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Splendid School Tale:
Every

"FACING THE MUSIC!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.
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A Splendid, New, Long Complete
School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.
and Lumley-Lumley at St. Jim's.

BY
MARTIN CLIFFORD.



CHAPTER 1. Lumley-Lumley Chips In!

NOW, then, you bouncer, clear out!" Tom Merry looked round quickly as he heard the unpleasant voice. The remark was not addressed to him, but he knew the voice of Levison, the cad of the Fourth, and he wanted to see whom Levison was speaking to.

The School House juniors were at cricket practice on their ground at St. Jim's. Jack Blake, of the Fourth, was bowling, and he was in great form. Monty Lowther and Manners, of the Shell, had gone down to his lightning bowling, and Tom Merry was just going in to the wicket.

Blake's unusual display had drawn quite a crowd round the field, and some of the New House fellows had come over from their pitch to watch the play. Blake's chums, D'Arcy and Digby and Herries, of the Fourth, were cheering him enthusiastically. It was only practice now, but Blake was shaping well for the coming match with the juniors of Rylcombe Grammar School, and his chums were delighted.

"Bravo, deah boy!" Arthur Augustus called out at every ball. "Go it, Blake, deah boy! I couldn't do that bettah myself!"

Which was one of the truest statements Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had ever made.

Then came Levison's sneering, unpleasant voice, and Tom Merry paused on his way to the wicket. Levison, of the Fourth, was waving his hand authoritatively to a lad who had come on the cricket-field from the direction of the house. It was Grimes, the grocer's boy, from Rylcombe.

Now, certainly, Grimes had no business on the school cricket-ground. His way lay round the back of the house to

the tradesmen's entrance. But Grimes was a cricketer as well as a grocer's boy, and he had seen the play from afar, and he was just as keen to see Jack Blake's bowling as the St. Jim's juniors were. So Grimes, instead of keeping on his way to the side gate, had drawn nearer and nearer, in his keenness to view, until he was fairly on the ground, quite forgetting that a grocer's boy with a basket on his arm was out of place in those sacred precincts. Not that any of the St. Jim's fellows resented his presence there, with few exceptions. But Levison was not much like the other fellows. Levison saw a chance of ragging a fellow who was not in a position to reply to him, and it was just like Levison to take advantage of it.

"Clear out!" repeated Levison. "Do you hear, you grocer bouncer? What do you mean by bringing your basket here?"

Grimes turned red.

"I was jest looking at the cricket, sir," he said.

"Well, buzz off, before I help you with my boot!"

Grimes was turning to go, but at Levison's last remark he turned back.

"Elp me with your boot?" he repeated.

"You'd better not try it on, that's all!"

"Levison!" shouted Tom Merry.

Levison looked round.

"Let Grimes alone. He can stay there if he wants to."

"Yaas, wathah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If you are interestved in the cwicket, Gwimey, deah boy, pway stay as long as you like."

"Thank you, sir," said Grimes.

Levison sneered.

"Rather a new departure to have giddy grocers on the cricket-ground," he said. "He's no right here, and he's got to get out."

"Shut up, you cad!" called out Tom Merry.

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Page
22.

Next Thursday:

"FACING THE MUSIC!" AND "THE SCHOOL UNDER CANVAS!"

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"Rats!" retorted Levison.

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

At any other time the cad of the Fourth would not have ventured to reply "Rats!" to the captain of the Shell. But Tom Merry was just going in to bat, and he could not leave the pitch to deal with Levison. Lumley-Lumley, of the Fourth, had just come out of the pavilion with a bat under his arm. Tom Merry called to him.

"Go and punch Levison for me, Lumley, old man."

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"I guess it will be a pleasure," he said.

"Buck up, then; he's going for Grimes!"

"You bet!"

Levison was indeed "going" for Grimes. The grocer's boy was at a disadvantage. He had eggs and other breakable articles in his big basket, and so he was not in a condition for a tussle, as Levison knew very well. The cad of the Fourth advanced upon him, with his fists up, with the evident intention of carrying out his threat, and ejecting Grimes forcibly from the cricket-ground.

Grimes backed away.

He was plucky enough, as he had shown in more than one row with St. Jim's juniors and Grammarians in the streets of Rylcombe.

But Levison had the advantage now. Grimes was in danger of getting the "sack" from Mr. Sandys, the grocer of Rylcombe, if he quarrelled with a St. Jim's fellow at the school, especially in a part of the school grounds where, strictly speaking, he had no right to go. Levison, much encouraged by Grimes's retreat, followed him up in a threatening way.

"Out you go, you grocer cad!" he exclaimed. "We don't want your sort here. Get out, or I'll bust your basket over your head!"

"I guess you won't!"

Lumley-Lumley, of the Fourth, came speeding up as if he were fielding a ball. His grasp fell upon Levison from behind, and the cad of the Fourth was swung round. Levison gritted his teeth, and glared at Lumley-Lumley. It was not so very long since these two had been friends, and Lumley-Lumley in those days had not been much better than Levison, though always more courageous and more manly. Lumley-Lumley had been called the Outsider of St. Jim's, and certainly he had been a reckless fellow; but Levison's special kind of meanness had never been a trait in his character. Snobbishness, or piling on a fellow who was down, had never appealed to the Outsider in his worst moments.

"Hands off, you cad!" yelled Levison.

Lumley-Lumley did not take his hands off. He tightened his grip instead, and Levison, white with rage, struck him full in the face.

"Take that! Now—"

Lumley-Lumley reeled under the blow for a moment. Then he struck out, and Levison rolled in the grass.

There was a yell of applause from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Bwavo, Lumlay, deah boy! Huwway!"

Lumley-Lumley rubbed his cheek where Levison's knuckles had struck, and grinned as he turned to the grocer's boy.

"It's all serene, Grimey. I guess you can watch the cricket as long as you want to. This worm won't interfere with you again."

Grimes gave him a grateful look.

"Thank you, Master Lumley," he said; "but I've got to get back to the shop. I oughtn't to have stayed, only I saw Master Blake bowling, and—"

"Right-ho!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Just you come along and watch any time you feel inclined, Grimey, when you've got the time to spare. As for this cad, if he bothers you, give him a hiding!"

Grimes grinned and nodded, and moved away with his basket, very glad to save his eggs intact. He knew that Levison would have broken them if he could. Levison sat up in the grass, and rubbed his nose, and glared furiously at Lumley-Lumley.

"You cad!" he muttered. "What does it matter to you about a rotten errand-boy, hang you?"

"Will you have some more?" asked Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "I've got some more if you want it. Don't be backward in saying so."

"Hang you!"

Levison rose slowly and painfully to his feet. He was not a fighting-man, and he did not care to face the Outsider of St. Jim's in combat. He preferred to revenge himself, if he could, by safer and more cunning methods.

"Done?" asked Lumley-Lumley, with a grin.

Levison did not reply, but he thrust his hands deep into his pockets and strode away. It was evident that he did not want any more.

Lumley-Lumley strolled back to the cricket pitch. Several voices were calling to him.

"Next man in!"

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Tom Merry's wicket had gone down under Blake's bowling. Lumley-Lumley was wanted. He picked up his bat from the grass and went in. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his famous eyeglass into his eye, and watched Blake keenly.

"Lumlay won't last long," the swell of St. Jim's remarked.

"No fear!" said Monty Lowther.

"I don't know," Tom Merry remarked. "Lumley has been picking up wonderfully on his batting lately, same as Blake has on his bowling, and I think he'll be all right to play against the Grammarians next match. Look there!"

"Bai Jove!"

The ball had come down from Blake like a four-point-seven shell, but Lumley-Lumley was ready for it. The willow gleamed, and the ball went on its journey, and there was a shout from the juniors.

"Well hit!"

"That's a boundary!"

"Bravo!"

Jack Blake caught the ball as it was fielded and tossed back to him, and he looked very grim as he prepared to bowl again. Tom Merry smiled.

"I think Lumley will keep his wicket up," he remarked.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I think you're quite wight, deah boy!"

And he was!

CHAPTER 2.

Fatty Wynn is Hungry.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY made a very good figure as he stood at the wicket. All eyes were upon him, and the Outsider grinned cheerfully. Lumley-Lumley was always perfectly cool. In his bad old days, when he had earned the name of the Outsider, he had always had that gift—nothing could ever daunt his coolness or shake his nerve. His best friends could not deny that he had been, as Blake had put it, several sorts of a blackguard when he first came to St. Jim's. But they had found excuses for him since his reform, which undoubtedly was genuine enough.

Lumley-Lumley had not always been rich. In earlier days he had known poverty and hard times, and he and his father—now a millionaire—had had many queer experiences together in many a strange city. There was little doubt that the elder Lumley had been an adventurer, and his son was following in his footsteps, when good fortune came to them, and with good fortune came a change.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley—he was suspected of having doubled his name when he came into his millions—had sent his son to St. Jim's—and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, with blackguardly tastes, a queer training, and unlimited pocket-money, had been one of the most reckless "bounders" the school had ever seen.

Yet there had always been good qualities in him—generosity and boundless pluck and an iron nerve and coolness, and many of the fellows who disliked him most could not help admiring him sometimes.

And since he had turned over a new leaf, and turned his talents in a better direction, there was no doubt that Lumley-Lumley had started in a fair way to becoming a credit to his House and to the school.

He was undeniably clever, and since he had taken up cricket instead of betting on horses, he had developed into a fine player, and since he had dropped secret cigarette smoking and breaking bounds at night, his health had improved, and he was now as keen and as athletic as any fellow in the Fourth.

There was much of his old recklessness left in him, and a strain of the old obstinacy; but all the School House voted him a decent fellow, and indeed he was.

Tom Merry, the junior cricket captain, had his eye on Lumley-Lumley as a coming recruit for the junior eleven.

And certainly, as he stood at the wicket now, Lumley-Lumley looked like justifying the opinion of the Shell captain.

Jack Blake was at the top of his form, and he had taken wickets from Herries, and Reilly, and Kangaroo, and the Terrible Three in turn. But his bowling did not seem to worry the Outsider.

Lumley-Lumley stood up to it with perfect nonchalance, and whatever Blake sent him he sent back.

Neither did the fieldsmen get a chance. There were no catches when Lumley-Lumley was batting.

Tom Merry chuckled joyously as he looked on.

"That's a rod in pickle for the Grammarians," he remarked.

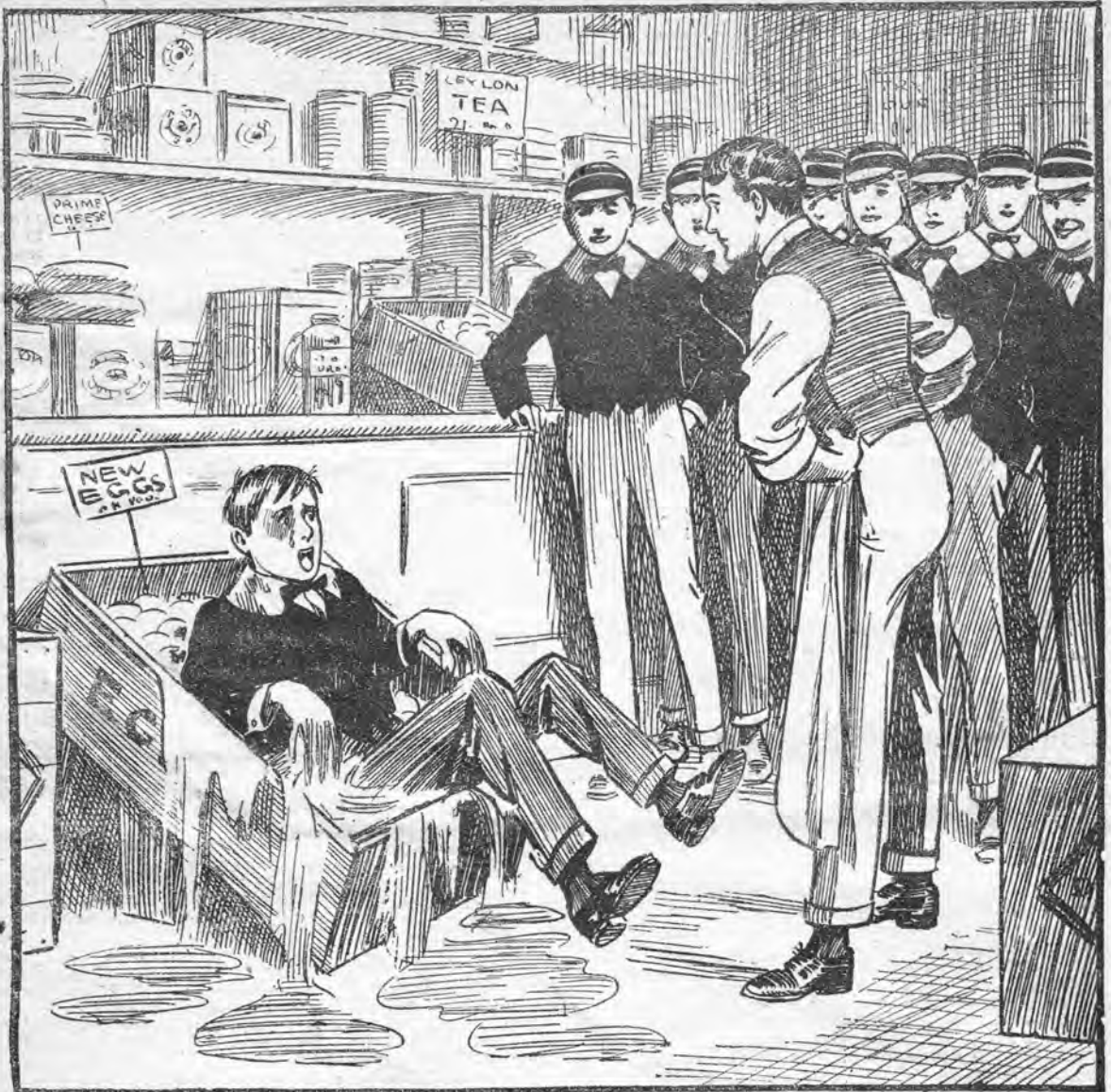
"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Bai Jove, I don't believe I could take his wicket myself, you know."

"Go hon!" said Monty Lowther sarcastically.

"Weally, Lowthah!"

Figgins & Co. of the New House came over from the New House pitch. Blake's bowling had drawn some spectators to

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Gore reclined in a box of eggs. He had broken about twelve dozen, and they were simply swamping over his clothes. He sat in a sea of yolk, gasping. "I shall have to charge you for those eggs, sir," said Lumley-Lumley calmly. "Twelve dozen at eighteen for a shilling—that will be eight shillings, please, and the broken eggs are yours, if you care to remove them, sir." (See Chapter 11.)

the ground, but Lumley-Lumley's batting was doing more. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn looked on with approval. They were thinking of the surprise in store for the Grammarians when the next match came off.

"Jolly good!" said Figgins. "Blake is in good form, but he can't touch Lumley."

"Wathah not!"

"Try him with Fatty Wynn or Reddy," said Manners.

"Good egg," said Tom Merry. "Reddy first. Blake, give Reddy the ball."

Blake grunted, and willingly tossed the ball to Redfern of the Fourth. The New House junior caught it, and went on to bowl. Redfern was a good bowler, and the crowd watched him keenly as he bowled to Lumley. But he did not make any impression upon Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's wicket.

"He's good stuff," said Redfern, when he had bowled an over.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry's eyes danced. Lumley-Lumley's batting looked like excelling his own; but there was not a trace of jealousy in Tom Merry's frank and happy nature. He was only too glad to see the one-time Outsider shaping so well at the grand old game.

"He could keep his end up against any bowler in the school excepting Fatty Wynn!" said Figgins, with conviction.

"Try Fatty!"

"Good! Fatty! Fatty!"

Fatty Wynn was the champion junior bowler of St. Jim's. He was also a champion gastronomist. While Redfern was bowling, Fatty Wynn had drifted away in the direction of the school tuck-shop. He had been at cricket practice, and he was hungry, and as it was still half-an-hour to tea-time, Fatty Wynn felt it necessary to have a snack. Figgins bawled after him.

"Fatty, come back, you fat boulder!"

"It's all right, Figgy—"

"You're wanted to bowl. Come back."

"Just a minute!"

"We shall have to fetch him!" grinned Kerr.

"Come on!" growled Figgins.

They dashed across the field after their plump chum. Fatty Wynn saw them coming, and broke into a run, and disappeared into the tuck-shop. If he was not to have a feed there was time for a snack; but Fatty Wynn's snacks were as large as the feeds of other fellows.

He had only started on his fourth jam-tart, when Figgins and Kerr burst into the tuckshop.

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"You fat boulder!" roared Figgins indignantly. "What do you mean by filling yourself up with pastry when you're wanted to bowl?"

"I'm hungry," said Fatty Wynn pathetically. "I haven't had anything since lunch, excepting a few sausages and some jam and eggs and some apples and jam-tarts. I get extra hungry in this June weather, you know."

"You must—if you take in cargoes like that!" grunted Figgins. "Put those tarts down, and come on."

"I'm putting them down as fast as I can, Figgy—"

"You ass! I mean, put them down on the counter."

"Now, look here, Figgy—"

"Oh, rats! Come on."

Figgins took Fatty Wynn by the collar, and Kerr seized one of his arms. The fat Fourth-Former was swept round from the counter. He made a desperate clutch at the tarts, and caught up one of them, and whirled it to his mouth. Figgins made a dive to stop him, and there was a muffled roar from Fatty as the tart was squashed on his face. It was a nice flaky tart, with plenty of jam, and it smothered his fat countenance.

"Groo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ugh! Groo! I'm cho-cho-choked!"

"You can come and be cho-cho-choked outside, then," said Figgins, rushing his fat chum out of the tuck-shop. "Come on!"

"Groo! I'm j-j-jammy!"

"Never mind. Come on!"

Figgins and Kerr rushed Fatty Wynn back to the cricket-field. His face was glowing with perspiration and jam, and as he halted breathless by the pitch, flies came from far and near to settle on his face. Fatty Wynn gasped and snorted.

"Here's the ball," said Redfern, grinning and tossing Fatty Wynn the leather. "Catch!"

"Ow!"

As Figgins and Kerr had hold of Fatty Wynn's arms, he could not very well catch, and the round red ball plumped on his chest and rolled down into the grass. Fatty Wynn roared.

"You ass! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm j-j-jammy!" roared Fatty Wynn. "Lemme go! Somebody lend me a handkerchief to rub this blessed jam off! Groo! Where are all these blessed flies coming from?"

Monty Lowther gently jerked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's cambric handkerchief from his pocket, and tossed it to Fatty Wynn.

"Here you are, kid," he said generously.

"Bai Jove, Lowthah—"

"Thanks!" mumbled Fatty Wynn, dabbing at the jam with Gussy's beautiful handkerchief. "Groo! Ow! I'm jammy."

"You feahful ass, give me my handkerchief!"

"Groo!"

Fatty Wynn tossed back the handkerchief—a jammy rag. Arthur Augustus allowed it to fall into the grass, and gazed at it with feelings too deep for words.

"Anybody going to bowl?" called out Lumley-Lumley, from the wicket.

"Buck up, Fatty!"

"Look here, I'm hungry!"

"If you get him out, you shall have a steak-and-kidney pudding for tea," said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn's jammy and shiny face brightened.

"Honest Injun?" he asked.

"Honest Injun!"

"I'll jolly soon get him out!"

And Fatty Wynn grasped the ball, and went on to bowl, with the air of a fellow who was determined to do or die.

The juniors looked on, grinning. Fatty Wynn was on his mettle now, and Fatty Wynn was a wonderful bowler. St. Jim's fellows often declared that he could have bowled any batsman in the Sixth, with the exception of Kildare.

But he had to deal with a batsman who was very much on the alert. Perhaps the jam-tarts had put Fatty Wynn a little off his form, or else Lumley-Lumley was in a specially happy mood with the willow. At all events, the champion bowler bowled over after over without touching the stumps.

"By Jove!" said Tom Merry. "It's ripping! Fatty isn't at his best, but Lumley-Lumley is standing up to him like a giddy Trojan! Hurray!"

"Yaas, washah! Bwaw, Lumlay!"

And when the gathering dusk put a stop to the bowling, Lumley-Lumley was still "not out." He walked back to the School House in the midst of a rejoicing crowd of School House fellows.

Fatty Wynn looked despondent. Figgins and Kerr sought to comfort him as they strolled back with him to the New House.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

"Cheer up, Fatty!" said Kerr consolingly. "You weren't in your best form, you know."

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"Any other time you'd have had his wicket," said Figgins. Grunt!

"It was the jam-tarts," remarked Kerr.

Grunt!

"Don't take it to heart, Fatty! The best bowlers can't take wickets always, you know."

Grunt!

"Cheer up, Fatty!"

"Oh, blow!" said Fatty Wynn. "I didn't get this wicket!"

"You'll get it another time."

"Blow another time! I don't want to get it another time!" said Fatty Wynn peevishly. "It was this time that mattered!"

"Why?"

"I suppose you haven't forgotten?"

"Forgotten what?" demanded Figgins, in surprise.

"I was to have a steak-and-kidney pudding if I took his wicket, fathead!"

Figgins roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! Is that what you are looking worried about, Fatty?"

"Of course, it is!" said Fatty Wynn. "What else is there to look worried about?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Figgy—"

"You're going to have the steak-and-kidney, all the same, old son!" grinned Figgins. "As a matter of fact, we've got the pudding in the study already. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, you're talking!" said Fatty Wynn emphatically.

And the worried look vanished from his face in an instant.

CHAPTER 3.

A Row with the Grammarians.

"LUMLEY, old chap—"
"Lumley, deah boy—"
"Lumley—"

The fellows pressed round Jerold Lumley-Lumley on all sides. The Outsider of St. Jim's grinned. Tom Merry had linked arms with him on one side, and Jack Blake on the other side. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy clapped him on the shoulder, and Digby dug him in the ribs. It was quite an ovation.

"You are coming to tea in our study," said Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather!" said Manners. "We've got sardines and jam."

"Stuff!" said Blake. "Lumley's in the Fourth, ain't he? He's coming to tea in our study—No. 6—after standing up to my bowling like that. We've got fresh herrings and marmalade."

"Better come along with us," chorused Kangaroo, Dane, and Glyn, of the end study in the Shell passage. "We've got pickles and ham and poached eggs."

Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"Any more offers?" he asked.

"Faith, and Hancock and I have got baked potatoes and bacon," said Riley, of the Fourth, "and we'll share it with ye like a bird, Lumley darling!"

"Weally, Weilly—"

"Now, then, Lumley—"

"Come on, Lumley—"

"This way, old son!"

"Jam—"

"Pickles—"

"Herrings—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lumley-Lumley. "Sorry I can't come!"

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"Oh, you can come!" said Blake. "This way to Study No. 6!"

Lumley-Lumley shook his head.

"Can't be did, I guess!" he said. Lumley-Lumley had never got out of the habit of "guessing," picked up when he was a boy in New York with his father. "I'd like to come to all of you to tea, but it can't be did!"

"Why can't it?" demanded all the juniors together.

"I've got to go and meet my father."

"Oh, blow!" said Blake. "Is your pater coming down here?"

"Yes; I've got to meet him in Rylcombe," said Lumley-Lumley. "I haven't exactly got to, but he wants me to, so—"

"Quite wight, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with an approving nod—"quite wight to tweek your patah with wipwah respect!"

"Oh, if Gussy approves, there's nothing more to be said!" said Monty Lowther, with a shake of the head.

"Quite wight, Lowthah, deah boy!" said D'Arcy unsuspiciously.

"Fact is, I've stayed a bit too long at the cricket," said Lumley-Lumley. "The pater is coming down in his car, and he's going to get into Rylcombe before dark, and it's getting dusk now. So I'm off, I guess!"

"Well, if you must, you must!" said Tom Merry. "Got a pass out?"

"Yes; I got it from Langton."

"We'll come down to the gates with you."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Tom Merry & Co. trooped down to the school gates with Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. There the Outsider of St. Jim's gave them a cheery nod, and departed, walking away with his quick, springy strides towards the village.

Lumley-Lumley's face was very cheerful.

He was on the best of terms with the fellows in the School House, with the exception of Levison and Mellish, who were on good terms with nobody, not even with each other. And Lumley-Lumley found it pleasanter than it had been of old, when he had been the "Outsider," and at daggers drawn with Tom Merry & Co.

In the soft and clear June evening, Lumley-Lumley walked down to the village. It was some time since Lumley-Lumley had seen his father, who had been away in America. Mr. Lumley-Lumley crossed the Atlantic as other men might cross the Thames, and different days frequently found him in different continents. The affairs of Lumleys, Limited, kept the millionaire very busy, and he did not have much time to see his son at St. Jim's.

On the present occasion he was taking a run down to Rylcombe in his fifteen hundred guinea motor-car, a standing monument to the prosperity of the Lumleys. Jerrold was to meet him in the village, and to take a run to the school in the car with him. Thus the millionaire would be able to have a chat with his son without losing a minute.

Lumley-Lumley was thinking of his father as he walked into the village, and he grinned to himself. The fifteen-hundred-guinea motor-car was a change after strap-hanging in the Elevated Railway of New York, which had been known to the elder Lumley in the old days. St. Jim's was a change to the younger Lumley after the Bowery in New York, the Latin Quarter in Paris, and Mincing Lane in London. All those places, and many more, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had known in the old days, and his experiences were wider and stranger than those of any other fellow at St. Jim's—than those of most of the masters, as a matter of fact.

Lumley-Lumley reflected sometimes on the change in his fortunes, which had been so great; but he was too much of an adventurer by nature to take it all too seriously. What had come easily might go easily, and Lumley-Lumley was quite prepared, if necessary, to take up the nomadic life again—to sleep in the fifteenth storey of a tenement house in New York, or to eat frugal dinners at a little restaurant near the Pont Neuf. The elder Lumley knew everything that was to be known about business; but his experiences did not go much further. He had sent his son to St. Jim's to make his way in the world socially. Lumley-Lumley knew it, and grinned over it. He had unlimited pocket-money, and anything he chose to ask his father for; but he was expected in return to make a good figure at the school, and to make his father proud of him.

The St. Jim's junior was thinking about it, as he strolled down the old High Street of Rylcombe, when all of a sudden his silk hat was tilted forward over his eyes, and he uttered an exclamation.

"St. Jim's waster!"

"Bump him!"

Lumley-Lumley clutched at his hat and put it straight, and swung round. Gordon Gay and Frank Monk and Wootton major, of the Grammar School, were regarding him with grinning faces. There was always war between the

juniors of St. Jim's and the Grammar School, and Lumley-Lumley had walked right into the hands of the enemy.

As he expected to see his father's motor-car come in sight at any moment from the London road, Lumley-Lumley was not looking for a row with the Grammarians, though at any other time he would have been quite willing for a "scrap" without counting odds.

"Here, hold on!" he exclaimed.

"Certainly!" said Gordon Gay genially. "Hold on, you fellows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Grammarians "held on," but not as Lumley-Lumley had meant. They grasped the St. Jim's junior, and held on to him. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley struggled in the playful grasp of the Grammar youths.

"I didn't mean that, you fatheads!" he exclaimed.

"Chuck it!"

"Certainly!" grinned Gordon Gay. "Chuck it, you chaps!"

"It" was Lumley-Lumley. The Grammarians chuckled "it," and Lumley-Lumley sat down in a puddle left by recent rain in the High Street.

Splash!

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

Lumley-Lumley jumped up in a rage, with water and mud streaming down his trousers and splashes of mud over his neat Eton jacket. His silk hat had rolled off, and had fallen into another puddle.

"You silly asses!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lumley-Lumley rushed at his enemies, forgetting for the moment that he was expecting the Lumleys, Limited, car to come along any minute. The Grammarians roared again, but not with laughter this time. Gordon Gay received Lumley-Lumley's left in his right eye, and Frank Monk caught his right with his nose. The two Grammarians dropped as if they had been shot, and then the St. Jim's junior closed with Wootton major. They struggled, and the Grammarian was whirled round, a foot caught in his leg, and he sat down on Gordon Gay, and the Cornstalk junior gasped.

"Ow!"

It was Lumley-Lumley's turn to laugh, and he did.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bump him!" gasped Gordon Gay. "Roll him over."

"Yes, rather!"

The three Grammarians jumped up and piled on the St. Jim's junior. Lumley-Lumley resisted gallantly. But he was borne over by the odds against him, and bumped on the ground, in the puddle he had sat in.

Splash!

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Gordon Gay. "Give him another!"

"Rescue!" yelled Lumley-Lumley, in the hope that some St. Jim's fellow might be at hand.

A youth with a large grocer's basket on his arm was swinging by, and he stopped at the sight of the tussle going on in the road. It was Grimes, the youthful assistant of Mr. Sandys, the grocer. He recognised Lumley-Lumley; and in a moment the basket was set on the pavement, and Grimes was rushing to the rescue. One good turn deserved another, Grimes thought; and he rushed into the tussle with a noble disregard of what happened to Mr. Sandys' property while it was uncared for.

Biff! Biff! Biff!

Grimes, like Julius Cæsar of old, came and saw and conquered. His sudden attack knocked the Grammarians right and left. Gordon Gay and Wootton major and Monk rolled over in the road, and Grimes helped Lumley-Lumley to his feet.

"Thanks!" gasped Lumley-Lumley. "Look out; here come the bounders!"

"Give 'em socks!" grinned Grimes.

And in a moment there was a wild and whirling combat going on. In the midst of it, there sounded the loud hoot of a powerful motor-horn, and a big car swung out of the London Road into the old High Street of Rylcombe. Lumley-Lumley remembered; and he caught a glimpse of a gentleman in a silk hat sitting in the car.

"My hat!" he gasped. "My pater! Chuck it, you chaps!"

"Your pater!" said Gordon Gay.

"I guess so."

The Cornstalk Grammarian whistled.

"My hat! It's time for us to go, my children!" he murmured.

And the three Grammarians melted away. Lumley-Lumley stood gasping for breath, and Grimes wiped a stream of red from his swollen nose. The big car slackened and halted, with a jamming of brakes; and Mr. Lumley-Lumley, millionaire, looked at his dishevelled and battered son and heir with a stern brow.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"FACING THE MUSIC!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 4.

Disowned!

"JERROLD!"

Mr. Lumley-Lumley rapped out his son's name in terrifying accents.

Lumley-Lumley dabbed at his streaming nose with his handkerchief, which was stained with crimson. He could not raise his hat to his father, because his hat was smashed out of shape in the road, having been trampled on in the excited conflict. Lumley-Lumley certainly presented a shocking appearance. His jacket was torn up his back, his trousers were muddy and torn, his collar had disappeared, and his face was battered and stained with gore and mud. Grimes did not look much better. Lumley-Lumley flushed as he met his father's glance. But his usual coolness did not desert him.

"Hallo, dad!" he said cheerfully.

"Jerrold!"

"I came down to meet you, popper! Glad I was in time. Shall I get into the car?"

Mr. Lumley-Lumley snorted.

"Get into the car! Certainly not, you disreputable young ruffian! Do you think I want an object like that in my car?"

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"I'm sorry, pop—"

"Sorry! You look sorry!"

"I guess I couldn't help it. I've been in a scrap!"

"I didn't send you to St. Jim's to get into scraps!" roared the millionaire. "You could have got into scraps at a less expensive school."

"I guess I could," agreed Lumley-Lumley. "But, you see—"

"Who is this?" demanded the millionaire, looking at Grimes with great disfavor.

"Grimes, the grocer's boy," Lumley-Lumley explained.

The millionaire turned purple.

"A—a—a friend of yours?" he spluttered.

"I guess so, and a good friend, too."

"You—you have made friends with a grocer's boy!"

"Why not?" grinned Lumley-Lumley. "I remember I was glad enough to get some crackers from a grocer's boy in the Bowery once—"

"Silence!" exclaimed the millionaire, who did not want his chauffeur to hear any of those little reminiscences.

"Silence, you young rascal!"

"Yes, dad. But—"

"Send that boy away."

"I'm jest goin', sir," said Grimes. "I came to 'elp Master Lumley, sir—"

"He chipped in, like a good pal, to help me," said Lumley-Lumley. "Give us your fist, Grimes, old boy! You're one of the best!"

"Jerrold!" roared the millionaire.

"Yes, popper?"

"Don't you dare to shake hands with that young hooligan."

"He isn't a hooligan, dad."

"Don't you dare to speak to him—"

"Oh, come off, popper!" said Lumley-Lumley, with certainly less respect than was due to a parent. "Draw it mild, you know. We haven't always been giddy millionaires, and Grimes is one of the very best."

The millionaire seemed upon the verge of an attack of apoplexy.

"You—you young rascal!" he exclaimed at last. "I—I—I—how dare you? I sent you to St. Jim's to form good associations, and I find you associating with a grocer's boy! You deserve to be taken away from your school, and sent to associate with him for good."

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders. Whenever he was "ragged" in any way, the old recklessness and obstinacy of his wayward nature were sure to show.

"I guess I shouldn't care," he replied independently. "I could look after myself, if you took me away from St. Jim's."

"You—you—you—"

"I guess something has gone wrong in bizney to-day, to put you into this ramping, dad," grinned the junior. "I remember you, you know. Do you remember how you ramped the time Colonel Bill did us over the ranch in Texas—"

"Silence, sir!" roared the millionaire. "I—I—I—Listen to me! I have told you what I have sent you to St. Jim's for—"

"If you've sent me there to make a snob of me it won't work," said the junior coolly. "I guess I wasn't built that way."

The millionaire raised his hand and pointed to the astounded and amazed Grimes.

"If you speak one word to that boy again, I will disown The Gem Library.—No. 228.

you, and you shall never return to St. Jim's!" he exclaimed furiously. "I mean it!"

Lumley-Lumley's eyes flashed.

"Then I won't return to St. Jim's!" he exclaimed.

"Take care, my boy! I am in earnest."

"So am I!"

"Boy! I—"

"Grimes's one of the best," said Lumley-Lumley; "and you're not going to make me act like an ungrateful cad, popper. Don't go, Grimes; it's all serene!"

"You have disobeyed me!" roared Mr. Lumley-Lumley.

"You have spoken to that low person."

"He's not a low person."

"You have chosen low associates instead of those I have selected for you," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley, forcing himself to be calm. "Very well; I will allow you to have your way. I hope it will be a lesson to you. If the school, and if your father's wishes, are nothing to you, you can avoid both. You shall not return to St. Jim's. You shall not return to me until you beg for pardon for your conduct, and promise to amend it."

"I guess there's nothing to amend."

"Silence, sir! Remain with your low friend; I shall go on to St. Jim's, and explain to the Head that you will not return!" fumed the millionaire.

"My hat!"

"You will have a chance of reflecting whether it is worth your while to disobey your father and defy him—"

"Oh, come off!" said Jerrold cheerfully. "I don't want your money, popper, and you know it. I don't care a Continental red cent for the giddy millions. And I jolly well sha'n't ever promise you to be a snob, if that's what you want. And, look here, I'll take you at your word, and I won't come back unless you apologise to Grimes for being rude to him."

"I—I—I—"

Words failed the millionaire. His chauffeur was grinning, and turning away his head to hide his grin. Jerrold's coolness was too much for him. Mr. Lumley-Lumley sank back in his seat.

"Drive on!" he gasped.

"Good-bye, popper!" said Lumley-Lumley genially.

The millionaire waved a fat hand.

"I disown you!" he shouted.

"Now, I say, popper—"

"I disown you, until you have renounced your low associates and apologised for your conduct!" roared the millionaire.

"All serene! Then I disown you, too, until you apologise to Grimes."

The millionaire made a gesture to the chauffeur, and the car glided on. It disappeared in the direction of St. Jim's, and Lumley-Lumley and Grimes were left standing in the street staring after it.

"My 'at!" ejaculated Grimes. "The old gent's in a tantrum!"

Lumley-Lumley was a little pale. But he shrugged his shoulders. His obstinacy was fully equal to his father's.

"That's nothing new," he remarked. "What's the odds?"

"But—but did he mean what he said, Master Lumley?" gasped Grimes.

"I guess so."

"You're disowned?"

"I reckon!"

"You ain't going back to St. Jim's?"

"No!"

"But—but wot's going to become of you, then?" asked Grimes, overcome by the perfect coolness of the son of the millionaire.

"I guess I can look out for myself."

"But—but where are you goin' to sleep to-night, if you ain't going back to the school?" exclaimed Grimes, in wonder.

"Oh, that will be all right! I can put up somewhere. The worst of it is that I'm low in funds. I was expecting to get a good tip from the pater to-day. And it doesn't look like it now, does it?" said Lumley-Lumley ruefully.

"Look 'ere," said Grimes, "this is partly my fault—"

"Rot!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"But it is!" said Grimes. "The old gentleman took me for a friend of yours—though even if I was I don't see that it would do you any 'arm—"

"Of course it wouldn't!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Haven't I told you you're one of the best? My dear Grimes, you mustn't mind my popper; that was only one of his tantrums,

ANSWERS

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and I guess he will get over it. The only trouble is—what the dooce am I going to do until he does get over it?"

"That's wot I was going to speak about," said Grimes. "He's took me for your friend, and if you'll let me be your friend while you're down on your luck I'll be only too pleased. And I won't take no advantage of it arterwards, when you're back at St. Jim's, neither. I've got a room that you can share—and welcome, if you ain't too proud."

Lumley-Lumley grasped his hand.

"Not much pride about me!" he chuckled. "I'll share your room with pleasure, Grimey, old man, and thank you for the offer. Didn't I say you were one of the best?"

CHAPTER 5.

Very Serious.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY came into Study No. 6 in the School House at St. Jim's with a decidedly serious expression upon his aristocratic features. Blake and Herries and Digby were doing their preparation, and had been so engaged for some little time. D'Arcy glanced at them and adjusted his eyeglass and glanced again. Then he coughed.

"This is wathah sewious, deah boys," he remarked.

"Is it?" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I've always thought so," said Blake, with a nod.

"Then you know about it?" asked D'Arcy.

"Certainly. I've always considered it serious for a silly ass to come into a study and jaw when a fellow's doing his prep," said Blake blandly.

"Hear, hear!" growled Herries.

"You uttah ass! I wasn't alludin' to your wotten pwerp!" said Arthur Augustus, with a frown. "And I wefuse to be called an ass. It's a sewious mattah—"

"Your new silk topper not come home?" asked Blake sympathetically.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Or have you spilled some ink upon your hundred and ninety-ninth fancy waistcoat?"

"I wegard you as an ass, Blake! It's wotten about Lumley-Lumley."

Blake started.

"What's the matter with Lumley-Lumley?" he asked.

"Not crocked, is he?"

"That would be rotten!" said Digby. "Tom Merry has selected him to play in the team against the Grammarians next match."

"He is not crocked, deah boys. It's worse than that."

"By Jove! Not ill?"

"Worse than that, deah boys."

"Then what on earth is it?" exclaimed Blake, in perplexity.

"Don't be so jolly long-winded, Gussy. It's all very well for your noble pater in the House of Lords, but you ought to cut it shorter."

"Weally, deah boy—"

"What's happened to Lumley-Lumley?"

"He's disowned."

"Whattid?" demanded the three Fourth-Formers together.

"Disowned!" said Arthur Augustus impressively.

The juniors looked bewildered.

"But who's disowned him?" demanded Blake. "You haven't done it, I suppose?"

"Pway don't be an ass."

"Then who's done it? If I catch anybody disowning Lumley-Lumley, after the way he stood up to my bowling, there will be trouble."

"Pway don't be widiculous, Blake! His patah has disowned him."

"My hat!"

"I wegard it as wotten. I considah it wathah wuff on Lumley-Lumley."

"How do you know?" demanded Digby. "Where is Lumley now?"

"He hasn't come back. His governah has just been here. He came in his cah, and saw the Head. He was in a feahful wage about somethin', and he talked to the Head in the Hall, with a lot of fellows lookin' on. Dr. Holmes edged him into his study, but a lot of the fellows heard. Lumley-Lumley isn't comin' back."

"Not coming back?" said Blake, in amazement.

"No! It seems that his patah found him fightin' or somethin' in the village, and lookin' vewy disreputable, and was awfully watty about it, and he has disowned Lumley."

"Phew!"

"You see, it's vewy sewious. Lumley-Lumley isn't comin' back to St. Jim's, and I don't know what he's goin' to do. We shall have to back him up somehow, you know. Only I must, he has not been disrespeetful to his fathah. I could nevah countenance anythin' of that sort, of course."

"Poor old Lumley!" said Blake. "It doesn't seem possible. Not coming back to St. Jim's!"

"So his patah says."

"There goes our best batsman for the Grammar match!" said Herries.

"Bai Jove, yaas! But I'm thinkin' of Lumley. It seems that his patah objected to his speakin' on friently terms with a gwocah's boy. I am afwaid that Mr. Lumley is wathah snobbish, deah boys. I do not see any harm in chummin' up with a gwocah's boy if he is decent—and I am a membah of a bettah family than the Lumleys, I considah. The D'Arcy's came ovah with the Conquewah—"

"Yes, we've heard about that," said Blake, with a grin. "Jolly lucky for you there wasn't a law against undesirable aliens about that time."

"Weally, Blake, you are an ass! My ancestahs won their estates with the sword, and—"

"That's what we call robbery with violence in these days," remarked Blake. "Your ancestahs would have got penal servitude for life if they had lived now."

"I twust, Blake, that you are not feelin' watty because my ancestahs licked your ancestahs at the Battle of Hastings—"

"Why, you ass," said Blake, "I—"

"I wefuse to be called an ass. My ancestahs—"

"Oh, blow your ancestahs!" said Blake. "About poor old Lumley-Lumley, this is rather rotten. I suppose his pater will come round?"

"He certainly didn't look as if he would come round. I was thinkin' that I might give him a good talkin' to," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "But he is gone now. He buzzed off in his motor-cah. He was in a feahful wage."

"But Lumley must come back. What's he going to do?"

"I weally do not know. But if he goes on the wocks, I think we might waise a subscrition or somethin' for him."

The chums of the Fourth left their preparation unfinished and went down. In the interest caused by this startling news, preparation counted as nothing.

They found the whole School House in possession of the news and talking about nothing else. Levison of the Fourth met them on the landing. He was talking to Mellish, and both the cads of the Fourth were grinning with disagreeable satisfaction.

"Lumley's got the order of the boot!" Levison remarked.

"Weally, Levison, you cad—"

"Jolly good thing, too!" said Mellish.

"He's been found chummin' up with Grimes, and his father has disowned him, and taken him away from the school!" said Levison, with a chuckle. "It would have been better for him if he'd let me kick that grocer cad out, I think. I think his father has done quite right. Lumley is a rotter!"

"I wefuse to allow you to call a fwiend of mine a wottah. Levison. Will you hold my eyeglass, Blake, while I thwash Levison?"

"No fear!" said Blake. "I'm going to thrash him myself!"

"Weally, Blake—"

Levison backed away, but the angry junior's grasp was upon him. Blake bumped him down heavily upon the stairs, and Levison roared. Blake bumped him on step after step till they reached the bottom of the staircase, and then left him gasping on the mat, looking very dusty.

Mellish did not interfere. Digby and Herries were ready to bump him down the stairs after Levison, and Mellish did not think it good enough.

Leaving Levison to gasp and mutter threats of vengeance, the chums of the Fourth went into the junior common-room. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were there, evidently in possession of the news.

The Terrible Three hurried over to Blake.

"Have you heard?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Blake nodded.

"Yes, we've just got it from Gussy. Is it correct?"

"Yes. Lumley's not coming back, and his pater's disowned him. The old chap was in a frightful wax," said Manners.

"Simply ramping!" said Monty Lowther.

"What's the Head going to do?"

"Well, he can't have Lumley-Lumley here against his father's wish," said Tom Merry. "I suppose he's going to let the giddy millionaire have his own way. He can't do anything else. I'm sure he's sorry for Lumley. But isn't it rotten—the chap not coming back?"

"Beastly!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let's get down to the village and look for him, and see what can be done," Digby suggested.

Tom Merry grinned ruefully.

"I've thought of that, and I've asked Kildare for a pass out of gates, but I can't get one. It's no go."

"But we've got to back old Lumley up, deah boy!"

"The Head won't have us backing him up against his

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

father, I expect. We shall be expected to keep out of it, I suppose," said Tom Merry.

"Wats?"

"We jolly well shan't keep out of it!" said Blake emphatically. "We're going to let old Lumley know somehow that we stand by him. It's rotten rough on him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And all the School House juniors, or nearly all of them, were agreed upon that point. They were going to stand by the fellow who had been disowned, and back him up—though exactly how the backing up was to be done was not yet quite clear.

CHAPTER 6.

Pals!

"HERE we are!" said Grimes.

Lumley-Lumley nodded, with a cheerful grin.

In his present peculiar circumstances Grimes was his only friend, and Lumley-Lumley had accepted his offer of friendship and aid as frankly and heartily as Grimes had made it.

He had waited for Grimes to take back his basket to the grocer's shop in the High Street, after which Grimes's work was finished for the day. Now Grimes had rejoined him, and was ready to take him home.

"Yes, here we are, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley. "If you're going to play the giddy Good Samaritan, Grimey, lead on."

"You're sure you'd like to come?" asked Grimes, with a slight hesitation. "I've only got one room, you know—a lodging in Mrs. Purfitt's. It will be a big change for you after the school."

"Not so big a change as sleeping under the bridge, I guess."

Grimes grinned.

"Well, no; that's right," he said.

"I've only got four bob on me," explained Lumley-Lumley. "That won't go far, if I've got to pay for lodging and meals. If you can take me in, I'll be jolly glad, and I'll stand my whack for supper. If you don't mind—"

"I'd be glad to have you, if you don't mind," said Grimes. "Come on, then. I'll make you as comfortable as I can, Master Lumley."

"Chuck that!" said the junior. "We're friends now, aren't we?"

"Yes, if you want it like that."

"Well, my name's Lumley, and yours is Grimes."

"All right, Master Lumley—"

"Chuck it, Master Grimes!"

Grimes grinned.

"Do you want me to call you Lumley?" he asked.

"I guess so, if you want me to call you Grimes."

"All serene! This way!"

Lumley-Lumley had put himself a little tidy after the fight with the Grammarians. He had dusted and smoothed out his clothes, and readjusted his torn collar. His silk hat was a hopeless wreck, but while waiting for Grimes he had dropped into Mr. Wigg's little clothing shop, and expended a shilling on a cheap cap.

The Outsider of St. Jim's—undoubtedly an outsider now, though in a sense different from of old—walked down the old High Street with Grimes, and turned into the lane that led towards the river and the bridge. This was a poorer quarter of Rylcombe, and the oldest part of the village.

A little house with a garden and masses of rusty ivy bore a brass plate, which announced that Mrs. Purfitt was a dressmaker, and made up ladies' own materials.

Grimes went in the side way, and mounted the back stairs to his room, which he rented from Mrs. Purfitt for the modest sum of three shillings weekly. The house was poor, but almost painfully clean; and Grimes's room, on the third storey, had a beautiful view of the river and the church spire, and the wide fields and woods beyond, in the daytime.

Lumley-Lumley looked about the little room with interest.

It was clean, like the rest of the house, and plainly furnished. Grimes explained that he paid extra for his breakfast with Mrs. Purfitt, and had his dinner at Mr. Sandys', the grocer's. Other meals he prepared for himself in his room, when he had any money; and there was a cupboard beside the firegrate containing cooking utensils, and another above it which Grimes used as a larder.

"You're jolly well fixed up here," said Lumley-Lumley, in admiration. "This is bigger than our studies at St. Jim's, and we go three to a study. I guess a chap could be very comfy here, Grimey."

"Good!" said Grimes. "The bed's big enough for two, if you don't mind sleeping with me, Master Lumley."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

"The question is, whether you mind sleeping with me, Master Grimes."

Grimes chuckled, and began to build up a fire. He looked curiously at Lumley-Lumley several times. He had expected to see the St. Jim's junior depressed and downcast by the trouble that had fallen upon him, but Lumley-Lumley certainly did not look downhearted. He was quite cool and cheerful, and he began to lend a hand in preparing the evening meal, just as if he were in a junior study at St. Jim's.

"Hungry?" asked Grimes.

"Famished!" said Lumley-Lumley frankly.

"We'd better get in something for tea," said Grimes. "I've got bread and butter, but that ain't enough for two. What would you like?"

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"The question is, what can we get?" he said. "If we're going to dig together for a bit, Grimey, suppose we pool resources. I've got four bob."

"I've only got two-and-six, and it's got to last me till Saturday," said Grimes, rather ruefully. "I shan't be able to do you well, Master Lumley."

"I guess I'm not going to sponge on you, if you could, Master Grimes. I ain't the kind of fellow to eat the bread of idleness, if I know it. When a chap's in want of money, there is only one thing for him to do—work."

"You can't work, Master Lumley!"

"Can't I, Master Grimes?" grinned Lumley. "You don't know me, I guess. I was working for my living, my son, when I was nine years old—that was before Lumleys, Limited, were ever heard of. Have you ever heard of the Bowery?"

"Never," said Grimes.

"It's in New York."

"You been to America?" asked Grimes, his eyes opening wide in wonder.

"I guess so. I was there more than two years," said Lumley coolly. "And I was nine years old the first time, and I turned an honest penny by carrying round drinks in a dive in the Bowery, and I learned some things there—sailors' language, for one thing. Don't look alarmed; I'm not going to give you any of it. I worked in an office in Paris with my pater when I was twelve. He had a scheme for making money in tube railways there, but it never came off. I've worked more than you have, Master Grimes. I can tell you, and I'm going to get another job now."

"Oh!" said Grimes.

"There must be lots of jobs going in Rylcombe, for a chap who's willing to work and had experience," grinned Lumley-Lumley. "There's that chap Pilcher, a friend of yours, who works for a butcher. He's punched my head, and I've punched his several times, so we shall be able to get on together all right. He might help me get a berth with the Rylcombe butcher; or perhaps you might recommend me to Mr. Sandys."

"You—you don't mean it!" gasped Grimes.

"I guess I do. I should make a jolly good grocer's boy. The chief thing is carrying home the goods, and I'm stronger than you."

"My 'at!" said Grimes.

"I don't mean I'm after your job, though I guess I could get it if I tried to boost you out," said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "But I'm going to get a job somewhere in Rylcombe, to pay my way while I'm looking round."

"But—but s'pose you 'ad to take a basket of groceries up to the school?" gasped Grimes.

"I guess I could do it."

"But—but wouldn't you mind?"

"Why should I mind, if I'm doing honest work?"

"Well, I s'pose that's right," agreed Grimes. "But a lot of the fellers there would turn up their noses at you, Master Lumley."

"They could turn up their noses, and welcome, Master Grimes!"

"Look 'ere," said Grimes. "If you mean it, there's a good chance at Mr. Sandys'. He wants another boy; he's just sacked one for dropping a basket of heggs. That chap was always dropping heggs, and now he's got the boot. He was lazy."

"Well, I sha'n't be lazy," said Lumley-Lumley. "That never was a fault of mine, I guess. I'm on that job."

"If you don't change your mind, Master Lumley, you can come round with me in the morning, and I'll put it to Mr. Sandys'."

"I sha'n't change my mind, Master Grimes; and I will come round with you in the morning. Now, about tea. Shall I cut out and get something?"

"You sit down, while I go—"

"Rats! I tell you I'm not a slacker! I'm going to stand

my whack of the 'exes,' and my whack of the work. That's understood, I guess, if I camp here."

"All right, Master Lumley—"

"What shall I fetch, Master Grimes?"

"What do you say to sossingers?" suggested Grimes. "We could have sossingers and bacon. They go all right with tea and bread-and-butter. I'll get the frying-pan ready while you're fetching them from Mother Murphy's."

"Good egg!"

And Jerrold Lumley-Lumley sallied forth on a shopping expedition. Meanwhile, Grimes explained to Mrs. Purfitt that he had taken in a lodger, and bargained that the extra payment to his landlady for her trouble should be a sum not exceeding one shilling weekly. Then Grimes remounted to his room, and scraped out the frying-pan and mended the fire and set the kettle on to boil. Grimes was looking, and feeling, very cheerful. Grimes was an orphan, and lived alone at Mrs. Purfitt's, and he was glad to have a friend to share his room; and he had a great admiration for Lumley-Lumley, and was not insensible to the honour of chumming with a public-school fellow.

Pilcher, the butcher's boy, and Craggs, the chemist's boy, were great friends of Grimes, but they lived at home with their parents. If Lumley-Lumley's banishment from St. Jim's lasted, Grimes thought they could get on very comfortably—though he hardly believed that Lumley-Lumley's banishment would last very long. He could not help wondering how Lumley-Lumley would take to the hard and incessant work of a grocer's boy, after the easy life at St. Jim's. But Lumley-Lumley was a schoolboy a little out of the common, and he had had experiences of harder times than Grimes had ever known.

Lumley-Lumley came in cheerfully with a bundle under his arm, and tossed it upon the table.

"Here you are!" he exclaimed. "Sausages and bacon, Grimey!"

"Good!" said Grimes.

And in a few minutes the sausages and the bacon were sizzling in the frying-pan, and the two chums were eagerly watching the cooking.

CHAPTER 7. A Friendly Call.

"KILDARE, deah boy—"

Kildare, of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, waved his hand, as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked into his study.

"Be off!" he exclaimed.

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Buzz!"

"But weally—"

"I know what you want," said Kildare. "You want a pass out of the gates. I'm not going to give you one. It's against orders."

"But I specially require a pass, Kildare, to go and see my friend Lumlay-Lumlay—"

"I know; and you can't have one."

"Undah the cires., as old Lumlay-Lumlay is down on his luck, deah boy—"

"Head's orders."

"I wegard it as wathah wotten undah the cires.—"

"Look here!" said Kildare. "It seems that Lumley-Lumley has disobeyed his father, and cheeked him, and has been given the order of the boot. He's not coming back to the school, and he's got to beg his father's pardon before Mr. Lumley will take him back at home, either. Therefore, you're to let him alone. Understand?"

"Yaas, I undahstand, but—"

"Then clear out!"

"Weally, Kildare—"

The captain of St. Jim's jumped up; and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hastily retreated from the study and closed the door. But he did not go far. He stepped along the Sixth-Form passage as far as Darrel's door, and knocked.

"Come in!" called out Darrel.

Arthur Augustus entered with his sweetest smile.

"Dawwel, deah boy, would you mind—"

Darrel grinned.

"Yes, I would," he said. "You can't have a pass out. I suppose that that is what you want."

"Weally, Dawwel—"

"Buzz off!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy left the study rather disconsolately. He hesitated a few moments, and then looked into Langton's study. The prefect was at work, and he looked up with a grim expression.

"Get out!" he said. "No passes to-night!"

"Weally, Langton—"

"Travel!"

D'Arcy travelled. The prefects were evidently useless, and the swell of St. Jim's drifted thoughtfully along the Sixth-Form passage, thinking it out. He was determined to see Lumley-Lumley, to assure him that he was backing him up, and he did not want to be driven into breaking bounds. But it looked as if he would have no other resource. He stopped at the Housemaster's door and tapped, and Mr. Railton bade him enter. It was a forlorn hope, and Mr. Railton's expression showed D'Arcy as soon as he entered that there was no chance.

"Would you mind givin' me a pass out of gates, sir—"

"Impossible, D'Arcy!"

And D'Arcy retired defeated again. His eye was gleaming behind his monocle now. He was getting, as he would have expressed it, "fed up." He was trying his masters to avoid breaking bounds, but it really seemed as if masters and prefects at St. Jim's were in league to force him to do it.

"Where on earth have you been?" demanded Blake, when Arthur Augustus came back into Study No. 6. "When are you going to do your prep?"

"I'm afraid I haven't time for prep. this evenin', deah boy," said D'Arcy loftily.

Blake stared.

"You'll get into trouble with Lathom in the morning, then," he said.

"I shall have to wisk that. At the pwesent moment I am thinkin' about Lumlay-Lumlay. I want to see him."

"It's impossible, my son."

"The word imposs. does not exist for a twue D'Arcy."

"Rats!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Get down on a chair and get your prep. done, my boy, and don't jaw," said Herries.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I was thinkin' that you fellows might be able to help me."

"Help you what and which?"

"Get out of the coll."

"Can't have you breaking bounds," said Blake, with a shake of the head. "I don't approve of such goings on in early youth."

"Pway don't be an ass!"

And Arthur Augustus walked out of the study. He looked into Tom Merry's room, and found the Terrible Three at work.

"I want one of you chaps to give me a hand," he remarked.

Monty Lowther held out his hand, grasped that of the swell of St. Jim's, and shook hands with him in an affectionate manner, a proceeding which Arthur Augustus D'Arcy viewed in considerable astonishment.

"Weally, Lowtiah, what are you up to, you ass?"

"Giving you a hand," said Lowther.

"You fathead!"

"Well, you asked for it," said Lowther, withdrawing his hand. "Did you mean the other hand?"

"I meant give me a hand over a wall."

"But there isn't any wall here, except the walls of the study, and they're joined to the ceiling," said Lowther. "I couldn't possibly give you a hand over them. Would it do if I gave you my hand over the table?"

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

"I wefuse to listen to your wotten attempts at humah, Montay Lowthah. I want somebody to help me ovah the school wall."

"Oh, I see! You're going to break bounds."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Can't be done!" said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "Pause and reflect, my children, when about to enter upon the path of temptation—oh, pause—"

"You uttah ass!" shouted D'Arcy, exasperated. "I'm goin' to bwreak bounds to go and see how Lumlay-Lumlay is gettin' on."

"Couldn't you break something else?" demanded Lowther. "Try the study crockery. You could break that without getting licked afterwards."

"I wefuse to entah into a widiculous discush with you, Lowthah!"

And Arthur Augustus retired from the study and slammed the door. He met Reilly of the Fourth in the passage, and button-holed him at once.

"Will you do me a favah, deah boy?"

"Sure and I will!" said Reilly, diving his hand into his trousers' pocket. "How much?"

"It's not money," said D'Arcy.

"Oh, good!" said Reilly, rather relieved. "What is it, then?"

"I want a bunk up ovah a wall."

Reilly looked round.

"Which wall?"

"The school wall, deah boy. I'm goin' to see Lumlay—"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

Lumley, and I cannot get a pass out. Therefore I am goin' to take Fwench leave."

"Faith, and I'll bunk ye up!" said Reilly. "But you'd better not go."

"Wats!"

And D'Arcy having replied thus politely to Reilly's advice, they proceeded into the dark quadrangle, and the Belfast boy helped D'Arcy climb the wall.

"Pway be careful, deah boy!" murmured D'Arcy. "I don't want to ruin my twousahs. If you could keep quite still while I west my feet on your head, I could get oveh the wall without wiskin' spoilin' my twousahs."

"What about my head?" howled Reilly.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that."

"You ass—"

"Weally, Weilly—"

"Buck up!" growled Reilly. "You're jolly heavy. I shall stumble in a minute—there, I told you I should!"

"Ow!"

Arthur Augustus found himself reclining gracefully in the quadrangle. Reilly looked down at him, and dusted his jacket.

"You ass, you've wiped your silly boots on me!" he said. "You can ask somebody else to help you over the wall, you silly gossoon!"

And Reilly walked away in wrath.

Arthur Augustus picked himself up, and very nearly ran after Reilly to take summary vengeance upon him. But he remembered that he was in a hurry, and turned back to the school wall. He climbed it this time without assistance, though at the cost of several scratches upon his beautiful trousers.

He dropped into the road outside the school wall, and carefully dusted his trousers. Then he started towards Rylcombe village.

It was not till he was in the High Street of Rylcombe that Arthur Augustus reflected upon the fact that he had not the slightest idea of where to look for Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. He paused in dismay.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "I wondah where the boundah is?"

He stood for some time in thought, wondering where to look for the Outsider of St. Jim's. While he was turning the difficult problem over in his mind, Lumley-Lumley himself came out of Mother Murphy's shop across the street, and hurried away with a bundle under his arm. Arthur Augustus caught sight of him across the street, and started across to overtake him. The Outsider was walking quickly, and he disappeared into a garden in River Lane before D'Arcy could come up with him.

"Bai Jove! I pwesume he's got a lodgin' here," said Arthur Augustus to himself.

And the swell of St. Jim's walked up to the door, where gleamed the brass plate announcing to all Rylcombe that Mrs. Purfitt was a dressmaker, and was not above making up ladies' own materials. He rang the bell, and the door was opened by a little maidservant, who was almost overcome by the resplendent vision of the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy raised his silk hat very gracefully and politely. Arthur Augustus was as polite to a housemaid as to a duchess.

"Pway excuse me," said D'Arcy elegantly. "I think a friend of mine is wesidin' here, and I should like to see him—chap named Lumley-Lumley!"

And he stepped gracefully in.

CHAPTER 8.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy is Astonished.

"PRIME—ch?" said Grimes.

"I guess so," said Lumley-Lumley, sniffing appreciatively the scent of the frying sausages. "I'm jolly hungry. Where are the plates?"

"I've only got one. But I'll have a saucer, Master Lumley."

"You won't. I'll have the saucer, Master Grimes."

And Lumley-Lumley set the table. The sausages were sizzling beautifully, and so was the bacon. Grimes was evidently an artist at this sort of thing. Lumley-Lumley lent him what assistance he could, but Grimes' was the master hand. In the intensely interesting occupation of cooking the sausages, the two boys did not hear a light tap at the door. It was repeated, and then the door opened.

"Pway excuse me, deah boys!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, looked in. Grimes went on cooking, and Lumley-Lumley swung round.

D'Arcy gazed into the room.

Exactly how he had expected to find Lumley-Lumley he could not have said. But certainly the bare attic was a shock

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 225.

to him, to say nothing of the sight of the St. Jim's fellow cooking his own evening meal over an open grate.

D'Arcy simply stared.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured.

Lumley-Lumley nodded cheerfully.

"Hallo, Gussy! How did you get here?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Come right in!"

"Yes, come in," said Grimes, looking round with a ruddy face from the frying-pan. "You're werry welcome, Master D'Arcy."

"Master rats!" said Lumley-Lumley. "This is Gussy. Come in, Gussy! Have you got a pain anywhere?"

"No!" gasped D'Arcy.

"You look as if you had."

"Weally—weally—ahem—"

"Walk in, kid!" said Lumley-Lumley hospitably. "You're just in time for supper, and there's enough for three, ain't there, Grimey?"

"Quite enough," said Grimes; "and D'Arcy's werry welcome."

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus came into the attic rather gingerly. He deposited his silk hat upon a chair, and removed his gloves, and regarded Grimes in a doubtful sort of way.

"You know Grimey?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"I—I have met him!" gasped D'Arcy.

Grimes grinned. The last time he had seen D'Arcy was when he was on the cricket-field at St. Jim's. But the time before that was on an occasion when Grimes, Pilcher, and Craggs had met the swell of the School House in Rylcombe Lane, and knocked off his silk hat, and in other ways treated him with utter want of respect due to a D'Arcy, whose ancestors had come over in Norman William's army of undesirable aliens.

"All serene, old man," said Grimes. "Bless you, I don't bear malice for a little row, and I 'ope that you don't neither."

"Oh, certainly not!" stammered D'Arcy.

"Of course not," said Lumley-Lumley. "Here, sit down, Gussy. Make yourself at home. Take this chair."

"Thank you, deah boy!"

"Not that one," called out Grimes quickly. "That one's got a gammy leg. Oh!"

Crash!

The chair collapsed, and Arthur Augustus sat upon the floor.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

"Sorry!" grinned Lumley-Lumley, helping him up. "I didn't know the chair was a giddy invalid. Take this one."

"Thank you!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I pwefer to stand."

"The sossingers are done," said Grimes, turning out the savoury mass into a dish. "I 'ope you like sosses, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, remembering that he had not had his tea. "I should be vewy pleased to join you, deah boys."

"There's one good chair," said Grimes, "and 'ere's a couple of boxes. Take your choice."

Arthur Augustus chose a box, and sat down. It seemed safer. Grimes finished dishing up the sausages and bacon, and made the tea. Lumley-Lumley cut the bread. Arthur Augustus tried not to look astonished. But he was really astounded to see the St. Jim's fellow so perfectly at home in the attic, and evidently so comfortable there.

"I came to see you, Lumley, deah boy," said D'Arcy, after a pause. "I was thinkin' that you would be feelin' awfully down on your luck, you know."

Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"I don't look it, do I?" he asked.

"Bai Jove, no!"

"I'm all O K," said Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "I've got a good chum, you see—old Grimey. We're great pals now, ain't we, Grimey?"

"Wot to!" said Grimes.

"Grimes is going to get me a job at Mr. Sandys," said Lumley-Lumley confidentially. "It's jolly good of him, isn't it?"

D'Arcy almost dropped his fork.

"A—a—a job!" he stuttered.

"I guess so."

"At the grocer's."

"Exactly!"

"Imposs."

"Fact!" said Lumley-Lumley. "My pater's given me the order of the boot, you know. I ain't aristocratic enough for him. I'm not going to sponge on Grimey, even if he lets me. I'm going to get a job."

"Gweat Scott!"

"Nothing like hard work and independence," said Lumley-

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Lumley. "Don't be surprised if you see me delivering the groceries at the school, Gussy."

"Bai Jove!"

"Of course, you won't be bound to speak to me, if you don't want to," said the Outsider gravely. "I don't want you to talk to your social inferiors, unless you feel inclined. I shan't take advantage of our former acquaintance."

"Weally, Lumley—"

"Jolly lucky to have a pal like Grimes, don't you think so?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yaas. But—"

"Have some more sossingers?"

"Thank you vewy much! But I suppose your patah will let you return to St. Jim's?"

"Not unless I apologise."

"You will apologise, then?"

"I guess not."

Arthur Augustus looked severely at the Outsider.

"Weally, Lumlay-Lumlay, I cannot approve of disrespects to a pawent."

"Then I shall have to worry along without your approval, I guess. I'll try to bear up," said Lumley-Lumley solemnly. Grimes chuckled.

"But—but suppose your father doesn't come wound, Lumlay?"

"Then I shall most likely start in the grocery business later on. I shall expect you chaps at St. Jim's to give me your custom."

"Bai Jove!"

"As a matter of fact, I expect the pater will come round when he's blown off steam a bit," said Lumley-Lumley. "But if he doesn't, I guess I'm quite able to stand on my own feet without being held up. I've done it before. Bless you, this ain't the first time I've had a row with the pater. It happened in Paris once, and I was on my own for a month, picking up jobs in the markets for a living. You should have seen me toting round sacks in the Halles, Gussy. This will be an easy job in comparison, and if I don't make it up with popper I shall stick to the grocery line, and grow up to be a regular Lipton, with branches in every town in the United Kingdom, baronetcy, and yacht complete."

Arthur Augustus could only gasp.

"Nother cup of tea?" said Grimes hospitably.

"Thank you vewy much, deah boy. Lumlay, are you sewious?"

"I guess so!"

"I was goin' to offah to see your patah, and talk to him!" said D'Arcy. "Undah the pwesent cires, a fellow of tact and judgment might be able to do some good!"

"No good at all," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'm going to stick to the grocery, and wait for the pater to come round. That will be all right!"

"But what about your studies, deah boy?"

"I guess I shall go to the night-school in Wayland."

"Oh! But what about the cwicket?"

"I'm joining the Rylcombe Junior Cricket Club. Grimes is captain, and he will give me a chance!"

"Wot to!" said Grimes.

"Then you won't be able to play against the Gram-marians?"

"Yes I shall—we'll challenge them," said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "We'll challenge you St. Jim's chaps, too, wou't we, Grimey?"

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Grimes.

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus finished his supper in a state of great astonishment. When he took his leave of Lumley-Lumley and Grimes, he walked back to St. Jim's still amazed. Lumley-Lumley as a grocer's-boy and attending the night-school at Wayland, and playing cricket with the village urchins on the village green, simply took D'Arcy's breath away. D'Arcy was thinking about it so deeply that he ran right into the arms of a prefect when he entered the school, and was given five hundred lines on the spot for breaking bounds.

CHAPTER 9.

Lumley-Lumley Gets a Job.

THE morning sun of June was shining down into the old High Street of Rylcombe. Grimes took down the shutters of Mr. Sandys' shop, and handed them to Lumley-Lumley as he removed them. Lumley-Lumley carried them in and stacked them away. The Outsider of St. Jim's was in high good humour. This seemed to him better than grinding Latin in the Fourth-Form-room in the School House. It was a change at all events. The shutters all down, Grimes went into the shop, and Lumley-Lumley followed him. Mr. Sandys had just come into his little parlour. Mr. Sandys was a fat and rubicund gentleman of middle age. He nodded very pleasantly to Jerrold Lumley-

Lumley. The millionaire's son had been a good customer at the little shop, having frequently sent orders for supplies that ran into pounds at a time. Lumley-Lumley was worth being polite to—or had been, for things were changed now. But Mr. Sandys did not know that yet.

"Good-morning Master Lumley-Lumley!" said Mr. Sandys. "What are you doing out of school so early?"

"I've been helping Grimes take the shutters down, sir!"

"Dear me!"

"I hear you want a boy, sir."

"Yes," said Sandys, in surprise. "I am looking for a boy!"

"Good egg! I know a boy who is looking for a job."

"Indeed!" said the grocer. "You want to recommend some lad for the place, Master Lumley-Lumley! I'm sure I should be very pleased—ahem—to give him a trial. Who is the boy?"

"Myself!"

"Eh?"

"I'm looking for a job!" Lumley-Lumley explained.

The grocer laughed.

"You will have your little joke, Master Lumley," he said.

"But it isn't a joke!" said Lumley-Lumley. "I'm looking for a job—honest Injun, you know, and Grimes said you were wanting a boy, so I've given you first chance!"

Mr. Sandys stared at him blankly.

"You're not in earnest?" he gasped.

"I guess I am!"

"You've left school?"

"My pater's taken me away!"

"But—but then you are going home—"

"Order of the boot!" Lumley-Lumley explained. "I've got low tastes, and my father learned a lot of aristocratic prejudices in the Bowery in New York. He's kicked me out to shift for myself."

"You—you don't say so!" Mr. Sandys ejaculated.

"But I do say so!" said the junior. "I've got to earn my living, or else sponge on Grimes. I want a job!"

"But—but your father's a millionaire."

"Yes; but I'm a shillingaire at present—I mean I've only got a bob, and I want to earn some more. Do you think I should suit?"

"Bless my soul!"

"I can weigh up things, and carry baskets, and keep accounts, and make myself generally useful. You can give me the same wages as the last chap, and I will undertake not to drop any eggs. Any eggs broken to be deducted from the salary."

Mr. Sandys burst into a laugh.

"If you really mean it—" he said.

"Honour bright, sir!"

"But what will your schoolmaster say?"

"It isn't his bizney now. My pater's taken me away from St. Jim's—ordered me not to go back, you know. He won't take me home either. I tell you I've got to earn my own living. Grimes will give you a recommendation with me. I'll serve you well, and if I don't suit, you can sack me. Is that all right?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, that is all right!"

"You'll take me on?"

Mr. Sandys rubbed his fat hands.

"I'll take you on," he said. "But it will mean work, you know—real work!"

"I don't mind work!"

Mr. Sandys chuckled. He did not think that the St. Jim's junior would take very readily to hard work. But Mr. Sandys was wise in his generation. He was quite assured in his mind that Lumley-Lumley's troubles would soon blow over, and that the junior would be sent back to St. Jim's. When that happened, Mr. Sandys could certainly count upon him as a generous customer, if he stood by him now in the hour of adversity. The grocer thought of that, and he was not insensible, either, to the extensive advertisement he would get when it became known that he was employing a millionaire's son as an errand-boy. People would come to the shop to be served by the son of the famous millionaire, Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley. When it got about the village, it would make Mr. Sandys' grocery famous for a mile and a half or more.

"Sure you don't mind work?" he asked.

"You bet!"

"You will be under Grimes, of course."

"I guess I don't mind that. Grimes is going to be my cricket captain, and I don't see why he shouldn't be chief officer in the grocery line."

"Very well," said Mr. Sandys graciously. "You can consider yourself engaged. Grimes will give you an apron!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Lumley-Lumley.

Lumley-Lumley was business-like—or, as he would have expressed it in the wonderful language he had learned in

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

New York—he was all business from the word go. Having been engaged by Mr. Sandys as errand-boy, he dropped entirely his St. Jim's manner, and seemed oblivious of the fact that he had been accustomed to address Mr. Sandys as "Old Sands," or even "Sandy Sugar." He was smart and respectful, and did not forget to call his employer "sir."

Mr. Sandys watched him curiously in the shop. Lumley-Lumley was a handy fellow. He did not break anything or knock anything over. By the ready way he dropped into the work, he might have been a grocer's lad. He took a broom from Grimes and swept out the shop; and, to Mr. Sandys's amazement and delight, he swept out the corners, as well as the places that showed. Mr. Sandys had never employed a boy before who did that. Then the junior helped to stack up the goods for sale, and that day being window-dressing day, he made himself remarkably useful in dressing the window.

Mr. Sandys was as delighted as he was surprised.

"You'll be very useful," he told Lumley-Lumley later in the morning.

"Thank you, sir! I hope to be!" said the junior respectfully.

Grimes, who was grinning from ear to ear all the time he was in the shop, went out on the morning round, the afternoon round being reserved for the new boy. Mr. Sandys retired to the bosom of his family, and Lumley-Lumley was left to mind the shop. In his white apron, half-folded diagonally in the real grocer style, Lumley-Lumley looked very smart and business-like.

Customers came in, and Lumley-Lumley, who seemed to have learned the business already, served them with promptness and despatch.

Towards midday three youths in mortar-board caps came into the shop, and Lumley-Lumley started a little as he recognised Frank Monk, Gordon Gay, and Wootton major of Rylcombe Grammar School. It happened to be a Wednesday, which was a half-holiday at the Grammar School and St. Jim's—though not for Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. The Grammarians had come in to purchase supplies for a picnic, quite ignorant of the fact that Mr. Sandys had a new boy, or of whom that new boy was.

"Tin of condensed milk, please, and open it," said Gordon Gay, "and—and—my only summer-bonnet!"

"Yes, sir!" said Lumley-Lumley calmly. "Nestle's Milk, or, or Snoozer's Splendid Brand—or will you try our own, sir—much better, and a lower price?"

"Lumley-Lumley!"

"I can recommend our condensed milk, sir—"

"You—you ass!" gasped Gordon Gay, while the other Grammarians stared at Lumley-Lumley in blank amazement. "What's the little game?"

"Is this a new jape?" demanded Monk.

"What the dickens are you doing here?" exclaimed Wootton major.

"I am Mr. Sandys' new boy, please, sir!"

"You!"

"I guess so. I mean, yes! Can I get anything else for you, sir? Our one-and-six blend of India and Ceylon is a splendid article, sir!"

"You—you fathead!" ejaculated Frank Monk. "You don't mean to say that you're really working here as a grocer's boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"If you call me 'sir' I'll punch your silly head!"

"Beg pardon, sir; but I'm bound to call my master's customers 'sir,' sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you try our ham, sir?"

"Look here," said Frank Monk, "what does it mean? Did you get into trouble with your pater after that little row yesterday?"

"Yes, sir. My father's given me the order of the boot, sir, and I'm not going to St. Jim's any more, sir."

"I—I say, was it our fault?" asked Wootton major, in dismay.

"Well, yes, sir, it was. But never mind, sir. I've had lots of rows with the pater, but he always comes round."

"We're awfully sorry," said Gordon Gay.

"Not at all, sir. I don't mind in the least. I like this for a change after the class-room. The hours are longer, but I have a very good master."

"Can we do anything?"

"Certainly, sir. If you give me a good order, it will help me with my master, as he will like me to be a good salesman."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How long are you going to keep this up?" demanded Monk.

"I don't know, sir. I'm in a good berth, and I hope to THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

keep it. Will you try our own marmalade, sir? We warrant every jar."

"Well, we can give you a good order, anyway; that's what we've come for," said Monk. "I've got a list here."

"Very good, sir."

Lumley-Lumley took the list, and made up the articles in neat packages. The Grammarians watched him in amazement. Lumley-Lumley had quick and deft hands. He served the juniors very quickly, and Monk laid a sovereign on the counter.

"Fifteen shillings and ninepence-halfpenny, sir," said Lumley-Lumley. "Bacon has gone up a ha'penny, sir."

"Right-ho!" grinned Monk. "It can go up a penny if you like."

"Can I show you anything else, sir? You have no tea in your list. We have a very special line in an India and Ceylon blend."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps you would like to take a trial half-pound packet? If you once use our tea, sir, we guarantee that you will never patronise any other establishment. Our motto is good quality combined with reasonable prices."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Gordon Gay. "Yes, shove in the trial packet. It's worth the money to hear you reel it off."

"Can I interest you in our nine-a-shilling eggs, sir?" asked Lumley-Lumley. "We have them direct from the Quarry Farm, sir, the same place that supplies St. Jim's—a well-known public school in this vicinity, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

By the time Lumley-Lumley had finished, the whole sovereign remained in Mr. Sandys' till, and the Grammarians departed, loaded with purchases and grinning hugely. Lumley-Lumley sedately dusted the counter. Mr. Sandys came out of his parlour.

"Any business?" he asked, with a smile.

Lumley-Lumley consulted his pocket account-book.

"Takings, thirty-three shillings and fourpence-three farthings, sir," he said.

"My word!" ejaculated Mr. Sandys.

"May I go to my dinner now, sir?"

"Yes, yes! Certainly! You'll find it all ready," gasped Mr. Sandys. "My word! Why, you're a treasure in the shop, my lad!"

"Very glad that you are satisfied with me, sir," said Lumley-Lumley. And he went in to his dinner.

CHAPTER 10.

The New Grocer's Boy.

TOM MERRY & CO. came out of the School House after dinner that day, looking a little less sunny than usual. They could not help thinking of Lumley-Lumley. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had reported to his chums that the banished junior was apparently in good spirits, and intending to get a job in Rylcombe, and quite satisfied with his lot. But the juniors did not feel quite convinced. The change from the Fourth Form at St. Jim's to the village grocer's shop was very great, and they were worried for Lumley-Lumley.

"It's rotten!" said Tom Merry, for at least the twentieth time.

And his chums agreed that it was.

"I suppose the giddy millionaire will come round in time," Monty Lowther remarked. "But it will be rough on Lumley-Lumley while it lasts."

"Yaas, wathah! It is weally a pwopah time for a fellow of tact and judgment to interfere; but Lumley-Lumley did not seem to think it would be of any use," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "I wegard it all as howwid."

"What bosh!" said Levison, of the Fourth. "Lumley-Lumley's found his mark now. It's just about what he's suited for. Some of us ought to go down to the grocer's shop and see him, and order eggs and things. It would be fun!"

"Oh, wats!"

And the chums of the School House turned their backs upon Levison. The cad of the Fourth shrugged his shoulders. In the fall of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley from his high estate, Levison saw an opportunity of paying off many old scores, and he did not mean to neglect the opportunity. And his estimable chums, Mellish, of the Fourth, and Crooke, of the Shell, fully agreed with him. They had never forgiven Lumley-Lumley for deserting their select society and turning over a new leaf, and leaving all bad habits—and themselves—behind him.

Figgins & Co., and Redfern, and Owen, and Lawrence, of the New House, came over for news of Lumley-Lumley. They whistled when they heard about him.

"Fancy him as a giddy grocer's boy!" said Redfern.

"Why, he may come up to the school with the groceries, as Mr. Sandys serves St. Jim's!"

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"Bai Jove!"
 "He'll have to come to the tradesmen's entrance," broke in Levison.
 "Shut up, Levison! Let's get down to the cricket," said Tom Merry.

School House juniors were playing New House that afternoon. Tom Merry had intended to play Lumley-Lumley in the School House team, but that was evidently out of the question now. But the juniors were thinking of him as they went down to the cricket-ground.

Tom Merry won the toss, and the School House batted first. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tapped Tom Merry on the shoulder.

"I want you to do me a little favah, deah boy," he said.

"Go ahead, kid, but buck up!"

"I want you to open the innings with me, Tom Mewwy."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Can't be done," he said. "You see, it would discourage the side if there were a duck's egg to start with."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and simply glared at his cricket captain.

"You uttah ass—" he began.

"Chaps are not allowed to call their skippers names," said Tom Merry severely. "I shall have to caution you, D'Arcy."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Well, don't let it occur again, and it's all right."

Arthur Augustus breathed hard through his nose.

"I specially want to bat first, deah boy, because I want to look woud, you know. I fancy that cad Levison intends to play some of his caddish pwanks on Lumley-Lumley, and I am goin' to keep an eye on him."

"Oh, all right," said Tom Merry graciously. "I'll begin with you, then, and you'll be free after the first over."

"You feahful ass—"

"Man in!" said Monty Lowther.

Eiggins & Co. went out to field, and Tom Merry opened the innings with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at the other end. Tom Merry's prediction was not fulfilled. D'Arcy was not out in the first over; but that was because Fatty Wynn was bowling to Tom Merry. In the second over Arthur Augustus met his fate at the hands of Redfern.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated, as his wicket went down.

And he walked back to the pavilion in a state of great astonishment.

But the swell of St. Jim's was comforted for the early fall of his wicket by the fact that he was free to keep a watchful eye on the movements of Levison & Co. And certainly he was quite right in supposing that Levison meant mischief.

The afternoon round at Mr. Sandys' included St. Jim's, and goods were due to be delivered that afternoon; and at half-past three a youth came to the tradesmen's entrance with a basket on his arm.

Levison was on the alert, and as the grocer's boy came up the gravel path to the kitchen door of the School House, Levison gave a shout.

"Lumley! By George!"

Lumley-Lumley did not look round.

He walked on quietly, his basket on his arm, and rang at the kitchen entrance.

Mellish, and Crooke, and Gore, and several other fellows gathered round, to stare at the schoolboy errand-boy.

"Eggs, please! Twelve a shilling!"

"What price sandy sugar?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lumley-Lumley did not appear to hear them. The cook came to the kitchen door to take the goods he had brought for delivery, and she almost fell down at the sight of the grocer's boy.

"Master Lumley-Lumley!"

"Please, I've brought the grocery, ma'am!"

"But—but—"

"I'm Mr. Sandys' new boy, please."

"Lawks!" said the cook.

And she took the groceries in, looking dazed.

Lumley-Lumley waited for the empty basket. Fellows were gathering round from all sides to look at him. Lumley-Lumley looked very different from of old. He was no longer in Etons, having borrowed a suit of clothes from Grimes that were more suitable for the work he had to do. But he looked just as cool and nonchalant as ever, and quite as well able to take care of himself.

"Thank you, ma'am," he said politely, as the cook handed him the basket. And he turned to make his way back to the gate.

Levison and Mellish and Crooke barred his path.

"Not so fast!" said Levison insolently. "We haven't seen you for quite a long time, Lumley. Don't be in a hurry."

"We want to have a squint at the new grocer's boy!"

grinned Crooke.

"Please stand aside, young gentlemen," said Lumley-Lumley very respectfully. "I have to get back to my work."

"What price eggs?"

"We're going to take you for a walk round the quad, basket and all, and show you to the school," said Levison.

"Collar him."

The three juniors advanced upon the Outsider. Lumley-Lumley's eyes gleamed. He took a grip upon the handle of his basket, and swung it round, and swept the heavy wicker-work right at the advancing juniors. It swept them off their feet as it struck, and they rolled on the gravel with loud yells.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, arriving upon the spot a minute too late to interfere. "Ha, ha, ha! I wergad that as funny!"

"Good-afternoon, Master D'Arcy," said Lumley-Lumley, raising his cap.

"Weally, Lumlay, deah boy—"

The three cads of the School House jumped up. They rushed together at Lumley-Lumley. He crashed the basket upon them again, and Crooke rolled in the gravel; but Levison and Mellish fastened upon the grocer's boy. Then Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sailed in. With all his elegant ways, the swell of St. Jim's was a hard hitter. He gave Levison his right, and Mellish his left, and the two cads of the Fourth dropped as if they had been shot. Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"Thank you, sir," he said.

And he put his basket upon his arm and walked out of the gate, touching his cap. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy raised his cricket-cap in polite response, and then turned to the three sprawling juniors. He jammed his monocle into his eye, and regarded them with immeasurable scorn.

"You uttah wottahs!" he exclaimed. "If any of you will walk into the gym with me, I will give you a feahful thwashiin'. Follow me if you have any pluck, you boundahs."

CHAPTER 11.

Gore Buys Eggs!

GRIMES greeted Lumley-Lumley with a grin as he came back after his round.

"Delivered the goods all right?" he asked.

"I guess so."

"Any trouble at the school?"

Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"Not much," he replied. "A few dents in my basket, that's all."

"Mr. Sandys has gone out," said Grimes. "I've got to take some jelly up to the 'All. You'll have to mind the shop while I'm gone, Master Lumley."

"I'll mind it all right, Master Grimes."

And Grimes departed. Lumley-Lumley, with his white apron on, sat down behind the counter contentedly to mind the shop. Several customers came in, and he served them politely and cheerfully. Then there was a lull, and he had leisure to read his number of "The Magnet." It was about five o'clock when a crowd of fellows came in, and Lumley-Lumley found himself confronted by old acquaintances. All St. Jim's had heard of his new engagement as grocer's boy, and quite a crowd of the fellows had come down to do some shopping at Mr. Sandys', to see the Outsider of St. Jim's at work.

Lumley-Lumley rose to his feet, and put away his papers. He saw Levison and Mellish in the party, and was ready for trouble. But most of the juniors were simply careless fellows out for a little fun. There was a roar from them as they came in, and spotted Lumley-Lumley in his white apron behind the counter.

"What can I do for you, gentlemen?" asked the grocer's boy respectfully.

"Ain't he got the manner to the life?" said Mellish. "Anybody could see that he was born for it."

"Yes, rather!" grinned Gore, of the Shell. "I want a ha'porth of plums, Lumley-Lumley, and please put it down to the account."

"Penn'orth of sandy sugar, please!"

"Eggs for me, and not shop 'uns. I know you!"

"Please give your orders one at a time, gentlemen. What can I do for you, Master Gore?"

Gore winked at his comrades. He intended to play a little joke on the new errand-boy; a joke that would appeal to him and his friends, although his humour was quite likely to be lost on Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"I'm standing treat," Gore explained. "I want quite a lot of things. Some of you fellows help me give the orders."

Lumley-Lumley looked at him suspiciously.

"Excuse me, sir," he said politely, "but our terms are strict cash. We do not give credit."

"Who's asking you for credit?" demanded Gore.

"Ahem! I prefer to see the colour of your money, sir."

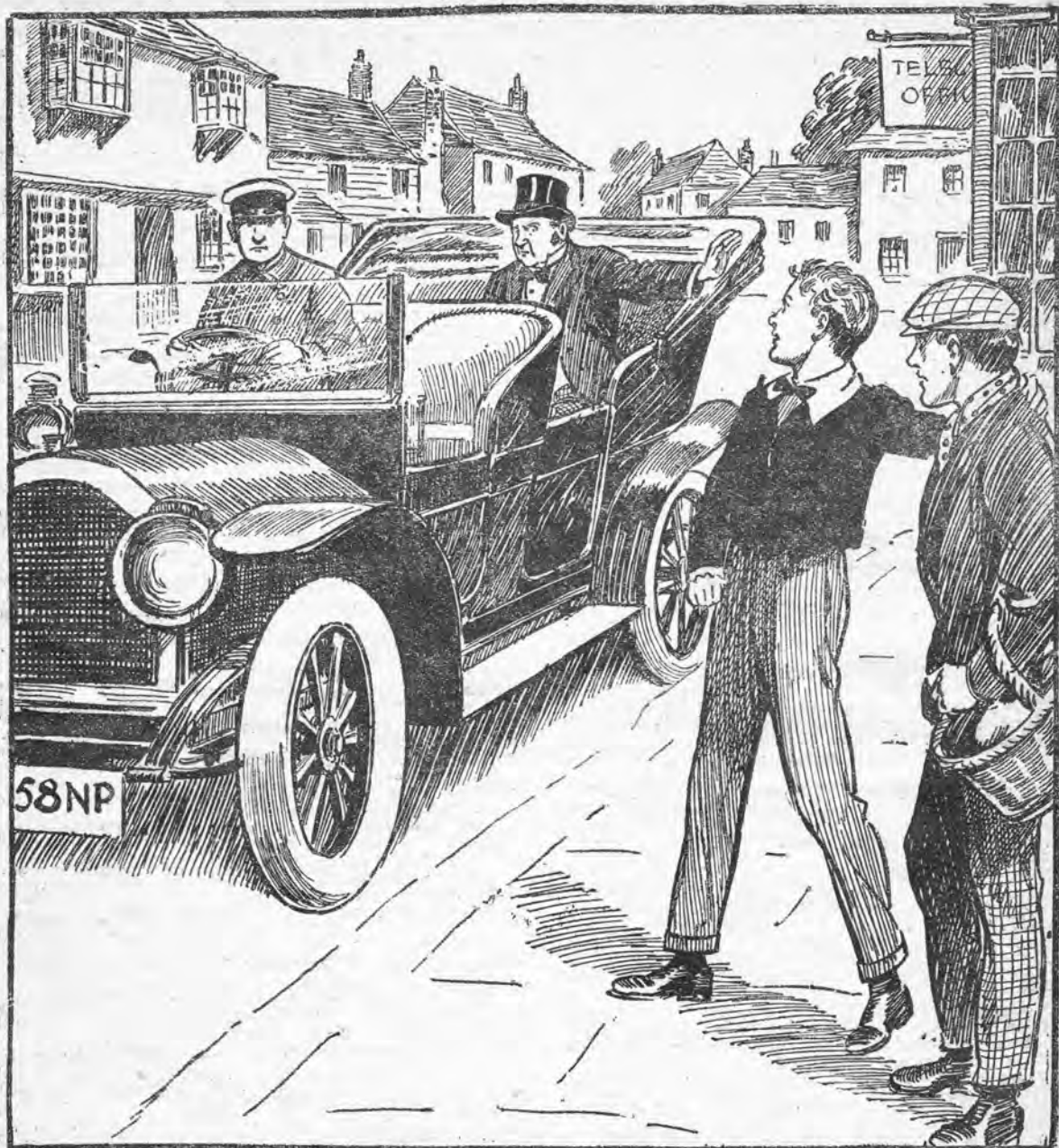
Gore, with a flourish, drew a sovereign from his waistcoat.

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A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at

St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT THURSDAY: "FACING THE MUSIC!"



"If you speak one word to that boy again, I will disown you, Jerrold, and you shall never return to St. Jim's!" exclaimed Mr. Lumley-Lumley furiously. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's eyes flashed, "Then I won't return to St. Jim's!" he exclaimed. (See Chapter 4.)

eight shillings' worth of goods from the big pile on the counter, and amended the bill, which he handed to Gore.

"One pound, please, sir!"

"I—I won't pay! I—I mean— Keep off, you grocer cad! Here's the quid, hang you!"

And Gore flung the sovereign ringing upon the counter.

"Thank you, sir!" said Lumley-Lumley demurely. He went back behind the counter, took up the sovereign, and slipped it into the till. "You are at liberty to take away the box of broken eggs at your discretion, sir, or we will deliver them at the school either by afternoon or morning delivery, according to your wish."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hang you! Gro-o-o-h!"

"Kindly take your goods, if you are going, sir!"

Gore breathed rage and vengeance, but he reflected that, as he had paid a pound for twelve shillings' worth of groceries, he might as well take them away. The other fellows helped him to gather up the packages. They were

likely to have the feed, after all, as George Gore had been kept to his bargain.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Lumley-Lumley courteously. "Always pleased to do business with you, sir! Would you care to try our two-shilling blend of Indian and Ceylon tea?"

But Gore was gone. The other fellows followed him from the grocer's shop, grinning and chuckling—and keeping to windward of Gore, who did not smell pleasantly of eggs. Lumley-Lumley was able to make a good report of business done.

"Sold a whole box of eighteen-a-shilling heggs!" exclaimed Mr. Sandys, in astonishment. "Well, my word! Who was the customer?"

Lumley-Lumley consulted his accounts.

"George Gore, of St. Jim's, sir!"

"Paid for, I hope?" exclaimed Mr. Sandys, who had had dealings with George Gore, of St. Jim's, and knew him.

"Yes, sir; paid in cash."

"Good!" said Mr. Sandys, still greatly astonished. "Bless me! What could the boy have wanted with all them eggs? You are a good salesman, my lad."

"Thank you, sir!" said Lumley-Lumley. And he went in to his tea, leaving Mr. Sandys in the shop, wondering what George Gore, of St. Jim's, could have wanted with twelve dozen eggs at eighteen a shilling.

CHAPTER 12.

No Surrender.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY took the shutters down the next morning at Mr. Sandys' shop. Grimes stood and watched him in admiration, as he handled the shutters like one to the manner born.

Lumley-Lumley had the shop open precisely to time, and the boxes of eggs were carried out and arranged on the pavement, and the masses of bacon in the window, and the shop swept out and dusted, with unremitting promptness and care.

"My word!" said Grimes, resting on his broom, and watching Lumley-Lumley's tireless broom at work. "Anybody would think you were born for this 'ere business, Master Lumley!"

"Perhaps I was, Master Grimes!"

"He, he, he!"

Lumley-Lumley minded the shop while Grimes went on his morning round with the pony and cart that were the pride of Mr. Sandys' heart. Many customers came in, chiefly from curiosity to ascertain whether the rumour was true that a millionaire's son was employed as shop-boy and errand-boy at the grocer's. They found Lumley-Lumley quick, obliging, and civil.

If the junior thought with any regret of St. Jim's, he did not show it. He served all customers with the same polite attention, and never made a mistake in the change; and was as courteous to the shabby urchin who wanted two-penn'orth of treacle as to the princely customer with four or five shillings to expend.

Lumley-Lumley was not surprised when, later in the morning, he heard the toot-toot of a motor-horn in the High Street, and heard a car stop outside the grocer's shop.

He looked very serious and sedate in his white apron, with the corner tucked up in the professional manner, as Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley, financier and millionaire, strode into the little shop.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley gazed at his son behind the counter.

He seemed unable to speak for some moments. He appeared to be struggling to decide in his mind whether his eyes were deceiving him or not.

"Jerrold!" he gasped at last.

"Good-morning, sir!"

"Jerrold!"

"What can I do for you, sir?" asked Lumley-Lumley gravely. "If you're short of petrol for the car, sir, you can get it at the corner shop!"

"You—you—"

"Ahem! Can I provide you with sandwiches for your journey, sir?"

"You—you young villain!"

"I can make up some sandwiches in beef and 'am, sir," said Lumley-Lumley, purposely dropping the "h," and watching the effect upon his father.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley turned purple.

"Jerrold! You young rascal!"

"Or if you would care to try our special blend of Indian and Ceylon tea—"

"What are you doing here?" roared the millionaire.

"Minding the shop, sir!"

"You young scoundrel!"

"Ahem! If I can supply you with eggs, sir, we have a very cheap line at eighteen a shilling. I sold quite a large number yesterday to a young gentleman from St. Jim's. We have a better quality at twelve a shilling; but the new-laid—"

Mr. Lumley-Lumley gasped.

"Take that apron off at once!" he shouted.

"I use it to protect my trousers, sir. I cannot afford to buy new trousers every week on my salary!"

"Get out from behind that counter!"

"Mr. Sandys' orders, sir, to mind the shop!"

"I—I—I'll skin you, you young villain! How dare you masquerade as a grocer's boy!" roared the millionaire.

"I am a grocer's boy, sir!"

"You—you—"

"I'm earning my living, sir! I hope to get on, and become a regular Lipton in time! Sir Jerrold Lumley-Lumley will sound all right, and I shall certainly race for the America Cup!"

Mr. Lumley-Lumley choked.

"I've heard about your goings on, you young rascal!" he said.

said at last, with an effort. "You have done this to annoy me!"

"Not at all, sir; I'm trying to earn an honest living! You have disowned me, and taken me away from St. Jim's. What is a chap to do? I cannot dig, and to beg I am ashamed!" said the junior cheerfully. "I think I shall get on, by strict attention to business, and by supplying a good article on reasonable terms!"

His father gasped.

"Are you coming in the car?" he demanded.

"Do you want me to?"

"No, I don't; but if you like to apologise you can come."

"Thank you, I decline! Besides, I could not possibly leave Mr. Sandys until he engaged another boy to take my place. A chap must play the game."

"You are trying to disgrace our name," shouted Mr. Lumley-Lumley.

"There is no disgrace in honest work, sir. I'm afraid you are a little bit shobbish, pater," said Lumley-Lumley, with a shake of the head.

The millionaire jumped.

"This to me!" he roared.

"Certainly, sir! Pray excuse me," added Lumley-Lumley, as a customer came in. "Business before pleasure, you know, sir. I have my duty to do."

The customer was a youth with fourpence to spend. He required several articles, in moderate quantities, for that fourpence, and Lumley-Lumley served him with quiet politeness and attention. His father watched him in open-mouthed amazement.

"How long are you going to keep this foolery up?" the millionaire demanded, when the diminutive customer had gone.

"This isn't foolery, sir; it's business."

"Don't you want to go back to St. Jim's?"

"I guess so, if you ask me nicely."

"What?"

"But you will have to undertake to play the game, and not bother me, popper."

"I—I—"

"Hallo, here's Grimes! Grimey, old man, is it time to get up that new case of sugar?"

"Yes, Master Lumley," said Grimes, with rather an uneasy glance at the irate millionaire. "But there ain't no 'urry."

"Better get it done, Master Grimes."

"Master Grimes!" gasped the millionaire. "Oh!"

"Please excuse me, sir," said Lumley-Lumley, turning politely to his father. "I have some work to do now, and must not neglect my employer's business."

"Jerrold! You young villain! You've only got to admit that you're in the wrong, and I'll take you in the car, and run you up to the school."

"But I'm not in the wrong, popper."

"You are, you young rascal! Apologise, and I'll take you back."

"No fear!"

"What's become of the respect due to your father?" demanded Mr. Lumley-Lumley.

"What about the respect due to your son?" demanded Jerrold, in his turn. "You have played the giddy ox, popper, and it's time for you to climb down."

Mr. Lumley-Lumley seemed to be on the point of suffocating.

"Are you coming?" he demanded chokingly.

"No, sir. I've got my work to do."

"For the last time!"

"Very good, sir."

The millionaire swung furiously round to the door.

"Sure you do not want to try our two-shilling blend, sir?" asked Lumley-Lumley anxiously.

"Grrrrrr!"

"Or our special line in eggs at eighteen a shilling!"

"Brrrrrr!"

And Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley was gone. The two boys in the shop heard the whirr and hoot of the motor, and the fifteen-hundred-guinea car rolled away. Lumley-Lumley chuckled softly.

"My 'at!" said Grimes. "My only 'at! If I 'ad a million-aire for a father, Master Lumley, I wouldn't be workin' in a grocer's shop."

"That's because you've got no ambition, Master Grimes," said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "There are plenty of openings in the grocery business for a chap to climb right up to the top of the tree."

"But your father will come round, won't he?"

"I guess so," he replied. "He always has. This isn't the first time we've had our little troubles, but they always blow over. The popper and I are very good chums, you know. We've always been good pals, only I don't stand ragging, even from popper."

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"But s'pose he don't come round?" asked Grimes.

The junior shrugged his shoulders.

"Then I stay here, Grimey."

"And stick to the grocery?"

"I guess so, and in two or three years I guess I'll have half the grocery business in Sussex in my hands, too," said Lumley-Lumley coolly.

"My eye!" said Grimes. "I believe you would too, Master Lumley."

"Let's get that sugar up," said Lumley-Lumley briskly. "It's nearly dinner-time, and after dinner I've got to go on my round."

And Mr. Sandys' two dutiful employees set to work.

CHAPTER 13.

Backing Up Lumley.

TOM MERRY & Co. came out of the School House into the sunny quadrangle of St. Jim's, just about the same time that Mr. Sandys' new boy was going to his dinner at the shop. The bright June sunshine was blazing down into the quadrangle, and most of the juniors made a straight line for the cricket-field. Tom Merry paused on the School House steps to look round. George Gore of the Shell came out, and Tom Merry nodded to him with a grin. The story of Gore's purchase of eggs was all over the school, and Gore had been laughed at over it till the mere mention of the matter was enough to drive him to fury.

"Hallo! Going shopping, Gore?" asked Tom Merry cheerfully.

The Shell fellow scowled.

"Oh, rats!" he replied.

"Looking for a bargain in eggs?"

"Go and eat coke!"

And Gore swung away.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, it's wathah funnay!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he came out of the house, polishing his eyeglass. "Goah seems to have gone to wag, and to have returned wagged. Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry was looking towards the gates. Gore had joined Levison and Mellish and Crooke, and two or three other fellows of the same sort, and they had gone out into the road together. Tom Merry wrinkled his brows a little.

"Looks like another visit to the grocer's," he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It wouldn't be a bad idea to get along ourselves," Tom Merry said thoughtfully. "We haven't seen Lumley-Lumley in his new line of business, you know, and if Levison & Co. mean trouble—"

"Yaas, wathah. Come on, deah boy!"

And Tom Merry and D'Arcy strolled down to the gates. Figgins and Redfern of the New House, and Jack Blake and Monty Lowther joined them. All the juniors were very keenly interested in Lumley-Lumley's new departure, and quite in a friendly way they wanted to see him at work. And they were also keen to checkmate any attempt on the part of the cads of the School House to rag the new grocer's boy.

Levison & Co. arrived in the High Street of Rylcombe, and stopped outside the shop of Mr. Sandys.

Lumley-Lumley was just starting on his afternoon round. He had the big grocer-basket on his arm, and Grimes was standing in the shop door, giving him some final instructions. Lumley-Lumley caught sight of Levison & Co., but took no notice of them.

"The eggs are for the Oaks, and the bacon for Mrs. Smith," Grimes was saying. "Don't leave the ham and beef at Major Purkiss's without the money. Don't forget to collect the empties at No. 13, River Road and the Lodge. That's all."

"Right-ho!" said Lumley-Lumley.

And he started down the street, with his basket on his arm. He had expected some ragging from Levison & Co., but perhaps Gore's experience in the shop on the previous afternoon had warned them to keep their distance. Lumley-Lumley intended, in case of necessity, to sacrifice some of the eggs intended for the Oaks, as missiles against Levison & Co., but they were not needed. The cads of St. Jim's were adopting new tactics.

They did not approach the schoolboy errand-boy.

Instead of that they elevated their noses high in the air, and walked past him with an air of the utmost scorn and disdain.

Lumley-Lumley paused in astonishment.

Levison and Mellish, and Gore and Crooke, and the rest, walked past him with noses in the air, sniffing.

Lumley-Lumley's cheeks grew red for a moment.

He was strongly tempted to dive his hand into the grocer-basket for eggs, and to open fire on the sniffing snobs of St. Jim's.

But he remembered that he was Mr. Sandys' boy now, and that he must take this kind of unpleasantness along with other

kinds that fell to the lot of fellows in employment. He averted his glance and walked on.

Sniff, sniff, sniff!

The audible sniffs of the juniors reached Lumley-Lumley's ears, and again he was very strongly tempted to turn, egg in hand.

But he restrained himself.

Sniff, sniff, sniff!

Lumley-Lumley tramped on.

Five juniors of St. Jim's arrived upon the scene, and looked at Lumley-Lumley with his basket, and at the sniffing fellows led by Levison.

Tom Merry & Co. understood.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "They are tweatin' Lumley-Lumley with howlid wudeness, you know."

"The rotters!" said Redfern.

Tom Merry grinned.

"Look here!" he said, indicating a large egg-box outside Mr. Sandys' shop. "These eggs are eighteen a shilling!"

"Yes. Gore knows that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's worth a bob!" said Tom Merry. "Pile in! Hallo, Grimes, I'm going to take eighteen of these eggs! Here's your bob!"

"Yes, Master Merry," said Grimes. "Shall I wrap them up?"

"Ha, ha! No. We want them for immediate consumption."

"You ain't goin' to eat 'em raw?" demanded Grimes, in amazement.

"Ha, ha, ha! We're going to chuck 'em!"

And each of the juniors seized two or three eggs.

The sniffing brigade had passed Lumley-Lumley, and had ceased to sniff, and were grinning at one another gleefully. They knew that they had annoyed the schoolboy errand-boy, and they were satisfied. But their satisfaction was of short duration.

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz!

Smash!

Squelch!

Eggs flew through the air with deadly aim. Tom Merry & Co. were all good bowlers. They captured wickets every time at this short range.

"Yah! Oh!"

"Owp—yowp—groooo!"

"Yaroo!"

Levison staggered across the pavement, and sat down in the road, as an egg smashed on his nose. Mellish caught one in the eye; and another, sent with unerring aim by Redfern, squelched on Crooke's mouth. It was a specially ripe egg, too, and the cad of the Shell turned quite white.

"Grorororoooooooh!"

Crooke sat down and dabbed frantically at the over-ripe egg with his handkerchief.

"Yowowowowowowooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz-z-z-z! Crash! Smash!

As Tom Merry had said, it was worth a "bob." The cads of St. Jim's howled and staggered under the merry fusillade. The eighteen eggs were expended in a very short space of time. Village boys gathered from all sides to look on, yelling with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!"

"Yow!"

"Oh! Groo!"

Whiz! Whiz!

Tom Merry tossed another shilling to Grimes. Eighteen more missiles were at the disposal of the bowlers. They made wonderful play with them. Levison & Co., yelling and gasping, and sending forth weird odours of over-ripe eggs, fled.

They dashed down the road towards the school at top speed, and the last of the eggs whizzed after them and smashed on the backs of their heads.

Then they vanished, streaming with volk.

Tom Merry & Co. roared with laughter. Lumley-Lumley had set down his basket to yell more at his ease. Levison & Co. had vanished, and they left nothing behind but patches of broken eggs on the pavement, and a lingering odour of stale eggs.

"Bai Jove! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess that was O K!" gasped Lumley-Lumley. "I reckon it's decent of you fellows to stand by me like this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I told you we were goin' to back you up, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wathah think we are doin' it! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors roared again.

Levison & Co. did not stop running until they had reached the cross-roads, half-way to St. Jim's. There, cut of breath, and half suffocated by the smell of the broken eggs that clung

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to them, they paused, and gasped and snorted, and snorted and gasped. They had sniffed at Lumley-Lumley; but they sniffed more emphatically at one another now, though for a different reason.

"Goodness gracious, young gentlemen! What a state you are in!"

It was Mr. Sandys, the village grocer, who had just turned out of the lane from Wayland. He stopped and regarded the egg-juniors in utter amazement.

"Dear me! Has there been an accident?" he inquired.

"Better ask your rotten errand-boy!" yelled Levison.

Mr. Sandys smiled.

"Dear me!" he said again, and walked on.

Sniff! Sniff! Sniff!

Levison & Co. rubbed at the eggs, and rubbed off most of the clinging stickiness, but they could not rub off the smell. That clung to them lovingly.

"Ow!" groaned Mellish. "It was Tom Merry and the rest—the beast! They're backing up that grocer cad—yow! We'd better leave him alone in future—groo!"

Levison gritted his teeth.

"I jolly well sha'n't let him alone!" he exclaimed savagely. "Nor old Sandys, either! I'll teach the fat cld boulder to grin at us! Groo! I'll—"

"You'll leave me out of your next scheme, anyway!" grunted Gore. "I've had enough of it! I'm fed up! Groo!"

"So am I!" growled Crooke. "Yow-ow!"

Levison snarled, but he did not reply. The unhappy snobs of St. Jim's, grunting and sniffing all the way, returned to the school on the worst of terms with each other and with themselves.

CHAPTER 14.

A Cricket Challenge.

TOM MERRY looked puzzled.

Afternoon lessons were over at St. Jim's, and Tom Merry had come in from the cricket-field, and he was sitting in the window-seat in the passage, with his hands in his pockets.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in and looked round, and halted beside Tom Merry.

"Anythin' up, deah boy?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Pway what is it? In any case of doubt and difficulty, you know, it is always wisah to consult a fellow of tact and judgment. Pway could in me, deah boy?"

Tom Merry grinned.

"It's not awfully serious," he said. "But Levison & Co. are up to some little game, and I fancy it's against Lumley-Lumley."

"Let us go and give them a feahful thwashin'?" suggested the swell of St. Jim's.

"That might not stop them japing Lumley."

"Bai Jove, you're wight! I neval thought of that," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "But what have they been doin'?"

"Levison has borrowed some of the amateur theatrical society's props," said Tom Merry. "He says he is going to rehearse the part of the old nurse in Romeo and Juliet. Of course, that's a—"

"Whoppah, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, with a nod.

"A terminological inexactitude, at least," said Tom Merry. "And Levison and Mellish have been whispering together a lot. They've got something on, and if they're going to rag Lumley-Lumley, I think we ought to step in. Eggs are cheap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They're caddish enough for anything," said Tom Merry. "But I'm blessed if I know what Levison means to do with a giddy skirt and bonnet. I suppose he can't be going to make himself up as a woman; and if he did, I don't see how that would be up against Lumley-Lumley. Perhaps I'm too suspicious. But he's such an awful rotter—"

"Let's go and punch his head till he tells us!" suggested Arthur Augustus, after some reflection. "We could get at the giddy scweet that way, you know."

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "Come with me, and I'll punch Levison; and if Mellish interferes, you can punch him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry rose, and the two juniors proceeded to Levison's study in the Fourth-Form passage. The study belonged to Levison, Mellish, and Lumley-Lumley; but since Lumley-Lumley's latest departure, Levison and Mellish had had it to themselves.

"I suppose they are here, deah boy?" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, observing that there was no sound from the study as they approached it.

"Oh, yes! They came up here, and I've been in the lower passage ever since, and they haven't passed me."

Tom Merry knocked at the door. There was no reply, and he turned the handle. The door opened, and he looked in.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 223.

"Bai Jove! They're gone!"

Tom Merry looked perplexed.

"They can't be gone far," he said. "They certainly haven't gone downstairs. I dare say we shall run them to earth in one of the box-rooms."

"Let's look, deah boy! I suppose there is some wotten twick on, or else they would not be hidin' in this way!"

They went along the passage and looked into the box-rooms, but the box-rooms were drawn blank. Then they searched along the Shell passage, but there was no sign there of the cads of the Fourth. Kangaroo of the Shell was discovered, and they questioned him. He gave them some information which convinced them that there was mischief afoot, at all events.

"Seen Levison or Mellish, or both?" Tom Merry asked.

The Cornstalk nodded.

"Yes, rather! They went out the back way nearly half an hour ago."

"Oh, the rotters!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in disgust.

"They must have sneaked down the back stairs, then, to keep out of my sight."

"The awful wottahs!"

"What's up?" asked Kangaroo. "I noticed that Levison was carrying a bundle, and the two wasters were chuckling over something or other."

"Come for a stroll down to the village," said Tom Merry. "We'll soon see. If they're ragging Lumley-Lumley in the grocery, we'll bump them—hard!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'm on!" said Kangaroo.

The juniors hurried downstairs. The voice of Jack Blake was heard calling in the lower hall.

"Tom Merry!"

"Here I am!" said Tom Merry, coming downstairs.

"Letter for you."

"Oh, leave it in the rack!"

"But it's in Lumley-Lumley's fist," said Blake. "That's why I took it out of the rack to bring it to you."

"Might be something important," remarked Digby.

"We've agreed to back the poor beggar up all we can, you know."

"Yaas, wathah! Pway wead the leffah at once, Tom Mewwy!"

Tom Merry slit open the envelope, which was addressed to himself, and bore the local postmark of Rylcombe. The letter within was written by Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, and Tom Merry gave a soft whistle as he read it.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

"Bai Jove! Is there any news, deah boy?"

"Yes, rather! It's cheek—pure, unadulterated cheek!" said Tom Merry.

"Read it out," said Blake.

"Here goes!"

Tom Merry read out the letter.

"Dear Merry,—The Rylcombe Junior Cricket Club have the honour of challenging the St. Jim's juniors to a cricket match for Saturday afternoon next. An early reply will oblige.
J. LUMLEY-LUMLEY, Sec."

"Gweat Scott!"

"The cheek of it!" exclaimed Blake indignantly. "Why, what chance will those young asses have against us?"

"A better chance, with Lumley-Lumley batting for them, than they would have had before," said Kangaroo, with a grin.

"Bai Jove! You're wight, Kangy!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Lumley-Lumley seems to have dropped St. Jim's for good, and quite thrown in his lot with Grimes and Pilcher and Craggs & Co.," he remarked. "I suppose he knows that our match with the Grammarians for Saturday has been postponed, and he is improving the shining hour by sending up this challenge. Are we going to play them?"

"The noble Levison would turn up his nose at playing a team of grocer and butcher boys," Kangaroo grinned; "but as we're not so aristocratic as Levison, I don't see why we shouldn't."

"Wathah not!"

"Oh, let's play 'em!" said Blake. "It's like their nerve to challenge us; but, of course, that's Lumley-Lumley's doing. Let's play them, and give them a lesson."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Not a bad idea," said Digby. "Of course, they wouldn't have a look in."

"Of course not!"

"So they're made Lumley-Lumley their giddy secretary," said Digby. "He was always a pushing chap. I don't think they'll lick St. Jim's juniors."

"Ha, ha! No!"

Quite a crowd gathered round to hear Lumley-Lumley's letter read. There was a general grin. The challenge from

the village junior club was regarded by the St. Jim's fellows as being, as Tom Merry had described it, pure and unadulterated cheek. But there was a general willingness to play, especially as a fixture for the Saturday had fallen through, and the afternoon was not engaged.

"We'll play them, then," said Tom Merry, looking round. "We'll go down to the village, and tell Lumley-Lumley so."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the juniors sauntered down the green, shady lane to the village. As they entered Rylcombe High Street, sounds of disturbance showed that matters in the quiet old village were not pursuing the usual even tenor of their way. As a rule, Rylcombe was a dozy place, and few things happened—in fact, nothing. But just now there was a crowd in the quiet old High Street, and the sound of many voices. And the crowd seemed to be thick in front of the village grocer's shop as the juniors of St. Jim's came up.

"Can it be Levison again?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I don't see—"

"Bai Jove! It's not Levison!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy excitedly. "It's a Suffragette!"

"What!"

"Look, deah boys!"

"Great Scott!"

Over the heads of the crowd, as the juniors hurried up, they could see a banner waving, and the banner bore the inscription which had braved the battle and the breeze and police on many a hard-fought field:

"VOTES FOR WOMEN!"

CHAPTER 15.

The Suffragette and the Sack.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY was behind the counter in the grocer's shop, sedately attending to his duties there, when an unusual noise in the quiet old street drew him to the shop door. Lumley-Lumley came out in his apron to see what was the matter. He had a suspicion that raggings from the cads of the School House were not over yet. But what he saw caused him to grin.

A peculiar-looking female was coming down the street, carrying a banner. She wore an awkward-looking skirt, and large boots, and a shapeless bodice, and hair that was evidently false plastered under an unbecoming bonnet. Her face was a brick-red in hue. The banner floated from a staff in her hand, and bore the inscription "Votes for Women." Lumley-Lumley gazed at the lady, and grinned. Village urchins were following her, and grinning, too. In the hand that held the staff the female held a small drum, too, and in the other hand she held a stick. She beat the drum as she marched down the village street, and the tattoo attracted idlers from far and near.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Lumley-Lumley. "It's a giddy Suffragette!"

The Suffragette halted.

She had chosen the open space in front of the grocer's shop, and here she beat upon the drum with great vivacity.

Rat-tat! Rat-atat! Rat-atat-a-tatat!

"Hooray!" yelled the thoughtless youth of Rylcombe. "Go it, missis! Votes for women! Hooray! Go it, missis!"

And there was a yell of laughter.

The wild female planted the staff upon the ground, and the banner flew in the breeze.

"Votes for women!" she shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My word," murmured Lumley-Lumley, "here's a chance for Police-constable Crump to distinguish himself! Of course, he's not here! I dare say he would think twice before tackling that lovely female! I guess I should!"

"Votes for women!"

"Hooray!"

"Go it, missis! Speech!"

"Bwavo!" shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he arrived upon the scene with Tom Merry & Co. "Play up, deah boy—I mean, deah gal! Hooray!"

"Pile in!" roared Kangaroo. "Speech! Speech!"

The Suffragette glared at them with a Suffragette glare. Apparently she imagined that the juniors of St. Jim's were making fun of her—at all events, she made a sudden sweep with the flagstaff, and smote D'Arcy's silk hat, and it rolled off, a wreck.

There was a roar of laughter from the crowd.

"Hooray!"

"Go it, missis! Give him beans!"

"Bai Jove! You uttah wottah—I mean, you unpwincled female!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's, making a clutch at his ruined topper. "You have bwoken my hat—you have uttably wuined it!"

"Votes for women!"

"Hooray!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors of St. Jim's.

But they ceased to laugh the next moment. The Suffragette seemed to take a special enmity towards them at sight. She charged at them, and the flagstaff made rapid play about their legs and shoulders. The juniors roared and retreated. Had it been a male Suffragist, they would have wiped up the road with him in a twinkling. But they could not wipe up the road with a woman—even a Suffragette. They retreated, roaring:

"Ow!"

"Keep off!"

"Yah!"

"Dodge her!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Yarrah!"

"Votes for women!" howled the female, belabouring the juniors with the flagstaff till they escaped out of reach. "Keep off, you ungentelemanly ruffians! How dare you interfere with a lady! Votes for women!"

"Hooray, missis!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Lumley-Lumley.

But his laughter, like that of the juniors of St. Jim's, was of short duration. The Suffragette turned towards him and charged at him with the flagstaff. Lumley-Lumley had just time to spring back into the shop, or he would have been bowled over.

"Hold on!" shouted the alarmed grocer's boy. "Keep out of this shop, you freak! I haven't got a vote for you, you silly idiot!"

"Votes for women!"

"Hurrah!"

The Suffragette pursued Lumley-Lumley into the shop. The youthful grocer dodged behind the counter, and there was a crash as the lady swung the staff round the shop, and knocked down piles of condensed milk tins and sides of bacon into the boxes of eggs. Lumley-Lumley gave a roar of rage. He was minding the shop, and his employer would certainly expect him to guard it from damage in his absence.

"Get out!" shrieked Lumley-Lumley. "I—I'll have you arrested! I—"

"Take that!"

The Suffragette made a furious swipe at him, and he dodged under the counter. There was a terrific crash, and a canister of Sandys' Best India and Ceylon Blend rolled over on the floor, followed by a flood of tinned salmon and lobster.

"Help!" yelled Lumley-Lumley. "Police!"

"Votes for women!"

"Help!"

Crash! Crash!

Salmon-tins and floods of condensed milk crashed about on the floor of the shop. There was crash after crash of breaking eggs. Lumley-Lumley, desperate, squirmed out from under the counter, and dodging the staff, he seized a syphon of soda-water, and turned it on the Suffragette.

Whiz! Squish!

"Yow!" roared the lady.

She backed hastily out of the shop. The crowd by this time half-filled the street, but there was no sign of the village policeman. P.-c. Crump must have heard the noise, but he had no desire to be scratched or bitten, or even embraced. He was quite willing to leave those gentle attentions to the police at Westminster, whose duty it is to guard our legislators from Suffragette raids, and to keep off infuriated females while the M.P.'s talk in peace.

"Votes for women!"

"Hurrah, missis! Go it!"

Crash! Crash!

The lady picked up loose stones from the roadway, and hurled them through the shop window, with terrific destruction to the array of salmon tins, lobster tins, and other articles with which the window was dressed.

Crash! Smash!

"Great snakes!" gasped Lumley-Lumley.

He rushed out of the shop to defend his employer's property.

Crash! Crash!

"Help!" shouted Lumley-Lumley. "The awful critter ought to be locked up! You fellows lend me a hand!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Keep off!" shrieked the Suffragette. "Don't you dare to lay hands on a lady!"

"A lady! Bai Jove!"

"Let that shop window alone, then, or we'll jolly well yank you off," said Tom Merry.

"Votes for women!"

"Hurrah!"

Lumley-Lumley gazed at the ruined shop window in utter dismay.

And the Suffragette, her destructive work done, marched away, waving the banner, followed by the cheers and laughter of the crowd.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. J'm's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"FACING THE MUSIC!"

"I guess that's rather thick," he said. "Where's that idiotic policeman? How on earth am I going to get that right?"

"Bai Jove, it will be wathah difficult, dear boy!"

"It ain't all beer and skittles to be a grocer's boy!" grinned Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Sandys, the grocer, came striding down the street. He paused, and stared fixedly at the ruined shop-front.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Who has done this?"

"A giddy Suffragette, sir," said Lumley-Lumley.

Mr. Sandys was purple.

"Why didn't you stop her?" he shouted.

"I guess I couldn't."

"You young idiot!" roared Mr. Sandys. "I left you in charge of the shop! How dare you let it be treated like this!"

"I guess——"

"I'll make somebody pay for this!" roared Mr. Sandys. "Where were the police? Why didn't you telephone for the police, you imbecile?"

"I guess——"

"Get out!" shouted the irate grocer. "You are a fool, sir!"

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess you're off your rocker, sir!" he remarked. "It ain't my fault if women want votes, and smash shop windows to get 'em, is it?"

Mr. Sandys shook his clenched fists in the air. He was in such a rage that he simply had to have somebody to wreak it upon, and Lumley-Lumley was nearest, and was in his employ. Therefore, the vials of Mr. Sandys's wrath were turned upon the Outsider of St. Jim's.

"Go away!" he roared. "You are a fool! You are not fit to be trusted with a shop to look after! You are no longer in my employ! I discharge you! Go!"

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"I guess there are other jobs if you don't want me!" he remarked.

"You are sacked! Get out!"

"All serene!"

Lumley-Lumley tossed his white apron into the shop, and put on his jacket and cap, and quitted the premises of the infuriated grocer. The juniors of St. Jim's gathered round him sympathetically. There was a snigger from Mellish, who was in the crowd.

"He, he, he! Sacked! He, he, he!"

Tom Merry swung round angrily, and the cad of the Fourth beat a retreat. Still chuckling to himself, Mellish returned to St. Jim's—with news for Levison.

CHAPTER 16.

Paying the Piper.

LUMLEY-LUMLEY, the schoolboy errand-boy, had been sacked! He did not seem to mind it, however.

His first essay in employment had been cut short, owing to the fact that votes were denied to the feminine part of the population of England. But the Outsider of St. Jim's was not downhearted.

Tom Merry & Co. tried to console him; but the Outsider of St. Jim's did not need consoling. He was perfectly nonchalant.

"My dear fellows, it's all right," he said. "I guess old Sandys will have to pay me a week's wages, in lieu of notice; and I shall jolly well make him do it, too! And I shall go round all the shops in Rylcombe looking for a job to-morrow morning, and if there isn't one to be found in Rylcombe, I shall look in Wayland. I'm going in to get Grimes's tea ready now."

And Lumley-Lumley parted from the juniors with a careless nod, and went into his lodgings. Tom Merry & Co. turned back towards St. Jim's.

"Cool beggar, anyway!" said Blake, grinning. "It was hard lines on Lumley-Lumley, that blessed Suffragette wrecking the shop while Sandys was out. It will make Levison snigger when he hears it."

"Queer that Levison wasn't there," said Tom Merry. "He came out with Mellish; but Mellish was here alone. My only hat!"

"What's the matter?"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Levison!"

"What!"

"I thought it was jolly queer that that giddy Suffragette should turn up in a quiet, sleepy hollow like Rylcombe!" exclaimed Tom Merry excitedly. "And that horrid old skirt she was wearing seemed familiar to me, too! It was the same colour as the nurse's one in 'Romeo and Juliet,' which Levison borrowed."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

"Bai Jove!"

"Levison!" shrieked Blake. "It was a jape!"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry.

They hurried back to St. Jim's. They hurried into the School House, and up to the Fourth Form passage. A sound of cackling proceeded from Levison's study as they approached it.

"He, he, he!"

"That's Mellish's cackle!" said Blake.

Tom Merry kicked the study door open.

Levison and Mellish were there, chuckling gleefully. They ceased to chuckle as the chums of the School House strode in, with excited faces. A large bundle lay on the table. On Levison's face were plain traces of make-up, evidently partly removed by a hasty wash.

Levison started to his feet.

"What do you want here?" he exclaimed, in alarm.

"Votes for women!" chuckled Blake.

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

"I—I don't understand you!"

"We'll soon make you understand!" said Tom Merry, grasping the parcel that lay upon the table.

Levison gave a shout, and sprang to stop him.

"Let that parcel alone!" he exclaimed fiercely. "It's mine!"

"We're going to see what's in it!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You're not!" yelled Levison. "Let it alone! I—— Oh!"

Tom Merry pushed him back, and the cad of the Fourth sat down violently upon the study carpet. The captain of the Shell dragged the bundle open. A skirt and a bonnet and a mass of false curls rolled out on the table.

It was pretty clear now whom the Suffragette had been.

Levison rose to his feet, looking rather pale.

"You rotter!" shouted Tom Merry.

"It was only a jape," said Levison sullenly.

"And wathah a funny one, too, Tom Mewwy," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Tom Merry grinned for a moment—he could not help it—at the memory of the ridiculous scene outside the grocer's shop in Rylcombe. But he became serious again at once.

"Yes, it was all very well as a jape, if Levison pays for the damage he's done," he replied. "Lumley-Lumley's got the sack."

"Serve him right!" said Levison.

"And Mr. Sandys has lost a lot of stuff—eggs and butter and things, to say nothing of the broken windows," said Tom Merry. "You'll have to pay for it, Levison."

"I sha'n't!"

"Do you want the grocer to stand the loss?"

"The grocer can go and eat coke!"

"Very well. You'll come back and explain to him, and he can take proceedings to get the money out of you," said Tom Merry determinedly.

Levison changed colour.

"Hands off!" he exclaimed, backing round the table. "I'm jolly well not going there! I—I—— It was only a joke."

"Exactly; and it will cost you three or four quid."

"I—I——"

"You're not going to put Mr. Sandys to that loss when we know it was you," said Tom Merry. "You'll pay up, or we'll make you. If you don't write a letter to Mr. Sandys, apologising, asking him to take Lumley-Lumley back, and promising to pay for the damage, I'll call Kildare in at once, and leave it to him."

"Yaas, wathah! You've called the tune, deah boy, and you must pay the giddy pipah."

Levison gritted his teeth.

"I—I can't pay!" he gasped. "It will come to pounds."

"You should have thought of that before you started breaking shop-windows," said Tom Merry scornfully. "You're not going to make old Sandys lose the money, and if he gets damages he may take Lumley-Lumley back."

"But I—I haven't got the money," said Levison in dismay.

"I dare say Sandys will take it on the easy terms system," said Blake, with a grin. "Just the amount of your pocket-money every week, you know. You can make Mellish stand his whack, as he was your partner in the wheeze."

Mellish looked alarmed.

"I—I had nothing to do with it," he exclaimed. "I—I was really against it——"

"Rats!"

"I—I swear——"

"Weally, Mellish, I wefuse to allow you to sweah in my pwesence. I wegard you as a disgustin' wascal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see nothin' whatevah to cackle at, deah boys. If Mellish sweahs while I am here I shall wegard it as my impwative duty to give him a feahful thwashin'."

"I—I'll swear I had nothing to do with it!"

SHOW YOUR FRIENDS THIS ALL SCHOOL-STORY NUMBER OF "THE GEM."

"Don't tell lies!" said Levison sourly. "You know you were hand in glove with me. You got the things I wore, and you've got to take back that false hair to the costumier's in Rylcombe."

"You—you asked me to. I—I——"

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom Merry contemptuously. "You're both in it together, and you'll both have to pay. You can either write a letter to my dictation, to be sent to Mr. Sandys, or you can go before the head prefect. Take your choice."

"You—you——"

"And buck up! That letter's got to be written quick."

Levison and Mellish looked at one another for a few moments. Then Levison, gritting his teeth, sat down at the table to write. He dipped his pen in the ink, and scowled at Tom Merry.

"What do you want me to write, hang you?" he asked sullenly.

"Begin 'Dear Mr. Sandys——'"

"Yes."

"We, the undersigned, are responsible for the damage to your shop this afternoon. I, Ernest Levison, disguised as a Suffragette, broke your windows——"

"I—I won't——"

"Then come to Kildare!" said Tom Merry, seizing him by the shoulder.

"Hold on! I'll write!"

"Buck up, then!"

"I've got that far," said Levison scowling. "What else?"

"I'm sorry I was such a cad. I did it to rag Lumley-Lumley, and I'm sorry I was such a rotter," dictated Tom Merry.

The juniors chuckled as Levison, scowling savagely, wrote down the lines.

"Anything else, hang you?"

"Yes. 'We—Mellish and I—will pay any reasonable amount for the damage done, so please send in the bill to us jointly.—Yours respectfully, E. LEVISON.' Mellish will sign the letter, too."

And the letter was signed by the infuriated cads of the Fourth, and Blake carried it down to the school letter-box and posted it.

Both the practical jokers felt very uneasy that night, and their uneasiness was justified, for the next day they received a little bill from Mr. Sandys—a little bill containing many items, with a total which was likely to account for their combined pocket-money for many weeks to come.

CHAPTER 17.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley Comes Round.

TOOT-TOOT!

It was a Saturday afternoon.

It was a glorious June day, and the St. Jim's fellows had turned out after lessons in high spirits, most of them bound for the cricket-field.

The match between Tom Merry & Co. and the Junior Cricket Club of Rylcombe was due that afternoon, and the heroes of St. Jim's were ready for it. They did not anticipate much trouble with the Rylcombe team, with the exception of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. He was likely to give their bowlers some trouble.

There was a match going on on the Sixth-Form ground and another on the Fifth, and the merry click of bat and ball could be heard on all sides when the youthful team arrived from Rylcombe.

Tom Merry & Co. met them with great politeness.

Lumley-Lumley & Co. were a little late, but Lumley-Lumley explained that that was due to the fact that, although his friends were all supposed to have the Saturday afternoon off, their employers sometimes kept them a little late.

Then they got to cricket.

St. Jim's won the toss and went in first, and the school batsmen slogged at the village bowling in fine style.

Lumley-Lumley did some bowling, and did it well, but the Rylcombe team had only one other good bowler, and that was Grimes.

He was captain of the eleven, and he did not put himself on to bowl at first. He made the fur fly when he did go on, however. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy saw with surprise his wicket fly to pieces under a whizzing ball from the grocer's boy, and Jack Blake, still more to his astonishment, shared the same fate. The next man in was Kerr of the New House, and Kerr followed in his predecessor's footsteps, achieving a duck's egg.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as Kerr came out. "What wotten luck! That gwocah chap is vewy hot stuff, deah boy!"

"The hat trick!" grunted Kerr. "Never mind; there's Figgy going in."

Figgins and Tom Merry between them made the runs pile up. Then Redfern got a chance, and added to the total.

But Reddy was caught out by Lumley-Lumley, and Tom Merry was clean bowled by Grimes. When all the wickets were down the St. Jim's juniors' score was exactly one hundred, which was not nearly what they had expected to do against a mere village team.

There was an adjournment for tea, and Levison and Mellish & Co. came sniffing round very disdainfully at the sight of grocer's boys and butcher's boys sitting down to tea with the juniors of St. Jim's. Unfortunately for Levison, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy caught one of his disdainful sniffs, and he wheeled round to the cad of the Fourth from the tea-table spread under the elms, and grasped Levison by the collar.

"Did you sniff, Levison, or did you not sniff?"

"Yes, I did, hang you!" growled Levison.

"Why did you sniff, deah boy?"

"Because I chose."

"That is not a weason!" said D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "If you wish to sniff, deah boy, it is bethah to have an adequate weason. I will pprovide you with one."

And with his disengaged hand, Arthur Augustus picked up the pepper-castor from the table, and kindly and gently shook it over Levison's face. Levison burst into a terrific sneeze.

"Ow! Atchoo—atchoo—cooh! Ocoop! Choo—oop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway sneeze at your leisure, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "You may sniff as much as you like now. Pway continue!"

"Atchoo—choo—choo! Snif-f-f-f-fiff!"

"Go it! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sne-e-e-e-eze! Snif-f-f-f-f-f!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison tramped away, sneezing and sniffing furiously. The cricketers were not troubled by him any more that afternoon.

"Time!" said Tom Merry, as the big clock on the tower of St. Jim's indicated five.

And Grimes & Co. went in to bat.

Tom Merry placed his men to field, and Grimes opened the innings with Pilcher, the butcher's boy, and Craggs, who honoured the local chemist with his assistance.

Fatty Wynn was put on to bowl.

The fat Fourth-Former had been carefully kept off the pastry at tea-time by Figgins and Kerr, and he was at the top of his form. He took Craggs' and Pilcher's wickets almost in the twinkling of an eye, and the St. Jim's crowd cheered.

"Go in next, and stop that fat bounder," said Grimes to Lumley-Lumley. "Stick it out if you can, Master Lumley."

"I guess I will, Master Grimes."

And Lumley-Lumley went on to bat, with Jimmy Smith, the post-office boy, at the other end. It was just after Lumley-Lumley's innings had commenced that the sound of a motor-horn was heard.

But no one took any notice of it. Everybody was too busy playing cricket, or watching it. Even when a big fifteen-hundred guinea car swung in at the gates, and was footed up the drive by an imposing chauffeur, nobody looked round. Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley stepped from his car at the door of the Head's house.

The millionaire was shown in.

Dr. Holmes was standing at his study window, looking out towards the cricket-field, and quite interested in the junior match, when Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley was announced. The Head of St. Jim's turned to greet his visitor. There was some perceptible coldness in his manner. The Head did not like the way the millionaire had dealt with his son, though, of course, the millionaire had had to have his way. But Mr. Lumley-Lumley looked now as if he had come into a more amenable frame of mind.

"Ah, you are watching the cricket!" he said, shaking hands with Dr. Holmes. "Bless my soul, is that my son there, batting?"

"Yes, that is Lumley-Lumley."

"You have not received the boy back into the school, Dr. Holmes!"

"Certainly not. He is playing with a visiting team."

"I guess I'm glad to hear it. I've run down to see you to-day," said the millionaire abruptly. "You thought I was hard upon my son."

"I still think so," said the Head drily.

"Ahem! I—I think I will speak to my son," he said. "If you are willing to take him back into the school, Dr. Holmes, I shall be pleased."

"I shall be very pleased," said the Head.

"Good! And—and I am sorry I was so hasty!" said the millionaire.

The Head smiled.

"Not at all! But this will be good news for your son. He seems to have succeeded in looking after himself very well; he has a decidedly strong character. But I am sure he will be glad to return to school."

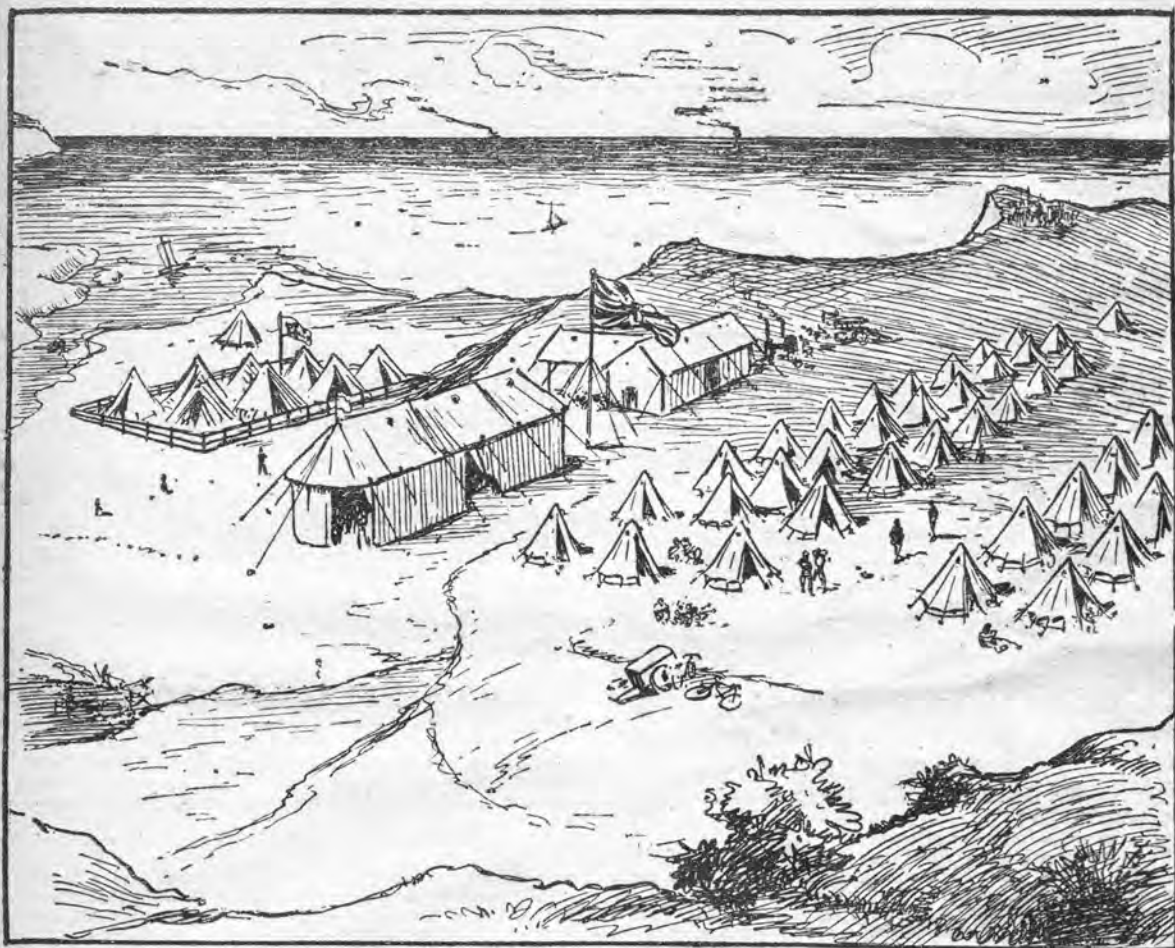
"I guess so," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley.

(Continued on page 111 of cover.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

The First Instalment of Our Grand New School Serial Story!

"THE SCHOOL UNDER CANVAS!"



A Rousing, New and Original School Story of Gordon Gay, Frank Monk & Co. By PROSPER HOWARD.

CHAPTER 1.

Nobody Knows!

BUZZ-Z-Z-Z!

The bell rang, and almost immediately the big doors of the Fourth Form-room at Rylcombe Grammar School were flung open, and the juniors trooped gleefully out.

Morning lessons were over.

Lessons had seemed longer than usual that morning. They always seemed long enough, as a matter of fact, to the youthful Grammarians. Most of them would rather have been out in the fields or on the river. Gordon Gay, the captain of the Fourth Form, had confided to his chum, Wootton major, in a whisper, that he would give all the books of Cæsar, and all the orations of Cicero, with the history of the Carthaginian War thrown in, to get out of the stuffy Form-room and on to the cricket-pitch for ten minutes. Unfortunately, Mr. Adams, the master of the Fourth, had observed the whisper, and Gordon Gay was the richer by fifty lines from the despised Julius.

But Gordon Gay did not mind now that he was out once more. It had really seemed as if lessons would never end that morning. The June sun was blazing down upon the Close, and shining in at the Form-room windows, and a soft breeze was stirring the leaves of the trees outside. As Tadpole of the Fourth put it in his poetical way—Nature was calling

to them. And certainly the juniors were eager enough to obey the call.

Gordon Gay stood in the big doorway of the schoolhouse and looked out into the sunny Close, and stretched his limbs and yawned.

"Lessons are a mistake in this weather," he remarked.

"If the Head would take my advice——"

"Which, of course, he's very likely to do!" grinned Wootton major.

"If the Head would take my advice," pursued Gordon Gay, unheeding the interruption, "he would make a little change. Now, suppose we had cricket instead of Latin——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Rowing instead of French——"

"Good!"

"Swimming instead of German——"

"Hurrah!"

"And—and swinging in a hammock instead of maths," said Gordon Gay. "I should look upon that as an improvement all round. Talking of cricket, let's get down and knock the ball about for a bit." He looked back into the house. "Why don't you fellows come out?" he demanded.

A crowd of the Fourth-Formers had gathered about the notice-board in the hall. There was evidently a notice of unusual interest on the board, judging by the eagerness of

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

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the juniors to read it. There were many exclamations as the juniors crowded round the board, and Gordon Gay turned back to join them. He made his way to the board by the simple expedient of digging right and left with his elbows, and there was a howl of indignation from the fellows he displaced.

"Ow! You ass!"

"Keep back there!"

"Don't shove!"

"Yow!"

"It's all right, my infants!" said Gordon Gay serenely. "Make room for your uncle! What is that giddy notice about?"

"Anything to do with the cricket?" asked Wootton major.

"It's by the Head," said Tadpole. "There's something up."

Gordon Gay read the notice aloud.

"The School will assemble in Big Hall at half-past six o'clock. An important announcement will be made."

(Signed), E. MONK, Headmaster."

Gordon Gay whistled softly.

"An important announcement—eh?" he remarked. "Anybody know what it's about?"

Apparently nobody did.

"Where's Monkey?" demanded Gordon Gay. "He ought to know. If he's brought his father up properly, the Head can't start keeping secrets from him. Where's Franky?"

"Yes, he ought to know, if anybody does," said Wootton major. "Where's Frank Monk?"

"Monk! Monk! Monkey!"

"Where's Monkey?"

"Monk! Monk!"

The juniors shouted for Frank Monk of the Fourth. He had come out of the Form-room with the rest, but he did not seem to be in evidence now. Frank Monk was the son of Dr. Monk, the headmaster of Rylcombe Grammar School, and so the juniors had some reason to suppose that he might be able to shed some light upon the mystery. They were all very keen to know what was the important announcement the Head had to make. It was very probably something that affected their interests; and anyway, they were curious. There was a general yell for Frank Monk.

"Monk! Monk! Monkey!"

Fellows of other Forms were gathering round the notice-board, and the crowd was thickening. Punter of the Fifth elbowed his way to the front, amid glares from the juniors, who could do nothing but glare; for Punter was a big fellow, accustomed to having his own way. Fourth-Formers and Fifth-Formers, and seniors of the Sixth, and innumerable fags, gathered round to read the notice, and asked one another what it meant; but no one seemed to be able to throw any light on the subject. The curiosity was intense. And Frank Monk, the only fellow who might have explained, was missing. There was a shout from Wootton minor at the door.

"There goes the bounder! He's got his bat! Come on!"

Gordon Gay & Co. shouted from the schoolhouse door. Three juniors—Monk, Lane, and Carboy of the Fourth—were going down towards the cricket-field, and Frank Monk had a bat under his arm. He turned his head calmly as the juniors shouted and waved their hands from the doorway.

"Hallo!" he called out. "Coming down to the cricket?"

"Come back!"

"Can't!"

"We want you!"

"Sorry!"

"There's a notice on the board!" yelled Gordon Gay.

"Well, I didn't put it there!"

"We want you to read it, and—"

"Oh, that will do when I come in," said Frank Monk easily, and he sauntered on with his chums.

Gordon Gay snorted.

"After him!" he exclaimed. "We'll jolly well see whether it will do when he comes in! If he won't walk in, we'll carry him!"

"Hear, hear!"

And Gordon Gay & Co. rushed down the steps and sped across the Close on the track of Frank Monk & Co. They came up to them with a rush. Lane and Carboy were charged off, and a crowd of juniors laid violent hands upon Monk.

"Oh!" roared Monk. "Hands off! You asses! Yaroo!"

The bat slipped from under his arm. Wootton major gave a terrific yell, and hopped upon one leg. The end of the bat had clumped upon his toe. He clasped his damaged foot as if he loved it, and danced on the other, roaring.

"You ass! Ow! You fathead! Yow! You chump! Yaroo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at—yowp!" roared Wootton major.

"You grinning asses—groo! Ow! My toe's squashed! Yowp!"

"Never mind your toe!" said Gordon Gay cheerfully. "It might have been worse!"

"How could it have been worse, ass?"

"Well, it might have been my toe!" said Gay innocently.

"Why, you frabjous fathead—"

"Bring him along!"

Frank Monk struggled to escape, but it was useless. He was swept off his feet in the grasp of half a dozen juniors, and swept away in the direction of the house. Wootton major was left to nurse his injured toe and to say things. Frank Monk was rushed up the steps and into the house, with his arms and legs flying wildly in the air.

"Ow!" he roared. "You silly asses! Leggo! Chuck it! Yaroo! Yah! Let me down!"

"Bring him along!" said Gordon Gay. "Your pater has put up a notice on the board, Monkey, and we want you to construe!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! I won't! Leggo!"

"Don't you fags shove me!" roared Punter of the Fifth, as the juniors rushed their prisoner across the hall. "Keep off! I— Oh!"

Monk was bumped into the Fifth-Former, who was standing in the way. Punter roared, and sat down with surprising suddenness. The rush of juniors passed over and round him, and Frank Monk was brought up to the notice-board. There, still in the grasp of Gordon Gay & Co., he was swung round so that he could read it. Gordon Gay pointed to the notice in the Head's handwriting.

"Read that, Monkey!"

"Ow!"

"Read it, you ass!"

"Yow!"

"What does it mean?"

"Yah!"

"Look here! It's no good talking Esperanto or Chinese, or whatever that is, to us!" said Gordon Gay. "We don't understand it. Construe that notice for us!"

"Grooh!"

"What does it mean?"

"Leggo!"

"Rats! It doesn't mean anything of the sort. Now then, we're waiting. If he doesn't read the notice at once, Tadpole, lay into him with that cricket-stump!"

"Hold on!" roared Frank Monk. "I'll read it!"

"I thought you would!" grinned Gordon Gay. "Go ahead!"

Frank Monk read the notice. He looked as surprised as the rest of the Fourth had looked. Apparently he could make nothing of it. The juniors watched him eagerly.

"Well?" demanded Gordon Gay. "What does it mean?"

"Eh?"

"What's the important announcement going to be?"

"I don't know!"

"You don't know!" exclaimed the Cornstalk junior. "Do you mean to say your pater hasn't said anything about it?"

Frank Monk grinned.

"Not a word!" he replied.

"You don't know what's going to happen?"

"No more than you do!"

Gordon Gay gave a snort of disgust.

"Well, you utter ass!" he exclaimed. "After giving us all the trouble of carrying you in here, you tell us coolly that you don't know any more about it than we do!"

"I didn't ask you to carry me in here!" grinned Monk.

"Oh, don't argue!" said Gordon Gay crossly. "I never met such a chap for arguing! I say, you chaps, he's given us all this trouble for nothing! Bump him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Here! Hold on!" roared Monk. "Ow! Chuck it! I—"

Bump!

"Yar-o-o-o-o-oop!"

Bump! Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"There!" said Gordon Gay severely. "You'll think twice before you give us so much trouble for nothing again! Come on, you chaps, let's get down to the cricket, for goodness' sake! We've wasted more than enough time on Monkey!"

And the grinning juniors trooped away, leaving Frank Monk sitting on the floor, very dusty and dishevelled, and gasping for breath.

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NEXT THURSDAY: "FACING THE MUSIC!" A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. J'm's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 2.

The Self-Sacrificers.

CRICKET practice was carried on with great keenness, until it was interrupted by the loud tones of a bell. "Dinner," said Wootton major laconically, "and I'm as hungry as a hunter. I say, I hear there's a new kid coming to-day—a French chap."

"I've just heard it, too," said Gay. "I've got an idea. Have you chaps ever heard of the Entente Cordiale?"

"The Ontong Cordiale?" said Wootton major thoughtfully.

"I think I saw it in a newspaper somewhere."

"What is it?" asked Jack Wootton.

Gordon Gay laughed.

"It means a good and cordial understanding. It's in French, you know, because—because it is. There's a giddy Entente Cordiale between England and France. We back them up, you know, and they back us up, and that sort of thing."

"Well, what about it?" demanded the two Woottons together. "Why don't you come down to dinner?"

"Because I've got a wheeze. The Entente Cordiale is a jolly good thing, isn't it?"

"Is it?"

"Blessed if I see how it matters to us!"

"Well, it does matter to us," said Gordon Gay. "I think we are called upon to back up the Entente Cordiale."

His chums stared at him.

"How on earth—"

"What the dickens—"

"There's a French chap coming here," went on the Cornstalk. "Now, backing up the Entente Cordiale means giving him a good welcome and backing him up, you know. And the first step would be getting leave from lessons, and going down into Rylcombe to meet him when he arrives."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think we ought to get leave, considering the Entente Cordiale," said Gordon Gay thoughtfully. "And it's German this afternoon, too. Herr Hentzel is always ratty in this hot weather, and it would be ripping to give him a miss."

"Good egg!" said Wootton major. "We'll try it on old Adams."

"Come on, then!"

The three chums left the study, leaving Tadpole to put away his masterpiece and follow at his leisure. Mr. Adams, the master of the Fourth, was about to leave his study for the dining-room when the three juniors reached it.

"May we speak to you a minute, sir?" said Gordon Gay, with his blandest smile.

Mr. Adams peered at him through his spectacles. Mr. Adams was a kind old gentleman, with a bald spot and spectacles.

"Yes, Gay, certainly. What is it?"

"There's a new boy coming to the school this afternoon, sir," said Gay meekly, "a French chap, sir, named Blong, or something."

"Yes, Gustave Blanc," said Mr. Adams, with a nod. "Quite so, Gay. I trust that you boys will be very polite to him, and show him every consideration, as he is a foreigner here, and a stranger to our customs."

"Exactly, sir; that's what we were thinking of."

"I am very glad to hear it, Gay."

"In fact, sir, considering that there is an Entente Cordiale going strong at the present moment, sir, we thought it our duty to show this French chap every possible attention, sir," said Gordon Gay.

"Quite right—quite right, my boy!"

"Under the circumstances, sir, wouldn't it be only polite for some of us to meet him at the station, sir?" Gordon Gay suggested. "Of course, it would be rather a sacrifice missing afternoon lessons, but we should be willing to do that, sir, for the sake of backing up the Entente Cordiale."

"Quite willing," said Wootton major.

"Very willing indeed," said Jack Wootton.

Mr. Adams nodded approval.

"Very good, my dear boys. This is indeed thoughtful of you. The new boy arrives by the half-past three train, and you may certainly go to the station to meet him. Of course, it is understood that you bring him directly to the school, and that you do not play any jokes upon him."

"Oh, sir!"

"I merely mention that," said Mr. Adams. "Very well, you will be excused from lessons at three o'clock, in time to walk down to the station."

"Perhaps it would be a good idea, sir, if you think proper, for us to go down very early, in—in case Blong should come by an earlier train, sir," Gordon Gay suggested diffidently. "We shouldn't mind giving up the whole afternoon, sir, as it is a special occasion."

Mr. Adams smiled.

"Three o'clock will be soon enough," he said. "Master

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

Gustave Blanc will arrive by the half-past three train, and not earlier. I must not take too great an advantage of your generous self-sacrifice, Gay."

And Mr. Adams walked away. The chums looked at one another.

"Well, getting off at three is better than nothing," Gordon Gay remarked. "We sha'n't miss the German lesson, but we shall get out of maths and history. We can learn all the history we want from Taddy's historical paintings. Now let's get in to dinner."

And they got.

CHAPTER 3.

A Little Too Late.

FRANK MONK wore a thoughtful expression as he sat at dinner at the Fourth Form table in the dining-room at the Grammar School. Monk was thinking. His chums, Lane and Carboy, who sat on either side of him, looked at him occasionally, wondering what was the cause of his unusually deep cogitations. Gordon Gay looked across the table at him occasionally, too, and grinned. The Cornstalk was thinking of the neat way in which he had got ahead of the rival Co. in the Fourth. There was a very keen rivalry in the Fourth Form at the Grammar School, between Gordon Gay & Co. on the one hand and Frank Monk & Co. on the other. Frank Monk had been captain of the Form before Gay and the two Woottons arrived from Australia; but the three Cornstalks had immediately proceeded to wake things up in the Fourth. Monk was still Form captain, but the Cornstalk Co. did very much as they liked, and the Old Co., as the three chums called themselves, had plenty to do to keep the Cornstalks in their place, and they did not quite succeed in doing it. Sometimes the rivalry between the two Co.'s made matters very lively in the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School.

The Cornstalks had scored this time, in getting leave from afternoon school for the walk down to Rylcombe Station. The duty of meeting the new boy and guiding him to the school was a light one. As Gordon Gay remarked, he would willingly have met a hippopotamus or a prize tiger at the station, if necessary, in order to get out of doors on that glorious summer's afternoon.

Frank Monk cogitated during dinner; and when that meal was over, he signed to his chums to stay in the hall, and wait for Mr. Adams. The master of the Fourth came out with his slow and solemn tread, and Frank Monk met him most respectfully.

"Please excuse me, sir—"

"Certainly, Monk!" said Mr. Adams, peering at him.

"What is the matter?"

"Ahem! Nothing, sir. There is a new fellow coming into the Fourth, I hear."

"Quite so."

"A French chap, sir."

"Quite correct."

"I—I was thinking, sir," said Monk diffidently, "that as the new chap is a foreigner, sir, and perhaps does not talk very much English, sir, I—I was thinking that it would be rather a good wheeze, sir—I—I mean a good idea, for some fellows to meet him at the station and bring him here, sir."

"Ahem! It is an excellent idea, Monk!"

"Yes; so we thought, sir."

"And it has already been suggested to me—"

"Indeed, sir—"

"And I have arranged that three juniors shall meet Gustave Blanc—"

"Oh, good!"

"Gordon Gay and the two Woottons—"

"Eh?"

"Are going to meet the new boy—"

"Oh!"

"So it will not be necessary for you to go, Monk. I thank you, however, for the suggestion, which was indeed very kind and thoughtful of you."

And Mr. Adams rustled on.

Frank Monk looked after him, and then looked at Lane and Carboy.

"Done!" he ejaculated.

"Oh, quite."

"Those blessed Cornstalks have got ahead of us this time!" said Frank savagely. "I suppose they tackled Adams before dinner. Blow!"

"There is the bounder, grinning at us!" growled Lane.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Cornstalk, who had heard all that passed. "You're a little too late, Monkey! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky sweep!" exclaimed Frank wrathfully, glaring at Gordon Gay. "I've a jolly good mind to bump you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"And I jolly well will!" exclaimed Monk, exasperated. "I owe you a bumping, anyway. Collar him, you chaps!"

"Yes, rather!"

The old Co. rushed at Gordon Gay wrathfully. The Cornstalk laughed and dashed down the passage. The three chums dashed after him at top speed. After the bright sunlight in the hall, the passage past the Form-rooms was dusky, and Gordon Gay did not see a blonde-bearded man who stepped out into the passage, until he was fairly upon him. Then it was too late.

Crash!

The blonde gentleman went over on the floor with a yell, and Gordon Gay went sprawling across him, dazed by the shock. Monk and Lane and Carboy were coming on at top speed, and they had no time to stop. Monk, who was in advance, made an attempt to slacken down, but Lane and Carboy crashed into him from behind; and he was hurled forward. He sprawled across Gordon Gay, and Lane and Carboy stumbled over him and sprawled upon him. Quite a heap of juniors were sprawling and struggling on top of the blonde gentleman, who was lying upon his back, roaring.

"Ach! Mein Gott! Tat you get off! Ach! Oh! Ach-h-h-h!"

"Gerroff!" mumbled Gordon Gay. "You awful asses, get off! You've floored Hentzel! Gerroff!"

"My hat!" gasped Monk.

He shoved Lane off, and dragged himself up. Lane sat gasping. Carboy rolled on the floor, and gasped, too. Monk lent Gordon Gay a hand and dragged him off the German master.

Herr Hentzel sat up, with both hands pressed to his ample waistcoat. He had had all his breath knocked out, and he was gasping painfully to get some more.

"I'm so sorry, sir," panted Gordon Gay. "I—I didn't see you, sir!"

"So sorry, sir!" said Monk meekly. "We couldn't stop in time, sir!"

"Oh, quite!" murmured Carboy dazedly.

"Ach! Himmel! You wicked young rascals! You play to trick on purpose! Ach!"

"We didn't, sir!" said Gordon Gay earnestly. "I didn't see you, sir!"

"Ach! I do not believe you! Ach!"

Gordon Gay flushed red. He did not like to have his word doubted, and no other master at Rylcombe School would have doubted it. But Herr Otto Hentzel was not exactly like the other masters. He was a capable German master, but he had no qualities to win either the liking or the respect of the boys.

"Ach!"—the German master staggered to his feet, still gasping—"Ach! I tink tat tat is a trick, ain't it? Ach! You take five hundred lines of German each, ain't it? Ach! Mein Gott!"

"Oh, sir!"

"Ach! I tink I cane you—"

The juniors melted away. And Herr Otto Hentzel, gasping and furious, staggered away to his study in a furious temper. He had only one consolation, and that was that the offending juniors would be in his class for German that afternoon. And no one knew better than Herr Hentzel how to make a lesson unpleasant to any fellow whom he disliked.

CHAPTER 4.

Wasps!

GORDON GAY looked very cheerful as he came into the Fourth Form-room that afternoon. True, he had five hundred lines of German to do, but that did not trouble him very much. The task was a heavy one, but it was not immediately pressing, and Gordon Gay was not accustomed to meeting troubles half-way. What he was thinking about was the fact that he was to escape from the Form-room at three o'clock with his chums, and stroll down to the village through the pleasant, shady lanes. Therefore Gordon Gay looked very cheerful, and his cheerfulness was reflected in the countenances of Wootton major and minor. They grinned at the old Co. as they took their seats in the Form-room.

German was the second lesson that afternoon, and when it was over the Cornstalk Co. would be free to go. Herr Hentzel entered the Fourth Form-room with a dark frown upon his brow. The Herr had, perhaps, not quite recovered from his tumble in the Form-room passage; at all events, his temper certainly had not recovered. He cast a glance at Gordon Gay and at the old Co., which showed plainly enough that there was trouble in store for the four. And the four exchanged warning glances. Outside the Form-room they were rivals; but they were together, shoulder to shoulder, against any common enemy, and Herr Hentzel was certainly an enemy that afternoon.

Mr. Adams had left the Form-room a few minutes before the German master entered. Herr Hentzel was frequently late. Gordon Gay had filled in the interval by buzzing peas from his pea-shooter at the blackboard. Gordon Gay was a dead shot with the pea-shooter, and from his desk he could hit the smallest chalk mark on the blackboard. But immediately the heavy tread of Herr Hentzel was heard, the pea-shooter was slipped into the Cornstalk's pocket. He did not mean to give the German master the slightest excuse for ragging him. He felt that Herr Hentzel could contrive to make enough. And he was right.

Herr Hentzel was evidently in a bad temper, and the juniors were very careful with him. But meekness could not save them. It was, as Frank Monk remarked afterwards, a case of the wolf and the lamb over again—though whether the young rascals of the Fourth could justly be compared to lambs was a question. But it was quite clear that Herr Hentzel was determined to find fault.

Gordon Gay was the first victim.

The Cornstalk was good at German. He worked as hard as he played, and he could both read and speak German, and any other master but Herr Hentzel would have been more than satisfied with him. Even Herr Hentzel found it difficult to find fault for some time. But Gay was caught at last.

"Ach! I tink tat you are stupid!" said Herr Hentzel. "You know no Sherman. I tink I giff you no more lines. Tat is no use."

"Thank you, sir," said Gordon Gay gravely.

The German's light-blue eyes gleamed.

"I tink tat you stand in te corner of te room," he said. "Go into te corner, and remain dere for te rest of te lesson, you stupid boy!"

Gordon Gay turned red.

He did not mind lines, and he could take canings; but to be placed in a corner of the room, like a naughty little fag in the First or Second Form, was rather too much. He did not move immediately.

"Vill you go?" thundered Herr Hentzel.

Gordon Gay moved unwillingly from his place. There was no help for it; he had to go. But his eyes gleamed as he went. There was a snigger from some of the Fourth. It seemed funny to see Gordon Gay, the great chief of the Cornstalk Co., standing in the corner of the Form-room like a naughty infant, and Gay's face became quite crimson as he heard the snigger. The German master smiled grimly. His object was to make the boy he disliked look ridiculous, and he thought he had succeeded. Carker, the bully of the Fourth, who had had many rubs with the Cornstalk, chuckled openly, and Herr Hentzel did not reprove him, though probably Wootton or Monk would have received a hundred lines for it. Herr Hentzel knew how to discriminate.

The lesson went on. Herr Hentzel turned to Potty Benson, who had the reputation of being the biggest duffer in the Fourth—a reputation he fully lived up to. Benson had a horror of German, and he was so nervous when the Herr turned his cold, hard eyes upon him, that what little knowledge he had fled from his mind at once. When Herr Hentzel gave him the simplest sentence to construe, little Benson could have dealt almost as easily with Chinese or Sanskrit.

"Ach! I tink tat you are as stupid as Gay, ain't it?" growled Herr Hentzel, as little Benson fixed his frightened eyes on him. "I giff you easy sentence, and you know nothing. Listen, den: Ich sage, dass Sie mein Bleistift haben."

"Yes, sir."

"Vat is tat, ten?"

"G-g-german, sir," stammered Benson.

The Fourth roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" shouted Herr Hentzel. "Listen to me, you stupid boy! I say tat you have my pencil. You understand?"

"N-n-no, sir!" stuttered Potty Benson. "I—I haven't, sir."

"Vat you say?"

"I say I haven't, sir."

"You—you haven't vat?"

"I haven't your pencil, sir," said Benson innocently. "There it is, sticking out of your own pocket, sir."

Herr Hentzel glared.

"You utter idiot!" he ejaculated. "Vat I say is te translation of te Sherman sentence. Ich sage, dass Sie mein Bleistift haben. Now, do you understand, ain't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"I tink tat it is time. Now, what does tat sentence mean?"

"I don't know, sir."

Herr Hentzel paused for breath, and then caught up a

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

came from his desk. As he did so, he felt a sudden stinging pain on the ear, and uttered a sharp exclamation. He dropped the cane, and his fat hand flew up to his ear.

"Ach! Oh! Mein Gott!"

Herr Hentzel gazed about him in wonder. His first impression was that a wasp had stung him, but there was no wasp to be seen. Bees and wasps buzzed in sometimes at the open Form-room windows on summer afternoons, but there was none to be seen now.

The Herr rubbed his ear, and turned back to the class. There was a suppressed gurgle from Wootton major, who had seen Gordon Gay slip his pea-shooter back into his pocket.

Herr Hentzel resumed operations upon Potty Benson. He dragged the unfortunate duffer of the Fourth up and down through a weary wilderness of incomprehensible German, and poor Benson perspired with the terrific mental exercise. In the midst of it there came another sharp sting upon the German master's fat skin, this time on the side of his nose.

"Himmel!" shouted Herr Hentzel, clapping his hand to his nose with such sudden force that he hurt that prominent feature. "Vat was tat?"

The Fourth Form grinned. But as the German master swept a furious glance at them they left off grinning. The German glared round the Form-room. Gordon Gay was standing in his corner, with his eyes modestly downcast, and a perfectly innocent expression upon his face.

"Ach! Dere is a vasp in dis room," said Herr Hentzel. "Can any of you poyas see tat vasp?"

"No, sir."

"I can't, sir."

"Shall we get up, and look for it, sir?" asked Higgs eagerly.

"Certainly nod! We will resume. Yow!"

Herr Hentzel clapped his hand to his ear again.

"Ach! Tat is tat vasp vunce more! Ow!"

The German master caught up a pointer, and swished it savagely through the air. It was some minutes before he resumed the lesson, his face crimson with anger, and with the heat that followed his unaccustomed exercise on the warm June afternoon.

But he had scarcely started finding fault with Monk's German than he left off with a sudden wild howl, as a sharp pang smote him on the neck.

"Ach! I am stung! Oh!"

He leaped almost clear of the floor, and swept out his fat hands to drive off the supposed wasp, in terror lest it should settle upon him.

"Dere is a vasp here!" he gasped. "You may look for it, poyas! I vill reward to poy who kill tat vasp!"

Like one man the Fourth Form rose to the task. They searched for that wasp everywhere. They dragged out forms, they turned out cupboards, they knocked over the blackboard, they wrecked the easel. In the midst of the confusion, Mr. Mopps, the mathematics master, who was to take the Fourth in the next lesson, opened the door and entered, and he gazed upon the scene in utter amazement.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Mopps. "What ever is the matter?"

Herr Hentzel turned a crimson and perspiring face towards him.

"Ach! Dere is a vasp here, Herr Mobbs, and ve look for it, ain't it? Ach!"

"I see no wasp," said Mr. Mopps, with some asperity; "and the juniors will kindly resume their places at once, and attend to me."

Herr Hentzel, perspiring, stalked out of the Form-room, almost as glad that the German lesson was over as the Fourth Form were. Gordon Gay and Wootton major and minor followed him out. They were free for the rest of the afternoon, and they put on their hats, and walked out of the schoolhouse arm in arm in joyful mood.

"If he had spotted you with that shooter—" murmured Jack Wootton.

"Ha, ha, ha! He didn't!"

"No, he didn't. Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Cornstalk Co. chuckled joyously as they sauntered out of the school gates, and took their way down the shady lane to Rylcombe.

CHAPTER 5:

The Arrival of Mont Blong.

"PORTAIR!"

Trumble, the old porter of Rylcombe, started. As a rule, nothing surprised Trumble. Even when the local train from Wayland came in to time, Trumble did not look surprised. And, having been a porter in a station close to a big public school—St. Jim's—and a big grammar school—that of Dr. Monk—Trumble thought that he knew all there was to be known about boys. He had seen all sorts and

conditions of boys, all varieties, big and little. And he was used to them. But the somewhat shrill voice that called "Portair!" from a window of a first-class carriage, and the face that looked out of the window, were new to Trumble, and he started, and stared.

"My heye!" said Trumble.

The face was sallow, somewhat long in feature, with black eyes that gleamed like jet. There was a frizz of curly hair over the somewhat narrow head, and its appearance betrayed at once that it was curled by art, and not by nature. A silk hat, with a very curly brim, surmounted the head. There was something very foreign in the look of the face, and in the accent of the shrill voice.

"Portair! Portair!"

"Yessir?" rumbled Trumble.

"Is zis Rylcombe?"

"Yessir."

The carriage door opened, and a lithe little figure hopped down. The rest of the passenger being disclosed, Trumble was enabled to view the whole of him, which he did with great interest.

The lad was dressed in Etons, but he had a very highly-coloured necktie, and he wore patent leather boots of an extremely small size. He had a gold-headed cane in his delicately-gloved hand. He looked neat, and clean, and tidy as a new pin, from head to heel. In fact, a miniature edition of a very tidy schoolboy.

"Zis is ze station for ze school?" he asked.

"Yessir. You goin' to St. Jim's, sir?"

"Non! I go to ze Grammar School."

"Oh!" said Trumble. "Yessir."

"You see zat my box—"

Bump!

A trunk alighted on the platform from the guard's van with a bump that rang the whole length of the station, and the foreign youth uttered an exclamation.

"Ciel! Zat is my box."

"I'll put it on a trolley, sir," said Trumble. "Shall I bring the box arter you to the school, sir, or will you take the keb, sir?"

"I zink zat I walk, if I know ze way. But you take great care of zat box."

"Hevery care, sir."

"Here he is!"

Three youths rushed breathlessly into Rylcombe Station. Gordon Gay and Harry and Jack Wootton were a little late. They had passed Grimes, the grocer's boy, on the road, and stopped to exchange polite opinions with him, and so the train had got in first.

The Cornstalk Co. rushed up to the foreign youth, and Gordon Gay grasped his right hand, and Harry Wootton his left, while Jack Wootton minor thumped him on the back in the most hearty manner.

"Here he is!"

"Welcome to Rylcombe!"

"Vive l'Entente Cordiale!"

"Hurrah!"

"Mon Dieu! Vat is ze mattair?"

"Nothing," said Gordon Gay blandly. "You are Gustave Blong—Monsieur Blong, in fact."

"Or Mont Blong for short," said Wootton major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My name is Blanc—"

"That's right! I knew it was you. We've come to meet you, Mont Blong, and to take you to the school," Gordon Gay explained. "You have heard of the Entente Cordiale, I suppose?"

"Ma foi! Oui, oui, mais oui!"

"We're backing it up. That's why we came to meet you. We belong to Rylcombe Grammar School. I'm Gordon Gay. That chap with the nose is Wootton major."

"Look here, Gay, you ass!"

"And the kid with the ears is Wootton minor—"

"Why, you fathead—"

"We're the cocks of the walk in the Fourth Form at Rylcombe," said Gordon Gay cheerily. "I hear you are coming into the Fourth, Monsieur Blong—"

"Blanc, please, not Blong."

"Yes, Blong," assented Gordon Gay. "I don't see any difference, but have it your own way. We're jolly glad to see you, ain't we, chaps?"

"We are," said Wootton major—"we is!"

"Yes, rather!"

The French junior disengaged himself from the grasp of the Grammarians, and raised his silk hat gracefully, and bowed almost to the platform. Trumble burst into a rusty chuckle as he saw this performance. The Grammarians stared.

"Oh, good!" said Gordon Gay, as the French youth rose from the excessively low bow. "Do that again!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear friends," said the French youth, beaming upon them, "I am glad—I am ravish—zat you come to meet me. I am full of joy. I zink zat I have never been so joyful as on zis occasion. I do not express myself well in ze beautiful English language, but I am vat you call ravish viz delight. Vive l'Entente Cordiale! I zink zat ven I am at ze Grammar School, I make you vat you call—vat you call—" He paused for a word. "Ah, I have ze word! Shum!"

"Eh?"

"Shum!"

"What!"

"You are shum!"

The juniors looked puzzled.

"What is that?" asked Gordon Gay. "Is it a French word?"

"Non, non, non! It is vun English word."

"My hat! I don't remember it, then! What does it mean?"

"Vat we say, ami," said Gustave Blanc. "Nous sommes amis, you see, n'est-ce-pas?"

Gordon Gay roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! You mean shum!"

"Zat is it! You hit ze right nail viz a stitch in time!" said Gustave, getting a couple of proverbs mixed with great effect. "You vill be my shum, and I vill be your shum, and zat is ze Entente Cordiale."

"I see," said Gordon Gay slowly.

"I zink zat I luff you!" said the French youth, in the effusive way that was natural enough to a French lad, but extremely surprising to an English one. "I zank you zat you 'ave come to meet me. I make you my shum."

"Thanks! But—"

"Zat I embrace my shum!"

"What!" gasped Gordon Gay. "Here, hold on—chuck it—ow—"

But there was no escape. Gustave Blanc rushed upon him and threw a couple of lithe arms round his neck, and embraced him, while the junior struggled to escape. There was a sounding smack as the French youth kissed the Cornstalk. Gordon Gay tried to dodge, with the result that the kiss landed upon his nose instead of upon his cheek.

"My luffed shum—"

"Ow! Leggo!"

"My dear shum—"

"Dragginoff!" panted Gordon Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Wootton major and minor.

"Help!" yelled Gordon Gay. "He's mad! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear shum—"

"Yank him off! He's going to kiss me! Yew! Yank—"

"I kiss my shum—"

Wootton major, choking with laughter, laid hands upon the French youth, and dragged him off Gordon Gay.

"Here, we've got to get to the school," said Gordon Gay, in alarm, afraid that the embracing was about to recommence. He did not want to hit the stranger from afar, but he felt that he could not stand any more embraces. "Buck up, or we shall be late! Leave your box with the porter, and come on!"

"Oui, oui, oui, my dear shum!"

And Gustave put his stick under his arm, and put his silk topper straight, and walked out of the station with the Cornstalk Co. They walked with him, but they kept their eyes upon him—afraid every minute that he might turn suddenly chummy, and want to embrace them.

CHAPTER 6.

Carker is Surprised.

GORDON-GAY & GO. did not hurry back from Rylcombe. By strolling gently they were able to time their return nicely to coincide with the end of afternoon lessons.

When they entered at the school gateway, the Fourth Form had just been dismissed, and they were swarming out into the Close. Gustave Blanc—whom the juniors were already calling Mont Blong, and who was seldom called anything else thereafter—looked round at the big, red-brick buildings with great interest, and at the cricket-ground, where several teams were at practice. He smiled a beaming smile at the Cornstalks.

"I zink zat I like zis school," he remarked. "I zink zat I shall be very happy here viz my shums."

Gordon Gay grinned.

He rather liked the French lad; but he had no intention of being appropriated as a chum at the first meeting, and he did not mean to be embraced any more. But he did not like to say so to the confiding youth from Paris.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Carker, of the Fourth, coming up with a crowd of the juniors, and staring blankly at Blanc. "What on earth's that?"

"Gentlemen, I am very glad to find myself viz myself at zis so respected school," said the new junior. "I zink zat ve all be great good friends, n'est-ce-pas?"

"I don't know what you mean by nespah!" said Carker grimly. "But you remind me of an organ-grinder's monkey, and there goes your topper for a start!"

Biff!

Gustave Blanc's shiny silk hat sailed away as Carker smote it, and the French junior uttered an exclamation.

"Mon Dieu! My new topper! Helas!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I zink zat is more zan a joke, monsieur," said Mont Blong. "I zink zat you go and pick up zat hat and give him to me."

Carker roared.

"Yes—I can see myself doing it—I don't think! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I zink zat I have ze right to insist, monsieur!"

"Oh, go and eat coke, you froggy ass!" said Carker, chuckling. "For two pins I'd knock your head off after your hat!"

"You knock him off for ze two pins?" asked Mont Blong.

"Yes, you fathead!"

"Zat is all serene!" Mont Blong drew two pins from the lining of his jacket and laid them in the palm of his hand, and extended them towards Carker, of the Fourth. "Zere you are, monsieur!"

Carker stared blankly at the two glistening pins in the French junior's palm.

"What do you mean?" he gasped.

"Zere are ze two pins," said Mont Blong, with calm deliberation. "Now you knock off ze head, mon ami—if you are not too great a coward."

"Why, you little whipper-snapper—"

"I wait for you to knock off ze head, monsieur."

"Go it, Carky!" shouted Higgs. "You ain't afraid of the froggy, are you?"

Carker turned red with rage.

"Afraid!" he bellowed. "I'll show him!"

And he rushed at the French junior. The little Frenchman looked as if he would be swept away, if not knocked to pieces, by the heavy rush of the bully of the Fourth. But it did not happen. He jumped lightly out of the way, as light as a monkey, and before the heavy Fourth-Former could swerve round, the lithe French youth danced round him, and smote him hard and heavy. Carker gave a roar as Mont Blong's right crashed upon his ear, followed up by the left on his eye. Carker spun round like an uprooted tree, and crashed down.

Bump!

There was a roar of surprise and approval.

"Bravo, Frenchy!"

"Carker's down!"

"Hurrah!"

A bell clanged out.

"Hallo! There goes the bell!" shouted Jack Wootton. "Time for the meeting in Hall. Come on, you fellows!"

And the new boy was rushed into Hall amid a crowd of juniors.

It was time for the school to assemble, and all the Grammarians, seniors and juniors, were anxious to hear the important announcement which the Head had to make. Every fellow, from Delamere, the captain of the school, to the youngest fag, wanted to know what the school was called together for. All the Grammarians felt that it was something out of the ordinary—as, indeed, they discovered soon enough that it was.

Mont Blong gasped for breath as he was rushed in, and his comrades halted among the Fourth. Mont Blong's silk topper had been lost en route, but there was no time to stop for that.

"Mon Dieu!" gasped Mont Blong. "Vat is it. Vat is it, my shums? I zink zat I am out of ze breath! What is going on, zen?"

"Speech from the Head," explained Gordon Gay breathlessly. "It's all right, we're in time, the Head ain't in yet."

"But I zink—"

"Here comes the Head!" called out Carboy. "Order, you Cornstalk bounders!"

There was a rustle, and Dr. Monk entered by the door at the upper end of the Hall. And there was a hush, as the Grammarians listened with intense keenness for the important announcement to be made.

(Another long instalment of this grand school serial in next Thursday's number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY. Will you please ask a friend to read this first instalment!—EDITOR.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 228.

NEXT THURSDAY: "FACING THE MUSIC!" A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



For Next Thursday.

"FACING THE MUSIC!"

is the title of our next week's grand, long, complete school tale, a story of more than usual power and interest, in which St. Jim's is agitated by an extraordinary occurrence. The situation is saved by the young cricket "coach," but recently engaged, who does his duty, but at what cost to his reputation and honour? Mr. Selby, master of the Third Form, plays a prominent part in

"FACING THE MUSIC."

while Tom Merry & Co. also do not allow themselves to be forgotten.

Pass this Number on, Please!

This issue of our bright little paper marks the return of the limelight, as it were, on those popular and merry school-boy characters, Gordon Gay, Frank Monk and Co., of Rylcombe Grammar School, in a new and original story, dealing with a fresh and unconventional aspect of school life.

"The School Under Canvas!" bids fair to attain a record-breaking popularity, and, together with Martin Clifford's splendid, extra complete school tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, forms a budget of reading matter absolutely unique in the interest it possesses for all lovers of clean, first-class school stories. May I ask my readers, mindful of the enjoyment they themselves have extracted from this grand All School-Story Number of "The Gem," to pass it on, when they have read it, to some of their friends or acquaintances who have not been introduced to our grand little journal?

Our Companion Paper This Week.

This week's issue of our popular companion paper, "The Magnet" Library, is one that merits the attention of every member of the reading public capable of appreciating a really first-class tale of interesting school life, and an exciting story of thrilling adventure on land and sea.

"BOLSOVER MINOR'S BOLT,"

a tale of the famous chums of Greyfriars School, by Frank Richards, is typical of the best class of school story, the interest and amusement of which never flags for one moment between "Chapter One" and "The End."

"TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE,"

the masterpiece of that prince of adventure story writers, Sidney Drew, is in a class apart from any other adventure story ever published, as regards thrilling and sustained excitement. The combination of Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire; Ching-Lung, prince and magician; and Gan-Waga, the amusing Eskimo, proves absolutely irresistible in the grand story, which is still in its opening stages in the issue of "The Magnet" which is now on sale. Any of my chums who are not already regular readers of our wonderful little companion paper, will find the pleasure and amusement to be derived from the contents of the current number the best investment for a penny it is possible to make.

Back Numbers Wanted.

C. Nixon, 12, Anderson Mount, Leeds, wishes to obtain No 161 (new series) of "The Gem" Library.

G. E. Cook, 24, Caskgate, Gainsborough, Lincs., wishes to obtain from No. 180 to No. 190 of "The Gem" Library. Will pay postage.

J. A. Macdonald, 32, Skirving Street, Shawlands, Glasgow, wishes to obtain Nos. 1 to 10 of "The Magnet," and Nos. 1 to 5 of "The Gem" (inclusive).

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

C. D. E., Birmingham.—I thank you for your interesting letter, and am glad to hear that you so enjoy reading the stories contained in "The Gem" Library. I will make a note of your suggestion.

Lillie W.—Thank you for the suggestion contained in your letter. Something more may be heard of it later.

M. Muir, Glasgow.—In reply to the query contained in your letter, I should say if you like that particular kind of office work, and there are any prospects of future promotion, that it would be better for you to stay on with it, and not start again in a trade of which you have had no experience.

F. R. Tate, Newport.—Thank you for your long and interesting letter. The suggestion you make is already under consideration.

How to Cure Small Skins.

The curing or preservation of the fur of small animals is a task which many amateur naturalists would undertake did they but know a simple and effective method of preparing the skins. The skins of trapped moles or rabbits may be made use of by country lads in many ways, if properly cured, while in the same way many readers would no doubt be glad to have mementoes of deceased pets, in the form of soft, velvety pelts.

The most primitive and the simplest way of curing a skin is to peg it out on a board, fur side downwards, and expose it to the action of the sun. The skin should, of course, first of all be scraped and cleaned with a knife as much as possible. After a time exposure to the light and air will dry the skin up until it can be said to be roughly cured. This method, however, is by no means the most satisfactory, and the skin can never be made so clean and soft as if properly cured.

Small skins can be really effectively and quite simply tanned by the following method:

Fasten the skin firmly to a board with tin-tacks, stretching it tightly, with the fur side downwards. Rub over with a soft rag dipped in a solution of common salt, and then wipe the surface with a second solution consisting of two and a half ounces of alum dissolved in a pint of warm water. Repeat this alum-water treatment at intervals for three or four days, then allow the skin to dry, remove it from the board, roll it loosely, long-ways, with the hair inside, and draw it backwards and forwards through a smooth ring until thoroughly pliable; then roll the skin up the opposite way, fur side outwards, and repeat the process.

Another very efficient way of curing skins can be carried out as follows: First trim the skin of all ragged and useless parts, and remove as much of the fatty matter from the inside as possible. Then, after soaking the pelt in warm water until quite soft, spread the inside with a paste made up of an ounce each of borax, sulphate of soda, and salt-petre, mixed with a little water.

After coating thickly with this paste, double the skin together and put aside in a cool place. At the end of twenty-four hours or so the paste above mentioned should be replaced by another consisting of an ounce of soda and half an ounce of borax, melted down with a couple of ounces of hard white soap. After being coated with this fresh mixture, the skin should be left for another twenty-four hours or so; this time in a warm place.

As a final treatment, the skin must be immersed in a hot bath of solution of a temperature that can be comfortably borne on plunging in the hand. The composition of the bath should be as follows: 4oz. alum, 8oz. salt, and 2oz. saleratus dissolved in hot water. After thoroughly immersing the skin in this solution for a further twenty-four hours or longer, it should be hung up to dry, when the finishing touches may be applied by means of fine sandpaper.

THE EDITOR.

WINGS OF GOLD!

By SIDNEY DREW.

(Concluding Instalment.)

Safe on Board the Yacht—The Specimens Brought Away—Wings of Gold Goes Under—In Conclusion.

Ten minutes later a boat came dancing over the water at racing speed, and in another ten the rescued men were shaking hands with the comrades from whom they had been parted so long. The whole party pulled back to the yacht, and boarded her amid loud cheers.

"Reckon this is a champagne day, Lance!" said Fordham, turning to his chum, with a smile.

"No doubt of it. Let every man come into our cabin."

The wine flowed merrily; but even then all else was not forgotten. Von Haegel was anxious for the safety of his specimens, and very soon a boat was despatched for them. They were brought safely aboard, much to the professor's delight, then Morgan clambered into the boat and was pulled to the ice, as he wished to examine Wings of Gold thoroughly in the daylight.

Lance and Fordham preferred to remain on the yacht, having had enough of the ice, and probably Wings of Gold, to last them for some time.

An hour later the boat, with Morgan's bowed figure in the stern, pulled alongside. The engineer clambered aboard with the feeble step of an old man, and descended straight into the cabin, where the others were celebrating their deliverance.

"Why, Teddy," cried Lance anxiously, as he caught sight of the engineer's white face, "what's wrong?"

"Gone!" said Morgan, in a low voice.

"What has gone?"

"Wings of Gold."

"You don't mean," Fordham began hoarsely, "that she—"

"Has gone through the ice, sir," the engineer finished brokenly, sinking into a chair, "and the plans with her."

"Which," Creeks said in a low voice, "is rough on you, Teddy, my lad. But things might ha' been worse, which, bein' so, are better'n they might ha' been. Which is consol'n'."

Lance thrust a glass of wine into Morgan's hand, and raised his own.

"To Wings of Gold II.!" he cried.

Morgan leapt up, his face aflame, and drained his glass.

"If human power can do it, it shall be done!" he cried determinedly. "The great secret shall not be lost!"

On the following day the anchor was weighed, and the yacht turned her head towards England, which, in due course of time was reached without adventure. Her arrival, with the intrepid adventurers aboard, caused a great sensation, and their portraits—that of Tooter doing full justice to his whiskers—were in every paper.

For six months after their return, Lance, Fordham, and Von Haegel had little rest, what with lecturing and attending banquets in their honour; but at the end of that time they were able to settle down.

The diamonds and jewels which the explorers brought safely away from Wings of Gold before she went through the ice fetched a large sum. This was divided equally among the crew of the airship, each share being enough to provide for its lucky possessor for life.

Lance, Fordham, and Von Haegel gave themselves up to complete idleness for a while, at least. Not so Tooter and Jackson. They equipped a large vessel, and when last heard of were doing a splendid trade between Britain and some of the foreign ports. As for Morgan and Crooks, they purchased a roomy house, and promptly set to work endeavouring to build Wings of Gold II. So far they have not succeeded; but as Crooks remarked during his last visit to the chums:

"What has been done once can be done again; which, being so, is hopeful. Why not?"

Let us hope with him that he is right; and as the ink dries on the last page of "Wings of Gold," bid a reluctant farewell to the airship's gallant crew, and wish them the best of luck in any other adventures which may in the future fall to their share.

THE END.

SHUNNED BY HIS FATHER.

(Continued from page 21.)

And the millionaire took his leave of the Head, and walked down to the cricket-pitch. The village innings was drawing to a finish—only one wicket was wanted to fall, and it would be over. But Lumley-Lumley and Grimes, between them, were keeping the game alive in fine style. Mr. Lumley-Lumley sat down outside the pavilion and looked on. A murmur ran round in the crowd that Lumley-Lumley's pater was there. The millionaire watched his son at the wicket, and there was pride in his glance. Grimes was backing the Outsider up; but there was no doubt that Lumley-Lumley was doing the cricketing. He piled up the runs, and the total was already 92.

Tom Merry gave the ball once more to Fatty Wynn, adjuring him to take wickets. The fat Fourth-Former did his best. But the first ball of the over gave Lumley-Lumley 4 for a boundary, and the Ryelcombe total was now at 96.

"Hurrah!" shouted Grimes. "That's right, Master Lumley!"

"I guess it is, Master Grimes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn sent down the ball again, and Lumley-Lumley drove it to the boundary with a terrific slog. There was a yell. The batsmen did not need to run.

"Hundred up!" roared Figgins.

"A tie, bai Jove!"

The scores had tied. If another run was taken St. Jim's were beaten—beaten by a village team! Fatty Wynn, as he prepared to deliver the third ball of the over, felt as if whole worlds depended upon him. The burden of Atlas, with the world on his shoulders, was as nothing in comparison. Fatty Wynn's eyes gleamed, and he took a hard grip on the round red ball, and backed away for his little quick run.

"Go it, Fatty!" shouted Figgins.

Fatty Wynn took his run, and the ball flew from his hand. Click! Away went the red leather, and the batsmen were running. It came whizzing in the hand of Tom Merry—a second too late. The batsmen had made their ends good, and there was a roar.

"Well run!"

The match was won!

Lumley-Lumley grinned as he sauntered off the field, with his arm linked in Grimes's. But he started at the sight of his father, waiting to meet him outside the pavilion. Mr. Lumley-Lumley looked at him grimly, and Lumley-Lumley and Grimes raised their caps.

"Hallo, pop!" said the Outsider. "Fancy meeting you!"

"You young rascal, are you going to give in, and do as I have ordered you?" demanded the millionaire.

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"Oh, come off, pop!"

The millionaire burst into a laugh.

"Very well, Jerrold!" he said. "I've seen Dr. Holmes, and you are to return to St. Jim's—"

"That spoils my chance of learning the butcher's business," grinned Lumley-Lumley. "But it's all serene. I'll come back, if you like. By the way, popper, this is Grimes, a most particular friend of mine, who has stood by me like a real good pal. Grimes, this is my popper—one of the best, though he has a rotten temper at times."

Mr. Lumley-Lumley glared at his son for a moment, and then he grinned, and shook hands with Grimes. Lumley-Lumley turned to the grinning crowd of fellows.

"Gentlemen, I am returning to St. Jim's, and there is going to be a big feed to celebrate that important event. Everybody is invited, and I recommend you not to spare the grub, as there is a millionaire footing the bill. You'll stand for the feed, won't you popper? You ought, you know, as you'll be paying for it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Mr. Lumley-Lumley did, and by the time he left St. Jim's he had a bill of very considerable dimensions to pay at the tuckshop, which he paid with perfect good-humour. And when Grimes & Co. quitted St. Jim's after that joyous celebration, they went minus one member of their team—the junior who had been Shunned by His Father.

THE END.

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