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— BY —

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Arthur Augustus on Guard.

"Gussy!"
"Gussy!"
"D'Arcy!"
It was Jack Blake's voice calling. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, started a little as he heard it, and looked uneasy.
"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated, under his breath. "It's Blake!"
"Gussy!"
Blake's voice was growing louder, and somewhat impatient. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was standing close by the wall of the quadrangle, where it bordered the road, in the thickening dusk of the evening. A slanting tree almost leaned on the wall, and in the shadow of the tree, the elegant form of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was difficult to perceive. But as Blake's footsteps came nearer, D'Arcy drew further into the shadow of the tree. He evidently did not want to be discovered.
"Gussy!"
D'Arcy made no reply.
Jack Blake came along, and passed within three yards of the swell of St. Jim's. He was muttering aloud wrathfully.
"Where on earth has that duffer got to?" he exclaimed.
"He's not in the study, or in the gym., or in the common-room, or in the house at all. Where the dickens is he? Just like Gussy to go off and lose himself now."
D'Arcy was quite silent.
Jack Blake passed on, and his voice, still calling for Gussy, died away in the distance.
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy smiled slightly.
"Bai Jove! That was a nawwow escape!" he murmured.

"Gussy!"
He started, and drew back into the shadow again.
It was Tom Merry's voice this time. Tom Merry, of the Shell, was also seeking the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.
"Bai Jove, this is gettin' wathah thick," murmured D'Arcy. "They don't give a fellow any peace. Weally——"
"Gussy! Where are you, ass?"
"Bai Jove!"
"Where are you, chump?"
D'Arcy breathed hard. He was strongly inclined to show himself, for the purpose of calling Tom Merry to account for these opprobrious epithets. But he restrained himself.
"Where are you, fathead?"
"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy.
"I know you're about here somewhere," said Tom Merry loudly. "Manners saw you sneaking along. What are you hiding yourself for?"
No reply.
"The utter ass!" said Tom Merry. The handsome, sturdy young captain of the Shell had halted within a few feet of the slanting oak, and was peering about in the gloom.
"What the dickens is he hiding for now, when the rehearsal is just going to begin? Gussy—Gussy—Gussy!"
Silence.
"Well, of all the chumps!" said Tom Merry.
Manners and Lowther, Tom Merry's chums in the Shell, came out of the gloom and joined him. D'Arcy remained as still as a mouse between the slanting tree and the wall, hidden in thick shadow.
"Found him?" asked Monty Lowther.
Tom Merry shook his head.
"No. He must be about here somewhere."

A DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE OF TOM MERRY NEXT THURSDAY.

"What's the duffer's little game?" said Manners. "He knows that the rehearsal begins at eight, and it's eight now. We can't get on with 'As You Like It' without Orlando, and the young ass insisted upon being Orlando, too."

"Just like Gussy!" growled Tom Merry. "I don't know what the game is, but I believe he's keeping out of sight on purpose. Gussy! Gussy!"

Only the echoes replied.

"Gussy! Gussy! Fathead! Duffer! Chump!"

"He ought to recognise some of his names, if he can hear them," Manners remarked. "If we find him we'll give him the frog's march to the School House."

"Yes, rather! Gussy!"

No answer.

"He can't have broken bounds," said Tom Merry, in an altered voice. "He can't have sneaked out here to break bounds after dark, can he?"

"That's not like Gussy."

"Unless somebody's pulling his leg," suggested Lowther.

"Look here, let's hunt for him," said Tom Merry. "If he's in the quad, we'll find him. I—Hullo, what's that?"

A gleam in the darkness had caught Tom Merry's eye. It was the gleam of an eyeglass. He dashed round the slanting oak, and his grasp fell upon the swell of St. Jim's.

"Here he is!" he shouted.

"Bai Jove!"

"You young ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Come out!"

Tom Merry dragged the swell of St. Jim's from behind the tree. D'Arcy's silk hat knocked on the trunk of the oak, and rolled off, and his eyeglass fluttered to the end of its cord. He resisted manfully.

"Pway welease me, Tom Mewwy! I insist—"

"Rats!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Chuck it, and come on—"

"But my hat—"

"Blow your hat!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Shake him!" said Tom Merry sternly.

The Terrible Three grasped D'Arcy firmly and shook him. It was a powerful shake, and all D'Arcy's teeth seemed to rattle in his head, and he gasped for breath.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"Shake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They shook and shook.

"S-s-s-s-top!" gasped D'Arcy. "Yow! Yaroo! S-s-stop!"

They stopped at last.

"There!" said Tom Merry. "Now, explain yourself. You know jolly well that the rehearsal begins at eight o'clock."

"Yaas, wathah!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Then why haven't you turned up in the School House?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"I had othah bizney—"

Tom Merry simply snorted.

"Other business, to keep you away from a rehearsal of the Junior Dramatic Society!" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, bump him!" said Manners. "He wants it."

"Yes, rather!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Bump him!"

"Ow! Yaroo!"

And bumped D'Arcy was. The Terrible Three were exasperated, as, indeed, were all the youthful dramatists, who were waiting for D'Arcy to come to begin. It was no joke to have to leave a rehearsal to hunt through a dark quadrangle for a missing rehearser.

"Now, then," said Tom Merry, as the breathless junior was stood upon his feet again. "Now, then, what do you mean?"

"Ow! You wuffian—"

"Explain yourself."

"You howwid boundahs—"

"Come on, then."

D'Arcy jumped back.

"I can't come!"

"Can't come," said Tom Merry wrathfully. "You ass!"

"I wufuse to be called an ass—"

"Chump, then."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Oh, come on!" said Lowther. "If you won't come quietly we'll give you the frog's march. Now, are you coming?"

"Weally, deah boys, if you will allow me to explain—"

"Oh, rats!"

"I can't possibly come now; I've got some awf'ly important bizney to attend to—"

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NEXT
THURSDAY,

"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Bosh!"

D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye.

"It's weally important, deah boys. It concerns the honah of the Fourth Form, and of St. Jim's genevally," he said, in a stately way.

The Terrible Three stared at him.

"You're going to miss the rehearsal for the honour of St. Jim's," said Monty Lowther, looking puzzled.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"You're hiding behind that tree for the honour of the Fourth Form?" asked Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Oh, he's off his rocker!" said Tom Merry. "Take a good grip on his ears, and bring him along."

D'Arcy backed away in alarm.

"I uttably wufuse to be bwrought along, especially by my eahs," he exclaimed. "If you will listen to me a moment, deah boys, I will explain. I'm here waitin' for a chap who's goin' to bweak bounds."

"Oh!"

"He's goin' to get out ovah the wall, you know," said D'Arcy, lowering his voice cautiously. "He's a chap in my Form, a School House chap, too. I know that he's goin' down to the Gween Man, in the lane. I'm goin' to stop him."

"By Jove!"

"I intend to wemonstwate with him," said D'Arcy. "I'm goin' to point out to him the ewwah of his ways, and persuade him to give up his wascally intentions."

"And if he won't?"

"In that case, I shall give him a feahful thwashin'."

Tom Merry chuckled.

"Good old Gussy!"

"I weward it as my dutay, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, picking up his silk hat, and adjusting it upon his head. "I'm awf'ly sowwy to have to cut the wehearsal, but you see that this bizney is most important. You fellows buzz off and tell Blake I'm sowwy I can't come."

"But who's the chap?" asked Lowther.

"Oh, I can guess!" said Tom Merry quietly. "It's Lumley-Lumley, the new chap—the Outsider. Isn't it so, Gussy?"

D'Arcy nodded.

"Suppose we stay here, too?" suggested Manners. "If the remonstrating doesn't have any effect, we can pick Lumley up and bundle him back, neck and crop, you know."

"Good egg!"

"In that case, pway wemain out of sight while I intahview him," said D'Arcy.

"But—"

"Bai Jove! Here he comes!"

The sound of a low, clear whistle was heard in the gloom of the quadrangle. Someone was whistling "There is a Tavern in the Town," and the sound was drawing near to the spot where the School House juniors stood.

"That's Lumley!" muttered Manners.

"What an awful nerve, to be whistling like that here!" muttered Lowther. "Why, any of the prefects might hear him and follow him here, and see him getting out."

"Oh, he's got nerve enough for anything!"

"Quiet, deah boys—"

"Look here, we'd better—"

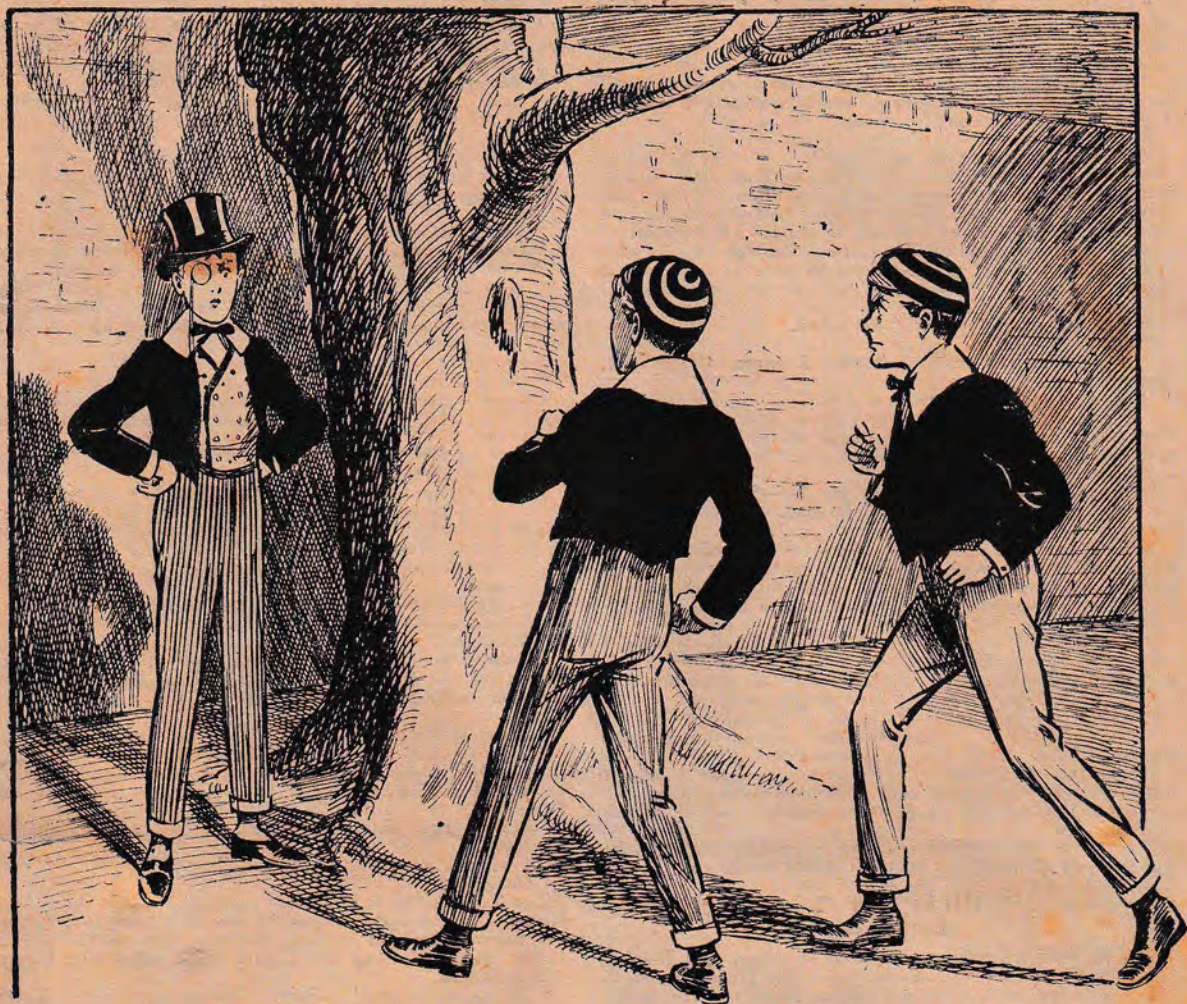
"Pway stand back, and leave me to deal with the wottah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy firmly.

And the Terrible Three, after a brief hesitation, assented. They drew back into the shadow of thick clusters of ivy on the wall, and the swell of St. Jim's was left standing alone by the tree to greet the Outsider when he came up.

CHAPTER 2.

No Exit.

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY, the new fellow at St. Jim's whistled coolly and unconcernedly as he came up to the slanting oak. He did not seem to care whether he was heard or not. The boy who was always called the Outsider at St. Jim's had nerve enough for anything. Pluck is a good quality, and he had heaps of pluck; there was no denying that. If he had had a sense of honour along with it, he would have been a very different character. But Lumley's training, and perhaps his nature, did not allow that. He had had a hard and curious career when he was of an age when most boys are at school, and he had come to St. Jim's with more experience than falls to most fellows of twenty-five. The lad who had roughed it among the street arabs of the Bowery, in New York, who had been forced to take care of himself in many strange places, and had learned a hard unscrupulousness in his contact with a hard world, was not the sort of fellow to pull easily with the boys of St. Jim's. And Jerrold Lumley did not seem to care whether he pulled easily with them or not. He went



Mellish stepped towards the tree, and then recoiled with a gasp. In the gloom, a figure in a silk hat and eyeglass stood before him. "You uttah wascal!" said a familiar voice. (See this page).

on his own way, cool, hard, and determined, and utterly reckless of others. His intention was to have a good time while he was at St. Jim's, and he did not mean to let anything interfere with that, if he could help it.

The whistle died away as he came up to the slanting oak. A nervous voice muttered in the gloom.

"For goodness sake, shut up, Lumley. Do you want everybody to know what we're going to do?"

Lumley laughed lightly.

"It's all right, Mellish."

"Well, you can't be too careful," grumbled the cad of the Fourth.

"I guess I know my way about," said Lumley. "It's all right. Look here, you shin up that tree first, and show me the way."

"Right you are."

Lumley began to whistle again, and Mellish turned to him irritably. Mellish might be as bad as the Outsider, whose only friend he was. But he had not his nerve.

"Will you shut up?" he hissed.

Lumley laughed.

"Oh, don't keep on showing the white feather, Mellish. Nice sort of fellow you are to break bounds."

"Well, shut up."

"Oh, go ahead!"

Mellish stepped towards the tree, and then recoiled with a gasp. In the gloom, a figure in silk hat and eyeglass stood before him.

"You uttah wascal!" said a familiar voice.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hallo!" said Lumley-Lumley, with perfect coolness. "Is that you, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, it is I."

"Are you coming out?"

"Eh?"

"I suppose you're here on the same job?"

"What?"

"What's your little game, then?"

"You utter wascal!" exclaimed D'Arcy, almost breathless with indignation. "Do you suppose that I would take part in any of your wascally pwoceedings?"

Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"What are you doing here, then?" he asked. "I believe this is the place where the kids break bounds, isn't it?"

"Yaas, wathah! I am here to see you."

"Oh!"

"I heard what you said to Mellish in the class-room," said D'Arcy severely. "You spoke in my hearin'. I knew you were comin' here at eight o'clock, and I guessed that it was to bweak bounds."

"Well, it could hardly be for any other reason," said Lumley coolly; "but I don't see what you are here for."

"I am goin' to stop you."

A dangerous gleam came into the Outsider's eyes.

"Stop me!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I guess that won't be so easy," said Lumley. "What business is it of yours, anyway?"

D'Arcy's eyeglass glittered scornfully upon him.

"I am thinkin' of the honah of the school," he said. "You are goin' to bweak bounds to go down to the Gween Man, to gamble. I know that."

"You've got it wrong," said Mellish hastily. "We're just going for a little stroll, that's all, D'Arcy. We mean no harm whatever."

"Don't tell lies, Mellish," said his friend. "I'm not afraid of D'Arcy, if you are. We're going to the Green Man—right."

Mellish bit his lip hard.

"And we intend to go, if we choose, and when we choose," went on Lumley. "It's like your cheek to interfere, D'Arcy. Will you kindly get out of the way?"

"Certainly not."

"We shall have to shift you, then."

"Pway listen to weason, deah boys. You can't bweak bounds, and you can't go to the Gween Man. It's too disgwaceful. That man Joliffe is a vewy bad chawactah, and not fit for young fellows like you to know." D'Arcy might have been fifty instead of fifteen, from the way he said this. "You can't possibly go. I appeal to your bettah feelin's, Lumley."

Lumley grinned.

"Are you going to shift?" he asked.

"Certainly not."

"Then we'll jolly soon shift you, I guess. Collar him, Mellish."

D'Arcy stepped back a pace, and pushed back his cuffs.

"If you attempt to pass me, I shall give you a feahful thwashin'," he exclaimed. "I should pwefere to weason with you, but if necessary, I shall thwash you."

"Will you get aside?"

"I have already wefused to do so. I—"

"Come on, Mellish," muttered Lumley.

He rushed straight at the swell of St. Jim's.

Mellish hesitated a moment, and then followed. He was not brave, but two to one seemed safe enough for the cad of the Fourth. Arthur Augustus hit out manfully, but Lumley dodged his blows, and closed with him and bore him backwards.

Back went the swell of St. Jim's with Lumley's weight upon him, and Mellish's added, and he went with a bump to the ground, with the two juniors sprawling upon him.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped. "Fair play, you know! Ow!"

"Lather him!" said Lumley between his teeth.

"Ow! Don't hit a chap when he's down, you know!" gasped D'Arcy. "Bai Jove! Wescue! Ow!"

Lumley had no scruples about hitting a fellow when he was down. It would have gone very hard with D'Arcy just then; but the Terrible Three were already rushing to the rescue.

Before Lumley had time to strike more than one blow, he was grasped and dragged off the swell of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 3.

Locked In.

TOM MERRY swung the Outsider away, and Lumley went with a crash against the wall. He slid down to a sitting position there, blinking stupidly at the chums of the Shell. Mellish beat a hurried retreat. He did not care to encounter the Terrible Three at close quarters. Tom Merry looked at the Outsider with flashing eyes.

"Don't you know better than to punch a chap when he's down?" he exclaimed. "You utter cad!"

"Oh!"

D'Arcy staggered to his feet.

"Bai Jove!" he exclaimed. "Where's my hat?"

"Your hat?"

"Yaas, wathah! It's fallen off somewhere."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Lowther.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the Shell fellow.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Lumley's sitting on your hat!"

"Gweat Scott!"

It was true! Lumley had fallen fairly upon the topper, and he was still sitting upon it; the topper, needless to say, crushed almost out of all semblance to a hat.

"You uttah wottah!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "You feahful boundah! Get off my hat!"

Lumley got off it, grinning.

He had had a shock; but he was as hard as nails, and he was himself again almost immediately.

D'Arcy picked up the hat. His face was a study as he looked at it.

"Bai Jove!" he said. "It's wuined!"

"Serve you jolly well right," said Lumley. "Why can't you mind your own bizney?"

"You utter wapscaillon—"

"You were going to break bounds," said Tom Merry angrily.

Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"A thing you've never done, of course," he said sarcastically.

Tom Merry flushed.

"A thing I've done as often as anybody, I suppose," he replied; "but never for such a purpose as going to the Green Man. That's where you were going."

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"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Well, it's my own bizney, I suppose."

"Nothing of the sort. That's a little mistake of yours. You're not going to be allowed to disgrace the school."

"I'm going out."

"You're not. D'Arcy's tried arguing with you, and it's no good. I'm not going to argue. I tell you plainly that you're not going out," said Tom Merry firmly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!" said Manners and Lowther.

Lumley gritted his teeth.

"So you are going to stop me?"

"Yes."

"You meddling puppy—"

"Better language, please," said Tom Merry sharply.

"It's hard enough to keep my hands off you, as it is."

"Well, I am going."

Lumley moved towards the tree. Tom Merry made a forward movement at the same time. The Outsider made a spring to gain the tree, to climb on the wall.

Tom Merry caught him and swung him back.

"No, you don't," he said coolly.

Lumley's clenched fist swept through the air, and crashed upon Tom Merry's cheek. The hero of the Shell uttered a sharp cry.

"Now let me go," said Lumley fiercely.

But Tom Merry did not let him go.

His grasp tightened upon the Outsider.

"I could smash you, and you know it," he said quietly.

"And I tell you plainly, that if you don't come back quietly to the School House, we'll give you the frog's march there."

"I tell you—"

"Come!"

Lumley did not reply, but he began to struggle fiercely.

"Lend a hand," said Tom Merry.

"What-ho!"

Manners and Lowther grasped the Outsider. He was swung off the ground. Tom Merry and Lowther had a shoulder each, and Manners took his ankles, one in either hand.

Lumley struggled desperately; but he was helpless.

"To the School House!" said Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as quite the pwopah capah," exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he followed the Terrible Three and their burden.

"Let me go!" hissed Lumley.

"Rats!"

"I will make you suffer for this!"

"Oh, cheese it!"

The Terrible Three ran their prisoner towards the School House. Mellish had disappeared, but they knew that he was not likely to go out without Lumley. Outside the School House they almost ran into Blake, and Herries, and Digby, of the Fourth.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Blake wrathfully. "Where the dickens have you been? What price that giddy rehearsal?"

"What on earth have you got there?" exclaimed Digby, in amazement.

"The Outsider!" said Tom Merry laconically.

"What are you doing with him?"

"Carrying him in."

"But what for?"

"He was going pub-haunting—his old game."

"The rotter!" said Blake. "Do you want help?"

"I think we can manage."

The Terrible Three carried Lumley-Lumley into the School House. The hall was not yet lighted, and they ran him in and upstairs without attracting notice. In the Fourth-Form passage they paused.

"Stand him up," said Tom Merry.

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The Outsider was placed upright on his feet. He was looking a little dazed, and extremely dishevelled.

"Now are you going to stay in?" asked Tom Merry.

"No!" yelled Lumley.

"Very well."

Tom Merry opened the door of Lumley's study, and changed the key to the outside of the lock. Then Lumley was pushed in. He stared at Tom Merry.

"What are you going to do?" he demanded.

"I'm going to lock you in."

"Good egg!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Lumley's face was convulsed with rage.

"Do you think I'll stay in quietly?" he demanded. "I'll smash the door down—I'll raise the house."

"You can take your choice about that; but if you bring the prefects or the masters on the scene, the whole matter will be explained, and you won't like what will follow."

Lumley ground his teeth.

"You—you hound! I'll make you smart for this!"

Tom Merry did not reply. He closed the door and locked it on the outside, and put the key in his pocket. His face looked a little troubled, but very resolute.

"That's the only thing that can be done with him, isn't it?" he said. "There has been a lot of talk lately about St. Jim's fellows being seen at the Green Man. If we don't want a scandal, it will have to be stopped. Lumley doesn't care if he disgraces the school, but—"

"But we care," said Blake, "and he's jolly well going to be stopped."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then that's settled."

"And now for the giddy rehearsal," said Jack Blake. "It's nearly half an hour late. Let's get on."

"Right you are!"

"I weally feel as if I owe you an apology, deah boys, for delayin' the rehearsal," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"But you see—"

"Just so! Come on!"

"Under the cires—"

"Exactly! This way!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Nuff said. Let's get to the rehearsal."

"Yaas, but—"

"Master Merry," said Binks, the School House page, appearing in the passage, "Master Kildare wishes to see you in his study."

Tom Merry grunted.

"Wonder what it is, now," he said. "I suppose I must go. You fellows get on with the rehearsal without me. Hang!"

And the hero of the Shell made his way to Kildare's study.

CHAPTER 4.

A Task for Tom Merry.

KILDARE, the head of the Sixth, and captain of the school, was standing by the table in his study, evidently waiting for Tom Merry. He nodded to the junior as he entered, and Tom Merry noticed that his usually cheery face was overcast.

"You sent for me, Kildare?" said Tom Merry.

"Yes, Merry. Close the door; I want to talk to you."

Tom Merry made a grimace as he closed the door. He felt that there was something of a troublesome nature coming, from Kildare's grave manner. No doubt some little delinquency had come to light, and Kildare intended to visit him with the consequences. Tom Merry was one of the best fellows at St. Jim's, but he had his faults, and he got into quite as many scrapes as most of the juniors.

"I say, I suppose it was the tar, Kildare," he said, as he turned from the door again. "It was only in fun, you know."

Kildare stared at him.

"Eh? What about the tar?"

"The tar on the garden seat, you know."

"Tar!"

"Yes, isn't it about that?" Tom Merry broke off.

Kildare smiled grimly.

"Oh! So it was you put the tar on the garden seat, that Mr. Selby sat down in, was it?" he exclaimed.

"I— We—we meant it for Figgins, of the New House," stammered Tom Merry, reddening. "It was just like Selby to go and sit there! We—"

"Well, well, never mind; it wasn't about that I was going to speak," said the captain of St. Jim's smiling. "It was a more serious matter."

Tom Merry looked perplexed.

"Blessed if I know what it is, then," he exclaimed. "I suppose you saw us carrying in the Outsider just now."

"The Outsider!"

"Yes, Lumley-Lumley. You see—"

"I did not see you," said Kildare. "Perhaps if you allow me to speak, we may arrive at what I want to say more quickly."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Certainly. Go ahead!"

"There's something going on in the junior Forms that wants correcting," said the captain of St. Jim's abruptly. "There have been reports for some time that a boy or boys belonging to St. Jim's have been in the habit of frequenting a place between here and Rylcombe—a low den called the Green Man."

Tom Merry coloured.

"Yes, Kildare," he said.

"It seems to me that there is something in it," said Kildare; "as a matter of fact, Mr. Railton has asked me to look into the matter. Mr. Ratcliff is quite certain that it is not a New House boy—Mr. Railton feels equally certain that it isn't a School House fellow, but both Monteith and I have been asked to look into it."

Tom Merry nodded. He felt a certain sense of guilty self-consciousness as he remembered the attempt of Lumley-Lumley to break bounds that evening. He could have given Kildare the name of the culprit easily enough.

But he did not. It would have been sneaking, and a schoolboy sense of honour held his tongue silent.

"That some junior at this school, and probably in this house, is making a fool of himself, seems pretty certain," went on Kildare. "What do you think?"

"I suppose so."

"You may have some idea as to whom it is?"

Tom Merry was silent.

"I first thought of Gore," said Kildare; "but Gore has seemed to be turning over a new leaf lately, and I haven't questioned him—I want to give him a chance. Now, I think that, as head of the juniors in the School House, you might be able to do something in this matter, Merry."

"I!" said Tom Merry.

"Yes, and that's why I've sent for you. There is no reason why, with a little keenness, you shouldn't discover who it is."

"But—"

"I don't expect you to report him to me when you've discovered him, of course," said Kildare quietly. "That's not my meaning at all. I know you are a decent fellow, Merry, and would be down on this sort of thing. You are head of the Shell, and it's your place to help keep order in your Form. If you find out who it is that's bringing disgrace upon the school, I think you might be able to deal with the matter."

"Oh," said Tom Merry slowly, "I see!"

"If you can find the young ass, and teach him the error of the way he's going, you will do the school a service, and the fellow himself a service. I don't approve of ragging among the juniors as a rule; but I certainly think it's a good idea in this case. You may save the masters a lot of trouble, and you may save the fellow himself from being expelled. You understand?"

"Yes, Kildare."

"Well, what do you say, then?" asked the captain of St. Jim's.

"I'll do my best."

"Good!"

Tom Merry was very red.

"You—you see, it's pretty awkward," he said slowly. "A fellow hates to seem to be taking up a high moral position over other fellows—it's so much like the hero of a rotten goody-goody book, you know—"

Kildare laughed.

"I know that, Merry; but there is good sometimes in goody-goody books. In this case you needn't be afraid of looking priggish. You may be able to save the silly fellow from being sacked out of St. Jim's, and perhaps disgraced for life."

"Yes, I know that. I'll do the best I can in the matter, Kildare, if you think I ought to."

"I do think so, Merry."

"Then it's settled."

Tom Merry left the captain's study in a thoughtful mood. As for finding out the culprit, he knew him already; it was Lumley-Lumley. But as for curing him of his propensities, that was a different matter. Already he had interfered, and he wondered rather grimly what Kildare would have said if he had known that the culprit had been caught in the act of breaking bounds, and had been locked up in his study.

Tom Merry turned his steps in the direction of the room where the rehearsal of the Junior Dramatic Society was to take place. As he approached the door, he heard the voice of Jack Blake.

"Heat me those irons hot."

"And look, thou standest within the attic!"

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"You ass!" said the voice of Digby. "It's arras."
 "Rot!" said Blake. "It's attic in my copy, and I wrote it out myself."

"Bosh! It's arras."

"Yaas, wathah! I think it's awwas, Blake, deah boy."

"Stuff!" said Blake. "Hallo, here's Tom Merry; let him decide. Did the murderers stand in the attic or in the arras in King John, Tom Merry?"

"Well, I think it was arras, but you can make it attic, if you like," said Tom Merry. "We were going to do 'As You Like It.'"

"I was going through that while we were waiting for you," said Blake. "What did Kildare want? Licked?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Faith, and ye're looking as serious as a boiled owl!" said Reilly, of the Fourth. "What's the matter wid ye intirely?"

"I twust Kildare was not watty about anythin', deah boy," remarked Arthur Augustus.

"Not exactly."

"Then what's the trouble?"

"It's about Lumley-Lumley."

"Oh!" The Junior Dramatic Society were all interested at once, and they forgot Shakespeare for the moment. "What's he got to say about the Outsider?"

"Nothing."

"You ass!" exclaimed Manners. "You said——"

"There's talk about a St. Jim's fellow pub-haunting, at the Green Man in the lane," Tom Merry explained. "The prefects are inquiring into it. They don't know it's Lumley; but we do. See?"

"Yes. You didn't give Lumley away?"

"Of course not. Look here," said Tom Merry abruptly, "Kildare has asked me to look into it, and settle the matter if possible without the masters being dragged into it, or any open scandal, you know. He thinks I may be able to do it, with the help of you fellows, of course, and save a lot of unpleasantness."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Faith, and there's something in that!" said Reilly.

"I think so," said Tom Merry slowly. "Kildare thinks that I can do it, and ought, as head of the juniors of the School House."

"As what?" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"As head of the School House juniors. He thinks I might look into it, and——"

"Rot!"

"What!"

"Rats!"

"Look here, Blake——"

"And many of 'em!" repeated Jack Blake emphatically.

CHAPTER 5.

A Question of Leadership.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY jammed his monocle into his eye, and fixed it upon Blake with a very reproving air.

"Weally, Blake——" he began.

"Cheese it, Gussy——"

"I decline to cheese it. I must remark that I wegard you as an ass. Kildare's ideah seems to me a good one, and I weally think that he has done quite the wight and pwopah thing in appealin' to Tom Mewwy."

"Hear, hear!" said Manners and Lowther.

"Rats!" said Blake.

"Look here Blake, if you're going to find fault with Kildare——"

"I'm not."

"If you don't think it's a good idea——"

"I do."

"Then what are you grouching about?" demanded the Terrible Three together, somewhat excitedly.

"I'm not grouching. What I object to is Kildare's calling Tom Merry the head of the juniors of the School House," explained Blake. "Of course, as a matter of fact, he's nothing of the sort. The head of the juniors is in the Fourth Form, and always was, and to be quite plain—you know I'm a plain chap——"

Lowther looked at him attentively.

"You are," he agreed.

"Ass——"

"Well, I wouldn't have mentioned it, but you said so yourself, and——"

"Oh, dry up!"

"I'm not a chap to pass remarks on a fellow's looks," said Lowther, "but when he admits it himself——"

"Cheese it, you ass. I was going to say that to be plain, I'm the head of the School House juniors, and any base imitation should be rejected."

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"Hear, hear!" said Reilly, and Herries, and Digby in chorus. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy chimed in, "Yaas, wathah!"

"Rot!" said the Terrible Three.

"Weally, you fellows——"

"Faith, and you——"

"Look here," said Tom Merry, "as head of the School House juniors——"

"Rats!"

"As head of the——"

"Wats!"

"As head——"

"Bosh!"

"You youngsters had better not interrupt me, or I may have to lick you——"

"Us what?"

"Youngsters," said Tom Merry, defiantly.

"Bai Jove! I uttably wefuse to be chawactewised as a youngstah. I shall twouble you to withdwaw that expwession, Tom Mewwy."

"Rats!"

"If you say wats to me——"

"Well, I do; and many of 'em."

"Bai Jove! I——"

"Look here, Tom Merry——"

"Look here, Blake——"

"Cheese it——"

"Dry up you Shell-fish!"

"Get out!"

"Rats!"

"I'll jolly well——"

"No, you won't——"

"I'll show you——"

"Yah!"

By the time these compliments were exchanged, Tom Merry and Jack Blake were reeling round the room with their arms clasped about one another's necks in a most affectionate manner. Herries and Lowther were punching away merrily, and Digby and Manners were trying to get one another's heads in chancery. Whether the headship of the juniors belonged to the Fourth Form or the Shell seemed likely to be decided by hard knocks.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "Go it, deah boys! Give 'em socks!"

"Yah!"

"Take that!"

"Young bounders!"

"Rotten Shell-fish!"

"Go it, Blake, deah boys! Bai Jove! What are you up to, Weilly?"

Reilly was prancing up to D'Arcy with his fists in the air. Reilly was a true Irishman, and he couldn't see a fight going on without wanting to take a hand in it.

"Come on!" he roared.

"What?"

"Put up your fists."

"You ass——"

"Are ye ready?"

"But what have we got to quawwel about?" demanded D'Arcy, backing away in amazement. "This is a Form wow, and we both belong to the Fourth."

"Put up ye're hands!"

"But——"

"Come on!"

"But——"

Reilly tapped D'Arcy on the nose.

"Faith, and come on!" he roared.

"You uttah ass——"

"Come on!"

"But we have nothin' to fight about, you feahful ass!"

"Sure, I'll give ye something to fight about!" said Reilly. "Here ye are!"

He dabbed D'Arcy on the nose again. The blood of all the D'Arcies rose to boiling-point in the veins of Arthur Augustus. He hesitated no longer.

"Bai Jove, I will give you a feahful thwashin', as you insist!" he exclaimed.

"Hurroo! Come on!"

And they went at each other, hammer and tongs.

The trampling of feet, the gasping and explaining, made a terrific din, as the combatants surged to and fro, panting and struggling and pommelling.

The door of the room was suddenly flung open. Kildare and Darrel, the prefect, appeared on the scene, with canes in their hands, and frowns on their faces.

"Stop that row!" roared Kildare.

"Bai Jove!"

"Cave!"

The juniors hurriedly separated. They were all looking considerably the worse for the combat, with dishevelled clothes, and collars torn out, and hair ruffled, and noses very red.



"You uttah wottah!" shrieked D'Arcy. "You feahful boundah! Get off my hat!" (See page 4.)

The captain of the school looked at them very grimly.

"And what is all this about?" he demanded.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at each other rather sheepishly.

"We—we were arguing—" stammered Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good! And what about?"

"Well, we were trying to settle who is the head of the juniors in the School House," said Blake. "Tom Merry has a curious delusion on the subject, and I was trying to hammer it out of him, in a friendly way, of course."

"Oh! Who is head of the juniors, by the way?"

"I am," said Blake instantly.

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "The position belongs to the top junior Form, of course, and that's the Shell. I'm head of the juniors, Kildare."

"Stuff!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, cheese it, Gussy—"

"I wefuse to cheese it! I—"

"Very well," said Kildare grimly, "as head of the juniors, Tom Merry, you ought to have kept order here. I am going to cane you."

"Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

But he ceased to laugh as Kildare went on.

"As head of the juniors, Blake, you ought to have kept order here. I am going to cane you."

"Oh!" gasped Blake, in his turn. And it was Tom Merry's turn to laugh.

Kildare swished his cane in the air.

"Hold out your hands," he said.

"You see, Kildare—"

"Hold out your hands!"

There was no help for it. The rival chiefs of the School House juniors held out their hands in turn, and Kildare laid the cane well on. They received three each, and they were stingers.

"There!" said Kildare. "You seem to be both leaders, but you can settle the matter between you; only settle it a little more quietly, or I shall come back."

And he walked away with Darrel, both of them laughing. Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another, and there was a grim silence in the room.

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CHAPTER 6.

Plain English:

"**B**AI Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, at last.
 "Rotten!" growled Blake.
 "Very rotten!" said Tom Merry rubbing his hands. "Kildare can lay it on! This is what comes of his swinging Indian clubs in the gym. It's not cricket."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Well, it can't be helped," said Lowther. "Matters might have been worse."
 "How do you mean?"
 "Well, I might have been caned, you know."
 "Ass!" growled Tom Merry. "Look here, after this, I suppose, you'll admit that I'm head of the juniors of this House, Blake?"
 "Not much!" said Blake promptly. "Haven't I been caned for not keeping order? And if that doesn't prove that I'm head of the juniors?"
 "But I've been caned, too, for the same reason, and——"
 "It's no good arguing, Tom Merry."
 "Who's arguing?"
 "You are! You'd argue the hind leg off a mule, I think!" said Blake warmly. "Nice state we're all in, too, through your losing your temper!"
 "I didn't lose my temper! You lost yours!"
 "Bosh!"
 "Look here——"
 "Rats!"
 "I'll jolly well——"

The door opened, and the juniors fell suddenly silent. They thought, for a moment, that it was Kildare returning. But it was only a Shell fellow, Kangaroo—otherwise Harry Noble.

The Cornstalk junior grinned in at them.

"My hat!" he said. "You look a set of beauties, I must say! What's all the row about here? Are you rehearsing a Surrev melodrama instead of Shakespeare?"

"Weally, Kangaroo——"

"I can't get Tom Merry to listen to reason," explained Blake.

"I haven't heard any from Blake to listen to."

"Look here, Tom Merry——"

"Look here, Blake——"

"Peace, my sons," said Kangaroo. "Lay the case before me, and I'll umpire. What's the trouble?"

"Tom Merry thinks he's head of the House juniors."

"Blake thinks he's head of the House juniors."

"Both wrong!" said Kangaroo, cheerfully. "I'm head of the House juniors."

"You!"

"You ass!"

"Oh, no rot!" said Kangaroo. "You know perfectly well that the proper place for a Colonial is at the top!"

"Bai Jove!"

"That question being settled——"

"Settled!" shouted Blake and Tom Merry together.

"Yes, that question being settled, let's hear what the trouble's about," said Kangaroo cheerfully.

Tom Merry looked at him and then at Blake. Then he burst into a laugh.

"Well, suppose we leave the question of headship over!" he exclaimed. "We can pull together in looking after the Lumley business."

Blake nodded at once.

"Jolly good idea!" he exclaimed heartily. "I was just thinking the same—or, rather, I should have thought the same, if—if it had occurred to me. I agree."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You can come in, Kangaroo. Look here, it's about Lumley-Lumley," said Tom Merry, dabbing his nose with a pocket-handkerchief as he talked—the said handkerchief growing redder and redder at every dab. "The powers that be know that there's some fellow in the Lower School going in for pub-haunting, and Kildare suggests that we should look into it."

"Good egg!"

"We know it's Lumley-Lumley—and Mellish. We caught them breaking bounds, and we know all about it. The question is, how to deal with them."

"They want ragging."

"Yes, I suppose that's the only way. Have you got anything to suggest?"

Kangaroo nodded.

"Yes. Let's have 'em here, and give 'em a trial, and if they're guilty, punish them according to law," he said.

"Eh? There isn't any law on the subject, that I know of."

Kangaroo sniffed.

"Well, I suppose we can make one, can't we?" he asked.

"Bai Jove, that's a good ideah!"

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"It's all right," said Blake. "We can form ourselves into a jury, and try Lumley-Lumley. We can warn him of the error of his ways, and inflict a light punishment to start in with, and perhaps it will be a warning to him."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good egg!"

There was a tap at the door of the junior club-room, and Mellish, of the Fourth, put his head timidly in. He blinked in a very uncertain way at Tom Merry & Co.

"I say, I want to go into my study," he said. "Lumley's just told me through the keyhole that he's locked in, and you've got the key. I want to do my prep."

"Right-ho!" said Blake. "We're coming!"

"If you give me the key——"

"Rats!"

The juniors left the room, Tom Merry turning out the gas. The rehearsal was quite off for that evening. Mellish looked very uneasy as they crowded upstairs with him. He did not want Tom Merry & Co. to accompany him to No. 8; but he had no choice in the matter.

There was a sound of hurried footsteps in the study. Lumley-Lumley was evidently pacing to and fro, like a wild animal in its den. Tom Merry unlocked the door and flung it open.

The Outsider stopped his pacing, and turned a fierce glance upon the juniors.

"So you've come to let me out!" he exclaimed savagely.

"Not at all! We've come to let ourselves in!" said Tom Merry, entering the study.

Lumley made a threatening gesture.

"Get out of my study!" he exclaimed.

"Rubbish!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wubbish, deah boy!"

"Look here——"

"Lock the door, Lowther!"

"Right-ho!"

The nine juniors had crowded into the study with Mellish. As the study was one of the smallest in the Fourth-Form passage, and was shared by only two juniors, as a rule, it was something of a squeeze. But they didn't mind that. They stood up against the door and the wall.

Lumley-Lumley looked at them savagely, but without alarm. He believed that a ragging was about to ensue, but he was not afraid. With all his faults—and their name was legion—he had a nerve of iron.

"Now, Lumley——" began Tom Merry.

"My name's Lumley-Lumley!" said the Outsider fiercely.

Tom Merry smiled.

"Very well. Jerrold-Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, we've come to this study-study to have a plain talk-talk to you."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Lumley clenched his hands.

"Kildare, our respected captain——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Don't interrupt. You can cheer when I'm done," said Tom Merry. "Kildare, our respected skipper, has asked me to look into a certain matter of pub-haunting. He doesn't know that I know the guilty party; but I know him—or, rather, them. You and Mellish."

"If you think——" began Mellish.

"I don't think," said Tom Merry, "I know."

"But——"

"You were going to the Green Man when we stopped you this evening. You have been there before——"

"And we'll go again, and as often as we like!" said Lumley, through his set teeth.

Tom Merry took no notice of that remark.

"We know what you go there for," he said. "It's to gamble on cards with Joliffe, and Crake, and Banks, and the other blackguards there, and, incidentally, to disgrace yourselves and your school. It's got to stop!"

"Who's going to stop it?"

"We are!" said Tom Merry quietly. "If it goes on you'll both be expelled from St. Jim's, in the long run, and it's as much for your sakes as for anything else that we're going to interfere."

"You are going to sneak to the prefects?" asked Lumley, with a bitter sneer.

Tom Merry flushed crimson.

"We're not going to sneak to anybody," he said. "We're going to handle the matter off our own bat. You won't be allowed to go to the Green Man."

"How are you going to prevent it?"

"By keeping an eye on you. When you try to break

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bounds again, you'll be stopped—and licked—licked thoroughly, and worse every time, till you're cured."

"That's plain English!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Lumley's teeth set hard.

"Do you want an answer from me?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, here it is: I shall go to the Green Man, and see Joliffe, and Banks, and the rest, just when I choose, and as often as I choose. That's plain English, too!"

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"So that's your answer, Lumley?"

"That's my answer."

"Well, you've heard our decision. If you won't mend your ways, you'll be ragged out of them. If you go to the Green Man, and we hear of it, we'll fetch you out, if we have to walk into the place and drag you out by main force."

"Bah!"

"I mean it. Don't be a fool, Lumley!" said Tom Merry, in a quieter tone. "What do you want to go there, for? You call it seeing life? Why, those fellows only want to swindle you! Do you think they'll even give you a run for your money? They'll cheat you all along the line if you were winning. If you did win anything, it would be only something given you to lead you on to blow more money there."

Lumley nodded.

"I know that's the game," he said. "I guess I've got my eye-teeth cut."

"And knowing that, you go among them?"

"They're catching a Tartar in me," said Lumley coolly. "I've skinned sharps in New York, who would have laughed at these fellows. Do you think Joliffe & Co. can pull the wool over my eyes? Do you think they can get hold of my money? My dear chap, I'm going down to the Green Man to skin them, not to be skinned!"

The juniors could only stare.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy at last.

"If you think I'm in danger of losing my money, you're off the track," said Lumley with a grin. "I'm all right. You can take all your kind warnings to Joliffe."

"Bai Jove!"

"It makes no difference," said Tom Merry, "if you go to cheat or to be cheated—in fact, it's worse the way you put it."

"Oh, don't preach to me!"

"In a word, do you intend to stop it?"

"No; I guess not."

"Then we're up against it all the time, and whenever we catch you, you'll be made to smart. We mean business."

"So do I."

"Vewy well," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I suggest that the present meetin' resolves itself into a Vigilance Committee to keep an eye on this wascal!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And every time he is caught playin' the giddy goat, we make an example of him."

"Hear, hear!"

"Unanimously adopted," said Tom Merry. "You hear, Lumley?"

"Yes; I hear."

"What have you to say, then?"

"Get out of my study!" said Lumley.

The juniors looked at one another. They were strongly inclined to collar Master Lumley-Lumley there and then, and give him such a ragging as he had never had before. But Tom Merry restrained that very natural desire, and made the others a sign to follow him from the study.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, with a deep breath, as soon as they were outside. "I don't think I evah met a chap who made my tempah wise so much."

"Same here."

Tom Merry breathed hard through his nose.

"Well, we've giving him warning," he said. "If he sticks to it, and keeps on disgracing his school and the House, he'll get it—in the neck! That's all!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

CHAPTER 7.

Skimpole's Idea.

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY burst into a scornful laugh as the door closed behind the juniors. Mellish did not look like laughing, and he did not feel like it, either. He was looking troubled and scared. The contemptuous derision of the Outsider did not reassure him.

"You must be an ass, Lumley," he said. "What did you talk to Tom Merry like that for? You know you can't back up against him."

The Outsider shrugged his shoulders disdainfully.

"That's just what I'm going to do!" he exclaimed.

"But—"

"I came to this school to have a good time," said Lumley coolly. "My governor bounced the Head into signing an agreement to keep me here for three years, and Dr. Holmes can't get rid of me if he wants to. I'm safe. Do you think I'm going to be fooled out of having my own way by a parcel of kids, when I don't care a rap for the Head himself?"

"But—"

"I've had a rough time," said Jerrold. "I've roughed it in New York, and I've seen the seamy side of life in Paris and Berlin and London. I'm going to have a good time now. I've seen more while you've been at school than many men see in a lifetime. Now's the time for me to score a little, and I'm going to do it. As for those rascals at the Green Man, that's child's play to me. They know I'm the son of a millionaire, and they think they've got me on toast. It won't take them long to discover that I've got them on the gridiron."

Mellish looked at him in admiration, mingled with fear.

"You are a scorch, and no mistake!" he said.

"I can look after myself," said Lumley; "I'm going to do it. As for being ordered about by Tom Merry, if that made any difference to me, it would only make me the more determined. Bah! I am going to the Green Man to-night just the same!"

Mellish started.

"To-night?"

"I guess so."

"But—but calling-over's at nine, and—"

"I don't mean till after that."

"Phew! After lights out, do you mean?"

"Yes."

Mellish looked very uneasy.

"I suppose it could be done," he said. "But some of the fellows may remain awake in the Fourth Form dormitory."

"Not likely. But if they do—"

"You'll give it up if they do?"

"Stuff! If they do, I shall go, all the same!"

Mellish gave a hopeless shrug of the shoulders.

"Oh, I suppose you'll have your way!" he exclaimed.

"I guess so," said Lumley coolly.

The two juniors did their preparation, and then went downstairs. It was near bedtime for the juniors. The junior common-room was pretty full. Many curious glances were cast at Jerrold Lumley.

That some St. Jim's junior was suspected of the delinquency known as "pub-haunting" was well known, and that the delinquent was Lumley-Lumley was no secret.

The Outsider consequently attracted a great deal of attention.

He remained perfectly cool under it.

Tom Merry & Co. did not speak to him. They had said all they had to say, and there was nothing more to be done, unless the Outsider disregarded their warning. Then it would be a time for action.

The Fourth Form and the Shell went up to bed at the usual time. As they separated in the upper passage, Tom Merry gave Blake a tap on the shoulder.

"I shouldn't wonder if Lumley bolted to-night, Blake," he said, in a low voice. "It's not worth while keeping awake to watch, of course, but if you should miss him let us know."

Blake nodded.

"He's hardly likely to have the nerve to go out this very night," he said.

"I believe he has nerve enough for anything."

"Well, that's right enough."

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy. "We ought to get up to some dodge, you know, to make sure of him for the night."

"Go it, Gussy!"

"Well, suppose we tied him down to his bed, you know," suggested D'Arcy, after a few moments' thought.

Tom Merry laughed.

"It might possibly attract the attention of the prefects, especially if he yelled," he remarked. "Besides, he couldn't be tied down every night."

"I nevah thought of that. Pewwaps Blake had bettah stay awake and watch."

"Catch me!" said Blake.

"Well, Digby might—"

"No fear!" said that individual.

"Well, Hewwies, then!"

"Rats!" said Herries.

"Faith, and why can't ye stay awake and watch yerself?" asked Reilly.

"I wegard the question as widiculous. I am sleepay,"

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said D'Arcy. "I shall go to sleep, of course. But I weally think somebody ought to keep an eye on Lumley!"

"Well, of all the asses——"

"If anythin' happens through no eye bein' kept on Lumley, I wash my hands of the whole mattah!" said Arthur Augustus loftily.

"Well, good-night!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

The Shell fellows went off to their dormitory. Skimpole, of the Shell, had been listening to the talk, and he remained standing in the passage, with a very thoughtful expression upon his face. Monty Lowther jogged his arm, and Skimpole started. Skimpole, the genius of the Lower School, frequently went off into the brown studies, and some of the fags had suggested that he really needed the attentions of a flapper, like the scientific gentleman in the city of Laputa, to awaken his attention to the outer world by frequent flaps on the ears.

"Wake up, Skimmy!" said Lowther pleasantly. "You're not in bed yet!"

Skimpole started.

"I was thinking, Lowther."

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"It seems that Lumley-Lumley is likely to break bounds to-night, and the fellows want to make sure that he doesn't," Skimpole remarked.

"Exactly!"

"I have thought of an idea. Suppose an alarum were arranged, to go off as soon as Lumley stepped out of bed——"

"Of course, he'd be obliging enough to step on it!" said Lowther sarcastically.

"H'm! Perhaps he might not," said Skimpole thoughtfully. "Of course, science is helpless without human co-operation. Something might be arranged against the door of the Fourth Form dormitory, to fall down with a crash as soon as the door was opened."

"I expect the wrong person would open the door, then."

"That, of course, could not be guarded against. Mistakes will occur in the best-regulated scientific inventions," said Skimpole, blinking at Lowther through his big spectacles. "Tom Merry, what do you think of the scheme?"

"What scheme?"

"I was thinking of leaning, say, a broom against the Fourth-Form dorm. door, so that it would fall down with a crash as soon as the door was opened from within. Then Lumley would automatically give the alarm as soon as he tried to leave the dormitory."

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry.

"Lowther suggests that it might fall on the wrong person."

"That wouldn't matter."

"Well, no," said Lowther. "I didn't look at it in that light. I really don't see that it would matter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Very well," said Skimpole, "I will leave it till after lights out, in case a prefect should see it, which might cause awkward inquiry."

"Ha, ha, ha! I should."

"Get into bed, you young scamps!" said Kildare, looking into the dormitory.

"Half a tick, Kildare!"

And the Shell were soon in bed, and the lights out in the dormitory. When the footsteps of the captain of St. Jim's had died away, Skimpole sat up in bed.

"I think I will carry out my idea now," he remarked. "I can get the passage broom from the cupboard under the stairs, you know. It is a very large and heavy broom, and will make a great noise if it falls suddenly. I take a great interest in this matter, because I feel that it is our duty to keep Lumley from acting in this foolish way. He is very reckless. I have offered him a splendid volume on the subject of Socialism to read, instead of filling up his leisure time in this pernicious way, and he was quite rude in return. He hurled the book from the study window."

"Hurrah!"

"I thought it very rude," said Skimpole.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skimpole crept out of bed, and left the dormitory quietly. To obtain the big broom from the cupboard at the end of the passage, and to stand it with the head resting on the door of the Fourth Form dormitory, did not occupy Skimpole long. Then, perfectly satisfied with himself, the genius of the Shell returned to his own dormitory.

"Well?" said several sleepy voices.

"It is all right," said Skimpole. "Lumley cannot get out of the Fourth Form dormitory without giving the alarm. It is all right."

And the Shell chuckled, and settled down to sleep.

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CHAPTER 8.

No Sleep.

LIGHTS were out in the Fourth Form dormitory in the School House. The Fourth-Formers, quite unconscious of the device of Skimpole for alarming them if the door were opened, were all in bed, and some of them were already sleeping the sleep of the just. But some did not sleep—Arthur Augustus, in particular, was in a sleepless mood. He closed his eyes, and resolutely kept them closed, and then opened them again and blinked into the darkness, and finally called to Blake:

"Blake, deah boy!"

There was a grunt from Blake's bed.

"Blake! I can't go to sleep!"

"Go to Jericho, then!" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Ring off!"

"It is wathah odd," said D'Arcy. "I was feelin' quite sleepay in the common-woom and when we came up to bed; but pewwaps that was the weseult of conversation with you, Blake!"

"Eh?"

"I feel vewy wakeful now. Pewwaps it would be a good ideah to sit up for the night, and wead a book," said D'Arcy. "Then I should be able to keep an eye on that wottah, Lumley."

Lumley, in his bed, gave a slight start. He was not asleep, and did not intend to go to sleep. Lumley seemed to have a faculty for doing without sleep; more than once he had spent half the night outside the walls of St. Jim's, and had turned up to lessons quite fresh and keen in the morning. He was not an athlete by any means; but he was hard as nails, and he seemed to have a constitution of iron.

"Oh, shut up!" said Blake drowsily.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Go to sleep!"

"I am suffewin' fwom insomnia."

"Then suffer quietly!" howled Blake. "I'm sleepy."

"Would you like to have a game of chess, Blake, if I got a light?"

"Groo!"

"Are you goin' to sleep?"

"Groo!"

"Blake!"

Snore!

"Weally, Blake, I wegard it as wathah inconsiderate of you to go to sleep when I am suffewin' fwom insomnia," said Arthur Augustus, in a tone of remonstrance. "Don't you think you might make an effort, deah boy, and wemain awake?"

"Groo!"

"Blake!"

Jack Blake started out of his doze.

"Eh? What—what?"

"I can't go to sleep, Blake."

Blake snorted.

"Do you want to be massacred in your bed?" he howled. "You're going the right way to work if you do. Shut up!"

"But——"

"Mum!"

"But——"

"Groo!"

"Blake, deah boy——"

Snore!

"Weally, Blake! Dig—I say, Dig! Are you asleep, Digby?"

"Eh? Oh! What? Anybody call?" came a mumbling voice from Digby's bed.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Eh? What's the matter?"

"I'm suffewin' fwom insomnia, deah boy."

"You—you've woke me up to tell me that?" gasped Digby. "Yaas."

"You—you chump! I was just dreaming that I was playing in a League match, and scoring goals over Newcastle United," howled Digby.

"Sowwy, but——"

"Br-r-r-r! Go to sleep, then!"

"But I can't."

"Then stay awake."

And Digby snored determinedly. D'Arcy groped for his eyeglass, and jammed it into his eye, and peered round the dark dormitory. What assistance the eyeglass was to him was not quite clear, for it was too dark for him to see anything.

"Hewwies! Are you asleep, Hewwies?"

No answer from Herries. D'Arcy called him two or three times, but the burly Fourth-Former was fast asleep. The swell of St. Jim's reached out to his washstand, found his toothbrush, and tossed it upon Herries's bed to awaken



"What's all this about?" demanded the captain of the School grimly. Tom Merry & Co. looked at each other rather sheepishly. "We were trying to settle who is head of the juniors in the School House!" explained Blake. (See page 7.)

him. It dropped on Herries's nose, as it happened, and effectually awakened him. He started out of slumber with a wild gasp.

"Wh-wh-wh-what's that?"

"It's all wight, Hewwies."

"Eh?"

"It was only my toothbrush."

"Your toothbrush?"

"Yaas. I chucked it to see, if you were awake."

"You—you—you chump!" mumbled Herries, fumbling for the toothbrush on his bed. "Your frabjous ass!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Here's your blessed toothbrush."

It whistled through the air, and caught D'Arcy under the chin. The swell of St. Jim's gave a wild whoop.

"Ow!"

"Now go to sleep!" grunted Herries, settling down again. D'Arcy rubbed his chin.

"Hewwies, I wegard you as an uttah wottah!" he exclaimed.

"Go to sleep!"

"But I am suffewin' fwom insomnia."

"Then suffer quietly, you ass!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Groo!"

"Hewwies, old man, wouldn't you like a chat—about—about ewicket?"

"Groo!"

"About football, then."

"Groo!"

"About—about Towser," exclaimed D'Arcy desperately.

Herries partially awoke.

"Eh? What's that about Towser?" he asked.

"I should like you to tell me things about Towser," said D'Arcy, with great cunning. He wanted somebody to talk to him, as he couldn't go to sleep, and Towser was a name to conjure with with Herries. The wonderful things that Towser, the bulldog, could do formed an inexhaustible theme with Herries.

"Oh, all right!" said Herries sleepily. "I'm glad to see you taking an interest in an intelligent subject at last, D'Arcy. I'll tell you all about it to-morrow."

"Oh, no; go ahead now, Hewwies, old man!"

Snore!

"Hewwies!"

Snore!

"Bai Jove, this is wotten!" said D'Arcy, as, sitting up in bed, he peered up and down the shadowy dormitory through his eyeglass. "A chap can't go to sleep and can't find anybody to talk to. I wegard it as wotten! I've left my book in the study, or I might have a wead. It's beastly.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

I wonder if it would annoy the fellows if I pwactised a wccitation?"

And Arthur Augustus, in his deepest voice, started on the "Song of Hiawatha."

"Should you ask me whence these stories, Whence these legends and traditions——"

"Stop that row!" howled Jerrold Lumley.

"Weally, Lumley——"

"Chuck it, you ass!"

"Pewwaps you would pwefer Bywon?" said D'Arcy. "How would you like the 'Apostwophe to the Ocean,' Lumley, deah boy?"

And without waiting for an answer he continued:

"Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue ocean, roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain!
Man marks the earth with ruin: his control
Stops with the shore——" Ow!"

The last ejaculation, needless to say, did not belong to Byron. It was uttered by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy "on his own," so to speak, as a boot whizzed through the darkness and caught him on the side of the head.

"Ow!" roared D'Arcy. "Bai Jove! Gweat Scott! Who thwew that? Pway tell me who you are, you wottah, and I will get up and give you a feahful thwashin'!"

There was no reply. Perhaps the individual who had hurled the boot did not consider a fearful thrashing "good enough" as a reward for owning up.

"Do you hear me, you uttah wottah?"

There was a chuckle, and that was all. Arthur Augustus rubbed the side of his head. He gave up practising recitations.

But the clump from the boot had made him less inclined to sleep than ever. After a little reflection he stepped out of bed. The only thing to do was to fetch his book from the study, and a cycle lantern, and read till he felt more inclined to woo the drowsy god. He drew on his trousers and moved towards the door.

Only Jerrold Lumley heard him go. The rest of the Form were asleep. But the rest of the Form heard him soon enough.

D'Arcy groped his way to the door, and opened it.

As he did so, something swooped down upon him in the darkness, and he received a heavy blow, and reeled back and sat down violently. There was a crash beside him, and the voice of the swell of St. Jim's rang through the dormitory from end to end.

"Ow! Yow! Help! Burglahs! Wescue!"

CHAPTER 9.

Returned with Thanks.

JACK BLAKE started out of slumber for the second time. He sprang up in bed, and heard indistinctly a crash and a yell. His first thought was that Lumley had tried to bolt, and that someone had collared him.

"Help!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Hallo! Is that you, Gussy?"

"Yow! Wescue! Yah!"

Blake bundled out of bed. Digby and Herries were turning out, too, and Reilly and several more. Digby was first at the door, and he fell over the broom, and sprawled on D'Arcy, whom he grasped immediately.

"Got him!" he shouted.

"Hold him!" exclaimed Blake. "I'll have a light in a jiffy."

"I've got him."

"Yow!"

"Hallo!"

"Leggo!"

"My hat! It's Gussy!"

"Gussy! Mind Lumley doesn't get away."

Blake struck a match and lighted a candle. The flickering light showed D'Arcy sprawling on the floor in pyjamas and trousers. Dig had just released him. The broom lying there, too, was sufficient evidence that D'Arcy had not been felled by a burglar, but by that article leaning against the door.

"My only hat!" gasped Blake. "What game are you up to, Gussy?"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Lumley's in bed," exclaimed Herries.

"Faith, and it's not Lumley!"

Jerrold Lumley did not move. Several of the fellows were awake now and demanding what was the matter. Lumley affected sleep.

Blake dragged D'Arcy to his feet.

"What on earth are you up to?" he demanded. "Where did you get that broom?"

D'Arcy rubbed his head.

"Eh?"

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Where did you get that broom?"

"On the nappah, deah boy," said D'Arcy ruefully.

"I mean where did it come from, you ass?"

"I weally don't know. I opened the door of the dorm., and I immediately felt a feahful blow——"

"A what?"

"A feahful blow. I was felled to the gground——"

"What ground?"

"I mean floor. I pwesume that it was the bwoom that fell on me. I thought at first that it was a jonnmay, you know, or a knuckle-dustah, in the hand of a burglah."

"Ass! What did you open the door for?" growled Digby.

"I was suffewin' fwom insomnia, and I was goin' down to the studay to fetch my book," said D'Arcy.

"Against the rules to read in bed," said Blake. "Serve you right. You might have set the dormitory on fire, you ass. I forbid you to read in bed."

"Weally, Blake——"

"It's a giddy trick of some of the Shell fellows," grunted Blake, looking at the broom. "It was shoved there to fall in when the door was opened. As we've been woke up, I think we may as well take the broom back to the Shell."

"Shouldn't wonder if somebody else has been woke up, too," said Kerruish, listening at the door. "Gussy's made row enough."

"Weally, Kewwuish——"

"I can't hear anybody coming," said Digby. "Let's get along to the Shell dorm., and return them their present with thanks—may as well mop it in water first."

"Good!"

Jack Blake filled a basin with water, and on second thoughts added a saucer full of soot from the chimney. He mixed it up with the broom, and soaked up most of the sooty water into the bristles of that article.

Then, after a cautious look down the passage, he led the way towards the Shell dormitory. Digby followed carrying the candle, and half the Fourth Form brought up the rear.

Blake opened the door of the Shell sleeping-quarters quietly. The candle glimmered in, and showed the juniors asleep in the row of white beds.

Blake chuckled softly.

"Come in, you fellows," he said.

"Yaas, wathah!"

The Fourth-Formers crowded into the room. Tom Merry awoke, and two or three other fellows at the same time.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry, blinking dazedly at the light.

"Hallo! What's the row? Gerrooh! Ow! Ooch! Gerrooh! Yah!"

He made those remarks as Blake pushed the sooty end of the broom into his face, and lathered his curly head with it. The Fourth-Formers gave a yell of laughter at the aspect of the Shell leader after a few seconds of that treatment.

"It's your little present, returned with thanks," said Blake genially. "Here's some for Lowther, too."

"Gerroff!" roared Lowther. "Gerroff—yow—yarrooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Manners——"

Manners made a desperate attempt to escape by rolling out of bed. But his feet caught in the bedclothes, and he bumped on the floor, and then the sooty broom caught him, and mopped all over his head and neck.

Manners roared.

"Here, get up!" roared Kangaroo. "Kick them out! Go for 'em!"

"Back up, you fellows."

"Groo!" roared Kangaroo, as the broom caught him under the chin, as he rushed forward. "Groo! Hoo! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as funnay!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the Shell fellows were turning out in force now, and it was time to retreat. Tom Merry had hold of the broom, and was trying to drag it away. Blake let go, and the Fourth-Formers trooped out of the dormitory, chuckling.

They hurried back to their own quarters, leaving four members of the Shell foaming, and the rest laughing. The Shell fellows who had not been sooted regarded it in the light of a joke, and they showed little sympathy for the Terrible Three and Kangaroo.

Skimpole sat up in his bed and blinked at the sooty faces of the quartette in great astonishment.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed. "What has happened? What an extraordinary time for you to choose to make up as nigger minstrels!"

"You ass!" roared Tom Merry.

"Really, Merry——"

"You chump!"

"My dear fellow——"

"They've brought your broom back, you ass!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"My broom!"

"Yes, you fathead!"
 "And to judge by the bump on Gussy's noble brow, it did fall upon the wrong person," grinned Clifton Dane.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Bless me!"
 "You chump! You frabjous ass!"
 "Really, Merry, it was an excellent plan, although it seems to have worked out somewhat unpleasantly. I— Oh!"
 Tom Merry had seized the broom and jabbed the sooty end under Skimpole's chin. The genius of the Shell gasped and snorted.
 "Ow! Groo! Yow! Snoo!"
 "There's some of it for you," said Tom Merry. "You won't be so beastly clever next time!"
 "Gerrooh! Oh!"
 "Let's get along and smash up the Fourth," exclaimed Gore.

And the Terrible Tree and Kangaroo, and Skimpole, too, growled Lowther. "We'll smash up the Fourth to-morrow." And the Terrible Three and Kangaroo, and Simpole, too, felt it more imperative to get rid of the soot than to smash up the Fourth; and they were soon splashing away merrily at the washstands, while the rest of the Form chuckled themselves to sleep.

CHAPTER 10.

A Startling Discovery.

"**B**AI JOVE! I wegard that as a weally wippin' victory, you know."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that remark as the victorious Fourth-Formers crowded into their own dormitory again. Blake grinned as he turned the key in the lock.

"We don't want the Shell-fish to follow us in," he remarked. "We've licked them—and 'nuff's as good as a feast."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It will be some time before they lean old brooms up against our door again," said Digby, with a chuckle.

"Yaas, wathah! By the way, I have a feahful bump on my head, you know."

"Never mind! Lucky there was nothing in it to be damaged."

"Weally, Digby—"

"They're not coming," said Blake, listening at the door. "I suppose they've had enough. Well, we've taken the Shell down this time."

"Yaas, wathah! But I am thinkin' about this bump—"

"Oh, never mind the bump!"

"But it is just where my hat goes, Blake. I shall not be able to wear a toppah again till the bump is considewably wedged."

"Poor old chap!" said Blake sympathetically. "Fancy having to go around in a cap for hours at a time! Hard cheese!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"My only chapeau, it's half-past ten!" exclaimed Herries, as the school clock rang out. "We shall all be as sleepy as anything in the morning, after Gussy keeping us up like this!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"I'm going to bed."

"Same here," said Blake. "Good-night! You still asleep, Lumley?"

There was no reply from Lumley's bed. Jack Blake glanced towards it. It had occurred to him that Lumley might have taken advantage of the absence of the juniors to slip out of the dormitory. But the form of a sleeper showed under the bedclothes.

He looked at Mellish's bed. There, too, he could trace the outlines of an occupant. But it seemed curious that they should have slept through the disturbance. Some of the fellows had done so, certainly; but neither Lumley nor Mellish was a heavy sleeper.

"They're playing possum," said Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, let 'em," said Blake, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I don't care what they do, so long as they keep in the dorm."

And he tumbled into bed.

Arthur Augustus was putting his slippers on. Blake noticed what he was doing, and called out to him.

"What's that for, Gussy?"

"I'm goin' down to the studay to fetch my book, deah boy."

"You're not," said Blake decisively.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Go to bed!"

"But I'm suffewin' fwom insomnia."

"You can't read in bed. It's dangerous, and against the rules. Suppose you set your bed on fire—think of the waste of good bedclothes, to say nothing of the funeral expenses your pater would have to pay."

"Weally, Blake—"

"If you can't go to sleep, repeat the multiplication-table, backwards, in your head, and do sums," said Digby. "Multiply the Song of Hiawatha by the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, subtract the Prisoner of Chillon, and—"

"Pway don't be an ass, Dig!"

"Well, sit up and watch Lumley, then, and give him fatherly advice to pass the time," said Blake.

"Weally, you know—"

"Go and sit on his bed, like good little George, in the story book, and take his hand, and tell him the story of your life, and all about the sunshine on the golden corn, and the little attic window where you used to watch the stars," said Blake. "If that sort of stuff doesn't make you sleepy, nothing will."

"I wegard you as an ass."

"Point out to him the error of his ways, and how much better it is to be a prig and die at fourteen to slow music," said Digby.

"Weally, you ass—"

"Well, go to bed and shut up!" said Blake.

"Would you fellows mind if I sang a tenah solo?"

"No—we should only chuck you out of the window," said Herries. "By the way, speaking of Lumley, I've got an idea. Suppose we had Towser to sleep in the dormitory of a night, to seize him if he tried to get out?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Towser likes to come indoors, too, and—"

"I should wefuse to permit anythin' of the sort. I wegard Towser as a dangerous beast; an animal that has no wespect whatevah for a fellow's twousahs."

"Put out the light, Gussy."

"But I'm going to wead."

"Your mistake; you're not."

"Weally, you know—"

"Put out the candle!" roared Blake.

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

Blake snorted.

"Then I'll jolly soon put it out."

He groped for his boot, picked it up, and, sitting up in bed, took a deadly aim at the candle. The boot whizzed through the air.

It missed the candlestick by an inch, passed it, and fell upon Jerrold Lumley's bed with a heavy clump.

"Phew!" gasped Blake. "Look what you've done now, Gussy!"

"I! Weally, Blake—"

"I'm sorry, Lumley. It was Gussy's fault. You can punch his head, if you like," said Blake.

There was no reply from Lumley. He had not uttered a sound. Several of the juniors stared towards his bed in surprise. It seemed incredible that a boy could go on sleeping after such a crashing clump from the boot. D'Arcy, who was standing near the bed, stared at it more amazedly than the others. He could see what the others did not observe—that the boot had made a deep dent in the form in the bed, and that the dent remained, with the boot resting in it.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped.

"Blessed if the fellow doesn't sleep like a top!" exclaimed Blake. "I should have thought that that would have woke up the Seven Sleepers."

"Bai Jove!"

"Take the boot off him, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, change the record!" said Digby. "We've heard that before!"

"Bai Jove!"

"What on earth's the matter with him?"

"Bai Jove!"

"What is it, Gussy?" exclaimed Blake, startled at last.

"Bai Jove! There's somethin' w'ong with Lumley!"

"Something wrong!"

"Yaas, wathah!" D'Arcy picked up the boot, and showed the deep dent in the middle of the supposed sleeper. "Either Lumley is made of indiahwubbah, or he isn't there."

Blake gave a yell.

"Isn't there!"

"Wathah not!"

D'Arcy threw back the bedclothes. Bolsters and pillows were revealed, cunningly arranged to imitate the form of a sleeper; but Jerrold Lumley was not there. The Outsider of St. Jim's was gone!

CHAPTER 11.

The Pursuers.

JACK BLAKE rolled out of bed and lost his footing and rolled on the floor. He jumped up, and stared at the Outsider's bed. There was no doubt that Lumley-Lumley was gone.

The things had been arranged in the bed to resemble the form of a sleeper, and they had deceived the juniors; and probably the Fourth-Form would have gone quietly to bed thinking that Lumley was there, had not the accident of the boot revealed the trick.

"My hat!" ejaculated Blake. "The awful bounder! He's taken us in!"

"Bai Jove!"

"He must have done this in the dark, while we were gone to the Shell dormitory!" exclaimed Blake, in amazement. "Then he slipped out before we came back. If I hadn't chucked that boot, we should never have known."

"Wathah not!"

"What about Mellish?" exclaimed Digby. "Is he gone, too?"

Blake ran to Mellish's bed and dragged off the clothes, as the quickest way of ascertaining whether Mellish was really there. A bundle of bolsters and other things was revealed, but Mellish was gone.

"I thought so," said Digby. "He's gone with Lumley."

"Both of them!"

"Birds of a feather," said Blake, with a sniff. "Well, they're gone, and they've been gone some time. Too late to stop them."

"But not too late to go after them."

"Just so," agreed Blake. "We told Lumley what to expect. If he's gone to the Green Man, we're going to follow him there."

"Of course, he may be gone somewhere else."

"We can easily settle about that," said Herries eagerly.

"How?" asked Blake.

"By taking Towser with us."

"Towser?"

"Yes. Towser will track them down."

"Oh, blow Towser!"

"Look here, Blake, you remember perfectly well Towser's tracking down the chaps who robbed the chapel that time, and—"

"Tracking down your grandmother!"

"If you're looking for a thick ear, Blake—"

"Pway don't begin to wow now!" said Arthur Augustus.

"It is a time for action, deah boys. There's no reason why Hewwies shouldn't take his bulldog if he likes, so long as he keeps the beast away from othah fellows' twousahs!"

"I'll get him out at once," said Herries, bundling into his clothes. "I suppose it's settled that we're going after Lumley and Mellish?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'll meet you fellows at the slanting oak, and I'll bring Towser with me. If you're going to take Tom Merry, you may as well go and call him while I get Towser."

"Faith, and if ye're caught breaking bounds by a prefect, it won't be any good to you that Lumley's done it before ye," said Reilly, looking out of bed. "Better lave it alone."

"Rats!"

"Yaas, wathah, wats, deah boy! We are bound to go affah the Outsidah, and bwing him back by force."

"And we'll give him something for the trouble he's giving us," said Blake, putting on his things at lightning speed.

"We'll make him sit up, and if nothing else will cure him, we'll hold him while Gussy sings a tenor solo!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You fellows buck up, and I'll call Tom Merry."

And Blake, with his boots roughly laced, and fastening his collar as he ran, hurried along the passage to the Shell dormitory.

He threw open the door and ran in, in his excitement forgetful of the late raid. There was a light in the dormitory, and the Terrible Three and Kangaroo and Skimpole were towelling themselves after a long and arduous wash.

They stared at Blake as he dashed in.

"Jumping kangaroos!" exclaimed the Cornstalk. "If that bounder hasn't come back again!"

"Collar him!"

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Blake hurriedly. "I— Oh!"

They had collared him in a twinkling. He was jerked towards the basin of sooty water in which Tom Merry had just washed his head.

He struggled desperately.

"You asses!" he shouted. "Stop! I tell you—"

"Duck him!"

"I—I— Oh, grooh!"

Splash!

Blake's head went fairly into the flowing bowl, and the sooty water splashed round over the floor, and the legs of the juniors. But they did not mind that.

"Give him another!" exclaimed Lowther.

"In he goes!"

Splash!

"Yaroooh—garrooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake was left sitting on the floor, with sooty water running down all over him. The chums of the Shell grinned at him.

"How do you like it?" demanded Tom Merry. "Does it seem as funny now as it did a little while ago, Blakey?"

"Yow—ow—ow!"

"Some of it's gone in his mouth," said Lowther sympathetically. "These Fourth-Form kids never can learn to keep their mouths shut!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groo!"

"Go it, Blake! Cough away!"

"You chumps!" roared Blake. "Catch me coming again—"

"Ha, ha! We caught you coming again this time!" grinned Kangaroo. "Like your cheek! What did you expect?"

"You chump! I came to call you!"

"What for?" asked Tom Merry.

"Lumley's gone!"

"Oh!"

"He sneaked out with Mellish while we were here, and we've only just discovered it," explained Blake. "You wanted me to call you, and—"

"Ha, ha! I'm so sorry! Ha, ha! It was a mistake! Ha, ha!"

"By Jove!"

"You fathead!"

"By Jove!"

"You utter idiots—"

"Well, how were we to know what you came for?" demanded Tom Merry, with tears of merriment running down his cheeks. "You didn't say, and we're not giddy thought-readers. You haven't had it as bad as we have, anyway."

Blake seized a towel, and began to mop his head dry. Lowther gave a roar.

"Hang it! You'll black that towel all over! That's my towel!"

"Whose is that you're using, then?" demanded Tom Merry, for Lowther had soaked through a towel pretty well himself.

"Oh, this is Dane's!"

"My towel!" exclaimed the Canadian, sitting up in bed.

"Why—"

"Well, I want mine in the morning," explained Lowther.

"Don't I want mine?" roared Dane.

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about:

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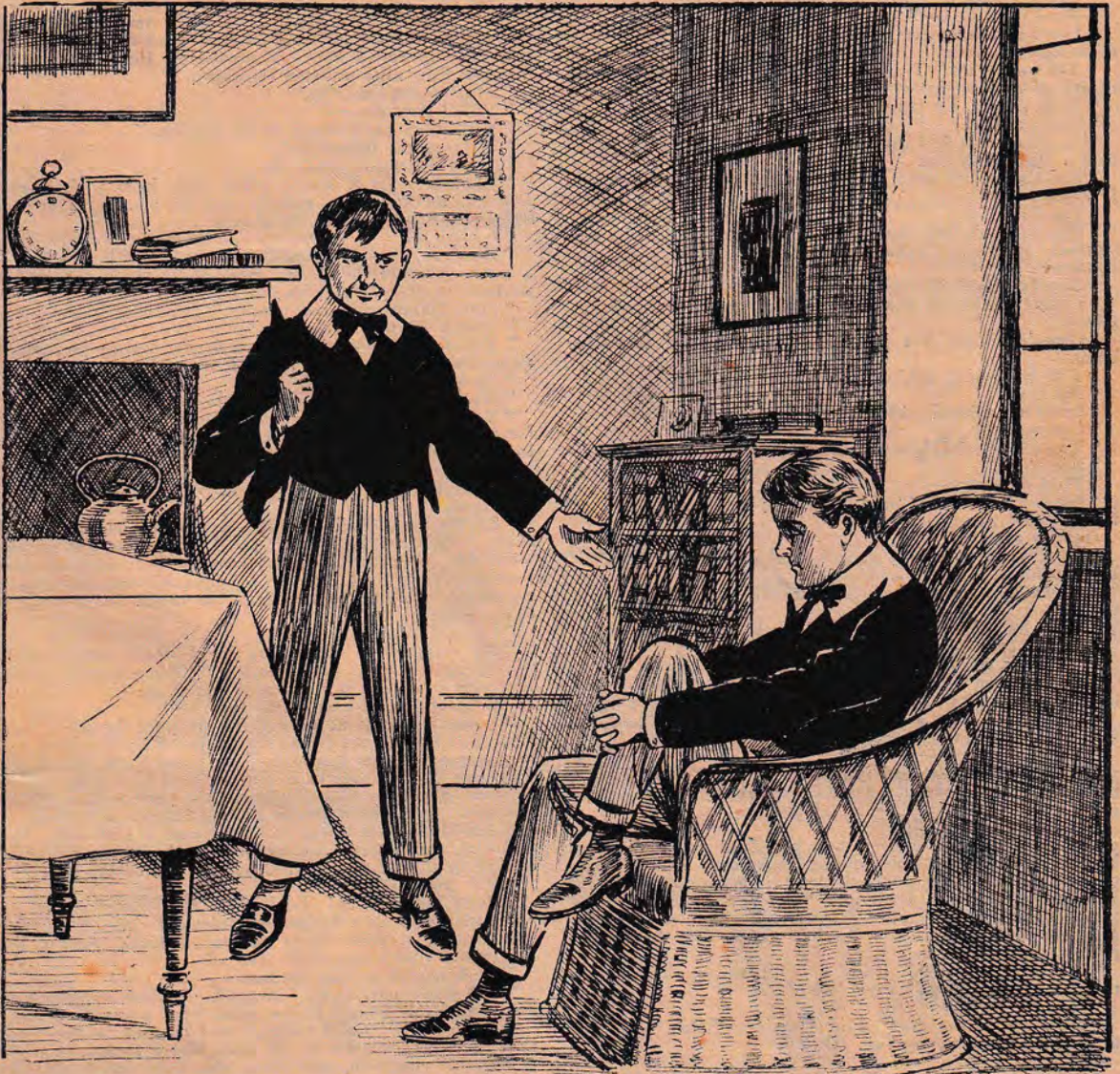
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PRICE ONE PENNY.



"Do you think I'm going to be fooled out of having my own way by Tom Merry, when I don't care a rap for the Head himself?" said Lumley Lumley scornfully. "I'm going down to the Green Man to-night just the same!"

"Blessed if I know; I never thought about it," said Lowther.

"Well, yours is pretty well mucked up now," said Dane, with a grin, as he saw the towel rapidly blackening as Blake mopped his sooty head.

Blake dabbed his face with Tom Merry's sponge, and then seized another towel to finish. It was Bernard Glyn's, but Glyn was fortunately asleep, and so there was no objection raised. By this time Digby and D'Arcy, fully dressed, were looking in at the door.

"Buck up, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "Hewwies has gone for his feahful beast, and we're quite weady!"

"Blessed if I see what Blake wanted to stop and wash his head for now," said Digby. "Must say he might have chosen a better time."

"You chump!" said Blake.

"We're ready now," said Tom Merry, laughing. "We be dressed in a minute."

"Buck up, for goodness' sake!"

It did not take the Terrible Three long to dress. Kangaroo, who was coming with them, was ready as quickly.

The light was extinguished, and the juniors went quietly from the dormitory.

Kildare had asked Tom Merry to see what he could do in the matter of the "pub.-haunting," and Tom Merry was carrying out his instructions. At the same time, the captain of St. Jim's would have scarcely overlooked the breaking of

bounds at night, even for the purpose of fetching Lumley-Lumley away from the Green Man. But Tom Merry thought he was entitled to use his own methods. Only it was necessary for the juniors to be careful. In case of discovery, lines, and probably a caning, would be their reward, however good their intentions.

They stole quietly down the back staircase.

A window had been left unfastened by Herries, who was already out. One by one the chums of the School House dropped to the ground, and Tom Merry, the last, closed the window.

Then the juniors made their way through the gloom towards the slanting oak by the school wall. A dark form stood there awaiting them.

"Is that you, Herries?" said Tom Merry.

"Yes!" came the voice of Herries.

"Bai Jove! Haven't you bwrought Towsah, Hewwies?"

"Yes, he's here."

"I can't see him," said D'Arcy, peering to and fro through his eyeglass.

"He's close behind you."

D'Arcy gave a jump.

"Weally, Hewwies, you might keep the beast futhrah away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I have been thwown into quite a fluttah. I wegard you—"



"Quiet, Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Don't give the alarm, old fellow. You can do those vocal exercises to-morrow."

"You uttah ass! I am not doin' vocal exahcises. I am explainin' to Hewwies——"

"Well, don't. Up you go, Tom Merry!"

"Right-ho!"

Tom Merry was first over the wall, and he dropped into the road. Digby followed.

"Somebody will have to help me up with Towser," said Herries.

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, he won't bite—not unless you look at him, or he gets startled, anyway. Take hold of him firmly with both hands——"

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"I hope you're not afraid of a quiet, good-tempered dog, Gussy."

"Certainly not; but I wefuse to touch that howwible beast."

"You take him, Blake."

"No fear!"

"Lend me a hand with Towser, Lowther."

"Catch me!"

"You're not afraid, are you, Manners?"

"Not a bit."

"Then help me——"

"Some other time," said Manners; and he shinned up the tree and was gone.

Herries snorted.

"Look here, somebody's got to help me with Towser!" he exclaimed.

"Shove him up on the wall yourself," said Blake, from the top.

"Well, he might misunderstand, and——"

"Bite!" grinned Blake.

"Well, it's not likely, but he might."

"Good reason for getting another chap to help with him," said Lowther. "I'd rather be excused, if you don't mind. As a favour, I'd tie a brick round his neck and chuck him into a pond, any day."

"You howling ass——"

"Well, I only mean to be kind. If ever you want Towser shot, and you mention it to me, I'll spend my last sovereign on a gun."

"Oh, dry up!"

Herries lifted up Towser, and put him on a slanting branch of the tree. The bulldog fortunately did not misunderstand, and he scrambled along to the top of the wall. His master followed him, and Towser was persuaded to jump down into the road. The fall did not seem to please him, for he gave a low, whirring growl that made the juniors scuttle back in a hurry.

"Oh, rot!" grunted Herries. "I never saw such a nervous lot of duffers. I—— Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's not biting me!" said Herries. "He's only just nipped my trousers, for fun. Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Towser! Towsey! Hoo-groo-shoo! Leggo, you fiendish brute! Chuck it, old doggy! Leggo, you rotten beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herries persuaded the bulldog to let go. Towser may have intended to nip the garment just in fun; but Herries had certainly had a scratch, too. The juniors laughed

CHAPTER 12.

At the Green Man.

"BLESSED if I half like it!"

It was Mellish who made that remark.

Lumley-Lumley and his companion had stopped in the lane, in sight of the lights of the Green Man. It was Mellish who had stopped first, irresolutely. He had been hanging back, and walking more and more slowly, for some time, but Lumley-Lumley had pretended not to notice it. He preferred not to go alone to the public-house, and Mellish was his only possible companion.

"Come on!" said Lumley shortly.

"I don't half like it."

Lumley looked at him with a sneer.

"What don't you like?" he asked. "You've been here before, and haven't made any bones about it. What's the trouble now?"

"You know what Tom Merry said."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 134.

NEXT THURSDAY:

"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Well?"

"The masters have got to know of it, and they've set the prefects on the track," said Mellish uneasily. "They may come nosing round here. Then there's Blake and his lot. Suppose they miss us from the dorm?"

"They're not likely to."

"But if they do——"

"Well, they can't sneak to the masters."

"They might follow us."

Lumley laughed derisively.

"Rubbish! As if they'd leave their beds to bother us. Besides, if they were caught out of bounds, they'd be dropped on as heavy as we should."

"I know; but——"

"Hang it! Come on, and don't be a fool! We can get a quiet game in the Green Man, and a good supper, and go back to the school with our pockets lined."

"More likely with them empty," grumbled Mellish.

"Haven't I won so far?"

"Yes, that's all very well, but they're letting you win, so as to draw you on," said the cad of the Fourth.

"How do you know?"

"Well, I—I know Joliffe's ways——"

"You do—and so do I," said Lumley coolly. "I know, for instance, that Joliffe stood you something to bring me to the Green Man in the first place."

Mellish started violently.

"If Joliffe has said——" he began. The Outsider cut him short.

"Joliffe hasn't said a word to me on the subject," he said. "He's not likely to. But I guess I've got my eye-teeth cut. Do you think I can't see there's a secret between you and Joliffe? He knew a millionaire's son had come to St. Jim's, and you've taken all the credit for getting me to his place."

"I——"

"My dear chap, don't deny it; I don't think any the worse of you for it," said Lumley. "You naturally wanted to make something out of me if you could."

"Well, if you look at it like that——"

"I guess I look at everything as pure business," said Lumley, with a shrug of the shoulders. "You've been paid, to put it plainly, to introduce the pigeon among the hawks, only the pigeon will turn out a hawk and they will be skinned, that's the only change in the programme. This is real fun to me. Now you're getting frightened because the prefects are on the track, and you want to slide out. Rot! Come on, and don't be a coward. We can have a good time, and cover up our tracks, and no one will be the wiser."

"But Tom Merry——"

"Hang Tom Merry! Look here," said Lumley, lowering his voice, and with a dangerous gleam coming into his eyes—"look here, if Tom Merry causes me much trouble, Tom Merry won't stay long at St. Jim's."

Mellish stared at him blankly.

"I—I don't understand," he said. "What do you mean? How could you make a fellow in the Shell leave the school?"

"There are ways and means," said Lumley coolly—"ways that are dark, you know. If Tom Merry makes an enemy of me, I'll ruin him, and drive him from the school. I'm not a braggart; you know I can always do what I say."

Mellish shivered a little.

"I believe you could, if you tried," he said, in a low and unsteady voice.

Lumley laughed lightly.

"Well, then, stop thinking of Tom Merry and his rot, and come on with me," he said. "You can take my word for it that I'm going to be the winning horse!"

Mellish hesitated still, but the Outsider caught him by the arm and hurried him on. They did not enter the place at the front, where a glare of light and the sound of a loud chorus showed that some of the denizens of the Green Man were "keeping it up." Lumley drew his companion into a dark path beside the inn, leading into the garden. Here a wooden verandah gave access to a room that was lighted, and in which, through the curtains at the window, several men could be seen seated at a table.

Lumley and Mellish trod lightly up the steps of the verandah.

The window formed the upper part of a door, glass above and wood below. Lumley tapped on the glass.

There were three men at the table, and they all looked round.

One was a powerfully-built fellow with a black beard. This was Joliffe, the landlord of the Green Man. Another was a short, dark man with a red face and short breath. He was Banks, the bookmaker. The third was a youth in a check suit and a high collar, and a straggling moustache, and big shirt studs of rolled gold—one of the "bucks" of Rylcombe, and in other moments a shopman in the establishment of Mr. Yards, the draper of Rylcombe. But Mr.

Poots, first in the silks in business hours, was a great dandy in leisure moments, and accustomed to "keeping it up with the boys" in the most fashionable manner.

There were cards and glasses on the table, and several little piles of money, and a haze of tobacco smoke in the air.

Joliffe rose and opened the door.

He grinned a welcome to the two boys.

"Come in, young gentlemen!" he said. "Welcome!"

"Evenin'!" said Mr. Banks, without rising.

"Good-evenin'!" said Mr. Poots, who, as a buck, was bound to drop his final g's. "How do do."

Lumley-Lumley nodded to the party.

"Sorry I couldn't come earlier," he said. "I was prevented."

Mr. Joliffe winked.

"The master's eye—eh?" he remarked.

"Oh, no; some interfering cads, whom I will make sit up for it, too," said Lumley. "But never mind that; we're here now."

"Good!"

"Have a taste of something to warm you, Lumley," said Mr. Banks, indicating a glass and a bottle on the table.

The Outsider shook his head.

"No, thanks!"

"But you always do," objected the bookmaker.

"Not this evening."

"Why not?"

"I'm going to keep my head clear to play," said Lumley pleasantly. "I'm going to skin you all, you know, right down to your socks."

There was a shout of laughter.

"He, he, he!"

"Funny young gent, ain't he?" said Mr. Joliffe. "Though I shouldn't wonder if he spoke the plain truth, gentlemen, for he has won all along the line so far."

"I guess so," said Lumley.

"Luck may change," said Mr. Poots, with a shake of the head.

"It may," agreed Mr. Joliffe. "Well, if you won't have anything to drink, Master Lumley, sit down and take a hand."

"I guess I will."

Mellish did not go to the table. After what Lumley had told him, he was curious to watch the game, but he did not feel inclined to risk his small possessions in it. Lumley-Lumley was the most peculiar pigeon that had ever been plucked in the Green Man's little parlour, and the process was certain to be interesting.

"Aren't you going to play, Mellish?" asked Mr. Banks. The junior shook his head.

"No; I'll watch."

"Oh, play!" said Lumley.

"I haven't the tin," said Mellish. "I'm no good in a game with you chaps. You don't want to play for coppers!"

"Ha, ha!" said Mr. Banks. "That's true."

"Quite true, by Jove!" said Mr. Poots, rattling a few shillings and a bunch of keys in his trousers-pocket.

"Stuff!" said Lumley. "I'll stand you some tin to play with."

"But—"

"You needn't pay if you don't win."

"Oh, all right!"

Lumley carelessly tossed three sovereigns on the table for Mellish. Mr. Banks and Mr. Joliffe involuntarily looked at one another. A fellow who could throw money about like that ought to be a gold mine to them. Mr. Poots opened his pale-blue eyes wide. Mr. Poots was a "pigeon," as Lumley was supposed to be, but he had not yet found it out. He had been plucked pretty bare by the hawks of the Green Man, and every week he left a considerable portion of his salary in the hands of Mr. Joliffe. But he had the consolation of knowing that he was "seeing life," as he called it, when he reeled home to bed with liquor in his foolish head, and next to nothing in his pockets.

Mr. Poots was quite ignorant of the fact that he was cheated as regularly as clockwork, and that Lumley-Lumley was brought into the card-party for the express purpose of being cheated, too. But a natural feeling of greed seized upon him at the sight of Lumley's money. He felt that he could do with some of that, as the song says.

"I see you've come well heeled, Mr. Lumley," Mr. Joliffe remarked, in a tone he tried to render casual and pleasant.

Lumley nodded.

"Yes; I shall want some cash. Can you change some notes for me?"

"Certainly!"

Lumley laid four five-pound notes on the table. Mr. Joliffe exchanged another quick glance with Mr. Banks. That glance said, as plainly as possible, that this would be

ten pounds each for them—very good pay for an hour's play in an evening.

"I'll get 'em changed," said Mr. Joliffe.

He left the room, and came back from the bar with a handful of gold and silver. Lumley-Lumley counted it coolly, and left it in a pile on the table before him. Young as he was, he was curiously old in experience. He knew how the sight of that little pile of gold would lead the hawks on, and make them keen to play, even if luck were going against them.

"What's the game?" asked Mr. Poots.

"Poker," said Lumley.

Mr. Joliffe exchanged a glance of satisfaction with his confederate. Poker was the game he would have chosen himself. Lumley-Lumley had played poker at the Green Man before, in a way that gave the hawks the impression that he was a mere bungler at the game.

Never for a moment did it cross the mind of Mr. Joliffe, or that of Mr. Banks, that the cute youth from New York was "playing them," as he would have expressed it, and cheerfully leading them on to their downfall.

Mr. Joliffe shuffled the cards, with one eye on Lumley's pile of money.

CHAPTER 13.

Drawn Poker.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY cut, and Mr. Joliffe dealt. The Outsider glanced at his hand, and changed three cards. Whether his hand had been improved or not by the draw, his face did not show. It was quite expressionless.

The game went round, shillings being added to the pool, and then half-crowns, and finally half-sovereigns. No limit had been fixed, and the game of poker, unlimited, is about one of the wildest gambles known. Lumley was the first to drop a whole sovereign into the pool, and then Mr. Poots drew out. The unfortunate "first in the silks" at Mr. Yards's shop could not have raised a whole sovereign to save his life. He had put in his last half-sovereign, and had done that with the consciousness that there would be a painful explanation with his landlady during the remainder of the week. Mr. Poots, with a disgusted expression, threw down his cards, but he rattled the bunch of keys in his trousers-pocket to show that it was not for lack of funds that he did so.

Mellish was the next to pass.

The three sovereigns Lumley-Lumley had given him were in the pool, and he did not choose to put in his own money; and, as a matter of fact, he had no gold.

The game remained between Lumley-Lumley and the two swindlers.

Mr. Joliffe gave Mr. Banks a peculiar glance, and that gentleman promptly "passed." As the gains were to be divided afterwards between the two rogues, it did not matter to them which was allowed to win the pool.

Lumley-Lumley cheerfully increased the amount to two pounds.

Mr. Joliffe covered it, and called for a show of cards.

Lumley showed a small pair.

Mr. Joliffe had three of a kind, and, of course, took the pool.

He grinned cheerfully.

"I thought you were bluffing," he remarked.

"Did you?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes, I thought so."

"A bold bluff," said Mr. Banks. "A big bluff. That young gentleman has got nerve enough for a whole regiment."

"He has," assented Mr. Joliffe.

Lumley shrugged his shoulders. His pile of money had been considerably diminished. He drew several banknotes from a leather purse, and laid them on the table beside the coin.

The swindlers' eyes almost started from their heads at the sight. They had known that Jerrold was the son of a millionaire, but they had never dreamed that he was so lavishly supplied with money.

Mellish twitched his sleeve.

"Are you going on?" he whispered.

"I guess so."

"Then play for smaller stakes," whispered Mellish.

"You'll be ruined in half an hour at this rate."

"Rats!"

"But—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

Mellish was silent.

"Your money all gone?" said Lumley-Lumley, glancing at him. "Take some of mine."

"Oh, all right!"

"I wish we was all millionaires," said Mr. Banks, with a laugh.

"Yes, it has its advantages," said Lumley. "I need a big capital to skin fellows like you, for instance, and that's where it comes in."

Mr. Joliffe and Mr. Banks laughed uproariously, as if Lumley-Lumley had said a very good thing. The cards were collected, and given to Lumley to deal.

The Outsider of St. Jim's shuffled them carelessly. Mellish watched him.

He had seen Lumley-Lumley perform tricks with cards that had made his eyes grow round with wonder.

He knew that Lumley was a past-master of the art of shuffling the cards to suit himself, and of replacing the pack after the cut exactly as it had been before it was cut. These were some of the things he had picked up among the gamins of the Bowery in New York in his earlier days.

That Lumley-Lumley meant to "play it low down" on the sharpers of the Green Man, Mellish was certain; and it occurred to him now, too, that that absurd bluff on Lumley's part had been purposely designed for the purpose of leading the rascals on.

He had given them the impression that he was utterly reckless, and would back up poor cards with big sums; and that impression was to be their undoing.

Mellish watched with all his eyes, so to speak; but for the life of him he could detect nothing suspicious in the way Lumley shuffled the cards.

Lumley gave them to Mr. Banks to cut, and then brought the two halves together with a snap. Mellish knew, but he could not see, that the cards were replaced just as they had been before, but it was done so cunningly that it was impossible to see it.

Lumley dealt the cards.

Mellish watched the faces of the Green Man swindlers. They involuntarily brightened, and Mellish knew that they had good cards.

Lumley-Lumley laid down the pack.

He drew only one card to his hand, and then laid the five cards face downwards on the table, beside his money.

Mr. Banks started the ball rolling with a shilling. Mr. Poots came in with another shilling. Mr. Poots had very few shillings left, but he still clung desperately to the hope of annexing some of the St. Jim's fellows' gold and notes.

Mellish put a shilling in as well, and then came Mr. Joliffe with a shilling, and then came Lumley-Lumley with a half-crown.

Mr. Joliffe smiled slightly.

He never dreamed but that it was a repetition of the previous performance; that Lumley was trying to bluff the players out by putting up big money.

The round went again, and Lumley again raised the stakes, this time to five shillings. It now cost five shillings to stay in at all, and Mr. Poots promptly dropped out. His last shilling was in the pot, and his last hope was gone.

He rose from the table.

"I think I'll be getting along now," he remarked.

Lumley looked at him with a sneering smile.

"Won't you stay for another round or two?" he asked.

"No. Good-night!"

And Mr. Poots went, with a careless nod from Banks and Joliffe. They did not care very much for Mr. Poots at that moment. They had a much more valuable pigeon in hand, who demanded their whole attention.

Lumley raised the stakes again, putting in a half-sovereign. Banks and Joliffe cheerfully followed suit, Mellish passing out.

Lumley's next bet was a sovereign.

At this figure the game went on for some time, sovereign after sovereign clinking into the pool, till a quite considerable sum was collected there.

By this time Mr. Banks and Mr. Joliffe could hardly conceal the greed that flamed in their eyes.

Lumley-Lumley was throwing money into the pool as if it were water, and they were perfectly convinced that his hand was an average one, if not a poor one, and that he was recklessly bluffing. And their own hands were very, very good. Mr. Joliffe had four of a kind—four queens—a hand almost invincible at poker. Mr. Banks had a royal flush—five spades, running from seven to jack.

Mr. Banks's hand would beat Mr. Joliffe's, strong as the latter was. A royal flush is the top hand at poker. And Mr. Banks's hand being "jack up," could only be beaten by another royal flush ending in a higher card—queen, king, or ace. There were, therefore, only three possible hands to beat Mr. Banks, out of all the hands that could be formed in a pack of cards, and he was justified in regarding the pot as his for a certainty.

Lumley-Lumley dropped two sovereigns at once into the pool.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The conspirators exchanged glances.

Their game, of course, was to lead Lumley on to put up all his money, and then to show their cards and rake it all in.

But it was unnecessary for both of them to be putting up money at the same time, and the money they had in common might be necessary, too, to prolong the game, and extract more wealth from Lumley-Lumley.

They had both kept in long enough to keep up appearances, and to avoid looking as if they were in collusion.

Now it was for the one with the weaker hand to drop out, and leave it to the other to skin Lumley-Lumley.

The two rascals had a set of signs for the purpose, and when Mr. Banks blew his nose twice, it conveyed the information to his partner that he had a royal flush, and when he turned the signet-ring round on his fat finger, it also informed Mr. Joliffe that the royal flush was jack high.

Whereupon Mr. Joliffe knew that his four hand was weaker than Mr. Banks's hand, and at the next round he promptly passed.

The game was now between Lumley and the bookmaker.

Mr. Banks's object was to lead Lumley on and on, making him pile up more and more money, before the cards were shown.

Never was a scheme more easily carried out.

Lumley fell into the trap with his eyes open.

Not only did he meet every bet of Mr. Banks's, but he went better every time, and the game soon cost the large sum of five pounds to "come in."

Then Mr. Banks exchanged a look with Joliffe.

Joliffe's glance said "keep on."

Lumley's money on the table was exhausted now, with the exception of a single five-pound note. He dropped that into the pool, and looked at Mr. Banks. The latter expected him to call for a show of cards, but he did not.

Mr. Banks opened a leather case, took out a five-pound note, and added it to the pool.

Lumley in his turn opened a pocket-book, and selected several crisp and rustling banknotes.

The two confederates watched him, as if fascinated, while he dropped four ten-pound notes in calm succession into the pool.

"Forty pounds!" he said, without a tremor in his voice.

CHAPTER 14.

The Cloven Foot

THERE was a dead silence.

That Lumley was in possession of such a great sum of money had never occurred to the conspirators. But having it in his possession, there was nothing to prevent him from cramming it all into the pool.

No limit had been fixed. The confederates had left the game unlimited, for their own purpose—and Lumley had acquiesced—for his.

And now—

Mr. Banks had either to equal Lumley's stake, or "pass," that is to say, throw up his cards and leave the pool to Lumley without a show of hands.

Banks and Joliffe looked at one another grimly.

They had not expected this.

To let the pool, containing now the greater part of their immediate capital, pass to Lumley without a struggle, was impossible.

But to cover a bet of forty pounds, and then call for a show of cards—Suppose, after all, that Lumley had a stronger hand than Mr. Banks?

Suppose he was not bluffing this time, but staking money upon a strong hand—cards stronger than the bookmaker's, and fully justifying his play?

It was possible.

Mr. Joliffe's face assumed a very ugly expression at the thought. Mr. Banks was staring at him with wide-open eyes, as if waiting for instructions.

Lumley-Lumley yawned.

"Well?" he said at last. "Are you passing?"

"No," said Mr. Banks hastily.

"Then put up your money."

Mr. Banks hesitated.

"It's a big sum," he said at last.

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess so; but that's your bizney. There's no limit to this game."

"No. But—"

"Put up or pass, old man."

"Yes, yes, certainly."

"There's no objection, of course, to my lending my friend Banks a little money?" said Mr. Joliffe. "He didn't come prepared for stakes of this size."

"Just as you like," said Lumley-Lumley, with a nod. "If

the bet isn't covered, I take the pool. If it is, I go on as long as you like."

Joliffe drummed on the table with his fingers.

"I suppose an I O U will be all right?" he remarked.

Lumley shook his head at once.

"No paper," he said. "We're playing for cash. That's understood, I guess. I offered you paper the night before last and you declined."

Mr. Joliffe was fairly caught.

"Wait a minute," he said.

He rose and passed into the bar. He came back with a little bag in his hand, and counted out forty pounds to Mr. Banks in gold and notes. The bookmaker, with a slightly trembling hand, put the money in the pool.

"Show up!" he said briefly.

Lumley-Lumley was in no hurry to turn up his cards. It was Mr. Banks's business to do so first.

The bookmaker showed his cards—a straight flush, jack high. It was a splendid hand, and one any poker player would have staked high upon.

Lumley grinned.

"You can't beat that?" exclaimed Mr. Banks anxiously.

"I guess I can."

"What!" gasped Joliffe.

"What have you got?" asked Mr. Banks, in a choking voice. "Not a royal flush?"

"Yes."

"Jack high?"

"Queen high," said Lumley-Lumley coolly.

"It's a lie!" gasped the bookmaker, forgetting himself for the moment.

Jerrold Lumley laughed, and turned up his cards. Five clubs were disclosed, ranging from eight to the queen in order.

It was a royal flush, and ended one card higher than Mr. Banks's. Lumley stretched out his hand to the pool.

"I guess I take that," he remarked.

Mr. Joliffe and his confederate rose to their feet instinctively. To let the junior take so much money away from them was not to be thought of. So long as they won, they could afford to be pleasant; but in the moment of loss, their real nature showed itself.

"You're not going yet?" said Mr. Joliffe, in a husky voice.

Lumley was glancing at his watch.

"Time I got back to St. Jim's," he remarked.

"You'll give us our revenge first?"

"Oh, I'll go on, if you like!" said Lumley cheerfully. "I told you I was going to skin you, you know."

Joliffe gritted his teeth. It was beginning to dawn upon him now, that Jerrold Lumley was not the inexperienced pigeon he had hoped to pluck. He was a fellow who knew the game of poker to the life, and had nerve enough to face any crowd at the game. Never had the rascally landlord of the Green Man been so hopelessly done, even by a professional sharper, as he had been by this mere schoolboy.

And the thing was growing clearer in his mind now. He and Banks had had such excellent cards—how was that? Was it possible that this boy had "stocked" the cards, and deliberately given them those good hands to lead them on, reserving for himself a hand just able to beat the best of them?

The cards, certainly, were marked, but marked in a way Joliffe had believed to be a secret between himself and Mr. Banks.

It seemed incredible that this boy had discerned the marks, learned them up, and turned his knowledge against the two swindlers in this way.

It was incredible. But—

The moving light in Jerrold's eyes revealed only too plainly that, incredible or not, it was true.

And it was borne in upon Mr. Joliffe's mind that in this extremely peculiar youth he had met his master at the game, and at every art of blackguardism into the bargain.

At the thought, his brow grew black with anger.

What was the use of being given his "revenge," if the markings on the cards were as familiar to Lumley as to himself, and now that the greater part of his capital was in the hands of his cunning and unscrupulous antagonist.

In his mind's eye, Mr. Joliffe saw the rest of his money added to the heap Lumley was cramming into his pockets.

His eye met Mr. Banks, and the landlord of the Green Man read the same thought there. The bookmaker had also "tumbled." He was too old a sharper not to realise when he had been taken in.

The two men rose to their feet.

Lumley-Lumley had "skinned" them, to use his own expression, but he had not yet got away with the plunder; and they were two men, opposed to two boys, in a place far from help.

"You young thief!" said Mr. Joliffe. "You've cheated!"

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"Cheated! You're dreaming. How could I cheat, unless the cards were marked? You weren't playing with marked cards, were you?"

Mr. Joliffe gritted his teeth. He couldn't very well answer that he certainly was; and he did not care to argue the point.

"You'll hand back that money?" he said.

The Outsider laughed again. Mellish, scared by the aspect things were assuming, shrank away towards the window. But Lumley-Lumley showed no sign of fear. The Outsider, rank outsider as he was, had a nerve that had never been known to shake.

"You'll hand back that money!" repeated Mr. Joliffe.

"Not likely."

"Will you?"

"I guess not."

"Then we'll take it!"

Lumley made a quick movement to the grate, and caught up a heavy iron poker. Then he sprang to the window.

"Get out, Mellish!" he said quickly. "You first!"

Mr. Joliffe sprang forward. Lumley made a savage swipe at him with the heavy poker, and the landlord of the Green Man sprang back only in time. He would have fallen stunned if he had caught the blow. Lumley evidently meant business.

Mellish was fumbling with the latch of the door. Lumley looked at the two swindlers with perfect coolness, his eyes scintillating. They were hesitating to rush on him. His hardihood amazed and dismayed them.

"Keep your distance," said Lumley. "I've played you at your own game, and skinned you, as I meant to do all along. No need to quarrel. We'll have a little game after this, if you play without marking the cards, on fair terms. It's silly to lose your temper. Get that door open, Mellish, you fool!"

But Mellish's hand had dropped from the latch as he caught a glimpse of a form outside the glass.

"There's somebody outside!" he faltered.

Then even Lumley started.

CHAPTER 15.

Towser Causes Trouble.

G-R-R-R-R!

"Keep that beast quiet, Herries."

"Eh?"

"Keep that beast of yours quiet."

"Don't be an ass! He's on the track."

"Track of what?"

"Lumley, of course, you ass! He always growls like that when he's picking up a trail," said Herries.

"Bai Jove! My experience is, that he always growls like that when he has designs on a fellow's twousahs."

G-r-r-r!

"He's on the track," said Herries, tugging at the chain as Towser dragged on it. "We're nearly up with the rotters, I should say."

Tom Merry chuckled softly. Towser was on the track of something, no doubt, but he had strong doubts about that something being the Outsider of St. Jim's.

"Keep him quiet, Herries," said Blake. "He's not on the track, you know."

Herries snorted.

"Oh, shut up, and see!"

Towser dragged his master on, and the juniors followed. The lane was very dark, the thick, overhanging branches above shutting out most of the starlight.

"How the dooce is he to get on Lumley's twack?" Arthur Augustus objected. "He doesn't know the scent of Lumley from the scent of any othah beast."

"I showed him Lumley's coat."

"Oh!"

"He niffed it," said Herries, with satisfaction. "I could see by the way he did it that he meant business. Since then he's come straight here—"

"Well, he had to come along the lane."

"If you're going to carp at everything, Digby—"

"I'm not," grinned Digby. "It's all right. Give Towser his head, and let's see where he'll lead us."

"Yaas, wathah! It won't waste vewy much time, I dare say."

Herries snorted, but vouchsafed no further reply in words. His faith in his bulldog was touching. Herries invested him with all the tracking powers of a bloodhound, and nothing would shake his faith in Towser.

And Towser certainly did seem on the track of something now. He was growling and snorting, and straining at the chain.

"I wonder what he's after?" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Rabbits, perhaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, come on!" growled Herries.

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THURSDAY:

"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

They followed the straining Towser. Suddenly the bulldog made a fierce jump at a dark form in the belt of grass beside the lane, and there was a wild yell.

"Ow!"
"Got him!" roared Herries.
"Bai Jove!"
"Collar him! Towser's got him!"
"Crumps!" gasped a voice. "Drag that dog orf! You fear me?"

"What!"
"Drag'imoff!" yelled the voice.
"Bai Jove! This chap is speakin' in Wussian!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Herries dragged at the chain. He saw now that there had been some mistake. Manners lent a hand with the chain, and Towser was dragged from his victim.

A dim form uprose from the grass.
"Which I wants to know what's the row?" demanded an injured voice. "A-settin' of a dorg on a gent who's takin' his nap in his hotel!"

"Ain't you Lumley?" demanded the astonished Herries.
"Wot?"

"Who are you?"
"William Henry Walker is my name," said the dim stranger, "and I've been bit something cruel!"

"It's a tramp!" said Tom Merry.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Hold that beast in, Herries!"

Herries sniffed.
"Well, Towser never did like tramps," he said. "Towser always goes for a tramp. It's very annoying. This may have thrown him off the scent."

"Wot about me?" roared Mr. Walker. "I've been bit!"
"You ought to be in bed at this time of night," said Herries crossly. "Serve you right for being out!"

"Which I was in bed," said Mr. Walker. "This 'ere grass is my bed. I'm looking for work."

"Rats!"
"Weally, Hewwies, if the poor chap is lookin' for work, and can't afford to pay for a bed, it is imposs. for him to be at home, though I certainly disappwove of his bein' but so late," said Arthur Augustus.

"Looking for rats!" growled Herries.
"Weally, deah boy—"

"Which I'm a 'ard-working man," said Mr. Walker, peering through the dimness at D'Arcy, and his tone showed that he sniffed money, as it were. He also exhaled a strong odour of gin. "If you gents could stand me a little to pay for a bed—"

"Certainly, Mr. Walkah!"
"Cheese it, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to cheese it! How much would you pay for a bed, Mr. Walkah?" asked the swell of St. Jim's, diving his hand into his pocket.

Mr. Walker gasped. He had never been asked a question like that before when he begged for the price of a bed—which was his euphonious way of saying the price of several drinks.

"Which way are you goin'?" asked D'Arcy. "If you're goin' to Wayland, I should recommend the Wayland Hotel. You can get a decent bed and bweakfast there for five bob!"

"Thank you kindly, sir!"
Tom Merry struck a vesta, and looked at their new acquaintance. He saw a coppersy face, fringed with ragged beard, a battered hat, and a dirty muffler. Mr. Walker was not a beauty. He blinked and grinned at the juniors.

D'Arcy counted out five shillings by the light of the match.

"Take it, deah boy!" he said. "I twust you will have luck in lookin' for work."

Mr. Walker grinned as the match went out. The mention of work gave him a cold feeling all over, but he thanked D'Arcy.

"Thank you kindly, sir! I've been bit!"
"You don't seem to have been much hurt, though," said Tom Merry. "Five bob is quite enough in the way of compensation."

"Come on!" said Herries.
"Weally, Hewwies, as your wotten dog bit Mr. Walkah, I think you ought to stand him somethin'!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Rats! I only hope Towser's not poisoned, or anything of that sort!" said Herries. "Come on!"

The juniors went on their way. Mr. Walker grinned after them. As a matter of fact, only his rags, and not himself, had suffered from Towser's teeth. Arthur Augustus turned back for a moment.

"Don't forget: the Wayland Hotel!" he said.
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"Thank you, sir!"
Mr. Walker cut off towards the nearest public-house in the district. Tom Merry chuckled as they went on.
"Do you think they'll admit a chap like that to the Railway Hotel?" he asked.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"
"And do you think he'd go, if they would?" grinned Kangaroo. "Of course, he'll blue that five bob in drink!"

"I twust not."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Pewwaps I had bettah go back and wequest him—"

"You come on!" said Blake, linking his arm in D'Arcy's.
"Weally, Blake—"

"There's the Green Man!"
Herries uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.
"Lumley's there!" he exclaimed.

"How do you know?"
"Towser's led us straight to the place."
"You mean you've led Towser!"

"Look here, Monty Lowther—"

"Well, we'll look in the Green Man, anyway," said Tom Merry, laughing. "No good going in the public bar, even Lumley wouldn't be there. Let's get round to the back and scout."

"I'll stay here, then," said Herries. "Towser would want to go for Joliffe's dog, and that would make a row."
"Good!"

And Herries remained under the shadow of the trees with Towser, while Tom Merry & Co. quietly opened the gate, and went down the path by the side of the inn.

CHAPTER 16.

The Prefect on the Track.

KNOX, the prefect, came quietly along the passage in the School House upon which the junior dormitories opened. There was a cunning expression upon the face of the senior, and his light eyes were glinting in the dark. He paused at the door of the Fourth Form dormitory and listened.

There was no sound within.
Knox opened the door quietly.
The dormitory was dark and silent.

For some moments the prefect remained hesitating. Then he switched on the electric light, and the dormitory was flooded.

Several juniors started and awoke.
Knox cast a quick, anxious glance up and down the row of beds. He looked relieved as he saw that several of them were empty.

His suspicions had not been unfounded. More than once he had suspected the juniors, and had been proved in the wrong. But Knox was of a suspicious, fault-finding nature, and each time his suspicions proved to be unfounded, only made him more keen to show that there was something in them, after all, by catching the juniors in fault.

He was evidently right this time. Six beds in the Fourth Form dormitory were vacant, and it was nearly eleven o'clock.

The juniors who had awakened blinked sleepily at the prefect as he advanced into the room.

"Blake, Herries, D'Arcy, Digby, Lumley, Mellish!" muttered Knox, running his eye over the beds, and counting up those who were missing. "Reilly!"

"Faith, and I'm asleep!"
"Reilly! Where are Blake and the others gone?"

"Eh?"
"You should know Blake isn't here."

Reilly blinked at the empty bed.
"Sure, he doesn't seem to be!" he remarked.

"Where is he?"
"I can't see him, entirely!"

"Has he left the House?"
"How should I know?"

Knox gritted his teeth. He could see that he would be able to extract no information from the Irish junior. Reilly was not likely to sneak about Blake.

"Hancock, do you know where they are?" he exclaimed.
"Eh?"

"Where is Blake?"
"Not in bed," said Hancock, looking at the empty bed.

"I know that!" roared Knox. "Do you know where he is?"

"Out of bed, I should say!"
"Very well; I shall soon discover, and they will smart for this!" said Knox.

And he turned the light out and quitted the dormitory. He left the Fourth-Formers in a buzz of excitement. That there was trouble in store for Blake they well knew, and they were sorry. Jack Blake's determination to keep the

Outsider of St. Jim's to the straight path was likely to cost him dear.

Knox hesitated in the passage.

He was a prefect, and it was his duty to look into such matters as this. But it is to be feared that it was not a sense of duty that was actuating the senior now. He was very much of a bully, and Blake & Co. had never knuckled under to his bullying, and that had bred a bitter dislike for them in the prefect's breast.

Knox was glad to find Blake in fault; to Lumley and Mellish he gave hardly a thought. But at the idea that Blake had broken bounds at night, he felt an angry satisfaction.

But he must be sure.

It was possible that only some boyish jape had taken the juniors out of their beds, and they might be in the passages or the other dormitories.

It was even possible that they were hiding somewhere to delude the prefect into accusing them of breaking bounds, in order to cover him with confusion by proving the contrary.

Knox felt that he must be very careful. He had been made to look a fool before the masters before by bringing too hasty an accusation against Blake.

He reflected a few moments, and then made his way to the Shell dormitory. He entered, and turned on the light.

There were four beds empty there, and he at once noted that they belonged to Tom Merry, Maaners, Lowther, and Harry Noble. That the Terrible Three and Kangaroo were with Blake and the rest, he was certain. But where?

"Glyn!" he exclaimed, meeting the startled eyes of the Liverpool lad. "Tom Merry is not in bed!"

"Isn't he?" said Glyn.

"No. Do you know where he is?"

"Better ask him!"

"Do you know where he is, Dane?"

"Find out!"

Knox gritted his teeth.

"You're asking us to sneak!" said Dane angrily. "You won't get a word out of me! Yes; you can lick me if you like; but you won't!"

"Skimpole, do you know where Tom Merry is?"

Skimpole sat up and groped for his glasses and put them on, and blinked through them at the angry prefect.

"Did you speak to me Knox?" he asked.

"Yes. Where is Tom Merry?"

"Tom Merry?"

"Yes!" roared Knox.

"In bed, I presume," said Skimpole. "It is long past bedtime, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox scowled fiercely at the laughing Shell fellows. Skimpole blinked in surprise.

"Tom Merry is gone out," said Knox.

"Bless me! Is he? Oh, yes, now I remember—"

"Shut up!" said Gore.

"Really, Gore—"

"Hold your tongue, ass!"

"Hold your own, Gore!" exclaimed Knox angrily. "Go on, Skimpole. Look here, I have found a window unfastened downstairs. I looked into the Fourth-Form dormitory, and found Blake and several others gone. Tom Merry and some of the Shell seem to have gone, too. I want to know where they are?"

"Very natural," said Skimpole.

"Well, do you know?"

"I do not know for a fact, but I think I can form a pretty clear idea," said the genius of the Shell thoughtfully.

"Shut up, Skimmy!" shouted a dozen voices.

Skimpole blinked round.

"It is all right," he said. "I'm not going to tell Knox anything."

"Where is Tom Merry?" shouted Knox.

"Under the circumstances, I beg leave to decline answering that question," said Skimpole, blinking at him.

Knox clenched his hands. But he had not come there for a row with the Shell; and he did not want to prejudice his case when it came before the masters, by being guilty of violence now. He left the dormitory.

He descended the stairs, and stopped at the window he had found open. After a little thought, he climbed through it, and dropped to the ground outside.

Knox had been told, along with the other prefects, of the suspicion that St. Jim's boys haunted the Green Man, and the thought that Tom Merry & Co. were the guilty parties filled him with fierce satisfaction.

To go down to the Green Man now, and find Tom Merry there—and Blake—and the rest—that was his idea!

What a triumph for him, when he marched them all in to the Head, and stated what he had discovered. Knox was feeling quite elated as he went down the dark lane, his mind full of visions of the triumph to come.

CHAPTER 17.

Lumley Does Not Resist.

TOM MERRY & CO., quite unconscious of the fact that a prefect from St. Jim's was on their track, stepped quietly along the dark path beside the Green Man. Before them stretched the long garden of the inn, extending down to the bank of the Ryll. On the left was the house; and from the back of the house, light streamed from a half-glass door upon a wooden verandah, and upon the shadowy garden.

Tom Merry stopped, and looked up past the verandah at the window.

There was a thickness of curtain within, which obstructed but did not prevent a view of the interior, and Tom Merry discerned several moving forms within.

The outline of one of them, nearest the window, he knew well.

"It's Lumley!" he muttered.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Lumley, right enough!" said Blake. "I suppose it's settled what we're going to do—take him away whether he'll come or not!"

Tom Merry's face set grimly.

"That's the programme," he said. "We'll tell him to come—and if he won't, we'll take him. Come on."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry led the way up the steps of the verandah. He paused outside the glass door of the room.

He caught a glimpse now of what was going on within, and it surprised him.

"By George!" he muttered. "It's a row there."

"Bai Jove!"

"Lumley's got a poker!"

"Phew!"

"Looks as if he's been winning, and they don't want him to get away with the tin," Monty Lowther remarked.

"Then it's lucky for him we came!"

Tom Merry tried the door.

Mellish had just retreated from it, on seeing the shadowy form outside, under the belief that it was some member of the Green Man gang. Lumley thought the same thing, and as the door was opened from outside, he retreated into a corner, still with the heavy poker firm in his grasp. Mellish skulked behind him. The cad of the Fourth Form was scared almost out of his wits.

"More of you, eh?" said Lumley. "Well, come on, if you want to be brained! You'll find me a tough customer, I guess."

Joliffe did not reply, and Mr. Banks was voiceless. They stared blankly at the individual who entered the room from the verandah.

They knew Tom Merry by sight.

Lumley uttered a startled exclamation.

"Tom Merry!"

The hero of the Shell gave him a scornful look.

"Yes, Tom Merry," he exclaimed. "We found you were gone, you see."

Lumley laughed.

"And you followed me?"

"Yes."

"Yaas, wathah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, following Tom Merry in, and fixing his eyeglass disdainfully upon the Outsider. "We have twacked you down, you wottah, to bring you back!"

Lumley laughed again. The situation seemed to amuse him very highly.

Joliffe ground his teeth.

"You've no right in here, Master Merry," he said. "I'll trouble you to get out—and quick!"

Tom Merry looked at him contemptuously.

"I'll go when that chap comes with me, that's all," he said.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lumley. "This is rich! I'm ready to go—and I'm glad of your company! Come on, Mellish, old man—our friends won't trouble us now!"

Tom Merry looked at him in surprise. He did not quite understand either the words or manner of the Outsider.

"You're ready to come?" he said.

"I guess so!"

"You don't intend to resist?"

"Not at all!"

"No tricks, you know."

"Honest Injun," said Lumley, cheerfully. "You've dropped into this little game just at the right moment, as a matter of fact. My dear friends here were going for me, because I've beaten them at their own game!"

Tom Merry's eyes opened wide.

"Beaten them!" he exclaimed.

Lumley-Lumley nodded coolly.

"I guess so!"

"You have won?"

"Yes."

"He's robbed us!" said Joliffe, between his teeth. "You can take him with you if you like, Master Merry; but he doesn't go till he's returned our money!"

Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"You won't get a cent of it!" he said.

"You young swindler—"

"Oh, come off! It's a case of the biter bit, and you can't complain."

"You'll 'and back that money!" said Mr. Banks.

"Not a red cent."

The juniors of St. Jim's were all in the room now. There were enough of them to decide the question if Mr. Joliffe and his friend showed trouble. But they were puzzled and dismayed. The situation took them wholly by surprise.

They had come there to take a foolish lad from the clutch of the hawks. They had expected to find Lumley-Lumley the loser of a large sum, and still losing, but probably determined to go on playing, in the hope of winning back his losses.

What they really found confounded them.

Lumley had been the winner, and the hawks had been plucked, and they were very savage about it, too.

"Bai Jove!" muttered D'Arcy. "I nevah thought of this, you know."

"You'd better come, Lumley," said Tom Merry, shortly.

"I guess I'm ready!"

Mr. Joliffe made a forward stride.

"I tell yer he don't go till he's 'anded back the money!" he exclaimed fiercely. "He's cheated us!"

"Cheated you?"

"Yes."

"In what way?"

"The cards was marked!" said Mr. Joliffe desperately.

Tom Merry turned a stern glance upon the Outsider.

"Is that true, Lumley?" he asked.

Lumley gave another shrug.

"Mr. Joliffe ought to know," he replied. "They were his cards!"

"His cards?"

"I guess so."

"That's neither here nor there," said Mr. Joliffe. "The cards was marked, and that young rip gave us good hands to lead us on, and gave himself a better one—and—"

"And skinned you, just as I said I would," said Lumley, coolly. "I don't hand back a red cent of it, either!"

"Did you cheat them?" asked Blake.

"Wolf eat wolf, my dear boy," explained Lumley, "and they happen to be the wolves who are eaten. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better give them their money back."

"Not a cent!"

"So cheating at cards is another of your accomplishments, Lumley?" Kangaroo remarked. "It seems to me that the Old Bailey is a more suitable place for you than St. Jim's."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry was perplexed. He had come there to force the Outsider away; upon the question in dispute between the Outsider and Joliffe he did not feel competent to decide. It was too difficult for him; but his original determination remained unmoved.

"I don't know which of you is the greater blackguard of the two," he said, in disgust. "But you seem to have got Lumley here to cheat him, Mr. Joliffe, and you only deserve what you've got. I've come to fetch Lumley back, and I'm going to do it. Come, Lumley!"

"Certainly!"

Lumley joined the juniors cheerfully. Mr. Joliffe sprang towards him, and the juniors lined up to receive him.

"Stand back!" said Tom Merry quietly. "You'll get hurt if you don't!"

The landlord of the Green Man realised it. He muttered a curse, and stopped. Mr. Banks had not made a movement. The fat bookmaker was not built for war, and he did not intend to be mixed up in a fight for any consideration.

"I'll have it back, though," said Joliffe, between his teeth. "You 'ear me? I'll have it back, and take it out of that young thief's hide, too!"

"You're welcome to try," said Lumley contemptuously.

"Get out!" said Tom Merry shortly.

The St. Jim's juniors crowded through the door. Mr. Joliffe gave them a savage look, and rushed from the room.

"Look out!" muttered Blake. "He's gone for help."

"Bai Jove!"

"We shall have a fight on our hands before we get away, very likely," muttered Manners.

"I guess so!" said Lumley coolly.

The juniors scrambled quickly down the verandah. They were not afraid of Mr. Joliffe or his friends, but they had no desire to be mixed up in a row at the public-house, especially at that hour.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

They ran down the lane beside the inn and reached the gate, and hurried out into the road, Mellish and Lumley in their midst.

There was a sudden exclamation in the gloom under the trees, and the sound of a dog's fierce growl.

"Ah! I've got you—one of you! Oh!"

It was the voice of Knox, the prefect. The words were followed by a yell of terror. Tom Merry gasped.

"My hat! It's Knox!"

"The prefect!"

"And Towser's got him!"

CHAPTER 18.

A Fight in the Dark.

KNOX, the prefect, had reached the inn, and as he skulked along quietly in the deep shadow of the trees by the lane he had fairly run into Herries, waiting there with Towser. Herries had not heard him coming. Knox was being very cautious and stealthy, desirous of making sure that the juniors were at the inn, by careful scouting, before he showed himself.

He ran into Herries without seeing him, and the next moment Towser was upon him. Knox had recognised the form as that of a boy, and although he did not know Herries in the dark, he had no doubt that it was one of the juniors from St. Jim's.

He grasped Herries by the shoulder, but he reckoned without the bulldog. The growl of Towser warned him—too late! Towser's bite quickly followed his growl.

Knox gave a yell of terror as he caught a glimpse of white teeth, and then felt the same teeth snap upon him.

Towser, fortunately, snapped more trouser than leg, but Knox felt the teeth all the same, and he leaped out into the middle of the lane with Towser clinging to him.

"Oh!" he roared. "Help! Murder!"

The juniors, startled as they were by the sudden appearance of the prefect, could not restrain a shout of laughter at the ridiculous figure he cut.

Knox's wild jump shook Towser off, but the bulldog wasn't finished yet. He made another rush at Knox, and Knox dodged him wildly.

"Call him off!" shrieked the prefect. "Yow! Yah! Call him off! Help!"

"Towser! Towser!"

"Help!"

"Towser! Towsy!"

But Towser declined to listen to the voice of the charmer. He supposed that Knox had attacked his master, and Towser was a faithful dog.

"Towsy! Towsy!"

"Yah! Help!"

Knox dodged the bulldog, and dodged again. Then he fairly bolted. The juniors saw him streaking down the lane in the dim starlight, with the bulldog after him.

They burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy, readjusting his monocle, which had fallen from his eye in that burst of merriment.

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as weally funnay, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a sound of voices and footsteps in the shadowy garden of the inn. Tom Merry cast a quick glance back.

"We'd better cut off after Towser," he remarked. "No good getting mixed up in a row with these blackguards."

"Quite wight, deah boy!"

The juniors hurried down the lane. Tom Merry was somewhat uneasy in his mind about allowing Lumley to retain possession of the money he had won at cards, but that was evidently not a question to be settled now. Afterwards there would be time to call the Outsider to account.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, as they ran on. "Knox must have discovered that we were out of the dorm., you know, and followed us. There will be a fearful wow. He'll know who were out if he's been in the dorm., and, anyway, he's bound to recognise Towsah. It looks to me as if there's goin' to be a wow."

"You're right, Gussy."

"It's Lumley's fault," said Manners. "All the fault of that rotten Outsider!"

Lumley gave a sneering laugh.

"Why couldn't you mind your own business?" he replied.

"I didn't ask you to follow me, did I?"

"Well, there's one comfort—he'll get it in the neck," said Digby. "I shouldn't wonder if he's expelled from St. Jim's."

The Outsider laughed again.

"That won't happen," he said.

"You seem mighty sure about it."

"I am sure about it," said Lumley coolly. "The Head's under an agreement with my pater to keep me at St. Jim's for three years, and he can't expel me."

"My hat!"

"As for anything else, I can stand it. It won't be any worse than you chaps get, anyway, I suppose."

"I should say it would, considering that you went to the Green Man to gamble and we only went to fetch you away."

"How will the Head know?" asked Lumley. "I sha'n't tell him so, and if you chaps start blowing your own trumpets you mayn't be believed. 'Self-praise is no recommendation,' you know, as the old proverb says."

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, don't jaw, you worm!" said Tom Merry roughly. "There's a ditch handy here, and you may get a ducking before we get in if you're not careful."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Jack Blake, suddenly stopping.

There was a loud growling and barking in the gloom behind. The juniors looked round; a lantern flashed, and there were footsteps and voices.

"They're after us!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's no good running; we shall have to have it out," said Tom Merry, setting his teeth. "Well, I don't mind so much here—only I didn't want to get mixed up in a row in a pub. We'll give Joliffe & Co. all they want if they tackle us here."

"What-ho!"

"There they are!" roared a voice.

"Look out for the dog!" muttered Blake. "That's Joliffe's mastiff, and he's a beast. Look out for his teeth."

"Bai Jove! Pewwaps we had bettah wun, deah boys."

"Afraid?" sneered Lumley.

D'Arcy turned on him.

"You uttah wottah!" he exclaimed. "I was thinkin' of my trowsahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind your trousers now, Gussy," said Tom Merry, with a chuckle. "Buck up!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

The juniors stood together in the dark lane. The pursuers were close upon them now, and further running was not of much use.

Dim forms loomed up in the starlight.

Mr. Banks was not there—running was not much in the fat bookmaker's line. But Mr. Joliffe could be recognised, and there were three powerful fellows with him—hangers-on of the Green Man Inn.

"There they are!" repeated Mr. Joliffe.

The running figures came to a stop.

It was only for a moment. Taking breath, they rushed at the juniors, the dog leaping on ahead with fierce barking.

But there came a low, rumbling growl from behind the juniors, and a powerful form leaped from the gloom and fastened on the mastiff.

It was Towser.

Herries had recaptured him at last, and returned with him in the nick of time. Towser fastened on the mastiff with a business-like growl, and the two dogs went rolling over in the lane.

"Good egg!" murmured Tom Merry, glad enough to be relieved of that enemy, more to be feared than Mr. Joliffe or his men.

Growling fiercely, the two dogs rolled over and fought. Meanwhile, the four rascals from the Green Man were upon the juniors.

The juniors hit out fiercely.

Lumley piled in with the rest, showing plenty of pluck, and Mellish was the only one who scuttled off towards the school, leaving the fighting to the others.

Mr. Joliffe and his friends had expected to have everything their own way when they overtook the juniors. They had regarded catching them as the only difficulty, but now they found that the lads were tough customers.

The odds were on Tom Merry's side, and the Green Man roughs, full-grown men as they were, soon discovered that they had taken on too large an order.

Mr. Joliffe went into the dust from an uppercut from Tom Merry, and each of his men had a couple of juniors to tackle, and found them too much for him.

Suddenly the mastiff broke away from Towser and fled. He had had enough of close quarters with the bulldog. Towser was rushing in pursuit, when Herries's voice called to him.

"Towser! Fetch 'em! Good dog!"

Whereupon Towser changed his mind, and instead of following the mastiff he fastened upon the leg of the nearest rough.

The man gave a yell of terror.

Dragging himself away from the bulldog, he fled at top speed down the lane, and his example was immediately followed by the others.

Mr. Joliffe, staggering to his feet, found himself deserted. "Come back!" he roared.

But the roughs did not come back. And Towser made a rush for Mr. Joliffe, and the landlord of the Green Man

dashed off, with Towser in pursuit. And a yell from him in the distance showed that Towser had allowed himself one free bite, at least.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "That was warm!"

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, mopping his nose with a handkerchief. "I have weceived a feahful blow, deah boys! My nose is injahed!"

"Look at my eye!" grunted Blake.

"I cannot see it in the dark, deah boy. My nose——"

"Oh, blow your nose!"

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

"Oh, come on!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Let's get back to the school. We've got to face the music yet!"

And with that comforting reflection the juniors tramped on towards St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 19.

Towser is Let In.

TOM MERRY & CO. halted at the gates of St. Jim's. As their absence from the school was known, Knox certainly having made his report by this time, it was useless to climb in over the wall again. Tom Merry rang a loud peal at the bell for Taggles, and the school-porter came in a few minutes and opened the gate. There was a portentous expression upon the face of Taggles.

"Which these are nice goings hon!" he remarked.

"Yes, ripping, ain't they?" said Blake affably.

"Which I've just let in Master Knox," said Taggles, who was evidently very curious. "He was in a state!"

"Not a united state. I should think, after Towser had been at him," said Monty Lowther, with a grin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"His trousers was tore cruel," said Taggles. "He's gone to the 'Ead. Come in, young gentlemen. You will all be flogged."

"Nice man, Taggles!" remarked Monty Lowther. "I think he's a direct descendant of one of those chaps who came along to chat with Job."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Come in, Herries!" said Tom Merry, as the burly Fourth-Former hung back in the road. "What are you waiting for?"

"Towser," said Herries.

"Isn't he with you?"

"He went after Joliffe."

"I dare say he hasn't finished him yet," said Lowther. "Joliffe's a big mouthful. Leave him out till morning."

Herries snorted.

"Would you leave out a bulldog if you had a particularly valuable one?" he demanded.

"Can't say. Would you?"

"Mine is valuable," roared Herries.

"Oh, I see! Well, you'll either have to leave him out or stay out with him. Taggles wants to go back to bed, don't you, Taggy?"

"I does," grunted Taggles.

"I'm not coming in without Towser," said Herries.

"Towser's not going to be lost. I've entered him for a dog-show, too."

"Well, whistle him up, for goodness' sake!" said Tom Merry. "We can't stay here all night, you know."

"Which I'm waiting here to close this 'ere gate," said Taggles.

"Wait, then," said Herries.

At that laconic reply Taggles gasped, and Herries whistled shrilly for his bulldog.

Towser showed no signs of reappearing. The juniors began to lose patience. Taggles had lost it. He tried to shut the gate, to shut Herries out into the road, but Tom Merry & Co. stood in the way.

"Get hout of the way, please," said Taggles.

"Rats!"

"I want to shut this 'ere gate."

"Herries hasn't come in."

"Do you think I'm going to wait orl night?" roared Taggles. "If you think so, Master Merry, you're mistook."

"Towser! Towser! Towser!" shouted Herries.

"Leave him out, Herries."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"He'll be all right."

"Rubbish!"

"Lemme close this 'ere gate, young gents."

"Wats, deah boy!"

Taggles pushed angrily on the gate; but he could not close it with half a dozen juniors in the way. Herries was still shouting and whistling alternately for Towser; but Towser, like the lover of the lady in the moated grange, came not.

"He cometh not," said Monty Lowther. "Give it up, Herries, old man."

Even Herries began to think that he would have to. He whistled and yelled again, and cast a last look down the road. Then he came in.

"It's rotten!" he said. "Some tramp might steal Towser—that fellow Walker, for instance. He's very valuable."

"Who—Walker?"

"No, idiot, Towser."

"Oh, Towser can take care of himself," said Tom Merry. "You can close the gate, Taggles, and get back to the gin-and-water."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Which I was just goin' to complain to the 'Ead," said Taggles surlily, as he closed the gate. He turned the ponderous key, and Herries took a last look through the bronze bars of the gate.

He uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Towser!"

A form bounded into view in the gloom. Towser rubbed his huge nose on the bars of the gate.

"Bai Jove! Here's the wotten beast!"

"Open the gate again, Taggles," said Herries exultantly. "Here's Towser!"

The porter was tramping off to his lodge, and he did not turn his head. Herries shouted after him.

"Towser's come back, Taggles!"

"Ho!" said Taggles. "Has he?"

"Yes; open the gate."

"That there gate's locked for the night," said Taggles stolidly. "I've 'ad enough trouble. I ain't opening that gate again for a blessed dorg."

"But Towser's there," said Herries.

"Let him stay there."

"You chump! I—"

Taggles opened the door of his lodge. Herries rushed after him and caught him by the shoulder, and whirled him out again. Taggles gasped for breath.

"Yow! Leggo! Whatcher doing of?"

"Open the gate."

"I won't."

"You will," said Tom Merry sharply. "You will, or we'll take the keys from you and open it ourselves."

"Which I'll report yer to the 'Ead if you do."

"Then open it."

"I ain't opening that gate agin to-night," said Taggles obstinately.

"Duck him in the fountain," suggested Lumley-Lumley.

"I'll lend you a hand. It will do him good; wash off some of the scent of gin, perhaps."

"You young rips—"

"You're going to open that gate," said Tom Merry.

"Now, then, hand over the keys."

"Which I won't."

The juniors laid hands on the porter. Taggles struggled, and was downed in a moment. Then they carried him back towards the gate by his feet and shoulders. They were greatly inclined to give the surly fellow the frog's-march, but that they refrained from. Taggles struggled and roared.

"Now, then!" said Tom Merry sharply.

"Elp!"

"Will you open the gate?"

"Elp!"

"What does this mean?" exclaimed a stern voice, and Mr. Railton, the House-master of the School House, came into view. "Merry! Blake!"

The juniors dropped the porter as if he had become suddenly red-hot. Taggles had wanted to be released, but not quite so abruptly. He dropped on the ground with a most uncomfortable bump.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Yah!"

"What does this mean, Merry?"

Tom Merry turned a crimson face towards his House-master.

"If you please, sir—" he began haltingly.

"If you expect me to be pleased at this conduct, I cannot understand you," said Mr. Railton coldly. "Knox has reported you as absent, and I find you returning at nearly midnight and assaulting the porter. This is serious conduct, Merry."

"Yes, sir, but—"

"I've been assaulted suthin' cruel," said Taggles, getting up with a groan.

"Well, he wouldn't open the gate for Towser," said Herries sulkily. "I don't want to leave Towser out all night, sir."

Mr. Railton glanced at the nose of the bulldog rubbing against the bars of the gate. Then he understood, and smiled slightly.

"We were twyin' to persuade Taggles to open the gate for Towsah, sir," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy explained.

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NEXT THURSDAY:

"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Oh! Open the gate, Taggles."

Taggles almost jumped.

"I've hopened it once, sir—"

"Well, open it again."

"But, Mr. Railton, sir—"

"Do as I tell you," said Mr. Railton crisply.

And Taggles, very much crestfallen, reopened the gate, and Towser bounded in. There was a piece of loud cheek cloth still in Towser's teeth, and he laid it at the feet of Herries.

Herries patted his head proudly.

"Good old Towser!" he murmured.

Mr. Railton's face wore a very curious expression.

"You boys are to come in to the Head at once," he said.

"Take Towser to the kennels first, Herries. Mellish is already with the Head. Come in as quickly as possible; this very strange affair must be cleared up at once."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Railton strode away. Herries led his favourite away towards the kennels, and Tom Merry & Co. waited for him to return. Then the whole party went indoors, and made their way to the Head's study, with solemn and serious faces. If there was one face among the crowd that was cool and careless, it was Lumley-Lumley's.

CHAPTER 20.

A Clean Breast of It.

DR. HOLMES was waiting for the juniors to come in. Mellish was in the study, sitting on the extreme edge of a chair, and looking very anxious and uneasy. He had been in some time, but the Head had asked him nothing, leaving the investigation till the rest of the party should return. Knox was in the study, too, and doing his best to keep an expression of ill-natured satisfaction off his face. Mr. Railton had just come in, to report the arrival of the juniors, and he was conversing with the Head in low tones.

There was a tap at the door, and Tom Merry & Co. entered.

The juniors had obeyed Mr. Railton in coming to the study as quickly as possible, and they had had no time to make any improvement in their appearance. Rough and tumble scrambling and fighting in the lane had not made them look very respectable. D'Arcy's swollen nose and Blake's darkened eye caught the attention at once. Their clothes were dusty and in disorder, and some of them had lost their caps. They looked, upon the whole, a remarkable set of hooligans for St. Jim's.

The Head's brow grew sterner as he eyed them.

Only Jerrold Lumley-Lumley met his glance coolly. The rest, conscious of the poor appearance they presented, hung their heads, and kept their eyes on the floor.

"Well," said Dr. Holmes, breaking the silence, "you have returned?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry.

"Where have you been?"

"Out of bounds, sir."

Dr. Holmes almost smiled.

"I am aware of that," he said. "Knox has made his report to me, as was his duty as a prefect. Kindly repeat what you told me, Knox."

Knox's eyes rested for a second upon Tom Merry, with a gleam of triumph in them. But his manner was subdued, quiet.

"I was making my rounds, and I found a window unfastened, sir," he said. "Knowing that these juniors are frequently in mischief when others are quietly in bed, I went to their dormitories. I found that there were ten boys missing; and these are the ten, sir."

Dr. Holmes nodded.

"Having been already informed of St. Jim's fellows being seen at the Green Man, I decided to go there and investigate before making a report," said Knox. "I left the school quietly. I reached the Green Man, and found these boys just leaving, and they set a dog upon me."

"That's not true, sir," exclaimed Tom Merry indignantly.

Dr. Holmes made a gesture.

"Let Knox finish, please, Merry."

"Yes, sir, but—"

"Go on, Knox!"

"I was attacked by a savage bulldog they set upon me, and had to leave," said Knox. "I have been bitten and my clothes torn. I got back to the school as fast as I could—"

The juniors could not help grinning for a moment as they recalled Knox's hurried flight. There was no doubt that he had got back to the school as fast as he could.

Knox caught the grin, and scowled.

"And made my report, sir," he concluded. "That is all I know by actual observation, but there is no doubt as to their object in visiting a low public-house."

"You have heard what Knox says, Merry," said Dr.

Holmes, turning to the hero of the Shell with a troubled brow. "I was never more amazed in my life when he made his report. You are the last boy I should imagine guilty of such an offence. The other boys here, or most of them, bear the highest characters in the Fourth and the Shell. Mr. Railton is of the same opinion."

"Entirely so," said Mr. Railton.

"Thank you, sir."

"And so, black as the matter looks at present, I have hopes that you may be able to offer me some explanation, Merry," said the Head. "If this is a wild prank, it is reprehensible enough, but I am very unwilling to believe that you and the rest could be guilty of acts of blackguardism."

And the look of distress in the good old doctor's face showed how earnest he was. Tom Merry was deeply touched.

"It's good of you to think so well of me, sir," he said, in a low voice. "If I had gone to the Green Man to act the giddy goat—I—I mean, to be a blackguard, sir, I should deserve all you could give me."

"You did not?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"You do not deny going to the Green Man?"

"No, sir."

"You knew it was out of bounds?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"And when Knox found you there—"

"We didn't set the dog on him, sir. He—"

"He ran right into Towser and me, sir," said Herries. "Towser thought he was going for me, and so he went for him. Towser's a splendid dog, sir; he stands up for me. I've entered him for a dog-show, and—"

"I am quite willing to believe that this explanation of the attack on Knox is correct," said the Head, while the prefect scowled, "but what explanation have you to give of your presence at the Green Man?"

Tom Merry & Co. were silent.

To say that they had gone for Lumley-Lumley was to make matters worse for the Outsider of St. Jim's. True, he deserved little consideration at their hands, but they could not be guilty of anything that savoured in the least of sneaking.

And by the sneering expression upon the Outsider's face, it was pretty plain that he did not mean to help them out of the difficulty. In fact, it was not hard to see that he intended to make matters as bad as possible for Tom Merry & Co., and involve them in his own disgrace if he could.

"Well?" said Dr. Holmes gently enough. "I am waiting for your reply, Merry."

"I—I—" began Tom Merry.

Then he stopped.

"I do not understand your silence, Merry," said Dr. Holmes, after an awkward pause. "If you have an honourable explanation to give, you can give it, I suppose?"

"We went to the Green Man with honourable intentions, sir."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We're not friends with Joliffe and his gang. We've—we've just had a row with them, sir, and we had a fight in the lane," said Tom Merry, flushing.

"A feahful wow, sir. My nose—"

"Then why did you go?"

The juniors were silent again.

"I suggest questioning Lumley, sir," said Mr. Railton quietly.

The Outsider started. The House-master was much keener than the kind old doctor, and he could see much more of the matter than Dr. Holmes could.

"Very well," said Dr. Holmes, bending his eyes upon Lumley-Lumley. "Why did you go to the Green Man, Lumley? I warn you to speak the truth, because, if necessary, I shall communicate with Mr. Joliffe to ascertain the facts."

The Outsider grinned. He knew what sort of a story Mr. Joliffe would be likely to tell about him after what had happened at the Green Man that evening.

"I suppose I'd better make a clean breast of it, sir?" he remarked.

"You certainly had better."

"Very well, sir. I went there for a little game."

"What?" ejaculated the Head.

"A little game, sir."

"A—a—a little game?"

"Yes, sir. Poker, sir—draw poker. I find things pretty dull at this school, sir," said Lumley, with cool impertinence. "I used to have a much livelier time. I'm new here, sir, and don't yet rightly know what's allowed and what isn't. I'm sorry if I've done wrong, sir. I'm telling you the truth, and that's what you asked me for."

"You went to the Green Man to gamble with the men there?" asked the Head, drawing a deep breath.

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

CHAPTER 21.

Not So Lucky.

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY did not move a muscle under the startled, searching gaze of the Head. He flicked a patch of dust from his sleeve.

The rest of the juniors were silent.

"Well, that is a frank confession, at all events," said Dr. Holmes at last. "That you are new to our ways here, Lumley, and that you have had a very peculiar training, I know; but you are perfectly aware that you have done wrong—grave wrong."

"I suppose so, sir."

"You have played cards for money?"

"Yes, sir."

"With Joliffe and the rest there?"

"Just so, sir."

"I do not quite follow," said the Head. "If you went there on friendly terms with Joliffe, and Tom Merry and these others have been fighting with him, I presume that you did not go all in one party?"

Lumley gave a slight shrug.

"I prefer to say nothing about the others, sir."

"You had better tell me the facts."

"I have done so about myself, sir. Is it fair to ask me to say anything against the others, who are here to speak for themselves?"

"Perhaps not," said the Head slowly—"perhaps not."

Tom Merry's lips hardened. Lumley was not afraid of saying anything against them; he knew that the truth, from his lips, would save them. His words were carefully calculated to give the impression that they also were guilty.

Mr. Railton's glance searched Lumley-Lumley's face.

"You do not wish to incriminate the others, Lumley?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"I hope that is your motive," said the House-master.

I hope that your motive is not an infinitely baser one."

"I hope so, sir," said Lumley calmly.

Mr. Railton turned to the Head.

"I have something to say which may throw light on the matter, sir," he said. "In the first place, only seeing with my own eyes would make me believe that Tom Merry and his friends would be guilty of base conduct. I spoke to the prefects yesterday about St. Jim's boys being seen at the Green Man, and Kildare had the idea of letting the juniors themselves investigate the matter, picking on the boys of best character in the lower Forms to do so. Kildare told me that Tom Merry had undertaken to do his best to discover what was going on, and to put a stop to it. I think it is possible that this prank is the result of Kildare speaking to him."

"Ah!" said the Head.

"Now, answer me, Tom Merry," said the House-master "Did you go to the Green Man on business of your own?"

"N-no, sir."

"Did you go because you believed that a St. Jim's boy was there, and you wanted to get him away from his rascally associates?"

Tom Merry coloured. He had a natural horror of appearing to have acted like a good little boy in a story-book, but he had to tell the truth.

"Yes, sir," he said quietly.

"Very good. I need not ask you—and would not ask you—the name of the boy; but in view of Lumley's confession, it is needless. You will understand the matter now, Dr. Holmes."

"That Tom Merry and the rest went to the Green Man to fetch Lumley away?" exclaimed the Head.

"Yes, sir. I have not the slightest doubt that that is the case. It was certainly a very reckless freak, for Kildare had, of course, not meant anything of the sort in placing the matter in Merry's hands. I am afraid that the thought of an adventure out of bounds was not without its attraction for the boys. But that their motive was honourable, and that they were doing what they considered their duty, I am sure."

"I am glad to think so," said the Head slowly.

"That accounts for the fact that Lumley's visit to the Green Man was a friendly one and that Tom Merry and the others fought with the roughs there."

"Quite so," said the Head, looking very relieved. "Now that this explanation has been made, Merry, you can have no objection to stating whether it is correct."

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy. "Go ahead, Tom Mewwy, deal boy!"

"It is correct, sir," said Tom Merry. "I would not have sneaked about Lumley, but he has told you himself why he was at the Green Man."

"Exactly so."

Jerrold bit his lip.

He had intended to injure Tom Merry & Co.; but his confession had done the work.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 134.

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

position had not served that purpose, after all. Mr. Railton had been too keen for him.

"Very well," said the Head, after a pause, "I take it that Lumley went to the inn to gamble, and Tom Merry and the rest went to fetch him away—a very foolish act on their part, but which, under the circumstances, I can excuse on consideration of their very excellent motives. But I must deal with you, Lumley. You have confessed to an action for which I should expel any boy from this school."

"I am sorry, sir."

"You do not look sorry," said the Head sharply. "You have acted in a disgraceful manner, and very nearly brought serious trouble upon better boys than yourself. You have been fleeced, I have no doubt, by the sharpers at the Green Man—"

Lumley grinned, but did not speak. But Tom Merry spoke.

"You ought to know, sir, that Lumley has won a great deal of money," he said. "I think he ought not to be allowed to keep it. As he does not intend to tell you, I do so."

Lumley gritted his teeth.

"Hang you!" he muttered.

Dr. Holmes's brow grew harder.

"Silence, Lumley! You won money at the Green Man?"

"Ye-e-s, sir; I guess so."

"How much? Does anyone here know?" asked the Head, with a manner that implied very plainly his disbelief in any statements made by Lumley himself.

Mellish knew, and Lumley knew that he would say, so he answered:

"About seventy pounds, sir."

The Head started.

"Seventy pounds!"

"Yes, sir. They tried to get it back by force, and that was the cause of the row."

"We helped Lumley to get away, sir," explained Tom Merry. "But we're not going to stand by him in keeping the money."

"Wathah not!"

"Oh, it's your turn now!" said Lumley. "Mine will come!"

"Silence, Lumley! You have acted disgracefully. It would have been bad enough if you had been fleeced at the Green Man, as foolish lads have been before. But to get the better of practised sharpers shows that you must be as cunning and unscrupulous as they are—as great a rascal, I am afraid."

Lumley was silent.

"Lay the money you have won upon the table."

The Outsider obeyed.

"That money will be returned to the Green Man," said Dr. Holmes, while Lumley bit his lips with chagrin. "You shall not keep a shilling of it. If you have not given the correct amount, I shall ascertain it from Joliffe."

"That is correct, sir."

"I cannot take your word. But for a certain difficulty I am under in the matter, I should expel you from the school," said the Head sternly. "As that cannot be done just now, I shall make an example of you in another way. You will be flogged, Lumley, and confined for a period of three days in the punishment-room on bread and water."

The Outsider's face hardened.

"Very well, sir," he said quietly.

"You others are excused," said Dr. Holmes. "You have done wrong, and such a thing must not occur again, but at the same time I thank you for taking this trouble, and running this risk, for the honour and reputation of the school you belong to. You may go."

"Thank you, sir. Good-night!"

The juniors left the Head's study, followed by Knox. The prefect was in such a rage that he could hardly trust himself to speak. He had confidently looked forward to seeing the juniors flogged, if not expelled; and to see them thanked by the Head instead was a bitter pill to swallow.

He paused in the passage and glared at them.

"You got off this time," he said. "Another time you won't escape so easily."

And he hurried off to his room, and closed the door with a slam that rang through the silent house, and awoke a good many sleepers. Tom Merry laughed contemptuously.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "Knox seems to be quite watty, you know. I wegrad him as a cad."

"And he is a cad," said Tom Merry. "But we needn't be afraid of him. We've got off jolly well, though, considering. Mellish is luckiest of the lot. He ought to have a flogging as well as Lumley, and he's been passed over."

Mellish gave them an appealing look.

"I've had a lesson," he muttered huskily. "I wouldn't go through the last quarter of an hour again for anything! You fellows won't speak?"

"Of course not," said Blake disdainfully. "You've got off cheap, but I wouldn't be in your shoes for a great deal."

Mellish moved off without replying. The juniors went upstairs to bed. Lumley-Lumley did not speak a word till they were outside the dormitory.

"I suppose you're feeling pretty satisfied with what you've done for me?" he said then, in a low and bitter voice.

"We've done our best," said Tom Merry. "I'm sorry you're going to be flogged and to have punishment-room, but it's your own fault. You were warned plainly enough not to go in for this sort of thing."

And the Terrible Three went on into their own dormitory with Kangaroo. Blake and the rest entered the Fourth Form dorm., Lumley very silent. But the bitter look upon his face showed that his thoughts were busy, and that they were not pleasant ones.

The juniors tumbled into bed. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy spoke a word to the Outsider before he laid his head on the pillow.

"Lumley, I'm sowwy about that floggin', you know," he said.

"Oh, go to sleep!" said Lumley.

"But weally—"

"Oh, ring off!"

And the swell of St. Jim's, brimming with suppressed indignation, repressed a desire to get out of bed and go for Lumley on the spot, in consideration of the fact that the Outsider was to be flogged in the morning. He took Lumley's advice instead, and went to sleep.

THE END.

NEXT WEEK!

"THE OUTSIDER'S CHANCE,"

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A Splendid Old-time Sea Story.**In the Service of the King.**By **LIEUTENANT LEFEVRE.****Read this First.**

Oswald Yorke, one-time knight of the road, joins the Navy as a midshipman under the name of John Smith. His first ship, the frigate Catapult, is wrecked under peculiar circumstances, and Oswald is one of the few survivors. Captain Burgoyne, the scoundrelly commander, in the course of his evidence before the Court of Inquiry at Kingston, accuses Oswald and Mr. Fryer, his former lieutenant, now dead, of inciting the crew to mutiny. Admiral Eastlake hears the accusation in silence, and then summons a sergeant of the Marines and a couple of privates into court.

(Now go on with the story.)

"Arrest that young gentleman!" said the admiral, pointing to Oswald.

Oswald rose to his feet, white but silent, and, taking off his dirk, handed it to the sergeant.

"Remove your prisoner to the farther end of the room," said the admiral.

As Oswald moved away in the charge of his guard, Maxwell shot a glance of sympathy towards him, and Dr. Telford also gave him a sympathetic glance.

Fid mumbled something to himself, but his words were inaudible; but the look he cast in the direction of his late captain was unmistakable.

Mr. Brabazon's evidence was brief. He bore out all that Captain Burgoyne had said.

"When the mutiny broke out, where were you?" asked the admiral.

Mr. Brabazon hesitated.

"In—in my cabin, sir, asleep——"

"Then you also are a sound sleeper?"

"Y-yes."

"Gentlemen, you will note," said the admiral, as Mr. Brabazon sat down, "that at the time this mutiny broke out the captain was asleep in his cabin, the first lieutenant was lying wounded, and the second lieutenant was asleep also in his cabin."

"The facts have not escaped my notice, sir," said Captain Turnbull quietly.

"The ship was apparently left to take care of herself, which, considering the disaffection which Captain Burgoyne had for a long time noticed among the crew, was, to say the least of it, not a very wise proceeding."

Dr. Telford now rose, and bowed to the admiral and the other officers.

"As I knew that an inquiry would be held into the loss of the Catapult," he said, "I did not think that a written report from myself would be necessary."

"It would not, sir," said the admiral.

Dr. Telford paused, and glanced around the room, until his eyes rested on Captain Burgoyne's face.

"You have heard the evidence given by Captain Burgoyne," said the admiral. "What have you to say, sir, in support of or against that evidence?"

Dr. Telford hesitated, then raised his right hand.

"This, sir. That from beginning to end, Captain Burgoyne's evidence is false. There is not one word of truth in the accusations he has brought against a man who died doing his duty nobly for his King and country, and against a lad who has proved himself to be a brave sailor; and who, furthermore, has saved the life of the man who now denounces him."

Captain Burgoyne sprang to his feet, and would have spoken; but the admiral sternly motioned to him to be seated.

"My story is simple, sir," said Dr. Telford. "I have little to say, and I can say it in a few words. Captain Burgoyne rightly said that the mutiny among the crew was due to disappointed ambition. As brave a set of men as ever sailed were under him, and it was his cowardice, his preference for flight rather than fight, that first disgusted them, and made them impatient of his authority. It was Mr. Fryer who conducted the engagement against the Amadee. The French line-of-battleship was disabled, many of her crew killed, and she was practically our prize when Captain Burgoyne came on deck, for the first time during the whole engagement, and ordered the Catapult to draw away from her crippled foe. The cutting-out of the privateer was conducted solely by Mr. Fryer; and when he returned

successful, but wounded, he was met by abuse from his captain.

"The day following Captain Burgoyne deliberately fled rather than engage with a small French frigate. It was this that finally aroused the men to rebellion and revolt. I repeat, sir, that the mutiny on board the Catapult, and the subsequent loss of the frigate, was due to one thing, and one thing only—the cowardice of the man who commanded her."

Dr. Telford ceased speaking for a moment.

"It is false—false!" screamed Burgoyne, leaping to his feet. "Hear me, gentlemen—hear me! That man——"

"Be silent, or I shall have you removed!" said the admiral sternly. "Sir, have you any more to say?" he added, turning to Dr. Telford.

"Yes, sir, one thing; I was wrong when I said that the loss of the Catapult was due to one thing only—the captain's cowardice. There was another reason for the mutiny—the evil habits of the captain and his second lieutenant. At the time when the mutiny broke out on board, when the captain said he was lying asleep in his cabin, and Mr. Brabazon said he, too, was asleep in his cabin, they were both lying drunk into insensibility in Captain Burgoyne's cabin, from which they were carried up on to deck by two sailors. They lay insensible through the whole night, and did not regain their senses until the morning, when the mutineers had been routed, and those who survived were sheltering in the fore-castle!"

"And that's the truth, the blessed truth, every word of it!" roared Fid, carried away by his emotions, and forgetting, for the moment, the assembly in whose presence he was.

"Silence!" said the admiral; but there was sternness in his voice.

Mr. Pringle now rose and briefly corroborated every word Dr. Telford had said. He was followed by Maxwell.

"You are aware," said the admiral, "that the statements you have heard constitute a very grave charge against Captain Burgoyne and Mr. Brabazon?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tell me—tell me truthfully—have you ever seen Captain Burgoyne worse for drink?"

"I seldom saw him otherwise, sir," said Maxwell.

Maxwell sat down and Fid rose.

"Sir, your honours—man and boy, I've been in the King's Service for nigh on forty years, and this is the first time in my life as ever I have been called upon to say aught against any captain I have sailed under. I've sailed under many, too, your honours—many of all sorts. There was some as was sober always, some as was sober sometimes; but they was all brave men, sir, your honours, sober or drunk—all but him." He raised his right hand and pointed his knotty forefinger at Captain Burgoyne's ghastly face. "All but him, sirs. He ran away from the Maid, when she might ha' been ours. He wouldn't ha' cut out that there privateer unless the luff—begging your honours' pardon, Mr. Fryer—hadn't made a pint of it, and when Mr. Fryer come on deck, it was only abuse and curses he got for his pains and his wounds. Then the next day it was run away agin, until the crew got sick of it and couldn't stand it no longer."

"It's heartbreaking to a lot of men, sir, who is longing to fight, to have orders to run away directly the minute they see an enemy. And so it was with the crew of the Catapult. They couldn't stand it no longer, and they mutinied. I wasn't with them, sirs; I've served my time in the Service honourable, and I didn't mean to end it by gettin' into disgrace. But I can't help owning, your honours, that I felt for the lads. If they'd been let fight, they'd ha' fought, sirs, and that's the truth of it. And then as to the cap'n being drunk, and Mr. Brabazon, too, your honours; I've been the worse myself, as maybe your honours have been in your time—begging your pardon all the same—but I never see two men more dead drunk than was the captain and Mr. Brabazon there, sirs, when they was hauled up on to the quarter-deck. And that's a fact, your honours, which I am prepared to swear to."

Fid turned his hat over and over nervously in his hands.

"What I have said is the truth, your honours. Maybe I am plain and blunt spoken; but I don't mean no offence, and so I hope your honours will pardon me."

And he sat down.

"In the face of the evidence we have heard, gentlemen," said the admiral, "there is but one course open to us. Sergeant, you will arrest these two officers."

Captain Burgoyne sprang to his feet, his face livid, and the perspiration standing out upon his forehead.

"Arrest—arrest me!" he cried. "I tell you they have lied! It is a plot to ruin me—a plot!" he shouted.

(An extra-long instalment of this Thrilling Serial will appear in next Thursday's issue of THE GEM.)

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NEXT
THURSDAY!**"AN OUTSIDER'S CHANCE."**By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

A Splendid New Series.

A Nature Story.

DESPERATE DINNERS.

By F. ST. MARS.

HE came and sat down by the lamb, and did not say a word. He was black as a lump of coal, and his beak was like a black coal-hammer, and when he wanted to walk, he hopped idiotically. His wings made a noise like a lady's skirt, for they were big wings, five feet across, but the saving point about him was the roguishness that lived back of his eyes.

He came and sat by the lamb, and watched its mother, the little Scotch mountain sheep, feeding up the hillside. He wanted that lamb for dinner; but not while its mother was there, for he knew all about her sharp horns, you see.

This black one, this loafing imp of darkness, was a raven, and the same is like a crow three times magnified.

At last the ewe—the lamb's mother—fed out of sight around a clump of heather all shimmering purple in the heat haze, with big, lazy, brown butterflies—but they are called graylings—flapping over it. Then things happened.

Quickly—so quickly that there was no time to sing out "Murder!" or "Police!"—the raven gave four prodigious hops towards the lamb, lifted his wings at the last hop, and sailed fairly into it. Wallop! This knocked the lamb over, so that it rolled half a dozen yards downhill; and as it fetched up against a heather root, the raven was above it in a flash. He had his head drawn back preparatory to the wicked pickaxe stroke that should end the lamb's life.

But that stroke was never delivered. Something spoilt it. There was a frantic "Cour-lip!" from a curlew—a big bird who is the sentinel of these wild places—a hissing sound in the air above, as if a meteor had chosen that moment to fall at that spot, and the raven found himself lying on his back a yard downhill.

He had not seen the eagle coming, you see, descending upon him like a wedge of rock, hitting him aside disdainfully, as who should say "Go away, little boy!" and seizing the lamb—his lamb, that he had spent three hours watching.

The matter did not end there, however, for the lamb bleated shrilly as it was being borne away in the great eagle's talons, and its mother, half-crazed with anxiety, came hammering downhill at a speed that was a marvel.

She saw that the lamb had gone, and since an animal rarely thinks of looking upwards, as a bird will, concluded that the raven, then lying on his back among the heather, had taken it. The next few seconds were quite busy for that raven. The ewe came at him like a young battering-ram, knocked him quite two yards into the heather, where he fell, a squawking, black heap of flapping wings, and shot on herself for twenty yards before she could check the impetus.

After that, the raven went away in a hurry. He had had enough of that place, where such an idiotic fuss was made over so small a thing as a lamb.

As he flew with his heavy, flapping stroke over the heaving purple sea of heather that clothed the mountainside as if the mountain were some great king in purple robes, his amazingly quick eye flashed to something small, brown, and alone in an open space. Closer inspection revealed a baby hare, which is a leveret, which is also amazingly good eating. Moreover, this leveret appeared to be alone; and although this raven was by no means a cowardly pirate of the air, he hated to draw a crowd. He came to anchor upon a rock hard by, with a rasping rustle of his great wings, thereby nearly frightening a mountain blackbird, who was cracking snails on that rock, out of his little wits.

With rascally ebony head, low-browed and sinister, first cocked on one side, then on the other, our raven considered that fat, comfy-looking little leveret from every point of view. From no point of view, however, could he see any danger, which was what he was really looking out for before making his final rush.

Of course, you must not believe that ravens run about killing things as if they were full-blown eagles; but they will, if they are hungry, kill young things. This raven was hungry. So he lifted his wings, and swished out from the rock.

I don't quite know what he meant to do. I think he meant to kill the leveret. If it had moved, he would have slain it, for it looked deliciously plump; but it didn't move. It just stayed where it was, and stared at the raven with its great, bulging eyes, and said nothing; and this so disconcerted the raven that he became suspicious, and settled on the ground about four yards away from it. He regarded it with head on one side, and made unseemly noises at it to induce it to move. Still it refused to budge. Then, in a flash he realised that it was dead—dead, although fresh, and propped up in a natural position.

Now, baby hares do not prop themselves up into a perfectly natural sitting position on their hind legs when they die, nor do they have chains fastened to stumps in the ground all round them. The raven was just thinking this and other things when something rustled in the heather behind him, and a young stag, which had been feeding quite close on the other side of the opening, snorted suddenly, and sprang away at a hand-gallop.

If you are a wild animal, you don't wait to look round and see what it is when danger threatens you. You jump first and look round after. This the raven did on the instant of the rustling. He flung himself into the air with a great beating of wings that made the long cotton-grass stems wave and nod, and at the same moment there shot directly beneath him a long, red shape and a gleam of white fangs, which snapped upwards at him as he rose.

It was a fox—a big, lean, rusty fox. He had pounced at the leveret, taking the raven on his way, as it were, but the raven was a black shadow ten feet above, calling him names. Then, as the fox seized the leveret, something happened. A thing got up without warning, and closed on his foot with a metallic ring that no one could mistake. It was a trap, steel-jawed, and cruel as—hunger. The fox jumped and tore and raged and bit and squirmed and wormed and turned somersaults, and wriggled and writhed and swore and snarled and growled and gnashed his lovely white fangs, but that trap held to him like a bad name.

The raven did not make things any the more bearable by settling and mocking at the fox the while. Then he gave an ungainly hop, grabbed the leveret, and succeeded in hauling it out of reach, even though Master Reynard's jaws closed with a savage clash on the longest feather of his tail. It was rather a neat little piece of manoeuvring, and he really did deserve his meal after so cleverly getting it.

Swiftly he flapped, half-running, half-flying along the ground with it to a low rock about a hundred yards away, and as he went, a pair of yellow-green, flaming eyes in the shadows under the heather followed him. It was drawing towards evening. The stags moved slowly, like great shadows, down to the pools to drink; bits drew mazy circles against the red sky in the west, and the owls and the mist began to come out together from dark places where they had been lurking during the day.

The big, round, luminous eyes showed more plainly now in the growing dark beneath the dense tangle. They floated as if on air, inch by cautious inch, after the raven, now perched on the low rock, feeding greedily and chuckling in guttural croakings over his hard-earned meal.

Nearer and nearer the eyes drifted, the black pupils narrowing to slits as they peered out at the red glare of the setting sun.

Now they were only ten yards from the raven. Now six. Now five—four. Still the raven fed on unsuspecting. Three yards only were they away. Two—one and a half!

The raven's head shot round at the sound of a mouse, mad with terror, dashing behind him. A plume of cotton-grass waved suddenly—and there was no wind. The raven half-unfurled his wings, still watching the cotton-grass that waved without cause and was now still. The eyes were in that grass now.

Next moment followed a rush, a vision of a dark, bristling body sailing out of the grass, the whistle of air as rending claws shot out and struck down the raven even as he hurled himself upwards, a flurry and scurry, a whirlwind of fur and jet-black feathers, and—silence.

The owner of those flaming eyes—a big, burly, male wild cat of the mountains—was standing snarling over the prostrate raven. And the raven was dead; the cat had killed him.

Slowly the cat left him, shaking each paw, as cats will, to free himself of the clinging feathers, and investigated the leveret, still scarcely touched. That cat was very hungry—very hungry indeed; but it was the baby hare he wanted, not the raven. Ravens are not good eating, you must know. He had simply killed the bird to get the leveret.

He began his meal, eating slowly, as cats will, and the day faded and went out, and a full moon came out and lit up the mountain-side and shone on the jet-black feathers of the raven, sprawling dead and still among the flattened cotton-grass.

Suddenly the cat stood up, tottered, staggered forward drunkenly, turned round six or seven times very quickly, and fell on his nose, shuddered all over, and was still.

The gamekeeper who had set the trap which had caught the fox, had filled the freshly killed leveret he had used as bait with poison, in case any vermin should manage to steal the bait without springing the trap.

So the raven's death was avenged within the hour, and the keeper killed three birds with one stone, so to speak.

THE END.

(Another of these wonderful little stories next Thursday.)

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