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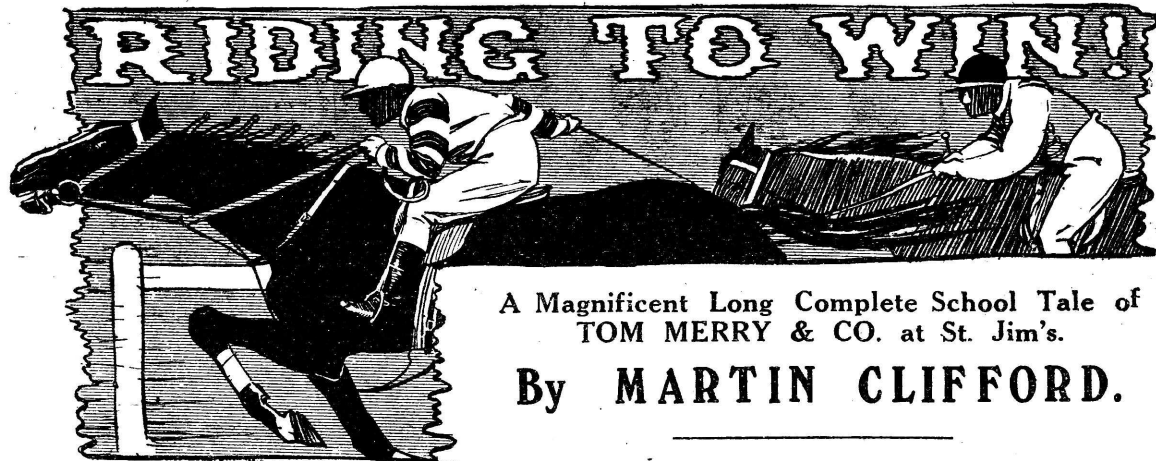


RIDING TO WIN!



THE END OF TRIMBLE'S JOY-RIDE!

(A Screamingly Funny Scene in the Splendid Long Complete School Tale in this Issue.) 31-5-19



A Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of
TOM MERRY & CO. at St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

For Old Times' Sake!

"WELL hit, sir!"
"Jolly good shot, Lumley!"
"Two more tiles off the gym roof!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Lumley's in fine form!"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth was certainly going great guns.

He was having ten minutes at the nets, getting into trim for the forthcoming match with Rookwood.

Not many fellows could have withstood the deadly bowling of Talbot, or the cunning deliveries of Jack Blake.

The little knot of spectators behind the nets expected to see Lumley's wicket wrecked at any moment.

But a straight bat met every ball, and occasionally, when Lumley leapt forward and smote, the spectators were visibly moved—and so were certain tiles on the roof of the gymnasium.

Lumley-Lumley was a fellow who could do great things when he chose. The pity was that he didn't always choose. There were times when he could be positively brilliant, and this was one of them.

Jack Blake retired from the bowling-crease, mopping his brow with a handkerchief.

"I give it up," he said. "I can't shift the beggar for toffee!"

"If only he shows this form to-morrow against Rookwood," said Tom Merry, "they'll go back with their tails between their legs."

"Yes, rather!"

Lumley-Lumley reached the end of his ten minutes still unbeaten, and handed his bat to Manners with a smile. There was a healthy flush on his cheeks, too, and his eyes were sparkling.

For Lumley no longer went on the razze, or enjoyed "little flutters" at the Green Man and similar houses of refreshment—and ruin. He was playing a clean and steady game, and was surprised to find how much more pleasure and satisfaction it gave him than the old way of living.

"Well played, kid!" said Kildare of the Sixth, as the junior came off the pitch. "You made some very fine hits."

"They were howling flukes, most of 'em," said Lumley, with a laugh; and then he passed on, to stumble into Knox.

The cad of the Sixth was in one of his black moods. He had reasons of his own for not wishing Lumley to go straight, and his feelings towards the junior were very bitter.

"You've been smashing tiles, I see," said Knox, pointing to the little heap of broken slates near the wall of the gym. "I s'pose you know you'll have to pay for the damage?"

"Rats!"

"If you say 'Rats' to me——" began Knox wrathfully.

"More rats!"

Knox clenched his hands, and would probably have proceeded to hurl himself upon the exasperating Lumley had not Kildare been standing in the vicinity.

"Take a hundred lines for impertinence!" he hissed. "And mind they're finished by to-morrow afternoon!"

"All serene!" said Lumley; and he strolled away.

If the future held nothing worse than a hundred lines there would be precious little to grumble about, he reflected.

He went along to the study which he shared with Wyatt, and pounced upon a letter which lay upon the table.

It was addressed to him, and the handwriting was familiar.

"Little Steve!" exclaimed Lumley, in great excitement. "Wonder what he's doing over here?"

Stephen Glover, one of America's leading jockeys, was perhaps the greatest friend the Lumley-Lumley family had ever had. As a rule, they didn't specialise in friendships, but Steve was an exception.

On the American ranch where, in the old days, Lumley-Lumley and his father had fought tooth and nail for existence—in the days when Mr. Lumley-Lumley had not yet come into his fortune—Little Steve had been their constant companion. He had served them faithfully, shared all their hardships, been gay when they were glad, and sympathetic when things went wrong; and, with his superior knowledge of horsemanship, he had taught Lumley-Lumley how to ride.

And now he had broken a long silence by writing to Lumley.

Something very important must be under way, the junior felt, for Little Steve wasn't in the habit of writing sweet nothings.

Lumley leaned back in the armchair and read the letter, his excitement increasing as he did so.

"The County Hospital,
Wayland, Sussex.

"Dear Jerrold,—Awfully sorry to have neglected you for such an age, but things move so swiftly in these days that one sort of gets out of touch with pals.

"For the past three months I've been leading jockey to Sir Charles Dexter, and have netted him a bunch of big wins

Yesterday, however, I came rather a nasty cropper, and am in hospital here with a broken leg.

"I'm not whining at this. I suppose fellows in our profession must expect to get it in the neck now and again. But it's unfortunate, coming as it does within a few days of the race for the Loamshire Stakes. I feel very upset at being crooked, because I was hoping to ride True Blue for the gov'nor, and to romp home. Sir Charles is an awfully good sort, and it's the biggest race of the season.

"I expect you'll think I've got an axe to grind in writing this letter—and so I have. I want you, old boy, to do a very big thing for me. Will you ride True Blue in my place? It can easily be wangled with the stable-hands, and Sir Charles doesn't know I'm badly hurt. In jockey's togs nearly all men look alike, so you ought to get through without being spotted.

"I am aware that I'm asking you to undertake a very risky game; but I know you too well to think you'll fail me. For old acquaintance' sake, you know!

"Try and get over to see me to-morrow afternoon, and I'll go into things more thoroughly with you.

"Meanwhile, believe me,

"Your friend as ever,

"STEVE."

The light of adventure gleamed in Lumley-Lumley's eyes as he tossed the letter back on to the table.

Of course, he could not fail Little Steve.

It was strictly contrary to school rules, he knew, to get mixed up with Turf dealings; but, dash it all, Little Steve had stood loyally by him in the old days, and had, on more than one occasion, actually saved his life.

It would be a delicate business.

There were fellows who would be quick to seize an opportunity of slandering him, and hinting that he was going back to his old wild ways. Oh, yes! Racke, and Mellish, and a few more, would not be backward in coming forward.

But Lumley didn't hesitate. His mind was fully made up; and he was already looking forward with great eagerness to the day when he should ride True Blue to victory in the Loamshire Stakes!

CHAPTER 2.

The Fellow Who Dared!

THE Terrible Three were at tea in their study when Lumley-Lumley strolled in.

"Squat down!" said Monty Lowther, jerking his thumb in the direc-

tion of the coal-scuttle. "If you're good you shall have a glass of barley-water!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Lumley moved restlessly from one foot to the other.

"It's about the cricket," he explained. "Well?" said Tom Merry.

"I shan't be able to turn out against Rookwood to-morrow."

Tom Merry regarded the speaker curiously.

"Something very important must have cropped up since you were at the nets, then," he said.

"It has. I've promised to call on a very old pal who's in Wayland Hospital."

"First time I've heard the Green Man called a hospital!" said Monty Lowther, with a chuckle.

"Don't be funny, Monty!" said Tom Merry sternly. "You know jolly well that Lumley's chucked his old games."

"I know that as well as you do!" growled Lowther. "Some fellows have got no sense of humour!"

"I'm sorry you can't turn out, Lumley!" said Tom Merry. "We were looking forward to another display of fireworks. Still, Brooke will make a jolly good substitute, and he's dying for a game."

Lumley nodded, and strolled out of the study.

He was sorry to miss the Rookwood match; but there were occasions when cricket had to take a back seat.

The next day, while Tom Merry & Co. were changing into their flannels, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley cycled over to Wayland, and dismounted at the gates of the County Hospital, one wing of which was being used for military purposes.

His luck was in.

It was within visiting-hours; and a group of convalescent Tommies, who had not yet fully recovered from war-time casualties, nodded him a cheery "Good-afternoon!"

After a brief delay, the St. Jim's junior was admitted to the ward where Little Steve lay.

The latter was alone in the room, and he welcomed Lumley with a cry of joy.

"Jerrold, old scout!"

"Steve!"

They clasped hands warmly.

"What did you think of my letter?" asked the jockey.

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"I guess it sort of bowled me over," he said. "It's a tough proposition, Steve!"

"I know! But"—the invalid threw out his arms appealingly—"you'll carry it through for me—won't you, Jerrold?"

"Of course!"

"You'll see the game through from start to finish?"

"Yes!"

"Then you're a real white man! Gosh! I don't know how to thank you for this! It means everything to me!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Lumley.

"What I'm going to do for you is a small thing, really, compared to what you've done for me. Matter of fact, I'm jolly glad to have the opportunity of levelling things up a bit. But, look here! We shall have to be jolly careful. I must be able to take True Blue out for a few trials, to get to know all her little ways. Can that be arranged?"

"Yep! I'll give you a note to Beckett, the trainer."

"And supposing Sir Charles Dexter comes chivvying round?"

"You can set your mind at rest on that score," said Steve. "He won't go near the course until the actual day of the race, and even then he won't smell a rat if you keep your cap pulled well down over your eyes. You're just about my build, too. And, besides, if True Blue wins—and she's got to win, Jerrold—Sir

Charles won't care tuppence who rode her. You see the point? The horse has got to win. Everything else is of small consequence."

Lumley nodded.

"What sort of opposition shall I be up against?" he asked.

"Well, there's only one horse you need worry about, and that's Desmond. She's owned by a galoot over in Ireland, and her chances will be fancied almost as much as True Blue's, I expect."

"I've heard Knox, one of our prefects, speak of Desmond," said Lumley-Lumley.

"She's one of his star turns, I believe. He backed her the other day, and was crowing because he'd made a fiver."

"Just keep your weather-eye open, that's all!" counselled Steve. "You'll be able to have a few mild canters on True Blue before the day of the race, and that'll give you a good idea of her mettle."

They were silent for some time.

"I'm sorry you're crooked, Steve!" blurted out Lumley, at length.

"So am I! I'd have given the world to have ridden True Blue to victory, I tell you! It was the biggest ambition of my life. But I feel tons happier now that I know you're going to take this on for me. I've more faith in you, Jerrold, than in a hundred professional jockeys. You'll go into the game with clean hands, and carry everything before you. That's your way. You inherited it from your dad, I believe. Everything he touched turned to gold. But, see here! If the risk is too great, and if you think there's a chance of your getting tripped up by some spying beast, and it might mean being sacked from St. Jim's, just say the word, and cry off! I don't want you to go running a halter round your neck!"

"I've considered everything, Steve. Leave it to me, old son, and I'll win through, or know the reason why!"

"Good enough!" murmured Little Steve. "Place your hand there!"

And the two friends, who had been brought together again after many years by such a strange turn of Fate's wheel, shook hands in solemn compact.

Lumley-Lumley stayed at the hospital for tea, during which meal he gleaned a variety of useful tips from the experienced jockey; and then, bidding Little Steve farewell, he cycled back through the leafy lanes, secretly glad that a ray of adventure had come into his existence once more.

But had he known of the numerous obstacles he would be called upon to face in this new adventure it is probable that Lumley-Lumley's outlook on life would have been a shade less cheerful, and his heart less light.

For, unknown to him at that moment, Knox of the Sixth was on the war-path; and that meant that there were breakers ahead!

CHAPTER 3.

The Lie Direct!

KNOX of the Sixth strode along the Fourth Form passage with gleaming eyes, like a beast of prey seeking what he might devour.

The corridor, as well as the studies, was deserted, for the Rookwood match was in full swing; and as Knox turned the handle of Lumley-Lumley's study, and entered, a mighty roar, louder than all the rest, announced to the world that some brilliant batting was in progress.

"The cheeky young sweep!" muttered Knox, who had come in quest of Lumley-Lumley. "He hasn't written my lines. My hat! I'll make him sit up for this!"

Inwardly, the prefect was rather glad

that he had caught Lumley-Lumley tripping.

He had a real case against him now, and he meant to make the most of it.

He was about to scribble on a slip of paper: "Report to me when you come in," when his eye was suddenly arrested by a letter which lay on the table.

It was addressed to Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, and the postmark was Wayland.

Prompted by curiosity, Knox kicked the door shut, and proceeded to read the letter.

It was the one which Lumley-Lumley had received the previous day from Little Steve, and which he had carelessly left on the table.

The gleam in Knox's eyes became more pronounced.

So this was the way the wind blew! Lumley-Lumley was having transactions with a jockey, was he?

Knox replaced the letter with a grim smile, and, availing himself of the arm-chair, proceeded to smoke a cigarette pending the arrival of Lumley-Lumley.

That cheerful junior sauntered into the study about an hour later. He was in good spirits, but the wind was taken out of his sails at the sight of the waiting prefect.

"You've come for my lines, Knox?" he said.

The prefect made a gesture of impatience.

"Never mind the lines now," he said. "I've something a jolly sight more important to jaw about. Where have you been?"

"Wayland!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Thought so," said Knox. "To see your pal Steve, I s'pose?"

Lumley gave a start.

"How did you know?" he stammered.

"How did you guess—"

Then his eye fell upon the letter, and he snatched it up with a shout of indignation.

"You rotter! You've been prying into my private correspondence!"

Knox shrugged his shoulders.

"If you leave your letters about for all the world to see," he said, "it's your funeral!"

"Hang you!" said Lumley passionately. "I s'pose you're going to report me now?"

"Not so fast, my son!" said Knox. "You should never jump to rash conclusions. I shan't report you—if you do as I ask, that is!"

Lumley caught his breath.

"What do you want me to do?" he burst out eagerly.

"In a nutshell," said Knox, "the thing is this. I've already put a small fortune on Desmond for the Loamshire Stakes. There isn't a horse that comes anywhere near Desmond's mark—except True Blue. And you've undertaken to ride that?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's where you can do me a good turn."

"How?"

"By deliberately losing the race, and giving Desmond a clear field!"

A wave of intense loathing for Knox swept across Lumley-Lumley's mind.

At that moment he had need of all his coolness, all his resource, to check himself from landing out with his left.

The utter unscrupulousness of the cad of the Sixth, who was prepared to sacrifice every shred of honour for his own personal ends, appalled even Lumley, who was not easily shocked.

With a great effort the junior fought down his natural impulse, and faced Knox calmly.

"Well," said the prefect, "are you going to carry this through for me? It's not asking a great deal of you. All

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you've got to do is to ride your very hardest till the last lap, and then let Desmond shoot ahead. It's as simple as pie, and nobody in the crowd will tumble to the game. And, if you like," added Knox, with a sudden burst of generosity, "I'll give you a fiver out of my winnings!"

"And what's going to happen if I refuse to do as you ask?"

Knox laughed harshly.

"You'll get it where the chicken got the chopper!" he said. "I've only got to tell the Head that you're riding the favourite in the Loamshire Stakes and he'll have several sorts of a fit. You'll be shot out of St. Jim's like a stone from a catapult! It's far from a pleasant prospect, kid!"

"And supposing I told the Head that you, too, had an interest in the race?"

"He wouldn't believe you! A prefect's word is always taken before a junior's—and especially a junior with such a black record as yours. There's no way out, Lumley. Either you agree to my terms, or refuse, and be ruined. Which is it to be?"

Lumley-Lumley looked the prefect squarely in the eyes.

"I'll do what you want," he said with deliberation. "I'll arrange for True Blue to lose."

"Well played!" said Knox. "You know which side your bread's buttered, I can see. You couldn't have done a more sensible thing. As for the lines I came in about, you can let 'em rip!"

"Thanks!" said Lumley.

Knox lounged out of the study in a very satisfied frame of mind.

He congratulated himself that he held all the cards.

The only horse which had been a serious rival to Desmond was now out of the running, for her jockey had undertaken to see that she would lose.

Little did Knox dream that Lumley had lied; but such was the case.

For Lumley-Lumley's intention to do the right thing by Little Steve had never wavered.

His determination to spur True Blue on to victory was stronger than ever.

CHAPTER 4.

Loyal to Lumley!

"WELLCOME, little strangers!" Monty Lowther addressed that cheery greeting to Jimmy Silver & Co., who had turned up on the St. Jim's cricket-ground wearing sunny smiles.

"We've come along to slaughter you!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "We mean to strew the hungry churchyard with your bones!"

"Perhaps!"

"You'll have all your work cut out," said Tom Merry, laughing. "You've never licked us on our own ground yet, and you're not likely to start now."

"Rats! We'll show you what Rookwood fellows can do when they're roused!"

"Hear, hear!" said Tommy Dodd.

The St. Jim's fellows were taking the field without Lumley-Lumley.

In the ordinary way Lumley's absence would not have mattered much. But he had shown such brilliant form lately that he would be missed on this occasion.

Dick Brooke was a good man, but he wasn't a patch on Lumley on current form.

Jimmy Silver won the toss.

"You'll put us in first, of course?" said Tom Merry.

The Rookwood captain grinned.

"I'm not quite potty yet," he said.

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"It's a good wicket, and we mean to make the most of it. Come on, Lovell!"

And the two Rookwooders went in to open the innings.

Play was fast from the outset.

Fatty Wynn bowled well. Some of his deliveries were deadly.

But Jimmy Silver and his partner were in excellent form. Nothing could shift them.

The score mounted apace.

"Alack! Alas!" groaned Monty Lowther. "We're in for a warm afternoon!"

"Afraid so, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "These beggars will take a deal of shiffin'!"

But they were shifted at last.

Jimmy Silver ran out to slog one of Fatty Wynn's balls to some point beyond the horizon, and the ball curled round his bat and crashed into the wicket.

"How's that?"

"I should be rather inclined to call it out!" grinned the umpire.

And Jimmy Silver wended his way to the pavilion.

Lovell was bowled the next over; but the mischief had been done.

Rookwood's score stood at 80 for two wickets—a very creditable display indeed.

In the field the St. Jim's fellows worked like niggers.

To be licked on their native heath by the Rookwooders would be little short of a tragedy.

Tom Merry & Co. felt that they must pull the game round somehow.

The batsmen continued to pile up runs.

Raby and Newcome and the three Tommies—Dodd, Cook, and Doyle—were all good bats, and even the wiles of Fatty Wynn were wasted upon them.

Dick Brooke, who was taking Lumley-Lumley's place, was very alert in the field, but he was a shade less smart than the absent junior.

Rookwood were dismissed at last—for 150.

Tom Merry gave a sigh of relief.

"I thought these beggars were going to make a week-end of it!" he said.

"As it is we've hardly got time to knock off the runs," said Manners. "Afraid it's going to be a draw."

Tom Merry & Co. were faced with an uphill fight, and they set about their task manfully.

The captain of the Shell hit out with vigour.

It was the only game to play now. Win or lose was a better policy than to let the game drag out in a draw.

Talbot batted well, too. He generally did.

Tom Merry's wicket fell with the score at 40; and Figgins, Jack Blake, and Redfern, batting more recklessly than usual, were disposed of in turn. But Talbot remained, putting a straight bat in front of everything.

The Saints were within twenty runs of victory when Brooke, the last man in, ran down the pavilion steps.

He had need to run, for only a few minutes remained for play.

"We can never do it!" muttered Jack Blake, watching from the pavilion. "The age of miracles is past."

Talbot was still batting. He had been at the wicket right through, as a matter of fact, and the strain had begun to tell upon him.

"Now, if only we had Lumley," sighed Tom Merry, as he watched Brooke tap a couple of deliveries back to the bowler, "our chances would be rosy. When Lumley gets going on a window-smashing campaign there's no

stopping him. I wish the silly ass hadn't wandered off to Wayland!"

Dick Brooke woke up towards the end of the over, and smote two 4's in swift succession.

But the effort came too late.

St. Jim's were still short of the required total when the time for drawing stumps came, and the match, which had been interesting throughout, ended in a draw.

After seeing Jimmy Silver & Co. off at the school gates, and solemnly vowing that they would not get off so lightly next time, the Terrible Three bumped into Baggy Trimble, who was rushing along in great haste, rolling from side to side like a Tank.

Manners fastened a vicelike grip on to the fat junior's ear.

"You clumsy porpoise!" he exclaimed. "What d'you mean by it?"

"Ow, ow, ow! Leggo my ear, you beast, or I won't tell you a word about Lumley!"

"Eh? What's that about Lumley?" asked Tom Merry.

Manners loosened his grip, and Trimble proceeded to explain.

"He's gone wrong again," he said. "The same old game, you know—horseracing and gambling, and all the rest of it."

"Rats!"

"Tell that to the Marines!"

"It's a fact," said Trimble. "I've no use for falsehoods!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Lowther.

"I happened to hear him jawing to Knox," Trimble went on. "There was a lot of plotting and planning going on, but I didn't quite catch everything. Of course, I'd never wilfully listen to other fellows' conversation. But of one thing I'm certain: Lumley's riding the favourite in the Loamshire Stakes on Saturday."

"What?"

"Sounds like a fairy tale," said Tom Merry. "Bump this prying toad!"

"Here, hands off! Leggo, you beasts!"

But the Terrible Three were out for scalps, and it was something more than an ordinary bumping that they inflicted on Baggy Trimble. That unhappy youth lay gasping on the flagstones like a punctured balloon.

"Fancy old Lumley riding the favourite!" grinned Monty Lowther. "He'd come to grief in the first minute."

"That's where you're wrong," said Tom Merry. "Lumley's a topping horseman. He was trained by one of the finest jockeys in America. Now I come to think of it, there may be a certain amount of truth in what that fat cad says."

"We'd better tackle Lumley on the subject," said Manners.

And the Terrible Three marched off to Lumley-Lumley's study.

"How did the game go?" asked Lumley.

"A draw," said Tom Merry. "With a little more ginger at the tail-end we'd have pulled through. I wish to goodness you could have postponed that Wayland stunt."

"So do I," said Lumley. "But a fellow can't go back on his old pals for the sake of a cricket-match. There are other things to live for besides cricket."

"Horseracing, for instance?" suggested Lowther.

Lumley flushed crimson.

"What are you driving at?" he exclaimed.

"It's like this, Lumley," said Tom

CHAPTER 5.

Lumley's Mysterious Behaviour.

THE Outsider—to give him the name by which Lumley-Lumley had generally been known in his more reckless days—thanked his lucky stars that he scraped through afternoon lessons next day without getting in the way of detention or impositions.

When the Fourth were dismissed, Lumley mounted his bicycle and sped away to the race-course.

He located the stables belonging to Sir Charles Dexter, and was cordially greeted by Beckett, the trainer.

"Steve's told me the little game," he said. "You're a tiptop jockey, I understand, sir?"

"You can cut out the 'sir,' and the compliment," said Lumley. "Where's

She settled down to Lumley from the start. Had he spoken harshly to her, or proceeded to violence, the horse would probably have become sullen and obstinate.

But Lumley had the art of being able to control her to the best advantage—by gentle persuasion rather than brute force. He was highly delighted with the result of the first ride.

True Blue was the last word in swift-ness, and did not easily tire.

"Well," said Beckett, half an hour later, "what's the verdict?"

"Why," said Lumley, his eyes shining, "she's a stunner! Of course, I didn't get as much out of her as I might have done, but in the actual race I shall go all out. My hat! Desmond must be a fine horse if she can hold a candle to True Blue!"

Merry. "Trimble came to us with a cock-and-bull yarn to the effect that you were riding the favourite in the Loamshire Stakes. At least, we hope it's a cock-and-bull yarn."

"Sorry to dash your hopes to the ground, then," said Lumley, "because it's true."

"True? Oh, my hat!"

The Terrible Three stopped short, and stared at the speaker in surprise and dismay.

"You'd better let me explain," said Lumley-Lumley. "I know I can trust you fellows not to split. I cut the cricket-match to-day because my pal, who was to have ridden True Blue in the Loamshire Stakes, is lying in hospital. I went over to see him, and we arranged that I should ride True Blue in his place."

"Phew! It's a big risk, isn't it?" said Tom Merry.

"Yes. But when you're passionately fond of a fellow, like I am of Little Steve, you're game to take every sort of risk that's going. Anyway, that's how I feel about it."

"By Jove!" said Manners. "I admire your spirit!"

"So there it is," said Lumley. "I expect my way of going on will seem very queer during the next few days; but you mustn't jump to the conclusion that I've gone on the razzle."

"We shall understand," said Tom Merry. "What's more, we'll come over to see the races on Saturday. Think you'll work the oracle all right?"

"I ought to," said Lumley, with a grin. "It won't be the first time I've been on a horse's back, by long chalks."

"Does Knox know about this business?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes, worse luck! He's backing Desmond heavily to win, and in order to keep him quiet I've told him that I'll do my best for him by letting Desmond shoot ahead of True Blue. Of course, I sha'n't do anything of the sort, really."

"You're a deep bounder," said Monty Lowther. "Personally, I don't give a tuppenny rap for horse-racing, but this case is different. I s'pose it means a lot to Little Steve?"

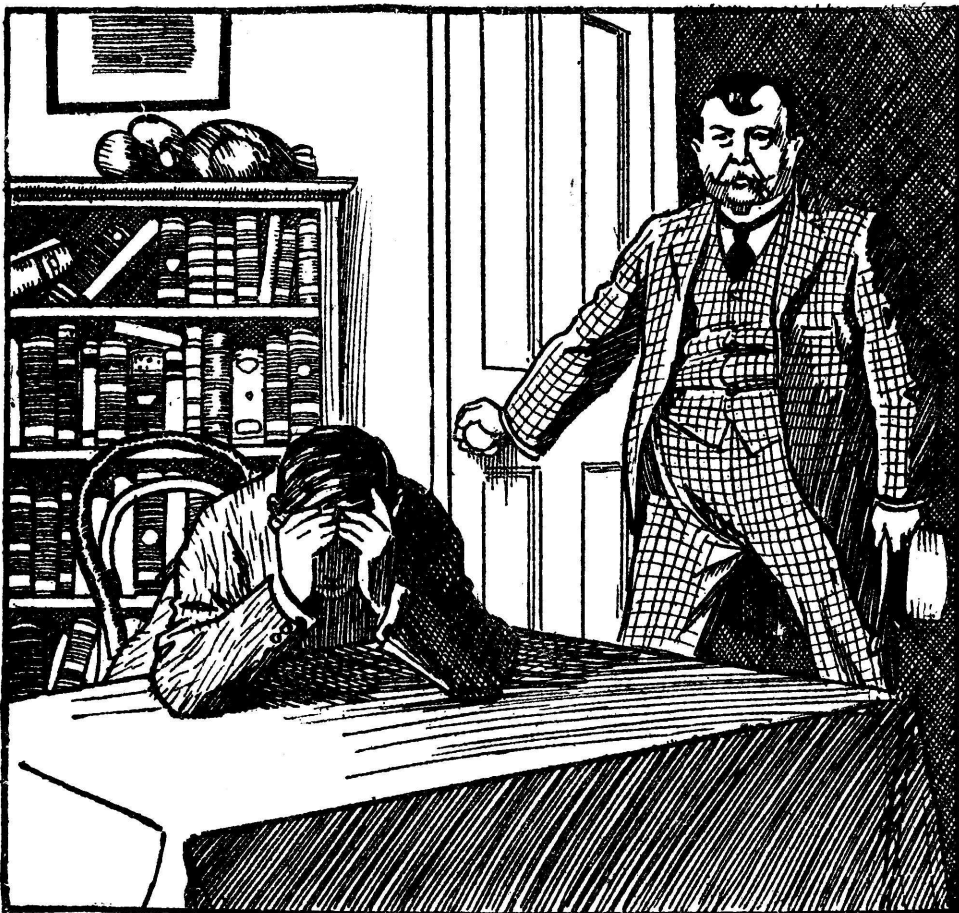
"It means everything," said Lumley simply. "And that's why I shall see this job through to the giddy end."

"And if you want any help," said Tom Merry, "rely on us."

"Yes, rather!" said Manners.

"And may you win hands down!" added Monty Lowther.

And Lumley, as he watched his visitors troop out of the study, felt devoutly thankful that he did not stand alone.



With a short cry of despair Knox sank down at the table and covered his face with his hands, as if to blot out something he dared not see. (See Chapter 10.)

this first-class, gilt-edged, eighteen-carat horse? I'm dying to put her through her paces."

"Better get into riding kit first," said the trainer. "It's all here ready. The stable hands are in the know, but they won't give you away."

"Good!" said Lumley.

He marvelled when he saw what manner of horse True Blue was.

She was indeed a noble animal, and contrasted very favourably with most of the specimens Lumley had seen in the days when he had made a speciality of going to race-meetings.

What was more, True Blue was an understanding creature.

"They're both top-notch," said Beckett. "The others will be 'also ran,' as sure as fate, and the race simply resolves itself into a neck-and-neck fight between True Blue and Desmond. When Little Steve got smashed up, our hopes went overboard; but now that the job rests in your hands, I know you'll move heaven and earth to come out on top."

"Thanks!" said Lumley. "When shall I come again for another canter?"

"To-morrow at this time, if you can manage it."

"All serene!"

Lumley nodded cheerfully to Beckett, and started on the ride back. He was so elated that he spun along recklessly; but

he was brought suddenly to his senses by a resounding pop.

Siz-z-z-z!

The front tyre had burst, and the air came rushing out.

It was a hopeless puncture, and Lumley ruefully decided to leave the machine at the little cycle store in Wayland, and return to St. Jim's on foot. This he did, going back by way of the woods in the cool of the evening.

It had been a day of thrills for him; but the string of adventures had not yet unwound itself to the full.

Passing through the thick undergrowth, close to a leafy glade, he became suddenly aware that two people were in conversation.

There was nothing very surprising in this; but when Lumley recognised Knox's voice, he halted and fell on all fours.

"Here you are, Banks," Knox was saying. "I put five quid on Desmond originally, and now I'm making it up to ten."

"Good biz!" said Mr. Banks approvingly.

His eyes gleamed at the sight of the crisp fiver, the twin brother of which was already nestling in his greasy pocket.

Fellows who put ten pounds on a horse were few and far between, and they were deserving of every encouragement, the bookmaker reflected.

"I only 'ope Desmond comes up to your expectations, Master Knox," said Banks, though he hoped nothing of the kind. "You'll be simply rollin' in riches if she romps 'ome."

"What-ho!" said Knox, with a chuckle.

"The silly ass!" muttered Lumley-Lumley to himself. "Ten quid going West! I shall have to step in and save his bacon. It's borrowed money, I expect, and if Knox doesn't get it back he'll come a fearful cropper."

The junior left the couple in conversation, and struck off towards St. Jim's by another route.

On reaching his study, he proceeded to write a letter—only a short note—which Mr. Banks received next morning, and acted upon. It ran as follows:

"St. Jim's.

"Dear Mr. Banks,—I have decided to transfer the ten pounds to True Blue, in place of Desmond. Please arrange this for me accordingly.—Yours,

"GERALD KNOX."

Lumley-Lumley's skill with the pen was such that he had forged Knox's handwriting so completely that Mr. Banks did not smell a rat.

The bookmaker made the necessary alteration, and all the time Knox, congratulating himself that he had struck a sure winner in Desmond, was blissfully unaware of the fact that his ten pounds had been placed not on the horse in question, but on True Blue!

And what Lumley-Lumley's little game was, and whether or no there was method in his madness, was known only to himself.

CHAPTER 6.

No Luck for Trimble!

LUMLEY-LUMLEY was the centre of much curiosity during the days that followed.

A good many fellows, thanks to Trimble's wagging tongue, were convinced that Lumley had grown tired of playing a straight game, and had gone back to his former habits and associations.

The mysterious manner in which he

disappeared from St. Jim's, his absent-mindedness in the Form-room, and the excited gleam in his eye, all lent colour to their convictions.

The Terrible Three guarded their secret well.

They assured Jack Blake & Co., and other doubting spirits in the Fourth, that Lumley's motives were honourable; but they were careful not to breathe a word about the forthcoming event, lest it should filter through to the hearing of one of the masters, in which case Lumley's fond scheme would be completely wrecked.

"It's hard to convince some of the fellows that you're playing with a straight bat," said Tom Merry to Lumley at breakfast one morning. "You seem to be in pretty bad odour, on the whole. Better let me break the news to one or two of the more reliable chaps. After all, it'll do you no harm to have somebody at your back in case of emergency."

So Lumley, on due deliberation, allowed the secret to be conveyed to three fellows whose word was as good as his bond. They were Talbot of the Shell, and Blake and D'Arcy of the Fourth.

As for Knox of the Sixth, he went through his daily round in a state of feverish impatience.

A great deal hung on the result of the race, so far as he was concerned.

He had been playing fast and loose of late, and had run up a considerable debt at the Green Man.

The landlord of that disreputable place was not prepared to wait indefinitely for settlement. He wanted it at once—spot cash, he told Knox at their last meeting; and ugly letters were beginning to arrive for the prefect, threatening all sorts of pains and penalties if he didn't speedily settle.

Knox had sailed pretty close to the wind many a time and oft, and now he was at the end of his tether.

If only Desmond won the Leamshire Stakes, he thought to himself, all would be well. Not only would he be able to settle his debt, but he would have a fine cash balance at his disposal.

And if Desmond lost?

Knox grew hot and cold by turns at the thought.

"If Lumley plays me up over this business, and gets me the sack," he muttered, "I'll drag him down to ruin as well! There'll be no escape for him! Jove, I wish Saturday were over! I believe this blessed suspense will drive me mad!"

Another person who took a deep interest in passing events was Baggy Trimble. His very ears were twitching with curiosity as to what was in the wind.

He had overheard part of the conversation between Knox and Lumley-Lumley on the subject of the race—but only a part. There were still certain details concerning which he was in the dark; and he meant to get to the root of the whole matter, if possible, with a view to being able to work off a blackmailing stunt on Lumley-Lumley.

But, although he kept his ears and eyes open during the next few days, and showed a marked affection for keyholes of all sorts and sizes, he was no wiser when the eve of the race came. Then he deemed it expedient to adopt more drastic measures.

"I'll track the beggar!" he murmured, when afternoon lessons were over. "He sha'n't be let out of my sight for a single giddy instant. That's the only way!"

When, therefore, Lumley-Lumley cycled out of the school gates a few moments later, Baggy Trimble calmly helped himself to Bernard Glyn's machine, and sped off in the Fourth-Former's wake.

Trimble was not a good cyclist. He was flabby and out of condition, and every downward pressure on the pedals brought beads of perspiration to his brow. But determination works wonders, and he just managed to keep his quarry in view as far as the gates of the County Hospital.

"So that's where he's going, is it?" panted Baggy. "I wonder what his little game is? He's going to have one tea here and another at St. Jim's. What a deep dodge! Anyway, I'll soon see if I'm right. Hero goes!"

The fat junior left the bicycle in the main gateway, and proceeded up the drive.

Then he stopped short, with an exclamation of dismay. On what grounds could he gain admission to the hospital?

Lumley-Lumley was probably very thick with one of the nurses, or something, and wangled it that way; but Trimble was without such influence.

If he tried to force an entry he would most likely be thrown out on his neck.

And then, as he stood there, a sudden inspiration came to him.

Why not masquerade as a wounded soldier?

In the porch, hung over a chair, was a suit of hospital blues—probably put there for the purpose of airing.

Baggy Trimble made a stealthy movement towards them, and ran as fast as he could to the conservatory, where he donned the suit over his Etons.

"Nobody's twigged me!" he muttered, glancing furtively out of the window. "This is great! Lemme see. I'll be private T. R. Imble, of the 10th Leamshires."

He lingered in the conservatory for a time; and then, seeing a party of convalescent Tommies entering the hospital at the conclusion of their afternoon stroll, he promptly joined them.

By wedging himself in the middle he would probably escape the observation of the nurses.

A few of the Tommies cast curious glances at the new-comer, but they said nothing.

New patients frequently arrived at the hospital, and Trimble's sudden appearance in their midst was not particularly amazing. He certainly looked anything but a soldier; still, theirs not to reason why.

Having got fairly inside the building, Baggy now began to consider his next move.

The hospital was apparently divided into two parts, one wing being set aside for civilian patients, and towards this wing the fat junior wended his way.

A brown-faced Anzac, approaching from the opposite direction, nodded to the impostor.

"Bullet wound or shrapnel, kid?" he jerked out.

"Both!" said Baggy; and bolted promptly up the stairs.

He was pausing to recover his breath when the sound of voices came to his ears through the open door of one of the wards.

"Everything's cut and dried, Steve," somebody was saying; and Trimble recognised the voice as Lumley-Lumley's. He flattened himself up against the wall, and listened.

"True Blue's in fine trim," Lumley went on. "I took her over the course yesterday, and she stuck it well."

"Good!" came in delighted tones from Little Steve. "Then you think there's every chance of your working the oracle to-morrow?"

"Yes, rather!"

Baggy Trimble felt himself quivering like a jelly in his excitement.

Peeping through the chink in the door,

he discerned a pair of crutches leaning against the bed.

Like a flash the truth dawned upon his brain.

True Blue's original rider was crooked, and that was why Lumley-Lumley was riding the favourite.

Evidently he and the fellow with the crutches were old pals.

Baggy Trimble strained his ears to catch more, but at that moment a strange and startling thing happened.

A stalwart giant, clad in a dressing-gown, came striding along the corridor.

"Where's my togs?" he kept shouting.

"I left 'em in the porch, and some beast has boned 'em. My stars! There'll be an explosion like Hill Sixty when I get on his track! Hi!" He broke off abruptly on sighting Baggy Trimble.

"Who the merry dickens are you?"

"Pup-pup-Private T. R. Imble!" stammered the unfortunate Baggy, longing for the floor to open and swallow him up.

"Private Imble, are yer? Hasn't nobody ever taught yer to keep yer 'ands from pickin' and stealin'? You're wearin' my blues, confound yer!"

And the incensed Tommy proceeded to shake the impostor till his teeth rattled.

"Yaroooooo! Dragimoff!" roared Trimble in terror.

"I tell you I'm Private Imble. I was wounded at Delville Wood, and at—"

"Wayland 'ospital!" said the Tommy grimly.

And he began to bump Trimble with merciless vigour on the floor of the corridor.

At the same instant Lumley-Lumley came rushing out to see what all the rumpus was about.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "This is quick work, Baggy! Since afternoon school you seem to have joined the Army, gone to France, got wounded—in spite of the fact that the war's over—and been shipped back to Blichty again, and put in hospital. Talk about hustle!"

The soldier in the dressing-gown glanced inquiringly at Lumley.

"Who owns this priceless barrel of lard?" he asked, pointing to the cowering Trimble.

"He's a cherished school-chum of mine," said Lumley. "I expect he came along with the object of keeping a fatherly eye on me."

"He don't seem to 'ave much regard for the Eighth Commandment, either," said the Tommy. "Fancy bonin' my 'ospital blues! Why, I should 'ave 'ad to take my week-end constitutionals in a dressin'-gown! It don't bear thinkin' of!"

Trimble scrambled hastily out of his borrowed plumes, hurled them at their owner, and made a blind rush for the staircase.

Various doors were thrown open along the corridor, and various boots helped Trimble on his way.

He went rolling down the stairs, gathering impetus as he went, and bowling the head matron over en route.

And as he limped slowly and painfully back to St. Jim's a few moments later—being too sore to ride Bernard Glyn's bicycle—he began to see a certain measure of wisdom in the old saying about fools rushing in where angels fear to tread.

CHAPTER 7.

Good-bye, Virginia!

SEVERAL fellows at St. Jim's had begun to think that the day of the race would never dawn. But it did, and Lumley-Lumley was ready. The excitement under which he had been labouring slipped away from

him like a mask, leaving him calm and self-controlled.

Deep down within him was the feeling that he was sure to win. Such a feeling sometimes comes to a football team before the game, and they invariably make hay of the opposition.

Baggy Trimble, despite the rough handling he had received the day before, was still burning with curiosity, and he had Lumley-Lumley under close observation the whole of the morning.

But at dinner-time Lumley was nowhere to be seen.

Unknown to any of the other fellows, he had arranged for a taxi to wait for him in the lane near the school, and had thus been able to speed over to Wayland without much trouble.

"Rotten luck!" muttered Trimble. "He seems to have gone right off the map. Still, there's Knox left. He's in the swim as well, from what I can make out, so I might as well track him."

Trimble had no difficulty in doing this, for after dinner the School House prefect, conspicuous in a flaming necktie and the very latest brand in silk socks, was seen to be crossing the quad.

The fat junior hurried after him.

To his dismay, however, he saw Knox bring out a bicycle from the shed.

"He's going to ride!" exclaimed Baggy, in tones of annoyance. "That's awful! I left Bernard Glyn's bike at Wayland, and the rest of the fellows are using theirs."

There was not even the shadow of a bicycle in the shed.

Tom Merry & Co., and Jack Blake, D'Arcy, and Talbot had already disappeared, in all the glory of their knickers and cycling stockings.

What was to be done?

Already Knox was out of the school gates, and Trimble saw him take the road to Wayland.

"He's going to the races, for a cert!" murmured the fat junior. "Wonder what he'll do when he gets there? I simply must catch him up somehow, or I shall miss the most important part."

He ran down to the gates, his fat little legs going like clockwork.

Passing along the road was a greengrocer's cart, loaded up with cabbages and cauliflowers.

The driver was a stolid rustic, who stared straight ahead, and would not be likely to notice anyone climbing up into the cart from the rear.

"Here goes!" said Trimble. "There's just room for me at the extreme end."

By a great effort—for he was neither an athlete nor an acrobat—Trimble scrambled up into the back of the cart.

Dozens of huge cauliflowers screened him completely from the view of the driver, even if the latter should look round. The horse was of the nimble variety, and made rattling progress.

Peeping round the edge of the cart occasionally, Trimble could distinguish Knox riding on ahead.

He chuckled to himself with intense satisfaction.

"I'm in clover!" he chortled. "I don't like these blessed earwigs and things that keep crawling about, though. Ugh! There's one gone up my trouser-leg. Never mind! I won't be put off my stroke by a mouldy earwig!"

The cart rattled along the road at a rare pace, but on reaching Wayland it was compelled to slow up considerably.

The crush in the little market town was terrific.

Young men and maidens, old men and children, bookmakers and ice-cream vendors, organ-grinders, and small boys chewing spearmint, all thronged towards the racecourse.

Bicycle-bells were clanging, cars were

hooting, pet corns were trodden on in abundance, and the only man who seemed to be immune from the crush was an Air Force pilot, who was leisurely taking the air in a single-seater machine, looping the loop occasionally by way of relieving the monotony.

"Groot! I shall lose Knox altogether now," growled Trimble. "He's swallowed up in this crush. Get off the earth, you cheeky brat!"

The last remark was addressed to a small youth in patched trousers, who was aiding and abetting a crowd of his comrades to swarm up into the cart.

Baggy Trimble launched out with his foot, and the invaders retreated in disorder.

Meanwhile, the country yokel in charge of the cart had succeeded in getting the crowd's back up.

Greengrocers' carts, especially when they try to plough a passage through very crowded thoroughfares, are an abomination.

"Get over the way!" roared a big, broad-shouldered man, who had just managed to dodge the horse's hoofs. "Can't you see you're takin' up all the road?"

The rustic, in reply, gave the broad-shouldered one a playful cut with his whip, and told him not to be naughty.

That did it, of course.

"Bert! Joe! Alf!" shouted the enraged victim. "Elp me put it across this beauty!"

And a score of rough-looking louts made a combined rush for the cart.

They hauled the driver down and wiped their boots on him; they took the horse out of the shafts; and then they did something which Baggy Trimble would not forget till his dying day.

"Up she goes, boys!" bellowed the leader.

The cart was tilted up, and, with a wild cry of anguish, Baggy Trimble shot out into the roadway.

Then, before he could sit up and get his bearings, there came a sound as of a rushing mighty wind, and a massed army of cauliflowers and other green-stuffs came hurtling down from the cart.

The next moment Baggy Trimble was invisible.

There was not even a little wooden cross to mark the spot where he had fallen—nothing save a huge pyramid of cauliflowers, which towered in might against the summer sky.

Behind this pyramid, holding their sides with laughter, stood a party of St. Jim's juniors, with their bicycles. They were the Terrible Three, and Jack Blake, D'Arcy, and Talbot.

"No good stopping here for excavation purposes," said Tom Merry. "We mustn't miss the big race on any account."

"No fear!" said Manners.

And, as they passed the scene of the wreckage, Monty Lowther sang, in a shrill falsetto:

"Thou art lost and gone for ever,
Oh, my darling Clementine!"

CHAPTER 8.

The Race is to the Swift!

"HERE we are!" said Tom Merry, as the little party from St. Jim's fought their way on to the race-course.

"And a packed house," said Monty Lowther. "Gee, what a crush!"

Seats were out of the question; but the juniors managed to secure standing-room at a spot which commanded a good view of the course.

The first race was already being run, and the favourite outran all the rest,

and romped home several lengths to the good.

Was this a premonition that the favourite in the three o'clock race would also prove successful?

"I can't say I'm in love with this sort of game," said Jack Blake. "Horse-racing doesn't appeal to me, somehow."

The others felt the same. "Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy suddenly. "Look, dear boys! There's Knox!"

All eyes were turned on the prefect. He was looking very pale, and was clenching and unclenching his hands.

It was obvious that he took more than a passing interest in the three o'clock race, which was now beginning to loom ominously near.

"He's spotted us!" said Manners. "And he's not best pleased that we're here, either!" said Tom Merry. "He's looking as black as fury!"

"Chcer-ho, Knox!" sang out Monty Lowther. "Pleasant sort of afternoon—what?"

Knox edged closer to the juniors. "What are you doing here?" he hissed.

"Drinking in the delicious view," murmured Monty Lowther. "Only needs a bottle of Burgundy to make it complete. Trot one out, old sport!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "You'd better mind your eye!" growled Knox. "I'm not disposed to stand any cheek from you. If you're not careful I shall have something to say to the Head when I get back. Six juniors at a race-meeting! It would make a pretty story!"

"What about yourself?" threw in Manners. "We could make things jolly warm for you, with so many witnesses!"

"Yaas, wathah! You had bettah be a bit more disweet, Knox, or else—"

But Gussy's threat missed fire. Knox had turned away, trembling from head to foot.

The three o'clock runners were getting into line.

Tom Merry & Co. shared in Knox's excitement, though their consciences were considerably more easy.

"Look out for blue-and-white!" said Talbot. "That's True Blue's colours!"

"There she is," muttered Manners, "and there's Lumley! I can just recognise him under the cap!"

"It must be a great moment for him," said Tom Merry, in awed tones. "I wouldn't be in his place for a pension!"

"Nor I!" said Monty Lowther. Then he broke off abruptly, as the jockeys bent over their horses.

"Now they're off!"

At first nobody had any eyes for anything save the horse with the blue-and-white colours, which set the pace at the outset, and continued to maintain it admirably.

"Lumley's the man!" said Jack Blake delightedly. "My hat! Just fancy him holding the field against a crowd of experienced jockeys! There isn't another horse in the running!"

"Don't be too sure!" said the watchful Talbot. "Look at the shamrock-green coming up behind. Which horse is that?"

"Desmond," said Manners. "She's the second favourite."

"It'll be touch-and-go," said Talbot. "She's gaining ground hand-over-fist."

The race had resolved itself, as the experts had anticipated, into a tussle between True Blue and Desmond.

The other competitors were nowhere, and for all practical purposes they might just as well have remained at the starting-post.

Lumley-Lumley was putting all his heart and soul into the business.

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He knew that, if he won, there would be little to spare. He had seen Desmond, and he had seen her jockey; and he knew now why Knox had been so eager to back her.

The last lap! Lumley set his teeth, spurred his horse on for a final spurt, and hoped for the best.

The swift, pattering sound close behind him told him that Desmond was gaining. Yes, and winning, too!

"It's all up!" he muttered, as the shamrock-green flashed by him. But his fears were false.

Desmond's effort had been made a second too late, for True Blue had already passed the post when the rival horse overhauled her.

Lumley-Lumley became conscious of a mighty, deafening roar.

Dimly, as in a dream, he realised that willing hands were leading True Blue away to the stables; and then he saw a distinguished-looking man, with iron-grey hair, run forward as if to congratulate him, and stop short in blank amazement.

Meanwhile, another drama was taking place in that small section of the crowd which comprised Tom Merry & Co., and Knox, the prefect.

The expression on the face of the latter was almost fiendish.

All his fond dreams—so far as he was aware—were shattered.

Lumley had played him false! At first he was almost stunned by the shock. Then the full vent of his fury was turned upon the juniors, who, in

their elation at Lumley's victory, were waving their caps wildly in the air, and giving expression to their feelings by means of lusty cheers.

"You will return to the school with me at once, all of you!" snarled Knox.

"Bai Jove! I wergard that wemark as bein' extwemely wude—"

In his blind rage Knox gripped Gussy by the collar. "You're coming with me—right now!" he said thickly.

D'Arcy's chums were not standing that at any price.

Moved by the same impulse, they launched themselves at the prefect, who was compelled to abandon his hold of Gussy.

In the scrimmage which followed Knox had a very sorry time. He finished up on his back in a cloud of dust, and half a dozen young and not unweighty bodies sprawled on top of him.

"Give the beast a bumping!" said Jack Blake. "We'll teach him to lay his unclean maulers on our one and only Gussy!"

And Knox, storming and raving and threatening, was bumped repeatedly and soundly, to the immense enjoyment of an admiring crowd.

When he eventually picked himself up his face was livid.

"You've kicked right over the traces this time!" he spluttered. "It'll mean the sack for you! I shall go straight to the Head, and report you for betting and brawling at a race-course, and for assaulting a prefect!"

"And how are you going to explain away the fact that you were here?" asked Tom Merry.

"I came here for the purpose of seeing what you were up to!"

"Rats!" "Go and eat coke!"

Knox went—not to eat coke, but to lay his concocted story before the Head.

Reckless of all risk to himself, and having no object in life just then but to make things as hot as possible for Tom Merry & Co. and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, Knox turned savagely on his heel, and was speedily swallowed up in the crowd.

CHAPTER 9.

In at the Death!

"AND who are you, pray?" The distinguished-looking gentleman who had hastened forward to congratulate True

Blue's jockey had recovered from his stupefaction, and his eyes, with a half-amused, half-angry expression, were fixed inquiringly upon Lumley-Lumley.

"I'm one of Sir Charles Dexter's jockeys," said Lumley evasively.

"Indeed! Then I must have employed you with my eyes shut. This is a clever masquerade, my boy, but you had better drop it before you get deeper into the mire. It may interest you to know that I am Sir Charles Dexter."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Lumley. He had hoped to get clear of the course before the baronet put in an appearance.

But there was no escape for him now. To make a clean breast of things seemed to be the only way out.

"I'll tell you the whole story, sir!" he blurted out desperately. "If you'd like to hear it, that is?"

"Yes, yes! Fire away!" Lumley-Lumley then proceeded to recount all that had happened since Little Steve had been crooked and taken to hospital.

He told Sir Charles that Little Steve was the finest pal any fellow ever had; how they had conspired together to win the race; and how all opposition had been trampled down and victory made

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sure. To all of which Sir Charles listened in blank amazement.

"This is extraordinary!" he gasped, when Lumley had finished. "It sounds more like a romance than anything else. But—but who are you, my boy? Do you mean to tell me that you are not a jockey by profession?"

"No, sir. My name's Lumley-Lumley, and I belong to the Fourth Form at St. Jim's."

The baronet jumped.

"St. Jim's! Great snakes!" he exclaimed.

"Do you know St. Jim's, then, sir?" asked Lumley meekly.

"Know it? Oh, no!" said Sir Charles, with crushing sarcasm. "I merely happen to be a governor of the place, and spent five of the happiest years of my life there when I was a kid. But I didn't know the school was a breeding-ground for brilliant jockeys. Give me your fist, boy! I like your style!"

And Lumley felt, as he shook hands, that Little Steve's glowing description of the sporting baronet was well justified.

He had expected anything but this.

Had Sir Charles been a narrow-minded man the result of Lumley's deception would have been quite the reverse.

At that moment Tom Merry & Co. burst into view. They had been hunting for Lumley.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Jack Blake, in ringing tones. "Bravo, Lumley, old man! You pulled it off a treat! It was a sight for the gods, to see you riding True Blue!"

"Yaas, bai Jove! I should have been hard pressed to put up a better show myself!" said Arthur Augustus modestly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fat's in the fire now, though!" said Tom Merry seriously. "What do you think? Knox has gone to report us to the Head!"

"Eh? What's that?" interposed Sir Charles Dexter. "Who's Knox, and on what grounds is he going to report you?"

Tom Merry turned to the speaker. "He's a prefect," he explained; "and a holy terror at that. He'll report Lumley for riding one of Sir Charles Dexter's horses in a race, and we shall get it in the neck for being on the course at the time."

The baronet nearly choked.

"The hound!" he exclaimed angrily. "He's trying to steal a march on you—what? Doubtless he hopes to bring about your expulsion from the school, for I am aware that the presence of a handful of boys at a race-meeting is viewed as a very serious offence by the authorities. In this case, however, there is no reason why any of you should be punished. Lumley-Lumley has performed a most

noble and unselfish action, at the request of an old friend, and I will make it my duty, as a governor of the school, to see that no single one of you is the loser over this business. You had better squeeze yourselves into my Daimler, and I'll drive you back to St. Jim's!"

"Weally, that's awfully sportin' of you, Sir Charles!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Nonsense! In you get, and we'll be through with this little affair in next to no time!"

The juniors clambered into the big car, almost hugging themselves with delight.

In their hearts they had been a trifle uneasy as to the result of Knox's report. The Head would be almost certain to

Truly, as Monty Lowther remarked, things were getting interesting.

CHAPTER 10.

The Price of Folly!

"GOOD-AFTERNOON, Sir Charles!" said the Head, rising. "I regret that you have arrived at so unfortunate a moment."

"Unfortunate? I'm afraid I don't understand," said the baronet.

"Then I will make things clear to you. Knox, here, has convicted these juniors on a charge of gambling and brawling at a race-course. An additional charge rests against Lumley-Lumley, on the grounds



Knox crouched low, ready to take the spring. The engine thundered by him, and then, timing himself to land on the footboard beside the rear carriage, Knox took the leap. (See Chapter 11.)

swallow it, in which case he would come down very heavy.

Sir Charles Dexter drove his car with unerring skill along the crowded stretch of road, and finally drew up in style at the gates of St. Jim's.

Taggles, the porter, recognising the governor, touched his cap respectfully, and threw the gates open wide, afterwards catching with amazing dexterity the half-crown which the baronet hurled at him.

Then the car flashed through the quad, and, glancing through the open window of the Head's study, the juniors could see Knox pouring out his tale of woe.

Both Dr. Holmes and the prefect had the surprise of their lives when, a moment later, Sir Charles Dexter came stamping in, with seven cheerful-looking juniors in his wake.

that he took part in one of the races, having actually ridden the favourite. In view of this weighty evidence, I have resolved to take the following steps, Sir Charles, in the interests of the welfare of this school—unless, of course, these juniors can render a satisfactory explanation of their conduct, which, I fear, they will find difficult. I shall expel Lumley-Lumley, and the others will be severely flogged!"

Sir Charles smiled blandly.

"You evidently don't mean to let the grass grow under your feet, Dr. Holmes," he said. "Perhaps, before taking such drastic action as you suggest, you will give me a brief hearing. It is true that Lumley-Lumley rode the favourite for the Loamshire Stakes; it is true that the rest of these boys were

present on the course; but to say that they were gambling and brawling is a lie—an infamous and cowardly lie!"

Knox turned almost green.

Just when he had been on the point of thoroughly convincing Dr. Holmes of the juniors' guilt, when he had imagined his revenge was complete, the owner of the winning horse had butted in.

And he was a Governor of St. Jim's!

"One can only conclude," went on Sir Charles relentlessly, "that Knox has tried to make things as black as possible against these boys, not from a sense of duty, but from feelings of personal spite. If any punishment is to be administered in this matter, then it is Knox who should bear it. To all intents and purposes these juniors are guiltless."

"Pardon me, Sir Charles," said the Head, "I have no wish to make myself objectionable, but I quite fail to see how a boy who deliberately visits a race-course, with the object of riding one of the horses, can be described as guiltless."

"Wait," said Sir Charles, with a smile. "Lumley-Lumley did all this not from perverse motives, but from a desire to render service to a friend of very long standing, to whom he owes a great deal—even his life, in fact. I know the lad in question—Stephen Glover, his name is—and there isn't a finer and straighter sportsman living. He has been my leading jockey for some time, but, in consequence of an injury, he was unable to take part in the Loamshire Stakes. It worried him a good deal, because he knew that I had set my heart on scoring the greatest triumph of the season, and he asked Lumley to come to the rescue, which the boy did. I ask you, what finer example of true comradeship could you wish to have?"

There was a murmur of applause from Tom Merry & Co.

"In my opinion," Sir Charles went on, "Lumley has behaved splendidly. I think a lot more of him, in these circumstances, than if he had backed out through fear of a flogging, or something of that sort."

"I believe this yarn about the self-sacrificing hero is all a fake!" snarled Knox.

"Be silent, sir!" The baronet's voice rang out so sternly that Knox jumped. "You have already blackguarded these boys to an almost unpardonable extent, and I will hear no more of it. Well, Dr. Holmes, what do you propose to do?"

The Head smiled.

"Your explanation, Sir Charles, has altered the whole complexion of things," he said. "I heartily agree with you in your opinion of Lumley. He has broken one of the rules of the school, and so have the others; but there are extenuating circumstances, and I do not think it necessary to punish them."

"Cheers!" murmured Monty Lowther delightedly.

Tom Merry stepped forward, and addressed the baronet.

"We're awfully grateful to you, sir!" he said. "But for you we should have been booked for a rotten time. You see, the odds were heavily against us."

"Yaas, vathah! We are weally awfully bucked!" chimed in the swell of St. Jim's.

Knox turned to go. Every remark the juniors made cut him like a knife.

He was slinking through the doorway, when the Head called him back.

"One moment, Knox! You are deserving of very strong censure for the part you have played in this matter. It seems that you were actuated by spiteful motives, and had no scruples in departing from the truth in order to gain your

ends. I shall not punish you, because I think the complete failure of your plans for getting these boys into trouble is punishment enough. But you must mend your ways if you wish to remain a prefect at this school. I will not tolerate anything that savours of unfairness."

"Hear, hear!" said Sir Charles, lighting a cigar. "If there is any further attempt on your part to get these boys into trouble without good cause, you'll hear from me!"

Thus admonished in the presence of the juniors he hated so bitterly, Knox, choking with rage, stumbled out of the study.

He had lost—lost all along the line! But there was worse to come.

What of his debt at the Green Man?

How could he possibly hope to wriggle out of his tight predicament?

The toils were closing in upon him, and the day of reckoning seemed close at hand.

And it was all through Lumley! Lumley had defied him. He had broken his word, and, instead of letting Desmond overtake him in the last lap, as arranged, he had gone all out and won the race for himself.

As he paced moodily up and down in his study, like a caged beast, the thoughts of the cad of the Sixth were blacker than the blackest midnight.

"It means ruin!" he muttered savagely. "Nothing more nor less. My number's up now! Heavens! I'd give anything to get out of this mess! But it's too late now!"

Even as he spoke there came a knock at the door of the study.

"Come in!" growled Knox.

The next moment the oily, shining face of Banks, the bookmaker, inserted itself in the doorway, and it appeared to Knox to be the face of a demon in a nightmare.

With a short cry of despair the prefect sank down at the table and covered his face with his hands, as if to blot out something he dared not see.

Verily, the way of the transgressor is hard!

CHAPTER 11.

The Coward's Part.

KNOX was completely unnerved.

He did not dream that Mr. Banks' sudden call was for any other purpose than that of demanding prompt payment of his debt.

The prefect hadn't a penny to his name. The raising of the ten pounds to put on Desmond had left him destitute.

He knew that Banks would not be prepared to grant him any grace.

The bookmaker would have no compunction in marching in to the Head and laying the whole matter before him. He wouldn't get his money even then; but he would ruin Knox, and gain a certain amount of satisfaction that way.

The thought of expulsion quite overwhelmed Knox. He knew he lacked the courage to face such a calamity.

After all his high-handedness, and the supreme contempt he had shown for many of his schoolfellows, he could not stand being humiliated before them.

A sudden wave of fury swept over him. Scarcely knowing what he was doing, he sprang to his feet and advanced towards Banks, who was in the act of lounging into the room.

"So you think you've got me beaten?" said the prefect thickly. "You may be right. Still, I'm not going under without giving you something to remember me by! Take that!"

"Why, my dear fellow——" said the

bewildered Mr. Banks. "You don't understand——"

Biff!

Knox's right shot out from the shoulder, and his hard and bony knuckles crashed into the bookmaker's face.

With a startled cry, Banks reeled and fell; but the prefect, beside himself with rage, had by no means finished his onslaught.

He picked up a cricket-stump, and proceeded to thrash his victim mercilessly.

Whack, whack, whack!

"O-oh! Ah! 'Elp! He's mad! He'll kill me! Yarooooop!"

The stump continued to rise and fall; and the dust rose in a cloud from the bookmaker's trousers. He had been thrashed many times in the course of his unwholesome career, and by many people; but never had he received so heavy a chastisement as this.

And there was no help for him, either.

Most of the fellows were either at the cricket or on the river, and the senior studies were deserted.

After having pounded away with the stump till his arm ached, Knox left Banks writhing and groaning on the floor of the study, and proceeded to quit the school premises.

He sprinted bareheaded across the quadrangle—happily deserted—and clambered over the school wall.

His brain was in a turmole.

One thought, vague at first, but gradually assuming definite shape, was uppermost in his mind.

He would run away.

It was the way of a coward's way. It was the way of a man who fears to face the music—who is ashamed to acknowledge his fault and stand by the consequences.

But Knox, in his desperation and distraction, could see nothing else for it.

Then, as the cool evening air made his mind calmer, he realised that he would have to act swiftly and surely.

If he remained in the vicinity of St. Jim's he would speedily be run to earth.

"I must train it!" he muttered. "Once I get to London I shall be like a small pebble in a mile of shingle, and they'll never find me. The chances are thousands to one against my getting spotted. But——"

He stopped short.

How could he possibly get to London without money?

Even at Rylcombe, sleepy though the station authorities were, they would not let him board a train without a ticket.

Knox was properly up against it.

It seemed as if the Fates had conspired to thwart him at every turn.

He paused, irresolute, in the roadway.

Faintly on the night air came the sound of a clock chiming.

It was the clock in the school tower chiming eight.

By bed-time Knox's absence was bound to be discovered, and search-parties would scour the countryside in all directions.

The rattle of a train close by gave Knox a sudden inspiration.

He would leap on to the footboard of the next London train while it was moving.

Such a feat was not remarkably daring or difficult, for the train, having only just left Rylcombe Station, would not have got up a great speed.

"I'll do it!" muttered Knox. "Hanged if I won't! It's a cheap way of getting to London, and I'll wriggle through at the other end somehow."

He plunged into the wood, through which a section of the line ran, and then, taking cover in a thick clump of trees, waited for the next train, which was due in half an hour.

He regretted having come away in a hatless and frenzied state.

His appearance would excite attention now, and there would be less chance of getting clear away.

And, apart from this, he was without food. Would it not be better to go back?

But the thought of Banks lying, perhaps unconscious, on the floor of his study was too much for Knox.

In his blind fury he had lashed the bookmaker with the full force of his arm, and it awoke him, now that the cool night breeze ruffled his hair, and all was still and silent, to think how savage he had been.

For many minutes he lingered there, trying to think out a plan of campaign for the future.

Going to London was all very well, but going there to starve was no picnic.

Knox was still wrestling with the problem when a distant rumble told him that the London train was approaching.

The prefect leapt down by the side of the metals and crouched low, ready to take the spring.

The engine thundered by him, the flashing lights in the carriages dazzled his eyes, and then, timing himself to land on the footboard beside the rear carriage, Knox took the leap.

It was a superb effort, and a desperate one; but Knox was the fraction of a second too late. He had not allowed for the increasing speed of the train.

One of his feet certainly landed on the footboard, and he groped wildly for the handle of the carriage door, or something to which he could cling before finally working his way into the carriage.

But luck was dead against him. He was whirled along by the train for fifty yards or more, and then, as it swerved sharply round a bend, he was sent hurtling down on to the metals.

The earth seemed suddenly to rise up and strike him in the face, and he remembered no more.

CHAPTER 12.

The End of the Drama!

WHEN Knox came to himself the sunshine—which he had imagined, in those brief and agonising seconds overnight, that he would never see again—was streaming in at the windows of a pleasant, cheery apartment, and the radiant face of Ferold Lumley-Lumley beamed down upon him.

"Where—where am I?" stammered Knox, raising himself on his elbow.

"The County Hospital," answered Lumley.

His tone was kindly, and there was no trace of malice in it.

"But—but how did I get here? I don't understand," faltered Knox. "When I came a cropper on the railway-line I thought my number was up."

"Nothing half so serious as that," drawled a voice from the next bed—the voice of Little Steve. "Guess I'd better throw some daylight on things. My pal Lumley's too modest."

"Go ahead!" said Knox, who, but for the throbbing at his temples, was feeling quite himself again.

"It's a queer story," said Little Steve. "First of all, why were you runnin' away from St. Jim's?"

"I was in debt," said Knox, "up to the eyes! I'd counted on Desmond winning the Loamshire Stakes, and she let me down. Then, when Banks called—to dun me for the money I owed him, I s'pose—I fairly went potty. I lammed him with a cricket-stump till my arm ached. Then I realised that there was nothing to stop at St. Jim's for, and

made off as quickly as I could. I couldn't board a train at Rylcombe, because I hadn't a cent on me. So I waited in the woods till the London train came along, and tried to get on while it was passing. I couldn't get a proper footing, though, and the last thing I remember is that the ground seemed to rise up and biff me. It was awful!"

"I guess it was," said Little Steve. "Well, your troubles are over now."

"I s'pose that means that they've sacked me?" said Knox bitterly.

"Nothin' of the sort. The Head knows nothin' about your gettin' into debt. The fact of the matter is, you're not in debt at all."

"Then what—?"

"Lumley arranged with Banks that the tanner you put on Desmond should be transferred to True Blue. So you backed the winner after all. Twigg?"

Knox passed his hand over his forehead.

"Am I dreaming?" he gasped. "Yes, I must be. I can't believe that all this is true."

Lumley-Lumley stepped forward, and displayed a bundle of crisp currency notes.

"I've drawn your money from Banks," he said. "He came to the school to pay it to you, really. He would have done you out of it if he could—you know what he is—but Sir Charles Dexter had a word with him, and he had no alternative but to pay and look pleasant."

"My only aunt!" was all Knox could say.

"The odds were five to one," continued Lumley, "which means that you win fifty quid, and get your tanner back. Well, I learned from Banks—who was pretty badly knocked about, by the way—that you owed him a matter of twelve quid. I've made that good. The remainder of the money is yours, to do as you like with. But I've got a suggestion to make on the subject."

"Namely?"

"That you give it to this hospital."

Knox was silent for some time.

Ever on the make, he didn't relish the idea, at first, of bestowing such a magnificent sum to charity.

But better impulses prevailed.

"I'll do it!" he said. "Every penny of it shall go to this hospital."

"Good man!" said Lumley approvingly. "Thought you'd do the decent thing."

"But—but I'm still in the dark as to how I got here," said Knox.

"Lumley brought you along," said Little Steve. "After he'd settled with Banks at St. Jim's, and sent him packing, he was walking through the woods to Wayland, and he caught sight of you lying on the metals. I might add that if you'd lain there another ten minutes you'd have been cut to pieces. The mail train was nearly due to pass. It was the biggest stroke of luck imaginable that Lumley should happen to be passing just then. Well, to cut a long story short, he heaved you up on his shoulder—and you're no light weight—and brought you here. It took him an hour and a half, and he was nearly a goner himself when he got here. You've had rather a nasty biff on the napper, but it's nothing to worry about. In a few days you'll be as right as rain."

Knox turned to Lumley-Lumley, and put out his hand.

"Thank you, Lumley!" he said quietly. "I owe you a good deal—more than I can ever hope to repay—and I want you to understand that I'm grateful. It's no use my making a swarm of promises to the effect that I'm going to steer a straight course in future, and

all that sort of thing. I should only go back on them. But I really am grateful. I'd been hating you like poison, and wanting to drag you down and get you kicked out of St. Jim's. Of course, I didn't dream you'd transferred my money to True Blue. How was it done?"

"Quite simple," grinned Lumley. "I forged a note, in your handwriting, to Banks."

Knox laughed. He could afford to laugh now.

"You're a deep boulder, Lumley," he said. "If you hadn't got that tanner transferred, I should have been properly in the soup. Nothing could have saved me."

"All's well that ends well!" said Lumley-Lumley. "I must be getting back to St. Jim's now, I think. I'll explain to the Head where you are, without going too closely into details."

"Say, old fellow," drawled Little Steve, as Lumley moved to the door, "I guess you're not goin' to vamoose the ranch without a word of thanks from your old pal. Give us your fist, kid. You've done splendidly, all along the line! I didn't rely on you in vain. Sir Charles is awfully bucked, and everybody's shoutin' from the housetops about your victory. You've proved what sort of stuff our friendship's made of. Founded upon a rock—eh?"

"Yes, rather!" said Lumley-Lumley. He gripped Steve's hand hard, hoping he would soon be fit again, and wishing him the best of luck for the future. And then, nodding cheerily to Knox, he left the ward, and turned his face once more towards St. Jim's.

He arrived during the interval between breakfast and morning school, and Tom Merry & Co., spotting him afar off, hastened to greet him.

"Lumlay, you boundah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You've been away all night, and the Head's feahfully wowwied. Have you been on the wazzle?"

"Rats!"

"Tell your uncles all about it, old chap," said Monty Lowther. "We're like a besieged garrison, ravenous for news!"

Briefly, and with becoming modesty, Lumley-Lumley outlined what had taken place.

It was a thrilling story, and the juniors listened with wide-open eyes.

They marvelled at the ingenious manner in which Lumley had extricated Knox from his financial difficulties, and they marvelled still more when they heard of the incident on the railway-line.

"Well played, Lumley!" said Tom Merry heartily. "You've come through this bizney with flying colours, and no mistake. I expect Knox'll lie low for a bit now. By the way, when's Little Steve coming out of hospital?"

"Next week," said Lumley. "Why do you ask?"

"Because we're having a study feed, and Sir Charles Dexter's coming along. He's an old boy as well as a governor, and he's frightfully interested in the school. But the spread won't be complete without Little Steve. Will you ask him to come along next Wednesday?"

"I will," said Lumley. "He ought to be quite fit by then. Cheero, you fellows! I'm going to make things right with the Head."

Dr. Holmes was certainly staggered when he heard of the exciting incidents of the past twenty-four hours; but he did not question Lumley too closely, nor did he inquire into the cause of Knox's accident.

Lumley played his cards well. And

when, a few moments later, he emerged into the quadrangle once more, he felt that all was right with the world.

CHAPTER 13.

The Last of Little Steve!

"GET a move on, you fellows!" "They'll be here soon!" Tom Merry's study in the Shell passage presented the appearance of a bee-hive.

The atmosphere was stifling. There was a blazing fire in the grate, before which Herries and Digby were kneeling, operating a frying-pan.

"These sosses are done to a turn!" said Herries.

"There's nothing for you to make a song about!" growled Digby. "I cooked 'em!"

The hoot of an automobile sounded in the quad.

"Here they are!" said Jack Blake. "And the feed isn't laid yet," said the captain of the Stuell. "Buck up with those sardines, Monty!"

Monty Lowther, with the perspiration streaming from his face, was making frantic jabs with a tin-opener.

Everybody was busy. It was, in fact, a glaring case of too many cooks.

Manners and D'Arcy, at the cupboard, reached simultaneously for a basket of eggs on the top shelf.

The result was appalling.

The basket came crashing down, and the eggs disported themselves over the elegant attire of the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus staggered back with a rasp of dismay.

"Bai Jove! My clobber is uttally ruined! Mannahs, you clumsy ass—"

"Your face is ruined, too, by the look of it," grinned Monty Lowther. "Still, it always did have a sort of sideways look."

Footsteps became audible in the passage.

"Oh, cwumbs!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I cannot remain heah in this dweadful condish, deah boys!"

"I should think not!" growled Tom Merry. "Scoot, while you've got the chance!"

And Arthur Augustus promptly fled to the nearest bath-room.

Out in the passage, he nearly cannoned into the sporting baronet, who, with Little Steve, was approaching Tom Merry's study.

"What the thunder——" began Sir Charles.

But Gussy did not heed. He streaked on his way like a champion of the cinder-path.

Panting and breathless, he arrived at the door of the bath-room.

"Weally, I shall have to administah a fearful thwashin' to that boundah Mannahs!" he gasped. "No end of wubbin' an' scubbin' will be necessary befoah I look pwesentable again!"

But it was not so bad as Gussy thought.

Within a quarter of an hour he was back again in Tom Merry's study, clad, and in his right mind, as Monty Lowther expressed it.

The feed was in progress.

War-time restrictions were banished, and the table groaned under the weight of the goodly viands.

The atmosphere was clearer now. Tom Merry had thrown up the window, and the cool breeze was wafted in from the quad.

"What a topping spread!" said Little Steve, his eyes glistening like a school-boy's.

"You boys certainly know how to do things in style!" said Sir Charles, who occupied the place of honour at the head of the table.

The feast was plentiful, and so were the feasters. Every corner of the study seemed to be occupied.

Besides the Terrible Three and Jack Blake & Co., Talbot and Cardew and Levison and Clive were present, and, of course, Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

Lumley felt that it was good to be alive.

Had anyone told him a month before that he would shortly sit down to a spread with his old pal Steve, and with a racehorse owner, who was also a governor of St. Jim's, Lumley would have been incredulous.

But the miracle had happened, and he was the happiest of the whole gathering.

He had played a most daring and difficult part, and he had come through with flying colours.

Baggy Trimble, who had not yet fully recovered from his unhappy experience of a few days before, made several attempts to force an entry into the study, on the plea that he had played a prominent part in True Blue's triumph.

But the Terrible Three, knowing Baggy's capacity for stowing away food, were careful to keep him at arm's length.

"If the company agrees," said Tom Merry, when the meal was over, "we'll adjourn to the Common-room, and wind up with a concert."

"Good!" said the baronet. "I haven't attended a concert in the Common-room for thirty years. They had one on the eve of my departure from St. Jim's—to celebrate getting rid of me, I suppose. Jove! It will be ripping to revive old memories! Come along! D'Arcy shall set the ball rolling with a tenor solo."

At this Monty Lowther groaned in such anguish of spirit that Sir Charles feared, for the moment, that he had over-eaten.

But Tom Merry and Manners paved the way to a permanent peace by waltzing Monty away to the Common-room ahead of the others, and bidding him dry up.

Talbot presided at the piano, and the concert was soon in full swing.

Yet somehow, disguise it from themselves as they would, the juniors felt that there was something strained about the atmosphere. And the cause of the tension was Little Steve.

That famous individual had been possessed of a fund of good spirits; but, as Monty Lowther whispered to Tom Merry, they were only put on for the occasion.

Those who watched Little Steve closely saw him glance several times in the direction of Sir Charles Dexter, and look ill at ease.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy got through his tenor solo without any casualties to the audience, and then Little Steve was called upon.

"Pile in, old son!" said Lumley-Lumley.

The jockey smiled, and mounted the little platform. He whispered something to Talbot, who struck up the tune of "Glorious Devon."

Little Steve had a fine, clear voice, and he made the old song live.

The listeners, carried right away by the charm of his singing, could almost see the foam-flecked shores of the western shire.

"Old England's counties by the sea
From east to west are seven;
But the gem of that fair galaxy
Is Devon—glorious Devon!"

There was a burst of applause when

Little Steve stepped down from the platform.

"That was wippin', deah boy!" beamed Arthur Augustus. "I think I can say, without any false modesty, that you sang vevy neahly as well as myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Little Steve seated himself on a form next to Sir Charles Dexter.

"I guess I've got something to say to you, sir," he said. "I've been tryin' to get it off my chest all the evenin', but I've funkied it till now. I—I'm afraid you might take it the wrong way, sir."

"Nonsense! What is it you wish to tell me?"

"Simply that I'm goin' to leave you, sir. I can't be your leadin' jockey any longer."

"And why not, pray?"

"For some time past, sir," said Little Steve, "I've cherished a big ambition. I've tried to fight it down, but it's no use."

Sir Charles thought he understood.

"Ah! You wish to change your situation?" he said. "You have been offered a more remunerative position as jockey to somebody else?"

"No, sir. I——"

"Well?"

"I want to join the Flying Service," said Little Steve.

"You want to fly?"

"It's all I live for, sir."

"But there is no war on, Glover."

"I know that, sir. But I've got the flying fever in my bones, and I sha'n't be happy till I'm piloting a 'plane. You've been an awfully decent boss, sir—no man could wish for a better—and it's like my cheek to spring this on you. But I'm eighteen, I'm sound in wind an' limb, and I feel that I ought to be makin' better use of my life."

The baronet coughed.

"I suppose you think me a beastly renegade, sir?" said Little Steve bitterly.

Sir Charles turned to his youthful companion with glowing eyes.

"Not a bit of it! I'm sorry to lose you, of course, but proud to think you're going to take a hand in a game which beats horse-racing, any day."

"Thank you, sir!"

When Tom Merry & Co. heard of Little Steve's resolve, he went went up several more degrees in their estimation; and they were quick to recognise that even the Turf sometimes produces sportsmen in the truest sense of the word.

And Little Steve's send-off from St. Jim's was so stirring and sincere that it would linger in his memory as long as he lived.

Knox of the Sixth was soon in harness again after his unenviable experience.

For the next week or so he was very quiet, and seldom resorted to his bullying, blustering methods, for which the juniors were truly thankful.

And for a long time afterwards Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was one of the crowned heads of the Lower School.

Fellows who heard of his dazzling exploits on the Wayland race-course, and the heroic way in which he had stood by Little Steve in his trouble, were swift to sing his praises.

And Lumley himself would always cherish fond recollections of the time when, in defiance of all obstacles and all opposition, he had set his whole heart upon Riding to Win.

THE END.

(Don't miss Next Wednesday's Great School Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's—"FOR SCHOOL AND COUNTY!"—by Martin Clifford.)



EXTRACTS FROM

TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY & THE GREYFRANKS HERALD



"MUZZLING TOWSER!" By Robert Arthur Digby.

JACK BLAKE & CO. had just finished tea when Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther came into the study. Jack Blake held up a warning finger, and Tom Merry stared.

"What's the matter with you, fathead?" demanded Merry.

Blake held up both hands in alarm.

"Shush!" he murmured.

Tom Merry snorted. "Shush yourself!" he growled. "What is the matter with you dummies? Herries looks as if he had eaten bad fried fish!"

Blake held up both hands. George Herries was sitting in the armchair, his face buried in his arms.

"Shush!" murmured Blake warningly.

"Yaas, shush!" said D'Arcy, adjusting his eyeglass. "Pway, desist, you fellahs!"

"Rats!" said Manners warmly. "It's my belief the silly fatheads are pulling our legs, Tommy!"

"We'll pull their blessed cars!" growled Monty Lowther.

"We couldn't think of pulling anybody's leg just now," said Blake solemnly.

He sighed, and glanced towards Herries. Tom Merry & Co. looked from Jack Blake to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and from the elegant Fourth-Former to one another.

There was not a ghost of a smile on the juniors' faces. They looked, as a matter of fact, unduly solemn.

Tom Merry decided something must be amiss.

"I say, you chaps," he said, "I hope you have had a decent tea?"

"Hear, hear!" said Lowther. "If you haven't, it's your own fault, because we had plenty!"

Jack Blake shook his head.

"It's something far worse than that!" he said solemnly.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, in the same tone. "It's weally feahful, you know!"

Tom Merry & Co. were all concern at once.

"I say, Blake," said Merry quickly, "we're frightfully sorry, 'old scout, if there's anything wrong!"

"There is," said Blake.

Tom Merry & Co. looked suspiciously at Blake & Co. It was not often that the Fourth Form juniors were serious, and the Shell fellows very naturally suspected a "rag."

But there was nothing to show that Blake & Co. were anything but earnest. Something had undoubtedly happened to the usually cheery Co.

"But—but don't answer if you'd rather not!" stammered Merry. "But—but who's dead?"

Blake & Co. looked surprised.

"Worse than that, too!" said Blake solemnly.

Tom Merry glared.

"You ragging chumps!" he said warmly. "Well—"

"Shush! Please!" said Blake, and pointed to Herries.

Herries was still sitting in the same position, apparently oblivious to the fact that Tom Merry & Co. were in the study.

"Oh!" said Lowther. "I savvy!" He lowered his voice to a whisper. "It's poor old Herries!" he said. "I think we'd better be jogging off!"

"Y-y-yes—but—but—I say, Gussy, what's up?" inquired Tom Merry.

"Something Hewwies saw in the papah this afternoon aifah lessons!" said D'Arcy.

"E'wightful bad news, deah boys!"

Tom Merry snatched up the paper that lay crumpled on the table. He no doubt fully expected to see a glaring headline to the effect that one of the Herries family had been kidnapped, or perhaps something worse.

Manners and Lowther looked over his shoulder as he glanced over the printed pages.

"Blessed if I can see anything," said Manners, frowning.

"Nor can I!" growled Monty Lowther.

He looked sharply at Blake & Co., but there was no suspicion of a smile that would betray them.

"What is it, Jack?" asked Tom Merry.

Blake looked at his study-mates, and for a moment they whispered together. Then Blake turned round.

"Of course, we are not anxious for this distressing matter to get all over the school," said Blake. "You'll keep it quiet?"

"Sure!" said Manners and Merry.

"Liken us to the oysters!" murmured Lowther.

"Well, the fact is——" Jack Blake began; then hesitated.

"Tell them, Blake," murmured D'Arcy. "It's bad enough without dwelling on it too long!"

Blake rubbed his hand across his eyes.

"Well, as I know I can rely on you not to shout it from the house-tops, I'll tell you!" said Blake slowly. "Herries read in the paper that all dogs have got to be muzzled, and——"

"Oh!"

Tom Merry & Co. uttered that exclamation, and interrupted Blake.

The news was out. But Tom Merry & Co. did not seem to realise the tragic part—they could only glare at Blake & Co. in amazement.

Tom Merry shook his fist at the Fourth-Formers.

"You spoofing rotters!" he roared. "We'll jolly well——"

"You dummies!" howled Manners wrathfully.

"Jabberwocks!" hooted Lowther. "Let's go for the cheeky bounders!"

"Here, hold on!" said Blake hastily.

"Yaas, don't forget you're visitahs, deah boys!" said D'Arcy.

"You'll visit the floor with a terrific bump, fathead!" said Lowther darkly.

Blake shrugged his shoulders.

"Of course, if you won't realise the seriousness of the matter," he said, "then I don't think it's up to us to teach you. Look at old Herries!"

Tom Merry & Co. hesitated. They had been ragged, in their opinion, and they wanted to exact summary vengeance. But there was something in what Blake said.

"H'm!" said Merry. "I dunno!"

"Weadly, I think it is up to us to help old Hewwies," said D'Arcy firmly. "Towsah is only a wotten mongwel, but I suppose old Hewwies can't help likin' the bwute. I——"

"You'd better tell Herries that Towsah is a mongrel!" said Lowther, with a grin.

"I suppose he can hear now, can't he?" said Manners.

"No," put in Blake; "he's in a state of coma——"

"Coma!" corrected Merry softly.

"As you like!" sniffed Blake, flushing.

"Pway don't intewwupt me, deah boys!" said D'Arcy. "I was talkin'——"

"You generally are!" chuckled Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah! Howevah, as you're a visitah to this study, I will let you off!" went on D'Arcy magnanimously. "I will thwash you anothah time, Lowthah. Towsah, I wepeat, has not an atom of wespect for a fellah's twosahs, so that proyes he is a mongwel. No thowoughbwed——"

Tom Merry snorted.

"Is this a lecture on dogs, or are you really going to say something sensible, Gussy?" he demanded.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy polished his monocle deliberately, and fixed it in his eye before he deigned to reply to that remark.

"Tom Merry, I wegard that wemark with uttah scorn!" he said coldly. "And but for the fact of your being a visitah I should have no wesource but to thwash you. As it is, I will let you off."

"Saved!" said Tom Merry fervently.

Lowther and Manners chuckled, but they assumed more solemn expressions as the elegant Fourth-Former glanced witheringly in their direction.

"To continue," said D'Arcy, "I shall take upon myself the duty of muzzling Towsah, and spare Hewwies the job."

Anybody who did not know Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would have wondered where the noble part came in. But the juniors knew, and they warmed towards the elegant Gussy.

"It's good of you, old top!" said Tom Merry warmly. "But I think perhaps Towsah might take a fancy to your trousers again, and you'll be sorry for it!"

"My deah Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus firmly, "I cannot take into consideration anything that might happen while performin' my duty, howevah unpleasant, and I do not mind if Towsah does teah my bags!"

"Good old Gussy!" murmured Blake.

"Straight from Drury Lane drama!"

"Weally, Blake——" began D'Arcy.

"Herries!" cried Manners.

Herries did not look up, and Blake tapped him gently on the shoulder.

He jumped to his feet with a start, and looked hurriedly about him. He saw Tom Merry & Co., and he took up a ruler from the table.

"What's up?" he demanded. "A row?"

The juniors stared.

"Haven't you been listening, you dummy?" demanded Lowther. "Do you mean to tell us you have missed Gussy's beautiful speech, and the noble sacrifice he is prepared to make?"

"Sorry, I have!" said Herries shortly. "He's always making speeches, so I'm used to them. You see——"

"Pway wetract that statemint, Hewwies!" said D'Arcy. "I should be sowwy to administrah punishment on such an occasion, but——"

"He's going to muzzle Towsah for you, you said Tom Merry. "Jolly decent of him, I consider."

Herries glared at the elegant junior.

"Let me catch you muzzling Towsah!" snapped Herries. "I'll jolly well give him your best Sunday topper to chew!"

"Bai Jove, Hewwies!" said D'Arcy indignantly. "I wegard that as a wotten ihweat!"

"Br-r-r!" growled Herries. "I'm gotten out to buy a muzzle." And he left the study, shaking his head mournfully.

"Bai Jove! Talk about wank ingwatitude!" said D'Arcy hotly. "I weally think Hewwies takes the biscuit!"

"I shall be there when Herries muzzles Towser!" said Tom Merry, with a chuckle. "I'll bet there'll be some fun!"

He was right.

The next morning, after lessons, Herries headed a small procession from the School House. He carried a bright new muzzle in his hand.

Everybody, with the solitary exception of George Herries, was grinning cheerfully. Herries was looking anything but happy.

"I think Gussy ought to sing to the dog to keep it quiet while Herries muzzles it," said Monty Lowther. "Music hath charms, you know."

D'Arcy fixed his eyeglass and stared at Monty Lowther suspiciously.

"Are you waggin', Lowthah?" he demanded.

"Not at all," said Lowther firmly.

"Weally, 'p'waps you're wight, Montay," said D'Arcy. "I always believed in that old saying about music soothing the savage beast—bweast—beast, whatever it is. What shall I sing?"

Monty Lowther winked at Tom Merry before he turned to D'Arcy.

"Well, I should sing 'I'll sing these songs of A-rabies'!" he said solemnly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, Lowthah! You spoofin' wottah!" shouted D'Arcy. "Pway put your hands up, deah boy!"

"Why?" asked Lowther innocently.

"I wegard youah wemark as an insult!" said D'Arcy hotly.

"So would Towser your singing!" said Blake. "Come on, kid!"

"Blake, I wefuse to move anothah step—"

"Kim on!"

And Arthur Augustus went on.

Herries reached the kennel, and unfasted the chain which held his pet. Towser wagged his stumpy tail and licked his master affectionately.

"Poor old Towsy!" murmured Herries. "Just as if you'd let them give you the rabies, old fellow. But—but it's got to be done!"

Towser sniffed suspiciously. He seemed to become aware that something unpleasant was going to happen to him. He always sniffed like that when Herries went to give him his weekly bath.

Herries pulled the muzzle from behind his back, and Towser growled ominously.

Gr-r-r!

"Now the fun starts!" chuckled Tom Merry.

Herries did his best to soothe his ruffled pet, but it only growled the harder.

Suddenly, as Herries was about to slip the muzzle over his head, Towser darted off.

Herries dashed after him, shouting, and the juniors, who had anticipated seeing some fun, joined in the chase.

"Stop him!" roared Herries. "Here, Towsy—Towsy!"

"Towsy," if he heard, heeded not, but made for the gates, where he knew freedom lay.

Taggles, the school porter, came out of his lodge as he heard the rushing of many feet. He saw Towser, running like fury, and the crowd of juniors giving chase.

For a moment his knees knocked together, then, with one bound, he reached the door of his cottage, and slammed it behind him.

"Mad dog!" he roared. "Police! Murder! Mad dog!"

Which, being shouted inside the cottage, was not likely to help anybody who happened to get in Towser's way!

Towser rushed out of the gates, and turned towards Rylcombe.

The villagers who saw the bulldog and the rushing juniors, headed by Herries, scampered out of the way into their cottages.

"Stop him!" roared Herries.

But nobody seemed inclined to tackle what they thought to be a mad dog suffering from rabies.

A giddy man-hunt is tame to this! said Manners, as he ran beside Tom Merry.

"The beggar will be shot if he goes on

(Continued on page 16.)

The Editor's Chat.

The Companion Papers are:

THE MAGNET.
Every Monday.

THE BOYS' FRIEND.
Every Monday.

THE GEM.
Every Wed.

THE PENNY POPULAR.
Every Friday.

CHUCKLES.
Every Friday.

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS GLAD TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS.

For Next Wednesday:

"FOR SCHOOL AND COUNTY!"

By Martin Clifford.

Mr. Martin Clifford sometimes takes it into his head to give us a refreshing change by bringing into the limelight a character who hitherto has occupied a back seat. Such is the case in next Wednesday's grand, long, complete story of school life, in which the lead is taken by Rusden of the Sixth. Philip Rusden is a prefect, and a staunch ally of Kildare's; but there is a rift in their friendship when Rusden lets the School House down at cricket. Kildare, acting rather more harshly than usual, banishes Rusden from the First Eleven; and Rusden, who is a very keen cricketer, resolves that if he cannot play for St. Jim's he will get his cricket outside the school. He does so; and so remarkable are his achievements that he is actually given a place in the County Eleven! Needless to say, Tom Merry & Co.—who have backed up Rusden all along the line—are delighted with the brilliant performance he puts up.

"FOR SCHOOL AND COUNTY!"

This is a story which will make a big appeal to all lovers of school and sport.

A STRAIGHT TALK TO MY READERS!

I do not believe in blinking facts. If a thing is unpleasant, it should be faced. The man who makes use of "soft sawder," or refrains from speaking out, straight from the shoulder, when occasion demands, is a moral coward.

I have no intention of mincing my words this week, even though the subject is a distasteful one. What subject? you will ask wonderingly. The subject, my chums, is

The Circulation of the GEM Library.

Once upon a time England—yes, and Scotland, too—was flooded with youthful organisations known as GEM Leagues. The primary object of these Leagues was to do everything possible to still further popularise this paper.

These League leaders were boys who possessed abundant enthusiasm and unflagging loyalty. No task was too big for them. If an anti-GEM League arose, they stamped it out. If an opportunity presented itself of getting new readers, they grasped it. The GEM Library won for itself a high place in the esteem of British boys. Its success was stupendous. Its circulation outsoared that of any other boys' paper on the market.

And now?

Enthusiasm has waned. GEM Leagues have shut up shop. Loyalty remains, it is true; but it is not a whole-hearted loyalty. It is a milk-and-water thing, shorn of all its former keenness and ardour.

And the result is reflected in the circulation of the GEM Library.

Now, our circulation, as it stands, is good; but, as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy said when he surveyed his battered topper, there is "room for improvement."

No wise editor is content to mark time. Every week he expects—and naturally so—new readers to be garnered in. There are still many thousands of boys and girls who have heard of the GEM only in name. They have never read it. They have never heard of Tom Merry. And they never will hear of him unless strenuous efforts are made by the present readers to

Spread the Fame of the GEM Library Far and Wide!

Now, it is a shameful thing to have to admit, but it is nevertheless true, that the GEM Library is far behind its companion paper, the "Magnet" Library, in the matter of circulation.

Why?

Not for one moment do I agree with the

suggestion made by one of my Birmingham chums that Frank Richards is a much better writer than Martin Clifford. Not for one moment do I agree that Harry Wharton is a much more captivating hero than Tom Merry.

I would not dream of disparaging the powers of Mr. Frank Richards as a writer for boys. He has won world-wide fame in this respect; but I honestly contend that his rival, Mr. Martin Clifford, is equally as good.

Obviously, then, the inferior circulation of the GEM cannot be due to any inferiority in the stories. Scores of readers have written to say that a certain GEM story published recently was the finest yarn they had ever read. If that were the case, why didn't they pass it on? Why did they allow such a story to waste its sweetness on the desert air? That story would have left a heritage of happy laughter in hundreds of homes; and yet the fellows who read it kept it to themselves, with the result that the circulation of the GEM Library did not benefit one iota.

Boys, it won't do! There is something radically wrong somewhere. Why, in the name of common-sense, should the "Magnet's" circulation be allowed to reach dizzy heights while that of the GEM remains stuck in a quagmire?

As Shakespeare remarks, "something is rotten in the State of Denmark." There is an apathy amongst readers of the GEM Library which must speedily be replaced by the burning flame of enthusiasm.

I do not exaggerate when I say that it would cut me to the quick to know that the GEM Library was the only failure in a brilliant batch of companion papers. It does not deserve to be a failure. It is almost an insult to Mr. Martin Clifford that the circulation should stay where it is.

If merit counts for anything in these days, then surely the GEM Library should be as flourishing as the flowers in May!

But I have sufficient faith in my readers to think that there will shortly be

A Great Revival

so far as this little paper is concerned. The enthusiasm of my Gemite chums is not dead; it is merely dormant. And when it re-awakens—as I feel sure it will—we shall see the circulation of the good old GEM mounting higher and higher, until it challenges that of the "Magnet."

I am making a personal appeal to you all to take action at once! I do not expect miracles from the boy who has very little pocket-money at his disposal. But the others—those who can reasonably afford it—will, if they have any love for their favourite paper, rally round without delay, and instead of ordering one copy of the next issue of the GEM Library, will order two, making a present of one to a non-reader.

Are you going to be beaten by the "Magnet"? Not likely! Very well, then, boys and girls of Britain. Show your Editor what you can do when you are roused! Speed up the circulation of the GEM Library, so that a few weeks hence I may truly remark that no other editor possesses such a vast army of staunch supporters!

NOTICES.

Correspondence, etc., Wanted.

Eric Oakleshaw, 41, Raglan Street, East St. Kilda, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia—with readers in the British Empire with a view to forming a league.

Miss Ida Harvey, 67, Bridge Street, North Lismore, New South Wales, Australia—with readers anywhere, 14-16.

Miss Margery Barndon, 235, Malvern Road, Malvern, Victoria, Australia—with girl readers anywhere, aged 14 or about.

H. A. H. (YOUR EDITOR).

"MUZZLING TOWSER!"

(Continued from Page 15.)

at this rate!" puffed Tom Merry. "They'll think he's really mad!"

"Wonder what old Railton will say when he finds half his House out of gates at this time of the day!" panted Lowther.

"Never mind," said Tom Merry. "The thing is to catch Towser!"

But Towser wanted some catching. He led the juniors through the village, back by way of one of the little lanes, and straight back to St. Jim's.

It was unfortunate that, at the very moment when Towser was careering through the gates, Mr. Railton, who had seen the juniors rush through the gates after Towser from his study-window, should be coming out. Towser dashed straight between the House-master's legs, and Mr. Railton sat down with a bump.

"Ow!" he gasped. "The dog must be mad!" "After him!" roared Herries.

There came a roar of voices, some laughing and some shouting, and the crowd of juniors approached the gates.

Herries was first through, and he saw the House-master's prostrate form at once. He swerved to avoid falling over him, and held up his hand frantically.

"Look out!" he shouted. "Railton!"

Which, to say the least, was disrespectful. However, he succeeded in warning the followers that Mr. Railton was about, and they pulled up in time.

Herries, thinking far more of his pet than Mr. Railton, continued the chase.

Tom Merry and Manners helped the House-master to his feet, and dusted down his robe.

"What—what is all this about?" demanded Mr. Railton angrily.

"We're muzzling Towser, sir," said Tom Merry meekly.

"Indeed! Towser has gone mad, I presume?" said Mr. Railton.

"Ahem! Not exactly, sir. You see—"

"Pway allow me to explain, sir—"

"Be quiet, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, sir—"

"Please go on, Merry!"

And, thus interrupted, Arthur Augustus thought he had better say no more. He looked very indignant, nevertheless.

"We're just muzzling Towser, sir," explained Tom Merry. "You see, there's an order published that all dogs in the county have got to be muzzled. Towser didn't like the idea, sir, and he bunked—I mean ran, sir."

Mr. Railton nodded. "I think the dog must be mad," he said quietly. "I will communicate with the police, who will take him away and have him shot. This rabies epidemic is a very serious thing."

"Weally, sir, with all due respect, may I suggest that Towser is only excited?" said D'Arcy politely. "You see, sir—"

Mr. Railton hesitated. "There may be something in what you say, D'Arcy," he said slowly. "I am unwilling to have a junior's pet shot, but I have my duty to do as a law-abiding citizen. We will go to the kennels."

Mr. Railton led the way to the kennels, followed by the crowd of hot and perspiring juniors. When they reached the kennel—Towser was chained and muzzled. "Is the dog mad, Herries?" asked Mr. Lowther at once.

Herries looked up, startled at the mere thought. "Not him, sir!" he said emphatically. "Towser is no more mad than—than D'Arcy is, sir!"

"Bai Jove, Hewwies—"

"All right, Herries," interrupted Mr. Railton. "See that he doesn't have his muzzle off except at meal-times."

"Very good, sir," said Herries meekly.

And Mr. Railton strode away, smiling.

Jack Blake and Tom Merry caught Herries by the shoulder.

"Come on, old son," said Blake cheerfully. "The dark deed is done, and there's been enough fuss over that poodle of yours already. Dinner will be all gone!"

And George Herries, with a last look at the bright new muzzle which clamped Towser's massive jaws, sighed, and suffered himself to be led in to dinner.

THE END.

Greyfriars Epitaphs.

No. 4. By BOB CHERRY.

HERE RESTFULLY RECLINES
the esteemed and ludicrous person

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH,
sometime Nabob of Bhanipur,

who perisefully gave up the ghostfulness
owing to the strain of attempting to
masterfully study the English
language.

He was a member of that select and honourable community known as the Famous Five, and did helpfully assist them in imparting the japefulness to rival Forms. He also shot for goal kickfully, and his bowlfulness was terrific! His speechfulness was weird and wonderful—

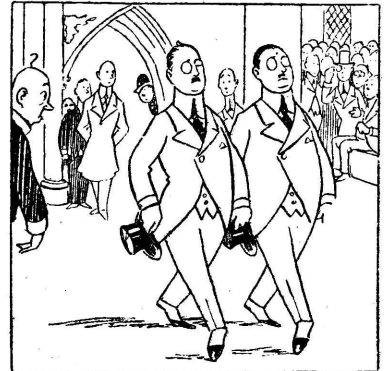
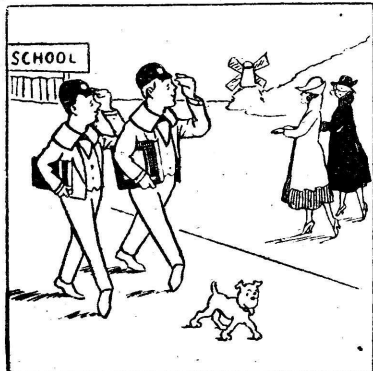
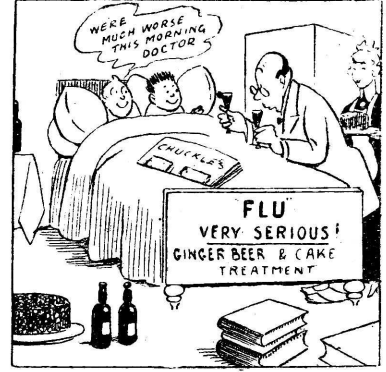
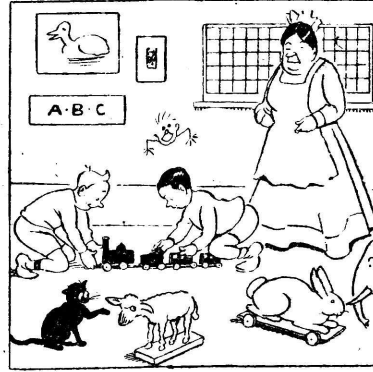
"A THING OF BOOTY AND A TOY FOR EVER,"

as our English proverb hath it. And now he has chuckfully handed in his mit, lamentfully mourned by the worthy scribes and scholars of Greyfriars School.

His body has departfully left us, but his scull still beckons brightly from the Inky Way.

Farewell to days of mirthful ways,
Of happy, boyful blissfulness!
Poor Inky's gone—a humble pawn
In Life's great game of chessfulness!

STICKING TOGETHER!



1. Their birthdays were together.
2. They played in the nursery together.
3. They got ill together.
4. They fell in love together.
5. They were swished together.
6. And together they entered Parliament.

HOW I PLAYED FOR THE FIRST ELEVEN!

By WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER.

THE heavy hand of Wingate of the Sixth fell upon my shoulder.

"Ha, ha, Bunter!" said he, in his pennytrating tones. "Just the felo I've been lookin' for! I want you to turn out for the First Eleven in the criket match with St. Jim's. We shall all feel highly omered if you will."

"Thanks, Wingate!" said I. "I'll go and change into my flannels—I mean, Bob Cherry's."

And, chucking old Wingate under the chin in a playful fashion, I rolled away.

Of course, I felt very bucked to think that I had been selekted to play for Greyfriars First.

That beest Wharton, eaten up with personal jellusy, never lets me play for the Remove. That's why the Remove loose so many matches. But I was glad to see that my splendid form had not escaped the eyes of Wingate.

It would be a grate b'low for the Remove, I reflekted, to see me figgering in a First Eleven match, and nocking the ball all over the field.

In dew corse I had changed into flannels. I saw Wingate just before the match, and he looked very pail.

"What's wrong?" said I.
"Boo-hoo! I don't feel well!" sobbed Wingate. "I fear I shall not be able to play. Will you skipper the team for me, Bunter?"
"Certainly!" I replide.

A few minnits later I walked out to open the innings with Gwynne. Cheer upon cheer went up as the eyes of the spektaters rested upon my slim and elegant figger. I looked downrite hansom as I swung my bat over my sholder.

Kildare of St. Jim's started to bole. He is usually regarded as a good man; but to me his stuff was child's play.

Jumping out of my creese like a tyger, I hit him all over the field.

The applaws was so defensing that I had to stop my ears.

Gwynne soon got boled out. He's not up to my waite.

"Hard cheese, old man!" said I, as he strode saavidgely back to the pavvilion.
"You'll have to let me give you a few leasons

in criket. At present hop-kotch or marbels is more in your line!"

Faulkner came in next.
"Leave the hitting to me," said I. "I'm the very man for a crysis of this sort!"
Faulkner nodded. He was content to keep up his wicket while I slogged.

The runs came thick and fast.
Fifty, 60, 70, 80, 90, and 100 went up on the bord in less time than it takes to rite.

The spektaters faredly went mad.
"Bunter!" they rored.
"Good old Bunter!"

"What should we do without our Bunter?" I continewed to hit at a most alarming rate.

Other men came and went, but I remaned. At last, I saw out of the corner of my eye that tea was being set out under the tresse. The score then stood at 720 for six wickets. I had made half the runs off my own bat.

Turning to the St. Jim's skipper, I said hortly:

"I declare!"
"And about time, too!" said Kildare, looking at my manly form with silent admiration.

We then adjerned for tea.
What a feest it was!
There was current-cake, doenuts, mades of onner, cream-buns, sossidge-rolls, and storberry and vannilla ices.

"Bunter, old man," said Gwynne, "you were simply grate—"

"Pass the cake!" said I.
"You remynded me of Jessup at his best—"

"Pass the doenuts!"
"I can't think why you never played for the Remove—"

"Pass the mades of onner!"
"You're certainly head and sholders above every other felo at Greyfriars—"

"Enuff of flattery!" said I sharply. "Pass the cream-buns, the sossidge-rolls, and the storberry and vannilla ices!"

II.

KILDARE of St. Jim's strode out to wicket with a trubbled frown.

He new that it was all over bar showing.

"How can we hope to servive," he said, "against Bunter's deddly boling?"

"Ha, ha!" said I. "You are going to your doom, Kildare!"

The next minnit his middel-stump lay flat.

"Well boled, Bunter!" eride everybody.

The St. Jim's wickets fell like ninepins before my hurrycane attack.

No runs were scored. One man after another was cene boled. You never saw anything like it in your life!

When the last man came in, he gave me a look of deddly hate.

"You shall never bole me out!" he said feercely. "Never!"

"We will see about that!" said I, with a feendish chuckle.

And I sent down a ball which broke all the stumps to peeces and half-killed the umpyre.

"Ha, ha!" said I. "How's that?"

"Out!" garsped the umpyre, sinking into the grass with a grone.

No sooner was the word out of his month than the crowd came swarming on to the terf.

The Head and Mr. Quelch were amungst them. They were most orfully bucked.

"Bunter, my dear good felo," said the Head, slapping me on the back, "you have deserved well of your country!"

"Not half!" said Mr. Quelch. "I dunno how you stuck it out, Bunter, old sport!"

"Come along and have a snack in my study, old top!" said the Head.

But before I could reply I was swung up on the sholders of the crowd, and carried in triumph to the pavvilion.

It was the gratest minnit of my life. The cheering was so terriffick that the sky shook!

"Pip-pip-please, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, going down on his knees, "will you do us the onner of playing for the Remove aft'r this?"

"Too late!" I eride dramatikally. "I have just had a wire asking me to play for England, and I have konsented."

"Oh, crumms!" groned Wharton.

"You have only your rotten jellusy to thank for this!" I said. "You have never given me a fare chance. If you had playt'd me in the first place, the Remove would have won every match, and it would have become a world-famous team!"

Wharton began to sob.

"I—I'm beestly sorry!" he howled. "I—I didn't give you a place in the team becaws I new you were the better man, and the feloes would clammer for you to be skipper. Can you forgive me?"

"We're all in it, Bunter," said Johnny Bull—and I distinkly saw two big teers roll down his cheeks. "Forgive us, Bunter!"

"Surely such a nobel conkeror will find it in his hart to show the quality of mercy!" said Nugent.

"Silence, you dogs!" I replide.

Taking out my hankercheef, I began to mop my heeted brow, while the feloes groveled in the dust before me.

Then the last note of the rising-bell died away, and I woke up—to find that beest Bob Cherry standing over me with a sponge.

It was only a dream, after all.

But it was a dream that may yet come true!



Hours of FUN in Store

for EVERYONE who buys a copy of the "RAINBOW" every Monday — there is something to amuse and delight in every page.

PRINTED IN COLOURS, with many funny pictures of Tiger Tim and the Bruin Family, the Two Pickles, the Brownie Boys, and lots of others. Stories, puzzles, toy models, games and tricks.

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