

'GEM' 246
ONE AGAINST THE SCHOOL.
(Lumley - Lumley)

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TO NEWSAGENTS!

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The Penny Popular

No. 238.

Three Complete Stories of—
HARRY WHARTON & Co.—JIMMY SILVER & Co.—TOM MERRY & Co.



BUMPING BUNTER OVERBOARD!

(A Laughable Scene from the Splendid Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co.,
contained in this Issue.)



Harry Wharton's Recruits

A Splendid Long Complete
Story, dealing with the Early
Adventures of
The Greyfriars Chums.

— BY —
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Off to Sea!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. and several other Remove juniors were standing on the school steps when their rivals, Temple & Co., approached.

"My hat!" said Temple. "Here are these youngsters up and washed already. Who was it said the age of miracles is past?"

"And we've had breakfast, too, and a jolly good one, while you slackers were in bed," said Bob Cherry. "Now we're going for a trip on our schooner. Sorry you can't come. Good-by!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Temple. "If you like to wait till after breakfast, we can come. I know a lot about sailing. I've sailed a yacht, you know, at home in the holidays. I can take command, and you kids can be the crew. Dab and Fry can be the mates, and I'll be captain."

"Oh, I say, Temple, you're too kind. You'll bust something."

"I don't mind. I'll—"

"But we do," said Wharton promptly. "We're not looking out for any commanders. I'm captain of the Marjorie."

"You? Rats!"

"Bob Cherry is first mate, and Nugent second mate."

"Bosh!"

"And these are my crew. We haven't vacancies for able seamen, but we'll take you chaps on as cleaners and stokers, if you like."

Temple, Dabney & Co. looked daggers at the grinning Removites.

"Look here—" began Temple.

"That's the offer," said Wharton. "You can take it or leave it."

"I rather think we'll leave it," said Temple. "Mind, I've offered to run the show for you, and make the cruise a success."

"Thank you for nothing."

"If anything happens, don't blame me. And I rather think something will happen."

"We'll be ready for you if you come along," said Wharton, laughing. And Temple, Dabney & Co. walked on to the dining-room, frowning.

"Cheeky young beggars!" said Temple. "They want putting in their place. Since Wharton got up this wheeze about sailing, the Remove has been altogether too cocky."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"They want a lesson," said Fry. "It's

a good idea to give 'em one. We've got to fill up the holiday somehow. If they are going to start in life as sailors, I don't see why we shouldn't begin as pirates."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat, that's a ripping idea!" exclaimed Temple eagerly. "If their craft is captured by pirates this afternoon, they've only got themselves to thank. We'll jaw it over with the fellows."

And the Upper Fourth, always ready for a row with the Remove, were soon eagerly discussing the project.

Meanwhile, the Remove sailormen were leaving the school to go down to the bay. They had donned their sailor garb—Wharton, Nugent, Cherry and Hurree Singh officers' garb, with peaked caps, and the rest ordinary bluejacket attire. They looked a fine set of youngsters, too, in their seafaring garb, and all eyes were turned upon them as they marched out into the Close.

Dr. Locke glanced out of his study window, and smiled. The Greyfriars Remove was a lively and restive Form, and gave more trouble to the authorities than any other Form at Greyfriars.

But the latest scheme was not only harmless, it was one of which the Head could heartily approve. Anything that fostered in the boys a love of the sea and sailing was beneficial, and the training they were getting in the form of amusement could only do them good.

Wharton formed his men up in order, four abreast, and gave the signal to march. The Remove marched.

After them came a crowd of "infants" belonging to the Third Form and the Lower Third, yelling and grimaicing and cat-calling, evidently very much amused by the sailor garb and the orderly march.

Some of the Removites were greatly inclined to break ranks in order to chase the cheeky "infants," and inflict condign punishment upon them, but Wharton's voice rang out sternly, and the Removites, kept in order by their captain, marched on with crimson faces to the gates.

Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, met them in the Close, but he did not grin, as the juniors expected. A grin from Wingate of the Sixth, the popular school captain, would have done more harm to Harry Wharton's scheme than all the jeers of the Lower Form boys, and the opposition of the Upper Fourth.

But the big Sixth Former did not grin. He looked up and down the ranks of the

Removites, and nodded his head with approval.

"You'll do!" he exclaimed. "Mind you don't get drowned, that's all. Remember, Wharton, only the fellows who can swim are allowed to sail the schooner."

"Right-ho!" said Harry.

"You've sunk her once," smiled the captain of Greyfriars. "If you had had any who couldn't swim to the shore with you, it might have been serious."

"We sha'n't sink her again, Wingate."

"No; but keep on the safe side. Head's orders, you know."

"Right you are!"

And the Removites marched on. Various village lads who saw them going down the road to the bay hurled ribald remarks at them, but the Removites preserved an aspect of lordly dignity, and took no notice.

They marched on round the hill, where the road wound by the rugged lower slopes of the Black Pike, and the sea burst upon their sight. It was a glorious view; the wide bay, shut in to the north by the towering rocks of the Shoulder—the stretch of blue water fading away into the boundless German Ocean—the brown sand glimmering in the sun, and the fishing village nestling among the rocks at the head of the bay.

They boarded the Marjorie, and very soon the anchor was weighed, and the schooner glided away from the shore under her main and top sail.

It was exhilarating to the juniors to feel the vessel moving under their feet.

They felt like real sailors at last, with a vessel in their hands to manage, and the wide blue sea before them.

And their ambitions began to rise. Instead of a sail round the bay, some of the more daring spirits suggested a run out into the German Ocean, while Micky Desmond even went so far as proposing a run across to the Continent.

But Wharton was captain, and he had too much cool sense to allow himself to be persuaded into real recklessness.

The schooner was very well for a sail on the bay, but she was by no means in a state to brave the German Ocean, nor were her crew as yet sufficiently trained to handle her there.

A sudden squall would have meant destruction to the schooner and all her crew; and a squall was quite within the bounds of probability.

"We'll stick to the bay," said Wharton, though if he had consulted his inclinations he would gladly have turned the schooner

seaward to the illimitable blue. "It's big enough for us, in all conscience. We shall have a jolly sail, and we can anchor somewhere for lunch."

"Good wheeze!" said Bob Cherry. "I've heard that there are all sorts of little coves and nooks in the Shoulder, where the smugglers used to land their contraband."

"And where they land it still, sometimes, if the tales we hear in Friardale are to be believed," Nugent remarked.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, we sha'n't meet any smugglers in the daylight, anyway," he said. "It would be a good idea to explore the cove over yonder."

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry.

The schooner was gliding gaily along, with a brisk breeze filling out the sails. Bob Cherry was steering. Wharton was giving directions for the ship to be made what old Captain Stump called "all afloat"—and there was a great deal to be done in that line. In the midst of the general busy animation, voices were heard in fierce dispute from the cook's quarters.

"Hallo, rowing already!" said Nugent. "Stop that row there!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Silence! You have to say 'sir' in addressing an officer."

"I'm sincerely sorry, but—"

"Well, don't jaw."

"But I say, you fellows"—Bunter's face, red and excited, was projected into view. He was blinking indignantly through his spectacles—"I say, I'm cook on this craft, ain't I? Then yank this heathen out."

"What's the matter with Wun Lung?"

"The heathen rotter is interfering with the cooking. There's no room for two cooks here. Yank him out!"

"Hold on! What have you got for lunch?"

"Irish stew," said Bunter, with a fat look of satisfaction. "And it's going to be ripping."

"Have you got it on the stove?"

"Yes, it's all right now—it only wants watching."

"Then Wung Lung can watch it, and you can come and do some painting."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Order! You say 'sir' in addressing an officer."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Don't jaw! Come on deck!"

"Yes, but I say—"

"Tumble up, there!" roared Nugent. "No back talk! Who's mate of this ship, I'd like to know? Do you want me to talk to you with a belaying pin, you lazy, lubberly, slab-sided son of a sea-cook. Tumble up, there!"

"But I say, you fellows—"

"Tumble up! You idling swab, do you want to be keel-hauled? Do you want to be married to the gunner's daughter? I'll teach you! I'll make you squirm! Tumble up!"

And Billy Bunter tumbled up, as Nugent seized a rope and rushed towards him. Nugent was soon falling into the way of it. He had a flow of language already that would have done credit to any mate in the merchant service.

"I say, Wharton," began Billy, in a last despairing appeal.

"Obey orders!" said Wharton severely. And the fat junior had to obey.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter the Painter.

BILLY BUNTER blinked round in search of some paint. Micky Desmond had been mixing it, and there was a bucket half full ready. Nugent thrust a big brush into it, and took Bunter by the back of the neck to guide him to the spot. He pushed down the spectacled face of the fat junior to within an inch of the bucket, and Billy gasped as he received the full benefit of the strong smell.

"Ow! gr-r-r-r!"

"Now, get to work, my lad."

"Look here, Nugent—"

"Sir!"

"I mean sir; I'm not going—"

"Trice him up to the main-brace and give him three dozen," roared Nugent.

The crew did not know what the main-brace was, so they did not obey; but there was no need, as Bunter hastened to carry out his orders. He picked up the bucket of paint in one hand, and the brush in the other.

"Where am I to paint?" he asked feebly.

"The outside of the bulwarks, of course."

"But I can't lean over far enough."

"Try, ass."

"But—but if I lean over my spectacles will very likely fall off, and—and if they get lost you'll have to pay for them, you know."

"You sling a wooden step over the side to paint from," said Russell. "Then it's easy enough. Go it, Billy, and we'll all take our turn. Of course, we want the great picture postcard artist to show us a good example."

"I—I'd rather you started, Russell."

"I'm busy splicing the main-brace."

"The—the what?"

"Are you going to start that painting, my man?" bawled Nugent.

"Ye-es, I'm just going to, Nugent. Don't be impatient."

"Tumble up, then, you sea-cook."

The sling was quickly made and put over the side, and Billy Bunter was lodged safely upon it, with the bucket and the brush. A rope was tied round his ample waist to secure him.

"Now, paint away!" roared Nugent.

"Look here, Nugent—"

"I'm looking, and I'll come down with a rope's end if you don't buckle to."

Bunter dipped the brush deep in the paint, and loaded it, and drew it out with a sweep of the arm.

Nugent gave a roar.

Whether intentionally or not, Bunter had sent a shower of drops of paint over him, and his face and his smart cap were smothered.

"Oh!" gasped Nugent. "I'll—I'll pulverise him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you dummies! There's nothing funny in being smothered with paint by a howling maniac."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up! Cackling like a lot of old hens in a farmyard. Silence fore and aft, or I'll be among you with a belaying pin," shouted Nugent, remembering that he was second mate.

Billy Bunter, a little comforted by smothering his tormentor, painted away industriously at the grimy wood.

The ship was gliding smoothly enough along on calm waters, propelled by a soft breeze, very soft and mild for the time of year.

Bunter painted and slashed away, getting very nearly as much paint on himself as on the woodwork, and the sling was shifted along from above as he finished one spot, and started on another.

"I say, I'm getting to the end of this paint," sang out Bunter, presently. "I

suppose somebody else had better begin with the next lot."

"Let's see how much you've done first," said Nugent. He had cleaned off the paint, and looked fresh and rosy from a wash, as he leaned over the rail. "I don't suppose you've done your little bit yet. Why, you lazy swab, you've done hardly anything."

"I've used up nearly all this bucket."

"Yes, but it wasn't half-full, and you've been wasting it! What do you mean by wasting valuable paint on your own clothes?"

"I—I couldn't help it."

"That's all very well. I've a jolly good mind to have you put in irons for surreptitiously making away with the ship's stores," said Nugent severely.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Just you finish that bucket, and then you can begin on another."

"Look here—"

"Oh, buckle too, or I'll have you triced up to the main arm—I mean the yard brace—that is to say—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you cackle at your officer, Micky Desmond, I'll stop your grog for a week, you swab. Get on with the painting, Bunter. Let's see how much you've got left."

Nugent leaned over the side; and, at the same moment, Bunter raised the full brush—and brush and face met!

Nugent gave a throttled yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bunter. "That was an accident, you know."

"Ow! It's in my mouth! Gr-r-r-r! It's in my nose! I'm suffocated! I'm poisoned! Yah! Ow! Gr-r-r-r! Help!"

The crew of the schooner roared with laughter.

Nugent, blinded and choked, danced wildly about the deck, and the Greyfriars sailors simply yelled.

But Desmond, for one, left off laughing when Nugent seized him, and rubbed the paint off against his chest.

"Arrah, and phwat are yez ather intirely?" yelled Micky, struggling in the grasp of his superior officer.

"I'm—groo—I'm rubbing off—gr-r-r-r—paint," gurgled Nugent. "Keep still, you mutinous rotter—gr-r-r-r-ere, that's better."

"Ye hateful scoundrel! Ye've ruined me beautiful blue jacket intirely."

"Serve you jolly well right, for cackling at your officer."

"Sure and I—"

"Order there!" shouted Wharton, as Micky danced up to the second mate with brandished fists. "No mutiny aboard this craft."

"Faith, and he's spoiled me illigant jacket."

"I'll spoil your illigant features if you mutiny."

"I say, you fellows, I've finished this paint," sang out Billy Bunter.

"Right-ho!" said Nugent, with a vengeful gleam in his eyes. "I'll give you another lot."

There was a second lot ready, and Nugent yanked it to the side.

It was a large pot, and it was full of paint, thinned down to the proper consistency for use. Bunter looked up expectantly as Nugent brought it up over the rail—and the next moment there was a terrific gasp like escaping steam.

Nugent had given him the pot of paint—but he had inverted it—and the pot settled over Billy Bunter's head like a very large hat.

The paint rolled down his cheeks—and the crew of the Marjorie shrieked with laughter.

"There you are!" shouted Nugent. "That's what you've asked for."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was shrieking, too, but he was not laughing. He reeled away and sat

down in the blue water, his hair and face streaming with paint. In a moment a couple of juniors had jumped in and were supporting him.

"Br-r-r-r! Gr-r-r-r!"
That was all Bunter said.
The yelling crew dragged the unhappy painter and his rescuers aboard. Bunter sat on the deck, streaming with water and paint. Nugent and Trevor had gone in for him, and they were dripping, too; but roaring with laughter as well. Bunter did not feel inclined to laugh. He sat and gasped and panted, and panted and gasped, and mumbled. He could not see, for his eyes were full of paint and water, and his spectacles opaque with paint.

"You—you beasts! Yah! I—I'm sincerely sorry I consented to be cook on this rotten craft! Yah! Gr-r-r-r!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Nugent, you're a rotten beast!"

"My word!" said Nugent. "I suppose you call that gratitude, Bunter. After I've dived in at the risk of losing my eye, to save your life."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Beast! Yah! Gr-r-r-r!"
"Oh, go below and clean yourself," said Nugent. "I don't expect gratitude, but—"

"Br-r-r-r!"
And Billy Bunter staggered below to clean himself, and was not seen again till lunch time.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
The Black Flag.

BANG!
Bang!
Bang!
The crew of the Marjorie jumped; and no wonder. Every able seaman stopped his work—Bob Cherry let go the wheel—and the painter who was in Bunter's place dropped his brush into the sea.

"Bang!"
"Bang!"
"What on earth is it?" shouted Wharton.

"It's an explosion in the galley!"
"Something gone wrong with the stove."
Bang!
Bang!

There was a rush towards the cook's quarters. Wharton was in the lead, and he burst in excitedly, prepared to find Wun Lung in a desperate state—but the little Chinese was sitting calmly on a box, with an iron bar in his hand, which he was crashing upon an iron saucepan.

"Bang!"
"Bang!"
"Stop that!" shouted Wharton. "What the dickens are you making that horrid row for?"
"Blay it!" yelled Nugent. "Avast there!"

The little Chinese grinned agreeably. "Me stlikee gong," he said. "Stlikee gong to callee to dinnee."
And he banged again.

"Ow! Hold that fearful row! Your beastly gong can be heard as far as Friarale," exclaimed Wharton. "Why couldn't you call us?"

"Stlikee gong, plopel way."
"Well, you've struck it enough now; dry up!"

And the little Celestial somewhat unwillingly relinquished the bar. He had an Eastern relish for barbaric noises. But the scent of the stew was enough to put the crew of the schooner into a good humour again.

It was a splendid stew, and Bunter had put into it nearly everything eatable on board the Marjorie; and Wun Lung had watched over it with fatherly care and cooked it to perfection.

The keen sea breezes had made the juniors very hungry, and they were quite ready for a solid meal.

"Bring it on d ek," said Wharton, and he rapped out orders.

This or was learning to obey smartly. Some of the hands carried up plates, others dishes, and dinner was laid on the deck. Billy Bunter came up with a sour expression upon his newly-washed face. His hair was still sticky with the paint he had been unable to remove.

But he forgot everything at the sight of a huge tureen full of rich stew. His little round eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, this is ripping! I think I'm about the hungriest, so you may as well s'rve me first."

And Billy Bunter was soon busy.
"Here, one of you come and relieve me at the wheel!" called out Bob Cherry.

But they were all too busy.
"It's all right!" called out Harry Wharton. "We're in deep water, and you can lash the wheel for a bit."

And Bob Cherry did so, and joined the feasters.

The schooner was out in the midst of the wide, sweeping bay, with the blue water curling round her bows, and the shore was dim and distant. The cabins of the fishing village had disappeared among the grey old rocks.

Huger, clearer, the great Shoulder loomed into view, with the sea-gulls flying round the summit. But the cove, which the amateur sailors intended to explore, would not be reached till after ample time for dinner. The juniors gave all their attention to the feast, and they enjoyed it.

There was enough and to spare, and in the enjoyment of it even Billy Bunter forgot the bonneting with the paint-pot, and a fat and g'asy smile came over his face, with an effect that was quite curious along with the streaks and smudges of paint that remained there.

The feast over, the crew of the Marjorie felt much more satisfied with themselves and with things generally.

They lay about the schooner, in deck-chairs, on the plank, in various attitudes of easy comfort, and chatted together cheerily.

Harry Wharton rose from the meal with his usual activity, and was inclined to recommence sailor training at once.

But he found himself in a minority of one, even the two mates not being very enthusiastic about the training just at the moment.

"No slacking!" said Harry briskly. "Come on! Tumble up, and lay hold of the ropes! You don't know how to 'bout ship yet."

"I don't believe you do, either," grunted Trevor.

"I'm learning—Captain Stump is teaching us, isn't he?" said the youthful skipper of the Marjorie mildly. "Training tells, you know."

"Well, give us a rest first."

"No slacking, lads!"

"Oh, I believe you go by clockwork, Wharton," yawned Russell, who had his head resting against a cask, and his legs outstretched in an attitude that was very comfortable, but could hardly be considered elegant. "Give us a chance! We're only common or garden mortals, you know."

"Faith, and ye're right! It was a beautiful stew intirely, and it makes a gossion inclined to take things aisy for a bit, ye know."

"Oh, get up! Work!"

"Bl'ss the work!"

"Come on, Cherry and Nugent!" exclaimed Harry. "Set an example to the crew, and if they don't follow it we'll touch them up with a rope's end."

Bob Cherry yawned.

"Just a few minutes, Harry."

"What! You slacking, too!"

"Not exactly slacking, but I've been

steering for hours, you know—and that was a jolly good dinner!"

"I say, Nugent—"

"Don't speak to me for an hour or two," murmur'd Nugent, who was lying on his back with his hands under his head. "I'm comfy."

"What about an example to the crew?"

"Blow the crew!"

"But the example—"

"Blow the example!"

"Here, Captain Stump, you got up and make a start."

"Bust my topsails!" said Captain Stump. "I've got a touch of the rheumatiz come back, and if you'll 'skuse me—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Oh, you're a set of slackers! Take a rest, if you like. I'll steer."

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "You'll be happy so long as you're working at something. Keep her head larboard and starboard, and—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

And Wharton went to the wheel. Billy Bunter, who had eaten enough for six or seven Dragoons, was already snoring. The crew of the schooner enjoyed a rest in the spring sunshine, while Wharton stood solitary at the wheel.

It was a glorious spring day, with a soft southerly wind, and a bright, warm sun. The sea rolled crisply and calmly, and the sailing on the bay was enjoyable. The Greyfriars sailors felt that the "wheeze" was more a success than ever.

The great rocky Shoulder was looming up closer ahead.

Wharton swept the sea with his glance occasionally. Out on the blue waters showed up white sail after sail, and further out so he could discern the blur of smoke left by a steamer.

But the bay was clear of craft, the fishing vessels being out of sight, and the pleasure boats near the shore lost to view against the high rocks.

But suddenly Wharton gave a start.

Round the rocks of the Shoulder a sail came into view—a big, brown sail, evidently belonging to a fishing craft.

It was a broad, deep boat of a heavy build, but it ran lightly enough through the curling water, with that single huge sail drawing in the breeze.

But it was not the light gliding of the big boat, or the belying brown sail, that attracted Wharton's glance. He had a passing thought that the boat was well handled. But what caught his attention was the ensign that streamed from the peak.

He looked, and he looked again! Then he rubbed his eyes, and again he looked.

"There was no mistake about it."

It was no ensign known to the Royal Navy or to the Merchant Marine. It was the black flag!

The black flag!

There it flew gaily in the breeze—her black ensign, with the white skull and crossbones upon it, plain for all to see!

The emblem of piracy—the flag that the British Navy had abolished from most seas—there it was, fluttering freely in Pegg Bay!

And Wharton, almost letting go the wheel in his amazement, stared at it spellbound.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Boarded by Pirates.

WHARTON stared at the black flag for a full minute before he spoke. So far he could see nothing of the strange craft but the heavy bows, the big brown sail, and the piratical flag fluttering from the peak. Of the crew of the stranger he could not get a glimpse.

He found his voice at last.

"Tumble up, the f! All hands on deck!"

There was a general yawning, and a snore from Billy Bunter. Some of the crew

of the schooner looked lazily round at the excited steersman.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter?"

"The black flag!"

"The black which?"

"Pirates!"

"Oh, don't be funny!"

"I tell you it's the black flag! Tumble up!"

They tumbled up then in earnest.

Even Billy Bunter woke and sat up, and groped for his spectacles. The rest of the juniors sprang to their feet.

The strange craft was making to cross the bows of the schooner, and drawing rapidly nearer.

She was in full sight of all, and the black flag fluttering in the breeze was not to be mistaken.

"The black flag!"

"Pirates!"

"My only hat!"

"It's some joke," said Mark Linley. "A jape to scare us."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, I don't suppose they're real pirates. I suppose it's a boat-load of practical jokers. Curious we can't see them though."

"They're keeping down out of sight."

"That's it," said Russell. "Hiding below the gunwale! I don't quite catch on to this. Surely it can't be—"

"Real pirates?"

"Well, we've got watches, you know, and a tidy sum of money between us, and there's no help to be had," said Russell slowly. "A set of ruffians might easily get a fishing boat and run us down here to rob us, come to think of it."

"Phew!" said Trevor.

"Faith, and it's right ye are! They ain't pirates, but they might easily be a lot of longshore thieves from the port up the coast."

Harry Wharton looked serious. It was possible, though the hoisting of the black flag looked more like a "jape" than anything else.

"We'll jolly soon see!" he exclaimed. "I can make them out from the maintop with a telescope."

"Good wheeze!"

Two or three juniors promptly climbed to the maintop, Wharton first. Harry disdained the use of the "lubber's hole," and clambered manfully over the edge of the top, and dragged up the telescope with him.

There he swept the sea with the glass.

With the schooner pitching a good deal beneath him, and the strange sail gliding along at a great rate, it was not very easy for him to get his focus.

But he aimed the telescope correctly at last, and the black-flagged boat rushed large upon his field of vision.

From his perch he could see into the boat, where the big brown sail did not obstruct the view.

He started as he saw the interior. For there were a dozen or more figures in the boat, crouching in the cover of the gunwale, and each of them had a black mask upon his face.

Masked men—in a boat flying the emblem of piracy!

Wharton descended to the deck, his face serious. The crew of the strange boat had observed him, and they gave up further attempt at concealment. They sprang into view, showing over the gunwale, and there was a general gasp from the deck of the Marjorie as the row of masked faces came into sight.

"Masked!"

"They—they can't be real pirates!"

The juniors watched the strange craft with beating hearts. It was almost certain that it was a "jape," and Wharton was too proud to fly, even if there had been real danger. The schooner forged on

slowly, and the stranger drew rapidly nearer.

"I say, suppose we buzz off," said Hazeldene. "No harm in giving them a run."

"That craft's quite as swift as ours," said Bob Cherry, "and they're handling it well."

"Still we could—"

Harry Wharton shook his head decidedly.

"We're not going to run," he said. "It's pretty clear that they mean to come aboard us—if they can. Hands to repel boarders!"

The crew of the schooner armed themselves with the mops, but half-heartedly.

The strangers, beside the black masks on their faces, wore black cloaks which almost concealed their figures from head to foot.

They evidently wanted to be disguised, and their disguise was a success, and something very much like alarm grew on board the schooner as they came nearer.

A figure stood up in the bows of the craft, and a black-gloved hand was waved at the Majorie.

"I fancy you are a set of duffers on a jape," went on Harry Wharton. "But if you were Captain Kidd come to life again, that flag wouldn't go down. Go and eat coke!"

"Once more!"

"Oh, ring off!"

"Then prepare for death! Load!"

There was a rattle of firearms. Most of the Removites turned pale. They were real firearms that glistened in the sun, in the hands of the masked, cloaked crew of the mysterious boat.

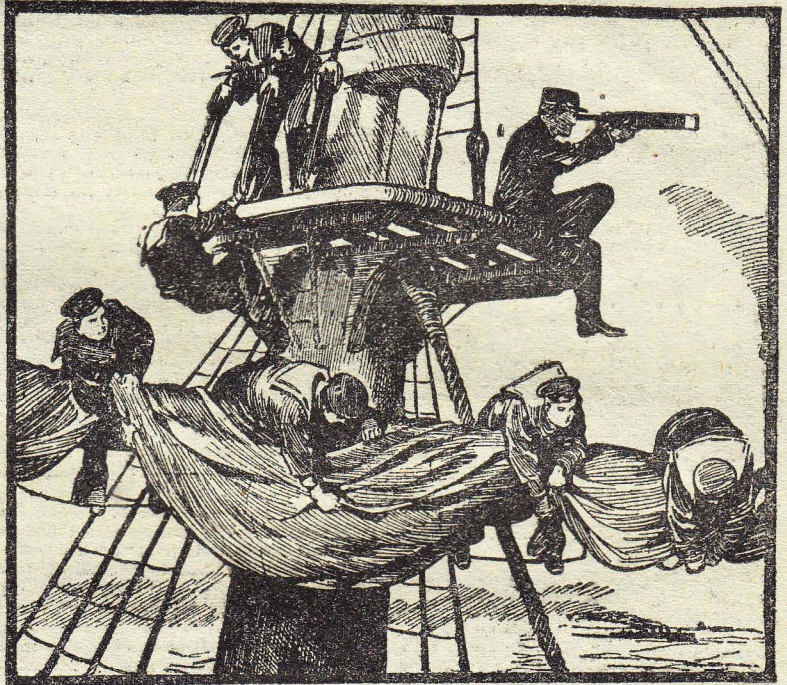
Wharton's teeth came together hard. If the "pirates" were jokers, they were playing the part with a grim earnestness that looked very like the real thing.

Was it possible that—?

The boy's brain swam for a moment at the thought.

Pirates in the twentieth century—in the calm waters of an English bay—seemed too absurd a dream to be possible.

Even Bob Cherry had changed colour. Most of the Removites were white. Bunter had dived into the galley. Captain Stump



Harry Wharton clambered manfully over the edge of the top, and dragged up the telescope with him. Then he swept the sea with the glass. "Pirates!" he exclaimed.

"Ahey there!"

"Ahey!" shouted back Wharton.

"Lay to!"

"Rats!"

"We're coming on board!"

"You'll get a warm reception, if you do!"

"Beware!" The pirate's voice was harsh and stern, as if he were purposely disguising it, yet there seemed a tone in it familiar to Harry's ears. "If you resist us we shall send every mother's son of you to feed the fishes!"

"Rats!"

"Will you haul down your colours?"

Harry Wharton looked up at the Union Jack that flew from the masthead—the brave old colours streaming out in the breeze.

"No! That flag never goes down to an enemy!"

"Bravo!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Hear, hear!"

was staring wide-eyed at the masked faces, spell-bound. Wharton looked round him.

"Present!"

The firearms came up to a level. It looked terribly business-like. Hazeldene clutched Wharton by the shoulder.

"For Heaven's sake, Wharton, don't be a fool—give in!"

"But—"

"They may murder us!"

"I'd risk it—"

"Think of us then! Surrender!"

"Better let them come aboard!"

muttered Trevor.

Wharton gritted his teeth.

"Very well—let them come! But mind—whatever and whoever they are, that flag does not come down!"

Hazeldene waved his hands frantically to the boat.

"Stop! It's all right—you can come aboard."

"Don't fire, men!"

The guns were lowered.

The boat surged up alongside the schooner, and the leader of the mysterious crew clambered aboard, followed by his men. He pointed to the fore-castle.

"That's your place!" he said, gruffly. "Get in there!"

Wharton did not move. Bob Cherry and Nugent and Mark Linley drew up round him, with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. But the others went forward, slowly, amazedly, hardly knowing whether they were awake or dreaming. The masked boarders watched them go. Wharton's mind was in a conflict. The masks and the cloaks so effectually concealed the invaders, that he could not see anything of them, hardly their eyes—yet few of them were tall enough to be taken for men—unless, as was possible—they were under-sized foreigners.

One of the masked men followed the crew, to close the scuttle upon them when they were in the fore-castle. The chief pointed sternly.

"Follow them!"

But, as he raised his arm, the wind caught his black cloak, and blew it up—and an Eton jacket was revealed underneath.

Harry Wharton gave a shout of relief and rage.

"It's a jape! Line up, there!"

And he rushed upon the leader of the boarding-party.

"Stand back, or—!"

"Rats!"

"Rescue, Remove!" roared Bob Cherry.

But most of the crew were in the fore-castle. The door was jammed upon them by a prompt "pirate," and secured. They raved and thumped from within in vain.

Five juniors were still on deck: Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Mark Linley. In a moment they were engaged in a wild and whirling combat with a dozen or more foes.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In the Hands of the Foe!

WHARTON fought like a hero, and his comrades backed him up well, but the odds were too great. They had no chance from the beginning. But they gave a good account of themselves.

In the wild struggle masks and cloaks were torn aside, and trampled under foot, and the familiar garments and familiar face of the Upper Fourth fellows were revealed.

Temple, Dabney & Co., and nearly a dozen more of the Upper Fourth Form at Greyfriars, were the wicked pirates!

They were gasping with laughter now, but they fought hard all the same, and the odds on their side rendered the result a foregone conclusion from the beginning.

Harry Wharton was soon down, with Temple and Dabney sitting on him, and Bob Cherry was sat upon by Fry and Harvey.

The nabob was captured next, and then Nugent—and Mark Linley was rolled on the deck, and tied up with a length of rope. The fight was over, and the pirates were in possession of the good ship Marjorie. From the prisoners in the fore-castle came an endless din of yelling and thumping. But the victors took no notice of it. They rested from their labours, sitting on their prisoners and yelling with laughter.

"Oh, my only hat!" gasped Temple. "What a howling jape!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"A sixpennyworth of black crepe for the masks—"

"A dozen black cloaks hired of the costumier in Friardale—"

"A dozen old guns out of the gym at Greyfriars, that these very asses themselves have used a dozen times for musketry drill—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And behold the pirates bold!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Upper Fourth fellows shrieked again. The Removeites did not laugh. The situation was comical enough, but it did not appeal to the heroes of the Remove. They were only thinking of the way they had been fooled—of the yells of laughter that would go up when the story became known at Greyfriars School.

The Removeites listened with red faces to the laughter of the Upper Fourth "pirates."

There was no doubt that the Remove, for once, had been absolutely "done."

They had triumphed over the Upper Fourth more than once, but on the present occasion they had to confess themselves "licked to the wide."

The five prisoners on deck, with rope-cends knotted round their limbs, lay helpless prisoners, glaring at one another and at the "pirates," and the latter, every few moments, burst into fresh roars of laughter.

Yet Harry Wharton could not blame himself.

Temple, Dabney and Co. had played their part so well that there had been a dreadful possibility that the masked invaders were really desperadoes in search of booty, and for the sake of the others, Harry had given in.

But now he was keenly conscious of the absurdity of the whole affair. The black cloaks and masks cast aside, the grinning faces of the Upper Fourth fellows and their Eton jackets made the scene inexpressibly ridiculous. The guns, too, at close quarters, could be recognised as the old specimens the juniors used for drill practice in the gym. They had not been loaded for many years, and would probably have burst if used as firearms.

The Upper Fourth were gloating, the prisoners on deck glaring, and in the fore-castle the rest of the Removeites hammered and yelled.

But they could not get out.

Dabney and Fry had secured the door fast, and seven Removeites were packed in there, unable to come to the aid of their leader.

Wharton gritted his teeth.

The laugh was fairly against the Remove, and the Upper Fourth fellows, taking their own boat in tow, were already trimming the sails to run ashore.

They intended to take the Remove sailors back to Pegg as prisoners. The fishing village was crowded with Greyfriars fellows that fine afternoon, and Wharton and his recruits would be held up to utter ridicule. It would be a blow the Remove would be a long time in recovering from.

Wharton turned over in his mind desperate projects for escape. But he was bound fast, and there was no chance.

Temple looked down at him with a grin. "Comfy?" he asked.

"Confound you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, stop your cackling," said Bob Cherry. "It's bad enough, without you going off like a cheap American alarm clock."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rather!" gasped Dabney. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're going ashore," grinned Temple. "We're thinking of exhibiting you chaps on the beach as captured lunatics and charging a penny admission."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Upper Fourth.

And the Removeites could only look at one another with sickly smiles.

"Put the prisoners below," said Temple loftily. "They're in the way here."

There's some good grub around; let's finish it off for them."

"Good idea!"

The bound Removeites were dragged down the little companion and dumped in the cabin. The Upper Fourth fellows remained in possession of the deck. The schooner was speeding on her new course. Captain Stump was placed at the wheel. The wooden-legged sailormen had been of no use in the scuffle, as he had been too bewildered to know much of what was going on, and a push had sent him rolling at the start.

Temple & Co. did not believe in doing more work than they could help, and the old sailorman was put at the wheel, under dire threats of being hung at the yardarm if he didn't steer straight for Pegg. And the juniors watched him to see that he didn't make any attempt to release Wharton & Co.

In the cabin the Remove prisoners were gloomy enough.

"What a precious lot of giddy asses we shall look!" grunted Bob Cherry. "Fancy being taken in by a set of kids done up in black masks."

"Oh, it's too rotten!" growled Wharton.

"If we could only get loose!"

"What would be the good?" said Linley. "We couldn't fight a dozen of them. And there's no way of getting the others out of the fo'c's'le."

"I suppose not. It's rotten!"

"We shall be at the village in half an hour, and Greyfriars will never finish laughing at the black flag—and us!"

"It's rotten!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific."

And the Removeites relapsed into gloom.

From the deck came the sounds of the Upper Fourth feasting on the ample remains of the lunch, and amid the clink of knives and plates rang the bursts of laughter.

In the cabin there was silence. But the silence was broken all at once, and Harry Wharton rolled over, his face flushed, listening intently. A sound had come to his ears, a sound from below, in the hold of the schooner.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Turning the Tables.

WUN LUNG, the Chinese, had not joined in the furious hammering and shouting in the fore-castle.

While his companions were exhausting themselves in vain din, the little Chinese was thinking. His quaint little face was screwed up into an expression of intense reflection.

"We can't get out!" exclaimed Hazel-dene, at last, throwing himself upon a bunk. "We've been utterly done, and we may as well own up."

"They've changed the course," Trevor remarked.

"Yes; I suppose they're going back to Pegg, to give us a showing up as a set of confounded jackasses."

"And the grub!" groaned Billy Bunter. "I can hear them wolfing it. There wasn't more than enough left for another meal, and now they're scoffing it."

"Oh, blow the grub!"

"That's all very well, Vaseline, but we shall be hungry."

"If we could only get out we could rush the rotters!" growled Russell. "Can't you suggest something, somebody?"

"We shall have to wait till they open the door," said Dicky Brown. "Then—"

"Faith, and then we shall have all Pegg grinning at us intirely."

"That's so! What are you screwing up your chivvy like a Chinese idol for, Wun Lung? Have you got a wheeze?"

"Me tinkee."

"Well, have you tunked of anything we can do?"

"Me savvy?"
"Oh, rats!" growled Trevor. "I suppose a heathen Chinese won't be able to get us out of the fix. We're done."

"Me savvy."
"Let him speak," said Hazeldene. "He has good ideas sometimes. Go ahead, kid!"

Wun Lung grinned.
"We no get outee of forecattle," he said. "No openee; but suppose we gottee through into hold?"

And he tapped the bulkhead which divided the forecattle from the hold. The juniors stared at him.

"My hat!" said Hazeldene. "I never thought of that."

"But the hatch is closed down," said Trevor. "We couldn't get on deck, even if we got through into the hold."

"Lazarette hatch in cabin."
"What on earth does he mean by a Lazarette?"

"I know!" shouted Hazeldene. "The lazarette! Don't you remember noticing there's a hatch in the cabin that opens into the hold. If we could get along there we could get out through the cabin. Those rotters don't know the craft, and they won't have noticed the lazarette hatch."

The juniors looked excited.
They only wanted a chance of getting out, and getting at close quarters with the enemy. They were satisfied that they could do the rest.

"But how are we to get through this bulkhead?" growled Trevor. "It won't be easy."

"Oh, I don't know! The inside of this schooner is pretty mouldy everywhere. The hull has been patched up, but the bulkheads are in a pretty rotten state. I think we could jump through somehow. There's an axe here, and if you fellows will stand out of the way—"

"Look out, ass; don't brain us!"
"Well, give a fellow room."

"Me tinkee——"
"That's all right, Wun Lung; you've tinkee enough. Get out of the way!"

"Me tinkee bang on dool again, and then the lottels no heal us bleak through bulkhead."

"Good idea! Hammer again, you chaps, while I use the hatchet."
"Right you are."

The hammering in the forecattle recommenced. In the din thus created the blows of the hatchet on the bulkhead were not noticed above the rest. The woodwork was, as Hazeldene said, in a more or less rotten state. A few mighty blows crashed an opening through. A few blows more, and this opening was large enough for the juniors to crawl through into the hold.

"Look out!" muttered Trevor. "It's jolly dark! Ow! I've barked my shin."
"Well, don't bark so jolly loud, or they'll hear you."

"Look here——"
"Oh, come on! Bunter, you can stay there and kick up a row, so that they won't suspect! You wouldn't be any use in a row."

"Oh, really, Vas-line!"
"Kick up a row! Hammer on the scuttle. Sing! Anything will do, so long as it's a fearful row. Come on, you chaps!"

And the Removites went on their way Bunter, not sorry to be left out of the coming scrimmags, hammered away in the forecattle and made noise enough to convince the Upper Fourth fellows, if that were need'd, that the prisoners were still safe in their quarters.

Meanwhile, the juniors were creeping aft through darkness, barking their shins, treading on one another's feet, and growling and grunting in chorus. It was Wun Lung, who seemed to possess a cat-like faculty of seeing in the dark, who reached the little cabin hatch first, and

crept up the stairs leading to it. He listened there, but not a sound came from the cuddy above.

The little Chinese felt over the hatch and slowly raised it. He peeped out into the cabin, and a smile glimmered over his face as he saw the Removite prisoners there and no one else. Harry Wharton's eyes met his.

"My hat!" muttered the captain of the R-movite.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The Chinese!"

Wun Lung grinned and crept silently out into the cabin. In a couple of minutes he had cut loose the prisoners, and while he was doing so the rest of the Removites came up and joined them. They looked somewhat flushed and dusty, but in good form for a fight, and very eager. Wharton stretched his cramped limbs.

"By Jove, this is too good!" he exclaimed, in a subdued voice. "Whose idea was it to get at us in that way?"

"Wun Lung's."
"By Jove, you're a little genius, Wun Lung! The Upper Fourth chaps are making for Pegg, and I expect we shall be there in a quarter of an hour. There's going to be rather a change of circumstances on board before we get there, though."

"Yes, rather."
"The ratherfulness is terrific."
"Come on, and quiet!"

Harry Wharton stole silently up the companion steps. Bob Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Hazeldene followed close behind, and then the rest of the Removites, silent and eager.

The companions hatch was open, and the blue sky shone above. Wharton put his head out cautiously on deck.

The Upper Fourth were feasting and making right merry. It never crossed

(Continued on the next page.)

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their minds for a moment that their prisoners could get loose, after the careful way in which they had secured them, and they were utterly off their guard. Wharton whispered back to his followers:

"Come on, as fast as you can, and hit your hardest."

"What ho!"

And Harry Wharton sprang out on the deck. There was a gasp of amazement from Temple, Dabney & Co. Most of the Upper Fourth sprang to their feet. Wharton rushed right at them. If the pirates could have closed the companion hatch they might have bottled up the Remove yet, and dealt with Wharton singly. Harry's idea was to keep them too busy for that, and he succeeded. He rushed into the midst of the Upper Fourth, hitting right and left, and his chums were after him in a few seconds.

Then the rest of the Removites poured out, and the malse became general. A terrific combat raged on the deck of the Marjorie. Fellows rolled over and over again, and still jumped up to renew the conflict. Desperate couples reeled to and fro in hand-grips, and breathless victors sat gasping on the chests of fallen foes.

The odds were slightly in favour of the Remove, and when Captain Stump secured the wheel and came to their aid, they had decidedly the advantage. The wooden-legged sailorman took care not to be upset this time, and he accounted for the burliest of the pirates, holding him fast in a loving embrace.

By this time, too, Bunter had crawled through the hold and emerged from the companion, and though he was not of much use as a fighting man, he plumped his weight upon Fry, who had been brought to the deck by Bob Cherry and held him secure while Bob rushed on into the fray again.

And so the tide of battle turned in favour of the Remove. But the fight was hard, and black eyes and swollen noses were distributed with great liberality on both sides.

But one by one the Upper Fourth pirates were dragged down and secured, and ropes fastened wrists and ankles.

After ten minutes of terrific scrimmaging, Temple, Dabney & Co. were prisoners, and lay red and panting at the feet of their conquerors.

And then the Remove cheered.

"Hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The cheering rang over the wide bay, and reached the fellows in Pegg, and brought general attention upon the schooner as it glided towards the shore.

"My hat!" gasped Wharton, mopping a trickle of red from his nose, "that was warm while it lasted. We've done them!"

"Get those masks and things, and shove 'em on the rotters," said Nugent. "We'll take 'em in as a crew of captured pirates."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Upper Fourth fellows wriggled and expostulated, but that did not matter to the Remove. The pirates were masked once more, sorely against their will, and the black flag was rolled round Temple in addition.

The crew of the schooner had some-

what recovered their breath by the time the vessel drew into the shore. The Marjorie was brought to anchor smartly enough—the Greyfriars sailors were already falling into the ways of sailormen.

A crowd was on the sands watching them curiously. Greyfriars fellows of all forms were there, as well as fisherfolk, young and old. The Removites assumed a gravity suitable to the occasion. The masked pirates were hoisted into their own boat, and the juniors pulled ashore. Trumper and several other villagers were among the crowd, and they pushed forward with somewhat warlike looks. But at the sight of the mask and bound prisoners and the black flag artistically draped round Temple, they stopped, and stared.

"What the——" gasped Trumper.

Wharton took off his cap to the wondering crowd.

"Gentlemen, we have captured a crew of pirates, and brought them ashore. You can hang them if you like, or make them walk the plank. Shove them ashore!" And the Upper Fourth pirates were shoved ashore.

They were greeted with roars of laughter. The Removites released their feet, but left their hands bound, so that they were quite helpless till friends in the crowd began to untie them.

Trumper & Co. were yelling with laughter, as well as the rest. The Upper Fourth pirates stumbled away with faces the colour of beetroots, followed by yells of laughter.

Then, as the Removites were about to push off again, Trumper & Co. made a rush for the boat.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Wharton, standing up, boat-hook in hand. "I say, make it pax for the day, you chaps, and all of you come for a sail in the schooner! We've got plenty of grub aboard, and you'll have a jolly time."

Trumper paused. The offer was too good to be refused.

"Right you are!" said Trumper at last. "We'll do it."

"Good! Tumble in!"

And Trumper and the other villagers were taken on board. Once more the schooner spread her white wings for a sail round the bay, Trumper & Co. and the Removites of Greyfriars fraternising cordially enough. Indeed, the college lads found that they could learn a great deal of practical sailing from the fisherboys, and they were keen enough to learn all they could.

And while the crew of the schooner enjoyed their sail, the Upper Fourth pirates crept disconsolately back to the school to hide their diminished heads. Fellows who had seen them put ashore spread the tale, and all Greyfriars laughed over their adventure. And Harry Wharton and his recruits found them still laughing when, at dusk, they returned to school after one of the most eventful outings of their lives. The Upper Fourth had nothing to say. Temple, Dabney & Co. sang small—very small—and the honours of the day rested with the Greyfriars sailors.

THE END.

BETWEEN OURSELVES.

A Weekly Chat between The Editor and His Readers.

THREE TOPPING SCHOOL STORIES!

Next Friday's issue of the PENNY POPULAR will contain three really magnificent stories—stories that will make a strong appeal to every one of you. To begin with, there is a long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. entitled:

"CUT BY THE FORM!"

Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire, is the leading character in this fine tale. Bulstrode & Co. make a dead set against him, and one of the Lancashire lad's worst enemies succeeds in getting him cut by the Remove. Full of grit, Mark Linley, although sent to Coventry by his schoolfellows, refuses to knuckle under to his accusers. You will read with much enjoyment how Mark is eventually cleared by Marjorie Hazeldene, and how he again comes into favour with the Form.

The second long, complete story in our next issue is that dealing with the adventures of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, entitled:

"THE PRICE OF SILENCE!"

This is a powerful story, and one that you will all like. A rowing match is to take place between the School House and the New House. Tom Merry has the task of choosing the eight to represent the School House. He is in doubt as to whom to make number eight. When Crooke asks for the place, he naturally refuses. But Crooke is not finished with. He goes to Tom Merry again, and states that he has proof that Lowther is a thief. Tom Merry scorns the idea at first, but when he goes into the matter he is forced to agree with Crooke that his chum is guilty of theft. Crooke informs Tom Merry that if he fails to include him in the eight he will denounce Lowther before the whole school. What does he do? This you will learn when you read next Friday's magnificent tale.

The third story in our next issue is, of course, that introducing Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood, entitled:

"THE FALL OF THE FISTICAL FOUR!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. decide to try their hands at toffee-making. Of course, Tommy Dodd & Co. are left out of the wheeze, but they determine to have something to do with it. They permit the Classics to make the toffee, and then they chip in. Strange to say, the part the three Tommies play has the effect of bringing about the Fall of the Fistical Four. This is a humorous story, and one that will send you into roars of laughter.

YOUR EDITOR.

Next Friday's Grand Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled:

CUT BY THE FORM!

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- BY -

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
The Pass.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY, the one-time outsider of St. Jim's, entered his study. Levison and Mellish were there, and they greeted the Outsider with smiles. Lumley-Lumley sniffed, and turned his head away.

Mellish and Levison looked surprised. "What's up with you?" asked Mellish. "Nothing much," said Lumley-Lumley. "Well, you're looking jolly blue about it then," said Mellish. "Wouldn't you," said Lumley-Lumley, "if you wanted to go out and couldn't get a pass?"

"Who won't give you one?" "Kildare and Darrel and Lathom," explained Lumley-Lumley.

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

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

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

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

"Better than some of you lot!" said Lumley-Lumley.

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

"You?" "Yes."

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

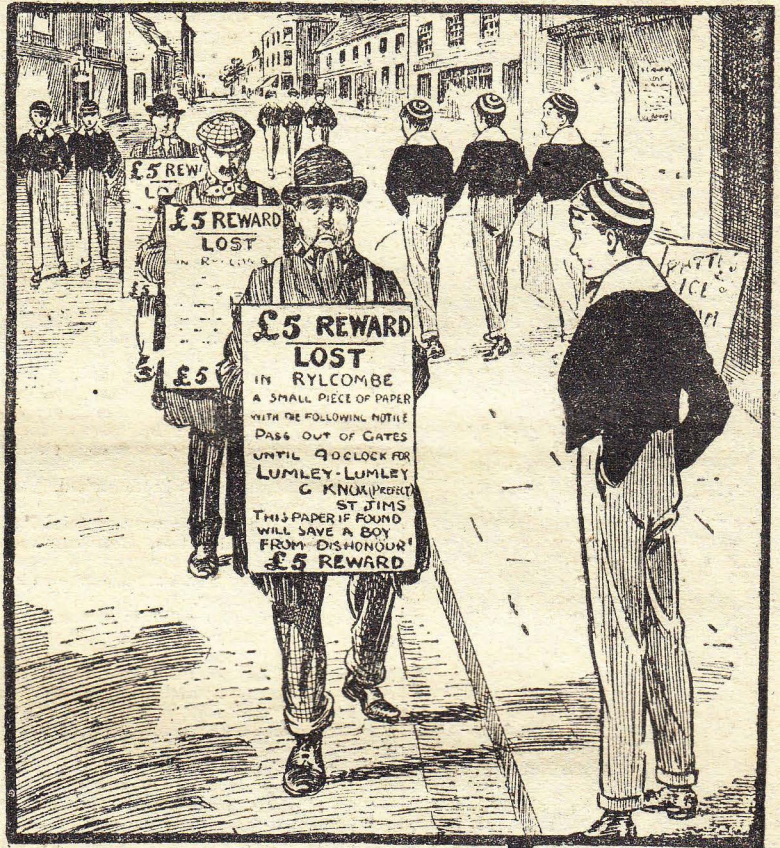
Lumley-Lumley hesitated. "Well, I guess I should like one," he said. "Knox wouldn't give me one. He's had his knife into me since I refused to get cigarettes into the school for him. He wouldn't give you the pass for me, Levison."

"He would as a favour to me." "And what would you want for getting it?"

"Nothing." "What's the little game, then?" Levison laughed.

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

Lumley-Lumley looked at him suspiciously.



In order to prove his innocence, Lumley-Lumley even sent out four men with a notice on sandwich-boards; but the missing paper could not be found. It was like searching for a needle in a haystack.

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

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

Levison rose and left the study. Lumley-Lumley cast a puzzled glance at Mellish. He did not understand at all.

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

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

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

"But why should he do it for me?" "Well, you used to be his pal," said Mellish.

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

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

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

Lumley-Lumley yawned. He was quite sure by this time that Levison was simply "pulling his leg" and

wasting his time, and he was annoyed with himself for having paid any attention to the cad of the Fourth at all.

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

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

"It's all right," said Levison. "What's all right?"

"About the pass out of the gates," Lumley-Lumley started.

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

"Yes, I have." "Let's see it."

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

"My hat!" said Lumley-Lumley. Levison grinned.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Thanks!"
"If you're hard up—"
"Thanks! I'm not."
"Oh, all serene."

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley took his cap and left the study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Not Present.

"LEVISON!"
"Adsum!"
"Lorne!"
"Adsum!"
"Lumley-Lumley!"

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

"Lumley-Lumley!"
There was no answer.

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

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

Silence.
Mr. Railton marked Lumley-Lumley down as absent, and went on with the roll-call. The fellows in the Fourth looked at one another. Lumley-Lumley was certainly not in his place with them.

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Railton frowned.

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

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

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

"Yes, sir."

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

"Move the rock, old man," said Lowther judiciously, as Manners paused to think.

"Move the rock to king's fourth."
"And leave the king in check!" snapped Manners.

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

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

"Ahem! I should say—"
"Oh, dry up!" said Manners. "You can't play chess for toffee!"

"Why, you ass—"
"Move the knight—king's knight to bishop's fourth," said a quiet voice.

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

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

Lumley-Lumley smiled.
"Look at the board!" he said.

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

"That settles you!" he remarked.
Tom Merry nodded.

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

"You're going to get into a row," he remarked. "Kildare is looking for you."
"Oh, those blessed lines!" said Lumley-Lumley. "I forgot all about them. I suppose Lathom will double them now."

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

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

"Oh!" said Tom Merry, in surprise.
"Have you seen your excellent friend Grimes?" asked Crooke sarcastically.

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

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

"Knox."
"Hallo! Here's Kildare."

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

"You're wanted," he said abruptly.
"What's the trouble, Kildare?"
"You missed calling-over."

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

"I had a pass from Knox."
"You can go and tell Mr. Railton that," said Kildare grimly.

"But—I say—"
"You're to go to Mr. Railton's study at once."

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

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

"Ah! You have returned?" he said. "Yes, sir," said Lumley-Lumley respectfully.

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

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

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

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

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

"Oh, no, sir!"
"Then who—?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lumley-Lumley flushed crimson.
"It was not a falsehood, sir," he exclaimed indignantly. "I had a pass from Knox, and I can't imagine what has become of it. But it's all right. You can ask Knox, and he will remember sending it to me."

"Lumley! This impudent effrontery—"
"Ask Knox, sir."

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

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

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

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

"Certainly, sir."

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

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
Levison's Lie.

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

"Knox," he said, plunging into the subject at once, "Lumley-Lumley states that you gave him a pass out of gates for this evening. Is that statement correct?"

"No, sir," said Knox.

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure, sir."

Mr. Railton fixed a frowning glance upon the Outsider.

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

Lumley-Lumley almost staggered.

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

The prefect stared at the junior.

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

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

"I did not."

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

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

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

"Certainly, sir."

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

Kildare returned with Levison, of the Fourth.

"Here is Levison, sir," he said.

"Come here, Levison!"

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

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

"When, sir?"

"This afternoon."

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

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

"Well, Lumley-Lumley?"

Lumley-Lumley stood petrified.

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

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

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

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

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

"But you—you—"

"I don't think I ever heard such a

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

Crash!

"Oh, help!"

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

"Now tell the truth, you villain!" yelled Lumley-Lumley. "Tell the truth, or I'll choke it out of you!"

"Groo! Oh, help!"

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

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



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

clumsy falsehood," said Mr. Railton. "Surely you could not expect Levison to back up an untruthful statement, Lumley-Lumley!"

The Outsider gave a hoarse gasp.

"It—it's true!" he exclaimed.

"Nonsense!"

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

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

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

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

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

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

"Secure that boy!" said Mr. Railton.

"Got him, sir!" said Knox.

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

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

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

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

"Lumley-Lumley," he said, "you have acted like a criminal. You have broken the rules of the school and defied authority."

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

"Sir! I—I—"

"Not a word! Go!"

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

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

"Oh, sir! I—I—"

"Go!"

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

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Prisoner.

ALL St. Jim's knew what had happened in ten minutes. There was an excited crowd in the junior common-room when Levison came in. Levison was not popular, as a rule, but he was surrounded by an eager crowd now eager for information. Levison told as much as he chose.

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

"Bai Jove!"

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

"Oh, shut up, Crooke!"

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

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

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

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

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

"You're there, Lumley?"

"I guess so. Is that Tom Merry?"

"Yes!"

"What do you want?"

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

"The door's locked."

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

"There was a pause.

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

"Where is it now, Lumley?"

"Lost!"

"That's very unfortunate."

The Outsider laughed.

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

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

"Do you want to do anything?"

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

"Well, you could do me a favour, only—"

"What is it?"

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"It's asking too much."

"I'll do it if I can."

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

"Oh!" said Tom Merry.

Lumley-Lumley laughed again.

"I know it's too much to ask," he said.

"Never mind. Good night."

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

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

Tom Merry hesitated.

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

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

"I guess you can leave that to me."

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

"I guess not."

"Can he prove how you spent your evening?"

"I never even saw him."

"Even how can he help you?"

"That's my bizney."

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

"Still there?" called out Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes," said Tom Merry.

"Good-night!"

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

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

Still Tom Merry hesitated.

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

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

Lumley-Lumley grunted.

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

Tom Merry laughed.

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

"Right-ho!"

"Good-night!"

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

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

"Oh, Master Merry!" he exclaimed.

"You startled me! I—"

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

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

"My mistake," said Tom Merry blandly.

"I suppose you know that Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth is in the punishment-room—Nobody's Study, you know?"

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

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

"Yes, I know Grimes, Master Tom."

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

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

"Good for you!" said Tom Merry.

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

"Good egg!"

And Tom Merry said good-night to Toby, and went to the Shell dormitory.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Sentenced by the Head.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY was alone in Nobody's Study.

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

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

Below, all was dark.

The high buildings without shut off the light of the stars that glimmered in the sky.

Lumley-Lumley gazed downwards, and waited.

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

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

Lumley-Lumley whistled softly.

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

"Yes, Toby. Catch!"

"Right!"

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

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

"Got it, Toby?"

"Yes, Master Lumley."

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

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"Buzz off, before you're spotted!"

Lumley-Lumley closed the window.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The Head wants you," he said curtly.

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

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

"All serene!"

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

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

Kildare frowned.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I guess so, sir."

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

"Excuse me, sir," said Lumley-Lumley, quietly and respectfully, but very firmly.

"I guess I haven't been guilty of anything of the sort."

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

"Yes, sir."

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

"Yes, sir."

"Both Knox and Levison deny it."

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

"We will go into this," said the Head.

"You cannot produce the paper in question?"

"No, sir."

"What has become of it?"

"I must have lost it, sir."

"You had it in your pocket?"

"Yes, sir."

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

"Yes, sir, some old letters."

"Did you lose any of them?"

"No, sir."

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

"I know it sounds queer, sir."

"Further than that," said the Head.

"You accuse Levison of having forged Knox's hand in writing out this pass that you declare you received from him?"

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

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

"I guess so, sir."

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

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

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

"Can you say that?"

"No, sir."

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

"I guess he couldn't, sir."

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

"Ye-es, sir."

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

Lumley-Lumley was silent.

Put that way, he could see that he had no case. It was only too clear that Levison had not trusted to his losing the paper. Levison could have had no reason to suppose that he would lose it. But if he had produced it, Levison would have been condemned.

Either the pass was written by Knox, or it was a wonderfully skilful forgery; and there was only one fellow at St. Jim's who could forge writing so cleverly, and that was Ernest Levison, of the Fourth.

What did it mean? Had Levison plotted against him, blind to the practical certainty of exposure, depending upon the merest chance, that Lumley-Lumley might lose the paper, for his safety?

It was impossible.

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

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

"Well?" said the Head, at last.

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

Dr. Holmes frowned darkly.

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

"Yes, sir. It's true."

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

"Oh, sir—"

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

"I guess—"

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

"Then I shall be sent away, sir."

"You mean that you will not confess?"

"I have nothing to confess."

"Lumley-Lumley! Are you utterly hardened?" the Head exclaimed, in as much sorrow as anger.

"I have shown you how utterly preposterous your story

is, and yet you persist in adhering to it with incredible obstinacy."

"It is the truth, sir."

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

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

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Outsider's Pal.

ONE by one the lights went out in the windows of the School House. The dormitories were all dark; and the studies, one after another, were plunged into darkness, too.

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

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

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

Half-past eleven.

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

Lumley-Lumley's face lighted up as he heard the whistle below. He leaned further out of the window.

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

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"Good for you, Master Grimes."

Grimes chuckled softly in the darkness below.

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

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

"I guess it was a surprise to you."

"Wot!"

"Got the things?"

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"Good egg!"

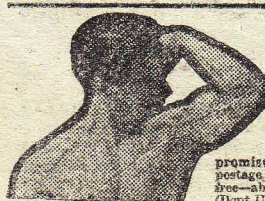
"Ow are you going to get the rope, sir?"

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

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

"Thank you, Master Grimes."

Lumley-Lumley lowered the improvised cord from the window. Tom Merry had been communicated with in the same way when he was a prisoner in the punishment-room. On that occasion he had drawn up a rope for Monty Lovther to climb up. The reverse was what Lumley-Lumley intended; he was going to climb down.



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Grimes uncoiled a rope from under his jacket, and fastened the end to the string.

"Ready, Master Lumley!" he said.

"Right-oh, Master Grimes!"

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

"Got it, Grimes?"

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"Knot it."

"Yes."

"Good! Now wait for me."

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

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

"Yes; but—"

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

"You're out of that, Master Lumley," said Grimes. "That's the best thing."

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

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

"Bunk!"

Grimes drew a quick breath.

"Run away from school?" he exclaimed.

of Levison's imitating other fellows' handwriting; he's got into trouble for it before. Only, when I got back, I found I had lost the pass, and both Knox and Levison denied knowing anything about it."

"Oh, Master Lumley!"

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

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

The Outsider laughed.

"So you doubt me, too, Grimes?"

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

Lumley-Lumley nodded.

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

"It do look queer, Master Lumley."

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would have passed round the bar of the grate in a flash, and he would have shot downwards to the ground.

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

Lumley-Lumley's feet touched the ground.

"Here we are again!" he said cheerfully.

"Oh, Master Lumley!"

"What's the matter, Master Grimes?"

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

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

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

Grimes chuckled.

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

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

"Master Lumley!"

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

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

"That's the best of it, or the worst," said Lumley-Lumley, with a chuckle.

"I haven't been doing anything. Last term I did a good many things to be sacked for, and they never came to light. Now I'm going to be sacked for nothing."

"What is it all about, Master Lumley?"

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

"Yes; I was gone over to Wayland," said Grimes. "I'm sorry I was—"

"Oh, that's all right; only, when I got back, I came into a fearful row. Levison had given me a pass he said was from Knox; but I don't know now whether Knox wrote it, and denied it, or whether Levison forged it—that's a peculiar gift

"It do!" grinned Lumley-Lumley.

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

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

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

"Find it!" repeated Grimes doubtfully.

"That's the programme," replied Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "I guess I remember everywhere I went this evening, and I'm going over the ground again to find it. Some body may have picked it up; and in that case he'd keep it, most likely, and send it to me, as my name was

written on it. Any chap who found it would know that the owner might get into trouble through losing it, and would send it to the chap whose name was on it, I guess. Don't you think so, Grimey?"

"I—I shouldn't wonder," said Grimes rather dubiously.

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

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

"Right you are, Master Lumley!"

"How did you get into the grounds, Grimey?"

"Over the wall from the road, Master Lumley."

"We'll get out the same way. Come on!"

finished a sandwich each and regarded one another dubiously in the starlight. The lantern had burnt out.

"No luck, Master Lumley!" said Grimes.

"I guess we're done," said Lumley-Lumley.

"I'll keep on if you want to, Master Lumley."

"I don't want to, Master Grimes. I'm tired as a dog. Let's get in. I'm done."

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

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
The Outsider's Triumph.

"WOT luck?"

Grimey asked the question. Lumley-Lumley shook his head.

He was seated in the kitchen of the house where Grimes lodged, and where Grimes took his meals. Grimes had come in for dinner. He lived only a few minutes from the grocer's shop, and always came home to his meals.

Lumley-Lumley had waited for him, sitting by the kitchen fire. The charge from the handsome old oak-pannelled dining-room at St. Jim's to the bare walls of the half-ruined kitchen of the little house in River Lane did not seem to

doesn't, I shall have to think of some dodge for making Levison own up."

Grimes looked very doubtful.

"You ain't giving in, then?" he asked.

"No fear!"

"Wot'll your father say, Master Lumley?"

"I guess he'll stand by me, Grimey. I hope so, at any rate. But it's a bit thick, to ask him to believe the story I've got to tell," said Lumley-Lumley frankly.

"Nobody at St. Jim's believes in me. Blessed if I know why you do."

Grimes grinned.

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

"That don't make no difference to me."

The two boys sat down to the kitchen-table to dinner. Grimes looked apologetically across to Lumley-Lumley.

"This is rather rough for you, Master Lumley," he said.

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

"You ain't lost your appetite over the business, Master Lumley," said Grimes, with great admiration.

"I guess it would take more than that

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The two lads crossed the dusky quadrangle, and in a couple of minutes they were over the wall and standing in the road. Grimes extracted the lantern from his pocket, and Lumley-Lumley lighted it.

"Goin' to search the road?" he asked.

"Every step of the way to Rylcombe," said Lumley-Lumley.

"My 'at! It will take a time."

"I guess I've got plenty."

"You'll come 'ome with me to sleep?"

"If you'll have me, Grimey."

"I'll 'ave you, and glad, Master Lumley. But I ain't goin' in till you come. I'm goin' to 'elp you search for that blessed paper."

Lumley-Lumley shook his head decidedly.

"I guess that won't do, Grimey. You've got to work to-morrow."

"That's all right."

"I'm not going to keep you up. Buzz off to bed!"

"Rats!" said Grimes.

"Look here, Grimey—"

"Look 'ere, Master Lumley—"

"You're an obstinate ass, Grimey!"

"Yes; that's all right," said Grimes. "Let's begin the search."

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

worry Lumley-Lumley in any way. Indeed, he had more important matters than that to think about.

He was dirty, and he looked tired. He had spent the whole of the morning in going over his footsteps of the previous evening, in the vague hope of finding the missing paper. He had not succeeded.

The longer he searched the more hopeless he felt the search to be; but he had not given up hope. He had inserted a notice in the local paper, describing the lost pass, and offering a reward of five pounds to anyone who should find it.

He had enlisted a dozen village lads in the search, giving them half-a-crown each for their day's labour and the promise of the reward if they found the paper.

Half the urchins in Rylcombe were buzzing with excitement over the search. He had even sent out four men with the notice on sandwich-boards.

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

"No luck!" said the Outsider.

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

"It may turn up," said Lumley-Lumley.

"No good worrying about it. If it

to make me lose my appetite, Master Grimey," said Lumley-Lumley.

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

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

Lumley-Lumley nodded.

"Yes. It was a half-sheet of impot. paper—like that I sent you the note on last night, Grimey—just about the same size. It's a queer thing," said Lumley-Lumley.

"I haven't the slightest recollection of putting that blank sheet in my pocket, and I clearly remember putting Knox's pass there. But when I turned out the pocket I found the blank sheet, and the pass was missing."

"You might have left it in your study, and put the blank sheet in your pocket by mistake," suggested Grimes.

"I guess not. I folded it and put it in my pocket immediately Levison gave it to me."

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

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

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Two hours later two tired youths

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

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

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"No!" he said, "Pass the dish, old son—I'm hungry."

Lumley-Lumley helped himself again to the stew. Then Grimes turned to the grate to take up the pudding which was to follow, and which his landlady had placed by the bars to keep warm. He uttered a stifled exclamation as he stooped over the fender, and Lumley-Lumley glanced at him.

"Burnt your finger?" he asked.

"No. Oh, crumbs!"

"What's the matter?"

"My heye!"

"What on earth—"

"Look, Master Lumley!"

Grimes caught Lumley-Lumley's arm with one hand, in an almost convulsive grip, and with the other pointed into the grate. Lumley-Lumley looked there, very much puzzled by Grimes' queer action, and then he became suddenly pale with excitement.

"Gee-whiz!" he exclaimed.

The paper Grimes had tossed into the grate had fallen upon the ashes underneath the fire. It was not burnt, but it was crumpled up with the heat above. And as it took on a brown tinge from the heat, a strange thing had happened. Instead of Lumley-Lumley's pencilled scrawl, lines of writing in clear black had strangely appeared.

The two boys gazed at the paper dumb-founded.

I was as if black magic had suddenly entered into their experience. The paper, when thrown into the grate, had been blank, save for the pencil lines. Now, through the faint scrawl of pencil, writing in ink was clearly visible.

Lumley-Lumley understood.

"My hat!" he said, with a deep breath.

"There was writing on that paper in invisible ink, Grimey, and the heat has made it show up!"

"But—but look wot's written!" gasped Grimes.

"G. Knox!" read Lumley-Lumley.

"Oh, my hat!"

He sprang to the grate and rescued the paper from the ashes. With a firm hand he held it to the bars, at a safe distance, so that the heat was evenly spread over the whole surface of the paper. Then the rest of the writing came into clear prominence.

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Grimes, almost overcome.

Lumley-Lumley set his teeth.

"The pass!" he said.

It was the missing pass.

There was his name upon it—"J. Lumley-Lumley"—and there was Knox's signature, clear to be seen and read. He knew Knox's handwriting again at once.

He understood.

"The villain!" said Lumley-Lumley. "The awful schemer! I remember now that Glyn's fountain-pen, with the invisible ink in it, was missing from Glyn's study. Levison wrote the pass in Knox's hand—

in invisible ink—and it faded out of sight; and when I looked for the pass in my pocket, I found only a blank sheet of paper."

"Oh, Master Lumley!"

"What is that?"

It was a deep voice at the open kitchen door. Lumley-Lumley swung round with the paper in his hand. Mr. Railton strode in.

"Mr. Railton!" exclaimed Lumley-Lumley.

"I came to fetch you away from here, Lumley-Lumley," said the Housemaster quietly. "I heard what you said as I came in. What is that paper?"

"Look at it, sir!"

Lumley-Lumley passed the paper to Mr. Railton. The School House master took it in his hand, and glanced at it keenly.

"This is a pass written by Knox, of the Sixth, giving you permission to stay out until nine o'clock, Lumley-Lumley, and dated," said Mr. Railton. "Is this the pass that you declared to me was given to you yesterday?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you not give it to me then?"

"Don't you see, sir?" said Lumley-Lumley excitedly. "You remember my turning out my pockets in your study, sir. Among the old letters I turned out there was a blank sheet of paper."

"I remember that," said Mr. Railton, with a nod.

"That's the sheet, sir."

"This?"

"Yes, sir." Lumley-Lumley was quite cool again now. He understood all that this discovery meant to him, and his heart was very light. "Levison brought me the pass, which Knox had given him, or which he had written in Knox's handwriting; but it was written in invisible ink."

"Lumley!"

"Glyn, of the Shell, will tell you, sir, that he missed his fountain-pen that day—the pen he has invisible ink in. Levison or Crooke must have taken it, and used it for this. I remember remarking to Levison, when he gave the pass, that Knox hadn't used the school ink, and he said Knox used his fountain-pen. That invisible ink is one of Bernard Glyn's inventions, sir—it looks like ordinary ink for about an hour or so, and then fades quite out of sight—and it comes up again as soon as you warm the paper. I never dreamed of such a trick. Levison knew that before the paper had been in my pocket an hour the writing would have faded away, and when I went to look for it I should find only a blank sheet."

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Railton. "But there is other writing upon this paper, Lumley-Lumley—in pencil."

"Yes, sir; I used the sheet, thinking it was a blank one, to send a note to Grimes last night, to ask him to come and help me get away. Grimes just chucked it away, and the heat of the fire brought up some of the writing; then I guessed.

Mr. Railton gazed at the paper.

The writing was clear and black now; it was either Knox's hand, or else a cunning imitation of it, so cunning that the prefect himself would not have known the difference. There was only one fellow

at St. Jim's who could have done that, Levison, who had forged Brooke's hand so well that Brooke himself had almost believed that it was his own; Levison had played the same trick over again to ruin his old associate who had left him.

There was no doubt about it now. Lumley-Lumley could not have imitated Knox's writing like that to save his life; and, indeed, if he had forged the pass, he would have produced it when he was questioned the previous evening. The accidental discovery had cleared up the mystery of the missing pass and exposed Levison's guilt.

"Are you satisfied, sir?" asked Lumley-Lumley. "If you're not, you'll only have to show that paper to Levison. I guess he will own up to it when he sees it."

"I am satisfied," said Mr. Railton. "Lumley-Lumley, I came here to take you home to your father. Instead of that, I shall take you back to St. Jim's, to reinstate you there and proclaim your innocence to all the school. I think nothing more will be said about your escape, considering the circumstances. Come!"

"Oh, crikey!" said Grimes.

Lumley-Lumley grasped his pal's hand. "Grimey, old man, I owe this to you," he said. "I guess I shan't forget it. Good-bye, Grimey, old son!"

"Good-bye, Master Lumley! I'm jolly glad!"

"So am I, Master Grimes."

And Lumley-Lumley's face was very glad as he walked back to St. Jim's with Mr. Railton.

Mr. Railton led Lumley-Lumley to the Head's study, and there the whole matter came out. At first Dr. Holmes was disinclined to believe Lumley-Lumley's statements, and he summoned Levison and Crooke and Mellish. When Lumley questioned the three cads, they were flabbergasted, and could not prove their innocence of the charge that was levelled against them by the Outsider.

The Head was satisfied that Lumley-Lumley had been made the victim of a cruel conspiracy, and he ordered the culprits to be flogged. Then he turned to the Outsider.

"Lumley-Lumley," he said, in kindly tones, "you may go. I am glad that your innocence has been proved, and I feel sure that you are a boy worthy of the noblest traditions of St. Jim's."

And the Head shook hands with the Outsider.

As soon as Lumley-Lumley stepped from the Head's study he was surrounded by a crowd of juniors. They seized him and bore him away shoulder-high.

From the Head's study sounds of anguish were heard—the cads of the School House were paying the penalty. But no one listened; no one was thinking of Crooke & Co. at that moment. Lumley-Lumley, surrounded by a cheering crowd, yelling and waving their caps, was carried round the quadrangle in triumph.

At that moment there was a no more popular junior at St. Jim's than Lumley-Lumley, who had suffered so much at the hands of the cads of the School, and upon whom had been passed the Head's Sentence!

THE END.

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OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Beaumont the Bully!

THE Fistical Four were very busy. They were engaged in the task of tearing up old newspapers into very small pieces. There was a good pile on the floor, and still the Classical chums continued to tear, tear, tear.

Suddenly the door of the end study opened, and in walked Beaumont, the Sixth Form bully.

"What are you kids doing?" asked Beaumont.

"Minding our own business," said Jimmy Silver calmly.

"Don't be impudent!" snapped the Sixth-Former. "What are you tearing up all those papers for?"

"For the paper-chase to-morrow," said Jimmy Silver. "I suppose you've no objection?"

"Cheeky young fag!" exclaimed Beaumont. "Take two hundred lines for impudence!"

"Certainly, Beaumont," said Jimmy Silver. "You're awfully kind!"

"I'll kind you!" grunted Beaumont. "Mind, I want those lines before bed-time this evening."

The Sixth-Former took his departure. "The beast!" cried Jimmy Silver.

"That blessed bully's always chipping in when he's not wanted. By Jove, I've got an idea!"

"What for?" asked Lovell.

"For paying the rotter out, of course." "Well, what's the idea? Get it off your chest, old son!"

"We're in want of more paper for the scent—"

"I know that. Get on!"

"And we owe Beaumont a one—a very big one. Suppose we kill two birds with one stone?"

"Eh? I suppose you're not going to propose that we tear Beaumont up to use him for a scent in the paper-chase?" demanded Lovell.

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"Not exactly. But you know that Beaumont's what he calls a sporting chap—that is, he makes bets with some blackguards in Coombe on the races—which the Head would expel him for if he knew—"

"And a pity he doesn't!"

"I guess so. But as I was saying, Beaumont is a sporting ass, and he keeps a file of sporting papers in his study. I've seen them. He's got a lot of them. He keeps them so as to refer to them, you know, about the form of the horses he puts his money on, and they're the apple of his eye."

"Quite so."

"Well," continued Jimmy Silver, "my idea is to kill two birds with one stone—pay Beaumont back for the lines he's given me, and get the scent we want for the paper-chase."



Right through the farmyard ran Jimmy Silver and Lovell, and there was a wild clattering and scattering of ducks and geese and fowls. A burly farmer jumped into their path, with a long cart-whip in his hand. "Sop, you young varmint!" he shouted. "Sorry we've no time," gasped Jimmy Silver; "we'll come in to tea another day, thank you!"

"Good wheeze!" said Lovell.

"Ripping!" said Raby.

"Glad you approve," said Jimmy Silver, with a grin. "Now, let's get along. We don't want to let the grass grow under our feet."

"No fear."

The Fistical Four left the end study, and made their way to the Sixth Form passage. They approached Beaumont's study on tiptoe and observed that the door of the bully's study was ajar.

Jimmy Silver popped his head round the door, and saw to his satisfaction that the study was empty.

The next moment Jimmy Silver had darted across the study to the couch under the window. It was made to open like a box, and he threw aside the cushions and lifted the top.

Inside reposed a heavy pile of sporting papers. Jimmy Silver had them out and under his arm in a twinkling. The sofa lid dropped and shut with a bang.

"Come on, you chaps!" said Jimmy Silver. "Grab hold of some of these, and let's get back to the end study before Beaumont returns."

Lovell and Raby and Newcombe each took some of the papers, and next moment the four Classics were racing towards their own quarters. They reached the end study safely, and locked the door.

They then set to work tearing up the papers captured from the prefect's study. They had no compunction on that point.

The bully deserved punishment, and the papers were of a kind that ought never to have been in a boy's possession.

"Sporting Tips!" said Lovell,

"Sporting Notes!" "Paddock Gems!" "Gr-r-r! Nice kind of literature to feed a young and growing prefect's mind on. This is really nice and considerate of us!"

"I hope Beaumont will see it in that light when he finds his precious papers gone!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Well, he can't be a bigger brute than he is now, anyway," said Lovell. "We may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb."

"What ho!"

The juniors soon made havoc of the sporting papers. Pink and white fragments multiplied on the floor as they tore and tore and tore again.

Jimmy Silver began to cram the torn paper into the bags the hares were to carry. By the time the last sporting prints were finished, the bags were crammed to the brim.

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver, with much satisfaction. "That job's done. I really don't think we shall be short of paper to-morrow."

"No fear!"

"Thanks to Beaumont!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Hare and Hounds.

MORNING school was voted a bore the next day by everyone concerned in the paper-chase for the afternoon; but, like all things, it came to an end at last, and the juniors were free.

In twos and threes they strolled down to the meeting-place, most of them.

already in their running flannels, with coats round them.

Bulkeley, the captain of Rookwood, was to time the start, and he was promptly on the ground. A pretty good crowd had collected to see the start.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell, who were to be the hares, came up, with their bags of scent slung across their shoulders, looking very fit and trim in their flannels.

Bulkeley nodded to them pleasantly. "Start in three minutes, youngsters!" he said cheerily.

"Right ho!" said Jimmy Silver. "We're ready!"

"Hallo!" said Lovell. "Here comes Beaumont. I wonder what he wants in such a hurry?"

Every eye was turned towards the school, from the direction of which the prefect could be seen running rapidly towards the meet. He was shouting something, which became audible as he drew nearer.

"Stop them!"

"What's the matter, Beaumont?" asked Bulkeley, looking up from his watch.

"Are you speaking of Silver and Lovell?"

The Classical juniors exchanged a glance. They could tell by the expression on the prefect's face that he had discovered the loss of his precious papers.

"Yes," panted Beaumont, coming up. "Stop the young scoundrels. I——"

"They start in one minute. What's the matter?"

"They have taken some papers from my study—some valuable papers——"

"How do you know?" asked Bulkeley.

"Did you see them?"

"No; but I know they did. I know——"

"What were the papers?"

"Some—some old newspapers I was keeping for—reference," said Beaumont, stammering a little. "They were valuable to me."

The captain of Rookwood looked at the Classical chums.

"Have you kids taken any papers from Beaumont's study?"

"What papers is Beaumont speaking of?" asked Jimmy Silver. "We've taken old papers from wherever we could find them to tear up for scent. If Beaumont could tell us the names of the papers, we could say."

"What were the papers, Beaumont?"

"I—I—they—what does that matter?" snapped out the prefect angrily. "I say they took a bundle of papers out of my study—out of the sofa chest. I know they did it."

Jimmy Silver shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't see that there's anything for me to say," he remarked. "If Beaumont can give us the names of the papers, Bulkeley will know that he's telling the truth, and not merely inventing an excuse to pick upon us, as he's always doing."

"Why can't you do that, Beaumont?" asked Bulkeley, pushing the prefect back, as he strode savagely towards the Classical junior. "Let Silver alone. If you have lost any papers I suppose you know what they are?"

"That's quite immaterial——"

"Not at all. I suppose the youngsters have collected up all the old papers they could find to make scent, and——"

Beaumont gritted his teeth.

"If they've torn up my papers, I'll——"

"Look here," said Jimmy Silver. "If we've torn up papers belonging to Beaumont, as we may have done, we've got the pieces in the bags here. He can look, and identify some of the fragments if he likes."

"Do as he says, Beaumont."

The bullying prefect turned red, and made no motion to approach the bags which the hares obligingly held open for him. It was as much as his career at

Rookwood was worth to identify any part of a racing paper as his property.

"Well, Beaumont!" exclaimed Bulkeley impatiently. "Are you going to do it?"

"No, I'm not. I——"

"Then stand back, you're wasting time."

"They have taken my papers."

"You said that before."

"Is that your property?" asked Jimmy Silver, taking a fragment from his bag, upon which the title "Sporting Tips" was printed.

Beaumont turned scarlet.

Bulkeley looked quickly from one to the other. Perhaps a glimmering of the facts came into his mind.

"Did you get that from Beaumont's study, Silver?"

"I don't see why we should be called upon to condemn ourselves," said Jimmy Silver. "We don't deny or affirm anything. It's for Beaumont to find proof as the accuser, as he'd know if he knew anything about law. Let him look in the bags."

The prefect muttered something between his teeth, and strode away. He realised that he had made a fool of himself, and that if the matter went any further it would be the worse for himself.

Bulkeley looked at his watch.

"Time!"

The hares, grinning cheerfully, started off across the open country. They were to have five minutes start, and the pack waited eagerly for the interval to elapse.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell disappeared behind a belt of trees, and every eye was then fixed on Bulkeley.

"I say, isn't it time?" ventured Tommy Dodd, of the Modern side.

Bulkeley shook his head. A few seconds later, however, he closed his watch with a snap.

"Time!" he said. "Off you go!"

And the hounds started running, with Tommy Dodd & Co. well in the lead. Tommy Dodd sent a cheery call from his bugle ringing across the country, and it came to the ears of the hares, and warned them that the hounds were on the track.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Run.

"THERE goes Tommy Dodd's bugle!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver as the ringing note from behind fell upon his ears. "They've started!"

The hares paused on the summit of a swell to look back. They could see the pink shirts of the hounds in the distance.

"There's Tommy Dodd!" exclaimed Lovell. "He's at the lead. And there's Tommy Cook behind. I tell you, Jimmy, those Moderns will be the hard stickers."

"But they won't catch us," said Jimmy Silver confidently.

Leaving the trail of torn papers behind, the hares descended the further side of the swelling ground, and ran on lightly and steadily towards the river.

They paused on the bridge to look back, and again caught sight of the pink shirts, and a note from the bugle showed that their own colours had been seen against the grey stone of the bridge.

"Come on, Lovell!"

They ran on, putting on a little more speed now, for the last bugle note had been nearer. They wound round the foot of a low hill, and Jimmy Silver suddenly turned to the left, and led the way up the acclivity through a narrow lane.

The hares began to breathe harder as they breasted the slope.

They came out on the high ground, and a gleam of pink showed up in the lane behind. Then Jimmy Silver led the way through lane after lane, winding and turning, and wherever they went the trail of torn paper remained to guide the hounds.

Suddenly they came out into the open ground, and to Jimmy Silver's amazement and dismay there were the hounds, running hard, and only a dozen paces distant.

There was a shout from the hounds, and a gasp from Lovell.

"Jimmy, we've——"

"It's all right!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

"We're a good mile ahead of them. They've got to follow the paper trail."

"By Jove! I forgot that."

The hunt was not, of course, by sight, but by scent. Wherever the paper trail led, the hounds had to follow, even if they saw the hares within arm's length to right or left.

Anything was allowed to the hares except crossing their own trail. Two or three thoughtless hounds left the track and started towards the hares, but Tommy Dodd's voice promptly called them back.

"Keep to the trail, asses!"

Jimmy Silver and Lovell stood grinning, and they kissed their hands, as the pack tore on. Tommy Dodd & Co. grinned back at them cheerfully enough. The hares took a rest while the pack ran on, and finally disappeared from sight.

They resumed their way at a leisurely pace.

"We've gained half a mile," observed Jimmy Silver. "That's the best of knowing the ground well. We've given them a hard run so far. We'll take it easy till we get to the Old Priory, where we turn homeward."

Lovell nodded. The Old Priory was the objective point of the run. It was a good five miles from the school, and there the hares intended to rest a little before turning back. They had gained a good deal already, and deemed themselves entitled to take matters more easily now.

But they took them a little too easily as it proved.

The pack had made good pace, and though some of the shorter-winded runners had dropped out, a good score were still sticking to Tommy Dodd & Co., who came on tirelessly.

Hidden by the rough ground and the trees, the hounds gained, and suddenly came in view of the hares scarcely a hundred yards ahead.

Tommy Dodd gave a yell.

"Run for your life, Lovell!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

The hares broke into a desperate spurt. They had been careless, and they seemed destined to pay for it. To capture them on the outward run had hardly entered into the calculations of Tommy Dodd & Co. But it seemed possible now, and Tommy Dodd's bugle rang out a note of hope.

It would be a triumph for the Moderns that could never be argued away by the Classics. Tommy Dodd & Co. raced on with every ounce of speed in them, and their followers backed them up well.

Three or four more dropped out of the race, but there were fifteen or sixteen sweeping on behind the chums in full cry.

"Buck up!" panted Jimmy Silver.

"We've got to dodge them or bust something."

Speed alone would not do it now. Stratagem was wanted, and as he ran, Jimmy Silver rapidly turned the possibilities over in his mind.

"This way, Lovell!" he shouted suddenly.

He swerved sharply off into a cart-track leading down into a farmyard. A man in a smock frock stared at them, as if amazed at their action.

"I say," said Lovell, "the folks may not like this, and we shall scatter the fowls, and no mistake."

"Can't be helped! Hallo, there's Farmer Turbutt, and he looks annoyed. Can't be helped! It we leave trouble here for the hounds, it will save our bacon. They can argue with Mr. Turbutt. Come on!"

Lovell grinned as he comprehended Jimmy Silver's device. Right through the

farmyard they went, and there was a wild clattering and scattering of ducks and geese and fowls.

A burly farmer jumped into their path with a long cart-whip in his hand, his face crimson with rage.

"You young rascals, get off my land! I'll—"

Farmer Turmutt did not like Rockwood boys. He knew them of old. And the audacity of the youngsters in dashing right through his farmyard and scattering paper scent behind them under his very eyes almost took his breath away.

"Stop, you young varmints!"

"Sorry we've no time," gasped Jimmy Silver; "we'll come in to tea another day, thank you!"

"Tea! I'll tea you! I'll teach you to—"

"Ow!" roared Jimmy Silver, as the whiplash curled round his legs, stinging the bare skin terribly. "Ow! Chuck it!"

But the angry farmer only lashed again, and Lovell got the next cut. But that did not stop the desperate hares. They dodged the farmer, and dashed on. Mr. Turmutt, boiling with rage, sprinted after them.

A six-foot fence loomed up before the boys, but there was no way of avoiding it.

"Jump!" panted Jimmy Silver. "No way out!"

Lovell set his teeth.

The crack of the whip behind lent them fresh energy. They rose to the leap

lessen their pace, however. They kept running at a good speed until they reached the Old Priory.

They were pretty well blown, but they climbed on the highest fragment of the ruins to look back, and saw the pink shirts of the hounds streaming across a field at a great distance back. Evidently they had succeeded in eluding the farmer.

Jimmy Silver gasped, and sank down on the masonry.

"That was a jolly close shave for us," he said.

"What ho!" said Lovell. "But I reckon we've got a good start, and we ought to keep it to the finish."

"I've been thinking," said Jimmy Silver, as he sat leaning back against the stone. "Beaumont knows the course, doesn't he?"

"I expect so. What about him?"

"It's occurred to me that he might meet us going back, and drop on us. It would be just like one of his caddish tricks. He can't make a fuss about the papers, in case it comes out that they were sporting papers. But he won't let us off cheaply."

Lovell nodded thoughtfully.

"It would be no joke to meet that bullying brute when we're blown with the run at the finish," remarked Jimmy Silver.

"We shall have to be on the look-out, that's all," said Lovell. "After all, there are two of us, and if he interferes we

"What's the idea, then?"

"You see, it's a chalky road, and the paper doesn't show up on the white dust. The hounds will lose time here, I fancy."

"Good!" said Lovell. "I never thought of that."

The white paper did, indeed, show little on the white road. When the hounds came streaming out of the wood, Tommy Dodd halted in doubt. The hares were well enough ahead by this time, and the track was for the moment lost.

"This way!" exclaimed Tommy Cook.

"Up this track! There's the paper!"

"Come on!" called out Tommy Dodd, giving a note on his bugle to call in the hounds who had scattered to look for the trail.

But the going was slower now. They knew that the hares might have left the track at any point, and as the paper was hard to see they had to run slowly and keep their eyes on it. But fortune favoured the hounds at last.

Tommy Dodd gave a sudden exclamation of delight.

"Look there! I fancy they never reckoned on that. Put the speed on!"

For now there was pink paper mingled with the white, and the pink showed up well on the dust.

"Good old 'Racing Tips'!" chuckled Tommy Cook.

The hares had evidently come upon the fragments of a pink sporting paper among

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gallantly. Jimmy Silver cleared the fence, and came down on his feet lightly in the field beyond.

Lovell caught his foot in the top rail and went headlong, landing on hands and knees.

The farmer could hardly essay such a leap. He stopped, and shook his fist furiously at the boys through the fence. But his attention was called off from them the next moment by the hounds pouring into the farmyard.

Jimmy Silver gave Lovell a hand up.

"Hurt?" he asked.

"No, not much," replied Lovell.

Lovell's knees were bruised, and his palms were cut, but he was not the fellow to make a fuss about it.

The hares gave a glance back through the fence. The hounds were swarming in the farmyard, and the farmer was rushing to stop them. Jimmy Silver gave a breathless chuckle.

"That will keep Tommy Dodd & Co. busy for a bit!" he murmured. "Come on! Now's our chance!"

The hares raced on again. They crossed a field and came out into a lane, and headed for the Priory. Behind them a terrific uproar was rising from the farmyard. The noise, however, gradually got fainter and fainter, as the hares got farther away from the farmyard. They did not

shan't nance matters with him, prefect or no prefect!"

Jimmy Silver rose and took another look at the pack. He counted them rapidly as they came nearer and nearer.

"Fight of them now," he exclaimed. "I can see a couple tailing off a long way back."

"Tommy Dodd & Co. are there, of course?"

"Oh, yes, and in the lead, too."

"Time we started again then."

The two chums left the ruined Priory, and set out at a swinging trot on the homeward run.

They followed a footpath through a wood, leaving the scent clear behind, and had just come out of the wood on the opposite side when a bugle note rang through the crisp air.

"Tommy Dodd again," exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "They haven't stopped at the Priory."

"No, they're sticking it out well."

Jimmy Silver turned down a rough track leading away from the pleasant lane. Lovell looked dubious, but he trusted to Jimmy Silver's guidance, and followed. Jimmy Silver glanced at him.

"Yes, I know it's a rougher road than the other," he said, "but it will be just as rough for the hounds as for us. But that isn't why I've taken it."

the rest in the bags. It was a material help to the pack. They ran on more swiftly. The note of the bugle rang to the ears of the hunted hares.

"There they are!" shouted Tommy Dodd. "Come on!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. A Close Finish.

"THREE miles more!" gasped Jimmy Silver, as the bugle note fell upon his ears. "My hat! It will be a run now!"

Lovell set his teeth.

"We've got to win, anyway."

Right gallantly the hares went down the road. It was the high road they were on now, and it led them back to Coombe village. Their feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as they sprinted on.

The bags were getting empty now. Three miles more to home, and the prospect was that it would be a close finish—very close. But the chums were determined to win. They were fighting for the honour of the Classics.

T-a-r-a-r-art-a-t-t-ara-ara-a!

"Tommy Dodd again! That chap sticks it out like a Trojan. He deserves to win!" panted Jimmy Silver. "But he sha'n't. Put your beef into it, Lovell!"

Right on, and on, and on. They turned

from a road into a winding lane, and from that to another, keeping on in the direction of the village. In the setting sun a sheet of water gleam'd ahead. They ran on to the margin of the river.

Jimmy Silver uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"The plank's gone!"

Lovell gave a whistle.

The stream was usually crossed by a plank, but it was gone now. Lovell's brows contracted. The water was deep at that point. He looked at Jimmy Silver.

"It's a dozen feet or more, Jimmy—but it's that or a licking!"

Jimmy Silver tossed his bag of scent to the opposite bank, and plung'd in.

Lovell followed the next moment.

Splash! Splash!

They struck out gallantly, and in a minute or less were clutching at the reeds on the opposite bank. Jimmy Silver scrambled ashore and gave a hand to Lovell.

They ran on. On the top of the rising ground, they looked back. Splash! Splash! Two fellows had plung'd in, and the rest had halt'd on the bank. And among those who had halted were Tommy Dodd & Co.

"Tommy Dodd's not going to funk it, surely?" remarked Jimmy Silver.

Lovell gave a yell.

"Funk it! Look at him! Bravo, Dobby!"

"Bravo!" repeated Jimmy Silver, the next moment.

For Tommy Dodd had plung'd in, and Tommy Cook had followed.

"By Jove! We'd better get on!" said Jimmy Silver.

The hares darted on, on to the road to the village. Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook crawl'd out of the water and shook themselves like mastiffs. The other two who had crossed were already on the chase. The rest had given it up, and were going down the stream towards the bridge.

"Run! Run!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd. "We'll do it yet!"

And the Modern juniors dashed on, and passing the other two hounds, sprinted with deadly determination on the track of the elusive hares.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell came out into the village street, and passed through Coombe like a flash. Then they turned into the lane that led up to the school.

"The last lap!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Dusk was falling on the countryside. The hares dropped the scent from the rapidly-emptying bags as they ran.

Jimmy Silver looked back over his shoulder as a bugle note rent the air.

"Tommy Dodd's still sticking it," he said.

It was near the finish now. The hunt was left to the rivals of Rookwood—Classicals against Moderns. Which would win?

A shadow loomed out from under the trees, and a hand clutched at Jimmy Silver.

"Now, you young cad!"

It was Beaumont's voice. Jimmy Silver reeled with the grip on his shoulder.

He was almost too spent to resist.

"Beaumont!" he gasped. "Hands off! Don't you see how close they are?"

"I'll give you—"

"You coward! Let me go! Let me go!"

Biff! Lovell was not stopping to argue. He charg'd right at Beaumont like a bull, and butted the prefect in the chest.

Beaumont went reeling and staggering. Lovell staggered, too; his head was ringing with the concussion. There was a loud splash. Beaumont, unable to save his balance, had tumbled headlong into the ditch beside the lane.

Jimmy Silver gave a gasping laugh.

"Come on, Lovell, before he gets out!"

"I'm coming!" gasp'd Lovell.

His head was swimming, but he dashed on bravely. The hares vanished up the lane in the dusk; but the encounter, brief as it was, had cost them precious moments.

The hounds were close behind. Beaumont crawl'd out of the ditch, mad with rage, and two running figures bumped right into him in the growing dusk.

"Got them!" roared Tommy Cook, clutching Beaumont by the hair.

"You—you cheeky young rascal!"

"That's not them!" chuckled Tommy Dodd. "It sounds like Beaumont! Come on! Get out of the way, Beaumont, can't you, fathead!"

The furious prefect made a blow at him, but Tommy Dodd dodged it.

The Modern chums ran on, and the prefect, muttering emphatic things below his breath, tramp'd dismally to the school, mud squelching in his boots at every step.

The hares were on the last hundred yard's now. Selwyn and Hooker were standing in the gateway, with a good many other fellows who had collect'd there to see the hunt come in. The juniors were watching the road anxiously, and they gave a whoop at the sight of the two running figures.

"Here they are!"

"One more spurt, Lovell!" gasped Jimmy Silver, as he heard the rapid pattering of footsteps behind.

"I—I—" Lovell was staggering.

"Jimmy, old son—"

Jimmy Silver turned back in consternation.

"Lovell! You're not cracking up now—on the last lap!"

"My head—it was charging that brute did it!" groaned Lovell. "I—I'm sorry, Jimmy. Run on—don't let them catch both!"

Jimmy Silver set his teeth.

"Hold on to my shoulder, Lovell, and run. I'll take your weight—I'll grip you so. Can you stick it?" he cried anxiously.

"I—I reckon so!" muttered Lovell.

They dashed on. Jimmy Silver was half-leading, half-carrying his chum. Lovell made a last terrible effort, and Jimmy Silver put out all his strength.

They dashed up to the gate.

"Got them!" panted Tommy Dodd, making a desperate clutch at Jimmy Silver's shoulder as the chums reeled into the gateway.

But Jimmy Silver made one more effort, and went staggering onward, and Tommy Dodd's clutch missed by an inch.

The next moment the hares were rolling on the ground, utterly fagged and spent, and Tommy Dodd & Co. staggered against the gateway.

The hares had won—won by an inch. One second more, and the hounds would have had them.

"I—I—I— You've won!" gasped Tommy Dodd, his heart beating in great thumps as he reeled against the gate. "But—but it was a near thing!"

Jimmy Silver sat up.

"But we did it," he managed to utter. "We did it, Dobby! But—but I admit you nearly had us, and you made a jolly good run. Help us in, you chaps!"

Willing hands helped the exhausted hares into the house, and others did the same for the hounds. What they wanted was a good rub down and a change, and after they had had it they felt much better.

They were fagged, but they were all right, only Lovell feeling a touch of a headache. The rest of the pack came in in twos and threes for the next hour, to learn that the hares had won by the skin of their teeth.

The Classicals had won; but the victory had been so narrow a one that defeat was no disgrace to the Moderns.

After they had changed their clothes the rivals met at the festive board in the end study, where Newcoms had prepared a really ripping tea. They discussed that meal with the keen appetite engendered by a long run in the spring air, and thus amicably ended the cross-country run.

THE END.

A Grand Long Complete Story of JIMMY SILVER & CO. in next Friday's issue, entitled,

"THE FALL OF THE FISTICAL FOUR!"

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

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