

POWERFUL ST. JIM'S SERIES STARTS TO-DAY!



The GEM

THE BEST BOOK FOR BRITISH BOYS

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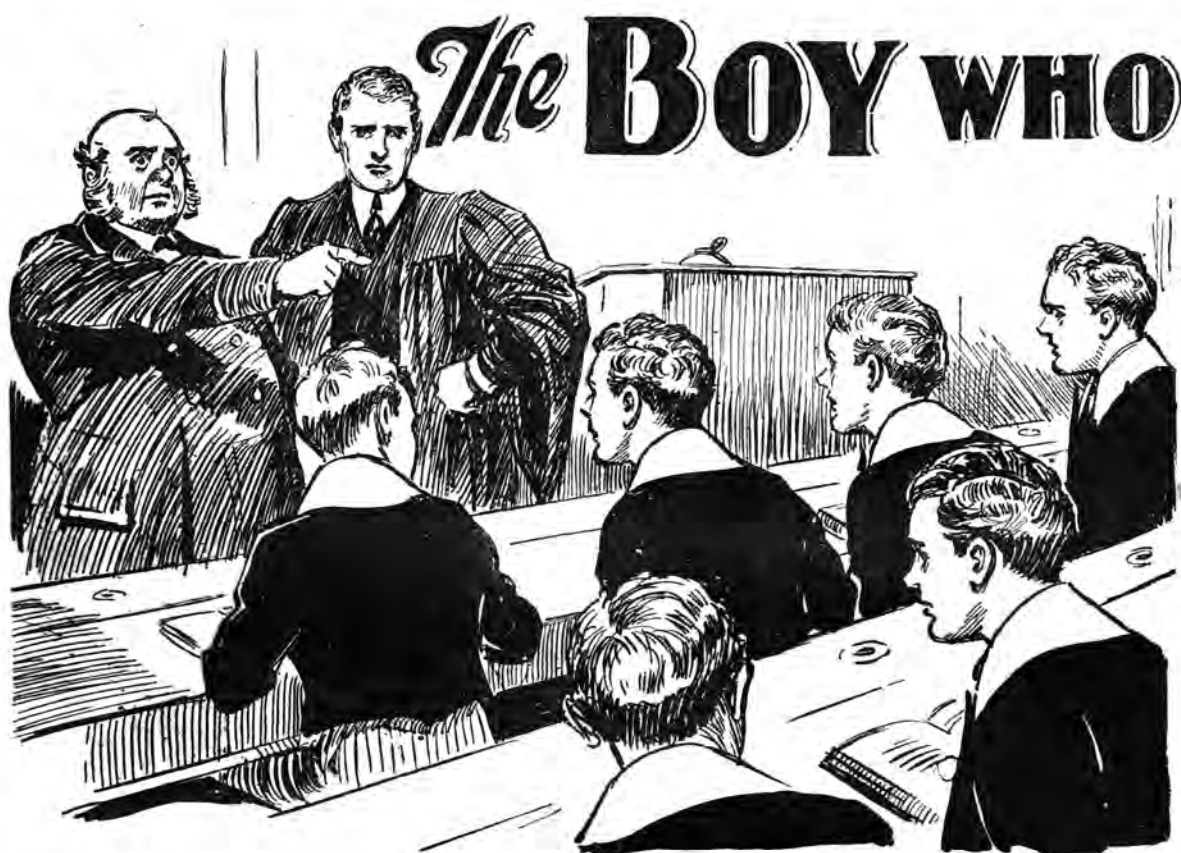
No. 1,367. Vol. XLV.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

Week Ending April 28th, 1934.



A DRAMATIC INCIDENT FROM "THE BOY WHO COULDN'T BE SACKED!"—WITHIN.



The Chums of St. Jim's soon form the opinion that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the new boy, is a rank outsider, and they are not slow to show him just where he gets off! Yet never does the cool nerve and brazen effrontery of the newcomer desert him—even when faced with expulsion—for he is safe in the knowledge that he cannot be sacked!

CHAPTER 1. Lumley-Lumley!

TOOT!
Toot!
Zip-zip!
Whiz!

Tom Merry jumped.

He was standing outside the gates of St. Jim's, with his hands in his pockets, chatting to Manners and Lowther, who were leaning against the stone archway in attitudes of lazy negligence.

The Terrible Three had a right to be lazy just then, for they had come off the cricket field after a particularly arduous game, in which the New House batsmen had given them all the leather-hunting they wanted, and a little over.

Tom Merry had his back to the road, and he naturally gave a jump as the whiz and hoot of the motor suddenly burst upon his ears.

"Look out!" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry swung round.

A big car was coming down the road at a great speed.

It was almost level with the school gates in the few seconds that had elapsed since Tom Merry heard the hoot of the horn.

Tom Merry made a jump for the gateway.

Toot-toot!

Whiz!

"Blessed road-hog!" exclaimed Manners, as the big car shot by the gates. "Hallo, there! Have you bought this road?"

There was no reply from the car.

But there was a sudden grinding and grating of brakes, and it stopped with such abruptness that the juniors of St.

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Jim's half expected it to pitch over into the ditch on the opposite side of the road.

But it did not.

The chauffeur, if he was a reckless driver, and given to taking risks, evidently knew his business all the same.

The car slackened down and almost stopped, and whirled round back to the gates it had whizzed past.

The Terrible Three stared at it.

"It's coming back," said Manners.

"Give 'em a yell as they pass," said Lowther.

"Good egg!"

The juniors could see the occupants of the car—a gentleman in a frock-coat and silk hat, and a lad of about fifteen, also in a silk hat. The man, who was a stout, red-faced person of about fifty, and wore gold-rimmed spectacles, half-rose to his feet as the car whirled round and glanced towards the juniors standing in the gateway, and spoke to the lad at his side.

But it did not occur to the Terrible Three for the moment that they were coming to St. Jim's.

"Now, then!" said Lowther. "Go it!"

And the Terrible Three gave the offending motorists a yell.

"Yah! Go and eat coke!"

Toot-toot-toot!

The car was coming straight for the gateway.

The chums of the Shell jumped aside.

"My hat! They're coming in here!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Phew!"

The big car whizzed in.

Right on and up the drive to the School House it went at a great rate, and the Terrible Three stood and stared at it.

Tom Merry gave a whistle.

—STARRING JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY, FROM NEW YORK.

COULDN'T BE SACKED!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Well, that's rich!" he exclaimed. "Suppose it's a friend of the Head's that we've been yelling at!"

"My only socks!" said Lowther. "Just our luck, if it is!" Manners shook his head.

"He's a blessed road-hog!" he said. "More likely he's come to bring that kid to St. Jim's—a new boy, you know."

"Ah! Very likely!"

"They've stopped."

The car had halted before the School House.

Tom Merry and his chums walked quickly towards the House. They were rather curious to see the new arrivals at close quarters.

There were four boys on the steps of the School House when the car stopped. They were Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy of the Fourth Form—the chums of Study No. 6. They looked in some surprise at the big car as it arrived; they were not accustomed to seeing a big automobile whirl up to the House in that breakneck manner.

When Lord Eastwood, D'Arcy's father, came in his big car the chauffeur always slacked down very much, and almost crawled to the House. But the red-faced gentleman in this car was evidently accustomed to more noisy and imposing ways.

He stepped from the car and looked round him.

"This is St. James' Collegiate School, I presume?" he said, addressing the group of juniors on the steps.

Blake raised his cap.

"Yes, sir."

"Very good! Get out, Jerrold."

The boy stepped out.

He was a slightly built lad, with a pale complexion and very keen eyes. He could not be called handsome, and his expression was not particularly agreeable. His lip had a curl in it that perpetually suggested a sneer.

He looked coolly at the chums of the Fourth, looking them up and down in a way that was far from gratifying.

Before he had been ten seconds under their observation Blake and his chums were conscious of a desire to "take him down" a peg or two.

It was not necessary for a new boy to be shy and nervous, of course, but a lad coming to a school like St. Jim's for the first time might have been expected to look somewhat subdued.

But this particular youth was far from looking subdued.

The chums of the Fourth glanced after the visitors as they disappeared into the House. They heard the strident tones of the red-faced gentleman speaking to Toby, the School House page.

"Lumley-Lumley—Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley! There's my card. Dr. Holmes is expecting me."

"Lumley-Lumley," murmured Jack Blake. "I wonder who he is? Hallo, Tom Merry! Seen the merchant who's just arrove?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes. He nearly ran me down in his smell-box! Know who he is?"

"Lascelles Lumley-Lumley!"

"Which?"

"Heard him announce himself. The kid's front name is Jerrold. A pretty pair! The Head's expecting them."

"Oh!"

"I knew it was a new boy," said Manners, with a nod. "I wonder whether he's going into the Fourth or the Shell."

"Oh, you can have him in the Shell!" said Jack Blake, at once.

"Declined with thanks," said Tom Merry. "He looks more suitable for the Fourth. To judge by first impressions, the fellow looks an utter bounder."

"I'm wathah a believah in first impwessions," said D'Arcy.

"Oh, we'll give him a chance," said Blake judiciously. "I don't believe in jumping on a new chap, whatever he looks like. I'll take the first opportunity of pointing out to

him that he doesn't own the place, and, if necessary, I'll give him a licking. But I really think, you know, that we'll give him a chance."

CHAPTER 2.

A Snappy Interview!

DR. HOLMES rose to receive the visitors as they were shown into his study. He shook hands with Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley, who gave him a grip that made the doctor wince.

Dr. Holmes was not a feeble man, by any means, but he did not possess the superabundant energy of Mr. Lumley-Lumley. That gentleman seemed to be overflowing with vitality. He came into the quiet study like a whirlwind, and it really seemed to the disturbed doctor that he set the furniture rocking as he entered.

"Dr. Holmes!" exclaimed Mr. Lumley-Lumley, in his strident tones, which penetrated to a great distance. "I am glad to meet you. You had my letter?"

"Certainly, Mr. Lumley-Lumley!"

"Then you were expecting me?"

"Yes."

"Very good," puffed Mr. Lumley-Lumley. "Jerrold, come here, sir, and don't sit down until you are told."

"Oh, I say, guv'nor!"

"Hold your tongue, sir! Dr. Holmes, this is my boy Jerrold—my son and heir, sir. Heir to a cool three million, as a matter of fact—what?"

"Really!" murmured the Head, who did not care twopence whether Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was heir to three millions or to threepence, but who felt called upon to say something.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley. "Three millions, if a cent, sir! All made in America, too—made by me, sir!"

"Dear me!"

"Jerrold, this is Dr. Holmes, your future headmaster."

Jerrold ducked his head.

Dr. Holmes shook hands with the boy in a rather dazed way. As a matter of fact, the loudness and the energy of Mr. Lumley-Lumley quite confused the Head, who was used to moving more quietly.

"Now, Jerrold, you can run away while I talk to Dr. Holmes," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley, jerking his fat thumb towards the door.

"Right-ho!" said Jerrold.

"Get out, then!"

Jerrold walked out.

The study door closed behind him, and then Mr. Lumley-Lumley accepted Dr. Holmes' invitation to sit down.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley, laying down the law with a fat forefinger on a fat knee—"now, sir, to business!"

"Certainly!"

"I'm a business man."

"Indeed!"

"You understand me? I'm Lascelles Lumley-Lumley, Ltd. Business from the word go, sir, as we say over there. That's me—Lumley-Lumley."

"Ah!"

"You've had a recommendation for my boy from one of the governors of the school, Lord Belstead," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes, Mr. Lumley—ah—Lumley."

"I suppose that's sufficient, eh?"

"Naturally."

"I'm off to South America in a day or two," resumed Mr. Lumley-Lumley. "I don't know if you know much about the meat-packing business?"

"Very little, I'm afraid."

"Well, sir, Lumley, Ltd., are going to make things hum!" declared Mr. Lumley-Lumley. "Talk about Chicago! I'm going to lay over Chicago, sir, I assure you. What do you think of a plan for cornering the whole meat supply of the Argentine, sir, and getting it entirely under the direction of Lumleys, Ltd.?"

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"Dear me!"

"That's why I'm wanted in South America, sir."

"Ah!"

"That's how it is, sir. I'm off in a few days. I want to get Jerrold planted in the school here first. My time is valuable—what? Here I am, sir. I've got to get back to town at two o'clock. That gives me a quarter of an hour to fix things up with you."

The Head breathed again.

He had been afraid that, from common politeness, he would have to ask his overpowering visitor to stay to lunch, and he certainly did not know how he would endure the ordeal.

The news that Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley had to hurry back to town was extremely gratifying.

"Ah, must you go?" murmured the Head.

"I must, sir. My time is very valuable. I want to fix matters up first here. My boy Jerrold has been prepared for this school. His tutor is quite satisfied with him. I have every confidence in you, sir, and shall leave my son under your charge with a clear conscience."

"I—I hope so."

"Now, sir, I may be away from England a long time. I shall, in any case, be busy, and shall not wish to be bothered about Jerrold." Mr. Lumley-Lumley drew a fat cheque-book from the inner pocket of his frock coat. "Now, sir—"

"Really—"

"I understand that the fees at this school are high, but you give a first-class education in return," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley.

"Oh, yes!"

"Good! What is the fee per term?"

"Really—"

The millionaire consulted an enormous gold watch.

"Excuse me, Dr. Holmes; I have to leave in ten minutes."

"Yes."

"The amount, sir?"

"Fifty guineas, sir," said Dr. Holmes, turning very red.

"Good! Three terms in a year, I believe."

"Yes."

"That is a hundred and fifty guineas," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley. "Any extras?"

"Certainly."

"How many?"

"Really, sir, I could not say at the moment."

"I wish to pay my son's fees in advance for three years?"

"But—"

"That will be nine terms. That will be four hundred and fifty guineas. Now, Jerrold had better take on all the extras."

"But—"

"If he feels inclined to drop any of them later, or you think they're not good for him, you can arrange the matter. But I wish to provide for everything before I go."

"But—"

"Will another hundred on the cheque cover all extras?"

"I—I have no doubt—"

"Very well. Then there's cricket and so forth; his subscriptions to the club, and all that. I want Jerrold to take everything."

"But—"

"I'll put on another hundred for all that."

"But—"

"And you can see to the details afterwards. I have only another seven minutes."

"But—" said the Head feebly.

His part in that remarkable interview seemed to be reduced to a constant repetition of the word "but." He realised that it served no useful purpose, and he relapsed into silence, and let Mr. Lumley-Lumley have it all his own way.

"Then I wish Jerrold to have plenty of pocket-money," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley. "Also, you will pay any debts he contracts; no need for the son of Lascelles Lumley-Lumley to stint himself, you know."

Dr. Holmes nodded.

"I will leave a hundred pounds with you for the purpose, and you can always obtain more by communicating with my solicitors, whose address I will leave with you. Here it is."

"I—"

"Here is your cheque, sir," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley, with a flourish.

The Head glanced at the cheque Mr. Lumley-Lumley had dashed off with a fountain-pen. It was for £772 10s.

"Seven hundred and seventy-two pounds ten shillings," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley. "I have no doubt you will find that correct, sir."

"Quite so!"

Mr. Lumley-Lumley glanced at his watch again.

"Ah, I have five minutes more. There is one more matter. I am going abroad, as I said. I leave my son in
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your charge. I wish you to sign a paper to the effect that you take charge of him."

"But—"

"Just a little legal agreement, you know."

"I have never—"

"Nothing like having everything legal and above board," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley. "I wish to leave my son in your hands with a clear conscience. What—"

"But—"

"Just jot down on that sheet of paper that you agree to take my son Jerrold into the school, feed, clothe, and tuition him for three years in consideration of a cheque for seven hundred and seventy-two pounds ten shillings."

"But—"

"I have only four minutes."

Dr. Holmes still hesitated.

The whole affair was so extraordinary that he was a little off his balance. But he realised that he was dealing with an exceptional character.

The legal agreement Mr. Lumley-Lumley asked for was a matter of form merely, for the Head, having once taken the boy into the school, was bound to take every care of him for the period that he remained at St. Jim's.

But chiefly the Head's mind dwelt upon the fact that Lord Belstead, one of the governors of St. Jim's, had specially recommended the millionaire's son.

That was sufficient to decide him.

He wrote the paper out as the millionaire suggested.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley looked it over.

"Sign, please," he said.

The Head signed the paper.

"Now get a witness, if you will be so kind."

Dr. Holmes touched the bell.

"Toby, kindly ask Mr. Railton to step here."

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, made his appearance. Dr. Holmes hastily introduced him to Mr. Lumley-Lumley, and explained. Mr. Railton looked very much astonished. He was much more of a business man than his chief, and there was a very dubious expression upon his face.

But it was not his business to give advice to the Head unasked. He signed the paper as a witness, and left the study.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley glanced at his watch.

"One minute more," he agreed.

He blotted the agreement and folded it up, and placed it in his fat pocket-book.

"This will be left in the hands of my solicitors, Messrs. Bird & Beaky," he said. "Thank you very much. I think all is settled."

"I—I think so."

"Then good-bye, Dr. Holmes."

"Good-bye, Mr. Lumley—ah!—Lumley."

The Head shook hands with his visitor and bowed him out of the study. Mr. Lumley-Lumley followed Toby down the passage to the hall of the School House, and as he reached the door a terrific uproar burst upon his ears.

CHAPTER 3.

Asking For It!

TOM MERRY & CO. had been chatting on the steps of the School House, when Master Jerrold was dismissed from the Head's study by his affectionate parent.

Jerrold came to the doorway with his hands in his pockets, looking about him in the half-sultry, half-sneering way the juniors had already noticed.

The chums of the School House glanced at him, and Jerrold returned their look.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry, as affably as he could. "You're a new kid, eh?"

"Yes," said Lumley-Lumley.

"What Form are you going into?"

"I don't know."

"Been to school before?" asked Blake.

They were the usual questions put to a new boy; but the juniors were putting them rather from politeness than curiosity in this case, for they did not take in the least to Lumley and did not particularly want to know anything about him.

"No," said the millionaire's son. "I had a tutor."

"I see."

"Which is your House, kid?" asked Tom Merry.

Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"Is there more than one House here?"

Tom Merry stared.

It seemed to him that even a new boy ought to have known that there were two Houses at St. Jim's—the School House and the New House.

The rivalry between the two Houses was one of the chief



"Who is it? What is it?" asked the juniors, crowding round the station hack. "Where did you pick it up, driver?" "The young gentlemen from the Grammar School sent it," he said. "Let me out!" roared the new boy, almost bursting with rage. "I'm tied up! Let me loose!" "It's Lumley!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

excitements of life among the juniors, and here was a fellow who didn't know that there was more than one House.

"Yes, there are two," said Tom Merry.

"New House and School House," said Monty Lowther. "This is the School House—the biggest and best. The School House is Cock House at St. Jim's!"

"I don't know which I shall be in. I suppose it doesn't matter much," said the new boy. "What kind of a life do you fellows get here? Any fun?"

Tom Merry looked at him keenly.

"That depends on what you call fun," he said. "There's plenty of fun. We have cricket and boating in the summer, and plenty of it, running and swimming, and so on."

Lumley yawned.

"Oh, is that all?"

"Then we have rows with the New House, you know. We jape them and they jape us, and there's a fight every now and then."

"What rot!"

"Eh?"

"Lot of rot, I call it!"

"Oh, do you?"

"Yes, I do. I should want something more exciting than that sort of thing."

The juniors looked at him expressively.

"You may get it, too," said Blake, after a pause. "A fellow who comes here with his nose turned up is in danger of getting it punched!"

"Oh, rats!"

Jack Blake slipped off the balustrade where he was sitting and took a step towards the new junior.

"I'll trouble you to take that back again," said Blake.

"Bosh!"

"Bai Jove! I should recommend you to give the boundah a feahful thwashin', Blake," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Let him alone; he's a new kid," said Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I am awah he is a new kid, but a fellow must considah his personal dig!" said D'Arcy, adjusting his eyeglass. "Howevah, if the wottah apologises pewwaps Blake might let him off."

"Rubbish!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Eh?"

"Rot!"

"Bai Jove, I must wequest you to stand aside, Blake, and leave this uttah beast to me! He wequiah a severe lesson!"

"Get out of the way, Gussy!"

"I decline to do anythin' of the sort. I am goin' to give Lumley a feahful thwashin'."

"Ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Order!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Blake's turn comes first, Gussy, and you can go for Lumley afterwards, if Blake leaves anything of him."

"Go it, Blake!" said Monty Lowther. "Give me your cap!"

"Are you ready, Lummy?"

"My name is Lumley-Lumley!" said the new boy fiercely.

"Sorry! I mean Lummy-Lummy! Are you ready?" said Blake, dancing up to the new boy with his fists in the air.

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"What?"

"You'll get hurt if I begin on you."

"Well, of all the cheek!" exclaimed Blake.

"Oh, get off!"

"I'm going to lick you for your own good," explained Blake patiently. "We teach manners here, you know; an extra, but not charged in the bill."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you ready, then? I shan't hurt you very much; only a little lesson not to be so jolly polite. Besides, I want to leave some for Gussy."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Blake gave the new boy a gentle tap on the nose.

Lumley gasped and sniffed.

"You rotter!" he roared, and he launched himself upon Blake like a tiger-cat.

The spring was so sudden that Blake had no time to knock him down, and in a moment Lumley was bearing him backwards.

They fell, and rolled down the steps together.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Somebody will be hurt!"

"Bai Jove!"

The two juniors rolled on the ground. Blake tried to separate, to get up, but the new boy did not let him go.

Apparently he had never heard of any rules in fighting.

He was posturing and kicking like a hooligan, and Blake, quite unused to that method of encounter, was getting the worst of it.

He staggered up at last, the new boy clinging to him like a cat.

"Go for him, Blake!" shouted the other juniors, exasperated by the kind of fighting indulged in by Lumley, and more than half inclined to interfere. "Knock him into the middle of next week!"

Blake drove home his fist on Lumley's nose, and there was a yell from the new junior.

Then he tore at Blake again, and the red showed where his fingernails scratched down the junior's face.

That was too much for the others.

"Yank him off!" shouted Tom Merry.

And the juniors leaped upon the new boy.

He was grasped by many hands, and wrenched away from Blake in a twinkling. Blake, dazed, dabbed at his face with a pocket-handkerchief.

"The—the rotter!" he gasped.

Lumley did not give in quietly.

He fought and scratched in the grasp of the juniors, and two or three of them rolled on the ground with him, Lumley undermost.

It was at this moment that Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley emerged from the School House.

CHAPTER 4.

Father and Son!

MR. LUMLEY-LUMLEY halted on the top step, and stared at the scene in amazement.

For the moment he did not see his son, who was pretty well hidden from view by the juniors who were scrambling over him.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the millionaire. "Is this how you young fellows amuse yourselves here?"

Blake turned red.

He wished now that he had put up with Lumley's insolence more patiently—at least, until the millionaire was gone. It was certainly bad enough form for the new boy to be roughly handled in the presence of his father.

At the voice of the millionaire, the juniors released Jerrold Lumley.

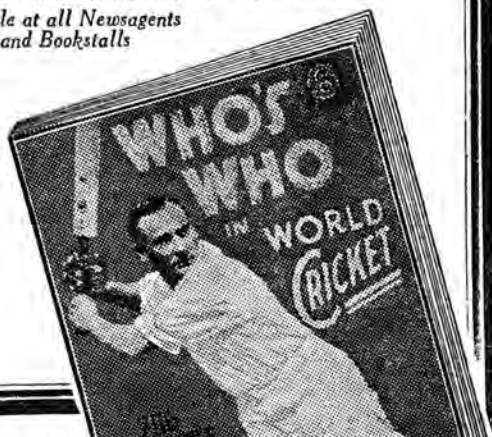
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He staggered to his feet.

His father uttered a cry of surprise.

"Jerrold!" he exclaimed.

Lumley rubbed his face savagely.

His nose was streaming red, and he looked decidedly dishevelled and dusty. He blinked rather dazedly at his father.

Tom Merry & Co. stood silent.

Under the eyes of the millionaire they felt awkward and confused, and wished themselves anywhere but where they were.

True, the blame had been with the new boy, but they did not expect Mr. Lumley to see that, and the situation was awkward enough.

But the millionaire did not look angry.

"So you're in trouble, Jerrold, already!" exclaimed Mr. Lumley-Lumley.

Jerrold growled.

"I needn't ask whose fault it was," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley. "I dare say you have been quarrelsome again, Jerrold."

"Oh!" murmured Tom Merry.

"They set on me!" growled Lumley.

Mr. Lumley nodded.

"I don't wonder. I suppose it was your fault—it usually is. Get into the car, Jerrold. I want to speak to you before I go, and I've no time to stop."

"Oh, all right!"

Jerrold stepped into the car.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley gazed at the amazed juniors with a smile.

"You needn't look so down in the mouth!" he exclaimed.

"I'm not offended, and I'm not going to complain to the Head. I've no time, for one thing."

"You see, sir—" began Tom Merry haltingly.

"Oh, I understand! It's all right. Jerrold is combative, like his father," said the millionaire, with a chuckle. "Always was. He's always in hot water. You'll get used to Jerrold."

"Bai Jove!"

"You must allow me to say that you're a real sport, sir," said Monty Lowther admiringly.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"Thank you! Good-morning!"

He stepped into the car after his son. The big car swung away down the drive.

Tom Merry & Co. took off their caps to the millionaire. He certainly wasn't the kind of man they admired most; but he was a sport.

The car swung out of the gates, and ran down the road.

Jerrold sat mopping his nose with a handkerchief, and looking decidedly sullen.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley seemed in high good-humour.

"I'll take you as far as Rylcombe, and drop you there," he said. "You can get a cab back. It's all arranged, Jerrold."

"Oh, is it?" growled the son.

"Yes. I've fixed Dr. Holmes down for three years."

Jerrold grunted.

"You'll be properly provided for three years, and the headmaster can't get rid of you if he wants to, Jerrold," said the millionaire, with another of his peculiar chuckles. "I've got his fist on that, and my solicitors will look to it while I'm away."

Jerrold grinned.

"Lord Belstead's recommendation prevented questions being asked," went on Mr. Lumley-Lumley. "Of course, Dr. Holmes did not know that Lord Belstead is a director of Lumleys, Limited, a gilt figurehead that has to do what I tell him, in case the horn of plenty should run dry."

Jerrold gave another chuckle.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley became more serious.

"Now, Jerrold, you've got your chance," he said. "Make the most of it."

"I'm going to have a good time!" growled Jerrold.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley nodded.

"I don't want to interfere with that, my boy," he said.

"Have as good a time as you can get. But this is a wonderful good opening for you here, if you make the best of it. We haven't always been rich, Jerrold."

"No need to tell me that."

"It's not so very long since I was in a little office, Jerrold, and you were sweeping it out of a morning."

"Pah!"

"That was when we started in New York—started to beat the Yankees at their own game, and did it!" said Mr. Lumley-Lumley, with a chuckle. "You were a cute kid, Jerrold. You were always as sharp as a needle. When you grow up you will be a credit to Lumleys, Limited, and make thousands where I make hundreds."

"What-ho!" said Jerrold.

"But money isn't everything," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley sagely. "Money can get you most things, but not everything. You want social position, classy friends, and entry

into the aristocratic circles, my boy. You can get all that with an education at St. Jim's, and by chumming up with the best fellows there."

Jerrold grunted.

"Now, Jerry, you've had a hard time in some ways," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley seriously. "You've taken the change pretty well, and it's a change from walking to save a bus fare to riding in a twelve-hundred-guinea motor-car."

"What-ho!"

"But you've got a lot of your old ways left. The boys you're going to meet now are not the same as the street arabs in New York that you used to fight with at the corner."

Jerrold grinned.

"I s'pose not," he assented.

"You've got lots to learn, Jerrold, but you'll learn it. Mind, I expect you to do well at this school. You'll have everything you want. Have a good time, and make things hum, and come out ahead—that's all right!"

"O.K.!"

"Here we are in Rylcombe. You get down here."

The car halted.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley shook hands affectionately with his son.

"Good-bye, Jerrold, and stick to it!"

"What-ho! Good-bye, dad!"

And Jerrold jumped out of the car.

Mr. Lumley-Lumley waved his hand, and the big car shot onwards, and disappeared down the London road.

Jerrold Lumley stood looking after it till it disappeared from sight.

Then he strode towards the station, where the solitary hack that Rylcombe boasted was in waiting. The driver was resting on the seat outside the station, sucking a straw, and exchanging desultory remarks with the old porter.

They looked lazily at Lumley as he came up.

"You the driver of this thing?" asked Jerrold, with a contemptuous glance towards the ancient hack.

"Yessir."

"Take me to the school."

"Suttin'ly, sir."

Jerrold sat down in the old hack.

It rolled off slowly towards St. Jim's.

The new boy drew a pack of cards from his pocket, and began to deal them. He was not playing patience—he was practising. His practice consisted of dealing from the bottom of the pack without allowing that fact to be apparent. If Dr. Holmes had seen his new pupil at that moment he would have been very surprised indeed.

The driver looked round.

"The skule, sir?" he said in his slow way.

"Yes!" rapped Jerrold.

"Which skule, sir?" said the man. "St. Jim's, sir, or the Grammar School, sir?"

"St. Jim's."

"Ay, sir!"

The hack rolled on. Jerrold dealt and dealt the cards on his knee, tirelessly, and it was wonderful to see the skill his youthful fingers had with them. Jerrold was not yet fifteen years of age, but he had certainly been a card player for many years. It was doubtless one of the accomplishments he had picked up in the parental office in New York in earlier days.

The hack came to a sudden stop, and the cards slid from Jerrold's knee and scattered on the floor of the little vehicle.

Jerrold uttered an impatient exclamation.

"You fool! What are you stopping for?" he called out, hastily gathering up the cards and pocketing them.

"You're not at the school yet."

The hack certainly was not at St. Jim's; there were high hedges and trees still on either side of it. It had stopped because a lad had caught hold of the bit and forced the old horse to a halt.

Four or five other lads had gathered beside the hack.

"Please, young gentlemen," said the driver appealingly, "it's a new boy for St. Jim's. Let me go on."

"Rats!" returned a fair-haired, sunny-faced youth cheerfully. "I suppose we can have a look at the curiosity, can't we? Here, you new fellow for St. Jim's, step out into the road and let's have a look at you! We belong to the Grammar School."

And Gordon Gay, the chief of the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School, opened the door of the hack.

CHAPTER 5.

Japin Jerrold!

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY looked in great surprise at Gordon Gay. He had never heard of Rylcombe Grammar School before, and had no knowledge of the feud that existed between the youthful Grammarians and the fellows at St. Jim's.

Gordon Gay grinned at him, and took off his cricket cap with a flourish.

"Good-afternoon!" he said.

Jerrold grunted.

"Will you kindly step out?"

"No, I won't!" growled Jerrold.

"How nice and polite!" murmured Gordon Gay. "You hear him?"

He turned to his comrades. Jack and Harry Wootton, Frank Monk, Lane, and Carboy were with him, and Tadpole was at the horse's head. They all nodded and grinned.

"St. Jim's manners, I suppose," said Monk.

"Just so, Monkey."

"He wants a lesson."

"Right—as you always are, Monkey."

"Let's give him one."

"Hear, hear!"

"Kindly step out, my young friend."

"I tell you I won't! Driver!"

"Yessir!"

"Drive on!"

"Which one of the young gents is a holdin' of the 'orse, sir?"

"Cut him with the whip."

The driver grunted. He might have cut Tadpole with the whip, but he would have been pulled off his box and rolled in the ditch the next minute, and he knew it.

Lumley looked fiercely at the grinning Grammarians.

"Get out of the way!" he cried fiercely.

"Listen to him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotters! Clear out!"

Gordon Gay & Co. looked at Jerrold Lumley. They had only intended a little fun—one of the harmless japes that

HIS GOOD DEED!

Scoutmaster: "Have you done your good deed for to-day, Tompkins?"

Tompkins: "Yes, sir."

Scoutmaster: "What was it, my boy?"

Tompkins: "There was only one dose of castor oil left, sir, so I let my young brother have it!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Clark, 54, Canons Road, Ware, Herts.



St. Jim's and the Grammar School were always playing upon one another. But the truculent manner of Jerrold Lumley was putting their backs up already.

"You're a new boy for St. Jim's, eh?" said Gay.

"Yes, I am!"

"I thought so! If you carry on there like this I can foresee a high old time for you. Get out of the hack!"

"I won't!"

"I give you one second!" said Gordon Gay grimly.

The Grammarians made a simultaneous move forward.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley realised that if he did not get out he would be dragged out, and he stepped savagely into the road.

"Now, then, what do you want?" he demanded.

The Grammarians looked him up and down.

"You look as if you've been in the wars already," grinned Gordon Gay. "What's your name?"

"Lumley-Lumley."

"Both?"

Lumley scowled.

"Or which?" asked Gordon Gay.

"Oh, shut up, and don't be an ass!"

"Pray allow me to introduce my friends," said Gordon Gay. "Gentlemen, this is Lumley-Lumley. Lumley-Lumley, this is Frank Monk-Monk. The long-legged chap is Carboy-Carboy. This is Lane-Lane. These two are Wootton-Wootton major and Wootton-Wootton minor. The chap holding the horse is Tadpole-Tadpole. I'm Gay-Gay."

The Grammarians burst into a roar of laughter, and Lumley-Lumley turned crimson.

"You cads!" he exclaimed.

"Nice youth—I don't think!" murmured Gordon Gay. "Kids, we're wasting politeness on him. We'd better let him go."

"Yes, you'd better!" said Lumley threateningly.

"Shove him into the hack!"

"What-ho!"

"Ow! Leggo! Lemme alone!"

"Rats!"

The Grammarians seized the unfortunate new boy of St. Jim's.

He was lifted into the hack, and whipcord tied his wrists together, and then his feet were secured.

This proceeding so astonished Lumley that he could hardly make any resistance; but his resistance would not have been of much use against Gordon Gay & Co., in any case.

He sat down on the seat, unable to move a limb or do anything but glare at his captors.

Gordon Gay chuckled.

"That's better!" he remarked, taking a stick of chalk from his pocket and proceeding to chalk over the face of Lumley-Lumley.

The son of the millionaire writhed and yelled helplessly; but finally desisted in sheer, breathless rage. His face was well chalked over, and then Gordon Gay drew red circles round his eyes with a stick of paint. Gordon Gay, the schoolboy actor of the Grammar School, generally had things of this sort about him.

The Grammarians yelled with laughter at Lumley's appearance when the transformation was completed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a giddy beauty!"

"I—I'll make you sit up for this!" roared Lumley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think that's all," Gay remarked. "Ta-ta!"

"Hang you!"

Gordon Gay jumped out of the hack.

"You can drive on, my son!" he said, with a grin, to the driver. "We're going to keep an eye on you, and you're to take your passenger to St. Jim's just as we've left him!" "But he won't pay me my fare, Master Gay," said the driver.

"That I won't!" roared Lumley. "Not unless you come and let me loose at once, you confounded chawbacon!"

"Nice boy, isn't he?" grinned Gordon Gay. "How much is the fare, driver?"

"Two shillings."

"There's three bob. Now take him to St. Jim's; and mind, don't you so much as look into the hack till you get there."

"Very well, Master Gay."

The hack rolled on.

The Grammarians stood in the lane looking after it as it rolled away in the direction of the school, and roaring with laughter.

They watched it till it entered the gateway of St. Jim's, and then, still laughing, they turned off in the direction of the Grammar School.

Lumley-Lumley raved in the hack and yelled to the driver to come and release him, but the man seemed to have become suddenly deaf.

The uncomplimentary epithets Lumley applied to him probably had as much effect as Gordon Gay's tip in making him deaf.

The hack entered upon the drive at St. Jim's. There Lumley's shouting soon drew a crowd round it.

Wally D'Arcy—D'Arcy minor—of the Third Form was the first to look into it, and he gave a howl of astonishment that drew other juniors from far and near.

"What's the matter?"

"What is it?"

"Who is it?"

"My only Aunt Jane!" gasped Wally. "It's the wild man from Borneo, I think!"

CHAPTER 6.

A Rank Outsider!

"**B**AI Jove! What is it?"

"Who is it?"

"Where did you pick it up, driver?"

The driver grinned.

"The young gentlemen from the Grammar School sent it," he said.

"Oh, Grammar cads!"

"It's one of Gordon Gay's japes!"

"But who is it?"

"Let me out!" roared Lumley, almost bursting with rage.

"Open the door, you fool! I'm tied up! Let me loose!"

"Lumley-Lumley!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Lumley-Lumley-Lumley!" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry opened the hack door and lifted the new boy out. He had to hold him to prevent him from rolling on the ground.

"Look at his chivvy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's tied up, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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Jack Blake opened his penknife and cut through the cords. He quite forgot the fact that he had been fighting with the new boy only an hour before.

"There you are," he said cheerfully. "You've been japed by the Grammarians—eh? Never mind; you'll get used to that."

Lumley ground his teeth.

"I'll make them smart for it!" he exclaimed.

"What on earth's that?" exclaimed Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, coming out. "Who on earth is that, Tom Merry? And how did he get into that state?"

"It's Lumley, the new kid."

"My hat!"

"He's been japed by the Grammar cads."

"Oh!" Kildare laughed. "Better get him indoors and show him where to clean himself. He doesn't look pretty."

Lumley went blindly towards the steps of the School House. The laughter of the juniors was natural enough under the circumstances, but it enraged the son of the millionaire.

"Had your fare, Ribbons?" asked Monty Lowther.

The driver nodded and grinned.

"Yes; Master Gay settled that."

And he drove the hack away.

The juniors followed Lumley into the House in a crowd. The first person he met indoors was Toby, who staggered away in a fright.

"Oh dear!" gasped Toby. "What is it?"

"You fool!"

"Crumbs! Who is it?"

"Get out of my way, you dolt!"

Lumley pushed Toby aside with a rough push that sent him staggering, and strode to the staircase. A maid who was descending the stairs caught sight of his face and gave a wild shriek.

"Help! Oh, help!"

"It's all right, Jane!" shouted Tom Merry.

But Jane was staring at the awful, white face with red circles round his eyes. It was beginning to get dusky on the staircase, and the fearful vision coming suddenly upon her out of the dusk had startled Jane into hysterics.

She dropped her broom and ran for her life.

"Fool!" snarled Lumley.

Jane, shrieking on her top note, ran towards the door of Mr. Railton's study, which was open. She dashed in, and the Housemaster sprang to his feet.

"What—what is the matter?" he exclaimed. "Calm yourself. What—what is the matter?"

"Save me!" gasped Jane. "Save me!"

"What has happened? Have you been frightened?"

"Oh, oh, oh!"

"What has frightened you?"

"Oh, the—awful thing!"

"Thing! What thing?"

"Oh, oh, oh!"

Mr. Railton, amazed and angry now, suspected that the maid had been frightened by some jape.

With a stern brow he strode from the study in search of the joker.

The hall was deserted.

The juniors had taken care to clear off. A sound from the staircase caught Mr. Railton's keen ear, however, and he strode upstairs.

There was a scurry of feet in the Fourth Form passage, and the retreating footsteps died away on the upper staircase.

Mr. Railton, frowning more darkly, strode up to the Fourth Form dormitory.

The door was closed, but he could hear a sound of suppressed voices within.

He flung the door wide open.

"My hat!"

"Cave!"

Mr. Railton strode into the dormitory.

Only one junior was visible. It was Lumley-Lumley. But a boot sticking out from beneath one bed and a cap from beneath another, and a low sound of squeezing and scuffling, hinted pretty plainly that there were others only just out of sight.

But Mr. Railton's gaze was fixed upon Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

The youth had stopped at a washstand, and was about to sponge his face when the Housemaster's entrance caused him to turn round.

He stared at Mr. Railton, and Mr. Railton stared at him.

"Boy!" gasped the Housemaster. "What does this masquerade mean? Is it you who have frightened Jane by disguising yourself in this absurd manner?"

"I didn't do it!"

"What! When I see you with my own eyes! You are—er—Lumley, I suppose? Yes, it is Lumley, the new

boy. You have lost no time in making yourself obnoxious, I must say. A harmless joke is one thing, but frightening a woman is a different matter. Hold out your hand, Lumley."

Mr. Railton had thoughtfully caught up a cane as he left his study.

"If you please, sir—" began a voice.

Mr. Railton turned round. Tom Merry was standing looking at him. There was some dust on the Shell fellow's clothes, and Mr. Railton did not need telling that he had just crawled out from under a bed where he had taken refuge.

The Housemaster eyed him sternly.

"Are you concerned in this, Merry?" he demanded.

"No, sir; but—"

"Blessed if there was any need to bolt like that, after all!" growled Jack Blake.

"Guilty conscience!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"You'd better get a wash before any further trouble happens, Lumley," said Tom Merry, with a laugh—and the new boy nodded.

"Thank you for speaking up for me!" he said.

"Oh, that's nothing!"

"I suppose he was going to cane me?"

"Yes."

"Then I'm obliged to you," said Lumley-Lumley, in a grudging sort of way.

Tom Merry glanced at him sharply.

"You needn't trouble," he said. "I don't want you to feel under any obligation."



Leaning on Mellish, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley stood unsteadily, looking at Blake. "Finished?" asked Tom Merry. "Yes," said Lumley. "I'm finished. I knew I couldn't stand up to Blake. But I shall fight him again next week, and he won't lick me so easily."

"Then be silent! Hold out your hand, Lumley."

"Please, sir—" said Tom Merry.

"Merry!"

"Yes, sir? It wasn't Lumley's fault. He was chalked and painted like that for a jape, sir, and not by his own will."

"Oh!" said Mr. Railton, lowering his cane. "That puts a different complexion on the matter certainly. Why did you not tell me so, Lumley, yourself?"

"You didn't give me a chance!" growled Lumley.

"Silence! I am obliged to you for speaking, Merry. As for the persons who coloured Lumley's face in this ridiculous manner—"

"They were fellows outside the school, sir," said Tom Merry.

Mr. Railton understood.

"Oh, very well! In that case the matter ends here."

And he strode from the dormitory. Five or six fellows crawled out from under the beds, looking very dusty and sheepish.

"And I don't want to, either," said Lumley. "Here, catch!"

He took something from his waistcoat pocket and tossed it to Tom Merry.

Tom Merry mechanically put out his hand and caught it. It was a half-crown. He glared at the coin, glistening in the palm of his hand.

"What's that for?" he said.

"For you."

Tom Merry's face flushed crimson.

He walked up to the new boy and laid the coin on the washstand beside him.

The other juniors looked on with bated breath. They expected to see Tom Merry put up his fists and give the new boy the thrashing of his life. But Tom Merry had his temper well under control.

"There's your half-crown, Lumley," said the hero of the Shell quietly. "You're an unspeakable cad to offer me money. If it were any other fellow did it I'd lick him till he couldn't stand, or until I couldn't stand! But

you're a new fellow, and perhaps you can't help being a rotten, rank outsider! Only don't do it again!"

And Tom Merry walked out of the dormitory before Lumley could recover his breath sufficiently to reply.

The other juniors followed. Lumley looked at the coin, and then picked it up and slid it carelessly into his waistcoat pocket again, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"My only hat!" said Jack Blake, as they went down the stairs. "Of all the utter, unspeakable cads and rotters, I think that chap takes the cake!"

"By Jove, he does!" said Monty Lowther. "Why didn't you wipe up the floor with him, Tommy?"

Tom Merry laughed shortly.

"He wasn't worth it, for one thing!" he said. "Never mind; there's no harm done. But he's a rotter, and no mistake, and I hope he's not coming into the Shell!"

"I jolly well hope he's not coming into the Fourth," said Blake.

"I don't suppose any Form will be anxious to have him," grinned Monty Lowther. "In any case, I hope he'll be put into the New House."

"Hear, hear!" said all the juniors at once.

Upon that point they were all agreed, and upon another—that the new boy at St. Jim's was a rank outsider!

CHAPTER 7.

Lumley's Little Joke!

TOM MERRY came into his study in the Shell passage some time later, and glanced round it.

There was no fire, but a spirit-stove was in the fender burning blue, and a kettle was singing away upon it. Manners was cutting films, and Monty Lowther was cutting bread-and-butter. There was a cake on the table, and a tin of bloater paste, and a piece of cheese. Tom Merry's face brightened up as he saw the table laid.

"Tea ready?" he said cheerfully.

"Just on," said Lowther. "It would have been quite ready if Manners had lent a hand instead of wasting time on those rotten photographs."

"Bosh!" said Manners. "There's no hurry."

"I'm hungry," said Tom Merry. "I'll make the tea. Kettle's boiling."

He rinsed warm water through the teapot, and made the tea. Manners put the films away, and rose with a yawn.

"Heard about the new chap yet?" he asked.

"What about him?" asked Tom Merry.

"I mean, whether he is coming into the Shell or the Fourth. I suppose it will be one of the two."

"And whether he's to be School House or New House," said Lowther anxiously. "I hope he will be put in the New House. Figgins & Co. are welcome to him."

"Yes, rather!"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I haven't heard," he said; "but he's been shut up in Railton's study for the last half-hour, I believe, and that looks as if he's going to be in the School House."

"Rotten luck!"

"Yes, but I don't think he'll get into the Shell," said Tom Merry. "And if he did—"

"It would be just our luck to get him planted in this study!" grunted Manners.

"Phew!"

"I think I would do something desperate if that happened," said Monty Lowther. "I—Hallo! Talk of angels!"

The study door opened, and Lumley stepped in from the passage.

He had quite cleaned off the signs of his adventure with the Grammarians, and changed his clothes, or, at least, some of them.

He wore now a white waistcoat and a large gold chain across it, and although it was genuine gold enough, the look of it was not at all tasteful. Neither was the look of a diamond pin in the necktie above. It was evident that the tastes of the new junior inclined towards the gorgeous.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry.

Lumley nodded.

"Well, I've come," he said.

"Oh, you've come, have you?" said Monty Lowther. "Well, you can go next. There's the door, and there's the window. Which way do you prefer to go?"

"Oh, come off!" said Lumley. "You'd better settle that with Mr. Railton."

"You don't mean to say that Mr. Railton sent you here?" exclaimed Lowther, with a sinking heart.

The new boy nodded.

"This is to be your study?"

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"With your kind permission!" said Lumley, with a sarcastic grin.

The Terrible Three looked at each other in blank dismay.

"My only hat!" said Monty Lowther.

"Sorry if I intrude!" said Lumley, with a sneer.

"Oh, I suppose we must make the best of it!" said Tom Merry, with a heavy heart.

Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"How charmingly polite you are!" he exclaimed.

Tom Merry looked him full in the face.

"I've got no politeness to waste on you," he said. "You know we don't want you in the study, anyway. We don't want a fourth chap in it, anyway, as far as that goes. But you least of all! You're not a chap we can chum with. You're a rank outsider—and that's plain English!"

"Quite so," said Lumley, with a nod. "Now hear some plain English from me. I don't care a tuppenny rap whether I chum with you or not! I dare say I shall find chums enough if I want any. If you treat me well I'll do the same by you. If you try to take any rises out of me, look out, that's all!"

"Why, you worm," said Monty Lowther wrathfully. "there isn't one of us who couldn't lick you one-handed, if he wanted to!"

"I shouldn't wonder. I'm not a boxer," said Lumley coolly. "But I should make you sorry for it some other way!"

"No good beginning with a row," said Tom Merry hastily. "Sit down, Lumley, and have some tea. We're just going to have tea."

Lumley cast a supercilious glance over the table.

"Is that all you've got for tea?" he asked.

"That's all," said Tom Merry.

"Phew! Look here, I've lots of money. I'll stand you a jolly good tea!" said Lumley, jingling the coins in his trousers pocket as he spoke. "I suppose there's a place here where we can get some decent grub."

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"You won't treat us to anything," he said. "So far as we're concerned, you can keep your money in your pocket."

"Hoity-toity!" said Lumley, looking at Tom Merry in astonishment. "I suppose you don't mean that?"

"I do mean it!"

"You see, Jerrold-Jerrold—I mean, Lumley-Lumley," said Lowther, in his blandest tone—"you see, you're not the kind of person we care to owe any sort of obligation to. So long as you're in the study you can stand your whack, and that's all."

"Oh rats!"

"I should hate to smash you on your first evening at St. Jim's," said Monty Lowther, "but you're going the right way to make me do it!"

Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm hungry," he remarked. "If you won't feed with me, I'll feed with you. I don't mind, anyway!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Right-ho! Sit down and begin, then," he said.

And Lumley-Lumley accepted the invitation.

The Terrible Three had been very much taken aback by the "planting" of the new junior in their study, and it was some time before they recovered from the shock. But upon the whole they treated the newcomer well. It wasn't his fault, of course, if he had been planted there. Doubtless the Housemaster had directed him there, and he had come.

That was all, and it wasn't exactly cricket to jump on him for it. Only the new boy himself was hard to bear, as well as his presence in the study.

But Lumley was trying to be agreeable now.

He chatted over tea, and forbore to make any further remarks upon the quality of the meal.

The views he expounded in conversation somewhat surprised the chums of the Shell.

Lumley had evidently seen a great deal of life; more, in fact, than was good for a boy of his age.

He did not brag of his experience or his travels, and it came out quite by chance that he had spent years in New York, and had passed time in Paris and Berlin.

Tom Merry and his chums had done a great deal of travelling in the school vacations—more than most of the St. Jim's fellows—but they realised that their experience was nowhere beside that of the new junior.

He had seen life, not as a tourist sees it, but as it is lived by people on the spot, and he had carried with him wherever he went a keen observation, and a certain sense of humour which was not wholly good-natured.

But he was in a good temper now and acting as agreeably as he could. As he drank his fourth cup of tea he related some little incidents of his life in New York without mentioning the fact that he had been office-boy in the early years of Lumley's, Limited.

There were some things which Jerrold knew he must keep dark at St. Jim's.

He related a story of a cardsharp who had inveigled

him into playing in a train, and whom he had "skinned" by beating him at his own game—cheating.

The chums of the Shell listened with interest at first, growing into surprise and disgust.

"I suppose you're rotting," said Monty Lowther, as the new boy finished with a chuckle.

Lumley stared at him.

"What do you mean?"

"Pulling our leg, I mean."

"No; I'm giving you straight goods," said Lumley, who frequently dropped into American slang. "It happened just as I said."

"Do you mean to say that you play cards for money?"

Lumley grinned.

"Do you think I play for love?" he asked. "Suppose we have a quiet game now. If you haven't any money I'll play on your IO U's."

"Are you off your rocker?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "If you make a suggestion like that again, Lumley, you'll get it where the chicken got the chopper!"

"In the neck!" explained Lowther.

Lumley shrugged his shoulders, and rose.

"Just as you like," he said, with a yawn. "I must say, you fellows are rather slow. I'm rather glad I'm not to stay in this study."

The Terrible Three leaped up with a simultaneous exclamation. Lumley crossed to the door and opened it rather quickly.

"What's that?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "You're not to stay in this study?"

"No."

"Mr. Railton hasn't assigned you here."

"Oh, no!"

"Why, you said—"

"You see, I'm going into the Fourth Form, and I shall be in a Fourth Form study," said Lumley lazily.

"But you said—"

"I was making fools of you," said Lumley coolly. "Tit for tat, you know, for the way you handled me this afternoon. I know how much you wanted to have me in the study, you know, and I guyed you. Ha, ha, ha!"

But Tom Merry & Co. did not laugh.

Lumley went out and shut the door. The Terrible Three exchanged glances.

"Well, it was funny, in a sense," said Monty Lowther, after a long pause. "But to think of a chap telling deliberate lies for the sake of a joke—"

Tom Merry's lip curled.

"I said he was a rank outsider," he remarked. "A chap who could roll out lies as he does is just the chap to play cards in the way he does, too, and to be kicked out of a decent school within a week, I think."

"Well, we haven't got him here, after all, that's one comfort," said Manners, with a deep breath of relief.

And the Terrible Three, with one accord, gave a cheer in their relief.

"Hurrah!"

Which Jerrold Lumley-Lumley heard as he walked down the passage.

CHAPTER 8.

Bumping a Bounder!

"BAI Jove, deah boys!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that observation as he stepped into Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage in the School House. Blake, Herries, and Digby were there—Blake oiling a cricket-bat, Digby writing out a German imposition, and Herries conning thoughtfully over a price list of dog biscuits.

They all looked up as D'Arcy came in. His voice and expression showed that he was alarmed.

"Well, what's the matter?" demanded Blake. "Hasn't your new topper come home?"

"Weally, Blake, I have no new toppah comin'."

"Oh, you generally have! What is it, then?"

"I have heard vewy alarmin' news about the new wottah."

"Oh, Lumley-Lumley, of that ilk!" exclaimed Blake.

"What about him?"

"He's in the School House."

"Rotten!"

"An' he's goin' into the Fourth Form."

"Rotten!"

"And I don't know yet what study he is goin' into, you know. The howwid thought stwuck me that he might be comin' into this study."

"Rottenest!"

"It would be feafuhl, you know!" said D'Arcy, with a distressed look. "Four are quite enough for a study of this size."

"Too many," said Blake, "when one of them has fifteen

(Continued on the next page.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Fine footballs are awarded every week for the two best jokes received and a half-a-crown is paid for every other joke that appears in this column.

"IKING!"

The Cockney was tramping along a country road on a hot summer's day. His bowler hat was set on the back of his head, and the perspiration was streaming from his brow.

"Iking?" inquired a farmer leaning on a gate.

"Not arf!" replied the Cockney. "In every bloomin' limb!"

A football has been awarded to F. Kirby, 32, Greystoke Road, Penrith, Cumberland.

FREE TIPS.

On returning to Aberdeen McTavish was asked if he liked London.

"Och!" he replied. "Did I like London? Rather! When ye go into restaurants ye find money under the plates!"

A football has been awarded to D. Woolley, 144, Codrington Road, Ashford, Kent.

HANDICAPPED.

Mother (to battered son): "So you've been fighting with Tommy Atkins again. Didn't you stop to spell your names as I told you, to cool your temper?"

Son: "Yes, we did; but my name's Adolphus Augustus, and his is Tom!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Owen, 35, Helena Road, Dollis Hill, London, N.W.10.

NO FLIES ON TOMMY.

School Inspector: "If there were three flies on the table and I killed one, how many would be left?"

Tommy: "One, sir—the dead one."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Elliott, 52, Beemead Avenue, Kenton, Middlesex.

HAPPY RELIEF.

Teacher: "This is the fifth time I have had to punish you this week. What have you to say for yourself?"

Offender: "I'm glad it's Friday!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to T. Ryan, Ballinacarrow, Ballymole, Co. Sligo, Ireland.

LIGHTER THAN THE LOT.

An Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scotsman were arguing as to which country possessed the lightest men.

"Begorra, we have men of Cork!" said the Irishman.

"But we ha'e men o' Ayr," retorted the Scotsman.

"Ah!" exclaimed the Englishman. "Up the Thames we have lightermen!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Roberts, 59, Amersham Vale, New Cross, London, S.E.14.

QUITE ANOTHER MATTER.

Mrs. Binks: "I'm inclined to think that our new maid is not strictly honest."

Mr. Binks: "She certainly is not much to look at, but we must not judge by appearances."

Mrs. Binks: "Certainly not. But I was judging by appearances."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Lloyd, 170, Bolton Road, Salford 6.

WORK-SHY.

Housewife: "If you love work, as you say, why don't you find it?"

Tramp (sadly): "Alas, mum, love is blind!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss C. Long, 61, Linenhall Square, Newry, Co. Down, N. Ireland.

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silk hats and whole boxes and boxes of waistcoats and neckties."

"Weally, Blake, you know perfectly well that I have only four silk hats—"

"And boots by the dozen, too."

"Only four silk toppahs, besides the opewah hat," said D'Arcy. "I wegard your wemarks as fwivolous in the extveme. But it is not only because we shall be cwowded, but the new chap is such a feahfully wank outsidah, you know!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I weally don't see how we could stand him."

"It would be rotten."

"Awful!" said Digby. "The chap's a mere worm!"

"Still, there are a good many Fourth Form studies," said Blake hopefully. "I really don't see why ours should be picked out. Some of the studies in this passage have only three fellows in them."

"But this is the largest."

"Yes, but still—"

"Hallo! Come in!"

The door opened.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley presented himself on the threshold, with a half-mocking smile upon his sharp face.

The chums of the Fourth stared at him.

His sudden appearance while they were discussing the chances of his being "planted" on them struck them with dismay. It seemed like a confirmation of their worst fears.

"Well," said Blake heavily, "what do you want?"

"Is this Study No. 6?"

"The number's on the door."

Lumley glanced at the door.

"Good! Study No. 6. This is my study, then."

"Your study?"

"Yes. Mr. Railton has sent me here. I'm in the Fourth Form, you know, and I'm going to dig in with you fellows," said Lumley pleasantly.

The four chums were silent.

"We've had rather a rough time together, so far," Lumley remarked, as he came easily into the study, "but that doesn't matter. Let bygones be bygones, you know. I'm quite willing to be on good terms."

"Bai Jove!"

"I'll begin by sitting down," Lumley remarked, pushing a hatbox off a chair and seating himself in the place of it.

"Now—"

There was a shout of wrath from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"My hat!"

He ran to the hatbox and picked it up. Then he turned his eyeglass wrathfully upon the new boy, who seemed as cool as a cucumber.

"You uttah wottah!" he exclaimed. "You might have damaged my toppah sewiously."

"Go hon!"

"I twust you will not force me to thwash you," said Arthur Augustus. "I suppose we must put up with your pwesence in the study if Mr. Wailton has sent you here."

"I guess you must!" grinned Lumley.

"Hallo, Blake!" said Tom Merry, looking in at the open door. "I—Hallo! Got him here, have you?"

"Yes," groaned Blake, "he's planted on us!"

"Oh, is he? Are you sure?"

"Yes. He says Mr. Railton sent him here."

"That's nothing! He's just been to our study and lied like a rotter!" said Tom Merry, with a flash of scorn in his eyes. "He pretended he was put with us. Perhaps he's telling lies again."

Blake jumped up.

"The rotten cad!" he exclaimed. "It never occurred to me he might be lying. Were you lying, Lumley?"

Lumley's lip curled.

"Find out!" he retorted.

Jack Blake knitted his brow.

"We jolly well will!" he exclaimed. "Anyway, whether you're here or not, you're going to be taught not to tell lies. Collar him, kids, and we'll bump the facts out of him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hands off! I—"

But the hands did not keep off.

In a moment Jerrold Lumley was struggling in the grasp of four pairs of hands. Jack Blake and his comrades meant business.

The four of them fastened grimly on him, and he was seized by the arms and legs and swept off the floor.

Only his head was free for him to move. His arms and legs were pinioned, and he gasped helplessly in the hands of the juniors.

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"Let me go!" he panted hoarsely.

"Heaps of time yet!" said Blake cheerfully. "Bump him!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Lumley was allowed to sink suddenly upon the floor in a sitting posture, with a bump that rang through the study and the passage outside.

He gave a yell.

"Let me go, you hounds! You rotters, let me go!"

"Rats! Did Mr. Railton send you to this study?"

"Find out!"

Bump!

"Did Mr. Railton send you to this study, my young friend?"

Lumley set his teeth, and did not answer.

"Will you enlighten us?"

No reply.

"Another one!" said Blake. "Harder!"

Bump!

Jerrold Lumley yelled.

"Great Scott! What's the matter here?" exclaimed Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, looking in at the door.

"What on earth's the matter?"

Blake turned a flushed face towards the big Sixth Former.

"It's all right, Kildare!" he said. "It's only a little wholesome discipline."

"Come, Blake! It's not like you to jump on a new boy like this," said Kildare. "Let him alone!"

The juniors reluctantly released the outsider.

Lumley bumped on the floor again as they dropped him, and then scrambled to his feet, shaken and dishevelled and red with rage.

"You cads!" he roared.

"Shut up, Lumley!"

"Now, what's all this about?" asked Kildare. "You explain, Merry, as you seem to be only a looker-on."

"Lumley says he's seen sent to this study by Mr. Railton," Tom Merry replied. "Blake wants to know whether it's the truth."

Kildare raised his eyebrows.

"I suppose it's the truth, as Lumley says so!" he exclaimed. "You have no right to doubt his word, Blake."

"The chap is a fearful liar," explained Tom Merry. "He came to our study and made us believe Mr. Railton had planted him on us, you see. So naturally we want a little proof about his statements."

Kildare's brow grew stern. He signed to the new boy to come towards him. Lumley looked at him and did not stir.

"Come here!" said Kildare.

Lumley looked him up and down.

"Who may you happen to be?" he asked.

Kildare turned crimson.

"I'm the head of the Sixth and captain of the school," he replied. "Come here!"

"Oh, all serene!"

And Lumley came.

"You seem to have started here by telling lies," said Kildare.

"It was only in fun."

The Sixth Former's lip curled.

"I don't know where you've been brought up," he said, "but you had better understand at once that decent fellows don't tell lies, even in fun."

Lumley bit his lip.

"And now we'll have the truth, please," said Kildare sternly. "Has Mr. Railton told you that you are to share this study?"

"No," said Lumley very reluctantly.

The chums of the Fourth exchanged looks of relief. They felt as the Terrible Three had felt before them at the good news.

"Why did you speak falsely about it, then?" asked Kildare.

"I wanted to make them sit up," explained Lumley coolly. "They don't want me in the study, and I was going to make them wriggle about it. You've spoiled a good joke."

"A joke is not good if the joker has to act dishonourably," said Kildare. "You ought to know that. There is no joke in telling falsehoods. If you cannot be humorous without becoming a liar, you had better be serious. What study are you in?"

"No. 1."

"Then go there."

Lumley shrugged his shoulders and went. Kildare glanced after him, and then went down the passage, looking very thoughtful.

(Continued on page 14.)



Let the Editor be your pal! Write to him to-day, addressing your letters :
The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, CHUMS! Another all-star programme is on the bill for next Wednesday. In this issue you have the first story of a really magnificent new series, which is carried further by next Wednesday's great St. Jim's yarn. You'll all vote this new series the "best ever." Only yesterday I had a letter from a reader who says that the recent GEM stories are the best he has read in all his long experience of reading St. Jim's yarns. Well, that's praise, if you like, for he has been reading the GEM for fifteen years. He'll find Martin Clifford's new series will create a new high record.

However, to resume. The second story in the "Lumley-Lumley" series, which bears the title of

"THE COMPLETE CAD!"

is a masterpiece of dramatic and exciting writing that proves beyond doubt that Martin Clifford is in a class by himself as an author of school stories.

The chums of St. Jim's break up for a short vacation, and Tom Merry takes a crowd of fellows down to Huckleberry Heath, his home. They are delighted when they learn that Figgins & Co., their New House rivals, will be staying near, but they are not so pleased when they discover that Lumley-Lumley, the Outsider, will also be close handy. As events turn out, Lumley has a big bearing on Tom Merry & Co.'s holiday, and the Outsider shows himself to be a complete cad. The magnificent story of the holiday adventures of the Chums of St. Jim's and Cousin Ethel will grip and hold your interest throughout.

"GHOST RIVER RANCH!"

For sheer thrills and Wild West mystery it would be hard to beat the third gripping instalment of our new serial. The unknown Black Riders of Ghost River Valley strike at the Chums of St. Frank's, aiming to wipe them all out. But Nipper & Co. show the gang that their threats cut no ice with them.

In this grand number there will also

be a special Australian number of "Tom Merry's Weekly," which is full of cricket and school interest, while another column of readers' jokes will provide for you much humour that means topping prizes for the senders of the jokes. You may be a winner.

THE CUP FINAL.

Once again that most popular and famous sporting event the Cup Final is due to be played off. No sporting contest arouses such nation-wide interest as does the Blue Riband of English Soccer. From all parts of the country special excursion trains will bring thousands upon thousands of footer fans to Wembley Stadium on Saturday—irrespective of the fact that many of them have no special interest in the two Cup Final teams—for every Soccer enthusiast wants to see this game—if he can get a ticket. But all those from the North of England will be hoping to see Manchester City win, while all Southerners will be cheering on Portsmouth. It is a North versus South Soccer battle that promises to be brimful of interest and thrills, with all the keen Soccer rivalry of North and South attaching to it.

FAMOUS CUP FIGHTERS.

Manchester City are more famous as Cup fighters than Portsmouth, for they have won the Cup twice, in 1903-4, when they beat Bolton Wanderers 1-0, and in 1908-9, beating Bristol City by the same score. The City's next appearance in the Final was in 1925-6, but they were beaten 1-0 by Bolton Wanderers. They also figured in last year's Final, losing to Everton 3-0.

The only occasion that "Pompey" have won their way to the last round was in 1928-9, when Bolton Wanderers beat them 2-0. So Manchester City have the balance in their favour of Cup Final experience, which is often a telling factor in such a needle match. But one never knows. Let's hope that the 93,000 odd spectators that will pack the Wembley arena will see a game well worthy of the best Soccer traditions, and that the better team will win.

GOLD AND SILVER PAVEMENTS!

Pavements that are worth a fabulous fortune is the proud boast of Denver, in Colorado, these days. For many years the pavements have been made from an old slag pile which the city bought for the purpose. Now it has been revealed that the people of Denver have been walking day after day on gold and silver without knowing it! For report states that the slag pile contains 29.16 ounces of gold, and 97.72 ounces of silver to the ton!

There is no truth in the rumour that many Aberdonians have booked passages to Denver!

THE CLOCK THAT'S ALWAYS WRONG!

In the year 1253, in Goerlitz, Silesia, a band of plotters sought to murder the councillors of that town. All was set for the massacre to happen at noon as the councillors left the town hall. But there was a big shock coming to the conspirators, for when they arrived they were all promptly arrested. The reason is that one of their number repented at the eleventh hour, and to defeat the ends of the conspirators without incriminating himself, he put the town hall clock on seven minutes. Ever since then—for 680 years—as a mark of memory of the councillors' narrow escape, the clock has been seven minutes fast.

SOME SWIM!

A champion swimmer named P. K. Ghosh has recently added fresh laurels to his amazing endurance achievements in the water. Already to his credit stands the record of seventy-nine hours continuous swimming. But his latest record will take some beating. In Calcutta he swam in a tank with his hands manacled for twenty-four hours!

THE GIANT BOY.

Primo Carnera, the giant Italian boxer, has been beaten—not in boxing skill but for weight and height. Robert Wadlow, a schoolboy of Illinois, U.S.A., who is only sixteen years old, stands seven feet ten and a half inches, and weighs no less than twenty-six stone! And Robert hasn't finished growing yet!

A COW RUNS AMOK!

Last week I told you about the bull and the elephants who charged into shops. Well, a cow's done it this time. It happened in Bradford recently. The poor old cow must have had an idea of its impending fate, for it was being taken to the slaughter-house. But it suddenly ran away and rushed into the doorway of a ladies' hairdresser's shop. The entrance, however, which led up a flight of stairs, was not wide enough for the passage of the cow and it became jammed. But that was not the end of the cow's adventure, for it couldn't be released. It took a score of men two hours to shift that cow!

THE EDITOR.

Jack Donoghue, John's Gate Street, Wexford, Ireland, wants pen pals; age 17-19.

Miss Chandra Carr, 305, Pacific Highway, Crows Nest, North Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wants girl correspondents; age 17-18.

Miss Edna Quane, 15, Mona Street, Peel, Isle of Man, wants girl correspondents; age 16-17.

Miss Mina Dornan, 19, Railway Street, Lisburn, Belfast, Ireland, wants girl correspondents in Spain, South America, China, India, Persia, and Russia, interested in music, painting, and hockey; age 19-23.

Lyn Grahame, 88, Eglantine Avenue, Belfast, Ireland, wants a pen pal outside the British Isles; age 15-17.

Leonard E. Wells, Kim-Ora, Cray Road, St. Paul's Cray, Kent, wants a pen pal, in Auckland, New Zealand; age 13-15; interested in cycling and shipping.

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A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal post your notice to THE GEM LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Gui Caron, 167 de l'Epee Avenue, Montreal, Canada, wants to exchange news and stamps; age 12-15.

Miss June A. Rose, 93, Alexandra Road, St. John's Wood, London, N.W. 8, wants girl correspondents in Australia, South Africa, and France; age 11-13.

THE BOY WHO COULDN'T BE SACKED!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Well, we're well rid of that!" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"Thank goodness the rank outsider's not planted on us!" said Digby.

"What-ho!" said Tom Merry. "You fellows coming down to the gym? That's what I looked in to ask you."

"Yes, we're coming."

And the juniors went out in a crowd. Lumley-Lumley stood at the door of his own study and watched them go, with a dark scowl on his face.

"Outsider, am I?" he murmured. "We'll see! I'll make some of them sit up yet."

CHAPTER 9.

Two of a Kidney.

"WHO'S that?"

It was a far from agreeable voice in the study where Lumley stood at the door he had opened.

The new boy did not trouble to reply or turn his head. He watched Tom Merry and the Fourth Formers down the passage to the stairs. The irritable voice in the room rapped out again.

"Who's there? Come in or go out!" Lumley shrugged his shoulders and entered the study.

"What do you want in my study?" asked Percy Mellish of the Fourth, the only occupant of the study. "I suppose they've not put you in here?"

Lumley grinned.

"That's just what they have done," he said.

"It's a rotten shame. It's the smallest study in the passage, and there's not really room for two in it."

"That will be rough on you, then," grinned Lumley. "I mean to have room for myself, I assure you."

"Look here—"

"Don't jaw! What's your name?"

"Mellish."

"Mine's Lumley-Lumley."

"Oh, yes, I've heard of you," said Mellish, with a sneer. "I forgot; my name's Mellish-Mellish, now I come to think of it."

Lumley's brow darkened.

"Don't be too funny, or you may find yourself on your back," he remarked.

"Are you the only fellow in this study besides myself?"

"Yes," said Mellish.

"Good! I dare say we shall get on all right," said Lumley, surveying the mean, cunning face of his study-mate with a keen glance. "You don't look a plaster saint like Tom Merry and the rest of those fellows."

Mellish's face cleared a little. Any enemy to Tom Merry was a friend to him.

"You don't like Tom Merry?" he asked.

"No."

"Nor Blake and his lot?"

"I hate them!"

"Good!" said Mellish, becoming quite cordial. "So do I. We shall agree on that score, at any rate. They're a lot of rotters!"

Lumley nodded.

"I've been used to having my own way, and I mean to keep that up," he said.

"If any fellow goes for me, I usually contrive to get even somehow. I suppose there are some chaps in the Fourth Form here who are a bit doggish, eh?"

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No. 11. Vol. 1 (New Series).

SAINTS v. ASTOL VILLA

THRILLING GAME WITH UNBEATEN TEAM

Eric Kildare's Running Commentary

This is Eric Kildare speaking from St. Jim's. Tremendous excitement has been caused at St. Jim's by the visit of Lord Astol's champion "under sixteen" eleven, Astol Villa. The Villa have been touring the country playing various schools, and are offering a magnificent silver cup to the first team to defeat them! This is to be the last match of the tour—and the last chance for a Public school eleven to win the Astol Cup!

The record of the Astol Villa eleven prior to visiting St. Jim's is formidable enough. Their last five matches were:

Astol Villa 4—Highcliffe 0.
Astol Villa 5—Rookwood 2.
Astol Villa 14—St. Jude's 1.
Astol Villa 3—Rylcombe Grammar School 0.
Astol Villa 2—Greyfriars 2.

The draw with Greyfriars has been their only check to date.

Teams.—St. Jim's: Wynn; Figgins, Kerr; Herries, Noble, Manners; Digby, Lowther, Merry, Blake, D'Arcy.

Astol Villa: Rodney; Bellairs, Stokes; Richards, Goole, Hay; McLean, Doggett, Beresford, Pountney, West.

There is a bumper crowd round the ropes; scores of juniors, including Gordon Gay and a contingent of Grammarians, many seniors, and even some of the masters being present. By Jove, here comes the Head himself! With Dr. Holmes watching, Tom Merry and his men will have to do or die!

The teams are changing now. The ground is in perfect condition. Slight wind; the sun will be an advantage to whoever wins the toss. Here come Astol Villa—led by Len Beresford, their skipper. St. Jim's follow. Stand by for a word from the captains.

Beresford of Astol Villa speaking: Hallo, folks! You're just in time to hear how we will wipe up the ground with St. Jim's. We haven't been beaten yet—and we don't fear anything now!

Tom Merry of St. Jim's speaking: Hallo, fellows! No time for talk—we've got to go out on the field and do things! Just keep your eye on the red and white, and give us a cheer!

And you should hear them cheering now! Enough to shake the school's foundations! Astol Villa are a heavier team than St. Jim's, but Merry and his men are as cool as cucumbers. Merry loses the toss—Beresford kicks with the sun at his back. Pheep! The ball's rolling!

Watch the Villa left. West and Pountney are making ground rapidly. A flying centre—Beresford leaps—heads just past the upright! A near thing!

Fatty Wynn's goal kick lands the leather at Blake's feet. Blake passes to D'Arcy—D'Arcy is away—a nice run—Merry fastens on the centre, and shoots—well saved, Rodney! A good shot, that!

Midfield play for a while—a rush brings the Villa into the Saints' goalmouth—Wynn punches clear—Wynn saves again at point-

blank range—Wynn is charged, ball and all, into the net! Goal! First blood to Astol Villa!

Lining up again, the Saints look grim. They are unlucky to be a goal down, but in football you have to make your own luck. Out to the wing—Digby is through—he passes to Lowther in the penalty area—Lowther feints and smashes a great cross-drive down to the goalkeeper's left. Rodney dives, though—by a miracle turns it round the upright!

Fast play on the Villa left—Figgins comes to the rescue with a clever tackle and a mighty punt. Merry, unmarked for once, traps the ball and makes a dash for goal. Can he do it? The keeper dives at Merry's feet, but Merry shoots a fraction before. Merry goes tumbling, but the ball whizzes over the line. Goal to St. Jim's.

Fierce play near half-time, the Villa bursting through. Figgins clears, but the Villa are back again like terriers. Wynn deals successfully with a cross shot, but look—a lightning return gives him no chance whatever—the Villa centre, Beresford, has scored!

Interval, 2—1 in favour of Astol Villa. Saints are having little fortune, but appear undismayed.

Here they come again—Merry's men look cheerful enough. Away they go—this is a new St. Jim's, freshly heartened. D'Arcy breaks clean through, to make a perfect opening for Blake, whose foot flashes out—goal! Well shot, sir! Saints are level!

Nothing can stop them now. Saints have the bit between their teeth! D'Arcy shoots just by—Merry goes close with a real pile-driver—Lowther skins the bar. Saints are all over the Villa now—they are forcing the pace, and the Villa don't like it! Brilliant goalkeeping by Rodney alone is holding the Saints at bay.

The Villa shine for a brief period, but Saints are at them again, this time not to be denied. Lowther unexpectedly sends a long pass clean across the field to D'Arcy—D'Arcy dribbles past the Villa right-back, draws the goalkeeper—and passes neatly to Tom Merry, who slams the leather home for number three and the lead!

Villa are a spent force now, struggling gamely to avert a heavy defeat. Saints break through once more—for Tom Merry to get his third goal with a lightning "header." The whistle blows—oh, well played St. Jim's! The Astol Cup is yours! Final result—St. Jim's 4—Astol Villa 2.

CALIBAN'S CUP FINAL PROBLEM

In the diagram you will see a football field represented by seven spaces. Two teams, the Blacks and the Whites, were lined up ready to do battle in a Cup Final. Three counters will represent each team.

When the game was about to start the Blacks' captain decided that he wanted his

Merry's Weekly



Week Ending April 26th, 1934.

ELLA TEAM

...ball and all,
...lood to Astol
...s look grim-
...down, but in
...our own luck-
...through—he
...enalty area—
...eat cross-drive
...left. Rodney
...is it round the

MONTY LOWTHER CALLING



Hallo, everybody! That's a good opening for a beginner, as the skater said when he went through the hole in the ice! Mr. Lathom is learning to play golf. "How is he getting along?" asked Mr. Linton of the Wayland instructor. "Oh, he's got the rough idea!" said the pro. Yes—we saw some of the "rough" still adhering to his maschie! Mr. Ratcliff had a genuine grouch the other day. "Look at that!" he said to Monteith, indicating the cracked mirror over his mantelpiece. "Figgins threw a cricket ball through my open window accidentally—and just missed me!" "What a pity!" observed Monteith sympathetically. Mrs. Mimms engaged a new maid. When some fresh plaice were delivered, the girl sent them back because they were marked C.O.D. No "coddling" her, was there? Skimpole, the philosopher, asks: How does money go? Quickly! 'Nother from Skimmy: Is the giraffe troubled by indigestion after eating anything that disagrees with it? No, not until the following week! What's that, Skimmy—another? Was man active on the earth at the same time as the brontosaurus? Well, if we had been there, the bront would never have seen the way we went! Gussy has been caught trying to write romantic poetry in Greek. At the same time we hear that the new assistant in the Rylcombe bunshop has a Greek name—Helen! Monsieur Morny took his wireless battery to be recharged. "How much is the charge?" he asked. "Two volts!" said the shopkeeper. "Two volts," repeated Mossos in astonishment. "Vat is zat in English money?" Well, as Selby said to young Joe Frayne in the Third Form Room: "You are a long time finishing that essay, Frayne!" "Yessir!" responded Frayne. "I'm spellbound!" Skimpole was pressed into service as a goalkeeper at footer practice. He stood at one end of the goal all the time, till Kildare asked him why. "My dear Kildare, the other end is too draughty," explained Skimmy. "There is a nasty hole in the net!"

Believe it or not! Till next Wed.!

(Continued from column 3.)

men to play in the other direction, necessitating a change over. As the Blacks' captain had won the toss, this was acceded to. Can you move the counters so that the three white counters are on the right, and the black counters on the left, with the unoccupied space at the opposite end? A counter may be moved to the next space (if unoccupied), or over one, or two occupied spaces to an unoccupied one. The jumps can be made in either direction. It is possible to change the teams over completely as required in ten moves. Can you see how it is done?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



PROBLEM

a football field
Two teams,
were lined up
Final. Three
eam.
to start the
he wanted his

Flying Squad Reports

TOM MERRY'S TRIUMPH

Flying Squad undertook lengthy cross-country flight to watch Westwood Rovers play local charity cup tie with big league eleven from nearby town. Leaguers expected to win, but Westwood eager to give close fight. Leaguers a man short at last moment. Westwood captain, knowing Tom Merry, suggested Tom for vacant place. Tom Merry gallantly turned out, playing at inside-right. League player, regarding him as a passenger, kept ball away from him at first. Merry took his chance eventually, and showed himself a dangerous raider! Brilliant pass by Merry led to Leaguers' first goal. After that, Merry plied with passes, and netted last of League side's goals on his own! Director of League side, grateful to Tom Merry, presented him with tickets for the Cup Final. Flying Squad will be present, ready to cheer victors and vanquished like sportsmen!

CROOKE COMES

A CROPPER

Gerald Crooke, in debt, laid bet on Abbotsford to beat Grimes & Co. of Rylcombe, in Sussex Villagers' Cup Final. Tom Merry, hearing of it, told Crooke he had lost already—Grimes & Co. hot favourites! Crooke, realising only hope was to spoil Rylcombe's chances, bribed Gore and Mellish to help him waylay Grimes. Grimes, after delivering groceries on day of match, knocked off bike by eld hurled by Crooke. Crooke, Gore, and Mellish piled on Grimes! Grimes undermost when Flying Squad flew up and engaged cads in fierce combat. Cads hurtled earthwards, wrecked. Grimes' bike smashed in melee. Tom Merry lent Grimes his machine, standing on Blake's step himself. Grimes, escorted by Flying Squad, reached village ground in good time—and led Rylcombe to brilliant victory, 3-1. Crooke & Co. completely defeated by Flying Squad!

"Why do St. Jim's win so many matches?" asks Figgins. Because they always have a Wynn in the team.

Figgins and Kerr are a popular pair of full-backs. They are more popular with their own team than with opposing forwards, however.

Harry Noble is the mainstay of the half-back line. As Lowther puts it: "Noble in all he does, by Harry!"

Solution of Last Week's Puzzle

Kerr arranged the hurdles as in the diagrams, making the width of the larger space from A to B equal to a match and a half. Thus, taking the matches to be an inch long, the smaller space would contain two square inches and the larger four inches by one and a half inches which equals six square inches.



"Oh, yes!" said Mellish, his eyes glistening. "Rather! I'm one. There are some more, only they're afraid of Tom Merry and his lot, and they have to be careful."

"Good! Look here, I smoke and play cards, and go to the races. I'm going to keep all that up, but I suppose I shall have to keep some of it dark."

Mellish chuckled. "Oh, rather! You'll have to be careful. Fellows have been expelled for doing less than that."

"The Head wouldn't find it so easy to expel me," said Lumley. "But never mind. Look here, I think you're the kind of chap I shall pull with. You can come and show me round the school, if you like, and I'll stand you something at the tuckshop."

"Right-ho! I hear you're a millionaire's son," said Mellish curiously.

"That's true."

"And you've got heaps of money?" The new boy plunged his hand into his pocket, and drew it out again half full of notes and silver. Mellish's eyes almost started from his head at the sight. He had never seen anyone in possession of so much money, not even D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth.

"My hat!" said Mellish. "You must be rich!"

"There's plenty more where that came from, too," said Lumley. "Come on!"

"All right, I'll show you the way to the tuckshop," said Mellish.

"Come on, then; I'm hungry."

"I heard that you had tea with Tom Merry," Mellish remarked, as they left the study.

"So I did—a workhouse tea!" grunted Lumley. "I want something better than that."

Several fellows glanced at the two Fourth Formers as they went downstairs and out of the School House. Monty Lowther saw them and glanced at Manners.

"That shows what Lumley is, if nothing else does," he remarked. "He's chummed up with the worst cad in the House."

"Exactly as I should have expected," said Manners.

Taking no notice of glances or remarks, Lumley and Mellish went into the quadrangle, and crossed over to the tuckshop.

Dame Taggles' little shop behind the elm-trees was lighted up, and looked very hospitable as the juniors came towards it through the dusk. A fat Fourth Former was lounging outside, and he glanced at them as they came up. It was Fatty Wynn of the New House.

Fatty Wynn was always hungry, and his expression, and the fact that he was outside the tuckshop instead of inside it, showed that he was out of funds.

"Hallo, Lumley!" said Fatty Wynn affably. "I've heard about you. You're the new chap, ain't you—the son of a giddy millionaire?"

"That's me," said Jerrold.

"Coming into the New House, I suppose?"

"No; School House."

"Ah! I'm sorry!" said Fatty Wynn, entering the tuckshop with the two School House boys. "Having tea here?"

"Yes," said Mellish, with a disagreeable grin, "and you can cut off, you New House boulder. We don't want you."

Fatty Wynn turned crimson. There was nothing of the sponger about Fatty Wynn, though when he was hungry he would certainly accept a feed from anybody.

"Well, you rotten worm," he said. "I've a jolly good mind to dot you on the nose!"

"Chuck that!" said Lumley. "Shut up, Mellish! You belong to the New House—eh?"

"Yes," said Fatty Wynn.

"Always up against the School House, eh, and going for them, so I hear," said Lumley, who never seemed to forget.

"Well, not always," said Fatty Wynn cautiously. "Sometimes we have feeds together, you know."

Lumley grinned.

"Let's have a feed together now," he said.

"Certainly!" said Fatty Wynn, with alacrity. And Lumley gave the orders.

CHAPTER 10.

After the Feast, the Reckoning!

FATTY WYNN, of the New House at St. Jim's, had seen many feeds in his time—feeds big and little—but he had never seen orders given as lavishly as Jerrold Lumley gave them now.

He ordered the most expensive things in Dame Taggles' stock, right and left, to the amazement of that good dame, and somewhat to her doubt, till the new boy threw a five-pound note on the counter.

"Change that!" he said.

Then Dame Taggles was all confidence and smiles.

"Certainly!" she said.

Fatty Wynn opened his eyes wide.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed involuntarily. "You don't happen to have robbed a bank, I suppose?"

"My father is head of Lumleys, Limited," said Jerrold.

"I wish mine were," said Fatty Wynn, with a sigh. "I've often written home to point out that I don't have enough pocket-money, but it's no use."

"Wire in!" said Lumley.

"What-ho!"

Fatty Wynn wired in. His capacity for "wiring-in" was wonderful. Mellish made a good second. Lumley was much more moderate. Perhaps the habit of always having as much as he wanted of anything had made him tire of the delights of ginger-beer and ices and cakes and tarts.

Fatty was simply beaming over his treat.

"I jolly well wish you were coming into the New House," he remarked.

Lumley laughed.

"Thanks!" he said.

"I hope you'll come over to a feed in our study," Fatty Wynn went on. "Of course, we're always up against the School House, but there's no law against that. I should really like you to come."

"Thanks, I will. By the way, I suppose you chaps are always on the look-out for a chance to go for Tom Merry and the other fellows?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Well, I can show you a way."

"Eh?"

"I can show you a way," said Lumley. "I'm up against Tom Merry and Blake and the rest as much as you are. Will you help me to get even?"

Fatty Wynn could only stare.

"Well, can't you speak?" demanded Lumley.

"But you're a School House chap!" gasped Wynn, at last.

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Oh, you don't know St. Jim's!" said Fatty Wynn, with a contempt he could not restrain. "A chap sticks by his own House, of course. A chap who helped the other side to score off his own House would soon be sent to Coventry."

"I dare say I could stand that," said Lumley. "The question is—will you help me—you and your friends in the New House?"

"Hold on!" said Mellish. "It won't do, Lumley! If any of the School House fellows heard you talking like this, you'd be ragged baldheaded."

"Mind your own business!"

Mellish gave a shrug, and slipped quietly out of the tuckshop. He did not object to Tom Merry and Blake being raided—in fact, he hoped it would come off. But he did not mean to associate himself with Jerrold Lumley in the recklessness of helping the rival House against his own side.

Lumley hardly noticed him go. He was not interested in Mellish.

"Have some more cream puffs, Wynn?" he said.

"N-no, thanks!" stammered Fatty.

"More ginger-beer?"

"No, thanks!"

"Rubbish! More ginger-beer, please. Open it for Wynn. Thanks! Here you are, Wynn."

And Lumley poured the foaming liquid into a glass.

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"Oh, all right!" said Fatty Wynn weakly.

"Now will you and the other fellows help me?" said Lumley. "My idea is to get a crowd of you into Blake's study—he's in the gym now—and wait for the rotters to come in. Then we can collar them, lick them, and give them a dose of tar and feathers, or soot and ink—something in that line."

"But—"

"Half a dozen fellows could do it."

"But—"

"And it will be one up for your House."

Fatty Wynn set down the glass.

"You don't understand," he said. "We're always looking for a chance to score off the School House, as I've said. But we wouldn't accept any help from outside. That would spoil everything. It would be rascality itself instead of fun, and there's not a chap in the New House, I believe, who'd have a hand in it. You don't understand."

"Oh, rot!"

"Besides, the School House would rag you till you thought life wasn't worth living, if you did as you suggest."

"I'll risk that."

Fatty Wynn shook his head.

"It can't be done," he said.

"Come!" said Jerrold. "I'll make it worth your while, you know."

"Eh?"

"I'll make it worth your while."

"Worth my while?"

"Yes."

"I—I don't quite catch on!"

"Look here, you're stony, and I don't suppose your friends are any too flush," said Lumley. "Back me up against Study No. 6, and I'll stand you a quid."

"What?"

"Hang it all, I've plenty of tin! I'll stand you and the rest half a quid each all round!" exclaimed Jerrold.

"What do you say?"

"Say?" repeated Fatty Wynn slowly. "I say you're the utterest, out-and-out bouncer that ever got into a decent school! Offering me money, are you? Do you think I want any of your beastly money?"

"You've got through some of it, anyway, the last quarter of an hour!" exclaimed Jerrold, with an angry sneer.

Fatty Wynn flushed scarlet.

"I'll settle that myself!" he exclaimed sharply. "Mrs. Taggles, you know what I've had; give me the account. You're not to take it out of that fellow's banknote—do you hear?"

"Certainly, Master Wynn!" said Dame Taggles, who had been making up the accounts. "But it comes to one pound fifteen shillings and threepence for you."

Fatty Wynn's face was blank with dismay. However he was to pay such a sum was beyond his powers of guessing. But he was none the less determined.

"I'll settle it."

"Rot!" said Jerrold Lumley. "Leave it to me; that's all right, I can afford it. And I'll stand you another feed like it every day this week, if you like, if you'd help me to put those rotters down a peg or two!"

Fatty Wynn turned upon him savagely.

"You'll never stand me a feed again," he said. "And you won't stand me this. I'd choke if I ate anything belonging to you, you—your rotten toad! Bah! You make me sick! I'll get the money somehow, Mrs. Taggles."

"I cannot allow you to be in debt for such an amount, Master Wynn. You owe me an account already. This young gentleman ordered the things, and he has given me the money to pay for them."

"You're not to take it—do you hear?"

"Then you must pay me."

Fatty Wynn ran his hands through his empty pockets. Jerrold Lumley watched him with an unpleasant sneer upon his face.

At that moment two other juniors entered the tuckshop, and Fatty Wynn turned towards them with a sharp exclamation.

"Figgins! Kerr! Come here!"

In a few rapid words Fatty explained the situation.

Figgins and Kerr looked daggers at the sneering Lumley.

"Would you believe it?" said Figgins slowly. "Hold on, Fatty! I saw Gussy outside. I'll borrow the money from him and pay this—this rank outsider!"

Figgins ran out and reappeared in a couple of minutes with the required sum. He laid it on the counter.

"Here you are, Mrs. Taggles—one pound fifteen and three. And now let's get out. This chap makes me feel sick!"

And Figgins & Co. marched out of the tuckshop.

CHAPTER 11.

In Bad Odour!

JERROLD LUMLEY went up to bed with the rest of the Fourth Form—School House part of the Form, that is—with his arm linked in Mellish's. The new boy and Mellish had chummed up very much. Mellish wanted a rich friend, and Lumley apparently wanted a toady, and so the two seemed likely to get on very well.

But Lumley received dark looks from some other members of the Form.

The story of Fatty's dilemma in the tuckshop had become known to some of the juniors. How Fatty Wynn had come to be so reckless in running up a long bill puzzled most of them, and some of them inquired into it. Figgins & Co. had no desire to say anything against Lumley; but they did not think of keeping the matter a particular secret, either, and so the facts were soon known.

That Lumley had tried to enlist New House aid against his own House was not known. The New House chums felt themselves bound to keep that dark, as Lumley had, in a way, spoken in confidence to Fatty Wynn. But the rest was known, and it did not raise the outsider in the opinion of the School House fellows.

Jerrold Lumley was not long in noticing that he was the recipient of unfriendly and contemptuous glances, and that there was some topic among the Fourth-Formers which they discussed to themselves.

"What's on, Mellish?" he asked.

Mellish wriggled uncomfortably.

"Oh, the fellows are jawing something over!" he said.

Lumley's brow contracted a little.

"About me?"

"I—I suppose so."

"Look here! Is there to be any japing to-night?" demanded Lumley. "I've heard that all sorts of games are played with new boys at a school like this."

Mellish shook his head.

"I don't think they mean anything of that sort," he said.

"Then what is it?"

"Better ask Blake."

Lumley crossed over to Jack Blake, who was sitting on the side of his bed and taking his boots off. Blake did not look at him.

"What's the row?" asked Jerrold.

Then Blake looked up.

"Did you speak to me?"

"Yes, I did."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say. I suppose you're planning some jape for to-night," said Jerrold fiercely. "Mind, I warn you, that if I am troubled there will be trouble for others, too!"

Blake smiled disdainfully.

"You needn't be afraid," he said. "I don't think that any fellow here would want to trouble you!"

Jerrold looked troubled.

"Then what's on? You've got something up against me. What is it?"

"I'll tell you if you like."

"I suppose it's that scrap we had to-day, or my coming to your study."

"Not exactly. In that little scrap you fought like a beastly rotter, and in that joke about the study, you showed yourself a liar," said Blake. "But that isn't all. You've disgraced your House—your first day in it."

"How? What do you mean?"

"We know about that affair in the tuckshop, that's all."

Lumley stared at him.

"You mean about that fat rotter paying his own account? I had stood him a big feed, and he wouldn't do me a bit of a favour!" he said.

"I expect it was something caddish you wanted done," Blake remarked.

"Faith, and ye're right!" said Reilly.

Lumley cast a savagely defiant glance round. He had his faults—in fact, his character seemed to be chiefly composed of faults—but cowardice was not one of them. He had nerve enough for a regiment.

"I wanted the New House chaps to back me up in raiding Blake's study," he said. "I supposed they'd do it. But I'll get even with that crew without help, I guess."

Blake started.

"You wanted New House chaps to back you up against your own House—eh? You worm! By Jove, he's a rottener cad than I thought."

"Yaas, watah!"

"Yes," said Lumley fiercely, "I'll show you, and I'll show the rest of you, that if I'm jumped on, I bite! You'll learn that I'm not to be meddled with, that's all! I'll show you,

(Continued on the next page.)

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and those rads of the Grammar School who painted me up to-day!"

"Oh, go to bed!" said Blake contemptuously. "You're not fit to talk to!"

Kildare looked into the dormitory.

"In bed, you youngsters?"

"Half a jiffy, Kildare!"

When the light was extinguished, and the captain of St. Jim's had gone, Jerrold Lumley sat up in bed. His eyes were scintillating in the dark like a cat's.

"Blake!" he called out.

"Rats!"

"Listen a minute! I'm going to fight you to-morrow."

"More rats!"

"You can't, and you shan't, get out of it. You've called me some pretty names," said Jerrold. "I guess I'll make you back them up with your hands."

"You young ass!" said Blake contemptuously. "I won't fight you because you couldn't stand up to me for two minutes, and because you fight like a wild-cat, instead of like a decent fellow."

"Wait till to-morrow," said Lumley, between his teeth.

"I'll give you no choice."

"Oh, shut up, and go to sleep."

And Blake turned his head on his pillow, and closed his eyes.

CHAPTER 12.

The Fight!

LUMLEY took his place in the Fourth Form class-room the following morning. There were so many peculiar things about the new boy that he excited a great deal of interest—and as much dislike as interest.

His meanness in many ways, his utter disregard for the truth, disgusted many fellows who were not extraordinarily scrupulous. At the same time, his coolness and nerve were qualities that called for admiration; and the amount of money he possessed impressed some of the fellows very much.

All were curious to see how he would shape in class. His snatches of New York slang, and his general manner of speaking and bearing himself, did not lead the fellows to anticipate much of his scholarship. But they were surprised.

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, gave special attention to the new boy, and Lumley came up smiling, so to speak, every time. Jack Blake was the head of the class, and was generally considered Mr. Lathom's brightest pupil; but the new boy was quite unexpectedly a runner very close.

Lumley had the second place in the Form by the end of the morning, Mr. Lathom giving honour to whom honour was due. The new boy made no secret of his satisfaction in getting nearly to the top of the Form, and the fellows he passed over did not feel any the more kindly towards him on account of his triumphant grin.

"I'll have your place to-morrow, Blake," he remarked, when the Fourth was dismissed, and they left the classroom.

Blake looked at him.

"You're welcome to it, if you can get it," he said.

"It would be nothing to me."

"Awfully clever beggar, aren't you?" said Digby. "What I like about you, next to your cleverness, is your blessed modesty."

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard Lumley as a bwaggin' beast."

"Hear, hear!"

Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose you've swotted all your life over these things," said Mellish, joining his new chum in the passage.

Lumley chuckled.

"Nothing of the sort. All I know of school subjects—the rotten Latin and mathematics, and so on—I mugged up in next to no time, when the pater decided to send me to a Public school. I learned more difficult things in less time, I can tell you."

"You must be awfully clever," said Mellish.

"I am clever," said Jerrold coolly. "I've beaten grown men at their own game, keen Yankee sharpers, too. Bah! All this is nothing to me, I guess. If it were worth the trouble, I'd enter for all the prizes and scholarships, and carry them off to make the other fellows grind their teeth. But it isn't worth the effort. I'm making a good beginning in class so that I can have an easy time afterwards. I can get round old Lathom that way."

Mellish looked at him admiringly.

"You're an awfully deep beggar," he said. "You can help me with my work, if you like, as it comes so easy to

you, and I'll write out any lines you get, in return. I expect you'll get a good many."

"It's a bargain," said Jerrold. "Wait here, will you? I want to speak to Blake. Will you be my second?"

"Your second!" said Mellish, staring.

"Yes, I'm going to fight Blake."

"Fight Blake!" ejaculated Mellish.

"That's it."

"You—you'd better get some boxing lessons before you tackle Blake," said Mellish hesitatingly. "He boxes awfully well."

"I'm going to see what he can do."

"But you'll get hurt!" exclaimed Mellish.

Lumley smiled contemptuously.

"Who's afraid of being hurt?" he said.

"Oh, if that's the way you take it, go ahead," said Mellish. "Here's Blake."

Blake came out of the School House with Tom Merry and D'Arcy. Jerrold Lumley strode over to him at once.

"Stop, please!" he said. "I suppose you haven't forgotten what I said to you last night, Blake?"

Jack Blake looked at him steadily.

"I've told you I won't fight you."

"Wathah not!" said D'Arcy. "I was goin' to thwash you myself, Lumley, but, upon reflection, I have decided that you are not fit to touch, you know."

Lumley raised his hand and struck Blake in the face with the open palm, a ringing blow that sounded like a pistol-shot. It came unexpectedly, and Jack Blake staggered back under the sudden force of it.

"Is that enough for you?" asked Lumley.

Blake recovered himself. His face had gone white, and the mark of the slap burned red upon it. His eyes were glinting.

"Yes, that's enough," he said—"quite enough! Come on!"

"When you like!"

"Follow me, then!"

Jack Blake strode away towards the chapel. Tom Merry and D'Arcy went with him. Blake's face was hard and set.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "I should advise you to give him a licking he'll remember, Blake! The utter cad!"

"I'm going to!" said Blake quietly.

They reached the open space behind the chapel walls. It was a secluded spot, and little affairs of that sort were often settled there, as the place could not be viewed from any of the masters' windows.

The juniors stopped.

Mellish was looking very uneasy, but Lumley was perfectly cool.

"Take your coat off," said Tom Merry. "And, look here, Lumley, you'll fight with your fists. If you begin to kick or bite, or scratch, we'll collar you and duck you in the fountain. You catch on?"

"All serene!"

"Ready, Blake?"

"Yes, rather!"

Lumley threw his jacket and cap to Mellish, and took off his big gold watch and chain. Then he faced Jack Blake.

His weedy form showed up to glaring disadvantage in contrast with Blake's sturdy, well-set figure, as did the narrow, cunning features looking at the open, frank face of the Yorkshire junior. That Lumley was no match for Blake was perfectly evident from the way he stood and the way he held his hands.

But whatever he wanted, he did not want nerve. He faced Blake with perfect coolness, and the unequal fight began.

As if by magic, the news of it had spread, and juniors were streaming round the chapel from all quarters to see the fun.

CHAPTER 13.

Licked Hollow!

JACK BLAKE advanced to the attack, and Jerrold Lumley met him fiercely enough. But Lumley's guard was clumsy and his blows were wild.

Not one of them succeeded in reaching Blake, while the Fourth-Former's fists rattled on the new boy's countenance to a telling tune.

Blake's face was hard and cold. He meant to punish the outsider, and he began well.

Right round the ring formed by the waiting juniors the new boy was driven, and at almost every backward step he staggered under a blow.

The onlookers grinned.

So sorry a show they had seldom seen put up before, and the nerve of the new boy in tackling the fighting-man of the Fourth astounded them.

"The sooner he gets his cheek knocked out of him the



As Gordon Gay came scorching by on his bicycle, the jagged stone whizzed from Lumley-Lumley's hand and crashed fairly into the spokes of the rear wheel. The next moment the cycle went whirling, and Gay pitched headlong over the handlebars.

better," said Monty Lowther. "And I really think Blake's the man to do it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"There he goes to the grass!"

Lumley tottered and fell.

Blake stepped back and waited for him to rise.

No rounds had been arranged for the fight, but Jack was not the fellow to take the slightest advantage even of an ungenerous enemy.

Lumley staggered up with the aid of Mellish. He was looking very dazed, and bruises were forming over his face.

"Well," said Blake scornfully, "have you had enough?"

Jerrold clicked his teeth.

"Not yet!"

And he stepped up again to the encounter.

"The beggar has pluck," Manners remarked.

"He needs it to face Blake when he isn't form enough to stand up to a fag of the Third," said Tom Merry.

"There he goes again!"

Lumley dropped heavily on his back.

A crashing left-hander from Jack Blake had caught him on the chin, and he had gone down like a log.

He lay dazed in the grass.

"I fancy that finishes him," said Kangaroo.

The Cornstalk was right.

Jerrold Lumley rose dazedly, with the aid of Mellish's arm, and stood unsteadily, leaning on Mellish and looking at Blake. Blake met his eyes with a clear, scornful glance.

"Finished?" asked Tom Merry.

Jerrold Lumley nodded.

"Yes," he said; "I'm finished. I knew I couldn't stand up to Blake, but I wanted to try him. I shall stand up to him again next week, and he won't lick me so easily."

And he walked away unsteadily with Mellish.

There was a buzz among the juniors. They did not quite know how to take Lumley, but it was certain that he had plenty of grit, and that was a quality to be admired.

"Blessed if I know what to make of him," said Digby.

"Well, he got what he asked for, that's one comfort."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake nodded in silence as he put on his coat. He had hardly a single knock, and he was not hurt in the least. He felt no satisfaction for such an easy victory; it was not worth even the slightest effort it had cost.

Mellish was silent as he walked away with his new chum. He expected Lumley to be feeling very downhearted and generally "rotten." That was the natural result to be expected of so complete and easy a licking.

But the new boy was full of surprises. The fight and its results, and even the damages he had received, did not seem to affect his spirits very much.

"I'd like to bathe my face," he said. "After that we'll go for a stroll, if you'd care to. I haven't seen the place yet."

"Right you are!" said Mellish.

Lumley bathed his face and chuckled at the sight of a black eye, a swollen nose, and a bruised chin in the glass. There was no doubt that the new boy was tough. He was not one to complain over injuries he received, even injuries which might have made many a fellow feel serious without being "soft."

"Doesn't it hurt?" demanded Mellish, who simply could not understand his new comrade.

Lumley made a grimace.

"Hurt! Of course it does!"

"Well, you don't seem to feel it."

"You mean I don't whine about it," said Lumley. "I'm hard—hard as nails. This is nothing to what I've been through in my time."

Mellish and Lumley strolled out of the House again and down to the gates. But Mellish hesitated as Lumley went out into the lane.

"We can't go down to the village without a pass," he said.

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"Well, let's have a stroll, anyway."

"We can stroll as far as the stile."

"Right-ho!"

They went down the lane. There was a sudden ringing of bicycle bells, and two cyclists came in sight in the shade of the big trees. They were Gordon Gay and Frank Monk, of the Grammar School, and the pace they were going at showed that they were racing.

Jerrold Lumley's eyes burned for a moment.

He recognised Gordon Gay and Frank Monk as the ring-leaders of the juniors who had chalked and painted him the previous day.

The two cyclists shot past.

"You know those chaps?" asked Mellish curiously, as he noted the black look upon Jerrold Lumley's face.

"Yes. You saw me come in yesterday, after I had gone

SIDE-SPLITTING!



Shop Assistant: "This shirt simply laughs at the laundry."

Cynical Customer: "Yeah, I can quite believe it. The last one I had came home with its sides split!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Morris, Hole Hill Farm, Smithills, Bolton, Lancs.

out with my pater. Well, those chaps were the leaders when the Grammar School rotters painted me."

Mellish grinned at the recollection.

"Oh, yes, I remember! It was funny."

"Was it? I'll make them think it less funny before I've done with them," said Jerrold savagely, looking after the cyclists. "Are they likely to come back this way, do you think?"

"Yes, I suppose they're having a race before dinner," said Mellish. "They'll be back in a few minutes, most likely, to get back to the Grammar School. It's round the next corner, you know. But—"

"Good!"

"Look here," said Mellish in alarm, "I suppose you're not thinking of going for them? We couldn't stand up to them for a tick."

Lumley made no reply. He was picking up a stone—a large, jagged stone, half-embedded in the soil. He dug it out with his fingers, and rose to his feet with the stone in his grip. Mellish looked at him with growing uneasiness.

"You're not going to throw that?" he asked.

"I guess I am."

"You—you madman!" said Mellish. "Why, you might kill a chap if you threw a stone like that at him. Look here, you're dangerous!"

Lumley smiled unpleasantly.

"I mean to make them understand that," he said. "But don't be alarmed; I'm not going to throw this at them, but at their bikes. I'll give them a tumble—or, at any rate, that chap who was in advance—the fair-haired chap. Do you know his name?"

"Gordon Gay."

"Ah, I think I remember hearing one of the others call him Gay, now. Yes, and he told me his name. Well, I'm going to give him a fall."

"You might injure him."

Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't care."

"Look here—"

"Besides, we needn't show ourselves. No one will know."

"If he's injured, it will come out. I don't like the chap any more than you do, but I'm not going to have a hand in anything of that sort."

"Clear out, then," said Lumley laconically.

There was evidently no moving Lumley from his purpose, and Mellish was expecting to see the Grammarians returning every moment. He took Lumley's advice and "cleared out" as fast as he could.

Jerrold Lumley grinned contemptuously, and concealed himself in the thickets under the trees beside the lane. There he waited for the Grammarians.

CHAPTER 14.

Struck Down!

GORDON GAY was well ahead as the two cyclists came whizzing back along the lane.

The two juniors of the Grammar School had ridden as far as the gates of St. Jim's, and then turned back, and from the turn Gay had been well ahead. He was a good two lengths in front of Frank Monk now.

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The outsider watched through the hedge.

The jingling of the bells and the whiz of the bicycles warned him to be on the alert.

Lumley rose to his feet. His hand was poised with the stone in it.

Gordon Gay came tearing by, leaning over his handlebars, scorching.

Whiz!

The outsider aimed well.

The jagged stone was a fraction of a second too late for the front wheel, but it crashed fairly into the spokes of the rear one.

The force of the impact simply swept the cycle sideways, to say nothing of the fact that the spokes were twisted and the wheel bent, so that it jammed in the forks.

The cycle went whirling, and the cyclist pitched over the handlebars. Frank Monk, unable to save himself in time, rode right into them, and crashed over, too.

Fortunately, he had sufficient presence of mind to jump clear, but his bicycle crashed upon Gordon Gay as he lay entangled with his own machine.

Monk was upon his feet in a second, dazed by the shock.

"Gay! You're hurt!"

He sprang towards the fallen Cornstalk.

Gay lay in the road with a red mark on his forehead, without moving.

A terrible fear tugged at Frank Monk's heart for a moment. He thought that Gordon Gay had been killed.

The stone lay in the twisted bicycle. Frank Monk's eyes swept round. He knew that the stone had been thrown from the hedge. He caught a glimpse of a cap amidst the green of the hedge, and knew the school cap of St. Jim's.

But he did not see the outsider. Jerrold Lumley popped down out of sight as he saw Monk looking round; and now he ran off across the field, keeping his head and shoulders low to keep out of sight.

Monk did not think of pursuing him, though he heard him go. All his attention was claimed by Gordon Gay.

The Australian lad groaned.

With his heart beating wildly, Frank Monk knelt by his side. Gay's eyes opened wildly.

"Wh-what has happened?" he gasped.

"You've been knocked over, old chap," said Monk.

"You're hurt! Must have been stunned for a moment, I think. Thank goodness it's no worse."

Gordon Gay tried to struggle to a sitting posture, but sunk back again with a groan, lights dancing before his eyes. There was the buzz of a car in the road, and Frank Monk jumped up, waving his hand excitedly.

"Stop! Stop!" he shouted, as a small two-seater came into view.

The vehicle drew up only a few yards from the overturned bicycles and Gordon Gay.

"Good heavens! What has happened?" cried a voice Frank Monk knew.

The Grammar School junior gave a gasp of relief as he recognised Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House at St. Jim's. Mr. Railton jumped out in a moment.

"Is it Gay?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir. He's been knocked over. Somebody threw that stone at his bike, and he was going at top speed, and—and he's had a bump in the road."

Mr. Railton bent over Gordon Gay.

"I will take him to the school!" he exclaimed—"St. Jim's! You get on your machine and ride as fast as you can to Dr. Short's, and send him or bring him!"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Railton lifted Gordon Gay into the car as easily as if the sturdy junior had been an infant. The lad made a feeble protest. Frank Monk pushed Gay's damaged machine into the hedge, and then mounted his own and dashed off towards the village. He was well content to leave his chum in Mr. Railton's hands.

"I—I'm all right!" said Gordon Gay feebly. "Don't trouble, sir."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Railton.

He drove on quickly.

It was a short distance to St. Jim's, and in a few minutes the car stopped outside the School House. As Mr. Railton lifted the Grammarian from the vehicle there was a crowding of fellows round to see what was the matter.

"Gordon Gay!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"G'wheat Scott! What has happened?"

"An accident," said Mr. Railton briefly.

Gordon Gay did not speak—he had fainted. The Cornstalk lad was tough enough, but he had had a very nasty blow on the head. Mr. Railton carried him into the House like a child, and the fellows watched with greatly concerned faces.

Mr. Railton carried Gordon Gay into his study and laid him on the sofa. There he rendered first-aid with quiet and steady hands. The wound was bathed and bandaged to

wait for the arrival of the medical man. Gordon Gay came to meet, with an icy feeling in his forehead and his face wet. He looked at Mr. Railton, and round at the unaccustomed room.

Mr. Railton touched him gently on the arm.

"Keep quiet!" he said softly.

"Mr. Railton!"

"Yes. I've brought you here—you must be quiet, Gay. Dr. Short will be here in a few minutes. You have had a nasty contusion—you may be thankful it was no worse."

"Where's Frank?"

"He's gone for the doctor. Now, lie quiet, and don't talk, there's a good fellow."

"All right, sir."

Gordon Gay did not feel much inclined to talk. His brain was in a whirl, and his head was aching terribly.

Dr. Short's car drove up in a few minutes more, and a little, stout, medical gentleman came bustling in, shown in by Toby.

Frank Monk followed him into the study, with a pale and anxious face. Gordon Gay gave Frank a faint grin.

"I'm all right, old chap," he murmured.

"A nasty knock," said Dr. Short aside to Mr. Railton, after examining the injury. "I should recommend the boy to remain here quietly for a few hours, when he may be driven back to his school."

"That can easily be arranged," said Mr. Railton. "I'll send a note over to Dr. Monk, at the Grammar School, and explain the matter to him."

"And I will call again this evening, at the Grammar School, and see him," said the medical man; and after giving a few more directions he took his leave.

Leaving Gordon Gay comfortably at ease on the big sofa, Mr. Railton drew Frank Monk out of the study, to speak unheard by the injured junior. He closed the door softly.

"You said that a stone was thrown at Gordon Gay," he said.

"Yes, sir," said Monk; and now that his first anxiety for Gay was over anger blazed up in his breast at the recollection of the outrage. "Either at Gay or at his bike, sir. It hit the bike and bowled him over when he was going at top speed."

"Did you see who threw it?"

"I saw his cap, sir—it was a St. Jim's cap!"

Mr. Railton started.

"A St. Jim's cap!"

"Yes, sir."

"Mind what you say, Monk," said the School House master, with an unwonted sternness in his tone. "You are accusing a St. Jim's boy of having perpetrated a cowardly outrage which any hooligan might be well ashamed of."

"I can't help it, sir," said Monk quietly. "It was a St. Jim's fellow—a fellow wearing a St. Jim's cap, at all events."

Mr. Railton was grimly silent for a full minute.

"Go in to your friend," he said. "I shall look into this matter at once."

Frank Monk re-entered the study. Mr. Railton strode away in search of Kildare, the head prefect of the School House. He could hardly believe that Frank Monk was not mistaken; but upon one point he was determined—the affair should be investigated to the very bottom, and the truth, whatever it was, ascertained beyond the shadow of a doubt.

CHAPTER 15.

The Culprit!

"SOMETHING'S up," said Monty Lowther.

Lowther was right, and all the fellows felt it, too. The prefects were going about looking as solemn as owls, and Mr. Railton's interview with Kildare had not passed unnoticed.

"Somebody's going to catch something," said Jack Blake.

"I wonder what the row is?"

"Can't be anything to do with Gay, surely," said Tom Merry thoughtfully.

"I don't see how it could."

The juniors went into their class-rooms in a puzzled frame of mind for afternoon lessons. They felt that there was something in the air. Mr. Lathom looked very preoccupied when he came in to take the Fourth Form.

"Something on his chest," said Figgins. "Hallo! Here's Railton!"

Mr. Railton entered the Form-room.

The stern look on the Housemaster's face was more than enough to tell the juniors that something was amiss, even if they had not guessed it previously.

Mr. Railton stopped in front of the class.

"Boys," he said, "a very serious thing has happened.

Most of you saw Gay, of the Grammar School, brought in here, injured. He was injured by being thrown from his bicycle. His fall was caused by a large stone being thrown at him when he was riding in Rylcombe Lane."

There was a buzz from the Fourth.

"Every Form is now being questioned, with a view to ascertaining what boy was absent from the school at the time this outrage occurred," went on the Housemaster.

"Frank Monk, who was with Gay, distinctly declared that the stone was thrown by a boy wearing a St. Jim's cap. It is not likely that a cap belonging to this school would be worn by a stranger. I desire to know whether any of the Fourth Form boys were absent from school during the recess after morning lessons."

There was silence.

"Did any boy in this Form go out of gates?"

Still silence.

"In case any boy broke bounds, he may confess in perfect safety, unless he was the person who committed this outrage," added Mr. Railton.

Many eyes were turned expressively upon Mellish and Lumley. They had been seen to leave the school by five or six fellows.

Mellish rose to his feet, trembling.

"I went out for a stroll, sir," he said.

"Ah! Did you throw that stone?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Did you see it thrown?"

"No, sir."

"Did you go out alone?"

"No, sir," stammered Mellish, with a helpless glance at Jerrold Lumley.

The latter sat motionless with a brazen face. He did not mean to speak out unless he was driven to it.

"Ah!" said Mr. Railton sharply. "Who was with you?"

"Am I bound to say, sir?"

"Certainly you are! Why has not the boy risen to make the statement himself?" said the Housemaster, his keen glance sweeping over the class. "Who is it?"

The outsider did not move.

"Since the boy will not speak himself, I call upon you to name him, Mellish!" said Mr. Railton. "You need not fear the imputation of tale-bearing! The whole Form hears me order you to speak!"

Mellish licked his dry lips.

"It was Lumley, sir."

"Ah, stand up, Lumley!"

Jerrold stood up.

"You left the school after morning lesson?" said Mr. Railton.

Clear and cool came the reply.

"No, sir."

"My only hat!" murmured Mellish. "Why, I saw him go!"

Mr. Railton's brow contracted.

"Take care, Lumley," he said. "Mellish states that you went with him. Did you leave the school?"

"No, sir."

"Very well. Blake, kindly go and ask Taggles to step here."

Blake left the class-room. The cool offrontery of Lumley faltered for a moment. He had not counted upon the school porter. But he remembered that he had not seen Taggles near the gates, and, after all, the man might have been engaged elsewhere and might not have seen him go out. He kept firm.

There was a grim silence in the Form-room while Blake was gone. The class sat quiet, wondering what was to happen.

(Continued on the next page.)

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Blake returned in a few minutes. He brought Taggles with him, grunting, and very red in the face. Blake had evidently made the porter hurry.

Taggles touched his cap to Mr. Railton.

"You sent for me, sir?"

"Yes, Taggles. Did you observe any juniors leave the school after morning lesson?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who were they?"

"They were Master Manners, sir, and Master French, and Master Mellish, and the new boy," said the school porter slowly.

"Ah, Manners and French are in the Shell, and may be questioned later. You say you saw Mellish and a new boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Point him out."

Taggles ran his eye over the class and pointed to Lumley.

"That's him, sir," he said.

"Ungrammatical, but conclusive," murmured Digby.

"Thank you, Taggles, that will do."

Taggles left the Form-room. Mr. Railton bent a severe glance upon the new junior, who was looking somewhat uneasy now, though not abashed.

"Lumley, it is proved that you left the school. You have lied."

"I wasn't bound to convict myself, sir," said Jerrold, with perfect coolness.

"You were bound to tell the truth, Lumley."

"And be punished for my pains, sir?"

"Stand out here, Lumley!"

Jerrold came out slowly before the class. Mr. Railton fixed his eyes upon him in a way that made even Lumley feel uncomfortable.

"You confess now, I suppose, to having thrown that stone at Gordon Gay?" he asked.

"I threw it at his bicycle, sir."

"For the purpose of injuring him?"

"I wanted to give him a fall."

"You knew," said Mr. Railton, in his deepest and sternest tones—"you knew that such an act might result in serious injury to a cyclist going at full speed."

Lumley was silent.

"Why did you made this wanton, this wicked attack upon a lad with whom you cannot be acquainted?" asked the Housemaster.

"He began it," said Lumley sullenly. "He tied me up in the hack yesterday, and painted my face and made a guy of me."

"That was certainly unjustifiable, but you must know the difference of a practical joke of that sort and a wicked outrage like this," said Mr. Railton. "You might have caused a broken limb, or worse. The fact that you show no remorse for your conduct is the most serious point of all. You have disgraced the school, Lumley, after being in it one day."

Lumley bit his lips.

"I'm ready to take my medicine," he said. "I'm not afraid of a licking!"

Mr. Railton's face set grimly.

"It is not a question of a caning," he said, "or even of a flogging. If I have any influence with the headmaster you will be sent away from this school at once. You are not fit to stay in it. Follow me!"

Mr. Railton strode from the room.

Lumley hesitated a moment and then followed him. He left the Fourth Form in a buzz.

"The rotter!" said Blake. "Well, this will be the last we see of him, I hope. We must make it up to Gordon Gay somehow."

"By Jove! I wathah think that an apology fwom the whole Form is the wproah capah, undah the extwa-ordinawy cires," said Arthur Augustus.

And for once the whole Form agreed with him.

CHAPTER 16.

Not Sacked!

DR. HOLMES wore a stern frown as he listened to Mr. Railton's explanations.

He had already been told of the outrage, and he knew that all the Forms were being questioned in their rooms by masters or prefects, and he was waiting for the discovery.

As soon as Mr. Railton entered his study with Jerrold Lumley he knew that the culprit had been found. When the Housemaster concluded, the Head looked hard at Lumley.

"I hope you realise the seriousness of what you have done," he said. "I cannot allow such a boy to remain in the school of which I am the Head."

"But, sir—"

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"Not a word! I shall telegraph to your father at once, and ask him to remove you from the school," said the Head sternly.

"But—"

"You will pack your box and remain in your study for the present," said Dr. Holmes. "I do not wish you to mingle with the other boys again."

"But—"

"You may go."

And the outsider went.

The School House page was dispatched with the telegram at once.

Jerrold Lumley did not reappear in the Form-room for lessons that afternoon. The Fourth Form guessed the reason easily enough. And only Mellish felt any regrets at the thought of the newcomer leaving St. Jim's.

Dr. Holmes was engaged in the Sixth Form Room when a telegram was brought to him some time later.

He opened it and read:

"Mr. Lumley-Lumley sailed for South America this morning."

The Head let the telegram flutter to the floor.

He had forgotten that the millionaire had told him that he was sailing immediately for South America, and wished to dispose of his son before he went.

He had disposed of his son at St. Jim's, and sailed, and the Head did not even know where to communicate with him in South America, even if that had been of any use.

The agitated doctor consulted Mr. Railton.

"The boy cannot remain here," he said. "But his father is gone. He understood that the lad was to remain at St. Jim's during his absence. What shall I do?"

"Mr. Lumley-Lumley's solicitors, sir," suggested Mr. Railton. "You were to communicate with them in case of necessity, I suppose?"

The Head looked relieved.

"Ah, yes, yes! I had forgotten! I will wire to them to make arrangements for the removal of this obnoxious boy from the school."

And a second telegram was dispatched, this time addressed to Messrs. Bird & Beaky, and the Head breathed more freely.

Classes were dismissed before the reply telegram came.

The boys crowded out of the class-rooms discussing the late happenings. Gordon Gay had been taken away to the Grammar School in the Head's car, with Frank Monk, and the juniors, who had hoped to see him and give him a personal assurance of their whole-hearted condemnation of Lumley's actions, were disappointed.

"But it's all wight," said D'Arcy. "We'll w'ite him a lettah, you know, and assuah him that we condemn the wotten boundah, and tell him that Lumley is kicked out. We'll make him a handsome apology."

"Good old Gussy!" said Tom Merry. "It's a good wheeze!"

"Yes, Gussy's got a good dodge for once," agreed Monty Lowther. "I think the letter should be written and sent right away."

And the juniors started on it. They put their heads together over the letter, and finally produced one that seemed satisfactory.

It ran as follows:

"Dear Gay,—The chap who bified you in the lane was a new fellow here—a rank outsider—and he is being expelled for it, so we understand. Anyway, we should make him sit up. We're sure you wouldn't think that any St. Jim's chap would play such a dirty trick. We're all sorry, and hope you will soon be all right again."

The letter was signed by so many hands that the list of signatures was a dozen times as long as the letter. But that would prove, as Blake pointed out, that the fellows all meant it.

The letter was sent over at once by Toby, who was instructed to wait for a reply. Then Tom Merry & Co. felt somewhat relieved. They had disclaimed any connection with the rank outsider, who had disgraced his Form, at all events.

Meanwhile, Dr. Holmes was waiting anxiously for a reply telegram from Messrs. Bird & Beaky. It came at last.

The Head opened it, and read:

"Telegram received. Are instructed by our client that, under agreement, Master Lumley remains at St. James' for three years.

"Faithfully,

"BIRD & BEAKY."

Dr. Holmes groaned.

That unlucky agreement.

He had signed it, and the millionaire had evidently placed it in the hands of his solitors, to be enforced, if necessary.

(Continued on page 23.)

MORE THRILLING CHAPTERS FROM OUR GRAND WILD WEST SERIAL.

GHOST RIVER RANCH!



By E. S. BROOKS.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

When Justin B. Farman, of St. Frank's, learns that strange things are happening on the ranch he has inherited, he goes out to Arizona to investigate, taking with him Nipper, Handforth & Co., Willy, and Archie Glen-thorne. No sooner do the seven schoolboys arrive by plane than mysterious horsemen, known as the Black Riders, charge at them. A flying bullet causes the plane to catch fire, and its petrol tanks are in danger of exploding!

Boss of Double Z!

AS Justin B. Farman and his St. Frank's friends raced away from the burning aeroplane they saw that their peril was not yet over. Several of the Black Riders had regained control of their horses, and were bearing down upon the boys to the sound of thudding hoofs.

At the pilot's warning the boys were running madly for safety—not so much from the Black Riders, but from the plane, the reserve tanks of which were likely to explode at any moment. But the black-garbed desperadoes were evidently unaware of this possibility.

On they came, determined to carry out their original intention. Some were still scattered, but a bunch of five had reformed, and were charging down upon the heels of the running schoolboys.

"Dodge!" yelled Nipper.

The hot breath of a straining horse was practically upon him as he flung himself sideways out of its path. He heard a hoarse curse from the rider as he swept by. Other boys, heeding the shout, succeeded in eluding the mysterious enemy. But Handforth, ever reckless, grabbed madly at the bridle of a Black Rider's horse as it charged down upon him. He obtained a grip, was swept off his feet, and carried along.

"Got him!" he roared triumphantly.

"Guess again, kid!" came the rasping, muffled voice from behind the Rider's black cowl.

Leaning far over the saddle, he obtained an iron grip on Handforth's clothing, swept the burly junior off his feet, and swung him broadside across the horse's back in front of the saddle. Handforth, utterly surprised, turned a startled face upwards as the horse, swerving at the word of command, again broke into a hard gallop.

Handforth saw two vicious eyes glaring at him through the slits of the black cowl. And in that moment the junior

realised that he had bitten off more than he could chew. He was being carried away—kidnapped! The Black Riders had succeeded in grabbing at least one victim.

"Handy!" he heard vaguely out of the distance, and he knew it was Church's voice. "Look! They've grabbed Handy!"

"By George!" gurgled Handforth furiously.

He struggled to get free, but his position was awkward, and his captor was holding him down with a grip of iron.

"Try this, kid!" said the muffled voice briefly.

The man's arm went up, and in his black-covered hand he gripped a heavy gun by its barrel; the butt was striking straight down at Handforth's uncovered head.

Boom-ooooom!

In that tense second the flames had reached the reserve tanks of the plane, and the resultant explosion was terrific. Handforth, helpless as he was, saw the utter destruction of the proud machine. The horse under him reared madly as the shattering explosion rent the air; the Black Rider's aim was destroyed, and the revolver-butt swept harmlessly past Handforth's head. Then, before the man could recover, Handforth had gone. The rearing horse had given him his chance; with quick presence of mind he wriggled and dropped.

As he struck the ground and rolled over he saw the frightened horse take control over its rider. Away it went, galloping in mad terror, panic-stricken by that booming report. Handforth sat up, half-dazed.

The great aeroplane had disintegrated as though hit by a bomb; flames leapt far and wide in a terrifying glare. But, thanks to the timely warning of the pilot, the boys were clear of the danger zone.

That heavy report, accompanied by the blinding glare, however, caused the final disorganisation of the Black Riders. Their horses bolted under them, galloping wildly across the plain into the darkness.

Handforth picked himself up and stared at the fast-disappearing figures. He gulped. But for the explosion, he would have been with those Riders—carried off, a prisoner. He ran dizzily back to his schoolboy companions, and they yelled with relief to see him safe.

"You—you hopeless ass!" panted Church, grabbing him. "What did you do that for? You might have been killed! Those outlaws had you, too! How did you get away?"

"Easy!" said Handforth, recovering his equanimity.

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"The rotter tried to hold me, but I wriggled free. My only hat! He nearly had me, though!" he added frankly. "I believe he was going to dot me one on the head, but his horse reared and spoilt his aim."

"So that's how you wriggled free?" put in McClure. "If the horse hadn't reared you would have been a goner. I've never known a more reckless, fatheaded chump in all my life! Hadn't you more sense than to grab that bridle? Men like that stop at nothing—"

"If you don't dry up, Arnold McClure, I'll knock you flat!" threatened Handforth suddenly, becoming aggressive. "I'm safe, aren't I? What's all the fuss about? By George! Look at that plane!"

The lurid flames of the blazing plane flickered on the startled faces of the boys as they stood watching the scene.

"So this is Arizona!" said Nipper.

"The real thing!" ejaculated Handforth. "Desperadoes shooting us up the minute we land! Hot ziggerty!"

"Eh?" said Church, staring.

"Don't be an ignorant ass!" protested Handforth. "We're out West now, aren't we? All real cowboys say 'Hot ziggerty'—or words to that effect—when they're pleased."

"In the first place, you're not a cowboy," retorted Church. "And, in the second place, what the dickens is there to be pleased about? Don't you realise that we were nearly grabbed by those gunmen?"

"I was grabbed!" growled Handforth. "And what do you mean—gunmen? You're getting mixed! They have gunmen in Chicago and New York; out here, in Arizona, they're called desperadoes from the bad lands."

"All right—you win!" said Church helplessly. "I give up!"

"Gee-whiz, fellers, I'm real sorry about this!" Justin B. Farman was saying. "I guess those hoodlums were just trying to put a scare into us."

"Trying?" repeated Archie Glenhorne, jamming his monocle into his eye. "I mean to say, they had a frightfully good stab at it, old thing; and as far as I'm concerned the blighters succeeded. I came out here prepared for a spot of rough riding and eating canned beans out of a pannikin, but when it comes to being shot up—well, it's a bit blue round the edges."

"Somebody's going to pay for this!" said the pilot, striding up, his face set grimly. "Look at my old ship! The finest crate I ever took into the air!"

From the direction of the ranch came men on horseback at the gallop. Big Jim Farman was leading, and his face was strained as he came within the zone of yellow light.

"O.K., dad!" yelled his son, running to meet him. "Nobody's hurt!"

Mr. Farman flung himself from his horse.

"I'm sure glad to see you safe, junior!" he exclaimed as he took Justin into a quick, warm embrace. "Guess I was kind of scared. Thought you were still in that blazin' plane. What happened? Did you crash?"

"Crash nothing!" replied Justin. "Our pilot made a fine landing. It was the Black Riders who set fire to the machine. I don't think they meant to. Their game was to kidnap me and the rest of the fellers."

"They did grab Handforth, sir," put in Church—to Handforth's mortification. "But he was lucky. The explosion came at the right moment, and the horse reared, and he was thrown clear."

"The Black Riders," said Mr. Farman, squaring his jaw. "Gee! They didn't figger on wasting any time, did they? Maybe you'll believe now that there's something almighty queer about this ranch, son?"

"Well, I guess it's plain that somebody doesn't want us around, dad," replied Justin, his eyes glowing. "Why should people act like this? Seems to me this ranch is worth keeping—since these other folks are so set on driving us away!"

He caught sight of the cowboys who had accompanied his father out from the ranch, and he ran forward with a shout of welcome.

"Say, dad, you didn't tell me that the Happy Bunch was out here!" he exclaimed. "Gosh, Square-Deal, I'm mighty glad to see you!"

"Same here, pard!" said Square-Deal Reeve, grabbing Justin's hand.

"Some of you chaps have met the Happy Bunch before, haven't you?" went on Farman, turning to his schoolboy friends. "Meet Ace-High Peter and Twirly Sam and Two-Gun Milligan."

They were hard-bitten cowpunchers—men, in fact, from Mr. Farman's own Californian ranch. He had brought them out with him. Two-Gun Milligan was rawboned lanky, and rugged of feature; and the others were typical Western cowboys—tough, tobacco-chewing men of the plains.

"You ain't aimin' to forget me, are you?" asked another man, in a fatigued voice.

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He was elderly, grizzled, wrinkled of feature, and the hand he extended to Farman was horny, but tired.

"Gee! So it's you, Slick Ed!" grinned Farman. "Just as tired as ever, eh? What an old fraud you are, Ed!"

"Howcome?" drawled Slick Ed wearily. "Guess this hyar outfit'd make most men tired. I'm sure tickled to see you, kid. Five minutes ago I was figgerin' to locate nothin' but a heap o' cinders!"

Mr. Farman was talking to the pilot.

"I'm in your debt, Captain Merton," said the millionaire bluntly. "It's a debt I'll never be able fully to discharge; for there's no doubt that your presence of mind saved my son's life—and the lives of the other boys."

"You're wrong, sir," said Captain Merton. "I did nothing. But I'm wondering how I shall get back to New York, and what I shall say to my company when I got there."

"Leave it to me," replied Mr. Farman. "If your company's insurance doesn't cover the loss, I'll make it good to the last cent. Moreover, I'll compensate you for your loss of time, and you'll allow me, if you please, to value that compensation at my own figure."

Captain Merton, his mind set at rest, watched the final destruction of his plane, which was a total loss.

"Boys," said Mr. Farman, turning to the cowpunchers, "meet your new boss—the boss of the Double Z outfit. From now on you'll take your orders from him."

"Nothing doing, dad," said Farman quickly. "While you're here—"

"I'm a visitor, son," interrupted his father. "You're the owner of Ghost River Ranch, and you're going to do all the bossing that needs to be done. I quit. From this minute you take over."

The Warning!

THE sound of an approaching motor-car interrupted further conversation. It carried Mr. Elmer C. Kyle, and Dirk Dixon, the sheriff. Mr. Kyle, seeing the lurid glare from the distance, had driven out over the grassy plain.

"Lucky we've got this auto," said the sheriff gloomily. "We'll be able to carry the bodies in—"

"You're wrong, sheriff," interrupted Mr. Farman, striding up. "Nobody's hurt."

"Waal, you sure surprise me," said Dirk Dixon, in a disappointed voice. "I was figgerin' that there'd been a crash."

"Figger something else," said Mr. Farman. "The Black Riders did this."

"Gosh darn my hide!" growled the sheriff. "So the all-fired galoots are getting more daring, are they? It's the first time they've ridden out before midnight. Did any of these young tenderfeet see 'em? Any chance of recognising the cusses?"

"We saw them, sheriff," said Nipper. "But they took jolly good care they shouldn't be recognised. Dressed in black from head to foot—even to their boots and hands. Black cowls over their heads, too, with nothing but eye slits."

"Yep, I know," grunted Dirk. "But what's a man to do? Here am I, sheriff of this doggone valley, and folks treat me like I was a no-account tramp. I guess this job is no cinch, with them Black Riders around. I'd show good hoss-sense to quit before I'm whisked away like them other guys."

It was now quite dark, and overhead the stars were gleaming in a velvety sky. The flames from the destroyed aeroplane were dying down.

"Maybe you'll give the boys a lift in your car, Mr. Kyle?" said the millionaire.

"Sure thing," said Kyle. "Jump right in, kids. Happy to take care of you."

And so Justin B. Farman arrived at his strange inheritance. The car, with headlights full on, bumped and swayed over the grassland, and it was escorted by the mounted cowboys.

Fortunately, the St. Frank's fellows had carried their suitcases out of the plane, and although many had been dropped during the rush, they were recovered, undamaged. So they arrived with all their belongings.

"Gee! Some shack!" remarked Justin, as he stood before the ranch-house.

"Your uncle had mighty artistic ideas, son; but I'm not saying that I care a heap for the place," said Mr. Farman.

"Reg'lar hoodoo," said Dirk Dixon gloomily. "Allus gives me the jitters. I wouldn't sleep in this dump, not if you was to offer me a thousand bucks."

The ranch-house was, indeed, a sombre structure. It was huge and sprawling, and built entirely of pine logs.

The newcomers crossed the veranda, and entered a great lounge hall, where a wide staircase led up to a balcony,



"Ods earthquakes and volcanoes!" howled Archie Glenthorne, as the bucking broncho shot up into the air and then thudded down again, and he flung his arms affectionately round the pinto's neck. "Help! SOS! Rally round, St. Frank's!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nipper & Co.

Even the stairs had been roughly hewn from logs. The walls, the ceiling—everything was constructed throughout of pine logs.

Farman's uncle had been very proud of the place. Built on the lines of a shack, it was, nevertheless, a mansion, with reception rooms, bed-rooms, library and sun-parlour. The place had its own electric generating plant and lights were gleaming everywhere. Yet they seemed feeble, and scarcely dispelled the shadows.

This was because of the dark nature of the pine-log walls. There was nothing bright to relieve the monotony. It was all very effective, but gloomy and weird.

A generous meal was ready in the dining-room, and the St. Frank's boys took their places at the table eagerly. They saw that the table itself—and even the chairs—were made of rough pinewood. But here, at least, there was a relief from the general gloom, for the big table was spread with a dazzlingly white cloth, and on it gleamed silver-ware and white crockery.

"You'll stay to supper, Elmer?" asked Mr. Farman.

"Glad to," replied the other as he sat down. "I'm sure pleased to meet the kids," he added, his face wrinkling as he smiled upon the St. Frank's boys. "As Mayor of Fortune City, I'd like to give you an official welcome into this valley. But I'm telling you right now that it's a mighty bad spot."

"You mean the Black Riders, Mr. Kyle?" asked Nipper.

"Them—and other things," replied Kyle slowly. "I don't want to scare you none, but this valley isn't exactly healthy."

"Aw, shucks! Best let the kids know where they are," said Dirk Dixon. "Ghost Valley is hoodoo. Yep, kids, this country is cursed by the phantoms of the old-timers who died in the gold-rush days. Say, Fortune City has brought nothing but tragedy and death ever since the fust shack was built."

"They brought the railroad here, and I remember the day when the fust train steamed in. What happened? That train no sooner got into the centre of the city than the boiler of the engine busted. Thirty-five people was killed that day, kids. Hoodoo! That's Ghost Valley!"

The sheriff appeared to be enjoying himself; he related various stories of tragic happenings with consummate relish. It seemed that Dirk Dixon was only really happy when he was being gloomy.

"Cut it out, Dirk," said Mr. Kyle at length. "I guess you're responsible for half the rumours which are rife in this valley to-day."

"Listen, mayor—"

"I've listened enough!" broke in Kyle, almost curtly. "We know you here, Dirk—but these youngsters are new. They're liable to take notice of your infernal pessimism. You go around with your tales of tragedy and disaster, and folks get kind of morbid."

"Truth is truth!" said the sheriff defensively.

"Even these crooks are taking advantage of the 'atmosphere,' which seems to be part and parcel of Ghost Valley," continued the mayor. "Maybe it's a good thing these boys have come. They'll liven things up some. What we need right now is cheerfulness—optimism. We want to get a different spirit into the folks of this valley."

"We'll do all we can, Mr. Kyle," promised Justin B. Farman, with a grin. "This is my ranch, and I'm not going to give it up tamely. I believe that all this mystery has been created by a gang of crooks which is working secretly—on some game of its own."

"Coiners, perhaps," suggested Handforth.

"Don't be a bigger ass than you can help, old man," said Justin. "What would coiners be doing out here? Cattle keep disappearing—and men, too. There must be something big behind it all. I'm not going to tamely knuckle under."

"I like your spirit, sonny," said Mr. Kyle admiringly. "Gosh, Jim, this boy of yours is showing us where we stand!"

"He's new out here," replied Mr. Farman significantly. "Give him time."

Nipper and Handforth and the others tried hard to keep things cheerful at that supper-table. But somehow they found it difficult to sustain the conversation. They caught themselves falling into long silences; and as they ate they found themselves listening.

The room was big, and the far corners of it were in deep shadow. And, outside, the valley was as silent as the desert. Over everything hung a brooding sense of mystery.

After Mr. Kyle and the sheriff had gone the silence seemed even more impressive. Mr. Farman talked with his son and the other boys for some little time, then he suggested that they should go straight to bed. They had had a tiring trip, and sleep was what they needed.

"I guess you're right, dad," said Justin. "I guess I'm beginning to understand why you phoned me at St. Frank's, too."

"You're not telling me, junior, that this place has 'got you' already?" asked his father dryly.

"Gee, no!" said the American boy quickly. "But it is sort of creepy. Maybe things will look different tomorrow."

"They generally do look different in the sunlight," agreed his father. "But there'll be other nights, junior—and most nights out here are the same."

"Do things—happen at night, Mr. Farman?" asked Handforth, unconsciously lowering his voice.

Mr. Farman laughed.

"Sorry to disappoint you, young 'un, but you're not likely to be aroused," he replied. "Sometimes they have a bit of excitement in Fortune City, but the nights out here, at the ranch, are mostly peaceful enough. The queer thing is, the ranch-hands who have disappeared have gone during the day-time. They ride out after the cattle, and they're never seen again. Their horses come back with empty saddles. No man knows what happens."

They went up to bed strangely subdued. Everything was so different from what they had expected. Ever since they had left St. Frank's the juniors had revelled in the thought of spending some weeks on a real Western cattle ranch. It seemed so adventurous.

The reality was something of a shock.

This sombre ranch-house, standing in such isolation, was like a wet blanket on their spirits—as ghostly and as eerie as a lonely Scottish castle.

Handforth & Co. found that they had a bed-room to themselves. Nipper and Archie Glenhorne and Willy were accommodated in another room, and Justin B. Farman was with them. Both rooms were well furnished and the electric lights were bright; but the log walls and ceiling were strangely sombre.

However, the beds were comfortable, and the boys were tired, and they soon fell into deep sleep.

Nipper, the lightest sleeper of them all, suddenly found himself awake.

He knew that he had been slumbering peacefully for some time, and he wondered what had aroused him. The moon had risen, and the pale beams were slanting through the open window.

Nipper raised himself in bed, and the only sounds which assailed his ears were the deep, steady breathing of his companions. He judged the hour to be late—probably between one and two o'clock in the morning. The entire ranch-house was slumbering.

Thud-thud—thud-thud—thud-thud!

At first Nipper wondered if his imagination was playing tricks; for he thought he heard, vaguely in the distance, the rhythmic thudding of hoof-beats. So faint was the sound, however, that he could not be certain. As he strained his ears to listen, the very silence seemed to cause a roar in his ears.

He slipped quietly out of bed, and he wondered why the creaking springs did not waken the others. Yet, actually, those sounds were trivial—and only exaggerated in Nipper's ears by reason of the general silence.

He padded softly across to the window. Not far away, bathed in moonlight, stood the low, squat bunk-house, in which the cowboys had their quarters. No sounds came from that direction. The corrals, farther afield, were empty. Right over the valley, as far as the eye could see, the moonlight made a fairy scene; in the dim, vague distance the mountains rose like shadowy sentinels.

Thud-thud—thud-thud—thud-thud!

This time Nipper was certain. A horseman was somewhere out there, riding at the gallop. The sounds were distinct in his ears—yet he formed the impression that they were unnatural. There was something muffled and mysterious about the hoof-beats.

"Great Scott!" he muttered, with a catch in his breath.

For, turning his head and gazing in the other direction, he saw something which caused him to go rigid. The mysterious horseman was close at hand—riding up at a hard gallop. But even at close quarters the hoofs of the steed made little or no sound. Thud-thud—thud-thud—thud-thud! They came like the rhythmic hoof-beats of a ghost horse.

But Nipper was a fellow of strong nerves; his experiences with Nelson Lee, the great detective, had taught him to keep a cool head. And he knew instinctively that the feet of this night rider's horse were padded.

Rider and animal came sweeping by, swerving close in at the last moment, to come near to the log wall of the ranch-house. Nipper was able to obtain a good, clear view.

He saw a horse as black as the night itself—a rider just as black, a mystic figure, shapeless, unidentifiable, with black cowl descending to the shoulders, and joining up with the rest of the garb.

Nipper wanted to shout, but, in spite of the coolness of his

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brain, his vocal chords seemed paralysed. He could only watch in fascinated excitement.

The Black Rider swept by, and as he did so one of his hands swung back. Something came hurtling through the air, and Nipper heard a thin, whining sound, followed by a heavy thud not a foot from his head. Something quivered in the log.

The rider swept on, swinging round the angle of the ranch-house, so that he was now out of Nipper's sight.

Nipper blinked. He even wondered if he was still dreaming. The thing had been so unexpected, so mysterious. Yet there was that object still quivering in the pine log. A dagger gleaming in the moonshine, and attached to it a scrap of white paper.

Nipper reached out a hand, and he wrenched the dagger free. With bated breath he detached the paper, and in the moonlight he saw the scrawled warning:

"Quit, or the Black Riders will get you all!"

Nipper's first impulse was to arouse the entire household. He was on the point of yelling out to Farman when he checked.

"Better not!" he muttered wisely.

What good purpose could be served by alarming everybody? By now the grim messenger was a mile away, galloping across the valley to—where?

He had come out of the night, and had vanished into the night. Any attempt to follow would be futile. The rider's horse had gone like a phantom. It would be ten minutes or more before any of the cowboys could be up, and another ten minutes before they could have their horses saddled.

Nipper came to the conclusion that by sounding the alarm he would only disturb his schoolfellows for the rest of the night. Once awakened and hearing that story, they would get no further sleep. Better to let them slumber on.

And Nipper himself, being a sensible youngster, calmly returned to his own bed, and within five minutes he was sound asleep, too. He possessed the happy knack of composing his mind at will.

Diamond Eye!

"MORE tricks!" said Jim Farman grimly.

It was breakfast-time, and Nipper had just shown the millionaire rancher the scrawled warning which had been left behind in the middle of the night by the Black Rider. Justin and his schoolfellows had listened eagerly whilst Nipper had told that story.

"I'm going to keep the dagger, sir—and that piece of paper, too," said Nipper. "They mean nothing to us now; but later on, after we've done some investigating, they might prove valuable as clues."

Mr. Farman looked at him straightly.

"You're aiming to stay on, then?" he asked.

"You bet we are, sir," replied Nipper. "We came here with your son to get to the bottom of this mystery—and we're jolly well going to do it!"

"Rather!" said Handforth eagerly.

"Well, kids, you sure got a heap of nerve," said Mr. Farman, with a sudden laugh. "Mind you, I'm not scared any by this warning. It's just another trick. But you'd best not treat it too lightly. These rustlers—or Black Riders, or whatever they are—are men of grim determination. There's going to be trouble if you boys stick around this ranch. You mustn't take this warning lightly."

"By George! Do you think the rotters will raid the place and grab us openly?" asked Handforth.

"I don't know what to think," replied Mr. Farman, frowning. He paced up and down for some moments. "This letter is going to the sheriff," he went on. "And I'm going to buy as many rifles as I can get hold of in Fortune City. From now on I'll have a permanent guard around this ranch-house—by night as well as by day."

Farman looked at his father with a smile.

"Who's boss around here, dad?" he asked blandly.

"Gosh, junior, I'd forgotten!" said Mr. Farman, with a sudden laugh. "Go right ahead! This is your outfit!"

"Thanks, dad!" said Farman. "But I think it's a pretty good idea of yours to station a permanent guard, and I'll do that. Meanwhile, what about some breakfast? Gee whizz! Buckwheat cakes and maple syrup to start with! Oh, boy!"

They sat down, and were soon piling in.

"Why show this message to the sheriff?" asked Nipper thoughtfully. "What good can he do, anyway? Don't you think it would be a better idea, Farman, to keep it to ourselves? We're doing the investigating, don't forget!"

"You said it!" agreed Farman promptly. "The sheriff has failed all along; and if we succeed, we'll succeed off our own bats—eh?"

"It's a pity you didn't wake me in the night!" grumbled Handforth. "I'd have given quids to see that Black Rider. Besides, we might have collared him."

"Far more likely he would have collared you, old man!" said Nipper. "It was better to let him think that he had been unobserved. I don't think he spotted me at the window, or, if he did, it doesn't matter."

Captain Merton, the airman, was frank. "I'll be mighty glad to get out of this spot," he said. "I don't mind telling you boys that I don't envy you. Give me New York every time!"

It happened that there was a stage-coach leaving Fortune City to-day, and Captain Merton had decided to go out on it—to the railroad. There was, indeed, nothing for him to stop for.

The ranch-house looked very different to the boys in the hot spring sunshine this morning. It became picturesque and homely, and the general air of activity and bustle about the place was welcome, too.

The boys, who were keen on seeing Fortune City, decided to ride into that desolate town with their friend, the airman. They would give him a good send-off. Square-Deal Reeve, receiving his orders from Justin, had prepared a number of pintos for the trip. They were fine animals, well trained, and they stood ready saddled at the hitching-rail.

"What-ho! A spot of horse riding—what?" said Archie. "I take it, old thing, that the steeds are quiet animals?"

"As tame as rabbits, pardner," said Square-Deal Reeve, grinning. "Pick which one you like."

The pintos were full of spirits, and to Archie they looked pretty restive.

"What about that one over there?" he asked, indicating another horse, which was hitched to a post farther away. "I must say, old dear, that he looks a frightful lot tamer than these specimens."

"O.K.!" replied Square-Deal. "Go right ahead; he's yours!"

Archie, beaming, was assisted into the saddle of the animal he had selected. Square-Deal Reeve unhitched him, and then, for some reason, the foreman moved with excessive quickness.

The reason was quite obvious a moment later; for the pinto moved with excessive quickness, too. It was largely Archie's own fault, for he touched the animal's sides lightly with his spurs.

It seemed to Archie, sitting so contentedly in that saddle, that his steed had suddenly become a mass of electrified springs. With an extraordinary movement the animal not only leapt into the air, but arched his back at the same time.

Archie shot up, thudded down again, and his arms wound themselves affectionately round the pinto's neck.

"Good gad!" he gurgled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The other fellows yelled with laughter as they appreciated the humour of the situation. Archie had selected this horse without the slightest suspicion that it was a genuine bucking broncho. It had seemed so docile a moment earlier.

Up went the broncho again, and again, and Archie slithered round helplessly. But somehow he still managed to cling on.

"Ods earthquakes and volcanos!" he howled. "Help! S O S! Rally round, St. Frank's!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Up he went again, and now the pinto suddenly bolted. He went off so unexpectedly, and with such terrific speed, that Archie was left more or less in the air. Luckily, he had released his grip, and the horse shot from under him. He soared through the air in a half-circle, and landed fairly and squarely on his back.

"Hurt, Archie?" asked Nipper, running up.

Archie sat up, blinking.

"Did we crash badly?" he asked, in a feeble voice.

"How far was the bally plane from the ground when we went into that nose dive?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Say, son, why didn't you tell me that you couldn't ride a bucking broncho?" asked Square-Deal. "I was sure tickled when you asked me if you could get on that hoss. I thought you was going to give us an exhibition of stunts. Suffering snakes! Howcome?"

"Pardner," said Archie, as he got to his feet, "you sure win! I guess it was absolutely my own frightful fault—what? Good gad! I believe I'm talking in this dashed Western lingo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Archie wasn't hurt much, and after that he tried no more experiments. He was content to mount the horse which had been specially saddled for him. It proved to be gentle and easily manageable.

After that diverting incident, Captain Merton took his leave of big Jim Farman, and presently, escorted by the juniors and two or three cowboys, he left for Fortune City.

The trail was pleasant this morning, and the boys enjoyed themselves immensely. The air was like wine, and the

sunshine warm and bright. Ghost River Valley on this spring morning was a delightful place.

But as soon as the schoolboy riders came into the city itself they lost some of their cheerfulness. Mouldering buildings, weed-choked streets, ruins and desolation—it was all depressing and gloomy. Even the sunshine failed to dispel that air of decay and mystery.

The boys had never seen a city like this before. They did not imagine that there are many such places in the United States. They found it difficult to believe that Fortune City had any population at all, for it seemed to them that nearly all the buildings were falling to pieces.

Only in certain sections was the town occupied. Main Street, in the very centre, seemed more forlorn than the rest of the place, because of the few buildings which were flourishing. They seemed to accentuate the desolation of the rest.

But there were many people about here—mostly men of the plains. An old-fashioned mail-coach was waiting outside the post office with its team of fine-looking horses. The boys, dismounting, were greeted by Mr. Elmer C. Kyle.

"Glad you've looked us up, boys," he said heartily. "I hope you slept well? Did anything happen during the night to disturb you? I've heard that a lone rider was seen."

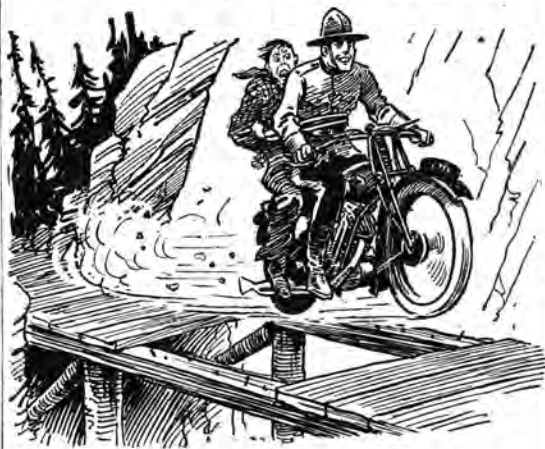
"He didn't bother us, Mr. Kyle," said Farman.

"Glad to hear it," said the other. "I was afraid that the Black Riders were up to some more of their tricks. Well, maybe things aren't so bad, after all."

As mayor of Fortune City he apologised to Captain Merton for the disaster to the latter's aeroplane.

"I guess you don't think much of us in this part of the country, captain?" he went on dryly. "Well, we're up against something, and we don't quite know what it is."

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One of these days, perhaps, we'll get these crooks just where we want them."

The departure of the coach was something of an event in Fortune City, for that coach was the only regular link with the outside world. The lumbering vehicle started off amid a great clatter and bustle.

Captain Merton had taken his place on the box-seat next to the driver, and he waved cheerily to his late passengers as the coach rolled away along the dusty, uneven road.

Thereafter, Mr. Elmer C. Kyle, appointing himself host, insisted upon taking the boys "round the town." He took them into his bank, of which he was proud, and they were surprised to find that the building was modern and up to date to the last degree. As Mr. Kyle said, Fortune City was not all decay. The "live" parts of it were very much alive, indeed.

And while he was showing them round the saloon which he owned, the coach was settling down on its run to Ghost Pass, a forbidding, rocky canyon which was the only exit from the valley on this side.

After some miles Fortune City was no longer in view, and the country had now become rugged, barren. The grasslands were all left behind, and here in the foothills, with the mountains frowning in the near distance, the ground on either side of the trail was dotted with cactus and sagebrush.

"Kind of picturesque?" ventured the coach-driver, glancing at his passenger.

"Picturesque or not, I'll be glad to get out of this valley," replied the airman. "Even in full daylight it gives me the creeps."

THE BOY WHO COULDN'T BE SACKED!

(Continued from page 22.)

Mr. Railton came in, and the Head showed him the telegram. The Housemaster started:

"What would you advise me to do, Mr. Railton?"

"That was a most unfortunate agreement, sir."

"I know that now. Of course, I did not foresee anything of this sort."

"Nevertheless, you have bound yourself, sir," said Mr. Railton. "If Lumley is expelled I am of the opinion that the solicitors will take you to law. Perhaps, after all, a flogging may meet the case."

"I—I suppose that is all that can be done."

There was no doubt about that. Jerrold Lumley, who was waiting with perfect coolness in his study, was informed of the fact, and never turned a hair. He could have told the Head, all the time, exactly how the matter stood, if Dr. Holmes had asked him.

The school would assemble in the Hall to witness a public flogging. That was the first intimation the boys had that Jerrold Lumley was not to be expelled, after all.

Blake had just received from Toby the answer to his letter. He read it out to a circle of juniors:

"You said it, stranger," agreed the driver. "I'll have you know I'm no native of this doggone valley! No, sir! I'm located down at Crag Junction, which is the township we're bound for."

"Ever have any excitement on this run?" asked the captain.

"Not so's you'd notice," said the driver, with a shrug. "Tain't as if we carry gold these days."

"Don't these Black Riders ever bother you?"

"Say, don't you know that the Black Riders only show themselves at night," replied the driver. "This coach don't run except in the daytime—"

He broke off, for in direct contradiction of his words a number of horsemen had suddenly sprang into view from behind a great mass of reddish rocks which stood near the trail. They came up at the gallop, and as they did so they let off a salvo of cracking gunshots.

Every man was clothed in black from head to foot, and the leader appeared to be a giant. His horse was coal-black like himself.

"Gosh!" gasped the coach-driver. "The Black Riders! And they're led by Diamond Eye himself!"

Captain Merton stared. He understood. The Black Rider in the lead was different from his fellows. There were not two slits in his cowl—not even one—nothing but a diamond-shaped "eye" which gleamed like silver.

"Reach for the sky!" came the sharp command. "Or we'll load you with lead! Captain Merton, we want you!"

(On no account, chums, must you miss the further exciting developments of this gripping story. Order your GEM early.)

"Dear Kids.—It's all serene. My napper's a hard nut to crack. Don't be too rough on the chap, whoever he was—a beast like that isn't worth ragging. Of course, I know all you chaps would be down on such a trick."

"Yours always."

"GORDON GAY."

"Bai Jove! I wegard him as awfully decent!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It seems that this wank outsidah isn't goin' to be sacked, aftah all. I wegard it as wotten. We've got to see him flogged."

"Well, I must say I don't feel sorry for the beast!" Tom Merry remarked.

The other fellows were all of the same mind. They assembled in Hall, and Jerrold Lumley took his flogging.

Hardly a cry escaped him, and even those who disliked him most could not help respecting his courage.

"Well, that will be a lesson to him, I suppose," Blake remarked, when the assembly broke up and they crowded out. But he spoke doubtfully, and he felt doubtful. And the others shared his feelings.

They all felt that a flogging was not likely to make much difference to the nature of the boy who couldn't be sacked!

THE END.

(Another ripping yarn of this powerful series next week. Don't miss reading "THE COMPLETE CAD!"—starring Lumley-Lumley and Tom Merry & Co. on holiday.)



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