

"A SHADOW OVER ST. JIM'S!" Great Yarn of Human Interest —Starring Tom Merry & Co.— WITHIN.



The GEM

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YOU WILL VOTE THIS GREAT YARN OF REAL HUMAN INTEREST—

A SHADOW OVER ST. JIM'S!

By
Martin
Clifford



A complete cad one moment, and a hero the next, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the Outsider of St. Jim's, has always been up against it. But in this moving story it is Death itself the Outsider is up against—a foe that brings out the best qualities in his hard nature!

CHAPTER 1.

No Admittance!

TOM MERRY, the leader of the Shell Form at St. Jim's, stopped.

He had to stop, because Jack Blake, Digby, and Herries of the Fourth were standing in the doorway of the Junior Common-room, and they had their arms linked, and filled the doorway from side to side.

They showed no disposition to move as the Shell fellow came down the passage, but rather stiffened up to meet him, and they regarded him with cheerful smiles.

So Tom Merry stopped.

"I want to come in," he remarked.

Blake shook his head.

"Can't be did," he said.

"But I want to come in," said Tom Merry, looking puzzled. "I suppose you Fourth Form bounders haven't taken possession of the Common-room, have you?"

"That's exactly what we have done," said Blake, with perfect coolness.

"What!"

"We've taken possession of the Common-room," said Blake.

"Exactly," said Digby.

"Precisely," corroborated Herries.

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was standing behind his chums, and regarding Tom Merry through his eyeglass, chimed in:

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry grew pink.

"Oh, don't rot!" he exclaimed. "I want to come in. I've left my Latin dictionary on the table in the corner, for one thing. And I'm coming in, anyway, for another."

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"Rats!"

"Yaas, wathah! Wats!"

"Look here!" exclaimed Tom Merry exasperated. "A joke's a joke—now, chuck it! Let me come in!"

"Rats!"

The hero of the Shell breathed hard through his nose.

"You see, we're holding a Form meeting in the Common-room," Blake explained. "There's no room for the Shell bounders. Only the Fourth admitted."

Tom Merry fairly crimsoned with indignation.

"You're holding a Form meeting in the Common-room," he shouted. "Go and hold it in the Form-room. Hold it in the woodshed, hold it on the roof! You can't hold meetings in the Common-room, and turn the other Forms out, you fatheads!"

"That's just what we can do," said Blake, with provoking coolness. "We're doing it."

And his comrades chuckled.

"I give you one minute to clear," said Tom Merry. "Then I'm going to charge."

"Stand by to repel boarders," chuckled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry receded a few paces to get room for a rush. To be excluded from the Common-room by the Fourth was a little too rich—he, the head of the Shell, the Form above the Fourth, and, in fact, almost a senior—in his own opinion, at least.

Digby, Blake, and Herries stood fast.

"I'm coming," said Tom Merry.

"Come on, then."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry charged.

He came for the Fourth Formers at top speed, and hurled himself upon them like a stone from a catapult.

Blake staggered back, with Tom Merry's arms round his

—THE BEST OF ALL! STARRING JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY.

neck, the force of the rush tearing him from his hold upon Digby and Herries.

"Back up!" he gasped.

"Yaas, wathah! Collah the boundah, deah boys!"

Herries and Digby had hold of Tom Merry in a twinkling.

He was dragged off Blake, and the three of them together grasped him and hurled him back into the passage.

He landed there in a sitting posture, gasping.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A crowd of Fourth Formers were behind Blake & Co. now, and they greeted Tom Merry's fall with a roar of laughter.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, screwing his monocle into his eye, and regarding the hero of the Shell. "I vegard that as wathah funnny."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry jumped up.

"You bounders—"

"Come on," said Blake cheerily. "Try another rush."

"This way, deah boy."

"Manners, Lowther! Rescue, Shell!"

Manners and Lowther, Tom Merry's chums of the Shell, came dashing up. The Terrible Three charged together at the blocked doorway.

The charge of the three champion athletes of the Shell sent the Fourth Formers whirling back.

Blake bumped against D'Arcy, and he went staggering, his eyeglass fluttering to the end of its cord.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped. "Weally, Blake—"

"Back up!" roared Blake.

"Weally, you know—"

The Terrible Three rushed into the room, over Digby and Herries, who were sprawling on the floor.

"Here we are!" gasped Monty Lowther.

"Sock it to 'em!"

"Back up, the Fourth!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The Fourth Formers backed up their leader manfully. A dozen or more piled upon the heroes of the Shell.

The Terrible Three hit out valorously, but the odds were too great.

They were collared, and downed, and dragged to the doorway again, and hurled forth ignominiously into the passage.

The doorway was jammed with Fourth Formers, yelling with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Outside!"

"No admission for bounders!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three picked themselves up. They were very dusty and very rumped. But they did not charge again. They might as well have charged a brick wall as that crowd of grinning juniors.

"You rotters!" gasped Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You outsiders!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "You're the outsiders—we're inside."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This way, Shell!" shouted Tom Merry. "Rescue!"

"May as well shut the door," said Blake softly. "We can't waste all the afternoon talking to these Shell bounders."

The door was slammed, and a chair jammed under the lock to keep it shut, the key being missing.

"There!" gasped Blake. "Now we're all right."

"Not at all," said Kerruish. "Figgins & Co. haven't arrived."

"Oh, those New House bounders. Can't be helped. Enough of us to hold the meeting, anyway," said Blake. "Gentlemen, the meeting is now open."

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen—"

Crash!

It was a thundering attack upon the door. But the chair/ack jammed under the lock kept it fast, and the Shell fellows pushed and thumped in vain.

CHAPTER 2.

Fortunate for Figgins & Co.!

THERE were a dozen Shell fellows in the passage now with Tom Merry. They were all hammering at the door, or shouting through the keyhole. They didn't want to come into the Common-room particularly. But, of course, they were not going to be excluded from the Common-room because of a lot of Fourth Form kids being there.

They were determined to get in, simply because Blake & Co. were determined to keep them out.

"The cheek!" exclaimed Harry Noble, better known as Kangaroo. "The cheek—to hold a Form meeting in the Common-room!"

"And without asking permission of the Shell!" exclaimed Bernard Glyn.

"Too bad!"

"Oh, it can't be allowed!" said Clifton Dane. "We shall have the bounders thinking they're on a level with the Shell next."

"Shouldn't wonder, by Jove!"

"Blake! Open this door!"

"Rats!"

"We're coming in!"

"You'll have to get through the keyhole, then."

And a roar of laughter from the Common-room followed that reply.

Tom Merry breathed hard.

"The bounders!" he exclaimed. "Hallo! Who's that? Another Fourth Form bouncer going to the meeting, I suppose."

It was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the Outsider of St. Jim's, as he was called. He looked in surprise at the mass of Shell fellows in the passage.

"What's the row?" he demanded. "I hear there's a Form meeting in here, and I'm going to attend."

"Well, you can't!"

"I guess I can."

"No Fourth Form bounders allowed to pass," said Kangaroo.

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry. "We'll let him in, and we'll go in at the same time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!"

"You can go in, Lumley!"

"I guess I won't, then," said the Outsider coolly.

"You jolly well will!" exclaimed Lowther, collaring the Outsider and swinging him towards the door of the Common-room. "Hallo, in there! Here's Lumley come to the meeting."

"Lumley can go and eat coke," came back Blake's voice through the keyhole.

"Open the door!"

"Rats!"

"You can't work it," said Jerrold Lumley coolly. "Let me go!"

"Oh, buzz off!"

The Outsider shrugged his shoulders and walked away. He didn't want to attend the Form meeting. Lumley was a curious mixture of bad and good. A short while ago he had given up the habits that had earned him his nickname, and he had gone up in the estimation of his Form-fellows. But of late he had broken out into his old habits again.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had had a curious boyhood, and the fellow who had roughed it in the Bowery of New York, and had seen the seamiest side of London and Paris before he had reached the age of fifteen, regarded life in a junior form at St. Jim's as decidedly slow.

He preferred gambling and smoking to football, and he made no secret of his preference.

With the result that he was, as he was called, an outsider, and disliked by the decent fellows of St. Jim's.

In calling a meeting of the Fourth, Jack Blake had not given a thought to the Outsider, and certainly he was not likely to be missed from the meeting.

As he walked away, the Shell fellows recommenced their attack on the door; but the chair held it fast, and two or three fellows had their feet against it inside as well.

"Hold on!" said Monty Lowther suddenly. "No good making a row and getting the prefects here. And hammering doesn't do any good, anyway."

"Quite right."

"Yes; chuck it!" said Tom Merry. "By George! Figgins!"

Three youths came down the passage. They did not belong to the School House, and really had no right there. They were Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of the New House—members of the Fourth Form.

"New House bounders!" exclaimed Clifton Dane. "Shut them out!"

"Pax!" exclaimed Figgins, holding up his hand.

"That's all very well—"

"Of course it is," agreed Figgins, "so shut up. We haven't come here for a row. We were told there was a meeting of the Fourth Form—"

"And so we've come to attend it," said Kerr.

"Just so," agreed Fatty Wynn. "I suppose it's a feed. I didn't have very much for dinner—only the usual school

dinner, you know, and a pork pie in the study, and a cake in the tuckshop, and some tarts and a dozen buns, and some milk chocolate, and so I shall be able to pile in, you know. Where's the feed?"

"There isn't any feed that I know of," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"I told you there wasn't, Fatty," said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"Oh, rot!" he exclaimed. "Blake's message said we were to come here for a very important matter. What could that mean, then?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther. "Nothing's important to Fatty except a feed!"

"Well, you see, I get jolly hungry at this time of the year, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Form meeting's in there, and they're keeping us out," said Tom Merry. "You fellows can go in, if you like."

Figgins & Co. walked through the hostile ranks of the Shell. Figgins tapped at the door of the Common-room.

"Here we are, Blake; let us in."

"That you, Figgins?"

"Yes; and Kerr and Wynn!"

"Those Shell bounders still there?"

"Yes."

"Then you can't come in!"

"Oh rats!" said Figgins warmly. "We've come to attend the Form meeting. We've got to come in."

"Sorry, but—"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy! We're sowwy, but—"

"You see—"

"You are intewwuptin' me, Blake!"

"Ring off, then. You see, Figgys—"

"Open this blessed door!" said Figgins. "We'll keep the Shell back!"

The Shell fellows laughed. There were more than twenty of them crammed into the passage by this time, and the offer of three New House Fourth Formers to keep them back was a little comic.

Figgins kicked at the door.

"Open this, Blake!"

"You see—"

"Yaas, wathah! You see—"

"We'll kick till you do, then!"

Crash, crash, crash!

There was an angry shout from the end of the passage, and the red and excited face of Knox, the prefect, appeared in view. Knox was the worst-tempered fellow in the School House, and his position as prefect gave him opportunities for giving play to his bad temper, of which he was by no means slow to take advantage.

"Will you stop that row?" he roared.

"Hold on!" muttered Figgins.

He bent and spoke through the keyhole.

"Open! Quick, Blake! It's all right now!"

"Right-ho!" said Blake.

The door swung open. The three Fourth Formers walked coolly in. The appearance of Knox was fortunate for Figgins & Co. The Shell would have dearly liked to make a rush; but there was Knox at the end of the passage, slanging them for all he was worth, and the most reckless junior there did not feel equal to a conflict under the very eyes of a prefect.

Jack Blake closed the door quickly behind Figgins & Co., and the chair was jammed into position again under the lock.

Knox stood in the passage for a good two minutes and talked to the juniors. The Shell fellows listened meekly. They preferred Knox blowing off steam in this way, as Lowther put it, to his reporting them to the Housemaster.

The prefect finally departed, with threats of what he would do if there was so much as a whisper in the passage again that afternoon, and the Shell fellows looked at one another.

"All up!" said Monty Lowther laconically.

Tom Merry growled.

"I suppose so," he said. "The cheeky young beggars!"

He knelt to the keyhole, and spoke through it to the Fourth Formers within. "I say, you young bounders, we'll make you sit up for your cheek another time."

To which there came a monosyllabic reply, in the unmistakable tones of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy:

"Wats!"

CHAPTER 3.

Hear, Hear!

Figgins indulged in a chuckle as footsteps died away in the passage. Kerr was grinning, too; but there was a serious expression upon the face of Fatty Wynn. He was looking round the Junior Common-room, but there was no sign of a feed to be seen.

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"That was rather neat," Figgins remarked. "Knox is a first-class, gilt-edged, double-action, non-skidding beast, but he has his uses, hasn't he?"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"I say—" began Fatty Wynn.

"It's all right now," said Blake. "We shan't be interrupted any more."

"And it's half an hour before afternoon school," said Digby.

"Plenty of time for the meeting—"

"But you said in your note it was an important matter," said Fatty Wynn, looking rather blank.

"So it is."

"But—but where's the feed?"

"The feed!"

"Yes. I supposed, of course—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I didn't have much dinner; only—"

"There's no feed," said Blake, with a grin. "It's a Form meeting—"

"Well, there's no objection to that, of course; only I don't see why there shouldn't be some refreshments."

"Weally, Wynn—"

"We adjourn to the tuckshop for refreshments afterwards," said Blake.

Fatty Wynn brightened up.

"I suppose the meeting won't take long?" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you see, I get jolly hungry in this autumn weather. I suppose there's going to be something pretty decent in the tuckshop?"

"Every chap will be at liberty to order anything he likes," said Blake.

"Oh, good!"

"And as much of it as he chooses," went on Blake.

"That's all right."

"In fact, any chap can have the whole blessed stock of the tuckshop, if he chooses," said Blake liberally, "provided—"

"Oh, that's all right!"

"Provided he can pay for it!"

"Eh?"

"There's simply no limit to the feed, except the amount of cash you have in your pocket," Blake explained.

Fatty Wynn gave him a freezing look as the juniors burst into a roar. The expression on Fatty Wynn's face was worth more than a feed.

"You utter ass!" said Fatty Wynn.

"And now we'll proceed to hisney," said Blake. "I've called this meeting to discuss a matter of the most overwhelming importance—nothing else than the condition of football matters at St. Jim's and the proper position of the Fourth Form in this college."

"Well, that's a big order," said Figgins.

"Go on, Blake."

"Buck up, deah boy! If you pwofer it, I will explain the mattah, as pewwies I could put it more clearly—"

"Cheese it, Gussy!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"This is how the matter stands," said Blake, mounting upon a cane chair and balancing himself there with some difficulty, for the chairs were not of the strongest.

"Is it?" said Figgins, in surprise. "On a chair?"

"Ass!"

"Well, I only go by what you said—"

"The matter stands like this," said Blake, unheeding. "The Fourth Form have proved themselves to be better footballers than the Shell."

"Hear, hear!"

The reply was unanimous. New House might quarrel with School House about many things, but all the members of the Fourth Form of either Houses were certain to agree upon that point.

"Well," said Blake, "you all know that the junior team is composed of Shell and Fourth. The captain is in the Shell—Tom Merry."

"Good old Merry!"

"Asses! Fatheads!"

"Why, what's the matter with Tom Merry?" asked Figgins, in surprise. "Of course, he's a Shell bounder, but—"

"I think the captainship of the Junior Eleven ought to be in the Fourth, not in the Shell."

"Hear, hear!"

"I'm not suggesting myself as captain—"

"I should jolly well think not!" agreed Figgins.

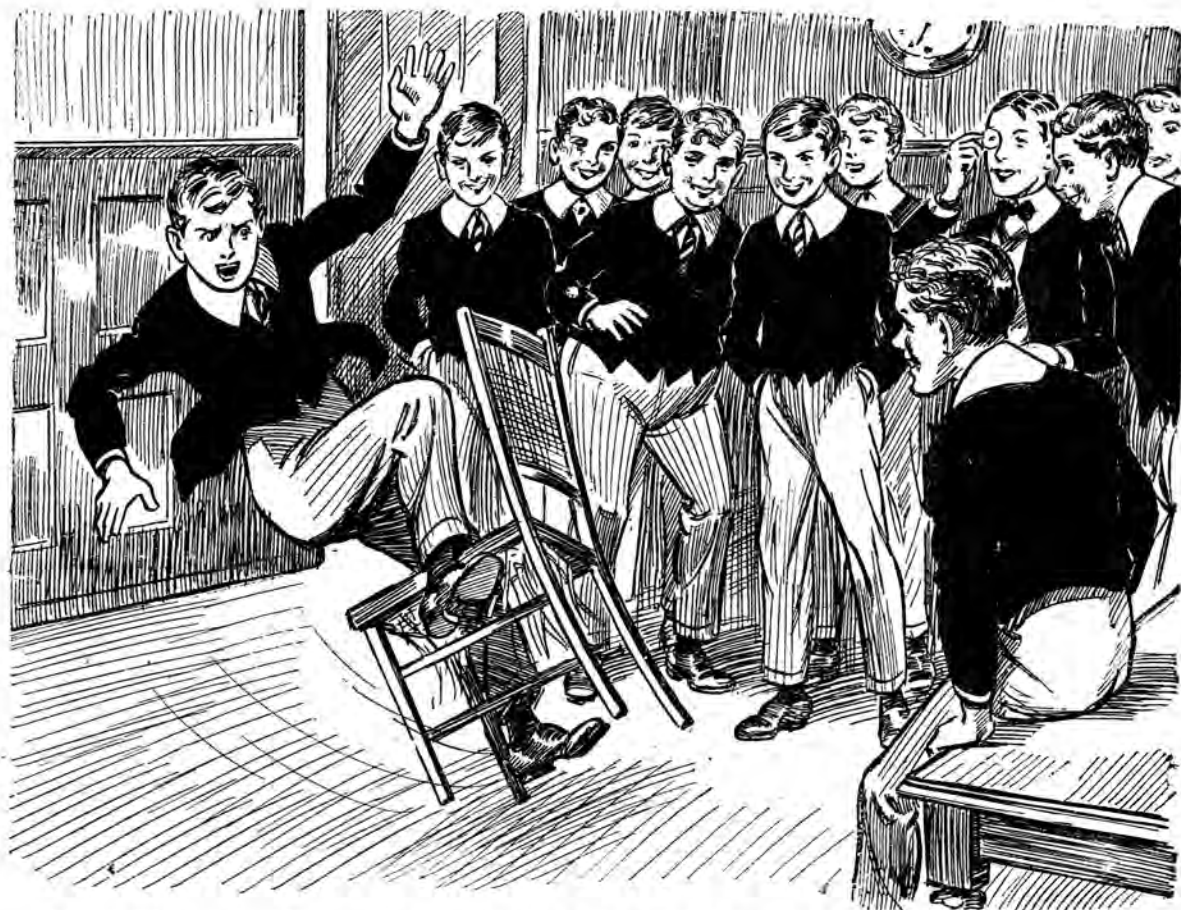
Considering that Figgins was really agreeing with him, Blake did not look at all gratified.

"I say, I don't suggest myself as captain—" he began again.

"Oh, that's settled, of course!" said Figgins.

"I don't suggest myself—"

"Yes; we've heard that."



"Cheese it!" exclaimed Blake, and he stamped his foot on the chair for silence. But the stamp was a little too much for the chair! His foot went through the cane seat, and he gave a wild yell as he fell over. "Oh! Help! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" the other juniors roared.

"As captain," continued Blake. "But I don't see whom else the Fourth Form could choose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake, they might choose me, you know."

"Duffers are barred, of course!"

"Weally—"

"Blake's right," said Figgins. "Gussy's barred under that disqualification. But, of course, it will be admitted by most of the fellows here that the junior captain ought to belong to the New House."

Applause from the New House juniors and a roar of denial and scorn from the School House.

"Oh, listen to reason!" said Kerr. "Of course—"

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Cheese it!"

Blake stamped his foot angrily for silence. The stamp was a little too much for the chair he was standing upon. It gave way.

Blake's foot went through the cane seat, and he tumbled over. With a wild yell he rolled over, chair and all.

"Oh! Help! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow!"

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as wathah funnay, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake staggered up, with the chair still clinging round his leg. Herries and Digby lent him helping hands.

The juniors were roaring with laughter, as Jack Blake turned a crimson and excited face upon them.

"You utter asses!" he cried.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who pushed that chair over?" roared Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha! Nobody," chuckled Figgins. "You did it yourself. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You grinning chumps—"

Blake rubbed his leg as he dragged it out of the ruined cane chair. He was feeling very much shaken up. The mishap had nipped the beginning House row in the bud. Blake limped as he kicked the chair away.

"Look here, you duffers!" he exclaimed. "Don't jaw! I'm hurt. I'm going to get some embrocation! Look here! Are we going to have the junior football captain in the Fourth, or are we not?"

"We are!"

"Hear, hear!"

"That's settled, then!"

And Blake limped out of the Common-room, and the meeting broke up.

Ten minutes later a notice, drawn up by the Fourth Form football committee in Study No. 6, was pinned up on the notice-board in the Hall.

CHAPTER 4.

Tom Merry's Challenge!

"I GUESS that's slick."

It was the voice of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, with its nasal twang, picked up by the Outsider in his days in New York.

The Terrible Three stopped as they heard it. Lumley-Lumley was standing before the notice-board in the Hall, and grinning as he read the notice.

There were a good many fellows there at the same time, all reading, and all grinning.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry, as he paused. "There's a new notice up, you chaps. Something to do with the Shell, perhaps."

"Let's look. Something up against somebody, I suppose, or that cad wouldn't be cackling over it."

The chums of the Shell joined the crowd before the board. Among the other papers pinned up there was a new paper in Blake's handwriting. That was the notice that was attracting so much attention.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "The cheek of it!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I guess it means business," said Lumley-Lumley.

The chums of the Shell, without taking any notice of the

Outsider, read the paper through. It was short, if not sweet:

"NOTICE TO THE SHELL FORM AT ST. JIM'S!

"It having been proved that the Fourth Form are at the top in respect of football—

"And the Form, in a solemn meeting, having decided that the Shell are not much good on the football field, anyway—

"And whereas, under the said circumstances, above and aforesaid, the Fourth Form consider the honour of St. Jim's juniors, as a football team, to be in jeopardy—

"The Fourth Form desire hereby to make it known by these presents that they have decided to play a team in future without any Shellfish in it.

"And hereby and thusly give notice in due form that the captaincy of the Junior Eleven will henceforward and hereinafter be vested in the Fourth Form, to the exclusion of Shell bounders.

"And any of the above-mentioned Shell bounders who feel at all aggrieved by these presents are at liberty to signify the same in the usual way, either with or without gloves.

"(Signed)

J. BLAKE.
A. D'ARCY.
ARTHUR DIGBY.
GEORGE HERRIES.
G. FIGGINS.
F. KERR.
L. WYNN."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Of all the cheek!" he repeated.

"So that's what the meeting was about?" Monty Lowther remarked.

"Cheek!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Faith, and we mean business entirely!" said Reilly of the Fourth. "No Shellfish wanted in the Junior Eleven."

"Rats! Come on, you chaps!" said Tom Merry.

The Terrible Three made their way at once to Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage. There was a sound of busy voices there, and as Tom Merry kicked open the door

he saw the leaders of the Fourth in the New House were in Blake's study along with Blake and his chums.

They all looked round and grinned at the sight of the Terrible Three. They had evidently been discussing the matter.

"You're in good time," said Blake affably.

"Yaas, wathah! You can give us your advice, deah boys, on a wathah knotty point."

"You see," Blake proceeded, "Figgins can't understand that the new captain of the Junior Eleven ought to be a School House chap. He's got a wild idea in his head that a New House chap is good enough, which, of course, is—"

"Rot!" said Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We want to settle it peaceably, if we can," Blake went on. "Now, what's your opinion on the subject, Tom Merry?"

"I think you're a set of cheeky asses!" exclaimed Tom Merry wrathfully. "What do you mean by that rotten notice on the board downstairs?"

"What it says."

"Do you call that playing the game—wanting to sack your skipper? I never heard of such a thing."

"Well, everything has to have a beginning," Blake said philosophically. "You see, we're acting from a sense of duty towards St. Jim's. We feel that the Fourth Form will represent better than the Shell the—the best interests of the college."

"Hear, hear!"

"Now, look here, Blake! Don't you work off on me fag-ends of the Head's last-day-of-term's speech!" said Tom Merry excitedly. "You've got to stop this rot. If you've any complaint to make, make it in committee in the proper manner."

"We don't complain."

"Wathah not?"

"Certainly not!" said Figgins. "We merely want to make it understood that we feel that the Fourth ought to take the lead, and we naturally expect that you fellows will gracefully submit, and—and—"

"And bow to the force of reason," said D'Arcy.

"Exactly!"

"You asses! Look here! You know you haven't a leg to stand on; and if we had an election of junior captain, I should poll all the votes," said Tom Merry. "Likewise, I'm not going to have this division between the Forms. The Junior Eleven will have to play both Shell and Fourth, if it is to be strong enough to meet other schools."

Blake nodded.

"No objection to that. We'll play Shell fellows under Fourth Form captaincy—see?"

Tom Merry snorted.

"I'll tell you what," he said. "We'll meet the Fourth in a Form match, if you like—Shell against Fourth—and if you beat us I'll resign the captaincy, and propose a Fourth Form fellow as my successor."

"Bai Jove!"

Blake and Figgins exchanged glances.

"Well, that's fair enough," said Blake.

"Quite fair," assented Figgins.

"Fair as can be," said Herries. "I think it's a jolly good offer, and we ought to take it. We shall walk all over them, of course."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"You're welcome to do all the walking over you can, and we'll stake the captaincy of the junior team—for this season, at least—on the result of the match," he said. "Is it settled?"

"Good! We'll play you!"

"We were going to have a House match on Saturday," said Tom Merry. "We'll have a Form match instead—Shell against Fourth."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The Terrible Three left the study, with that important matter settled. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley met them in the passage.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" he asked.

"You can ask Blake," said Tom Merry, passing on.

The Outsider cast a very ugly look after him, and then went on to Jack Blake's study.

**CHAPTER 5.
The Outsider's Offer!**

"I WEGARD it as a wippin' plan!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was laying down the law to that effect when Jerrold Lumley-Lumley paused at the door of Study No. 6.

The Outsider listened.

"Of course it is," said Figgins. "It's ripping. We shall beat the Shell, of course!"

"What-ho!"

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"I don't see how they can stand against us," Blake remarked. "We're the top footballers of the Lower School."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The only question is, who's to be leader?" said Figgins thoughtfully. "I suppose in the important case of a Form match like this, you fellows will admit that a New House chap ought to take the lead?"

"Wats!"

"And many of 'em!"

"Now, look here—"

"Bosh!"

"You School House asses—"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley entered the study. Both School House and New House fellows united in glaring at the intruder.

"What do you want?" was Blake's question.

"No good saying I want politeness, I guess," Lumley-Lumley remarked coolly.

Blake coloured.

"Well, as far as that goes, you're not entitled to it," he exclaimed. "You know we're not on good terms now. What do you come here for?"

"About the Form match."

"What do you know about that?"

"I've just met Tom Merry," said Jerrold, not thinking it necessary to mention that he had paused to listen at the door of Study No. 6. "You're playing the Shell, in a Form match, and—"

"And if the Fourth win Tom Merry resigns the captaincy to a Fourth Former," said Blake. "I don't see that it matters to you. You don't play."

"I guess I can play."

"Yaas, as a mattah of justice, I must remark that I have seen Lumley at pwactice, deah boys, and he has picked up amazingly."

Blake shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose you don't suggest playing him in the Form team, Gussy?"

"Wathah not!" said the swell of St. Jim's promptly.

"I guess that's what I want," said Lumley.

"You'd better guess again, then," said Blake. "You've guessed right off the mark this time."

"Look here!" said Jerrold Lumley. "If you play me, it's a dead cert that the Fourth Form will pull off the match."

"Ha, ha, ha! Modesty, thy name is Lumley."

"I guess it's about correct. I don't think you fellows have ever heard me brag of what I couldn't do."

"No, I'll do you that justice," said Figgins. "But at the same time, you're only a very passable footballer, and you're talking out of your hat now."

"What will you bet on it?"

"Bet?"

"I guess that's the word."

"I don't bet!" said Figgins indignantly. "And you'd better not, either, unless you want to be sacked from the school."

The millionaire's son drew a leather pocket-book from his jacket. He opened it, and drew out a wad of rustling banknotes. He counted out five of them upon the study table, the Fourth Formers watching him in amazement.

"There's twenty-five pounds there, I guess," said Lumley.

"I lay that against sixpence that we pull off the Form match if you play me, you to hold the stakes," said Jerrold Lumley.

The chums stared.

They knew of the habits of Lumley-Lumley. They knew that he smoked, that he drank, that he betted recklessly. They knew he was allowed almost unlimited pocket-money by his father, the canned meat millionaire. But this was a surprise to them. They knew, too, that Lumley generally knew what he was talking about. Among the scheming sharpers at the Green Man Lumley had held his own, and more than held his own—he had "skinned" the sharpers, playing their own game upon them. In his betting he had generally won. He was cool, keen, unscrupulous; but there was no empty swank about him. What he said he could do, that he could do.

There was a long silence in the study. The juniors were so taken aback that they did not know what to say. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley broke the silence at last.

"Money talks!" he remarked tersely.

"Bai Jove!"

"Put your money away," said Blake at last. "We don't want to touch it. Put it away, and don't play the goat."

"It's a good offer, I guess."

"Put it away!"

Lumley-Lumley replaced the banknotes in his pocket-book, and the book in his pocket. Then he stood facing the juniors.

"I mean business!" he said slowly. "I dare say you wonder that I want to play in the eleven—"

"Well, you've never shown yourself anything like a sportsman before."

"Suppose I want to turn over a new leaf again?"

Blake laughed.

"You don't believe me?"

"Well, turn over the new leaf again, and we'll see," said Blake. "I suppose you don't expect us to take a yarn like that on trust?"

"But it's true."

"Rats!"

"Perhaps I'm tired of being called the Outsider," said Lumley, with a new note of earnestness in his voice. "Perhaps I'm not so black as I'm painted, Blake. Look here! I'll give you the thing straight. I'm sick of the present way things are going on. Tom Merry would give me a chance if I asked him. I ask you first, as my own Form fellows."

"Bai Jove!"

"You accuse me of rotten ways. I own up. I was brought up differently from you chaps, and things don't seem the same to me. But, look here! Once I'm in the Form Eleven, and treated decently all round, I throw cards and drink and cigarettes overboard again for good. I can play. I can win for the Fourth. Let me try!"

"Bai Jove! As a mattah of fact, deah boys, I wathah think we ought to give him a chance," said D'Arcy. "You wemembah he swam for the doctor when the distrikt was flooded and the Head was ill. Lumley wisked his life, and a fellow who would do that can't be all bad."

NOT SO CLEVER!



Mike: "Begorra, Pat, I was too clever for that customer. He tried to pass a bad half-crown on me."

Pat: "And you gave it back to him?"

Mike: "Yes, I mixed it up with the pennies in his change!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to "A Reader."

18, Garden Road Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Jack Blake nodded.

"Yes, I know about that," he said.

Lumley sneered.

"Oh, for goodness' sake let that rest!" he exclaimed. "I've been complimented by the doctor and the Head, and bothered by Lathom and Railton about it. Chuck it! That's got nothing to do with footer!"

"It has!" said Blake. "It shows you've got a good point. What do you New House chaps say? Are you agreeable to giving him a chance in the team?"

"Oh, I don't care!" said Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let's try him in practice, and see how he turns out," said Kerr, the canny and cautious. "I don't know what he means by saying that if he plays Tom Merry is certain to be licked. How do you make that out, Lumley?"

"Are you such a dark horse that you're going to surprise the whole coll all of a sudden with your wonderful powers as a footballer?" asked Blake.

Lumley gave a shrug of the shoulders.

"Never mind that," he said. "If you play me, I'll answer for it that the Shell lose, and I'll stake anything you like on it."

"Bai Jove!"

"You won't stake anything on it with us," said Blake. "and if you stake anything at all with anybody, you won't play."

"We don't want gamblers in the Fourth Form Eleven."

"I'll agree to anything you like," said Jerrold Lumley, with unusual submissiveness.

"That sounds like business," said Figgins. "Let him join in the first practice, anyway, and we'll see. That's my opinion."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, I'm agreeable," said Blake.

And so it was settled.

CHAPTER 6.

Who Shall Be Captain?

THE idea of a Form match to decide whether the captaincy of the Junior Eleven should belong to the Fourth Form or the Shell, caught on at once.

Both Forms quite satisfied, because both felt quite certain of winning the match. Tom Merry hadn't

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the slightest doubt that a Shell team would knock the Fourth Form kids into a cocked hat; and Blake and Figgins gleefully told one another that they were going to do for the Shell this time. Both parties looked forward eagerly to Saturday, when the match was to take place.

Whether Blake or Figgins was to captain the Fourth Form team remained an open question for some time.

They joined cordially in the footer practice, and argued out the question of captaincy at the top of their voices; but, as Kerr remarked, it was necessary to come to some decision, and Blake at last proposed to put it to the vote.

But at this the New House juniors demurred.

The School House was a much larger establishment than the New House, and about two-thirds of the Fourth Form belonged to it.

As they were certain to vote according to the House they belonged to, Blake was sure of a substantial majority in advance.

Kerr, on the other hand, suggested tossing up for it.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy shook his head seriously at the proposition.

"It is wathah like gamblin,' you know," he remarked. "I don't like anythin' that savahs of gamblin,' deah boys." To which Kerr promptly rejoined:

"Ass!"

D'Arcy jammed his monocle in his eye, and gave the Scots junior a disdainful survey from head to foot, and then from foot to head again.

"Weally, Kerr—" he began.

"We toss for choice of goals in a footer match, ass," went on Kerr.

"Yaas, that's so, but—"

"And for innings in a cricket match—"

"Yaas, but—"

"But rats! You're talking bosh!"

"I wufese to have my wemarks chawactewised as bosh, Kerr. Tossing up a penny savahs of the wascally conduct of that boundah Lumley-Lumley."

"Eh?" said a voice at D'Arcy's elbow. "What's that?" The swell of St. Jim's looked round and saw the Outsider.

He was not at all disturbed.

"I wemarked that tossin' up coins savahs of your wotten twicks," he said. "I don't like the ideah!"

"I guess—"

"Pway don't intewwupt, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, with a wave of the hand. "I'm thinkin' this out—"

"Got any other method to suggest?" demanded Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, go ahead!" said Jack Blake crisply. "If you can make any suggestion, we're willing to hear it, but I expect it's only rot!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Come to the point."

"I'm coming to it as fast as I can. I think that undah the cires, we—that is to say, you—ought to select some chap of supewiah bwain powah, and give the mattah to him to decide."

"Something in that," said Digby. "Suppose we ask Kildare to decide—Kildare or Darrell."

"Good!" said Figgins.

"That was not exactly what I meant," said D'Arcy. "I don't see why we should twouble the Sixth with our personal affaihs."

"Whom do you suggest, then?"

"There's Lefevre of the Fifth," remarked Kerr. "Suppose we put it to him."

"No need to bothah the Fifth, deah boys!"

"I suppose we can't go and get an umpire from the Third or the Second," said Blake tartly. "Are you suggesting young Wally, for instance?"

"Pway don't be an ass, Blake!"

"Well, whom do you name?" asked Figgins.

"Supposin' there were in the Fourth Form a fellow of unusual tact and judgment—and what you wequiah for this mattah is a fellow of tact and judgment—"

"Well, who's the chap?"

"He's standin' before you at the pwesent moment, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

But Blake apparently did not understand. He looked at all the fellows who were standing near him in turn, with a perplexed look.

"Do you mean Lumley-Lumley, Gussy?"

"Certainly not!"

"Herries, then? Herries knows all about bulldogs, but

I don't see that he's any special good for selecting a footer captain."

"I don't mean Hewwies."

"Oh, Digby, then! But—"

"Not Digby!"

"Well, I'm surprised at you selecting a New House chap to be the judge in this matter. I suppose you mean Kerr."

"I don't mean Kerr," said D'Arcy freezingly.

"Then it's you, Fatty!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Is it Reilly, then?"

"It is not Weilly."

"Then who the dickens is it?"

"I believe you are wottin,' you wottah. You know perfectly well that I was alludin' to myself all the time!" said Arthur Augustus loftily.

"Yourself!" ejaculated Blake, with an expression of great astonishment.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But you said a fellow of superior brain power."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"And a fellow of tact and judgment," went on Blake.

"You couldn't expect me to guess that you meant yourself, from a description like that, now could you?"

"I wufese to considah this widiculous discush," said D'Arcy with dignity. "I will umpire in the mattah, if you choose, but otherwise—"

"And what would you decide?" said Figgins.

"Yes, let's hear the oracle, anyway," Blake assented.

"I should not appoint Blake," said D'Arcy. "I considah that there are othah fellows in the School House—one othah fellow, at least—more fitted for the post of captain."

"Good!" said Figgins. "You'd decide for me. I say, Blake, we may as well leave it to Gussy, for all I can see."

"I should not decide for you, Figgy."

"What?"

"I should decide against you."

"Oh, Gussy's no good," said Figgins. "We're wasting time."

"I should not appoint eithah of you," said D'Arcy. "I would suggest you both wetiwin' in favour of a bettah man—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Gussy again!"

"Well, undah the cires—"

"Oh, Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway heah me, deah boys—"

But that was just what the dear boys declined to do. They walked away in a body, leaving Arthur Augustus to explain and expound his claims to the desert air.

Kildare had just come in sight, and D'Arcy's idea of selecting an umpire to decide the matter had found favour, though the juniors had no idea of selecting D'Arcy himself to make the momentous decision.

"Let's ask Kildare," said Blake.

Figgins nodded assent.

"I'm quite willing."

And the juniors stopped the captain of the school. Kildare looked at them inquiringly. The captain of St. Jim's was a School House fellow himself, but all of them had a complete faith in his fairness.

"Well, what do you youngsters want?" he asked.

"We want you to umpire—"

Kildare laughed.

"What do you mean? Are you playing a belated cricket match?"

"No," said Blake, laughing. "We're playing the Shell at footer, and Figgy can't decide that a School House chap ought to captain the Fourth. We want you to umpire on the point, and decide between Figgins and me."

"Rather a difficult task," said Kildare with a smile. "I should recommend talking it over."

"Oh, we've done that!" said Blake. "But you know what these New House chaps are! There's no getting them to listen to reason!"

"No driving sense into the heads of these School House kids, you know, Kildare," said Figgins. "You live with 'em, so you ought to know what it's like."

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Look here, Blake—"

"Why not toss up for it?" said Kildare, interposing as the rival Fourth Formers faced each other wrathfully.

"Well, that was what Kerr suggested," said Blake. "But Gussy thought it savoured of gambling. Of course, Gussy is an ass!"

"It's the same as tossing up for choice of goals," said

Kildare. "The matter must be decided some way, and that way's as good as any other. Toss up a penny—heads Blake, and tails Figgins."

And Kildare walked away.

"Well, that's good enough," said Blake. "We'll get some disinterested chap to toss up the penny. Here, young Wally."

D'Arcy minor of the Third stopped as Blake called him.

"Hallo, cocky!" he said.

Blake swallowed his wrath at being thus familiarly addressed by a fag of the Third.

"We want you to toss up a penny to decide a point," he said.

"Right-ho!"

"Here you are!"

Blake handed Wally a penny.

The fag tossed it up and hid it in the palm of his hand.

"Heads Blake," said Kerr. "Tails Figgins. Show it up, Wally."

CHAPTER 7.

A Fright for Mellish

MELLISH of the Fourth looked at the list posted on the notice-board and whistled.

Jack Blake, the newly appointed captain of the Fourth Form Eleven, had put up a list of players, and it had been read down with a great deal of interest by the juniors.

The Terrible Three were interested, too, and they had read the list at once, to know whom they were to meet on Saturday afternoon.

The list ran as follows: Wynn, Figgins, Kerr, Herries, Digby, Pratt, Blake, Kernish, D'Arcy, Reilly, Lumley.

Tom Merry whistled just as Mellish did. The last name in the list surprised him.

"So they're playing the Outsider," he remarked.

"Looks like it," said Lowther. "I know he's been taking up footer, and I hear he's coming on very well. Blessed



"Here's good health and good fellowship!" said Lumley, as Tom Merry & Co. raised their glasses. But before they could drink the lemonade, Mellish sprang forward, his face white and excited. "Don't drink!" he exclaimed. "Lumley's put something in the lemonade!"

Wally disclosed the coin.

"Heads!" shouted Blake in delight.

And heads it was.

Figgins grunted.

"All right!" he said. "You've got it. Cut off, young Wally—you young ass!"

"I suppose I keep the penny?" Wally suggested. "I believe that's usual in such cases."

Blake laughed.

"Yes, you can keep it, kid," he said. "Now then, you chaps, footer practice immediately after lessons, you know. We're going to beat the Shell."

"Well, it doesn't take you long to shake down, anyway," said Figgins.

"There are some chaps who are born to command," said Blake loftily.

And ten minutes later all the Fourth Form knew that Blake was captaining the Form team in the match with the Shell; and a little later it was announced definitely that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was included in the eleven.

if I should care to play him, though, if I were captaining a team."

"Same here," said Manners emphatically. "But I suppose it's Blake's bisney, and he can do as he likes. I hear Blake's captain."

Tom Merry nodded.

"He would be better without Lumley," he said. "But as you say, it's his own business."

And the Terrible Three walked away, discussing the coming match.

Mellish glanced after them with a curious look in his eyes, and then read the notice-board again. There was Lumley's name as plain as Blake's big sprawling hand could make it. There was no mistake about it.

"Well, my hat!" was all Mellish could say.

Mellish, the cad of the Fourth, was Lumley-Lumley's study mate and chum—as near as he could be a chum to anybody. He was not chummy by nature. But the two had many tastes in common; and Lumley's wealth led

Mellish to toady to him, when other fellows did not care to speak to the Outsider.

This new departure of Lumley's was a surprise to Mellish, and not a pleasant surprise. For if Lumley-Lumley intended to take up this sort of thing, it was pretty clear that Mellish's friendship would not be of much use to him any longer.

Mellish walked away in quest of Lumley. He ascended to the Fourth Form passage, and glanced into the study they shared.

For a moment he thought the study was empty.

"Not here, Lumley!" he called out.

There was no reply, and Mellish was about to quit the study when he paused. The big armchair—an expensive purchase of Lumley-Lumley—was drawn before the fire-grate, and the back of it was towards the door. It struck Mellish that someone was sitting in that chair, although he could not see him.

He stepped quickly towards it.

"Lumley!"

There was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, sitting in the chair, his hands lying idly beside him, his feet on the fender, his eyes fastened in a fixed stare on the fire.

Mellish knitted his brows. Lumley-Lumley was in the habit of treating him with unconcerned contempt, but at every new instance of the Outsider's insolence, Mellish showed as much anger as a toady could venture to do.

"You rotter!" he snapped. "Why couldn't you speak?"

Lumley did not answer.

"You heard me call, and you are letting me go away again without a word!" said Mellish angrily.

No reply.

"My hat! He's asleep!" ejaculated Mellish.

He shook Lumley-Lumley by the shoulder.

But he did not wake.

The Outsider remained stretched in the chair, his glassy stare fixed still upon the glowing embers of the fire, his limbs inert.

Mellish felt a spasm of fear as he looked at him. This was not sleep. What was the matter with Lumley? Was he ill?

"Lumley!" cried Mellish, and his voice now was shrill and frightened. "Lumley! Wake up, old man! Wake up!"

Lumley did not stir.

Mellish glanced round the study helplessly. He was strangely frightened, and it was on his lips to shriek for help.

But a glass of water stood on the table. He seized it, and dashed the water into Jerrold Lumley's face.

The Outsider stirred and shivered.

His eyes turned upon Mellish with a cold and glassy stare that sent a shiver through the cad of the Fourth. But he was inexpressibly relieved to see Lumley move a little.

"Lumley! What's the matter with you?" Mellish gasped.

"Matter!"

"Yes. What is it?"

Lumley looked at him dazedly, and passed his hand across his brow, evidently for the moment not recollecting where he was.

"What—what is it?" he muttered. "What's happened? My face is wet! How did my face become wet?"

"I threw the water over you. You fainted or something."

"Fainted!"

"Yes. You didn't speak or move, anyway," said Mellish, his alarm subsiding as he saw that Lumley-Lumley was becoming more like his old self again every moment now. "I was a bit scared, I tell you!"

The Outsider of St. Jim's staggered to his feet. His head was swimming, and he was very pale, and he grasped at the back of the chair for support.

Mellish made a movement forward, as if to help him, but the Outsider waved him sharply and impatiently back.

"I'm all right!" he said curtly.

"Oh, very well! But—"

"Leave me alone!"

Mellish stood back. The Outsider was himself again now, and there was the old unpleasant, sneering expression upon his face. If Mellish had felt a real friendship for the Outsider, the latter would have tried it very severely.

"I'm all right, I guess!" said Jerrold, speaking a little thickly. "It's only an attack! I've had them before. I feel a little faint, that's all; but it's a rotten lie to say that I fainted! I've never fainted in my life."

"You fainted then."

"It's a lie!" said Lumley fiercely.

Mellish drew back a pace.

"Oh, have it as you like!" he said sullenly. "I don't care a rap myself; it's no business of mine whether you fainted or not! If I were you, I should see a doctor, that's all!"

"Rot!"

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"Well, I don't care! I came here to speak to you," said Mellish, changing the subject. "Your name's down—"

"Don't speak of this out of the study!" said Lumley, interrupting him with a harsh frown. "I don't want to be known as a spooney!"

Mellish made a gesture of deprecation.

"Do you feel quite better now?" he asked.

"I tell you I didn't faint!" said Lumley-Lumley doggedly. "If Blake & Co. could have seen you in that armchair, you'd have hard work to get them to believe you."

The Outsider waved his hand impatiently.

"There'll be no reason for Jack Blake & Co. to hear anything about it, if I've anything to do with it!" he said threateningly. "Why are you harping on that string?"

"Your name's in the team for the match with the Shell."

"Well? Tell me something new!"

"That is a novelty!" returned Mellish. "Does that mean that Blake is taking you up?"

The Outsider set his lips.

"So you're jealous—eh, Mellish?" he said quietly.

"I!" retorted Mellish. "Not much! You're welcome to a place in the rotten team, I assure you."

The Outsider laughed.

"I didn't mean you were jealous of me," he said. "You must be a tenderfoot, Mellish, to think you can lay over me like that! Keep your mouth shut about this, that's all!"

Mellish bit his lip. He knew only too well what Lumley-Lumley meant in the last remark.

The cad of the Lower School was deeply in debt to the Outsider.

Jerrold Lumley kicked open the door.

"Where are you going?" said Mellish.

"To an appointment with Blake & Co. on the footer field," said Lumley coolly.

The laugh that accompanied the words made Mellish wince. And with the slamming of the door, he realised that though he was alone, the Outsider knew as well as himself what his thoughts were. They were not pleasant ones!

"It can't last!" muttered Mellish. "That's one thing that's jolly certain; it can't last! There will be a row before long. Lumley's not the chap to pull with Jack Blake for a long time!"

And perhaps Mellish was right there.

CHAPTER 8.

The Practice Match!

TOM MERRY walked slowly from the Shell class-room. Afternoon lessons were just over, and everyone was talking about footer practice.

But the captain of the Shell did not join in. He was moody and thoughtful. The inclusion of the Outsider in the Fourth Form team puzzled him.

Manners and Lowther came along.

"Hallo, Tommy!" cried Manners. "Coming to help us push the leather about?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

The Shell skipper was puzzled.

He was thinking of the Outsider.

"Football, Tommy?" said Lowther persuasively.

"No," said Tom Merry. "No; I don't think I'll go down just now."

"Why? What the—?" began both of the chums at once.

"I thought of going to watch the Fourth practice," went on Tom Merry.

Manners and Lowther exchanged glances. They understood. Blake's selection had puzzled them, too.

"But, really, Tommy," said Lowther, "we ought to do a little towards discrediting Kipling's famous statement about chaps who play about goals to-day. Now, do I look like a muddled oaf?"

"No. You're a windbag, Monty! Deflate, old chap! What's the row, Tommy?" asked Manners.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Nothing at all, Manners. I merely thought I'd go and watch the Fourth practice. There's a change in the team, you know."

"Rotten!" said Lowther emphatically.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Rotten or not, I suppose we shall have to play against him," said Tom Merry. "Have either of you seen him play?"

"Shh!" said Lowther.

"Oh, ring off, Monty! What sort of an answer's that?"

"Goodish! Fairish! Baddish! Caddish!" went on Monty Lowther, with a grin.

Manners nodded to the captain of the Shell that he agreed with Lowther.

Tom Merry frowned a little.

"Anyway," he said, "I'll see for myself what Lumley's play is like. Blake's lot are turning out at five sharp. Bye-bye!"

"Oh, we'll come with you!"

"Good wheeze, Monty! The more the merrier!" said Tom Merry.

"Good!" said Lowther. "I wouldn't miss the trial match for anything!"

"Lumley's outside-right," said Manners, quoting the team-sheet.

"Outside rats!" said Lowther. "Come on!"

And, arm-in-arm, the Terrible Three went down to the junior footer field.

The practice game had just started. The game was not a full one, each side being several men short. But Tom Merry & Co. knew that Blake had done it for the express purpose of seeing how Lumley shaped.

Figgins captained one side, and Blake the other. All eyes were on the Outsider. But there was some surprise, and not a little comment, when the Terrible Three joined the spectators.

"They think they've got a soft thing on for Saturday, Blake!" whispered Lumley-Lumley.

But Jack Blake did not appear to hear. As a matter of fact, he had already seen that the Outsider needed all his wind for playing.

"Blake, deah boy, Tom Mewwy & Co. are watching."

"Yes, I know, ass! And if you were, you wouldn't have to rely on Figgy to take a pass that Lumley meant for you!"

"You don't mean to say, Blake—I'm sure, Lumley—I beg your pardon, deah—"

"On the ball!" roared Blake.

But the Terrible Three saw the sneer with which the Outsider returned D'Arcy's generous apology.

"Pig!" said Monty Lowther.

"He plays very decently, though," Manners remarked.

"And his going is very much above what I expected," said Tom Merry.

"Indeed, my sons," said Lowther. "Well, next time he comes down the wing, just listen and you'll hear a noise like someone blowing a fire."

"You don't mean to say that Lumley's puffed?"

"Yes, I do, Tom Merry, my son. I'll bet you what you like Blake goes for him about his wind when it's over," said Monty Lowther. "By Jove! That was a neat bit, though, kids!"

"It was," said Tom Merry and Manners together.

The Outsider was certainly playing up. He seemed to do just what he liked with the opposition.

"Here he comes!" said Manners. "And, my hat, he doesn't look as if he's winded now!"

By a series of clever passes, Lumley-Lumley and Reilly had got the ball to themselves. With a clear field in front, the Outsider suddenly showed a desire to keep it to himself. On he came, with the patient Reilly in attendance at inside-right. Kerruish, who had been lent to the opposition, came out to meet him.

"His right's all right," said Monty Lowther; "but he can't even dribble with his left!"

The Outsider heard Lowther's remark. Flinging a look of defiance at the chums of the Shell, he turned to dodge Kerruish.

But Monty Lowther was right. The Outsider's left foot was his undoing. Peinting, as if he were about to pass to Reilly, he clumsily kicked the ball in earnest.

The ball went farther forward than he had intended in any case, and Kerruish made no mistake. He almost snarled as the Manxman sent the leather flying into mid-field.

"Serve the greedy beggar right!" said Manners disgustedly. "Fancy, with Reilly at his side like Patience on a Monument!"

"That won't do, Lumley!" rang out Jack Blake's voice.

"What won't?" said the Outsider testily.

"Pottering about with the ball like you were doing then. It was a certain goal if you had passed to Reilly."

"Was it?" called out Fatty Wynn.

The renowned goalie of the Fourth had also been lent to the scratch team Blake was playing.

"Shut up, Fatty!" said Blake. "You mustn't keep the ball to yourself, Lumley. I don't like losing points. And, besides, it isn't the game."

"Faith, no; it's a good skipper ye are, Blake!" said Reilly.

"Get up the field! And you, too, Lumley—"

"I suppose if I want to go for a goal myself, I've a right to please myself?" said Lumley-Lumley sulkily.

"No, you haven't—you'll do what your captain tells you! Buzz off!"

Lumley-Lumley reluctantly obeyed. He had been more used to giving orders than taking them, but he was conscious that Blake was taking notes of his hard breathing, and he said no more.

(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.). Half-a-crown is awarded to the sender of every joke that appears in this column.

THE CULPRIT.

Angry Customer: "I sent my boy for eight pounds of plums and you only sent me seven pounds. I know, because I've weighed them."

Shopkeeper: "What about weighing your son?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to N. Sharples, 6, Percy Street, Lancs.

STUNG.

First Hiker: "What's the best cure for stings caused by biting insects?"

Second Hiker: "Don't bite the insects!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Openshaw, 10, Falls Grove, Gatley, Cheshire.

GOOD BUSINESS.

Sales Manager: "Well, how many orders did you get today?"

New Traveller: "Two—one to get out and the other to stay out!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Booth, Muirton Farm, Whitecarns, by Aberdeen.

THE FREE WHEEL THAT WASN'T.

Sandy entered the shop where he had recently purchased a bicycle.

"It's about the cycle, mon," he said.

"Hasn't it arrived yet?" asked the shopkeeper.

"Sure it has," said Sandy. "But where's the free wheel ye spoke about?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Scott, 26, Edmond Street, Bearpark, Durham.

THE PARTING GIFT.

The rich uncle had come on a visit and before he departed he gave Johnny a pound note.

"Now be careful with that money," he advised. "Remember the proverb, 'Fools and their money are soon parted.'"

"Yes, I know, uncle," Johnny replied. "But I want to thank you for parting with it all the same!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Neill, Oakfield, Boreham Wood, Herts.

TELLING THE AGE.

Brown: "Do you know you can tell the age of a horse by its teeth?"

Black: "Yes; and so you can a chicken's age."

Brown: "A chicken hasn't got any teeth!"

Black: "No, but we have."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Malbert, Magdalen Laver Rectory, near Ongar, Essex.

THE ONE THING HE FORGOT.

"Ere we are, sir," said the plumber. "None of your comic joke stuff about us. I've remembered my mate, I've remembered my tools, and I've come at the right time."

"Well," said the householder, "hadn't you better go to the right house now?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss R. Shaw, 35, September Street, Liverpool 6.

UNFLATTERING THOUGHTS.

The Bore: "Do you know, I am a bit of a thought reader."

The Listener: "Oh, I beg your pardon!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Waters, 43, Paisley Road, Barrhead.

"Well? Did you hear him breathing like a broken-winded cabhorse, Tommy?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Oh, I say, Monty!" said Tom Merry, keeping his eyes on the play at the other end of the field. "His breathing sounds like too much cigarette, certainly, but he plays very decently, as I said before."

To do Lumley-Lumley justice, his addition to the Fourth did not seem such a bad thing as the Terrible Three had anticipated. Except for that fault in his wind, he played up in a manner that would have drawn Tom Merry's attention at any time.

Tom Merry was a keen football skipper, and he knew that Lumley-Lumley would make a splendid forward if he stuck manfully to the game, and let smoking alone. He determined to say as much to him when he came off the field. His chief fault was selfishness in play, but after Blake's warning he was not likely to be guilty of that again—or, at all events, not so openly.

The practice ended, and the Fourth Formers came over, breathing deeply. Lumley-Lumley glanced at Tom Merry, with a slight sneer on his face.

"Well, as you've come to the show, what's your opinion of it?" he asked.

Tom Merry did not like either his tone or his manner, but he was not there to quarrel with Lumley-Lumley. He answered quietly:

"I think you play wonderfully well, considering."

The Outsider was a little taken aback. He could never understand that a fellow might be on bad terms with him and yet be a generous foe. He had expected detraction, at least, if not open jeering.

"I guess that's all right," he remarked, after a pause.

"Yes, if you want a word of advice from a fellow who's played more footer than you have, keep off the smoking," said Tom Merry.

Lumley-Lumley looked at him with a peculiar expression.

"I haven't smoked to-day," he said, "nor yesterday—nor the day before. I gave it up when I thought of entering the Form Eleven."

"That's what's the matter with your wind," said Blake. "I couldn't help noticing that you were rocky there, Lumley."

"I'm all right—sound as a bell."

"Rather too much sound," remarked Monty Lowther.

"In fact, quite a noise!"

"It will mend," said Lumley, looking at Blake without heeding the humorist of the Shell. "I shall play up all right on Saturday, you'll see."

"I hope so."

"And we'll win," said Jerrold Lumley. "The Shell are booked for a licking, I guess, and—"

He broke off short. A strange paleness swept over his face, and he caught suddenly at Tom Merry, who was nearest to him, for support.

As he grasped the Shell fellow's shoulder, Tom Merry, greatly surprised, but on the alert at once, reached out a hand to hold him. Lumley-Lumley leaned heavily upon the hero of the Shell for a moment.

"Good heavens!" cried Blake, in real alarm. "What's the matter, Lumley?"

The Outsider straightened up.

"Nothing," he said thickly through his teeth.

"But—but what—"

"I'm all right now. It was just a little faintness."

And without another word the Outsider of St. Jim's dragged his coat about him and strode away without assistance to the School House.

Blake looked after him with a very doubtful expression, and then met Tom Merry's eyes.

"Blessed if I know what to make of it," he said.

"He can't be fit."

"Wathah not, deah boys!"

"Yet he played up all right," said Blake. "Well, if he's not fit on Saturday I shall play Hancock in his place. But I hope he will be. It really looks to me as if we've been a bit hard on the chap, you know—and he's got his good points. I shall play him on Saturday if he's able to play."

"Yaas, wathah!"

CHAPTER 9. A Slight Suspicion!

JERROLD LUMLEY'S form on the football field excited a certain amount of surprise among the juniors. The contempt he had always expressed for manly sports of all kinds had not led the fellows to suppose that he would ever develop as a footballer. The fact that he had done so, and that Jack Blake was playing him in the Fourth Form team, gave the juniors something to talk about.

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Lumley's faintness after the footer practice, too, was commented upon. But when the Outsider was seen afterwards he showed no sign of that. He was as cool, collected, keen as ever, and certainly did not look as if he was ill in any way. The general impression he gave was that he would be in good form physically on the Saturday, and that he would do his Form credit in the match against the Shell.

"He's a curious beggar, that chap," Kangaroo of the Shell remarked to a group of Shell fellows, as Lumley-Lumley passed them going down to another practice. "There's a lot in him, though he's a howling outsider in most things. He has a way of doing things he's set his mind on. Now, a couple of weeks ago no one would have imagined that he would become a footballer, and now—"

"Yes, it's very odd," said Tom Merry.

"Then no one would have guessed that he'd ever get a place in the Form team for the Fourth—but he's got it."

"Yes, rather!"

"I don't like him," said Kangaroo; "but a chap must admit that there's something in him. Do you know, a lot of fellows believe that the Fourth will lick us on Saturday just because Lumley-Lumley has said so."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Rot!" said Manners.

"I know it's rot," agreed Kangaroo. "We shall lick them hands down. At the same time, I hear that Lumley-Lumley told Blake that if he were played he would guarantee that the Fourth Form would win."

"Gas!"

"And he offered to lay a big sum on it."

"Well, he knew that Blake wouldn't bet," Gore remarked.

"Perhaps that was it, but—"

"But what?" asked Tom Merry, as the Cornstalk junior paused.

"Well," said Kangaroo slowly, "Lumley-Lumley believed what he said, of course. The question is, how did he feel so certain? He may think a lot of his own play, but he can't think enough of it to feel certain that the Fourth will win just because he's in the team. He's not idiot enough for that!"

"Hardly."

"Then why does he feel so sure?"

"Give it up," said Clifton Dane. "What do you think?"

Kangaroo was silent again.

"Well," said Tom Merry, "what are you thinking of, Kangy? What are you making a blessed mystery about?"

"I hardly like to say what I'm thinking," said the Cornstalk slowly. "It looks so jolly suspicious. But—"

"Go ahead!"

"What are you suspecting?"

"It isn't possible that Lumley was thinking of foul play of any sort?" said Kangaroo slowly.

Tom Merry started.

"Foul play!"

"Yes; he was so jolly certain about winning."

"Do you mean fouling any of us on the field?"

"Oh, no, that wasn't the idea! But—well, the thought's hardly shaped in my mind at all, really, only—only how did he feel so jolly certain?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Just gas, I expect," he said. "I don't see any way he could get at us, Kangy. I suppose he couldn't have any of us spirited away before the match, eh?"

The juniors laughed.

But the Australian lad was quite serious.

"Well, if some of the best of us couldn't play the match would have to take place all the same, as there's no other date open," he said. "Then the Fourth would lick the Shell."

"But we shall all play," said Monty Lowther.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"I don't trust Lumley," said Tom Merry; "but—hang it!—I don't think any thoughts of that kind are in his head, Kangy. Not that I blame you for suspecting the bounder! He's always shown himself such an unscrupulous cad!"

"Well, we shall see."

And so the talk ended. But the juniors remembered it—and ere long, too, they had good reasons to remember it, and to admit that the Cornstalk had not been over-suspicious, after all, but had been the keenest of any of them.

The Shell were turning up to regular practice now, as well as the Fourth. Tom Merry had every confidence in his team, but he was not the kind of leader to leave anything to chance. The team was a very strong one, consisting of seven School House fellows and four from the New House. The School House fellows were the Terrible Three and Kangaroo, Glyn, Clifton Dane, and Gore. From the New House came French, Jimson, Payne, and Richards.

Tom Merry felt that that was a team that could stand up to anything the Fourth Form could muster, and win. Blake and Figgins were of a different opinion, but Saturday would

(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! Once again another great issue of that most popular book, "The Holiday Annual," is almost due. The 1935 number will be on sale next Saturday. For sixteen years the "H.A." has been a big favourite with British boys—and girls; its ripping school stories, thrilling adventure yarns, and other interesting features never failing to give the fullest entertainment to its large band of readers all over the world.

And now comes the 1935 issue, to add fresh popularity to the "H.A.'s" second-to-none reputation for providing the best and most varied budget of school and adventure yarns that five shillings can buy. All the schoolboy favourites of St. Jim's, Greyfriars and Rookwood Schools are ready again to entertain with their fun, frolic and exciting adventures, and a better programme of adventure stories could not be found in any book. Wild West, sea, sport, flying, motor-racing—all these types of yarns and others are featured in the "Holiday Annual." In addition, there are interesting articles, delightful poems, and four grand colour plates.

Tell your parents to-day that your favourite annual will be out on September 1st. Last year there was such a demand for the "H.A." that it was sold out in no time. So GEM readers would be well advised to make certain of not missing their copies by ordering in advance.

"THE BOY WHO CAME BACK!"

This is the intriguing title of the next great St. Jim's yarn, and it is the sequel to the powerful and dramatic story in

this number. Who is the boy who comes back? I can imagine most of you asking yourselves. That question I will leave to Martin Clifford to answer in next Wednesday's wonderful story. But a new boy—Ernest Levison—comes to St. Jim's and makes an amazing discovery—a discovery that is the sensation of the term! You simply mustn't miss reading all about it. This is the most gripping story Martin Clifford has ever written.

Then there are further vivid chapters from our exciting serial, "The School From 'Down Under'!"—telling of the outcome of the Australian schoolboys' amazing jape on St. Frank's. "The Weekly" and the Jester's jokes provide all the laughs of the week, and lastly, I shall have something to tell you about a super new serial that is coming along shortly.

PETER THE HIKER.

Let me introduce you to young Peter Muller, the eight-year-old boy who decided to take a "stroll" with his dog, and hiked for fifty miles. Peter wanted to see the countryside and seek adventure, so he started off from his home in North London, with his dog as companion. He turned his footsteps southward, and, leaving London behind, took the road to Maidstone. He was well into Kent when darkness came, and he was faced

PEN PALS COUPON

1-9-34



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, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

Myer Mendelson, 54, Lewis Street, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, wants pen pals in the region of the Great Lakes, also in Australia and England; Public school fellows especially; interested in GEM and "Magnet"; age 12-14.

W. Evans, 22, Macquarie Street, North Williamstown, Victoria, Australia, wants pen pals in Japan; age 10-11; interested in ships.

Miss D. Jordan, Cald, Newtown, New Mills, near Stockport, Cheshire, wants a girl correspondent in Northern India; English, photography, swimming, films; age 16-17.

Ivor Crowe, 16, Newcomen Road, Leytonstone, London, E.11, wants a correspondent in France; football, swimming, athletics.

Jack E. Baker, 11, Westwood Avenue, Eccleshill, Bradford, Yorks, wants a correspondent in Australia; age 15-16; music, photography, drawing.

Bill Skelton, 139, Eaton Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada,

with the problem of sleeping somewhere for the night. But Peter didn't mind roughing it, and a house being built by the roadside gave him shelter. On he tramped the next morning, and reached Wrotham before darkness came again. He spent the night in a shed. The following day, however, Peter had a bit of luck. A kind woman took pity on him and gave him sixpence. Peter decided to put it to the best use and save his feet, so he took a bus and arrived in West Malling. Then on he tramped again, and eventually reached Maidstone. But it was here that Peter's adventures came to an end. He was stopped by a policeman and taken to the police-station, where he was given a good tea before being restored to his anxious parents.

THE "GHOST SHIP."

The "ghost ship" of the Arctic, Jack Bowyer, of Bradford, is the Baychimo, a water-logged vessel which has been drifting among Arctic ice-floes ever since it foundered. It was abandoned by its crew about four years ago, and ever since then the Baychimo has been sighted at various times as it drifted about. It was once boarded by sailors from a fur-trading ship, who found that everything aboard was well preserved by the freezing coldness of the Arctic.

TWO HUNDRED TEETH!

Next time you feel nervous about going to the dentist's to have a tooth removed, take courage from the young lady of Kansas City who recently had two hundred teeth removed! 'Sfact! The roof of her mouth and gums were filled with minute teeth, and how they did ache! She had them all, except her normal teeth, extracted, and now she smiles again.

A MAN OF MUSCLE.

A Gloucestershire blacksmith named Price is the strong man you are thinking of, Fred Jones, of Bristol. This man of muscle could bend thick iron bars across his jaw and drive nails into wood with his fists! It is also recorded that he once defeated ten men in a tug-o-war with comparative ease!

TAILPIECE.

Captain of Village Team: "What do you think of our new colours—black and white?"

Supporter: "What's the idea? Are you in half-mourning because you lost every match last year?"

THE EDITOR.

wants a pen pal in England, Africa, France, Spain, U.S.A., and New Zealand; sports, swimming, camping.

Richard White, c/o Dooneys, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, Ireland, wants a pen pal in Australia, New Zealand, and India; stamps; age 10-12.

S. L. Carey, 3, Central Road, Half Way Tree P.O., Jamaica, West Indies, wants a correspondent interested in radio, television, electricity, and moving pictures; age 16-20.

J. Osborne, 25, Stephen Road, Barnehurst, Kent, wants a pen pal in India or Japan; age 13-14; music, books, sports.

Wilson Trewick, 40, King Street, North Invercargill, New Zealand, wants to hear from stamp collectors; age 13-17; Newfoundland, Nigeria, Gold Coast, South West Africa, and the Cook Islands.

Carlton Hales, 26, Mansfield Street, E. Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada, wants pen pals; age 15-16; theatricals, writing, motoring; France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, British Isles, New Zealand.

Members are required for the International Correspondence Club; write C. W. Simmons, 63, Vaudrey Crescent, Congleton, Cheshire.

Miss Teresita Bageie, Concepcion Arenal 1619, Montevideo, Uruguay, South America, wants girl correspondents.

Miss Maria del Carunen, Charlone, Rio Branco Street, 1392, Montevideo, Uruguay, South America, wants girl correspondents.

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A SHADOW OVER ST. JIM'S

(Continued from page 12.)

decide. If the Fourth could beat the Shell, Tom Merry was quite willing that the junior captaincy should pass from the Shell to the Fourth. If the Shell could not hold it they did not deserve to have it. But nobody in the Shell had the least expectation of a defeat—unless Kangaroo had a lingering suspicion that the cunning of Lumley-Lumley would over-reach them in some underhand way.

By Saturday morning, at all events, nothing had happened to shake the confidence of the Shell. It was a fine, bright morning, cold and clear, and the Shell fellows were feeling in the highest of spirits.

So were the Fourth, for that matter. When they came out after morning classes Jack Blake met Tom Merry in the passage, and gave him a cheerful grin.

"Getting ready for the licking?" he asked.

"We're getting ready to give it!" said Tom Merry.

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Many wats, deah boy!"

"All of you fit?" asked Blake.

"Fit as fiddles!"

"Lumley said he thought you were looking a bit pale this mornin' at brekker!"

"Stuff! I don't feel pale, anyway!"

"No, you look all wight!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, adjusting his monocle and giving Tom Merry a leisurely survey through it. "You will probably give us some little trouble before we lick you."

"Well, we'll try to!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

The juniors went to dinner in high spirits. Jerrold Lumley-Lumley glanced across from the Fourth Form table several times at Tom Merry, with a somewhat peculiar expression upon his face.

Blake followed his glance, and grinned. "Tom Merry's all right," he said.

"You were mistaken, Lumley. He's as right as rain!"

Lumley shook his head.

"He doesn't look to me quite steady!"

"Well, he does to me. By the way, how are you feeling yourself?"

Lumley's lips twitched for a moment. There was very little colour in his face, but there was grim determination in every feature.

"I'm as right as anything, I guess!"

"Good! You look a little pale yourself."

"Oh, that's nothing—I never have a high colour," said Lumley-Lumley. "I haven't been smoking, if that's what you mean. I'm as fit as a fiddle!"

Jack Blake nodded, and the subject dropped.

CHAPTER 10.

Mellish is Mysterious!

THE kick-off was timed for half-past two. But that left a good interval between dinner and the kick-off.

When the boys came out of the School House dining-room Jerrold Lumley strolled upstairs to his study. A few minutes later Mellish followed him. Mellish seemed very much interested in the movements of Lumley-Lumley of late.

Since his inclusion in the Form team Lumley had hardly spoken a word to his former cronies.

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No. 29. Vol. 1. (New Series.)



MONTY LOWTHER CALLING

Hallo, everybody!
"What are you like in goal?" demanded the football director.

"Oh, passable," said the applicant. "N.G.!" snapped the director. "We want one who isn't!" Did you hear of the Scot who gave his dog a bone on a mirror, so that the dog would think he had two? Now, who do you think perspires most at his job? Quickly, boys! The Turkish bath attendant! "Who saved India?" demanded Mr. Selby. "Clive Brook!" answered Curly Gibson. Digby tells me he made a fortune overnight—and then the rising-bell sounded! The Head's gardener informs us that many blooms come up year after year of their own accord. Self-raising flowers! When Mr. Linton caught Skimpole reading a book on "Day Dreams" in class, he interpreted them in a very painful manner. It was quite a nightmare for Skimmy! A reader inquires: Which sport is the greatest leveller? Boxing, old chap! Mellish quarrelled with Blake, and then cried off from a scrap by saying he was sickening for molesks. "O.K.," said Blake. "I can still knock spots off him!" We heard of a Cockney who, asked if he would care for a hike, said no, he didn't like fish! "The most terrible thing about the stage," said the old actor to me, "is the glare of the footlights!" Also the glare of the critics, and the glare of the producer if you don't do your stuff! "If an elephant charges at you," writes a hunter, "let him have both barrels!" He could have the whole gun as far as we are concerned! Buck Finn tells me that in America a confidence man succeeded in swindling a number of grocers out of a large sum. They must have been rather green grocers! A local landowner has diverted a stream running through his property to make electricity. Making "light" of his task! Here's Buck Finn again. What's that, Buck? Some American skyscrapers tower completely out of sight! Still, we must remember that lots of "tall stories" have no foundation whatever! Mr. Ratcliff observes that he hates sea trips. As far as he is concerned, they are "all bunk!" He must have had a "sickening" time! Well, as the chairman remarked, it's never too late to amend! "Nother reader wants to give a pal of his a timely and striking present. Make it a clock, old chap! Mr. Selby has been boasting that he has picked up a second-hand car for ten pounds. Probably one of those bargains that are hard to drive! Manners has a pile of holiday snaps this year. Tales out of spool! Oh, and I must tell you this one: "Your answer to this problem is wrong!" said Mr. Selby, to D'Arcy minor, "and you must remain behind until it is correct!" "How much am I out, sir?" asked Wally. "A penny!" snapped Selby. "Then if you don't mind, sir," said Wally, producing a penny. "I'll just pay the difference!" One more to wind up with. Wrote a lag in an essay: "Jonah was the first man to give a whale indigestion." Chin, chin!

SAINTS IN SOCCER MIX-UP — SURPRISE START TO NEW SEASON

By George Kerr

It was all my fault, though my chum Figgins insists that I wasn't to blame. It's like old Figgy to stand by a pal, but I freely admit that it really was my fault that Tom Merry and the rest of the St. Jim's junior cricket eleven were landed in rather a mess during the vac. at the ancient Scottish capital of Edinburgh.

You see, I have a cousin in Edinburgh, and hearing that I was staying with a St. Jim's party for a few days on a sight-seeing tour, he wired me suggesting a game with his club eleven. They are known as "The Spiders," and the players are drawn from various Scottish schools. Without a thought I suggested the fixture to Tom Merry, and it was arranged. Imagine our complete astonishment when on arrival we found the "Spiders" changed into footer kit and punting the ball about on a footer field! We had brought our cricket gear, expecting a cricket match! My cousin explained that football starts earlier in Scotland than in England, and their season was already in full swing. Ours, of course, doesn't begin till the new term. Merry, accepting the situation, immediately offered to play footer if the "Spiders" could lend us tackle, and this was at once forthcoming. Clad in borrowed "clobber," the Saints took the field against the famed combination of the "Spiders."

Having, of course, had no footer practice since last season, we made rather a poor start, which was unavoidable. Fatty Wynn in goal was alone the master of the situation. He dealt with several stinging shots and succeeded in holding the "Spiders" at bay until we got into our stride. And in our first attack we scored. Tom Merry received a pass from Lowther in the penalty area, and feinting past the "Spiders" right-back, he slammed the pill home ere the goalkeeper could move—one up for St. Jim's!

A veritable bombardment was the reply of the "Spiders" to this set-back, and Figgy and I, playing at back, were hard put to it to stem the avenging tide. Fatty Wynn between the sticks did yeoman service, and considering that he was out of practice, I think his display was one of the best I've ever seen. Just before half-time the "Spiders" equalised—my cousin Alec scoring with a great cross-drive which left Fatty helpless. The second venture found us in better form, and the defence was not so hard pressed. The "Spiders" included some class players, but they found a sting in the Saints attack, and after fifteen minutes Tom Merry added further to his laurels by banging the leather past the custodian to give us the lead! The "Spiders" came back at us fiercely, and showed us the short-passing game as it really should be played. Their equaliser was a work of art. Merry led a smashing attack on the "Spiders" goal by way of reprisal.

(Continued at foot of next column.)



Week Ending September 1st, 1934.

TUNE IN TO THE ST. JIM'S BACK-CHAT BOYS

Hallo, folks! Monty Lowther speaking. This is the First Meows Bulletin. Just a few "catty" remarks, to cut a long "tail" short, as the Manx cats say! Talking of cats—

BLAKE: Wait a minute. What makes you think the customers want you to talk about cats? Now, I've a lecture here, all about the beauties of the Yorkshire moors—

LOWTHER: The more we hear of the moors, the more we shall wish we were not moored to this spot—

TOM MERRY: Gentlemen, attention! I propose a toast to the Readers of the GEM!

ALL: Carried unanimously!

D'ARCY: Yaas, wathah!

MERRY: And now to tackle the business of the day. Namely, and to wit—shall we or shall we not adopt the twenty-four-hour clock at St. Jim's?

WYNN: If it means putting in twenty-four hours a day in the Form-room, I vote against it with both hands!

MERRY: The twenty-four-hour clock is intended to simplify the process of telling the time. Hitherto, you only had to be able to count up to twelve to tell the time. With the twenty-four-hour clock, you have to be able to count twice as high—

BLAKE: Does it mean any more time for footer or cricket? If not, it is an untimely innovation.

MERRY: It looks complicated, but it's really very simple. I'll just explain it in detail—it won't take more than an hour—

LOWTHER: Have any of you fellows heard the one about the Scotsman who always kept his watch slow in order to save time?

D'ARCY: I move that if Lowthah is going to make wotten jokes, we had better all move—

LOWTHER: Before you go, do you know the watch-word?

D'ARCY: Pway, what is the watch-word?

LOWTHER: Tick-tick!

SNAPSHOTS

Tom Merry wishes to thank the 153 juniors who have applied for places in the junior team. He regrets that he cannot field a St. Jim's CLUI instead of the usual XI!

Even on the footer field, says Gussy, one should be a mould of form. The trouble is that if one's opponents are in "form," one is speedily in the "mould"!

A Figgins has never missed a penalty kick. Neither has Skimpole—but Skimpole has never taken one!

and this time it was left for D'Arcy to bob up his well-groomed head and nod the weather just inside the post—a great "header," and as it turned out, the winning goal for St. Jim's!

The "Spiders" entertained us lavishly after we had changed, and paid us a handsome tribute as footballers. Considering how we had taken the match on at a moment's notice, I think we all deserved congratulation. I wasn't sorry after all that I had suggested the fixture—especially as this win was a good augury for the season about to start at St. Jim's!

MY CHANNEL SWIM

By Herbert Skimpole

My dear friends, standing on the beach during my holiday on the Kent coast, I was overcome with a desire to plunge into the sea and swim across to France.

A mere twenty-one miles—what is that? I felt sure I could do it, though I must confess I had never made any serious attempt at swimming before. My studies of Professor Balmypumpet and similar learned men have left me little time for physical achievements. But at that moment, I felt an urge to battle with the angry waves, and show that the hand of Man may conquer Nature in her wildest mood. To be precise, I do not think Nature was very wild that morning—on the contrary, in fact. However, I attired myself in a bathing costume of brilliant crimson and white, feeling that as I was going to swim the Channel, I might as well wear the St. Jim's colours while doing so, and thus bring honour to my school.

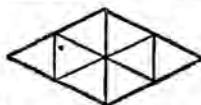
I then waded out till I stood poised on a rock, face to face with twenty-one miles of the English Channel! Then I dived. I hit the water head first, being unaware, or rather forgetful, of the fact that one should place the hands together before diving to break the water. I hit the water with a terrible splash, and the impact on my cranium almost knocked me dizzy. Nevertheless, once in the water, I struck out fiercely.

I know nothing of swimming strokes, however, and this lack of knowledge made me imbibe a great deal of sea water, some of which I swallowed, and some of which I managed to eject. Striking out, however, with my hands and kicking strongly with my legs, I felt myself moving through the water—and a feeling of triumph surged over me! I was swimming—a mere twenty-one miles, and success would be mine!

I kicked and splashed with all my strength for what seemed like hours, and then, before my eyes there rose a burst of spray, and beyond, a rock! In desperation, I made for this "land"—and scrambled ashore, gasping and exhausted! But I was not on the French coast. I had "swum" a matter of a few yards to a rock in shallow water! Alas, I am no Channel swimmer.

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER

Can you cut up the T-shape shown, and put the pieces together so as to form a perfect square? It's really quite simple, as Kerr remarked when he suggested it to me.



Solution of Last Week's Puzzle

Mellish, certainly, was not the kind of fellow any decent lad would want to chum with.

If Lumley-Lumley had made up his mind to be decent it was only natural that he should want to see as little as possible of Mellish, and only meet him when they were thrown together by the fact that they occupied the same study in the Fourth Form passage. At the same time, the Outsider might have been a little more delicate the way he dropped an old friend.

Mellish, truly, was a toady and hanger-on rather than a friend. All the same, he might have been dropped a little more politely. But Lumley-Lumley had never shown much consideration for others in any part of his career.

He had taken up with Blake and the decent set again, and was trying to get on with them. He did not want Mellish any more. He dropped him.

He did not know and did not care what a tempest of rage this roused in the cad of the Fourth.

The humiliation of being taken up or dropped at pleasure was not pleasant, but Mellish had stood that sort of thing many times. But now Lumley-Lumley no longer chummed with him a source of income was cut off. Mellish could borrow no more money of him; and it was as if the horn of plenty had suddenly run dry. Then Mellish had no other friend—nobody liked the carping, sneering, ill-natured fellow. His only study-mate had friends outside the study; and Mellish had no companionship now within it, and very little outside. Lumley regarded him openly as a sort of dog that would come and go at a nod. Mellish had toadied to Lumley, but had never liked him. Now he had nothing to gain from him, and he did not conceal his dislike—which was rapidly intensifying into a bitter hatred.

Mellish knew all about the Outsider's declaration that if he were played in the Fourth Form team the Shell would lose.

And Mellish was far more keen than other fellows when it came to smelling out evil. That which was only a vague suspicion in Kangaroo's mind was perfectly clear in Mellish's. He knew, as well as if Lumley-Lumley had told him so, that the Outsider meditated some treachery towards Merry & Co.

The question was, what form would it take? How did he intend to take measures to make the Shell lose that important match?

Mellish pondered over it, and kept his eyes on Lumley-Lumley, quite unknown to that youth. Lumley despised Mellish too much to dream of fearing him.

Mellish divined Lumley's thoughts on the subject. The Shell defeated, the captaincy of the junior team would pass to the Fourth Form—to Blake or Figgins. Lumley, then, would always be assured of a place in the junior eleven—he might even aspire to become its captain.

Only, Tom Merry & Co. had to be defeated first!

How? In a fair match they had at the very best equal chances—as a matter of fact, they had more than equal chances, as a higher and older Form.

Foul play was intended, then. Mellish knew that. Yet Saturday afternoon had come without any move on the part of the Outsider. It wanted but an hour to the match. What was Lumley-Lumley thinking of? Mellish pondered as he followed on the track of Lumley-Lumley upstairs.

There was a very spiteful look on Mellish's face.

If he could catch Lumley-Lumley in his

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treacherous scheme, whatever it was—if he could gain clear proof—then to denounce him before Tom Merry!

That was Mellish's idea—his revenge for Lumley's insolence of late. It would show the Outsider that if his friendship was not to be valued, at all events his enmity was to be feared.

Mellish grinned at the prospect. If he could only contrive it. But Lumley-Lumley seemed too deep for him.

Mellish paused outside the study door. Lumley had closed it after going in. Mellish listened, and heard the sound as of a glass touching a glass.

His heart beat.

There was something curiously secretive about the sound—something that set his thoughts alert. He suddenly threw open the door and stepped into the study.

Lumley-Lumley was standing at the table.

Mellish saw that he had a glass in his hand, and that a phial was standing on the table, half-full of a whitish liquid. Lumley-Lumley was stirring something in the glass—a pale liquid with a dull opal light in it.

Only for a second did Mellish see as much.

The glass fell from Lumley-Lumley's hand as he swung round, startled, and crashed into a hundred pieces on the floor.

A look of black fury swept over the Outsider's face.

Mellish started back.

"Sorry!" he muttered. "I—I—"

"You spying hound!" roared Lumley. "You—you sneaking spy!"

He sprang towards the cad of the Fourth.

Mellish, scared by his expression, made a spring back to the door. The Outsider rushed at him and seized him by the throat and shook him as a dog shakes a rat.

Mellish gasped and struggled.

"Let go!" he muttered thickly. "You're choking me! Let go! You mad fool, let me go!"

"You spying hound!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had just come upstairs to change into his football things, and had caught sight of this strange scene in the passage.

He ran forward and caught the Outsider's arm.

"Wease him, you ass!" he exclaimed. "You are hurting him!"

Lumley-Lumley looked for a moment as if he would turn upon D'Arcy, but he was already recovering command of his temper, and did not.

He released Mellish and flung him to the floor. The cad of the Fourth lay there, gasping, for some moments, and then, picking himself up and looking like a spiteful cat, slunk away.

D'Arcy looked at the Outsider in astonishment.

"Weally, Lumley, I wegard this as goin' too far!" he exclaimed. "You were chokin' that boundah!"

Lumley breathed hard.

"Hang him!" he said.

"Yaas, wathah! I have not the slightest doubt that he deserves to be hanged!" assented Arthur Augustus. "But I must remark that I do not approve of this wuffianly conduct, Lumley."

"Oh, rats!"

"Weally, Lumley—"

Jerrold Lumley went into his study and slammed the door. D'Arcy stared indignantly at the closed door for a moment, and then, swallowing his wrath, he went away to his own quarters.

Lumley stood gritting his teeth in the study.

"Hang him!" he muttered. "Hang him!" He was not referring to D'Arcy. "Did he see? But if he did—he couldn't guess! Hang him!"

Five minutes later Jerrold Lumley quitted the study, with a slightly worried wrinkle on his brow. He looked for Mellish, and found him on the School House steps. Mellish did not speak as he came up, but his eyes burned.

"I guess I'm sorry I handled you so, just now," said Lumley, as civilly as he could. "You startled me, you know. I was just taking—some medicine, and I wasted it dropping the glass."

Mellish made no reply.

"Look here, if five bob's any use to you," said Lumley, rattling some money in his pocket.

Mellish's eyes glistened.

"I don't want your money," he said.

Lumley-Lumley gave him a searching glance, and then shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess you can do as you like about that," he said carelessly, as he walked away.

Tom Merry was just coming into the School House. He stopped for a moment to look at Mellish.

"Turning over a new leaf?" he asked, with a laugh.

Mellish looked at him.

"I've got a reason for not touching Lumley-Lumley's

money," he said. "I wouldn't touch it—or the chap himself—with a poker!"

Tom Merry whistled.

"You've been chummy enough with him up 'till lately," he said.

"That's over!"

"Yes; I've noticed it. But—"

"You don't blame him for treating me as he has done!" said Mellish, with a sneer. "Well, perhaps I shall have something to tell you about him—soon!"

And Mellish walked away without saying more, leaving Tom Merry in a state of considerable astonishment.

CHAPTER 11.

A Sudden Warning!

FATTY WYNN, with his extremely plump calves showing beneath a very well-filled-out overcoat, paused outside Dame Taggles' little tuckshop under the elms, in a corner of the great, rambling quadrangle of St. Jim's.

He looked rather dubiously at Figgins and Kerr, who were watching him.

"What would you fellows say to a few tarts?" he asked.

"I should say rats!" said Figgins cheerfully. "What would you say, Kerr?"

"Rats!" said Kerr.

"Well," said Fatty Wynn thoughtfully, "suppose we say buns, then?"

"Rats!"

"Or cream-puffs?"

"More rats!"

"I'm feeling rather peckish," said Fatty Wynn pathetically. "I get awfully hungry in this weather. No good trying to play without laying a solid foundation, you know."

Figgins laughed.

"Take his other arm, Kerr," he said, linking an arm with Fatty Wynn. "Let's take him out of the danger-zone."

"Ha, ha, ha! All right!"

"Hold on!" said the fat Fourth Former. "You see—"

"Hullo!" came a cheery hail from the tuckshop. "Hullo! Come and have some lemonade! It's home-made and hot, and jolly good—the best Dame Taggles has ever made."

It was Tom Merry who gave the invitation. Figgins & Co. halted.

"Right-ho!" said Figgins. "We'll come!"

"Well, I suppose we can have some lemonade," said Kerr, as they turned back towards the tuckshop; "but no grub, mind, Fatty. You're not going to blow yourself out and lose the match to the Shell if I know it."

Fatty Wynn grunted.

"I should keep goal better if—"

"If you filled yourself up to the chin with pastries," said Figgins, laughing. "Yes, I'll wager you would! Lemonade, Fatty, but no grub."

"Oh, all right, ass!"

And Figgins & Co. entered the tuckshop. It was already pretty well filled. Mellish was sitting in one corner, eating tarts. A pleased look came over his face to see Fatty Wynn come in. He wasn't particularly pleased to see Fatty. It was not that at all. But he knew how it would make Fatty suffer to see a fellow eating tarts that he could not touch. That was very pleasant to the amiable Mellish.

The Terrible Three were there, with Kangaroo and several more of the Shell. Blake and D'Arcy and Digby stood at the counter with glasses. Mrs. Taggles was beaming behind her fortification of tarts, and buns, and cakes, and bottles of sweets. Dame Taggles was a famous brewer of home-made lemonade, and it was a very pleasant drink on a cold day, hot and steaming.

"More glasses," said Tom Merry cheerily. "This won't hurt you, Figgys."

"No fear, my son!"

"I should think that just a slice of cake with the lemonade—" began Fatty Wynn.

"Not a morsel."

"A biscuit or two—"

"Stuff!"

"That's what he wants to do," said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn cast a longing glance at the piles of good things on the counter. As if by a special spite of fate, Mrs. Taggles had a new supply of tarts there, in luscious piles on a big china dish.

The fat Fourth Former uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Was that Ratly calling?"

Mr. Ratcliff was the Housemaster of the New House. Figgins and Kerr turned quickly towards the door, expecting to see the amiable features of their Housemaster looking in.

But there was no one in the doorway but Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, who was just coming in.

The moment they had turned their backs Fatty Wynn made a dive for the tarts. He simply couldn't resist them. He had grabbed the first one, and was darting it to his mouth, when Figgins turned back and caught him fairly in the act.

Figgins did not speak. There was no time for words. But he caught Fatty's hand as it shot towards his mouth, and slanted it, so that the tart was dabbed upon his nose instead of into his mouth.

It was a nice, soft, flaky tart, with plenty of jam, and it dabbed on Fatty Wynn's round little nose and stuck there.

There was a yell of laughter in the shop.

"Ow!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Groooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty snatched off the tart, and glared at Figgins.

Figgins roared.

"You ass!" howled Fatty. "You fathead! I—"

"Serve you right," said Kerr, with a grin. "You know jolly well Ratty isn't anywhere near here. You were just tricking us, you bouncer."

"Well, I—I—"

"I wegard it as a wank deception," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon the fat Fourth Former.

"I am surprised at you, Wynn."

"Rats!" said Wynn heatedly. "It was a stratagem."

"I wegard it as a wank—"

"Oh, bosh!"

"If you chawactewise my wemarks as bosh, Fatty Wynn—"

"Well, I do! Bosh! Rubbish!"

"Then I shall have no recourse—"

"Here, hold on, keep the peace!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"No rows till after the match. Keep your kids in order, Blake!"

"All right," said Jack Blake cheerily. "If Gussy makes a row, I'll souse him in lemonade!"

"I should uttably wefuse to be soused in lemonade, Blake! I—"

"Here, give a chap a chance to get to the counter," said Lumley-Lumley. "I want some of that lemonade."

"Pway excuse me, deah boy—"

"I'll excuse you if you get out of the way."

"Weally, Lumley—"

"Thanks!" said the Outsider, pushing D'Arcy aside and taking his place at the counter. "Time you kids were getting down to the ground, I guess. Hallo, our friends the enemy!" he went on, looking at Tom Merry and his chums with a very cordial expression. "Will you have some lemonade with me?"

"Thanks; we've had some!"

"Oh, have another glass—for the sake of good fellowship!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Look here, I know you fellows were surprised at Blake's playing me. I know you don't like it. I guess I don't blame you. We haven't pulled together, and I own up that it was mostly my fault. I can't be fairer than that."

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as a vewy pwopah thing for Lumley to say."

"Fair enough," said Blake.

"Well, what I mean is, I want to look forward and not backward, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley. "Blake will tell you that I play the game on the footer field. I don't want you fellows to feel rusty about it. I mean to play up and beat you, if possible. But you'll find that I play the game all the time. If I don't, Blake's at liberty to kick me out of the team, and I'll admit that I deserve it. Now all that's over, and you'll have a lemonade with me?"

"Oh, certainly!" said Tom Merry, in his good-tempered way. "I'm sure I don't want to keep up any ill-feeling, and as far as that goes, I've never made an enemy purposely, and I don't want to begin now."

"Same here," said Manners. "As a matter of fact, I'm willing to admit that some of us have been a bit rough on you, Lumley, and haven't made enough allowance for the kind of training you had before you came here."

"All serene!" said Monty Lowther. "All olive branches accepted as soon as offered, and misunderstandings made up while you wait! And it's jolly good lemonade, anyway!"

"I guess that's all right, then!" said Lumley-Lumley.

He took the steaming jug and poured out the lemonade. Mellish, with a strange, startled look, was watching him like a cat. Lumley-Lumley filled four big glasses, and then another.

"You, too, Kangaroo?"

"Oh, all serene!" said the Cornstalk, cordially enough.

Lumley handed the four Shell fellows the glasses. Then he raised his own.

"Good health and good fellowship!" he said.

"Hear, hear!"

Mellish sprang forward, white and excited.

"Don't drink!" he shouted.

"What?"

"Don't drink! For goodness' sake, don't!"

Tom Merry and his friends lowered their glasses in

amazement. Mellish's scared face was enough for that, without his word. Lumley-Lumley's face seemed convulsed; but he was making a great effort to calm himself.

"What do you mean, Mellish?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Why shouldn't we drink?"

"Because he's put something in the lemonade!"

"What?"

CHAPTER 12.

Accused!

THERE was a dead silence in the tuckshop.

The four Shell fellows stood still with their glasses in their hands, their faces pale and startled.

Lumley-Lumley stood petrified.

He stood quite motionless, leaning on the counter, and, save for a wild light burning in his eyes, might have been turned to stone.

The juniors stood crowding round breathlessly, amazed.

The silence was suddenly broken.

The glass slipped from Manners' hand, and fell with a crash to the floor, where it was shattered to pieces.

The crash of the breaking glass broke the spell that seemed to have fallen upon the juniors. There was a buzz of voices.

"What do you mean, Mellish?"

"What has he put in it?"

"Are you joking?"

"Explain."

"It's—it's a lie!" said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley thickly.

"It's a rotten lie! I've put nothing in it!"

Tom Merry looked at his pale, hardened face, and then turned his glance upon Mellish. Mellish had his hand still upraised, as if to warn. He lowered it now to his side.

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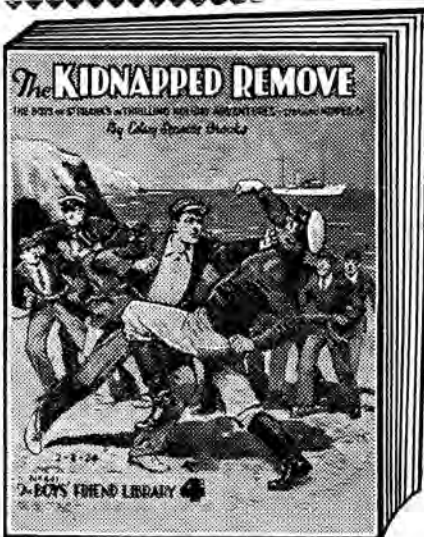
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"What do you mean by that, Mellish?" asked Tom Merry quietly. "You say that Lumley has put something into the lemonade?"

"Yes."

Mellish gasped out the word.

"Do you mean that he is japing us—that he has put something nasty into it?"

"More than that."

"What more?"

"Ask him," said Mellish. "Ask him what was in the liquid he was mixing in the study just after dinner, when I interrupted him. Ask him what's in the bottle he's got in his waistcoat pocket at this minute."

"Have you a bottle, Lumley?"

Lumley's hand had gone unconsciously towards his pocket. He tried to brazen it out with a laugh.

"Yes," he said.

"What was in it?"

"A medicine I've been taking lately. It's a soothing medicine—for the nerves."

"Is there any of it left?"

"I don't know."

"Let me see the bottle."

Lumley-Lumley drew a small phial from his waistcoat pocket and held it up. It was a colourless glass, without a label, and quite empty.

"It's all gone," he said.

"It's in your lemonade," said Mellish.

"Liar!"

"Wait a bit," said Tom Merry quietly. "Mellish is a liar, as we all know, but it looks to me as if he's speaking the truth this time."

"And to me," said Kangaroo. "You remember what I said to you fellows—I felt all the time that Lumley intended some foul play."

"I guess I won't stay here to listen to this," said Lumley-Lumley fiercely, and he thrust forward through the crowd.

He thrust against Monty Lowther, and Lowther's glass went with a crash to the floor, and the liquid in it was gone in a moment. Kangaroo uttered a fierce exclamation, and held his own glass in safety. But at the same moment Lumley's hand struck Tom Merry's glass, and sent it spinning. It crashed down and was broken.

"Hold him back!" said Kangaroo. "He's trying to destroy the staff."

Lumley was plunging towards the Cornstalks. But Tom Merry seized him in a grip of iron, and hurled him back towards the counter.

"None of that!" he said fiercely.

The Outsider, pale and breathless, reeled against the counter. Mellish looked at him with a hard, sneering smile. There was grim condemnation in every face now, and the cad of the Fourth was triumphant.

"Keep that glass safe, Kangaroo," said Tom Merry. "It's the only one left—it's pretty clear why Lumley wanted to destroy it."

"That—that was accidental—"

"You lie!" said Tom Merry icily. "You know you lie, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley! Keep that glass out of his reach, Kangy!"

"What-ho!" said the Cornstalk.

"Now, Mellish, tell us what you know about this, and we'll see," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I knew he was up to some tricks all along," said Mellish, with a gleam of great satisfaction in his eyes, and quite a relish in his voice. "I knew he never meant to play the game. I knew when he said so certainly that the Shell would lose if he could work it. He knew he'd never be played in the junior team while Tom Merry was captain, and he wanted the captaincy to go to a Fourth Form fellow. That was his game. He was always certain of a good place in the team if Blake became junior captain after to-day. Oh, I knew his game from start to finish, I can tell you!"

Lumley's lips moved, but he did not speak.

"Enough of that," said Tom Merry. "Never mind your suspicions; tell us what you know!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I knew he intended some trick," said Mellish. "That's why I kept an eye on him. I went into the study this afternoon, and found him mixing something in a glass—something that was in that little bottle. He was so startled that he dropped the glass and broke it."

"It was my medicine," said Lumley.

Mellish sneered.

"Then why did you jump at me like a wild cat and half-choke me?" he said. "I had a right to go into my own study if I liked, I suppose. D'Arcy saw how you were treating me."

"Yaas, that's quite true. I was in the passage, deah boys, and saw Lumley tweatin' Mellish in the most wuffianly way, and I stopped him. But for the circe that he was

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playin' in the team to-day I should certainly have given him a feahful thwashin'!"

"Cheese it, Gussy! Go on, Mellish!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Go on, Mellish! Buck up!"

"Well, I guessed something then," said Mellish, "but I wasn't sure. It seemed too horrible, and that's the truth. But when he came to me and tried to be friendly, and offered me some money, then I was certain. Tom Merry heard him offering me the money, and heard me refuse it."

"That's so," said Tom Merry.

"I told you I should have something to tell you about Lumley later."

"You did."

"I couldn't tell you then—there was no proof. You'd have said it was more of my lies," said Mellish unpleasantly.

"Very likely."

Mellish bit his lip.

"Well, I kept an eye on you fellows after that. I knew that Lumley meant to get at you somehow, before the match. When he came in here, and proposed that you should drink with him, then I knew the game. I watched him. I suppose you others didn't see him pour anything into the jug before he filled your glasses?"

"No."

"Well, he did. He had the thing in his sleeve, I think. He filled his own glass, and then he dropped the stuff in. He's a cunning hound. I shouldn't have seen it if I hadn't been specially watching, knowing what was coming."

Every eye was turned upon Lumley-Lumley now.

The Outsider of St. Jim's had fully recovered his coolness. "Well, what have you to say, Lumley?" asked Jack Blake, taking up the questioning.

Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"Only that it's a string of lies."

"You deny it?"

"Yes, from beginning to end."

"It does sound a bit thick," said Digby. "But Mellish has two witnesses for part of the yarn, at any rate."

"Oh, he's worked that, of course!" said Jerrold Lumley.

"He made me break a glass, and I lost my temper and went for him. Then I thought I'd been a bit rough, and as he'd been worrying me for money lately, I guessed I'd lend him a few shillings. That's all there was to it."

The juniors exchanged dubious glances.

Certainly Lumley-Lumley's explanation was plausible enough, and it required an effort to believe that anyone could be base enough to drug an opponent on the eve of a football match.

But the sneering smile never left Mellish's face.

"You deny it all?" he questioned.

"I guess so, you liar!"

"Then you have no objection to drinking the glass of lemonade you poured out for Kangaroo—the only one you haven't contrived to upset?" said Mellish maliciously.

"Bai Jove! That's a pwoof, if you like!"

Tom Merry looked fixedly at the Outsider.

"Will you drink it, Lumley?"

But the face of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was pale, almost haggard, and he made no reply.

CHAPTER 13.

Guilty!

ACCUSING eyes were turned upon the Outsider of St. Jim's from all sides. Why should he not drink the lemonade, if it was harmless? In his haggard face, in his wandering glance and gasping breath, the juniors read guilt.

Guilt!

Yes, he was guilty; there was no doubt upon that point.

The only question that remained to be settled was the extent and depth of his guilt. Why had he put the stuff in the lemonade? The darkest suspicion did not go to the extent of poison. It was a drug of some kind—but what?

There was a murmur of voices, growing louder.

"He's guilty!"

"He's drugged the lemonade!"

"The cad!"

"The coward!"

"The rotter!"

"The uttah wascal!"

Lumley-Lumley stood licking his dry lips. There was a wild light in his eyes.

Kangaroo held the glass out before him, taking no care to defend it now.

"Drink it," he said—"drink it, or knock it from my hand! Take your choice. We shall know what to think."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The Outsider raised his hand, and struck the glass from the fingers of the Australian. It shattered upon the floor.

"Very well," said Tom Merry quietly. "That's enough—that's proof. The lemonade was drugged!"



"Drink the lemonade or knock it from my hand," said Kangaroo, holding out the glass to Lumley. "Take your choice. We shall know what to think." The Outsider raised his hand and struck the glass from the fingers of the Australian boy. "That's enough!" said Tom Merry. "The lemonade was drugged!"

Lumley was silent.

"I rather think this is a matter the police would take hold of, if it were known," said Tom Merry. "But I suppose nobody here wants it to go further?"

"Wathah not!"

"Oh, no!"

"Never!"

"Keep it dark!"

The juniors were all in earnest about that. The disgrace to the old school would be terrible if it were known. An attempt to drug opposing players was unheard of, horrible, on a level with the lowest dodges and devices of the race-course!

Only to Lumley-Lumley, of all the fellows at St. Jim's, could such an idea have occurred.

This was the fruit of his training among the Bowery Boys in New York. This was what he had learned in knocking about London and Paris when other fellows of his age were at school. Lumley was very proud of his experience—but it had stood him in very ill stead.

It had led him to this!

The utter baseness of it shocked and disgusted the most reckless fellow there. Even Mellish, bad as he was, was incapable of planning and carrying out a scheme like this. The juniors drew away from Lumley-Lumley as if he were an unclean thing—a thing they could not touch.

The Outsider stood pale and stricken.

All was over now, he knew.

If he had been an outsider of St. Jim's before, he was doubly and trebly an outsider now. That everybody, even Mellish, would ever speak to him again he could not believe. He would be utterly barred—despised—ignored!

His face grew more haggard at the thought.

Tom Merry glanced round at the juniors.

"Not a word of this outside," he said. "If this gets about—I suppose it will, don't say a word for or against. It's disgrace enough as it is."

"Quite so," said Figgins.

"The fellow meant to drug us, so that we should lose

the match. I don't believe there was anything in the lemonade to really hurt us. I can't believe that of even Lumley. But we should have been out of form for the match, and easily licked. I can see the whole game now, easily enough."

"So can we all," said Lowther. "It's no good talking to him. Words aren't strong enough."

"Bai Jove, you're wight, deah boy."

"As for playing him to-day, Blake," went on Tom Merry, "I suppose there's no question of that. You won't play him?"

Blake coloured.

"Of course not," he said. "I'd sooner play a scorpion or a rattlesnake. He won't play in my team!"

"Wathah not!"

The juniors crowded out of the tuckshop. No one offered to touch the Outsider. His offence was too deep for a ragging. They simply let him alone.

Only Mellish remained for a moment. Lumley-Lumley stood leaning heavily on the counter, his face ghastly pale now. His hand was pressed to his heart, as if he felt a pain there.

"So I am even with you!" said Mellish.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley did not reply.

"I'm even with you, I say."

Lumley-Lumley had fixed a stony stare upon Mellish, but his lips did not move. The cad of the Fourth looked at him closely.

"Are you ill, Lumley?"

Lumley did not speak.

But he lurched forward, and fell with a crash at the feet of the cad of the Fourth.

Mellish started back.

"Lumley! I say, Merry! Help! Lumley's fainted!"

Some of the juniors looked into the tuckshop quickly. Tom Merry ran towards Lumley-Lumley.

"What's the matter with him?"

"I don't know. He fell down."

Tom Merry raised Lumley's head.

His face was ghastly, and he was breathing stertorously. He was quite unconscious. All the anger died out of Tom Merry's face.

"Lend a hand here, you fellows!" he exclaimed.

Lumley's eyes opened.

"What's the matter? What is it? What do you mean?"

He dragged himself from Tom Merry's hands.

"You fainted," said Tom Merry.

"It's a lie!"

Lumley staggered to his feet, holding to the wall. The colour was coming back into his cheeks.

Tom Merry bit his lips.

"Very well," he said, "you don't want my assistance!"

And he left the shop again. Mellish followed him, and Lumley was alone.

He left the shop a few minutes later. He caught Dame Taggles' eye on him as he went out. The old lady was regarding him with unconcealed disgust and horror. Outside the shop Towser was basking in the sun. Herries had taken him out for a little run, and Towser had got away, and Herries, hurrying off to the footer field, had no time to look for him. Towser blinked at Lumley-Lumley.

Lumley-Lumley, with all his faults, had one virtue which showed that he was not really bad—he was fond of animals. He stopped and spoke to the bulldog, and smoothed his huge head. Towser rose lazily and followed him.

In the solitude the Outsider had made for himself the friendship for the dog was something. It was all the friendship he was likely to know so long as he remained at St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 14.

The Pluck of the Outsider!

TOM MERRY & CO. hurried down to the footer field. What little gloom had settled on the chums of the Shell soon wore away. Lumley's duplicity was soon forgotten in their interest in the king of games, and Shell hopes ran high.

"Now, then," cried Smith, leading a small coterie of enthusiasts. "Come on, my sons! You're almost late, for a football team!"

The Terrible Three laughed.

"As if Blake & Co. were any earlier," said Monty Lowther.

In a minute the chums had whipped off their coats.

But Blake had his men on the field first. Filing on the ground at a brisk trot, he gave the ball a mighty kick, and the Fourth Form spectators cheered to a man.

"It's nice to be popular, Blake, deah boy. Aren't you glad I'm in the team?"

"Well, of all the cheek—" began Jack Blake. "Of all the nerve—"

"Surely, Blake, you didn't think that was all for you, deah boy? Why—"

Another mighty cheer rent the air.

"Bwavo! Bwavo!" cried D'Arcy, completely forgetting his subject.

Catching the general infection, he cheered lustily as Tom Merry led his merry men on.

"Hear, hear!" said Figgins. "It'll be a good game if we win. They're a jolly fit lot!"

In another second or two the whistle went. The preliminary punting ceased, and Tom Merry, Blake, and the referee closed to toss for choice of ends.

Blake won it. The Shell would have to face the wind. Both sides settled down to a determined game, and a ding-dong battle ensued.

Neither side had scored when the whistle for half-time sounded, and the two teams trooped off the field.

The five minutes' "breather" was almost up, when there was a sudden:

Toot-toot-toot!

"Bai Jove! What's that?"

"Sounds like a motor-horn," said Blake, with a grin.

"Haven't you heard a motor toot before, Gussy?"

"Yaas, ass; but it's a wemarkably loud one—"

"Hark!"

"Bai Jove!"

The toot of the horn had come from the direction of the road—the Rylcombe Road, a considerable distance from the football field. From the same direction came a fainter sound, but a sound that sent a thrill through every heart.

It was a deep, throbbing scream.

"Good heavens!" cried Tom Merry. "What has happened?"

No one answered the question. No one stopped to speak. All knew well what had happened. It was an accident—a

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motor accident on the road—and someone was badly hurt. Was it a St. Jim's fellow?

With one accord the footballers and spectators, in an excited crowd, dashed from the field and ran in the direction of the gates of St. Jim's.

"What is it?"

"What has happened?"

"Towser!" cried Herries.

The crowd burst into the road in great excitement. The footballers, in their light attire, ran the fastest, and they were first on the scene.

A strange sight greeted the eyes of Tom Merry & Co.

A large car was drawn up in the road. Two men—one in the dress of a chauffeur, and the other in a fur-collared coat and silk hat—were bending over a form that lay motionless in the dust of the high road.

Towser, looking frightened and dusty, ran to his master, and Herries laid a protecting hand on his collar. His first thought was that Towser had been hurt in the accident, but he soon saw that the bulldog was untouched.

But what was that form lying in the road?

The man in the silk hat looked round, and Tom Merry recognised him. It was Mr. Hicks, the mayor of the neighbouring town of Wayland. His fat and usually jolly face was pale and distressed.

"This is a terrible happening!" he exclaimed. "I am afraid the boy is hurt. Help me get him into the school."

"Who is it, sir?"

"I don't know. One of your boys, however."

Tom Merry leaned over the chauffeur, as he supported the fallen form, and looked at the dusty, blood-stained face. He uttered a startled cry.

"Lumley!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Lumley!" cried Blake.

"Yes."

"Good heavens!"

"He is not—not—"

"No, no!" cried Mr. Hicks. "Nothing of the sort! He was knocked down, but I cannot blame my chauffeur. It was the dog's fault."

"The dog?" cried Herries.

"Yes. He was with this boy. The dog ran into the road before my car, and the boy dashed after him to save him. He lifted the dog out of the way, and the car caught his shoulder before he could get clear, and hurled him down. By Heaven's mercy, he was not caught fairly by the car, or he would have been smashed. He was almost clear when the car struck him."

"He tried to save the dog?"

"Yes; that was how it came about. It was not the chauffeur's fault in the least. He stopped with wonderful quickness. It was the lad's own wonderful courage that caused this. He is a brave lad. Help me carry him in."

The gentleman raised the insensible lad in his arms, aided by Tom Merry, Figgins, and Kangaroo.

The juniors were quite silent.

Lumley-Lumley was carried in.

With silent, grim faces they bore him to the School House, and he was carried up to the dormitory and laid upon his bed.

Then Mr. Hicks hurried back to his car, promising to dash off to Rylcombe to fetch the doctor and return with him at top speed.

In a minute more the car was buzzing away down the dusty road.

Lumley-Lumley lay motionless upon his bed. He had not yet recovered his senses. Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, was with him, and the Head was sent for.

The juniors filed slowly and silently upstairs.

"Poor chap!" said Tom Merry. "Poor chap!"

"It can't be—" began Blake. He did not finish. He could not bring himself to add the terrible word "fatal."

"It would be tewwible, deah boys. Lumley was not a bad sort, aftah all, you know."

"Not at all."

"It was jolly brave of him," said Digby.

"Yes, he has plenty of pluck," said Herries. "Towser's come through all right, fortunately."

"I always knew that wotten bulldog would cause trouble, you know, Hewwies. You will wemembah I said so a dozen times."

"I don't remember anything of the sort," said Herries tartly. "And it wasn't Towser's fault. Lumley oughtn't to have been taking my bulldog out. I didn't know he had Towser. I wouldn't have let him if I'd known."

"I hope he gets over it, that's all," said Monty Lowther. "It would be awful if—if anything happened, especially after—"

Tom Merry nodded gravely.

"But I don't think we need reproach ourselves," he said quietly. "What has happened makes no difference to Lumley's action. He was guilty of baseness and we were quite right to be down on him. There's no getting out of

that, and we needn't be hard on ourselves for being down on him. At the same time, I'm awfully sorry this has happened, and I hope he's not much hurt."

The footballers put their coats on, and the whole crowd hung aimlessly about the passages till there was the sound of a motor on the drive, and the car drew up, with Mr. Hicks and Dr. Short, of Rylcombe.

The little man jumped out, and was at once taken upstairs by Mr. Railton. The Head was in the dormitory, and Mr. Hicks went up with the doctor.

The juniors waited below in great anxiety.

The accident was known over the whole school now. Everybody was anxious and disturbed. A football match on the senior ground had ceased, and Kildare of the Sixth, and Darrell and North were waiting in the Hall of the School House for news.

Deep anxiety was in every face.

There was a buzz among the juniors as Mr. Railton was seen coming downstairs. Tom Merry approached the School House master.

"If you please, sir, can you tell us how Lumley is?" he asked. "We're all awfully anxious about him, sir."

"Certainly," said Mr. Railton. "Dr. Short has relieved our minds very much, Merry. Lumley has escaped fatal injuries almost by a miracle. His shoulder is terribly bruised, and his head and arms have been cut by his being hurled into the road. Thank Heaven it is no worse! The injuries are painful, but they are not, in Dr. Short's opinion, serious. There is no need for anxiety."

Tom Merry drew a deep breath of relief.

"I'm jolly glad to hear that, sir," he said.

"Lumley must be kept very quiet, however," said Mr. Railton. "He will be moved into the school infirmary this evening."

"And he is not in danger, sir?"

"Not at all."

"I'm so glad."

"Yaas, wathah! It's a twemendous welief, sir," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The Housemaster went into his study. Mr. Hicks came down, looking much relieved by the medical man's verdict, and whizzed away in his car. Slowly the juniors dispersed.

The happenings had caused them a shock. But the news that Lumley-Lumley was not in danger relieved their minds.

CHAPTER 15.

In Danger!

SUNDAY.

Sunday was always a quiet day at St. Jim's.

But this Sunday was quieter and sadder than any Sunday that Tom Merry and his chums remembered at the old school.

Lumley-Lumley had been removed on the Saturday evening from the Fourth Form dormitory to the building among the elm-trees which was used as an infirmary at St. Jim's.

In the white bed in the school hospital he lay now.

Dr. Short had come from Rylcombe to see him twice the previous evening, and the first thing the juniors saw when they went down on Sunday morning was the doctor's car in the quadrangle.

"That looks bad," said Monty Lowther, with a nod towards the car. "That's the fourth visit, and I know old Short seldom comes out as early as this."

Tom Merry looked troubled.

"But Mr. Railton said last night that he was not in danger," he said.

"He may have taken a turn for the worse."

Tom Merry did not reply.

Nothing had been said to the juniors so far of Lumley's state, but all of them had a curious feeling of something in the air—something indefinable, as if there were a shadow on the school.

Was there a shadow on St. Jim's—the shadow of death?

Tom Merry shuddered at the thought. His heart was heavy. He, of all fellows, had no cause to love the Outsider. But he felt for him now.

The chums of the Shell were very silent that morning.

Nobody had liked Lumley-Lumley. But that fact made his illness, his possible doom, all the more touching.

He was alone. In the midst of a crowd of two hundred fellows and more, he was alone!

Did he care?

He must care. If he thought of anything as he lay upon his bed, he must think of that—of the solitude he had, and of the throng of friends he might have had if he had chosen a different path.

There was a gloom upon the juniors. It was shared by the seniors as the day wore on. Kildare, Darrell, Montcith, and the other prefects were very quiet, and even Sefton and Knox, the bullies of the Sixth, forgot to raise their voices.

It was a calm, quiet day; the light wind just rustled the

fallen leaves under the elms and sighed among the bare branches. The fellows involuntarily lowered their tones when they spoke.

Again before noon the doctor's car was seen driving up, and Mr. Short disappeared into the school infirmary.

Many eyes watched him go.

A crowd of fellows waited on the walk under the elms for him to emerge, anxious for news.

It was a long time before he came out. When he appeared a nurse was seen speaking to him, and then the juniors knew that a nurse had been sent in especially for Lumley-Lumley.

As the medical gentleman came down towards the School House, with the evident intention of going in and speaking to the Head, the juniors respectfully saluted him.

"Would you mind telling us how Lumley is, sir?" asked Tom Merry.

"We're awfully anxious, sir," said D'Arcy.

The doctor paused.

"We hope for the best," he said briefly.

Tom Merry started.

"Then he is in danger?"

"I do not say so at present."

And the medical man walked on.

The juniors looked at one another in dismay.

"There's something fresh since yesterday," said Tom Merry in a low voice.

"That's certain, deah boy."

"I wish he'd speak more plainly," said Blake sharply.

"Why can't a blessed medical man speak in English?"

"His not speaking plain makes it plain enough, Blaka. If there was no danger he would say so at once."

HE SAID IT!



The two neighbours were quarrelling over the garden fence.

"Call yourself a man of sense!" yelled one.

"Certainly I do!" shouted the other.

"Why, you're next door to an idiot!"

Hall-a-crown has been awarded to G. Clarke, 30, Leominster Road, Hall Green, Birmingham.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Lumley is in danger," said Tom Merry quietly.

He shivered a little as he spoke. The old elms rustled in the wind. The shadow that had fallen on the school seemed to deepen.

Dr. Short was shown into the Head's presence at once.

Dr. Holmes met him with a dark and anxious face.

"My dear Short, I hope you can give me some good news."

The medico shook his head.

"Not worse, Short?"

"Not worse—no."

"But not better?"

"No."

The Head of St. Jim's took a long look at the little medical gentleman's serious face. What he read there startled him.

"Then there is danger?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What do you fear?"

"Complications."

"Complications! Of what sort?"

"I can hardly tell yet. But it is not the motor accident; that might be dismissed if there were nothing else. But it is clear to me that Lumley has been suffering for some time from a nervous malady, of which he has apparently said nothing. This accident in itself would confine him to his bed for a few weeks. But the shock has brought his malady to a head; that is what I fear, and he—"

The medical man paused.

"Well?" said the Head.

"He is in danger. That is all I can say at present. But, with your permission, I shall call in a specialist to see him."

"To-day?"

"I shall wire to him immediately I reach Rylcombe."

The Head's look was very anxious. He knew what this meant.

"Then one word more," he said. "This lad's father is in South America. His lawyers have his address for cables. Would you advise me to send a cable to him?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Then you think——"

"If all goes as I fear, I think Mr. Lumley-Lumley is not likely to reach England in time to see his son. But you must give him what chance you can."

"The cable shall be dispatched at the earliest possible moment," said the Head sadly.

"Very good! I have left all instructions with the nurse. I shall return with the specialist."

"Thank you."

And Dr. Short took his leave.

He left heavy hearts behind him.

CHAPTER 16.

The Shadow.

ANGER!

To the St. Jim's boys, happy and careless, so lately occupied with their boyish pursuits, it was a terrible shock to know that Jerrold Lumley might never leave his sick bed—that he might die!

Even when they knew it—even when the Head had allowed it to become officially known that Lumley-Lumley was in danger—they could hardly realise it.

The shadow of death was on the school. Jerrold Lumley was in the valley of the shadow of death, and its darkness was gathering upon him.

On tiptoe the fellows moved about. Voices were never raised above a whisper. Doors were closed silently, softly.

The boys would meet in groups in the passages and in the quad and speak in whispers, and then the groups would dissolve, gather together again in fresh groups and dissolve again.

Under that grim shadow the boys were aimless, quiet, almost dazed.

What was passing in the sick-room?

What were the thoughts of the sufferer lying there?

"I—I can't stand it, you know," muttered D'Arcy, stopping in an aimless walk under the trees. "I feel simply howlid, Blake."

Jack Blake nodded glumly.

"It's rotten for all of us, Gussy."

"And his gov'nah so far away, Blake; that's the worst of it, you know!"

"It's rotten."

"I wonder if he would like to see any of us chaps?"

"He'll ask for us if he does, Gussy."

"Yaas, I suppose so. I wish I could do somethin', deah boy."

"I jolly well wish I could!"

"He was wathah a decent chap, you know."

"Of course he was."

That was the general feeling now.

No one spoke of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley as the "Outsider" now. It was "Lumley," or even "Old Lumley." All the Outsider's faults were forgotten in this dark hour. There were few things the juniors would not have done to restore him to his old self.

But they could only wait in grim anxiety.

The boys drifted in aimless groups about the quadrangle.

Towards evening Dr. Short and the London specialist arrived.

They were in the school hospital for some time, and the Head and Mr. Railton were both there. The London gentleman departed after some time, but it was understood that Dr. Short was to remain the night at the school.

In the evening the Head received a message from the Lumley lawyers. They informed him that his cable could not be sent as Mr. Lumley-Lumley had already started for England, and might, as a matter of fact, arrive any day. The moment he arrived he should be informed of his son's state.

The Head could only hope that he would arrive in time.

When bed-time came that night, the boys went up to their dormitories in sad silence.

There was nothing to be said.

"Nurse!"

The gentle, kind-faced woman turned to the bed. From the coverlet a face looked out that was as white as the bandage on the forehead.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley lay very quiet.

The Outsider, the fellow whose keenness was a proverb, who was never deceived, knew only too well that he was in danger.

Those strange attacks he had suffered from, which he had so obstinately kept secret, lest he should be considered "soft"—he had always had a lurking fear that they meant something serious. The terrible shock of the motor accident had done the rest. He knew—or he thought he knew—that this was his end.

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And he did not fear.

The boy who had led so strange a life, whose experience in strange places among strange people exceeded that of many men, had looked death in the face before, though not in the same way.

And he did not fear the terrible visitor.

* Fear was not in Jerrold Lumley's composition. Regret, anger, yes—but not fear.

"Nurse!"

His voice was so faint that he hardly recognised it himself. And perhaps his hearing was growing a little dulled.

"Yes, dear?"

"What time is it?"

"Seven o'clock!"

"Monday evening?"

"Yes."

"I shall not see the sunrise to-morrow," said Lumley.

The nurse made a gesture.

"You must not think such thoughts," she said. "You must——"

He laughed silently. It would have been his old mocking laugh if it had been audible.

"I guess I know," he said. "I guess I've got some sense to see it, nurse. I'm at the end of my tether."

"No, no!"

"You don't know," said Jerrold Lumley coolly. "But I know. Do you know, nurse, that I have no feeling whatever left in my leg?"

"My dear——"

"I shall not last out the night. This must be death."

"I will call——"

"Don't call the doctor. There's no need. He can't help me, and he can't deceive me. I know I'm going!"

The nurse was silent.

"I'm not afraid," said Lumley quietly. "I never was afraid—of anything. I suppose I ought to be. I've not led a good life—and I'm only fifteen. What a fool I've been!"

"You must not speak any more, my dear lad!"

"I guess I'll do as I like, nurse. I want to see Tom Merry."

The nurse hesitated and then stepped into the next room and spoke with the doctor, and Dr. Short came to the bedside. For the last twenty-four hours he had not left the school, except for a short drive in the afternoon to see his other patients.

"You must be quiet, my dear boy," he said.

"I want to see Tom Merry——"

"Nurse, will you take the message?"

The nurse quietly left the sick-room.

"I want to see him; I treated him rottenly."

"I'm sure he will forgive you, then."

"I want him to say so."

The door opened softly. The nurse reappeared, and the Head came in with her, with a grave and solemn face. Tom Merry followed the Head into the room. Outside, in the passage, there was a faint sound of whispering voices. Other fellows had come with Tom Merry—Blake, and D'Arcy, and Lowther, and Manners, and some more—but they waited outside, not to disturb the sick lad unless he asked to see them.

Tom Merry's face was very pale.

He knew the truth—he knew that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was dying, and that he had come to look upon a lad from whose face the light of life was departing.

Lumley made a slight movement as he came in.

"Is that you, Merry?"

"Yes, Lumley, old man."

"Come here!"

Tom Merry approached the bedside. Lumley's hands lay outside, on the white coverlet, and he made a feeble groping motion with one of them. Tom Merry understood; and he took Lumley's hand in his. It struck a chill to his own warm palm as his fingers closed upon it. But his face gave no sign of that.

"I cannot feel your hand," said Lumley. "But you are holding mine."

"Yes."

Lumley's eyes sought his face. There was a strange expression in them—something of the old, mocking light, mingled with strange emotion.

"I'm glad you've come, Merry," he said. "It was good of you to come!"

"It was little for me to do," said Tom, with a catch in his voice. "I only wish I could help you, old fellow."

"Too late for that," said Lumley.

Tom Merry was silent.

"I'm going," said the Outsider, in a weaker voice. "I know that. I may be dead in an hour."

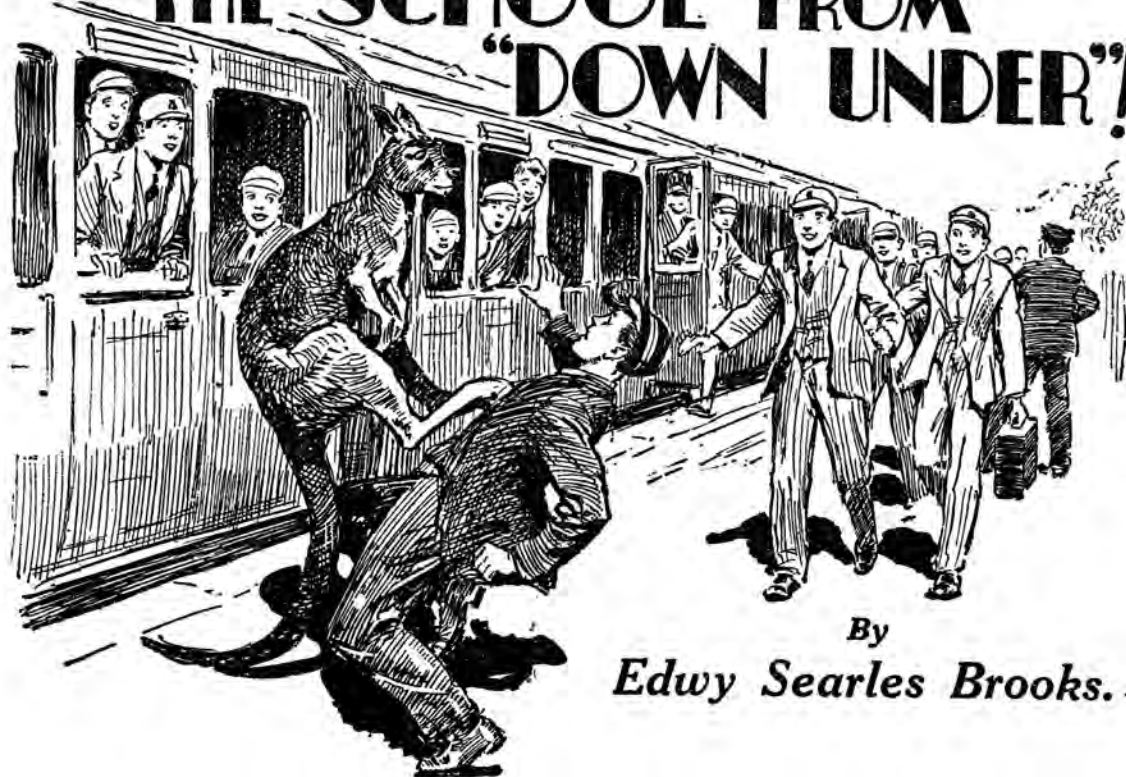
"Oh!"

"I'm not afraid. But—but—I want to ask you a favour, Tom Merry."

(Continued on page 23.)

ANOTHER EXCITING INSTALMENT FROM OUR GREAT ST. FRANK'S SERIAL!

THE SCHOOL FROM "DOWN UNDER!"



By
Edwy Searles Brooks.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Some schoolboys from Australia take over River House School, near St. Frank's, for the summer, and immediately the two schools are at grips in a friendly "war." Jerry Dodd, of St. Frank's, discovers that one of the Aussies, Jim Sayers, is an impostor. He tells Handforth, of St. Frank's, about Sayers, and the two juniors start investigating secretly. They find out that Mr. Rutter, an Australian master, is in league with the impostor. They shadow the master, but are trapped in a dungeon in some old ruins. They are rescued, however, by Nipper, but so as not to alarm Rutter, Dodd and Handforth agree to remain "prisoners" while Nipper does a little investigating. When the Australian School go to the Oval for the final Test Match, Dodd and Handforth take a chance and go, too. But while there they are spotted by Rutter, who immediately motors back to the old ruins to make sure if his captives have escaped—to discover that the two boys are still prisoners!

Nipper's Narrow Escape.

RUTTER'S relief, as he beheld the two sleeping figures, was great. That one glance told him that his fears had been groundless. Far below him, in that dungeon from which escape was impossible, were the two prisoners.

While Rutter still looked, one of the figures stirred. The next moment Jerry Dodd sat up, blinking.

"Handy!" he gasped, starting sleepily to his feet. "Quick! Wake up! Somebody's here!"

Handforth stirred, but before he could rise, Dodd uttered an exclamation of disappointment.

"So it's you!" he shouted, staring up. "What are you doing here? How much longer are you going to keep us imprisoned in this awful place?"

The rascally Australian schoolmaster did not even answer. He released the great stone slab, and, actuated by its spring, it rose back into place, leaving the two schoolboys in total darkness.

"Phew! That was a narrow shave!" murmured Jerry Dodd.

"Think we fooled him?" came Handforth's voice.

"All the way!" said Jerry calmly. "He wasn't sure that it was you he spotted at the Oval, and he drove all the way

down here to make certain. Well, he found us just as I had left us. He thinks we've been here all the time."

It had really been touch and go. The astute Jerry Dodd, after dragging Handforth down—when the latter had risen to his feet, yelling, and waving his panama, at the Oval—had seen Rutter making a hasty exit from one of the big stands. Jerry had guessed at once the nature of the Australian schoolmaster's sudden departure.

Like lightning, Jerry had come to a decision. He and Handforth had hurriedly left the Oval, and had sped away on Jerry's motor-cycle, Handy riding on the pillion. To follow Rutter was impossible; so they had left London by way of Wimbledon and Kingston. Never had Jerry Dodd driven so fast; he had made that motor-bike fairly burn the road. And they had managed to get to the old ruins first.

"Well, I hope you're pleased with yourself," said Jerry suddenly.

"I don't know about that," replied Handforth. "It was you who did the riding; I was only on the pillion. Of course, I dare say I should have made better time—"

"I wasn't talking about that, you hopeless idiot!" interrupted Jerry. "We needn't have come down here at all if you had sat still at the Oval. But what do you do? Not content with leaping to your feet, and waving your hat—the hat you bought especially to hide your face—but you yell at the top of your voice. By cripes! And that voice of yours is known better than the chimes of Big Ben!"

Handforth was subdued.

"Sorry, Jerry," he said. "I—I forgot myself. I leapt up and yelled without thinking."

"Oh, well, we won't make a song about it!" said Jerry. "No harm has been done, as it happens, and I expect Rutter is cursing himself for coming down."

It was a good guess. At that very moment Rutter was in the ruins above. He had secured the safety catch of the mechanism, and had replaced the smaller stone slab.

"Fool!" he muttered savagely. "I might have known the kids couldn't get out. It was some other boy at the Oval."

In the face of what he had just seen, there was no other possible conclusion. He knew that it was somewhat risky for him to be in the ruins in full light of day; so, after making sure that he was not being observed, he made his way to Edmore Lane, where he had left his car.

Satisfied that his prisoners were safe, Rutter's first thought,

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now, was to return quickly to London. He could easily make some excuse to explain his absence. As he drove away, however, another thought came to him. While he was down here, he might as well go to the school. There was something he wanted.

Reaching the River House School, Rutter left his car in the road, for the main gates were closed. He then entered the school by means of the small wicket-gate. The quadrangle, scorched with sunshine, was completely empty.

He walked through the open doorway of Marshall's House into the cool shadows. Nobody was about. He went to his study and inserted a key in the lock.

And inside that study was—Nipper!

Knowing that Rutter was in London with the rest of the Australian School, Nipper had deemed it perfectly safe to come to the River House to make another search. This afternoon, Church and McClure were not with him. Nipper preferred to work alone. He had entered unchallenged, for he had not even seen the porter. He felt that Mr. Rutter's study contained secrets, and he was keen to probe them.

But he had scarcely been there fifteen minutes before he heard footsteps in the passage. He wasn't worried. The door was locked, and Mr. Rutter had the key. The man in the passage was probably the porter. It was only necessary for Nipper to remain quiet.

Then, suddenly, a key was rattling in the lock. Nipper went rigid.

He was trapped!

There was no possible escape. There was scarcely a second for him to act. He could not reach the window—and, in any case, the window was closed. There was no place of concealment in the room. It seemed that he was caught red-handed!

But no! There was one slim chance. Like a rabbit, Nipper dived, and the next moment he was under the table. It was provided with a baize cloth, and the cloth hung down on all sides. Even as he reached that doubtful haven of refuge, the door opened, and Nipper saw a pair of legs. The door closed—and was then locked from the inside.

This was curious. The porter would not have locked the door on the inside. The porter, too, would have been wearing trousers with a stripe. The man who entered was wearing grey flannels.

The man went straight across to the window, and with a quick movement he pulled the curtains. Nipper, hearing the rustle of the rings, and knowing that the man must have his back to the room, peeped out from beneath the fringe of the tablecloth. He caught his breath in so sharply that he nearly gave himself away.

Rutter!

Nipper only saw the back of his head, but it was enough. The man in the study was Rutter himself! The last man in the world whom Nipper had expected to see!

Discovery would mean trouble with a capital "T." For Rutter would know, in an instant, that he was suspected, that his crooked game was "twiggid." For Nipper could give no satisfactory explanation of his presence in the study. At any moment Rutter might discover him. One glance under the table would be sufficient.

But Rutter was too busy to look under the table. He had no suspicion that he had trapped an intruder in his room. Nipper had been careful to disturb nothing, and the study, therefore, looked just as it had looked when Rutter had locked it up, before going to London.

The next moment Nipper received a shock, for the Australian schoolmaster went down on his hands and knees in a corner of the room, and fumbled at the painted skirting.

Nipper's danger was excessive. Rutter had only to glance round, and from his position on all-fours he would see right beneath the table! Nipper scarcely dared breathe. With every second which ticked away he expected to be seen. Fortunately for the skipper of the Remove, however, Rutter did not turn his head.

There was a sudden creak, and a section of the skirting board, about nine inches long, came away in the man's hand. No doubt that piece had been cut, years ago, by a gas-fitter or an electrician. For in the hollow cavity now exposed, Nipper caught a glimpse of a pipe, or a lead-covered wire. Rutter was thrusting his hand into the cavity. He drew forth an ordinary looking tobacco pouch.

Squatting back on his legs, the man opened the pouch. He was sideways to Nipper now, and one glance round would be enough.

Quick footsteps sounded in the passage, and Nipper saw Mr. Rutter stiffen. A peremptory knock sounded on the door.

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With a muttered curse, Mr. Rutter leapt to his feet, and at the same moment he stuffed the tobacco pouch into his pocket. Unknown to him, a tiny object fell out of the opened pouch and rolled on the carpet towards the table.

Rap-rap-rap!

"Who's in here?" came a sharp inquiry.

Rutter evidently saw that it would be foolish to remain silent. He strode to the door and unlocked it. And in that same second Nipper reached out, and seized the little object which had fallen from the pouch.

The man flung the door wide open.

"Well?" he asked curtly.

"Why, bless me, sir, it's you!" came the startled voice of the house porter.

"What's the matter with you, Hackett?" demanded Rutter irritably. "Did you expect to find somebody else in my study?"

"Sorry, sir! I didn't know you was in the school," said the porter apologetically. "I never saw you come in, sir."

"Then why have you come to my room?" asked Rutter.

"I was taking a drink of water, by the gardener's shed, when I see the curtains of this window being closed," replied the porter. "Thinking you wasn't in the school, sir, I reckoned it was my duty to come along to find out what was going hon."

"And quite right, too, Hackett," said Mr. Rutter. "I'm glad to find that you are such an observant man."

"Sorry I disturbed you, sir," continued the porter. "I thought you wasn't coming back until to-morrow."

"I was careless enough to leave one or two important books behind, so I motored down to fetch them," explained the master. "I shall be leaving in a minute or two."

He nodded and closed the door; and the porter went away thinking no more of the matter.

Rutter was relieved. He had stood squarely in the doorway during that brief conversation, so that Hackett could not see in. Now he returned quickly to the corner of the room, and replaced the section of loose skirting board.

"Fool of a fellow!" Nipper heard him mutter.

Rutter straightened up then, and Nipper could not see what he was doing. But the lad heard a slight chinking sound, and he gathered that Rutter was looking over the objects in the tobacco pouch. A minute later the door opened again. Then it closed, and a key turned in the lock. Nipper heard Rutter's footsteps.

"Phew!" breathed the Remove skipper. "By Jove! That was a narrow escape!"

He ventured to creep out and peep through the slip of the curtains. He saw Mr. Rutter stride across the quad and vanish through the wicket-gate.

"So he came here to fetch that pouch from the secret hiding place," murmured Nipper.

He took the tiny object from his pocket and examined it. The thing was just like a small pebble, about the size of a haricot bean.

"Well!" he ejaculated, his eyes aglow.

For he knew that the thing between his fingers was an uncut diamond of considerable value!

The New Recruit.

A LEAN, lanky figure, attired in flannels, moved cautiously amongst the ruins of the old abbey. Rutter had been gone some little time, and the ruins were deserted and silent.

With exaggerated caution, the lean one entered the central "chamber" of the ruins. Looking carefully about him, he satisfied himself that he was quite alone. Then he went down on his knees, removed the small stone slab, and pulled at the rusty, old lever which operated the safety catch of the ancient mechanism. Then he pushed on the greater slab, and it moved downwards.

"Well, you've taken your time!" came Handforth's grumbling voice.

"Would you have me take unnecessary risks, brother?" asked the lean one, staring down into the depths. "How do we manage this wonderful contrivance? A prop of some kind is indicated. Ah! Just one moment, brothers, and all will be well."

The lean, lanky individual spoke benevolently. He was, in fact, none other than William Napoleon Browne, the imperturbable skipper of the Fifth Form at St. Frank's.

He went to work unhurriedly. He jabbed a length of wood against the slab and the rest of the stonework; then he lowered a stout rope. Handforth came up first, followed immediately by Jerry Dodd.

"Has he gone?" asked Handforth eagerly, as he looked round.

"An entirely unnecessary question, Brother Handy."



As the St. Frank's juniors looked from the window of their dormitory an extraordinary sight met their gaze. The Triangle was full of sheep! There were sheep everywhere and their noisy bleating was awakening the whole school. "Well I'm jiggered!" ejaculated Nipper. "How the dickens did they get into the school?" It was another jape by the Aussies!

replied Browne. "The very fact that I am rescuing you from durance vile proves that Brother Rutter has gone. And now, without being unduly inquisitive, might I ask what, exactly, all this jiggery-pokery means? I do not mind confessing that I am intrigued."

"Well, Browne, we should have been dished without you," said Jerry Dodd. "So we shall have to tell you everything; we shall have to join you up as a new recruit."

"I am not unappreciative of the honour, Brother Dodd," said Browne gravely.

He was very curious—and with good reason. For, as yet, the two Removites had given him no explanation of their extraordinary conduct.

The one thought which had troubled Jerry Dodd during that hectic motor-cycle ride from London had been the problem of the secret trapdoor in the ruins. Jerry knew that he and Handforth could release the safety catch, drop into the dungeon, and see the stone slab replace itself into position. But there was a snag. If they did that, the safety catch would remain open. Rutter, therefore, would know that something was wrong.

It was necessary that a third party should secure the safety catch after Handforth and Dodd had descended into the dungeon. At first, Jerry had thought of riding to St. Frank's, and getting hold of Nipper, or Church, or McClure—the other fellows in the secret. But that would be very risky, seeing that Handforth and Dodd were supposed to be in London. Also, there was insufficient time.

But luck had come to the aid of Jerry and Handy.

Just outside Bannington they had been fortunate enough to overtake a smart Wolseley car; and they instantly recognised the driver as the imperturbable William Napoleon Browne. In a flash, Jerry made up his mind. Without explaining anything to Browne, he asked the latter to help. They rushed him to the ruins, and Browne, having parked his car in a neighbouring spinney, where it was completely concealed, had secured the safety catch as requested. Then he had mounted the old abbey tower, and from his lofty eyrie he had seen Rutter enter the ruins, had seen him open the trap and then close it. Finally, he had watched Rutter as he went back to his car and drove off.

"I dare say it looks like jiggery-pokery to you, Browne,"

said Jerry Dodd earnestly. "But it's a pretty serious business. That man Rutter is a crook."

"I am not entirely devoid of reasoning power," said Browne, nodding. "I deduced as much."

"He trapped Handy and me in that dungeon, and he thinks we've been there for a day or two," continued Jerry. "It was very important that he should be fooled into thinking that we had been there all the time. As a matter of fact, we were at the Test match this afternoon, and Handy was ass enough to stand up in the crowd and yell."

"No need to rub it in," growled Handforth.

Between them, they gave Browne all the facts; and Browne, who was an astute fellow, quickly appreciated that this whole affair was verging on the sensational.

"There can be no doubt that Brother Rutter is a thoroughly unpleasant piece of work," said Browne at length.

"He's a crook," said Handforth, "and we've got plenty of proof of it. The trouble is, we don't know his game. We only know that he's mixed up with that cad, Jim Sayers, in some underhand game. Sayers is just as bad, for Sayers knows that Jerry and I were imprisoned in the dungeon."

"We daren't come out into the open—yet," said Jerry. "We don't know how the land lies. I could prove, of course, that Jim Sayers is not Jim Sayers at all, but that wouldn't get us anywhere. We want to know why this impostor has come to England."

"And what about those stones Rutter buried in the River House grounds?" demanded Handforth. "He took them away afterwards, but I'll swear they were diamonds."

"You were quite right, Handy!" said a calm, unexpected voice.

They swung round, startled, for they had been satisfied that they were alone in the ruins. But in the deep shadows of a creeper-covered archway they beheld Nipper.

Nipper had approached very cautiously. After leaving the River House, he had decided to take a look at the ruins; for he had thought it possible that Rutter would pay a visit. Nipper was rather alarmed at that thought, for he knew, of course, that Handforth and Jerry Dodd were in London. At least, he thought they were.

However, Nipper received a surprise. For in the ruins

he found not only Handy and Jerry, but William Napoleon Browne, too.

Explanations quickly followed. Nipper now understood the reason for Rutter's visit to the neighbourhood; the visit to the River House School was probably an after-thought.

"Well, as it happens, everything's all right," said Nipper at length. "You saved the situation by dashing down here, but things are beginning to get hot, you know."

"There's no real difference," said Jerry Dodd. "Rutter has gone back to London now, and he's satisfied. There's no reason why he should come here again for days."

"I'm not so sure," said Nipper. "The Australian School returns to-morrow. Rutter will be in the district; he might pay a visit to the ruins at any time."

"Not during the day," said Handforth. "He's certain to leave any visit until after dark."

"Which means that you ought to be on the spot," said Nipper, frowning.

"But that's rot!" protested Handforth. "I'm willing enough to keep this game going, but I'm dashed if I'm going to stay a prisoner in that rotten dungeon. Can't we think of a way out?" Then suddenly he turned to Nipper, with a puzzled look. "By George! That reminds me. What was that you said when we first saw you, Nipper? Something about me being quite right."

"Oh, yes, the diamonds!" said Nipper, nodding.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, it's my turn to tell a story," replied Nipper. "I've been having a look in Rutter's study. I found a long telegram, and I took a copy of it, and I sent it to my guv'nor. I believe it's a secret message—in code."

"My only sainted aunt!" said Handforth breathlessly.

"We won't know the result yet, because Mr. Lee, unfortunately, isn't in London just now," continued Nipper. "I went to Rutter's study again to-day, and I thought it was all up with me."

He explained what had happened, and the others listened eagerly.

"But here's the important point," said Nipper. "Rutter dropped this single stone—and he hasn't missed it. Yes, it's a diamond. A real beauty."

"Then all the rest must be diamonds!" ejaculated Handforth excitedly. "What did I tell you? This proves more than ever that the man's a crook."

"Not necessarily," said Nipper. "He may have brought the diamonds over quite legitimately. Later on, perhaps, we shall be able to know for certain. I'm going to send this one to my guv'nor for him to examine it. He may be able to discover something about it—where it came from."

"Well, as we can't know anything for certain about this stone until Mr. Lee has examined it," said Jerry Dodd, "we'd better drop the subject. The thing is, what are we going to do? Go back to Mr. Lee's place in London?"

"Well, in the circs, I think it would be safer if you remained here, somewhere in the district," said Nipper. "It can't be long, now, before matters reach a climax. It's better for you to pretend to be prisoners—but to remain more or less on the spot."

"Am I allowed to voice a suggestion, brothers?" asked Browne gently.

"Go ahead!" said Nipper. "You're in the plot with us now."

"Splendid!" beamed William Napoleon. "Then why should not Brothers Handy and Jerry remain here, in the very ruins?"

"In that dungeon?" growled Handforth. "Thanks! If you can't suggest anything better than that—"

"Kindly permit me to finish," interrupted Browne.

"Towering above us there is a lofty edifice—in fact, the only section of the abbey ruins which is at all habitable. Above us, brothers, there is the tower-room. It is quite dry, there is a roof which does not leak, and its narrow windows command a view of the entire countryside."

"You mean—"

"I mean, Brother Nipper, that they will be on the spot—and yet they will have their liberty," said Browne. "They can sleep during the day, and remain on watch during the night. At present the nights are moonlit. From such a commanding position they can easily see if the enemy is approaching. I would suggest a third member of the party—to attend to the necessary details in case there has to be a sudden dash into the dungeon. This third party will also come in useful for listening-in to any stray scraps of villainous conversation which may develop. Then there might be a spot or two of tracking to be done."

"By George! It sounds good!" said Handforth eagerly.

"But who's to be the third chap?"

Browne looked thoughtful.

"We need, of course, an individual of high courage," he said. "We need an individual whose wits are razor keen."

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who can be relied upon to act like lightning if an emergency arrives. In a word, myself!"

"I thought that was coming," grinned Nipper. "Well, it's a good idea. You're just the chap, Browne."

Browne looked gratified.

"Then I will immediately see Brother Pagett, my Form-master, on my return to the school," he said. "No, on second thoughts, I shall give Brother Pagett a miss in baulk. He and I are not on the very best of terms. I shall see Brother Wilkes. I shall explain that I am reluctantly called away from school for a few days, and I shall then make an ostentatious departure, with my car burdened with immense packages."

"No need to overdo it," said Nipper.

"The immense packages, Brother Nipper, unknown to the innocent onlookers, will be filled with sheets, blankets, pillows, and so forth," explained Browne calmly. "Sundry trunks and suitcases will be laden with foodstuffs, cooking utensils, crockery, knives and forks, and so on. We must remember that Brothers Handy and Jerry will be in need of these things."

"Browne, old man, you're a genius!" said Handforth enthusiastically.

William Napoleon Browne shrugged.

"You're telling me!" he said, with calm serenity.

An Alarm in the Night!

WHEN Rutter got back to London he went straight to the great hotel where the Australian School had been staying. He found a long cablegram from Australia awaiting him; it had been sent on from the River House. This was no code message, but a straightforward wire from Mr. Bartholemew Easton, the eccentric uncle of the real Jim Sayers.

"Have heard disturbing reports concerning my nephew's conduct in England. If his disgraceful behaviour continues, I shall call you to account. What is the matter with the boy? Send me details at once."

"BARTHOLEMEW EASTON."

Mr. Rutter's eyes sparkled, and he chuckled.

"Certainly, Mr. Easton," he murmured. "I'll send you details—and I'll enclose a few Press cuttings, too. But you needn't think you can hold me responsible for what is happening."

He chuckled again, folded the telegram, and put it in his pocket—intending to show it to his schoolboy confederate later. He was well pleased. Things were going smoothly. Then he frowned. He had remembered the two prisoners in the ruins. Not so smoothly, perhaps! Well, those infernal brats had got themselves into that mess, and they must suffer the consequences.

Meanwhile, the Australian schoolboys had just finished a hearty meal, and they were feeling very lively. They had enjoyed the day's cricket, and now they had dismissed the Test match from their minds.

Curly Baines was looking quite mischievous, in fact, as he collected his chums round him. All the Australian stalwarts were there, including McVittie, the thin, lean youth from Geelong, Kennedy of Bourke; Ken, Rod, and Vic Taylor of Adelaide; Richards of Brisbane; and all the others. Even Jim Sayers was present, although he was so much in the background that the others scarcely noticed him.

"Well, coppers, we're supposed to go back to our school to-morrow," said Curly cheerfully.

"What do you mean—'supposed'?" asked Evans of Ballarat. "We're not staying in London longer, are we?"

"No; but I've been thinking," replied Curly. "I've got a bonzer idea. It's quite a time since we japed our doughty rivals at St. Frank's. They'll think we're losing our touch. Now, it's occurred to me that they'll be preparing something for us; they know that we're returning to-morrow, and they might be planning to give us a warm reception."

"Gee! That's possible," said McVittie. "We shall have to be wary, that's all."

"But to-night they're off their guard," continued Curly Baines dreamily. "I've been looking up the trains, chums. There's a very late train to Bannington; it gets in about midnight."

The others stared.

"Now, if we turn up at the River House at about one o'clock, the porter will let us in," continued Curly. "We shan't meet with any trouble there. Don't forget, there'll be no masters—because the masters aren't going down until to-morrow."

"But what's the good of getting to the school in the middle of the night?" demanded one of the others.

"Before we go to our own school we can go to St. Frank's," said Curly happily. "It seems to me that Nipper and his coppers always sleep too soundly. Now, you may



Mr. E. S. Brooks welcomes letters from readers.
Write to him c/o The Editor, The GEM, Fleetway
House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

NIPPER is not related in any way to Nelson Lee, B. Waite, Leeds. His real name is Richard Hamilton, and Nelson Lee is his legal guardian. It's quite true that nobody under the age of seventeen is permitted to have a driving licence for motor-cars in this country. Admittedly, Edward Oswald Handforth is not seventeen, and yet he drives a car. The fact is his father is an important man, and he succeeded in "wangling" things for Handy by having a special driving licence granted. This was quite fully explained in the story which featured Handforth's car for the first time.

Tony Cresswell is no longer at St. Frank's, R. W. H., Hull. When Bernard Forrest was expelled from St. Frank's he indulged in a little trickery, and fooled the "Beaks" into believing that he had reformed. In fact, he did actually perform a

remember that Farmer Holt's property is pretty close to St. Frank's, and Farmer Holt owns lots and lots of sheep."

"Sheep!" echoed all the others.
"To say nothing of cows and things," said Curly. "But I'm thinking mainly of the sheep. They're noisy things, sheep. They bleat quite loudly if they find themselves in unfamiliar surroundings—particularly at night."
"What exactly are you getting at?" asked Ken Taylor, grinning.

At St. Frank's, that same evening, William Napoleon Browne made his spectacular departure, according to programme.

Nipper had told Church and McClure all about it, and between them they had packed Browne's suitcases and trunks. Nobody else guessed a thing. When Browne drove away in his car there was much laughter, for his car was chock full of suitcases and trunks and parcels. He had talked vaguely of "going on a visit," and he let it go at that. If any other fellow had left with so much personal luggage, all sorts of inquisitive questions would have been asked. But Browne was a unique sort of chap, and his activities merely caused amusement.

Off he went, and, after taking a fairly long ride round the countryside—waiting for darkness to fall—he finally ended up near the abbey ruins. It was now intensely dark—just that hour after sunset before the moon rose. With Handforth and Jerry Dodd to help him, he transferred the stuff to the tower-room, and the young plotters were soon very comfortable indeed. They had blankets and pillows, and sufficient good food to last several days.

"The blankets are all right, of course," said Handforth. "But this stone floor will be pretty hard to sleep on, won't it?"

"I have no intention of sleeping on the hard stone floor, brother," replied Browne calmly. "Leave it to me."

He went off again—into Bannington. Here he garaged his car, and then visited a firm of sports outfitters. He purchased three air beds. They were made of rubberised canvas, and deflated were quite small. But when they were blown up they were as comfortable as feather beds. Browne did not mind doing a spot of detective work. But he believed in his comfort.

So when he returned to the ruins everything was all "set." In that lofty tower-room the watchers were in full command of the situation. In turns they could keep watch throughout the night hours; and if an alarm came, the two "prisoners" could nip down into the dungeon. Meanwhile, they could enjoy their liberty.

There was something about the whole adventure, too, which appealed to their schoolboy spirits. In any case, this was heaps better than perspiring in a stuffy class-room. And they always had the knowledge that Nipper was working outside. Soon Nelson Lee himself would be brought in.

It was a waiting game, and the two Australian rascals were being fooled up to the eyes.

St. Frank's went to bed as usual; there was no excitement amongst the juniors. Nobody had suggested japing the Australian boys on their return on the morrow. Nipper might have done so, but Nipper was busy with other matters just now.

very plucky and noble deed, and this earned him his second chance. With regard to Ralph Leslie Fullwood, he was certainly a rotter during his first few terms at St. Frank's. It was mainly owing to the influence of Clive Russell, the Canadian junior, that Fullwood dropped his bad ways. One of the Moor View girls, too, helped a good deal. Glad you are finding the "Names List" useful in compiling your own "collection," and in due course, after all the Fourth Formers have been mentioned, you will have the names of the most important fellows in the Sixth, Fifth and Third—and, naturally, the masters.

As we have just been talking about the "Names List," we'll shove No. 8 in here. Modern House, Fourth Form: Study No. 5, Horace Crowe, George Webb, Albert Crooke; Study No. 6, John Bunterfield Boots, Percy Bray, Walter Denny; Study No. 7, Walter Skelton, Eugene Ellmore; Study No. 8, Terence O'Grady, Herbert Vandayke; Studies 9 and 10—these, at the moment, are both unoccupied.

The "Monster Library," John Goodall, New Seaham, has been out of print for quite a long time, and I'm quite certain that you cannot obtain any copies through the newsgagents. They were published at 1s., and I think I know somebody who has duplicate copies of most numbers. I believe he values them at more than a shilling, as they have been out of print so long. I don't know whether he would be willing to part with any of his spare copies, but I could "tap" him on the subject if you are really keen on obtaining them.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

After lights out, then, the great school gradually settled down for the night. The harvest moon rose, shedding its silvery light over the picturesque buildings, over the Triangle, the Squares, and the adjacent playing fields. It was a warm, tranquil summer's night.

The juniors slept soundly, as usual. Nipper, for some reason, awoke unexpectedly. He found the moonlight streaming into his dormitory; and a glance at the luminous dial of his watch showed him that the time was five minutes to midnight. He turned over in bed, and settled himself for sleep again.

Baaaaa—baaaaa—baaaaaah! The bleating of sheep came to his ears with surprising distinctness. It was most unusual. Farmer Holt's nearest meadow was on the other side of Belton Lane, and he did not usually keep sheep in that meadow, anyhow.

Baaaa—baaaaa—baaaaaah! Sir Montie Tregellis-West and Tommy Watson, who shared the little dormitory with Nipper, stirred uneasily in their sleep. Sir Montie sat up, rubbing his eyes.

"Begad! What on earth is this frightful din?" he asked. "I went to sleep countin' sheep, an' I'm dashed if I can't hear the frightful things yet!"

A shout sounded from somewhere, and Nipper recognised the voice of Travers, in a neighbouring dormitory.

"Funny!" muttered Nipper. He jumped out of bed, and went to the window. Then he gasped.

"Here, you chaps!" he ejaculated, turning. "Come and look at this!"

Tregellis-West and Watson joined him. They stared. West Square, below them, was full of sheep!

Other fellows, awakened in the same way, made similar discoveries. The East Square was full of sheep, too! Sheep were wandering about the Triangle in scores, and they were all bleating noisily. Within ten minutes, the entire school was awake, and lights were springing up in many windows. Prefects were on the move; masters were being roused out.

In some unaccountable way, St. Frank's was full of sheep.

It was an extraordinary sight, in the moonlight, to see all the school buildings surrounded by dense flocks of sheep in continuous movement. They were wandering out of West Arch, and into East Arch; they were increasing their din, and the night air was throbbing with the sound.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" ejaculated Nipper, as he went to one of the front windows and looked out upon the Triangle. "How the dickens did all these sheep get into the school?"

Sheep, sheep, sheep—everywhere!

"Ha, ha, ha!" It was a soft sound of laughter, and it came from some where in the vague distance. Nipper started. He turned to Travers and Gresham, who were at the window with him.

"Did—did you hear that?" he asked tensely.

"The bleating?" asked Travers. "Dear old fellow, I've heard nothing else—"

"No, no!" said Nipper. "Somebody's laughing."

"Can they be blamed?" drawled Travers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It came again, floating on the tranquil summer breeze.

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"The Assies!" ejaculated Nipper, setting his teeth. "Don't you understand, you chaps? It's a jape! The sheep didn't get in here by accident! Curly Baines and his pals have got back to-night, instead of to-morrow, and they've shored all these sheep—"

"One moment!" interrupted Travers, with a sharp note in his voice. "Look over there!"

He pointed. From that window it was possible to see a corner of Little Side. In the moonlight, which was very bright, the juniors could see some big, lumbering shapes moving about.

"They're not sheep!" said Gresham, with a jump.

"Cows!" said Travers in an alarmed voice.

"Cows!" howled Harry Gresham. "Cows on Little Side! But—but the pitch—"

"Come on!" shouted Nipper.

A SHADOW OVER ST. JIM'S!

(Continued from page 22.)

"What is it, old chap?"

"You know how I treated you—"

"Don't speak of that now."

"I guess I must speak of it. You know how I've treated you rottenly—like a cad. But—but I want you—"

"Yes," Tom Merry bent to catch the faint words.

"What is it—anything?"

"I want you to stay with me till—till the end. It makes me feel better somehow to have you here."

"I shall be glad to stay, Lumley," Tom Merry's voice choked a little. "Lumley, old man, I wish I'd treated you better, too."

"Stuff!" said Lumley. "I only got what I deserved, but not enough of it. I guess it's all right. But if you think you can look over what I've done—and I've done a lot I'd like to recall now—"

"Of course—of course!"

"I know you're not the sort to bear malice, Tom Merry. But it makes me easier to hear you say it, all the same."

"And you'll forgive anything I've done, or said, that's caused you any pain," said Tom Merry, in a low voice.

"I've said that I guess I've never had as much as I deserved. That's all right. Sit down, Tom Merry; there's a chair there."

Tom Merry sat in the chair by the bedside. Even in that little matter he marked a change in the Outsider. Lumley was not wont to be so considerate to others.

Tom Merry sat by the bed, Lumley's hand still in his.

There was silence in the room. Dr. Holmes had spoken a few words to Lumley-Lumley, but the boy had not answered. He hardly seemed to hear.

A strange and terrible expression was coming over his face—an expression that Tom Merry, unversed as he was in such matters, thought he knew the meaning of.

The hand of the Outsider lay like a mass of lead in his own.

Was this the end?

Lumley was very still and silent.

In the stillness of the room, even the faint, barely audible ticking of the clock in the next chamber sounded oppressive. The branches of the elms without swayed and creaked, and every faint sound was heard.

Lumley's head stirred on the pillow.

His eyes turned towards Tom Merry.

Outside in the passage a group of juniors waited and watched in deep anxiety. They could not go. They felt

The news spread like lightning; crowds of wildly excited Removites dashed downstairs, taking no notice of prefects, who shouted to them. They flung open the doors, they fought their way through the sheep, and at last they reached the playing fields.

It was true. Their beloved Little Side was occupied by a great herd of cows! The pitch was ruined; the turf, almost every yard of it, was pocked with the indentations caused by the heavy animals' feet.

"The cads—the rotters!" shouted Nipper furiously. "They call this a jape, do they? They've ruined our cricket pitch—and on Saturday we have one of the most important games of the season!"

(Who has done this? Is it some more of Sayers' handiwork? Don't miss the exciting developments in next week's chapters.)

that they must remain till they knew the worst. They were very silent; only occasionally a faint whisper was audible.

In the sick-room the stillness was heavy. There the watchers of the sick-bed waited—they knew not for what.

The shadow of death had been hovering over the school; they were waiting for it to fall.

To fall, and to blot out the young life. To fall, and to drive out the gleam from those eyes that had always been cynical and mocking, but which were very soft now.

The boy's lips moved.

Tom Merry bent nearer.

"Merry—Tom Merry!"

"Yes."

"I—I—I'm sorry," said Lumley, low and faint—"sorry—for what—I've done amiss, Tom. I'm sorry. I've been a waster and a wanderer all my time. Now—I'm—going—home."

His lips were still.

His eyes closed.

Tom Merry still held his hand; but it felt like ice in his grasp. The junior was blind with tears.

"Lumley—Lumley, old man."

But the voice of the Outsider did not reply; his eyes did not open.

The Head took the still hand and released it from Tom Merry's grasp, and laid it gently upon the coverlet. It lay there like a stone.

"Merry, it is over. Go now, my lad!"

Tom Merry could not see clearly for the moment. He gazed at the still, white face through a mist of tears.

One last blurred look; but there came no answering look from the still face.

Tom Merry turned blindly away, and stumbled to the door.

He passed from the sick-room like one in a dream.

Outside in the passage the juniors were waiting—waiting with heavy hearts and shadowed faces. Blake grasped Tom Merry's wrists.

"Tom Merry, is it over?"

The hero of the Shell nodded in silence.

Jack Blake pressed his hand.

He did not speak. What was there to say? With silent footsteps the juniors moved away.

And within the sick chamber, with closed blinds and lowered lights, lay what had been Jerrold Lumley-Lumley—the Outsider of St. Jim's—now

"A thing

O'er which the raven flaps his funereal wings."

THE END.

(Next Wednesday—"THE BOY WHO CAME BACK!"—a sensational St. Jim's story featuring Ernest Levison, a newcomer to the school.)

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