

LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S COUP!

A Sensational School Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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The GEM 2^D LIBRARY OF SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES



THE SCHOOLBOY FIREMEN!

The good work of the St. Jim's fire brigade is somewhat impeded by the strange antics of the swell of the Fourth!
(An exciting incident from the grand school story inside.)



Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

MY DEAR CHUMS,—Of course there is the jolly spirit of Christmas in evidence on all sides this week. It pops up everywhere, and makes things bright and lively. My Chat this time has to do with Christmas, for I am offering all cheery good wishes to my chums for happy times, heaps of bright days, plenty of sport, and all the presents you most want.

A GRAND CHRISTMAS-WEEK NUMBER!

Naturally enough, you want the GEM. Our coming issue is prime. The new features are just as lively and smart as anybody could wish. Those readers who have not yet tackled the particularly smart GEM competition should do it now. It is full of fun, and, as the man said when he helped himself to a bottle of sea-water out of the deep, there is lots more where that came from.

A TIP FOR LATE-COMERS!

Here's a hint. Don't let any reader think it is too late to join in with all the pleasures of this competition. Never too late! You can get the back number you may have missed if you write to the Back Number Department, Bear Alley, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. That's something worth remembering.

DOUBLE-LENGTH THIS TIME!

That's our new yarn of St. Jim's for the Special Christmas Week Number. It is a story worthy of Mr. Martin Clifford, the man who cares not how hard he works so long as he gives pleasure. We all know he manages that part.

"RIVALS OF THE NEW HOUSE!"

By Martin Clifford.

This tale is a regular ace of trumps. It shows you something about the high jinks and the misunderstandings rife in the New House. Figgins falls foul of Redfern. That puts the cat among the pigeons. You will take the remark as a mere figure of speech. There is no cat and nothing feline or crafty about the hammer-and-tongs dispute between these two favourites. Figgins is captain,

but he slacks, and just as when the steam-roller passed over the pedlar's apple-cart, matters get complicated. You see Redfern all out as a hustler, and many interesting events take place. These happenings are not entirely agreeable to all parties. The New House has a stern way of regarding some affairs. Next week's is a real rattler of a yarn.

THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

Of the making of books there is no end, but there is only one "Holiday Annual," and because this cheery volume occupies a unique position, and is the best and brightest book on the market, I am recommending it as a Christmas present for all and sundry. All will like it, and unless "sundry" hastens he may get left. It is the book of the season. Nulli secundus! Worth waiting for; but, mark this—don't wait too long, for the publisher's cupboard may get bare, like that of the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard.

ENTER THE FIFTH FORM!

There is always something precious dignified about the Fifth. This Form has next week's "St. Jim's News" to its lordly self, and a right down sterling issue it is. They do say that people who do not take themselves seriously are N.G. Whether they are no good or not is a matter of opinion, but the Fifth at St. Jim's is all safe in this respect. They are a mixed crowd, but the Fifth contains some splendid fellows. You hear about them and the others next Wednesday. I have had a host of reminders about our Supplement. Every correspondent says it is not big enough. I am bearing this point in mind; but, if little, the "St. Jim's News" is good—very good!

"CHUMS OF THE IRON WAY!"

By Roland Spencer and Francis Warwick.

An extra thrilling instalment in our next issue. There has been romance in plenty about the railway since "Puffing Billy" first creaked out of its shed. But it is the new days of the iron track which these two crack writers deal with here. Anything more slap up to date could not well be imagined.

["THINGS WORTH REMEMBERING!]

There are several of these items, so look out! I want you most particularly to hear in mind that the "Boys' Friend" Free Books are booming along, and must not be missed. Also remember the magnificent "Magnet" Photogravure Plates, likewise the "Popular" Hobby Supplement, which is a fair record.

NO "ERROR" ABOUT IT!

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Your Editor.

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In this gripping story we find the shadow of suspicion settling on Lumley-Lumley. A fire occurs, and during the confusion something of priceless value goes missing. The conclusions arrived at are only set at naught by the sudden appearance of Ferrers Locke!



Lumley-Lumley's Coups!

The Borrower!

"D'ARCY, I want a word with you for a moment." It was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley who made the request. He had just pushed open the door of Study No. 6 of the Fourth Form passage at St. Jim's, and so stood framed in the doorway.

Christmas had come and gone and the holidays were at an end.

Tom Merry & Co. had spent a most enjoyable time as guests at Lord Eastwood's famous residence, and now they were back again at St. Jim's.

Inside the famous School House study was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the junior Jerrold Lumley-Lumley appeared anxious to see. But there was no ardent welcome on Arthur Augustus' lips. In fact, no sound came from them at all except a steady, unusual snore, for the swell of St. Jim's was asleep.

His elegantly clad form was comfortably supported by a multitude of cushions in the biggest of the easy-chairs the study boasted of, and his patent-leather shod feet rested on the table.

In addition, the lower section of Arthur Augustus' aristocratic jaw had dropped a little, and his head was inclined to sag forward. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley laughed impatiently.

"D'Arcy, you chump, wake up!" he exclaimed. "Wake up, duffer! I want to speak to you!"

"Gerrooh—gug!"

The only answer was a slightly louder snore than any of the previous ones, and Lumley-Lumley laughed still more impatiently. Then he crossed the room and shook Arthur Augustus, chair and all.

"Wake up, you dummy! Open your eyes, ass!"

Again Jerrold Lumley-Lumley shook the swell of the School House, and Arthur Augustus showed faint signs of regaining consciousness. In fact, he opened his eyes about half-way, emerged slowly from the middle of a pleasant dream, and even made a remark.

"Go away, deah boy! Go wight away, as I'm westin'—"

"Ass—"

"And pway shut the door aftah you," added Arthur Augustus dreamily.

At that, Arthur Augustus closed his eyes again, and in a very few seconds would have been fast asleep once more. But Jerrold Lumley-Lumley did not mean that to happen. He fairly shouted at the resting Fourth-Former.

"D'Arcy, don't be a fathead!" he rapped out. "I want to speak to you about a very important matter—I want to borrow some cash!"

"Wight-ho, deah boy!"

"I—I want rather a lot—"

A Sensational, & Long, Complete
School Story of Tom Merry & Co.
at St. Jim's.

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Pway don't mench!" drawled the dozing Beau Brummel. "I am too fatigued to wise fwom this chair, but I wathah fancy you will find some monay in a dwawer in that desk. Take what you need, deah boy!"

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders. Short of bumping Arthur Augustus, there seemed little likelihood of rousing him from his semi-conscious state this afternoon. In consequence, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley swung round to the desk.

"Which drawer, dummy?" he cried.

"The one with the monay in, bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

The swell of the School House had commenced to snore again, and Lumley-Lumley gave him up as a bad job. Instead of making a further attempt to rouse D'Arcy, the New York junior opened one of the desk-drawers. Just by chance it happened to be the one which contained the cash.

Quite eagerly Lumley-Lumley drew out a roll of Treasury notes. There certainly was quite a useful sum rolled up there and held together by means of an elastic band. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley made a mental calculation as to the amount, and spun round on his heel again.

"D'Arcy, old chap—"

Snore!

"D'Arcy, you gurgling Rip Van Winkle, how much of this can you spare—"

Again no answer, but a deep, long-drawn-out snore. Lumley-Lumley's face set a little. He looked from the notes to the sleeping Gussy, then laughed shortly.

The moment following he had left Study No. 6, and Arthur Augustus snored on gently.

By rights he ought to have been left there in peace until tea-time or later, for Jack Black, Digby, and Herries were all out.

Naturally they had wished Arthur Augustus to join them in a walk down to Rylcombe; but Arthur Augustus had refused. Apart from being fatigued after a morning spent at maths when he and Mr. Lathom had failed to see eye to eye in the matter of some Euclid riders, Arthur Augustus had prophesied rain. As a result the swell of the School House had retired to Study No. 6 with every chance in the world of enjoying a peaceful afternoon's rest.

But already there had been one interruption, and within five minutes of Lumley-Lumley's departure there was a second one. At least, the door of the famous Fourth Form study was pushed noiselessly open.

Not wide open, by any means, but just sufficient to allow the uncombed head and somewhat inky face of Wally D'Arcy to appear round the doorpost.

Almost at once the dishevelled head of Arthur Augustus' young brother vanished, and some subdued chuckles might have been heard in the corridor outside.

Anyone at all well acquainted with the Third Form at St.

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Jim's would have recognised the voices of Gibson and Manners minor amongst the chucklers.

But Arthur Augustus recognised nothing, for the simple reason that he heard nothing. He just slept on. He was still sleeping on when the door noiselessly opened again, but the swell of St. Jim's was very near the last of his forty winks at that moment.

He gave one final contented snore, then something pounced into his chest and promptly gave him a liquid sort of lick right across his noble brow.

"Oh-wow!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Call it off, deah boys! Gewooh!"

Long before he was really awake Arthur Augustus slid forward. Before the commencement of the sliding movement a good deal of Arthur Augustus had been over the edge of the chair, and the slide proved to be the last straw. Gussy slithered right out of the chair, and, because his heels had been resting on the table, he had very little chance of saving himself.

"Yah!" he bleated. "Gweat Scott! Yoop!"

His head and shoulders shot down while his legs shot up over the table, and the next thing Arthur Augustus was conscious of was hitting the floor.

Thud!

The impact shook the snug little room, and Arthur Augustus wailed dismally. He lay where he had fallen, blinking up at the ceiling, and for the life of him he could not understand what had happened.

In fact, he was still in the dark when Wally D'Arcy's little mongrel terrier, Pongo, stood over him wagging an absurd stump of a tail. Arthur Augustus did not quite grasp matters when Pongo attempted to give him another liquid lick; but by then shrieks of laughter were coming from the study doorway.

"Oh, my hat! What an ass you are, Gus!" choked Wally. "Were you trying to stand on your head, or something, old duffer?"

"Whatever it was, please do it again," pleaded Manners minor. "I wasn't looking properly."

"Yes, Gussy, you might," chortled Gibson, holding his sides. "Just to oblige a friend, old top!"

The three fags clung together, yelling with laughter. The expression of utter horror on Arthur Augustus' face was providing the Third-Formers with the one bright spot of what had previously been a dull afternoon. They fairly yelled with glee.

Vaguely Arthur Augustus rose to his feet.

He was somewhat shaken and very flustered, but the spectacle of those convulsed fags made him also very wrathful. He thrust his monocle into his eye and glared ferociously through it.

"You utter young wascals!" he roared. "You deliberately set that wotten mongrel on to me! You realised that I was wotin', and you dared to play a wotten pwank on me! Wally, come heah!"

"Rats, old son!"

"Waltah, as your eldah bwotah—Mannahs, gwasp my minah by his arm. Collah the young wascal, as I intend to administrah a fwightful thwashin'!"

"Rats again, Gussy!" chuckled Manners minor, backing rapidly out into the passage.

"Gibson, you young wottah, collah my minah—"

"I don't think!" grinned Gibson.

Then Wally D'Arcy chipped in with a brief order:

"Get the door shut, kids. We can tell the ass what we want through the keyhole. Come on, Pongo!"

Obediently Pongo dashed out into the passage. After him rampaged Arthur Augustus. But the swell of St. Jim's was not quite quick enough. The door of his own room shut in his face with a slam.

Indignantly Gussy gripped at the knob. He wrenched with all his strength, but the result was not very satisfactory. The door refused to budge.

"Leave go of the wotten knob, you scallywags!" roared the Fourth-Former. "Unless you release me instantly—"

"You'll administrah a feahful thwashin'!" chuckled back Wally. "Well, old dummy, it isn't a thrashing we want, it's tin!"

"Open the door—"

"Just a little loan, you know," went on Wally, gripping tighter than ever at the door knob. "Ten bob will see us through!"

"Open the wotten door—"

"Or even five!"

"Not a w'etched penny!" roared Arthur Augustus. "I utterly refuse to lend a penny! For the third and last time I ordah you to release the door, you wascals!"

"Right!" rapped out Wally. "It's released!"

It was released, too; at the exact moment Arthur

Augustus gave it a specially violent tug. The result was that the immaculate Fourth-Former shot back across the study at an amazing pace.

"My—my only toppah!" he gasped. "Gweat Scott! I'm fallin'! Wow!"

And for the second time within five minutes Gussy thudded to the floor.

He sprang wrathfully to his feet and rushed out into the corridor, but there was no sign of Wally & Co. of the Third. They had completely vanished.

"I shall twash them!" cried Arthur Augustus ferociously. "The moment I set eyes on the young wascals I shall administrah a feahful thwashin'! I am uttably wesolved pn that!"

At the moment of making the vow Arthur Augustus undoubtedly was resolved to carry it out, but always there was a generous strain in Gussy's make-up.

Of course, Wally must be severely corrected for having dared to play a trick on his major, but that did not mean that Wally's request for a small loan had fallen on deaf ears.

In fact, Arthur Augustus so hated the thought of being short of cash himself that almost anybody could borrow from him. Even in his present wrathful state of mind he was ready to advance Wally a little coin of the realm.

"But only on the condish that he takes his thwashin' like a man," decided the School House swell. "I shall offah him the ten shillin's, and then I shall cowwect the young wascal! I will attend to the mattah at once!"

As Arthur Augustus had no money at all in his pockets, he crossed the study to the desk. Once there he opened the top left-hand drawer and stared down into it.

Apparently the spectacle which met his gaze was a bewildering one, for he screwed his monocle into his eye and stared again. The result was no better. Like a certain cupboard of poetical fame, that drawer was bare.

As if in a dream Arthur Augustus looked in the other drawers, but with exactly the same result. They were all just as empty as the first, and Arthur Augustus let his monocle fall from his eye.

When he had dropped off to sleep there had been twelve pounds ten shillings in that top left-hand drawer; now there was nothing. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had certainly taken Gussy at his word and helped himself to "all he needed."

"The uttah wottah!" gasped D'Arcy. "He has absolutely skinned me, bai Jove! I haven't a sixpence in the world! I—I am bwoked!"

And he dropped back into his easy chair and strove manfully to face the financial crisis with befitting calm.

At the Green Man!

"MY hat, here comes the rain!"

Tom Merry spoke in profound disgust. He and Manners and Monty Lowther of the Shell were about half-way between St. Jim's and Rylcombe, and they had been keen on going to the pictures, with a late tea to follow.

Now it looked as if the visit to the pictures would have to be postponed unless the three juniors cared to risk a thorough drenching.

And Tom Merry was not likely to consent to that risk being run. As skipper of the St. Jim's junior eleven it was up to him to see that his team kept fit, and going to the pictures in wet clothes was scarcely Tom Merry's idea of training.

"Can't carry on to Rylcombe through this, chaps," he said decidedly. "We'll shelter for a bit and see if it clears up, if you like."

"Yes, that's the idea!"

"Make for the trees near the Green Man, then," exclaimed Manners. "Sprint up!"

The three broke into a fast run, and it took them a very short time to reach the trees near the lane which led to the Green Man public-house. There they would be completely sheltered from the rain for quite a long time.

Still disgusted, Tom Merry leaned against the trunk of one of the trees and dug his hands deep into his pockets. Near him was Manners just as disgusted, for spending a portion of a well-earned half-holiday sheltering from the rain did not exactly appeal to Tom Merry & Co.

"Wish to goodness I had stayed in the school and got on with those photographs!" growled Manners. "If it hadn't been for you asses persuading me— What's the matter now, Lowther?"

"N-nothing!" muttered Monty Lowther.



The light from the oil lamp showed up Lumley-Lumley's card-playing companions, showed them up very clearly. The sight of them brought an exclamation of horror from the aristocratic lips of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Gweat Scott!" he ejaculated. "What a collection of utah wuffians!" (See page 6.)

"Then why are you standing out in the rain, you duffer?" demanded Manners. "What are you staring at?"

No answer came from Monty Lowther, and Tom Merry and Manners stared at him in surprise. After all, it was rather curious that Lowther should have deliberately stepped out into the rain merely for the purpose of gazing across a rain-drenched field when there was absolutely nothing to see.

At least, Tom Merry and Manners could see nothing. "Batty, of course," commented Manners presently.

"No doubt of it," agreed Tom Merry sympathetically. "I've seen it coming on for a long time now. Monty, old top, if you aren't getting wet enough standing there, try this other side of the tree. Heaps more rain there."

"Or why not roll in the ditch?" began Manners.

But he stopped speaking suddenly, and behaved in an extraordinary way, too.

He stepped out into the rain and joined Lowther in the curious occupation of gazing across the field. Tom Merry gasped aloud.

"My—my hat, you asses—"

"Dry up, Tom Merry!"

"Yes; but—"

"Oh, do dry up!" said Lowther quietly. "I—I think I saw someone coming down the lane!"

Tom Merry was bewildered. Why in the world Lowther and Manners should deliberately risk a soaking because

someone was going down the lane astounded the captain of the Shell.

As a matter of fact, heaps of people went down that lane because it led to the Green Man, and the Green Man was a popular resort among the rougher element of Rylcombe.

In utter astonishment Tom Merry risked getting wet, too, and joined his chums.

"Lowther, you frabjous duffer—"

"There, can you see him now?" flashed Lowther. "Just by that tree-trunk there, Manners. No, it's too late. The hedge is hiding him."

"Hiding whom, you ass?" almost shouted Tom Merry.

"The chap who is going down the lane," answered Lowther.

"Well, what the policeman does it matter—"

"He was wearing a St. Jim's cap!" muttered Manners.

"What?"

"And—and that lane only leads to the Green Man," put in Lowther. "Can't be Cutts or any of the blades of the Fifth going to play billiards. They'd be tall enough to show above the hedge. There he is, Manners!"

"Yes."

Both juniors leaned a little forward, and at the same moment Tom Merry glimpsed the fellow who was causing all the excitement. And as Lowther had said he was not nearly tall enough to be Cutts or one of Cutts' cronies,

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But the chap who was making straight for the Green Man was certainly wearing a St. Jim's cap. Tom Merry could see it quite distinctly as the junior swung towards the back yard of the unsavoury public-house. And as he walked he turned a little, so that his face was towards the watching juniors for a moment or two.

Instantly an exclamation of dismay broke from Monty Lowther.

"My hat, you see who it is——"

"Lumley-Lumley!" muttered Manners.

"Yes, it was Lumley-Lumley," nodded Tom Merry quietly. "Perhaps he isn't going into the Green Man after all, though. Perhaps——"

Tom Merry stopped speaking, for there could be no further doubt as to the reason of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's journey down the lane. He was certainly going to the Green Man. In fact, he was actually passing through the back door.

Tom Merry & Co. were utterly astounded at their discovery.

Of course, they all remembered well enough that Lumley-Lumley would have thought nothing of visiting the Green Man away back in the past when he had been known as the Outsider of St. Jim's. But all had thought those days gone and done with.

For ages now Lumley-Lumley seemed to have forgotten his hard and curious upbringing in the Bowery quarter of New York. Slowly but surely he had given up his initial fight against law and order at St. Jim's, and had settled down.

No one quite remembered when the change had taken place, but nobody doubted that it had occurred. From being a rank outsider, Lumley-Lumley had become a very decent junior. Certainly not the sort of junior who would risk expulsion and bring disgrace to his school by visiting a disreputable place like the Green Man.

And yet Tom Merry & Co. had seen him go into the public-house with their own eyes!

Even then Tom Merry tried to think of some ordinary explanation.

"Perhaps—perhaps he has taken a message there for someone——"

"That doesn't look much like message-taking, does it?" said Manners, pointing suddenly towards the public-house. "The back window, I mean!"

Tom Merry and Lowther peered in the direction indicated, but before anything else could be said a well-known and somewhat breathless voice came shouting through the rain.

"Make woom for me undah the twees, deah boys! I'm wunnin' a fighwifful wisk of gettin' my clobbah wuined by the wain! Bai Jove, what's the mattah, Tom Mewwy?"

And Arthur Augustus came dashing up to the trees for shelter, only to find that Tom Merry & Co. were standing stock still out in the rain.

"You uttah asses! What's the ideah? I—— Gweat Scott!"

Vaguely Arthur Augustus felt for his celebrated monocle, screwed it firmly into his eye, and glared, too, at that back window of the Green Man.

"Gweat—gweat Scott! A St. Jim's junior playin' cards in a wotten public-house!" he gasped. "Bai Jove! It's Lumlay-Lumlay, deah boys!"

"Yes, it's Lumley-Lumley!"

"Lumlay-Lumlay playin' cards in a wotten—— Oh, my toppah! That's what the boundah wanted to bowwow my cash for! That's why he took the lot, just to play cards with!"

"Eh?"

"Absolutely dwained me out!" cried Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I happened to be wessin', and the wottah came in and bowwowed my cash—ewewy penny, bai Jove!"

"And—and he borrowed half a quid from me," suddenly put in Tom Merry quietly.

"He tackled me, too, now I come to think of it, only I was out of funds," nodded Manners. "M-my hat! Look at the sort of toughts he's playing with, chaps!"

There was no need for Manners to advise the others to look. They were all looking hard enough, and what they saw was disconcerting enough in all conscience.

Lumley-Lumley had just lighted an oil-lamp in that back room of the Green Man, and the light showed up his card-playing companions, showed them up very clearly. And the sight of them brought an exclamation of horror from the aristocratic lips of Arthur Augustus.

"Gweat Scott! What a collection of uttah wuffians!" he gasped. "Thwee of them, bai Jove, and the best of them looks worse than a wotten pickpocket!"

"Yes, they're pretty awful! Ah, Lumley-Lumley's pulling down the blind!"

The blind came down with a run, blotting out the

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unpleasant scene in the back room of the Green Man. At the same moment Jack Blake, Herries, and Digby of the Fourth came up at a run.

Blank consternation showed in Jack Blake's face.

"My aunt! What's it mean, Merry?" he burst out. "Lumley-Lumley playing the fool in there!"

"Sssh!" whispered back the Shell junior. "Here's Baggy Trimble and a whole crowd of others. Mum's the word!"

Jack Blake nodded in a dismayed sort of way.

Heading for Disaster!

TOM MERRY & CO., and Jack Blake and his chums of the Fourth slipped quietly away in the gathering darkness.

Not for anything did they want to stay there and be bombarded by questions from Baggy Trimble, for it seemed almost certain that Baggy and the others must have glimpsed Lumley-Lumley there in the Green Man.

If so, then it would be all over the school within an hour. And when news like that gets about who can say where it will stop? As likely as not it would find its way to the ears of Kildare or one of the other prefects, and then there really would be trouble for Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"Not that it's up to us to feel sorry for the ass!" growled Digby as the juniors ran through the rain. "If he's going to let St. Jim's down that way, the sooner he's called over the coals the better!"

"That's true——"

"Yaas, certainly that's twue, deah boy; only—only I have wedged Lumlay-Lumlay as being watah a decent sort for a long time. I weally fail to undahstand the mattah, and wpropose to speak to the young duffah the moment I set eyes on him."

"Fat lot of good that'll do!"

"Oh, with a few tactful remarks——"

"Much better give the rotter a jolly good bumping. I say!" growled Jack Blake bluntly as they reached the St. Jim's quadrangle. "That is, if he can't give us a proper explanation."

At that Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders.

"What explanation can he give?" he asked. "We saw him!"

Jack Blake did not answer. Puzzle over the strange affair as he would he could think of no possible reason that could cause a decent junior to frequent the Green Man and play cards with awful-looking bounders like Lumley-Lumley's new friends. It did not seem possible that there could be an explanation except the obvious one, that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had slipped right back into his old bad ways.

If that were so, then he was heading straight for disaster. And quickly, too. All seven juniors realised that.

All the same, they hung about in the corridors and Common-room with more than a little anxiety showing in their faces, for they had all liked Lumley-Lumley.

His ability to put up a good fight against big odds, and his open-handed generosity when in funds had appealed a great deal to the St. Jim's juniors. Then they often remembered that he had had a very hard childhood in the Bowery quarter of New York, and it had seemed so certain that he had made good.

Now this thing had happened along. Small wonder, then, that Tom Merry & Co. waited anxiously for the return of the millionaire's son; but they had to wait until well after six o'clock. Then Lumley-Lumley sauntered easily into Study No. 6.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he said carelessly. "Sort of family gathering or something?"

He looked round at Tom Merry & Co., guests for the time being in Study No. 6, then nodded to Arthur Augustus.

"D'Arcy, old top, I hope you didn't mind my taking all your cash this afternoon?"

"Bai—bai Jove——"

"I needed it badly, you know," went on Lumley-Lumley. "Don't happen to have any more about you, I suppose?"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Of course, you shall have it all back directly my luck turns," went on Lumley-Lumley. "Waiting for funds from my father. Any of you others got any spare tin you could let me have? Really, I want about a fiver, and must have it this evening."

In dead silence Tom Merry and Jack Blake greeted that request, but Arthur Augustus had risen to his feet.

Grimly he felt for his monocle, and when it had been screwed home in his eye he glared quite sternly at Jerrold Lumley-Lumley through it.

"Lumlay-Lumlay, I watah want a word with you——"

"Yes? Fire ahead, then!"

"But—but pewsaps it would be bettah if we discuss the mattah in pwi-vate, deah boy—I mean, Lumlay-Lumlay!"

"Eh?" ejaculated the other junior. "Oh, I haven't much time for long confabs. Got to slip out again very shortly. Have an appointment, you know."

"Yes, with your new friends at the Green Man."

It was Jack Blake who rapped out that remark, a blunt statement, bluntly made; for the leader of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's did not believe in beating about the bush.

Undoubtedly Lumley-Lumley looked startled; then he shrugged his shoulders. He even laughed—which, in the eyes of Arthur Augustus was an act quite on the par with "last straw and the camel's back" story.

"Gweat—gweat Scott, Lumlay-Lumlay—"

"Oh, don't start cackling, Gussy, old chap!" grinned Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "We all know your celebrated imitation of an old hen by heart! The important point is, can any of you chaps lend me some more tin?"

"Not—not anothah penny—"

"You, Merry?"

"No!"

"Then I may as well clear out," answered Lumley-Lumley. "Must try Figgins & Co., of the New House. Or perhaps Kildare will lend me some. No, I can't stop gassing, D'Arcy. I've an appointment to keep when I can get some cash!"

"Lumlay-Lumlay, you wottah! Lumlay—"

"Rats!"

"Come heah, you uttah ass!" roared Arthur Augustus as the other junior backed to the door. "For your own good, Lumlay—"

"For my own good I'm going so as not to be driven dotty with your cackling, Gussy!" grinned the millionaire's son. "So-long!"

And he slammed the door.

For a moment or two Arthur Augustus stood staring across the room, then he turned slowly to the others.

"Bai—bai Jove! Then it's t'wue!" he gasped. "Lumlay-Lumlay has gone back to his wotten old ways, and—and is a gamblin' duffah!"

It seemed to be beyond all doubt that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had gone back to his old ways, and if that were so then there could be but one end to it all—expulsion for the black sheep!



RICHARD BROOKE.

A day-boy at St. Jim's, and a very nice fellow, indeed. Has roughed it considerably in his younger days. Was rather despised when he first came to the school, but his indomitable courage has won for him the esteem of all the decent fellows at St. Jim's. Although not a regular member of the Junior Eleven football team, Dick Brooke is no dud at the game, and he can also play a fair game on the cricket field. More of a studious fellow is Brooke. He has the ability to write verses, and is not a bad hand at musical composition.

that evening, and on top of it a particularly unpleasant impot for Mr. Linton. Then it had not been as easy to settle down to work as usual because of the Lumley-Lumley mystery.

To be perfectly candid, Tom Merry & Co. were a great deal exercised over that affair. They could not begin to understand it, yet they were very loth to put Lumley-Lumley down as an outsider. Even now, when the chums of the Shell were tossing their books away into the bookcase, Tom Merry couldn't help speaking about the mystery.

"Is isn't as if Lumley-Lumley had given any previous signs of kicking over the traces!" he exclaimed. "He's seemed as cheery and contented as anybody for ages."

"That's so."

"And look how he's bucked up at footer," added Lowther. "Regularly coming on in his old age—Oh, my hat! What's that?"

Lowther fairly rapped out the question, for the big bell was clanging out loudly. At the same moment Kildare came running swiftly along the Shell passage, shouting crisply.

"The fire brigade to their posts! Is Merry there?"

"Yes, Kildare!"

Tom Merry dashed out into the corridor. As captain of the Shell Form he held a minor post of authority in the St. Jim's fire brigade. In case of an outbreak of fire, it was Tom Merry's duty to get together his section of the

brigade drawn from the Shell and Fourth Forms.

He stood to attention waiting for Kildare to speak again. "Get your section together at once, Merry!" he rapped out. "Muster in proper order in the quadrangle! How long will it take you?"

"Five minutes as the chaps are not in bed yet."

"Try to do it in three!" cried Kildare. "A fire has broken out at Col. Wenham's house, and our brigade is miles nearer than any other. Phone message gave us the news. It's pretty serious, I believe, Merry, so there isn't a moment to waste."

The captain of St. Jim's dashed on, and Tom swung round. "Manners, slip down to the St. Jim's fire-station and get all the doors open! Lowther, go and muster Blake & Co.! I'll see to the others! Meet in three minutes' time in the quad!"

Naturally, the ringing of the bell by Taggles, the school porter, had brought most of the fellows rushing out into the various corridors, so Tom Merry's task of getting together his section ought not to have been difficult. At the start it looked as if it were to be the easiest thing imaginable.

"Kerruish! Bernard Glyn! Dane!" he shouted.

"Yes, we're here!"

"Make hard for the quad, then, and fall in with Manners' lot!" ordered Tom Merry. "Anybody seen Hammond of the Fourth?"

"Yes, I'm here, Merry."

"Slip away with the others, then! And Lumley-Lumley! Is he there?"

No one answered at once, but most of the juniors looked

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"Fire!"

THERE goes the dorm. bell, chaps!"

It was Manners of the Shell who made the remark, and he jumped to his feet without his usual reluctance over retiring for the night.

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther were equally ready to go to bed, for it had not been a specially cheery evening for the Terrible Three.

To commence with there had been rather a lot of prep

eagerly at each other. Tom Merry looked, too, anxiously as well as eagerly.

"Is Lumley-Lumley anywhere about?" he shouted. "Skimpole, you've just come out of the Common-room, haven't you? Was Lumley-Lumley there?"

Herbert Skimpole of the Shell blinked thoughtfully through his glasses and puckered his bumpy forehead into deep wrinkles.

"Yes, I've just come from the Common-room, Merry."

"Well, was Lumley-Lumley there?"

"Yes."

"Go and tell him to fall in at once, then!"

But Skimpole shook his head in surprise.

"I—I can't very well do that, Merry," he said in mild surprise. "Lumley-Lumley certainly was in the Common-room, but he isn't there now. In fact, he left the moment he succeeded in borrowing five shillings from me. I—I am afraid he has gone out, Merry!"

"Gone out?"

"Yes. With a permit I presume," nodded Skimmey.

Tom Merry was conscious of a feeling of relief. If Lumley-Lumley was out of the school on permit from Kildare, it was all right, of course. Still, the captain of the Shell had no time to waste thinking about Lumley-Lumley.

"Gore, fall in in Lumley-Lumley's place!" he ordered. "At the double for the quad!"

The juniors broke into a fast run. Quick as they were, though, Kildare was before them. In that calm but lightning-like way of his he already had the bulk of the fire brigade lined up.

"I've taken the roll of my section, Darrell," he said. "Run over the names of the others!"

"Right, Kildare!"

Darrell, the second prefect of the School House, whipped the roll-call book from Kildare's hand, and a moment later the juniors and seniors alike were answering to their names.

"Merry—"

"Adsum!"

"D'Arcy!"

"Adsum!"

"Lumley-Lumley—"

There was no answer. In surprise, Darrell glanced up from the book in his hand.

"Lumley-Lumley!" he called in a much louder voice.

Still no answer came, and Tom Merry and Jack Blake exchanged uneasy glances. Darrell of the Sixth was marking Lumley-Lumley absent.

By then Kildare and his section had the fire-engine—a very smart little affair, perhaps not right up-to-date, but quite capable of giving a good account of itself—out in the quadrangle. Lined up with it was the hose carrier and a neat, portable escape. Everything was in perfect order, and it had not taken Kildare more than five minutes from the first alarm to the moment when he was ready to set off.

Just as he gave the order to move Figgins & Co., together with the New House section of the brigade, came dashing up. Just behind them was Mr. Linton.

"As quickly as you can, Kildare!" the Shell master exclaimed. "Fresh news has come from Colonel Wenham, and the fire has a serious hold on his house. You ought to be on the spot quite twenty minutes before the Wayland brigade can arrive."

"We'll do our best, sir."

"I know that, Kildare," answered Mr. Linton. "All the brigade present?"

"All except Lumley-Lumley, sir," put in Darrell.

Loudly the words rang out, and Tom Merry glanced quickly towards Kildare. But the skipper of St. Jim's made no comment. Certainly he did not explain that Lumley-Lumley was out of the school ground on his permit.

Of course, that might not mean anything. As likely as not Kildare had not noticed what Darrell had said. Or, if he had noticed, Kildare might have forgotten that he had given Lumley-Lumley a permit.

Undoubtedly this last was possible, only there was one thing against its probability: Kildare was not good at forgetting such things. His mind was far too clearly centred on his responsibilities as captain of St. Jim's.

But there was no time for Tom Merry to worry about the affair, for the St. Jim's fire brigade was on the move.

Rapidly, but in perfect order, it swept from the quadrangle just as the last of the rain-clouds drifted towards the horizon, leaving behind an early moon.

The faint light showed up the rain-soaked countryside clearly, then something else attracted the attention of Tom Merry & Co.

Away to the west there was a red glow, and they all

knew what that meant. Colonel Wenham's fine, historic old mansion must indeed be seriously ablaze.

"Steady with the engine, Darrell! We don't want a smash-up!"

At once the leading section steadied down, for always Kildare's lightest order was obeyed to the letter on occasions like this. Perhaps that was because the St. Jim's skipper gave so few orders, confining himself to just those which were absolutely necessary.

Still in perfect order, the brigade dashed towards the scene of the fire.

The Junior in the Bushes!

"B AI Jove! What a blaze, deah boys!"

Arthur Augustus gasped with dismay as the St. Jim's fire brigade reached Colonel Wenham's grounds. But that first glimpse of the fire was deceptive, for it was from the garage that the red glow and the clouds of black smoke were pouring.

"Still, the house is on fire as well!" panted Tom Merry. "The west wing is, anyway. Stand by for Kildare's orders!"

The orders came crisply and loudly, and the St. Jim's fellows lost no time.

The smart little fire-engine was rushed up to a spot indicated by Kildare. Just as quickly, Darrell, with the help of Figgins & Co., got the hose into position, and ran with one end of it to a well Tom Merry had located.

Back raced Kildare to direct the play of water, shouting as he ran.

"Get ready with the hose, D'Arcy!"

"Wight-ho, deah boy!"

With praiseworthy smartness, Arthur Augustus whipped up the brass nozzle, which was fastened to the hose leading from the fire-engine, and Kildare's voice rang out again:

"Can't you get the engine started, chaps?"

"Yes; it'll be all right in a minute, Kildare," shouted back Bernard Glyn. "She'll fire up any moment."

Glyn was cranking round the starting-handle of the small motor engine just as hard as he could, and Arthur Augustus roared out some encouragement.

"Stick to it, deah boy! Pway don't give in! Whiz her wound—"

Bang!

The engine had started. It was throbbing away finely, drawing water from the well at a great pace. But nothing was happening at the nozzle end yet. That was because the hose was of such a length; but Arthur Augustus did not think of that.

"Somethin' w'ong here, Kildare!" he shouted. "The water isn't comin' through— Oh, gweat Scott! Ouch! Yawwooh!"

The dandy of the Fourth had accidentally turned the nozzle towards his aristocratic features at the exact moment that the water came rushing out. Full in the face it caught him, bowling him over like a ninepin.

So startled was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy that he clung to the hose in much the same manner as a drowning man would grasp at a straw; and the result suggested that Gussy was deliberately trying to drown himself.

"Wow! Help, deah boys— 'Oh, gweat Scott!'"

"Take the hose from him, Digby!" roared Kildare. "Out of the way, D'Arcy!"

"Oh, my hat! Bai Jove! What's happened? I'm dwenched to the skin—"

But no one laughed, for no one was looking at Arthur Augustus. It was the fire that mattered to the St. Jim's fellows, and Digby was playing finely into the room nearest the garage—the only room in the house from which smoke was pouring.

And as the water hissed into the room, smashing the window as it spurted through the air, Colonel Wenham came racing up. Excited, and not a little alarmed, he gripped at Tom Merry's arm.

"There are thousands of pounds' worth of antique jewellery in my study behind that room!" he cried. "For all we know the place may be on fire already, but—"

"I'll see about that, colonel!"

Tom Merry broke into a fast sprint; with him raced Jack Blake, but the hero of the Shell stopped for a moment as he was passing Digby.

"Try to keep the water away from us, Dig!" he panted.

"We're going through that casement window."

"Pretty risky, isn't it?"



Just as quickly as Blake handed up Colonel Wenham's valuable knick-knacks to Tom Merry so the junior captain of St. Jim's thrust the articles between the bars out to Lowther and Manners. At the same time Digby and the others were playing on the fire in the other room. (See page 10.)

"Dunno; but we're going. On the ball, Blake!"

Perhaps wisely the juniors raced past Kildare without attracting his attention, for it is more than doubtful whether the school captain would have allowed two juniors to risk going into the burning room. As it was, Kildare had no idea why Tom Merry and Jack Blake dashed past him.

He did shout to them when he glimpsed them running for the window; but it was too late then. The two juniors were already scrambling up on to the low veranda.

Digby cleverly steered the jet of water away from them, and Tom Merry led the way into the room.

Spark-laden smoke rushed into his face, and just in front there was a dull red glow. He choked a little and crooked his elbow over his mouth and nostrils.

"Steady on, Blake!" he gasped. "The study door's to the left!"

"Yes, I see. Phew, this room isn't half ablaze!"

"No doubt about that!"

In the dash for the door Tom Merry and Jack Blake by no means escaped scot-free, for sparks were flying all around them. Still, they reached the door and the room adjoining.

Once inside it the St. Jim's juniors understood why it was that Colonel Wenham had been so anxious about his treasures in the study. The place was simply crowded out with valuables of all kinds.

"Oh, my hat, we want about a dozen furniture removers

to shift this!" gasped Blake. "Iron bars in front of the window, too!"

"Phew! Yes!" answered Tom Merry. "Anyway, get the window open, old top, and I'll shut the door!"

He slammed to the door, but that did not mean that he failed to realise the very unpleasant position both he and Blake were in. In fact, that study had become a veritable trap with the closing of the door, for there was no other way out of it, unless the iron bars could be wrenched clear from the window from outside.

And beyond the closed door was the blazing room. Even as Blake flung up the window Tom Merry could hear the roar of the flames in the adjoining compartment. He rushed to the window and joined Blake in shouting to those outside.

"Kildare, you've got to fairly soak that room Digby's playing on to do any good!" yelled the Shell captain. "It's absolutely blazing!"

"Yes; but are you all right in there?" shouted back Kildare, racing with others round the corner of the house. "Why, the window's barred! Herries, a hack-saw from the engine tool-box, and all the blades there are! These bars have got to be cut through, and as quickly as possible!"

From the set look which had swept across Kildare's face it was clear that he knew the plan of Colonel Wenham's house, and knew the sort of trap Tom Merry and Jack

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Blake had stumbled into. But Kildare could be trusted to get those bars cut through in record time.

Meanwhile Tom Merry was thrusting between the bars all manner of valuable knick-knacks Jack Blake was handing up to him.

Naturally Blake was not exactly a connoisseur of antiques. He could tell a good cricket-bat from one made of dud willow, and knew quite a lot about footballs and how many panels they ought to have. But art treasures were a good deal beyond the leader of Study No. 6.

Still, he was doing his best, and at one moment he was handing Tom Merry a picture, and the next a vase, and so on. And just as quickly Tom Merry was thrusting the articles out to Lowther and Manners and the rest of the juniors below.

All the time Digby and the others in charge of the hose were putting up a splendid fight against the fire in the other room. In spite of their efforts, though, the St. Jim's engine was really too small for the work in hand, and Digby could see that he was not getting the fire under very quickly.

He shouted anxiously to Kildare.

"The fire's gaining a bit, I think, Kildare! What had I better do?"

The St. Jim's skipper raced up, but at the same moment Tom Merry's voice rang out in a shout.

"Pass the hose through this window, chaps! I believe it will be all U P with the giddy fire if you do!"

"Yes, good idea!" shouted back Kildare. "As quickly as you can, Digby!"

The hose was rushed to the window, and Jack Blake grabbed at it. The next moment he and Tom Merry crashed open the door leading to the next room, and sent the water hissing into the bigger compartment.

A huge cloud of white steam poured into the juniors' faces, but they took no notice of that. They had got that jet of water playing on exactly the right spot, and they were literally drenching out the flames.

Tom Merry gave vent to a rousing cheer.

"We're winning through, Kildare! We'll have the flames all out in a few minutes!"

"Good!"

As Kildare rapped out that one word the sound of a loudly ringing bell became audible in the distance. Everybody knew what that meant. The Wayland fire brigade was being rushed to the spot.

Almost as it arrived the last of the iron bars in front of the study window was hacked away by Kerruish and the other juniors now in charge of the hack-saw, and again Kildare was giving orders.

"No need for you to stay in there any longer, Merry!" he cried. "Out you come, both of you!"

Black and grimy and not a little scorched, Tom Merry and Blake came scrambling through the window, gasping a little for breath. A whole crowd of willing hands helped them down, among them being Colonel Wenham's.

"Splendid, youngsters!" the colonel cried. "Whether by luck or judgment I don't know, but the things you handed through the window were amongst my most valuable possessions."

"That's all right, then, sir!" answered Tom Merry gleefully. "Now the Wayland brigade is here nothing more will be burnt."

"Splendid!"

Close to the school fire-engine stood the St. Jim's fellows, waiting for fresh orders, and near by Colonel Wenham's servants were collecting the art treasures Tom Merry and Jack Blake had salvaged from the study.

With the Wayland Fire Brigade hard at work, there was naturally a certain amount of confusion, although Kildare was calm enough.

"Limber up, you fellows!" he ordered. "All that remains to be done now is for the Wayland brigade to stand by in case of any further minor outbreaks! There is no need for us to stay!"

A little disappointed, but willingly enough, the St. Jim's fellows got to work. The hose was flattened out and rolled up, the various tools and apparatus bundled aboard the fire-engine and into the lockers of the trailer. In less than ten minutes all was ready for the homeward journey.

"Fall in by that tree over there!" ordered Kildare. "Darrell take the roll-call again!"

The fellows fell in in good order, Tom Merry and Jack Blake being at the end of the long line. Still black and grimy-looking, they waited for Darrell to call out their names, then a voice extremely well-known at St. Jim's

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broke out in a loud sort of stage whisper behind Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove, who is that in the bushes, deah boys?"

"Shut up, Gussy, you ass—"

"I wefuse to shut up, Tom Mewwy!" whispered back Arthur Augustus. "I distinctly saw someone in the bushes, and—and it may be one of our fellows, who is injured or somethin'—"

"My—my hat!"

It was Jack Blake who gave vent to that exclamation, for he, too, had seen that someone amongst the bushes, a junior wearing a St. Jim's cap!

He stared intently, then gripped Tom Merry by the arm.

"You—you see who it is?"

"Lumley-Lumley!"

"Bai Jove, yaas!" whispered Arthur Augustus, a note of genuine relief in his voice. "Lumlay-Lumlay must have come wushin' along with us, aftah all! Jollay good!"

But that explanation of the swell of St. Jim's could scarcely be the right one, for why was Lumley-Lumley hiding there in the bushes? Surely if he had come running from St. Jim's—or from anywhere else—the best thing he could have done would have been to line up with the others now, and so answer when his name came on the roll-call.

And Darrell was shouting out his name, apparently forgetting for the moment that Lumley-Lumley had been marked absent when the brigade had left St. Jim's.

"Lumley-Lumley!"

Quite loudly the name was called out by the prefect, and it must have been heard by the junior in the bushes. But he did not answer. He did not even move. He just stayed crouching there, obviously under the impression no one had seen him.

"How—how dashed funny!" muttered Arthur Augustus.

"It's more than funny!" growled Jack Blake in his blunt way. "It's beastly suspicious! It looks to me very much as if the ass has been down to the Green Man again playing cards with those awful rotters!"

"Bai Jove, I twost not!"

Tom Merry said nothing at all. The mystery of Lumley-Lumley completely fogged him; for if Lumley-Lumley had been down to the Green Man again what was he doing out here in the country by Colonel Wenham's house? And if he hadn't been to the Green Man why didn't he join in the fire brigade and take his hand in the work of limbering up?

Tom Merry frowned as those questions flashed across his mind because he could not find answers to either of them. He just couldn't begin to understand the mystery of Lumley-Lumley.

A few minutes later the St. Jim's fire brigade had started on the homeward journey, and Tom Merry was sure—quite sure—that Lumley-Lumley had been left there behind in the bushes.

It certainly was very astounding.

The Missing Jewel Box!

IT must have been very nearly midnight when Jack Blake, Digby, Herries, and Arthur Augustus reached the Fourth Form dormitory at St. Jim's that night.

As was only to be expected, the juniors who had not accompanied the fire brigade to Colonel Wenham's place sat bolt upright in their beds, eager for news.

"What happened, Blake?"

"Is it true, as Baggy Trimble says, that the house was burnt to the ground and five lives lost?"

The questions fairly flooded upon Jack Blake & Co., but before he attempted to answer any of them he cast a quick, uneasy glance along the row of beds. At the same moment Arthur Augustus gave vent to a subdued murmur.

"Lumlay-Lumlay hasn't turned up, then, deah boys!"

"No, he hasn't turned up—"

"The utter ass!" growled Herries. "Just asking for the sack, of course! Perhaps this is him coming along the passage."

Blake & Co. turned towards the door. Certainly there were footsteps to be heard in the passage outside, but they seemed too loud for a junior's. All the same, the chums of Study No. 6 waited anxiously for the opening of the door.

It crashed open, and the next moment Eric Kildare stood framed in the doorway.

(Continued on page 12.)

GRAND "ERRORS" COMPETITION

BIG MONEY PRIZES

1ST. PRIZE £10 2ND. £5. 5 PRIZES OF £1 EACH
and
6 FOOTBALLS.

WHAT a splendid offer, chums! £10 First Prize; £5 Second Prize; 5 Prizes of £1 each, and consolation prizes of Six Footballs!

This easy competition is only open to readers of the GEM, and the opportunity afforded should not be missed.

If you do not win the First Prize you may be the successful winner of one of the smaller awards.

It is a competition in which keenness counts. And who could be keener than readers of the GEM?

This is the Second Picture in our easy contest, and all readers who have not yet obtained the First Picture should get it through their newsagent, or our Back Number Department, Bear Alley, Faringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

is to study carefully the picture below—an illustration in which the artist has purposely made mistakes—and see how many "Errors" you can find in the incident.

For instance, one mistake is pretty obvious; the express is passing the signal which is set at danger.

There are several "Errors" like this that the keen observer will soon discover.

Don't be satisfied with the most obvious mistakes, but look into the drawing until you are satisfied that no "Error" has escaped your attention.

Remember there are other readers competing against you, and it is up to YOU to beat them if possible.

As you find the mistakes, jot them down neatly upon a piece of paper, then,

when you have satisfied yourself that is the exact number of all the "Errors" count them, put the Grand Total—that is the exact number of all the "Errors" you have found—in the space provided in the top right-hand corner of the Entrance Form.

Having followed these simple instructions, sign your name and address in the space provided on the Entrance Form. Then pin the Entrance Form to your neatly written list of "Errors," and put both in a safe place until next Wednesday when the next picture containing "Errors" will appear.

In all there will be six of these pictures, and readers are asked to study each in turn, making a FRESH LIST OF "ERRORS" for each picture.

After the last picture in this "ERRORS" COMPETITION has appeared you will be informed when and

where to send in your complete six lists of errors.

Remember, all the above prizes **MUST BE WON**—the First Prize of £10 being awarded to the sender who has found the largest number of "Errors" throughout the whole competition. The decision of the Editor of the GEM will be absolutely final.

There is always this fact to remember, too, that if you only find a fair amount of "Errors" in one picture you may be able to bring yourself on level with others in another picture.

Every attempt must be complete in itself, that is, your six lists of "Errors" and the six coupons all properly arranged and filled in as directed.

A regular weekly delivery of the GEM from your newsagent will ensure you against missing any one picture in this NEW and Novel Contest.

"ERRORS" COMPETITION—ENTRANCE FORM.

SECOND PICTURE.

I accept the Editor's decision as final.

Number of Errors,

Name

Address

GEM.

And don't forget the third picture in this Great Competition will appear in next week's GEM—SO DON'T SEND ANY ENTRIES YET. Employees of the proprietors of this journal may not compete.



"Blake, you were with Merry in Colonel Wenham's study during the fire?" he rapped out.

"Yes, Kildare."

"Well, do you remember handing a small black box out of the window?" next asked the school captain. "A box covered with leather and about a foot square?"

Jack Blake thought hard then half shook his head.

"I can't remember any special box," he said at last. "At least, I remember two or three, one with some old-fashioned silver knives and forks in—"

"No, not that one!"

"Well, I can't recall any other," said Blake. "Of course, Merry and I were working just as quickly as we could, and I was snatching up anything that came to hand and would go between the bars at the window. I wouldn't like to say, Kildare."

"Think again, youngster, and try to remember."

But Jack Blake shook his head more definitely than ever.

"There may have been a black leather box, but I don't recall one," he said. "Is—is it important?"

"Very important indeed," was the skipper's grave answer. "As it happens the box in question contained Colonel Wenham's most treasured possession—an immensely valuable emerald necklace of extremely old pattern."

"Phew!"

"And—and it cannot be found," said Kildare, frowning. "It is known to have been in the study at the time of the fire, but it isn't there now. Nor is it amongst the articles you and Merry salvaged."

"My hat!"

"I understand a very thorough search has been made and is being made now," went on Kildare. "But Colonel Wenham thought it wise to telephone through to St. Jim's to ask if you can remember anything about the box."

Again Blake shook his head.

"No; I can't remember it."

"Then slip along and see Tom Merry," said the school captain. "Discuss it carefully with him, and see if either of you can remember anything at all about it. Afterwards come down to my study."

"Yes, certainly, Kildare."

Jack Blake flashed away. He knew that Tom Merry had gone up to the Shell dormitory, and the way led along a specially dark passage. But the journey would not have taken the chief of Study No. 6 more than a minute or two if he had not pulled up dead just as he was passing the middle window in the passage.

Exactly what it was that made Blake stop he did not know at the moment, but he found himself staring at the window. Then he realised that it was being pushed silently open, and that someone was sneaking into St. Jim's.

"My—my hat!"

Blake muttered the exclamation to himself, and took a step forward into the window recess. There he stopped again, for a head and shoulders had appeared above the window-sill. And there was light enough outside for Jack Blake to glimpse at least one thing—this midnight visitor to the School House was wearing a St. Jim's cap!

The next moment Blake was stepping forward again.

"Lumley-Lumley!"

He rapped out the name, and the junior, clambering up on the window-sill started violently. Then he screwed up his eyes, recognised Jack Blake, and laughed shortly.

"Hallo!" he said briefly. "Didn't reckon to find you up at this time."

Jack Blake bit his lip. Perhaps of all juniors he was the least likely to butt into another fellow's business, but of late he had rather liked Lumley-Lumley. His utter recklessness in face of danger, his colossal nerve—they appealed to the junior from the broad acres.

He stifled his disinclination to butt in.

"My hat! You must be an ass, Lumley—"

"Oh!"

"I—I mean, you're just asking for the sack!"

"Am I?" commented Lumley-Lumley. "Pity, isn't it? Good-night, old top!"

He pushed his way past the leader of Study No. 6.

Jack Blake bit his lip again, and shrugged his sturdy shoulders. After all, it was no business of his if Jerrold Lumley-Lumley liked to look for trouble, and there was a more important matter to attend to. Jack Blake dismissed Lumley-Lumley from his mind, and hurried on for his talk with Tom Merry.

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A Case for Ferrers Locke!

"BAI Jove! Is that you, Blake, deah boy?"

Arthur Augustus asked the question in a sleepy sort of voice as Blake crept into the Fourth Form dormitory nearly an hour later.

As Jack answered the swell of St. Jim's, Digby and Herries both sat up in bed, eager for news.

"What happened, Blake?"

"Could Tom Merry remember about the black leather box—"

"Get it off your chest, old top!"

Jack Blake sat down on the foot of Herries' bed, but he had not a great deal to tell.

"I yarned and yarned with Merry, but it was no go," he said in a lowered voice so as not to wake any of the other juniors. "Neither of us can remember any particular box except the one I told Kildare about."

"My hat!"

"Yet it must have been handed through the window, deah boys!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "As it was not in the studey aftahwards but is known to have been there befoah, it stands to reason—"

"Oh, dry up, Gussy!"

"No; pway listen, Hewwies—"

"Rats, dummy!" growled Herries. "So you couldn't remember anything, Blake? Did you and Merry go and tell Kildare that?"

"Had to!"

"And what's going to happen?" asked Digby. "Is the matter going to be put into the hands of the police?"

Jack Blake shook his head.

"No, not exactly," he answered. "Colonel Wenham is of the opinion that some crook or other must have been watching the fire, and—in some way sneaked the jewel-box. He thinks it will be better if the affair is put into the hands of a private detective."

"Ferrers Locke?"

This time Blake nodded.

"Yes, Dig. The colonel told us on the phone that he happened to know that Ferrers Locke is staying at Wayland."

"Oh, good!"

"But the colonel isn't quite certain whether Ferrers Locke will be able to take up the case," went on Blake. "It seems that the detective had a bit of a motoring smash just outside Wayland a few days ago, and has been in the hospital ever since. Still, we shall know to-morrow whether he will be able to investigate matters for the colonel."

Digby and Herries were openly excited, and they did not doubt for a moment that Ferrers Locke would take up the case. As Herries said, it would take a very bad motoring accident to keep that famous criminologist out of the war he had been waging against crooks all his life.

"He'll be in it right up to the neck, Blake," Digby agreed. "Expect he'll come to St. Jim's, too, to make inquiries."

"Wathah, deah boys; and Blake and Tom Mewwy will have to twy and wemembah about that box again," declared Arthur Augustus. "As a matter of fact, it is weally amazing to me that they can have forgotten such a simple thing—"

"Rats, duffer!"

"More than amazin'; it is astoundin', Blake," declared Arthur Augustus. "If I had been in that woom I should have mentally noticed ewevythin'."

"Yes, I don't think!" grinned Herries. "I can see Gussy remembering, with smoke and sparks all over the place and a sporting chance of being burnt to death!"

"Gussy, of all people, too!" chuckled Digby. "Why, you can't always remember that you're a silly ass!"

"Bai Jove, you wuffian—"

"Oh, switch off!" breathed Jack Blake. "I've told you all there is to tell, and I want to get to bed. A hit whacked, you know— Hallo, where's Lumley-Lumley?"

"Eh?"

"Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. Where is he?"

Arthur Augustus felt for his celebrated monocle, and an expression of amazement crept across his aristocratic face.

"My—my toppah! What's the mattah with you, Blake, deah boy?"

"The matter with me?"

"With your wotten memowry, I mean," said Gussy vaguely. "Not only you can't wemembah a simple little mattah like a black leathah box, but you've jolly well forgotten that you spoke about Lumlay-Lumlay not havin' returned yourself."

"Yes, of course you did, Blake!"



"Lumley-Lumley," said Mr. Railton tersely, "you—you have been out of the school?" Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth did not speak. His silence was a sufficient answer to the question. "To-morrow morning," continued the Housemaster sternly, "you will report to the Head!" (See page 16.)

The chief of Study No. 6 shrugged his shoulders. "But Lumley-Lumley did come in," he said bluntly. "I saw him scrambling through the passage window!"

"Bai Jove!" "He didn't come into this room, anyway," declared Herries. "We've been awake all the time!"

Jack Blake looked more puzzled than ever, and instinctively crossed the room to the window.

Outside, the moon was shining quite brilliantly, for there was not a vestige of a cloud in the sky now. In fact, the quadrangle was almost as light as day as Blake stared down at it.

And as the Fourth-Former stared he glimpsed someone climbing the school wall near Taggles' lodge—someone who was obviously a School House junior.

Blake waited there at the window long enough for the junior on the wall to drop down, and as he turned Blake knew he had not made a mistake. It had been Lumley-Lumley who had just left the school grounds. There could not be a shadow of doubt about it.

In disgust Blake turned from the window and noticed that the dormitory door was opening silently. The movement was followed by Tom Merry putting his head round the doorpost.

"You awake, Blake?"

"Yes."

"And Lumley-Lumley's in bed, of course?" went on the captain of the Shell. "Not? That's funny! Anyway, he's in the school, for he woke Cutts up in the Fifth Form dorm and borrowed two pounds from him."

"What?"

"Heard Cutts laughing about it to St. Leger," declared

Tom Merry. "I was on my way up from that jaw with Kildare. Couldn't help overhearing Cutts and the rest of the blades of the Fifth talking."

"My hat!" muttered Jack Blake bluntly. "I know where Lumley-Lumley is, then!"

"Where?"

"Gone back to the Green Man for more card-playing!" snapped Blake. "Saw him getting over the school wall. I've finished with Lumley-Lumley!"

"Y-yes," nodded Tom Merry, as he backed from the room.

"All the same, it's pretty funny."

"Pretty rotten, you mean!" growled Blake. "Good-night, old top!"

And Jack Blake scrambled into bed, once again succeeding in dismissing Jerrold Lumley-Lumley from his mind.

In the early hours of that morning, almost when it was getting light, the middle window in the Fourth Form passage opened silently, and again Lumley-Lumley came clambering over the sill.

But this time there was no one to see him, for St. Jim's was in absolute silence.

With easy calm Lumley-Lumley closed the window after him, but apparently he was anxious to take as few risks as possible, for he removed his somewhat muddy boots before starting on his journey along the corridor.

Then, gripping his boots firmly in one hand, he tiptoed towards the dormitory. He opened the door and undressed in the dark, but he made scarcely a sound. Certainly not a sound sufficient to wake any of the Fourth-Formers.

"Good!" he murmured, as he slipped between the sheets. "I guess I've earned a bit of a sleep!"

Which was a curious thought for a junior to have when he

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had spent as much of his evening as possible playing cards with bounders in the Green Man. But then Jerrold Lumley-Lumley always had been a curious chap himself, never acting quite as other juniors would be expected to act, always causing surprises.

Still, he slept easily enough that night, for even rising bell when it clanged throughout the school failed to wake him. It needed the excited voices of the Fourth-Formers scrambling from their beds to do that.

Gussy's Few Words!

"**S**AY, is it really time to get up, chaps?" yawned the millionaire's son. "Doesn't seem to me as if I'd been to sleep at all."

Jack Blake, Herries, and Digby flashed glances Lumley-Lumley's way, and they were not specially friendly glances. They could quite understand why it was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was averse to getting up this sunny, crisp morning.

Juniors who spend half the night playing cards with scamps such as Lumley-Lumley's new friends at the Green Man can scarcely hope to feel fresh and fit in the morning.

Yet Lumley-Lumley did not seem greatly the worse for his experiences over-night. He tumbled out of bed with the rest, and started chatting with Kerruish about the previous night's fire.

The Maux junior was ready enough to talk, and Lumley-Lumley showed ordinary sort of interest. It was not until Kerruish suddenly remembered Lumley-Lumley had not answered his name at the fire brigade roll-call that the conversation flagged a bit.

"No, I didn't answer my name," the millionaire's son said easily. "I suppose Kildare booked me absent?"

"Darrell did."

"Same thing," yawned Lumley-Lumley. "Bound to be a rumpus, of course. What's likely to happen to me, D'Arcy?"

Arthur Augustus turned slowly from the mirror which was aiding him in manipulating a new tie. Usually when anyone interrupted the swell of the School House in that important task there were loud and indignant protests. This morning, though, Arthur Augustus looked very grave, not to say alarmed.

"Yaas, there'll be a wumpus, deah boy—I mean Lumlay-Lumlay," he answered sternly. "A vewy gwave wumpus, indeed, unless you have a good weason for bein' absent."

"Oh, that's all right, then!"

"You had a good weason—"

"Toppin' one," grinned the millionaire's son. "Had some new pals of mine to meet. Regular sporty lads, too. Friends of Banks—"

"Gweat—gweat Scott!"

"You know Banks?"

Arthur Augustus gasped.

"Weally, Lumlay-Lumlay, you have no wight to suggest such a thing," he shuddered. "I pwesume you are wewewing to Banks of the Green Man?"

"Yes, that's the guy—"

"Then I do not know the wottah!" said Arthur Augustus freezingly. "I should uttably wefuse to know him, and if he dared to speak to me, I should be inclined to administrah a feahful thwashin' on the spot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's no weason for wibald laughter, Lumlay-Lumlay—"

"Oh, isn't there!" grinned the millionaire's son. "You take it from me, D'Arcy, Banks can use his mitts some. He and one of my other pals had a set-to late last night with the gloves, and it was topping!"

"Bai—bai Jove—"

"And Banks won easily," went on Lumley-Lumley. "Put Bud out in the third round, and it cost me half a quid in a side bet with Slinger."

"Slingah—"

"Yes, 'Slinger' Horton, another pal of mine," nodded Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "Awful sporting bounder. Backs his fancy at any sport from cutting the cards to the geegees. Anything the matter, D'Arcy?"

Certainly there appeared to be something the matter with the swell of the Fourth, for he was literally gasping. He groped for his monocle, and he thrust it into his eye quite roughly. Then he glared at Lumley-Lumley through it and fairly snorted.

"You—you wottah, Lumlay—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"You uttah scamp—"

"Go hon, Gussy!"

"And—and you are a disgwace to the Fourth Form, bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "F'wom this minute I wefuse to have anythin' more to do with you. I twust you will have the decency not to address me even, for I uttably wefuse to converse with any fwiends of Banks and— and Slingah Horton, or any othah wottah who fwequents the Gween Man!"

"Hurrah!" cheered Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "Now I shall have some peace. There goes the gong for brekker, chaps!"

He sauntered from the dormitory with his hands stuffed carelessly into his pockets.

By reason of his little outburst Arthur Augustus was reduced to rushing through his toilet, a thing he hated to do. Still, he hated even more getting into hot water with Mr. Railton as early in the day as breakfast-time, so fairly raced from the dormitory.

"Bai Jove, I shall only just do it!" he panted, dashing round the corner at the end of the corridor. "I've got to wush like anythin'— Oh, my toppah! Wow! Oh, gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus ejaculated thus, for he had gone full tilt into the chest of Kildare, and the brawny captain of St. Jim's was a decided heavy-weight compared with Gussy.

In consequence, Arthur Augustus shot back and thudded against the passage wall.

"Bai Jove, I'm sowwy, Kildare, though I can't help con-sidabin' that you wush wathah wecklessly wound cornahs. Howevah, if you will allow me to pass—"

"No; wait a minute, D'Arcy!"

"No, weally, I haven't the time—"

"Wait, I say!" ordered the school captain. "You are going in to brekker, of course? Well, tell Blake he is to join Merry at the Head's garage at half-past eleven this morning, and that they are both to go over to Colonel Wenham's place."

"Phew!"

"And don't waste time asking questions."

"No, wathah not, but—"

"In another two minutes you will be marked absent by Mr. Railton," said Kildare sternly. "Hadn't you better buzz off?"

"Bai Jove, yaas!"

And Arthur Augustus dashed on to give Jack Blake the latest item of news.

Naturally, the chief of Study No. 6 was excited at this sudden call to Colonel's Wenham's house, and it was the same with Tom Merry. That they were both about to be arrested for jewel stealing, as Baggy Trimble suggested, was not considered likely by either the Fourth or the Shell Forms, though.

"All the same, I expect it's the police who want to see you," commented Lowther enviously. "Lucky bounders to get off maths!"

"Going in the Head's car, too!" agreed Digby.

"Yaas, that's twue, and all because they can't wemembah a simple little thing that any ass could wecall quite easily!" declared Arthur Augustus. "It's weally wathah stwange!"

"Duffer!" grinned Tom Merry. "Come on, Blake, it's time for classes!"

Time passed quickly to Tom Merry and Jack Blake, and punctually at half-past eleven the Head's car started on the short journey to Colonel Wenham's house. In less than a quarter of an hour the car was drawing up in the colonel's grounds, and a young man came through the doorway, limping slightly, but with a cheery smile on his keen, alert face.

At once Tom Merry sprang out of the car.

"My hat, it's Mr. Ferrers Locke!"

"By Jove, yes!" shouted Blake.

The next moment the two juniors were shaking hands warmly with an old, tried friend, Ferrers Locke, the world-famous detective.

Ferrers Locke is Puzzled!

"**I**T'S splendid to see you lads again!" exclaimed the detective. "As a matter of fact, I expected to pay a visit to St. Jim's before this, only I had a car crash in Wayland!"

"Yes, we heard about that, sir!"

"Nothing much of a crash, but it damaged the old knee, Merry," went on Ferrers Locke. "Against hospital orders I am out to-day. Still, this missing jewel-case is a very extraordinary affair!"



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Lumley-Lumley tackled each other with a will, sending the table flying. "Boys, what on earth is the matter?" Instinctively the juniors dropped their hands, and turned round to see Ferrers Locke standing in the study doorway. (See page 18.)

Eagerly Tom Merry and Jack Blake looked up.
"You are investigating the affair, sir?" Blake asked.
"You sent for us to—to help?"

"Exactly!"
For a moment or two Ferrers Locke's forehead puckered itself up into thoughtful lines, then in his crisp way he rapped out a question.

"Neither of you youngsters can remember anything about the missing box, I understand?"
Tom Merry shook his head ruefully.

"Not a thing, sir—"
"Well, it could scarcely be expected that you would remember," commented the detective. "The thing now is for you to show me exactly what you did in the study during the fire!"

Eagerly enough Tom Merry and Jack Blake reconstructed their salvage operation. Just as had happened during the fire, Tom Merry stood inside the room by the window, while Blake pretended to hand him things. Outside in the ground Ferrers Locke asked several tense questions.

"Who took the various articles from you, Merry, when they were passed through the bars?"

"All sorts of chaps!"
"Only St. Jim's fellows?"

Tom Merry nodded.
"Yes, I am sure of that, sir!" he said decidedly. "If there had been a stranger I should have noticed. Yes, they were all St. Jim's chaps!"

"And Colonel Wenham's butler was here all the time?"
"So Kildare said afterwards," answered Blake. "It was the butler who took charge of the boxes and things and piled them up just a bit to the left of where you are standing, near where the fire-engine was."

Ferrers Locke nodded slowly, but he was obviously puzzled.

"You see, boys, the curious thing about it all is that I happen to be engaged just now on tracking down a gang

of notorious jewel-thieves!" he exclaimed as the St. Jim's juniors came out into the grounds. "A clever, resourceful gang, mind, who concentrates only on big hauls. This mysterious disappearance of Colonel Wenham's jewel-case is all the more extraordinary because I believe the leaders of the crook gang are in this neighbourhood!"

"Phew!"
"But—but how could they have worked it?" burst out Jack Blake. "Say the crooks mixed up with our fellows, someone would have spotted them."

"That's so!"
"And I don't believe there was a single stranger amongst us until the Wayland brigade came along!" declared Jack Blake. "I am sure there wasn't!"

"I am sure, too, because I specially questioned Kildare over the phone on the subject," agreed Ferrers Locke. "All the same, that does not prove one of the gang was not hiding somewhere—among those bushes, for instance!"

He pointed carelessly to his left, and it must have been absolutely chance that made him indicate the very bushes under which Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had been seen hiding.

It was a startling coincidence, and for the moment it quite staggered Tom Merry.

"My—my hat!"
"Yes, Merry?"

"N-nothing, Mr. Locke!" stammered the Shell junior, and he flashed a warning glance to Jack Blake.

Jack Blake half shook his head, for it seemed utterly absurd to bring in Lumley-Lumley's name.

True, Lumley-Lumley was known to be a frequenter of the Green Man, and he had been seen playing cards with awful-looking bounders. True, too, that he was short of money, but all that was just coincidental in Jack Blake's mind. Certainly it was not evidence enough to link Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's name with a daring jewel robbery.

All the same, Tom Merry and Jack Blake were very

puzzled and not a little uneasy, so it came as a relief to them when the colonel called from one of the rooms that lunch was ready.

Naturally, nothing was talked of during the meal except the mysterious disappearance of the jewel-box, but there was nothing anybody could say that threw the slightest light on the matter.

The butler, for instance, a very old servant of Colonel Wenham's, was quite sure that no stranger had been near the valuables after they had been handed by Tom Merry from the burning study. Nor could he remember whether the missing box had ever been amongst the things handed to him.

"It wasn't any too light, sir," he said to Ferrers Locke as he handed round the coffee. "I just took the articles as they came. I don't remember seeing the box, sir."

The puzzled look came back into the detective's face, and he made no answer. He seemed to be completely lost in thought, for he did not notice another servant enter the room. "A letter-card for Mr. Locke, sir—express post!"

The detective looked up at that, glanced at the letter-card handed to him, and at once his face became keen and alert-looking. He tore open the letter-card and read the short message it contained. Then he thrust it into his pocket with a laugh.

"That note at least settles one thing, boys," he said to Tom Merry and Blake. "The gang of jewel thieves I am after had nothing to do with the colonel's loss."

"Not?"

"No, Merry," came the criminologist's answer. "I have just had word that none of the crooks touched any of the things handed out of this house on the night of the fire."

Eagerly Tom Merry and Jack Blake, and even Colonel Wenham, waited for Ferrers Locke to go on, but apparently the detective had no more to tell. Or, more likely, nothing he wished to tell. Instead, he jumped to his feet and gave Tom Merry and Jack Blake their orders for the afternoon.

"First of all, you are wanted at Wayland police-station to give your story," he exclaimed. "After that, you had better go to the pictures."

"The—the pictures?"

"Yes, unless there is a decent footer match on at Wayland," laughed Ferrers Locke. "I don't mind where you go so long as you do not return to St. Jim's until after everybody is asleep and in bed. That is, everybody who would be likely to pester you with questions."

"But—"

"Oh, I have arranged about permits for you!" went on Ferrers Locke. "You see, my boys, I don't want anybody in this neighbourhood to know I'm within a hundred miles of the spot, because I am still on the track of the jewel thieves."

At that Colonel Wenham also rose to his feet, looking openly disappointed.

"Does that mean, Mr. Locke, that you are giving up your attempt to find my box?" he exclaimed. "If so, I had better wire for some other detective—"

Ferrers Locke laughed easily.

"No, colonel, it merely means that I hope to be able to return to you your missing jewellery in a very short time," he answered. "In fact, I believe I can promise that."

"Phew!" whistled Tom Merry.

"My—my hat!" gasped Jack Blake. "Can't—can't you tell us more, Mr. Locke?"

"Not a word more," came the answer. "Remember, no one is to hear that I am in the neighbourhood, and—you had better slip along to the station and catch your train to Wayland."

And Tom Merry and Jack Blake went, more puzzled than ever.

Caught Out!

"Gussy are you awake, old chump?"

Digby of the Fourth asked the question at about eleven that night, sitting bolt upright in his bed to ask it. By way of answer Arthur Augustus snored peacefully.

"Gussy, you duffer, wake up!" insisted Dig, shaking the swell of the School House. "Open your blessed eyes, ass! Oh, my hat! Dig him in the ribs, Herries!"

"Right!" grinned Herries sleepily. "There you are!" It was a hefty sort of dig, and it roused Arthur Augustus at once. In fact, it brought an indignant wail from him.

"You uttah wuffian, Hewies—"

"Well, wake up!" breathed Digby. "Did you shut our study window, Gussy?"

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"No, deah boy!"

"Ass!" snorted Digby. "As Blake hasn't come back you jolly well ought to have seen to the window! You were last in the study!"

"Yaas, old bean!"

"And you left it open?"

"That's wight!"

"Then go down and shut it, you footler!" snorted Digby.

"At once, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus shuddered slightly.

"Don't be wedic at this time of the night, Digbby!" he answered. "I uttably wefuse to get out of bed to shut any window! To-morrow mornin' I will attend to the matiah. For the pwesent I pwapose to go to sleep again!"

Digby snorted once more. Of course, the proper thing to be done was to yank the dozing Arthur Augustus from between the sheets and compel him to return to Study No. 6 and see to the window. But to do that meant rousing the whole dormitory.

And the whole dormitory might not be best pleased. Digby quite saw that, and so did Herries.

"Best wait until the morning to bump Gussy!" he growled. "We don't want a rampus now. I'll toss up which of us shuts the window if you like, Dig."

"Oh, let's both go!"

"Right-ho!" agreed Herries. "We can have a look in the Shell dorm to see if Tom Merry is back. Funny the kids haven't shown up before."

Digby nodded as he slipped on a dressing-gown. All that evening there had been a good deal of speculation in the Fourth Form and the Shell about the long absence of Jack Blake and Tom Merry, and there had been any amount of rumours. But there had been no real information at all.

Still discussing the matter, Digby and Herries hurried along the corridor, lighted only in patches where the moon shone through the windows. It was near one of these windows that Digby breathed a warning.

"Sssh! Someone's on the prowl!"

There was a bath-room door close to Herries, and he opened it noiselessly. Then he and Dig slipped in, just as they both glimpsed Mr. Railton stepping out of one of the other rooms further along the corridor.

"My hat! Lucky escape!" breathed Digby. "Not a sound, old top!"

"Oh, I'm not going to kick up a rampus!" grinned back Herries. "I already owe the Railton bird more lines than I shall be able to pay! Phew! What's that?"

A distinct scraping sound had carried to the Fourth-Formers' ears, just the sort of sound that would be made by someone stealthily opening one of the passage windows.

And somebody was opening a passage window! From where Digby and Herries crouched in the bath-room, peering round the door, they distinctly saw the shadow of a head and shoulders thrown on the passage floor in the light patch in front of the middle window. And Mr. Railton had seen the shadow, too. That was absolutely proved by the way in which the master stopped dead, then drew back a little into the shadow of a doorway.

The scraping sound continued, and Digby and Herries could tell from the shadow on the passage floor exactly what was happening. Someone was climbing into the school through the window, had actually got into the school by now.

"But—but it can't be Blake!" breathed Digby. "He and Merry would both have permits!"

"That's so— My hat, Railton's coming forward!"

Silently the master stepped from the shadow of the doorway. He was almost up to that window recess from which the shadow was being thrown, when his voice rapped out sternly:

"Who is there?"

There came in answer a startled gasp, then a junior stepped from the window recess. At once Mr. Railton's voice rang out again.

"You, Lumley-Lumley?"

"Yes, sir!"

"You—you have been out of the school?"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was silent, for he never had troubled much to answer questions which answered themselves. Obviously he had been out of the school, or else he could not have been climbing back into it. The junior, who had spent his early life in the Bowery quarter of New York, waited for the next thing to happen.

It happened in the only way it could.

"To-morrow morning you will report to the Head!" rasped Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir!"

"And—and I trust you realise that this is a very serious matter," went on the Housemaster. "Now go to your dormitory at once!"

"Very well, sir!"

Quite calmly Lumley-Lumley turned away and came striding along the passage. He had to pass quite close to the bath-room door behind which Digby and Herries crouched, and it happened that there was another moonlit patch close to hand. In consequence the Fourth-Formers saw Lumley-Lumley quite clearly.

Saw his calm, self-confident face, his steady eyes, which never showed fear what else they might show, and both juniors saw something else. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was carrying half-hidden under his coat a small, black box!

Only for an instant could Digby and Herries see the box, for Lumley-Lumley suddenly swung round to the right and slipped into his study.

He was out again in the passage within a minute or so, but he no longer had the box. Then he acted a little curiously, for he carefully locked his study door and slipped the key into his pocket, a thing very few juniors at St. Jim's ever troubled to do unless a specially large assortment of provisions had been laid in.

After that Lumley-Lumley stuffed his hands into his pockets and sauntered on towards the dormitory looking quite unconcerned.

At the same moment the shutting of a door told Herries and Digby that Mr. Railton had retired to his room, so the coast was clear for the Fourth-Formers. All the same, they did not leave the bath-room at once. There was nothing to be gained in running risks.

Later they crept silently back into their dormitory, to find Arthur Augustus still awake.

"Did you shut the study window, deah boys?"

"Yes—"

"That's the ideah," said Arthur Augustus drowsily. "I suddenly wemembah afteh you had gone that my new ovahecoat was in the studay. It was absolutely neccess the window should be shut, Digby! My coat might have got damp!"

"Blow your overcoat!" growled Digby. "There—there's going to be no end of a rumpus to-morrow, because Lumley-Lumley has been caught out!"

"Eh, deah boy?"

"Absolutely caught red-handed climbing into the school through that passage window," put in Herries. "The Railton bird was down on him like a cartload of bricks. It—it means the sack for Lumley-Lumley, I reckon!"

Arthur Augustus was wide awake now.

"Bai Jove, how wotten!" he said in dismay. "Mind, Lumley-Lumley has been askin' for twouble, but—but it's wotten, all the same. I shall have a word with the duffah in the mornin', just to point out that I warn'd him what would p'robably happen if he cawwied on like a sillay jabbahwock!"

"Fat lot of good that'll do!" growled Herries, slipping back into bed. "All the same, it is rotten!"

"Yes, beastly!" agreed Digby. "Lumley-Lumley had his good points, anyway!"

"That's twee, bai Jove!"

And the three Fourth-Formers found it more difficult to drop off to sleep again than did the junior they were talking about, who was already in bed at the further end of the long dormitory.

In fact, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had fallen to sleep almost as soon as his head had touched the pillow, which only went to show that amongst those good points he was said to have sound nerves must be numbered.

A Startler for Gussy!

BECAUSE of his overnight decision to have a few words with Lumley-Lumley, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy managed to wake up at an unusually early hour the following morning. Such an unusually early hour that for a moment or two he could not think what had roused him.

"Bai Jove, I wemembah!" he murmured presently. "I've got a few wemarks to make to that duffah Lumley-Lumley!"

He sat up in bed and felt for his celebrated monocle. Then he let it fall again, for Lumley-Lumley was no longer in the bed at the end of the dormitory.

"Gweat Scott! I twust the young wottah hasn't wun away, or done anythin' despewate like that!" flashed through Arthur Augustus' massive brain. "No doubt he wealises that he is likely to be expelled, and so may be feelin' watah despewate. I weally wish I had woused up scowah!"

True, he had forbidden Lumley-Lumley to address him

in any way, but the dandy of the School House was ready to forget all that. He still considered Lumley-Lumley to be an outsider to frequent the Green Man, but that, too, was to be forgotten for the moment. The millionaire's son was in trouble—and whenever anybody was in trouble Arthur Augustus did not mind getting up early even on a cold, bleak morning.

Quickly enough Arthur Augustus scrambled out of bed, when generally it needed the threat of the "cold pig" to get him up in winter. But this morning he was very much in earnest.

"A few tactful wemarks and a little kindly advice may make all the diff to Lumley-Lumley at this cwitical point in his caweeah," decided Gussy, tying his tie with his usual care. "I sincerely twust I shall find him in his study!"

The moment he was dressed Arthur Augustus slipped down the stairs.

It was still too early for anybody to be about. In fact, only servants were to be heard moving downstairs, but Arthur Augustus saw that Lumley-Lumley's study door was ajar.

Quite eagerly the immaculate junior hurried forward. He was in slippers, so he made little or no sound in the passage. Certainly he reached Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's study without being heard by Lumley.

Then Arthur Augustus stopped dead on the threshold, for the picture he had expected to find before his eyes scarcely materialised. Instead of finding a junior down and out, a fellow dreading the future and regretting the past, Arthur Augustus glimpsed a very different thing, for Lumley-Lumley certainly did not appear to be on the verge of despair.

Instead, he was lying comfortably back in his easiest of easy chairs, with his heels on the mantelshelf, above a very cheery fire he had lighted. On the table to the left of him was a big dish of fruit, and Lumley-Lumley was not leaving the fruit waiting. He was very cheerily scoffing an apple when Arthur Augustus glimpsed him.

"Bai—bai Jove!"

The exclamation broke from Gussy's lips quite loudly, but apparently Lumley-Lumley failed to hear it. At any rate, he did not move in his chair. In consequence, Arthur Augustus stepped farther into the study.

"Lumley-Lumley!"

"Eh?"

The millionaire's son started violently and grabbed at something on his knee, a small black leather box which was open. He closed the box with a quick, anxious movement.

But he had not closed it before Arthur Augustus had glimpsed its contents, glimmering, shining contents, which could have been nothing but precious stones or clever imitations.

The moment the box was closed Lumley-Lumley's calmness returned to him.

"Hallo, D'Arcy!" he said cheerfully. "Come to lend me some more tin, after all?"

"Bai—bai Jove—"

"You have, eh? Well, I can do with a bit. My pal Slinger Horton hasn't half been having some luck with the cards lately, and Banks isn't exactly a dud at the poker game—"

"Gweat Scott—"

"So shell out, if you can spare the brass, Gussy," grinned Lumley-Lumley. "You'll get it all back again in time, you know!"

Arthur Augustus gasped aloud. He was staring in utter dismay at the millionaire's son, and he scarcely knew what to say. In the end he ventured a horrified sort of remark.

"That—that box, Lumley-Lumley—"

"Eh?"

"The—the one you have on your knee," gasped the swell of the School House. "Where did you get it f'rom?"

Lumley-Lumley stopped grinning. He appeared to be considering the question, then he laughed shortly.

"Don't see what that's got to do with you, D'Arcy," he exclaimed. "It's not a bad wheeze for everybody to mind his own bizney, you know."

"Yaas, I wealises that, but—but that box— There is jewellery in it, Lumley-Lumley!"

"Is there?"

"You jollay well know there is—"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, it's obviously a jewel-box," he admitted calmly.

"And I don't see anything startling in a jewel-box containing jewellery, do you? If it contained coke, now—"

"Bai Jove—"

"So suppose we leave it at that?" suggested the other junior pleasantly. "In other words, suppose you buzz off, old top!"

Arthur Augustus gasped again, only much louder. But he showed no signs of buzzing off. Instead, he evinced every

sign of staying, and proceeded to make that thoroughly clear to the other junior.

"Lumlay-Lumlay, I have weason to believe that is the jewel box Colonel Wenham had stolen on the night of the fire," he said gravely. "Ewevy weason in the world."

"Oh!"

"And—and I am goin' to make sure," breathed Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to see what is in that box, Lumlay-Lumlay!"

"My hat—"

"I must see into it," went on Arthur Augustus desperately. "Don't you wealise that the loss of that jewel case is in the hands of the police, that eweveybody is searchin' all ovah the place for it. Lumlay-Lumlay, pway sit down again and weason this mattah out calmly!"

"Oh, I am calm enough!"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley laughed as he answered, but he did not sit down again. Instead, he placed the small black box on the mantelshelf and stood with his back to it. He looked with quite cheerful defiance at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Awfully sorry to make you waxy and go off the deep end, D'Arcy," he said, "but you can't touch that box. I have special reasons for not letting you!"

"Bai Jove—"

"In fact, very special reasons," went on the millionaire's son. "So special that unless you buzz off, old top, I shall have to turn you out of the room!"

"My only toppah! Gweat Scott!"

Quite calmly, but none the less grimly, Lumley-Lumley came striding forward.

He gripped Arthur Augustus round the waist and tried to rush him from the room. Just as obstinately Arthur Augustus refused to be rushed, and the two juniors crashed into the table.

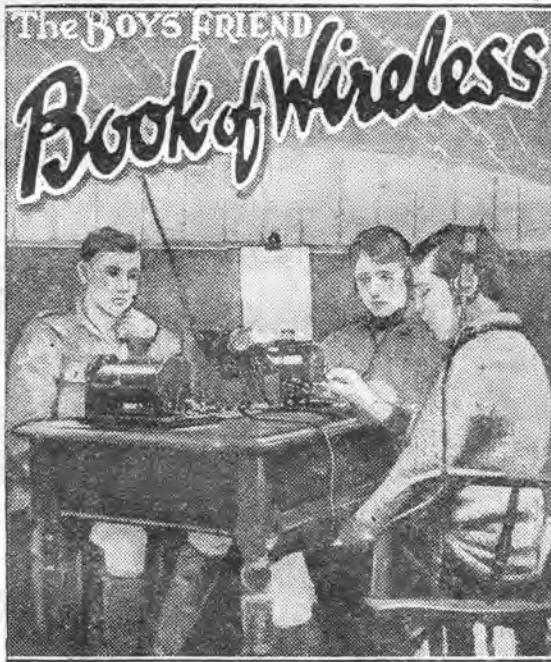
Thud!

The table shot across the room, to be brought up hard against the wall. A chair went hurtling over, and the dish of fruit crashed into the fireplace.

Then, clearly, a voice rang out from the doorway:

Just the thing for the Wireless Enthusiast!

This grand 20-page book is given FREE
with—



Full of interesting articles and pictorial diagrams.

THE "BOYS' FRIEND"
NOW ON SALE.

BE SURE YOU GET IT, CHUMS!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 380.

"Boys, what on earth is the matter?"

Instinctively the juniors stopped struggling and turned, and Arthur Augustus felt vaguely for his monocle. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley laughed briefly, for, standing in the doorway, was Ferrers Locke, and with the world-famous detective were Tom Merry and Jack Blake.

It was a climax that rather took Arthur Augustus' breath away.

Ferrers Locke Explains!

"WELL, what is the trouble?" demanded Ferrers Locke again. "Why the scrapping, D'Arcy?"

"I wathah fancy it is up to Lumlay-Lumlay to explain, sir," answered Arthur Augustus quietly. "I am afwaid I cannot tell you anythin'."

Again Jerrold Lumley-Lumley laughed, but he made no attempt to explain. He seemed to be waiting for Ferrers Locke to act first. And the detective did not keep him waiting long.

"Suppose you come in and shut the door, Merry," he exclaimed. "Sit down, all of you; and no one is to start scrapping unless I give the order. Lumley-Lumley, I have been absolutely successful!"

"You have, sir?"

"Absolutely," nodded Ferrers Locke. "Late last night Merry, Blake, and myself visited the Green Man, and it was a regular round-up!"

"Good?"

"Yes, it was excellent," agreed the detective. "Not only did we get the leaders of that gang of jewel thieves I was after, but the other three crooks who worked with them as well. Apparently they were just about to set out on a pretty big burglary, but I had police enough there to make a fight impossible. They are all under lock and key now."

"My pal Slinger Horton amongst them?"

"Yes, he was one of the first to cave in," answered Ferrers Locke. "Oh, it was a clean sweep, wasn't it, Merry?"

"Rather!" agreed the captain of the Shell. "And Lumley-Lumley has been helping you, sir?"

Ferrers Locke shook his head.

"No, it is I who have been helping Lumley-Lumley," he corrected. "You see, I was on my way to Rylcombe after those crooks when I had that motor smash in Wayland. That put me right out of count, for I could scarcely walk, so I just had to have an assistant for a time."

"Lumlay-Lumlay, bai Jove!"

"Exactly, D'Arcy," nodded the detective. "The moment I came round in the hospital I got through on the phone to Lumley-Lumley, and gave him his instructions. They were simply to hang round the Green Man and keep Slinger Horton and his confederate under observation."

"My—my only toppah!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Then your goin' to the Gween Man, Lumlay-Lumlay, was for that weason?"

The millionaire's son nodded.

"Of course it was, you chump!" he laughed. "I had orders from Mr. Ferrers Locke to keep those crooks under observation, and I reckoned the best way was to get pally with them. That meant playing cards in the Green Man; but you can't play cards without cash—at least, not with Slinger Horton."

Slowly but surely Arthur Augustus' massive brain grasped the situation.

"Bai Jove, I gwasp it!" he exclaimed. "You were short of funds—"

"That's so," admitted Lumley-Lumley. "My pater is in America, you know, and that new motor-bike I bought took all my ready cash. And as there wasn't time to slip over to Wayland and find Mr. Ferrers Locke I had to borrow tin from you, Gussy, and the other chaps."

"Gweat Scott, yaas! I undahstand that—"

"Then you understand that this successful conp is really Lumley's, not mine," put in Ferrers Locke. "Lumley was able to phone me all sorts of details about Slinger Horton and the other scamp, and it was Lumley-Lumley who convinced me that the colonel's jewel-box was not stolen by my special crooks. You remember that letter-card which was brought to me while we were lunching with the colonel, Merry?"

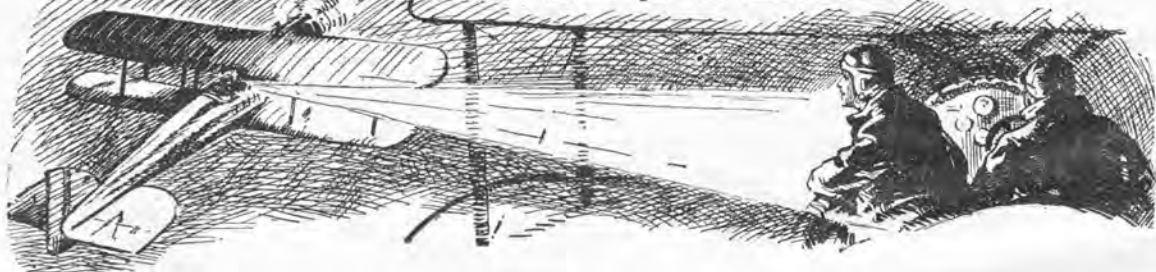
"Yes, rather!"

"That was from Lumley-Lumley explaining that he followed Slinger Horton and his confederate on the night of the fire right away to Colonel Wenham's place," continued the detective. "In fact, Lumley-Lumley was hiding in the bushes, watching the crooks all the time."

(Continued on page 27.)

"Live-Wire" Lindsay and Jerry O'Gorman, the two wireless enthusiasts, indulge in further thrilling exploits in their endeavours to track down the elusive criminal, Ultima!

The RADIO CHAIN MYSTERY!



Another of Lester Bidston's Splendid Wireless Stories—Written Exclusively for the GEM!

The Great "Chain" Flasco!

"**M**ESSIEURS.—You refused to place a price on the life you had saved—mine humble own. You refused the fifty-fifty of my diamond sale—saying I would starve you of the joy of making independent fortune. Mes braves, I salute you, but I must pay a little of my debt. So I have bought for you le petit Radio Shanty. It is yours—you have the radio flair, may it prosper you.

"But remember—Ultima escaped. Perhaps he is lurking in the ether, waiting—waiting to pounce!

"To your success, my friends,
"JULES DARGE."

A strange gift and the echo of a whirlwind adventure that had sent Lyle Lindsay and his aero pal, Jerry O'Gorman, speeding to the rescue of Monsieur Darge and his peerless diamonds in far-away Rotterdam.

But the tale has been told. Ultima, the wireless unknown, might or might not be "lurking in ether"—meanwhile, Lyle and Jerry had very gladly taken over "Radio Shanty" and meant to make it a success.

Their methods were startlingly original. For instance, they had already treated Liverpool wireless fans to an aero concert—circling over the city with Jerry nursing the old bus and Lyle mixing gramophone records with a judicious boosting of the little wireless shop.

Nor was that all. On a patch of ground behind the shop they erected a tin shed, turned it into an informal clubhouse, and conducted a series of interesting stunts for the benefit of the neighbourhood.

In short, Radio Shanty was throwing its weight about. Liverpool was beginning to "sit up and take notice," and at eleven o'clock on this particular night the partners were preparing to surprise the natives.

"Now, laddies, we're going hunting to-night," Lyle announced to the forty or fifty young enthusiasts who packed the room. "We've heard and read quite a lot about this jolly old Radio Chain Society. Well, to-night they're starting a London to Lerwick dart at 11.15, and we're darting after 'em!"

"Shure, Live-Wire, some of us don't understand this radio chain game," Jerry grinned from his side of the

platform. "Is it willin' ye are to tell us what they're after?"

"They're 'after' playing tick in the ether, I should say," Lyle laughed. "They started a month ago with splash adverts in the papers, asking all amateur transmitters to join the Radio Chain—a society brought into being with the objects of testing for statics and magnetics."

"And what have they done, so far?" one youngster asked.

"Nothing very alarming," Lyle smiled. "They've played three wireless tricks—a crystal zig-saw 'chase,' a south-coast 'paddle,' an anagram 'argument'—just the usual amateur gramophone game we've all heard and been bored with."

"And to-night's programme, old Live-Wire?" another fellow asked—a familiarity that spoke volumes for Lyle's popularity.

"To-night, laddie, the Chain Society reckon to get down to brass tacks," Lyle explained. "Every member has been numbered, a mystery message starts from headquarters in London, tours the country and ends in Lerwick—each amateur timing his reception and transmitting to his next numbered club-mate."

"But where does our hunt come in?" a third youngster asked.

Lyle turned to the wired mysteries that occupied half the platform.

"We're going to follow that London to Lerwick dart, as they call it," he answered. "At least, with the help of our sausage aerial overhead, the directional and beam screens we have here, and the use of these selenium amplifiers we've invented, we hope to tap the messages as they pass north and to trace the breaks that must occur." He glanced at his watch and turned quickly to Jerry. "Now, Jay, the 'off' is timed two minutes hence—crank up the giddy old doings and let's be having some juice."

"Juice it is," Jerry grinned, springing to a wall switch that connected with the dynamo in the workshop.

For a moment a thin whir trembled through the shed, then—as Jerry adjusted the current—sank to an almost imperceptible purr. Meanwhile, Lyle turned up the aerial switch, adjusted a

three-section frame of gold-tinted wire with the utmost care, and sent the power flooding and illuminating six stained glow-lamps.

"Gentlemen, the Lindman beam 7 is now reaching out to Hampstead, from whence the Chain Society's president will start the 'dart's' spring into the ether," Lyle announced quietly.

Thirty, forty, fifty seconds passed in absolute silence. Then came a preliminary howl and the rasp of a distorted voice. With thumb and finger Lyle made a delicate adjustment of the screen, the voice sounded plain and clear in the black "speaker," and the Shanty partners stared at each other in stupefied amazement.

"Larry's lament," Jerry whispered. "If that isn't the same throat that planned the killing of Darge a month back, it's its ghost!"

"Hist, Jay!" Lyle frowned. "These fellows'll never forgive us if we spoil the experiment. Dry up and listen!"

Casually and quietly they donned headphones cunningly rubbered to deaden all outside noise.

Now the voice came in perfectly attuned. "A few words of explanation to those listeners in who are interested in to-night's experiment," they heard. "In a few moments I—naming myself No. 1—will speak a few trivial words into my microphone. The sentence will be picked up by No. 2, who resides in Romford, passed on to No. 3 in Maldon, and so on to No. 100, in distant Lerwick. So, covering a thousand miles, it should trickle back to London in the exact form I speak it, and in the space of a few minutes." There followed a momentary pause, a cough—then: "I calls 2. Ar—ahem!—er—when others mean nothing you do!"

Lyle and Jerry frowned, and the crowd below howled satirically. They had all been keyed to maximum excitement. They'd looked for something dramatic, like "England expects, etc." Instead, came this rignarole—piffing, idiotic, puerile!

The radio partners caught Nos. 2 and 3 passing the message, lost touch for a minute, picked the piffle up again in Northampton, kept touch through Derbyshire, and lost it again near Hull.

Undoubtedly, the experiment in Radio Shanty far transcended the Chain Society's experiment in circling Britain with twaddle. The methods by which Lyle focused his screens, his cunning leaps ahead whenever he lost touch, demonstrated the marvel of beam

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ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2:

reception to the crowd who packed the shed.

But it proved a deadly dull business and not worth recording. The silly sentence was thrown back to Hampstead in exactly twelve minutes—an example of either shaking as idiotic as ever amateur transmitters have perpetrated.

Jerry's face was expressive, though—for business reasons—he kept his mouth locked until the last guest had laughed and departed.

But the moment he and Lyle were alone he voiced his feelings with downright viciousness.

"Bedad, av all th' tame pussyfoot performances—" he growled, "Shure, no more Chain games for Radio Shanty, not if I know it!"

But Lyle completely ignored his pal's complaints.

"When others mean nothing you do," he was mumbling, frowning with an effort of thought and repeating the rigmarole until Jay came up and shook him.

"Stop it—stop it, I tell ye!" he howled. "I've had enough! I'll be murderin' ye if ye say it once again!"

Lyle wriggled free and laughed.

"All right, Jay—keep the giddy old thatch on," he advised. "And look here, you thought you recognised Ultima's voice when that Chain president began speaking?"

"An' just as quickly recognised my mistake when the asinine footler burred his blather," Jerry replied sourly.

"I'm not so sure you were wrong, and I'm not so sure it was blather," Lyle answered quietly. "The message sounded tosh—it was tosh, in its actual wording. But—"

He broke off, scribbled the words on a scrap of paper, and frowned horribly.

"The old think-tank's leakin'," he sighed, shaking his head. "I can't focus the spotlight properly—but there's a pearl hidden in this priceless piffle, I'm dead-sure certain."

Suddenly, an idea flashed into his mind. He stood for a moment rigid, gasped shrill surprise, then quickly jotted down a single letter under each word of the "Chain" message.

"Well, if I'm not the prize doughnut!" he yelled. "Look, Jay—the first letter of each word, the letter 'C' for the word 'you,' and spell backwards!"

Jerry glanced down at the paper, which now read:

"When others mean nothing you do."

"W O M N U D!"

"Spell backwards—that'll be Dum-mow!" He looked up, bewildered.

"Faith, it's a name—but I'm still nursin' a blind spot!"

Lyle grinned.

"When others mean nothing, Ultima does," he said. "In this case, he means that the innocent radio amateurs have broadcasted a rendezvous in a little Essex town to further some crooked scheme of his own!"

"Then we've got him!" Jerry yelled.

"We've only to identify th' spalpeen in connection with th' Rotterdam diamond affair—"

"And how d'you propose to do it?" Lyle interrupted. "What'll you identify him by—his whiskers, his watch-chain?"

He smiled wryly. "Nunno, Jay, we think we recognise the voice—but a larynx loud-speaker isn't evidence in a criminal court."

"Then we've got to sit back and let th' blighter laugh at us?" Jerry demanded.

"Not exactly," Lyle chuckled.

"We're going to dig into the history of

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 880.

Mr. President, of the Radio Chain, and we're keeping the old headlamps flaring for the next Chain stunt!"

The Second Chain Stunt!

JERRY was busy selling one cat's-whisker, two terminals, and three insulators to a young—but exacting—customer, when Lyle bustled into the Shanty after a three days' absence.

"Hallo, dear Dublin's Own," Lyle drawled, when the small customer had vanished. "Draggin' the dough from the diminutive, as per?"

"Drop bein' D-mented," Jerry grinned, "and tell me how you got on in London?"

"Located the Chain boss as one Sir Marcus Maltravers—a moneyed gent who dabbles enormously in wireless experiment, does zero for a livin', and has lashin's o' time to do it in," Lyle grinned.

"Tuning in to your low wavelength, Sir Markey Malty appears to be quite a harmless Hampsteadite and to have no connection with the dear Ultima."

"So ye've wasted your time and the firm's 'dover?" Jerry sighed.

"And another guinea," Lyle laughed. "Anyway, yesterday afternoon I toddled round to the society's office in Fleet Street and decided to blue in a golden one by joining up."

Jerry stared.

"But if Ultima's in the thing you've shown him we're poking into his affairs again," he said.

Lyle winked.

"For that occasion only I was John Fleming, of Rugby—a cousin of mine," he explained. "Paying over my sub I asked when the next stunt would happen, and was told that no date had been arranged, but that I'd be notified by letter."

"Well?" Jerry demanded.

"Just as I was leaving the office, a Marconi messenger entered, a radiogram in his hand," Lyle continued.

"Now, Jay, we come to the interesting sequel. Thought I'd better warn Fleming of what I'd done and found he'd received a letter announcing an 'east coast relay race.' Jay, old bean, that 'relay race' was very suddenly arranged—after the arrival of the Marconigram!"

"That means listening in again," Jerry grunted.

"That—and more," Lyle answered; adding: "The old Fleetwing in running order?"

"She's in flying order," Jerry corrected.

"Then, if we can solve the secret of to-night's message, we're booked for a turn of night flying," Lyle answered.

Within ten minutes their arrangements were complete. Jerry started off for Ainsdale—where the old Fleetwing was still housed—and Lyle served sundry customers and subdued his impatience until closing time.

That night the Shanty shed was closed to all comers and Lyle spent the evening carefully testing every minute portion of his intricate apparatus. Long before eleven he was ready—his "beam" screens locked to a fractional degree, his set tuned to 270—the wave-length ordered by the Chain Society.

At 11.25 he started up the motor, placed paper and pencil in handy position, donned headphones, and waited.

At 11.27 Seaforth started a dot and dash argument on six hundred and forced him to counter with choke control and wave trap. Then, for another minute or so, he heard the tuning howls of amateurs who crossed his beam path and, finally, the cold, harsh voice of Sir Marcus Maltravers.

"Good-evening, gentlemen of the Chain. For to-night's relay race our members have been divided into teams—A B C and D respectively—forming four zig-zag lines from London to Aberdeen. In a moment, I will announce a chosen sentence, then A 1 will relay to A 2. B 1 to B 2 and so on until the four messages return to this office. Now, ready?" A fractional pause, then: "By able agreements many arguments dwindle!"

Instantly, Lyle dropped headphones and became feverishly busy.

"Sounds easy going, this time," he muttered. "I'll try final letter; E S Y S E Y—oh, hang! That's no good!"

Rapidly, he spelt out first letters—that gave him: B A A M A D! Next, alternate letters—only to get a senseless jumble. He grew irritated, jumped quickly from idea to idea without result, and only after ten minutes of frenzied concentration did he tear the secret out of the cleverly-worded sentence.

"That's it—the second letter in every word!" he mumbled. "Y B G A R W reversed, reads: Wragby!" And, on the word, he flung papers aside, hurried from the silent shed and raced through the empty streets.

Five minutes later he was thudding across Waterloo sands, making a bee line for the Fleetwing's coloured lamps.

"Wragby, Jay!" he panted, tumbling into the bus. "I've wasted ten minutes wangling the clue—how soon can you get off?"

"About ten seconds," Jerry answered.

"Knew you'd be on the jump, so brought a mechanic along." He raised his voice: "Now, Dixon!"

A shadowy form jumped to the propeller.

"Switch off?" Dixon cried.

"Switch off," Jerry agreed.

"Contact!" Dixon yelled, waited

Jerry's agreement, then bumped the propeller over compression.

The roar of racing engine racketed through the air, and the mechanic sprang clear. Jerry moved the stick a trifle forward, drove the bus slowly over twenty yards of hard sand, then lifted from the ground as lightly as a swallow.

She picked up speed almost immediately, but Jerry was taking no risks, and drove her in the eye of the wind for a full mile. Then he pulled the control back, climbed to two thousand, and turned the machine inland.

"Wragby, d'ye say, Lyle?" he yelled through the tube. "Never heard of it, but we'll hunt the owld map!"

"Somewhere in Lincolnshire," Lyle answered, and found the place the moment Jerry turned on the shaded lamps of his gadget-board. "Here y'are, son—buried in the Lincoln hills!"

"Um! About a hundred-and-fifty, and practically due east," Jerry reckoned. "Two hours to do it in—though what you expect to find is beyond me."

"Oh, we've an odd thread or two to fix on," Lyle answered.

"I haven't," Jerry growled.

"Well, Ultima—for I'm certain the so-called Sir Marcus is Ultima—is using

the Chain members to broadcast Wragby, which can only mean that he is calling one or more persons there," Lyle answered. "His wirelessing of all England and Scotland proves that he has no exact knowledge of the Unknown's whereabouts, but he appears confident that the hidden word will be picked up and understood."

"That's plain enough," Jerry admitted. "Carry on."

"Next we come to the radiogram and the sudden change of plan," Lyle continued. "There we have proof that his visitor comes from overseas, and—remembering the Rotterdam job—it shows that Ultima has taken wireless and aero as his allies, and that his subordinates are experts in these branches of science."

Jerry nodded understandingly.

"He seems to be a wide-awake spall-pen, with queer ideas for makin' a living," he chuckled.

"That's just it—he's treading new trails in crime," Lyle replied. "We've dropped on his track simply because our beam experiments are a bit in advance of anything he understands. The ordinary listener-in would never have suspected anything sinister behind his innocent activities, but we know that—wherever he acquired his knowledge—he is emerging as the master-mind of the underworld, with a gang of assistants who form a Trade Union of scientific crooks."

"An' to-night's programme, Live-Wire?" Jerry demanded, secretly struck by his pal's clear reasoning—though he would not have admitted the fact for worlds.

"To-night I'm banking on Ultima sticking to his wireless and aero doings, for he has no reason to suspect the Rotterdam fiasco as anything but the rottenest of rank bad luck," Lyle answered. "I've an idea that we're not the only fly-by-nights this ante emma, and as soon as we approach Wragby I'm dropping the giddy old aerial."

Few words were spoken after that, for the strain of talking in running aircraft is not a thing to be performed for pleasure. The average pilot will tell you that he's the shock-absorber in an iron foundry—a humorous exaggeration, of course, but a straight hint of the "quietude" one endures in the blue.

Helped by the lights of the towns they passed—Stockport, Sheffield, Rotherham—but relying chiefly on the compass, they crossed England at a height of five thousand, and were feeling the effects of strain and cold pretty badly when Jerry broke the long silence.

"Twenty miles to Wragby!" he announced. "Orders, Lyle?"

"Lights out, pass Lincoln, circle Wragby as low as the Wolds will allow," Lyle replied. "I'm for the clothes-line to ear if the ether's warbling."

A touch of foot released the weighted aerial wire, a pull of switch connected engine and magneto with the batteries of his set; then Lyle clamped the rubber-capped receivers over his ears.

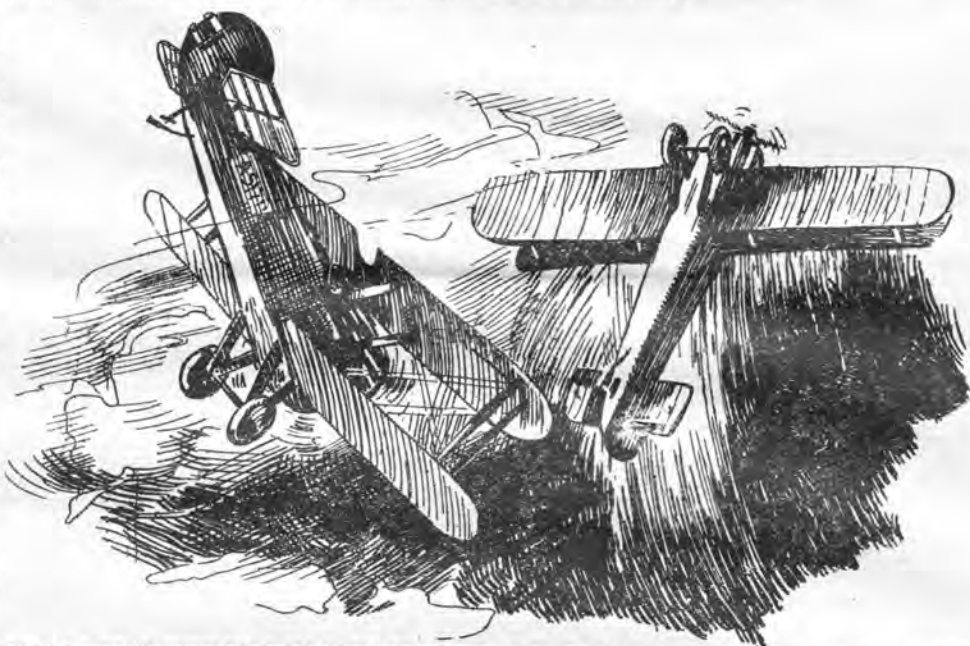
For a time he worked the tuner in vain, picking up the commercial Morse of Cleethorpes (BYB) and Cranwell (GFC), but getting no satisfaction from that. Lincoln sailed past, two miles to the south; black moorland, broken only by the lamps of an occasional village, stretched endlessly; and Lyle was beginning to doubt his theory, when it was startlingly justified. He was still patiently and slowly "boxing the compass" of his tuner, when a shrill howl on wave-length 180 filled his ears, and a trifling adjustment brought in a harsh, irritable voice.

"K. L. calls. Notifies arriva' to late bird. Reply and over!"

Lyle knew that "K. L." was waiting his answer, and that the answer must be in some exact wording—a countersign. Deliberately he tuned out—the micro-

entered into a straight glide, his engine barely turning—so that he was half-flying, half-gliding towards the smooth stretch on which he had fixed. At the quarter-mile he set the wing flares going, at forty feet from the ground he completely "killed" his engine and flattened out so gently and gradually that the bus touched ground as gently as a falling leaf, ballooned ten yards—thanks to an unseen clod—then taxied to a perfect standstill!

"Jay, you're a bath-bun, but I'll kiss you later!" Lyle cried admiringly. "Old K. L. I think we're just a passing mail or Admiralty plane, I'm hoping. Anyway, if he has to get in touch with a flying pal—as it appears—he can only do so by wireless, and he's shown us he works on 180." He quickly changed the set over to the wing aerial and prepared to resume head-phones. "Each to his job, old bean. You keep your eyes and ears alert, for fear K. L. saw us dropping—though I think the town hid us—whilst I do the gay old ether eaves-dropping!"



Jerry O'Gorman, realising the danger of a crash, pulled the joystick sharp into his chest and turned the rise into a loop.

phone was fixed six inches from his mouth—and turned to Jerry.

"They're biting from somewhere below, and it's evident the sound of our engine was a signal to them," he explained quickly. "Daren't reply—they'd spot a fake at once. Any chance of a landing t'other side of the town?"

"Night landin' on unknown ground's suicide," Jerry grumbled. "But my neck's yours, if you demand it."

Speeding over Wragby at a height of two thousand, Jerry shut off, glided silently onwards and down to five hundred, and shot a parachute flare from the launching-tube. Instantly he swung upwards, banking in a wide "S," and saw the dropping flare lighting up a long rise of pasture land.

Allowing for a slight wind drift he

The Night Hawk Strikes!

At two a.m. there's a loneliness in the Lincoln Wolds perhaps greater than any other place in England, and the silence that now surrounded the aero adventurers was in eerie contrast to the crashing roar they had endured since midnight.

Dark clouds hid the segment of moon that had lighted most of their journey, the sleeping countryside was shrouded in Stygian blackness, and a thin morning wind whistled high overhead.

"Jerry, we've no idea of what the next few minutes hold, so be ready for a quick breakaway!" Lyle whispered.

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"I'm fixed for contact, and I'm scouting round to see we have a smooth 'take-off,' Jerry answered, dropping quietly to the grass and beginning to examine the "take-off" with the help of a pocket torch.

There followed a trying wait that seemed endless—long minutes that dragged as though Time had tired and died. Tensed as they were to high resolve, knowing they were interfering with the plans of ruthless lawbreakers, the period of inactivity proved almost intolerable. It was with signs of relief that they heard the first faint drone of a distant engine trembling through the night air.

"Here they come!" Lyle whispered. "The land gang'll be too busy to worry over us, so on with the phones, Jay!"

Almost immediately the formula that Lyle had already heard was repeated.

"K. L. calls! Notices arrival to late bird. Reply and over!"

"Night bird calling. Snow at night —" Abruptly, the voice from the air stopped dead.

"Means day delight," came K.L.'s reply. Then: "Understood. The moving light moves slowly—it can be caught with ease."

"It will be caught with ease."

So much Lyle listened, then discarded ear-pieces.

"It's time we moved," he said quickly. "Switch the set over to drop aerial, whilst I start her up, Jay."

Hurriedly, but with due care—for many an arm has been shattered over a similar job—Lyle humped the propeller and raced back to his seat. Despite Jerry's care they jarred on some minute portion of bad ground, and only his alert skill prevented a disastrous "stall."

But that danger was past and forgotten in a second, and soon they were in the air, gathering speed and climbing as swiftly as Jerry dared. In a flash, Wragby was dropped behind—they topped a hill without noticing its bulk, and sighted the self-styled "night bird."

"Look, Jay!" Lyle yelled. "There's the fellow—double green and red lights—a thousand feet up, a mile ahead!"

"And there's the 'moving light'—the dazzle-glare of a motor-car on the road beyond!" Jerry cried.

"There goes a parachute flare, and—my stars—it's dropping fast—it's weighted!" Lyle said. "Straight at it, Jay—that parcel carrier's the key to the mystery!"

Like a famished hawk that sights an unwary victim, the Fleetwing streaked downward and outward at a mad pace—a mad act to any but a skilled pilot.

Jerry was all that and more. Cautious to a degree on routine work, he could, on occasion, become the wildest of wild Irishmen and do things that looked suicidal when necessity demanded.

Yet even this hurtling swoop was not fast enough for Lyle.

"Kick her up, Jay!" he yelled. "Both car and bus have taken fright—they're pacing us for the flare!"

Whilst it lasted it was a race without equal. The car came swirling along the white ribbon of road, the aerial night-hawk, handicapped by having to turn, was now eating space at an amazing speed, and the old Fleetwing was between car and plane, but ahead of both. And the objective of all three was a magnesium flare, timed to a scant sixty seconds of radiant life.

Still seated—it was impossible to rise against the titanic air-flurry their rush created—Lyle held a coiled rope that

ended in a curved and three-pronged grappling hook.

The ground seemed to be racing to meet them—an onlooker would have sickened at the terrible smash that appeared certain. But Jerry knew his job. He began to flatten at exactly the right moment, eased the engine until she steadied, raced forward a bare fifty feet above ground, and shut off when the magnesium parcel-carrier was fifty yards ahead, and about to alight on the boulder-strewn roadside.

At that moment the car was two hundred yards behind them, the black plane a quarter-mile away, and perhaps three hundred feet higher, yet Jerry remained calmly intent and won.

"Now, Lyle!" he yelled.

Lyle sprang to his feet, sighted at a glance, and flung his pronged hook in the exact second that Jerry pulled the joy-stick into his chest.

The sudden jolt flung Lyle back into his seat, feeling as if an attempt had been made to wrench his head from his shoulders. He was dimly aware that Jerry had missed the ground by inches, and that a great six-seater touring-car was tearing along the road several yards ahead. He was also most acutely conscious that the mystery plane was hovering on their tail, bathing them in the blue glare of a drum-light and striving to force them down to a deadly crash.

But he hung grimly to the rope that seemed determined to wrench his arms from their sockets, and Jerry hung grimly to his job of nursing the Fleetwing out of its terrible position.

Gathering speed, they pulled up to the car, saw one of its four frenzied occupants pointing a venomous gun, then saw them drop into the car's well, as the Fleetwing's wheels skimmed a scant yard over their heads.

Then Jerry performed a hair-raising stunt that took Lyle's breath away. Deliberately he dropped until he was running just ahead of the car, and deliberately he began to edge away in its cover.

He reasoned shrewdly. The enemy plane had no option but to rise or crash into its road-racing friends. That meant rise, of course, and in the breathing space thus cleverly gained, Jerry tilted his wings, banked with superb skill, and fled away at an angle.

By that time Lyle had hauled his prize aboard and dumped it on the empty seat behind him. Instantly he adjusted headphones and started the set in the hope of hearing an unguarded word from one or other of their pursuers.

Nor was the hope altogether vain. "Probably the same fellows that put Sturm and Golt in a Dutch settlement prison," he heard. "Now, listen, Du Calion. Down here, we can do nothing, and are dropping out of the chase. We depend on you, reminding you that the whole carefully-built-up scheme collapses unless you can crash and kill them. If they're the prying thieves I think—two youths named Lindsay and O'Gorman—their machine is old and chancy, and not to be compared to yours. If possible, herd them out to sea; but, anyway, smash them!"

"Chief, it is done," the enemy observer bragged. "We will not fail."

Lyle was tempted to jar Ultima's already lacerated feelings by replying in kind. But he resisted the thought as childish, and decided on something far more useful and, possibly, effective.

He saw that Jerry was driving the bus steadily upwards—not keeping a straight line, but twisting in all manner of fancy

"S" curves—striving to gain by stunting that which he knew must be lost by a trial of speed alone. Then, satisfied that his pal was doing his bit, and a bit more, he turned in to wave-length 240, seeking to establish touch with 22D, a Gainsborough amateur to whom he had often sent "beam" tests.

But though he howled his call sign into the microphone a score of times no welcoming reply came his way.

"Heigho! I'd ha' put salt on Ultima's tail if 22D had been working," he sighed. "But he's snoring his head off—lazy blighter—and all the pro stations round about are miles above the wave-length of these little doings."

Reluctantly he removed phones, closed down, and began to notice Jerry's complaints.

"About time you roused up, bedad!" Jerry yelled. "Here's me, feelin' like a blinkin' blackbeetle wid a big boot stampin' down on me, an' you shrieking '2 Zeddy' until th' head av me's ringin'! Faith now, kape yer eye on that sky-pirate, an' do a bit av intelligen' observin'!"

"No chance of dodgin' his searchlight!" Lyle asked.

"Niver a bit," Jerry panted. "He's got th' wings av us ivery time—on a straight run he'd lave us standin'!"

"Don't grouse—you're doing very nicely for a young 'un," Lyle grinned. "You're about three hundred feet above him, and I notice he's yards slower on every turn."

"If only I could get away from his glare," Jerry groaned. "But he's a cute beggar, too cute to get right below us."

"And your intentions, old dear?" Lyle murmured.

"To try and win to that heavy cloud and play hide-and-seek wid him—it's the only chance we've got," Jerry grunted.

Lyle saw that the altimeter already registered four thousand, reckoned the cloud-belt at another thousand, and saw that the enemy plane was all out to stop Jerry's rise.

But his pal had one great advantage. The initiative was his—so long as he kept the upper place. He was twisting, turning, always climbing. The lower bus was bound to follow and to move in wide sweeps, else risk the Fleetwing shaking off his light and vanishing for good.

But the black plane was sticking to its job and gradually narrowing the height between them, though Jerry cracked on speed and took risks in angled darts that would have turned a R.A.F. officer green with envy at his daring.

"Never make it at this rate," he yelled. "Hold th' breath av ye, Lyle. Ye'll want it!"

Suddenly he turned a steep bank into a straight drive for the cloud. That meant an angled zoom, a hoiked turn that caught their pursuers napping. But it gained Jerry just the few precious seconds he wanted. For a moment the blue glare quartered the cloud base wildly, picked them up again, then thinned and lost its power as they shot towards the mist.

Instantly Jerry switched off and kicked his rudder, making the Fleetwing sweep sharp to the left. Then, as quickly, he re-started his engine, to avoid a spin, eased her level, and plunged straight into heavy, clogging mist.

His scheme was to go through the cloud-belt "all out," an unnerving experience, twisting and turning on the way, and to gradually rise above the mist. That kept him busy. But Lyle



The light from the oil lamp showed up Lumley-Lumley's card-playing companions, showed them up very clearly. The sight of them brought an exclamation of horror from the aristocratic lips of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Gweat Scott!" he ejaculated. "What a collection of uttah wuffians!" (See page 6.)

"Then why are you standing out in the rain, you duffer?" demanded Manners. "What are you staring at?"

No answer came from Monty Lowther, and Tom Merry and Manners stared at him in surprise. After all, it was rather curious that Lowther should have deliberately stepped out into the rain merely for the purpose of gazing across a rain-drenched field when there was absolutely nothing to see.

At least, Tom Merry and Manners could see nothing. "Batty, of course," commented Manners presently. "No doubt of it," agreed Tom Merry sympathetically. "I've seen it coming on for a long time now. Monty, old top, if you aren't getting wet enough standing there, try this other side of the tree. Heaps more rain there."

"Or why not roll in the ditch?" began Manners. But he stopped speaking suddenly, and behaved in an extraordinary way, too.

He stepped out into the rain and joined Lowther in the curious occupation of gazing across the field. Tom Merry gasped aloud.

"My—my hat, you asses——"

"Dry up, Tom Merry!"

"Yes; but——"

"Oh, do dry up!" said Lowther quietly. "I—I think I saw someone coming down the lane!"

Tom Merry was bewildered. Why in the world Lowther and Manners should deliberately risk a soaking because

someone was going down the lane astounded the captain of the Shell.

As a matter of fact, heaps of people went down that lane because it led to the Green Man, and the Green Man was a popular resort among the rougher element of Rylcombe.

In utter astonishment Tom Merry risked getting wet, too, and joined his chums.

"Lowther, you frabjous duffer——"

"There, can you see him now?" flashed Lowther. "Just by that tree-trunk there, Manners. No, it's too late. The hedge is hiding him."

"Hiding whom, you ass?" almost shouted Tom Merry.

"The chap who is going down the lane," answered Lowther.

"Well, what the policeman does it matter——"

"He was wearing a St. Jim's cap!" muttered Manners.

"What?"

"And—and that lane only leads to the Green Man," put in Lowther. "Can't be Cutts or any of the blades of the Fifth going to play billiards. They'd be tall enough to show above the hedge. There he is, Manners!"

"Yes."

Both juniors leaned a little forward, and at the same moment Tom Merry glimpsed the fellow who was causing all the excitement. And as Lowther had said he was not nearly tall enough to be Cutts or one of Cutts' cronies.

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But the chap who was making straight for the Green Man was certainly wearing a St. Jim's cap. Tom Merry could see it quite distinctly as the junior swung towards the back yard of the unsavoury public-house. And as he walked he turned a little, so that his face was towards the watching juniors for a moment or two.

Instantly an exclamation of dismay broke from Monty Lowther.

"My hat, you see who it is—"

"Lumley-Lumley!" muttered Manners.

"Yes, it was Lumley-Lumley," nodded Tom Merry quietly. "Perhaps he isn't going into the Green Man after all, though. Perhaps—"

Tom Merry stopped speaking, for there could be no further doubt as to the reason of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's journey down the lane. He was certainly going to the Green Man. In fact, he was actually passing through the back door.

Tom Merry & Co. were utterly astounded at their discovery.

Of course, they all remembered well enough that Lumley-Lumley would have thought nothing of visiting the Green Man away back in the past when he had been known as the Outsider of St. Jim's. But all had thought those days gone and done with.

For ages now Lumley-Lumley seemed to have forgotten his hard and curious upbringing in the Bowery quarter of New York. Slowly but surely he had given up his initial fight against law and order at St. Jim's, and had settled down.

No one quite remembered when the change had taken place, but nobody doubted that it had occurred. From being a rank outsider, Lumley-Lumley had become a very decent junior. Certainly not the sort of junior who would risk expulsion and bring disgrace to his school by visiting a disreputable place like the Green Man.

And yet Tom Merry & Co. had seen him go into the public-house with their own eyes!

Even then Tom Merry tried to think of some ordinary explanation.

"Perhaps—perhaps he has taken a message there for someone—"

"That doesn't look much like message-taking, does it?" said Manners, pointing suddenly towards the public-house. "The back window, I mean!"

Tom Merry and Lowther peered in the direction indicated, but before anything else could be said a well-known and somewhat breathless voice came shouting through the rain.

"Make woom for me undah the twees, deah boys! I'm wunnin' a fidgetful wisk of gettin' my clobbah wuined by the wain! Bai Jove, what's the mattah, Tom Mewwy?"

And Arthur Augustus came dashing up to the trees for shelter, only to find that Tom Merry & Co. were standing stock still out in the rain.

"You uttah asses! What's the ideah? I— Gweat Scott!"

Vaguely Arthur Augustus felt for his celebrated monocle, screwed it firmly into his eye, and glared, too, at that back window of the Green Man.

"Gweat—gweat Scott! A St. Jim's junior playin' cards in a wotten public-house!" he gasped. "Bai Jove! It's Lumley-Lumlay, deah boys!"

"Yes, it's Lumley-Lumley!"

"Lumlay-Lumlay playin' cards in a wotten— Oh, my toppah! That's what the boundah wanted to bowwow my cash for! That's why he took the lot, just to play cards with!"

"Eh?"

"Absolutely dweined me out!" cried Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I happened to be westin', and the wottah came in and bowwowed my cash—ewewy penny, bai Jove!"

"And—and he borrowed half a quid from me," suddenly put in Tom Merry quietly.

"He tackled me, too, now I come to think of it, only I was out of funds," nodded Manners. "M-my hat! Look at the sort of tongs he's playing with, chaps!"

There was no need for Manners to advise the others to look. They were all looking hard enough, and what they saw was disconcerting enough in all conscience.

Lumley-Lumley had just lighted an oil-lamp in that back room of the Green Man, and the light showed up his card-playing companions, showed them up very clearly. And the sight of them brought an exclamation of horror from the aristocratic lips of Arthur Augustus.

"Gweat Scott! What a collection of uttah wuffians!" he gasped. "Thwee of them, bai Jove, and the best of them looks worse than a wotten pickpocket!"

"Yes, they're pretty awful! Ah, Lumley-Lumley's pulling down the blind!"

The blind came down with a run, blotting out the

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unpleasant scene in the back room of the Green Man. At the same moment Jack Blake, Herries, and Digby of the Fourth came up at a run.

Blank consternation showed in Jack Blake's face.

"My aunt! What's it mean, Merry?" he burst out. "Lumley-Lumley playing the fool in there!"

"Sssh!" whispered back the Shell junior. "Here's Baggy Trimble and a whole crowd of others. Mum's the word!"

Jack Blake nodded in a dismayed sort of way.

Heading for Disaster!

TOM MERRY & CO., and Jack Blake and his chums of the Fourth slipped quietly away in the gathering darkness.

Not for anything did they want to stay there and be bombarded by questions from Baggy Trimble, for it seemed almost certain that Baggy and the others must have glimpsed Lumley-Lumley there in the Green Man.

If so, then it would be all over the school within an hour. And when news like that gets about who can say where it will stop? As likely as not it would find its way to the ears of Kildare or one of the other prefects, and then there really would be trouble for Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"Not that it's up to us to feel sorry for the ass!" growled Digby as the juniors ran through the rain. "If he's going to let St. Jim's down that way, the sooner he's called over the coals the better!"

"That's true—"

"Yaas, certainly that's twue, deah boy; only—only I have regarded Lumlay-Lumlay as being wathah a decent sort for a long time. I weally fail to undahstand the mattah, and pwopose to speak to the young duffah the moment I set eyes on him."

"Fat lot of good that'll do!"

"Oh, with a few tactful wemarks—"

"Much better give the rotter a jolly good bumping, I say!" growled Jack Blake bluntly as they reached the St. Jim's quadrangle. "That is, if he can't give us a proper explanation."

At that Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders.

"What explanation can he give?" he asked. "We saw him!"

Jack Blake did not answer. Puzzle over the strange affair as he would he could think of no possible reason that could cause a decent junior to frequent the Green Man and play cards with awful-looking bounders like Lumley-Lumley's new friends. It did not seem possible that there could be an explanation except the obvious one, that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had slipped right back into his old bad ways.

If that were so, then he was heading straight for disaster. And quickly, too. All seven juniors realised that.

All the same, they hung about in the corridors and Common-room with more than a little anxiety showing in their faces, for they had all liked Lumley-Lumley.

His ability to put up a good fight against big odds, and his open-handed generosity when in funds had appealed a great deal to the St. Jim's juniors. Then they often remembered that he had had a very hard childhood in the Bowery quarter of New York, and it had seemed so certain that he had made good.

Now this thing had happened along. Small wonder, then, that Tom Merry & Co. waited anxiously for the return of the millionaire's son; but they had to wait until well after six o'clock. Then Lumley-Lumley sauntered easily into Study No. 6.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he said carelessly. "Sort of family gathering or something?"

He looked round at Tom Merry & Co., guests for the time being in Study No. 6, then nodded to Arthur Augustus.

"D'Arcy, old top, I hope you didn't mind my taking all your cash this afternoon?"

"Bai—bai Jove—"

"I needed it badly, you know," went on Lumley-Lumley. "Don't happen to have any more about you, I suppose?"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Of course, you shall have it all back directly my luck turns," went on Lumley-Lumley. "Waiting for funds from my father. Any of you others got any spare tin you could let me have? Really, I want about a fiver, and must have it this evening."

In dead silence Tom Merry and Jack Blake greeted that request, but Arthur Augustus had risen to his feet.

Grimly he felt for his monocle, and when it had been screwed home in his eye he glared quite sternly at Jerrold Lumley-Lumley through it.

"Lumlay-Lumlay, I wathah want a word with you—"

his lips in a non-committal way when Jimmy sought his opinion as to the probable result of that race.

The great race! That was the one topic of conversation on all sides in the repair and erecting-shops.

Jimmy, as he and Sam had agreed to do, kept mum about their peculiar bit of inside knowledge with regard to that subject. That night they were going to see Sir Richard Grant and tell him of their knowledge; but they did not want to start any scare-rumours as to the wonderful performance of Langrish's new electric loco.

When at last that first fascinating shift with the fitters was over, Jimmy hurried off to meet Sam Blundell, who was waiting outside the gates with his motor-cycle. It was not long before they were at Sir Richard's house.

"Pretty late hour to call, but our business is important," muttered Sam Blundell.

When the two chums had been admitted to Sir Richard Grant's library, Sam Blundell, looking troubled and weary, told their queer story. When he had finished, the older man rose to his feet and paced restlessly up and down.

"This is bad news," he said at last. "I had hopes of putting up a good fight in this race which we have been forced into. But if, as you say, Langrish has a new locomotive, capable of averaging seventy miles an hour between London and Edinburgh, there is little hope that the G. S. C. can hold its own. Langrish's last blow. He seems to have ceased his attempts—attempts only too successful—to bring about trouble and accidents on the line. No need for that now—he has put our railway in bad books with the public and the Press. This, if we sustain a crushing defeat, will be the final blow."

The baronet sank into a chair again.

Next morning, the papers were again full of the two companies' prospects in the great railway race. Carnborough seemed very confident of their ultimate success; in Blackhampton opinion was rather divided, but an air of anxiety seemed to be abroad in the town, and the most hopeful supporters of the G. S. C. could do no more than prophesy a bare margin of victory for their railway. But most men in the big railway town, if asked as to the result, would simply shake their heads doubtfully and say nothing.

It was that morning that Jimmy, with Sam at work and his own shift not starting till two o'clock in the afternoon, set off with Sam's mended plans for the drawing offices of the G. S. C. to put his scheme into execution.

The Wonder Locomotive!

SAM BLUNDELL was far away from Blackhampton between duties for that day and the next. It was on Thursday that, entering the room he shared with Jimmy, at five o'clock in the afternoon, he found a note lying on the table, addressed to him in Jimmy's writing.

Sam flung himself into a chair, feeling utterly fed-up. He had only just come off his engine, after firing from London to Blackhampton, and the locomotive had been one of the "black sheep" that for no apparent reason crop up here and there in almost any type of locomotive. Besides which, he found himself continually worrying over Langrish's challenge to the G. S. C.—a challenge which must result in the downfall of the G. S. C. reputation, Sam felt, now that he had lost all hope of designing his own wonderful Wolf locomotive, with which he had once dreamed of smashing all existing records.

It was as though a horrible blank space had been left in his life. For so long now had he devoted most of his spare time to the Wolf. Failure had been his reward, but even now he could scarcely realise that the Wolf, the child of his brain, was but a shadow of the past.

With heavy eyes, Sam scanned the single sheet that comprised the note Jimmy had left for him.

"Mr. Steel, of the drawing-office, wants to see you as soon as possible. Cheerio!" ran Jimmy's message.

Sam stared in surprise at the scribbled sentence.

"What on earth does Steel want to see me for?" he muttered. "Suppose I've got to go, anyway. Wants to ask how I'm getting on. Well, when I tell him I've chucked up my ideas he'll chuckle!"

Sam arrived at the G. S. C. drawing-office only a few minutes before the staff were leaving. But Robert Steel, the chief of that department, was still there, and in a few minutes Sam was in his presence.

"Good-afternoon, sir—" began Sam, and then broke off in sheer amazement.

For the drawings over which Steel was bending were Sam's own!

Sam rubbed his eyes. Was it all a dream? Then his eyes met those of the chief of the drawing-office.

"I wanted to see you badly, Blundell. These drawings here—yours, I believe? Your friend Speed brought them to me—told me you had torn them up as useless—"

Sam listened in amazement to the big man's words. Steel went on, motioning Sam into a chair.

"These drawings, Blundell—they're not the same as those you brought to me before."

"No," Sam answered. He felt angry with Jimmy for letting him down like this. "But I had never intended you to see these, or anyone else! Young Speed had no right to do this, sir. I know my ideas are no good, and so I'll save you the trouble of telling me that, sir. You had to tell me so once—"

"Did I? Yes, I remember that I did. At least, I wasn't very enthusiastic. Perhaps I was a little blind—oddly blind, Blundell. For the germ was there even then. But these drawings are a great advance on the ones I saw then. These, Blundell, are wonderful ideas!"

The quiet, incisive voice ceased. Sam's jaw dropped several inches with sheer surprise.

"I beg your pardon," he stammered.

"Wonderful ideas, Blundell! Quite revolutionary. This firebox, this superheater—of course, they have yet to be proved—the proof of the pudding is in the eating; but I believe in them. The only thing is, this locomotive of yours is quite impracticable."

Sam fell to earth with a jolt. After the wave of joy that had surged through him at Steel's first words, he felt almost sick with the reaction. Steel reached out a long finger and pointed.

"Quite impracticable. Look here, now. You'll get expansion here, steam will escape. And here, again, what's to be done about this slope at the back? No fireman on this earth could be expected to keep up steam with that to—"

"I know—I know," muttered Sam. "It was because of those points that I realised I was beaten. The ideas were all right as far as they went, but they didn't go far enough. It was all rough theoretical ideas that I tried to work out with my small knowledge, and small though it is, that knowledge of mine was enough to prove the futility of it all."

He reached out an unsteady hand.

"May I have my drawings back, sir?"

Robert Steel stared hard at the young fireman.

"Amazing!" he muttered, half to himself. "You amaze me, Blundell! Here's a fellow like you who can go so far, who can give us what we've been hunting our brains for all these years—not only in one thing, but in two different points of locomotive construction—and yet stumbles over two absurdly tiny points, which in themselves render it all useless. Do you mean to tell me you are content to throw all this over—not to carry on till you've disposed of those two obstacles in your path?"

"I've carried on," said Sam bitterly. "For months I've worked, but I can't overcome those obstacles. It's impossible to overcome them. I've tried long enough, I ought to know."

"That's just it. You've worked at these so long that you can't see the wood for the trees. Often the way—known it to happen with myself—some little point stumps one, till the office-boy points out the obvious remedy! The brain that has supplied the big thing, the original, amazing thing, does not seem able successfully to turn its attention to the little fiddling points. Can't you see, Blundell, all you have to do—"

Steel took a pencil from his pocket. His eyes were oddly alight as he leaned over the table and made some quick movements of his pencil.

When Steel straightened himself Sam was staring down with wide eyes, almost as though he had seen a ghost. One hand was clutching the table-edge, the other was clenched and thrust deep into his coat-pocket.

"That's all," said Steel quietly. "Looks simple enough now—eh? Old story of Columbus and the egg—I understand, you know. You've worried too much, and your brain was too tired to rise to this last little bit of thinking. But they are your drawings, for all that; it's you who is the father of this wonder locomotive, Blundell—the Wolf, I see you've named it here."

Sam swayed unsteadily. His tongue moistened his dry lips. "Fancy not thinking of those little things for myself! A kid ought to have seen all along—and yet—"

"Don't worry—I've explained that," laughed Steel. "I'll have these plans drawn to exact scale, carbons taken, and so on. They'll want those carbons mighty quick in the shops. The great race is on the thirteenth, you know."

Sam Blundell stared incredulously at Steel.

"What—what do you mean?"

"Why, simply that I'm talking to the fellow who, if anyone can, is going to bring victory in the railway race to Blackhampton! I've already spoken to Sir Richard Grant—dare say he'll want to see you soon and congratulate you. Your ideas are worth their weight in gold to the company! The Wolf is to be built straight away—a rush job, my heavens, yes! For the race is on the thirteenth of April—the Wolf has to be built, tested, worked easy. And then the Wolf versus this great 4-10-4, of which you told Sir Richard. Heaven knows what the result will be, but it will be the race of the century, Blundell."

There was a wonderful light in Sam's eyes as Steel gripped his hand and wrung it in a sudden wave of boyish excitement.

The race of the century! The new locomotive! Was it to be victory for the G. S. C.—and Sam?

Building the Wolf!

SAM BLUNDELL walked on air when he finally left Steel's office.

For a long time, till late that night, the two had pored over Sam's drawings, discussing them down to the smallest details. With Steel's experience at work upon them, a few further alterations and modifications were made, for which Sam was very grateful. But Steel, in gripping Sam's hand before they parted, made light of his part in the work.

"My little suggestions are nothing beside your great work, Blundell—you are the inventor of the Wolf, its father and mother. Ninety-eight per cent to two—that's what the proportion is."

"But your two per cent have been mighty useful," Sam insisted. "Without 'em, the Wolf could never have been built. As you know, I had given up hope. Though, as you know, I swopped up mathematics and loco design for an age. Even now I don't know half enough to have finished alone. But for you—"

"But for your friend Speed, you mean!" laughed Steel. "He's the chap you've got to thank for fishing your drawings out of that wastepaper-basket you'd been ass enough to put them in!"

"Yes, I owe my chum a lot, too," said Sam.

He found Jimmy pacing restlessly up and down the room when at last he got home. For hours Jimmy had been on tenter-hooks to know the result of Sam's visit. His chum's long absence had raised his hopes high, and he was all eagerness when Sam burst in.

"What's your news?" shouted Jimmy instantly.

THE RADIO CHAIN MYSTERY

(Continued from page 23.)

"I'm not asking you to," Lyle retorted. "Hendon's our show, if we can stagger that far?"

Jerry eyed his petrol gauge.

"It's good for that," he said, and turned the plane's nose due south. "Bedad, there's been a rare owld fuss about that dumpy parcel you bagged. What d'you reckon's in it—gold-dust?"

"Nunno! Something a jolly sight more valuable than gold-dust," Lyle chuckled. "Anyway, Ultima told you, didn't he?"

"Didn't hear him!" Jerry growled.

"What about the 'snow at night?'" Lyle demanded, and laughed at Jerry's bewilderment. "Think it out, laddie! Speed the old grey matter up!"

Jerry was still thinking it out when, ninety minutes later, they were ushered into the room of a Scotland Yard inspector.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 880.

Sam's great hand came down on Jimmy's shoulder. His eyes were shining.

"By gum, what it is to have a pal, Jimmy! Grand news I've got—and all thanks to you!"

Sam seated himself on the edge of the table, and told Jim what had happened in his interview with Steel.

Jimmy went quite mad for a minute. He executed a war-dance round the room, till Sam had to hold him down for fear of causing trouble with their landlady.

On the following day Sam was sent for by Sir Richard Grant.

"The chief says the Wolf is to be started right away," Sam told Jimmy afterwards. "He's awfully keen on it, I think. And there's grand news again—he's promised that I can drive the Wolf in the great race! What do you think of that?"

Jimmy knew that Sam Blundell had already been successfully examined for the grade of "passed fireman," which meant that before long he would become a driver, though in the ordinary course of events he would have to go back to shunting and local goods duties. But this was an exceptional case altogether. As the designer of the new locomotive, and known to be a safe and skilful man, Sir Richard was prepared to allow Sam to drive the child of his brain in the great railways race against the Great Electric Northern, believing Sam to be capable of driving it to its very best advantage. And with such huge stakes hanging in the balance this was no time for red tape.

Already the news had leaked out, and Sam awoke next day to find himself famous. He was the hero of Blackhampton; his name was on everyone's lips.

The cloud that had hung so heavily over Blackhampton was to some extent lifted now, though anxiety reigned still. But there was hope, where there had been no hope. And in Carnborough, too, at the news of the building of the Wolf, the new wonder locomotive of the Great Scottish and Central, excitement rose to fever-pitch. Carnborough, so confident a day before, was suddenly apprehensive. What was this mysterious Wolf locomotive? What could it do? Their utter faith in the G.E.N.'s great electric 4-10-4 was suddenly shaken.

In the Scottish and Central Railway shops all other work was held up where need be; scores of men were working night and day in the plate-shop, the boiler-shop, the foundry and pattern-shop, and the machine-shop. Slowly—though, judging by ordinary standards, wonderfully swiftly—the Wolf was being born; a thing of the mind, a thing on paper no more, but a living thing of steel and iron and copper.

(Will the new locomotive spell disaster for the treacherous Granite Steel? Be sure you read next week's instalment of this powerful serial, chums.)

"Mr. Inspector, we've brought you a present," Lyle said.

The inspector eyed the grimed pair sourly.

"You'll find this a bad place to play jokes, my friends," he said grimly.

"We've risked our lives to play this one," Lyle replied quietly.

His manner impressed even that hardened official. In silence the strings were cut, and a white, flakey powder exposed to view.

For a moment the inspector stared with a puzzled frown.

"Where did you get this?" he demanded harshly.

"First—what is it?" Lyle countered.

"Why, cocaine, as I think you know," the inspector snapped. "There's enough 'snow' here to drug half London.

Where did it come from?"

"Like other snow, it tumbled from the sky!" Lyle laughed, then told his amazing story from beginning to end.

The inspector heard him out in silence, then warmly congratulated them on their pluck.

"You've done wonderfully well, and you've killed a very vile business," he said. "We've known for some time past that quantities of this stuff were sneaking into England, but I'll confess we've

been sadly at fault in trying to locate the method." He smiled thoughtfully. "A clever ruse—no incriminating letters, no chance of a Customs' search! Well, well, 'snow' brings fantastic profits to the criminals who trade it, but they'll trade no more this way." His hand hovered on the telephone. "Now for Maltravers, or Ultima, and your flying friends. I've little doubt we'll get them before the day is out."

"An' shure, we'll be arrestin' all the little wireless fellows that helped 'em!" Jerry asked, with a grin.

The inspector chuckled, and applied himself to the telephone.

But his confidence in laying Ultima by the heels was not borne out by events. The Hampstead flat saw no more of that mysterious person.

Of course, the Radio Chain Society came to an abrupt end—sort of went into moral bankruptcy. But the newspapers, when they took hold of the yarn, boosted Lyle and Jerry to the skies, and did their new wireless business a power of good. THE END.

(The two aero chums had again failed to capture the elusive Ultima, but they did not give up hope. Look out for the next thrilling adventure in this splendid series.)

LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S COUP!

(Continued from page 18.)

"That's true," agreed the millionaire's son. "They were in the bushes opposite, and they never left them except when all the fun was over. I guess they saw it was impossible to sneak anything Tom Merry was handing out of the window with all the St. Jim's fellows about."

"Yaas, I agree!"

Arthur Augustus was still openly excited. He considered that he had all the loose ends of the case neatly gathered together, just as if he had been a detective himself, and slowly a brain wave came over him.

He looked at Lumley-Lumley, then at the box on the mantelshelf, and the brain wave found expression in words.

"Gwoat Scott! I undahstand, Lumlay-Lumlay, for it is as deah as daylight, bai Jove! You saw this jewel-box lyin' on the g'round, an' took it in ordah to p'wvent Slingah Horton and the othah c'wooks layin' hands on it?"

"No, I never touched the box."

"But, deah boy—"

"In fact, I never saw it on the night of the fire," declared Lumley-Lumley. "What probably happened is that you took the box—"

"What?"

"You or some other St. Jim's chap," laughed Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "Anyway, the jewel-box was picked up by one of the St. Jim's fire brigade and bundled into one of the lockers on the fire-engine by mistake. Isn't that so, Mr. Locke?"

"Undoubtedly," agreed the detective. "Quite by accident the jewel-case was brought back to St. Jim's on the fire-engine—a possibility which occurred to me quite suddenly at luncheon at Colonel Wenham's place. As a result, I telephoned through to Lumley-Lumley, asking him to search every locker on the fire-engine, only I couldn't get my message through until late in the evening."

Lumley-Lumley nodded.

"That's so; because I spent most of the early part of the evening down at the Green Man, losing cash to the crooks," he laughed. "Still, I found the box all serene late at night in one of the lockers on the old fire-engine, so that little mystery is cleared up."

A curious sort of silence followed Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's last words, during which Arthur Augustus rose quietly to his feet. There was quite an anxious expression on the face of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove, Lumlay-Lumlay, I am sowwy—"

"Rats!"

"Dashed sowwy—"

"More rats!" grinned Lumley-Lumley. "Naturally, you didn't catch on to the idea, and put me down as a rotter. Who wouldn't? As a matter of fact, I've got to thank you for lending me that cash which made it possible for me to play cards with the crooks—cash which Mr. Locke is anxious to pay back now."

"Rather!" exclaimed the detective, hauling out his note-case. "Twelve-pounds-ten, I think, D'Arcy?"

While he was fumbling with the notes Taggles, the school-porter, looked into the room.

"Which you are to come to the 'Ead's room at once, Master Lumley-Lumley," he snuffled. "I've been sent for you."

"That's right," answered the millionaire's son. "You needn't look so cheerful, though, Taggles, because it's quite all right. Mr. Railton has reported me for being out of the school after lock-up last night, but Mr. Locke has already explained to the Head why I was out. Instead of getting a whacking I may have a half-holiday awarded instead."

At that Ferrers Locke laughed heartily, but he knew that a half-holiday was to be awarded Lumley-Lumley.

"And you, Merry, and Blake are also to have one," declared the detective. "In fact, all the members of Study No. 6, as well as Tom Merry & Co., and we are going to the pictures this afternoon. Afterwards, you will all have tea with me at that ripping cafe down in Rylcombe."

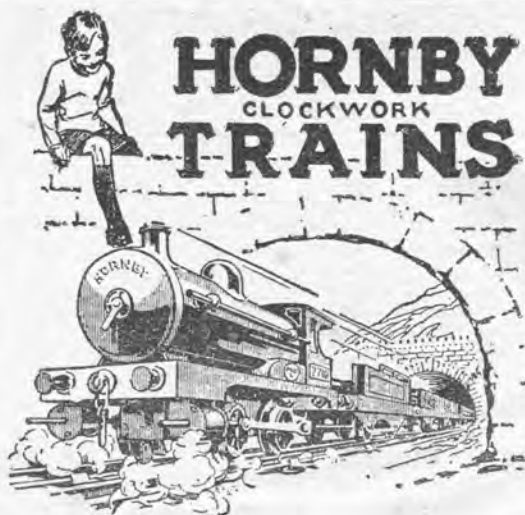
"Bai Jove, how wippin'—"

"Three of the best for Ferrers Locke, chaps!" cried Tom Merry. "Let her rip!"

And the chums of St. Jim's let her rip in cheers which were heard to the extreme end of the Fourth Form corridor of St. Jim's.

THE END.

(Look out for another exciting story of Tom Merry & Co. next week, chums, entitled: "RIVALS OF THE NEW HOUSE!" by Martin Clifford. It's ripping.)

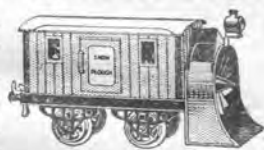


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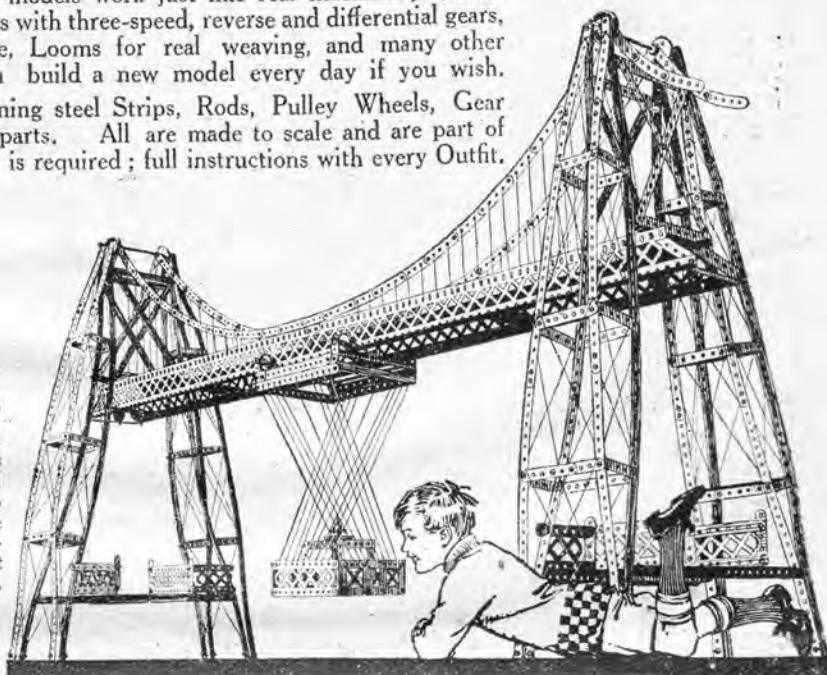
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