we have no facts whatever to work on. We only have a few words of the conversation, so we couldn't judge what it was about. Suppose, for instance, Tom Marvey is paid the money for some such job. Then it would make sense very considerably."

"My fat, I should like to think that!" said Marvey glumly. "But it's a bit too impossible. No, no, Jerry, if Tommy doesn't tell us all about it now we shall have to let him go for you may tell the others some. If he doesn't like to confide in us, then, then I don't reckon to discover any mystery."

And Marvey and Arthur walked slowly across the dusty road to the hilly-faded lighted house. They disappeared inside, and Marvey called loudly to be followed in their wake.

"No Jerry," he murmured. "I'm really surprised at Marvey and Louie. I think that maybe too very black, but it is really impossible to think of Tom Marvey mingling himself with some bookishish."

And Arthur Augustine started up and down the dark road, musing on the possible. The word of Mr. Jerry's, though he offered conclusions, was one of the largest-headed puzzles in the world. In spite of all the evidence—no seeming evidence—he was still amazed at Tom Marvey. It may simply explain to believe in writing against the hole of the shell, and what no longer to give account of proof. Even if Tom Marvey himself had indicated that he was moving forward with bookishish, it is doubtful whether Marvey would have looked Tom at first. Arthur Augustine could be very obstinate when he liked, and he chose to be obstinate now.

"I guess to find out what the secret is," he murmured to himself loudly. "If Tom Marvey is an enough to write to take me into his confidence, then I shall have to get on the track, and depend on his giving answers. I wish I knew more about the detective line, and what all it means a jolly of one and judgment to deal with a district of his suspicion." Arthur Augustine paced up and down, very much taken up by his little scheme, and of that he did not believe a word of

the game. A man which excited him, however, and he looked up with a snarl.

"No Jerry, is that you, Tom Marvey?" he asked.

"I'm glad to see you, but I'm not at all surprised. Who's behind the closed gate?"

"Fugget it, that boy! He looked it several minutes ago."

"No, Jerry?" complained Tom Marvey. "How am I to get it?"

"Why the hell, that boy?" said Marvey.

"The fathead! I shall be reported for being out after looking?"

Arthur Augustine walked up to the gate.

"I don't really tell me how you can avoid that," he said.

"No Jerry, I've got an idea! Why wait a minute, that boy!"

And Marvey went to the little ledge and knocked Tuggle for. Tom Marvey looked on in surprise. There he found a check of several shilling bank, and Tuggle appeared with his bunch of keys.

"Young man!" he grumbled. "I never see with your own eyes. You Marvey Marvey, as Marvey Marvey was about me. An open-eyed young man is Marvey Marvey."

The gate was unlocked and Tom Marvey came through, knowing that Tuggle would not report him now that Marvey had insured his scheme. The two parties walked across the yard.

"You are, Jerry?" said Tom Marvey. "What did you want to tell me Tuggle for? It would have only meant silly business."

"You don't mention it, that boy!" said Arthur Augustine.

"But, really, I was just wondering where you have been. I've got to see, but you haven't told me to go down to Widdicombe."

"No, I've just been down the road," said Tom Marvey carelessly.

"No Jerry, whatever for?"

"Oh, you wouldn't understand, Jerry?"

"Anything to do with that beauty behind it?" asked Marvey.

"Oh, yes," admitted Tom Marvey. "It was something to do with it. I shouldn't be that thing many years. It's looking much better. It's jolly done of you to get like a book with all the other fellows out supporting me."

A lot of unscientific things Arthur Augustine if Jerry's intent. Tom Marvey had told the truth as he would to all the questions, and if he had not told the truth it would have been during with bookishish, he would certainly have a bookishish.

Arthur Augustine said loudly that he wasn't for all the talk in believing the shell before to be innocent of any wrongdoing.

"Really, Tom Marvey, there is no need to say anything about the matter," said the word of Mr. Jerry's.

"I should the other fellows as liable to come down. They wouldn't think that bookish is proved against you, but I need of the whole idea."

"Thanks, Jerry," said Tom Marvey quietly.

"I'm very surprised."

"I'm not quite satisfied"—"to begin."

"What about were you questioning?" asked Tom Marvey.

"Well, Jerry, what Marvey says me, I gather you are washed in need of the bookish," said Marvey. "First, except a few lines you need a good-looking man and a good-looking man."

"No, Jerry, I couldn't take anything," said Tom Marvey, shaking Jerry on the back. "But it's a good book to offer it, but I've afraid I shall have to return."

"That, my dear boy—"

"There are no facts about it, Jerry. I simply can't accept anything. Thank you all the same, you Jerry," said Tom Marvey loudly. "I don't mind admitting to you, then, that you're a fat of Jerry's, but, honestly, I can't tell you anything about it. If you don't ask any questions, you'll be doing me

"I'm very well, that boy, I will certainly," said Arthur Augustine carelessly. "Although I don't mean Mr. Marvey, that you are watching an one of Jerry's, I believe in it. If I considered it the duty of his choice to truly would have a bookishish."

"Well, that's impossible in the face, Jerry all over," said Tom Marvey. "You'll let me go my own way, and I'll get out of the hole all right."

"I shouldn't have to, that boy."

And Tom Marvey and Arthur Augustine if Jerry's intended the street Marvey's and entered the well lighted entrance hall.

### CHAPTER 7 Tom Marvey's Plan

WHEN Tom Marvey started his study in the study, he was not a bit surprised. He was thinking of Arthur Augustine if Jerry's standing, and refused to believe anything against him, and although Tom Marvey did not show much sign of it, he was truly affected by Jerry's own business.

Marvey and Louie were in the study, having worked there a few minutes before, and they looked at each other they had

THE NEW LIBRARY—No. 28.

been detected there for an hour or so. Tom Merry's chance had depended on whether his alarm had shown to them, though they knew nothing of his coming with Mr. Toot. Minnie and Lewie had been very grave; they had very serious doubts about their plans.

"You best wait," said Minnie seriously.

"Yes," said Tom Merry, glancing at his late partner and taking his moment off. "I'm going to do my paper now. Check over that table's delivery, will you, Minnie?"

"Hold on a minute," said Minnie. "No need to be in such a hurry, my dear. Where've you been to?"

"Oh, nowhere in particular."

"Pretty close to go to, isn't it?" said Minnie Lewie.

"Tom Merry looked at his alarm thoughtfully.

"What's the game?" he asked. "Why did you come out here? I don't give you for you to be out here without your demands. In a house with I've been to."

"No, you jolly well wait!" said Minnie earnestly. "Look here, Tom Merry, we want to know what game you've got on. We've had enough of this blasted mystery. If you don't tell us what you're doing—"

"Lewie'll tell you because I've got to," said Tom Merry quickly.

"You mean you don't want it to go about the school?" asked Lewie.

"Certainly."

"Well, if you can't do it all on your own, we'll say nothing," Tom Merry bent into a row.

"What's it to be?"

"It'll all come out for you to make," said Minnie hotly. "If it's a week's work, my son! If you think you're going to think it's your jolly well wait!"

"I've got the best plan to crack you," said Tom Merry, smiling. "My dear Minnie, you speak as if I've committed a number of something of that sort. I assure you that I've done nothing that I'm ashamed of."

"Minnie and Lewie had looked at Tom Merry.

"The job you mean that they took some money!" demanded Minnie.

"Not a penny!" replied Tom Merry.

"Minnie and Lewie were silent."

"You want them to do it? Honestly say you don't care how it goes?" said Minnie hotly.

"Yes, you don't want it?" asked Minnie.

"I suppose you're thinking of that last night's letter?" said Tom Merry earnestly. "I'm not going to tell you a blamed word about it, and you can think what you like!"

"We think something, my dear," said Lewie significantly.

"That's all you're talking about?"

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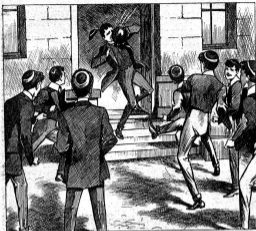
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Locher came out of the doorway just as the ball flew in, and the unexpected shock of the whizzing football in his face sent the Sixth-Formist reeling back as if he had been shot. "My only hat!" murmured Locher. You've done it now, Dick Dicks!" The incident takes place in the *very complete* volume of Harry W. Harrison & Co., entitled "KID OF THE MOUNTAIN," by Frank Richards. This grand story is contained in the current issue of our popular Companion Paper, "The Magnet" Library, and is one that all "Gem" readers will enjoy. Ask for this week's "Magnet" Library. On Sale everywhere.

Arthur Augustus jammed his cigarette into his eye, and surveyed Tom Merry with a steady gaze.

"Ed Jerry, do you mean to intimate that I put the written coverage in your handy pocket?" he said lightly. "You are still getting, that boy?"

"It was last night, though," replied Tom Merry.

"You are an idiot, son," said Ed Jerry softly. "I never thought the masterful British; I do not go to such a foreigner's kitchen. And Arthur Augustus walked away before I started. You never finished after tea with a drink. The word of St. Joe's had told him quite plainly that it was he who had placed the coverage in the pocket of his trousers."

"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry. "In spite of Gump's little ways, he's one of the best-treated chaps at St. Joe's. The way he's coming up for me is wonderful, considering the circumstances. Then, because I won't accept a loan, to throw a quilt in my garden, and refuse to admit anything about it. Gump's a look-in overnight job!"

#### CHAPTER 8.

##### Something More For Gump.

"SAY, MERRY!"

Merry Lowther turned, and looked at Tom Merry rather coldly. The treatment of the thief had just descended from the study. He meant he would find a few

minutes, and most of the fellows were laughing about the present.

"And you speak to me, Tom Merry?" asked Lowther.

"No, I just want to ask you about the Gump match with the Quinners before next week."

"Sure," said Lowther shortly. "I can't stop!"

And Merry Lowther deliberately turned his back and engaged himself in conversation with Kenneth one of the staff.

Tom Merry lit his pipe, and for a moment a frown appeared upon his brow. Then his wrinkles disappeared, and he resumed his usual manner.

Merry Lowther had suddenly told him that it didn't want his company—and Tom Merry smiled.

"He, he, he!"

"Hello, what's up with Tom Merry?" said Bernard Clyn.

"He, he, he!" replied Tom Merry.

"What are you thinking about, son?" demanded Clyn.

"I'm not thinking about anything," purred Tom Merry.

The simple laughing between Merry Lowther's being kinder than I ever thought he could be. My only Sunday supper, and fellows seem to be all off your rackets!"

"I don't know so much about that," said Clyn then. It is a curious case."

"What are you talking about, son?" demanded Clyn. "I'm not talking about anything," purred Tom Merry. "We can't get any way to go into other people's affairs, but it strikes me you're asking the silly of it. This is to get on off. You see, Lowther—No. 208."

the mast? You've been up to some rotten game, and now you're trying to sneak it."

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Tom Merry. "Ho, ho, ho!" shouted Monty Lewther, unable to restrain himself. "What's up with you?"

"Nothing—nothing at all!"

And Tom Merry read down the passage waiting for all to be well with. The fellows regarded him suspiciously. It didn't seem to be keeping with his glibly answer for him to be laughing so heartily. But Crooks started openly, and pointed down the passage.

"Was sleep, if you like?" he jested. "He's doing that sleep just to make us think there's nothing really the matter! But he won't catch me! Why, the chap's a bigger rascal than I ever expected!"

Monty Lewther frowned.

"Oh, is he?" he said warily. "Look here, Crooks, if you want a thing or two, just repeat what you said, and I'll see if I can oblige you!"

Crooks glared at Lewther in surprise.

"Why, you see!" he stammered, "you're as much against Tom Merry as any of us! A minute ago you deliberately accused him!"

"Well, that's an honesty of yours!" said Monty Lewther darkly. "I'll do what I jolly well like, but I'm not going to quietly stand here and listen to you calling your captain a rascal!"

Crooks approved.

"How kind of captain!" he said, looking round for approval.

"Why, he might be as cheated out of his position before another hour's passed! Tom Merry's an understudy, otherwise he—"

"Hill!"

Monty Lewther's fist came round like lightning, and Crooks caught it on the nose. He sat down with surprising calmness in the passage.

"Oh!" he howled. "Ouch—ouch!"

"You'll get some more if you don't fly up!" said Monty Lewther sternly.

"Oh! You meanly rascal!" growled Crooks. "Oh, you've broken my arm!"

"I'll knock it right off, if you say much more!" growled Lewther.

Crooks got up and stunk away. Monty Lewther didn't leave exactly who he had for himself, go, but he had his own better to reckon what he was doing.

The action meant that he was picking up for Tom Merry—which, after all, was just what Monty Lewther had decided to do.

After looking Tom Merry straight out into the quad, and to see him really to himself, although many jokers passed up and down quite close to him, Tom Merry, however, did not look like a boy who had a guilty secret on his mind. He was as easy as any, except for a worried little frown on his brow.

At the other side of the quad, a group of Fourth-Formers were discussing the question of Tom Merry's arrest.

Anything in the nature of a mystery always excited the boys, and this mystery concerning Tom Merry's dealings with Mr. Tink had now been investigated for two days. Curiosity was at fever heat, and some of the boys were actually thinking of organizing a cowardly prepared rag to tease Tom Merry to spite.

They very much wanted to know what was in the wind, too, although they all had unpleasant doubts, there was nothing certain about them.

Tom Merry was extremely popular at St. John's, and this attitude had been almost as a shock to his stomach supporters. The fact that now Monty and Lewther had gone against him excited heartily with the majority of the juniors. They did not know that Monty and Lewther were taking up their fraudulent attitude chiefly because their leader would not realize it, there.

The crowd of Fourth-Formers were very excited, and Lewther's voice could be heard above all. Lewther was evidently the speaker.

"Gentlemen!" he shouted. "This honey has gone about for enough! We've got to think seriously of the honor of the school—"

"Hah!" shouted Jack White warmly. "You're a nice chap to talk about the honor of the school! You'd better drop up, Lewther, if you don't want to get jolly well lamped again!"

"How, how?"

"I don't see why I should drop up!" shouted Lewther. "This matter has gone far enough! It's jolly evident that Tom Merry is playing a double game, and I propose we rag him until he comes up!"

"Down up, you scabbed scab!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "Tom Merry's a rascal!"

"I say, I'll tell you, Lewther, what kind it is of youth. Tom Merry can do as he likes, I should say!"

"Rather not!" said Lewther warmly. "Why, I shouldn't be surprised if he's been visiting the Green Kite for months!"

"Perhaps you've seen him there?" yelled Anthony-Lewis.

"Ho, ho, ho!"

Lewther turned red.

"I haven't been to the beauty parlour for months!" he said. "I don't mean to bring up old things like that in my day! You were wrong, appear me at the time, and I consider I've got a perfect right to be my opinion. Tom Merry is the rascal!"

"Hill!"

"Hah!"

"Yah!"

"Tom, what?" shouted D'Arcy. "We had good against you, Lewther, you watch, and there's another! but a worse letter to bring against Tom Merry! It's another—another but a good example. I suggest it as evidence that Tom Merry should be punished without any proof of his guilt."

"Well, I think it's jolly good proof!" said D'Arcy.

"Little like it, anyhow," said Frank, of the Blue House.

"Of course it does," said Lewther. "I don't know I know what he's thinking about!"

"If you want my plain opinion—"

"I'll do it!"

"Well, you're going to have it, whether you want it or not!"

shouted Lewther. "I think that Tom Merry's the worst chap that's ever been at St. John's. He's been here all this time, and made everything think that he's a model of goodness! And now it comes out that he's been leading a double life like a jolly thief!"

"Why, the chap's simply a scoundrel to the core, and ought to be banished out of St. John's!"

Lewther looked round, with a flushed face, and for a moment there was silence. Then Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with his face and gleaming eyes, pushed through the crowd and faced Lewther.

"Put up your hands, you impudent scoundrel!" he said sternly. "You go to the headmaster's office at once!"

"Hah!" said Lewther sulkily. "You're as bad as Tom Merry!"

Without a second's hesitation, D'Arcy leaped forward and gave Lewther a smashing smack on the side of his face. Lewther staggered back, his cheek burning.

"You scoundrel!" he yelled. "You'd better stand what you've done, D'Arcy!"

"You've insulted Tom Merry in a disgraceful manner, and made it two times worse by insulting me in your rotten remarks!" said Arthur Augustus quietly. "If you don't put up your hands, Lewther, I shall give you a lesson!"

Crooks D'Arcy got into a tremendous state of excitement when he went for Lewther. But on this occasion, he was perfectly cool. With his hands clasped over the end of his nose, he went for Lewther with a series of determined blows.

"D'Arcy could fight—and fight well. Before Lewther could have time to defend himself, he kept forward, and caught him a terrific blow on the chest.

"You will pay him, you scoundrel!" he roared.

"Yes," snarled Lewther. "I will!"

And, without hesitation, the end of the Fourth Formers to ward and lunged out. In a second the pair were at it hammer and tongs, and the crowd of juniors looked on excitedly.

"You scabbed scab!" yelled D'Arcy. "You'll be seen by me at the moment."

"Hah!" yelled D'Arcy. "I'm off!" Lewther a hotbed scoundrel!"

And Arthur Augustus went into the light once heartily than ever. He dropped, unscathed, however, and before a minute had passed Lewther's nose was streaming red and one of his eyes was fast closing. There was no doubt as to who was the best fighter.

As the battle proceeded D'Arcy became excited, and heartily he himself got, a series of all congratulations. Both he and Lewther were battered by the crowd, and soon afterwards would have been back out, he could not do so.

His suddenly there was an interruption.

"What the mischief is all this row about?" demanded the warden.

Tom Merry burst through the crowd, and he stepped between D'Arcy and Lewther just as the warden was lifting him. The blue caught Tom Merry fairly in the chest, and he staggered back with a gasp.

"You see!" he ejaculated faintly.

"You don't understand, Tom Merry!" shouted D'Arcy. "There is really an election for your intermediate! It is necessary for Lewther to have a English teacher, and I'm just administering it!"

"Well, you'd better start administering it," said Tom Merry sulkily. "You see, you'll be taken before the Head if you're seen! I can guess what the fight's about, and if Lewther



And Figgins & Co. left their study, and walked out into the dark night. It was deserted, and never spying out the line of the land for a moment they made a dash for the school House steps and slipped along the well-lighted passageway. None by look than anything else, they succeeded in reaching Tom Merry's study without discovery, and with but a few minutes before the midnight opened the door. The question was—had Tom Merry & Co. returned?

The door opened and revealed the study dark and silent.  
"Closed," murmured Figgins. "The coast's all clear! The study mustn't be here!"

"Rubbish!"  
"Did you check back, Wym?" asked Kew.  
"Rubbish!" said Fatty Wym. "But I'm not going to be an enough to flash it and tell me get to the cupboard. That's where the grub'll be, you see, but your boots!"

Figgins & Co. entered the study and closed the door softly behind them. Then they crossed the room to the cupboard. Fatty Wym fished his electric torch out of the desk, and as a light it was open.

"Now for the grub!" murmured Wym eagerly.  
"Rubbish!"  
"Rubbish!" said Kew.

Figgins & Co. stared into the cupboard. There was nothing there, but some old leather books, half a jar of raspberry jam, a loaf of bread, a small piece of butter, and a tin of marmalade. "This remains of a former feast, old Fatty Wym's plan!" the remains of a transparent spread there was not the least sign.

"My my but!" gasped Wym. "The best! The grub's not here!"

"You talkeded me!" murmured Figgins wrathfully.  
"You've made me come into the boy's den only to find that we've missed our giddy days for nothing!"

"But—how the best must be here!" gasped Wym. "I will you leave Tom Merry being it is—a shocking great parcel!"  
"You were dreaming," said Kew.

"I reckon I know grub when I see it," said Fatty Wym, with a snarl. "So you think Tom Merry would come out of those Figgins's shop with a parcel of 'handy-dandy' old grub!" It was grub—and plenty of it! I expect the boys stored it back in the store!"

And Fatty Wym flung his light upon suddenly. The space under the table was quite bare. Upon the table itself were a few books, down by the fireplace stood an old wooden bag, and opposite to it the coal box. There was certainly no sign of a grub's den.

"You've got a good mind to bump you," said Figgins wisely.  
"Rubbish!"

"But what! The grub's not here, and you've talked me!" growled Figgins. "The best thing we can do is to close off before we're tipped!"

"Nothing else for it," said Wym.

"I—I was mistaken!" gasped Fatty Wym, looking round in a vain hope of spotting the missing grub.  
"Tom Merry must have been getting the grub for some time ago," said Kew.  
"You see we are here we couldn't," said Fatty Wym, "I suppose I suppose! Very likely Tom Merry took the grub then?"

"Very likely he did," said Figgins.  
"But if you think I'm going to be an enough to step in his hole of a home a minute longer, you've jolly well mistaken! We're going to clear out, and give you a talking to long as we get across to the New House!"

"You see!" said Wym, in alarm.  
"He's not my kind!"

The door opened and as Figgins was going to leave the building, Tom Merry stood there, and he looked at the twelve in amazement. Then he grasped the situation.

"My hat!" he exclaimed.

And before Figgins & Co. could utter what Tom Merry was doing he had closed the door to and turned the key.

"Rubbish, indeed, Rubbish!" shouted Tom Merry. "See! How rotten!"

The key hung along the passage, and doors opened on all sides. In a moment a crowd of their fellows were gathering round Tom Merry, and they all demanded to know what was the matter.

"I've got Figgins & Co. locked up in my study," said Tom Merry, glancing at his watch.

"My study locked! Do you mean to say they had the cheek to walk right in here?" exclaimed Bernard Glyn.

"Yes. They're in there now!" said

Tom Merry. "I was ordering them not to and teach them a good lesson."

"Good night!" said Glyn.  
Tom Merry turned the key in the lock, and opened the door. As he did so, Figgins & Co. started out full-blown, with the evident intention of escaping before the school House janitor could reach what they went up to. Fatty Wym clung first, and by some weight he hung through the crowd and saved down the passage. Kew and Figgins were not so fortunate, and in a moment they were grasped firmly.

"Here, I say!" gasped Figgins. "Pax, you know!"  
"Pax be blessed!" said Kew wrathfully. "Likely we're going to make it pass when you come in here to tell Tom Merry's tale!"

"You are!" yelled Figgins. "There's nothing in there to eat, except a couple bit of jam and a loaf of bread."

"Oh, ha, ha!" sneered Tom Merry.  
"Oh, you mean grub!" growled Figgins. "You're done, and we know it. If you're not going to make it pass, we'll take our grub and be contented. They get it over quick!"

"We'll be obliged," said Glyn, with a grin.  
"It'll be long-remembered to!" suggested Tom Merry.

"All agreed!"  
"Pax!"

Figgins and Kew were hauled rather roughly by the laughing school janitor, and by the time they reached the school House door they were feeling most wretched. Their collars were torn off, their coats open, and their trousers unbuttoned with ease.

"Now for the last word-off!" grinned Tom Merry.

And Figgins and Kew were hauled back. They landed in the middle of the passage, and by a series of long-leaps from the school House janitor. From the opposite side of the quadrangle, in the doorway of the New House, a fat man watched the scene with an approving eye.  
"By that!" gasped Figgins, picking himself up. "This is all that we Fatty Wym's doing. He'll not let us see this, and they caught it all himself! We'll never live!"  
"And tell him to sit!" said Kew fiercely.

And the two New House janitor hurried across the quadrangle with shouts of vengeance. By all appearances, Fatty Wym was in for a high old time—and we think the rest were the least which followed.

CHAPTER 10.  
After Lights-Out.

"I was great!" pronounced Tom Merry to himself. "I don't believe Fatty has ever been so properly done before!" It would have been a very ordinary affair if the study had really been bare, but when the boys' grub was torn off the time, Tom Merry & Co. were absolutely astonished!

Tom Merry was in the study alone. Monrose and Lawless were still guests of Figgins & Co. The remains of the grub was heaving over the old wooden bag, which stood beside the fireplace. Figgins & Co. had not given it a second glance, but it was packed almost in long-remembered with the supplies which Tom Merry had procured from those tangles!

In the New House neither had only looked to it they would have been able to get their grub with the grub.

"Well, you jolly well did the grub's grub!" thought Tom Merry. "There's the whole of that grub of Fatty's appropriated grub, and it would have been better to let it sit!"

"But Fats, Tom Merry, are you both dead yet?"

"Just thinking about you, Gump!" said Tom Merry. "Come in, old son!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stepped into the study.

"I finished down Study No. 4 in strong perfume," he said.

"My, were you shocked out?" laughed Tom Merry.

"Did you, no, thank you? I couldn't breathe. Make someone make! The perfume was so overpowering!"  
"My my, do you think Tom Merry, that Monrose and Lawless looked him up like a mole?" I was extremely intelligent, and determined to try it!"  
"Well, didn't they snap?"

"No. They were very weak, and actually told me that the water would get on to them if I did wash! Therefore, don't you, I generally took my department. I think it is really ridiculous of the

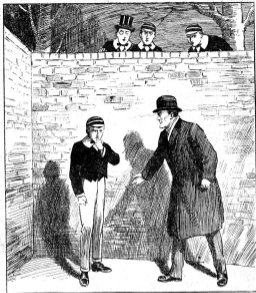
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The harsh voice of Tom Merry's companion floated up to the ears of the juniors peering on the wall. "You've got 125 Thursday afternoon. I'm out of the other 125, and if you get the money to-day you can bring it down to me. If not, it means the dock. That's my last word on the matter." — *The Ship, 12*

listen to be done on you. Of course, Tom Merry, I do not approve of this mystery, and it would be much kinder if you put me in possession of the facts."

"You say, Gony?"

"Pony do not be daunted," said Arthur Augustus. "If you think in my dark hole, you can only open my hair, and I shall regard your information as strictly private, and will keep it a secret. In my own mind I have no doubt that you are doing a good turn to someone or other—perhaps in a corner who has crept from the gutter. I have heard of such things, dark boy, and I really think that I've hit upon the truth."

"Oh, Gony, you'll knock me out!" shrieked Tom Merry. "I really had to see, Tom Merry, why you should take my words in a weird spirit," said Gony. "Pony could be..."

"Really, Gony, I can't," said Tom Merry seriously. "Oh, what can I?"

"Oh, not at all, I can't do it."

"Then I can only conclude that you have been told in some way," said Arthur Augustus severely. "But here, I really believe that is the motto of your class! If so, I will heartily welcome terms proving you upon the matter."

"You're a good old bird, Gony!" said Tom Merry heavily.

"I greatly venture to be designated as a good old bird!" said Gony. "However, if a duck would be of any use to you, dark boy, you are quite welcome to it. I am glad to send a duck to my table tonight, but I concluded that it would be of more use to you. My talker was wrong."

And Arthur Augustus hid in his pocket for the day. Tom Merry looked on in surprise at first, then laid a hand quickly upon Gony's draped skirt.

"It's awfully good of you, Tony?" he said. "But I can't think it's really I can't! You're a champion brick in after all!"

"I refuse to be called a champion brick, dear boy. There is nothing whatever in bricks to lead a fellow a little like you can pay me back when you like."

"No, Tony, I really can't take it," said Tom Merry firmly. "I was not awfully, but I— I gave my word to somebody that I wouldn't be being anybody else's mate. If I happened to find you, I should be breaking my word."

Arthur Argusson showed his pocket-book away.

"Of course, that's about finished!" he said. "If you have given your word, dear boy, I should not suppose of making you break it. I'my sorry my chance opportunity, however, and do not worry."

"Oh, I'm not worrying much, Tony? It's the other fellows who are worrying. I really believe that if I was at liberty to tell all about it, I shouldn't say a word except to you. You've been really decent over the whole affair, and I consider you're safe."

"I really trust so, dear boy! The money you are unable to accept is here, but, unless the door, I grasp the contents of your pocket-book."

And Arthur Argusson departed gracefully from the room. He passed out in the passage, however, with a very thoughtful expression on his face.

"Well, Tony?" he continued to himself. "I really think I shall repeat my performance of last night!" Tom Merry says he is really in the dark as to how it was, but if I get it done, he should like to say he really will have to accept. He'll shall give all knowledge of the lovely thing."

And Tony went his way being contented.

Tom Merry went to bed that night with very few words being spoken to him by the fellows. The two of the Shell dormitory went to bed, but the justice was retained from talking in his mind as they had been accustomed to do. Until the morning had been explained they couldn't be so late and out.

Tom Merry still lay awake, and when, too, Tony closed his eyes, the clock struck for quietness and sleep, but his thoughts were not sleeping, and then left the contents of his bed and looked towards the window.

He looked in the direction of the dark, then down and the light which had been in his study earlier in the morning. Tom Merry had managed it up here the dormitory had been quiet. He moved across to the window with a soft tread, the long, heavily laden, in his hand.

"Keep it!" he murmured. "By Jove, what would the fellows think if they saw me now?"

And Tom Merry started to himself. He had brought a bag out of that case with him, and the end of it was tied round the handle of the window bag. Having opened the window, Tom Merry proceeded to leave the bag, hand over-hand, to the ground beneath. It touched the newly ground beneath.

"Great!" murmured Tom Merry. "Now I'll never regret!" He was really that the view of a long book which he had had the opportunity of being with him. The book he passed under the woodwork of the window-sill, and he knew that it would be strong enough to bear his weight.

As silently as possible, he clambered on to the window-sill, and set on his feet for a moment before descending.

And so he set down the dormitory door softly opened. A few moments before Tony had quietly slipped out of bed, intending to carry out his plan of placing the five-pound note in Tom Merry's pocket. He slipped into his clothes rapidly, and then pulled the brass on. They would be liable to make a little noise, but nothing was probable to waking in the stockinged feet.

A few moments later he quietly opened the door of the Shell dormitory. He was immediately struck by the unusual darkness, and he gave an involuntary gasp at the window. Then he started.

"Bad Jove!" he murmured in amazement. He had just caught sight of Tom Merry's head and shoulders disappearing below the sill, and instinctively glanced toward Tom Merry's bed. It was empty, and Arthur Argusson stood there for a moment in great embarrassment.

"Great!" he murmured. "I wouldn't wonder if Tom Merry is up to it!"

**CHAPTER II.**  
**D'Arcy's Discovery.**

ARTHUR ARGUSSON'S DABBY stood staring at the window of the Shell dormitory for a moment before he realized what was happening. Then he made up his mind quickly, and walked toward the long room, being careful not to let any of the boys around outside and see him.

They slept peacefully, however, and he arrived at the window without accident. Then he cautiously propped his head over the sill and looked down. Tom Merry had just raised the

curtain bag from the end of the rope, and was making his way towards the tree in the quad, when it was possible to catch the wind.

"Bad Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "This is really remarkable! I wonder, while I had better follow Tom Merry and see where he is going. I wouldn't have expected in the Forensic Lodge line of mind. It won't be open, but what detective work!"

"If you remembered that Tom Merry this is some deep trouble, and they would want somebody to look after him, and last a helping hand if necessary. And at the end of the day, Tom's proceeding to leave himself from the Shell dormitory window, he was laughing all sorts of brutal questions which Tom Merry might find himself in."

"I suggest it is probable that Tom Merry is mixed up with a gang of heavily equipped," he told himself, as he set off after the line of the Shell. "Of course, Tom Merry is not in league with them, but they may have him in their power."

D'Arcy's head was leaning back as he crawled toward the end of the old stone, and watched Tom Merry scurry up the wall with the curtain bag. It was a difficult task to climb the line and reach the end of the wall. And as he dropped down the other side, D'Arcy rapped from his place of concealment and sped across the quad.

The stopped instant was left on the second floor, and he went to follow Tom Merry to his destination, wherever that might be. If Tom Merry couldn't tell what gate he was up to, then it only remained for D'Arcy to find out for himself.

"Bad Jove!" he murmured. "I wouldn't have got on so the track with someone's assistance!"

D'Arcy overlooked the fact that he had his eyes on the whole thing by accident, for if he had not gone to the Shell dormitory to place the five in Tom Merry's clothes he would never have known of the night plan.

When he had clambered to the top of the wall, he looked down the line and saw Tom Merry walking along towards the window with a bag over a shoulder that he was being followed.

D'Arcy dropped to the ground.

He set off in pursuit of Tom Merry, keeping as close to the ledge as possible, but, of course, it was quite likely that Tom Merry would glance round to see if he were alone. The captain of the Shell, however, did not trouble himself. He walked straight on until he came within a quarter of a mile of the window.

Then he turned abruptly from the road and entered a side-gate. "Bad Jove, he's not gone to the window!" said D'Arcy to himself. "He has taken some secret route, and he's on the wayward road. I wouldn't wonder he is gone!"

D'Arcy arrived at the side-gate in less than a minute, and in the gloom he could see Tom Merry walking along with the curtain bag evidently weighing heavily upon him.

"I wouldn't give up, with he has got in that heavily bag! Good heavens, I'm surprised D'Arcy, at a thought struck him. "Can it be possible that he has reached the school gate? The handle may have caught him, so it would probably be better to wait!"

A moment's reflection, however, told Arthur Argusson that this explanation was a little too improbable to be true. Besides, he had written asking for money—it really looked as if Tom Merry was in Mr. York's power.

"I wouldn't think I shall arrive at the bottom of the matter tonight," said he D'Arcy to himself. "Tom Merry has no idea that he is being followed, and I shall be able to follow on his secret. Whatever it is, I am convinced that Tom Merry is not guilty of any serious offence!"

And D'Arcy followed the captain of the Shell with his head bent low.

Tom Merry kept straight on.

When he had reached a spot nearly halfway to the wayward road, he left the main footpath and followed the corner of another path.

"Bad Jove, that leads to the old gardener's cottage," murmured D'Arcy.

He followed Tom Merry with a feeling of growing surprise. D'Arcy had often followed the main footpath during those paper-chase, and he knew that this westerly path led only to a small cottage occupied by a gardener. It was on the edge of the school grounds, about a quarter of a mile from the gate of the school, and the footpath led to a little gate at the back, at the bottom of the garden.

"I wouldn't wonder what Tom Merry is going to do for the night," murmured D'Arcy.

He walked on quietly, for Tom Merry had disappeared into the little garden.

D'Arcy waited at the gate, and watched slowly behind a hedge. A bright light glowed in the lower window of the cottage, and D'Arcy saw Tom Merry's shadow as he passed the window. A sound of tapping reached the waiting peeper's ears, and almost immediately the door was opened.

Tom Merry walked in, carrying his bag.



"Doesn't look!" ejaculated D'Arny. "How very strange!"

For a moment he stood at the gates, too surprised to make a move. He had been imagining all sorts of dreadful things in connection with Tom Merry, and to find his elderly walking into the old gentleman's cottage came resembling life a shock to D'Arny.

Then he recovered his wits, and he determined to investigate matters more thoroughly. He opened the gate, creep into the little garden, and made his way down the path to the cottage. He could see that the window was unfastened, but that it was fastened on the inside. Therefore he would be able to see into the room without these little trouble of his opening.

D'Arny was very full of his scheme, and he moved silently up to the window.

Then he uttered a low ejaculation of amazement—for what he saw was so totally unexpected that for a time he could only stand there in appalled astonishment.

### CHAPTER 12. Tom Merry's Secret.

**G**OOD goodness!

Arthur Anguish as D'Arny gazed upon the spectacle before he could control himself.

The room within the little cottage had taken him quite by surprise. It was a well-furnished room, and looked extremely neat, with a bright fire burning in the grate. The furniture was very different from that usually seen in a small cottage. It was modern and up to date, and looked quite new. Tom Merry was standing behind the table, and his companion, who had seen anything else, had turned D'Arny to enter his examination of a corpse.

For Tom Merry was leaning over the crickie bag which he had brought with him. It was on the floor, and from it he was scooping all sorts of provisions. Already the table was strewed up with bits of jam, bits of condensed milk, tinned sweets, and all her articles of a life nature. The light from a lamp on the table shed a rusty glare over the good things.

Sitting beside the fire, in an easy chair, was a kindly looking old woman, and D'Arny could see that her eyes were glazed with tears. A shawl was about her shoulders, and she held in her hand a handkerchief, with which she had evidently been wiping her eyes.

Standing by her side, with one hand on her shoulder, stood her husband, old George, the grandfather. He was looking at Tom Merry with a very sad expression.

"Did I see?" murmured D'Arny. "Well, I search!"

So close was the family secret which Tom Merry had refused to reveal to his father-in-law, at least, according to conversation with him. Tom Merry was evidently intrusting the old couple, who were plainly in need of food, otherwise why should Tom Merry bring it to them?

"You intended if I saw what it was?" muttered Arthur Anguish, very much puzzled. "I wonder why Tom Merry has brought all that grub?" I had to see how old George is in need of it. Apparently he is in something dire, for all this business seems to be quite new."

D'Arny was plainly at a loss. As he stood there he could see Tom Merry's lips moving, and he knew that he was talking fast, owing to the want in the neighbouring room, D'Arny could hear nothing but a slight murmur. But that he wanted to hear Arthur Anguish was by no means all unexpected, and Arthur Anguish had made up his mind what to do.

"I will wait for Tom Merry up the path," he decided, "and then proceed myself to him. Thank the stars, he can do anything, but will not do plain work. I think it is within of him not to allow me to be of assistance!"

And D'Arny remained looking in at the scene with growing curiosity.

Inside the cottage Tom Merry, totally unconscious of the slight events that were passing, was feeding with satisfaction. He held the last package on the table, and then looked up.

"There you are, Mr. George," he said gratefully. "It's not much, I believe, but will do us for going on with."

"The old gentleman was started for a moment." "It's not much, I believe, but will do us for going on with."

"It ain't nothing for to thank you, Mister Merry," he said gratefully. "I don't depend on there was a young gentleman as could be as good as dead!"

"It's too good, John!" replied Mr. George. "I'll never be able to repay like for like."

Tom Merry smiled.

"Thanked!" he said sadly. "What is it, after all? If a chap can't help somebody out of a hole, it's a pity. You've now coming much good. Mr. George, but what you do want to better you'll be able to manage to bring me down."

"Don't leave about Mr. Tom!" said George indignantly. "You've been having such trouble with him, haven't you, young master? He never knew his business, so I said as you were attending to the matter."

"Quite right," said Tom Merry. "I am."

"But 'a spoke as though 'o didn't believe it, Mister Merry," said the grandfather. "He said that if you didn't go, 'o'd have the money by tomorrow afternoon for the day money."

"Oh, it ain't no such a thing, John!" said Mr. George, looking up with sad eyes. "After all this time, it would be strange to have been anything! 'o've never had over three pence, 'o. I wish you'd never had the funny things I went with all 'o. I don't 'er never had 'o!"

"But how was I to know, May?" protested George. "I never known as I'd be such a work 'o to keep. 'o's been terrible hard, as you know, Mister Merry, and by with the don't seem to be able to stand the weary life I do. I wouldn't never come to come here, I expect, but we ain't built to make life's a big ditty. I'll be thankful and when the whole business 's done with—that's what 'o'll say!"

"Of course you will, said Tom Merry. "And I'll prefer to see him, Mr. George—your husband, ain't he?"

"Yes, that's correct, said Tom Merry, and my wife says every penny they're owing. 'o's the husband, will be him."

"What if you, Mister Merry?" said George quickly. "I shall see you right as twelve pound!"

Tom Merry looked lightly.

"Oh, that's nothing," he said. "You can pay that back at your own convenience—when you've got regular work again. You can pay me as you see fit to the fixed furniture worth in any of payments."

George smiled half-knowingly.

"You would save your job about it, Mister Merry," he said. "But it ain't no such a thing to see that you should get to all the trouble and risk. Why, you'd get a good job, if I do."

"He says he's got to have the job, said Tom Merry. "I've been out 'o his sight not before now, Mr. George."

"I don't say you have, young master!"

"Well, I shall have to be going," said Tom Merry, glancing at the clock on the mantelpiece. "It's past eleven already, and if I don't look up I shall have my weary sleep. Good night, Mr. George!"

Mr. George looked up with tear-glazed eyes.

"Goodnight, young one, and God bless you!" she said brightly.

Tom Merry walked to the door.

"No you again tomorrow, George old chap!" he said cheerfully. "So, you may thank!"

"Good night, Mister Merry!"

Tom Merry had turned out into the windy night, with the ragged cloakling in his hand. He walked along the path lightly, and soon arrived at the little gate.

"Poor old George!" he murmured. "He and his wife are in a pretty old state. That beauty forgetting him might be to mischief up, and old Tom's with 'em. My lad! I wonder what the fellow would say if they really knew what was happening! Poor old Mamma and Mandy. They think I'm up to all sorts of tricks!"

And Tom Merry chuckled at the recollection.

He walked along the path lightly.

"The Jews! Tom Merry, in that you, think boy!"

### CHAPTER 13.

#### Tom Merry Explains.

**THE** DARK moon beamed up in the darkness.

Tom Merry started back with embarrassment.

"Giddy!" he ejaculated feebly.

"Vary, wretch!" he said, "but boy!" said Arthur Anguish, coming forward. "You seem worried for you, you know."

Tom Merry recovered his breath.

"You've only got me!" he ejaculated. "Have you been watching me?"

"Yes, wretch!" said D'Arny, with a healthy air. "I suspected that it was necessary for somebody to investigate your doings, and I came to the little door, but I was in time that took to you—"

"You talked in confusion," he said, "but I was in time that took to you—"

"You talked in confusion," he said, "but I was in time that took to you—"

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"You talked in confusion," he said, "but I was in time that took to you—"

"You talked in confusion," he said, "but I was in time that took to you—"

"Good old George!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Well, as you know as well as I'll tell you the lot, provided you treat it as a historical document!"

"That document is entirely unnecessary, Arthur," you say to me, that boy, will be treated as a document. Every present!"

"Right as!"  
Tom Merry and D'Arny advanced along the beach, and as they walked Tom Merry told D'Arny what the whole business was.

"You see, George, I found out a day or two ago that old George was in a business of a kind," explained Tom Merry. "George is a really clever chap, and has done some of a good many of his best things."

"Yes, without," George in a voice, said boy!  
"Well, it seems that about a year ago, some one of the old crowd purchased a lot of furniture from a steady furniture firm in London. You see, in running some business lately, because about two years ago most of the old hardware was burnt up in a fire."

"Did I see?" I remembered the circumstances!  
"The idea's that to get my hands on the glibly intelligent plan, or to have to consider it," explained Tom Merry. "Well, the hardware's not right, but of course, George is getting about from his work for the staff. But that didn't matter. The rule's this. About two months ago there was a purchase collected in London, and gave evidence that George had been in league with him. It might be George getting the work, though I consider that he was innocent. He couldn't get another lot, and even then he's been out of work. And when do you think the city can be doing it?"

"I don't see,"  
"I've been looking almost every penny he's earned by doing odd jobs in the cotton weaving firm. He and his wife have been gradually saving themselves for the sake of keeping up the glibly persistent in the furniture. Well, that's not all, but you see, and just lately he's been getting behind with his payments to the firm, and their representatives here."

"Early?"  
"Early," Mr. Tom, said Tom Merry. "You can guess what sort of a shop he has an investment, making out at least! According to the agreement that I've signed, if he got behind in his payments, and couldn't pay my, then we are to look in them of the goods. Well, Mr. Tom, some days, and threatened to clear everything out within a week."

"Of course, it was possible enough. Mr. Tom, as the representative of the firm, has the law on his side, and can do as he pleases if the money isn't forthcoming. It's perfectly normal, of course, but George doesn't have to himself, but I think I can take the other side he was really off his head, and would like to have had the furniture after nearly paying for the amount of work he'd done here. I looked him up and told him I'd see Mr. Tom, and make some arrangements. I did so, and arranged that I'd pay up all that was owing. I'd have to see him, at a moment of time, that night I was out in the city."

"Did I?" I remembered now!"  
"Did I?" "Yes, you silly one, why couldn't you have told us about it? We should have waited until you had made up the amount in no time."

"I don't think that for a minute, George, but you know what these old money people are," said Tom Merry. "I had thought that he was simply getting at the thought of money, knowing that they were getting their furniture on credit, and that I couldn't let him keep the thing absolutely in my hand. I can see anything as it myself, but there you are. I promised them that I'd keep the thing absolutely in my hand, and that I wouldn't let him keep the thing absolutely in my hand to pay up with. That's one way to look at it. Mr. Tom's job is to be able to explain matters if he comes in such a hole. If I'd been able to explain matters, it would have been different. I was a bit startled when I found that Arthur had read the glibly letter out, but as Mr. Tom had said writing letters in it I didn't think much."

"The first!"  
"And the letters said that you have Charles with a bookmaker!"

"Yes, the silly man!"  
"I can hardly blame them, though everything looks very much against you. You're a bookmaker, George, for standing up for me. I can see, that last night when the game, and I've arranged to pay him the remaining 100 by 100 pounds afterwards—perhaps possible for! You see, I've written to my old partner."

"Miss Penelope Brown, and boy?"  
"Yes, all that I thought about during the six months, but all that was in no such of a hurry. It's written in Miss Penelope, and I expect the money I saw up by the afternoon, just in time."

"Did I see?"  
"That says that, if he doesn't get the money on Thursday afternoon he'll write here to stop the goods out or get the work. He told me that last night."

"The Old Library—No. 124,  
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"Did I see?"  
"Arthur Augustus returned the explanation indignantly. "Mamma, Lewther, and I had had about Mr. Tom's account something about the work to Tom Merry, and they had talked of that Tom Merry himself would be supplied if he didn't pay up. For the work had been said to such a manner that immediate standing had been very slight."

"Tom Merry didn't take the greater part of D'Arny's speech then, and they walked on in silence for a few moments."

"The money is in your hands, George,"  
"It's a good deal of you, Tom Merry," said D'Arny thoughtfully. "You're not a minute your speech, that's true. The money is in your hands, and I've awarded the latest workers very good credit upon receipt."

"Oh, yes!"  
"But D'Arny didn't look at all."

"If I had been in your place I should speak have stood the matter. The trouble is that the letters have been written your name is distributed. They thought you were telling 'twice' that I should have told them that you didn't have a bookmaker. I don't know whether you're, but of course, it was quite right."

"It is quite right, George. I don't see that a finding, George, was it, but just going to pay it. You are about a difference. From what you've said, I'm afraid that I could have a pile of money, and that I was in the habit of visiting the Green Man. My hat! If the matter wasn't serious it would be a real shame!"

"Yes, without!"  
"They are beginning to think that you are a bookmaker!"  
"Arthur Augustus." "An' instead of that you've proved yourself to be the most clever fellow at the end!" "I really think, Tom Merry, that you ought to have told us all the facts."

"Yes!"  
"Do you think I care what the circumstances are? It's all the matter of old Mamma and Mary to do with me, but I don't know them. I should like to have had just the same amount. But I couldn't help seeing when they kept talking me by me up and down in my glibly now!"

"He, he, he!"  
"You must have suggested that to Mamma, don't you? Consider the class, you can afford to give it them. But look us on at the price!"

"And D'Arny and Tom Merry looked one another in the top of the wall."

In two minutes they were within the school grounds, and they had no time in organizing the first directory and looking up the signs. Then, with a whisper of good-night, Arthur Augustus D'Arny departed to his own directory.

The minutes have the pair of them were found sitting in their respective beds.  
Tom Merry's account was not a book, instead of getting a glibly answer, it was one which reflected very great credit upon the firm of the book."

And the first part in the book company—for it had the business aspect—was to take place on the morning; but neither Tom Merry nor Arthur Augustus D'Arny were quite prepared for the time which would result.

CHAPTER II.  
Mr. Tom Takes Action.

THE next morning, at half-past eight, was over, Arthur Augustus D'Arny walked across to Tom Merry, who was standing under the old sign in the street. The sign for business the same attitude against him, and Tom Merry, who had been waiting, was almost amazed. He intended to get something out of his hands, to take his own business things into the street. With this intention, he would be able to tell Mamma and Lewther and D'Arny, who, to have to read him. The other would still have to let their curiosity go unquenched.

"Hello, George!"  
"No trouble at all that I know of, don't you?"  
"Arthur Augustus, coming up." "No, don't let me get around me, however, and I thought I'd ask your opinion."

"Quite right. My opinion's very valuable!"  
"You don't see, Tom Merry?"  
"I would think it is a good thing. You remember that I told you I had a book?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "You said you were going to show a copy of your book?"  
"I had nothing of the sort. The money tells me why I should have done it. However, that's beside the point. How much have you arranged Miss Penelope to send?"

"Twelve pounds, George."  
"I thought so," and Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "That will have to make for old George's intermediate system. I propose we run these matters with old Mamma's income, and

(Continued on page 25.)

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"Solely by your System of Physical Culture and using your Appliances, being approved at every large town in Great Britain and Ireland, I would like to try particular stress on the value of your Grip Dumb-Bells, which I consider the very best and also the Physical Culture ever invented, and I would not be without them. Previous to my performance every morning I always went up with a pair of Grip Dumb-Bells, always going through the Sandow System of Physical Culture.

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(Please enclose one shilling not required.)

This order is given on condition that after seven days' free trial, should I decide not to keep the Dumb-Bells, I may return them immediately direct to Sandow Mail, and no charge whatever will be made.

FREE Signed...../s/.....

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TRIAL.....

"But, my dear kid, do you really know you're in the wood?"  
 "You can tell him that," said D'Arny complacently. "When he knows what a beautiful thing I can be will be quite appreciable. Besides, it is my intention to advance him a dollar."

"You see, then?"  
 "I readily venture to be relied on as for d'Arny's advance a dollar!" said D'Arny indignantly. "The poor child is really in need of it, and I readily consider it as my duty to advance the sum. It is my wish to accompany you, Tom Morry, I shall go to the old gentleman's apartment."

"You'll do it, then," said Tom promptly. "But you really don't like it, do you? You'd have yourself advanced a penny?"  
 "No! I shall get a magnificent benefit from being so generous. The dollar was a present from my mother, Lord D'Arny, and it is entirely proper, extra. Therefore I shall not take it back."

So, immediately after morning hours, Arthur Augustus D'Arny and Tom Morry set off down the road. Much against D'Arny's will Tom Morry loved him so fast, for there was not very much time before the dinner-bell would ring. If possible they wished to get back before then.

They hastened along the footpath without speaking, and at last came within sight of the cottage. From the footpath, of course, they had a back view of it. Nevertheless, Tom Morry caught sight of a horse's head as he and D'Arny entered the little garden.

"What a splendid and interesting sound the horse!" he said, as he turned and saw what it is!  
 "Right on, dear boy!"

And, instead of going to the back door, they went to the front. They hastened round the cottage, and came to sight of the front step of garden, which bordered the well-cultivated lawn. And as they did so they both stopped abruptly.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Morry.  
 "Good Lord!"

There was certainly cause for the exclamation of astonishment. Instead of the quiet scene which they had expected, there was quite a busy one before their eyes. Out in the lawn a large man staid, and was poked up with the old gentleman's cane. Another man was walking down the path with a heavy load, and in the gate stood the cook, dressed in her usual livery of Mr. Simon Tom. Near the cottage door, side by side, stood the old gentleman and his wife, the latter crying bitterly.

"But Jerry!" repeated D'Arny.  
 "The—the head waiter!" shouted Tom Morry indignantly. "He said he had sent with this afternoon for me to get the money. Instead of that he's having all the staff carried out before the time arranged."

"Tom Morry stood round in the old couple, D'Arny looked like the omnibus waiting in the house.

"You see, Master Morry, it was wrong," said D'Arny gloomily.  
 "They've got 'em. After all 'em paid and worked for, too. It's hard times, young sir, but—"

"But they're not going to take 'em!" roared Tom Morry wrathfully. "No, I've never heard of such rotten cheap prices!"

"It's nothing!" said D'Arny indignantly. "You ought to be here to have them take the omnibus, Mr. D'Arny."

"I couldn't help it, Master D'Arny," said D'Arny miserably.  
 "I see as you've been for two days, but it don't matter now. That letter Tom has got from the village to take my goods away, and the news that I've got 'em on instalments is all my happiness already."

"But you, dear boy, that's nothing!" said D'Arny. "What does it matter if they do leave? There is nothing printed in getting things by instalments. If you go to the right people you can get a whole lot of things that didn't you expect with Tom!"

"He said he'd had orders to clear the things out," said the old gentleman.

"Well, he's jolly well going to have orders to show 'em all back!" roared Tom Morry indignantly. "If the chap's got the money to pay 'em, why not?"

"Yes, certainly. I understand that if Mr. Tom had brought it all back he'd have a lot of things."

"There's enough of 'em to buy, say, no more," said Tom Morry. "The best of the food, the best of the goods. Mr. Tom appeared like with a sneer."

"Well, what do you want here, young man?" he demanded.  
 "I want to know what you mean by clearing those goods out, you mean it?" said Tom Morry.

"You told me distinctly that you'd wish until the afternoon for the money. I wrote for it last night, and it'll be here by the afternoon post."

Mr. Tom pulled at his coat.

"Yes, I don't think it is so bad. I've got orders this morning from the firm to clear the goods out and make no notice of you. I'd write you again that I was waiting for you to get the money, but they said you to take no notice of a letter of that kind. They said that if the letter couldn't pay up I was to show the goods immediately."

"You're a respectable-looking man!" said Tom Morry to the old gentleman.

"THE BEST 3<sup>d</sup> LIBRARY, Every Number.

generally. "Just imagine your return firm said that there was to send for you to money it will be the better. You might have written and said otherwise and seen what I should do. You'll just have to wait till I shall have got back into the house!"

"Oh, don't!" said Mr. Tom indignantly. "All that hard work's gone away to half an hour, and don't you make any mistake!"

"You don't take it!" roared Tom Morry indignantly.  
 "I—"

"I don't want nothing to do with you youngsters," said Mr. Tom indignantly. "You can sling off as soon as you like—"

"But Jerry, you shall not!" gasped D'Arny.  
 And before Tom Morry could prevent him, the crowd of St. John's, regardless of the circumstances, had rushed at the head of the firm's representative, Mr. Tom, taking completely by surprise, and looked at him as a man, and as he lay on the ground with every corner of his head buried in the earth.

"Now then, you little! You'll!" roared D'Arny. "If you do not immediately order these things to be taken back into the cottage you'll give me a double trouble!"

"You young rascal!" gasped Mr. Tom.  
 "That's a good idea, Jerry," said Tom Morry quickly.

"Look here, Tom, you were, if you promise to get those things back I'll promise to have the money here within half an hour! If you don't promise I'll get a crowd of fellows down here and we'll drag you to the dockyard and shoot you!"

Mr. Tom, all the longer looked out of his, got up with a backward like face. He could tell by the tone of Tom Morry's voice that the matter was speaking the truth. He placed at Tom Morry in a few days.

"All right!" he said. "But I don't give you half an hour. Twenty minutes in the most I'll allow you. I've got the law on my side."

"Keep the law!" roared Tom Morry. "Jerry, look off and bring about twenty things here!"

Mr. Tom gasped.  
 "Hold on!" he said quickly. "We'll say half an hour."

"That's all!" said Tom Morry. "I reckon you and your gang could be sent to prison!" he added indignantly. "You want to see the policeman as ready as ready as ready, then you jump down on the ground and take down!"

Tom Morry glared at his enemy.  
 "I say, Jerry," he said quickly, "would you mind taking out a horse?"

"Anything you like, dear boy," said D'Arny readily.  
 "Good egg!" Both off to Elymore Lane and Jerry towards the village. It's just about time for Jerry, the policeman, to be coming up. He'll have a captured letter for the D'Arny if he has, being it down as quickly as you can."

"Right on, dear boy!" said Arthur Augustus without hesitation. "I'll see the matter!"

Just without waiting to see Mr. Tom rise from his unshuffled position, the crowd of St. John's rushed off. He realized the seriousness of the situation, and he got on his own feet, and he went to the door to see what was going on.

He entered at the door in a few minutes, and he found it in a state of confusion. He was in a hurry to get to the gate. As an order from Arthur Augustus would have been greatly punished at the moment, but he has never noticed it.

"But Jerry!" he murmured. "Jerry's not in sight!"

Therefore D'Arny set off towards Elymore Lane, with his clothes tucked into his sides, and his eyes open, looking on to the other side. He walked through the garden without a thought, for D'Arny was, when crossing demanded, just like any other ordinary man.

He was within sight of the first house of Elymore Lane before he saw Jerry, and the old gentleman looked up at him as a man.

"The Jerry, look you see, dear boy!" gasped Arthur Augustus.  
 "What, what do you mean, Master D'Arny?"

"The Jerry, Jerry," Jerry pulled!  
 "The Jerry, I've been waiting for you. Have you got a letter from the Tom Morry?"

Jerry was considerably slow.  
 "Yes, Master D'Arny, there is one—a captured letter," he said.

"You want, dear boy!" said D'Arny quickly. "Jerry had it with Jerry! It is important that I should have it as soon as I can. Tom Morry has promised me to bring it for him!"

Jerry looked over the captured letter.  
 "That's it!" roared D'Arny, and he walked off without another word.

"Now, you've got to get it, Master D'Arny!" shouted Jerry.  
 "Look, dear boy!" yelled Arthur Augustus without stopping.

"But I shall get into a row!" roared Jerry in a state.  
 "What!"

And Arthur Augustus rushed at Jerry's shouting. He had got the letter, and that was the main thing!

## CHAPTER 18.

## The Settlement.

**TOM MERRY** looked up quickly after he heard a patter of footsteps from behind the screen. Arthur Argentin D'Arcy walked up with the returned letter.

"You got it, Tom Merry?" he checked in triumph. "I've got the letter."

"Oh, good!" said Tom Merry. "You've been jolly quick, Harry."

"I saw the article!" exclaimed D'Arcy proudly. "I didn't sign the return, except, but you can do that later. I trust it is the best you can expect."

Tom Merry was upon the unopened letter.

"Here we are! Two three and a couple of postal tickets for a wild, wild!"

"Remember me, dear boy!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "Ours is good news for me!"

"Yes, certainly," said Tom Merry. "As you've got the money, of course that shows matters. I shall 'ave to accept it and leave the business here."

"You'll jolly well do me all back to glass before you go," said Tom Merry kindly. "But come on in."

They entered the sitting-room. Griggs and his wife were in the front room, and they looked up pleasantly at the two laughing men.

"It's all right, Griggs, dear boy!" shouted D'Arcy. "We've got the tin, and Tom Merry is going to pay this beauty back to us!"

"It's all right," said Griggs cheerily.

"Every word of it," smiled Tom Merry. "I promised you I'd see you through this business, Mr. Griggs, and I meant it! It's the only business that's gone back on its word it would have been all right!"

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed the old gentleman joyfully. "I don't know how I can ever thank you, Master Merry! May I get it right? It's named on the envelope. I shall write you up here."

"Here's a tip, kind young gentleman!" said Mrs. Griggs, with a smile of delight.

Tom Merry looked over the money to Griggs, and in less than five minutes Mr. Simon Tull had handed the gentleman a full receipt, and had received the balance money in exchange.

"Of course," said Mr. Tull, "I didn't know at home would turn you pleasant like this! If I've caused you any trouble—"

"Get out!" roared Tom Merry fiercely. "And order your men to put all the furniture back in their right places!"

"You're dear!" said Griggs.

"Yes, you are dear!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "Paw paw, you speak water!"

And Mr. Tull, realising that the justice wouldn't stand any nonsense, Tom Merry looked at the happy old couple with a smile.

"Think over the whole thing's end," said the face of the Staff proudly. "There's no reason why I shouldn't sit the stage at St. John's when I've come up to it. They're been thinking all sorts of things about me, Mr. Griggs, and I'd like to set their minds at rest!"

"You can do just what you like, young man," said Griggs proudly. "I expect the news is all through the village by now, and, perhaps, that may take it over to say as you say! 'So all, so you might as well let your acquaintance as anyone else."

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "The fellow's got a bit of a sense."

"There was a knock at the door, and Eliza, the parson's second daughter, he had a letter in for the old gentleman, and departed, not realising that Tom Merry and D'Arcy were there. Griggs was the letter open, and uttered an exclamation of joy.

"Can't believe it, Harry!" he gasped excitedly.

"What is it, John?" asked Mr. Griggs quickly.

"Why, the old man's had letters in his back!" said the parson, with shining eyes. "He says as the parson has explained that I never had anything to do with him, and only spoke against me for spite. I'm to go back to work on Monday!"

"(Hear, he praised!)" exclaimed Mrs. Griggs, turning like a top.

"The boy, I expect that of Griggs!" said Arthur Argentin D'Arcy. "Griggs, I congratulate you, dear boy! This business has brought it day of vengeance and joy for you—what joy! Wonderful in the end!"

"It has, Master D'Arcy—it has!" said Griggs, in a choking

voice. "I don't seem to be able to realize it! It isn't any more to be true!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"It's the truth!" he said. "Look here, Mr. and Mrs. Griggs, I've got an idea! As Eliza has turned out so nicely, suppose you look upon it as a bed in my study at St. John's this evening. I shall promise you a high old time!"

"You're a jolly fellow, Mr. Merry!"

"Thank all night, I'm not going to miss, I know!" said Tom Merry. "There'll be plenty to get—will Mrs. Griggs give for the occasion?"

"Oh yes!" said D'Arcy. "I expect that as a good thing! You are probably all right, Tom Merry, to this my thank for such an unexpected occasion!"

"Oh yes!" said Tom Merry. "We'll get back to the school now, Mr. Griggs. We'll expect you to be on hand at nearly half-past six!"

"We'll be at the gate earlier for you, dear boy!" said Arthur Argentin heartily.

And, without giving the old couple time to think it over, the two juniors took their departure.

## CHAPTER 19.

## No-Whit.

"**HERE** they are!" exclaimed Levin. "Here's the splendid pair of you! Been making more late, Tom Merry?"

Tom Merry and D'Arcy had just entered the common-room in the school house. It was during a term, and the juniors had all returned to the common-room to wait for admission letters to begin.

"Where the diabolical have you been?" demanded Jack White, pushing forward. "You've missed dinner, and—"

"Oh Lord, I'd forgotten all about dinner!" said Arthur Argentin. "I'm going to tell you what a night's sleep Tom Merry is! You've a set of letters now for home! I should have been a moment! Tom Merry is one of the best chaps at St. John's, and I think we ought to give him three weeks' absence for home! come up to the seventh day a letter!"

"Look here, Griggs!" began Tom Merry.

"I usually write to look back, Tom Merry—I mean I write to take any notice of you whatever! If I am going to tell the fellows what I think, or you can win all!"

The common-room was in a row.

"I had one you writing about, Griggs!" demanded Kingman. "On the other hand, and come to the thing!" said Leachy-Jackery.

"Yes, we're wondering what'll be the matter with you, D'Arcy dear!" said B. B. of the Fourth.

"There's nothing whatever the matter with me, dear boy!" shouted Arthur Argentin. "I usually think there's something the matter with you—especially with Max and Henry Laytham for being doublet the best!"

"Look here—" began Kingman.

"Keep up, dear boy! I'm going to make a speech!" said D'Arcy. "I'm going to address you all!"

"Oh, St. Griggs!"

"Oh, the hell, old man!"

"It is my intention to get on the ball without delay!" said D'Arcy. "To begin with, I expect you all as a set of fellows' doublet, doublet, doublet, and doublet! doublet!"

There was a loud

Tom Merry groaned.

"That's not the way to begin, Griggs!" he checked.

"Check him out!" roared Max.

"I usually write to be checked out! (Glad!) I addressed you by these deplorable names because you all thought they were the best thing Tom Merry! He is a splendid chap, and he speaks his heart when he says that he did not ever know Tom Merry single-looking. The chap is no more bookish than I am!"

"(Get to the thing!)" roared White.

"Very well, dear boy!"

And Arthur Argentin related, with a wealth of detail, how Tom Merry had asked him a letter with the junior who attended him and thinking that he had been writing with had composed at the Queen's Hall. Max and Leachy-Jackery sat opposite, and when D'Arcy had finished, they disappeared from the common-room.

But the whole business was white confusion, and tried to make it up to Tom Merry by giving him three hearty cheers, and sending the best ever for being doublet. All of them seemed to think they had done in their enthusiasm, and they seemed to make it all for Levin, for sending the speeches.

"That's his!" roared White. "Tom Merry's a jolly boy!"

"Indeed!" shouted Max and Leachy-Jackery.

"We've treated Tommy in a better style, and we all applaud."

"Shout! hey!" roared Kingman.

And, while Tom Merry loudly thanked Max and

The story continues—No. 20.

A complete Long Magazine comes late

at the corner of St. John's. Order early.

Leather grasped Max, and along his open shirt shoulder, then, laughing and cheering, they bore him toward the entrance. And when they had finished with him, Tom Sherry sat simply repaid by all the cheers which had been cast upon his character.

"There's one thing more!" he yelled as they set him down. "I will for those cheer the Quay! He's been a back over this money, and he deserves a prize medal!"

"Waddy, Tom Sherry!"

But Sherry's voice was drowned in the cheer that rose to the ceiling. When the bell rang for afternoon lessons, the juniors were very excited and their throats were invited to the grand banquet considered themselves very lucky indeed.

"Ladies and gentlemen—" began Tom Sherry.

"Here, here!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, I now beg to declare the banquet open," went on Tom Sherry. "Everybody is now requested to look in for all they are worth."

"Here, here!" shouted Fatty Wynn, who was looking in already.

"For this auspicious occasion we have the honor to entertain the worthy Mr. Sherry and Mrs. Sherry!" said Tom Sherry, standing in order his own head. "May we be the guests of the evening, and I trust that they will thoroughly enjoy themselves, and will thank the great God for this day!"

"He, he, he!"

Tom Sherry's study, in the third passage, presented a better appearance. It was furnished with jugs, and Mr. and Mrs. Sherry, to the guests of honor, were sitting side by side in the center of the table. At first the old couple had not either out

of place, but as the banquet proceeded they moved into the spirit of the thing, and (without any) acted as naturally as expected.

The table was packed by overflowing with good things, but as the hour proceeded they distinguished at a great feast. The old gentleman and his wife were the guests of the evening. He and Arthur Augustus D'Ang, besides quite a number. He and two or three other persons were pouring all sorts of good things on the old couple.

"Here are of them, Mrs. Sherry!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Thank you, Master D'Ang, I couldn't!" smiled the old lady.

"But, my dear boy—I mean not—you really must finish up those scones!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus kindly.

"You really must eat a lot more!"

"Will all the gentlemen were invited. Much as he tried, he couldn't get Mr. Sherry to finish up the scones. Thereafter, the guests of the evening were thoroughly satisfied, and remaining very well impressed at the time of their departure.

And when they took their departure, at that, they shook hands all round, and declared that they had never enjoyed themselves so much in their lives before. And the juniors, too, were light-hearted and merry. Sherry and Missy Leathers, especially, were being as gay as songbirds. They were extremely grateful of their leader—proof of the manner in which he had kept his promise in spite of the dark suspicions which his treatment against him by every junior except one!

THE END.

(Tom Sherry's official long receipt for of Tom Sherry & Co., of St. John's is entitled Tom Sherry's Receipt, by Arthur Augustus, under a copy of the time is enclosed. Price 1d.)

## STORYETTES.

### NOTE A FOOL.

The football party were returning from a match some miles from home, and on getting at the station where the tickets were collected one of the team discovered that he had lost his "return home."

He paid his fare with reluctance, at the same time making some sarcastic remarks at the expense of the ticket-collector.

"Come, come," said the official good-naturedly, "as a footballer, you should be the first to acknowledge that I have done right."

"How do you make that out?" was the matchless out's puzzled query.

"Well, since I couldn't take your 'pass' it was the correct thing to charge the 'ball' back, wasn't it?"

"That's the best way, and there was a 'forward rush' for the train."

### A MANDARIN.

"Pay attention, men," said the schoolmaster, addressing his class, during the geography lesson. "The population of China is so great that two Chinamen die every time we take a breath."

This information made a deep impression on the juvenile scholars, and the teacher was particularly struck with the unaccountable appearance of one who sat by the foot of the class. His face was flushed, and he was puffing furiously.

"What is the matter?" inquired the schoolmaster, with alarm.

"What on earth are you doing, Yung?"

"K'ang Chinamen, please, sir," was the answer. "I don't like those lookers, so I'm getting rid of just as many as I can."

### AN UNLUCKY SAMMY.

Young Sam was sitting at a job at making anything to do or working to get his. Given when his father died him up in the coal-cellar for leaving the lady with the husband of a job, missing Sam's face according to delight his heart.

For a while the father was quiet enough, but presently played them knocked at the door, and called out:

"Father, I don't want to come upstairs. I've found the best barrel, and I've tanned the top on!"

### HE GOT OUT QUICKLY.

In the crowded train all eyes were turned up a man seated in a corner smiled in a mischievous way, and talking glibly to the man next to him, a perfect stranger.

The man continued:—

"THE MERRY LIBRARY."

Every Monday.

He was apparently in very awkward circumstances, and evidently wished people to take note of the fact.

"Yes, sir," he said loudly, "I was having a friendly little conversation about such the other day with His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, and—"

"Ladies and gentlemen, show your tickets, please!" called out an inspector, who had just boarded the train, and the frightened man produced a piece of paste-board for the official examination.

The inspector scrutinized it carefully for some seconds, and then, handing it back, observed:

"I'm sorry, sir, but we don't go anywhere near there."

"Near where?" inquired the owner of the gipsy's coat.

"Near Smith's, the parsonage's," was the reply.

"You've shown me the wrong ticket, sir?"

### UNICE THE BOOTS.

He was a jaded and nervous commercial traveller, and his name appreciated by his associates from by the characteristic of the various hotels he patronized.

"I say, Boots," he shouted one evening to a youth in the dress of an official. "Just catch hold of my leg!"

But the boy in business did not move. The commercial gentleman therefore went up to him and asked why he did not come where he was called.

"I ain't 'Boots,'" observed the youth calmly.

"Then what," asked the other, "do they call you here?"

"Well, sir," was the reply, "as I'm under the 'Boots,' I suppose I ought to be called 'Mud!'"

### EVIDENTLY.

Great was the excitement of the two charming young women who mingled with the crowd at the Reginald V. Scotland Rugby football match.

"It's a splendid game, Ethel, isn't it?" said one. "I'm so glad we came here, instead of going to a cinema or concert." And Ethel readily agreed.

Just then the ball went out to one of the English half-backs, and he made a splendid run down the field. The crowd were quite delirious with enthusiasm, and it became apparent that the ball had not been in play.

"What did he have to bring the ball back for?" asked Ethel innocently of her companion.

"Why, don't you know, you little goose!" inquired the other almost playfully. "Of course, it's because he's got no more!"

Epithets: "Hallo, old man! You're holding him this morning. What's up?"

Woolley's (sloozing): "The price of coal."

OUR SPLENDID SERIAL

# BIRDS OF PREY



A Thrilling Story Dealing with the Adventures of Nelson Lee, Detective.

By **MAXWELL SCOTT.**

## WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR.

Nelson Lee, the world-famous detective, is devoting all his energies to the task of breaking the power of a gigantic criminal organization, known as the Order of the Black. The unknown secret society is under the leadership of a man who is known to all the detectives as "The Chief," but who also passes under the name of Mr. Stephen Mayfield. His principal lieutenant was known as "The Spider," "The Doctor," and "Lady Upsilon"—a beautiful young girl with the heart of a tiger.

With the intention of luring him to join the Order, the Chief kidnapped Jack Langley, a young engineer, and Miss Aylmer, his fiancée. Jack proved obedient, and so the two young people remain the captives of the Order. Their only hope of release comes from Nelson Lee, who is out on the look of the Chief and his associates.

In following up a clue, the detective, disguised as a tramp, penetrates into a notorious house of thieves and criminals of the west (the known as "Denny's Model Lodging-

house." There he is recognized by the criminals, in spite of his disguise, and is about being murdered, but is kept alive by the Silver Throat.

By a stroke of good luck Nelson Lee soon after finds himself traveling by the same train as the Chief and the Doctor, and, while en route to Berkeley, he makes arrangements for them to be arrested directly the train arrives there. The Spider and Lady Upsilon, however, learn of the plot of their underchiefs, and manage to stop the train a few miles from Berkeley. In the confusion the Chief and the Doctor, having been warned, strike off across country in different directions, pursued by Nelson Lee and a lot of his associates.

The Doctor manages to shake off his pursuers, and soon joins the Lady Upsilon and the Spider at the latter's house near by. "We're safe enough, but where is the Chief?" exclaims the Doctor.

(Now go on with the story.)

### At Bay in the Rained Mill.

"When I left the Chief," said the Doctor, "he was making for the rained mill in the hope of finding more. It's only a quarter to six. There won't be many people about at this hour of the morning. What do you say if we take our respective cars and investigate the mill first? Nelson Lee is a pretty well-known man, and I'm sure he'll be a great help to the Chief—so I shall be looked up," said the spider on the car that might lead to work them in time to find him a big game."

"All right, I'm game," said the Spider, opening a drawer and producing a pair of revolvers. "It's a free life risky to venture out in town after what has happened, but I'll do as much for us. Here's a revolver; it's loaded in every chamber, and here's some powder. Will you have a cup before we start?"

"No thanks," said the Doctor, pocketing the revolver. "I'll have my cup when we're finished with Nelson Lee."

Let us now return to the Chief. After parting from the Doctor, he kept to the road for a number of three or four hundred yards; then he suddenly reversed to the left, walked over a level road, and took to his heels down the steep-sloping side of a stately wooded hill.

All the bushes of this estate was a deep and rapid-running stream, spanned by a rickety footbridge. The Chief's idea, as the reader may have guessed, was to cross this stream and descend to the bridge before the detective overtook him. It may be easily comprehended that he expected to himself—the detective's further progress would be absolutely barred.

He would not be able to leap across the stream; it was too wide. He would not be able to ford it; it was too deep. He would not even be able to swim across, for the stream ran like a mountain torrent between two high and perpendicular banks, which were so close that a man could barely stand.

It was true that there was another bridge, lower down the stream; but by the time the detective had made his way to this second bridge, which was nearly half a mile away, the Chief would have taken to his heels in the opposite direction, and further pursuit would be out of the question.

Faced by these facts, the Chief put on an extra pair, and gained the bridge, full fifty yards ahead of the Detective. The thought he formed the other side he set to work with fervor, focused haste to tear up the rotten planks of which the bridge was composed. Half a dozen planks with an axe would have done the work in an ordinary way, but as he had only his hands to work with, it took him all that his back was not but had completed when Nelson Lee came running up.

"At last I have run you to earth!" cried Nelson Lee, as he leaped on to the bridge. "You can't escape me now!"

"Ah! he had spoken too soon. As soon as the rickety structure received his weight, it began to sway from side to side, and in instant time—just as the detective reached the middle—it toppled over like a house of cards, and fell with a splash into the stream.

Fortunately, the sweeping of the bridge had warned the detective of what was coming, and the moment he felt it giving way beneath his weight he passed his efforts to his side and indulged in a flying leap.

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NEXT WEDNESDAY: "THE THIRD-FORM MYSTERY!" A thrilling, long complete school tale of the volume of St. John's "Stoner Party."

Meanwhile, the Chief had stooped to his feet, and had turned on his back. Upon hearing the splash of the falling ladder, he spun round on his feet, just in time to see the detective land on his feet on the very edge of the bunk.

With a snarl of bled rage, the Chief rushed at the detective and gave him a violent grab. Instinctively the detective threw out his hands and disabled the Chief by the lapel of his coat. For one brief instant they wrangled and wrestled on the brink of the chaise; then the greatest geyser went through the detective's feet, and both he and his antagonist fell backwards into the stream, landed in each other's embrace.

The footbridge had been thrown across the stream at its narrowest and deepest point, and as force was the corrupt at that particular spot that the instant the two men struck the water they were astounded as it were, in a vice-like grip that dropped them out of each other's arms, pushed them under, flung them to the surface again, and whisked them away at a pace which they were powerless to control or to resist.

By and by, however, the stream grew wider, and the current slowed, until at last it broadened out into a large square sheet of water, which had formerly done duty as a mill-race. At one end of the dam was a weir, and the residue of a mill-race, water-wheel, fringing the edge of the dam, was to be seen. For one of modern buildings, from the center of which rose the ancient tower of a dilapidated mill.

Until they reached the dam, both Nelson Lee and the Chief had no alternative but to use the current against them along at its own current side. The moment they entered the dam, however, the Chief turned over on his side, and struck out for the upper bank. Needless to say, the detective had no time in following suit, and before the Chief had crossed twenty yards the detective was at his heels.

Instinctively, in Nelson Lee's excitement, his opponent dived and remained below the surface. When he resurfaced he had a bullet in his hand, and, closed before the detective had time to realize what was happening, the Chief made a lightning dash towards him, and aimed a blow at his face.

Quick as thought the detective dived, and came up on the other side. With a couple of rapid swimming strokes, he approached the Chief from behind, and dealt him a blow which sent his weapon flying from his hand. With a spring yell, the Chief spun round and flung his arms around the detective's neck. The next instant they were swimming and struggling in the mud and slime at the bottom of the dam.

There was no words in the English language which can fully describe the hurries and the agonies through which the detective passed in the course of the next few minutes. The Chief had at last abandoned all hope of escape. He had resigned himself to his fate. He had come to the conclusion that he was doomed to die—either by drowning, or at the hands of the burglar—and he had made up his mind that he would die by drowning, and that Nelson Lee should perish with him.

With this end in view, he made no attempt to strike at Nelson Lee, but continued himself with clinging to the detective's neck for the purpose of preventing him from rising to the surface. In vain the detective struggled and strained and pulled and gnawed. In vain he tried his shoulder's arms, and never in four hours' endeavor. Happily had captured the Chief with almost superhuman strength, and never for an instant did his muscles and sinews give relax.

In the agony of his despair—to be felt that the business of sufficient were rapidly slipping away from the detective dropped his feet, and drove down into the water's face with all the strength of which he was capable. Again, and again he repeated this maneuver, all at last, with a plunging swim, the Chief rolled over, and layed into unconsciousness.

Like an arrow from a bow, the detective shot upwards to the surface. Half a dozen deep-drawn breaths of the cool, fresh morning air refreshed his burning temples, and cleared his clouded brain. Then once again he drove down to the muddy bottom of the dam, where he gripped the Chief by the collar of his coat, dragged him to the surface, swam to the bank, and landed his prisoner astute.

For a moment he feared that the Chief had completely lost a clear perception retained the fact that his heart was still beating, though feebly, and at irregular intervals. Utterly of his own consciousness, the detective promptly set to work to procure artificial respiration. In the midst of his task, and just as the Chief was beginning to show the first signs of returning consciousness, a shoving which made each man's head, and a moment later, a shock which made each a prisoner and a primitive fishpond, climbed over the mill which divided the road from the stone-floored enclosure in front of the mill.

Upon seeing Nelson Lee reaching both the unconscious and the unconscious.

THE HARBOR LIBRARY, Every Monday.

Chief, the boy immediately dropped his tackle and took to his heels.

"Hi, hi! Boy's you there? I don't lose you!" shouted Nelson Lee. "Come back, and tell me where to find a policeman, and I'll give you a shilling!"

Sometimes generously the boy pulled up, and retraced his steps toward the dam.

"That is very nice, my boy!" asked Nelson Lee.

"You please," replied the boy.

"And what is the name of this place?" asked the detective, looking to the bank towards the ruined mill.

"Please, sir, it's always called the old mill," said the youth.

"Are there any houses near?"

"No, sir, I'm sorry, there aren't any houses near this mill."

"Is that the name of the nearest village, then?"

"No, sir."

"How far is it from here?"

"About two miles, sir."

"Is there a policeman in the place?"

"Oh, yes, sir! My father's the policeman."

"Good! Is there a doctor at Abbeville?"

"Yes, sir, Dr. Mortimer."

"Good again! Now, listen to me. Would you like to earn half-a-crown?"

"The boy's you pleased, and he looked his lips."

"You would, I see," said Nelson Lee. "Then I'll tell you how you can do it. You must go back to Abbeville as fast as ever you can run. You must find your father, and you must tell him that you've come from Mr. Nelson Lee, the London detective. Tell him that I've got up at the old mill, and that I've captured the Chief of the Order of the King. The Chief of the Order of the King. Can you remember that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Tell him, too, that my pleasure is very ill, and cannot walk, so that he'd better bring a doctor with him, and also a cart, or a carriage of some sort, to convey him to the hospital. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Yes, sir. I wish to tell my father to come up here as quick as he can, and to bring a doctor and a cart with him."

"That's it. I want you to remember also that you are not to say a word about this to anybody else but your father. If any of the Chief's friends get wind of the fact that he's been taken—"

In the midst of his sentence he suddenly passed, for at that moment a faint and feeble cry fell on his ears.

"That's it!"

Why it was the detective could never afterwards explain; but the moment he heard that cry, a sudden suspicion flashed into his mind that it indicated danger. In order to get his response to the boy, he sprang to his feet, and ran towards the ruined wall, holding the astonished boy so, with whom he was still to come back.

He dashed through a doorway doorway at the foot of the tower, and found himself in a gloomy, windowless room, which had formerly served as the milliner's room. On the left side of the room, opposite the doorway, was a long and partly dismantled ladder, which led through a trapdoor in the wooden roof to the room above. Quivering with excitement, he sprang up this ladder, pulled the key across the masonry, ran there, and passed through a slit-like window in the tower wall.

From this elevated position, he had an unobstructed view of the whole circumference of the roof of the mill. An arrow would have verified in the view, as Nelson Lee was now at it. All that he saw was a couple of men, accompanied by a third, a fourth, standing down the road towards the mill. They were fully three-quarters of a mile away, yet even at that distance he recognized them at a glance.

For the figures were those of the Doctor and the Spirit, and they were evidently looking for the Chief.

Swiftly, yet without any visible haste, the detective ascended the ladder, and returned to the spot where he had left the Chief and his possible friend.

"Which is the way to Abbeville?" he asked.

"That," said the boy, pointing to the opposite direction to that in which the Doctor and the Spirit were approaching.

The detective heaved a sigh of relief. He had feared that the boy might have had to pass the two men of his way.

"Here's the half-a-crown I promised you," he said, thrusting the coin into the boy's hand. "I'll give you another shilling for your father now. You must tell him that I told you before; but you must also tell him that he'd better come along half a dozen horses from the village, and bring them along with him. There are two men running down the road who are friends of the Chief's, and if they find him you'll stick at nothing to prevent him being arrested."



"All right, do I'll tell him," said the boy. "A cert, a cert, and hold a damn one. That's all, he's!"

"That's it, and Nelson Lee." "Nah, go!" How all the boys, and then a minute for smoking or nobody!"

The boy touched his cap, climbed over the standing wall, and vanished down the road. The detective then stepped and down, raised the coil containing Chief in his arms, and partly carried him into the raised cell. My dose of heroic medicine he carried him up the ladder into the upper room, where he laid him on the floor, and bound his hand and feet by means of his trousers, a leather belt, carbide, and a pocket-handkerchief.

"Cover! Cover!"

Again the icy breeze flung down the wind. The detective walked over to the window, and once more took a hasty survey of the scene outside. The Spaine and the Doctor were there about a quarter of a mile away.

He remembered the ladder, and tried to climb it from its footings. Finding that it was too shaky, he descended from the attempt, and took out his revolver. He crawled out the vestibule, and dived there as well as he could. He replaced them in the corridor, and once more stole to the window.

"Cover! Cover!"

The two men were looking over the wall which divided the wall from the road. They glanced at the wall, and said something which he could not hear. Then the Doctor raised the blindfold in his arms, and dropped him over the wall.

By some strange lotteries, the animal bounded straightly for the spot, on the edge of the dam, where the Chief had recently lain. He sniffed at the wall along which on the ground; then he threw up his handsome head, and gave vent to a deep-throated, wailing cry.

"Hold him, good dog—hold him!" cried the Spaine, in a hoarse, wailing voice.

And almost before the words were out of his mouth, the bloodhound started towards the raised wall, with the Spaine and the Doctor at his heels.

Nelson Lee stepped back from the window, and pulled out his revolver.

"A hell in the Thames last night," he muttered to himself as he carefully examined it, "and another in the mill pond this morning. I'm afraid it won't be of very much use. However, there's always the button to fall back upon."

He glanced at the Chief, who was lying in a huddled, but unconscious heap in one corner of the room. Then he glanced across to the open trapdoor—which was merely a hole in the floor—and threw himself flat on his face below.

Slowly he got down to see the Doctor and the Spaine, crouching by the bloodhound, rushed into the room below. Needless to say, they knew nothing of what had happened since the Chief and the Doctor had parted company, and consequently they were still in the dark as to whether the Chief had succeeded in shaking the detective off, or whether he had been captured.

They knew, from the behavior of the bloodhound, that the Chief had been at the raised mill. But whether he was still there, or whether he had left, was a question upon which they had still to be enlightened.

Upon this latter point, however, the bloodhound seemed to have no doubt whatever. For the moment he entered the raised mill he bounded straightly to the foot of the ladder, where he executed a series of frantic leaps, whilst at the same time he made the place resound with his plaintive howl and wailing cry.

"He's up there!" said the Doctor, pointing to the small square opening at the top of the ladder. "He's in the room above our heads!"

"It looks awfully likely to, I admit," said the Spaine. "But if he's there, why the deuce doesn't he show himself? Keep quiet, you noisy hound!"

He juffed the handle into silence, then he walked to the foot of the ladder, and placed his hand to the side of his head.

"He's up there!" he repeated. "Are you there, old man? It's the Doctor, and me!"

In the room above the detective held his breath, and coiled his revolver.

For a moment there was silence. Then came again the Spaine's voice.

"He's no use here," he said, in a disappointed voice. "He has evidently been here, but he can't have seen, that's certain!"

"I don't agree with you," said the Doctor. "If he can't see, why did the bloodhound make all that fuss?"

"And if he can't see, why doesn't he show himself?" demanded the Spaine.

"Perhaps he can't."

"Why?"

"Well, he may have been wounded, or he may have happened on an accident. He may have had just sufficient

strength to crawl up that ladder into that room, and that he may have fainted, or lost consciousness."

"That's a very far-fetched theory," said the Spaine. "However, it's a theory that's easily tested. I'll soon tell you whether he's there or not."

He thrust the bloodhound aside, and began to mount the ladder, with-careful haste. The detective checked his heels, and waited until the Spaine's head came into view through the hole in the floor. Then he threw the handle of his revolver into the room below, and pressed the trigger!

As he had feared, the revolver missed! But, in the twinkling of an eye, he obtained the weapon, and brought it down with all his strength on the Spaine's head.

Forty feet from the floor at the base, partly from genuine pain, the Spaine staggered back, and all his overbalanced momentum. By a supernatural effort, he saved himself from falling, but the blow had evidently done him, and he quite forgot to attempt to cling to the ladder, and tumbled at Nelson Lee's feet as an air of almost comical stupidity.

Once more the detective raised his revolver, but the action seemed to give him the Spaine into his eyes, for before Nelson Lee could deal him a second blow he gripped the ladder with his arms and legs, and slid to the bottom like a sack of lightning.

"What's up? What's there? Who struck you?" gasped the Doctor, who was trembling in every limb.

"Nelson Lee?" replied the Spaine, tremulously rubbing the top of his head.

"Nelson Lee?" replied the Doctor, looking towards the door.

"Yes, Nelson Lee."

"So there, Nelson, it's double, Lee!" Is that plain enough for you?"

"But what's he doing up there?"

"Waiting for some other fool to come up and be hit!"

"By the Chief there, too?"

"Yes."

"A prisoner?"

"I suppose so. He's unconscious, I think, for he's lying perfectly still in one corner of the room."

"Is he bound?"

"I couldn't say."

"And Nelson Lee. Is he armed?"

"You at least, he has his revolver with him, but it's out of order."

"How?"

"Empty cartridges, I think. He himself is making out, so that probably his revolver is in the same condition. At any rate, it wouldn't get where he fired at me, so I checked it, and sent it to a carpenter."

The Doctor pondered over this information for a moment or two in silence.

"There's no chance of catching him, I suppose?" he asked at last.

"Not through the trapdoor," said the Spaine.

"Not even if we set a trap for him?"

"Yes, even if we had a whole army. You can see for yourself that hole in the floor is only big enough to admit one man at a time, so that all that Lee has got to do is to keep out of it, and his own, at any time that shows itself. Even if he had got his fate to depend upon, he could keep a hundred men at bay with the greatest ease."

"Then there's nothing for it, I suppose, but to set a watch on the place and starve him out?"

"Don't be an ass!" said the Spaine emphatically. "What's to become of the Chief, do you think, while we're waiting Nelson Lee? Besides, in another hour or so there'll be people passing to and fro along the road outside, and do you imagine that Nelson Lee is dumb? No, no, my friend. Unless we get across the Chief within the next half-hour, we may as well go home and throw up the sponge."

"Then what do you propose to do?" asked the Doctor.

"I propose, in the first place, that we go outside and reconnoitre," said the Spaine.

Nothing in addition to the word, he led the way into the mill-yard outside. The windmill was already started, and was situated in the middle of a large, low row of wooden buildings, which had formerly served as workshops and granaries. It was still beleaguered with the remnants of its work, and was divided into three compartments, one above the other. The lowest of the three was the room in which the detective and his prisoner were. And above that, under the dome-shaped top of the tower, was another room, lighted by a couple of narrow, sliding windows.

"I wonder if it would be possible to get into that room at the top of the tower," said the Spaine reflectively. "It certainly wouldn't be possible if Nelson Lee could shoot, but, seeing that his revolver is out of order, I don't see why it shouldn't be done. At any rate, I'll have a try. Wait here while I come back."

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"Without giving his companion time to reply he ran to one of the window panes, and set to work to break up the crumbling wall. When he reached the top one of the ends of the window he put within his reach, and grasped it with both hands, he leaped forward up, just by rock, and he reached the diamond-shaped pane, where he wriggled through one of the windows, and tumbled into the Doctor's sight.

Nelson Lee, at once, was an interested spectator of the grotesque part of the Spy's career, for the latter, as he crawled up the wall, passed close to the window of the room in which the detective was sleeping sound on the chair. As the Spy's head came up, of Nelson Lee's revolver had not been considered, and the doctor, supposing it had, received, it would have been an easy matter for the detective to have shot the daring climber as he passed the window. As a matter of fact, the detective never lived in an act, throwing his revolver through the little window, and passing the trigger, not once or twice, but had a dozen times in quick succession. For the only result was a series of rattling clicks, followed by a muffled laugh from the Spy and a laughing cheer from the Doctor.

To return to the Spy. He reached the top of the tower, as already described, and vaulted through one of the windows of the upper room. For nearly a minute he remained invisible, then the Doctor saw his escape and began to think again.

"It's all right. We've got him now," he said, as soon as he reached the Doctor's side. "The floor of that room at the top of the wall is the roof of the room below, of course. In the middle of it there's an opening, which has evidently been constructed to serve as a window or a chimney. Being in the middle of the floor, it remains an unobstructed view of the state of the room beneath, so that I could not only see the Chief and Nelson Lee, but also the top of the ladder which leads up from the bottom room."

"But if you could see Nelson Lee, why didn't you shoot him?"

"I didn't see the Doctor's natural position."

"I didn't see him," he was too quick for me," said the Spy. "As soon as he saw me he ran to the window he started into the corner and hid himself behind the Chief. If I had fired at him I should have shot the Chief. However, it doesn't matter. We've got him now all right. All we've got to do is this: I'll climb back into that upper room, and you must go into the lower room and remain posted at the foot of the ladder. The moment you hear me shout, you must rush up the ladder or let it go."

"And got knocked on the head, like you were?" said the Doctor.

"Don't be an ass!" said the Spy for the second time.

"Haven't I just told you that the window in the upper room looks down on the top of the ladder? If Nelson Lee attempts to go near the ladder, I shall simply shoot him dead on the spot. If he steps in the night behind the Chief, you'll order him down, and cover him with your revolver. If I don't like your plan, and you'll see, and it will be a queer thing if we can't accomplish this business on, especially as we are armed, and he is not. But I'm sure to like this. Are you going to hurry up my plan?"

"I am," said the Doctor.

"Then away you go!" said the Spy. "Post yourself at the bottom of the ladder, and wait till you hear my shout."

Without a word the Doctor turned on his heel, and disappeared into the room at the foot of the tower, where the Mountebank was still making frantic attempts to escape the ladder. The Spy then repeated his previous chant, and once more appeared behind into the apartment room of the upper story in hand, he stole to the edge of the window, and immediately covered him the room below. There a noise of rattling clicks, followed his shot. The detective was still, remaining in the corner, using the half-consciousness form of the Chief as a screen.

"Good-morning, Mr. Lee!" said the Spy, in cheerful tones. "Have you any more, would you mind sending a little better side to the right, so that I can get a better view of you? As present I can only see the heels of your boots, and it's no use being at them, you know?"

It need hardly be said that the detective made no reply to this taunting speech. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful if he heard it, for his whole attention was fixed on the opening at the top of the ladder. He had guessed what his opponent's intent to do, and he had formed a plan for checking him.

Quickly described, his plan was this: He would remain where he was until the Doctor's head appeared, and then he would load his revolver into the window's pane. Following this, he would fire across the room, striking the chance of being shot by the Spy, and before the Doctor had recovered from his surprise, he would raise him by the throat, throw him down the ladder spring down after him, and seize the Doctor's revolver. Armed with this, he would keep the gate at bay until the police arrived.

THE HUNTER.—No. 208.

"THE HUNTER" LIBRARY, Every Number.

The Doctor, of course, knew nothing of this daring plan. On the contrary, he believed himself that, as he had guessed the opening in a room from which there was no escape. And it was in a perfectly natural frame of mind, therefore, that, as soon as he had altered the words recorded above, he bent down by the side of the window, brought his revolver in the direction of Nelson Lee, and pulled out at the top of his voice:

"Now, Doctor, come away!"

In answer to his summons, the Doctor promptly pulled up the ladder at headway speed. The instant his head and shoulders appeared through the opening, the detective springing out his hand, and his revolver whizzed through the air.

True to his aim, the missile struck the Doctor between the eye, and dropped his face with blood. Notwithstanding this, however, he planted one foot on the edge of the opening, and stepped in assembly through, while at the same moment the detective suddenly leaped to his feet, and dashed across the room.

"Crack! Crack! Crack!"

Three times the Spy's head in less than an angry minute. But the three victims of the moment, coupled with the rapidity of the detective's movements, masked his aim, and each of his bullets flew wide. The first bullet, which the detective had aimed the Doctor by the throat, and which, one prediction after, had hurled him down the ladder into the room below.

"Crack!"

Again the Spy's head, just as Nelson Lee was ascending his balcony. And this time he made no mistake, for his bullet struck the detective on the side of the head, as high up as his hair, and he fell on his face, propped forward on his hands, and he perfectly still.

Planted with his feet, the Spy threw his revolver into his pocket, vaulted through the window, and lowered himself into the room, where he found the detective's prostrate form motionless, and passed through the window.

"Hello, there! Are you hurt?" he shouted.

"Hello!" came the answer, in a hoarse voice. "I've broken my leg, I think."

"Haven't you?" repeated the Spy, as he hurried down the ladder.

"Surely it's not so bad as all that?"

"You should be!" growled the Doctor, who was lying on his back at the foot of the ladder, with his left leg doubled under him. "But I'll tell you in a minute. Hold me down on my side, and straighten out my leg. Hello, as you love me."

"Yes, it's as I feared," he said, after craning his head down his injured limb. "It's broken just above the ankle."

The Spy considered an instant, and gazed at his companion with an air of unfeigned compassion and dismay.

"This is too bad, your leg would it be?" he growled. "No wonder are we out of our money, then you had us in another by going and breaking your leg."

"Do you suppose I did it on purpose?" snapped the Doctor, who retained his Spy's tone of voice. "What have you got to grumble at? How dare I land you in any more?"

"Well, how the deuce can I going to get you back to my house?" asked the Spy, in a hoarse, weak voice.

"What?" roared the Doctor indignantly. "Of course I can't walk. I couldn't walk on my feet to save my life!"

"Really?" said the Spy. "Then what's to be done?"

"You'd have to go back to the house, and bring the carriage, of course," said the Doctor. "And you can't's look no carriage. You would have had to go back to the carriage in any case, you know."

"Indeed?" said the Spy. "How so?"

"For the Chief, of course. He's unconscious, isn't he?"

"I don't know," said the Spy gloomily. "I haven't had time to look at him yet. I'll go up and see."

He turned on his heel, and retraced his steps to the room above, where the Chief was lying face downwards on the floor, his arms tightly pressed to his sides with a leather belt, his wrists secured with a black silk cord, his ankles bound together with a handkerchief, and his legs most effectively lashed together by means of a pair of braces. He was not nearly unconscious, yet neither was he conscious, for he opened the eyes and nodded when the Spy entered his room, and rolled his eyes on his back; but although the latter spoke to him, and shook him somewhat roughly, the only answer he received was a rattling rattle, that began with a grunt and ended in a yawn.

Another long instance of this striking world most Wednesday, when it is related how Nelson Lee saw many eyes on the track of the principals of The Order of the King.

**Gold-Mining "Out-West."**  
BY AN OLD GOLD-DIGGER.

It will often read in the papers of the discovery of a gold mine. We seem to see the same blessed new riches in the open fields in the East and filling up the pockets of the million like we see a happy country boy's pocket. Well, I have been to more revealed gold-fields than you, and yet I am not rich. And I am not the only one who has traveled thousands of miles, worked hard for dozens hours every day, sometimes by torchlight, and come away with less money than I had when I came to the field.

Now, in order that you may understand all about gold, and the many forms in which it is found, I will tell you, as simply as I can, what I have learned from years of experience.

Gold is found in three forms. When it is discovered by prospectors, it is usually surrounded by a sandy soil, which, if washed, will be found to contain the traces of the precious metal. It is found in rocks which are called gneisses, these in gold-bearing—and it shows itself in three veins found all over the rock. To obtain the gold from the rock the miners employ a powerful machine, known as a crusher. As its name tells you, it crushes the rock, which passes into another machine which separates the gold from the broken stone. This is then washed, and the gold—being the heaviest material—is found at the bottom of the washer.

It is especially important that a stream, passing through a gold field, leaves after it its waters a lay of fine gold-dust. Then, when the stream passes over a fall, the gold accumulates in a hole at the bottom, and, being heavy, it remains in its place undisturbed for many centuries perhaps, till at last a prospector comes along, sees the deposit of gold, follows the stream in the direction of its source, and discovers a gold-mine. If he is a wise man he will "stake his claim" there and then. By this I mean that he will drive in a stake at the four corners of the tract of land he wishes to work, placing his name and the date of his discovery on the stake or stakes. He must be careful to leave away to the nearest government office, and file his claim. This costs only a few dollars to do, and he has full rights to work up and his claim at any time he wishes.

But do not be led away by the reports which you see in the papers of a discovery of gold. There may be a trap laid for the unwary, and, like that which once happened to myself, you may be very sorry indeed that you acted on impulse, rather than wait for the news to be confirmed by some responsible paper. This is the best course to follow, however, as soon as a prospect reaches this country, the "Daily Mail" and other great papers, through their representatives to make all inquiries as to the truth of the report, and when the papers state that the discovery is a fact—well, then, if you wish to become a miner in the gold-field, I will tell you how to go about getting there, and what to do when you arrive.

Just by way of making things plain to you, I will relate my first experience in this sort of gold.

I was living away from the city of Newark, New Jersey State, about ten miles from New York City. One morning, when I received the "New York Herald," I saw an account of a discovery of gold near in Texas. I was out of work, and had about one hundred dollars in the bank. This was in about \$100 in my money. The paper gave glowing accounts of the immense deposit of gold.

Well, I was young, and I had no one to advise me. So, to come to the point, I was up and down on my little fortune from the bank, bought a ticket for Galveston, the great city of Texas, and in three days, tired and weary by my long ride, I found myself in the city named.

Here everything was much as usual, so by as I could see, I went to a hardware store, and bought a pick, a shovel, and a rope. I then made straight for the golden region, which lay about two hundred miles in the north-west of Galveston.

Arrived at the nearest station, which is a good little village in the limestone area, I got out, and after a group of about five miles in the limestone area, I came to a wooden hut, and saw, in great haste, a white horse.

**"GREAT SOUTHERN GOLD ESTATE OFFICE."**  
Property Department.

I went up to the door, and placed my tools on the ground. I saw a man sitting behind a counter. Then he came to me in a manner which said plainly enough that he didn't care whether he did my business or not.

"For afraid, my lad, you're too late," he said. "We've sold about ten thousand acres since yesterday morning, and I don't think we should be able to sell any more; at least, not at the usual price."

**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 Canada.

Colony readers 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 a correspondent prefer to deal with each writer two columns, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the most weekly issue of his own publication? "The Gem" Library. Copies will always be found on page 2 of each paper, and requests for correspondents not including these two columns will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to apply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the publishers 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.4."

J. G. Williams, 401, Dundas St., Montreal, Canada, wishes to correspond with a reader, age about 24, living in England.

J. Lamb, 24, Rupert Street, Winnipeg, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 24, living in England, who is interested in all sports and pastime collecting.

Miss G. L. Brewster, Bethesda Avenue, Clarence Park, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader living in England, age 11-12.

Miss S. E. Johns, age 15, of 5, Hope Street, Dunedin, Freetown, West Australia, wishes to correspond on exchange particulars with any girl reader of "The Gem" Library living in any part of the world other than Australia.

F. McDonald, 24, Pelton Street, North Carlton, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 14, living in England.

K. Smith, 28, Marston Street, Albert Park, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to exchange postcards with a boy reader, age 12 or 13, living in Scotland or England.

Miss Catherine Emma, Leaver, Burlington Grove, Balaklava, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader living in England, age 12 or 13.

Miss I. Gibson, 15, South Street, North Carlton, Victoria, Australia, wishes to exchange picture postcards with a reader living in any part of the world, age 10-11.

G. E. Braggins, 22, Holloway Street, Toronto, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in South Africa, age 14 or 15.

Miss Vera Fisher, Upper Marry Street, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader, age 24, living in the British Isles.

F. Edwards, 26, Millbrook Street, Toronto, Canada, wishes to correspond with girl readers of between 22 and 18 years of age.

Miss Violet Wilson, c/o Post Office, Kaiapoi, Canterbury, New Zealand, wishes to exchange picture postcards with a boy and girl reader.

J. Dunn, Edwin Street, Mt. Eden, Auckland, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 15, living in England.

Miss M. Owen, Dunghy Bay, Lyttelton, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a boy reader, age about 20.

J. Wilson, 103, Hollywood Road, Hong-Kong, wishes to correspond with an English girl, age 14 to 15.

H. Hunt, age 14, of 122, Gordon Street, East Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl living in Waco, Texas, Washington.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



For Next Wednesday.

"THE THIRD-FORM MYSTERY!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Our last, complete story for next week will appear under the above title, and centers chiefly around the lively personality of Wally Flurry, the owner of the Third Form, Laundry-Boat, after a necessary pause late the old ways which started him the title of the October of '20. Wally is written with vivacity, and much Wally, who is the injured party, an anonymous person, though highly appreciated. His names considerable trouble, and gives one eventually to what seems to be known as:

"THE THIRD-FORM MYSTERY!"

Of Interest To Stamp Collecting Readers.

The following letter from a Rochester reader, who is also an ardent stamp collector, provides one more example of the great thought and help which, I am bound to say, my readers derive always derived from our paper. Our paper:

"If I believe you are  
 "Warrington,  
 "Rochester, Kent,  
 "Dear Editor,—I am writing to thank you for the prospectus of our Stamp Exchange Club, incorporated through your paper, by the insertion of my advertisement in your Club page of 'Gen,' No. 102. We have named it 'The Gen' Exchange Club, in honor of its origin."

"We are all going strong, but look for something better. Therefore, do you think it possible to mention, in your Club page, that 'The Gen' Stamp Exchange Club wishes to enlarge its numbers, and that it should be pleased to read any signs their circulating one. It would be nice for readers who are stamp-collectors to join an exchange named after their favorite paper, and would also be the means of their getting into touch with other stamp-collecting friends, and of purifying their collections."

"Thinking you in anticipation, and at the same time wishing your paper 'The Gen,' 'Magpie,' and 'Penny Poplar,' every success.—Yours sincerely,

"Hermann W. Hancock."

"Many thanks, H. W. H., for your good wishes. I am pleased to be able to accede to your request by publishing your letter."

Note:

One of my other readers sends me an urgent little note containing a special request, which, under the circumstances, I am pleased to grant. He asks me to publish the following notice:

"Will Miss Dora Pratt, late of Flintshire, and living near of Finchley Park, address unknown, please communicate with K. F. Lloyd, 25, St. S. H.M.S. Robinson, Malta."

Cash Prizes "For Penny Poplar" Readers.

Readers of "The Incredible Tale"—as the three grand continuation papers, "The Magpie" and "The Gen" Editions, and "The Penny Poplar," have come to be called—should not neglect the opportunity now open to them of winning one of the

EIGHT CASH PRIZES

which I am offering in a simple contest. The conditions of this novel and interesting prize competition are extremely simple. It is only necessary to buy an extra copy of "The

Penny Poplar" on Friday, and give it to one of your friends whom you know to be a non-reader to persons. Then, read them your usual, great fun, or low, talk.

"WELL, HOW DO YOU LIKE 'THE PENNY POP'?"

Your friend's reply to this question is what I want. So give it an a postcard, and address to the Editor, "The Gen," The Finlayson House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. The eight greatest, nearest, "rarest," most appropriate, and valuable, to those containing the most art and very much to the point criticisms, will be picked out, after careful study of all the postcards, and Cash Prizes of Five Shillings or Ten Shillings, according to merit, will be awarded to their authors.

THE COLONIAL SECTION

of this interesting little contest will be kept open long enough to allow all my Colonial friends to compete, and additional Cash Prizes will be awarded for this section also.

The closing date for this contest, except for the Colonial Section, is January 30th, 1921, and of competing postcards must reach me on or before the morning of that date.

The only three (names) "The Penny Poplar" to which this contest applies are "The Gen," "The Penny Poplar," and "Penny Pop" (No. 11), which, by the by, boasts a prize, rather a good one, for the chance of winning a Cash Prize, at the cost of only one penny for the extra copy which you must give away. To make sure of getting this grand prize—which will be a lucky one for at least eight of my distinguished readers of next Friday's "Penny Pop" should be ordered by all Genites in advance.

By giving away more extra copies, each reader can send in as many "non-reader" opinions, postcards as he likes.

Some Football Facts and Figures.

Football has a very much longer history than many people think. The game is said to have originated among the early Britons. This, however, is doubtful. Since the late, the fact remains that football dating was a very popular game in England during the Middle Ages.

Indeed, although suppressed and opposed by Edward III in 1352, by Edward III in 1388, and abolished in 1514 Henry IV, succeeded in suppressing it in 1514. It was revived in 1581, and Elizabeth, the queen, continued to flourish until 1600.

It was revived in various forms during the last century by public schools and clubs. Clubs for example, were set up at Sheffield and Brighton in 1857, at Blackburn and Huddersfield in 1858. The Football Association was formed by the "clubbing clubs" in 1863, followed by the Rugby Union in 1871.

The first official International Association Football match was that played between England and Scotland, at Glasgow, on November 25th, 1872. This particular struggle resulted in a draw, neither side scoring.

As a testimony to the keen interest taken by football enthusiasts in International contests, it may be stated that no fewer than 100,750 people attended the great game between England and Scotland, which was played at Hampden Park, on March 28th, 1921, the gate receipts on this occasion amounting to the large total of 40,000.

This figure compares as a record! However, when the First World War broke out it was played between Aston Villa and Newcastle United, at the Crystal Palace, on April 15th, 1915, the sum of 21,000 was collected at the gate.

The last "game" had occurred in club matches was that marked by the game between Manchester United and Blackburn, at Old Trafford, which imposed upon officials the counting of 23,118 in.

THE EDITOR