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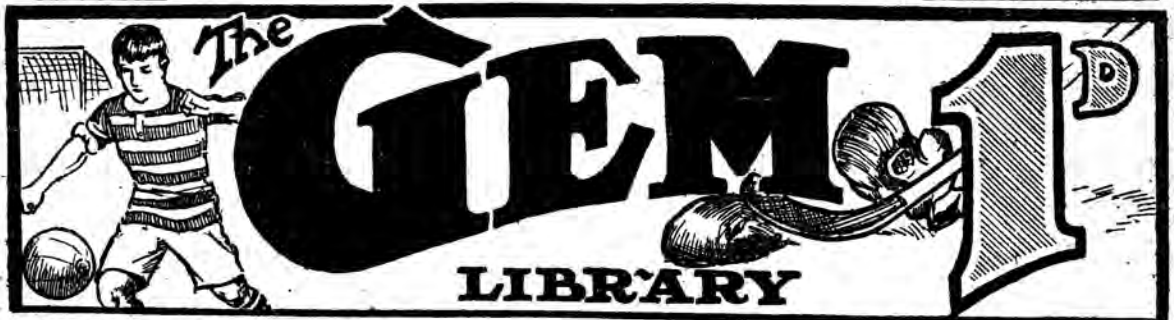
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"Tom Merry versus Jack Blake."

Another Splendid Tale of the Juniors
of St. Jim's, by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

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(Our Readers are informed that the characters in the following Story are purely imaginative, and no reference or allusion is made to any living person. Actual names may be unintentionally mentioned, but the Editor wishes it to be distinctly understood that no adverse personal reflection is intended.)



A Splendid, Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of St. Jim's
and—the Outsider.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

**CHAPTER 1.
Carried Home.**

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY!"
"Yaas, wathah!"
"Coming back?"

"Yaas."
"By George!"

Tom Merry was surprised. He looked surprised, but whether he was pleased or not it was not so easy to see.

Manners and Lowther, who had looked up in surprise at the news imparted by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth, were equally non-committal. No one could have told from their faces whether they were pleased or the reverse.

D'Arcy put up his eyeglass, and surveyed the Terrible Three. He was standing in the doorway of their study in the Shell passage. The chums of the Shell had been busy with their prep, when D'Arcy opened the door, and Monty Lowther had picked up a Latin dictionary to hurl at the interrupter. In the surprise of the announcement, he laid it down again unhurled.

"Wathah a surprise, isn't it?" Arthur Augustus remarked.

"Yes, rather!"

"But is it true," demanded Monty Lowther, "or is this one of your Fourth-Form japes?"

Arthur Augustus gave Lowther a stare.

"I should not be likely to make an untrue statement for the sake of a joke, Lowthah, I twust," he said.

"Oh, rats!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Come down off the high horse, old son," said Monty Lowther, with a grin, "and tell us in plain English, honour bright, if the news is correct."

"It is quite cowwest."

"So Lumley-Lumley's coming back?" said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "For good, do you know?"

"I weally don't know."

"For bad, if he's anything like he used to be," grinned Lowther.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon Lowther.

"Weally, deah boy, you might give the chap a chance," he said. "He nearly died, and came neah bein' buwied. I have no doubt at all that that has had a gweat effect upon him, and he certainly seemed decent when he left."

"Quite true," said Tom Merry.

"Now, my ideah," said D'Arcy, coming further into the study, and speaking very confidentially, "my ideah is to give the chap a warm reception."

"Rag him, do you mean?"

"No: I do not mean to wag him, Lowthah. I mean a warm

"TOM MERRY & Co., and 'THE IRON ISLAND.'"

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reception in the sense of makin' much of him. We ought to make him undahstand cleahly that bygones are bygones, and that he can start with a clean bill of health, so to speak. Nobody is to remembah anythin' against him."

"Hear, hear!"

"I am very glad you approve of my ideah, deah boys," said the swell of St. Jim's, looking very gratified. "I suppose you will agree with me, then, that he ought to be greeted with musical honours?"

"Musical honours!"

"Yaas, wathah! I have an idea that we could hire the band from the tea-house in Wylcombe, you know, and give him a wegulah stunnin' greetin'."

And Arthur Augustus beamed upon the chums of the Shell, evidently greatly pleased with his idea.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther exchanged winks.

"There are only three in that band," said Lowther. "If I remember, they had a piano, a fiddle, and a 'cello. You couldn't get the piano here—"

"The pianist can play second fiddle on occasion, deah boy. That is all wight."

"Even then they would hardly make enough row," said Lowther, with a shake of the head. "You see, what you want on an occasion like this is plenty of row—it doesn't matter about being musical, but it must be a row—something on Elektra or Salome lines, you know. Now, my idea is that we should wire to the Shepherd's Bush Exhibition for a dozen niggers to beat tom-toms—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Or else get in a gang of road-menders, and provide them with mallets and rammers, and set them going."

"You uttah ass!"

"What do you fellows think?" asked Lowther blandly. "Isn't my wheeze ever so much better than Gussy's?"

"Heaps!" said Tom Merry.

"Piles!" said Manners.

The swell of St. Jim's jammed his eyeglass yet more tightly into his eye, and surveyed the Terrible Three wrathfully. It dawned upon him that they were making fun of him.

"I wegard you as a set of asses!" he exclaimed. "I considah my ideah wippin'! When I suggested it to Blake, he laughed very wudely. I wegard him as an ass! Undah the circe—"

"When is Lumley arrivin'?" asked Tom Merry.

"Mid-day to-morrow. I considah that ideah of musical honahs is wippin'! If it were propwally awwanged, I should be willing to join in with the voice. I could put in some tenor bits with fine effect, I think."

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

"Weally, you boundahs—"

"But what has Lumley-Lumley done?" demanded Monty Lowther. "Didn't you say that bygones were to be bygones?"

"You fwabjous ass—"

"Well, you oughtn't to be rough on a chap the first day he's back. You see—"

Arthur Augustus made a rush into the study. If there was one thing Arthur Augustus could not be patiently ragged upon, it was his tenor voice.

"You uttah ass! I wegard your wemarks as insultin'! Put up your hands!"

Lowther jumped up.

Arthur Augustus brandished his fists, and made a Junge at Lowther. The humorist of the Shell dodged round the table.

"Come here, you uttah boundah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You feahful ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus dodged round the table after Lowther. Somehow Manners' long legs got into the way, and the swell of St. Jim's rolled on the carpet.

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

D'Arcy sat up and groped for his eyeglass. His elegant attire was somewhat dusty, and his collar had burst from its stud.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped.

The Terrible Three roared.

"Yow! You uttah asses! I am howwibly dustay!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy scrambled to his feet, his aristocratic face red and wrathful.

"I shall have no wesource but to administrah a feahful thwashin'!" he exclaimed. "Put up your hands, you wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three were rocking with laughter. Arthur Augustus rushed at them blindly, hitting out.

When Arthur Augustus was wild, he was very wild. He could be most destructive when he was enraged. The chums of the Shell scattered from his attack, still roaring with laughter, and the swell of St. Jim's beat the empty air with his fists.

"Help!" gasped Manners. "He's dangerous!"

"It's hydrophobia!" gasped Lowther.

"Run for the fire brigade!"

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"Shriek for help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is what comes of letting him out unmuzzled!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy, pink with rage, rushed at the chums of the Shell. He caught Tom Merry this time, and hammered away at him furiously. Tom Merry clasped him round the waist, and lifted him off the floor, and D'Arcy's blows were expended in space.

"Weleasse me!" roared Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry gasped with laughter.

"Weleasse me, you uttah ass! I ordah you to set me down at once, so that I can thwash you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You feahful wottahs!"

Tom Merry bore the struggling swell of the School House to the door. D'Arcy's arms and legs were waving wildly in the air.

"Weleasse me, you feahful wottah!" he shrieked.

Manners and Lowther yelled with laughter. Tom Merry rushed into the passage with the swell of St. Jim's half sprawling over his shoulders, and D'Arcy's limbs going like clockwork in all directions.

Down the Shell passage he went at top speed, with a rush that took Arthur Augustus' breath away.

"Ha, ha, ha!" screamed Lowther. "Taking him home?"

"Yes," panted Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You wottah—I protest—I insist—ow!"

Down the Fourth-Form passage went Tom Merry, and he bumped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy against the door of Study No. 6. There was a surprised exclamation within, and a voice yelled:

"Come in, fathead!"

Tom Merry did not reply. He bumped D'Arcy on the door again. D'Arcy's boots crashed on the door as he struggled.

The door was thrown open from within. Blake, Herries, and Digby glared out wrathfully. Then they staggered back in surprise.

"M-m-my hat!" ejaculated Blake.

Tom Merry reeled into the study with his burden. He plumped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy down breathless in the arm-chair, and, without a word, strode from the study, shutting the door after him.

CHAPTER 2.

Tit for Tat.

JACK BLAKE stared at Arthur Augustus blankly. The swell of St. Jim's sat gasping and gasping in the chair. Every ounce of breath had gone out of him. He seemed to be able to do nothing but gasp like a newly-landed fish.

Blake, Herries, and Digby stared and grinned.

"Ow! Bai Jove! Ow!"

"What on earth have you been up to?" demanded Blake. "Is that a new sort of gymnastics?"

"Yow—no!"

"Then what do you mean by it?"

"Ow! I have been tweated with the gwossett diswespect!"

"Ow!"

"Well, you look as if you've been through a mangle," said Herries.

"Ow! Wow!"

"Or under a motor-car," said Digby. "I must say you're a disgrace to any decent study. I hope no one will come in and see you. It would be very awkward for all of us."

"Very awkward!" said Herries.

"Awfully awkward!" agreed Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat upright.

"I wegard you as a set of uttah asses!" he exclaimed.

"Good!"

"And feahful chumps!"

"Go it!"

"And wotten boundahs!"

"Hurray!"

Arthur Augustus, at a loss for words, gasped for breath. Blake sat down at the table again, and took up his pen.

"I suppose we can get on with the washing if Gussy has done blackguarding us," he remarked.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Aren't you finished?"

"I have been tweated uttally diswespectfully!" said Arthur Augustus. "I have been cawwied through the passage in a ludicwous mannah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can see no cause whatevah for widiculous laughah. This whole studay has been insulted, and I wathah think it is up to us to put those Shell boundahs in their place!"

Blake winked at Herries and Digby.

The dignity of the one and only Augustus had been affronted, but that was no reason for raiding the chums of the Shell, with

whom Blake & Co. happened just then to be on particularly good terms. Besides, there was work to be done, and if the time were spent in rowing instead of working it meant trouble with the Form-master in the morning.

"Don't you think you could treat them with silent contempt, old chap?" asked Jack Blake. "It's very effective, and it saves time."

"A chap must considah his dig."

"Well, wait till you are insulted again, and then consider both your digs, at once—I mean, avenge both insults at once. If you work two together in this way it saves time, and time is money, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard your suggestion as widiculous, Blake. I insist upon you fellows backin' me up, and puttin' those Shell wottahs in their place!"

Blake rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Of course, if they've treated Gussy with gross disrespect something serious ought to be done," Digby remarked. "I should suggest something lingering, with boiling oil in it."

"Weally, Dig—"

"Look here!" said Blake. "They've carried Gussy along the passage, and bumped him down in this study, in the most disrespectful manner!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's up to us to do as much to them, to keep up the honour of the study, to say nothing of D'Arcy's personal dig."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!" said Digby and Herries.

"It's up to us," went on Blake, solemnly, "to treat them in exactly the same manner, to show that they can't swank over us!"

"Quite wight, deah boy!"

"Then we'll do it!"

"Vewy good!"

"You agree, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Go ahead, then!" said Blake, rising. "Collar him!"

Herries and Digby stared for a moment, and then they understood. With a chuckle they closed in upon D'Arcy and collared him, and Blake lent a hand. The swell of St. Jim's struggled frantically.

"You uttah asses!" he roared. "What are you up to? Stop it! Welease me at once! What are you up to, you chumps?"

"We're going to give Tom Merry tit for tat! He's carried you here, and we're going to carry you back! He bumped you down in this study, so we're going to bump you down in his!"

"Ow! Yow! I—I—"

"Come on!"

"Bear a hand!"

"Yow! Yawwoh! You feahful asses! Welease me! I did not mean anythin' of the sort! You are silly chumps! Welease me! Ow!"

"Come on, you chaps!"

"Right-oh!"

Arthur Augustus's struggles were unavailing. The three sturdy Fourth-Formers grasped him, and whirled him out of the study. With arms and legs flying he was rushed along the passage in the direction of the Shell quarters.

Fellows looked out of their studies to see what the din was about, and roared with laughter at the scene.

"Faith! And phwat's the matter?" demanded Reilly of the Fourth.

"We're paying back Tom Merry in his own coin!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah asses!"

"And avenging D'Arcy's dig," Blake explained.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Welease me! Ow! I—I— Bai Jove! Ow!"

Right along the passage went the three Fourth-Formers, with a rush. Right up to Tom Merry's door they came like a whirlwind. Blake kicked the door open, and they whirled in, with Arthur Augustus struggling on their shoulders.

Tom Merry and his chums sprang up. They had been half-expecting a raid. But at the sight of Arthur Augustus doing the "flying angel" they roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here you are!" panted Blake.

"Bump him down!"

"Yow! Welease me! Bai Jove! Oh!"

Bump! Arthur Augustus bumped down into Tom Merry's armchair. He lay there gasping. Blake grinned at the Terrible Three.

"Sorry to interrupt you," he exclaimed; "but you had insulted D'Arcy, and we were bound to treat you in the same way. The honour of Study No. 6 is avenged!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Blake, Herries, and Digby retired breathlessly from the study.

Arthur Augustus sat in the armchair and gasped.

The Terrible Three roared.

Arthur Augustus groped for his eyeglass, and jammed it into his eye. He gazed at the chums of the Shell with a gaze that ought to have withered them.

But they did not wither, they roared!

"I wegard you as beasts!" said D'Arcy. "I wegard Blake and the west as beasts! I wegard you all with fearful despision—I mean contempt! Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus retired from the study, and closed the door with a slam that could be heard throughout the School House. The Terrible Three collapsed into their chairs, and shrieked till they could shriek no longer.

Arthur Augustus did not return to Study No. 6. It was true that his personal dignity had been very much injured. But he did not want Blake & Co. to avenge it any more.

CHAPTER 3.

The Outsider Arrives.

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S coming to-day!"

That was the great item of news in the School on the following morning.

Both Houses took a deep interest in the matter; but the School House especially, for Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had been a School House boy, and would naturally return to his old quarters.

What would he be like?

Lumley-Lumley's career at St. Jim's had been a curious one. His early years having been passed in a wandering life, in many cities, before his father's accession to wealth, Lumley-Lumley had brought to the School a knowledge of the world that was very much out of place in a Fourth-Form junior.

He had reckless ways—he was, in fact, in many respects a blackguard. He had little regard for his word, and little for the truth. He had had some qualities—cool, unflinching courage and nerve among them. But they weighed little in the balance in his favour.

The fellows could never like him. He was called the Outsider from first to last. His illness, and his narrow escape from death had softened all hearts towards him. Tom Merry & Co. had made friends with him before he left.

He had gone away for his health. Now he was returning, after but a brief absence. What would he be like? The softer and kinder side of his nature, which had shown during his illness, and after it—would that remain? Or would he be the reckless and cynical Outsider of old? The fellows could not tell. But it was agreed that he should be given a chance. All the decent set in the School House were agreed upon that.

Lumley-Lumley had sinned deeply enough. But if he had repented, if he meant to do well, it was best to let bygones be bygones. And although Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's idea of a musical greeting was not adopted, it was intended to give him a cordial welcome.

In fact, as the juniors sat in class that morning, they were mostly thinking of the coming of Lumley-Lumley, especially the Fourth—that being the Form to which the outsider of St. Jim's belonged.

Figgins of the New House whispered an inquiry to D'Arcy in class.

"What time do you expect him, Gussy?"

"Half-past twelve twain, deah boy!"

"Good! We'll all meet him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Not a bad idea to stand a big feed, just to celebrate his coming back," Fatty Wynn remarked. "He would be bound to take it kindly."

"And if he didn't you would, wouldn't you, Fatty?" Blake remarked.

There was a chuckle, and Mr. Latham looked round.

"Silence in class, please!" said the little Form-master.

And the subject of Lumley-Lumley dropped for the time.

When the class was dismissed, many of the juniors went to the gates to wait for the arrival of Lumley-Lumley. Others gathered about the School House door, or before the fire in the hall, for the weather was very cold.

There was a shout from the quadrangle at last.

"He's coming!"

"Here he is!"

"Look out!"

A cab, piled with luggage, had driven in at the gates of St. Jim's. A shout from the fellows greeted it.

"Halloa, Lumley-Lumley!"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley sat in the cab.

The Outsider looked very much the same as his old self—there was still the half-sneering curl to the lip, the curious glint in the eyes. But his cheeks were tanned by a southern sun, and he looked stronger and better.

The cab stopped before the house. The juniors crowded out. There was a rush to shake hands with Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

The Outsider—no one called him the Outsider now, by the way—jumped from the cab, with a grin on his face, shaking hands with fellow after fellow.

He was evidently glad to be back at St. Jim's. He was just

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NEXT WEEK: "TOM MERRY versus JACK BLAKE." Another Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

as evidently pleased with the hearty and spontaneous greeting he received. The suggestion of a sneer vanished from his face, and his keen, hard eyes gleamed with a softer light.

"Welcome home, Lumley!"
 "Here you are again!"
 "Shake, old chap!"
 "Hope you're better!"
 "Glad to see you again!"

There was no doubt about the heartiness of the greeting. Fellows crowded up from all sides to shake hands with Lumley-Lumley.

"I guess I'm glad to be back," said Lumley-Lumley. "This is very decent of you! I'm glad you're pleased to see me!"

"Of course we are!" said Tom Merry.
 "Pleased as Punch!" said Figgins.

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"Well, I hope you'll remain glad," he said. "Look here, you chaps! We had some bad times when I was here before—"

"Oh, that's all ovah, deah boy!"

"Bygones are bygones!"

"I guess so. But I want to say that that's what I feel—bygones are bygones, and it's all over," said Lumley-Lumley.

"We shall go on a new tack in the future. That's all."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hurrah!"

Half a dozen fellows gathered round Lumley-Lumley, and escorted him into the School House. Tom Merry took his cap, and Lowther his coat. Blake relieved him of his gloves, and Digby pushed up a stool before the fire for him.

Lumley-Lumley was both surprised and pleased! it was easy to see that. And if the Outsider's present mood lasted, there was no doubt that all would go well with him at St. Jim's. But would it last? That was the question—a question that was lurking in Tom Merry's mind all the time. But he tried to dismiss it. Upon one point he was sincere and determined—the Outsider of St. Jim's should have every chance.

When the juniors went into dinner, Lumley-Lumley was, of course, with the Fourth-Formers. Levison, of the Fourth, met him at the door of the dining-room. Lumley-Lumley started a little, and then shook hands with him.

"You're still here!" he said.

Levison stared at him.

"Still here?" he repeated. "Why shouldn't I be still here?"

The Outsider grinned.

"Oh, I guess the place might have got fed up with you?" he replied. "But I don't want to be ungrateful. You found I was alive when the doctors were going to bury me in a trance. I sha'n't forget that."

"You didn't seem to remember it a moment ago."

"I do remember it," said Lumley-Lumley quietly. "I never forget a service—or an injury. If I can do anything for you, at any time, to pay you back for what you've done, you've only to say so."

Levison's eyes glimmered. That was what he had angled for—he wanted the friendship of the millionaire's son. Lumley-Lumley's character did not matter to him in the least. What he wanted was a rich friend in the school. He understood little of Lumley's motives, but what the Outsider said was very pleasant to him to hear.

"Good!" he said. "You'll be in my study."

"I was with Mellish when I was here before."

"I'm in Mellish's study, too."

"Oh, I see!"

Lumley-Lumley sat down at the dinner-table. It was not a good augury for the future of the Outsider that he should be in the same study with the two least reputable members of the Form. But that could not be helped. His old quarters were naturally assigned to him.

Blake & Co. made it a point to be very agreeable to Lumley-

Lumley during dinner. They wanted it to be clear to him that their friendship was to be had, if he chose to have it. And there was no doubt that the Outsider, so far, chose to have it. He was on the best of terms with the chums of Study No. 6 when they went into the Form-room for afternoon classes. After lessons that day, as it was now light enough for footer practice after classes, Lumley-Lumley was borne off to the ground by Blake & Co.

"You feel up to playing, I suppose?" asked Blake. "You're looking a jolly lot better than you did when you went away!"

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"I'm as fit as a fiddle!"

"What about your illness?"

"It's gone."

"Quite gone?"

"The doctors think it has quite worked out of my system," said Lumley-Lumley. "I hope they're right. Anyway, I'm fit enough. I'll play, with pleasure."

"Good egg!"

And Lumley-Lumley showed that he was fit enough when he joined in the footer practice. Jack Blake slapped him heartily on the shoulder.

"Good! You're fit for the junior team!" he exclaimed. "The School House are playing the New House to-morrow afternoon. I'll speak to Tom Merry about it, and I've not the least doubt he'll shove you in the team."

And Tom Merry did!

The Outsider of St. Jim's went to bed that night in a very contented frame of mind, and undoubtedly the auspices were good for his future career at St. Jim's. But would it last? That was a question that many of the fellows were asking themselves.

CHAPTER 4.

Two Rascals!

LEVISON, of the Fourth, stood with his hands thrust deep into his trousers pockets, under the elms outside the School House. It was a bright, keen morning, and the nip of frost in the air made it all the more enjoyable. A bunch of juniors were punting a footer about—Tom Merry, Blake, Lowther, Figgins, D'Arcy, and a good many more. Their merry laughter and shouts rang clearly in the frosty air. Levison stood watching them. There was an unpleasant glitter in Levison's eyes, and a very unpleasant curl to his lip. The scene was cheering enough, but Levison was not enjoying it.

"Come on, Levison!" called out Herries, as he came out of the house and ran to join the punters.

Levison did not reply, or stir. He had no fancy for that rough exercise, and he was in no mood for good-fellowship. He started a little as he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned his head slightly, and saw Mellish, the cad of the Fourth. Mellish gave him a sour grin.

"You seem interested," he remarked.

"And you?"

"Oh, very!" And Mellish sniggered.

"Lumley-Lumley's palled on to Tom Merry and Blake and their lot soon enough," Levison remarked slowly. "I hardly expected that."

"It won't last!" said Mellish.

"Don't you think so?"

"I'm sure not."

"Well, you've had a longer experience of Lumley-Lumley than I have," said Levison slowly. "I suppose you ought to know."

Mellish shrugged his shoulders.

"It's all right now," he remarked. "They're all feeling jolly good and chummy, because it's Lumley's first day here. Wait till they get used to him, and he gets used to them. That's more important. He's going to play footer this afternoon."

"Well?"

"Well, I rather fancy he's going to play his old tricks," grinned Mellish. "Lumley is crooked all through. He couldn't play a fair and decent game to save his life. He'll foul somebody, or keep the ball when he ought to pass, or something of the sort. I know him. That will be the first rift in the lute."

Levison nodded thoughtfully.

"But suppose he plays the game?"

"He won't. But if he does, I tell you he's bound to get sick of the goody-goody tack soon. He'll begin to pine for his old amusements at the Green Man. He's bound to want to play cards and break bounds. He's got it in his bones. You wait till the first flush of his return has worn off. You'll see!"

"Look here," said Levison, "I understand you, and you understand me."

"I think so," said Mellish.

"I want Lumley to chum with me, but I'll share what's going with you if we can work it between us," said Levison frankly. "If he sticks to Tom Merry & Co., where do we come in?"

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"We don't come in at all."

"Exactly. Tom Merry and the rest don't want us, even if we felt inclined to turn over a new leaf and play good-little-Jimmy-at-school, which we don't."

"Not much!"

"Then we've got to get him away from them."

"I'm on!"

"We can do it. He's in our study, for one thing. His old habits are bound to break out in time, and then——"

"Then we shall have him."

"Exactly, I—— Oh! Yow!"

Biff!

Levison was so intent upon his discussion with Mellish, that he had not noticed the bunch of players swaying in his direction. The ball suddenly came out of the press like a pip from an orange, and it smote Levison fairly upon his somewhat prominent nose. Levison gave a howl, and staggered back. Back he went, two, three paces, and then he sat down.

Recent rain had left puddles in the quadrangle, and the frost had crusted them over. There was a crack of thin ice as Levison sat in a puddle.

"Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "Sorry. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! Groo!"

Mud was plastered over Levison's face—mud was in his eyes and his nose. Even Mellish was yelling with laughter.

"Sorry!" gasped Blake. "Ha, ha! Sorry!"

"Yaas! Wathah! Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison staggered to his feet. His face was smothered, and his trousers dripped with muddy water. Through the mud on his face the skin flamed red with rage.

"Hang you!" he shrieked. "You did that on purpose, Tom Merry!"

"Ha, ha! It was Figgins booted the ball."

"Sorry," said Figgins. "Ha, ha! Really! Ha, ha!"

"You—you rotter——"

"Oh, cheese that!" said Figgins sharply. "It was an accident. If you had been playing, instead of hanging about and slacking, it wouldn't have happened. On the ball, you chaps!"

"Hurrah! Buck up!"

The players closed round the footer again, and rushed it off. Levison dabbed his face with his pocket-handkerchief, and gave them evil looks. There was a great deal of evil in Ernest Levison's nature when it was roused.

Mellish chuckled.

"You won't do it much good with that," he said. "You'd better go and get a wash before the bell goes for brekker. Your bags want changing, too."

"Hang them!"

"With pleasure! Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison, with an evil look, started for the house. Mellish strolled away a safe distance from the punters. Levison was still looking evil, but much cleaner, when the juniors came in to breakfast.

There was a red and healthy glow in Lumley-Lumley's cheeks, and a clear light in his eyes. He had enjoyed the punt about, and it had done him good. Levison joined him as they left the dining-room after breakfast.

"Half-holiday this afternoon!" he remarked.

Lumley-Lumley nodded.

"Coming out?"

"Can't!"

"Why not?"

"Playing footer."

"Oh, come, you are not taking that up, are you?" said Levison banteringly. "Look here, if you come with me, I can promise you some fun."

Lumley-Lumley shook his head.

"I'm playing footer against the New House," he said.

Levison sneered.

"How long is that sort of thing going to last?" he asked.

"All the time I'm at St. Jim's, I hope," the Outsider replied quietly. "I know what you are thinking of, Levison. You've heard about what I used to do. But I'm done with all that for good now."

"You've turned over a new leaf?"

"Yes."

"And become a good little boy?"

"You can put it that way if you like," said Lumley-Lumley quietly.

"Oh, if you are on the goody-goody tack, and you've turned yourself into a humble follower of Tom Merry, I've nothing more to say," said Levison, with a disdainful shrug of the shoulders.

Lumley-Lumley reddened.

"I'm not a humble follower of anybody," he exclaimed.

"Oh, I don't care—keep it up! When you've wasted time in sucking up those fellows, you'll find out, I daresay, what they really think of you."

"I believe they think well of me."

"Rats! They're spoofing you."

Lumley-Lumley turned pale. The ill-natured shot had gone quite home.

"Why should they spoof me?" he said.

"Oh, they're taking all this trouble because you've been a naughty boy, and they're going to reform you," sneered Levison. "When they get tired of the amusement, they'll drop you fast enough, I promise you."

Lumley-Lumley looked at him steadily.

"I don't believe you," he said quietly.

And he turned away without another word, leaving Levison biting his lips.

CHAPTER 5.

Unchanged.

THERE was a goodly crowd on the junior ground that afternoon to see the House match. House matches generally excited some interest; but the fact that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was playing for the School House, brought many fellows round the ropes, who would not otherwise have been there.

Tom Merry had given Lumley-Lumley a place in the junior House team, and the Outsider looked very fit when he appeared on the ground with Tom Merry & Co.

All the fellows round the ropes looked at him.

There was no denying that he looked very fit, and quite capable of putting up a good game—if he chose.

Levison and Mellish were in the crowd, quite as keenly interested as anybody there. They did not care a button for the footer, and it mattered nothing to them whether their House won or lost.

But they were very keen to see how the Outsider shaped.

Levison firmly believed that the old Adam, so to speak, was too strong in Lumley-Lumley for him to play the game all through, and keep in with Tom Merry & Co. for any length of time. Mellish would gladly have believed the same, but he was not so sure about it as Levison was.

Lumley-Lumley glanced across at the two as he came out with the team. Perhaps the keen Outsider guessed what they were thinking of, for a cynical smile crossed his lips—a smile that made him look very like the old Outsider the fellows had once known.

Close by Levison and Mellish were a group of the Third, inky, cheeky young rascals, with Wally at their head—Wally D'Arcy, the younger brother of the great Arthur Augustus.

With Wally was Joe Frayne, the little ragamuffin whom Tom Merry had brought to St. Jim's, and whom Wally had made a chum of in the teeth of the whole Third Form. Wally, by sheer force of character, was forcing the Third to take up Joe, much against the will of many of them.

"Lumley looks all right," Wally remarked. "My only Aunt Jane! I believe the Outsider is going to run straight at last, you know."

"Rats!" said Jameson of the Third.

"Give the chap a chance, Jimmy," said Wally.

"It ain't in him," said Jameson.

"Oh, you shut up!" said Wally. "You're always carping at something. Now you've left off chipping Joe, you're starting on Lumley."

Jameson sniffed.

"I know what I know," he said.

"And that wouldn't fill a dictionary, would it?" suggested Wally. And Jameson having no reply ready to this remark, contented himself with snorting.

The whistle went, blown by Lefevre of the Fifth, who was refereeing in the House match. There was a rumour that Kildare, of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, intended to give the match a look-in, so every fellow on the ground was on his mettle. Every junior player was keen to shine in the eyes of the St. Jim's skipper.

Tom Merry & Co. rushed things from the beginning. But for Fatty Wynn in goal, they would have scored early and often.

But the fat Fourth-Former was a giant in goal, and as fast as the leather was pelted in to him, he booted or fisted it out.

There was a serene smile on Fatty Wynn's face all the time. Fatty Wynn was fully conscious of his powers in goal. And the New House fellows cheered their champion loudly. They were proud of Fatty Wynn between the sticks.

Figgins & Co. got going at last, however, and they came down upon the School House defence like a hurricane. Two School House forwards were rolling on the ground as the New House rush swept on, and one of them was Lumley-Lumley.

The Outsider picked himself up with all the good-humour gone out of his face.

The old expression was there—hard and untamed.

He dabbed a splash of red from his nose. He had had a hard knock, and the fact that it had been wholly accidental, did not make it any the more pleasant—to the Outsider, at least.

It was Kerr who had charged him over, and robbed him of the ball—a perfectly fair charge, if ever there was one, but Lumley-Lumley had fallen clumsily.

The New House players were streaming on for goal.

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"Look out in goal!"

"Play up!"

"Hurray! Well saved!"

"Well saved, sir!"

And the play went swaying back to mid-field.

Lumley-Lumley threw himself into it again, with a hard face and glinting eyes. He had a gleaming eye upon Kerr now.

Down came the New House line once more, passing brilliantly. There was rush and scramble, and scramble and rush, and the School House had the ball from them, and Kerr rolled on the ground with a sharp cry.

Then there was a roar.

"Foul!"

"Penalty!"

"Foul!"

"Yah!"

"Cad!"

"At his old tricks again!"

The whistle rang out shrilly.

Figgins ran to Kerr and helped him up. The forward was not much hurt, and after leaning on Figgins's shoulder for a minute, breathing deeply, he was himself again.

Lumley-Lumley stood with clouded brows. Tom Merry tapped him on the shoulder.

"You tripped Kerr," he said.

The Outsider looked him in the eyes.

"It was accidental," he said.

"You are sure?"

"Honour bright!"

Tom Merry looked at him doubtfully. Some of the New House fellows in the crowd were shouting for a penalty. The New House were not entitled to a penalty kick, but undoubtedly the School House player had been in the wrong. But it was Lumley-Lumley's first day at St. Jim's, and Figgins & Co. did not want to be hard on him. Lefevre, the referee, catching the desire of the New House players on the subject, judiciously saw nothing.

The play was resumed.

But feelings were changing with regard to Lumley-Lumley.

Had that tripping been an accident?

Few believed so.

Least of all did Levison and Mellish believe so. They exchanged a look of satisfaction as they noted what had happened.

"Same old Outsider!" murmured Mellish.

"Yes, rather!" said Levison. "Just the same!"

"What did I tell you?" said Jameson to Wally.

Wally grunted.

"It must have been an accident."

Jameson grunted back.

"Accident be blowed! I saw him put out his foot. Didn't you, Curly?"

"What-ho!" said Curly Gibson.

"Same old rotter!" said Jameson.

"Crikey!" remarked Joe Frayne. "I thought it was done on purpose, Master Wally!"

Wally was silent.

He more than half thought so himself. Most of the fellows round the ropes thought that Lumley-Lumley had tripped Kerr deliberately.

But he was given the benefit of the doubt.

It remained to be seen what would happen before the match finished. The Outsider, whether he was aware of it or not, was on his trial.

The first half of the match finished without a score.

In the second half, Lumley-Lumley was playing hard, and he still looked very fresh.

Twice he came near to scoring, but was beaten in goal by Fatty Wynn. On the second occasion Tom Merry called to him.

"Pass the ball, Lumley—don't keep it to yourself so much. Centre had a chance then!"

Lumley-Lumley's lip curled.

There was quite his old look upon his face.

"Do you hear?" called out Tom Merry sharply.

Then the Outsider remembered himself.

"Yes; all serene!" he said.

"Well, remember!"

"I'll remember!"

And Lumley-Lumley played the game a little more after that. But towards the finish—the duck still unbroken on both sides—he slipped again.

The School House forwards had brought the ball right up to the New House goal, and it had gone out to Lumley-Lumley on the wing.

The Outsider was tackled keenly, but he had a good chance to send the leather in to Jack Blake.

He did not take it.

He had a sporting chance at goal, and he chose that rather than the certainty, or almost certainty, that would have accrued from passing to Blake.

He kicked for goal!

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Tom Merry gritted his teeth.

He knew that that kick would never answer with Fatty Wynn, though it would have caught some goal-keepers napping.

Fatty Wynn, in fact, grinned as he dealt with the shot. He fisted it out, and Pratt cleared easily to mid-field.

The School House chance was gone, and the Outsider of St. Jim's had thrown it away!

There was a yell from the crowd.

"Yah! Play the game!"

Lumley-Lumley bit his lips.

Tom Merry gave him a look, but did not speak. It was useless to speak. He felt that it was his fault for giving the Outsider this chance. He had thrown the game away, as a matter of fact, for there was no time for further attempts. The whistle went with the score at love all.

With a blank score-sheet on either side, the juniors tramped off the field.

Lumley-Lumley was angry and dissatisfied with himself, and with everybody else. He expected reproaches, but he did not receive them. No one said a word to him on the subject of that wasted goal, as the players changed into their clothes.

But Lumley-Lumley knew what they were thinking of, and his brow was black, and the old unpleasant glint was in his eyes. He knew what a bad beginning he had made, and he knew that every fellow at St. Jim's knew it too.

CHAPTER 6.

Trouble Ahead.

TOM MERRY went into his study in the School House with Manners and Lowther. There was a shadow on Tom's usually cheery face.

The result of the House match had been very unsatisfactory.

Both teams had been in good form, and a big score could not be expected on either side, but the School House had had at least one chance.

That chance had been lost!

The Terrible Three were silent on the subject for some time. But at last Monty Lowther, looking up from making toast at the blazing fire, burst out:

"It won't do, Tom!"

"What won't do?" asked Tom Merry uneasily.

"Playing Lumley!"

Tom Merry was silent.

"It jolly well won't do," said Manners. "Do you believe that he fouled Kerr accidentally, Tom?"

"I hope it was accidental."

"But do you think so?"

"I don't know what to think."

"And that goal—he threw it away."

"Well, that's so."

"The game was ours."

Tom Merry nodded.

"I don't want to be hard on him," he said,

Monty Lowther glared.

"But you won't play him again?"

"I don't know."

"You can't!" exclaimed Manners, vehemently. "Look here, we have another House match next week. You can't play Lumley."

Tom Merry did not speak.

Manners and Lowther stared at him. Their looks showed how deeply they took the matter to heart.

"Look here, Tom, you can't play him."

"Oh, let it stand over now," said Tom Merry. "Hang it all! I hoped he had stopped all that sort of thing."

"But he hasn't."

"It appears not. But—"

"It's in his blood," said Lowther. "It's bred in the bone. He was a rank outsider at the start, and he'll remain a rank outsider till the finish."

"I hope not."

"Oh, you're a tender-hearted chump," said Lowther, politely. "You want to stick to him because he was ill—because he's been away—"

"I can't forget that I stood by his bedside, when we all believed he was dying, and took his hand," said Tom Merry in a low voice. "I can't forget that, Monty. I want to stand by him if I possibly can."

"Well, stand by him, then, but don't play him in House matches," growled Lowther.

"That's my view," said Manners. "I don't suggest dropping the chap. But don't pile him on us in the House matches."

Besides—hallo! What do these Fourth Form chaps want?"

Blake, Herries, Digby and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came into the study. They were all looking very serious.

Tom Merry looked at them with a worried expression. He could guess their errand from their looks.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

The Fourth-Formers looked at one another. They had evidently come there to speak plainly to Tom Merry, but they were a little diffident about beginning.

"Look here——!" began Blake.

"Bettah leave it to me, powwaps, deah boys," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Powwaps I can put it a little bettah to Tom Mewwy."

"It's like this——" began Dig.

"Weally, Dig——"

"You see——" started Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies——!"

"Oh, come to the point," said Tom Merry, a little crossly. "What is it all about? If you've come to tea, it's all right. Say so!"

"We haven't come to tea."

"Wathah, not, deah boy. We've come to explain that we wegard it as a bad ideah to put Lumley-Lumley into the House team."

"Oh, rats!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——!"

"Bosh!"

"Look here," exclaimed Jack Blake, nettled, "you can say rats and bosh as much as you like, but we all think the same as Gussy. We don't blame you for having given Lumley-Lumley a trial; I'm sure we all hoped he had turned over a new leaf!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But he's made it pretty clear that he hasn't!"

"Yaas, wathah! Quite cleah, deah boy."

"And so he ought to be dropped from the team."

Tom Merry was silent. He could not but admit that there was justice in what the chums of the Fourth said. At the same time, he was unwilling to be hard upon the Outsider. He believed that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was doing his best.

"Well, what do you say, Tom Merry?" asked Digby. His voice rising.

"I'll think about it."

"Haven't you thought it out yet?" asked Herries.

"Well, no."

"Then it's time you had."

"Yaas, wathah."

"Look here, I'm junior footer captain, I believe," exclaimed Tom Merry, warmly, "I can make up my teah how I choose!"

"Well, if you put it like that——" said Blake, taken somewhat aback.

"I want time to think it out, anyway."

Blake's eyes glittered.

"The winning goal was thrown away by Lumley-Lumley," he said; "I don't want you to drop the chap; I only say, don't play him in House matches."

"That's weally vewy weasonable, Tom Mewwy."

"And I know Manners and Lowther think so, too," said Digby.

The chums of the Shell were silent. In their hearts they agreed with the Fourth-Formers, but they would not say a word against their chum.

Tom Merry looked very worried.

"Well, leave it over for the present," he said; "it's a week to the House match, anyway."

"Yaas, but——"

"Well, you can choose the team if you like," said Blake, hotly. "That's your bizney, just as you say. But if you choose Lumley-Lumley, you can choose another fellow as well, to take my place."

"Look here, Blake——"

"Yaas, wathah, and anothah fellow to take my place, deah boy."

"And mine!" said Digby.

"And mine, rather!" said Herries.

And with that the Fourth Form chums stamped out of the study, and Jack Blake closed the door after him with considerable force.

Manners and Lowther looked grimly at their leader.

"You see how the other fellows take it," Lowther remarked.

"Yes, I see."

"Then it's time for you to climb down."

"Oh, give us a rest!"

"Look here——"

The study door re-opened. The red, cheery face of Reilly of the Fourth looked in. He nodded to the chums of the Shell.

"Faith, and it's a word I'd like to have with ye, Tom Merry," he remarked.

"Oh, go ahead!" said Tom Merry, resignedly.

"Sure, it's about Lumley-Lumley."

"I could guess that."

"I don't blame ye for giving him a chance," said Reilly. "We were all agreed on that, intirely. But you won't play him next week in the House match?"

"I don't know."

"Faith, and I——"

"Oh, buzz off!" exclaimed Tom Merry, exasperated. "I'm getting fed up with the subject."

Reilly grinned.

"Sure, and the others have been goin' for ye about it, I suppose," he observed. "Well, if ye say ye won't play Lumley-Lumley——"

"I don't say so."

"Then ye're going to play him?"

"I haven't decided."

"Faith, and I——"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Sure, and——"

Tom Merry grasped a loaf, and raised it in the air. Reilly dodged out of the study and slammed the door.

Tom Merry turned very red.

"Hang it all!" he exclaimed. "Blessed if I don't chuck up being junior football captain. There's no doing right, anyway, in that position!"

"Well, you see——"

Monty Lowther was interrupted by the door opening again. Kangaroo of the Shell put his head in, and Clifton Dane looked over his shoulder.

"Just looked in to speak a word," said Kangaroo, cheerfully.

"About Lumley," added Clifton Dane.

Tom Merry jumped up.

"I've had enough of Lumley!" he bawled. "Get out!"

"But——"

"I say——"

Whiz!

The loaf flew through the air. Kangaroo popped back just in time, treading on Dane's feet, and shut the door. The loaf crashed on the door, and rolled on the study carpet.

"Yow!" growled Dane, dancing on one foot. "Groo! You've squashed my toe."

"Sorry!" grinned Kangaroo. "Tom Merry seems to be excited about something."

"Groo!"

Kangaroo opened the study door again cautiously.

Bang!

It was a cushion this time that crashed on the door. The Cornstalk chuckled, and closed it, and did not open it again.

The Terrible Three had their tea in a most uncomfortable mood. The usual cheeriness of that meal in Tom Merry's study was gone.

It almost seemed as if the first rift in the lute had appeared, and as if there would be a break in the friendship that had always seemed unassailable. Was Lumley-Lumley destined to cause division and strife among the Terrible Three themselves?

CHAPTER 7.

Straight from the Shoulder.

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY met Tom Merry when the hero of the Shell came down, some time later. Tom Merry's face was clouded. He had not enjoyed his talk with Manners and Lowther. And he was not pleased to see the Outsider. He had stood up for Lumley-Lumley against his own friends; but he was annoyed and exasperated with the Outsider for causing so much trouble. If the fellow had only played the game!

But he hadn't! It did not seem to be in Jerrold Lumley-Lumley to play the game. Lumley-Lumley greeted Tom Merry very cordially, but with a lurking watchfulness in his keen eyes.

"I guess I ought to apologise for what happened this afternoon!" he exclaimed, with much frankness. "I know I didn't play up as I ought to have done!"

"We all know you didn't!" said Tom Merry grimly.

Lumley-Lumley flushed.

"I was excited!" he said. "It's my first footer-match for a long time!"

"Well, that's so, of course. But you might have played the game," said Tom Merry. "I cautioned you about it, too!"

"I guess I'm sorry! Do you mean to say that you've been put to any trouble through it?" the Outsider asked.

"Yes, of course!"

"The fellows have grumbled?"

"Nearly every fellow in the team has been to my study grousing about it!"

Lumley-Lumley's eyes glittered.

"They want you to drop me out of the team?" he asked.

"Of course!"

"And are you going to do it?"

"I don't know!"

Lumley-Lumley started.

"Then you may?"

"Yes, I may. In any case, I never told you you could consider yourself a permanent member of the House team," said Tom Merry. "You could not, in any case, expect to be played in every match."

"That means that you are going to drop me out for the House match next week, I suppose, to come to plain English!" said Lumley-Lumley roughly.

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"If you take that tone to me, Lumley, I shall certainly drop

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"you out of the team, and out of my acquaintance, too!" he exclaimed.

The Outsider shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, we're coming to that, at last, are we?" he sneered.

"To what? I don't understand you!"

"Levison warned me of it."

"Of what? Explain what you mean!"

"That you were only taking me up, intending to drop me again!" the Outsider exclaimed angrily. "I didn't believe him then!"

"Do you believe him now?"

"It looks like it."

"Well, it is not true. It depends on yourself whether you are dropped or not," said Tom Merry quietly. "It's up to you to play the game, and if you don't do it, what can you expect?"

"In a word, am I to play next match or not?"

"I haven't decided."

"Why haven't you?"

"There are too many pros and cons to be considered at once. If I play you, it will be against the wish of the whole team!"

"I understand; you want an excuse for dropping me!" said Lumley-Lumley savagely. "I was a fool to believe that any of you were sincere."

Tom Merry reddened.

"If that's how you're going to talk, Lumley, the less said the better!" he replied.

And he walked on to the common-room, leaving the Outsider biting his lips.

Tom Merry was very angry—angry with himself, with Lumley-Lumley, and with nearly everybody else. It seemed to be his fate to be misunderstood all round.

Lumley-Lumley looked after him with a far from gentle expression.

A tap on the shoulder made him swing round angrily. Mellish was looking at him with a sneering smile.

"Well?" said Mellish.

"Well," repeated Lumley-Lumley angrily. "What do you want?"

"Are you satisfied now?"

"Satisfied? What do you mean?"

"That they're pretty nearly done with you!" sneered Mellish. "Tom Merry is the only fellow who's inclined to stick to you at all, and he won't keep it up long."

"Mind your own business!"

Mellish shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, all right! Only Levison and I have something on to-night, if you cared to join in it—that's all."

"I guess I don't care to!"

"Suit yourself!" sneered Mellish. "If you prefer toadying to fellows who don't care a button for you—Oh!"

Lumley-Lumley's fist shot out, and it caught Mellish on the end of the chin.

The cad of the Fourth went fairly flying along the passage, to crash down to the floor six or seven paces away from the Outsider.

Lumley-Lumley looked at him with blazing eyes, as he lay dazed.

"That's for you!" he said. "I guess you'll get some more, if I have any more of your lip, Mellish."

"Ow!"

"Oh, get up! You're not hurt!" said Lumley-Lumley contemptuously.

"Oh!"

"Hullo! What's the matter here?" exclaimed Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, coming along the passage. "What's the row?"

"Oh!" groaned Mellish. "The beast hit me unawares, and—and my jaw's broken, I think."

"Nonsense! Get up!"

Mellish slowly rose to his feet.

Kildare looked sternly at the Outsider.

"This won't do, Lumley," he said. "You'd better keep a guard upon your temper, I think!"

"I guess I'll do as I like about that!"

Kildare's eyes flashed.

"Do you understand whom you're talking to?" he exclaimed. "That is not the way to speak to your captain, Lumley. Take fifty lines!"

Lumley-Lumley's lips set doggedly. He knew very well that he was flagrantly in the wrong, but the obstinacy of his nature would not allow him to say so, and to ask the pardon of the captain of St. Jim's.

Kildare looked at him intently.

"I'm afraid you are not very much changed, Lumley," he said slowly. "You will need to be very careful, if you are to remain at St. Jim's. I shall expect those lines before bed-time to-night."

Lumley-Lumley did not reply, and the captain of St. Jim's walked on. The Outsider went moodily into the junior common-room.

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CHAPTER 8.

Bad Blood.

"WHAT about the 'Weekly'?" said Jack Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry yawned.

"Lemme see," he said. "How many numbers did you have out while I was away from St. Jim's?"

"None," said Kangaroo. "Nobody seemed to want to bother about it. But we ought to have another number out now."

"Yaas, wathah! I have a splendid article on turnin' up the bottoms of twousahs. It will be vewy useful to the fellows."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys——"

"There's a lot of footer news to go in, too," Blake remarked.

"And I have another instalment of my serial all ready. You remember my serial?"

"Blessed if I do!"

"I'll read you part of the instalment I have ready," said Blake, drawing a bulky packet of manuscript into view. "Look here!"

"Ahem!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"The Black Redskin," said Blake. "A Romance of the Raiders of the Rockies."

"Oh, rats!"

"Sure you don't mean the Red Blackskin, a Romance of the Black Bounders of the Sudan?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Look here, Lowther!"

"These things look evah so much bettah in pwint," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, hurriedly. "I weally don't think we ought to twouble Blake to wead it out."

"Oh, it's no trouble, if you come to that," said Blake courtteously. "Here goes for the first chapter! The sun was setting on the Rocky Mountains——"

"I've heard something like that before," said Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The sun was setting on the Rocky Mountains," repeated Blake fiercely. "and the birds were resting in their nests——"

"You've got it mixed," said Lowther. "You mean the sun was resting, and the birds were setting. Was there any hatching, too?"

"If that silly ass is going to interrupt me, you'll lose the best part of the story," said Blake. "The birds were resting in their nests. Night had cast its sable mantle over the boundless plains——"

"But you said the sun was setting!"

"So it was, ass!"

"Then how could night have cast her sable mantle over the boundless plains? In all the stories I've read, the sunset is over before the night sets in, and——"

"I daresay these things work out differently in the Rocky Mountains," said Manners. "Lots of things happen there!"

Blake snorted.

"Over the boundless plains," he repeated, "when a solitary horseman, alone and without a single companion——"

"Tautology!"

"Shut up! And unaccompanied by anyone save his faithful steed, rode over the rocks."

"You are sure he didn't rock over the road?" asked Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake put the manuscript on the table.

"If you'll step into the middle of the room, Lowther, I'll give you a lesson in manners!" he roared.

"I'm all right here," said Monty Lowther, without moving.

"Let Manners step into the middle of the room, and give him a lesson in Lowther!"

"You ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! that is wathah funnay, you know! I con-sidah——"

"What about the 'Weekly'?" said Kangaroo. "We want a report of the footer match to go into it, too, you know!"

Tom Merry's brow clouded.

"You can cut that out!" he said. "If you fellows think we ought to have another number out, we'll start on it. It is not obligatory on any member of the staff to read his contributions to any other members."

"Wathah not!"

"And it's not obligatory for the other members to listen to him if he does," Lowther remarked.

"Now," said Tom Merry hurriedly, before Blake could speak, "let's get to work! Who's got contributions ready?"

"I have, deah boy! A splendid article on turnin' up the bottoms of twousahs. I will wead out the beginnin'——"

"Barred!"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Yes, I must say I agree with Lowther for once," said Blake.

"We can't be bothered with articles on bags!"

"Weally, Blake——"



The Outsider's face was red with rage, and he was boxing Wally's ears with savage force. "Hold on!" shouted Tom Merry, as he dashed up with his chum. (See page 10.)

"If anybody would care to hear the first chapter of the Black Redskin——"

"Nobody would!"

"Look here——"

"Speaking of contributions," said Herries, "I've got a column or two on feeding bulldogs. The question of biscuits is a serious one, and——"

"Oh, blow bulldogs!"

"Having studied my dog Towser——"

"Blow Towser!"

"Yaa, I must say I agree in wingin' off Towsah. But speakin' of twousahs——"

"Speaking of redskin serials——"

"Speaking of bulldogs——"

"Oh, order!"

exclaimed Tom Merry, stopping his ears. "Look here, every chap can wire in getting his stuff ready. We'll go and prepare the number at once."

"Hear, hear!"

And the Terrible Three proceeded towards their study. It was the day after the footer match, and general good-humour had been restored among the juniors.

The vexed question whether Lumley-Lumley should be played in the next House match was left in abeyance.

Tom Merry did not know what to decide, and the other fellows were all ready to start upon the warpath if he decided in favour of the Outsider. So he was giving the subject a rest for a time.

Tom Merry was naturally given to taking things easily, and it was quite possible that the matter—like so many matters—would settle itself if left alone. Lumley-Lumley might work his way into general favour again, or he might act in such a way that Tom Merry would simply have to drop him. In either case the thing would be settled then. If it remained unsettled by the time the House match was due, then Tom Merry would have to make up his mind.

But for the present he put the whole subject out of his thoughts.

The Terrible Three ascended the stairs to the Shell passage, and, as they did so, there was the sound of a loud and excited voice above.

"You rotten Outsider!"

Tom Merry and his chums exchanged a look.

It was Wally's voice, and he was evidently addressing the Outsider of St. Jim's. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was in trouble again.

The Terrible Three hastened their steps.

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There were three or four Third-Formers in the passage, and the Outsider of St. Jim's, with eyes that glinted with the old light, was advancing upon them savagely.

Lumley-Lumley's face was red with rage, and it was clear that the fags had exasperated him, though in what manner the chums of the Shell did not know.

But the Outsider's savage looks, as he ran at the Third-Formers, showed pretty plainly that he was quite the old Lumley-Lumley again.

He grasped Wally by the collar, and boxed his ears with savage force, the fag kicking and struggling all the time.

Jameson and Curly Gibson and Joe Frayne rushed to the rescue.

Tom Merry dashed up.

"Hold on!" he shouted.

The struggle ceased.

"Crkey!" murmured Joe. "It's Master Tom! Chuck it!"

The Outsider swung back from the fags with blazing eyes and flushed cheeks. The fags were breathing hard, and looking very savage.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Mind your own business!" cried Lumley-Lumley.

Tom Merry coloured.

"Oh, we can take care of ourselves!" said Wally cheerfully, rubbing a reddened nose as he spoke. "He won't get much change out of us. Jameson was speaking about the way he played yesterday, that was all. He wouldn't have heard, only he was sneaking along the passage and we didn't hear him coming."

"You young cub——"

Same to you, and many of 'em," said D'Arcy minor cheerfully.

Lumley-Lumley ground his teeth.

He made a movement to rush upon the Third-Formers again, but Tom Merry stepped in the way.

"Hold on!" he said quietly.

Lumley-Lumley looked at him with blazing eyes.

"Keep out of this!" he said fiercely.

"There's been enough of it—stop it."

"Will you get aside?"

"No!"

Lumley-Lumley drew a deep hissing breath.

"I guess that finishes it," he said.

And he walked away savagely.

"Good, riddance!" said Wally cheerfully. "We've been taken in by that chap, Tom Merry, old son. Leopards can't change their spots, you know."

Tom Merry went into his study without replying. But he was very much inclined to agree with Wally there.

CHAPTER 9.

The Decoy.

LEVISON looked up with a grin as Lumley-Lumley came into the study. It really seemed as if he had seen the happenings in the passage; but he was sitting at the table when the Outsider came in.

Lumley-Lumley slammed the door, and threw himself into a chair. He bent his brows savagely upon Levison.

The latter's grin widened.

"Well?" he said.

"Well?" snapped the Outsider.

"You've been rowing with Tom Merry?"

"You've been spying as usual."

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Have you retained the passage for private performances?" he asked. "I naturally looked out when I saw a row going on."

The Outsider was savagely silent.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had a most bitter and unpleasant temper when it was roused, and that it was roused now was shown in his darkened brows and glinting eyes.

"I wondered how long it would last," went on Levison evenly. "It's lasted less than two days. I didn't expect it to last so long."

"Oh, shut up!"

"Certainly, if you wish."

Levison reopened a book, and began to read. Lumley-Lumley watched him angrily. He expected Levison to begin speaking again. But Levison did not. The calm way he turned page after page showed that he was really reading. Lumley-Lumley broke out at last.

"Haven't you anything to say, hang you?"

Levison lowered his book.

"Yes, if you care to listen," he replied.

"Well, go on, then."

"I imagine you've had enough of Tom Merry & Co. by this time!" said Levison, with a grin. "I told you how it would work, but you wouldn't listen. The Good-little-Jimmy bizney does not suit you."

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Lumley-Lumley growled, but made no other response.

"They're chucking you, just as I predicted," said Levison. "You're done for as far as the footer is concerned. If Tom Merry still thinks of playing you—which I think is very unlikely after what's just happened—the other fellows will be down on him like a cageful of monkeys."

"I know that."

"Then you haven't a dog's chance."

"I guess not."

"It's the same in everything else. They're getting up a new number of 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' but you won't be asked to have a hand in it."

Lumley-Lumley was silent.

"You're out of everything. Why not accept the position as it is, then, and have some fun where you can get it."

The Outsider bit his lip.

"I've tried my best to pull with them," he said slowly.

"Of course you have, but you've failed."

"Yes, I've failed. I don't deny that it was partly my fault, but I think they might have given me a little more rope. They might have made things a bit easier for me."

"That wasn't their game, I suppose."

"I shouldn't wonder if you're right."

"Anyway, you've done with them now?" Levison suggested.

Lumley-Lumley nodded.

"Then what do you say to some fun on our own?" asked Levison. "I had it fixed for last night, but I put it off till you could take a hand."

"What's the game?"

"We get out of the dorm. after lights out—after the other fellows are asleep, of course, or Blake might interfere."

"He'd better not interfere with me," said the Outsider, with savagely glowing eyes.

Levison laughed.

"That's more like yourself," he said. "But still, we'll keep out of a row if we can. No good starting a rumpus in the dorm. Look here, if we can get out of St. Jim's without being found out, we can have a ripping time. I've heard about your old exploits down at the Green Man."

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"I made them sit up there," he said. "They caught me for a gull, and I skinned them inside out."

"That's it—Joliffe has told me. Well, I've seen Joliffe——"

The Outsider looked curiously and keenly at Levison.

"So you know Joliffe?" he said.

"Yes, rather."

"You and Mellish go to the Green Man, then?"

"Why not?"

"And you want me to come with you?"

"It won't be anything new for you, will it?" said Levison, with a sneer.

"No, I guess not."

"And it's great fun. Joliffe asked me to tell you that he'd be glad to see you as soon as he heard that you were back at St. Jim's. He's willing to let bygones be bygones; though you did skin him rather badly."

The Outsider chuckled.

"I shall skin him again."

"Oh, I don't know. He's willing to take the risk."

Lumley-Lumley looked Levison up and down. He knew the thoughts and the motives of Ernest Levison as well as the junior himself knew them.

"So that's where you and Mellish are going to-night?" he asked.

"Yes, that's it."

"And you've promised Joliffe to bring me?"

Levison looked a little uncomfortable.

"Well, you see," he said, "he'd like to see you, and I'd like you to come, and——"

"I guess you can't take me in for a sucker," said Lumley-Lumley contemptuously. "I know the whole game."

Levison turned red.

"I don't understand you!" he exclaimed.

"I guess you do. Joliffe has offered to make it worth your while to get me down to the Green Man. He knows I've heaps of money. He thinks he will be able to ring in a cold deal on me this time."

"You needn't come if you don't choose," said Levison uneasily.

"But I do choose," said the Outsider coolly. "As a matter of fact, I've only been half-hearted about the new line I was following. I was beginning to get sick of the whole business. Footer's not so good as draw poker."

"Tom Merry was a duffer not to see it from the first."

"Mind, I've done my best," said Lumley-Lumley. "I don't know that I shall drop it altogether, either. But I'm going down to the Green Man with you to-night, if only for a change. I want livening up."

"Exactly. Come by all means."

"What time?"

"We get out at ten, if all the fellows are asleep."

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"Good! I'll be awake."

Mellish came into the study. There was an unpleasant grin on his face. The two juniors looked at him.

"Well, what's the joke?" demanded Lumley-Lumley, angrily. "You are!"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the Outsider, clenching his hands angrily.

Mellish promptly moved round the table.

"Keep your wool on!" he said. "It's the 'Weekly,' that's all. I hear they're doing a long article descriptive of your exploits in the footer match yesterday. Lowther has turned out a limberick on the subject, and the fags are all chanting it."

"I don't believe it."

"It begins like this:

"An outsider—you all know his name—
Who never could play a fair game—"

"Oh, shut up!" exclaimed Lumley-Lumley.

"Certainly!" grinned Mellish. "It's rather amusing, though. It seems that it's going to occupy quite a prominent place in the 'Weekly.'"

Lumley-Lumley started to his feet.

"We'll see about that!" he exclaimed, angrily. "Are they doing the 'Weekly' now?"

"Yes; in Tom Merry's study."

"Then I'll jolly soon have that out with them!"

Lumley-Lumley swung out of the room. He strode along the passage to Tom Merry's study, and turned the handle of the door.

The door did not open. Lumley-Lumley shoved at it angrily, but it was locked on the inside. He hammered on the panels with his fists.

"Tom Merry!"

"Hallo!"

"Open the door!"

"Can't be did!"

"I want to speak to you."

"Impossible! No admittance during business hours. This is the editorial office of 'Tom Merry's Weekly' just now."

"I want—"

"See you later."

"Are you doing the 'Weekly'?"

"Yes."

"I want to speak to you about it."

"Some other time."

"Look here!"

"Rats!"

"Will you open this door?" roared Lumley-Lumley.

"No!"

Lumley-Lumley kicked and hammered savagely, till a prefect's voice roared up the stairs to know what that confounded noise was about. Then Lumley-Lumley desisted, and retired from the spot with flushed cheeks and gleaming eyes.

CHAPTER 10.

Lumley Looks In.

"GET on with the washing," said Tom Merry, cheerfully, as the hammering ceased at the door of the study. Manners and Lowther grinaed.

Lumley-Lumley was not the first to interrupt their editorial labours, and they did not expect that he would be the last.

But during editorial hours they did not mean to be interrupted. All other matters had to stand over for that most important one of preparing the "Weekly" for publication. As a matter of fact, Mellish had drawn upon his imagination for the tale he had told the Outsider, and the Terrible Three had no intention whatever of mentioning Lumley-Lumley in the paper. Least said soonest mended, was Tom Merry's idea; and in any case, slating a fellow in the school paper was likely to do more harm than good.

And so the chums of the Shell did not know what personal reason Lumley-Lumley had for disturbing them. As soon as he was gone, they settled down cheerfully to their work once more.

Three pens scratched busily over sheets of nice white foolscap. So busy were the juniors, that they did not see a shadow darken the window from outside.

The window of the study was a very considerable distance from the ground, and the juniors were far from expecting anybody to look in. True, New House raiders had on a famous occasion got in there by using Taggles's long ladder. But there was no thought of raids just now. Figgins & Co. of the New House were as keen on producing the new number of the 'Weekly' as the School-House fellows could be.

A face looked in at the window.

It was Lumley-Lumley's face.

The Outsider looked through the glass, and his eyes gleamed as he saw the Terrible Three busily at work at the table.

The table was covered with papers, many and many sheets, some of them covered with writing, some partly covered, and a great many blank.

The Terrible Three seemed to be working away against time. Editorial labours were heavy for them.

The Outsider grinned.

Two juniors below were holding the ladder he was standing upon. They were, of course, Levison and Mellish.

Mellish was a little uneasy as to what the results of the raid might be. He did not like the prospect of being hammered by the chums of the Shell.

But he was as glad as Levison to back the Outsider up in any attack upon the Terrible Three. The chums of the Shell would hardly keep on friendly terms with Lumley-Lumley when he had carried out his present scheme.

The Outsider had a large garden squirt in his hands. It had been filled with a concoction of red ink and water.

The sheets of the "Weekly" were not likely to be in a fit state to send to the printer, after that had been discharged over them; nor were the youthful editors likely to be in an enviable state.

Lumley-Lumley watched the Terrible Three at work for a moment.

Then, with a sudden movement, he threw up the lower sash of the window.

The noise, of course, alarmed the editorial staff of the 'Weekly.' They started up, staring in amazement at the face at the open window.

"Lumley!"

"Get out!"

"Buzz off!"

Monty Lowther grasped an inkpot.

The Outsider grinned, and raised the squirt. The three Shell fellows sprang towards him.

"Drop it!" roared Tom Merry.

"I guess not!"

"You duffer—Oh! Ow!"

"Yaroo!"

Whizz-z-z-splash!

Lumley-Lumley discharged the great squirt, and a stream of ink and water shot at the Terrible Three.

It smothered them, and fell in great splashes over the table, drenching the heaps of papers, and staining them red.

Tom Merry had the worst of it, and he staggered back, blinded by the stream in his eyes. Manners staggered and fell. Monty Lowther rushed forward.

The Outsider slid down the ladder without touching the rungs.

He was out of Monty Lowther's reach in a twinkling. The three young rascals looked up to the window, yelling with laughter.

Monty Lowther still had the inkpot in his hand. He leaned out of the window, and inverted it over the three grinning faces.

"Oh!" roared Mellish, as the black ink swamped into his face.

They rushed away, leaving the ladder where it was standing. Monty Lowther turned back into the study.

Manners was sitting on the hearthrug, gasping. Tom Merry was leaning against the door, gouging ink and water out of his eyes.

The papers on the table were drenched and ruined. Most of the labour the editors had put into the "Weekly" so far was wasted.

"Ow!" gasped Manners. "I'm p-p-poisoned! I g-g-got some of the filthy stuff in my m-mouth!"

"Groo!"

"I—I can't see!" gasped Tom Merry. "Here, I'm going to get this washed off!"

"Groo! I'm poisoned!"

"It was Lumley-Lumley!" growled Monty Lowther. "The 'Weekly's' spoiled! The whole thing's inked and mucked up!"

"The rotter!"

"The waster!"

The Terrible Three rushed from the study. They sought a bath-room in hot haste. Fellows who met them in the passage yelled with laughter.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was the only one who did not laugh. "Have you had a fearful accident, dear boys?"

"Groo!"

"You are bleeding fearfully!"

"Ass! It's red ink!"

"Wed ink!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's in the greatest astonishment.

"Yes, ass. Lemme pass!"

"B-b-but what have you been pourin' wed ink ovah each other for?" asked Arthur Augustus, innocently.

"Ass!"

"Weally, you fellows—ow!"

Arthur Augustus sat down in the passage as the chums of the Shell pushed him aside and rushed on.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped. "They must be off their workahs!"

"Blake, old man, keep out of their way; they're dangerous."

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NEXT WEEK: "TOM MERRY versus JACK BLAKE."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three rubbed and scrubbed savagely in the bath-room. But red ink is not easy to get rid of, especially when it has been used in liberal quantities. The chums of the Shell were kept busy cleaning themselves until close upon time for afternoon lessons.

They said things, all the time. They made the most liberal promises as to what should happen to Lumley-Lumley when they saw him again.

But when they had finished cleaning up, and started forth to look for the Outsider, he was not to be found. Lumley-Lumley carefully kept out of sight till the bell rang for afternoon school, and the Terrible Three had to go in with the Shell, with their vengeance still unsatisfied.

"Never mind!" said Monty Lowther, grimly. "Wait till after school!"

Which augured ill for the Outsider of St. Jim's, as soon as lessons should be over that day.

CHAPTER 11.

Spool.

"WHERE'S Lumley?"

"Where's the Outsider?"

The Terrible Three came along the passage as the Fourth Form poured out of their Form-room, looking for Lumley-Lumley.

"Where's the Outsider?"

It was a significant question.

For it was the first time Lumley-Lumley had been called the Outsider since his return to St. Jim's.

But the chums of the Shell called him that again, unconsciously. His conduct was so "outside," that the word came naturally.

Lumley-Lumley came out of the Form-room with the rest of the Fourth. He had avoided the Terrible Three before afternoon school. But he could not avoid them now.

Lumley-Lumley could not count upon a friend in the Fourth to stand by him. Levison and Mellish were his friends, certainly. But if the chums of the Shell chose to "go for" him, Mellish and Levison were likely to find important business in another direction.

But the Outsider was quite cool and collected.

Whatever happened to him, he was not likely to lack courage to endure it, or coolness at any time.

He stopped, as he heard the Terrible Three inquiring after him, and faced them with his hands in his pockets.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What's the mattah, deah boys?"

"Heah he is."

"Lumley! You cad!"

"Hallo!" said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "Got all the ink off? Levison—Mellish—where are you going? These chaps want to see you."

But Levison and Mellish did not seem to hear. They walked away very quickly.

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"I guess they don't want to see you," he remarked.

"It's you we want to see," broke out Manners angrily.

"You've mucked all we've done of the 'Weekly'."

"I guess so."

"We shall have to do it over again."

"I reckoned you would."

"To say nothing of drenching us with ink!" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"A jape's a jape," he replied.

"I call that a bit too thick for a jape," said Tom Merry warmly. "What did you do it for? What had we done to you?"

"I guess you know."

"I certainly don't."

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, there's no love lost between us," he exclaimed. "Look here, I guess you're going to bump me. You're three to one, and I can't stop you. Go ahead."

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry coloured.

"We're not three to one," he replied. "You can put up your fists to any one of us—and choose which one."

"That's fair enough," said Jack Blake.

"Yeas, wathah!"

"Well, choose your man," said Monty Lowther. "I'll stand you a feed if you pick me! I do so want to lick you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lumley-Lumley eyed the three over keenly.

He was in for a fight, and he knew that he was not a match

for any of the Terrible Three. He intended to pick out the least formidable.

He stepped forward, and struck Manners in the face with his open palm. The blow rang like a pistol shot, and it was so sudden that Manners could not guard against it. The Shell fellow staggered back.

"What the—" he ejaculated.

"You rotter!"

"I choose you," said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "I'm ready to adjudge to the gym, as soon as you like."

Manners's eyes blazed with rage. He was usually a very cool and quiet fellow, but the Outsider's action would have exasperated a saint.

"Come on," he said, between his teeth. "I'll make you sorry for that."

"I guess I'm ready."

The juniors, in the midst of a crowd of others, swarmed off towards the gym.

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, came out of the Shell Form-room, and glanced at the excited crowd as they swarmed out into the quadrangle.

He stood in the doorway looking after them, with a perplexed expression upon his face, and watched them disappear into the gym.

Then he slowly followed them. It was not difficult for Mr. Linton to guess what was toward.

Meanwhile, the juniors had poured into the gymnasium, and Manners had his coat off and his cuffs pushed up. He was breathing vengeance. The Outsider did not seem to be in a hurry.

A junior offered to be his second—it was Reilly—but Lumley-Lumley waved him aside. He had no sympathiser there.

"I guess I don't want a second," he said.

"Faith, it's as you choose."

"Bah! You know you'd be glad to see me licked, second or no second," said Lumley-Lumley savagely.

Reilly looked directly at him.

"Faith, and you're right," he said. "I never saw a spalpeen I'd sooner see licked than you, Lumley-Lumley."

"Hear, hear!" said Jack Blake.

The Outsider shrugged his shoulders. More than ever he had dropped into his old cynical humour, and seemed impervious to the dislike he aroused on all sides.

"Are you ready?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"I guess so."

"Then begin."

Manners and Lumley-Lumley faced one another.

Manners started the attack, hard and fast. He meant to punish the Outsider for that slap in the face, and if the fight had proceeded, punished Lumley-Lumley certainly would have been.

But hardly had a blow been struck when Mr. Linton entered the gym.

The master of the Shell, with a frowning face, hurried towards the ring round the combatants, with rustling gown.

"Boys!"

Lumley-Lumley had just reeled back under Manners's first blow.

He would have recovered from that blow, but as he heard the Form-master's voice he did not choose to recover, but fell heavily to the floor.

"Boys! Stop this instantly."

Manners dropped his hands.

The master of the Shell came up angrily. The fellows separated to let him reach the spot.

He gazed at Lumley-Lumley, who still lay upon the floor groaning, and then at the Terrible Three accusingly.

"So you are fighting with Lumley-Lumley, Manners?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said Manners quietly.

"You have hurt him."

"I hit him, sir."

"You are perfectly aware, Manners, that Lumley-Lumley has only recently returned here after an absence due to illness," exclaimed Mr. Linton severely.

Manners flushed red. In an instant he saw the Outsider's object in pretending to be hurt. As a matter of fact, Lumley-Lumley was as fit and well as Manners was himself, and all the fellows knew it. The Form-master was the only one there who did not know it, because Lumley had succeeded in giving him a false impression.

"He is all right now, sir," exclaimed Manners.

"He has been ill!"

"Yes, but—"

"And he has only been at school a few days. I think, Manners, you should have been more considerate."

Manners bit his lip and was silent.

"If Lumley-Lumley is really hurt you will be very severely punished, Manners," said Mr. Linton.

Lumley-Lumley groaned.

Most of the fellows standing round clenched their hands with

rage. They knew very well that Lumley-Lumley was only railing, with the direct intention of getting Manners into trouble with the Form-master.

It was exactly one of the Outsider's old tricks, and it showed that at bottom his nature was the same as ever.

Mr. Linton bent over the fallen junior.

"Lumley, are you hurt?"

"Oh, sir! I—I'm all right," said Lumley-Lumley faintly.

Mr. Linton gave Manners a stern glance.

"I hope you are satisfied with what you have done, Manners," he said. "I do not care who provoked this quarrel—you should not have attacked a lad in a weak state of health."

"He isn't in a weak state of health, sir," burst out Blake.

"He's all right, sir. He's only shamming, sir."

Mr. Linton frowned.

"You have no right to make such an allegation, Blake. And do you think I am an infant to be deceived by shamming?"

"But, sir—"

"Go to your Form-master at once, Blake, and report to him that you have been guilty of impertinence to the master of the Shell!"

Blake turned crimson.

But he had to obey, and he left the gym with slow and reluctant steps. The other juniors did not venture any opinion upon the genuineness or otherwise of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's attack.

"Manners, you will remain indoors the rest of to-day, and you will take a thousand lines," said Mr. Linton.

"Oh, sir."

"If anything of this sort happens again, I shall cane you."

Manners compressed his lips.

"Now, Lumley, let me help you to the house," said Mr. Linton kindly.

The Outsider rose with a great apparent effort, and, leaning on Mr. Linton's arm, and walking slowly, quitted the gym.

He left the juniors furious.

CHAPTER 12.

More for Manners.

"THE cad!"

"The rotten outsider!"

"The low-down bounder."

"Bai Jove! I regard the fellow's conduct as utterly unspeakable, you know."

"The worm!"

"The toad!"

"Are you going to play him in the House match after this, Tom Merry?"

"Bai Jove! I should refuse to play with him."

"The horrid worm!"

"The beastly cad!"

These remarks, and many more, were passed by the angry Shell fellows and Fourth-Formers as Lumley-Lumley quitted the gym, leaning heavily upon Mr. Linton's arm.

The juniors did not blame Mr. Linton. He had been taken in by the Outsider; Lumley-Lumley was cunning enough to take anybody in. Besides, the fact that he had been recently ill lent colour to his humbug on this occasion.

Mr. Linton had been deceived. But what contempt was deep enough for the fellow who had deceived him?

Lumley-Lumley had broken every law of schoolboy honour. He had lied outrageously, though without speaking, in affecting to be ill. He had brought a Form-master into a private quarrel against his adversary. He had caused his adversary to be punished severely. He had definitely set the whole of the Lower School against him. After this, how could anybody stand the Outsider?

That he did not seem to be aware of the baseness of his conduct was no excuse. It only showed that he was base to the very core.

He was an outsider—a rank outsider!

Was there a fellow left who felt inclined to make the least possible defence of him? Only Tom Merry's voice was silent in the general howl of condemnation.

Tom walked away very quietly, saying nothing.

But the rest were unanimous. Lumley-Lumley was impossible—Lumley-Lumley would have to be barred!

The fellow was as bad as ever—or worse! He had not improved in the slightest degree. His good behaviour for a few days had worn off, and he was the same old Outsider—the same old unscrupulous and unforgiving rascal.

That was clear enough to the juniors.

"It's awfully wuff on you, Mannahs, old chap," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sympathetically. "You won't even be able to give the wotah a faithful thwashin' now."

Manners nodded gloomily.

He did not feel the punishment so much as having sunk in the estimation of his Form-master. Mr. Linton was a somewhat hasty gentleman, but Manners valued his good opinion, and he felt that he had lost it now. It was as if the Outsider had selected the tenderest spot for planting his blow.

"We'll all lend a hand doing the lines," Digby remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Twenty chaps, doing fifty each, will soon get through them," said Monty Lowther consolingly. "That's all right, as far as the lines go."

"It's wuff, though, that Mannahs has got to stay in," said D'Arcy. "If you like, Mannahs, I will come into your study, and sing you some of my tenah solos."

"Oh, rats!" said Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Br-r-r-r!"

Manners walked away with Monty Lowther. As he entered the School House he met the Outsider of St. Jim's.

Lumley-Lumley gave him a cynical grin. There was no trace of illness about the Outsider now.

"You cad!" said Manners, between his teeth.

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"You came out at the little end of the horn that time, I guess," he remarked.

"You rotten cad!"

"Hard names break no bones," said Lumley-Lumley.

"You ought to be kicked out of the school."

"Anything else?"

"I'll never speak to you again."

"I guess that won't hurt me."

"You cad! If it weren't for what Mr. Linton said, I'd go for you now, and smash you," said Manners, his voice trembling with rage.

"I daresay you would," assented the Outsider coolly. "But you dare not, you see."

Manners clenched his hands.

"Come away, Manners, old man," said Monty Lowther, slipping his hand through his chain's arm. "Don't talk to him."

"The cad—"

"Yes, he's a rotten cad, but you can't get into a row with him now. Can't you see he's trying to provoke you, so as to get Linton down on you again?"

"Yes, I know he is, the worm!"

"Well, come on."

Lumley-Lumley burst into a mocking laugh as the chains of the Shell passed him. Manners turned round, his face flaming with rage.

"I can't touch you now," he exclaimed, "but—but wait a bit, till—"

"Oh, rats!"

"You coward! If it wasn't for the Form-master, you wouldn't dare to cheek me like that!" cried Manners fiercely.

"Bah!"

"Let me go, Lowther!" howled Manners. "I can't stand him! I'm going to smash him!"

"Hold on—"

"Oh, let him go," said Lumley-Lumley tauntingly. "Don't stop him! Let the sweet youth have his way."

"You rotter!" said Lowther wrathfully.

Manners broke away from his chain, and ran at the outsider. Lumley-Lumley put up his fists, backing away towards the door of Mr. Linton's study. He knew that the master of the Shell was in his room. Manners was too enraged and excited to think about it at all.

"Now then, you cad!" shouted Manners. "Come on!"

"I guess I'm ready."

Manners hit out furiously. Lumley-Lumley staggered back, and fell with a crash against Mr. Linton's door.

In a moment the door was flung open from within by the angry Form-master, and he stared at the Outsider, rolling at his feet, and then at the dismayed Manners.

His brow became black as thunder.

Manners dropped his hands, staring at the Form-master helplessly. He was hopelessly in the wrong again.

"Manners!" exclaimed Mr. Linton. "So you are at this again! Come into my study!"

The Outsider staggered to his feet. He gave Manners a triumphant grin as the latter passed into the Shell-master's study.

Mr. Linton took up a cane.

"Speaking to you seems to be useless, Manners," he said. "I shall now try other methods. Hold out your hand."

Manners obeyed without a word.

He was too indignant, and too angry, to speak a word in his own defence; and the angry Form-master probably would not have listened to him.

He was caned twice upon each hand, and then Mr. Linton dismissed him from the study. He went with glowing eyes.

Monty Lowther was waiting for him outside.

ANSWERS

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 158.

NEXT WEEK: "TOM MERRY versus JACK BLAKE." Another Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Hard cheese, old chap," said Lowther. "We'll make that rotter sit up for it soon, though. Our turn will come." Manners nodded without speaking. His feelings, at that moment, were too deep for words.

CHAPTER 13.

No Rag!

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY had evidently dropped his new line definitely. He was his old self again—indeed, as Blake remarked, he was more his old self than ever.

He seemed to be doing his very best to make himself the most thoroughly disliked fellow at St. Jim's.

And he was succeeding.

Even Tom Merry could hardly find excuses for him now. And Tom Merry was the last who made any attempt to do so.

In his own Form, Lumley-Lumley was regarded with unconcealed contempt and aversion. Levison and Mellish were glad of his company. Nobody else wanted it.

When he spoke to Blake that evening in the common-room, Blake turned his back upon him without a word. Blake was fed up with the Outsider.

Lumley-Lumley's cheeks glowed a dull red at the rebuff; then he shrugged his shoulders. He cared little.

It had always been his boast that he was sufficient to himself. If the Fourth Form did not want his friendship, he did not want theirs. At least, that was what he said to himself.

He had come back to St. Jim's with good intentions and high hopes. Both were over now. He was once more the "Outsider."

He did not think that it was wholly his own fault. He knew that it was partly his own fault, but he did not care.

Levison had spoken truly when he said that Lumley-Lumley would grow tired of the "good conduct" tack.

Something a little more exciting was more in the Outsider's line.

He was looking forward to the night when the ends of the Fourth were to break bounds to pay the promised visit to the Green Man. Lumley-Lumley was very keen to be at his old game again. It seemed to him ages since he had handled a pack of cards, or heard the dice rattle.

When bedtime came Lumley-Lumley yawned and threw down the book he had been looking at, and went up with the rest of the Fourth.

Levison gave him a significant glance, but did not speak. It was better not to be seen discussing their intentions. They did not want to excite suspicion in the Fourth. Jack Blake, if he had known what was intended, would certainly have taken it upon himself to put a stop to the scheme.

"Tumble in," said Kildare, and he left the dormitory to give the juniors a few minutes to "tumble in."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and looked round the Fourth-Form dormitory.

"I have an ideah, deah boys—" he began.

"Keep it till to-morrow," suggested Digby.

"Weally, Dig! I have a wipph' ideah. I wegard Lumley-Lumley as havin' acted in a wotten and disgwaeful mannah in shammin' illness to-day, in ordah to get Mannahs into a wov with his Form-mastah."

"Yes, rather."

"It was rotten."

"Caddish!"

"Quite outside."

"Unspakable!"

"Just like Lumley!"

The Outsider's eyes glittered, but he went quietly on taking his boots off, and made no remark.

"Well, deah boys, as you all agree with me in the peish. I have taken up, I suppose you will agree unanimously that the uttah wottah ought to be wagged."

"Hear, hear!"

Lumley-Lumley looked up.

"I wegard it as a wipph' ideah to wag him, to show our disapprovahl of his wotten conduct," said D'Arcy. "What do you fellows say?"

"Good egg!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Vewy well, deah boys—"

"No go," said Jack Blake. "The fellow isn't fit to touch. Leave him alone, that's my opinion."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Faith, and ye're right," said Reilly. "I don't care about laying decent Irish hands on a chap like that."

"Yaas, I fully appreciate your point of view, Weilly. But, at the same time, I wegard it as a good ideah to wag the wottah, and I think it ought to be left to the majowity of the Form to decide."

"Hear, hear!"

"What do you fellows say, then?"

"Rag him!"

The GEN LIBRARY.—No. 158.

"Put him through it."

"Good egg!"

There was no doubt which way the feeling of the School-House Fourth-Formers ran. They considered the ragging of Lumley-Lumley to be the best idea ever put forth by the brilliant brain of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

D'Arcy looked up and down the dormitory through his eyeglass. There was no doubt that the great majority of the Form were on his side.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley sat on the edge of his bed quietly, his eyes glittering. He seemed to have nothing to say. He was still unlacing his boots quietly.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his monocle upon Blake.

"You see, deah boy, the majowity is against you," he remarked.

Blake nodded.

"Well, rag him, I don't care."

"I wegard it as the duty of the Fourth to wag the wottah," said Arthur Augustus. "We are called upon to show our contempt for his wotten conduct. It's up to us to show that such mean wottenness will not be toleated in the Fourth Form."

"Hear, hear!"

"Faith, and ye're right."

"Good old Gussy!"

"Then we will wag the wottah. I suggest tossin' him in a blanket, you know, and then makin' him wun the gauntlet."

"Good!"

"Put the bounder through it!"

Kildare opened the dormitory door, and the excited voices died away. The captain of St. Jim's looked severely at the Fourth-Formers.

"Not in bed yet!" he exclaimed.

"Weally, Kildare—"

"You have not even begun to undress, D'Arcy. Are you going to keep me up here all the evening?" exclaimed Kildare sharply.

"Sowwy, deah boy."

"Well, buck up!"

"Certainly, Kildare. You see—"

"Get to bed!" roared the captain of St. Jim's.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Lumley-Lumley rose from his bed. He looked coolly at the captain of St. Jim's as he unfastened his collar-stud.

"D'Arcy has been too busy talking to have had time to undress, I guess," he said. "They are planning a ragging after lights are out, Kildare."

"What?"

Kildare stared directly at the Outsider. He was taken by surprise.

The Fourth-Formers gasped. That the Outsider—even the Outsider—would sneak in this way to the captain of the school was a shock to them.

True, it was rough upon Lumley-Lumley to have to go through the ragging when an appeal to a prefect would have insured him protection, but it was required of him by the commonest sense of schoolboy honour. To drag a senior into junior quarrels was against all rules.

After Lumley-Lumley's conduct in the gym, the Fourth-Formers might have expected it certainly. But they hadn't! Kildare looked fixedly at the Outsider.

"Explain yourself," he said sharply.

"D'Arcy and the rest are arranging to rag me after lights out," said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "I appeal to you for protection."

Kildare's lip curled.

"You will certainly be protected," said Kildare. "Blake!"

"Yes," said Jack Blake.

"You are head of the Form in the School House, Blake. I call upon you to see that order is kept in this dormitory to-night. There is to be no ragging, no infraction of the rules in any way. You understand?"

"Yes, Kildare."

"Mind, I make you responsible for what happens in the dormitory to-night," said Kildare. "There is to be no ragging, and no breaking of the rules of any kind. You will have to answer for it, Blake."

"Very well," said Blake quietly.

"Now get to bed."

The juniors turned in.

Kildare extinguished the light and left the dormitory. There was a dead silence as the door closed behind the stalwart captain of St. Jim's. The silence lasted only a few moments. Then the storm broke.

"Cad!"

"Rotter!"

"Cur!"

"Sneak!"

"Outsider!"

"Worm!"

Lumley-Lumley chuckled in his bed. He expected nothing.



The Outsider looked through the window, and his eyes gleamed as he saw Tom Merry and Co. busily at work at the table. (See page 11.)

worse than words, and words could not hurt him. He was hardened to them.

"I guess you can keep it up," he exclaimed. "Go on! Any more nice things to say?"

"Rat!"

"Rotter!"

"Toad!"

"Pig!"

"Yankee bounder!"

"Beast!"

"Feahful outsiders!"

"Sneak!"

The juniors piled it on. Every fellow, nearly, had something to say, and said it. They could do no active ragging without Jack Blake being held responsible, and that, of course, was not to be thought of. But they could say what they thought of the Outsider, and they did.

Lumley-Lumley, if he had had any feelings at all, must have felt the insults that were showered upon him. It seemed strange that any fellow with blood in his veins should not feel the general loathing and contempt that was poured out upon him in a flood. But Lumley-Lumley only chuckled. He seemed to be amused by the outburst of the Fourth, and to have no other feeling upon the subject whatever.

The juniors ceased at last. There was, as Digby remarked, no penetrating the thick hide of the Outsider. He was impervious to verbal attacks, and any other attack was barred by the authority of the captain of St. Jim's.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Blake, at last, in sheepish disgust. "He doesn't care! How can you expect a rotten worm like that to care what we say to him?"

"You are wight, Blake. The awful cad hasn't any feelin's at all."

Lumley-Lumley chuckled again.

"Oh, keep it up!" he exclaimed. "It's entertaining."

"You uttah wottah!"

"Cad!"

"Sneak!"

"Outsider!"

But the epithets trailed off at last. The indignation of the Fourth-Formers had spent itself in vituperation. They would have given whole terms of pocket-money to rag the Outsider. But it was impossible. Jack Blake had been made responsible for any disorder that night in the Fourth-Form dormitory in the School House, and he would have had to interfere if any ragging had been attempted.

"Oh let's get to sleep!" exclaimed Blake at last. "Leave him alone. He makes me sick."

"Yaas wathah!"

And the juniors settled down to sleep. Some of the more excited ones called out for ragging Lumley-Lumley, but Blake put a stopper on that at once.

"It can't be done," he said decidedly. "You heard what Kildare said. I should have to stop you. Chuck it!"

"Oh rats!" said Hancock. "I don't see why you can't go to sleep and leave us to do as we like."

"Orders are orders, my son."

Hancock snorted. But Blake had his way. The dormitory settled down to sleep at last. But Jack Blake did not go to sleep. His responsibility was heavy upon him. He knew that some excited youth might get out of bed as soon as Blake was supposed to be asleep to wreak vengeance upon the Outsider. And Jack Blake remained awake, and intended to remain awake for some time yet, to see that nothing of the kind should happen.

CHAPTER 14.

Jack Blake Chips In

LUMLEY-LUMLEY did not sleep. It was at ten o'clock that Levison had arranged to leave the dormitory, but the excitement had caused the juniors to remain awake unusually late.

Ten o'clock had chimed out from the old clock tower, and the voices had not all died away in the Fourth Form dormitory.

But at last the voices were silent. Snores and deep breathing were the only sounds heard in the dormitory.

Half-past ten struck. Then Lumley-Lumley sat up in bed. "Levison!" he whispered.

"I'm awake," came an answering whisper from Levison's bed.

"Mellish!"

"All serene."

"Up you get!"

"Righto!"

Jack Blake, with his eyes half open, half awake, started into broad wakefulness. Low and whispering as the voices were, they were quite audible in the dead silence of the dormitory.

Blake sat bolt upright in bed.

That something was "on" among the cads of the Fourth was quite clear. And Blake remembered, with a grim smile, that he had been made responsible for any infraction of the rules that might happen in the Fourth-Form dormitory that night. He was bound to put a stop to any ragging of Lumley-Lumley, but he was equally bound to put a stop to any rascality on the part of the Outsider.

It was quite clear! Kildare had made him responsible for anything that happened out of the usual routine. And Blake grinned in the darkness. Whatever little game the Outsider and his friends had planned, Blake meant to take a hand in it.

He heard a sound of the fellows getting out of bed. He heard them dressing, and wondered whether he should speak. What was their intention? Were they going to raid someone, or to break bounds? Or what?

He remained silent.

"Ready, you fellows?" whispered Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes."

"Come on, then! We shall be late."

"Right you are."

Jack Blake heard the dormitory door open. By that time he had made up his mind. He leaped out of bed.

"Lumley-Lumley!" he rapped out.

There was a gasp in the darkness.

"Is that you, Blake?"

"Yes."

"I thought you were asleep, hang you!"

"Well, I'm awake. Come back!"

"Rats!"

"Where are you going?"

"Mind your own business."

"You remember what Kildare said," said Blake grimly.

"I'm responsible for what happens in this dormitory to-night."

There is going to be no breaking bounds while I'm looking after things. Not if I know it!"

"Oh, go and eat cake!"

"Come back!"

"I won't!"

"Then I'll jolly soon fetch you!"

Blake ran to the door. Lumley-Lumley had the door open, and was in the passage now. Mellish and Levison had not yet joined him there. They were taken by surprise, and doubtful how to act.

"Now then, you cad!" exclaimed Blake, grasping somebody in the darkness. "Back you come!"

He whirled his prisoner back into the dormitory.

"Ow! Yow! Leggo!" gasped the voice of Mellish.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Mellish?" exclaimed Blake. "Will you get into bed?"

"Yow! Yes."

Blake pitched him upon a bed. There was a roar, and Herries awoke, and hit out blindly in the darkness.

"Yaroo!" yelled Mellish.

He caught one of Herries's fists with his chin and collapsed upon the floor.

Meanwhile, Blake had collared Levison. Levison made no resistance.

"It's all right," he said coolly. "The game is up—I know that. I'll go back to bed. You can let me go."

"Bai Jove! What's the mattah, deah boy?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, sitting up in bed and groping for his eyeglass.

"Lumley going out."

"Bai Jove! Stop him!"

"I'm going to, rather."

Levison was rushed back to his bed and bumped down there. Both Levison and Mellish went quietly to bed again.

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"JOHN BULL Jnr's WEEKLY."

A highly amusing tale of the Chorus of Greyfriars College

There was certainly a row coming now, and it was quite possible that masters or prefects would be drawn into it. In that case, Mellish and Levison preferred to be in bed. If Lumley-Lumley was fool enough to keep on, under the circumstances, he deserved whatever might happen to him.

And there was no doubt that the Outsider of St. Jim's meant to keep on. He had taken advantage of Jack Blake's being occupied with the other two to slip down the corridor.

Blake ran to the door after he had disposed of Ernest Levison. But Lumley-Lumley was no longer there.

"Lumley!" Blake called out.

There was no reply.

"Lumley, come back!"

Still no response.

"Bai Jove! He's gone, you know!"

Blake gritted his teeth.

"Then it's up to us to fetch him back!" he exclaimed.

"Bai Jove!"

"Kildare told me to look after this dorm. I'm responsible. Any of you fellows going to back me up?" demanded Blake, as he hurriedly slipped into his clothes.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What-ho!"

D'Arcy and Digby and Herries turned out at once. Somebody turned on the light of an electric glow for them to dress by.

"Four's enough," said Blake. "He can't have gone far. You others keep an eye on the other two cads, and see that they don't bolt."

"Faith, and we'll do that!" said Reilly.

"Come on, kids!"

"Pway wait a minute, Blake deah boy! I haven't put on my necktie yet!"

"Blow your necktie!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ass! Come on!"

"I refuse to be called an ass! Undah the cires, deah boys—"

"Will you come, you chump?"

"But how can I come without a necktie?"

Blake did not stop to answer that conundrum. He ran out of the dormitory, followed by Herries and Digby.

"Bai Jove! Wait for me, deah boys! I sha'n't be five minutes!"

But the dear boys did not reply, neither did they wait. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave a dissatisfied sniff, and after a moment or two of hesitation, he followed his chums minus the necktie.

CHAPTER 15.

Lumley Means Business.

TOM MERRY sat up in bed and listened.

He did not know what had awakened him. The night was calm and quiet. Only the faintest rustle of the wind could be heard in the branches of the old elms in the quadrangle.

He had a vague, sleepy impression that he had heard the door of the dormitory open, but he could not be sure. He stared through the darkness in the direction of the door, but he could not see in the deep gloom whether it was open or not.

"Hallo!" he said. "Anybody there?"

There was no answer but the faint echo of his own voice in the long, lofty room.

"If that's a giddy dorm. raid coming, you'd better go back to bed!" said Tom Merry. "It's too jolly late for that sort of game to-night!"

Silence!

But a cold draught of air playing on his face as he sat up in bed convinced Tom Merry that the dormitory door was really open.

Even as he came to the conclusion, he heard a faint sound, and knew that the door had been almost noiselessly closed. Then through the stillness of the night came other sounds—hasty footsteps passing the dormitory door—quiet, stealthy footsteps, though hasty, clear enough to Tom Merry's ears in the tense stillness of late night.

As if he had seen it all, Tom Merry knew what had happened. Someone was being pursued along the passage, and had dodged into the Shell dormitory, in the hope of being passed undiscovered by the pursuers. Whoever it was that had taken refuge in the Shell dorm. was there still!

Tom Merry felt a thrill at his heart.

Who was it? The thought of burglars crossed his mind, only to be dismissed at once. The caution and quietness of the pursuers in the corridor showed that it was not a case of burglars. Whoever the pursuers were, they were moving quietly, in order not to awaken anyone in the house.

Tom Merry reached out for a box of matches on the washstand, beside his bed, and struck one of them.

The light flickered out in the long, dark dormitory, feebly lighting up the gloom. Tom Merry held up the match.

He caught a glimpse of a form crouching just inside the dormitory door, with a hand still upon the handle.

Dim and brief as the glimpse of the crouching figure was, Tom Merry knew it at once! It was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley! "Lumley!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

The match went out. The dormitory was plunged into the deepest darkness again. There was the sound of a deep hissing breath, but no reply came in words.

"Lumley! What are you doing here?"

"Hallo! What's that?" demanded Monty Lowther's voice sleepily.

"Lumley's here!"

"The Outsider!" exclaimed Lowther, starting up into broad wakefulness at once.

"Yes."

"My hat! What's he doing here?"

"I don't know."

"The Outsider!" repeated Manners, who was now awake. "Lumley in our dorm! What's he doing here, the cad?"

The door was heard to open. The Outsider had, of course overheard every word that was uttered by the chums of the Shell.

"He's going!"

"Lumley, stop!"

Tom Merry had already sprung from his bed. He rushed to the door, and caught the handle just as Lumley-Lumley closed it from outside. He tore the door open again. In the dim passage outside he caught a glimpse of a shadowy form.

"Lumley! Hold on!"

The form fitted down the passage. Tom Merry dashed after it, and grasped it with both hands. A strong grip was laid upon him in return.

"Let go, you fool!" hissed Lumley-Lumley.

"What are you here for?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Find out!"

"I mean to!"

"Let go! Let go, I say!"

"No fear!"

Tom Merry tightened his grip. The Outsider did the same, and they struggled savagely in the darkness of the passage. Tom Merry uttered a cry as he felt a savage kick upon his bare leg, and he stumbled, and was thrown heavily to the floor. The Outsider of St. Jim's sprawled over him. Tom Merry's teeth gritted hard together.

"Oh, you coward!" he muttered.

"Let me go, then!" hissed Lumley-Lumley. "Mind your own business, you interfering hound! Let me go!"

"Never!"

They struggled on the floor, Lumley-Lumley on top. Manners and Lowther were coming out of the dormitory now.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley fought like a tiger. It was not only that he was determined to carry out his plan of going down to the Green Man; but all the angry obstinacy of his nature was aroused. He would not be prevented from carrying out his scheme. If the Head himself had appeared and ordered him to return to his bed, it is doubtful if the Outsider of St. Jim's would have obeyed.

"Let me go!" he hissed again.

"I will not!"

"Then take that, you fool!"

Something heavy in the hand of the Outsider struck Tom Merry upon the head. The hero of the Shell gave a gasping cry, and released his grip upon the Outsider.

Lumley-Lumley sprang to his feet, just as Manners and Lowther came racing down the corridor to Tom Merry's aid. The Outsider rushed away, and the Shell fellows stopped themselves just in time to avoid stumbling over their chum.

"Tom, is that you?" gasped Lowther.

"Oh, yes!"

"What's the matter?"

"I—I've had a crack on the head!" gasped Tom Merry dazedly. "The villain had a stick, or something! It's made my head sing!"

"The cowardly brute!"

"After him!" panted Manners. "You stop here, Tom——"

Tom Merry staggered up.

"Not much!" he said. "I'm all right! Come on!"

Silent in their bare feet, the chums of the Shell rushed on in the direction the Outsider of St. Jim's had taken.

Lumley-Lumley's object—to get out of the house for the purpose of breaking bounds—was quite clear to them now, and they did not mean him to effect it if they could possibly prevent him. The Terrible Three were "up against" Lumley-Lumley all the time now.

CHAPTER 16.

A Collision in the Dark.

JACK BLAKE had not paused as he passed the door of the Shell dormitory. It did not occur to him that Lumley-Lumley might have dodged into the Shell dorm. to elude his pursuers, intending to proceed when they had grown tired of waiting for him, and gone back to the dormitory.

That was the plan Lumley-Lumley would have carried out—and successfully—if Tom Merry had not awakened in the Shell dormitory. While the Outsider was busy with the Shell fellows, the Fourth-Formers had reached the window on the next floor below, from which bounds had been broken many a time, and which Blake believed Lumley-Lumley meant to use for getting out of the School House.

Blake uttered an exclamation of surprise as he ran up to the window. He had quite expected to find it open, or, at all events unfastened, and the Outsider gone! He was quite prepared to track the Outsider across the quadrangle, and down the road to Rylcombe if necessary.

But Lumley-Lumley had evidently not left the house!

Jack Blake felt over the catch of the window. It was one that could not be possibly fastened from outside. It was secure, and it proved that Lumley-Lumley had not yet quitted the School House by that exit, at all events.

"He's not gone!" Blake exclaimed.

"But he came this way!" said Digby.

"We've passed him, then."

"We couldn't have passed him in the passages," said Herries. "He must have dodged into some doorway."

"I suppose so."

"Bai Jove! Have you got him, deah boys?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, panting up in a great hurry.

Blake snorted.

"No!"

"Gweat Scott! You haven't let him get away, have you?"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"He's in the house still! Look here," said Blake hurriedly. "He may go out in another direction. One of us had better stay here and look after the window, in case he doubles back here, and the others hunt for him."

"Good! Only don't make a row. We don't want to drag the prefects into this."

"Prefects in it or not, Lumley-Lumley's not going out to-night!" said Blake grimly. "Which of you will stay here and look after the window?"

"You can leave me heah, deah boy. I have brougth my necktie with me, and I shall be able to put it on while I'm watchin' here."

"Oh, all right, ass!"

"Look here, Blake, I wefuse to be called an ass! I have mentioned several times already that I wefuse to be called an ass, and——"

"B-r-r-r-r!"

Blake, and Herries, and Digby went back along the passage, leaving the swell of St. Jim's to guard the window.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy proceeded to tie his necktie in the dark. It is to be feared that the School House swell gave more attention to his necktie than to his task of keeping watch.

"I say," muttered Herries eagerly, as the chums of the Fourth hurried through the dark passage. "I say, Blake, old man, Lumley-Lumley is very likely hiding in some corner."

"Most likely, I think."

"He may intend to lie low, perhaps, for an hour or two, till we get sick of it, and go back to bed," said Herries.

"He'll jolly well be disappointed, then! I'm not going back to bed, for one, till we've yanked that cad back to the dorm.!"

"What-ho!" said Digby.

"Yes, yes, that's all right," agreed Herries. "Only we don't want to spend half the blessed night in hunting for the cad, do we? I've got an idea for nabbing him."

"Go ahead!" said Blake crisply. "What is it?"

"Towser!"

"Eh?"

"My bulldog!" said Herries confidently. "Suppose I cut down to the kennels, and sneak Towser into the house? He'll track down Lumley-Lumley in two shakes! You know what a marvel he is at following a scent."

Blake snorted.

"You ass!"

"Look here, Blake——"

"Hallo! Listen! What's that?"

"My hat! Somebody's caught Lumley-Lumley!"

"That's Tom Merry's voice!" exclaimed Blake.

"And Lumley's!"

"The Shell chaps have got him!"

"Come on!" exclaimed Blake, breaking into a run.

The Fourth-Formers dashed on recklessly along the dark passage. They realised that somehow or other Tom Merry had got mixed up in the matter, and that he had hold of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

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NEXT WEEK: "TOM MERRY versus JACK BLAKE." Another Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

That was enough for them to know. They dashed as fast as the darkness would allow along the passage to reach the scene of action.

Suddenly a sound of hasty footsteps was audible before them in the darkness, but before they fairly realised it, or what it meant, a flying form dashed right into them, and sent them spinning right and left.

It was Lumley-Lumley, fleeing from the Terrible Three. He had dashed right into the Fourth-Formers without seeing them in the dark.

"Oh!" exclaimed Blake.

"Ow!"

"Yarook!"

Blake rolled on the floor, and Digby and Herries staggered against either wall. Lumley-Lumley reeled drunkenly from the shock.

"Hang you!" he panted through his set teeth.

"Collar him!" cried Blake, scrambling up. "It's the Outsider!"

But Lumley-Lumley was already dashing on.

He had passed the Fourth-Formers, and he did not know that there were only three, and not four of them. He did not know that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had been left on guard at the window by which he intended to escape from the School House.

He ran on breathlessly.

Once he was free of the School House, he felt that he could dodge his pursuers in the darkness of the quadrangle. He felt that they would hardly follow him to the Green Man, even if they knew he was bound for that delectable place. And he knew them well enough to be certain that, if they missed him, they would never give him away to master or prefect. He had not betrayed to fear at the hands of Tom Merry & Co., whatever he should do.

Blake staggered up, and Digby and Herries pulled themselves together. But even as they were starting in pursuit of the Outsider, three charging forms came heavily into them, and they went reeling again.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Who—what—"

"You Shell dummies! Ow!"

"Yow!"

"Yah!"

"My hat!"

"Blake! That you, Blake?"

"You! Yes," groaned Blake. "You clump! What did you run into me like a blessed steam-roller for? Ow!"

"What did you get in the way for?" demanded Tom Merry, with equal heat. "We were after the Outsider!"

"So were we, you fathead!"

"Clump!"

"Ass!"

"You Shell boulder—"

"You Fourth Form fathead!"

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

It really looked as if the hunt for Lumley-Lumley would end in a Form row in the darkness of the passage, and that the Outsider would be left to his own devices. But Manners, always thoughtful, poured oil upon the troubled waters.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "Lumley's getting away all this time, you know! Let's get after the rotter."

"By George! Yes!"

"Come on!"

And the juniors, rubbing their bruises, ran down the passage after the Outsider of St. Jim's. There were plenty of them to deal with the Outsider if they caught him. But he had a good start, and all depended upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy now. If the swell of St. Jim's failed to stop him, Lumley-Lumley would get out of the window, and the chase would have to be dropped, or continued under the stars. Not that the juniors had any intention of dropping it, in any case.

CHAPTER 17.

Caught!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY had finished tying his necktie to his satisfaction, and was gazing into the gloom after his chums, wondering what was happening in the dark passages, when Lumley-Lumley came tearing up.

The Outsider did not see D'Arcy in the darkness. He ran straight to the window, and caught at the catch of the sash.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

He was too taken by surprise to act for a moment. But that was only for a moment. Then he ran at the Outsider.

Lumley-Lumley had already unfastened the catch, and had succeeded in throwing up the lower sash of the window.

But then the swell of St. Jim's was upon him. Lumley-Lumley had no time to get out of the window. If he had attempted it, the elegant junior had only to grasp his legs and drag him back again.

He turned upon D'Arcy with a snarl like a spiteful cat.

"Stand back!" he muttered thickly.

"Wats, deah boy!"

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"JOHN BULL Jnr's WEEKLY."

A highly amusing tale of the Chums of Greyfriars College.

AND "THE WOLVES OF THE DESERT," a thrilling new serial, are in the

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"Hands off, you fool, or—"

"You are not goin' to get out of that window, you feahful wascal!"

Arthur Augustus grasped the Outsider. In the collision with the Fourth-Formers in the passage, Lumley-Lumley lost his stick. He clenched his fist, and drove it fairly into D'Arcy's face.

The heavy blow almost blinded D'Arcy. He gave a sharp cry, and fell back. The Outsider sprang to the window, and went plunging through.

But D'Arcy was after him like a shot. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy never knew when he was beaten; or, rather, he never allowed himself to be beaten.

He grasped the Outsider by the back of his jacket as he plunged through the window, and dragged him back.

"No, you don't, you wottah!" he gasped.

Lumley-Lumley struggled furiously, gasping for breath as he strove to drag himself through the window.

"Let me go, you fool!" he hissed.

"No feah!"

There was a shout from the passage, and hurrying footsteps.

"Gussy's got him! Hurray!"

"Yaas, wathah! Buck up, deah boys!"

Lumley-Lumley struggled frantically.

But he could not throw off the grasp of the swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could be very determined when he liked.

The Outsider, snarling, slid back into the house again, and turned upon the swell of St. Jim's like a tiger. He rained blows upon him with his clenched fists, and the junior, startled and breathless, relaxed his hold.

Lumley-Lumley sprang to the window again.

But Tom Merry & Co. were on the scene by this time. Two or three pairs of hands grasped the Outsider as he leaped for the window, and he was dragged back and bumped heavily upon the floor.

He resisted still; but the juniors were piling on him, and his resistance did not count for much. He was crushed under the weight of numbers, still struggling and gasping like a wild animal at bay.

"Got the cad!" said Tom Merry. "Hallo! What's that?"

A light was advancing along the passage. It was a lamp held in the hand of Kildare. The captain of St. Jim's came up with a brow like thunder.

"What does this mean?" he exclaimed.

"Bai Jove! D-d-did you hear anythin', deah boy?" stammered Arthur Augustus.

Kildare could not help grinning, in spite of his anger.

"I should think I did," he exclaimed. "You have been making row enough to wake up the whole house. What does this mean? I told you, Blake, that I should hold you responsible for any disturbance in your dormitory!"

"Exactly," said Blake, "and, being responsible, I had to stop that rank outsider from breaking bounds, hadn't I?"

Kildare's eyes had already noted the open window. He signed to the juniors to allow the Outsider to rise. Lumley-Lumley, looking very flushed and dishevelled and untidy, rose to his feet, his eyes gleaming with rage.

"You were going to break bounds, Lumley-Lumley?"

The Outsider gritted his teeth.

"I guess so," he said.

"Go back to your dormitory."

"I won't!"

Kildare's eyes flashed.

He dropped his hand upon Lumley's shoulder. In that grip of iron the Outsider did not attempt to struggle. He knew that it would be useless.

"I cannot trust you to remain in your dormitory to-night," said Kildare quietly. "I shall lock you up in the punishment-room to-night, Lumley, and the Head will deal with you in the morning. You juniors have done quite right. Go back to bed! I will look after this young cad!"

And Lumley-Lumley was marched away with Kildare's grip upon his shoulder. The juniors went back slowly to their dormitories.

"Lumley-Lumley will get it warm in the morning," Blake remarked. "Well, we gave him the chance of coming back quietly—and he's only got himself to thank."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I wish he'd get out of St. Jim's," said Tom Merry. "It was a mistake sending him back here. He ought to leave."

"But he jolly well won't!"

"I suppose not!" said Tom Merry slowly.

"But we've all done with him now, I suppose," said Lowther.

"Even you can't stand up for him any more, Tom!"

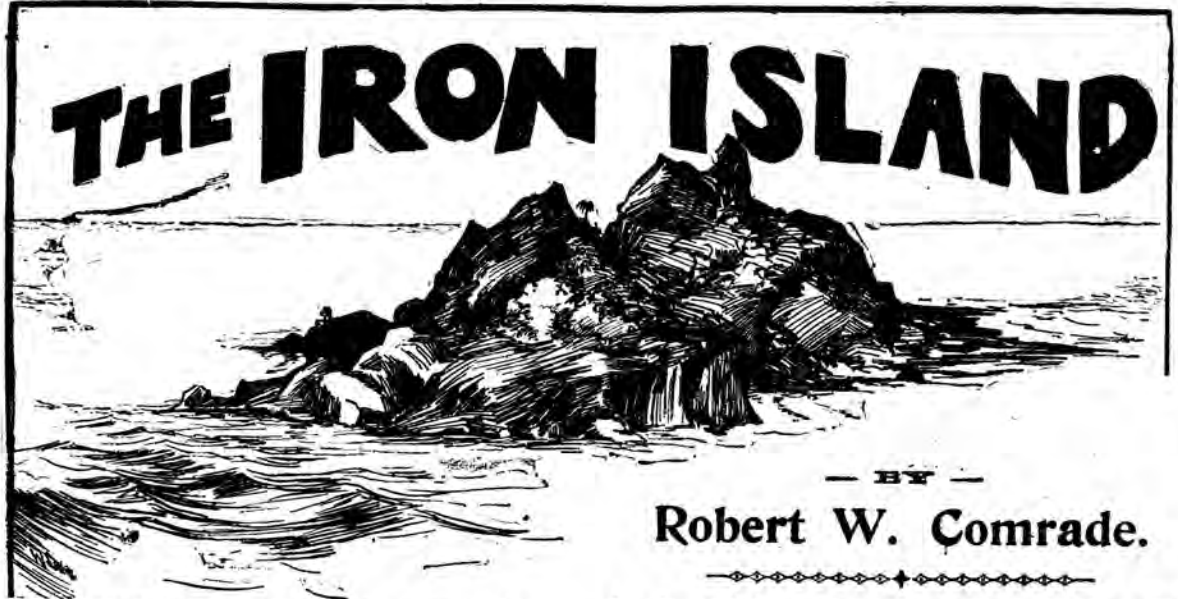
Tom Merry did not reply. Could he stand up any longer for the Outsider of St. Jim's? It was pretty certain, at all events, that he could not do so without falling out with his own friends, and was it worth that?

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete story of the Chums of St. Jim's again next week, entitled "Tom Merry versus Jack Blake," by Martin Clifford. Order your GEM Library in advance. Price One Penny.)

[Our Readers are informed that the characters in the following Serial Story are purely imaginary, and no reference or allusion is made to any living person. Actual names may be unintentionally mentioned, but the Editor wishes it to be distinctly understood that no adverse personal reflection is intended.]

A Thrilling Adventure Tale.



— BY —
Robert W. Comrade.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS BRIEFLY RE-WITTEN.

Philip Graydon is a young Englishman, who for eight years was marooned on an uncharted island in the Pacific—the Iron Island—by a criminal society called the Brotherhood of Iron, of which he was once a member. A lucky chance brings to his aid Dolores de las Mercedes, a beautiful Parisian actress, who has incurred the displeasure of the French Government. Graydon escapes from the Iron Island, and lands in England with Dolores. As Frank Kingston and Miss O'Brien, the two begin a secret campaign against the pernicious Brotherhood, and six prominent members are

BROUGHT TO BOOK.

Having had a scarab talisman stolen from her at a dinner given by Lord Mount-Fannell, the chief of the Brotherhood, Princess Kamala of Srinpudu, a friend of Dolores, puts the case in Kingston's hands.

Kingston discovers the precious article in a house in Whitechapel, occupied by Jacob Lowenwirth. On leaving he is attacked by Hindus, and rendered unconscious. He recovers, to find himself confronted by Prince Malabari, brother to Kamala, who accuses him of stealing the talisman. Finding it impossible to prove himself innocent in the prince's eyes, Kingston makes a desperate rush out of the house. He then visits Kamala, and restores the talisman to her in the presence of Prince Malabari.

Declaring that Lowenwirth shall suffer the penalty of death for having stolen the talisman, Malabari pays a visit to his house in Whitechapel.

(Now go on with the story.)

Lowenwirth in the Hands of the Indians.

From that time till eight o'clock in the evening Prince Malabari remained inactive, attiring himself once more in native costume, and lolling languidly on his cushions. When eight struck, however, he rose and prepared to depart.

He walked out of the house, and hurried to the main road. Just round the corner, near Whitechapel Station, a large green motor-car stood against the kerb.

With a few words to the driver he clambered into the tonneau, and seated himself beside another Hindu, who saluted respectfully. The ride was not a long one, for the car was in Ilford when it pulled up.

The prince looked round with a glance of satisfaction as he stepped to the ground. The surroundings were hardly cheerful, for the road was deserted, narrow, and practically unused. Two high fences bordered the sides, and the lamp-posts were few and far between.

"Follow me," said the prince, in Hindustani, to one of the men. "You know what there is to be done, and we want to get away as soon as possible."

They walked sharply down the road for about a hundred yards, then turned a corner. Suddenly Malabari stopped, and looked keenly up and down. Not a soul was in sight. Just

here it was dark and dismal, and not a sound could be heard. The Hindus moved absolutely noiselessly; so noiseless were they, in fact, that they had the appearance of being unreal things flitting along. Malabari had stopped exactly opposite a little doorway. There were numerous other similar doorways along the same fence, but this one had been freshly painted.

"This is the one?" asked the prince, in a whisper.

"Yes, your Highness. I made a mark on it. See?"

Faintly in the darkness could be distinguished a little scratch on the new paint. The Hindu had been there before, that very evening, reconnoitring.

"Come along," directed Malabari, "and be careful."

The door was unbolted, and in a moment the two found themselves in a large garden. It was long, but rather narrow. Some distance ahead could be seen the lights of many houses—a whole row, in fact. The garden was well kept, and the two intruders had no difficulty in finding their way to the house.

The top half was a soft lawn, which extended even to the walls of the house, the latter being a good-sized, old-fashioned building. The only room with a light in it this side of the house was evidently a large one, for the windows were in the form of a broad bay.

They were fitted with Venetian blinds, and one of these was only partially closed, making the interior of the room quite clear to a close observer. The prince, quiet as a kitten, stepped forward, motioning to his companion to remain behind. He stood for a moment gazing into the well-lighted room, then smiled with grim satisfaction.

Seated close to the fire in an easy-chair was Jacob Lowenwirth, while opposite to him sat another man. The two were engaged in conversation, both laughing heartily.

"Quite a merry pair," murmured Malabari to himself.

"The stranger little thinks, however, that the man he is joking with so freely will, by to-morrow morning, be buried where no man on earth can find him."

On the table stood a decanter of whisky, soda-syphons, and a box of cigars. Judging from the piles of cigar-ash in the little trays, the visitor had been there a considerable time.

"I will wait half an hour," the prince told himself. "If, at the end of that time the other man makes no move, he will have to be rendered unconscious as well. I want, if possible, however, to catch the Jew alone."

Patiently, motionless as statues, the two Indians waited outside the window. Relentless they were; relentless and unbending. Their object was vengeance, and they were two to one; two strong men, against one who had no suspicion of coming peril. And the means they employed to capture him was so silent, so deadly, and so unexpected, that Lowenwirth never stood an earthly chance of defending himself.

At the expiration of twenty minutes the visitor arose to depart, drank a final whisky-and-soda, and passed out of the room, Lowenwirth accompanying him. Malabari listened

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intently, and in two minutes a dull bang sounded, the front door being closed.

As the prince had guessed, Lowenwirth came straight back and reseated himself in his own chair. He leisurely snipped the end from a cigar and applied a match to it, lying back then with evident satisfaction. A magazine was in his hand, and in a very short time he became engrossed in its pages.

"Now," thought Malabari, "the time for action has arrived. The task ought to be simple."

He stood on the window-sill, so that now his head was on a level with the top of the upper sash, which was lowered for several inches. Then the prince fumbled in his coat-pocket, finally producing a long, thin tube, made out of some kind of cane.

A blow-pipe!

Yes, the object was one of those deadly weapons which deal death as silently and as surely as the bite of the most venomous serpent. To an unsuspecting foe the blow-pipe is fatal. He is struck before he knows anything about it, and should the little dart be coated with poison, death is practically instantaneous.

But this easy death was not destined to be Lowenwirth's. The prince intended making the blackmailer suffer unspeakable mental agony before he died. He had violated the laws of an honourable family, and death was the sentence. It was Hindu vengeance.

So the blow-pipe did not contain deadly, poisonous darts. It was this weapon which had been used so effectively on Kingston the same morning. When he had suddenly become unconscious in the street it had been the result of a tiny dart piercing his skin.

Prince Malabari raised the tube to his lips, directing the end towards Lowenwirth's face, and gave a sharp puff.

No result could be seen until the lapse of two seconds. The doomed man raised his head to discover the cause of the sharp sting, then seemed to fall limp and lifeless in his chair. The cigar dropped from his mouth, and sent out a shower of sparks as it struck his knee, rebounding on the floor.

It had all happened as silently and as suddenly as if Lowenwirth had merely dropped asleep. The prince stealthily raised the lower sash of the window, and stepped into the room, motioning his servant to follow.

Without the least suspicious sounds the two Indians crossed the room, and leant over the still form of the Jew. Malabari pulled the tiny dart from Lowenwirth's cheek, then grasped him under the arms, the other Hindu taking the feet. In two minutes Lowenwirth's unconscious form was lying on the lawn, and the prince was lowering the window-sash again. How the solicitor had disappeared would be a mystery which would never be solved.

"Now," whispered the prince, "to the roadway, and hurry."

They did hurry, carrying the weight between them seemingly easily. Having reached the back gate leading on to the ill-lighted lane, the prince stepped into the roadway alone and looked keenly up and down. No one was in sight, and on the still air the piercing whistle of the Indian society sounded. It was the signal for the automobile to drive up.

It did so immediately, and before half a minute had elapsed Lowenwirth was pulled aboard, and the car turned round.

"You know where to make for," said Malabari, to the driver, in his own language. "Don't go too slow, and take the shortest cut."

But the driver did not know the English roads very well, therefore it was necessary to stop at the corner where the smaller road joined the main road, and read the signpost. After that there was no delay. Through Romford the car went, picking up speed again on the somewhat hilly piece of road to Brentwood.

Soon after passing the latter town—it was nearly ten o'clock now—the green car, instead of keeping to the main road, took the turning which led down to the marshes—the road to Billericay. Why was this? Where was Malabari taking the Inner Councillor to? What was he going to do with him?

The whole adventure had an air of uncanniness about it; yet it was carried out in a perfectly straightforward and businesslike manner. No one could suspect the car of being implicated in the disappearance of Jacob Lowenwirth. The place where the prisoner was being taken to now was miles from any habitation, lonely, and as bleak as the Devonshire moors.

What the prince was doing was, all said and done, murder; to him and the princess it was just punishment; and to the world at large it was a blessing. There was not one person in England who would bemoan the loss of Lowenwirth except the members of the Brotherhood of Iron. He was the vilest blackmailer in Europe; a fiend with no heart, and who lived by preying on his fellow-creatures. To have him gone for

ever would be a relief to hundreds of people, and would mean, perhaps, the saving of many lives.

For Lowenwirth was a murderer; a murderer of the worst type. He had driven dozens of honourable men and women to ruin and suicide, and, had he been allowed to live, would have driven others along the same terrible path.

But he was not allowed to live. His last hour had come, and the manner of his death was about as fitting a one as could possibly be found. It was slow, but absolutely sure; as sure as was the doom of those innocent people whom he had driven into the depths by his foul and lying tongue. For them there had been a faint hope of deliverance. For him there was absolutely none.

The Doom of Jacob Lowenwirth.

"This will do," exclaimed Prince Malabari, in Hindustani. "And remember, there must be no delay! It is late, but there is a bare possibility that someone may come along. I want to avoid being seen. In any case, Sinha, you had better remove the bonnet, and be tinkering with the engine."

The driver, whose name was Sinha, salaamed obediently, and did as his master had bidden. The prince and the other Hindu meanwhile hauled Lowenwirth from the car into the muddy roadway.

The party had come to a halt by the side of the road in about as lonely a spot as could be found. A damp mist hung over the flat country, and no house or habitation could be seen for miles. Down there, on the marshes and the mud-flats, there was little fear of being seen.

Lowenwirth was still unconscious, and once more he was hoisted up and carried along. By this time the ground over which he went was very different. Having passed through a gap in the hedge, Malabari, who was leading the way, directed his steps across a soft, muddy, grass field. On the other side of this, divided by a shallow ditch, could be seen a huge expanse of dull marshland.

"The dog shall die the death he deserves," said the prince, half to himself and half to his companion. "Nothing can save him once he is on the centre-spot. He will be unconscious when he is placed there—unconscious of the fact that one step will mean death."

Malabari laughed grimly.

"It is in truth a splendid death-trap. When the Jew recovers his wits, which will be very soon now, he will, being unaware of his peril, step out towards us. Two paces will be enough. By that time he will have been caught by the mud, unable to move either way. Slowly but surely he will be dragged down, until at last the bog covers his head. Not a trace will remain to tell what has happened on this lonely spot to-night."

Lowenwirth's death was indeed to be a terrible one. Yet he deserved it; it would be none too severe.

Having walked some yards past the dividing ditch, Malabari stopped, and suddenly stepped back. His feet had sunk a little into the clinging mud.

"We are at the edge," he said to the other. "You continue on alone now, Ghoolab, and waste no time. You are the only man who knows the way to the safe spot in the centre. Do you think you can manage alone?"

"I have done it many times before, your Highness," answered the Hindu significantly, "and this jackal will prove an easy burden."

"Very good; waste no time," said Malabari. "I will wait here till you return. After that we will watch. Lowenwirth has already showed signs of recovering."

Ghoolab slung the Jew across his shoulder, and started on his perilous journey. The distance was short, barely a hundred yards, but every inch of those hundred yards was fraught with danger.

In the centre of the mud-flat was a small island, a solid piece of ground surrounded by a kind of quicksand. In appearance the ground was all alike, but there was one way in which the centre could be reached, and the only man who knew this path was Ghoolab. Had the prince attempted to cross, he would inevitably have been caught by the treacherous quagmire.

The place was avoided by everybody in the district, for there was no denying that it was a terrible death-trap—a trap which caught its victims and swallowed them up without a trace being left to show what had become of them.

Even where the prince was standing the ground was soft and boggy. He stood watching his servant as the latter picked his way along the invisible path. It was dangerous work, but at last Ghoolab stood on the solid island in the centre.

In the darkness—and in the daylight, too—it looked quite an easy matter to walk straight across, for it appeared the ground was all the same.

Having laid Lowenwirth down, the Hindu stood for a moment outlined against the dark sky; then he commenced the journey back. Once he slipped, and for a moment

Malabari thought it was all up with him. But with a wrench Ghoolab forced himself free, and continued his way unconcernedly. In thirty seconds he had negotiated the dangerous part, and was standing beside his master salaaming.

"It is done, your Highness," he murmured.

"Yes," said the prince, "it is done; and when the scoundrel recovers he will walk with open eyes into the trap. He will be killing himself, for, should he remain where he now lies, rescue would be probable. But he will step into the quagmire, realise too late what he has done, and perish before our eyes."

"See," interjected Ghoolab suddenly, "the dog moves!" Malabari looked intently. Yes, Lowenwirth was certainly recovering his senses. It was a matter of a few minutes only now; unless a miracle happened the Jew would be dead in less than an hour.

But while this tragic drama was being enacted on the lonely marsh, what was Frank Kingston doing in London? Did he know that his work was being taken out of his hands, that the plans he had made for Lowenwirth's downfall were now useless?

Yes, he did know, but not until it was too late. After the conversation with Dolores in the early afternoon, he spent the rest of the day at the club, there meeting Lord Askew, the young man who had deposited his bonds in Gissing's Bank some few weeks before. Askew had invited Kingston to dinner, and the latter, knowing that his plans against Lowenwirth could not come into operation till the following morning, consented. There was no suspicion in his mind that Prince Malabari would take such a terribly extreme measure as he had done.

It was on the stroke of eight o'clock when Kingston lounged out of his rooms, attired in immaculate evening-dress. As it happened, Dolores was that minute crossing the corridor with the evident intention of calling on him.

"Mr. Kingston," she said quickly, "come into my suite, please. I have just learnt something which may cause you to alter your plans."

She spoke with great earnestness, and the expression in her eyes told Kingston that something unexpected had happened. Without hesitation he followed her into her own boudoir, and stood with back to the fire.

"Ten minutes ago," said Dolores, "I was with the princess, and she, while continuing her expressions of gratitude to both you and myself, mentioned something concerning Jacob Lowenwirth. Now, you yourself have made all arrangements to deal with him, haven't you?"

"I have, Dolores. He, like the other Inner Councillors, shall pay the penalty. To-morrow sees his downfall."

"Then, Mr. Kingston, you are too late. The prince is already taking steps to put him to death to-night."

Kingston did not move a finger, nor, in fact, seem in any way surprised. But he was surprised—surprised and annoyed. He looked at Dolores keenly.

"The prince is taking steps to kill Lowenwirth?" he repeated. "Jove, but the man's got a nerve!"

"The princess said that he is starting at eight o'clock for the Jew's house at Ilford," went on Dolores. "What he will do there Kamala is not quite certain of, but Lowenwirth is not going to be murdered there. Malabari intends taking him away in a motor-car to some spot in Essex, some spot this society has always used as a place of execution. She herself does not know exactly where it is. But come; you had better question her."

Kingston followed her without a word, glancing at his watch as he did so. If possible he would save Lowenwirth's life; for, bad as the man was, Kingston did not care for the idea of his being done to death by a crowd of uncivilised Hindus. He had done them no harm; anyhow—no serious harm.

Kamala was lying amongst her cushions when Kingston and Dolores were shown in. She looked quite at ease now, and was puffing gently at a tiny cigarette. Before she could even open her mouth to greet her visitors, Kingston commenced his questioning.

"You will excuse me, princess, for this abrupt entry," he said sharply, "but I want to know exactly what your brother is doing. Miss O'Brien has told me certain things which seem hard to believe."

"I do not understand," said the princess. "Do you mean in connection with the man Lowenwirth?"

"Yes. Tell me everything, please."

"My brother has gone to punish him for his crime," said Kamala, her dark eyes shining dangerously. "He had laid sacrilegious hands on my talisman, and the sentence for doing that among my people is death. Malabari has gone this very night to see the villain receives his deserts."

"He is laying himself open to arrest for murder," said Kingston. "But where has he gone—or, rather, where will he go when he has left the house at Ilford?"

Kamala gave him a keen glance.

"Why do you want to know?" she asked suspiciously. "What do you mean to do?"

"There is no time to explain now, but if the prince had come to me I would, perhaps, have given him my assistance," replied Kingston, hoping to get her to tell all she knew.

"I do not know myself exactly," said the princess. "All I can say for certain is that after rendering him unconscious at Ilford, my brother means to take him to a lonely spot on the Essex marshes. I do not understand what it means, for this is my first visit to England. Malabari, however, has been here many times."

"And that is all you can say?" asked Kingston.

"I know no more, Mr. Kingston. But you seem in a hurry. Won't you sit down and—"

"My dear princess," interrupted Frank Kingston, "don't you see that I am desirous of finding your brother? I have a better plan to suggest to him—a far better way in which to punish this Jew."

"I am afraid it is too late," answered Kamala. "There is a possibility, however, that you may catch him at Ilford. He is travelling there in a large green motor-car."

"I suppose it is a useless question, but do you know what tyres your brother has fitted to the machine?"

The princess smiled and shook her head.

"I am afraid I do not know enough about motor-cars. Ah, but wait a minute! Only to-day he told me he had had two pairs of—of things fitted to his wheels to prevent slipping. They are kind of chains, and are named after the inventor. Really, the name has slipped my memory."

"You are referring, perhaps, to Parsons' non-skids?" asked Kingston quickly.

"Yes, yes; that's it!" cried the princess. "He had them put on yesterday. But why do you wish to know? You seem different to your usual self, Mr. Kingston."

"I am different," he replied. "I am in a considerable hurry, and must say good-night without delay. Miss O'Brien," he added, turning to Dolores, "I will do my very best, but I'm afraid I shall be too late."

Without another word he turned and left the room. Although he looked so quiet and unmoved, he was in reality very much annoyed. He had thought the princess would be content with the return of her scarab.

"These Hindus are more revengeful than I imagined," he told himself as he crossed to his own place, throw an overcoat on, and ordered Fraser to get the car round immediately. "I had no idea that Malabari would decide to turn on Lowenwirth. After all, he has done no real harm. Not that Jacob does not deserve death, for he does, and a very hard death at that. But it's more than exasperating to have the work taken out of my hands. I had my arrangements all cut and dried for Lowenwirth's downfall, and this fool of an Indian must needs go and vent his vindictive spite on him. I'm afraid I am too late; but there is just a chance. A large green car ought not to be very hard to trace."

In a few minutes he stepped into his own landaulette, an all British Daimler, exactly similar to the one Colonel Marsden had used at Cragmoor Prison. Fraser was at the wheel, and before long the brakes were applied, and the car came to a halt outside Carson Gray's rooms.

The detective was in, and somewhat surprised to see Kingston again so soon. He began questioning, but the visitor held up his hand.

"Slip your things on," he cried, "and come with me, Gray. Something unexpected has turned up, and I want your assistance if it is available. I can't stop to explain anything now; all I want to know is, can you come?"

Carson Gray rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"I'm afraid not," he replied. "I have some very important work on to-night—work which absolutely must be done. I'm sorry—"

"You can't come, then?"

Kingston moved towards the door without waste of time.

"Well, you see— But one moment! What time do you expect to be done?"

"Not a minute after midnight," replied Kingston. "I think I can safely promise to set you free at midnight."

Carson Gray made up his mind quickly.

"Then I'll come!" he cried. "The case I am on is urgent, but I cannot act until after twelve o'clock. Yes, I'll go with you, Kingston."

Three minutes later the landaulette was whizzing eastwards, and, inside, Kingston was telling his companion the news he had just learnt and what he intended doing.

"Jove!" said Gray. "But you haven't lost much time! Personally, I think I should have let Malabari do his work without interference. Lowenwirth is too utterly vile to expect pity from anyone."

"Granted, my dear fellow. That is not the reason for my present journey. It is because I wish to do my work in a rational manner, and let Lowenwirth know what he is being punished for. As it is, these Hindus are killing him just because he stole their confounded scarab. The thing is trivial,

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and death to Lowenwirth would, I think, be preferable to a life of penal servitude. I want to stop this wild, heathen vengeance, and give the Jew over to justice in the proper manner. It will be a far harder punishment for him."

"I grasp your meaning," said Carson Gray. "Nevertheless, I think you are too late. Of course, there is always the possibility that Lowenwirth was not at home when his genial Hindu visitors arrived. In that case, he will still be alive."

"Personally, I am counting on their having to wait an opportunity," said Kingston calmly. Although he had spent the last twenty minutes in one long rush, he had done it all with a quiet thoroughness which was convincing. "As to following the car in case it has got away before we arrive at Ilford, we shall have to trust to luck. I have got an idea that the prince is taking the prisoner to the lonely Essex mud-flats, there to throw him in some watery quagmire."

"That solution certainly sounds the most likely," said the detective, "for it would get rid of him without a trace being left. You know Lowenwirth's address?"

"Oh, yes; and at this rate we shall not be long in getting there. Fraser is excelling himself, and, incidentally, causing more than one policeman to look after us with no welcome eyes. If we do not get our number taken I shall be surprised."

The whole of the way to Ilford they discussed the matter in hand. At last Fraser drew the car smoothly to a standstill, and Kingston leaped out alone. The street was quiet, but not quite so lonely and forlorn as the lane which ran parallel with it at the bottom of Lowenwirth's garden.

A butler answered Kingston's ring, but he did not see a young dandy on the doorstep. The man who stood there was apparently advanced in years, for his face was a mass of wrinkles, and he did not stand quite upright.

"Is Mr. Jacob Lowenwirth at home?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. Do you wish to see him?"

Kingston produced a card.

"Take him this, will you, please," he said, in a disguised voice. "I think he will see me."

"Very good, sir."

The butler took the card and departed, leaving the caller on the step. Kingston had not to wait long before the servant returned.

"I can't make it out, sir!" he exclaimed, somewhat alarmed. "The master isn't in his room, and I could have sworn he went in there after Mr. Roberts left. The gas is full on, and there's a cigar on the floor, as if it had been knocked down somehow. It seems queer—"

"I suppose your master has gone out for something," interrupted Kingston. "Never mind, my man, I will call on Mr. Lowenwirth at his office to-morrow. Good-night!"

Before the butler could answer he had turned, and was opening the gate. He paused for a moment to speak to Fraser.

"To the main road, Fraser, and stop at the corner."

In the car he altered his tone, and resumed his former expression.

"They've been, Gray," he said shortly. "Taken Lowenwirth without letting any of the servants know. The thing now is to be after them with as much speed as possible."

"They have been smart," said Carson Gray—"very smart. It is more a question of luck than anything else now."

A policeman stood at the corner, where the road entered the main highway. He looked at the car curiously as it pulled up. Carson Gray looked out.

"I say, constable," cried the detective, "have you seen anything of a green motor-car along this way—a large one, fitted with a canvas hood?"

"Yes, sir, that I have," replied the policeman instantly. "Just five minutes ago it came along that very road, and went off towards Romford."

Gray laughed loudly.

"Thanks!" he cried. "By Jove!" he added, in the same loud voice to Kingston. "We're having a regular chase for the boulder."

That laugh, and those few words gave the officer an altogether wrong impression of the chase, and presently the automobile was rushing along the road to Romford. Arriving there, Gray made the same inquiry, with the result that Fraser continued the journey to Brompton.

Here they found that the green car had passed through only a minute or two before. Gray's eyes were shining with the excitement of the chase, but Kingston seemed as calm and languid as ever.

"We shall have to slow down a little now," he said, "and I mean to take my seat in front. There is no telling where the car turned off, and I mean to stop at every bye-road we come to."

"But how will you tell whether our quarry has taken one of these bye-roads?" asked the detective. "The imprint of the tyres?"

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"Exactly."

"But there are cars passing along this road all day."

"Very possibly. I think, however, I am correct in assuming that not very many cars take the road to the marshes. Ah, here is one already!"

The Daimler pulled up, but no car had passed down the side road that day. This stopping was all delay, but at last they came to the turning which led to Billericay.

"Ah!" cried Kingston. "See here! This is the imprint of a tyre fitted with Parsons non-skid chains, I think."

The detective examined the marks, which were quite visible in the soft earth.

"Yes," he said, "they are. But what do you make of those, Kingston?"

The latter turned and saw, leading straight onwards, the track of another car which had also been fitted with Parson's non-skids.

"This makes matters a little puzzling," said Kingston. "Confound it! What a piece of wretched luck!"

"Those chain arrangements are by no means uncommon. There is no means of ascertaining, either, which is the track made by our friends, the Hindus."

"I think we can safely assume," went on Kingston, "that the marks leading down the side road are the correct—A moment, though!"

He bent down and closely examined, one after another, the two sets of wheelprints. Then he clambered aboard the car.

"Down the side road, Fraser!" he cried. "Our quarry has gone in that direction. The chains which made these marks are quite new; whereas, the others have evidently been in wear for a considerable time. Prince Malabari had his fitted only yesterday."

Carson Gray looked somewhat surprised at the rapidity with which Kingston had come to this conclusion, but said nothing. To himself, however, he thought what a really great detective Kingston would make.

Soon the car was rushing down the narrow road, both Fraser and Kingston keeping their eyes wide open. Suddenly, with startling abruptness, the tail lamp of a motor-car came into view. Fraser jammed the brakes on, and the landaulette came to a standstill within five yards of the other car.

And, even as Kingston and Gray leaped to the ground, the same familiar whistle sounded. Sinha was letting his master know of the new arrivals.

"Take no notice of this fellow here," said Kingston quickly. "I heard a cry from the field across the road. Hang it all, I believe we are too late even now."

He leaped over the hedge like a deer, while Gray found it necessary to crawl through the gap. When the latter found himself on the other side of the hedge, he could see his companion leaping ahead at an amazing pace. To Kingston the run was nothing, and in a very few seconds he had arrived at the spot where the prince and Ghooolab stood looking at him in apprehension and hostility.

"Prince," cried Kingston, "a word with you! Don't be alarmed; I have come as a friend!"

"Kingston!" cried Malabari, starting forward. Then he stopped where he was, for from behind had come a cry of surprise and anger.

The prince turned round, and saw the outline of Lowenwirth's figure clear-cut against the sky. He had just recovered full consciousness, and realised in no degree his position.

But Kingston took the situation in at a glance, guessed where the Jew was, and cried out in warning:

"Stop where you are if you value your life! Don't move an inch."

Lowenwirth evidently did not understand the meaning of the words, for there was nothing betwixt himself and the three men save a stretch of grass. So he took three quick steps forward.

"Too late!" cried the prince. "He is doomed!"

Lowenwirth realised now in a sense where he was. With awful rapidity he was being sucked down into the quicksand. Kingston stood quite still. He made no fuss, but looked on with calm chagrin. Never for an instant did he make the mistake of thinking the Jew might be saved. Without a long ladder rescue could not possibly be effected.

"Help!" shrieked Lowenwirth, in terror-stricken tones. "For Heaven's sake, help! I am being sucked down by this terrible mud as if it were alive! Can nobody come— Ah, good heavens, I shall go mad!"

He could be seen waving his arms about frantically, endeavouring to free his legs from that ghastly embrace. Already he had sunk to his waist.

"It is a pity," said Kingston quietly—"a great pity. Lowenwirth was a consummate scoundrel, but he should never have ended his life in this manner. All said and done, however, the world is rid of a pest; it will be far the sweeter for

his absence, and I for one can say nothing to you, prince, for having taken this step."

A minute later Jacob Lowenwirth had disappeared, and nothing remained to tell the tale. The wind freshened a little now, and blew across the dreary mud-flats in cold gusts. And there, gazing at the now deserted quagmire, stood the little group of men.

Not one of them spoke, and suddenly, as if by a common impulse, they turned and walked slowly and silently back to the roadway.

The Case of William Haverfield.

"The only thing to do," declared Frank Kingston, when they stood in the road once again, "is to simply return to London. There is nothing more to be done here."

"Nothing," agreed Carson Gray, in a quieter tone than he usually affected. The terrible death of Jacob Lowenwirth—bad as the man had been—had impressed him more than a

"Please don't misunderstand me, prince," Kingston broke in. "Lowenwirth's colleagues can be numbered by the hundred, and every minute you remain in London will add to your peril. In spite of all your slaves, all your Indian magic, you can't stop a sudden revolver-shot, or an organised attack. I assure you, I am telling you all this for your own good. Act upon the advice, and leave England."

"You will say nothing to the police?" asked Malabari, who was considerably impressed by Kingston's words.

"Nothing at all. Lowenwirth deserved his fate thoroughly."

"I shall follow Mr. Kingston's lead," put in Carson Gray. "In all probability Lowenwirth's disappearance will never be fathomed. Being an unofficial detective, I can use my own discretion, and it would certainly be unjust to have you hung for the murder of a man who deserved something worse than death. No, Prince Malabari, I have nothing to say to you except that you were a little too hasty."

"Yes, I ought to have waited, or, at least, consulted Mr.



There, gazing at the now-deserted quagmire, stood the little group of men. Jacob Lowenwirth had disappeared, and nothing remained to tell the tale. (See above.)

little. Even Malabari, who had been the cause of it all, was unusually subdued.

"I had no idea you were aware of my plans, Kingston," he said. "I suppose, in the eyes of the law, I have committed murder. I gather, however, from the words you uttered a moment ago, that you are going to do nothing in the matter. You consider the Jew deserved to die?"

"Yes, prince; he was a scoundrel of the blackest type. Death was too good for him. I intended having him arrested to-morrow on several serious charges, and thrown into prison. Your drastic interference, however, has ruined my plans."

"I am sorry," said Malabari, "but I did not know. The act is done, and nothing can undo it."

"Let me offer you a word of advice!" exclaimed Kingston, laying a hand firmly on the prince's shoulder. "Leave England at once, and take your sister with you. Lowenwirth has companions who will guess what has happened, and who will assuredly wreak their vengeance upon you. It will be a case of tit-for-tat."

Malabari smiled in the glare of the motor-lamps.

"I think I can take care of myself," he said confidently. "I am always surrounded by servants, to mention nothing of the society—"

Kingston. However, it is useless discussing that matter now. I shall proceed at once to London—"

"Two cars together would be liable to attract attention," interrupted Kingston. "Therefore, perhaps you had better continue northwards to Ipswich, and stay there the night, returning to London in the morning."

The prince agreed at once, and Fraser started his engine. A few minutes later the Daimler was turned round and started for the main road. Kingston and Carson Gray sat in the cosy, well-lighted tonneau, each engrossed with his own thoughts. Gray's face wore a serious expression. Kingston, on the other hand, was his usual self. With dreamy eyes, he lolled back among the soft cushions, humming softly to himself. Suddenly Gray awoke from his reverie, and gazed at his companion, in surprise.

"By Jove, Kingston," he said, "your self-possession is wonderful! How on earth you can sit there, looking as if you were returning from the theatre, is beyond me!"

Frank Kingston smiled.

"My dear Gray, you don't seem to be aware of the fact that my thoughts cannot be judged by the expression on my face. Although I was apparently so unoccupied a moment

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ago, I was in reality thinking very deeply of the terrible events which have just come to pass."

"Such an accomplishment would be invaluable to me," replied the detective. "To look unconcerned when one's nerves are all on the stretch is a difficult task. To you, however, it seems to come naturally."

"It does come naturally. But, to bring the conversation round to a more serious matter, I think we have disposed of his precious Highness. To speak frankly, I don't relish these Hindus having a hand in my pie. The sooner they are out of England the better. The princess, alone, is not so bad, but Malabari will be getting into trouble if he remains here any longer."

"They will both leave the country now," declared Carson Gray. "After what you have said, the prince will make all haste away. By the by, what is the time?"

Kingston glanced at his watch.

"The time," he said, "is twenty minutes to eleven. You will be in London long before midnight to carry out your plans. As it happens, there was no real necessity for you to have accompanied me, but I was not certain."

"I am glad I came, because this ride back affords me an opportunity of telling you the facts of the case I am now engaged upon."

"I shall be delighted to hear them," replied Kingston—
"delighted!"

Carson Gray produced his pipe, and commenced filling it slowly.

The car, at that moment, had turned into the main road.

"About four days ago," commenced the detective, "you may have read in the papers the particulars of a singularly mysterious murder—the murder of Mr. Philip Whyte, a young stockbroker?"

"I remember it distinctly," said Kingston, lying back with closed eyes. "He was found dead in the Thames, a few yards from Blackfriars Bridge, bound hand and foot."

"That is it. Clearly a case of murder, for no man on earth could have bound himself up as Whyte was bound. His parents are overwhelmed at their loss, and immediately sent for me, and commissioned me to track the murderer down. It has been no light task, but at last I hit on a clue and followed it up. I am practically certain in my own mind that I have cornered the murderer, but so far I have no proof."

Carson Gray paused for a moment to apply a match to the bowl of his pipe, resuming when the tobacco was burning evenly.

"The clue was so slight and insignificant as to be almost unnoticeable. Under two finger-nails on the dead man's right hand I found some dark substance, which, on examination, proved to be leather. Not shoe-leather, but of the variety which is stretched across writing-desks. It is quite evident the poor fellow struggled violently while he was being bound, and his hand came in contact with the table, at which he clutched convulsively. The action of the water did not wash the leather from his finger-nails, for it was rammed under them tightly, clear proof of how desperate he was."

Kingston nodded.

"I follow you exactly," he said. "The thing is now to find the writing-desk. But you say you have a very good idea as to who the murderer is. How did you find him out?"

"The task was a difficult one, and I cannot explain it in full now. To be brief, I made certain judicious inquiries, and found out that Whyte had been intimate lately with a gentleman of private means, named Haverfield—William Haverfield."

Kingston opened his eyes for a second, and again nodded.

"I found out, by chance, that Whyte had visited Haverfield the same night as he disappeared; the body was found the next morning. Now this information is absolutely exclusive—the police are even unaware of it, and Haverfield himself has made statements in different quarters—casually, of course—to the effect that he had not seen Whyte on the night of his disappearance."

"That fact in itself makes the case look black against him," murmured Kingston. "To-night, I presume, you are going to break into Mr. Haverfield's house, and look for a writing-table which is considerably scratched."

"That is my intention, Kingston. Haverfield is an elderly man, tall and powerful, and keeps only manservants in his house."

"Where does he live?"

"In Chelsea, which is another point against him. The river being so close makes matters fit in quite nicely. His house stands by itself, and is about half a mile from the river. Exactly how he conveyed the bound man to the river is a matter of secondary importance. There are numerous ways in which it could have been done."

"Have you arrived at any motive for the murder?" asked Kingston, watching his companion's face interestedly.

"None whatever. That's the only point at which I've drawn blank. Possibly, however, a motive may disclose itself

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when I search the house. Haverfield is absolutely ignorant of what I am doing; he imagines himself to be unsuspected. Of course, I may be on the wrong scent, but I don't think so, Kingston; I decidedly don't think so."

"Well, I wish you luck, I'm sure," drawled Kingston. "You have evidently been working hard on the case, and to-night's task seems to be rather risky. Nevertheless, it appears to me hopeful. If Haverfield doesn't prove to be your man, I shall be surprised. All I say is, take every precaution."

"No necessity to tell me that, Kingston," smiled the detective. "By Jove, but we are travelling. That man of yours knows how to drive."

"We shall be in London very soon now. Do you intend going straight to Chelsea, or will you call at your rooms first?"

"Oh, I shall disguise myself slightly!" replied Carson Gray. "There is no need to commence operations until well past midnight. Haverfield never retires until late, so it would be unwise breaking in before two or three."

They discussed the matter all the way up. At Great Portland Street Fraser pulled up smartly. Carson Gray stepped on to the pavement.

"Well," he said, as he shook Kingston's hand, "if the journey has been fruitless it has not been without adventure. Good-bye, Kingston, and thanks for the ride. I'll see you some time to-morrow—provided I'm still alive and kicking—and tell you the result of the night's work."

"Yes, do, Gray. Good-bye, and good-luck!"

"Thanks!"

The door closed, and the Daimler glided smoothly away, its occupant reclining easily on the luxurious seat, with a peculiar, inscrutable smile on his features.

"And Gray doesn't know," he mused. "By jingo! What would he say if he did? It is peculiar, though, that he should be after Haverfield. There is no doubt about it, Gray is a smart man; he has handled the case remarkably well. I certainly don't like the idea of his going to the scoundrel's house alone, however. All his servants are bound to be common-members of the Brotherhood."

Kingston sat there thinking hard. It had surprised him greatly—although he had made no sign whatever—when he had learnt that the man Gray was after was William Haverfield, one of the first members of the Inner Council. Carson Gray had no idea of Haverfield's connection with the Brotherhood, and Kingston had not enlightened him.

"No," the Avenger told himself, "I will say nothing at present. Haverfield may as well be the next member to fall as anyone. And if Gray is successful in bringing about his downfall, all the better. He has the matter in hand now, so I will simply hover in the background, ready to give a hand if necessary. It would be a pity to enlighten Gray now; and, if he knew, and was captured by Haverfield, there is a chance he would let it slip, and so sign his own death-warrant."

There was one thing Kingston disliked, however, and for a few minutes he was a little concerned. Carson Gray did not know what dangers beset him; he did not know that every man in Haverfield's house was a criminal. Kingston did know, and it seemed rather unfair to let the detective walk on blindfold. Suddenly an idea struck him.

"The very thing," he told himself. "And it will test the youngster's ingenuity. Yes, I'll give Tim a chance; he shall follow Gray, and be at hand to assist him in case of danger. His sharp eyes won't miss much, I'll warrant."

For London the hour was still early, and the Strand was crowded with motor-buses and taxis, travelling both ways in the brilliant glare of the numerous lights. The landaulette turned into the spacious courtyard of the Cyril, and Kingston stepped to the ground.

He lounged into the entrance hall, and made his way upstairs, letting himself into his rooms with the aid of a key. A bright fire blazed in the grate of his study. He switched on the light and rang the bell for Tim, finally taking up his position with his back to the fire. The lad was not long in coming. He looked very smart in his neat uniform.

"You're back, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Well, Tim, that's fairly evident," smiled Kingston. "Come over here, and sit down."

Tim did so, wondering what his master could want. He looked a little serious when he saw the grave expression in Kingston's eyes. The latter laid a hand on Tim's shoulder.

"Young 'un," he said quietly, "you asked me the other day if I had something for you to do—something connected with the Brotherhood. Well, an opportunity has arisen in which you can prove your worth."

Tim's eyes gleamed excitedly.

"Yer got somethink for me to do, sir?" he whispered eagerly. "Do you mean it, sir? Am I ter take a hand in the game? Lummy, but I'd do anythink to 'ave a part in doin' the Brotherhood in, sir!"

"Well, Tim, you shall take a hand to-night," smiled Frank

Kingston. "Now, listen carefully. You know Mr. Carson Gray's rooms in Great Portland Street?"

"Yes, sir. I took a note there once."

"Well, I want you to change immediately into your rags, hurry to Great Portland Street, and wait until Mr. Gray appears. He will be disguised, but only slightly, so keep your eyes well open. He will go to a house in Chelsea, and you must follow him; keep him in sight without his being the least aware of your presence."

"I sha'n't give 'im no chanst to see me, sir!"

"Mind you don't, Tim. He is going to break into this house, and may possibly run into great danger. I am sending you after him for the especial purpose of helping him in case he gets captured. The owner of the house is an Inner Councillor, so you see how dangerous is his errand."

"Not 'arf, sir!"

"If he comes away safely and starts for home again, you do the same. There will be no need to show yourself at all. Mr. Gray does not know the house is connected with the Brotherhood, so I am sending you to be a kind of body-guard."

"I tumble, sir. You know as Mr. Gray's goin' into danger an' you want me to be at 'and in case 'e's taken unawares? An' if 'e does 'is work without gettin' nabbed, you don't want 'im to know as I was watchin' 'im all the time?"

"That's it exactly, Tim!" cried Kingston. "Now be off and change, and remember a lot may depend upon your quickness and ingenuity. I trust you, young 'un, to warn Mr. Gray in case of danger."

"If Mr. Gray's in a 'ole, sir, an' I don't pull 'im out some way or another, then I sha'n't be no good!" cried the lad, rushing to the door, his face glowing with excitement and pleasure. "I've longed to be a detective for years, but I never thought as I'd be put on to guard the life o' Mr. Carson Gray! Lummy, sir, I don't know 'ow to thank you!"

"Never mind about the thanks, Tim. Get along with the changing; there's no time to waste."

When Tim had vanished, Kingston dropped into a chair and smiled quietly.

"That boy will do wonders with a little training," he told himself. "Somehow, I feel that I can quite confidently leave Gray in his charge. It sounds ridiculous, of course, but whereas Gray is unaware of his great danger, Tim knows everything. And that, I think, makes a considerable difference."

The House at Chelsea.

"Will I do, sir?"

Tim Curtis stood before his master, eager and anxious to be off. He was dressed in the raggedest of clothes, with the exception of his stockings and boots. On his head was set a torn and battered cap. As for his face and hands, they were clean and shining.

"Splendid, Tim. When you get to a quiet spot, rub your boots thoroughly with mud, dirty your face, and tear a few holes in those stockings. Until you get outside, though, you must look respectable. Now, then, reverse that coat and cap."

Tim divested himself of his ragged coat, turned it inside out, and donned it afresh, treating the cap the same way. He now looked quite respectable, the coat and cap appearing as new.

"That's better, youngster," said Kingston. "Now I sha'n't repeat what I've already said, but I trust you, Tim, and have every confidence in sending you on this mission."

He grasped the boy's hand for a second, then seated himself before the fire again.

"Thank you, sir," said Tim quietly. "I'll do my very best! Good-night, sir!"

"Good-night, Tim!"

The boy left without another word. This was the first real work which had been entrusted to him, and he meant to acquit himself properly.

Being, to all intents and purposes, so well dressed, he was taken no notice of as he walked out of the hotel. A motor-bus was passing at the moment, and Tim jumped into it. It was just past midnight when he turned into Great Portland Street, having alighted from the bus at Oxford Circus.

The former thoroughfare was practically deserted, and it was the task of a moment for Tim to reverse his overcoat and cap, tear his stockings, dirty his face, and smear his boots with mud. The transformation was remarkable, for now he looked nothing but a street urchin.

"That's all serene," muttered Tim. "Now to git along to Mr. Gray's place, Gum, but it's a rare rummy job I'm on!"

He slouched up the street, keeping near to the buildings, and avoiding everybody he passed. He acted the part to perfection, for although he was uneducated, he had never been quite so low down as he was supposed to be now.

Arriving opposite Carson Gray's rooms, he found a dark

recess into which he squatted himself and pretended to sleep. No ordinary passer-by would have noticed him. He could see the door of the house opposite him quite distinctly, and never for a second did he relax his vigilance.

Half-past twelve struck, and still no sign of the detective. Tim began to wonder if he had come too late—if Gray had left for Chelsea before he arrived. But just as a quarter to one was chiming out, the door of Carson Gray's house opened, and a man stepped out. He was attired in dark tweeds and cap to match.

"That's 'im," thought Tim, after a keen scrutiny. "'E's wearin' a beard, but it's 'im right enough."

Yes, it was Carson Gray at last. The detective had not hurried, because it would have been useless arriving at Chelsea before two o'clock.

He walked along the pavement briskly now, making for Oxford Street. Tim had no difficulty in keeping him in sight, for he walked straight on without once looking back.

"E don't suspect 'e's bein' shadowed," muttered Tim. "I don't s'pose the idea's ever entered 'is noddle."

And, as a matter of fact, it hadn't. Carson Gray, knowing that Kingston was the only man aware of his plans, never dreamed of being followed. This made Tim's task comparatively easy, and when the detective jumped on to a late motor-bus and seated himself inside, Tim was never noticed as he slipped up the stairs to the top.

Being late, the bus rapidly covered the distance, for the roads were practically clear of traffic. At a certain spot in King's Road, Chelsea, Gray alighted, and Tim, behind several other passengers, followed suit.

He had not lost sight of his quarry, however. The detective was striding along the opposite pavement, his thoughts wholly concerned with the thoughts before him.

Presently he turned down a side street. This, in comparison to the one he had just left, was dark and deserted, and Tim was enabled to keep him in view from a very long way behind.

So they progressed along several similarly-deserted streets, until at last Gray turned into a somewhat spacious square. The houses along three sides of this were roomy, and surrounded by large gardens. The general appearance was one of dinginess, most of the houses being in ill-repair, and the gardens comparable to a wilderness.

One house, however, a corner house, seemed to have been recently redecorated. It was in darkness now, and Carson Gray walked past it quickly, looking round the square with a swift, keen scrutiny. Not a soul was within sight, so he stepped furtively into the gateway of the house adjoining Haverfield's, and crept silently up the grass-covered path.

Tim grinned to himself, and emerged from behind a gateway, crossing, with noiseless step, to the spot Gray had just vacated. It was an easy matter to keep him in view now, for Tim was able to crouch down against the dividing wall of the two gardens in absolute darkness.

"'E's goin' to climb over the wall," the lad told himself. "an' break in from the back. I shall 'ave to be jolly careful or 'e'll spot me."

He stood perfectly stationary now, watching Carson Gray clambering over the wall. The youngster was enjoying himself hugely, and felt that at last he was on the way to becoming something better than a "buttons." After the detective had disappeared, Tim did not move for some few seconds, allowing Gray to get well across the other garden.

Two minutes later Tim, too, was on the other side of the wall, effectively concealed behind a dense clump of laurel-bushes. He was watching Carson Gray as the latter worked silently and stealthily at a pair of large French windows.

"Now this is where the real work begins," muttered Tim. "It's only just playin' up to now. If Mr. Gray goes an' gits 'imself into trouble, I shall 'ave to git 'im out ag'in!"

Tim said these words to himself in all seriousness, almost taking it for granted that the detective was going to fall into the enemy's hands. He watched eagerly now, admiring Gray for the quiet manner in which he carried on his work.

In less than five minutes the detective had the French windows open, and without loss of time he stepped into the room and closed the window behind him, producing, at the same moment, a powerful electric torch.

"My," thought Tim, "'e's come prepared, anyway. It don't look much as like 'e was goin' to be collared! I'm goin' to git a little nearer."

The lad crept from his hiding-place, and, with his eye still on the reflection of the torch inside the room, ran across a stretch of grass to some other evergreens quite close to the window. From this point of vantage he could see everything that happened in the room.

Carson Gray was flashing his torch about slowly, examining every article of furniture in the apartment. It was well furnished, and proved to be a drawing-room. The detective's feet made no noise on the soft carpet, and as he saw the delicate furniture, the grand piano, and dozens of little ornaments, he shook his head.

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NEXT WEEK: "TOM MERRY versus JACK BLAKE." Another Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"This is not the room I want," he murmured to himself. "No murder was ever committed here. The library is the most likely place. Jove, but Haverfield believes in luxury; this room is very expensively furnished. The longer I remain here, though, the greater the risk I run. Perhaps the next room is the study. One sight of a scratched and torn writing-desk will be enough to complete my evidence."

He crept towards the door noiselessly—he wore rubber-soled boots—and turned the handle. On the other side he found himself in a broad passage. Straight ahead could be seen a large baize door, presumably leading to the hall, while a few yards away, on the same side of the passage as the drawing-room, was another door. He made for this without hesitation.

Meanwhile, Tim was a little taken aback at this move on Carson Gray's part. He had lost sight of the detective altogether, and wondered what he should do.

"Lummy," he muttered, "that's done it, that 'as! What shall I do now? I mustn't let Mr. Gray out of me sight, yet 'e's bin an' left the room! I shall 'ave to enter the 'ouse myself, that's all!"

He had made up his mind quickly, and was just about to move forward when a sudden flash of light attracted his attention at the next window. He altered his position slightly, then grinned to himself as he saw the dim figure of Carson Gray moving about in the other room.

"Hasn't gone, after all! I wonder 'ow long 'e'll stop there, though? I'd better wait till 'e's done afore I try to git in."

He could not see much in the darkness, for the curtain before the window blurred the detective's figure somewhat. Carson Gray himself, as he entered the room, felt a thrill pass through him. The first flash of his torch had revealed a room, the walls of which were lined with bookcases. In the centre of the floor stood a massive, old-fashioned writing-table, and its surface was covered with numerous books and papers.

"What luck!" thought Carson Gray. "The very apartment I'm looking for! The fate of Mr. William Haverfield will, in all probability, be decided within the next few minutes. The very first thing is to search the table."

Quickly he stepped forward and commenced his task, feeling just a little excited—his self-possession was not like Frank Kingston's. A rapid scrutiny of the table revealed nothing at first glance; the leather seemed perfect and intact. The whole of it was not visible, however, various papers covering a large portion.

With careful fingers the detective lifted a pile of correspondence at one corner, then drew his breath in sharply.

"By gad," he muttered, "the very proof!"

Yes, there, underneath the letters, plainly visible on the dark leather covering, were three long scratches—not tears, but jagged scratches, made, clearly, by a man's finger-nails. It was positive proof of Haverfield's guilt!

"What luck!" muttered Carson Gray, his eyes gleaming with triumph. "What splendid luck! I never expected to complete my task so easily as this!"

A massive leather-padded chair stood behind him, and he sat down for a moment to examine the scratches more closely. And then, with amazing abruptness, a startling thing happened.

Before the detective had time to even suspect trickery, the arms of the chair flew upwards and clasped him tightly round the chest, while at the same moment his legs were similarly secured.

"Good heavens," cried Carson Gray aghast, "what a devilish contrivance!"

Suddenly the incandescent lamps on the electrolier above him became brilliantly illuminated, and simultaneously with their ignition, a bell somewhere remote in the house commenced ringing insistently. The whole incident had happened so terribly swiftly that the prisoner could hardly realise what had occurred. But the chair was a trap—a trap out of which there was no escape.

Carson Gray was an absolutely helpless prisoner.

* Carson Gray's Terrible Experience.

No matter how the detective struggled, he could not free himself from that awful grip. The arms of the chair were immovable, and they clasped him round the chest like a steel vice. To add to his discomfiture, the false whiskers had, in the course of his struggles, become displaced.

"What a fool," muttered Carson Gray angrily—"what a senseless fool I have been! In the excitement of triumph I allowed myself to fall into this trap. I ought to have known. I might have expected something out of the ordinary—something to give Haverfield warning in case of danger."

He looked round the room helplessly, and suddenly realised that the bell had stopped ringing. Before another minute had passed, he reflected bitterly, he would be the butt of Haverfield's triumphant jeers and sneers. He looked at the

window, and the sight of it rekindled his impotent self-denunciation, for liberty was within a few feet.

Gray would have been considerably surprised had he known that outside that window a small figure was crouching with wide-open eyes, watching all that passed within the room. Tim Curtis was quite cool, however. The sudden illumination of the room and the capture of Carson Gray had certainly taken him by surprise, but now he was deciding the best course to pursue.

"The gun'n was right," he told himself. "Mr. Gray 'as bin an' done it. 'E's let 'isselt in for somethink pretty 'ot by the look of it. But 'ow the blue peter am I to 'elp 'im? Them chair arms are made o' steel, for sure, an' the Inner Councillor chap will be down in a minnit. I don't want to git copped meself, so I'll wait an' see wot 'appens. Lummy, 'ere 'e is!"

Tim watched eagerly as the door suddenly burst open and William Haverfield entered, attired in dressing-gown and slippers. He was a big man, tall, and thick-set, with clean-shaven face. His head was practically bald, and an expression of agitation and sneering triumph disfigured his countenance at the present moment.

He stood gazing at the prisoner for a moment without speaking, and Carson Gray, far from being disconcerted, returned Haverfield's gaze coolly.

"This contrivance of yours," he exclaimed, with affected calmness, "took me completely unawares. Nevertheless, before we go any further I had better say that—"

"Before we go any further," interrupted Haverfield grimly, "I had better remove this beard."

He stepped forward and gave the detective's beard a sharp tug. It came away readily in his hand, revealing the clean-shaven face of the prisoner.

"That is better. By Jove, Carson Gray!"

Haverfield dropped the beard in his sudden surprise, and gazed at the disclosed detective with renewed interest. Then slowly a smile came into his eyes.

"So I have trapped the great Carson Gray, eh?" he said slowly. "The man known throughout the civilised world as the Greyhound."

"I observe you are well acquainted with the nickname," put in Carson Gray grimly. "But why are you keeping me here? If you are the respectable citizen you affect to be, surely, now that you know I am a detective, and not a criminal, you will release me from this chair?"

Haverfield seated himself with a smile of derision on his features.

"Release you?" he repeated. "That is hardly likely, is it? I am well aware of the reason for this nocturnal visit."

He pointed to the uncovered scratches on the table, and Carson Gray, now that all pretence was over, dropped his polite mode of speech.

"Yes, you scoundrel," he cried, "that is the reason I paid this visit to your house. I have tracked you down, and that table is the proof of your guilt. It was you who killed Philip Whyte—you who did him to death in this house!"

"And it is you," said Haverfield, "who will follow in his footsteps. Since you have poked your nose so very far into my affairs, I have no option in the matter. By to-morrow morning your body will be floating lifeless down the Thames."

"You intend to murder me?" cried the detective.

"To speak plainly, I do. If I do not take that necessary step you will inform the police. It is one or the other of us; and as you are a dangerous enemy, well, I'm afraid you've failed to bring your last case to a successful conclusion."

Carson Gray breathed hard.

"You have got the upper hand now," he said, "but before long you will be shown up for the scoundrel you are. It is known to at least one man where I have gone, and he will make things hot for you when I am discovered."

"No amount of threats or warnings will alter my decision," exclaimed the other harshly. "To-night, Carson Gray, you die. You are completely in my power, and nothing can save you. No help is within your reach."

"That's all you know, cocky," muttered Tim to himself outside. His ear was within an inch of the glass, and he could hear every word of the conversation. "You think you've got everything your own way, don't yer? Mr. Gray ain't dead yet."

"No help can reach me?" reiterated the detective, his gaze resting on the sneering features of his companion. "You forget that you have servants in the house."

"Servants?" Haverfield laughed. "My dear Gray, you are evidently in ignorance of my connection with the— But no matter. I need only say that all the servants in my house are well aware of your presence, and are only waiting the word to carry out my orders."

Haverfield by this time had satisfied himself that Gray knew nothing whatever of the Brotherhood of Iron. Nevertheless, he was none the less dangerous. He would, if he were allowed to go, bring about the arrest of Haverfield.

The detective himself began to realise the hopelessness of his case. Here, surrounded by foes, he was at their mercy. It would never do, however, to show signs of fear.

"You are talking very confidently, Haverfield," he said calmly. "Suppose I told you that the house is surrounded by police, and that the slightest whistle from me would result in their breaking in?"

"Suppose you told me that, Gray?" sneered Haverfield. "Well, I should be rather inclined to call you a liar. No, you are alone, and only by the barest chance was your presence revealed to me. I had no suspicion of your coming, and had you not seated yourself I should have been hopelessly trapped. As you did sit down, however, it is you who are hopelessly trapped."

"You are very positive."

"A man in my position can afford to be positive. That chair will hold you in your present position for years, if necessary. There is no escape from it. I may tell you that it is not a burglar alarm, for burglars seldom seat themselves."

"You use it, perhaps, to capture unwary folks like myself," said the detective.

"Exactly. I generally set it at night before retiring, in case somebody of your own stamp happened along. I am very pleased at the result of my forethought."

"Have we not had enough of this farce?" asked Gray impatiently. "If you really mean to take my life, kindly set about it without delay. I warn you, however, that you will have to pay the penalty. My friend will know exactly what to do, for I have told him this case from beginning to end."

"Your friend will be able to do nothing," said Haverfield, "for my servants and myself will deny all knowledge of you."

"The table and chair will be ample evidence, though."

"Not at all. The table will not be here, and the chair, when in its ordinary position, and unmet, is quite innocent looking. No, Gray, you are absolutely in my hands, and your talk of my being arrested is so much gas. But it is getting late—or, rather, early—so I will accede to your request, and get the business over."

Haverfield touched a bell-push and waited. It was only a couple of moments before the door opened and two men entered. They looked curiously at the captive prisoner in the chair. Suddenly one of them uttered an exclamation.

"The Greyhound!" he said hoarsely.

"Yes, my man, the prisoner proves to be no other than Mr. Carson Gray, the celebrated detective. For the first and last time he has made a false step, and before daylight comes again his lifeless body will be floating somewhere on the river."

Haverfield was trying to make Gray break down, to make him plead for mercy. In this, however, he was disappointed, for the detective closed his ears to the cowardly words, and gazed at his captor with perfect calmness. He was pale, and trembled slightly, but not a sign of fear could be seen. Carson Gray was a brave man as well as being a clever detective.

"Now, then, men, unfasten his feet, then bind them up with rope; you have plenty of it there, I see," ordered the Inner Councillor. "By the time you have done with him, and the clamps are unfastened, I think he will be about as helpless as he is at present."

Gray could do absolutely nothing. All his blood was up, and he felt like making a fight for it. But those terrible bonds held him as tightly and firmly as if he were part of the chair itself. And the men gave him no chance to kick, for the rope was placed round his ankles before the chair was unclamped.

In this manner he found himself being made as helpless as formerly, but free from the automatic chair. He was utterly impotent, and glared at his tormentors in silent fury. He expected no mercy, and what chance of escape was there? No, Carson Gray that night really thought his last hour had come.

Tim, outside, was worrying his little head a lot. He had been sent by Kingston after Gray for the especial purpose of helping the detective in case of danger. Now that the danger had come—danger very real and very terrible—there seemed nothing for him to do.

"They've collared 'im proper," thought the youngster worriedly. "Goin' to do 'im in, too. 'Ow? That's the blessed question. I can't do nothin' out 'ere, an' it's out o' the question to bust in suddenly. There's three o' 'em ag'in me, an' Mr. Gray's bound all up. What can I do? 'Ow can I lend a 'and? Oh, bust it, it's rainin'!"

He looked up, and saw that the sky was obscured by dark, swiftly-moving clouds. Already the rain had begun to fall steadily. Tim, however, took no more notice, but kept his ear to the window.

"Now, Mr. Carson Gray," said Haverfield, with mock politeness, when the detective was bound hand and foot,

"perhaps you would like to know what is to become of you—how you are going to die—"

"It does not interest me in the least," interrupted Carson Gray coldly. "You have told me that you are going to murder me, so I should advise you to get on with it at once."

"You think, probably, that I mean to kill you before you enter the river," exclaimed Haverfield. "That is a wrong impression. I may say here that this work is very distasteful to me, as well as being unpleasant to yourself. You will admit, however, that the course I am taking is necessary for my safety."

"You are right, the course is very necessary; for were I to live, you would very soon find yourself on the gallows. But you are wasting time."

"There is no hurry," replied the councillor. "Ah, did you hear that? Rain! The very thing I was waiting. How extremely fortunate!"

"The water'll be high, sir," said one of the men.

"Very high, and nothing would suit our purpose better. You see, Mr. Gray, we are very close to the river here, and directly beneath this house runs a large sewer—a sewer which drains hundreds of roads hereabouts. You will understand that when rain is falling the sewer becomes like an underground river, and you, bound as you are, will simply be washed down the sewer at an alarming pace into the Thames. Needless to say, you will be dead before you join the larger stream."

"You mean to kill me that way?" cried Carson Gray. "Am I to drown as I am, bound and helpless, unable to lift a finger to assist myself?"

"Exactly!" murmured Haverfield, who was apparently a callous man, with no feelings in him whatever. Indeed, the murders to his credit were many, and all had been perpetrated in the same manner as that mapped out for Carson Gray. Haverfield was, in a sense, the executioner of the Brotherhood of Iron. To him was entrusted the task of getting rid of any troublesome person who happened to menace the Brotherhood.

"You will render me senseless first?" asked the detective. "You will not allow me to suffer the agony of drowning while bound as I am?"

"I have told you how you will die," returned the other. "And I see no reason to alter my decision. You may rest assured, Gray, that you will not live many minutes. Possibly you consider me a fiend. You must remember that it's either your life or mine—one must go—and I am sure you will agree that as I hold the upper hand I have the right to live."

Gray did not answer, and let his eyes wander from one man to another, finally closing them, as if to say he was weary of waiting. Outside it was pouring with rain, and Tim Curtis was staring blankly before him, heedless of the soaked state of his clothing. The words he had just overheard had caused him to tremble for the safety of Carson Gray.

"They're goin' to bang him down the sewer," he muttered in dismay; "goin' to drown 'im just as 'e is, bound all up, without even a chanst of makin' a fight for it. But 'ow? There must be a way to the sewer through the cellar. I can't do nothin', though; there's three o' 'em, and they'd chuck me in as well if I did anything. Lummy, things are nicely messed up, an' no mistake!"

Tim stood there puzzling his brains for a way out of the difficulty. It looked very much as if Gray was to go to his death. What good could Tim do? It would be suicide to attempt to rescue him.

"All I can do is to see poor Mr. Gray taken away, an' then rush off to the boss an' 'ave this rotter arrested," reflected Tim miserably. "They'll be doin' 'im in a minnit. 'Arf a mo', though, couldn't I go and fetch a copper? No, there ain't time; an' the councillor chap might git away in the commotion. Down the sewer, eh? Lummy, but me blood's fair boilin'! When I think o' Mr. Gray bound up like that—'Allo, they're cartin' 'im away!"

Through the thick curtains he could see the two men grasping the detective by the shoulders and feet. From a distance of twelve yards the interior of the room was merely a blur. This accounted for Haverfield's allowing the blind to remain up. Tim stood there in the downpour, excited and distracted. There, in the room, he could see the man he had been sent to lend assistance to, being carried away to his death. And he could do nothing to prevent it.

"What can I tell Mr. Kingston?" muttered the lad, in agony. "What will 'e think o' me arter this? It'll be the sack, I expect—"

Suddenly Tim stopped, and an excited expression came into his eyes—an expression of hope, determination and wonderment—wonderment because the idea which had just struck him was so daring and so risky.

"It's the only way," he told himself, giving a last look into the room, which was now empty, "an' even now I may be all wrong. My, if it should come off, though, wot a different tale to tell the boss! Let's see, the river's over there."

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nodding his head to the front of the house—"that's right, I shall 'ave to 'urry up if I ain't goin' to be too late!"

He darted up the garden, carrying with him an iron rod he had found near the French windows, was over the fence in a flash, and a moment later emerged into the square. It was deserted, the rain pattering heavily on the pavements, and rushing headlong down the drains.

"Now, where would it be? Somewhere in the middle o' the road, I expect. Yes, 'ere we are. Gum, but I believe I've got it fust go off!"

After a hasty glance round for the sight of a possible constable, Tim bent over the manhole in the middle of the road. Far below could be heard the sound of swiftly-rushing waters. With as much rapidity as possible, Tim hoisted the manhole cover upwards. It was a terrible task for a lad of his age, but desperation lent him strength, and at last the covering lay in the road beside the yawning hole.

Without wasting a second, Tim dropped into the opening, found the little iron ladder with his feet, and then hoisted the heavy cover back into position, closing himself in. Had the lad had time to think, he would have hesitated before taking such a dangerous step as this. It was terribly risky, and the hope of success was slight—so slight that it practically amounted to a matter of chance.

Having secured the covering above him, he commenced descending the ladder, producing, as he did so, an electric lamp which Kingston had placed in his pocket. The brave lad's heart was beating hard with the excitement of the adventure. It was only a minute or two since he had first thought of the plan, and the sooner he reached the sewer, the better.

He was sure he was nearer the river here than Haverfield's cellar was; therefore, Carson Gray's bound body would have to pass him. Tim felt no fear whatever—he was too anxious and too eager for that.

"Blessed long way down," he muttered. "I believe it's the right tunnel, though. There wouldn't be two sewers o' the same sort about 'ere. Ah, 'ere, we are! Lummy, ain't the water rushin' along!"

He flashed his lamp below him into the dark tunnel. The sewer was perhaps half full of swiftly-moving water, the dark ripples reflecting sinisterly the rays of the electric lamp. The sight was not a cheering one, and for a second Tim felt a cold shiver pass down his spine, a chill feeling of dread.

He descended a little lower, and looked up and down the tunnel. The sewer was one of those very large ones, in which a man can walk almost upright. Tim's hopes dwindled still lower as he saw only the shining walls and the muddy water.

"It's no go!" he exclaimed aloud, the echo of his own voice in the hollow tunnel startling him. "Mr. Gray's either gone, or—"

Then he paused, hanging on to the ladder with only one hand, gazing eagerly up the dark sewer. Above the swish of the waters had come a dull, clanging sound, impossible to describe. The next second Tim switched off his light, and drew his breath in sharply, descending a few more rungs until the water was whirling round his knees.

About twenty yards up the sewer a brilliant light had suddenly appeared—a powerful acetylene gas lamp. And by this light the two men Tim had seen in the room a few minutes before were lowering Carson Gray's inanimate form into the rushing water.

Tim was not too late, after all.

Tim to the Rescue.

The plucky youngster could see quite distinctly what was going on, and heard the men uttering jeering remarks at their victim's expense.

"Now!" muttered Tim.

He was right, for as he uttered the word, a dull splash sounded, and he saw the form of the detective disappear into the murky water, bob up to the surface for a moment, then disappear again.

And as Tim saw this he lowered himself until he was

practically submerged. The icy water chilled him to the bone, but he never felt it. His gaze was directed up the sewer to the glowing light. The surface of the water intervening was plainly visible, and, like a dull patch amidst the glittering ripples, could be seen the form of Carson Gray.

The roar of the water filled Tim's ears, while the force of it well-nigh carried him away. He clutched tightly to the ladder, however, and waited. The detective's face showed above the surface of the water for a moment as he tossed about.

"All right, Mr. Gray," cried Tim, in a voice croaking with excitement, "you ain't dead yet; but if you're goin' to die, I'm a-goin' to die with yer!"

He released his hold as Gray's form lit him forcibly in the chest. The next moment the pair of them were being whirled away, with Tim's arms round his companion's middle. Neither Gray nor Tim had noticed a shout from the two men, followed by a flashing of the gas-lamp, and a round of blasphemy.

The boy had all his work cut out to keep his own and Carson Gray's head above water. Conversation was utterly impossible. Tim had intended to cut the detective's bonds immediately, but he found that such a thing could not be done.

That headlong rush to the river seemed to take hours and hours. Both of them received numerous grazes and bruises as corners were negotiated. In the darkness—darkness utter and absolute—they could not tell what was in store for them. They could only trust to luck and Providence.

The daring and bravery of the youngster were even greater than Kingston had supposed them to be. In doing what he had done, the chances were heavily in the favour of death. Yet, because it was the only possible way in which Gray might be preserved, Tim took the risk without hesitation.

Gray himself was too numb to realise anything beyond the fact that Kingston's young assistant had, in some mysterious manner, come to his aid at the very moment of death. Without Tim's support, the detective would have breathed his last within three minutes.

On they were carried at an ever-increasing pace. Tim, although he could say nothing, realised that in another minute his strength would give out. The strain was too stupendous for his little form to bear. To have held his own would have been a clever feat, but to support a bound man as well made his action heroic.

The water they were in was comparatively clean, being, of course, merely rain water drained off the roads. Fortunately for both of them, the sewer was almost a straight one, with no abrupt corners.

At last the end came. All sense of speed had gone, and Tim only knew that he was nearly exhausted. With a stifling feeling of despair, he realised that he was under water, and that to rise to the surface was impossible.

Instinctively he clutched Carson Gray, and both of them were tossed about like a couple of corks.

For a moment they gave up hope; then, still grasping the detective, Tim found himself breathing the pure night air, and surrounded by comparatively still water, the rain pattering noisily on the surface.

"Thank 'Eaven," murmured the lad. "We're out o' that sewer at last! Lummy, but I thought it was all up! Ain't I cold, though?"

Here, free from that roar and rush, Tim found the task of supporting his charge easier. The water was like ice, but by this time the dread chill had accustomed itself to the lad. Nevertheless, he had his work cut out to draw a knife from his pocket.

"I can't open it," he muttered despairingly, after a moment. "Me 'ands are like lumps o' clay! Love us, sir, but I think we're goin' to peg out arter all!"

(Next week's instalment of this thrilling story describes how Tim and Carson Gray extricated themselves from their terrible position, and the revenge they took upon their enemies.)

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