

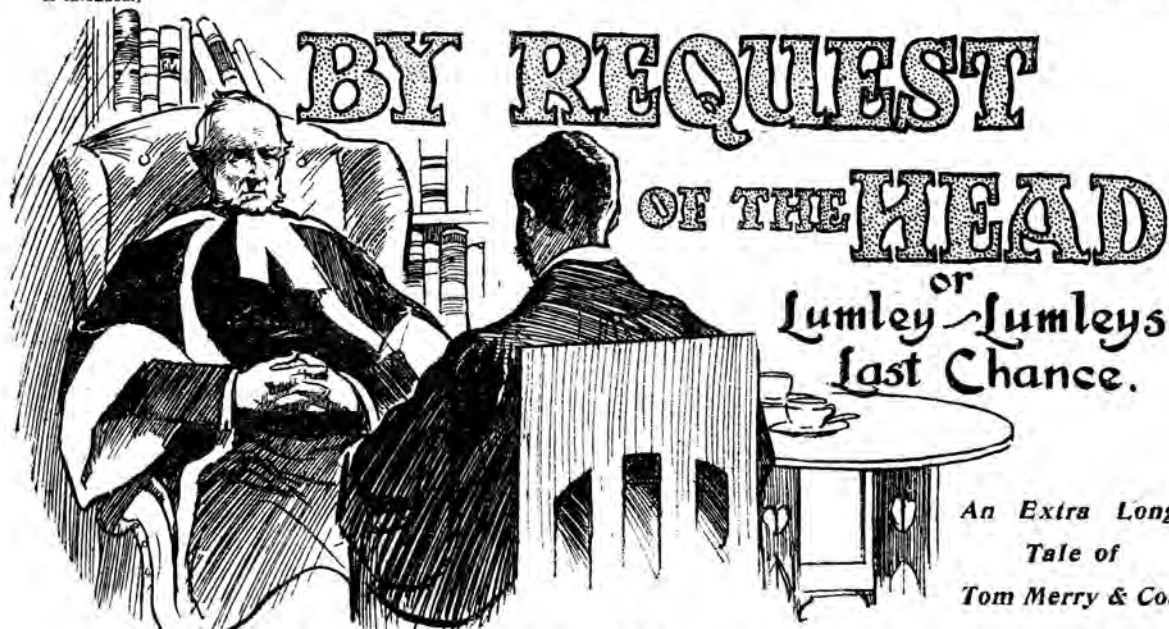
Every

Thursday.



Complete Stories for All and Every Story a Gem!

[Our Readers are informed that the characters in the following 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.]



BY REQUEST OF THE HEAD or Lumley-Lumleys Last Chance.

An Extra Long
Tale of
Tom Merry & Co.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1. The Last Chance.

DR. HOLMES, the Head of St. Jim's, was frowning. The St. Jim's fellows did not often see their head-master frown. As a rule his expression was equable, pleasant, and kind. The famous schoolboy who once described his head-master as a "beast, but a just beast," did not belong to St. Jim's. Dr. Holmes was just; but he had never been called a "beast." To the St. Jim's fellows he was not only the Head of St. Jim's, but a kind friend upon whom they knew they could rely.

A frown upon the Doctor's brow was the exception, not the rule. But he was frowning now—a frown that knitted his brows darkly, and cast a shadow upon his kind old face.

The Head was sitting in his study—alone. The window was open, letting in the spring breeze, and an echo of the shouts from the playing-fields. It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and the footer-ground was thronged. There was a pen in Dr. Holmes's hand, but he was not writing. He sat deep in thought, with a troubled frown growing deeper on his face.

He looked up, roused from his reverie, as Mr. Railton entered. The big, handsome House-master seemed to bring in a breath of the fresh, open air with him. Mr. Railton, House-master of the School House, was an athlete as well as a scholar, and the first eleven at St. Jim's owed a great deal to him.

"Sit down, Railton, please," said the Head. "You know, of course, what I want to speak to you about."

The House-master nodded.

"Lumley?" he said.

"Exactly!"

There was a pause. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, whom the fellows at St. Jim's called the "Outsider," was not an agreeable subject for discussion.

The Outsider had caused nothing but trouble since he had arrived at St. Jim's. He had made himself unpopular with the boys, and unpopular with the masters. A hard and suspicious nature, and a half veiled impertinence towards those in authority, could not fail to have that effect.

And yet, at times, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had shown that there was a better side to his character—a glimmer of better things.

"The boy's case is peculiar," said the Head slowly. "His father is abroad, and I am reluctant, very reluctant, to compel him to leave the school. Punishment, however, seems to have little or no effect upon him. I have never seen a boy of such a hardy nature. I am driven to the conclusion that he must go; and yet I regret it. What is your opinion, Mr. Railton?"

"The boy has his good points," said the House-master. "He is certainly plucky, for one thing. I have heard how he jumped into the river to rescue the miller's little girl, and there seems to be no doubt about the accuracy of the story."

"I have thought of that, too. He is not all bad, and that is why I hesitate to expel him. But I cannot allow him to remain among the other boys, unless he alters his ways. That is the question. He may taint others."

"That is the most serious aspect of the case, certainly. His early training, of course, is at fault. He seems to have led a hard and roving life before his father became wealthy, and he knows too much, and too little. Of 'playing the game,' as the boys call it, he knows nothing. He is hard and unscrupulous; he shows a total disregard for the rules of the school, and when he is punished he endures the punishment rather with the hardihood of a savage, than with what I should call fortitude. He is a strange character; yet, as I have said, there is good in him, if it could only be turned to account."

"But how to bring it out," said the Head. "That is the question—whether I should give him one last chance, and whether he would make anything of it."

"It is difficult to say, certainly."

"I have spoken to him—kindly and considerately, I hope," said the Head. "I have rarely failed to make an impression, even upon a hardened case, by putting the matter earnestly and seriously before the boy's mind. But in the case of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, I must confess to failure."

Mr. Railton was silent.

He knew from his own experience how useless words were with the hard, cynical Outsider. He was not like the other boys.

"But I have a new idea," the Head continued, "an idea for giving this boy a last chance, and you can help me."

"I shall be only too glad. Bad as he is, I should be sorry to see him expelled from the school."

"If it fails, I shall have no resource but to expel him. But I hope it will not fail. It is a slender hope, I admit." The Head paused for a moment, and then went on. "If this lad were brought under the influence of a really good and noble nature—and there are many such in this school, Mr. Railton—what might not be the effect upon his character?"

"Quite so; but—"

"But he has shown no desire to form such a friendship?"

"If he has, he has failed. If he had made a friend of such a lad as Tom Merry of the Shell, or Blake of his own Form, it would have done him lasting good. But he is really on the worst of terms with them. In fact, I hear that Tom Merry and Blake, who were great friends, have recently had trouble, owing to Lumley's conduct. He is the cause of endless trouble in the Lower School."

"I have no doubt St. Jim's would be better without him, Mr. Railton. But for the boy's own sake I am inclined to make one more effort."

"I shall gladly render any assistance in my power, sir."

"Well, then," said the Head musingly, "if it could be arranged for Lumley to be thrown into close association with such a boy as I have mentioned—say Blake, as they are in the same Form—the Fourth—or Merry—"

"Merry, perhaps, sir. He is in the Shell, but because he is older than Blake, and of a somewhat more thoughtful character, I should think he would be the more fitted. I think, too, that he is more likely to undertake such a painful task. For it will be a painful task to any lad who undertakes to become the friend of Lumley-Lumley. He may have to face ill-feeling among his own friends on the subject."

"Quite possible. You think Merry would be willing—"

"I think, with tact, he might be induced to act in the manner you wish, sir. In the first place, I could arrange for Lumley to be placed in his study."

"Very good!"

"As a matter of fact, some of the Fourth Form studies are to be papered, and I could easily arrange for Lumley's to be the first. Lumley and Mellish would therefore have to find new quarters. I would put Lumley in Tom Merry's study temporarily, with Merry, Manners, and Lowther."

"And then—"

"Then, if you like, sir, I would speak to Merry quietly on the subject."

The Head looked very relieved.

"Thank you, Mr. Railton. If you undertake this, it will remove a weight from my mind. I have been very troubled over the matter."

"I will undertake it, sir."

"It is Lumley's last chance," said the Head. "If it fails, he must go. But if it succeeds, Mr. Railton, I am convinced that something may be made of the boy."

"I agree with you fully, sir."

And after a little more discussion, Mr. Railton rose, and quitted the Head's study.

His face was very thoughtful as he walked away. He had undertaken a delicate task, and to one who understood boys less than Mr. Railton did, it would have presented insuperable difficulties.

But Mr. Railton hoped to carry it through.

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CHAPTER 2.

A Surprise for Tom Merry.

"HALLO!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, of the Shell, paused as they came along the passage. It was the Fourth Form passage in the School House. Several articles of furniture—a table, a desk, several chairs, and a bookcase—stood in the passage, and it was necessary to thread one's way very carefully among them. They were standing outside a Fourth Form study, of which the door was wide open. From within came a smell of whitewash, and the sound of rumpling paper.

"Lumley's study being done up," said Monty Lowther. "They've broken up the happy home, and no mistake. I wonder where Lumley and Mellish will dig while it's going on."

"Oh, they can do their prep. in the common-room," said Manners.

"I don't envy the chaps who get Lumley and Mellish put into their studies, even for a few days, anyway," Tom Merry remarked. "It won't be us, anyway, as we're not in the Fourth."

"Don't be so sure of that," said a voice; and Mellish came out of the study.

Tom Merry looked at him.

"What do you mean, Mellish?"

Mellish laughed.

"I mean that Lumley-Lumley's new study is arranged for him."

"He's sharing with somebody else in the Fourth?"

"No."

The Terrible Three looked at Mellish curiously. There was a malicious smile on his face that rather puzzled them.

"What is it?" exclaimed Tom Merry abruptly. "If you have anything to say, Mellish, say it, and have done."

"Lumley has been put into a Shell study."

"Oh!"

"Guess which study!" grinned Mellish.

"Not ours!" exclaimed Manners.

Mellish nodded.

"Yes," he said. "Yours."

The chums of the Shell went on their way without replying. The news was a surprise to them. It was unusual for a Fourth Form fellow to be put in a Shell study, and it was extremely disagreeable to the chums of the Shell to have the Outsider in their quarters.

Tom Merry had been more patient with him than any other fellow at St. Jim's. But even Tom Merry's patience had been exhausted.

Like the rest of the Lower School, he barred the Outsider. To have Lumley-Lumley thrust into his quarters in this way was dismaying.

"I suppose Mr. Railton doesn't know much about our private likes and dislikes," Manners remarked. "I wish I'd had a chance of speaking to him on the subject."

"It's rotten!" said Monty Lowther.

"Well, it will be for a few days only," said Tom Merry. "We shall have to stand it, that's all. I suppose we can put up with even the Outsider for a few days."

"Yes, if we have to."

"Hallo!"

The chums of the Shell had reached their study. The fellow they were speaking about came out as they arrived at the door.

Lumley-Lumley was looking a little dusty. He had been carrying books into his new quarters. He nodded to the Terrible Three coolly.

"Have you heard?" he said.

"Yes," said Tom Merry curtly, "if you mean about your coming into our study. Mellish has just told me."

"I guess it's not agreeable news to you."

Lumley-Lumley, though it was many years since he had left New York, had not dropped the habit of "guessing." Sometimes, too, a French expression would drop from him, reminiscent of his sojourn in the French capital. Lumley's had been a strange boyhood, spent in wandering on the face of the earth with his father, before fortune smiled upon the house of Lumley.

For that reason much was to be forgiven him. And yet it was hard to get on good terms with a suspicious and unscrupulous nature.

"It's not agreeable, certainly," said Tom Merry, in his downright way. "But you're welcome to dig in our study for a few days, as far as that goes. We're not going to cut up rusty about it."

"Oh, no," said Manners.

"Peace at any price," said Monty Lowther, with a yawn. "We can't give you the order of the boot, anyway; so we may as well take it smiling."

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"Well, it's no good your bucking against Railton's orders,

"I guess," he said. "But if you think I'm anxious to come into your old study, you're mistaken. I'd rather dig in the Fourth, if I had my choice."

"We'd rather you did, too," said Lowther blandly. "What a pity it can't be arranged."

"Oh, no good jawing," said Tom Merry hastily. "We shall be rather crowded, but we'll make the best of it. You'll want room to put your things, Lumley. Let's see what arrangements we can make."

They entered the study.

Lumley-Lumley's face was clouded. Cynical as he was, he had feelings to be wounded, and although he did not wish to show it, he felt the repugnance the chums showed to having him in their study.

"You can shove your books in the bookcase," said Tom Merry. "Have a shelf to yourself if you like. And there's room at the table for four."

"I guess so."

"I rather think I shall have tea in hall this evening," said Monty Lowther carelessly.

Lumley-Lumley flushed red.

The juniors at St. Jim's were allowed to have their tea in their own studies, when they chose to do so. It was very seldom that a fellow had tea in hall, if his funds would run to a "feed" in the study.

Lowther's motive in making that remark was only too clear to the Outsider of St. Jim's.

He strode towards Lowther with an angry brow.

"What do you mean by that?" he exclaimed.

Monty Lowther looked at him coolly. He was not in the least afraid of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, and not particularly unwilling to quarrel with him. They had had many a rub before this.

"I mean what I say," replied Lowther, with a drawl in his voice that was very irritating to the angry Outsider.

"You don't want to feed with me?"

"Not particularly."

"You're going down to hall to tea because I'm in the study?"

Monty Lowther shrugged his shoulders. Lowther prided himself upon an aristocratic calmness of manner, and this dragging things out into the light, as it were, jarred on his nerves, and he allowed the Outsider to see it, plainly enough. "I haven't said so," he said quietly.

"But you mean it?"

"I'd rather not discuss the matter."

"Oh, if you're afraid to stand by your own words——"

Monty Lowther's eyes were gleaming now.

"If you put it like that, I'll be as candid as you wish," he said. "I don't want to eat with you. I don't like you sufficiently. That's plain English."

"And that's plain, too, I guess," cried the Outsider.

Smack!

His open palm came with a ringing smack upon Monty Lowther's cheek, and the Shell fellow staggered back towards the window.

CHAPTER 3.

D'Arcy Decides.

IT was surprise, more than anything else, that caused Monty Lowther to stagger away. The blow had been a sharp one, but it only tingled on his face. He was not hurt. But the red mark of it showed up plainly on the cheek.

It was only for a moment that Lowther staggered. Then he came springing forward, his fists clenched, and his eyes blazing.

Tom Merry sprang forward.

"Monty! Stop!"

He thrust himself in between the two. Lumley-Lumley was standing his ground. He was no match physically for Monty Lowther. But he did not retreat an inch. He was willing to stand by what he had done. With all the Outsider's faults, no one had ever called him a coward.

Tom Merry dragged the angry Lowther back.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed.

Lowther struggled in his grasp.

"Let go!" he shouted. "I—I'll smash him! Let go, Tom Merry!"

"Hold on, I say!"

Lowther pushed Tom Merry aside. But the hero of the Shell held him fast, and he could not get at Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"Monty, I tell you——"

"Let go!" shouted Lowther.

"But——"

"Let me get at him!"

"You sha'n't!" said Tom Merry. "Lend a hand here, Manners!"

Manners hesitated.

"Why not let them have it out, Tom?" he exclaimed. "Hang it all, old man! He's punched Lowther's head, you know!"

"Yes, I know, but——"

"Oh, let him come on," said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "I guess I don't object to a little scrap."

"Hold your tongue!" said Tom Merry sharply.

Lowther made another effort to tear himself loose, but Manners lent Tom Merry a hand, and the angry junior was whirled back towards the window.

Lumley-Lumley put his hands in his pockets, and surveyed the scene with a sneering smile.

"Will you let me go?" panted Monty Lowther. "I'm going to lick that cad, I tell you."

"You're not," said Tom Merry.

"I will, I——"

"Cheese it," said Manners. "Tom's head of the study; we've agreed on that. You've got to toe the line. Chuck it."

"Ass!"

"Thanks! But chuck it, all the same!"

"Fathead!"

"Good! (Chuck it, all the same, though," said Manners unperturbably.

Lowther panted for breath. He desisted from struggling for a moment or two, from sheer want of breath.

"What do you mean by this, Tom Merry?" he exclaimed.

"Why can't I go for the cad, if I want to? Are you off your silly rocker?"

"No," said Tom Merry; "but you can't fight Lumley now. Mr. Railton put him into the study, and it's up to us to take it quietly."

"Not if he lays his paws on us, I suppose!" roared Lowther.

"Well, you provoked him."

Lowther gasped.

"I—I provoked him!"

"Yes," said Tom Merry sturdily. "He had no right to act as he did; but you knew he was an outsider, anyway. But you started it!"

Monty Lowther simply snorted. He was far from expecting his own chum to turn against him in this manner.

"Well, I like that!" he exclaimed. "Are you standing up for that—that unspeakable rotter?"

"No, I don't like him any more than you do; but if Mr. Railton's put him here while his study's being done out, it's up to us to fall in with his wishes. Mr. Railton has always been decent to us."

"Quite so," said Manners. "A giddy Daniel came to judgment. Shut up, Monty! Tom's right, all along the line."

"Rats! I——"

"Now, cheese it, Monty!"

"The unspeakable, inexpressible bounder will think I'm afraid of him!" roared Monty Lowther.

"Oh, stuff!" said Manners.

"If he does, what does it matter?" said Tom Merry practically. "I suppose nobody will take any notice of his opinion."

"Well, there's something in that," Lowther admitted.

"Of course there is!"

"But, all the same, I'm going to punch his head," said Lowther. "If Lumley-Lumley likes to let the matter drop, then I'm satisfied."

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"I guess not," he remarked.

"Then I'll jolly well——"

"Hold him, Manners."

"Leggo! I——"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed a voice at the door. "Bai Jove, deah boys! Is that a new form of gymnastics, or—— I weally twust you are not havin' a wow!"

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form, who was looking in. D'Arcy of the Fourth was a most elegant junior, and his elegant little boots and his inimitable ties, were the despair of the greatest dandies in the school. D'Arcy's elegant manner and his inimitable accent were famous through both Houses at St. Jim's.

The Shell fellows paused as D'Arcy spoke.

"I twust," went on Arthur Augustus severely—"I twust, deah boys, that you are not allowin' yourselves the relaxation of a vulgah wow."

"Oh, rats!" said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah!"

"Buzz off!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I wegard you as a vude boundah, Lowthah. And if you are havin' a wow——"

"We're not," said Manners. "It's only Lowther who's in want of a little exercise."

"Bai Jove!"

"I'm going to wallop Lumley!" roared Lowther. "He's dotted me in the chivvy!"

"What a howwid expression!"

"Ass!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"He's dotted me in the chivvy!"

"I weally wish, Lowthah, that you would say he has swicken you in the countenance, if that is your meanin', deah boy."

"He's dotted me in the countenance—I mean the chivvy!" gasped Lowther, "and I'm going to wipe up the floor with him, and these silly asses are trying to stop me."

"Bai Jove! If Lowthah's dig, has been insulted in this mannah, deah boys, you must allow him to wetaliate."

"There!" exclaimed Lowther. "I knew Gussy would back me up!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy, undah the cires."

"Let Gussy decide," said Manners.

"Yaas, that's a weally good ideah! You can always depend upon me to show you what's the wight and pwopah thing to do, deah boys!"

"Lumley's been put into our study," explained Tom Merry, releasing Lowther, while he explained matters to the swell of the School House. "Lowther immediately said he wouldn't feed with him."

"That was wathah wude!"

"Ass!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"And then Lumley-Lumley dotted him on the chivvy—I mean, struck him on the countenance."

"That was vewy wude indeed."

"And now Lowther wants to wipe up the carpet with him."

"And I'm jolly well going to!" shouted Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"I tell you—"

"Undah the cires, you had better let Lumley alone. You see, as Mr. Railton put him in the study, it was up to you to receive him politely. Any othah course of conduct implies a disrespekt for your House-mastah—and that is a thing of which I could nevalh appwove."

"Fathead!"

"Weally, you know—"

Monty Lowther was too excited to follow the excellent reasoning of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He suddenly broke loose and rushed at Lumley-Lumley. The Outsider of St. Jim's was quite willing to meet him half-way.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rushed between.

"Weally, deah boys— Oh! Ow! Yawooh!"

D'Arcy was acting the part of the peacemaker—but in this particular instance the peacemaker was not blessed; Lowther's fist caught him on one side of the head, and Lumley's on the other.

The swell of the Fourth gave a wild howl, and dropped on the carpet with a bump.

CHAPTER 4.

The House-Master's Invitation.

"MY hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Manners.

"Bai Jove! Yawooh! Yow! Ah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess—"

"Yah! Oh!"

"I'm sorry!" gasped Lowther. "What did you get in the way for, you duffer?"

"I guess it's your own look-out," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Bai Jove! You wottah!"

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther raised the swell of St. Jim's up. He was gasping for breath, and his head was swimming.

"Bai Jove, I wegard you as a pair of feahful duffahs!" he exclaimed. "I have a gweat mind to give you both a feahful thrashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can see no cause for wibald laughah! I have a vewy considerable ache in my beastly head!"

"Oh, there's nothing in that!" said Manners. But whether he alluded to the ache or to the head he did not explain.

"It feels howwid! You see—"

"Look here, you can chuck it now, Lowther!" said Tom Merry, as he sat Gussy down in a chair. "There's been enough of this. You must have made poor old Gussy's head spin between you."

"Yaas, wathah! By Jove!"

Lowther grunted.

"He's dotted me in the chivvy," he said truculently.

"Well, let it drop!"

"I guess you'd better," said Lumley-Lumley mockingly.

"You might get another dot in the chivvy which you wouldn't like half so much, you know."

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Lowther turned crimson.

"Will you hold your tongue, you cad?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"I guess my tongue's my own, and I'll use it as much as I like!" said the Outsider coolly. "I—"

"If you don't shut up," said Monty Lowther, breathing hard, "you may get shut up, you know."

"I guess there's nobody here who can shut me up."

"I can—and will!" shouted Lowther, his temper going again. "Look here, Tom Merry, I can't stand that cad—and I won't!"

"Hold on—"

"Oh, let him come on!" sneered Lumley-Lumley.

And Monty Lowther did "come on."

He rushed right at the Outsider and closed with him. The two juniors reeled to and fro in the study, kicking up clouds of dust from the carpet.

"Now, you cad," panted Lowther, whirling the slim Fourth-Former towards the door, "out you go!"

"I guess not!"

"Pll—"

"Pll—"

"Ahem!"

It was a slight cough from the passage.

The struggle ceased as if by magic.

Mr. Railton, the House-master of the School House, stood in the doorway.

"Oh!" gasped Lowther.

"Ah!" murmured Lumley-Lumley.

They separated, as if each had suddenly become red-hot. They stood, dusty, dishevelled, panting, crimson. But, curiously enough, Mr. Railton did not seem to notice anything unusual. Perhaps the House-master was exercising his gift of tact.

"I wished to speak to you, Merry," he said, looking across at the hero of the Shell, who was very red and conscious.

"I want you to come to tea with me."

"Oh, sir!"

Tea with the House-master was, of course, a great honour—much coveted by the boys, especially the juniors. There was only one greater honour at St. Jim's—tea with the Head and Mrs. Holmes.

To have Mr. Railton look in upon a scene of disorder and quarrelling when he had come to ask them to tea went straight to Tom Merry's conscience.

"Th-th-thank you, sir!" he stammered.

"Manners and Lowther as well, of course," said Mr. Railton. "and Lumley-Lumley. I wish also to ask the boys in No. 6 Study in the Fourth. Ah, you are here, D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, wathah, sir."

"You will take my invitation to Blake and Herries and Digby?"

"Yaas, sir. Digby has gone home with Glyn, sir, to tea."

"Then, of course, he cannot come," said Mr. Railton, with a smile. "I shall expect the others—at six o'clock precisely."

And Mr. Railton, with a cheery nod, went on his way.

The juniors looked at one another.

"Blessed if I'm going!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Weally, Lumlay," said Arthur Augustus, rising to his feet, "you seem to be uttally unacquainted with decent mannahs, deah boy. It is a gweat honah to be asked to tea with a mastah—and it is uttally impos. to wefuse! It is like a Woyal command, deah boy."

"We must all go, of course," said Tom Merry quietly.

"It's beastly awkward!" said Lowther. "It's very kind of Mr. Railton; but, under the circumstances, it's—well, awkward."

Lumley-Lumley burst into a laugh.

"I guess we can keep the peace at the House-master's tea-table," he remarked.

"I home so."

"Six o'clock, I think Mr. Wailton said!" D'Arcy exclaimed. "I shall have to go and tell the chaps in my study. Au wewoir, deah boys!"

And the swell of St. Jim's left the study.

Lumley-Lumley, with a peculiar look at Monty Lowther, followed him out. The Terrible Three looked at one another in grim silence.

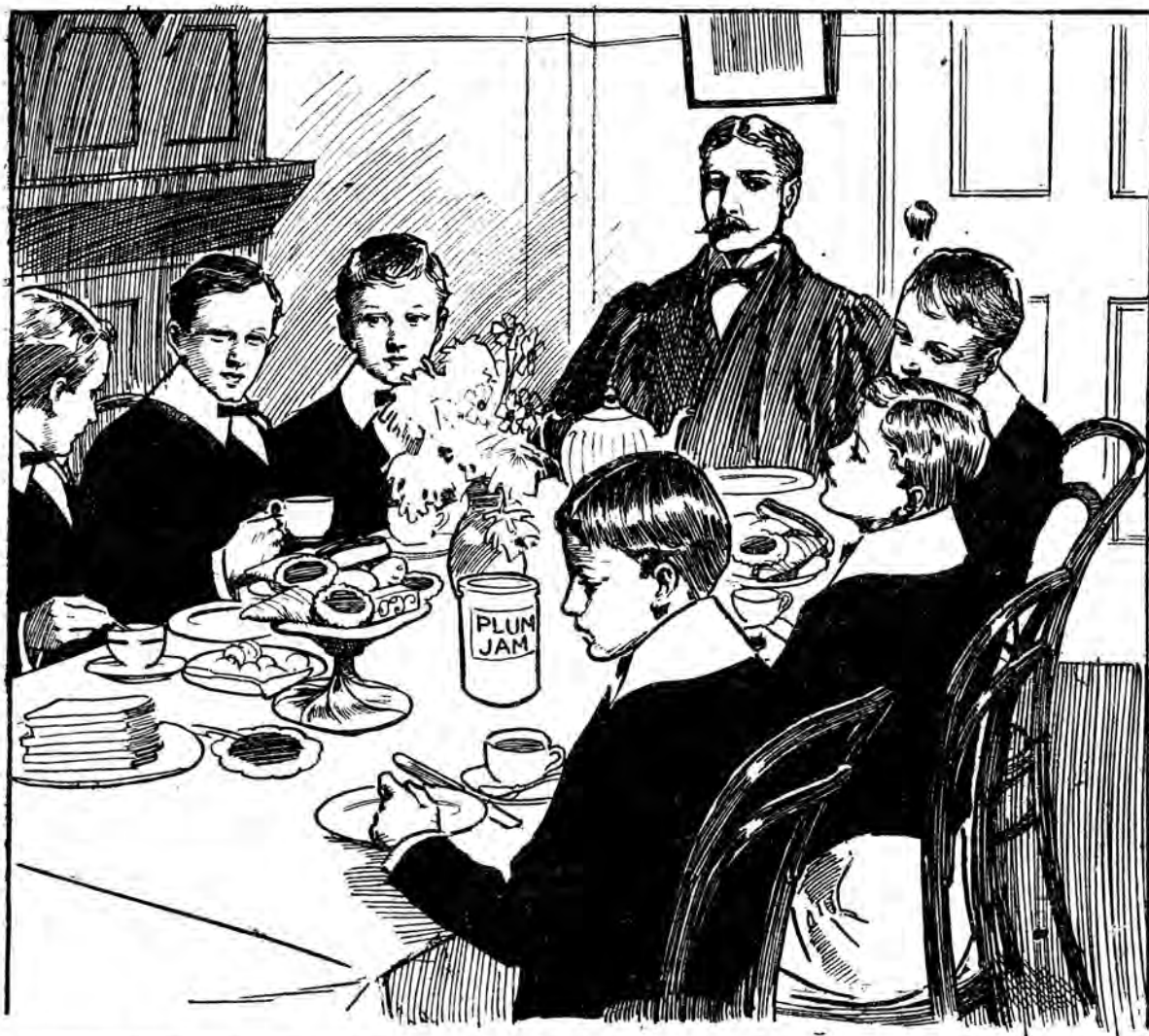
"This is jolly odd!" said Manners, at last.

Manners was a quiet fellow, but it was generally supposed in the Shell that Manners could see deeper into things than most fellows.

"It's a bother, rather," said Tom Merry. "But what is there odd about it?"

"It's odd that Mr. Railton should put the Outsider into our study and then ask us all to tea with him."

"Perhaps it's the idea of pouring oil on the troubled waters?" suggested Monty Lowther, with a grin. "I don't suppose Mr. Railton would take the trouble though."



Amidst the buzz of cheery talk, to the accompaniment of the clatter of cups and saucers and plates, Mr. Railton felt that his object was being achieved, and that it was more than probable that Lumley's last chance would not be wasted. (See page 7.)

"Well, it's odd."

"It's settled we're going, of course," said Monty Lowther.

"Of course."

"Upon the whole, it's just as well that I haven't a black eye or a swollen nose to take with me," Lowther remarked thoughtfully.

"Look here," said Tom Merry abruptly, "you'll have to be careful, Lowther!"

Lowther looked rather belligerent.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"No losing your temper, and slanging Lumley——"

"I hope you don't think I'm likely to lose my temper, and play the goat, at a master's tea-table," said Lowther, turning very red.

"Well, no. But Lumley might try to provoke you—you know what an exasperating beast he can be when he likes."

"Well, if he does——"

"You must take it all lying down," said Tom Merry firmly. "Fellows get into that position sometimes, when they have to take cheek, and grin and bear it. If Lumley's too rotten you can take it out of him in the gym afterwards."

Lowther hesitated.

"I suppose you're right," he said.

"Of course I am."

"It's a go, then."

"Well, keep your weather eye open," said Tom Merry, rather doubtfully. "I can't help thinking that Lumley would like to show us up to the House-master if he could."

"I won't give him a chance, for one."

"Good! Now, let's get ready."

And the Terrible Three prepared for the visit to Mr. Railton's quarters, taking a great deal more care with their toilet than was their custom.

CHAPTER 5.

Taken to Tea.

"UNDUH the circs.——"

"Got a stud to spare, Gussy?"

"Heaps, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy graciously. "You'll find 'em in the box on the mantelpiece."

"Thanks!" said Jack Blake.

"Undah the circs.——" resumed D'Arcy.

"Where's that stud?"

"In the box."

"Thanks!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eye rather suspiciously on Jack Blake. Herries was grinning for some reason. Blake did not make any movement to take the stud he had been inquiring after.

The chums of the Fourth were giving the finishing touches to their attire in the study. A large glass, the property of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, gave them special facilities there for seeing exactly how they looked.

They were dressed very nicely. Blake was in his every-

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day clothes; but Herries, after reflection, had changed into his Sunday "bags." His week-day ones had suffered from too much contact with his bulldog, Towser.

Towser was a splendid dog—at all events, Herries said so, though when he said so his voice was like a voice in the wilderness. No one else said so. But even Towser had his faults. He would leave great deposits of loose hairs on Herries, and sometimes, in a playful way, he would rip a bit out of his master's trousers. Herries said that a really good and faithful dog was always a little playful. Whether Towser was good and faithful or not, certainly he was playful—if tearing clothes was a sign of a playful nature.

So Herries had changed the trousers, and certainly he looked much neater for the change. There were loose hairs only on his jacket now. He had brushed his jacket and brushed his hair. The jacket was not much changed by the brushing, but the hair was—it was standing almost on end!

After Blake and Herries had finished, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was still standing before the glass, and wearing a perplexed expression upon his aristocratic countenance. He had not decided which tie to wear. D'Arcy had so many ties that he was always rather puzzled which to wear, and there were many, many considerations for the swell of St. Jim's to take account of in the matter.

He had asked Blake's advice and Herries' advice. Blake had advised him to toss up for it, and Herries had suggested shoving the ties in the fire. Neither suggestion commended itself to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

As a matter of fact, Blake and Herries were bored with Gussy's ties. But Gussy was far from comprehending that. He was never tired of the subject himself.

"Undah the cires, I think a fellow ought to wear a decent tie," he remarked.

"Did you say you had a stud?" asked Blake sweetly.

"Yaas, wathah; in the box."

"Thanks!"

"Mr. Wailton will natuwallly expect a chap to look decent."

"Gimme that stud!"

"It's in the box, deah boy, on the mantelpiece. Pway help yourself!"

"Thanks!"

"Undah the cires.—"

"Hand over the stud."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries suddenly.

Arthur Augustus turned an inquiring eye upon Herries. He did not see any reason for the burly Fourth-Former's sudden outburst of merriment.

"Weally, Hewwies—" he began.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for laughtah, Hewwies. Pway look at these ties, Blake. Of course, the first gesidewatum is for a chap to wear a tie that agwees with his eyes in tone."

"Where's that stud?"

"In the beastly box. There are othah considewations, howevah, beside the colah of the eyes," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "The tone of the jacket one is weawin' must be considahed. Then there are the colours worked into the waistcoat—a vewy important item to consider. What do you think, Blake?"

"What do I think?" repeated Blake.

"Yaas!"

"You really want to know what I think, Gussy?" queried Blake, with a very thoughtful expression upon his face.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Then I'll tell you."

"Go ahead!"

"I think you're an ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries again.

"Weally Hewwies—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"I wegard you as a pair of silly duffahs! If you cannot give a sensible opinion about a chap's necktie, Blake—"

"Where's that stud?"

"In the box. I will get it for you, deah boy," said D'Arcy obligingly, going to the mantelpiece. "What sort of stud do you want?"

"I didn't say I wanted a stud."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries.

"You were makin' incessant inqwies aftah a stud, Blake."

"That was only to stop you," said Blake, with a sweet smile. "You see, one has to do something to stop your talking, when you get on the subject of ties or toppers."

"You uttah ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway take a look at this tie, Blake. Do you pwfer a soft cwimson with gween spots?"

"Where's that stud?"

"You feahful ass! Or a soft gween, with cwimson spots?"

"Can you spare a—"

"You ass!"

"Stud, Gussy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy bestowed an indignant look upon his study mates, and proceeded to select a tie without their assistance.

Having selected one, he tied it with the grace and finish which was an art known only to D'Arcy of the Fourth.

"I am weady!" he announced.

"Come on, then. We don't want to keep a House-master waiting. It's not respectful; and besides, the tea will be cold."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weally wish you would not woah out in that abwupt way, Hewwies. You weally thwow me quite into a fluttah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, I forgot!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's suddenly.

Blake, who had reached the door of the study, turned back with an exasperated look.

"What is it now?" he shouted.

"My hat!"

"Eh!"

"Shall I go in a silk topper, or in a—"

"Cab?"

"You uttah ass! A silk toppah, or—"

"You champion chump!" roared Blake. "As we're not going out of doors at all, there's no need for headgear of any kind."

"Yaas, but—"

"Come on!" said Herries.

"It looks bettah to go in a silk hat, and it looks vewy gwaceful standin' there, you know," urged D'Arcy. "It gives a sort of finish—"

"Chump!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, collar him, Herries, and run him out!" exclaimed Blake, seizing the swell of the Fourth by one arm. "This way!"

Herries promptly seized D'Arcy by the other arm.

"Come on!" he shouted.

"Weally, deah boys—yow! Don't be such wuff beasts! You will wumple my jacket, you know, and make cweases in my sleeves. Ow!"

"Buck up!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was rushed out into the passage. Reilly of the Fourth was coming along, and he skipped out of the way just in time to avoid being cannoned.

"Faith, and what are ye at?" shouted the Irish junior.

"Is it off your rockers ye are intirely?"

"Sorry!" gasped Blake. "We're taking Gussy to tea."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Stop! You are wumplin' me fwightfully!"

"Never mind; come on!"

"But I do mind. Ow—yow!"

Arthur Augustus, in spite of his expostulations, was propelled along the passage by his energetic chums.

"Buck up!" exclaimed Blake. "I know those Shell chaps. They'll have scoffed all the cake by the time we get there, if we let Gussy delay us much longer."

With a final rush D'Arcy was brought up to the door of Mr. Railton's study.

Just as the juniors reached it, the door opened, and Mr. Railton looked out into the passage. Perhaps he had heard the scuffling of feet, and the gasping of the swell of the School House.

"Oh!" murmured Blake.

The juniors stopped dead, too startled even to release D'Arcy. Mr. Railton smiled a genial smile.

"Ah, it is you!" he said cheerfully. "Come in!"

"Weally!"

The juniors went in, with very red faces.

CHAPTER 6.

Tea with Mr. Railton.

MR. RAILTON'S study looked very cheerful and cosy. There was a good fire burning in the grate, and the table was laid for tea. And the table looked very inviting. Great preparations had evidently been made.

The juniors could not help glancing at the good things with an appreciative eye. Even Arthur Augustus D'Arcy forgot his tie for a moment.

Mr. Railton was so utterly unconscious of any confusion on the part of his guests, and so genial and kind, that their confusion soon disappeared.

It was impossible to be self-conscious or awkward with the House-master. He had a way of setting young people at their ease which never failed.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther presented themselves within a couple of minutes of the arrival of the chums of the Fourth.

Mr. Railton shook hands with them cordially, with a few words of welcome.

The Terrible Three looked very neat and clean and cheerful, with perhaps a touch of consciousness in their manner which hinted at the fact that they had specially clean collars on.

One guest only was expected now—the Outsider of St. Jim's. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had not yet arrived.

Was the Outsider coming?

The juniors did not think he would venture to disregard the invitation of the House-master; yet at the same time they realised that there was no telling what a fellow like Lumley-Lumley might or might not do.

Mr. Railton, perhaps, felt a twinge of uneasiness on the subject. If Lumley-Lumley did not come, his little plan would be spoiled.

The task he had undertaken by request of the Head was to begin with that friendly tea which was to place the Outsider on good terms with the other fellows.

But if the Outsider did not come—

Mr. Railton did not allow his manner to indicate what he was thinking. He was calm and cheerful and genial.

He had started a never-tiring topic—football. Junior football, of course—for the juniors of St. Jim's naturally felt more interested in their own play than in the doings of the First Eleven, great men as the latter undoubtedly were.

The kettle was singing on the hob, all ready for the tea to be made, for the meal was to be taken in quite a chummy way, as if Mr. Railton were simply a senior in the school, and Blake had already been settled upon to make the tea.

Blake could not help glancing at the clock after a little talk, even on the intensely interesting subject of football in general and junior House matches in particular.

It was ten minutes past six.

The Outsider was already ten minutes late. Was he coming? Would he have the cheek to stay away, or was this but another sample of his insolence? Because the St. Jim's fellows considered it bad form to keep a master waiting—that was a reason why Lumley-Lumley, with his peculiar ideas, would do it.

There was a footstep in the passage, and a tap at the door. "Come in," said Mr. Railton cheerily.

Lumley-Lumley entered.

He had come! But a look at his face was sufficient to show that he was late on purpose. It was but one more example of the impertinence that had made Lumley-Lumley a sore trial to the masters at St. Jim's.

"Ah, we are complete now," said Mr. Railton, shaking Lumley-Lumley by the hand in so genial a manner that even the Outsider looked less sullen.

Mr. Railton did not appear to notice that Lumley-Lumley was late. He did not seem to be aware that the Outsider had not a wholly pleasant expression upon his face. Mr. Railton never saw anything it was not judicious to see, and St. Jim's fellows sometimes wondered at his blindness in consequence. "I think you may make the tea now, Blake," Mr. Railton said.

"Certainly, sir!"

Blake would gladly have taken Lumley-Lumley by the collar and shaken him. The other fellows felt the same. When Mr. Railton was being so kind, it seemed to them so utterly rotten to cheek him, that they could scarcely contain their anger. But it was necessary to do so under the circumstances.

"I suppose," murmured D'Arcy in Tom Merry's ear—"I suppose it will be all wight if we hammah that cad aftar-wards?"

Tom Merry smiled.

"Quite, Gussy!"

"I feel as if I cannot stand him, you know, Tom-Mewwy."

"Yes—but—Mr. Railton is looking at you."

"Bai Jove!"

Blake was making the tea. D'Arcy coloured under the momentary gaze of the House-master, and he went to help Blake with the tea. Blake was pouring hot water into the teapot to warm it when Arthur Augustus tapped him on the shoulder. It was not exactly a judicious thing to do under the circumstances. Jack Blake gave a wild howl as a spurt of hot water from the kettle went over his hand.

Crash!

"Bai Jove!"

Blake sucked his hand and glared at his chum.

"You—you ass!" he panted.

The teapot lay in fragments in the grate.

"My hat!" murmured Monty Lowther.

Mr. Railton smiled kindly.

"A little accident?" he remarked. "It is of no consequence. I will ring for another teapot." He touched the bell. "I hope you have not scalded your hand, Blake?"

"Oh, it's n-n-nothing, sir!" gasped Blake. "Only a little splash—only I was startled. I'm sorry the teapot's broken, sir."

"Yaas, bai Jove, I'm awfly sowwy, too, sir!"

"It is of no consequence whatever."

"It's vewy kind of you to say so, sir; but I must be permitted to remark that Blake is a clumsy chap, and not to be trusted with a teapot."

"Me!" gasped Blake. "I—I mean, I! You—you—why, you made me drop it!"

"Weally, Blake—"

A maid appeared at the door.

"Another teapot, please," said Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir!"

The new teapot was quickly forthcoming. Mr. Railton handed it to Blake, and D'Arcy stretched out his hand to take it from his chum.

"You had better let me make the tea, deah boy!" he remarked.

"Buzz off!" murmured Blake.

"Weally, Blake, you are not to be trusted with a teapot—"

"I'll—I'll—"

"It would be too wotten to have anothah accident, and—weally, Hewwies!"

"Come and look at the pigeons in the quad., Gussy," said Herries, slipping his arm through D'Arcy's, and forcibly leading him to the window.

"Hewwies! How can I see the pigeons aftar dark? Are you off your wockah?"

"Never mind—look!" said Herries cheerfully.

"Weally, Hewwies!"

Jack Blake made the tea. Herries released the swell of St. Jim's as soon as that operation was safely over, and the juniors took their places round the table.

Mr. Railton assigned the place next to himself to Tom Merry, and next to Tom Lumley-Lumley sat, and Monty Lowther was on the other side. Little polite offices had, therefore, to pass between the juniors, which was, perhaps, the House-master's object.

There was a curious expression upon Lumley-Lumley's face.

The Outsider had come there with the intention of being silent and sullen, but in the genial kindness of Mr. Railton he melted imperceptibly. In spite of himself, the sulky boy began to look more cheerful and good-humoured, and the other fellows realised that it was up to them to make the tea-party in the House-master's study a success if possible. There was, therefore, a circle of cheerful faces round the table when tea began, and Mr. Railton took care that there should be no long intervals of silence.

And it was a tea that could not fail to appeal to the juniors. Ham and fresh-boiled eggs were there in any quantity, and there were cakes, and scones, and dough-nuts, and marmalade, and various kinds of jam.

The boy who could not have spent a very happy time at that table must have been a very unnatural boy indeed, and Tom Merry & Co. were all healthy, normal fellows. So was Lumley-Lumley when his better nature was uppermost, and under the influence of his genial surroundings, the Outsider's better nature was rapidly coming to the top.

Mr. Railton noticed the change, without allowing it to be seen that he was taking note of anything.

And in the midst of the buzz of cheery talk, to the accompaniment of the clatter of cups and saucers and plates, the House-master felt that his object was being achieved, and that it was more than probable that Lumley's last chance would not be wasted.

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CHAPTER 7.

Specially Requested.

"PASS the jam, Lumley!"

"Certainly!"

"Try the tarts, Lumley, old man?" said Herries, in a stage whisper. "I can recommend them. Quite all right."

"I guess so!" said Lumley-Lumley.

The chums of St. Jim's and the Outsider had almost forgotten, by this time, that they were on bad terms.

Indeed, amid such genial surroundings, it was difficult for anybody to remain on bad terms with anybody else.

Mr. Railton quietly marked the progress of his little plan with inward satisfaction.

Lumley-Lumley's face was very bright and cheerful. His voice took on a softer tone, and the old, cynical expression no longer lingered about his lips.

There was no doubt that Mr. Railton's tea-party was quite a success.

And, strangely enough, under the circumstances, Lumley-Lumley helped to contribute to that result. For under Mr. Railton's kindly influence, the Outsider came out strong, and he told more than one anecdote of his earlier days—days which had been spent amid strange scenes quite unknown to the St. Jim's fellows.

Lumley-Lumley had learned, by this time, not to relate yarns of reckless doings, or of hard dealings such as had shocked and surprised the fellows when he first came to St. Jim's. What he said was interesting, without making his hearers feel that he was an "awful outsider."

The little party broke up at last, on the best of terms.

Mr. Railton made the Shell fellows a sign to remain after the Fourth-Formers had gone. The Fourth-Formers—Blake, Herries, D'Arcy, and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley—departed in the friendliest fashion possible, chatting cheerily as they went down the passage.

The Terrible Three were a little surprised at being detained, but they all three wore their politest smiles.

"Just a few minutes' more talk," said Mr. Railton, with a smile. "Draw your chairs up to the fire."

The Shell fellows obeyed.

They wondered what was coming. Tom Merry had an uneasy, inward feeling that it was something to do with Lumley-Lumley. He was right.

"You have a new boy in your study, my boys," Mr. Railton remarked.

"Yes, sir."

"Lumley will probably remain with you for a few days."

"Ye-es, sir."

"You do not mind?"

"It's for you to settle about it, sir, of course."

"That is not an answer to my question, Merry," said Mr. Railton, with a smile.

Tom Merry coloured.

"Well, sir, if you want me to speak out, we don't like Lumley-Lumley in our study. But we're willing to treat him civilly."

"More civilly than any other chaps, I think," said Lowther.

"Now," said Mr. Railton, "I feel that I can speak in confidence to you three boys."

"I hope so, sir," said Manners, in quite a stately way, while Tom Merry and Monty Lowther wondered, uneasily, what was coming.

"It is about Lumley, of course."

"Ye-es, sir."

"You don't like him?"

"No, sir."

"The other fellows in the School House feel the same towards him?"

"I—I think so, sir."

"It's not confined to the School House, sir," said Manners. "The New House chaps feel just the same. But—I didn't know you—you—"

The House-master laughed.

"You didn't know I had seen it?"

"Well, sir—"

"I see many things that I am generally supposed not to see," remarked Mr. Railton, and Monty Lowther coloured furiously as he remembered the scene in the study. "But what I want to get at is this—what is the cause of Lumley's general unpopularity?"

The three Shell fellows looked at one another helplessly. Respect for the House-master made it impossible for them to avoid answering his questions. At the same time, they had a horribly uncomfortable feeling at being driven, as it were, to talk about the faults of a fellow who was not present.

"You need not mind speaking out to me, my lads," Mr. Railton said quietly. The thoughts and feelings of the

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juniors were as clear to him as if they had been written on an open sheet. "I am intervening in this matter for Lumley-Lumley's sake. If you desire to help your school-fellow, the best thing you can do is to join hands with me in the matter."

That was really putting it very diplomatically. Mr. Railton had placed the Shell fellows in the position of being desirous of helping Lumley-Lumley—a thought that had not occurred to them before.

"The fact is," went on the School House-master, in the most candid way, "I am sure I can rely upon you, and I am going to speak very plainly. I want to help Lumley-Lumley. He is the most unpopular boy in the school, and I fear that he deserves it only too well. At the same time, he has many excellent qualities."

"He's a plucky beggar—I—I mean a plucky chap," said Monty Lowther.

"Yes, I heard that he risked his life to save the miller's little girl in the mill-stream."

"Yes, it's true enough, sir. Cousin Ethel—Miss Cleveland—saw it."

"A really bad fellow would not do that, Merry."

"I know it, sir. And he never swanked about it, either," said Tom Merry, warming a little. "He used to get frightfully ill-tempered if it was mentioned."

"Then, don't you think there is a chance for Lumley-Lumley yet?" asked Mr. Railton. "A boy like that is capable of good things. Now, to be plain, unless a change takes place in Lumley-Lumley, he will have to leave St. Jim's."

Mr. Railton made that statement very seriously.

The Shell fellows exchanged glances again. Nothing would have pleased them better than for Jerrold Lumley-Lumley to leave St. Jim's.

And yet their House-master had, somehow, placed them in the position of wishing him to stay—or, at all events, taking the matter very seriously.

"Indeed, sir!" stammered Manners.

"Yes, Manners. Unless Lumley-Lumley changes, he must go. But the Head, and I, would be sorry to see the doors of St. Jim's closed upon one who was capable of becoming a credit to the school if he had a little help in time."

"Ye-es, sir."

"You would be sorry, too, Merry?"

"I—I suppose so, sir."

"It would be a shame, wouldn't it?"

"Well, yes, sir."

"Now, why is Lumley-Lumley so unpopular?" asked Mr. Railton. "Speak quite frankly, and in complete confidence; regard me simply as a senior, like Kildare, and consider that we're discussing a matter for the well-being of a schoolmate we want to help."

"Oh!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Well, go on, Merry."

"Well, sir, he's—well, he's a rank outsider," said Tom Merry. "He can't say I haven't given him a chance. I had a row with all the other chaps for playing him in the footer eleven. But he never would play the game; he doesn't seem to be able to. He'd keep the ball to himself all the time, and then more than once he fouled a chap who upset him."

"That is very serious."

"And he's not truthful; and how is a chap to get on with a liar?" said Lowther.

"But remember his early bad training," said Mr. Railton.

"He was brought up in a class of people to whom untruthfulness comes quite easily. The same influence is at work even in his footer; he was trained to be selfish and hard."

"H'm!"

"But I don't see how we're to stand it, sir."

"No, I don't think you should, Merry. Certainly not!" said Mr. Railton heartily. "You must not stand it; you must cure him."

"Oh!" said Tom Merry, taken aback.

"As there is certainly good in him, why should we not make a combined effort to bring it to light?" suggested Mr. Railton. "The thought has long been in my mind that what Lumley-Lumley needs to set him right is friendship with some really decent lads. That is why I thought of you."

The Terrible Three coloured.

"I confess," said Mr. Railton, "that I have so far relied upon your co-operation in this matter, that that was my motive in sending Lumley-Lumley temporarily into your study."

"Oh, sir!"

"Now, I am going to ask a favour of you—for Lumley-Lumley's sake," said Mr. Railton. "The boy has had many disadvantages. Considering everything, he is not so bad as—as he might be. You see that?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Suppose you make up your minds to be very patient with him—to stand by him like true friends, and always treat

him with perfect politeness—for a few days at least," Mr. Railton suggested. "Back him up all along the line; let him see that you're willing to chum with him if he plays the game."

"Oh, sir!"

The chums of the Shell sat dismayed. It was a large order.

"You could even give him another trial at football, Merry," the House-master went on. "Give him a real chance—a last chance."

Tom Merry looked deeply troubled.

"If you wish it, sir—"

"I do wish it, most earnestly."

"Then I will try, sir."

"Thank you, Merry! I am sure that you will do your best. And you, Manners and Lowther?"

"I'll do my best, sir," said Manners slowly.

"And—and I, sir," said Lowther, not very heartily.

But any look of heartiness in the manner of the juniors was apparently not noticed by Mr. Railton. He rose to his feet.

"Thank you very much," he exclaimed. "I am sure you will not regret it, however the experiment turns out. But I think it will be a success, if you try your hardest."

And the House-master shook hands with the chums of the Shell, and they departed. After the study door had closed on them, they paused in the passage.

"Well, this is a nice go!" murmured Monty Lowther.

Manners grunted.

"We're in for it."

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "We're in for it. And we've given Mr. Railton our word, and we've got to play up and do our best."

"Oh, yes!"

The chums of the Shell were agreed upon that, but their expressions were not very hopeful as they walked slowly away.

CHAPTER 8.

Very Polite.

TOM MERRY & CO. sat in their study that evening at prep. They were very busy, and had forgotten for the moment all about Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. The opening of the study door, and the appearance of the Outsider, brought him back to their minds.

Lumley-Lumley looked into the room with rather an aggressive air.

The effect of the tea-party in Mr. Railton's study seemed to have worn off already.

The chums of the Shell rose as he came in.

They had agreed that Lumley-Lumley was to be tolerated; and not only tolerated, but treated with marked politeness on all occasions.

Music, as Lowther remarked, had charms to soothe the savage breast, and it was worth while to try the effect of politeness upon Lumley-Lumley.

If it came a little awkwardly at first, that could not be helped; they would get more accustomed to the "dodge" in the course of time.

"Good-evening!" said the Terrible Three together.

Lumley-Lumley stared at them.

"Eh!" he ejaculated.

"Good-evening, Lumley-Lumley!"

"What!"

The Outsider came in with his aggressive look growing more pronounced. He stared at the chums of the Shell in a far from agreeable manner.

"If you're trying to pull my leg, you may as well chuck it now, I guess," he remarked.

Tom Merry coughed.

"Ahem! We're not, Lumley."

"Certainly not!" said Lowther.

"Quite the contrary," said Manners.

Lumley-Lumley stood quite still and stared at them. He could not make the Terrible Three out at all.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "what do you mean?"

"M-m-mean?"

"Yes."

"We—we don't mean anything."

"Of all the asses—"

"Eh?"

"Of all the silly fatheads—"

"Ahem!"

"Are you off your silly rockers?" shouted Lumley-Lumley angrily.

The chums of the Shell smiled in a sickly way. It was not pleasant to be suspected of being "off their rockers" because they had started politeness in the study.

"N-not exactly," said Tom Merry.

"Not at all," said Manners.

"I guess you must be."

"Oh, no," said Monty Lowther; "quite the contrary."

"Look here—"

"Yes?"

"Tell me what you're getting at, you chumps."

"Ahem!"

"You see—"

"I want some room at this table, as I'm shoved in here to do my prep.," growled Lumley-Lumley. "Make room for me, will you?"

"Certainly!"

"With pleasure!"

The chums cleared a space on the table for the astonished Outsider.

He could only stare.

He had expected peevishness or resistance, especially after Monty Lowther's reception of him in the study earlier in the day.

But he was receiving nothing but the most profound, Chesterfieldian courtesy. The chums could not have done more to oblige him if he had been a long-lost brother turning up unexpectedly, as they do in the novels.

"Is that all right?" asked Manners graciously.

"Let me get you a chair," said Lowther.

"You'd like the light shaded, perhaps?" Tom Merry suggested.

"Not that chair," said Manners; "that's the one with the game leg. Give Lumley-Lumley the best chair."

"My mistake; certainly!"

Lumley-Lumley looked at the chums in wonder.

"If you're all mad here, I'd better get out," he exclaimed. "Blessed if I want to do my prep. in a giddy lunatic asylum."

"My dear chap, you mustn't go!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in alarm. "Look here, would you like to have a chair by the fire?"

"I'll get a cushion for you," said Manners.

"It's a cold evening," Lowther remarked, "I'll get a hot-water bottle to put under your feet, if you like."

Lumley-Lumley backed towards the door.

"You jolly well ought to be in strait jackets," he gasped.

"I guess you'll be developing homicidal tendencies next."

"But, I say—"

"Hold on, Lumley—"

"Look here, my dear fello.—"

Lumley-Lumley backed out into the passage.

Tom Merry & Co. ran after him. Their faces were earnest and anxious, but they did not make the impression they desired upon the Outsider.

Lumley-Lumley appeared to believe really that they were insane; and certainly their sudden change of conduct must have appeared unaccountable.

The Outsider bolted down the passage.

"Come back!" shouted Tom Merry.

"I say, Lumley—"

"My dear chap—"

Lumley-Lumley ran on.

The Terrible Three dashed after him. As soon as he heard their footsteps in pursuit, Lumley-Lumley quickened his pace. He turned into the Fourth Form passage, and dashed into the first open doorway, which happened to belong to No. 6, Blake's study.

Blake, Herries, D'Arcy, and Digby were there. Digby had come back from tea at Bernard Glyn's, and he was describing the luscious dainties that had graced the hospitable board at Glyn House.

"As for cake," said Dig, in deep admiration, "you should have seen it! Miss Edith made the cake herself; I got that from old Glyn. And I tell you what it is, she makes cake better than you can buy for a shilling a pound in Rylcombe."

"Go hon!" said Blake.

"It's a fact. I— My hat!"

Lumley-Lumley burst into the study, interrupting Dig very suddenly.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy, starting. "What's the maffah? You have thrown me into quite a fluttah, you outside boundah."

"They're mad!" gasped Lumley-Lumley.

"What?"

"Who?"

"Which?"

"They're mad!"

"Eh? Who's mad?"

"Bai Jove!"

"They are!"

"Who, you ass?" yelled Blake, seizing the excited junior by the shoulder and shaking him.

"Who's mad?"

"Tom Merry, and Manners, and Lowther—mad as batters—madder than March hares!" panted Lumley-Lumley. "They're gibbering and jabbering in their study—right off their rockers. Close the door; I can hear them coming."

He flung the door shut with a slam, and turned the key in the lock.

Only just in time!

The Terrible Three reached the door the next moment. Tom Merry hammered on the panels with his fist.

"I say, open the door!" he called out.

"Sha'n't!" yelled Lumley-Lumley. "You're mad! Sha'n't!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You ass!"

"Bai Jove! What makes you think they're off their beastly wockahs, deah boy?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"They're mad, I tell you."

Bang, bang, bang!

"I say, Blake! Open the door!"

Jack Blake ran to the door. Lumley-Lumley tried to stop him.

"I tell you they're mad!" he shrieked.

"Oh, you're a duffer!" said Blake.

"Don't open the door!"

"Rats!"

"I tell you—"

"Bosh!"

Jack Blake put his hand to the key. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley made an effort to drag him away, but that was not of much use with the sturdy Fourth-Former. Blake grasped him, and pushed him forcibly into a chair.

"You sit there!" he remarked. "If they're mad, I dare say there's enough of us to handle them. Sit tight."

And Blake unlocked the door and opened it. The Terrible Three rushed in. Lumley-Lumley jumped up, and dodged round the table. The expression of alarm on his face was so genuine that the chums of the Shell paused, and burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 9.

Quite Sane.

B AI Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Jack Blake, in amazement.

"They look as if they're rather dotty! Look here, what's the matter with you?"

"Yaas, wathah! What's the beastly mattah, deah boy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Explain, you duffers!"

"Yaas, explain. I—"

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

Lumley-Lumley grasped a heavy ebony ruler from the table.

"I guess they're simply raving!" he exclaimed. "Keep off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! If you don't explain what's the beastly mattah, you know, we'll throw you out into the passage!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"Yes, rather!"

"Hold on!" gasped Tom Merry. "But—but I couldn't help laughing. We're not mad!"

"Well," said Blake. "If you're not, I must say you're acting as if you were. And mind, we're not going to take your word for it."

"Wathah not!"

"You see, we were trying to be civil to Lumley-Lumley," explained Tom Merry, laughing. "We wanted to be polite—"

"What?"

"Polite?"

"Which?"

"Polite, you ass!" shouted Tom Merry.

"You wanted to be polite?"

"Yes."

"Nice-mannered?" asked Blake.

"Yes."

"Courteous?"

"Just so."

"Well, no wonder he thought you were off your rockers. What made you change your manners and customs like that all of a sudden?"

"Fathead!" said Tom Merry.

"Ahem! If that's a sample of the new politeness, you may as well get back to the old style," Digby remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess you should have warned me," said Lumley-Lumley, still regarding the chums of the Shell somewhat doubtfully. "What's the little game, anyway? What were you trying to butter me up for?"

"Yaas, wathah, Tom Mewwy! Lumley-Lumley is entitled to an explanation."

"Well, the chap's going to dig in our study," said Tom Merry. "We really wanted to do you down well, Lumley."

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, if that's the lay out, I guess I can follow it," said Lumley-Lumley. "But if you're trying to pull my leg—"

"We're not."

"Honour bright?"

"Oh, all serene."

"Come back to the study, old man," said Monty Lowther, quite affectionately. "We'll kill the fatted calf for you, we will really."

"We'll make you quite comfy, Lumley."

"You shall have half the table."

"And all the armchair."

"And a slice of cake."

"And some ginger-pop."

"I guess I won't come," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'll do my prep. in the common-room."

"But—"

"My dear chap—"

"We want you to come, you know."

"Oh, come off," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'll go down into the common-room, I tell you. Don't play the goat."

"But—"

"Rats!"

"My dear Lumley!"

"Piffle!"

And Jerrold Lumley-Lumley walked out of the study, and went downstairs. The Terrible Three looked after him in dismay, and then they looked at the chums of the Fourth, who were grinning hugely.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

Tom Merry snuffed.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" he exclaimed.

"Well, you were doing enough cackling yourself just now," Blake remarked. "It's my turn. One good turn deserves another, you know. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries and Dig.

"Oh, rats!" said the Terrible Three together.

And they quitted Blake's study.

They left the Fourth-Formers laughing heartily. In the passage, Tom Merry gave an expressive growl.

"Blessed if it seems like much of a success so far!" he exclaimed.

"Well, it doesn't," agreed Lowther.

"Better chuck it," said Manners.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Can't! We've promised Mr. Railton."

"True; I forgot that."

"We shall have to make it up with Lumley-Lumley somehow. I'll tell you what it is," said Tom Merry, as if struck by a sudden thought. "You chaps must have overdone it!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"You two overdid it," said Tom Merry firmly.

"Well, of all the cheek—"

"Of all the nerve—"

"That's what it was," said Tom Merry. "I wish you'd be more careful, you know, really. We don't want to spoil the whole thing from a little carelessness, you know."

Monty Lowther winked at Manners.

"You think we were too polite, hey?"

"Yes."

"Too gentle?"

"That's it."

"Too sweet?"

"Exactly!"

"Too kind and lamblike?"

"You've hit it."

"Well, we'll jolly soon change all that!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "Lend a hand, Manners, old man. Bump him!"

"What-ho!" said Manners heartily.

And they grasped hold of their leader simultaneously.

"Here, I say, hold on!"

"We're holding on!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"I—I mean leggo!"

"Bump him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah—ow—oh—leggo!" roared Tom Merry. "You chumps! Oh!"

Bump!

Tom Merry sat down heavily upon the linoleum. Manners and Lowther, laughing heartily, walked away, and left him sitting there, blinking.

ANSWERS

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NEW READERS Can Always be

CHAPTER 10.

Honour Bright!

TOM MERRY and his chums did not see Lumley-Lumley again that evening.

Whether the Outsider had a lingering doubt as to their sanity, or whether he simply didn't care for his company, certainly he did not return to the study.

At bedtime, he went up with the Fourth Form, and the chums of the Shell went to their own dormitory.

They chatted on the subject for a few minutes before they turned in. Tom Merry had quite forgotten his bumping in the passage. Little incidents like that did not make any difference to the friendship of the Terrible Three.

"We haven't started well," Monty Lowther remarked.

"That's a fact!" Manners agreed. "Still, we may improve as we go on, and it may do you good, Monty."

"Me—how?"

"Why, it may end in a general improvement of manners," his chum assured him, solemnly. "You may grow to be quite naturally polite!"

"If it ends in an improvement of Manners," said Lowther, grinning, "it will be a jolly good thing. Manners needs improving."

"Why, you ass!"

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

"I don't see what you're cackling at, Tom," said Manners.

"Look here, we haven't done well—to come back to the subject. We shall have to pile it on to-morrow, that's all."

"Good egg!"

"You fellows off your rockers?" asked Harry Noble, otherwise known as Kangaroo in the Shell, because he came from the land of the cornstalk.

"Not exactly," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Why?"

"The fellows are saying so. Lumley-Lumley says that you are developing politeness and courteous manners in your study. Is it a serious attack?"

"We're trying to get on with the Outsider."

Kangaroo whistled.

"It will take you all your time," he remarked.

"I shouldn't wonder!"

"And you've started politeness on him, have you?" remarked Clifton Dane. "You shouldn't do these things too suddenly, you know. Why not turn it on gradually, so that a sudden change in your manners wouldn't be so noticeable?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three went to bed with the best possible resolutions for the morrow. They had determined to treat Lumley-Lumley with perfect courtesy to-morrow, and watch how it worked. It was really as if they were trying a scientific experiment. When the Shell went down in the morning, Tom Merry & Co. looked out for the Outsider.

Blake and his chums were already down, punting a footer about in the quad, in the fresh, breezy morning.

Jerrold Lumley stood by the School House door, looking on, with his hands in his pockets, and a hard expression on his face.

He was an outsider, and no mistake, now!

Lumley-Lumley was naturally of an energetic turn. He did not care to look on idly while other fellows were doing things. He was not a slacker by nature.

Gladly he would have joined the Fourth-Formers in the punt about. But they evidently did not want him; and the Outsider was too proud to thrust himself where he knew that he was not wanted.

"Here he is!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"He looks as if he'd like some exercise," said Tom Merry. "Buzz off and get my old footer, Monty; we'll make him join us in punting it."

Lowther ran upstairs for the footer. Tom Merry tapped the Outsider on the shoulder in a most genial way.

Lumley-Lumley gave a start, and looked round. He was not usually greeted at St. Jim's in that friendly manner.

He did not speak, but simply looked at Tom Merry, in a way that was decidedly uncompromising.

"Good-morning!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Waot do you want?"

"Nothing."

"Then keep your paws off my shoulder," said Lumley-Lumley.

Tom Merry turned red.

"It's a cold morning," he remarked.

"I guess I knew that."

"A little exercise would keep a fellow warm."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"We're going to punt a ball about till brekker," said Tom Merry, determined to keep cheerful and good-tempered in spite of the Outsider's unpromising manner. "Will you join us, Lumley?"

"No!"

"Oh, come, pile in!" said Manners. "It will do you good."

Lumley-Lumley stared at them.

"Look here, what's the little game?" he demanded.

"Footer," said Tom Merry innocently.

"I don't mean that? Why do you want to make me punt about with you?" demanded the Outsider abruptly. "You don't like me."

"Ahem!"

"As a matter of fact, there's no reason why you should," said Lumley-Lumley in his disagreeably frank way. "I can't say that I like you much."

"Hum!"

"That's plain English, isn't it?"

"Hem!"

"I haven't treated you well, either," said the Outsider. "I've been going to say that I'm sorry for the way I acted over—the footer match the other day. It's been on my mind."

"I'm glad to hear you say so," said Tom Merry, sincerely enough.

"Mind, I'm not saying that to butter you," said Lumley-Lumley aggressively. "I don't care twopence whether you think well of me or not."

"We know that."

"I was in the wrong, that's all, and—and I was sorry afterwards."

"Good for you."

"I've said that to satisfy myself, not to please you."

"Never mind; it does please me all the same," said Tom Merry good-humouredly. "You're a cantankerous sort of chap, Lumley. Why do you always make yourself out to be worse than you are?"

"I—I don't know that I do," said Lumley-Lumley, taken aback.

"Well, you do. Hallo, here's Lowther with the ball! This way, Monty! Now, you're joining us, Lumley, aren't you?"

Lumley-Lumley did not move.

"I don't make you out at all," he said. "It's only a few days since you told me you had done with me, and said something about punching my head if I should speak to you again."

Tom Merry coloured painfully.

"I was wrong to say it," he replied.

"No, you weren't," said the Outsider, rather reasonably, "after the way I acted, you were right enough. I wasn't surprised at it, and I don't owe you a grudge for it. But why have you changed all of a sudden, that's what I want to know."

Tom Merry was silent.

He knew that it would not do to explain to the Outsider.

He was growing to understand the suspicious, jealous, touchy nature of this strange lad much better than he had ever understood it before. He was beginning to realise that there was in Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's breast a great longing for a good and healthy friendship—that in his heart he did not value fellows like Mellish, who toadied to him for his money.

Yet at the mere suspicion of being patronised or even helped, all the lad's unruly pride was up in arms at once.

If he had known that Mr. Railton had spoken to Tom Merry on the subject, that the House-master had taken a personal interest in his welfare, it would probably have been quite enough to set him against the whole plan for his benefit.

"Well?" demanded Lumley-Lumley.

"We want to be on good terms with you," said Tom Merry.

"After all that's happened?"

"Yes."

"I guess I don't catch on."

"Take it for granted," said Monty Lowther, "and come and help us move the footer. The bell goes soon."

Lumley-Lumley still looked puzzled.

"You mean all this?" he asked.

"Of course."

"Honour bright?"

"Honour bright," said Tom Merry.

That was enough for even the Outsider. He knew that Tom Merry's word of honour was sacred.

"Well, I guess I don't understand, all the same," he said.

"Never mind, come on, time's passing."

Monty Lowther tossed out the ball, and the juniors were soon punting it about quite merrily. Kangaroo, and Dane, and Glyn, and French, and other Shell fellows came up to join in the fun, and there was soon quite a crowd, laughing and shouting merrily; the Outsider of St. Jim's as merry as the merriest.

Mr. Railton stood for a moment on the steps of the School House and looked out. A very pleasant smile came over the face of the House-master as he saw. It lingered there as he turned back into the house.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"THE RUNAWAY."

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Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 11.

D'Arcy Thinks It Is All Right.

"B AI Jove!"

"Hallo, Gussy! What's the matter with you?"

"Nothin' the mattah, deah boy."

"Then what are you burbling about?" asked Jack Blake pleasantly.

"I was not aware that I was burblin', deah boy," answered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity, "I was uttewin' an ejaculation. Look!"

And the swell of St. Jim's nodded towards the group of Shell fellows in the distance. The Fourth-Formers had stopped their punt about, and were going in.

They looked across at Tom Merry & Co. in surprise.

It was new to see Jerrold Lumley-Lumley on such excellent terms with Tom Merry and his chums, and Blake could hardly believe his eyes at first.

"My hat!" he exclaimed, at last.

"Yaas, wathah! It's vewy cuwious, isn't it?"

"Lumley must be turning over a new leaf."

"Or else Tom Merry is," suggested Digby. "He's done this sort of thing before, you know. He twice played Lumley-Lumley at footer, against everybody else's wishes. I should have thought he'd be tired of it by this time."

"Same here."

"Faith, and ye're right!" said Reilly, of the Fourth. "But sure Lumley seems to be playing up, and he's laughing, too! He seems to be quite jolly."

Blake sniffed.

"Oh, he'll show the cloven foot soon enough!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I wogard it as pwactically certain, deah boys," said D'Arcy. "There is no doubt that Lumlay-Lumlay is a wank outsidah. The twail of the serpent is ovah him all the time, you know."

The Fourth-Formers stood and looked on for some minutes.

Jack Blake's prediction, that Lumley-Lumley would not play heartily and good-naturedly for long, or that he would show the cloven foot as Blake expressed it, was verified.

Bernard Glyn collided with the Outsider, quite by accident, and pushed him over on his hands and knees. The Outsider swung round instantly, and gave the Liverpool lad a shove that sent him spinning.

Glyn was far from expecting the attack, and he rolled over, and crashed down on the ground with a bump.

"Oh!" he exclaimed.

There was a shout from the other fellows.

"Shame!"

"Cad!"

Tom Merry ran up. His face was crimson.

"Lumley! What did you do that for?"

"He shoved me over," said Lumley-Lumley sullenly.

Tom Merry compressed his lips.

It was against all the rules he had laid down, for him to quarrel with Lumley-Lumley then; but he had never felt more inclined to do so in his life.

He controlled his temper, however.

Lumley-Lumley stood with a dark and sullen brow, as Bernard Glyn rose slowly to his feet.

"I—I'm sorry, Glyn," faltered Lumley-Lumley, "I—I acted without thinking. I'm sorry if I hurt you."

Bernard Glyn had begun pushing back his cuffs.

He stopped as the Outsider spoke, and looked curiously at Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"Oh, very well!" he said. "If you're sorry, that's all right."

And he walked away.

The Shell fellows went in to breakfast. Blake grunted as he turned towards the house.

"What did I tell you?" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy! But—"

"The chap's simply hopeless!"

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"Quite outside!" said Herries.

"Yaas! But—"

"Look here, what are you butting in like that for, Gussy?" demanded Blake.

"I was goin' to wemark, deah boy, that, undah the circs., Lumlay-Lumlay's conduct could be ovahlooked. You see, he apologised to Glyn."

"What difference does that make?" grunted Herries.

D'Arcy gave his chum a severe glance.

"All the difference in the world, Hewwies," he replied. "If one chap apologises to anothah that makes it all wight."

"Rats!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"I suppose it would take away all Glyn's aches and things, and dust his clothes, wouldn't it?" demanded Herries sarcastically.

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"Weally, Hewwies—"

"My belief is that Lumley-Lumley said he was sorry because Glyn was going to punch his head," said Herries obstinately.

"Not at all, deah boy. Lumlay-Lumlay is an awful outsidah, but he's got heaps of pluck—you must say that for him."

"Oh, rats!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Piffle!"

"Look here, Hewwies—"

"Oh, cheese it, you two!" said Jack Blake. "Stop arguing, and come in to brekker."

"I was not arguin'," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"I was explainin' to this ass—"

"Well, chuck explaining, then!"

"Weally, Blake—"

Blake seized his chum by the arm and rushed him into the dining-room. Arthur Augustus simply had to leave off.

At the breakfast-table D'Arcy looked round for Lumley-Lumley, and dropped into a seat beside him. Hancock, who was going to take that seat, grinned, and went further. He was not sorry to give up his place next to the least-liked fellow in the School House.

Lumley-Lumley looked idly at D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's gave him a most benignant smile in return.

"Good-mornin', Lumlay, deah boy!" he remarked.

"Hallo!"

"I saw you bump Glyn ovah—"

Lumley-Lumley scowled.

"Oh, shut up!" he exclaimed.

"Eh?"

"I've heard enough about that," said the Outsider savagely. "Let it drop!"

"I was not goin'—"

"Oh, chuck it!"

"I wepeat—"

"Cheese it!"

"I wepeat," pursued Arthur Augustus D'Arcy firmly, "that I was not goin' to throw your wotten conduct in your face, Lumlay-Lumlay. I was goin' to wemark that I was vewy glad to see you apologise to Glyn aftahwards."

"Oh, rats!"

"I wogarded it as the wight and pwopah thing to do."

"Well, ring off the subject now!"

"I am afwaid you are a wude beast, Lumlay-Lumlay, upon the whole. However, I weally think there is some good in you. Whenevah an injuwry is done, an apology should be quite enough to set the mattah wight between gentlemen. I am vewy glad to see that you are learnin' mannahs, deah boy."

"There is too much talk at this table," said Mr. Lathom mildly.

And D'Arcy "rang off," as Lumley-Lumley had requested him to do.

But when the juniors went out after breakfast the Outsider's look was a little more cordial. He realised by this time that the swell of St. Jim's had meant kindly. A new prospect seemed to be opening before Lumley-Lumley.

If the fellows were willing to forget old grudges, and to be friendly it was a chance for him—a chance to abandon his old ways of sullen isolation and defiance, a chance to set himself right with the school, a chance to bring friendship and good-feeling into his life.

Lumley-Lumley thought it over seriously. In his dark, suspicious mind there was yet a lingering doubt that the fellows might be "rotting" him.

But if they were not—if they were willing to let bygones be bygones—surely he would be reckless to let the chance—the last chance perhaps—slip by.

And in Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's mind a resolution was slowly forming—a resolution that was to have a far-reaching effect upon his career at St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 12.

The Evil Genius!

THERE was bright sunlight in the quadrangle, a fresh breeze of spring stirring the branches of the old elms. After morning school the St. Jim's fellows were keenly enjoying the fresh air and the sunshine. One fellow sat upon a somewhat retired bench under the trees.

It was the Outsider!

Many a time Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had looked on at the other fellows enjoying their game and had felt himself to be what he was—an outsider.

He had felt, at the same time, that it was his own fault—he had known that he had sullenly refused the olive-branch held out more than once.

in sullen pride and suspicion he had said to himself that he did not care; that his own company was sufficient for him; and that with his disreputable associates outside the school gates he could amuse himself better than by joining in the boyish sports of the juniors.

But he had felt all the time, secretly, in the depths of his heart, that it was not true; that he longed really for association with fellows like Tom Merry, and that he would have given anything for a real boyish friendship.

Why did he not make an effort?

He had made the effort more than once. But he had failed—and he had to confess that the fault lay with himself. A hasty, revengeful, and suspicious nature was a bar to friendship. Every fellow who had tried to take up the Outsider had found him "impossible."

And so the nature of the boy had grown harder and more sullen. But now, it seemed, a gleam of light had crossed the dark path of the Outsider.

As he sat there, under the elms, pencil and book in hand, his face was brighter than it had been for a long time—brighter, and more boyish in its expression.

The book in his hand was his school "Virgil," and Lumley-Lumley, in the hours of leisure, was trying to make up for lost time.

For the Outsider had made a resolve.

Tom Merry & Co. were making an effort to save him from himself, and though the Outsider did not fully understand that, he understood that he had at last a chance to set himself right with the St. Jim's fellows.

And he meant to do his best!

To become a kind, cheerful, friendly fellow instead of a sullen, frowning outsider, to become a worker instead of a slacker, to drop his cynical, scornful manners and adopt a more boyish and hearty tone—all that required a great effort. But the Outsider of St. Jim's was prepared to make it.

Hitherto, in the endless troubles of the Form-room, Lumley-Lumley had contented himself with sullen submission or sullen defiance. Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, had shown much patience in dealing with Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. But even Mr. Lathom had lost patience at last, and punishments had fallen thickly upon the lazy and insubordinate boy. The punishments were endured with sullen hardihood.

To set himself right with Mr. Lathom would not be easy. But Lumley-Lumley meant to do it if he could. Hence his work at this moment when the other juniors were at play.

He was construing "Cæsar" now—going over work that should have been quite familiar to him, but which he had neglected till the youngest Fourth-Former, the newest comer in the Form, could pass him easily.

The "Gallic War" presented more difficulties to Lumley-Lumley than to many sharp lads in the Third Form.

He was wrinkling his brows over it when Mellish came by. Mellish was looking for the Outsider.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed.

Lumley-Lumley looked up.

"Well?" he said.

"I've got them!" said Mellish.

Lumley-Lumley stared at him.

"You've got what?"

"The fags."

"Oh!"

"I've put them in the study," said Mellish. "They're good! Are you coming to have a smoke?"

The Outsider shook his head.

"Oh, come on!" said Mellish. "It was a lot of trouble getting them. I thought Tom Merry had spotted them once. And you know how he interferes in those matters—though I can't see what biznay it is of his."

"I can't come," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Why not?"

"I'm working."

"Oh, hang! You don't want to do more prep. than you're bound to, I suppose?" said Mellish. "What's the little game?"

"I'm awfully behind in class, and I want to pull up."

Mellish burst into a sneering laugh.

"You don't mean to say you're trying to butter up Lathom?" he exclaimed.

Lumley-Lumley turned red.

"I guess not," he said angrily.

"Then what are you doing it for?"

"To pull up, as I said."

"Oh, rot!"

Lumley-Lumley's eyes glinted. But he dropped them to his book again.

"What are you doing?" asked Mellish, standing with his hands in his pockets and looking down at him.

"Cæsar."

"What rot!"

Lumley-Lumley did not reply.

"I should think that stuff was bad enough in the classroom," said Mellish, with a yawn. "I can't stand it. Do you find it interesting?"

"I guess it's dry," said Lumley-Lumley rather ruefully. "But I dare say that's because I don't know enough. I've heard fellows say that the book's well worth reading, if one mugs up enough Latin."

"Oh, rats! Only swots, I suppose?"

"Well, I'm swotting at present. So buzz off, will you?" "Look here, the cigarettes are in the study, and we could have a quiet smoke. Blessed if I understand you lately, Lumley!"

"Don't try. Buzz off."

"But I want you—"

"I can't come."

Mellish sneered.

"Oh, I've seen it all!" he exclaimed.

"You've seen what? What do you mean?"

"I've seen you sucking up to Tom Merry and his friends," said Mellish fiercely. "Do you think I'm blind? You think they may take you up again."

The Outsider was silent.

"They're only fooling you," said the cad of the Fourth. "You mark my words! As soon as they're tired of you they'll drop you fast enough."

"I don't believe it."

"Rats! It's happened before."

"It was my fault."

Mellish sniffed.

"Oh, if you're going to understudy good little Georgio in the story-book I've done!" he exclaimed. "You make me sick, Lumley."

Lumley flushed uncomfortably.

"I'm not!" he said. "There's nothing goody-goody about me, I guess! Still, I don't see why I shouldn't be civil to Tom Merry when he goes out of his way to be obliging to me."

"I expect he's got an axe to grind," said Mellish.

"I don't see how."

"Oh, chaps don't take trouble over one another for nothing."

"You don't, certainly!"

"Oh, pile it on!" said Mellish. "I understand you! You think you'll be on the best of terms with Tom Merry now that you're in his study, and you can afford to drop me!"

Lumley-Lumley shifted a little uncomfortably.

"I wasn't thinking that," he said. "I don't know that I want to drop you. But I'm going to drop smoking. It's a fool's game, anyway."

"It's the first time I've heard you say so!" sneered Mellish.

"Well, you hear me say so now, and I mean it."

"Rot!" said Mellish. "Look here, those chaps in the Shell are making things all right for you now, because they don't want continual rows in their study. Wait till you're back in your own quarters—they'll drop you like a hot brick."

Lumley-Lumley started.

"I don't believe it!" he said, but more weakly than before.

"It's the jolly truth, all the same. Look here, for goodness' sake stop this goody-goody rot, and act like yourself!" urged Mellish. "Come and have a smoke! If it's for the last time, it doesn't matter—come and say good-bye to the cigs!"

Lumley-Lumley hesitated, and rose.

"I wish you'd let me alone!" he growled, ungraciously.

"Oh, come on! You can mug up 'Cæsar' afterwards!" Mellish took a look at the open book in Lumley-Lumley's hand. "Pooh! Blow Orgetorix! I don't care twopence whether he was the noblest and richest of the Helvetians! Br-r-r!"

Lumley-Lumley flushed and closed the book.

He followed Mellish. Just as they were leaving the spot, Tom Merry came up, with a cheerful and rosy face.

"Hallo, Lumley!" he exclaimed. "I caught sight of you. Are you finished?"

"Well, not exactly finished."

"What are you mugging up?"

"Cæsar."

"Like me to help?"

The offer was made so frankly and cheerily that even the Outsider could find no fault with it. He hesitated.

"I suppose this is child's play to a Shell fellow?" he remarked.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, I think I could take you through it easily enough," he said, "and I shall be jolly glad to, as well. Sit down and let's begin."

Mellish pulled at Lumley's sleeve.

"You're coming with me?" he said.

"I-I—guess—"

The Outsider hesitated.

"Look here, Tom Merry, Lumley's promised to come with me," said Mellish aggressively. "That rotten Latin can wait!"

"Better stick to it, Lumley."

"If you'd care to help me—later—" said Lumley-Lumley, hesitatingly.

"Oh, very well."

The Outsider walked away with Mellish. There was a cloud on his face. He was in a dubious frame of mind. His good angel and his bad one had contested for him, and the bad one had triumphed for the time—Ormuzd had been defeated by Ahriman. Mellish grinned with triumph as he walked away with Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. They left Tom Merry with a cloud upon his face.

CHAPTER 13.

Caught.

"HERE you are!" said Mellish.

The two Fourth-Formers entered a Fourth-Form study. It was the one Mellish was occupying at present, being temporarily disposed of, as Lumley-Lumley had been. The study belonged to Hancock and Drake, of the Fourth, but both of them were absent now. It was an excellent opportunity for Mellish—and for Lumley-Lumley, if he had been what he had once been.

But Lumley-Lumley seemed to be changing.

Smoking was a doubtful pleasure. Neither had could honestly say that he enjoyed it. Either, if he had told the truth, would rather have eaten jam tarts at the tuckshop.

But it was against the rules—it was surreptitious. It involved a secret defiance of authority, and to certain natures all these things appealed.

But the Outsider did not look cheerful as he came into the study with Mellish, and the ead of the Fourth closed the door.

Mellish took a box of cigarettes from his desk and opened it, and held out the box to Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"Light up!" he said.

Lumley-Lumley hesitated.

"Look here, suppose Hancock or Drake comes in?"

"They won't—they're out on their jiggers!"

"Or a prefect—"

Mellish sneered.

"Are you growing afraid of the prefects?" he asked.

"No," said Lumley-Lumley, flushing. "You know jolly well I'm not afraid of a prefect, or of Kildare himself—or a master, for that matter! But—"

"Then light up!"

"But—"

Mellish struck a match, and lighted his own cigarette. He blew out a whiff of smoke. The whiff was not fragrant. The cigarettes were cheap and common, and a smoker ever so addicted to smoking, would have declined them. But to the self-styled "sportsman" of the Fourth, a smoke was a smoke.

"Go it!" said Mellish, extending the lighted match.

"It's a mug's game!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"What is?"

"This smoking."

"What put that into your head?"

"Well, it's rot! You don't care for cigarettes, and I don't, either," said Lumley-Lumley abruptly. "We're simply playing the giddy goat. I'm not going to smoke!"

"Had orders from Tom Merry?" sneered Mellish.

Lumley-Lumley flushed angrily.

"Look here, don't keep harping on that string!" he exclaimed. "Tom Merry wouldn't, and couldn't, give me orders. Only this is a silly mug's game."

"You never said so before you went into Tom Merry's study."

The Outsider was silent. That was true enough, and he knew, too, that it was Tom Merry's influence that had changed him.

"Light up, for goodness' sake!" said Mellish. "Don't be a cad!"

He lighted another match.

"Well, it's jolly well the last time!" exclaimed Lumley-Lumley.

"All right; have a good smoke, then."

Lumley-Lumley lighted his cigarette. He blew out a

cloud of smoke. The atmosphere of the study was soon clouded with it, for the room was small, and there was a great deal of smoke from two cigarettes.

But Lumley-Lumley's face remained clouded.

The knowledge that what he was doing was forbidden, and that there would be punishment if it was discovered by master or prefect, usually added a zest to it for Lumley-Lumley. But that zest was gone.

He was trying to turn over a new leaf, now, and such a discovery at the present moment might spoil everything; and besides, the ridiculousness of what he was doing had now occurred to him for the first time.

Through the open window of the study he could hear the merry shouts of the fellows on the playing-fields.

It was borne in upon his mind how much more healthy and honest and manly it would have been to join them there, instead of hanging about indoors, smoking.

But like many a fellow who has followed the wrong path, and seeks to find the right one, Lumley-Lumley had a morbid fear of the opinion of former bad associates.

Mellish was a conscienceless young rascal, and his opinion should have influenced nobody; but it had a very strong influence upon Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

He did not want Mellish to think of him as turning "soft"; he did not want Mellish to regard him as a fellow who was afraid of the prefects, or who was trying to "suck up" to Tom Merry and his chums.

As yet the Outsider had not learned to have sufficient strength of mind to disregard what a bad and selfish fellow might think of him, and to pay attention only to the opinions of those who were manly and decent.

The atmosphere of the study became thicker and thicker with the fumes.

"This is something like!" said Mellish.

Lumley-Lumley grunted.

"Don't you like the cigarettes, Lumley?"

"No!"

"They're the same brand as before."

Another grunt.

"Lost taste for smoking, perhaps?"

"I never had any taste for it, and you hadn't, either!" said Lumley-Lumley, with a snort. "We were only humbugging all the time. What's the good of it?"

"Look here—"

"I guess—"

Lumley-Lumley stopped, as the door of the study was flung open.

Kildare, of the Sixth, appeared in the doorway. Kildare was head prefect of the School House, and captain of the school. As a rule, Kildare was a very genial and good-tempered-looking fellow. But now his face was dark with anger.

"What does this mean?" he almost shouted.

The two juniors started up.

Mellish, with a quick motion of his hand, flung his cigarette into the fire. Lumley-Lumley did not follow his example.

The obstinate pride of the Outsider was roused.

He had been caught in the act! Very well, he would not lie about it. He would stand to the punishment—"racket," as he put it to himself.

He faced Kildare, the cigarette in his fingers.

"What does this mean?"

Mellish was silent. His eyes could not meet the prefect's.

But Lumley-Lumley was cool as ice.

"It's a little smoke," he said.

"You know it is forbidden, Lumley!"

"I guess so!"

"And you, Mellish?"

"I—I—"

"Whose cigarettes are they?" asked Kildare.

"Lumley's!" said Mellish eagerly.

The Outsider gave him a glance of scorn. Outsider as he was, he would never have tried to save himself at the expense of his companion.

But there was no dodge or shift that Mellish was not capable of to avoid the punishment he had fairly earned.

Kildare fixed his eyes upon Lumley-Lumley.

"Is that true, Lumley?"

"I guess so!"

"The cigarettes were yours?"

"Yes."

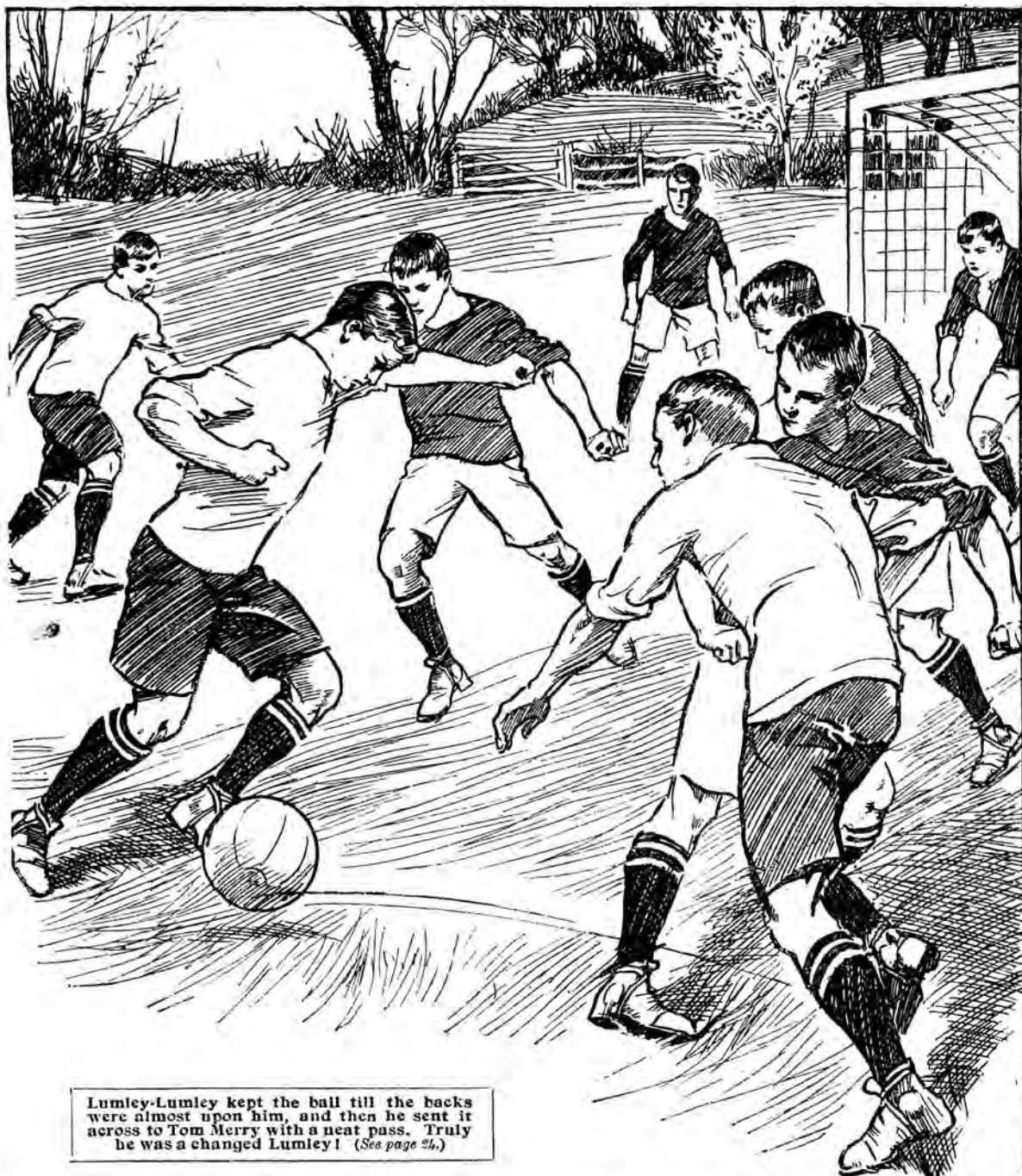
"Then you are the more to blame of the two. Mellish, you will do five hundred lines for this, and take them to Mr. Ralston. I shall explain to him what they are for."

"Yes, Kildare," said Mellish meekly.

He was only too glad to escape a caning.

"As for you, Lumley-Lumley," said Kildare, turning





Lumley-Lumley kept the ball till the backs were almost upon him, and then he sent it across to Tom Merry with a neat pass. Truly he was a changed Lumley! (See page 24.)

sternly to the Outsider, "you will follow me to my study. Lines will not meet your case."

"Very well," said Lumley-Lumley quietly.

And he followed the captain of St. Jim's out into the passage.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther came from the direction of the staircase at the same moment, and Kildare and Lumley-Lumley met them face to face.

CHAPTER 14.

Lumley-Lumley's Promise.

TOM MERRY paused.

He could see, from the look of the school captain, that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was in trouble again.

Kildare gave the Shell fellows a short nod. He was very much out of humour.

Lumley-Lumley made a mocking grimace.

Quite his old expression had returned to the Outsider's features now. Once more he was the Outsider—the black sheep of the Fourth.

Kildare strode on; but Tom Merry caught the Outsider's sleeve, and he paused.

"What is it, Lumley?" Tom Merry whispered.

"Only a row."

"But what have you been doing?"

"Smoking."

"Oh! With Mellish?"

"Yes."

"That was what you left me for?"

"I guess so."

Tom Merry looked at him keenly.

"You didn't want to do it," he said. "You let Mellish banter you into it, and now you're taking the lion's share of the punishment."

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"No need to tell me I'm a fool," he said cynically. "I know that already."

"But look here—"

Kildare glanced round.

"Come, Lumley."

"All serene!"

Lumley-Lumley nodded to Tom Merry, and hurried after the captain of St. Jim's. Tom Merry stood with a perplexed and undecided expression upon his face. He was very impatient with the Outsider. But he realised very clearly that things were not so bad as they had been—that the Outsider was not the black sheep of old. He had been led into this against his will, and he had calmly accepted the major part of the blame, leaving Mellish to sneak out of the more severe punishment.

Tom Merry understood that quite well.

"Well," said Monty Lowther, "what are you standing about for, Tommy? Come on!"

"Just a minute!"

"You can't interfere between Lumley-Lumley and the skipper, Tom. You will have to draw a line somewhere, you know," said Lowther laughing.

"I know, but—"

"Come on!" said Manners.

Tom Merry looked into Hancock's study. Mellish was there, looking far from happy. He gave the hero of the Shell a glance of defiance.

Tom Merry replied to it with a scornful look. Mellish had escaped the severer punishment, but he had been much worse than Lumley-Lumley.

"So you've got out of a licking?" asked Lowther.

"Mind your own bizney!" said Mellish.

"You ought to have had one."

"Oh, rats!"

"You brought Lumley-Lumley into this," said Tom Merry scornfully. "It would be only commonly decent to tell Kildare so."

"And take the licking?" sneered Mellish.

"Yes," said Tom Merry calmly.

"Well, I've no fancy for lickings myself—and Kildare looks as if he will lay it on, too," said Mellish. "Why can't you mind your own bizney, Tom Merry? I can't see that it has anything to do with you."

Tom Merry turned out of the study without replying.

"Where are you going?" exclaimed Manners.

"To see Kildare."

"What for?"

"To explain to him."

Mellish uttered a cry of alarm.

"Tom Merry! You cad! If you speak about me—"

The Shell fellow gave him a fierce look, and turned upon him so suddenly that the cad of the Fourth shrank away in fear.

"Hold your rotten tongue!" said Tom Merry angrily.

"I'm not going to give you away to Kildare. I'm going to speak up for Lumley-Lumley, that's all."

And he strode away.

Manners and Lowther made no effort to detain him. Tom Merry was "on the high horse now," as they would have expressed it, and nothing they could have said would have stopped him.

Meanwhile, Kildare had gone into his study and taken up a cane. Lumley-Lumley followed him in, and stood coolly awaiting his punishment.

Kildare looked at him sternly.

"You know you have broken the rules of the school?" he said.

"I guess so."

"And are you sorry?"

Lumley-Lumley was silent.

"Yes," he said, after a long pause.

"Very well. I am glad to hear you say so, Lumley; though you must take the caning, all the same."

"Oh, I guess I'm not afraid of that!" said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "I'm hard all through—hard as nails."

"I believe you are," said Kildare. "I suppose it is useless to talk to you, Lumley. You seem to be wanting in the feelings the other fellows have."

The Outsider shrugged his shoulders.

"I shouldn't wonder," he assented.

"And you don't care?"

"No."

"You will be made to care if you remain at St. Jim's," said the captain quietly. "Hold out your hand."

Lumley-Lumley obeyed.

There was a knock at the door, and it opened, and Tom Merry came in, with a somewhat flushed face.

Kildare gave him a frowning look.

"You should not interrupt me now, Merry—"

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"Yes."

"I must, Kildare. I want to speak for Lumley."

"For Lumley?"

"What can you possibly have to say for him?" exclaimed the St. Jim's captain. "He was caught in the act of smoking, and he has given some of his cigarettes to another junior."

"Yes, but—"

"Well? If you can have anything to say in his favour, I'm willing to hear it," said Kildare, lowering the cane.

Lumley-Lumley burst into a laugh.

"There's nothing to be said for me!" he exclaimed. "You'd better go ahead with the caning, and get it over, I guess."

Kildare made him a gesture to be silent.

"What is it, Merry?" he asked.

"I think I ought to speak out, Kildare. Only you won't take what I say in Lumley's favour as informing against another fellow, will you?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, Lumley has smoked before, I know—all the school knows it. But this time he didn't want to do it, and he was chaffed into it."

"Oh!"

"He wasn't half so much to blame as someone else," said Tom Merry. "I don't believe he wanted to smoke at all, only he allowed himself to be chipped into playing the silly goat."

Kildare smiled.

"Is that true, Lumley?"

The Outsider gave a shrug.

"I guess I've nothing to say on the subject," he replied.

"You need not be afraid of implicating Mellish," said Kildare. "I shall make it a point, under the circumstances, to leave Mellish's punishment exactly as it is fixed at present. Tell me the truth."

"Well, I guess I had come to the conclusion that I was playing the giddy ox, and I meant never to smoke again," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'm not saying this to keep out of the punishment though. I can take that."

"You intend never to smoke again?"

"I guess so."

"Will you give me your word?"

Lumley-Lumley hesitated.

"Give Kildare your word, Lumley!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "He will trust you. Give your word, old fellow, and keep it."

"Give me your word, and it is enough," said Kildare, laying down the cane.

"Look here," said Lumley-Lumley abruptly, "it's no good! You wouldn't believe me. I know I've told lies. The fellows don't take my word now. I guess they're right—though they might now, all the same. If I gave my word of honour I should stick to it."

"Then give it."

"You'll believe it?"

"Yes."

"All serene, then!" said Lumley-Lumley. "I'll give it. I won't smoke again—till I'm a man, anyway. Honour bright!"

"Very good!" said Kildare quietly. "You may go. I believe you."

Lumley-Lumley looked at him curiously.

"You're not going to lick me?" he asked.

"No."

"Then I reckon—"

"Well?"

"It's a bit rough on Mellish. He's got five hundred lines, and I'm getting off scot-free," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Can I—I—"

"Go on."

"Can I do half Mellish's lines?" asked the Outsider, colouring.

Kildare laughed.

"No," he said. "But—well, yes, you may. Tell Mellish you are going to do half. Lumley, my lad, I believe you would make a really decent fellow if you gave yourself a chance."

The two juniors quitted the captain's study.

"Much obliged to you for speaking up for me," said Lumley-Lumley in the passage.

"Not at all! It was only right. I'm glad you spoke up for Mellish, too—not that he deserves it."

"Well, I couldn't let him take it all," said Lumley-Lumley. "I guess that would have been pretty low down. Look here, do you think there's anything in what Kildare said?"

"About what?"

"If—I gave myself a chance, he said—"

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "If you gave yourself a chance, Lumley, I believe you would become one of the most decent chaps at St. Jim's."

The Outsider paused for a moment.

"You think that?" he said.

"Yes."

"Honest injun?"

"Yes, honest injun!"

"I guess I'm going to try," said Lumley-Lumley.

And he walked away without another word.

CHAPTER 15.

Detained.

MR. LATHOM wore a slightly worried look in the Fourth-Form room that afternoon.

The Fourth-Form master was having trouble, as usual, with Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

Lumley-Lumley was generally careless, and when called to account for his carelessness, he had a way of becoming impertinent. The most patient of Form-masters could not be expected to tolerate conduct of that kind.

But as it happened now, Lumley-Lumley was doing his best. He had made honest efforts to make up the leeway caused by slackness.

If he was very far behind the rest of the Form now, it was owing to faults that he had discarded.

But Mr. Lathom could not be expected to understand that.

Of any unseen changes that had taken place in the Outsider's thoughts and feelings, the Fourth-Form master could not possibly be aware.

To him Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was the same careless, slacking, slovenly, impertinent lad of the week before.

And Lumley-Lumley's peculiar pride would not allow him to make an appearance of "swotting" before the Form-master.

He did not wish to be suspected of currying favour with the master. That in itself was right enough, if not carried to the pitch of sullenness and impertinence. But the old Adam was still strong in the Outsider of St. Jim's.

There was no doubt that the Outsider's construing was very weak. It would have made some of the fags in the Third Form smile.

There was no doubt, either, that if the Outsider had worked, as he should have worked, his construing might have been as good as Blake's or Digby's, for he was a keen and intelligent fellow, and had not the excuse of stupidity.

"I shall lose patience with you, Lumley," said mild Mr. Lathom. "I am assured you could do better than this if you tried."

Lumley-Lumley was silent and sullen.

"I hope," said Mr. Lathom, "that this is not mere impertinence. You construe worse than many boys in the Third."

"I can't help it, sir."

"You must help it," said Mr. Lathom angrily. "You will stay in an hour after school, Lumley, and study this passage, and see if you cannot make some meaning of it."

When the Fourth were dismissed, Lumley-Lumley remained at his desk.

Mr. Lathom gave him a look over his spectacles as he quitted the class-room. The Form-master felt sorry for him, and would have rescinded the detention; but he felt that for Lumley's own sake he had better not.

Of the Form-master's kindly feelings towards him, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley knew nothing. He only felt that everything was against him, now when he was trying to do better than he had done before.

He sat sullenly and despondently at his desk.

His pen was unused in his hand, and the sheet of paper before him was blank. The troublesome book lay open on his desk, but unread.

Through the open windows of the class-room came the fresh breeze, and on it was borne the shouts of the fellows on the playing-fields.

The sounds echoed dully in Lumley-Lumley's ears.

Why was he not free like the rest? Why should he stay here? Angry rebellion came into his face.

He would not stay.

He deliberately closed his book, and put his pen away.

The class-room was very silent and still; there was no sound of footsteps in the passages.

The whole house seemed to be deserted; everyone was out of doors.

A bitter look came over the face of the Outsider.

He was alone, deserted; there was no friend to miss him, to feel sorry that he had been detained.

Even Tom Merry, who had taken an interest in him, did not allow him to come in the way of his enjoyments. Tom Merry had forgotten him now.

Black and bitter were the thoughts of the Outsider.

He went quietly to the door.

He had been ordered to remain there for an hour, and Mr. Lathom would undoubtedly look into the class-room later.

If Lumley-Lumley left it, his absence would, of course, be noted as soon as the Fourth-Form master looked in, and he would be sent for at once.

Severer punishment awaited him if he deserted the desk where he was detained; but in his bitter and reckless mood the Outsider did not care.

Was he growing tired of his new role, and did he wish for an excuse for dropping back into the old, sullen, rebellious ways?

It was quite possible.

He stepped through the Form-room doorway. As he did so, he almost ran into a junior who was coming to the door.

It was Tom Merry.

Lumley-Lumley started back in surprise as he met the hero of the Shell face to face. Tom Merry stopped, too.

"Going?" he asked.

"I guess so."

"I heard that you were detained," said Tom Merry.

Lumley-Lumley laughed bitterly.

"So I am."

"Oh! Has Mr. Lathom let you off?"

"No."

"But you were going?"

"Yes."

Tom Merry's face grew very grave.

"Hang it all, Lumley, this won't do, you know," he said. "Don't play the giddy ox. You'd better get back into the class-room."

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders angrily.

"I guess not," he said. "I'm sick of it."

"But Mr. Lathom will know."

"Let him."

"He will cane you."

"Let him!" repeated the Outsider.

"It's no good bucking against the masters in that way, Lumley," said Tom Merry quietly. "It doesn't pay. Besides, Mr. Lathom is one of the kindest masters at St. Jim's, and I know it worries him when he has to cane a chap."

Lumley-Lumley sneered.

"I guess I'm not likely to think of him," he said.

"You might do worse."

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here, Lumley, it's rotten being detained, I know, especially if you're alone; but you needn't be alone," said Tom Merry earnestly.

"Who wants to keep me company in this dreary place, then?"

"I do."

"You!"

"Yes, that's what I came for, when Blake told me you were detained," said Tom Merry, in his frank way. "I know you got into trouble over the construing. Let me help you with it. I've been through this, you know, and it's easy enough to me. Mr. Lathom won't object to my sitting in here and helping you, though you're under detention. Let's go in, and have a dig at it together."

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley hesitated.

But he had no excuse, even to himself, for disregarding Tom Merry's offer, or receiving it in a cavilling spirit.

"Look here, you're very good," he said.

"Not at all. I just want to help."

"Why?" asked Lumley-Lumley abruptly.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Oh, because—" he said

"I guess I don't quite catch on to you," said Lumley-Lumley, after a pause. "But perhaps I shall some day. If you'll help me, I'll be glad."

"I will, with pleasure."

"I guess it's a go, then."

And Lumley-Lumley turned back into the class-room. Tom Merry went with him, and sat down with him at the desk.

"What is it?" he asked. "Virgil?"

"Yes."

"Where are you in it?"

"Second book."

"Trot it out, then, and we'll tackle it together."

And the dog-eared old Virgil was "trotted out," and the two juniors, with their heads close together over the book tackled it together.

So they were sitting, deep in the subject, when Mr. Lathom glanced in at the door.

The Fourth-Form master seemed surprised for the moment, and then a smile came over his face, and he turned quietly away, and the two juniors did not even know that he had looked in.

CHAPTER 16.

Mellish is Silenced.

TOM MERRY and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley left the Form-room together, when the period of detention was over. They had worked hard together at the desk, and Lumley-Lumley had felt the benefit of it. He drew a deep breath as they went out into the passage.

"I wish I'd worked a little harder!" he exclaimed. "It's not difficult to a chap that sticks to it. You're well up in this sort of thing."

"I've stuck to it," said Tom Merry, with a smile. "That's it, I guess. Well, I'm going to stick to it," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Good! And I'll give you any help when you want it, like a shot," said Tom Merry. "You'll soon pull up with the other fellows, if you choose. You've got brains enough."

"Thanks!" said Lumley-Lumley, laughing.

And they parted on the best of terms.

Mellish met Lumley-Lumley at the corner of the passage.

"Tom Merry's been with you?" he asked.

"Yes," said Lumley-Lumley shortly.

He tried to pass on.

Since the scene in Hancock's study, when Mellish had been the cause of his being caught by Kildare, and had basely thrown as much of the blame as possible upon him, Lumley-Lumley had come to a decision regarding the cad of the Fourth.

After that Mellish could not consider that he had any claim upon his friendship, and Lumley-Lumley did not intend to acknowledge any further claim.

He simply wanted to be rid of Mellish and his evil influence.

But the cad of the Fourth was not so easily got rid of. He caught the Outsider by the arm as the latter passed him.

"Hold on a minute, Lumley!"

The Outsider paused impatiently.

"Well, what is it?" he demanded.

"Are you in a hurry?"

"Yes."

"Where are you going?"

"Only into the quad."

"I'll come with you."

Lumley-Lumley looked at him squarely.

"You won't!" he said.

"Why not?" demanded Mellish, flushing with anger.

"Because I don't want you."

"You've been learning elegant manners from Tom Merry, I must say! What did he want in the Form-room?"

"He came to help me with my Latin."

"Oh, rats!"

"A thing you never thought of doing!" said Lumley-Lumley, scornfully. "Your friendship only goes as far as sneaking cigarettes into the school, and trying to make me take all the blame when a prefect drops on us smoking!"

"Well, you see—"

"Yes; I see that I've been a fool ever to speak to you at all!"

"The cigarettes were yours, and that's all I said to Kildare."

"They were mine, as I had paid for them; but you brought them into the school, and you would have paid half for them, too, if you had been decent, and then they'd have been as much yours as mine. You are a cad, Mellish!"

"Well, I spoke too hastily!" he said. "Kildare looked so furious that I—well, I lost my nerve, that's all!"

"And you lost a friend, too!" said Lumley-Lumley.

Mellish gave him a very spiteful look.

"Rot!" he exclaimed angrily. "This friendship of yours with Tom Merry and his friends won't last—it can't!"

"I guess it will, if I can work it!"

"You can't!" said Mellish. "You've tried it before. Didn't Tom Merry twice play you in a footer match against Figgins's team, and didn't you break out each time? Do you think they'll ever give you another chance at footer?"

"Perhaps."

"Stuff! You can't expect it! They're going to tolerate you because you're too troublesome when you cut up rusty—that's all!"

"Have you finished?" asked Lumley-Lumley coldly.

"You don't believe me?"

"No!"

"And anything I can say won't make any difference to you—eh?" asked Mellish, spitefully.

"Not in the least."

The cad of the Fourth looked at him as much in curiosity as in anger. He did not in the least understand Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"I'm blessed if I can make you out!" he exclaimed.

"You must be humbugging—you'll never make me believe anything else! But what's your object, and what's the good of trying to work it on me?"

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Lumley-Lumley smiled quietly.

"I don't expect you to believe anything else, Mellish. But I don't want to quarrel with you. Goodness knows, I'm not going to set up and preach at anybody—I'm not the kind of chap for that; but I wish you'd think things over as I've done, and perhaps you'd come to the same frame of mind."

Mellish sneered.

"That's not likely. I've got no object in trying to spoof people who know me. Are you going to give up smoking?"

"I've given it up."

"And no more whisky and water with Jolliffe at the Green Man?"

"Never again."

"No more cards?"

"Not under any circumstances."

"Or anything on a horse?"

"No."

"You mean that?" demanded Mellish, in unbounded amazement.

"Every word."

"You're mad! That's the only possible explanation."

Mellish exclaimed. "You're mad—just stark, staring dotty! That's what it is."

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"No, I'm sane now," he replied. "I've been a fool—an utter fool—but I've found it out in time. That's what it is. And if you'd think it over, Mellish, and look at things in a more sensible light—"

"Oh, don't give me sermons!" said Mellish savagely.

"Don't try to spoof me! I know it's all lies!"

Lumley-Lumley's eyes glinted.

"You'd better chuck it now!" he exclaimed. "I don't take that sort of talk from anybody—you, or anybody else, Mellish, I guess!"

"You're spoofing!" said Mellish, who was too angry and disappointed to care what he said. "You're lying—you know you are! You've got some secret game on—something you want to keep me out of, and you're lying to me—Oh!"

Lumley-Lumley's right came out, and Mellish staggered back against the wall. The Outsider was never slow to take offence, and he had stood a great deal from Mellish. He came up to the cad of the Fourth, as he staggered against the wall, with clenched fists and blazing eyes.

"I guess I've had enough of that!" he said. "Stop it!"

"You—you—"

"We can't get on," said Lumley-Lumley. "Let's part. That's all. And don't give me any more of your rot! I don't like it, I guess!"

Mellish stared at him savagely. He did not return the blow. He had no desire for a fight with the Outsider of St. Jim's. But he gave the Outsider a deadly look as the latter turned away.

Lumley-Lumley forgot the whole incident in half an hour. But Mellish did not forget.

CHAPTER 17.

An Editorial Disaster.

MANNERS and Lowther were doing their prep. in the study when Tom Merry came in and joined them.

Monty Lowther looked up lazily.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Where's your new chum?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Lumley-Lumley?"

"Yes."

"I don't know. I haven't seen him since I was in the class-room, helping him with his Latin. Look here, make room for a chap! We've got to get some work done this evening!"

"I'm nearly finished."

"I don't mean that. I'm thinking of the 'Weekly.'"

"By Jove, I forgot that!"

Tom Merry gave his chum a glance of editorial indignation.

"You forgot the 'Weekly!'" he exclaimed.

"Blessed if I didn't!"

"Well, of all the asses—"

"Heaps of time!" said Manners. "Get this over, and we can wire into the 'Weekly' together, and get it ready for the printer before bedtime."

"Right you are!"

And the chums of the Shell settled down to work. The "Weekly" was the junior school paper—"Tom Merry's Weekly," to give it its full title. The editorial office was Tom Merry's study, and the Terrible Three were editors-in-chief. A dozen more juniors were sub-editors, and, in fact, nearly every contributor to the paper had been admitted to the honorary rank of sub-editor.

The Terrible Three, however, had most of the work to do—cutting out and filling in, lengthening some columns and shortening others, accepting and rejecting copy, and so forth.

It was complained by some of the staff that the Terrible Three accepted all their own copy, and only rejected that of others; but that, of course, was editorial privilege.

The paper was printed at the local printer's in Rylcombe, and when the copy went into the printer's office too late, the paper missed a number—and this happened not infrequently.

Of late several numbers had been missed—indeed, some of the contributors had sarcastically proposed to change the name from "Tom Merry's Weekly" to "Tom Merry's Annual."

But the chums of the Shell had some time for the work this evening, and other work being done, they prepared for their editorial labours.

The copy of the "Weekly," and all papers appertaining thereto, reposed in a large drawer in the bookcase, which was kept locked, in case mischievous youths should at any time feel inclined to play tricks with those exceedingly valuable and important papers.

Tom Merry cleared the table, to make it ready for the flood of scrawled foolscap, and then groped in a pocket for his key, and went towards the bookcase.

Then he uttered a sudden exclamation:

"My only hat!"

"What's the matter?" asked Manners.

"Did you open the drawer?"

"I? No!"

"Did you, Monty?"

"No! I thought you had the key."

"So I have!" said Tom Merry. "The drawer's been forced open—the lock's busted! Some ass has been playing a game here!"

"The rotter!"

"The chump!"

The Terrible Three frowned as they looked at the injury done. A chisel, or some such instrument, had been inserted, and the drawer had been forced open, breaking the lock, which was not a particularly stout one.

The drawer had been closed again, and Tom Merry had never noticed the damage until he went to unlock it.

"That's awfully queer," said Monty Lowther. "It looks as if somebody's been trying to get at the 'Weekly.'"

"Some curious beggar, I suppose!"

"It's a jolly serious thing to bust a lock!"

Tom Merry pulled open the drawer.

There was a shout in the study the next moment.

Inside, the papers belonging to the "Weekly"—more than half of which had been written out ready for the press—were a mass of wreckage.

Sheets had been torn up into fragments, and ink plentifully sprinkled and splashed over the pieces.

The copy would be undecipherable by the editors themselves, to say nothing of the compositor at the printer's office.

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Who could have done that?"

The Terrible Three stared at the wreck.

"It's some rotten jape by some cad!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "That's why the lock was broken."

"I suppose so. But—"

"But who could have done it?"

Tom Merry gritted his teeth.

"We'll find that out!" he exclaimed.

The wrecked mass of paper was turned out on the table. There was no possibility of saving any of it. Not a single sheet had been spared.

Tom Merry turned it over in dismay. There were hours of work wasted there, and it was a blow to the youthful editors. For one thing, it made it impossible to issue a number of the school paper that week.

"Oh, it's rotten!" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"Beastly!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What's this?"

He picked up a glimmering oval of metal—evidently the half of a broken cuff-link. It was of gold, with the monogram engraved upon it—"J.L."

"J.L.!" exclaimed Manners.

"Jerrold Lumley-Lumley!"

"My hat!"

The chums of the Shell stood transfixed.

The broken cuff-link had belonged to Jerrold Lumley-Lumley—there was no doubt upon that point.

Had he dropped it in the drawer while engaged in tearing up the foolscap? It was only too certain.

How else could it have come there?

"My word!" said Tom Merry, at last. "My word! It was Lumley!"

"Lumley!"

"The cad! Then he has been pretending all this time."

"Yes."

"The hound!"

"He's spoofed us, and played this rotten, cowardly trick on us, just as we were beginning to trust him," said Tom Merry bitterly. "Oh, the cad!"

Lowther gritted his teeth.

"We'll make him pay for it, then. If we hadn't found the cuff-link, we might have suspected Mellish, or Gore, or Crooke, and perhaps gone for them."

"Very likely."

"And all the time that cad—"

"He would have been laughing in his sleeve at us."

"The unspeakable rotter!"

"The outsider!"

"He's been spoofing us all the time—and this shows it. But—"

Manners broke off.

The door had opened, and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the Outsider of St. Jim's, had stepped into the study.

CHAPTER 18.

Innocent or Guilty?

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY had a very cheerful expression upon his face. He gave the Terrible Three a genial nod.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed. "You've finished your prep?"

There was no reply.

Knowing what they did, the Terrible Three were amazed and silenced by what they regarded as the brazen effrontery of the Outsider.

Tom Merry held in his hand proof of the outrage the junior had committed; yet he could walk into the study with a cheery smile on his face and friendly words on his lips.

The chums of the Shell clenched their hands.

Lumley-Lumley looked at them with an expression of surprise. Their silence and lowering looks struck him at once.

"Anything the matter?" he asked.

Then his glance fell upon the mass of torn and ink fragments of paper on the table, and he gave a low whistle.

"Great snakes! What's that?"

Tom Merry looked at him scornfully.

"You don't know?" he asked.

"I? What do you mean?"

"That is the copy we had ready for this week's number of the paper."

"Phew!"

"Some rotten cad has torn it to pieces, and smothered it with ink, to spoil it," said Tom Merry, in a voice trembling with anger.

"What a cad's trick!" said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"Do you think that?"

"I guess so."

"You don't know who did it?"

Lumley-Lumley looked astonished.

"How should I know?" he asked. "If I had seen the hound doing it, I'd have stopped him, jolly quick, I guess. But I understood you kept the copy for the 'Weekly' locked up in a drawer."

"Quite right."

"Then how was it got at?"

"The lock on the bookcase-drawer was broken. It's been forced with a chisel, or something of the sort."

"My hat—regular burglary."

"Yes, quite as bad."

"I say, it's rotten," said Lumley-Lumley, with a look of concern. "That means a fearful waste of time for you chaps, and a heap of work. If I can do anything to help you, of course, I shall be only too glad."

The Shell fellows could contain themselves no longer.

"You rotter!" shouted Monty Lowther. "Cheese it!"

"What!"

"For goodness' sake stop lying!" said Manners.

"Eh?"

"We know who did it," said Tom Merry quietly.

"And we're going to make the hound sit up," said Lowther.

"Yes, rather!"

Lumley-Lumley stared at them blankly. He seemed hardly able to grasp the meaning of their words for the moment.

"You—you don't mean to say that you suspect me?" he gasped at last.

"Didn't you do it?"

"I?" shouted Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes, you."

"No, I didn't."
 "You deny it?"
 "Of course I do. I know nothing whatever about it. I never knew anything of it till I came in here a minute ago."
 "You haven't been to the drawer at all?"
 "No. How could I, when it was locked, and the key was not in the lock?"
 "You didn't break it open?"
 "Certainly not."

Tom Merry held out the broken half of the cuff-link.
 "Then how did that come into the drawer, among the torn papers?" he demanded.
 Lumley-Lumley stared blankly at the glimmering disc of gold. He did not seem to be able to credit his eyes.
 "It is yours?" asked Tom Merry.
 "I—I suppose so."
 "It has your initials on it—J. L. There are other fellows with those initials at St. Jim's; but they never come into our study."

"The link is mine," said Lumley-Lumley, "I noticed some time ago that my cuff was loose. I've lost a link somewhere this evening."

"You admit that it is yours?"
 "Of course it's mine. I've the fellow to it on the other sleeve. You can see," said Lumley-Lumley, pulling out the wrist band of his shirt.

The chums glanced at the sleeve link. It was exactly the same as the disc Tom Merry held in his hand. On Lumley-Lumley's right wrist the cuff was loose.

"You were wearing this to-day?" asked Tom Merry.
 "Yes, certainly."

"When did you break it?"
 "I don't know. It was all right in class this afternoon," said Lumley-Lumley. "I know it was all right when you were helping me with my detention work."

"I have just picked it out of these torn papers," Lumley-Lumley wrinkled his brows.

"I guess I can't understand it," he said.
 "You still deny having broken open the drawer and mucked up the papers?"

"I guess so. I don't savvy at all."
 Tom Merry smiled contemptuously.

"But I do," he exclaimed. "If I hadn't found this link, I might have suspected somebody else wrongfully. But I know now who did this."

"You think I did it?"
 "I know you did."

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley turned pale.

He was silent, standing very firmly upon his feet, and looking steadily at the accusing faces of the chums.

"I did not do it," he said, at last.
 Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose you do not expect us to believe that?" he asked.

"I don't know—it's the truth."

"That broken link dropped among the papers while you were tearing and inking them," said Manners. "How you can have the nerve to deny it passes me."

"And me, too!" said Lowther.
 "I—I tell you I didn't do it. Honour bright."

"Then how did your cuff-link get into the drawer, among the papers?"

"I—I don't know."
 "The drawer was locked, till it was forced open," said Tom Merry. "You admit that the link was on your sleeve since afternoon school. I left you at half-past five, after your detention, and you had it on then."

"Yes"

"How could it have come into that drawer, then?"
 "I don't know."

"You will have to tell a yarn a little more convincing than that," said Monty Lowther scornfully.

Lumley-Lumley's lips trembled.

"It's the truth," he said. "I suppose you won't believe me—it serves me right—you've known me to tell lies, and I can't expect you to take my word."

And his head drooped a little.

Tom Merry looked at him searchingly. He would gladly have believed the Outsider. But was it possible to believe him?

"Can you make any explanation?" he asked.

Lumley-Lumley shook his head.

"I guess not. I'm stumped! If the sleeve-link was in the drawer, I suppose it was dropped there by somebody."

"But you were wearing it," Lumley-Lumley gave a hopeless shrug of the shoulders.

"I give it up," he exclaimed.

Monty Lowther sniffed angrily and contemptuously.

"Can't you tell the truth for once in your life?" he exclaimed. "Why can't you own up that you did it?"
 "I didn't do it."

"Well, you can lie as much as you like," said Manners, "but you'll take your medicine all the same. You're not going to get off scot-free for what you've done."

"No fear!"

Lowther crossed to the door and locked it. The Terrible Three turned grim looks upon the Outsider of St. Jim's.

But there was no fear in the Outsider's looks. He faced them calmly.

"Go ahead!" he said. "I never did it, and I'll try and find out who did. But if you want to rag me, go ahead! Here I am."

CHAPTER 19.

The Mediator.

THE chums of the Shell had been advancing towards Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. But now they stopped.

They had intended to punish him—to give him a "bumping," and then to throw him out of the study, as the author of the outrage upon the "Weekly" fully deserved.

But now they stopped.

Perhaps a doubt crossed their minds. Yet the evidence was perfectly clear. Perhaps it was the thought that, after all, it was the Outsider—a fellow who could not be expected to act decently.

At all events, they stopped, and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley stood untouched. He had not stirred. He looked at them calmly.

"Well?" he exclaimed. "I suppose it's ragging. Go on!"

"We shall not touch you," said Tom Merry, after a pause. "After all, you're not worth it."

"I guess—"

"It won't undo what you've done, if we bump you black and blue," said Manners, "I don't know that it's any good ragging you."

"Oh, let him alone!" said Monty Lowther. "I knew how it would turn out. The fellow's a hopeless cad, and the more we trusted him, the more he would have played us dirty tricks. It's in the nature of the beast. We've happened to find him out the first time, that's all. Let him alone; he's not fit to touch."

Lumley-Lumley coloured.

"I suppose it's no good my saying that I didn't do that?" he asked.

"Not much."

"You wouldn't believe me?"

"No."

"Then I guess I won't say anything," said Lumley-Lumley quietly. "Only I'm sorry."

"Sorry you did it?"

"No; sorry you think I did it."

Tom Merry made an impatient gesture.

"Oh, drop the subject, for goodness' sake!" he exclaimed.

"You make me sick. Here's your sleeve-link. You can look in those papers for the other half of it, if you like."

"I don't suppose it's there," said Lumley-Lumley. "I did not drop this half there, at all events. But I won't stay here while you suspect me. You can have your study to yourselves."

He began to collect up his books.

"You haven't done your prep.," said Tom Merry.

"I can do it downstairs."

"But—"

"I'm not staying here while you think of me as you do," said Lumley-Lumley quietly. "I'm not flying into a temper about it. I know I've no right to expect you to believe me. I've not got my back up, but I don't step into this study again till this matter's cleared up, that's all."

And he quitted the room, closing the door behind him. He left the chums of the Shell looking uncomfortable.

"I suppose there's no doubt about it?" Tom Merry remarked at last.

Lowther laughed scoffingly.

"Of course there isn't."

"Not the slightest," said Manners.

"He's changed," said Tom Merry slowly. "He would have stuck here, in defiance of us, at one time, and stayed all the more if we wanted him to go."

"I suppose he's got some slight sense of decency," said Lowther. "We'd better chuck away all this, and start fresh."

"I suppose so," said Tom Merry ruefully.

And the inky fragments of the "copy" were thrown into the waste-paper basket, and the chums of the Shell sat down to work.

Meanwhile, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had gone downstairs with his books. His own study was still in the hands of the paperhangers; the work was proceeding slowly. He did not care to ask for permission to work in anybody else's study; but he had the choice of the Form-room and the common-room.

CHAPTER 20.

Arthur Augustus Intends to Investigate.

He went into the latter.

He was soon at work; and the sight of a fellow doing his pewp. there, instead of in his study, although not uncommon, attracted attention. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who had been feeling very kindly of late towards the Outsider of St. Jim's, came up to him and tapped him on the shoulder. Lumley-Lumley looked up.

"All alone, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy.

"I guess so."

"Doin' your pewp. down here, eh?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"Not a wov, I hope?"

"Yes."

"Nothin' sewious?"

"I don't know."

"Bai Jove! I thought you were gettin' on wathah well with Tom Mewwy lately, you know," Arthur Augustus remarked.

"So did I," said Lumley-Lumley grimly.

"Weally, Lumlay, this is wotten, you know. Pewwaps a mediatah would be of some service to you," D'Arcy suggested. "I should be vewy pleased to use my good offices."

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"Thanks; you couldn't do any good."

"You do not know that, deah boy," said D'Arcy, gently but firmly. "As a mattah of fact, in a delicate mattah of this kind, what is wanted is a fellow of tact and judgment. You could wely on me."

"Thanks; but—"

"In a case of doubt, deah boy, you can always depend on me to indicate the wight and pwopah thing to do."

"Rats!"

"Eh?"

"I mean, it's all right," said Lumley-Lumley, who was growing much more polite lately. "Sorry I said rats; but you can't do any good."

"You have offended them somehow?"

"Yes."

"Then surely an apology ought to set the mattah wight. From one gentleman to another—"

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"But I haven't done anything."

"Bai Jove! That is vewy remarkable! Surely Tom Mewwy is not offended because you haven't done anything?" exclaimed D'Arcy, in astonishment.

"Ha, ha! No. He thinks I've done something."

"What was it?"

"Some cad has mucked up the 'copy' for the 'Weekly'."

Tom Merry thinks I did it."

D'Arcy jumped.

"The copy for the 'Weekly'?"

"Yes."

"Mucked up?"

"Completely, I guess; quite done in."

"Bai Jove! This is awfully sewious! All of it wuined?" asked D'Arcy, in alarm.

"Torn to pieces and smothered in ink."

"Gweat Scott! Then my contwibution must have pewished with the west?"

"I guess so."

"Bai Jove! I had a wippen' article on the latest thing in toppahs," exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's, in dismay.

"Go hon!"

"Yaas, wathah! There will be a wov if that is lost. Are you quite sure you didn't do it, Lumlay, deah boy? If you did, I should have no wresource but to give you a feahful thwashin', you know."

"Well, I didn't, and that's the end of it."

"The mattah will have to be inquired into, deah boy. I am wathah inclined to believe your statement," said D'Arcy.

"I know you have been an awful fibbah, but I believe you are tellin' the twuth now."

Lumley-Lumley impulsively held out his hand.

"Put it there!" he exclaimed.

"Certainly, deah boy!"

D'Arcy shook hands with the Outsider.

"I am goin' to look into this," he exclaimed. "I wegard it as impewative for me to find out the wotten wascal, and give him a feahful thwashin', you know. I will also mediate between you and Tom Mewwy, deah boy."

"But—"

"That's all wight; leave it to me."

"I tell you—"

"You can wely upon my tact and judgment."

"I guess you'll make matters worse."

"Wats, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked away. Lumley-Lumley half rose to stop him, and then sat down again. After all, he reflected, D'Arcy's mediation would make matters no worse, if it did not make them better.

"EDITORIAL notes!" said Monty Lowther. "I suppose they can be left out. No need to write all that out again."

Tom Merry looked up warmly. As author of editorial notes, he had quite a different opinion on the matter.

"Ass!" he said, with more than editorial frankness.

"But that stuff, you know—"

"My dear chap, the editorial notes are the part of the paper that's most eagerly read. There are readers who turn to the editorial notes first, even before they look at the pictures."

"Only when they edit the paper," said Lowther.

"Ass!"

"I wouldn't mind writing out an extra instalment of my serial," said Monty Lowther, "if it would save you the trouble of scribbling out that stuff again, Tom."

"Fathead!"

"I'm leaving it off at a most interesting point, as it is," said Lowther. "Listen to this: 'Sir Fitzroy de Fulke raised his battleaxe, and smote Sir Plantagenet de Porque with the glittering edge, cleaving him to the chine. With an awful groan—'"

"Ow!"

"Chuck it!"

"With an awful groan," pursued Lowther, "'Sir Plantagenet fell from his saddle, and crashed upon the earth. 'Ha!' cried the victor. 'Thus do I slay such caitiffs!' To be continued next week."

"Oh, rotten! Put 'Finis' instead."

"Chump!"

"Anyway, put 'To be concluded.' That holds out a hope to the reader."

"Look here, if you can't understand a really ripping historical serial, you had better shut up," said Monty Lowther wrathfully. "I bring all sorts of historical personages into the story, and it's very instructive, especially to fags. We have to think of the kids in the Lower Forms, and instructing them, and so on. I bring in King John, and William the Conqueror, and Wallace, the hero of Scotland."

Manners burst into a wild yell.

His chum gave him an inquiring glare.

"What's the matter with you?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the matter with you?" roared Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha! Don't you think William the Conqueror would do better in another story?" gurgled Manners. "You see, there was a certain lapse of time between William the First and John."

"I—I forgot. I crossed William the Conqueror out, on second thoughts."

"Then you'd better have some third thoughts, and cross Wallace, the hero of Scotland, out, or else King John," gasped Manners.

"Oh, rubbish! Of course, an author can't stick too closely to dates in an historical novel. Scott doesn't."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, if Manners is going to cackle like a whole barnyard, I'm done. Do you want me to do an extra instalment instead of the editorial notes, Tom?"

"Thanks, no."

"Well, it would have saved you trouble, and the readers would have liked it better," grunted Lowther. "But have it as you like. Hallo! Here's a duffer come to interrupt."

There was a tap at the door, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy entered the study.

"I twust I am not intewwuptin' you, deah boys," he remarked.

"Well, you are," said Lowther.

"Am I stoppin' your work?"

"Yes."

"I'm sowwy, then," said D'Arcy. And he came in, cheerfully, and closed the door. "I'm sowwy, especially as it can't be helped."

The editorial trio gazed at the calm interrupter. Monty Lowther dropped his hand, carelessly as it were, upon the inkpot.

"Pwaw excuse me, deah boys!" said D'Arcy, keeping a wary eye upon Lowther. "I have come upon a mattah of gweat importance—in fact, I am a mediatah."

"A what?"

"A which?"

"A mediatah, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to mediate between you and Lumley-Lumley. You have been quawwellin' with him."

"Not exactly—we've dropped him."

"You think he mucked up the copy for the 'Weekly.'"

"We know he did."

"I wathah think it ought to be investigated—"

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NEXT THURSDAY: "THE RUNAWAY."

Another Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"We're quite sure on the subject, Gussy; and we'd rather let the matter drop, and hear no more about it."

"I dare say you would," said D'Arcy. "It is quite possible. But, you see, it can't be done. It appears that the whole of the copy written out for the 'Weekly' has been destroyed."

"Quite."

"My contribution among the west?"

"Did you have one in the number?" asked Tom Merry reflectively.

D'Arcy eyed him wrathfully.

"I trust, Tom Mewwy, that you have not forgotten the existence of my wippin' article on the latest thing in silk topkaps?"

"By George, I had! I suppose it would be a lot of trouble to you to write it out again, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then don't trouble. I'll put in some extra editorial notes to fill up the space," said Tom Merry generously.

"You uttah ass!"

"Eh?"

"I certainly could not consent to depwive the weadahs of the best article in the whole numbal to save myself a little twouble. That would be uttably selfish. And, besides, I will nevah be a party to inflictin' extwa editowial notes on anybody."

"Why, you chump—"

"Howevah, revenons nous a nos moutons," said D'Arcy, with dignity. "My contribution has been destroyed, and I feel that I have no resource but to administrah a feahful thwashin' to the wottah who destroyed it. If it was Lumley-Lumley I should pwoceed to thwash him at once."

"Oh, let it drop!"

"Undah the cires, deah boy, that is quite impos. I have to investigate the twuth concernin' the destruction of my valuable manuscript, and I have also pwomised Lumlay-Lumlay to act as mediatah."

"Rats!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"We're busy!"

"I shall not waste time, I trust. In the first place, pway tell me what weason you had for suspectin' Lumlay-Lumlay."

"Oh, he's bound to have it!" said Monty Lowther. "He won't be happy till he gets it. Go ahead, Tommy, and get it over!"

"Weally, Lowthab—"

"The drawer was broken open," said Tom Merry, in explanation, "the copy was torn to pieces, and smothered in ink. We found half a broken sleeve-link among the papers. The chap who tore them must have dropped it there."

"Bai Jove!"

"That's all clear enough, I suppose?"

"Whose sleeve-link was it, deah boy?"

"Lumley's, of course!"

"You are sure?"

"He recognised it as his own when we showed it to him."

"Somebody may have bowwowed it—"

"He was wearing it after afternoon school, and admits that it must have become unfastened and dropped off since then."

"And this outrage was committed aftah aftahnoon school?"

"Yes, of course. I looked at the papers after dinner, to put in some copy, and they were all right then. Besides, Lumley-Lumley was wearing the cuff-link then, and I tell you we found it in the drawer among the papers."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"As a mattah of fact, deah boy, I wathah think you are quite w'ong," he remarked.

"Ass! I tell you—"

"A sleeve-link may be wathah weak, or just on the point of bweekin'," said D'Arcy calmly; "but even then it would wequire a jerk to bweak it. Why should it bweak when a chap was merely tearin' papahs?"

"Well, that must have required some exertion, I suppose."

"It is fah more likely, Tom Mewwy, that Lumlay-Lumlay bwoke the cuff-link somewah else, and it dropped without his noticin' it."

"H'm!"

"I wegard that as an extremely pwobable theowwy," said the swell of the School House firmly.

"But, if it dropped somewhere else, how did it come into the drawer where we kept the copy?" bawled Manners.

"It must have been put there."

"Put there?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But who should put it there?"

"The chap who mucked up the papers," said Arthur Augustus.

"But why?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, you are an ass, you know! Lumlay-Lumlay has lately been on good terms with you. Somebody else has twied to stop it."

Tom Merry started.

"Mellish!"

"Well, I would not suspect anybody without pwoof. But certainly Mellish has twied to stop Lumlay-Lumlay fwom weformin'. I know that for a fact."

Tom Merry nodded.

"It's true enough," he said.

"Vewy well! Suppose Mellish or Goah or Crooke, or one of those chaps who have an interest in keepin' Lumlay-Lumlay as he was—suppose they picked up the link? They would wecognise it as Lumlay's fwom the monogwami. Then—"

Tom Merry started up.

"By Jove," he exclaimed, "I'm beginning to think that we may have done Lumley-Lumley wrong, after all, you fellows!"

"Oh, I can't think it!" said Lowther uncomfortably. "And you can't take his word. He's such a liar!"

"He was, but—"

"Give him a chance, deah boys. Suppose we twy and find out just where he might have lost the sleeve-link?" suggested D'Arcy.

"Good!"

Tom Merry swept the papers into the drawer, with a frown upon his brow. The thought that he might have been unjust to Lumley-Lumley weighed upon his mind.

"Come on!" he said abruptly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the Terrible Three went down with Arthur Augustus in search of the Outsider of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 21.

The Guilty One!

LUMLEY-LUMLEY was finishing his work in the common-room. He looked up in some surprise as the Terrible Three came in with Arthur Augustus. They came directly up to him.

"Gussy has been putting the matter in a new light, Lumley," said Tom Merry, in his straightforward way. "I think that it may not have been you, after all, who mucked up the copy for the 'Weekly.'"

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"Are you going to give me the benefit of the doubt, then?" he asked.

"We are going to get at the truth."

"I guess that's difficult."

"My deah chap, what is wequired is a fellow of tact and judgment," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a superior smile. "That's all wight—I've taken the mattah in hand. In the first place, where did you lose the sleeve-link?"

"I don't know."

"Where did it get bwoken?"

"I don't know that either. If I'd known it was broken I should have looked after it, of course."

"My impression is that it must have been bwoken by a blow or jerk," said D'Arcy. "Have you been w'estlin' with anybody since aftahnoon school?"

Lumley-Lumley shook his head.

"Or exercisin' in the gym?"

"No."

"Or fightin'?"

"No."

"Not even punchin' anybody's nose?"

The Outsider grinned.

"Well, I did punch Mellish's head just after I left Tom Merry. He was pitching into me a little too strong."

The Terrible Three uttered an exclamation together.

"Mellish!"

"I guess so."

"Bai Jove! Where did that happen?"

"In the Form-room passage."

"We had better go and speak to Mellish, deah boys. I wegard it as extremely pwob. that the sleeve-link burst on that occasion, and Mellish may have picked it up. Mellish is just the chap to destroy the copy for the 'Weekly,' too. You wemembah how spiteful he was because you would not insert a wotten article he w'ote, w'ectin' on the mastahs."

"Yes, rather!"

"Bai Jove, we'll see what Mellish has to say! Anybody seen Mellish?"

"He's up in my study," said Hancock.

"Thank you, deah boy!"

Upstairs again went D'Arcy and the Terrible Three, and Lumley-Lumley accompanied them this time. The Out-

CHAPTER 22.

Chums.

sider's face was brighter now. He saw a chance at last of setting himself right with the chums of the Shell.

Mellish was in Hancock's study, dawdling over his prep. There was a suspicious scent of cigarette-smoke in the air, but of that the juniors took no notice as they entered.

Mellish rose to his feet in alarm he could not conceal as the five juniors marched into his study.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "What do you want?"

"The twuth, deah boy."

"I—I don't understand."

"Lumlay-Lumlay punched your head early this evenin' in the Form-room passage—"

"Look here—"

"On that occasion he bwoke a sleeve-link, and it droppod without his noticin' it, and you picked it up—"

"I—I—"

Mellish's face went to a pale greenish tinge.

"You went to Tom Mewwy's study and bwoke open the dwawah where the copy was kept, and tore it up and smothahed it with ink," said D'Arcy inexorably. "You left Lumlay's bwoken sleeve-link there to implicate him—because you wanted to bwreak off his fwiendship with Tom Mewwy and keep him in your own wotten ways."

"I—I—"

"Isn't that twue?"

"I—I—!" stammered Mellish.

"Bai Jove! How did you get your cuffs so inkay, Mellish?" exclaimed D'Arcy suddenly.

The cad of the Fourth put his hands quickly behind him. But Tom Merry, with a heavy frown, grasped his wrists and forced his hands forward into view, and pulled the shirtcuffs from the sleeves.

The cuffs were darkly stained and splashed with ink—and it was evidently new ink, for there were older stains of a much darker tone. Mellish was always slovenly, and his linen was seldom free from soil of some kind.

"How did you do that?" asked Tom Merry sternly.

"I—I upset a bottle of ink."

"Where?"

"Here, in the study. I—I—"

"And you stained your cuffs in cleaning it up?"

"Yes," panted Mellish.

"What did you clean it up with—a duster?"

"Ye-es."

"Where's the duster now?"

"I—I threw it away."

"Where?" asked Tom Merry, mercilessly.

"In the dust-bin behind the house. I—I—"

"Lowther, old man, go and look!"

"I—I mean I burnt it," gasped Mellish. "I—I forgot. I meant to throw it away, and I—I burnt it instead."

"Bai Jove! That's wathah too thin, you know!"

"I should say so!" remarked Monty Lowther contemptuously. "Why, you miserable young liar, do you expect us to believe a word of that?"

"I guess it won't wash!" Lumley-Lumley said, with a grin. "You mucked up the copy in Tom Merry's study, Mellish, and you got your cuffs in that state in doing it!"

"I—I—I—"

"And you put my sleeve-link there!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Mellish looked round the table, with a hunted look in his eyes.

"If—if you touch me, I—I'll yell for help!" he panted.

"I—I won't be ragged! I'll yell, I tell you!"

"We want the truth!" said Tom Merry. "Did you tear up the copy in my study?"

"I—I— What are you going to do?"

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"We know you did it!" he said. "It's clear enough!"

But I'd rather hear you confess it yourself. Tell us the plain truth, and we'll let you alone."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Hang it all, Tom—"

"He's not worth touching!" said Tom Merry contemptuously. "It's soiling your hands to put them on a chap like that! Let him alone!"

"Well, if you put it like that, deah boy—"

"Now, Mellish, the truth—the truth, mind, or you'll get bumped till you yelp!" Tom Merry exclaimed roughly.

"You won't touch me?"

"No."

"On your word?"

"Honest Injun."

"Well, you see," stammered Mellish, "I—I did it!"

"Bai Jove!"

THE cad of the Fourth cowered from the scornful glances of the juniors as he said it. They had promised not to touch him, and he knew he was safe; but the scorn in their looks was not pleasant, even to Mellish. Contempt, the Eastern proverb tells us, will pierce even the shell of the tortoise, and even Mellish, bad as he was at heart, felt a spasm of inward shame at that moment.

"You did it?" repeated Tom Merry.

"Yes, Lumley punched me, and—and he dropped the link at the same time. I—I saw it after he had gone. I picked it up. I meant to throw it away—to pay him out—and then I thought—I thought—"

"I suppose you had already thought of mucking up the 'Weekly,' and dared not do it?" said Tom Merry, with a curling lip. "When you picked up the sleeve-link, you thought of a chance of killing two birds with one stone."

"I—I—"

"Is that the truth?"

"Yes," said Mellish, miserably.

"I think we've finished here," said Tom Merry quietly.

The juniors quitted the study. Mellish stood by the table looking after them. He had prided himself upon his cunning. He had taken a cowardly pleasure in a deep-laid scheme. But now he somehow felt that it was not worth while—that even if it had succeeded, it was not worth while.

At that moment Mellish was the most miserable fellow in St. Jim's.

And perhaps that feeling of misery and self-contempt was the first sign of an awakening of a better nature, even in the cad of the Fourth.

In the passage, after the door was closed, the juniors paused. There was a smile of great satisfaction upon the aristocratic countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He had taken up the matter when the Terrible Three had dropped it. He had solved the mystery—he had established the truth! He had been the Sherlock Holmes!

"It is vevy fortunate I undahtook to act as mediatah!" he remarked. "Of course, I'm not a fellow to bwag, or swank, or anythin' of that sort—"

"Of course not!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Yaas; but weally, I must wemark that it's wathah fortunate I stepped in, you know. As I have wemarked before, in a delicate mattah of this kind, you can always twust a fellow of tact and judgment."

Tom Merry gave the swell of St. Jim's a ringing smack on the shoulder.

"Bravo, Gussy!" he exclaimed.

"Yow!"

"What's the matter?"

"Ow! You've hurt me, you feahful ass!"

"Oh, never mind that, Gussy! Don't bother about trifles!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Look here, Lumley—"

"You are intewwuptin' me—"

"Exactly! Look here, Lumley, we're sorry!" said Tom Merry. "We thought you had done it, and you hadn't, and—and we're sorry!"

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"It's all right!" he said. "As I said, I don't bear you any grudge for suspecting me—you had a right to, after what you'd been used to from me."

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as puttin' it vevy hand-somely!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I must confess, Lumlay, deah boy, that I have wegard you as a wank outsidah, and a weally impossible boundah, you know! But weally, I think you have somethin' in you, and I shall we-cognise you in futuah!"

"Go hon!"

"I mean it, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus walked away serenely, leaving the other fellows grinning.

"Come to the study, will you?" said Tom Merry, linking his arm in Lumley-Lumley's. "We're going to have roast chestnuts."

"I guess so!"

Mr. Raiton came down the passage. He glanced at the Outsider and the chums of the Shell, and nodded genially.

"I hope you get on pretty well together in the study, my lads," he remarked.

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry, brightly, "and we're jolly glad to have Lumley there, now. What do you chaps say?"

"Quite so!" said Manners.

"Oh, rather!" said Monty Lowther.

Lumley-Lumley coloured with pleasure.

"It's jolly decent of you to say so!" he exclaimed. "I

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guess I like being there, sir. It's made a lot of difference to me, sir—more difference than anybody would guess!"

The House-master smiled.
"I think I can guess, Lumley," he said. "I am glad to see this, and after you have left Tom Merry's study, I hope this friendship will continue."

"Thank you, sir!"
Mr. Railton walked on, with a genial face, and a few minutes later he was speaking to the Head. And that conversation brought a very satisfied expression to Dr. Holmes's face.

"You think the experiment has been a success, then, Mr. Railton?" he asked.

"I do, sir."
"And our surmise that there was good in the boy was well-founded?"

"Quite so. He will be a credit to St. Jim's if he goes on in the way he has started now," said Mr. Railton. "Of course, there will be more difficulties and troubles yet. But Tom Merry evidently regards Lumley with real friendship, and that is a proof of a great change in the boy."

"I am glad to hear it."
In Tom Merry's study, at the same moment, the four juniors were eating roasted chestnuts. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley sat on the table swinging his legs.

There was a very bright expression upon his face.
"I guess I'm glad Gussy shoved his ear in in that way," he remarked. "I'm jolly glad the truth has come out. I never guessed it."

"You'll give Mellish a wide berth now?" said Monty Lowther.

Lumley-Lumley hesitated.
"I don't know," he said. "You see, I—I don't know whether I ought to stick to him to some extent, and see if—hang it, don't think I'm turning goody-goody, will you?"

"No," said Tom Merry, with a smile.
"Well," went on the Outsider awkwardly, "I'd rather not let Mellish quite alone. I think I may be able to get him to chuck some of the rotten ways we had together. He's going the right way to be expelled, just the same as I was."

"That's right enough."
"So I think—well, I'm going to see what I can do, I guess!"

Tom Merry nodded.
"Quite right!" he said. "I'm glad to hear you say so! Look here, Lumley, to-morrow's Saturday, and we're playing the New House in a House match!"

"I know it."
"Will you play?"
Jerrold Lumley-Lumley drew a deep, deep breath.

"You mean that?" he said.
"Of course!"
"You'll play me in the junior footer team?"

"Yes."
"What will the other fellows say?"
"They'll say nothing. They think differently of you now—much differently. You see, you've changed."

The Outsider laughed.
"Yes, I guess I have! Look here, I'll be glad to play—jolly glad! But—but you've given me the chance before, and I acted like a cad. It sha'n't happen again."

"I'm sure it won't," said Tom Merry.

And he did feel quite sure of it. Lumley-Lumley, certainly, had reformed before and had relapsed; but this time Tom Merry felt that all was right. There was too marked a change in the Outsider for him to think anything else.

There were many fellows at St. Jim's who were looking forward to the footer-match on the morrow, but none so keenly as Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. The Outsider not only wanted the game, but he wanted to prove to all St. Jim's that he could be trusted; that Tom Merry had not done unwisely in choosing him for the team.

The news that Lumley-Lumley was to play again for the School House was received with mixed feelings. But upon the whole, the general feeling was that the Outsider seemed to be on his good behaviour, and that he should be given a chance of showing whether he was in earnest.

When the afternoon came, and the teams appeared on the junior ground, there was a great muster of spectators—far more than a junior match generally attracted. A great number of the Saints wanted to watch Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. They were ready to hoot and groan at a sign of the old Outsider tactics.

But no such sign was seen. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was playing inside-right, and he played well. Keen, cool, alert, but strictly scrupulous; always ready to seize an advantage for his side, but never to score unfairly over an opponent. Truly he was a changed Lumley! And late in the game, when the match, fiercely contested, was in danger of ending without a score, Lumley-Lumley came to the front.

He had the ball, and was speeding down to goal. Tom Merry was ready to take it at centre. There was a groan from the School House fellows watching. They knew the Outsider—they fully expected him to kick for goal, and be easily beaten by Fatty Wynn, instead of letting Tom Merry have the ball to score. Well they knew the old, selfish play of the Outsider—all for himself, nothing for the team! But there was a change—a wonderful change!

Lumley-Lumley kept the ball till the backs were almost upon him, and then he sent it across to Tom Merry with a neat pass, and the School House captain trapped it at once. The next moment it was whizzing in, with a shot that beat Fatty Wynn, in goal, all the way. There was a roar from the crowd:

"Goal! Hurrah!"

"Bravo, Tom Merry!"

And then, after an almost imperceptible pause:

"Bravo, Lumley!"

It was the first time Lumley-Lumley had ever heard himself cheered there. When the team walked off, with a score of one to nil, and the School House the victors, Lumley-Lumley's eyes were very bright.

Lumley-Lumley had had his last chance, and had made the most of it; and Tom Merry & Co. had saved him, though Lumley did not yet know that it was by request of the Head.

THE END.

(Another splendid, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. next Thursday. See notice below.)

Next Thursday.

"THE RUNAWAY."

And her Splendid Long, Complete Tale of the Juniors of St. Jim's.

By Martin Clifford.

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"THE IRON ISLAND."

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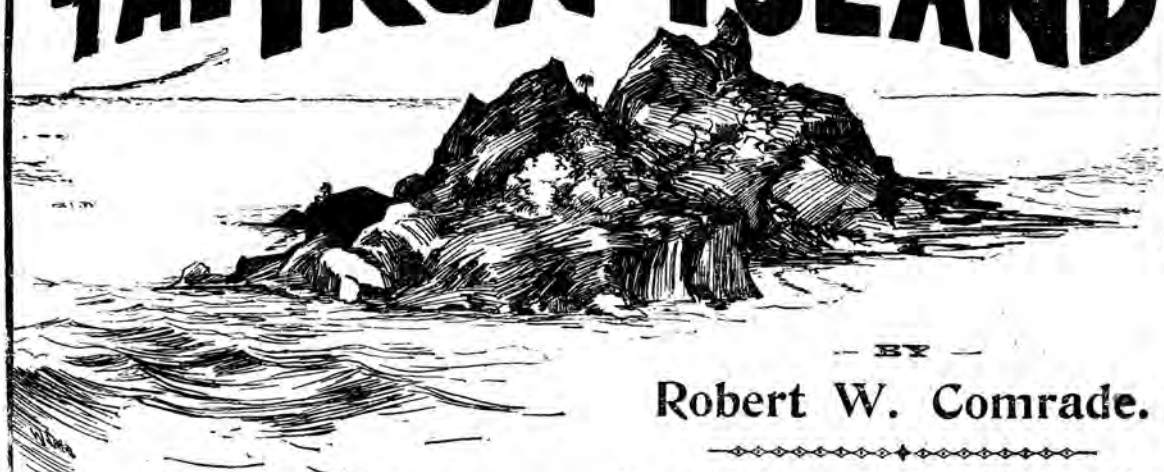
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A Thrilling Adventure Tale.

THE IRON ISLAND



— 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, an accomplished young lady, 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 seven prominent members are

BROUGHT TO BOOK.

Carson Gray, a detective, is on the track of William Haverfield for murder. The man, however, manages to elude him. Kingston tells Gray that he must "lie low" for a time, as Haverfield, being a member of the Brotherhood, the society will do their best to kill him.

Kingston rescues an old man—Professor Graham Polgrave—from under a motor-bus, and goes to the man's house. There he is astonished to find that, unknown to the world, the man is a clever scientist. He marvels at the things he sees, and, finding that some of the professor's inventions may be of use to him in ruining the Brotherhood of Iron, he confides in the man.

"The time has flown rapidly," remarks the professor, when Kingston has finished his story, "and we have forgotten all about tea."

(Now go on with the story.)

News from Crawford.

"By Jove, so we have!" replied Kingston. "And I must be going—much as I should like to stay. In all probability you will see me back again before twenty-four hours have passed."

"Good!" chuckled Polgrave. "I should like to see you every day. I have taken a liking to you; I respect you, look up to you, for, in spite of the modest way in which you have told your story, I can deduce the obvious fact that you have been doing a work which no other man on earth could undertake alone. And, as I said, I will assist you in any and every way possible. This house is not out of the way, and you can easily reach it."

"It appears, professor, as though it were ordained that you and I should meet. You can help me in a great degree, for a perfect disguise is absolutely essential. From other words you have uttered I gather that you have means by which I can gain a big advantage over my enemies."

The hermit did not answer, but laughed softly to himself, as he proceeded to pour out two cups of strong tea.

Kingston did not press him to relate what other discoveries he had made, for it was evident he would do so of his own accord when the necessity arose.

It was surprising what a nice tea he served up. From a

deep, air-tight bin he produced biscuits, cake, and butter, and presently both of them were enjoying the meal, chatting now on matters connected with Kingston's campaign. Both felt as though they had known one another for months, and, in spite of their vastly different positions in life, their interests were, in a way, similar.

For Kingston soon found that Polgrave was vastly interested in all classes of detective work, and had, in fact, devoted a great part of his life to assisting that profession. For what reason he had done this Kingston had yet to discover. That, however, could be referred to on another occasion.

At last the visitor rose to go, and Polgrave seemed really sorry at having to part. He led the way up the staircase to the massive communicating door, and shook hands with heartiness and vigour.

"Remember," he said, "you will always be welcome—always! To let me know you are here you have merely to ring the bell at the area door. It is an electric one, and communicates with my living-room. In order that I may know it is you, give two short rings, a long one, and then another short. All other rings I will take no notice of. It is very seldom anyone comes here, however."

"You will hear the ring, in all probability, sooner than you anticipate," said Kingston, as he walked along the passage to the outer door.

"All the better," replied the old hermit sincerely—"all the better! You cannot come too often. Good-bye, my rescuer! And remember that I shall always be in your debt, always owe you something which I can never hope to repay."

The sincerity of his tone was unmistakable; there was nothing put on. Everything he said he meant. He was grateful to Kingston, and interested immensely in him and his work. Therefore Kingston would always be a welcome visitor.

"Jove, but it's nearly six!" thought the latter, as he walked rapidly down the now dark road. "I seem to have been having a rather surprising dream. Here, in St. John's Wood, it seems impossible that the old man has lived underground for so many years. And the light! It was like summer sunshine. He is a marvel, and will be of more use to me than I can possibly imagine."

He walked on, and presently encountered a taxi. Chartering it, he directed the driver to hasten to the Hotel Cyril. Fraser would probably be back with news from Crawford. As soon as he had seated himself, however, his thoughts went back to the experience he had just passed through.

"I know I have done right in trusting Polgrave with my secret," he told himself. "The old man would never dream of betraying my confidence. He is as interested in me as I am in him. Jove, that disguise of his took my breath away! When he reveals to me the secret of it I will give Gray a little surprise visit!"

Kingston stopped the taxi for a moment to purchase an evening paper, and smiled when he saw a paragraph relating

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"THE RINAWAY"

Another Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of

NEXT
THURSDAY

how an unknown gentleman had saved an old man from death in Piccadilly Circus.

A good deal was made of it, and the "unknown gentleman's" praises were sung highly. The leading item of news in the paper, however, was the story of William Haverfield and the house at Chelsea. The Whyte murder case, as it was called, had created a sensation, and everybody was conjecturing what had become of the murderer. The newspaper was very meagre in its statement, and the full story was by no means given.

"Good!" thought Kingston. "What the public don't know they will have to guess. Tim's name is not even mentioned, neither is Carson Gray's adventure in the sewer."

He folded the newspaper up neatly and slipped it in his pocket. As he did so the cab drew up at the imposing entrance of the Hotel Cyril, and the fare stopped to the pavement.

He strolled leisurely into the magnificent entrance-hall and mounted the stairs. He acted his part of dandy to perfection, the expression in his eyes seeming to denote absolute boredom.

But as soon as he had entered his own suite of rooms he was a different man. Tim admitted him.

"Is Fraser back?" asked Kingston quickly.

"Yes, sir. An' Crawford's brought 'im some real news!" answered Tim eagerly. "I don't know what it is, 'cos Fraser won't tell me."

"All right, Tim. Send him to my study at once. I must hear this important news."

"Right, sir!"

Tim hurried off, and almost before Kingston had seated himself in his chair his faithful ally presented himself. An expression of eagerness was in his eyes.

"Well, Fraser, what news?"

"Something really important, sir," replied Fraser. "I've been back a long while, expectin' you in every minute—"

"The news, Fraser!"

"Sorry, sir! I saw Crawford, an' he tells me that a general meetin' of the Inner Council is arranged for to-night."

"What time?"

"Ten o'clock, sir."

"A general meeting?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did Crawford say what question was to be discussed?"

"It's about Mr. Carson Gray, sir."

"I understand. Haverfield is to have his case dealt with."

"That's it, sir," answered Fraser.

"Do you know where Haverfield is in hiding?"

"He's in the Council Chamber at the Chief's, sir."

"Quite a safe place," smiled Kingston. "The police would never find him there. Jove, but I should like to know what passes at that meeting! I wonder if— Any other news from Crawford?" he ended abruptly.

"Nothing much, sir. Only that a man named James Cassell will arrive in London to-night from Canada, and be present at the meeting."

"James Cassell?" repeated Kingston. "He is not an Inner Councillor."

"No, sir; he's the Chief Agent for Canada. This is his first visit since you have been back from the Iron Island. He only comes over once in five years."

"Once in five years? Have you ever seen him?"

"I saw him once, sir, for a minute. He's an American, tall and slim, clean-shaven, and always dresses as if he was the King himself."

Kingston examined the woodwork of his desk in silence for a full minute. When he looked up an expression was in his eyes which Fraser knew meant business.

"When does he arrive?" asked Kingston. "And how?"

"By train, sir. He gets to Paddington at half-past eight."

Kingston glanced at his watch.

"Fraser," he exclaimed coolly, "you and I are going to meet the eight-thirty train at Paddington!"

The Chief Agent.

Fraser looked across the table eagerly.

"What for, sir?" he asked. "What do you mean to do?"

"I mean to attend the general meeting of the Inner Council to-night," replied Kingston coolly. "I must know what the Brotherhood's plans are in connection with Mr. Carson Gray."

"But how can you, sir? And look at the risk! If you are spotted they'll kill you for certain."

"But, my good Fraser, I shall take good care not to be spotted. This man Cassell seems a very handy sort of fellow. He is arriving at the right moment, and he has not been seen by any of the councillors for five years."

"You—you mean to impersonate him, sir?" cried Fraser.

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NEXT THURSDAY: "THE RUNAWAY."

"That is my intention. The task will be simplicity itself. Once in the Council Chamber I can make any excuse for not discussing my own affairs. Now, listen here! I will explain exactly what you have to do."

Kingston gave Fraser full instructions, then donned his hat and overcoat. A few minutes later he was on his way to Great Portland Street. Arriving there, he found Carson Gray seated in his consulting-room sorting out newspaper cuttings. A pipe was in his mouth, and the room was somewhat thick with tobacco-smoke.

"My dear Gray, what on earth has happened?" asked Kingston.

The detective looked at his visitor in surprise.

"What's happened?" he repeated. "Nothing that I know of."

"But this smoke—really, your pipe has not filled the room to this extent."

"Yes, it is a bit thick, isn't it?" smiled Carson Gray. "I have been smoking rather more furiously than usual. What can you expect when I am cooped up here like a chicken?"

"Nevertheless, you have found something to do, I observe. I have paid this visit because I should like to have the use of your make-up for a few minutes."

"You intend to disguise yourself?" asked Carson Gray, looking up interestedly. "What game is it this time, Kingston? I must say you don't let the grass grow under your feet."

"I am going to a meeting of the Inner Council to-night," explained the visitor. "The case of Haverfield is to be discussed, and I want to be present."

"It will be risky."

"Not at all." And Kingston briefly told Carson Gray what he meant to do. He said nothing about old Professor Polgrave, meaning to leave that until there was more time at his disposal. At present there was none to spare.

The disguise Kingston donned was a clever one, yet exceedingly simple. And, almost as soon as he was ready to depart, the bell rang twice in quick succession.

"Ah!" exclaimed Kingston. "Fraser has arrived just at the right moment. Now, Gray, I must say good-bye. All being well, I will look you up to-morrow, and let you know how things went."

"That's good of you, for I'm rather anxious. Being bottled up here is not only exasperating, but exceedingly unprofitable. There are several cases waiting for me to get to work on."

"Before the week is out, Gray, your danger will be passed."

"How do you know that?" asked the detective quickly.

"I can't stop to explain now, but it is a promise. Good-bye!"

"Good luck to you!"

"I don't believe in luck personally, but thanks all the same," said Kingston, and closed the door. Outside, Fraser was sitting at the wheel of a hired motor-cab.

"Straight to Paddington," murmured Kingston, as he took his seat in front by Fraser's side. He was attired in a kind of uniform, and looked particularly neat.

Nothing was said during the ride to the Great Western terminus, and they arrived there in due course. The time was just twenty past eight.

"Couldn't have been better," said Kingston, as he stepped to the pavement. "You will wait here, Fraser, until I return. Unless some extraordinary miscarriage occurs, I shall bring the Chief Agent for Canada with me."

"I won't shift from here, sir."

Kingston passed into the station, and had no difficulty in finding out which platform the Fishguard express arrived at. Cassell had come from New York on board the *Mauretania*, so landed at Fishguard instead of Liverpool.

"I understand Cassell lives at Montreal," thought Kingston, as he took up his position where he could see every passenger who left the platform. "I presume he travelled to New York expressly to catch the *Mauretania*, that being the fastest boat across."

Exactly to time the huge express engine, hissing and pulsating, glided into the station with its long train of coaches. The passengers who flocked from it were numerous, and it was apparently a difficult task to pick out Cassell—a man Kingston had never even seen. No ordinary individual could have done it, but Kingston's eyesight was remarkable; not one person who left the Fishguard express escaped his attention.

And everyone was subjected to a second's scrutiny, then passed over. Most of the passengers had dispersed when Kingston caught sight of his quarry. Exactly as described, he was a tall, slim Yankee. The cut of his clothes was a clue immediately. In addition, he was clean-shaven, attired extremely well, and smoked a huge cigar. One or two other identification marks left Kingston in no doubt as to whether he had spotted the right man or not.

Another Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Waiting until Cassell had reached an open space, Kingston approached him. The American had a bag in one hand, and a rug over his arm. As he paused for a moment to look round him, he found a man before him, attired in livery.

"Mr. James Cassell, sir?"

The Chief Agent for Canada eyed his questioner up and down curiously.

"Why, yes," he exclaimed, "that does happen to be my name! Might I inquire, however, why you're so mighty curious?"

Kingston did not answer verbally, but, quick as lightning, made the secret sign of the Brotherhood. Cassell opened his eyes.

"Gee-whizz!" he remarked. "That's how it stands, is it? I'd no notion I was to be met in state. What're you—a C. M.?"

"Yes, sir," replied Kingston, guessing that the other meant a common member. "There is a motor-car waiting outside to take you to the Chief's house."

"Then ain't I to have no time to put up at my hotel?" asked Cassell. "Guess the Chief's in a mighty hurry, ain't he?"

"I think he wants to have a few words with you, sir, before the council meet," replied Kingston, secretly pleased at the Yankee's pronounced accent.

"Oh, very well, it don't make much odds," said the Chief Agent. "Where's your automobile?"

"Just outside, sir."

And Kingston led the way out of the "depot," as Cassell would have termed it. Fraser did not look up as his master approached and opened the door. Cassell clambered in, and Kingston gave the word to start, taking his seat beside Fraser a moment later.

The car glided out of the station, and very soon was bowling along the road at a good pace. It was not until then that Kingston acted. Cassell, in the body of the car, was entirely unsuspecting. By Kingston's side, on the seat, lay an indiarubber tube, at the end of which was a bulb—the thing was, in fact, one of the articles generally used on cameras to lift the shutter.

The use to which this one was put, however, was quite different. The bulb was filled with chloroform! And as Kingston pressed it, so a fine spray of the drug shot out in the interior of the car into the Chief Agent's face. There was no escaping it; before Cassell could realise what was happening, he fell back drunkenly, and lost consciousness.

Kingston could see what had happened through the glass, and laid the bulb down.

"Now, then, Fraser," he said sharply, "let the car go for all she's worth. It is getting on towards nine already, and I ought to be at Grosvenor Square by ten."

"It will be a pinch, sir."

"It will that, Fraser. So far, matters have progressed smoothly. Cassell has fallen nicely into the trap. It now remains for me to do my part."

The car whizzed along, and after travelling for about twenty minutes, came to a standstill in the centre of a desolate common. There was not a soul in sight, and everything was favourable.

"Now," said Kingston, "we can do the trick in two minutes. There is practically no fear of being seen."

With no apparent hurry, yet with remarkable rapidity, he lowered from the roof a large travelling trunk, and stood it in the roadway.

"Now for Cassell," he said.

He opened the door of the car, and grasped the inanimate figure of the American in his arms. There was no doubt as to his being unconscious.

"He is safe for a couple of hours, at least," said Kingston, after a moment. "There you are, my friend," he added, as he lowered his victim into the trunk. "I think nobody will suspect your presence in there."

He snapped the lid down, a slight smile playing round his lips. Then, with no assistance from Fraser, he grasped the trunk, Cassell and all, and hoisted it to the roof of the car as though it had been a handbag.

"Now, Fraser," he cried, "back at all speed! You know the address in St. John's Wood. I intend giving Professor Graham Polgrave a surprise visit!"

James Cassell Number Two.

The motor-car moved forward with a jerk, and soon was whizzing back on its own tracks. Seemingly it was the same as formerly, but now, instead of its passenger being inside, he was outside, encased in a travelling trunk.

The journey to St. John's Wood did not take long, and the road in which Professor Polgrave's house was situated was soon reached. It was a quiet district, and even so early at night there was hardly a soul about. Not that Kingston

was minded being seen, for who could say a word about taking a trunk into a friend's house?

"I shall be ready as quickly as possible, Fraser," said Kingston, as he looked up and down the street. "Be back here in ten minutes, and wait for me. You know what to expect."

"Yes, sir."

Fraser smiled and slipped the clutch in. The cab moved forward, leaving Kingston standing on the pavement with the trunk.

Had anybody been there to see, they would have sworn that the trunk was empty, for Kingston grasped it and carried it up the grass-covered path with scarcely any apparent effort. The house showed no sign of being occupied—most people in the same road imagined it to be empty—and Kingston thought what a really fine spot it was for the professor to carry on his work.

The area steps were a little awkward to negotiate, but Kingston got the trunk down easily enough. All was quiet, and he pressed the electric bell push in the manner the professor had directed—two short rings, a long one, and then another short.

As he stood there, he wondered what sort of reception he would get, for his second visit was very close on the first. But Polgrave had offered his services, and Kingston was taking him at his word. The necessity for a perfect disguise had arisen unexpectedly.

In a very short time the door was opened, and in the light from the electric lamps the slim figure of Professor Graham Polgrave could be seen. He peered out at Kingston, and his face screwed itself up into a welcome smile.

"Ah!" he exclaimed warmly. "My life preserver! What a welcome surprise! I scarcely expected you back so soon! Come in, come in! You always have free access to my house!"

"I have returned earlier than I have anticipated," replied Kingston, shaking the old man's hand.

"Not a moment too soon!" cried the professor. "I am delighted at seeing you again. Ah, what is that trunk?"

"If you will allow me, I will carry it into your laboratory, and then explain," said Kingston. "Something totally unexpected has occurred, and your assistance is imperative. You told me to apply to you—"

"Quite right, good friend—quite right!" exclaimed Polgrave delightedly. "I am anxious to help you—eager to make use of my discoveries in such a good cause as yours."

Kingston lifted the trunk, and carried it inside. The journey to the laboratory was accomplished in comparative silence, the only sounds being the creaking of the trunk and Professor Polgrave's repeated murmurs of satisfaction. There was no doubt about his being pleased to see Kingston.

"Now," he exclaimed, as he entered the laboratory with Kingston close behind, "let me know what you require. I am curious to know the reason why you have brought that empty trunk here."

Kingston set his burden down in the centre of the floor, and smiled.

"The trunk," he said, "is far from being empty, professor. See."

He lifted the lid after a moment's delay with the straps, and disclosed to view the huddled-up figure of Cassell, the Chief Agent for Canada. The Yankee was breathing faintly, yet regularly.

"Good gracious," cried the old hermit, "this is indeed a surprise! Who is this man, and why have you brought him here? He is unconscious, and has been made so by the use of chloroform."

"That is right, professor," replied Frank Kingston, glancing round him at the benches on which stood several large test-tubes and a couple of Bunsen burners—evidently Polgrave had been in the middle of an experiment.

Without delay Kingston told his old companion everything in connection with Cassell, and that he wished to impersonate the American for a few hours. The time was even then late.

"I understand," murmured the professor, rubbing his chemical-stained hands together with satisfaction. "This man, then, is one of the heads of the infamous Brotherhood? Dear, dear, I should never have thought it at first sight."

"Most of the Inner Councillors are well-known members of society, and they have, for years, been considered absolutely above suspicion."

"There is no telling," exclaimed Polgrave—"there is no telling! But you have carried off this affair very smartly. Cassell fell into the trap without a thought of danger. And the meeting is to be at ten? There is no time to waste if you are to be in time."

"Not a moment. You see how the case stands, professor. The fate of my friend, Mr. Carson Gray, is to be decided at this meeting, and unless I am there to hear the result, there is a possibility he will get murdered. Haverfield, also, has to

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be dealt with. The task will not be without risk, but, as a matter of fact, the whole campaign is risky."

"You will not get caught," declared the hermit. "It would take cleverer men than those of the Inner Council to detect you when I have finished. In fact, I might say it will be impossible to detect you at all."

The professor smiled knowingly, and bent over the open trunk.

"Help me to lift him out," he said. "It will be better to have him on the bench over yonder."

Kingston picked the still figure of Cassell up in his arms, and carried him to a huge bench under one of the peculiar electric lights, which made the place seem like day.

"There will be no necessity to change clothes," said Kingston. "The man has not been in England for several years."

"Good. I can soon complete the disguise. I suppose you can imitate his voice?"

"I was speaking to him for some few minutes at the station, and have heard quite enough of his accent and tones to copy his method of speech."

Without a word the professor bent over Cassell's form and began a minute examination of his features. Suddenly, however, he paused, then placed his ear to the unconscious man's side. He looked up.

"Dear me," he remarked, more to himself than to Kingston, "Mr. Cassell's heart is in a very poor state. I do not think it would take much excitement to cause it to stop beating. I wonder—"

The old man broke off, and looked at Cassell's left hand.

"Ah, that explains it."

He turned to Kingston with a shake of his head.

"You are a very man, Mr. Kingston, to abstain from smoking. Here, before us, is a very good example of the excessive smoker. You can see by the stains on his hand, how tremendously he indulges in the habit."

"It has, I suppose, weakened his heart?"

"Very considerably. By the appearance of the stains, I gather he smokes cigars, and, moreover, inhales the smoke from them. It is, I think, unusual to inhale cigar smoke. This man has done it to such an extent that he may die of heart failure under any sudden shock or stress of excitement. But come, I will commence operations."

Kingston seated himself in a chair beside the bench, and for a moment the professor busied himself with several little phials and hypodermic syringes. Kingston smiled.

"I feel," he said, "as though I were about to go under some terrible operation. In this apartment, surrounded by chemical bottles, retorts, and test-tubes, it is hardly possible to imagine that I am merely going to be disguised."

"There is no pain whatever," the professor said, "and, even if there was, I don't suppose you would object, for a man such as you would take no notice of a little pain."

He drew a few drops of some chemical into one of the syringes, and stepped to Kingston's side. The latter was enjoying the novel experience, and wondered what had happened when he felt a little prick in his neck.

But, although he could not see what result the injection had had, the professor nodded his head in approval; for, after a moment, Kingston's complexion had changed from a healthy ruddiness to a pasty white, precisely similar to Cassell's.

"Good!" muttered the professor. "Now for the facial muscles. This is the most difficult part of all."

He laid the syringe down, and picked up another one, this containing a light red fluid, very transparent.

"You may not think it," said Polgrave, "but it took me eight months to make half a pint of this liquid. It is the most difficult of all, although there is one other, of which I have not told you, which is nearly as hard to prepare."

He bent over Cassell for a moment, then applied the syringe to a certain part of Kingston's cheek. The sensation to the latter was peculiar, for it felt as though his muscles were being contracted. This, in fact, was happening, and it altered his appearance altogether.

So, for three or four minutes longer, the professor continued with the injections. The needle of this syringe was so fine that Kingston never felt it enter his skin. Finally, having widened the ears a little, Polgrave stepped back with a smile of satisfaction.

"I think," he murmured, "that the disguise is perfect. There is nothing— Ah, but wait a moment! What am I thinking about? The eyes!"

"The eyes!" repeated Kingston. "You cannot alter the colour of those!"

"You will see, good friend. You will see whether I cannot. His are light blue."

"Before you do, professor, I suppose I can have them altered back as they are now?"

"Instantly, if you wish it," replied Polgrave, "and, anyhow, the liquid I am about to apply will itself fade off within two days. It is far from being permanent."

"I am glad of that," smiled Kingston, who felt decidedly in the background when in the professor's presence, "for I assure you, I have no wish to have light-blue eyes for the rest of my life."

The old hermit laughed, and crossed the room. The operation he performed now seemed to Kingston to be a very trivial one, and certainly useless. Yet the action of spraying a minute drop of bluey matter into each of Kingston's eyes, instantly altered their colour.

Altogether the disguise was a masterpiece of cleverness. Without the use of a single atom of paint or make-up, Kingston's features had been made into an exact counterpart of Cassell's.

It had all been accomplished by the use of a few drops of chemical liquids, which could be found nowhere else in the world. It seemed utterly incredible, and an outside individual would have laughed in derision.

But to Kingston it did not seem at all absurd. When he realised that Professor Polgrave had been engaged upon the task for over twenty years, he could well understand the results. Down there, alone, free from financial worry—for he lived on the interest of money which had been left him when his father died—it was only natural that he should have many successes. Polgrave never gave a thing up. Once he started experimenting, he would continue perhaps for years on the same task—continue until he had attained his object.

And these little phials of different liquids were the results of his labours—or, at least, part of his labours, for he had invented and discovered things which Kingston never dreamed of.

"Now," said the man of science, "get up and view yourself in the mirror. I think you will admit that my method of disguising the features is second to none."

Kingston rose, his face feeling as though it were being held in a certain position by invisible hands. On the far side of the laboratory was a full-length looking-glass, and he crossed over to this and examined his reflection.

He did not start, or utter any exclamation of astonishment, but after a moment he turned and bowed low before the scientist.

"The likeness is perfect!" he exclaimed. "I can only say, professor, that, figuratively speaking, I take off my hat to you. Your discoveries are phenomenal and deserving of the highest praise. I shall not attempt to thank you for your assistance, because I know such a thing would be distasteful to you."

(An extra-long instalment of this exciting serial in next Thursday's issue of the "Gem" Library.)

How Do You Do?

WHOM TO WRITE TO—The Editor, "GEM" LIBRARY, 23-9, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, London, who will be pleased to hear from you.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

The "GEM" Library out next Thursday, will contain another capital tale of the Chums of St. Jim's, and the Editor will be greatly obliged if new readers will order their copies in advance.

N.B.—Don't forget the X on the back page.

The Editor