

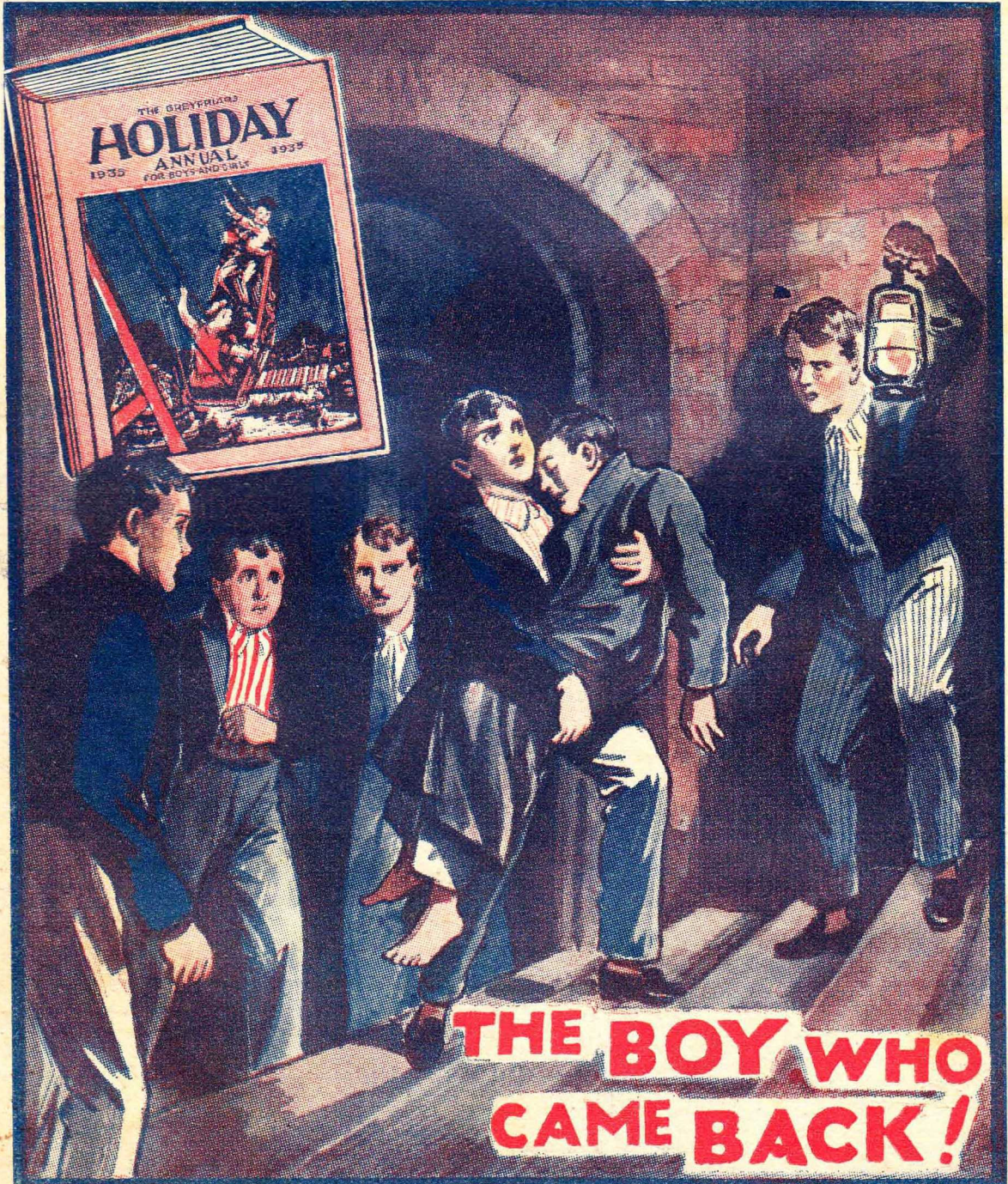
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The GEM

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The alarm in the night! What is happening in the St. Jim's vaults to cause such stark terror in Percy Mellish, the cad of the school? A staggering shock awaits Tom Merry & Co.—a shock that shakes even their cool nerve! This dramatic and powerful yarn will grip and hold your interest as no story has ever done before!

CHAPTER 1.

Gussy Runs For It!

"LEVISON!" said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "Yes, Levison. That's the name."

"I've heard it before."

Tom Merry of the Shell Form at St. Jim's was certain he had heard that name before, but where he could not, for the moment, recollect.

Jack Blake of the Fourth Form thrust his hands deep into his trousers pockets reflectively.

"I believe I know the name," he said, with a nod. "It's not a common one, either; but I don't know where I heard it."

"Well, I know the name, and we shall soon see if we know the chap," said Tom Merry. "You say he's coming to St. Jim's to-day?"

"Yes; so I heard from Kildare. He's coming into the Fourth Form," said Blake. "I only hope they don't put him into our study, that's all."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's.

"When will he be here?" asked Tom Merry.

"Three o'clock train. I think I'll stroll down and meet the chap at the station," Blake remarked. "I'm curious to see him, to see if I know him. The name's as familiar as anything. And I don't feel much inclined to settle down to anything this afternoon."

"Same here," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! I am feelin' quite wotten, you know." And then as the dinner bell rang the three juniors went into the dining-room, but with appetites less keen than usual.

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A shadow still hung over the old school of St. Jim's. The boys could not forget the vault where Lumley-Lumley had been laid to rest.

Lumley-Lumley had been called the Outsider of St. Jim's. He had earned the dislike of all the best fellows in the school, and even those least particular in their ways had thought Lumley-Lumley "the limit."

But all that was forgotten now.

Death wiped out all stains.

The fellows only felt regret for the boy who was gone, and the painful shock from the horrible and unexpected happening in their midst.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon, but it was pretty certain that the juniors of St. Jim's would not enjoy it much.

Even the football practice had been dropped by tacit consent.

The arrival of the new boy, Levison, was a welcome interruption to the gloomy train of thought in every mind at St. Jim's, and Jack Blake and his chums, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy, were glad of an excuse for a stroll down to the village.

"May as well go," Digby said, as they came out after dinner. "Nothing to do at home, that's certain. Can't play footer."

"Wathah not!"

"Good!" said Herries. "I'll take Towser for a run."

"Weally, Hewwies—" began Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Herries gave the swell of St. Jim's a freezing look.

"Got any objection to Towser, ass?" he inquired.

"Yaas, wathah! The bwute has no respect whatevah for a fellow's twousahs, as you know vewy well, and—"

"Rats!"

—OF ST. JIM'S—STARRING ERNEST LEVISON AS A NEW BOY.

CAME BACK!

By
**MARTIN
CLIFFORD**

"If you say wats to me, Hewwies—"
"Rats!"

Arthur Augustus pushed back his cuffs. Then he remembered, and let them slip over his wrists again.

"Undah the circs, I cannot administah a feahful thwashin', Hewwies."

"Lucky for you, ain't it?" said Herries.

"Weally, you know—"

But Herries was already striding off to the kennels for Towser. Herries felt the general despondency as much as anybody else, but his bulldog was a comfort. Monty Lowther had declared that if Herries were wrecked on a desert island he would be perfectly happy so long as he had Towser with him.

Gr-r-r-r!

That agreeable sound announced the arrival of Towser. D'Arcy kept a wary eye upon the bulldog as they walked out of the gates. In his time Towser had accounted for a great many garments belonging to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Gr-r-r-r!

"Keep that wotten beast quiet, Hewwies!"

Herries made no reply. He walked straight on, without looking at D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's repeated his remark.

"Will you keep that wotten beast quiet, Hewwies?"

No reply.

D'Arcy jerked his chum by the sleeve.

"Hewwies, old man, are you deaf?"

"Hallo!" said Herries. "Were you talking?"

D'Arcy almost exploded.

"I was shoutin' at you, you uttah ass!" he exclaimed wrathfully.

"What were you shouting about?"

"That howwid Towsah!"

"Rats! You were talking about a rotten beast," said Herries. "Towser is a handsome, well-bred animal, so it couldn't possibly apply to him."

"Look here, you ass!" D'Arcy shook Herries violently by the arm to engage his attention.

There was a fierce growl from Towser.

Gr-r-r-r!

"Look out!" yelled Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jumped back.

Towser evidently imagined that the swell of St. Jim's was attacking his master, and that was a thing Towser wouldn't have thought of allowing.

He came for D'Arcy with his jaws open.

"Bai Jove! Keep him off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy dodged round Blake, and round Digby, and then round Herries. Towser followed him with a deadly look of determination.

"Shoo!" gasped D'Arcy. "Shoo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep him off, Hewwies!"

"You shouldn't excite him," said Herries. "He thought you were going for me. He went for a tramp once who pitched into me, and you should have seen that tramp afterwards. Don't look at him, and he may let you alone."

"Ass! Oh! Bai Jove!"

Towser, probably encouraged by D'Arcy's retreating, made a sudden rush.

The swell of St. Jim's skipped across the road.

"Yow! Stop him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gr-r-r-r!

Arthur Augustus fairly bolted.

Down the road he sprinted, with his eyeglass fluttering at the end of its cord, and one hand holding on his silk hat, with Towser close behind.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake..

Herries wiped his eyes.

"Towser won't bite him," he said. "He knows D'Arcy. Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared as the swell of St. Jim's and the bulldog disappeared in the direction of the village. They quickened their pace, and hurried on to overtake D'Arcy as soon as they could.

CHAPTER 2.

The New Boy!

"H A, ha, ha!"

"There he is!"

The chums of the Fourth had come in sight of the railway station in Rylcombe High Street.

Outside the station was a heap of packing-cases, and on the topmost packing-case was seated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with Towser watching patiently below.

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and looked at the chums appealingly.

"Dwive that howwid beast away!" he said imploringly. "I had a feahfully nawvow escape with my twousahs as I got up here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause whatevah for wibald laughtah," said Arthur Augustus. "Hewwies, keep that fwightful beast of yours undah contwol."

Herries slipped a cord into Towser's collar and held it.

"It's all right now," he grinned. "You can come down."

D'Arcy descended gingerly from his perch. Towser eyed him and growled, but made no further movement. The juniors entered the station booking-hall.

"Well, we're early," said Blake, looking at the clock. "This is what comes of Gussy running races with bulldogs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wefuse to allow you to descwibe the mattah in such a wudicrous way, Blake," said Arthur Augustus warmly. "I wegard you as an ass."

"Thanks! Well, we're early."

"Pewwaps we may as well have a stwoll wound the town, then," said D'Arcy.

"H'm! As we're only a minute and a half early, we may as well go on the platform," said Blake blandly.

"Look here, Blake, if that is your idea of a joke, pwetendin' we are early—"

"Well, we are a minute and a half. Come on!"

"I wegard you—"

"Follow your leader."

The juniors went on to the platform. They were well-known to the old porter, and had the freedom of the station.

The train was already in view in the distance. The juniors waited for it to come in, standing by the automatic machine on the platform. Digby improved the shining hour, so to speak, by inserting pennies and extracting butter-scotch.

The train rattled into the station.

"Now look out for the chap," said Blake. "We shall discover whether we know him now. I'm sure I know the name."

"Here he is!" said Digby.

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From one of the carriages alighted a lad of about their own age, with a slightly narrow face, and eyes of great keenness. He did not look athletic, but looked wiry, and his chin was very determined. The expression of his face was not wholly pleasant. It seemed as if a sneer was for ever lurking about his lips, and a mocking light always ready to gleam in his eyes.

D'Arcy gave a start as he saw him.

"I've seen that chap before!" he exclaimed.

"By George, and I believe I have!" exclaimed Blake. "But I can't remember where."

"Well, let's speak to him," said Digby. "He must be the chap; there's no other kid among the passengers."

"Oh, he's the kid, right enough."

The chums of Study No. 6 walked across to the newcomer. He was glancing up and down the platform, and calling to a porter about his box. The box was bumped out upon the platform with a rather heavy bump.

"You careless bounders!" said the boy, with an angry stare at the guard and the porter, who had bumped down the box between them. "Do you want to smash my things?"

The two men stared at him. They had been a little careless, perhaps, but a schoolboy's trunk can generally stand a little rough handling. And, anyway, that was not the way for a boy to speak to grown men. The guard stepped into the train again without replying, and the old porter of Rylcombe stood by the box and stared at the newcomer across it as the train moved out of the station.

The newcomer, in going towards his box, had turned his back upon the juniors of St. Jim's. He had not noticed them yet.

"Which did you speak to me, my lad?" asked old Peter. The ancient porter of Rylcombe, who was popularly believed to have seen the first railway train that ever was run in England, was a character in the village, and was generally treated with a semi-comic respect by the St. Jim's boys.

"Yes, I spoke to you and the guard," said the newcomer. "Handle that box a bit more carefully, you careless ass!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "This is a wathah nice chap for St. Jim's—I don't think!"

"What-ho!" said Blake.

The old porter stared at the boy.

"I ain't never been spoken to like this by a St. Jim's boy afore," he said. "Which I suppose you're for the school?"

"I should think you could read the address on my box. Haven't you got any eyes in that wooden, stupid head of yours?"

Old Peter gasped.

"You may be going to St. Jim's," he said, "but if I was a little younger I'd take my strap and larrup you for talkin' like that."

And the old man stumped away indignantly.

"Here, I say, you haven't got the box," called out the new junior. "Carry it out to the cab, if you have such a thing as a cab in this deadly hole of a place!"

The porter did not turn his head.

"You insolent old blackguard!" shouted the new boy. "Come back and take my box, or I'll report you to the company!"

"Which you can report and welcome," said Old Peter. "I don't touch your box, not if I know it."

The new junior uttered an angry exclamation.

"The old fool! What am I to do?"

"I should recommend you to be a little more polite to an old fellow, a man old enough to be your grandfather," said Jack Blake indignantly.

The new junior turned round, and stared at him coolly.

"Would you?" he said. "And who may you happen to be?"

"I'm Blake of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's," said Blake, turning very red in the face.

"Well, Blake of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, will you oblige me by keeping your advice till I ask for it?" suggested the new boy.

Jack Blake breathed hard.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "Bai Jove! I wathah think that a feahful thwashin' is what this wottah needs."

"Order!" said Blake. "Can't row with a new boy on the first day. Look here, Levison—your name's Levison, I believe?"

"Yes—Ernest Levison."

"Well, look here, we came to the station to meet you."

"What for? What's the little game?"

"There's no little game on," said Blake. "We had nothing to do this afternoon, and we came to meet you because we thought a little attention like that would be only decent to a new boy. We thought we were going to meet a decent chap, you see. Sorry for the mistake."

"Bai Jove, had him there!" said D'Arcy.

To the surprise of the juniors the new boy only grinned.

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He had a sense of humour, and he seemed to be able to appreciate a dig, even if it was at his own expense.

"All serene," he said, "only don't pile it on, you know. I'm a new boy to this school; but I've been to a Public school before, and I know all the ropes. You can't pull the wool over my eyes."

"I don't know what you are driving at," said Blake impatiently.

Levison laughed.

"Oh, come, you may as well own up!" he exclaimed. "You came here to work off some jape on a new kid, and you've dropped the idea because you see I'm fly."

"Nothing of the sort."

"You'll allow me to keep my own opinion about that," said Levison dryly.

Blake flushed crimson.

"Do you mean that you doubt my word, you utter cad?" he exclaimed.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"We needn't argue about it," he said. "No need to have a row that I can see. So long as you don't try any japes, all serene. If you do try any, you'll find that I can keep my end up."

"Of all the uttah wottahs—"

"What am I to do about this box?" said Levison, interrupting Arthur Augustus D'Arcy without the slightest ceremony. "If you belong to St. Jim's, you fellows, I suppose you can tell me how to get it to the school?"

"You can have it put on the hack, or leave it here to be sent on."

"I want to take it with me. There are some things in it that might be broken," said Levison. "These porters are careless asses. Is there a stationmaster here I can complain to about that impertinent old fool?"

"Oh, shut up! We'll help you get the box out."

"All serene! Hang it!" exclaimed Levison suddenly. "Keep that confounded dog away!"

The cool, half-insolent carelessness of Ernest Levison's manner had suddenly vanished. He made a spring to place the box between himself and Towser.

The dog, unnoticed for the moment, had been looking at the newcomer with a steady, fixed glare, and a strange thrill had run through him—a thrill that meant he was about to spring. The juniors did not notice it, but Levison's keen, half-greenish eyes seemed to let nothing escape him.

"Hold that dog!" he shouted.

Herries grasped at Towser's collar just in time. The bulldog was launching himself forward on the new boy.

"Hold him, you fool!"

The startled Herries grasped the collar hard, but Towser fairly dragged him towards the new boy in his effort to get at Levison.

Blake promptly grasped the collar, too, and between them the bulldog was fairly dragged back, growling savagely, and his eyes fairly flaming at Levison.

"The brute's mad!" shouted Levison. "He ought to be shot!"

Herries snorted. He could not understand what was the matter with his dog; but he wasn't inclined to hear a word against Towser.

"He's all right now," he said. "I suppose you were looking at him?"

"The infernal beast! Take him away! A chap's not safe near him."

"Bai Jove, that's quite wight, Hewwies, old man! That dog certainly has no wespsect whatevah for a fellow's twousahs."

Herries looked grimly at the new boy.

"Towser doesn't like you," he said bluntly. "He wasn't playful just now; he was in earnest. You'd have been hurt if he'd have got hold of you. Do you want my opinion of you, Levison? You're a cad—a rotter! A fellow that a dog takes a dislike to is no good. I don't want to have anything to say to you."

And Herries dragged Towser away, the bulldog still showing his teeth.

CHAPTER 3.

One Who Knew Lumley!

"**B**AI JOVE!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Blake and Digby stared at one another. The incident had taken them wholly by surprise, and they did not understand it. Towser, though he had a very terrifying appearance and playful little ways that strangers sometimes took too seriously, was really a quiet and affectionate dog, and would not have hurt anybody.

The sudden and unaccountable dislike he had taken to the new boy was startling. There came into Blake's mind the old proverb, that a fellow who is not liked by dogs or



"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Blake & Co., as they arrived at Rylcombe Station. "Here he is." Outside the station was a heap of packing cases, and seated on the topmost one was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with Towser watching patiently below. "Dwive that howwid beast away!" implored Gussy. "I've had a fwrightfully nawnwow escape!"

children is no good. The juniors had already had a sample of Levison's nature—cold, carping, suspicious, ill-natured. Was it possible that Towser, with the blind instinct of an animal, had read his nature as worse than the juniors yet imagined it to be?

It was an unpleasant thought, and Blake tried to dismiss it.

"Sorry, Levison," he said. "You mustn't mind Herries, you know. He's simply wrapped up in that blessed dog. Towser's been a bit excited this afternoon, and I suppose he hasn't got over it, as a matter of fact."

"Yaas, wathah! Pway don't think of what Hewwies said."

"I don't care what Herries says or Herries thinks," said Levison. "He can go and eat coke! If that brute tries to bite me again, I'll shoot it or poison it! Look here, help me with this box."

The juniors carried the box to the exit from the platform. There Levison gave up his ticket, and old Peter received it, with a heavy frown. Then he took the box from the juniors, shouldering it himself.

"I wouldn't touch it for that young person, Master Blake," he said, "but I'll carry it for you young gents."

"Thank you vewy much, Petah, deah boy," said D'Arcy.

"Well, be careful with it, you old donkey!" exclaimed Levison. "There are breakable things in that box."

"Look here," said Blake roughly, "if you can't speak to Peter civilly, you'd better keep your mouth shut, Levison! We don't like that sort of thing."

Levison gave his shoulders a shrug—a shrug which had an exasperating effect upon the juniors.

But the new boy did not reply in words, and the matter dropped; but he did not address any further incivility to the old porter. Indeed, when the box was deposited on the roof of the hack, he tossed the old man a sixpence.

Old Peter took the sixpence and looked at it, and then deliberately threw it out into the middle of the road.

Levison gave another shrug.

"His loss, not mine," he remarked.

He stepped into the hack.

"You fellows coming?" he said. "Look here, if it's true about your coming to meet me, I'm much obliged. Come in!"

The juniors stepped in. Jack Blake looked round for

Herries, but Herries was already gone. He was evidently keeping to what he had said about having nothing to do with the new boy.

The hack rolled off towards St. Jim's.

"Look here," said Blake suddenly. "Haven't we met you before, Levison?"

Levison stared at him.

"Not that I know of," he said.

"I've heard the name Levison before."

"That's quite possible," said the new boy.

"So have many other fellows at St. Jim's," said Digby.

"Tom Merry said he was certain he'd met somebody of that name."

"Who's Tom Merry?" asked Levison.

"A chap in the Shell at St. Jim's."

"Never heard of him."

"But the curious thing is, that I think I know your face as well as your name," said Blake, wrinkling his brows in deep thought. "Are you sure I haven't met you before somewhere?"

"I don't remember it if you have. I never knew anybody named Blake to my knowledge," said Levison carelessly.

"It's very odd."

"Oh, there are chance resemblances, you know!" said the new boy, in a perfectly cool and unconcerned manner, as if the subject bored him somewhat. "I don't see that it matters, either way. Will you chaps tell me something about St. Jim's? I've heard that a son of Lascelles Lumley-Lumley, the millionaire, is there."

The juniors' faces clouded.

"He was there," said Blake shortly.

Levison looked at him.

"Has he left, then?"

"He's dead!" said Blake quietly. "Did you know him?"

"Yes," said Levison, whose face showed surprise, but no other emotion whatever. "I knew him just slightly. My uncle in London had some business dealings with his father, and I happened to meet him at the office. We spent an hour or two together looking round London while the old fogies were talking business in old Lumley's office. I expected to meet him here, and renew the acquaintance. And he's dead!"

"Yes."

"How long?"

"He died on Monday evening."

"The funeral—"

"There hasn't been a funeral," said Blake. "His father is expected back to England every day—he's been in South America—and until his arrival the coffin has been left in the vaults under the St. Jim's chapel. Mr. Lumley-Lumley may be at the school to-morrow. Then the funeral will take place."

"Poor chap!" said Levison. "It's rotten! I expected—"

He broke off, and did not speak again. But Blake, scanning the hard, unmoved face, could see that the newcomer had entertained no sentiments of friendship towards Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. Without being uncharitable, Blake felt that Levison had hoped to chum up with the millionaire's son simply because he was a millionaire's son, and that his only feeling on hearing of Lumley-Lumley's untimely fate was one of personal disappointment.

CHAPTER 4.

Levison is Not Liked!

TOM MERRY was standing on the steps of the School House, chatting with Manners and Lowther, when the hack from the station arrived.

The Terrible Three were unusually subdued in their manner. The death of Lumley-Lumley had passed a shadow on the school which was not likely to lift very soon. Try as they would, the boys could not forget that the Outsider of St. Jim's lay in the vaults under the chapel.

No one liked the Outsider, but that made no difference now. They thought of him with sad faces, and spoke of him in whispers.

The Terrible Three were killing time. As a rule, they had plenty to do; but they were idle now. They did not feel that it would be the thing to play footer.

Lumley had not been a friend of theirs, but he was dead. And Tom Merry could not forget that last sad scene in the sick room, when the Outsider had asked him to remain with him till the end, and he had done so.

The arrival of the hack was a break in the monotony of the afternoon. Tom Merry remembered the new boy, whose name was familiar to him, though he could not remember

where he had heard it before. He wondered whether he would know the new boy's face.

The hack came plodding slowly up to the School House, and at the same time Herries came round from the direction of the kennels. Herries had just taken Towser back to his quarters. He came up the steps of the School House, pausing for a moment to look at the hack with an expressive sniff.

Tom Merry caught his look.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "You know the new fellow, Herries?"

Herries shook his head.

"No, I don't, and I don't want to!" he snorted.

"You've seen him?"

"Yes; we met on the station. He's a rotter!"

"How on earth do you know?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"He wasn't labelled as one?"

"Towser doesn't like him," explained Herries. "I believe in a dog's instinct. When you see a dog take a dislike to a chap, you know that that chap isn't fond of animals. A chap who isn't fond of animals is no good. You mark my words, that chap Levison will turn out to be a rotter. I'm going to have nothing to do with him. If he's put into Study No. 6, I shall change into another study!"

And Herries sniffed again and went into the House. The Terrible Three grinned at one another.

"Good old Towser!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Fancy being tried and found guilty by Judge Towser!"

"There's something in it, though," said Manners. "Dogs know the kind of fellow they can trust, I believe."

"We won't condemn the new chap on Towser's evidence alone, though," said Tom Merry, with a smile. "Give him a chance!"

"Oh, rather!"

The hack stopped and the door opened. Blake and Digby and D'Arcy stepped out, followed by Ernest Levison.

Tom Merry looked at him, and wrinkled his brows in an effort at remembrance.

"You've seen him before?" asked Manners.

"His face seems familiar."

"Same to me."

"I've seen him, or somebody like him, somewhere," said Tom Merry. "It certainly wasn't anyone I knew well, though. I suppose I just met him somewhere—perhaps at some place where we played out."

"Very likely!"

Levison was talking to old William, the driver. He was speaking in the same tone he had used to the porter at the railway station. Whether he intended it or not, there was always a sarcastic tone in Levison's voice and a half sneer on his face.

"How much?" he asked.

"Four shillings," said William.

"If you think I'm going to pay a charge like that, you've got it wrong," he remarked. "I'll give you two."

"Four shillings, sir!"

"Rats!"

"Weally, Levison—" said Arthur Augustus.

Levison turned to the swell of St. Jim's and looked him directly in the face.

"I believe this is my business?" he remarked, in a sort of interrogative way.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then would you mind leaving me to manage it my own way?" asked Levison, with a bland smile.

"Now then, driver, how much do you want? You can't spoof me, you know!"

"The fare is two-and-six," said William stolidly. "And sixpence each for the hextra passengers. That's charging nothing extry for the box; but I'm willing to leave that to you, sir, if you are a gentleman."

Levison laughed again.

"If I cannot be a gentleman without being swindled, I think I won't set up any pretensions in that direction," he remarked. "I will give you two shillings for your fare and twopence for the box."

"Which the hextra passengers—"

"Nothing for them. You should have told me."

"But—"

"That's all right," said Blake, in disgust. "We'll pay our own tanner each. William is entitled to charge it."

"Stuff!" said Levison. "Don't pay. Two shillings is enough."

"I insist upon payin'," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in his most stately manner. "Here is the cash, William."

And he passed eighteenpence to the driver.

"Which you are a gentleman, Master D'Arcy," said old William, taking the money, and giving Levison a glance which inferred that he considered the new boy very far from being a gentleman. But Levison did not mind.

"I want two-and-sixpence from you now, sir," said William.

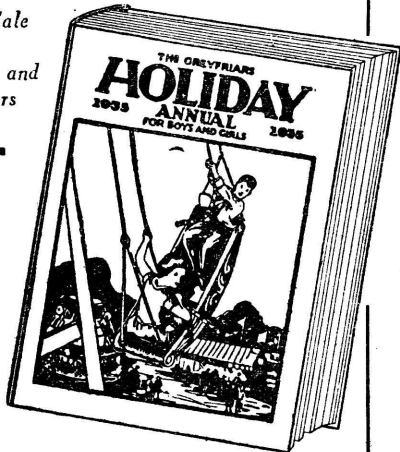
Levison took out a two-shilling piece, and added twopence to it.

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"There's your fare," he said. "You can take it or leave it. I shan't give you a tip for your impertinence. Isn't there a school porter to take down my box? There ought to be."

William looked at the two-shilling piece and two pennies in the palm of his horny hand. Then he fixed a steadfast gaze upon Levison.

"Fourpence more, please," he said.

"Rats!" said Levison.

"Which I think—"

"Never mind what you think; you're paid to drive, not to think!" said Levison, with cheerful insolence. "Put that box off, and get away."

Taggles, the school porter, was on the scene. Levison looked at him and pointed to the box, which the driver made no motion to touch.

"You're the porter, I suppose," he said.

Taggles touched his hat. He did not like the new boy's manner; but a new boy and his box were generally productive of a tip.

"Yes, sir," said Taggles.

"Get that box down, then."

The new boy's tone was still less likeable as he gave that order. As Taggles said afterwards, in mentioning the matter to Mrs. Taggles, "the young gent was no gent, because he didn't seem to 'ave any idea that servants 'ave feelin's." In which probably Taggles was quite right.

"Suttin'ly, sir!" said Taggles.

Taggles might have feelings, but he never allowed them to interfere with a prospective threepence, sixpence, or a shilling. He lifted the box down.

"Careful!" said Levison. "There are breakable things in that box."

"Suttin'ly, sir."

Taggles bore the box into the House. The driver sat on his seat, looking at the two shillings and twopence. Minds did not work very fast in Rylcombe, and William had not yet made his up.

Levison turned to follow Taggles in. Then William raised his voice.

"Which you howe me another fourpence, sir," said William.

Levison looked at him over his shoulder.

"You've had all you're going to get from me," he said.

"I'll complain to the 'Ead."

"Complain and be hanged!"

And Levison went in.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wegard that chap as a mean wottah! Here's a sixpence for you, cabb!"

Old William touched his hat.

"Thank you, sir. You're a gentleman."

"Gentleman for the low price of sixpence," murmured Monty Lowther. "Who wouldn't be a gentleman at the price?"

Old William blinked at him and drove away. The juniors remained in a group on the steps to discuss the new boy.

"Well," said Tom Merry, "I don't believe in being imposed on by cabbies, or anyone, but I think the chap might have paid William."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We went to meet him at the station, and joined him in the hack to keep him company," said Digby, "and he let us pay!"

"Wotten!"

"I was rather thinking that Towser was hard on him," said Tom Merry. "But I'm rather inclined to back up Towser now. Towser knows a thing or two."

And the others agreed that Towser did.

CHAPTER 5.

Mellish's New Chum!

TAGGLES paused near the stairs with the box. It was somewhat heavy, but not quite so heavy as Taggles made out. Taggles had a way of bracing himself for the lightest burden, and shouldering it with many grunts—having found that the tip varied in proportion to the exertions he made.

"Mighty heavy, sir," he remarked, as he rested the box on the floor.

"Stuff!" said Levison.

"Eh?"

"Stuff! The box is not heavy. Get it along!"

Taggles gave the new boy an expressive look, and shouldered the box again, this time without grunting, and carried it up. He knew that Ernest Levison was to be put in the Fourth Form, and he carried the box up to the Fourth Form dormitory without a pause.

There he set it down and grunted.

"Thank you," said Levison.

Taggles puffed and blew,

"I suppose I can get a wash here?" said Levison, glancing up and down the row of white beds, each with a neat washstand next to it.

"Yes, sir."

"Good!"

Taggles puffed and blew, but he blew and puffed in vain. No tip was forthcoming, and the porter departed in a disgruntled mood.

Levison took off his jacket, and pushed up his cuffs. He poured water into a basin, appropriated a cake of soap, and began to wash his hands and face.

Levison finished washing, readjusted his collar, and descended the stairs. Few would have taken him for a new boy as he walked along with perfect coolness, apparently as much at home at St. Jim's as if he had been there all his life. He met a boy of his own age in the passage, who looked at him curiously. Levison returned his stare with as insolent a look as he could summon to his features—which is saying a great deal.

"You'll know me again, I suppose?" he remarked. "Are you one of the chaps who think they have met me before? There seems to be a lot of them here."

The junior shook his head.

HARD WORK!



Friend (calling on artist):

"Busy, old top?"

Artist: "I've been working like a cart-horse."

Friend: "Why?"

Artist: "I've been drawing a cart all the morning."

Half-a-crown has been

awarded to G. Hill, 52, Love

Lane, Pinner, Middlesex.

"I've not seen you before," he said, "and I can't say that I want to see you again. I suppose you are the new chap—Levison?"

"Yes. Have you heard the name, too, like the rest?" asked Levison, in a tone of sarcastic unpleasantness.

"No, and don't want to hear it. I was looking at you because you are to be in my study in the Fourth."

"Oh!" said Levison, looking at the other with new interest. "I'm to be in your study. What's your name?"

"Mellish."

"Where's your study?"

Mellish looked the new boy up and down. Mellish was called in the School House the cad of the Fourth, and he deserved the name. Mellish was calculating, as he looked at Levison, whether he was worth toadying to, and whether he had enough money to make civility worth while, and whether he was sufficiently a boxer to make it advisable to treat him with respect. His conclusion was that Levison had money, for he was smartly dressed, and self-confident, but that the new boy did not look as if he would part with any of it very easily. Still, Mellish was without a chum at the present moment, owing to the late happenings in the school, and since Snipe's father had recently taken his son away from St. Jim's, and he thought he might do worse than make up to the new boy.

"I'll show you the study if you like," he said.

"Thanks. I can get my books and things into it. I've been told to report myself to the headmaster, too, but that can wait."

"Come on, then."

Levison followed Mellish to his study in the Fourth Form passage. It was the smallest study in the passage, but Mellish explained that it never had more than two occupants, and so they had as much room as any of the other Fourth Formers, who generally went three or four to a study.

"There's four in Study No. 6," Mellish explained. "Blake, Digby, D'Arcy, and Herries. We have more room than they have, as a matter of fact."

"I suppose you've had the study to yourself up to now?"

"Only for a few days."

"Some fellow left?"

"No—died."

Levison started.

"Was it Lumley-Lumley?" he asked.

Mellish nodded assent.

"Yes, he was in this study. We were great chums."

"Were you?" said Levison, looking at him. "You don't look very cut up."

"Oh, I'm cut up, of course," said Mellish, in a tone of perfect indifference. "We were great friends. He was a millionaire's son, you know, and his father is expected

every day at St. Jim's. He's Lascelles Lumley-Lumley, of Lumley's, Ltd., one of the richest—"

"I know more about him than you can tell me," said Levison. "I knew the chap."

"You knew the Outsider?" exclaimed Mellish, in surprise. "Oh, was that what you called him?"

"Yes. He was always called the Outsider here."

"Then I take it that he wasn't popular?" said Levison, with a grin.

"No, he wasn't—quite the other thing, in fact. But, of course, the fellows aren't talking about that now. He had his good points," said Mellish. "But where did you know him?" he went on curiously. "Did you know him well?"

"I knew him in London, for a few hours," said Levison; "that is all. But I knew him well, all the same. We got very chummy, and he told me a lot of things about himself. You see, we went into a place to grub, and he had an attack of illness there, and I looked after him, and that was how we became confidential."

Mellish stared.

"I must say you don't look the kind of fellow to look after a chap who's ill," he remarked.

"You don't think so?"

"No. But, of course," said Mellish, "he's a millionaire's son—I forgot that."

An ugly look came over Levison's face.

"Are you much of a boxer?" he asked.

"No," said Mellish, surprised at the question. "I don't go in for that sort of thing."

"Then you'd better be a little more careful how you talk to me. I am."

Mellish backed away a little.

"Oh, all right," he said. "I didn't mean to offend you. Look here, as we're going to share this study, we may as well be friends. It's small enough as it is, and it's worse if we're on bad terms in it."

Levison nodded.

"All right," he said. "I've been in a smaller study than this—"

He broke off.

"You've been to school before?" asked Mellish.

"Yes."

"What school?"

Levison did not seem to hear the question.

"I think I'll get my visit to the headmaster over," he remarked. "Can you tell me where to find him?"

"You haven't told me what school you used to go to," said Mellish.

"I never answer questions," said Levison, in his ruder manner. "Where is the Housemaster's room?"

Mellish grinned.

"I never answer questions!" he said, in his turn. "Find out!"

Levison looked at him angrily for a moment, and then burst into a chuckle. It was one of his peculiarities that he could enjoy a joke just as much when it was turned against him. He did not reply to Mellish, but left the study and shut the door.

Mellish stood with a curious expression on his face, his forehead wrinkled, and a strange light gleaming in his eyes.

"Why doesn't he give the name of his old school?" he muttered aloud. "What's he keeping that a secret for? Is there something he is ashamed of, I wonder?"

Mellish grinned at the idea. He was the Paul Pry of the school, and he never could bear that a secret should be kept from him. He no sooner suspected that the new boy had a secret than he resolved to discover what it was.

If there was nothing in it, he would gratify his curiosity, at all events; and if it turned out to be something that gave him a hold upon the new boy, so much the better. Mellish was glad that the new boy had been put into his study.

CHAPTER 6.

Tea in Tom Merry's Study!

TOM MERRY came upon Levison as he entered the House. The new boy was looking up and down the main passage of the School House, evidently trying to find somebody or something.

Tom Merry had not taken to the new boy in the least—in fact, he had felt a sensation of repulsion on making his acquaintance. But Tom Merry was good-natured to a fault, and he did not allow any sentiment of that sort to stand in the way of obliging a stranger.

He crossed over to Levison.

"Are you looking for anything?" he asked.

"Yes," said Levison. "The Housemaster."

"Mr. Railton?"

"That's the name. I suppose you don't have more than one Housemaster here, do you?" said Levison, with that curious jeering note in his voice which gave his most ordinary remarks an unpleasant ring.

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"Only one in each House, of course," said Tom Merry quietly. "There are two Houses here. Mr. Railton is the master of the School House, and Mr. Ratcliff of the New House. I suppose you're to be in this House?"

"Yes."

"I'll take you to Mr. Railton's study."

"Thanks!"

Tom Merry did so, and tapped at the door. The deep voice of the Housemaster bade the newcomer enter, and Levison went in and closed the door.

Tom Merry went up to his study, where Manners and Lowther were setting tea. The Terrible Three had asked the chums of Study No. 6 to tea that afternoon, and the Fourth Formers were expected every minute. Not that the juniors felt in any humour for jollity under the shadow that was on the school. But it was that very shadow which made them want to seek one another's company round the tea-table. It was dispiriting to think that the footsteps of the Outsider would never be heard in the passage again, though they had never liked him.

Monty Lowther was stirring up the fire, and planting a kettle upon the blaze. Manners was laying the table. There was a new jar of strawberry jam on the table, and Manners removed the paper top very carefully. Manners was careful in everything, and he could make toast as well as he could take photographs, and he was the head of the School House juniors in the classics—in fact, only Kerr of the School House was his equal in that line.

"Not here yet?" asked Tom Merry, as he came in, throwing down a packet on the table. "There's the ham!"

"Good! Now we're ready!"

"Kettle will soon boil," said Lowther, looking up with a very pink face. "No good making the tea before they're here."

"Not a bit of it."

"Bai Jove, you look vewy cosy in here!" said a voice at the door, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in, followed by Blake and Herries and Digby. "Are we early, deah boys?"

"Not at all," said Tom Merry. "But as you're here, make yourselves useful. You can butter the toast, Blake."

Blake began to butter the toast.

"I hear that the new chap has been put in Lumley-Lumley's old place," he remarked. "He's sharing Mellish's study."

"Well, from what I've seen of him, I should say that Mellish is about the likeliest chap in the School House to get on with him," said Monty Lowther.

"Just what I thought. It's curious about that chivvy of his," Blake went on, with a puckered brow. "Do you know, I'll swear I've seen him before, and I can't help fancying that he remembers it, too, though he denies it."

"Bai Jove, Blake, that's accusing a chap of speakin' untwuly, you know."

"Well, I don't want to do that exactly, but that's the impression he gave me," said Blake. "Of course, I might be wrong."

"Yaas, I wegard that as extwemely pwob," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy assented. "As a mattah of fact, you vewy fwrequently are wong, aren't you, Blake?"

"Ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Can I come in?"

It was a voice from the passage. The Fourth Formers had left the door half-open when they entered, and another face was looking in now. A slight shade came over Tom Merry's face as he saw Levison, but he did not allow it to dwell there.

"Certainly!" he said. "Come in, by all means!"

Levison came in.

The other fellows were silent. Levison's coming seemed to have cast a sort of dampness over their spirits.

"This is Blake's study, I believe?" said Levison, looking round.

"No; it's mine!"

"Oh! I heard Blake's voice, and concluded it was his," said Levison.

Blake coloured a little. If Levison had heard his voice he had doubtless heard what he said, too. But in that case, how came Levison near enough to hear him without his footsteps being heard in the passage? Had he come silently down the passage on purpose to hear without being heard? At that thought Blake ceased to feel any regret that the new boy might have heard himself spoken of unkindly. It was right that listeners should hear no good of themselves.

"This is the Shell study," explained Tom Merry. "This passage is the Shell passage. The passage at the end belongs to the Fourth."

"Oh, I see! My mistake," said Levison blandly. "I don't see that it matters, though, as I wanted to speak to Blake, and he's here."

"Better stay to tea, now you're here," said Tom Merry.

He could hardly say less. He did not take to the new boy, but he wanted to be hospitable and kind.

Levison was not slow to accept the invitation. "Thanks, I will!" he said. "You're very kind."
 "Here's a chair. Do you like toast?"
 "Yes, rather!"
 "Here you are!"
 Monty Lowther had made the tea, and he now poured it out. Under the general influence of tea and toast the juniors thawed a great deal, and were prepared to make the best of their new acquaintance.
 "You wanted to see me," Blake observed, remembering presently that Levison had stated that he was in search of Blake when he happened upon Tom Merry.
 "Ah, yes," said Levison. "Mr. Railton told me to find you."
 "Yes. Anything I can do for you?"
 "That's it. He said you were the head of the Fourth Form in the School House, and you'd show me round a bit, and put me up to things, you know."
 "Oh! I will, certainly!" said Blake, though he did not particularly relish the duty. "I'll do anything I can."
 "Thanks!"
 "In the first place, this is Tom Merry's study, and these chaps are Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther," said Blake, with his mouth full of toast. "You can sort them out for yourself."

and reappeared, holding a little brown mouse, which was evidently not alive, for it made no motion in his grasp.
 The juniors stared at it with horror. Manners, who had helped himself to jam, pushed his plate away. D'Arcy, who had eaten a considerable quantity of it, assumed a very sickly expression.
 "My hat!" murmured Tom Merry.
 "I—I didn't see it in the jar!" exclaimed Manners.
 "Did you look?" asked Levison.
 "Well, no; but—"
 "Bai Jove! I feel wathah wockay inside, you know! I—I think I will wetiiah ffrom the studay, deah boys."
 "Oh, sit tight!" said Lowther. "It won't hurt you."
 "I can't understand it," said Tom Merry. "That was a new jar of jam, and it had never been opened till Manners took the paper off ten minutes ago."
 Levison made a motion of tossing the mouse into the fire.
 "Well, that settles it," he said. "I think I'll have some jam. After you, Blake!"
 Blake shook his head.
 "I don't think I'll have any," he said.
 "It's all right."
 D'Arcy rose to his feet. His face was very pale.
 "I—I think I'll wetiiah, deah boys," he stammered. "I—I feel wathah seasick, you know."



"Ah! I thought so!" exclaimed Levison, looking into the teapot. His fingers went into the opening, and he drew forth a mouse dripping with hot tea! The other juniors stared in amazement. They had all had cups of tea from that pot!

Levison laughed.
 "Good!"
 "I wogard that as a wotten way of intwoducin' a fellow, Blake," said Arthur Augustus. "It is weally vevy bad form."
 "Go hon! You can do it over again, if you like, Gussy," said Blake. "Pass the jam, Dig."
 "Allow me," said Levison.
 He passed the jam to Blake. Tom Merry was not the possessor of a jam-dish. He had possessed several, presented to him by Miss Priscilla Fawcett, his old governess, but each had gone the way of the others in turn. Glass and crockeryware did not last long in the junior studies. The jam was in the original three-pound jar, and it was a little heavy to pass round the table, though certainly it was growing lighter every minute. Levison stared into the jamjar as he lifted it, with an expression of surprise upon his face.
 "What's the matter?" asked Tom Merry, catching his expression. "Nothing wrong with the jam, is there?"
 "Do you usually keep dead mice in your jampots?" asked Levison.
 "What?"
 "Bai jove!"
 "Dead mice?"
 "What do you mean, Levison?"
 "Look here!"
 Levison's slim white fingers went into the top of the jar,

And he rushed from the study. The other juniors sat looking very uncomfortable, with the exception of Levison, who helped himself to jam and ate it with a good appetite, as if the discovery in the jampot did not affect him in the least.

CHAPTER 7.
 Another Mouse!

TOM MERRY was looking and feeling very uncomfortable.
 The jamjar was placed on the shelf. No one but Levison felt inclined to touch it. The juniors contented themselves with toast. Fortunately, there was plenty of that.
 "Do you have many mice in this school?" asked Levison.
 "I've never seen any," said Tom Merry. "There are rats round the kennels, but not many. I've never seen mice in the School House. I simply can't understand it, but it must have been in the jar when it came here."
 Levison laughed, showing his teeth in the curious way he had whenever he parted his lips at all.
 "Well, after that, things seem to have a peculiar flavour," he remarked. "Do you notice anything curious about the tea?"
 "What's wrong with it?" asked Lowther, rather warmly; for he had made the tea, and he rather prided himself upon the way he did it.

"Oh, nothing," said Levison—"unless it has a rather curious flavour! But if you fellows don't notice it—"

"I don't, for one!" said Lowther.

"Nor I!" said Digby.

"Nor I!" growled Herries. Herries was not in a very good humour. He had determined to have nothing to say to the new fellow, yet here he was at the same tea-table with him within the first hour of Levison's arrival at the school. He could not very well help himself. Levison had come in as a guest of Tom Merry's and Herries could not act in a pointed manner towards him in another fellow's study. But Herries did not like the position.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

He lifted the lid of the teapot, and looked into the steaming opening. Then he uttered an exclamation:

"Ah! I thought so!"

His slim fingers went into the teapot, and he drew forth a mouse, dripping with the hot tea.

The juniors were amazed.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Digby.

"Hang it all, Tom Merry, this is too bad!" exclaimed Blake, turning quite pale. "I've had three cups of tea, and that—that—Ow!"

Monty Lowther's eyes seemed to be about to start from his head as he stared at the mouse in Levison's hand.

"It—it wasn't in the pot when I made the tea!" he stammered.

"Rats! It must have been!"

"I tell you it wasn't!"

"Then how could it have got in?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"I—I remember now the tea had a taste," stammered Digby, very white in the face. "I—I— Excuse me, you fellows, I think I'll—I'll go."

He almost staggered from the study, with a curious sound in his throat.

Levison's hand swept towards the grate again.

"There goes the second one," he said. "I suppose, as a matter of fact, this study is swarming with mice."

"I don't know that I gave him the name."

"I suppose he wasn't easy to get on with?" suggested Levison.

"I'd rather say nothing about him. We made it up before the end, and I don't care to talk on the subject."

That would have been enough for most fellows, but Levison did not seem in the least rebuffed. The chums learned later, when they knew Ernest Levison better, that he was not easily turned from anything he had set his attention upon.

"Well, you see, he was a friend of mine, in a way, though I only knew him for so short a time," said Levison. "Do you know what he died of?"

"He had an illness—something he had been keeping dark for a long time. There was a motor accident, and the shock brought on a severe attack," said Tom Merry, compelled to reply upon the distasteful subject.

"But the malady—what was that?"

"I don't rightly know—some curious nervous complaint which had an effect upon the heart."

Levison nodded slowly.

"That's it. He had an attack of it while I was in London with him," he said. "It was in a restaurant at lunch, and he had been taking more wine than perhaps he should have. He turned white and cold all of a sudden, and lay like a dead chap in his chair for five minutes or more; but he recovered before a doctor could be brought, and he was in a furious temper at my sending for one."

"That was just like Lumley," said Monty Lowther.

"He came round, and we parted jolly good friends," said Levison. "I was looking forward to meeting him here. I met him just after leaving—my old school."

Levison had evidently been about to utter the name of his old school, but he checked himself in time.

"What school were you at?" asked Tom Merry, to change the subject.

It was an ordinary question enough to put to a new boy, and there was no trace of inquisitiveness in it, but Levison did not choose to answer it.

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"I can't understand it," was all Tom Merry could say.

"I'd like another cup of tea, please."

"What!" ejaculated Blake. "You don't mean to say that you're going to drink the tea, all the same?"

"Yes," answered Levison.

"Well, I'm not squeamish, I hope," said Blake; "but I couldn't touch that tea again. What I've drunk already makes me feel qualmy. I think I'll go into the open air a bit, Tom Merry, if you don't mind. I feel as if I did the first time I got on a Channel steamer."

And Blake left the study. Herries followed him without a word. He did not feel so qualmy as Blake, but he was glad to get away from the new boy. It was curious how Herries' dislike, founded upon the incident of Towser, had grown in so short a time.

The Terrible Three looked at each other in dismay.

They had intended that little tea-party to cheer up themselves and their friends in the Fourth, but it was having quite the opposite effect.

Levison alone seemed undisturbed. He ate and drank quite cheerfully, and as the Shell fellows fell silent, he chatted away.

His talk was chiefly about London, and about a long holiday he had had abroad. He did not mention his former school. Tom Merry tried to rouse himself from his gloom for the sake of courtesy to his guest. The Shell fellows would have been very glad to have seen Levison leave, for they were feeling qualmy themselves. But the new boy showed no signs of hurrying over his tea.

He turned the conversation upon Lumley-Lumley at last—a subject the chums of the Shell would have been very glad to avoid. But Levison, having told them he had known Lumley-Lumley in London, might be excused for wanting to know some of the particulars of his life at St. Jim's, and the gloomy end of his career there.

"I hear that he was called the 'Outsider' here," he remarked.

Tom Merry nodded.

"You didn't like him?"

"I don't care to say so, considering that he's dead!" said Tom Merry sharply.

"Well, you could hardly have given him that name if you had been fond of him," Levison remarked.

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"I was speaking about Lumley," he said. "I hear that his father is expected at the school, and the funeral's not to take place till he comes."

"That is so."

"Where is Lumley now?"

"The coffin was placed in the vault under the chapel," said Tom Merry.

"Would it be possible to see him?"

The chums of the Shell stared at Levison.

"I suppose you can't want to see him," said Tom Merry abruptly. "What on earth do you mean?"

"Well, he was my friend, you know," said Levison coolly.

"Why shouldn't I see him?"

"It wouldn't be allowed. I don't suppose the coffin will be opened, even when his father comes, unless he comes very soon. Hang it all, what a ghoul you are, Levison!" exclaimed Tom Merry irritably. "I wish you'd get off the subject."

"Then you think I shouldn't be allowed to see him if I asked the Head?"

"I think you'd very likely get your ears boxed if you asked it."

Levison laughed.

"Then I shan't ask. Look here! Is it possible for a chap to get in to the vault without raising a row?"

"No. Taggles keeps the key."

"The school porter?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry shortly.

"H'm! Not much chance of his obliging me," said Levison, with a grin. "He seemed rather huffy because I didn't tip him for carrying my box in. Is the vault entered from inside the chapel?"

"Yes; but there's an entrance from outside, too."

"And Taggles has the key of that?"

"Yes."

"Where does he keep it?"

"Look here! Are you thinking of getting the key and entering the chapel vaults without permission?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Suppose I am?"

"Then you'd better not."

"I may have a reason."

"No reason but morbid curiosity, I suppose?"

"Perhaps—perhaps another reason. I certainly shan't

explain what it is—yet. Still, if I can't get the key—
Where does Taggles keep it?"

"He keeps it on his bunch," said Tom Merry. "But you won't be able to get hold of it. And, look here! If I find you nosing round the chapel vaults, I'll jolly soon stop you."

"Do you always talk to your guests in this polite way?" asked Levison blandly.

Tom Merry turned crimson.

"I—I'm sorry! I forgot. But really, Levison, you're enough to provoke anybody," he said.

"Curious. The fellows used to say that at—at my old school."

Levison rose, and, with a careless nod to the chums of the Shell, passed out of the study.

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"I'm jolly glad that chap's not in the Shell," he said.

And Manners and Lowther said with one voice, in cordial agreement:

"What-ho!"

CHAPTER 8.

The Missing Postcard!

LEVISON strolled downstairs in the cool, nonchalant way which showed that his self-possession was complete—too complete really for a new boy.

A little modesty and awe would have been more in place, but perhaps because this was not his first Public school, Levison was quite himself. He coolly returned the stares of the boys he met, and many of them passed the remark to one another that he was a cool customer.

He paused as he passed the letter-rack in the Hall, and glanced carelessly enough at the letters placed there ready for the fellows to take them. But suddenly his face changed, and his look became fixed, and the colour wavered in his cheek. His hand went quickly up to the rack, and he took down a postcard. It was addressed to Tom Merry, School House, St. Jim's, Rylcombe, Sussex, in a boyish hand, and the postmark on it was Friardale. Levison thrust it hastily into his pocket.

"Hallo!" said Kerruish of the Fourth, glancing at Levison. "Letters for you already, and you haven't been here two hours—eh?"

"Yes," said Levison coolly.

And he walked away with Tom Merry's postcard in his pocket.

Figgins of the New House at St. Jim's came across with Kerr and Wynn, his chums, and looked into the School House door. There was a general exclamation:

"New House cads!"

"Kick them out!"

But Figgins held up his hand, with a grin.

"Pax," he said. "I've come over to see Tom Merry about the match on Saturday. Is he in?"

"In his study, I believe," said Jack Blake, who had just come downstairs. "He's been standing a tea with dead mice in the teapot and the jamjar. Gussy's in our study wrestling it out."

Figgins chuckled.

"Hallo! Who's that chap?"

He was looking at Levison who was just walking away from the letter-rack. Figgins' glance followed him in some surprise.

Blake turned his head to look.

"Oh, that!" he said carelessly. "That's the new chap, Levison."

"I believe I've seen him before somewhere," said Figgins.

Blake laughed.

"There are a lot of fellows here who think they've seen him before, or heard the name somewhere," he remarked; "but Levison doesn't own up to knowing anybody, except poor Lumley-Lumley."

"Oh, he knew the Out—H'm! He knew Lumley?"

"Yes; he knew him in London. It's a curious thing," said Blake. "I'm certain I've seen the chap somewhere, and he gave me the impression that he knew me, and yet he won't admit it. It's odd."

"And he doesn't seem to want to tell us the name of his last school," Mellish remarked, joining in the conversation. "Have you noticed that?"

"Well, yes," said Blake.

"What's he keeping it secret for, then?"

"I don't know."

"Depend upon it, there's something rotten about it, or he wouldn't keep it dark," said Mellish. "I thought you might know."

"Well, I don't," said Blake shortly.

He moved away with Figgins. Mellish shrugged his shoulders carelessly. He had gained the information he wanted.

(Continued on the next page.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Half-a-crown is awarded to the sender of every joke that appears in this column.

TAKING THE COUNT.

Tom: "Do you know how they take the census in Scotland?"

Tim: "No. How?"

Tom: "Roll pennies down the streets!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss I. Frater, 19, Polworth Gardens, Edinburgh, Scotland.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Bob: "I say, Bill, one of the buffers is missing from the station."

Bill: "Lummy! Who's pinched it?"

Bob: "King Kong wanted it for a collar-stud!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to K. Greenwood, 40, Beresford Avenue, Tolworth, Surbiton.

A GOOD GUESS.

Fortune-teller: "Tell your fortune, sir?"

Passer-by: "How much?"

Fortune-teller: "One shilling."

Passer-by: "Quite right!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Roberts, 4, Martin's Place, Besson Street, New Cross, London, S.E.14.

OBEYING ORDERS.

Boss: "What is the meaning of this? I gave you half a day off, and you took the whole day."

Office-boy: "Well, you see, sir, you told me never to do things by halves!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Harcastle, 42, Bradley Mills Lane, Huddersfield.

WASTED ENERGY.

A sergeant was showing a recruit how to use the rifle.

"See here," he said. "This thing is the butt, this is the barrel, and this is where you put the bullet. Now, to shoot, you put the butt to your shoulder, look down those things called sights, take aim, and press the trigger. By the way, what were you before you joined the army?"

"A gunsmith, sir!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Mackinnon, 32, Auldburn Road, Newlands, Glasgow.

HOME FROM HOME.

Landlady: "You have not paid me any money for three weeks."

Boarder: "You said it would be just like home here, and I don't pay anything at home!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss F. Gullick, 14, Sherwood Park Road, Sutton, Surrey.

THE LAUGH'S ON FATTY.

Monty Lowther: "Are you dining anywhere on Monday and Tuesday, Fatty?"

Fatty Wynn (eagerly): "No, old chap. Why?"

Monty Lowther: "You'll be hungry on Wednesday, then, won't you?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss L. Swinburne, Rookwood, Birmingham Road, Wylde Green, Birmingham.

A FITTING QUESTION.

Shop Assistant (to customer trying on bowler): "It's a wonderful fit, sir."

Customer (viewing himself in glass): "Yes, but suppose my ears get tired?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Weitz, Mount Pleasant P.O., Emerald Hill, Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

"Levison's been having tea with Blake and the rest, and he hasn't told them the name of his last school," Mellish murmured. "It's pretty plain that he's keeping it dark. But I rather think I shall bowl him out—what?"

And Mellish chuckled as he walked away, turning the matter over in his mind. Blake and Figgins went up to Tom Merry's study. The Terrible Three were there; and they had cleared the table to do their preparation.

"Found any more mice?" asked Blake.

"No," said Tom Merry curtly.

"Figgins wants to see you about the match. I've brought him up."

"Sit down, Figgy," said Tom Merry cordially. "I don't know that I've got anything to tell you. Wharton said that he would come over from Greyfriars to arrange the details, and would let me know which day he could get an exact. But I haven't heard from him yet."

"Have you had your postcard?" asked Blake.

"What postcard?"

"There was one for you in the rack when I went to look for letters since the last delivery," said Blake.

"Was it in Wharton's fist?"

"Yes."

"Then that's it," said Tom Merry. "Let's go down and get it."

And they went downstairs.

Tom Merry ran his eyes over the letter-rack.

"There's no postcard there," he answered.

Blake glanced over the rack.

"Sure you haven't had it?" he asked.

"Quite sure."

"It was just here, sticking just underneath this letter for Kildare," said Blake. "I was going to take it and bring it to you, only—I didn't. It was here right enough."

"Perhaps somebody else took it," suggested Figgins. "It may be some other obliging chump—excuse me—obliging fellow is taking it up to Tom Merry at this very moment."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Tom Merry, "and if it's Skimpole, he may have put it in his pocket and forgotten all about it."

"Well, we can easily inquire. The postcard must be somewhere."

The juniors inquired.

Nobody, however, seemed able to tell them anything about the missing postcard. Nobody seemed to have taken it. A good many had seen it in the rack, just under Kildare's letter, and some had observed that it was in the hand of Harry Wharton, the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

Nobody knew anything further of it.

Skimpole was found and questioned, and that brainy youth made a great effort and detached his attention for one moment from the deep problems he was busy upon, to answer that he hadn't seen the postcard.

"You're quite sure?" asked Tom Merry. "You might have taken it with the idea of bringing it up to me, you know."

Skimpole shook his head.

"Not at all. I have not been to the letter-rack to-day."

"You may have forgotten all about it."

"Really, Merry—"

They left Skimpole; there was nothing to be got out of the brainy man of the Shell. They asked questions right and left, with the same result.

Tom Merry was beginning to look worried.

"I can't understand this," he said. "It looks to me now as if somebody has taken the postcard and is suppressing it for a silly joke."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who had joined in the search. "If that is the case, Tom Mewwy, I would suggest givin' the feahful jokah a thwashin'!"

"We've got to find him first," Figgins suggested.

"Perhaps he's in the tuckshop," remarked Fatty Wynn.

They stared at Fatty Wynn. Fatty's mind naturally ran to the tuckshop, under all circumstances.

"What on earth do you mean?" demanded Blake. "Why should he be in the tuckshop?"

"Well, we might look there, I mean," said Fatty Wynn. "If he isn't there, we might discuss the matter more fully over a—little refreshment!"

Blake snorted.

"Well, I think it's a good idea," said Fatty Wynn. "This going about inquiring seems to make a fellow hungry."

"Bai Jove!"

"I think I'll wait for you chaps in the tuckshop, in fact," said Fatty Wynn. "You can let me know if you find the postcard."

And Fatty Wynn rolled away, leaving Figgins and Kerr to continue the search with the School House fellows.

"I don't catch on to it at all," Tom Merry remarked, his brow wrinkling. "It's rotten, because if I don't get that postcard, I shan't know when Wharton's coming, or whether he's coming at all. You're sure it was in his fist, Blake?"

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"Quite sure. You see, I looked at the postcard to see whether it might be for me, and in reading the address, I couldn't fail to recognise the handwriting."

"I wish you had read the message, too," said Tom Merry. "What the dickens can have become of the thing? Hallo! Here's a fellow we haven't asked. Kerruish, have you seen anything of a postcard belonging to me? It was on the rack half an hour ago."

Kerruish shook his head.

"Sure, no!" he said. "I remember seeing it there, just before Levison took his letter. Haven't you had it?"

"Levison!" exclaimed Tom Merry, without answering the rather superfluous question. "We haven't asked him yet, you chaps. I don't know where he is."

"Curious that Levison should be having correspondence so soon," said Herries, who had joined the searchers in time to hear Kerruish's remark. "Fellows don't usually have letters addressed to them here before they get to the school."

"Oh, you're down on Levison!" said Blake. "I suppose you'll be suggesting next that Levison boned the postcard, because Towser tried to bite him at the station."

"Lower knows something," said Herries. "He knows when a fellow's not to be trusted. If Levison had any possible motive for taking the postcard, I'll bet he's the chap who has taken it."

"What possible motive could he have?"

"Oh, I don't know!"

"It might be a rotten jape!" suggested Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, we'll ask him if he's seen it, anyway," said Tom Merry. "No harm in that. Does anybody know where he is?"

No one knew apparently.

"He may be in his room," said Blake. "He has Mellish's study, you know. Let's look for him there, at any rate."

And the juniors hurried up to the Fourth Form passage, knocked at the door of Mellish's study and opened it.

CHAPTER 9.

Strangely Found!

LEVISON was in the study.

He was sitting there reading something he held in his hand when the door was opened, and he hastily thrust his hand into his pocket.

He rose quickly to his feet, confronting the juniors as they came in, with a flush on his cheek, and an angry gleam in his eyes.

Tom Merry, Figgins, and Kerr, and Blake, D'Arcy, and Herries were there, and after them came Mellish, who intended to learn all there was to be learned of the matter. The chums took no notice of the cad of the Fourth.

"What do you want?" exclaimed Levison angrily. "I should think you might wait for an invitation before tramping into a fellow's study like this."

"We knocked," said Tom Merry quietly.

"Well, I never asked you to enter."

"Oh, we don't stand on ceremony to that extent here!" said Jack Blake. "We want to see you, Levison, that's all!"

"Well, you've seen me, if that's all you want. Good-bye."

"Bai Jove!"

"We're not quite done yet," said Tom Merry. "A postcard, addressed to me, was in the rack an hour ago, Levison. Did you see it?"

"I'm not in the habit of looking at other fellows' correspondence! Is that a custom here?"

Tom Merry's eyes gleamed, but he kept back the angry retort that rose to his lips.

"No," he said. "Don't pretend to misunderstand me! If you looked for letters for yourself, you could not avoid reading the addresses on letters for other fellows."

"I didn't look for letters for myself."

"That won't do. Kerruish saw you!"

Levison bit his lip. Kerruish was not with the juniors, and it had not occurred to him that Tom Merry might have been asking questions, and that the Manx lad had mentioned the little incident.

"Bai Jove! The boundah is lyin', you know!"

"I'm not lying!" said Levison fiercely. "I didn't look for letters for myself. I just looked over the letter-rack, that's all, without expecting to see one."

"But you found one for you?" said Tom Merry.

"Well, yes," said Levison, remembering Kerruish again. "Yes, I found one, as it happened."

"Did you see a postcard for me?"

"No."

Levison's voice did not falter in the least as he spoke the direct falsehood. But, somehow, the juniors did not believe him. The juniors did not trust Levison.

"I'm sorry to have to doubt any chap's word," said

(Continued on page 14.)

COME INTO THE OFFICE, CHUMS, FOR A CHAT!



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

HALLO, CHUMS! Here's some more good news for you. In addition to the bumper new 1935 "Holiday Annual," a reproduction of the cover of which appears on our front, another great number of the "Popular Book of Boys' Stories" is just out.

When this tip-top Annual was first published in 1930, it soon became established as a popular favourite, and with each passing year its popularity has steadily increased. And I have no hesitation in saying that the 1935 "Popular Book" will beat all records, for no expense has been spared to make its present programme the best ever. Its wonderful collection of adventure yarns, written by the best boys' authors of the day, cannot fail to appeal to every boy. There are thrilling stories of the Wild West, motor-racing, the sea, and the African jungle, and a grand school tale, a side-splitting circus yarn, and others. The "Popular Book's" varied programme will suit all tastes, and its 192 pages for only 2s. 6d. represents value that is unsurpassed. It is now on sale at all newsagents and booksellers, most of whom run subscription schemes so that ripping gift books like the "H.A." and the "Popular Book" can be brought within the reach of every boy. See your local newsagent about booking your copy to-day.

"UNDER FALSE COLOURS!"

Supposing you met a boy who, very much against his wishes, was just going to start his school-life at a big Public school, and he asked you to take his place and there was nothing to stop you from doing so, what would you do? Would you take the risk for the chance of getting a first-class education for nothing? This is the problem that confronts Jim Brown, a sailor lad, in next week's ripping yarn

of the chums of St. Jim's. Lord Devigne, a youthful, distant relation of Gussy's, is journeying to St. Jim's when he meets Jim Brown and suggests to him that Jim takes his place. Being keen to get a good education, Jim accepts. The grand story of what happens to the sailor lad, and the outcome of his sailing under false colours, will amuse and interest you from first line to last.

A NEW THRILL-SERIES.

Our exciting St. Frank's serial is now nearing its conclusion, and the final full-of-thrills instalment appears next week. For a few weeks now Mr. Brooks has been hard at work on a super new series of St. Frank's stories to take its place. When he suggested the theme of the series to me, he said it was just what the "Nelson Lee" readers used to revel in. And I should think so, too! For sheer thrills, eerie mystery, and breath-taking adventure this great series is unbeatable. The first story appears in a fortnight's time, and believe me, it will be a big sensation. Look out for further details next Wednesday.

THE DEAD ALIVE.

The remarkable story of a woman returning to life in dramatic circumstances comes from Belgrade. This case is on a parallel with that of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley in the powerful story in this number. The woman, Mlle. Sonia Dragovicz, was making preparations to be married to a young Englishman when she was stricken with an unknown malady,

PEN PALS COUPON

8-9-34



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

Clement Lyle, The Bungalow, Harbour Head, West Indies, wants pen pals anywhere; interested in Scouting, Pitman's shorthand, and stamp collecting.

Jack Henry Wills, 149, Albert Road, North Woolwich, London, E.16, wants correspondents.

Miss Betty Smith, 58, Margaret Street, Sheffield, 2, wants a girl correspondent in Montreal, Canada; age 14-16.

Miss Edna Wood, 15, Mere Road, off Whitegate Drive, Blackpool, Lancs, wants girl correspondents, age 15-18, especially overseas; sports, postcard views.

C. Shaw, 84, Belvedere Road, Upper Norwood, London, S.E., wants correspondents interested in dance bands.

and on the day before her wedding, it was given out that she had died. The heartbroken bridegroom, for sentimental reasons, decided to go ahead with the wedding, and he obtained permission to do so. The ceremony was carried out, with the bride in her coffin, and then—the bride returned to life! She had been in a kind of coma, which had been mistaken for death. If the bridegroom had not insisted on the marriage taking place, it is possible that a terrible fate would have befallen the bride—that of being buried alive!

IS YOUR NAME JONES?

If this question was put to the passengers on board the Orduna, what a chorus of answers it would get! For there are no less than 102 Joneses on board. The Orduna is now on a cruise to North Africa, and all its passengers are Welsh. Besides the 102 Joneses there are 68 with the name of Williams, and 53 will answer to the name of Thomas. It is to be hoped that it's not necessary for the captain to have to call the roll!

A NEW RAIL RECORD.

The new speed record for a train which was set up in America recently, Bob Bayliss, of Darlington, was made under special conditions. The record-breaking train, travelling from Chicago to Milwaukee, reached a speed of 103 miles an hour, it is true, but the line was cleared for the run, and men were stationed at crossing gates to see that all was clear as the express train hurtled through. The previous speed record was held by the Great Western Railway's City of Truro, which, in 1904, travelled at 102.3 miles an hour over a section of its run.

THE WHALE'S SWALLOW!

Can a whale swallow a man? is the unusual question that comes from Bernard Harris, of Bermondsey, London. Bernard has heard that a whale has a throat with a diameter of only two inches. This is true of a certain species of whale, but not of all whales. It is the Greenland whale of which Bernard has heard, with a throat diameter of two inches. The sperm whale, however, can swallow immense quantities of food at one go. When a sperm whale is dying it ejects the food it has eaten, and it has been known for one of these monsters to eject food about the size of seven average-sized men!

TAILPIECE.

Kind Lady: "Here's a glass of water. Surely you can drink that."

Tramp: "I'm afraid I can't, mum. I've got an iron constitution and the water would rust it!"

THE EDITOR.

Miss Irene Hyde, 12, Raleigh Street, Essex Road, Islington, London, N.1, wants girl correspondents interested in swimming, gymnastics, and all sports; age 15-16.

Miss Sylvia L. Clare, 91, Graham Road, Hackney, London, E.8, wants girl correspondents in U.S.A., Africa, Australia, New Zealand, or India; age 17-20.

C. Hullar, Fenkle, Knaresborough, Yorks, wants a pen pal in West Indies or Australia; age 20-23.

A. Clapham, 6, Hilton Lane, Knaresborough, Yorks, wants a pen pal in West Indies or U.S.A.; age 20-22.

M. Wood, 20, Stockwell Drive, Knaresborough, Yorks, wants a pen pal in London; age 15-16.

Miss Mellie Hichens, 27, 11th Avenue, Mayfair, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wants girl correspondents, especially in America, France, and China, age 14-16; films, sports, books, aviation.

John H. West, 10, Reede Street Gardens, Cape Town, South Africa, wants a pen pal in Canada, U.S.A., or Asia.

Miss Joyce Bullen, Argyll Cottage, Church Street, Wynberg, Cape Province, South Africa, wants girl correspondents in Switzerland, Spain, Japan, and Egypt; age 14-15.

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THE BOY WHO CAME BACK!

(Continued from page 12.)

Tom Merry slowly. "But you've just told us something—well, you were very near a lie when you said you hadn't looked for letters, Levison! This may be another truth of the same sort—so near a lie that one can't tell the difference."

"If you've come here to insult me in my own study, Tom Merry, you'd better get out! I'm not the kind of chap to take it quietly!"

"You declare that you didn't see my postcard?"

"No, I didn't!"

"Was it a letter or a postcard you took for yourself?"

"A letter," said Levison, after a moment's hesitation.

"Blake, old man, will you call Kerruish?"

"Yes, rather!"

Jack Blake stepped out of the study. Levison looked at Tom Merry with a bitter smile.

"Is this a catechism," he asked, "or a trial? I suppose Kerruish is the principal witness for the prosecution—is that it?"

"I want that postcard," said Tom Merry.

"Do you think I've got it?"

"I don't know."

"Why should you imagine that I want your postcard?" said Levison. "It's ridiculous on the face of it."

"Well, I don't know why you should want it; it might be simply curiosity. I know Mellish has been licked more than once for reading other fellows' correspondence. You may be a chap of the same sort. I don't say you are, but you give me that impression, and you lied to me once, or so near lied that it makes no difference!"

Levison gritted his teeth. Tom Merry was usually very civil, but when he was driven to speak plain English, his English was very plain indeed.

Kerruish came into the study with Blake.

"What's wanted?" he asked.

"You saw Levison take his letter from the rack a while ago?"

"Yes," said Kerruish, in surprise.

"What about it?"

"Did you see whether it was a letter or a postcard?"

"I think it was a postcard. But I wasn't looking, and he put it in his pocket very quickly," said the Manx junior.

"Do you remember which part of the rack he took it from?" asked Tom Merry quietly. "The left or the right?"

"The left."

"Under Kildare's letter, then—that big letter that's waiting for Kildare?"

"Yes; just there."

"That's where my postcard was, I think, Blake?"

"Exactly!" said Blake.

Tom Merry turned to Levison again, with a gleam in his eyes. The new boy of St. Jim's had changed colour slightly.

"It's beginning to look rather clear to me," said Tom Merry. "You took a letter—which looked like a postcard to Kerruish—from the same ledge of the rack where my postcard was. You still say you had a letter?"

"Of course!"

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No. 30. Vol. 1. (New Series.)

THE ST. JIM'S BACK-CHAT BOYS

What jolly - ho, everybody! Monty Lowther of the Back-Chat Boys calling on a million metres wave-length! The time is a quarter past fifteen! Stand by for the Blues Bulletin regarding the weather. An aunty cycling and a tornado of an uncle are rapidly approaching from the south-west—stop! No! The train is wrecked, the ship is sinking, the plane is crashing to its doom! All is lost! S O S!

Tom Merry: My dear fellow, have you gone crazy?

Lowther: Why not? Do you know that's the most sensational news bulletin ever broadcast? Even now many ships are speeding to our assistance!

Tom Merry: But we don't want any assistance, you blithering jabberwock!

Lowther: Don't we? S O S cancelled. Sorry you've been tr-r-roubled!

Tom Merry: Now if Monty has finished acting the goat we'll put a motion before our readers—

A. A. D'Arcy: If the weadahs are still listenin' after Lowthah's wot, we are vevy lucky!

Tom Merry: It has been suggested by one Herbert Skimpole that I, as leader of the St. Jim's Flying Squad, should lead an acrial survey to the South Pole—

Jack Blake: Who's going to supply the aeroplane?

Tom Merry: Skimmy has generously placed at our disposal his own plans for a super-super-extraordinary flying-boat which he claims will be able to reach the South Pole from St. Jim's in the brief period of three and a half hours!

Blake: Skimmy's potty!

Digby: He's got grit in the gear-box!

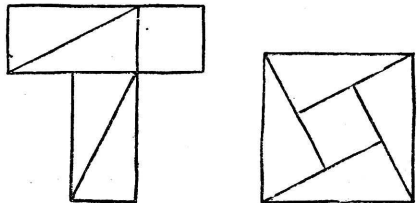
Tom Merry: Gentlemen, such a lack of confidence does not astonish me. As far as I can see, Skimmy's plane has ten wings, twenty-nine propellers, three tails and eleven landing wheels of various sizes!

D'Arcy: Bai jove! Pway do not give the weadahs a chance to vote for our twyin' to fly in a thwill-wagon like that! They might ask us to do it as a joke!

Lowther: Wait! Here's a telegram just received from the readers of the GEM: "WE SHALL WATCH YOUR FLIGHT TO THE SOUTH POLE WITH KEENEST INTEREST!" What shall we do now?

Tom Merry: Listen! BANG!!! I think that solves our problem. Skimmy's wonder-plane has just blown up! -Sorry, readers! You'll forgive us this time!

Solution of Last Week's Puzzle



HOUSE TEAMS ON GOALS GALORE—RE

By Eric Kildare

Judging by the School House v. New House game which I refereed, I fancy St. Jim's will be able to field a pretty strong junior eleven this season. I understand they are taking part in a league formed from twelve neighbouring schools, and report has it that they will come up against some doughty rivals. All I can say is, if Merry and Figgins and their men can reproduce the form they showed in the House match, they will give a good account of themselves.

The ground was hard, with a gusty wind, and the ball bobbed about freely from the first kick. Merry went right through to net for the School House from short range, Wynn being unsuspected. New House came into the picture immediately with a strong attack which ended when Figgins, playing at centre-forward instead of his usual place at back, beat Herries all ends up with the equaliser. Figgins' long legs make him appear rather clumsy, but in play the reverse is the case. He can pick up or intercept a pass which would evade an ordinary fellow, and his speed is something to see. He led a further attack which resulted in New House taking the lead at 2-1, and a little later Figgins completed his "hat trick," making the score 3-1 for New House. French on the wing was next to score, and Pratt added a fifth. Figgins smashed home yet another goal just before the interval, and New House crossed over with the astounding lead of 6-1 over their School House rivals!

Merry and his men had suffered through their defence faltering, but with the wind to help them now they effected a splendid recovery. Fatty Wynn—a great goalkeeper—found his work cut out to deal with the swarm of shots he received, though he met them all with a cool front and showed marvellous anticipation. D'Arcy beat him at last with a splendid shot, and Blake netted from a pass from Merry, after Merry had skilfully drawn Wynn out of goal. In a fierce attack Fatty Wynn jumped high in an effort to tip the ball over the crossbar. He succeeded, but cannoned his head on the bar—and had to go off for first aid. During his

Flying Squad Report

SQUAD AID STORM VICTIM

Flying Squad out hiking were overtaken by sudden storm. Tom Merry led dash for shelter of barn near road. Downpour terrific, succeeded by blinding flashes of lightning and shattering peals of thunder. Squad, watching road from barn, saw saloon car approaching. Earth and sky were suddenly lit up by dazzling flash—car swerved, skidded, slumped into ditch near barn! Lightning had struck radiator, which was twisted and bent, as car came to rest at steep angle. Heedless of the storm, Squad dashed to scene. Driver lying in road, thrown out by force of shock. Squad hastily carried him to

absence French shots by the score one bel House little the no stay self slat moment beating School New led an in the cleverly seventh and onl whistle, ends to sides h really o fourteen Merry h play F line, or has son will be season to them The f from ri the frs next w is prese of the GRE for the ROO so mir RYL Jim's c works ST. trophy. Wall describ Eastwo

STO The this or found lawn.

Merry's Weekly



Week Ending September 8th, 1934.

IS ON THE MARK RE—RECORD SCORE

Eric Kildare

House New House had French in goal, but French is no Fatty Wynn, and he let in two shots from Merry and Lowther, which made the score 6—5 in favour of New House. Only one behind, School House besieged the New House goal, and though Wynn returned, little the worse except for a bump, there was no staying Merry and his men. Merry himself slammed home the equaliser, and a few moments later he shot first time from a centre, beating Fatty Wynn to the wide, and giving School House the lead.

New House rallied gallantly, and Figgins led another dash on goal, which ended in the New House leader dribbling the ball cleverly round Herries and netting the seventh goal for his side. Score seven all and only two seconds left. As I blew the final whistle, I felt that a draw was a fitting end to a match full of thrills, in which both sides had battled hard and which nobody really deserved to lose. I understand that fourteen goals in a House match is a record! Merry has a ticklish job to decide whether to play Figgins in his junior XI in the forward line, or at back with Kerr. I think, as Merry has some good forwards to call upon, Figgins will be at back. Anyway, I prophesy a good season ahead for St. Jim's—and good luck to them!

The following telegrams have been received from rival schools in the Eastwood League, the first games in which competition start next week. Lord Eastwood, D'Arcy's father, is presenting a silver trophy to the winners of the League at the end of the season.

GREYFRIARS: All fighting fit, eager for the fray!—Harry Wharton.

ROOKWOOD: We're in non-stop form, so mind your eye!—Jimmy Silver.

RYLCOMBE GRAMMAR SCHOOL: St. Jim's cripples had better look out for fireworks from us!—Gordon Gay.

ST. FRANK'S: We like the look of the trophy, and we mean to get it!—Nipper.

Wally D'Arcy will be at the microphone, describing St. Jim's first fixture in the Eastwood League. Full reports next week!

shelter of barn, where close examination revealed no damage except shock and bruises. A certain, an elderly gentleman, recovered swiftly under Squad's first aid treatment, and was able to stand. Car out of action, but, fortunately, off the road, not blocking traffic. Flying Squad stopped next car passing, and as storm abated, victim of lightning was taken to his home near by. That evening, Squad paid call to inquire after him, and found him almost fully recovered. Squad entertained to right royal supper in appreciation of their timely aid.

STOP PRESS

The Head has forbidden football! Luckily, this only applies to the Third, who were found practising ball control on the Head's lawn. The Head now "controls the ball"!!

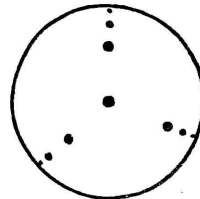


MONTY LOWTHER CALLING

Hallo, everybody! Like most holiday-makers, I expect you started out on pleasure from pleasure broke! Rumour has it that in a holiday contest, Fatty Wynn drank ginger pop for a solid hour—or rather, a liquid hour! No, he didn't "pop"! A reader inquires: "Is there much luck in bull-fighting?" Lots, old chap. It all depends on who wins the toss! Mr. Ratcliff asked an angler if he had had any bites. "Gnat, midge, bee, wasp, dragonfly, and field-bug—but no fish, sir!" grunted the angler! And then there was the fellow who, hearing that nature is very imitative, put a photograph of an airship among his vegetable marrows! Snippet from a Wayland paper: "Shipping in the Channel was slowed down by a rather heavy miss." One of those Channel swimmers again, we suppose! You heard about the fellow who couldn't tear himself away from the newly-opened Wayland Park? He had sat on a freshly-painted seat! Then there was the business man who asked his lawyer to telegraph the result of his lawsuit. The telegram read: "Right has triumphed." The business man wired back: "Appeal immediately!" A reader tells me that it costs a lot to have a building demolished. Well, you can always look for a gas leak with a lighted match instead! Mellish complains that while he was on holiday, the sun took the skin off his nose. It was a "sore point" with him! We read that sea water has a very beneficial effect on the human body. But only externally! Don't do as Crooke's uncle did. Attempting a "swallow" dive off Brightsea pier, he "swallowed" more than he intended! Did you hear the story of the tin of petrol and the cigarette? Listen: BANG! That's it! A tennis enthusiast of my acquaintance has been signed as a professional footballer because he can't resist sending the ball into the net! Caught breaking into the school pantry at dead of night, young Piggott broke into a fit of sobbing. The Head's punishment, however, showed that he was more concerned with Piggott's breaking into the pantry! An exhibition of fossils is to be held in Wayland. We know of one or two St. Jim's masters we'd like to send!—All the best, boys!

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER

Tom Merry dreamed that he had to place ten men of his team in a circle as shown, and that he had to draw three circles inside the large one, so that each footballer had his own section, and could not reach another without crossing a line. He succeeded in doing it—can you?



"Will you show us the letter?" Levison bit his lip. "Certainly not!" he said. "I'm not likely to show my private correspondence to a set of inquisitive kind!" "We don't want to see your private correspondence. We only want to see the envelope. Show us that envelope addressed to 'Levison, St. Jim's.' That's all."

Levison did not speak. Every eye was upon him now, and in spite of his nerve and his cool impertinence, the new boy was faltering.

"Show us that envelope," said Tom Merry, his voice rising a little, "and I'll ask your pardon for doubting your word. But if you don't show it, I shall think that you have lied—that it was not a letter at all, but my postcard, that you took from the rack—though for what reason, unless it was caddish curiosity, I don't know."

Levison breathed hard for a moment. "I'd show you the envelope willingly enough," he said, "if it were still in existence; but I'm not in the habit of carefully preserving old envelopes. I threw it into the fire when I opened the letter."

The juniors glanced towards the grate. A fire was burning there, and though no trace remained of burnt paper it was certain that if an envelope had been tossed into the glowing embers it would have been consumed in a moment. Levison's explanation was perfectly plausible, but it had not the ring of truth.

"Very well," said Tom Merry, after a moment's pause—"very well, we'll say the envelope is destroyed. I won't call any fellow a liar till I'm forced to. But you haven't burnt the letter, I suppose? We don't want to see your private letters, but I must ask you to show us that letter—one line to prove that it's genuine will be enough. I suppose you could find a single line in it that it wouldn't matter if anyone saw?"

Levison's nostrils dilated a little. It was as if, in spite of all his cunning, he was being caught in the invisible folds of a net. A frank and open nature had this advantage over a false and deceptive one—that when matters were brought fairly out into the open, the liar feels as if all his customary defences have failed him, and does not know where to turn for aid, since falsehoods will no longer serve him.

"Well?" said Tom Merry. Levison's eyes gleamed a little, as if an idea had flashed into his brain. He smiled mockingly as he met the glance of the hero of the Shell.

"You seem to have pretty well made up your mind that I have the postcard," he remarked, in a careless tone as he could assume.

"I am waiting for your proof about the letter."

"And if I don't care to show it—"

"Then we shall conclude that you have my postcard."

"And then—"

"We shall search you for it."

Levison laughed lightly.

"Is this sort of ragging allowed at St. Jim's?" he asked mockingly. "When I was at—at my old school, the prefects would have stopped that sort of thing."

"Shut the door, Figgy."

Figgins closed the door, and as an additional precaution turned the key in the lock. Levison's eyes dilated a little. He was locked in the study with half a dozen fellows, each of whom was more powerful than himself if it came to a struggle. But the mocking smile remained upon his face.

"I think I'll get out of this," he remarked.

He advanced towards Tom Merry.

The captain of the Shell grasped him and stopped him. Levison threw his arms round Tom Merry, and struggled for a moment. Then he reeled back, gasping.

"That won't do you any good," said Tom Merry calmly.

Levison smiled in a curious way.

"Well, if a gang of you have come here to rag me, I suppose I've no chance," he said. "At the same time, I don't see why my private letters should be seen by everybody. You say you have lost a postcard—"

"I say my postcard was taken from the rack."

"There are such occurrences as fellows taking things and shoving them in their pockets and forgetting all about them," suggested Levison. "Suppose a fellow took the card down, intending to carry it up to you, and forgot—"

"I've asked nearly everybody about it."

"You may have taken it yourself and slipped it into your pocket, intending to read it later, and forgotten it."

"Nonsense!"

"Unless, of course, you are infallible," said Levison sarcastically. "I mean, any common or garden chap might have done it."

"I did not do it."

"I say you might. I shouldn't wonder if you have the blessed thing in one of your pockets now," said Levison, with a yawn. "Such things have happened to me. This may be a jape of yours, too, to set the fellows against me. Look here, then—turn out your pockets, and I'll turn out mine. If you've not got the postcard, I'll show you the letter."

Tom Merry looked at him steadily.

"What do you mean, Levison? You know I've not got the postcard."

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know anything of the sort," he said. "I suspect that you have tried to fix this on me because you don't like me. It's easy enough to get up anything against a new fellow who hasn't a friend in the place. But I dare say that doesn't make any difference to you."

Tom Merry flushed crimson.

"Don't mind the cad, Tom Merry!" said Blake. "Let's have that postcard off him. I know he's got it."

"Put it to the test," said Levison. "Let Merry turn out his pockets, and then I'll turn out mine. I say this is a scheme against me, or else a mistake of Merry's. I've a right to ask to see whether Merry's got the card or not."

"Rot!"

"Wats, deah boy!"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Herries. "He's only trying to gain time; but let him have his say. We don't want a cad like that to be able to say that he didn't have fair play. Turn your pockets out, Tom Merry. It won't take a minute."

"He doesn't want to," said the new junior, tauntingly. "Merry objects."

Tom Merry clenched his hands.

"I'll turn them out to satisfy the fellows," he said. "Not to please you. As for you, you've got the postcard, and you know it, and if I find it on you, I'll give you the licking of your life afterwards."

"I'll take the licking without lifting a finger if I've got the postcard."

Tom Merry thrust a hand into a jacket pocket, and turned out the lining. There was a general exclamation of surprise.

From the turned-out pocket a postcard fluttered to the floor. Blake stooped and picked it up. It was addressed, in Wharton's hand, to "Tom Merry, School House, St. Jim's."

It was the missing postcard!

Jack Blake held up the postcard silently, and Tom Merry stared at it blankly.

A sneering smile crossed Levison's face.

"Is that the card?" he asked.

"Yes," said Blake.

"Then I hope you're satisfied."

Levison, with a careless whistle, turned away towards the fire, and sat down. Tom Merry took the card from Blake's hand.

"I suppose this is it," he said slowly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

There could be no mistake about it. The fellows were all looking curiously at Tom Merry. They did not believe for a moment Ernest Levison's hint that Tom Merry had known that the card was there, and had purposely worked this up against the new boy. But it was very curious that Tom Merry should have put the postcard in his pocket and forgotten about it. It was not at all like the hero of the Shell. He was not wont to be absent-minded. Even Skimpole was seldom so absent-minded as this.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "It's vevy wemarkable! You are an absent-minded beggah, Tom Mewwy, and no mistake!"

"I can't understand it," said Tom Merry at last.

"Oh, you forgot about it," said Blake.

"I haven't the slightest recollection of seeing it before. In fact, I didn't know that a postcard had come for me until you told me in my study, Blake."

"You must have taken it down in passing the rack and forgotten it."

"I suppose it's possible," said Tom Merry slowly.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy, it's quite poss. These things do occur, you know," said D'Arcy sagely. "I wemembah once forgettin' that I had a new silk hat, and goin' out in my old one on a Sunday, you know. It's wemarkable, but quite twue!"

"I don't understand this"

Levison yawned.

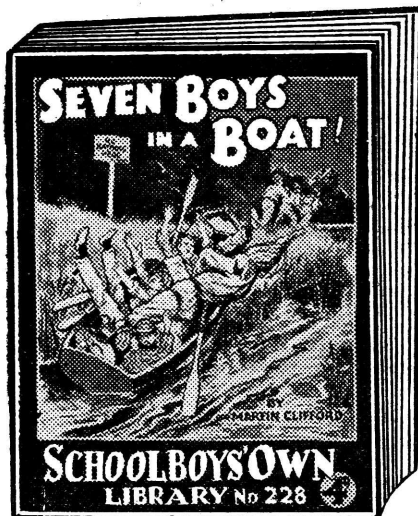
"Well, if you fellows are finished here—?" he began. Herries unlocked the door. The discovery of the postcard had silenced even Herries for the time. But Herries looked unconvinced. Herries' faith in Towser was unshaken, and he did not trust the new boy a quarter of an inch.

"We're going," said Blake.

Tom Merry turned to Levison, a troubled look on his handsome face.

"I don't rightly understand this," he said. "I've never had a lapse of memory like that before. I can't catch on to it at all. But I suppose I have been unjust to you. I beg your pardon."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Levison. "If you put it like that, I take back what I said about it being a



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scheme against me. I'm willing to believe that it was a lapse of memory. It's all right."

"Well, I'm sorry!"

"It's all right."

The juniors left the study, all of them silent and puzzled. Herries paused in the doorway, and the others stopped for him. Herries looked straight at the new boy, who smiled and showed his teeth.

"You're jolly deep," said Herries, in his slow way. "You're too deep for me, Levison. But I don't trust you. I believe there's some trick in this."

"Trick! What do you mean?"

"I don't know. But I don't believe in you. I want you to understand that, that's all."

"Oh, come on, Herries!" exclaimed Blake. "The whole thing's explained, and Levison comes out of it all right."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Herries looked obstinate.

"All I've got to say is that I don't believe him," he said. "I don't know how he's worked it, but it's a trick of some sort."

And the big Fourth Former moved away with his heavy tread.

CHAPTER 10.

Herries' Faith in Towser.

TOM MERRY came into his study alone. The post-card had been read, and the other juniors had parted from him downstairs.

There was a deep trouble in Tom Merry's face—and it drew the eyes of Manners and Lowther on him at once.

"What's the matter?" they asked together.

Tom Merry threw the postcard on the table.

"That's from Wharton," he said. "He's coming over to-morrow."

Lowther picked up the card. The message on the back from Harry Wharton of Greyfriars was brief:

"Dear Merry,—I shall have an exeat on Thursday, and shall be able to run over to St. Jim's to see you about the arrangement for Saturday. I shall get to your place about five.

"Always yours,
"HARRY WHARTON."

"Good!" said Lowther. "He'll get here after afternoon lessons are over, and we shall be able to stand him some tea. Luckily we are in funds. I hope no more dead mice will turn up in the jam."

"I've chucked the rest of the jam away," remarked Manners. "I wonder how Levison could go on eating it after what he found in it. He must have an inside of gutta-percha, I should think."

Tom Merry nodded absently.

"But what's the matter, Tommy?" asked Manners, looking at him. "There's nothing on the postcard to bother you, is there? I shall be glad to see Wharton, for one. He's a very decent chap."

"Nothing on the postcard—no."

"Then what is it?"

"I don't know what," said Tom Merry. "Either I'm losing my senses, or something's happened that I can't understand at all."

"Expound."

Tom Merry explained the incident of the postcard. His chums listened with attention, and considerable surprise was manifested in their faces.

"It's jolly odd," said Manners. "I've never known you to do an absent-minded thing like that before, Tommy."

"Nor I," said Lowther. "I suppose these things do happen; but I don't quite understand it."

"That's how I feel," said Tom Merry. "I've laughed often enough at Skimmy's absent-mindedness, and his coming into the class-room with his hat on, or going out for a walk without it. But even Skimmy never took a letter and put it in his pocket and forgot at once that he had received it."

"It's odd."

"But there it is. It makes me feel as if I can't trust my blessed brains any more," said Tom Merry. "If your brain serves you a trick like that, it's not to be relied upon, I think."

"Well, such things do happen, you know," Monty Lowther remarked, as the only comfort he could give.

Tom Merry laughed ruefully.

"I know they do, but I don't like them to happen to me."

The chums of the Shell were uncomfortably silent. Manners and Lowther could not understand it any more than Tom Merry could.

The door of the study opened, and Herries put his head in.

"Hallo!" said Lowther, rather gruffly. "Blow Towser!"

"Eh?"

"Towser can go to the dickens!"

Herries stared at him.

"What are you driving at?" he exclaimed. "What's Towser done?"

"Nothing that he should, I expect, and heaps of things he shouldn't," said Lowther. "But it's all right, if you haven't come to talk about Towser. I thought you were just going to spring him on us."

Herries snorted.

"Well, I wasn't. I wasn't thinking of Towser. Though, as a matter of fact, speaking of Towser—"

"There he goes!" groaned Lowther. "I knew he would."

"Well, you started the subject," said Herries. "Speaking of Towser—"

"Don't!"

"Don't what?"

"Speak of Towser."

"Look here—"

"Speak of anything else," implored Lowther. "Talk of shoes, ships and sealing-wax, and cabbages and peas. But spare us Towser."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" growled Herries. "Speaking of Towser—"

"Cheese it!"

"Speaking of Towser, it's remarkable that he—"

"Ring off!"

"It's remarkable that he should have got on to that new chap's character so quickly," said Herries. "Of course, Towser is an awfully intelligent dog. I could tell you stories about his intelligence—"

"It is wrong to tell stories," said Lowther solemnly.

"Oh, don't be a goat! I could relate personal experiences of his intelligence that would make you fairly sit up—"

"Make us lie down and go to sleep, you mean."

"Ass! Well, leaving that out, the way Towser got on to that new chap's character was a marvel. You're all finding him out now."

"I don't know," said Tom Merry. "I certainly suspected him of taking the postcard, though what his motive could be I cannot imagine. But he cleared that up satisfactorily enough, as far as he was concerned."

Herries gave another expressive snort.

"That's what I've looked in to see you about," he said.

"What do you know about it?" asked Lowther with interest.

"I'd have told you before if you hadn't jawed," said Herries. "That chap explained it all beautifully, and got out of it nicely. He gives me the impression of being the sort of chap who can always explain things. But I don't believe a word of it."

"But the postcard was in my pocket," said Tom Merry.

"I don't care."

"I must have taken it and forgotten it—"

"You don't do those things as a rule, do you?"

"No," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head, "and it's a worry on my mind to think I've done it once."

"Then don't think so. I tell you it's a trick," said Herries impressively. "He's taken us in somehow."

"How do you know?"

"I feel sure of it."

"But why?"

"Because I know he's a rotter. Mind, I don't say I can tell you how he worked it—he's too deep for me, I confess that. But it's a trick of some sort, and he's taken you in. That's what I came here to say. Don't let that worry your mind, Tom Merry, because it's not as he made out. He had that postcard when we went into the study. But he got it into your pocket—how, I don't know, unless he's a blessed magician. But there it is, and that's all."

And Herries left the study. He paused a moment in the doorway to look back and make the impressive statement:

"Towser knew him. Towser never makes a mistake. That's all right."

Then he departed.

He left Manners and Lowther grinning. Their faith in Towser's sagacity was not equal to that of Herries. But Tom Merry was looking very thoughtful.

(Continued on the next page.)

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CHAPTER 11.

The Chapel Vault!

"BED!" said Kildare, looking into the Junior Common-room. "Make a move!"

And the juniors moved.

It was half-past nine, the bed-time for the Lower Forms at St. Jim's. Levison rose from his seat in a corner of the room and yawned.

Tom Merry tapped Jack Blake on the shoulder as the juniors moved towards the door.

"Well, my son?" said Blake affably. "Still bothering about the blessed postcard? Forget it; these things do happen?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No, no. I wanted to speak to you about Levison. He's got a scheme for visiting the chapel vaults, and I heard from Figgins that he got Taggles' key this evening. I don't know what his game is, but it's horrible to have the fellow nosing about the vault, considering what—what is there. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Blake with a shudder. "What a morbid beast! The Head would be down on him like a sack of coke if he knew."

"I think he ought to be stopped."

"Yes, rather!" said Blake emphatically.

"Well, that's why I've mentioned it. He'll be in your dorm, and perhaps you'll be able to jump on him if he tries to get out."

"You bet I will!" said Blake.

Levison went up to the Fourth Form dormitory with the rest of his Form with perfect nonchalance of manner. It was hard to believe that this was his first day at St. Jim's. He might have been there for years.

Blake spoke to him bluntly.

"You don't go out of this dorm to-night," he said.

Levison stared at him.

"I suppose I shall do as I choose," he remarked with a shrug of the shoulders.

"That's just where you make your mistake," said Blake calmly. "You won't! We're not going to have any ghastly prowling about in the vault. I wonder you've got enough nerve, even if you are such a morbid beast."

Levison laughed.

"I might have a reason," he said.

"What reason?"

"I prefer to keep that to myself."

"You'll keep yourself in the dorm, too. Mind, I shall sleep with one eye open, and if I don't hear you shifting someone else will. And you'll get it in the neck."

Levison shrugged his shoulders again, and walked towards his bed, as if the discussion was quite indifferent to him.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I regard that chap as a beast, you know. Fancy wantin' to prowl wond the vaults when poor Lumley-Lumley is there in his coffin! It's howwid!"

"Rotten!" said Herries. "But what can you expect of the fellow? Didn't Towser want to go for him at the very first meeting? What about Towser now?"

Levison went to bed without another word. Kildare put the lights out. There was the usual run of talk from bed to bed before the juniors went to sleep, but the new boy did not join in it.

Either he was asleep, or he affected to be so. The talk died away at last, and deep and regular breathing took its place.

The Fourth Form dormitory slept.

Eleven tolled out from the clock tower—eleven dull, heavy strokes through the quiet night. As if the sound had moved him, a junior sat up in the dormitory.

It was Ernest Levison.

He sat listening. The night was cold, and he pulled the bedclothes tightly round him as he sat. His eyes seemed to gleam in the darkness like a cat's. There was not a trace of sleepiness in Levison's face, if it could have been seen. Yet he had certainly had a fatiguing day.

The last sound of a closing door had died away below. Levison knew that the bed-time of the Fifth was ten o'clock, and the Sixth were generally in bed by half-past, though those grandees of the top Form were left to decide that matter for themselves, as a rule. Only a few masters were likely to be up at eleven.

Levison quietly left his bed, after listening a few minutes, and stepped towards Mellish's bed. The cad of the Fourth was sleeping very uneasily. The task of the night was weighing on his mind, for he had agreed to accompany Levison on his excursion to the vaults. The lightest touch on Levison's hand was enough to bring him broad awake.

"Hush!" whispered Levison, as two startled eyes opened.

Mellish shifted uncomfortably.

"Is that you, Levison?"

"Yes."

"Better give it up and get back to bed. It's c-c-cold!"

"Come—out with you!"

Mellish lay silent for a moment. He did not want to go; yet his curiosity was keenly aroused.

"What's the game?" he whispered. "What are you going to the vaults for?"

"For a reason."

"Can't you tell me the reason?"

"It's a secret—now."

"Come—and don't make a row!"

He jerked the bedclothes off Mellish. The latter shivered, and was a great deal inclined to call out and put an end to the expedition by waking Blake. But he did not. He was curious, and he was afraid of Levison. He put on his trousers and coat, and Levison led the way from the dormitory. He closed the door behind him softly.

"How do you get out of the House?"

"There's a window in the Hall, but—it's too early for that—the light's on still. We shall have to try a back window."

"Lead the way, then."

They crept down the stairs. Mellish opened a window softly. He knew the way, even in the almost pitchy darkness, without a fault. Many a time had he crept out of the window with Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, to visit the Green Man at late hours, and play cards there—with Lumley, who now lay so cold and still in the vaults under the chapel.

Mellish shivered at the thought that the last time he had opened that window Lumley had been with him, and had given him a hand down on the outside.

He kept his thoughts to himself, however, and dropped to the ground unaided, and Levison dropped after him. They were in darkness, broken by a glimmer of starlight and in the shadows of great buildings and trees. It was all new and strange to Levison, but Mellish knew every inch of the way in the darkness. He had trodden it often enough.

"Where now?" asked Levison.

"This way. But, hush! Were're not far from the kennels."

Levison followed Mellish by a path unseen and unknown to himself, but without a pause.

They came out of the shadows of the buildings, and into the clear starlight, and passed the ruined tower. Now Levison recognised his surroundings. He had examined them very keenly during the daylight, with a view to this.

The chapel, with its old grey walls heavy with ivy, loomed up before them. Grim and ghostly enough it looked in the dimness, with the ivy shaking and rustling in the wind.

Levison's nerves were of iron; but Mellish started at almost every sound, and even in the darkness Levison could see his face, it was so white.

They exchanged few words. In a few minutes more they stopped before a deep, low porch, covered with ivy in clinging dark masses.

"Is this the place?" asked Levison.

"Yes."

"Good! Show me the door."

Under the porch it was black as pitch. Mellish showed no readiness to enter the chilly portal. He was looking back towards the School House with a startled face. Levison muttered impatiently.

"What are you stopping for? Are you afraid of the shadows?"

"Hush! You can see the windows of the Fourth Form dorm from here."

"What about it?"

"Look! I saw a light!"

Levison followed his startled glance. In the distant gloom from the dark mass of buildings, a light glimmered in a window. It was only for a few moments, and then all was plunged in darkness again.

"They're awake!" said Mellish.

"Are you sure that's the dormitory window?"

"Yes. They've missed us."

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

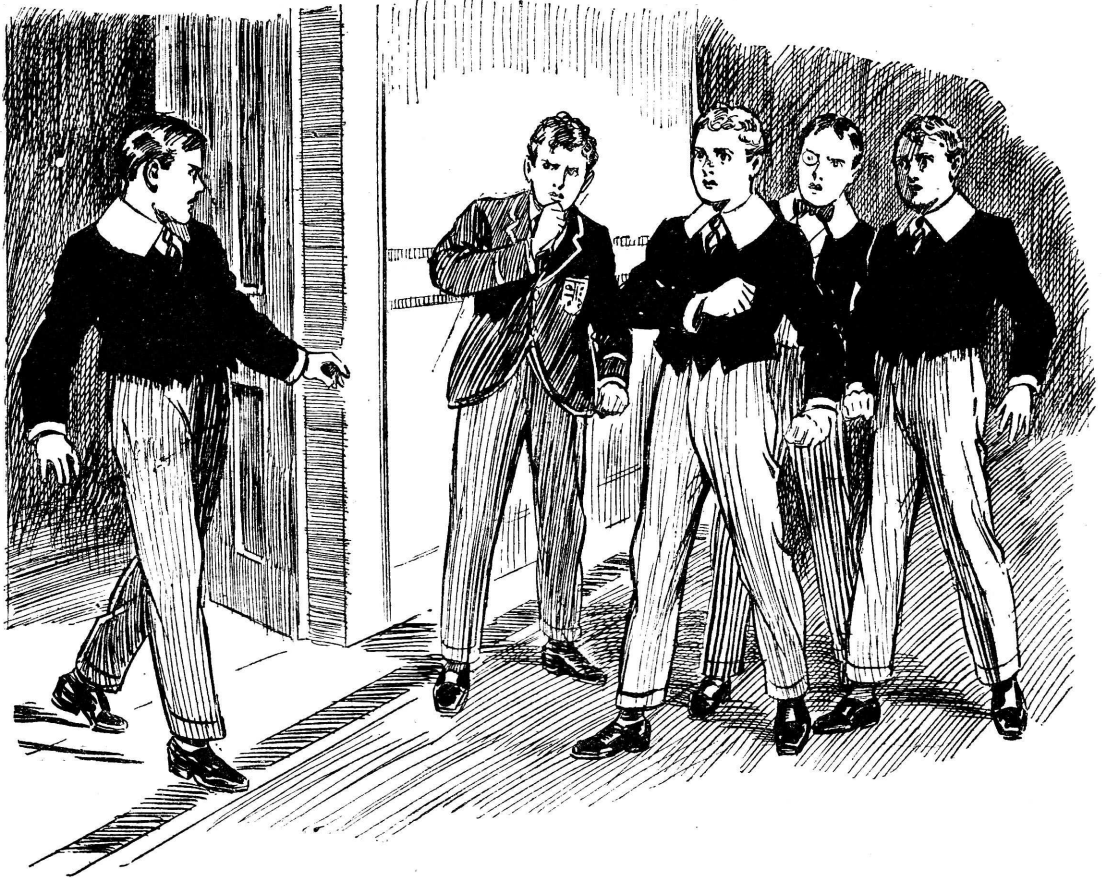
"I don't care. I don't suppose they'll take the trouble to come after us."

"You don't know them," said Mellish, with a shiver. "Blake will come. Most likely he'll call Tom Merry, and half a dozen of them will come here to see if we are in the vaults. They're up against this."

"I don't care! I shall have time to finish before they come."

"Finish?"

"Yes."



The study door swung open and Levison came out into the passage. He came face to face with Harry Wharton, and his face paled as he saw the Greyfriars fellow. "Wharton!" muttered Levison. "Oh, what rotten luck!" It was the last person he wanted to see—for he had been expelled from Greyfriars!

"In—in Heaven's name, Levison, what are you going to do?"

"That's my business. Show me where the keyhole is." They entered the dark porch, Mellish trembling in every limb. He felt over the low oaken door, banded with iron, that was set in the thick stone.

"Here's the door, and here's the keyhole. Feel it!" The key grated in the lock.

"All serene!" said Levison. "You're as cool as ice!" muttered Mellish, his trembling hand touching Levison's, and finding it quite firm.

"Why not?" "You know what's in there!" muttered the other. "Lumley—dead!"

"Well, if he is dead, he cannot hurt us!" "Oh, I can't talk to you! What did you bring me here for?" muttered Mellish hoarsely. "I shan't come in!"

"Please yourself about that." Levison pushed open the door he had unlocked.

"There's a flight of steps inside," muttered Mellish. "It goes down right under the chapel. Mind you don't fall!"

"Good!" A match flared out, and Levison, shading it with his hand, lighted a lantern he produced from under his coat. A shaft of light pierced the black opening before him.

"Wait here!" he whispered. "If those fellows should come, you can call out."

"All right!" Levison descended into the vault.

CHAPTER 12.
The Dead!

MELLISH stood alone in the deep, dark stone porch, shaking in every limb. He was terrified; he hardly knew why. After all, what was there to be afraid of? If Tom Merry & Co. came to stop that visit to the chapel, which they regarded as desecration—well, they would not hurt him.

He had no cause to be afraid of them. As for the vault, he was not called upon to enter it. Even if he had, what was there to fear? A dead youth, who had been his friend in life.

There was nothing to fear. He knew it, yet he was shaking like a leaf in the wind.

It came into his mind that it was Levison whom he feared more than anything—Levison, that junior with the cold, icy voice, the cool, determined brain, the penetrating eyes that missed nothing.

Mellish stood trembling in the darkness. What was Levison doing? He listened.

In the dead, still silence, broken only by the distant whisper of the wind in the trees, the faintest sound was audible.

With straining ears, close to the half-open door, he tracked Levison through the vault.

He heard him descend the steps with feet that did not falter—a steady tread, as steady as if he were strolling in a garden in the sunlight. At the bottom of the steps he halted, and Mellish knew that it was to flash the lantern to and fro, and ascertain his bearings. A gleam or two of light came from below as the lantern moved and glimmered in the dark vault.

Then the footsteps, fainter now, went on. Levison was moving round the vault, in search of what he had come there to see—the coffin on its trestles.

Mellish shuddered. Would the new junior dare to approach it, dare to touch it? There was nothing to fear, true. But—

But Mellish knew that he would have fainted with terror if he had descended alone there in the darkness.

What was Levison doing now? The footsteps had ceased. Mellish strained his ears.

He remembered Levison asking if the coffin had been screwed down, and his satisfaction at hearing that the lid had been left unfastened, so that if Mr. Lumley-Lumley arrived soon enough he could look upon his son once more before he was consigned to the earth.

Did he intend to open it, then, and gaze upon the features of the dead?

Why? He had known Lumley-Lumley—known him slightly. But he had not been his friend. If anybody had ever been Lumley-Lumley's friend, it certainly was not Ernest Levison.

Then why should he wish to gaze upon the dead face? Was it possible that mere morbid curiosity could gain such an ascendancy in such a cool, calculating nature as Ernest Levison's?

It was not likely.

Yet—

Mellish strained his ears to listen. What was Levison doing? He could hear nothing now. Twice the junior approached the open door, tempted to descend and see what the junior inside the vault was doing, and twice he receded in fear. Then, setting his teeth, curiosity overcoming terror, Mellish pushed the oaken door wider open, and stepped inside upon the stone stair.

Below, in the gloom, he caught the glimmer of the lantern. It's light fell in a shaft across the blackness of the vault. He could not see Levison. The latter was not standing in the light of the lantern; he was swallowed up in the blackness.

But the shaft of light fell across something—something

HOW ANNOYING!



First Hiker: "There's one thing I hate about hiking."

Second Hiker: "What's that?"

First Hiker: "The mile-stones are too far apart!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. Dunskey, 17, Somme Road, Delville, Germiston, South Africa.

that Mellish knew—something that stood upon trestles—the coffin of Lumley-Lumley.

Mellish could see part of the coffin, where the light touched it, and his head swam with horror as he saw it.

For he saw that the coffin lid was removed.

The coffin was open.

Mellish stood upon the steps, clinging to the oaken door, his heart beating like a hammer, his eyes dancing.

What was Levison doing?

The question seemed to shriek in his ears. What was that sound he heard? What was it? With creeping flesh he listened.

"Lumley—Lumley, old man!"

Levison's voice, soft and eerie and creepy in the darkness. He was speaking to the dead boy.

Mellish stood rooted.

What did it mean? What horror was this? Was Levison mad?

That must be the explanation—that was all it could be. He was mad—mad to penetrate into the gloomy vault at midnight, and speak to the boy who was dead as if he were still alive!

Low as Levison's voice was, the deep, hollow vault seemed to boom with echoes of it. The echoes died away, and there was silence—stony silence.

Mellish listened with a heart almost ceasing to beat.

Silence!

Then a sound! What was the sound? A sound of cloth rustling—the body that was raised.

Mellish clung to the door. His tongue was cleaving to the roof of his mouth; his eyes no longer saw. Levison was mad—mad!

Again through the hollow arches of the vault that eerie whisper:

"Lumley!"

"Oh, Heaven!" muttered Mellish.

He would have fled, but his limbs refused to stir. Horror and deep, unreasoning fear held him chained. He was like one in a grip of a nightmare, unable to stir hand or foot—helpless, fascinated.

What was Levison doing?

What was that?

A voice—low, faint tones, not Levison's! Who else was in the vault?

Who else? Nobody else, nobody except—except the dead boy! Yet there was another voice—a voice Mellish knew.

He broke from the grip of terror.

With a wild shriek that rang through the vault in thunderous echoes, Mellish turned and fled up the stairs

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again and out into the porch—out into the cool night air, his brow streaming with sweat.

He shrieked again, unconsciously, as he ran—shrieked and shrieked. He ran into a group of dark forms, and hands closed upon him and grasped him, and he fought and struggled in unreasoning fear, striking and clawing and shrieking.

"Hold him!" cried a voice. "It's Mellish! What's the matter with him? Mellish, are you mad?"

CHAPTER 13.

Alive!

FOR the moment Mellish was mad with fear! But as he recognised Tom Merry's voice he ceased to struggle, and sobbed with sudden weakness. The juniors stood round him in amazement and consternation.

They had expected to find Levison and Mellish at the vault, but they had not expected this. Blake had awakened to find the two juniors gone, and he had roused his chums and called Tom Merry from the Shell dormitory. The juniors had found the window the two had left open behind them, and they had followed, angry and determined to prevent the intrusion into the chapel vaults. They had arrived too late for that; they had arrived to receive Mellish, flying from an unnamable dread, shrieking with terror till the quadrangle rang with it.

Tom Merry held the junior by the arm. Mellish had utterly broken down; he was clinging to Tom Merry and sobbing like a child.

Anger died away at the sight of that. The juniors were puzzled and not a little alarmed. What was the matter with Mellish?

"Mellish, what has happened?"

"Tell us what has happened, deah boy!"

"My heavens!" exclaimed Mellish.

"What is it?"

"Oh—oh!"

"Where is Levison?" asked Jack Blake quietly.

"In the vault!"

"What has he done?"

"The coffin—he has opened it!"

Tom Merry clenched his hand.

"The brute! But what is there to be frightened at? What is the matter with you?"

Mellish groaned.

"I heard him!" he muttered hoarsely.

"What!"

"I heard his voice!"

"Whose? Levison's?"

"Yes—yes! But the other—"

"What are you saying?"

"I heard his voice," said Mellish, trembling. "I tell you I heard it."

"Whose voice?"

"Lumley's!"

Tom Merry grasped him firmly.

"Are you playing a horrible joke on us, Mellish?"

The cad of the Fourth groaned again.

"Do I look like it? I tell you I heard his voice!"

"Lumley's voice?"

"Yes."

"Lumley is dead!"

"I know he is! But I heard his voice. I thought I should go mad! Oh!"

"Bai Jove! He is mad!" said D'Arcy. "He was frightened by the dark, you know, and lost his wits, deah boys."

"I suppose that's it."

"I heard his voice!" repeated Mellish doggedly.

"Is Levison still in the vault?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes."

"Then we'll jolly soon see about it! Come on, you chaps!"

Leaving Mellish there, the juniors hurried on to the porch. Mellish remained clinging to a tree. He was too weak and unnerved to take a step farther, though every whisper of the wind frightened him to trembling.

Tom Merry and his comrades entered the porch, and Tom Merry led the way into the vault. The chums did not hesitate. Levison was in the vault, and they meant to know what he was doing there.

The light glimmered from the gloom of the vault. The lantern was standing on the floor. There was a sound of rustling, and a weak groan.

Then Levison's voice!

"Buck up, old fellow!"

The juniors halted, struck motionless. Whom was Levison speaking to?

They listened with tense nerves, their hearts almost ceasing to pulsate.

Would a voice reply—or was Levison mad—mad with fear, and babbling to himself there in the darkness?

They listened.

"Buck up! I'll soon have you out of this!"

"Yes—yes. Thank Heaven you came, Levison!"

Tom Merry clutched Blake's arm. Blake was shaking like an aspen.

"Good heavens!" said Digby.

"That's Lumley's voice."

"What—what—"

"He's not dead!"

"Gwreat Scott!" muttered D'Arcy, through his chattering teeth.

"Not dead!" whispered Herries.

Their voices were audible in the silence. Levison's sharp tones came back from the gloom.

"Is that you, Tom Merry?"

"Yes." In spite of himself, Tom Merry's voice shook.

"So you followed me?"

"Yes."

"You're in time to be useful," said Levison, with his chuckle—a chuckle that sounded almost terrible in that place, and under those strange circumstances. "Lend me a hand with Lumley."

"Levison, what has happened?"

"Nothing."

"Is Lumley alive?"

"Yes."

"Alive! Good heavens! Alive!"

"Yes. He was in a trance."

"Oh!"

"That's why I came here—to see," said Levison. "It's lucky for Lumley you didn't succeed in stopping me."

"Why didn't you tell us? If we had known—if we had had the faintest suspicion—"

"I preferred to keep it to myself till I was sure," said Levison coolly. "Don't stand talking there. Help me with him. He's as weak as water, and a bit heavy for one chap to carry."

"Heaven bless you, Levison," said a faint, quivering voice.

"Good!" said Levison. "It's the first time anybody's ever blessed me, I think; it's quite a change. Pick up the lantern and show a light, some of you; don't stand gaping there!"

Levison's tone was not pleasant. What had happened had not changed him in the least; the same cool, cynical, and insolent manner was his still. But he had earned the right to be obeyed.

Digby picked up the lantern, and turned it upon Levison

and his burden. Levison held the Outsider of St. Jim's in his arms—a ghostly figure. Lumley-Lumley was deadly white, and seemed only half-conscious. There was a spot of blood upon his cheek.

His eyes met Tom Merry's wildly.

"Heaven knows how glad I am of this, Lumley!" said Tom Merry softly. "Let me help you, old chap."

He took the lad in his arms, and Levison having wrapped a coat round Lumley, Tom Merry carried him out of the vault. The others followed.

Tom Merry carried him towards the door of the School House. There was, of course, no thought of entering the place quietly now. The sooner the whole House was awakened the better, with the strange news they had to tell. Mellish joined them, shivering, scarcely able to believe his eyes.

"He's alive!" said Blake.

"Alive! But—"

"It was a trance!"

No one at St. Jim's had even known that Jerrold Lumley was subject to trances—he had never said so. And Dr. Short had believed him dead.

Blake rang a loud peal at the School House door. There was a light burning in the Hall still, but the House was locked up for the night.

It was some minutes before the door opened. It was opened by Mr. Railton, the Housemaster himself.

He stared blankly at the sight of the juniors.

"Boys! What does this mean?"

"We have news, sir—don't be startled—Lumley—Lumley—"

"Lumley-Lumley!"

"Yes, sir, he's—he's not dead!"

"Not dead!" cried Mr. Railton.

"No, sir."

"What do you mean, Merry?"

"Look, sir!"

Blake pulled the edge of the coat aside, and showed Lumley-Lumley's face. The master of the School House gave a violent start.

"Lumley!"

"Yes, sir."

"Come in—come in! Bring him in. I will ask you no questions, now, Merry, but one—who discovered this?"

"Levison, sir—the new fellow."

"I shall not forget this, Levison. Give the poor lad to me; I will carry him up to bed. Kildare!" The captain of

(Continued on the next page.)

SEPTEMBER'S STAR STORIES

Unbeatable Book-length Yarns to Suit All Tastes

HERE'S a tip for the holidays! Travel with the cheery chums of Greyfriars on the holiday trail and share with them their rollicking and exciting adventures. If you've had your annual holidays join up with Harry Wharton & Co. and have another by asking to-morrow for the **SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY**, No. 227, "**THE TRAIL OF THE TRIKE**," a sparkling book-length yarn by Frank Richards.

And if that's not enough, what about sailing with Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's on a grand holiday trip in a boat up the River Thames? Where Tom Merry & Co. are you are sure of fun and adventure, and it's yours for the asking. Get Martin Clifford's latest—"**SEVEN BOYS IN A BOAT**"—to-morrow. It is **SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY** No. 228.

Concrete Charlie they called him in the football world, for obvious reasons. He inherited a derelict football club, but couldn't get money to run the show until he met Waldo, the Wonder Man, the adventurer, who took money from highly-placed swindlers to give to their victims. And that was the start of adventures of perils that will thrill you, for Waldo's biggest enemy happened to be Charlie's, as well. Read all about it in **BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY** No. 445, "**WALDO'S WONDER TEAM**," by Edwy Searles Brooks.

There are no characters more famous in boys' fiction to-day than Captain Justice, the skipper with a price on his head,

and his companions, Dr. O'Malley, Len Connor, and young Midge. And here's another rousing yarn of their exploits—"**THE OCEAN OUTLAW**," by Murray Roberts. It is **BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY** No. 446.

"**THE ST. FRANK'S CASTAWAYS**," by Edwy Searles Brooks, is a thrilling holiday yarn of the boys of St. Frank's, with Nipper & Co. well to the fore. If you read last month's St. Frank's story, "**The Kidnapped Remove**," you'll have to read this one. Even if you didn't, you'll find "**THE ST. FRANK'S CASTAWAYS**" is a winner. Note the number—**BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY** No. 447.

And who likes yarns of the Spanish Main, pirates, hidden treasure, and the rolling sea? "**WHO SAILS WITH ME?**" by Maurice Everard, will more than fill the bill. This rattling fine story is **BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY** No. 448.

A man once called at Scotland Yard and asked for police protection. To look at, he was amazingly like Sexton Blake, the famous detective, only he was plainly in fear of something, or somebody. His story sounded wild and incredible, but the police agreed to help him. Then, as he left the famous building, a car shot past, there was the rat-tat of a machine-gun, and he fell dead! And that is how the thrilling story by popular John G. Brandon, featuring R. S. V. Purvale, adventurer, begins. Read it in **SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY** No. 445—"**UNDER POLICE PROTECTION**."

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St. Jim's had just come down, called up by the loud ringing of the bell. "Kildare! It is Lumley—he was not dead! Will you ring up Dr. Short at once, and tell him to come here?"

And Mr. Railton carried Lumley-Lumley upstairs. From the pale, cold lips of the Outsider of St. Jim's came no word.

CHAPTER 14.

The Hero of the Hour!

THE sensational return of Lumley was a nine days' wonder at St. Jim's.

The next morning it was all over the school, and both Houses rang with the strange tale.

Lumley was the hero of the hour.

Levison, whom no one had taken a liking to, whom even his own study-mate feared and disliked, had the school at his feet.

He was called upon to tell the story a hundred times, and he told it carelessly enough, as if attaching little importance to his own part in it.

But that was only on the outside; inwardly, Levison was intensely gratified by the sensation he had made, and the kudos that came to him; and by the fact that Tom Merry & Co. were put quite in the shade by his exploits.

The fact that Jerrold Lumley-Lumley might have been buried alive but for Ernest Levison was enough to make the latter a hero.

His iron nerve, too, in penetrating alone into the vault at dead of night, on such an errand, won great admiration, though some of the fellows said it was unnatural and uncanny.

But the result had been the saving of a life—and everything could be glossed over and excused for that.

Levison was called before the Head the first thing in the morning to explain. He did so, in a perfectly unconcerned manner.

He had known, he explained, that Jerrold Lumley was subject to trances. Lumley had had such an attack when he was with Levison in London. In their talk afterwards he had told Levison about that strange malady, and asked him to say nothing of it—for Lumley's ruling passion was a desire to be considered as "hard" as he wished to be, and a hint that he was weak or nervous was enough to throw him into a fury. That his strange complaint could ever visit him severely enough to cause a risk of his being buried alive had never crossed his mind, so far as Levison knew. It was not a thought that would present itself to the boy's mind, his attacks having been so brief at all previous times, seldom for more than a few minutes.

Levison had never thought of such a thing, until he arrived at St. Jim's and learned that Lumley-Lumley was dead.

Then it had crossed his mind that there might be some doubt in the matter, especially when he learned that the juniors had only very vague ideas of what complaint the junior had died of.

He had determined to discover for himself if there was anything in his surmise that Lumley-Lumley might be only in a trance.

At this point the Head interrupted him.

"You should have acquainted me with your suspicions, Levison," he said.

"You would have considered them only a fancy, sir, I thought."

"Probably," the Head had to admit; "but I should have caused Lumley-Lumley to be seen by my medical man again before the coffin was screwed down."

Levison smiled in a way that was not complimentary to the medical man, or to the medical profession generally.

"Dr. Short had already certified him as dead, sir," he replied. "He would have gone to the coffin with the feeling that Lumley was dead, and that he was wasting his time. And he would have left him for dead, sir."

The Head looked at Levison queerly. It was quite true.

"Besides, sir, it wasn't a mere look at him that was required," went on Levison. "I pricked his cheek with a needle, to see whether blood was flowing yet—and it was! Then I was certain. I chafed and massaged him till he opened his eyes—he was already partially recovered from his trance, though goodness knows how long he would have stayed insensible but for me. Very likely he would not have come to himself before the funeral."

The Head shuddered.

"Do not speak of that, Levison; it is too terrible to think of. Oh, what a terrible narrow escape! Levison, I wish you had spoken to your master, instead of carrying out this investigation single-handed. I think you have been too self-sufficient in the matter. But that is a slight fault when I think of what you have done—that you have, in all probability, saved a life and prevented a fearful calamity.

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Levison, I am glad you came to this school—I am deeply grateful to you."

"Thank you, sir!"

And the Head shook hands with Levison, and dismissed him.

Immediately he was outside the Head's study, the other fellows were thronging round him.

There were no lessons that morning. It was impossible for the juniors to put the slightest attention into their work, and the masters had wisely resolved to grant a morning's holiday to celebrate the recovery of Lumley-Lumley.

The juniors gathered in groups in the passages and the quad to discuss the wonderful happenings.

Ernest Levison was the general hero for the time.

Nothing else was talked of all the morning. Bulletins from Lumley-Lumley's room were eagerly read. They were put up on the notice-board in the hall every hour, so keen was the interest of the whole school in his progress. He was well—Dr. Short, amazed to find him alive, had pronounced that he was not only certain to recover, but was practically recovered already. It was only the trance that had held him in its grip; and the effect of that was wearing off.

A telegram was received from Mr. Lumley that morning, to say that he had landed, and was coming on to St. Jim's immediately. And gladly enough the Head sent a reply wire to tell the millionaire that the son whom he had already learned was lost to him, was yet alive, and ready to greet him on his arrival at the school.

The endless discussion of the subject ebbed towards noon, and in the afternoon the boys went into the classrooms with minds freed a little, and gave some slight attention to their work.

After school, Tom Merry was told that Lumley-Lumley wanted to speak to him, and he was taken up into the sick chamber.

He was surprised by the change he saw in the junior. The colour had come back into Lumley's cheeks, and the light to his eyes. He turned his glance upon Tom Merry with a smile.

Tom Merry grasped his hand.

"Thank Heaven, Lumley!" he said.

"I have thanked Heaven," said Lumley, in a low voice, and the words sounded strange enough from the lips of the fellow who had been called the Outsider of St. Jim's. "I have done that, Merry. The doctor says I'm strong enough to travel if I like to-day, and I'm leaving with the governor. You know my governor, I guess?"

A big, bronzed gentleman came over from the window, and shook hands with Tom Merry. The Shell fellow remembered Mr. Lumley-Lumley. He had seen the millionaire when he brought his son to St. Jim's.

"I wanted to say good-bye, Tom Merry," said Lumley. "I'm going abroad for a holiday, to pick up after this. It's been a rotten time. Of course, I didn't know it. I was unconscious all the time I was in the coffin—I never knew anything till I opened my eyes and saw Levison leaning over me. I guess I'm glad that chap came to St. Jim's—and so are you, dad, eh?"

"I guess so, Jerry," said Mr. Lumley-Lumley, with a rather tremulous smile. "I guess I'll take care of you after this, too. You won't be in danger again."

"I'm sorry you're leaving," said Tom Merry simply. "I hope you'll come back."

The Outsider smiled.

"You want me to come back?" he said.

"Yes."

"I believe you, Merry. I don't know if I shall ever come, but thank you for saying so. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, old chap!"

A few more words, and Tom Merry hurried to leave. Mr. Lumley went to the door with him.

"I want to see the lad who saved Jerrold," he said. "I haven't seen him. Will you ask him to step up here?"

"Certainly, sir."

Tom Merry descended the stairs. Monty Lowther was waiting for him there.

"Wharton's come," he said.

"Oh, good!"

Tom Merry had almost forgotten the promised visit of Wharton of Greyfriars for the moment. A handsome junior in a Greyfriars cap came forward, and shook hands with the hero of the Shell.

"I hear you've had some excitement here," he remarked.

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry. "You've heard about it already, then? The fellows are full of it. Where's Levison, Monty?"

Harry Wharton started a little at the sound of the name.

"Levison!" he said involuntarily.

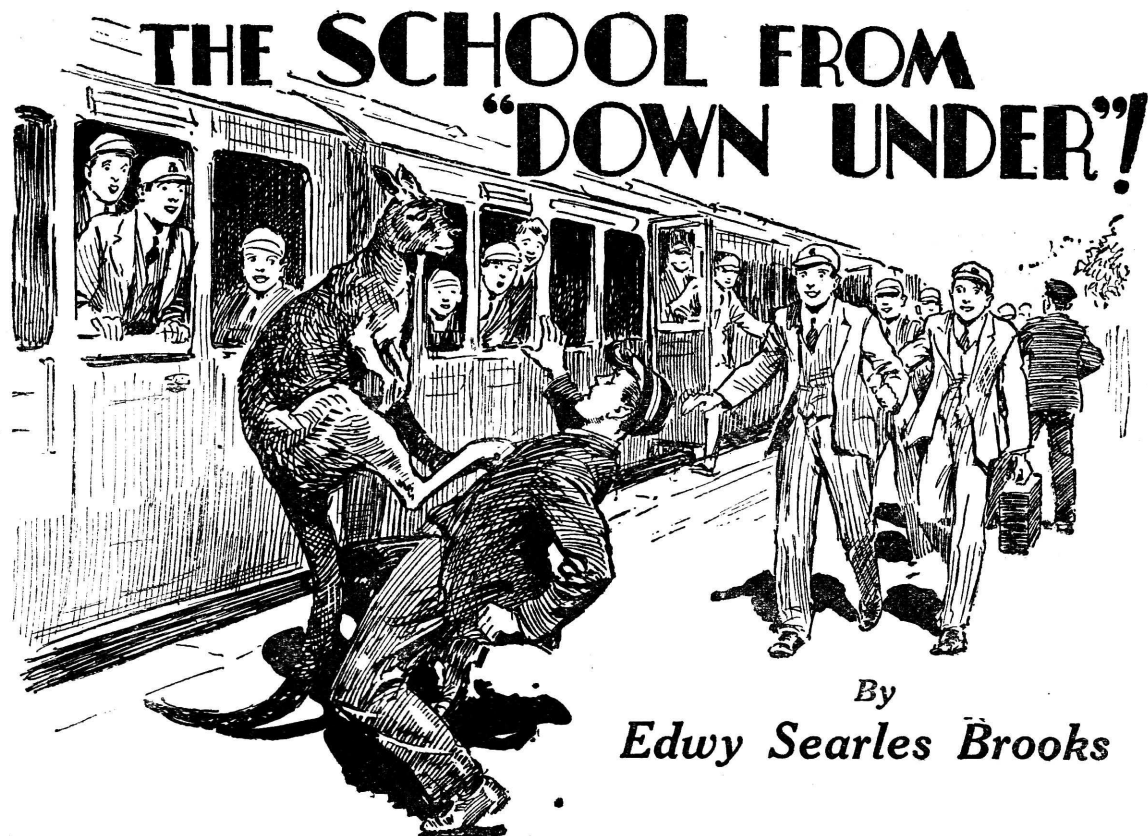
"Do you know him?" asked Tom Merry.

"I knew a chap of that name once."

"He's a new fellow here," said Tom Merry. "It was he

(Continued on page 28.)

THE SCHOOL THAT WAS FULL OF SHEEP!



By
Edwy Searles Brooks

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Some schoolboys from Australia take over River House School, near St. Frank's, for the summer, and immediately the two schools are at grips in a friendly "war." Jerry Dodd, of St. Frank's, discovers that one of the Aussies, Jim Sayers, is an impostor. He tells Handforth, of St. Frank's, about Sayers, and the two juniors start investigating secretly. They find out that Mr. Rutter, an Australian master, is in league with the impostor. They shadow the master, but are trapped in a dungeon in some old ruins. They are rescued, however, by Nipper, but so as not to alarm Rutter, Dodd and Handforth agree to remain "prisoners" while Nipper does a little investigating. Later, St. Frank's is awakened one night to find flocks of sheep in the school Triangle. It is a jape by the Australian schoolboys. But that is not all. A herd of cows has been turned on to Little Side, and Nipper & Co. are in a rage when they see their cricket pitch being ruined.

Asking for Trouble!

NIPPER & CO. were truly horrified as they saw that great herd of cows walking over the beautiful turf of Little Side. The moon was shining so brightly that the playing fields were almost as bright as daylight. The pitch itself—that most sacred of all spots—was occupied by at least half a dozen of the animals. "The Aussies couldn't have done this," said Harry Gresham tensely. "It's—it's unthinkable!"

"But we heard them laughing," said Nipper. "The rotters are about here somewhere."

There had been heavy rain recently, and the mossy turf of Little Side was soft, even spongy in places. In every direction the cows had left deep impressions where their feet had sunk in.

"It's no good standing here," said Nipper, pulling himself together. "We've got to do something. Come on, you chaps! Help to drive the brutes off!"

"Begad, rather!" said Tregellis-West. "But this is most frightfully awkward, you know—it is, really! How does one talk to cows? The things won't take any notice of me."

But the other fellows were getting active now, and by running about and shouting they got the cows on the move. The beasts herded together, and presently they

were coaxed into heading for an open gateway which led into a neighbouring meadow.

But cows are funny creatures to deal with. At the last moment, when everything seemed all right, the leading cows veered off, and went in a different direction. The others followed. In a moment there was a stampede across Little Side. Thud, thud, thud! Thud, thud, thud! Those heavy hoofs were churning up the turf still further, and the juniors yelled with anguish.

"Head 'em off!" yelled Nipper. "They're going straight for the Triangle!"

There was another open gateway on this side, of course, and the herd was making for it. It so happened that a weedy-looking individual, only half-dressed, was coming through that gateway at the same moment. Mr. Horace Pycraft, in fact, was on the warpath. The master of the Fourth Form, always eager to make himself unpleasant, was coming to Little Side to find out the reason for all the shouting. He was quite certain that some of his own boys were there, and he meant to deal with them drastically.

"Outrageous!" he spluttered, as he strode purposefully forward. "Somebody shall pay for this disgraceful disturbance. Boys—boys! Listen to me! I demand to know who—"

He broke off, horrified.

For he had just got through the gateway, and he was now in Little Side. Coming straight towards him at the double was a fearsome herd of monstrous bulls. At least, Mr. Pycraft took them to be bulls.

"Good gracious!" he shrieked. "What—what— Help!"

He spun round on his heel, and in wild terror he fled. Behind him, their hoofs thundering, came the cows.

Mr. Pycraft, dashing between the wing of the Ancient House and the wing of the School House, made for the Triangle. And almost before he realised it, he was in the midst of a dense flock of sheep.

"Help!" he howled wildly.

Perhaps it was his frenzied shout which caused the sheep to stampede. But they certainly did stampede. About a score of them rushed at Mr. Pycraft, and the next moment he was swept clean off his feet. With arms and legs waving, the unfortunate Form-master was carried along, flat on his back. The stampede increased, and a vast

number of sheep, carrying Mr. Pycraft in their midst, went hurtling into the Triangle. Alarmed shouts rent the air as seniors and juniors dashed away in all directions. It was an extraordinary scene—particularly at this hour of the night, when the school should normally have been fast asleep.

"Help!" yelled Mr. Pycraft. "I am being killed!"

Next moment the stampeding sheep encountered the fountain, which stood in the middle of the Triangle. They parted, streaking off in two different flocks; and Mr. Pycraft, who was in the very centre, suddenly found himself whirling through the air.

Splash!

His ride was over. He landed deeply in the fountain pool, and his frantic yells changed into spluttering gurgles. Mr. Pycraft went under the surface, and when he came up he was gasping with panic.

"Great Scott! It's old Pieface—in the fountain pool!" chuckled Buster Boots, from the Modern House steps. "Well, after taking a ride on all those sheep, he needed a bath."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A number of fellows dashed forward, and they dragged Mr. Pycraft out.

"Upon my soul! I'm half drowned!" babbled the Form-master. "This will be the death of me! Good gracious! What an experience! I shall demand the expulsion of the boys who are responsible for this appalling outrage!"

Mr. Pycraft staggered away, leaving a trail of water behind him. Meanwhile, some of the other boys had managed to get the sheep under control, and the whole flock, at length, was persuaded to leave the precincts of the school.

On Little Side, too, Nipper and the other Removites had got the cows through into the meadow, and strong barriers were placed in position. Breathless, hot, and indignant, the juniors spread themselves over Little Side to survey the damage. In that clear moonlight the damage was obvious enough to see.

"I say, coppers!" said an urgent voice.

The Removites spun round. Curly Baines, the cheery leader of the Australian boys, was running up. Behind him came McVittie, Kennedy, the Taylor brothers, and all the other prominent Aussies.

"Grab 'em!" roared De Valerie.

There was a rush, and crowds of angry Removites and Fourth Formers surrounded the boys from the Australian School.

"Wait a minute, chums!" said Curly Baines earnestly.

"We didn't put the cows in your cricket field."

"If you didn't, who did?" demanded Reggie Pitt. "It must have been some beastly carelessness of yours, in any case. Do you admit that you drove the sheep—"

"We thought it was a good jape—the sheep, I mean," said Curly. "We came down early from London especially. We're not supposed to be here until to-morrow. But we thought it would be a good laugh, so we drove the sheep into the Triangle, knowing that they couldn't escape."

"Then what about the cows?" demanded Nipper.

"We didn't know anything about the cows until we heard you chaps shouting," put in McVittie. "Gee! You don't think we'd ruin this ground, do you? Have you forgotten that we're coming here on Saturday for a match?"

"That's true," said Nipper, frowning. "All the same, I can't understand—"

"Perhaps I can enlighten you," said an amused, mocking voice.

They all spun round; and there in the moonlight, some distance away, stood the boy who called himself Jim Sayers.

"You!" went up a roar from the Australian boys. "You again!"

"Why not?" grinned Sayers. "A jape's a jape, isn't it?"

"Why, you—you—you—" Curly Baines was at a loss for words.

"I was with you when you planned the sheep jape, so I thought I would improve on it," explained Sayers, with a shout of laughter. "If sheep, why not cows? My motto is to do a thing thoroughly—"

"That's our motto, too," said Nipper grimly. "Grab him, you fellows! This is a second dirty trick he's played on us here!"

There was a rush, but Jim Sayers had taken up a position which assured him an easy line of retreat. With another yell of laughter, he turned, and, like a hare, bolted. Dodging to a neighbouring fence he leapt over, and streaked across the paddock. A minute later he vanished into the dense blackness of the plantation near the school chapel.

"No good chasing him!" panted Nipper. "He can easily dodge us in the darkness! The cad!"

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"The queer thing about Sayers is that he plays these dirty tricks openly," said Travers. "Another fellow would keep his mouth shut, and leave the thing a mystery. But Sayers seems to glory in it, and the dirtier the trick the more he glories. He doesn't mind the story getting into the newspapers, either."

Prefects were shouting now; and quite a few masters were stalking about, too, gathering the boys together. For the masters were determined upon having a roll-call at once, and then sending all the boys back to their dormitories. This disturbance had lasted long enough.

"Look here, coppers!" said Baines quickly. "You've got to go. We're real sorry about the damage to your cricket pitch, but it wasn't our doing."

"We understand that!" growled Nipper. "Your jape was harmless enough. It's something like that other affair, when Sayers butted in and turned the hose on."

"We'll punish him," said McVittie. "We've had enough of this. He's been asking for trouble for a long time—and now he'll get it!"

"As for your pitch, leave it to us," said Curly.

"What?"

"Yes, I mean it," went on the leader of the Australians, talking earnestly. "We accept all responsibility—because, after all, it was we who started the jape. And Sayers is an Aussie. We'll put your pitch to rights before Saturday, if we have to work morning, noon, and night!"

"Well, that's sporting of you, and we appreciate it," said Nipper. "But I doubt if much can be done. Just wait until daylight, and then you'll see the damage."

The Australian boys thought it advisable to clear off at once, before they encountered any of the St. Frank's masters. There would be a row about this, of course, in any case, and the Aussies knew that they would have to "pay the piper." But they had only played a good-natured joke, and the punishment could not be very severe.

"When we get hold of Sayers, we'll skin him alive!" said Curly Baines threateningly, as he and his chums walked across the fields to the River House School. "It's any odds we shall find him at our own school. He can't stay out all night."

"We ought to have been ready for him," growled Kennedy. "We were fools to bring him down with us."

They trudged on glumly. Ever since they had come into the neighbourhood of St. Frank's, Jim Sayers had given them a bad name. Everywhere people were saying that the Australian boys were hooligans and ruffians. They were all having to suffer for Sayers' caddish behaviour. Well, this time they would make him sorry for himself.

When they arrived at the school, they found the buildings in total darkness. No masters were present, of course, for the school was not supposed to return until the morrow.

But it was easy enough for Curly Baines and his chums to climb over the wall, and to march in a body to Marshall's House. Here they set up such a noise that within a few minutes the porter made his appearance, only half-dressed.

"Bless my heyes!" he ejaculated, blinking. "What are you young gents doing here at this time o' night?"

"My good Hackett, we seek entry," said Curly Baines politely. "We've come slightly in advance of time, and we want to go to bed. Any objections?"

"Not as far as I'm concerned, young gent," said Hackett. "But I'll have to report this to Mr. Atherton in the morning."

"He won't mind," said McVittie, grinning.

"Well, I hope it'll be all right," said Hackett doubtfully.

They all went in. There was no sign of Jim Sayers, and although they waited up for a full hour, still Sayers did not put in an appearance.

"He knows what's waiting for him," growled Curly Baines darkly. "Well, we don't mind. We can wait. He's given us a bad name for the last time. To-morrow, chums, we're going to kick him out of this school—and see that he keeps out!"

The Watchers in the Ruins!

EVERYTHING was quiet in the tower-room of the abbey ruins. At least, fairly quiet. Edward Oswald Handforth was sleeping, and complete quietness, therefore, was out of the question. He was lying on one of the pneumatic mattresses, covered with his blankets, and he was snoring industriously.

William Napoleon Browne was asleep, too. Admittedly, he had found it difficult to drop off, for Handforth had started snoring early. It was Jerry Dodd's "watch." He was well on the alert, leaning on the sill of the deep-set window. Below him stretched the moonlit countryside. Occasionally he would move across to another window of the tower-room and take a survey. Thus it was easy enough for the solitary watcher to keep the whole countryside under almost constant surveillance.

Midnight had long since passed, and soon it would be Handforth's turn to watch.

Jerry Dodd was very satisfied with the arrangement. Everything here was comfortable. The beds were excellent, and there was a good supply of food. This tower-room was sheltered, too. It had a roof, and during the calm summer weather there were no hardships to be borne. Heaps better, in any case, than in remaining incarcerated in that black and dismal dungeon.

Jerry was thoughtful as he watched. He knew that matters were coming to a climax. Things could not go on much longer; Nipper was getting busy on the "outside," and by this time, in all probability, Nelson Lee knew some of the facts. For Nipper had written him fully, and it was certain that Lee, by now, had received the letters.

Besides, Rutter would have to make a move of some kind soon; for Rutter believed that his two prisoners were helpless in the dungeon. He could not leave them there for ever. When he made a move it might be possible to trap him in some way.

Jerry Dodd's thoughts were suddenly shattered. He leaned farther over the sill and stared hard. He had seen something vague and shadowy moving on the towing-path some distance away.

safety catch. After that, the lanky Fifth Former retired into a secluded corner of the ruins, where he was completely concealed by a mass of dense ivy. Yet it was possible for him to keep his eye on that stone-flagged open space, where the moonlight was streaming.

The wait was not a long one.

After five minutes, stealthy footsteps sounded. Jim Sayers entered the ruins, and he looked about him rather uneasily as he advanced. Sayers, in fact, thought that this was a good opportunity for him to come and have a word with the prisoners. He was rather anxious to "square" himself. Furthermore, he was afraid to go to the River House School just yet. He wanted Curly Baines and the others to go to sleep, for he had a shrewd idea that they were preparing something particularly hot for him.

Now that he was in the ruins, however, he was not feeling very comfortable. There was something weird in this age-old place at dead of night. The moonlight, if anything, only added to the general eeriness. There was a faint breeze, and it was causing the creepers to rustle here and there. Sayers looked about him uncertainly; he remembered hearing, from somebody or other, that the old abbey ruins were supposed to be haunted.

"Heck!" he muttered, pulling himself together.



As the frightened sheep suddenly stampeded, Mr. Pycraft, standing right in the way, was swept clean off his feet. With arms and legs waving, the unfortunate master was carried along, flat on his back. "Help!" yelled Mr. Pycraft. "I'm being killed!"

"By cripes!" he muttered tensely.

Browne, who seemed to have thought of everything, had brought an expensive and powerful telescope—for, as he had said, a telescope would come in very useful, particularly during daylight. Jerry Dodd grabbed the instrument now, and in a moment he had it levelled through the narrow window. He focused it. The solitary figure, moving on the towing-path, sprang into clear view.

"Gee whiz! Sayers!" muttered Jerry, startled.

The figure seemed to be within a yard or two of him; he recognised Jim Sayers at once. The Australian boy was walking briskly, and it was clear enough that he was coming straight towards the ruins.

Jerry leapt across the room, and with one movement he awoke Handforth and Browne.

"Quick, you chaps!" he hissed. "Rouse up!"

Handforth and Browne, both fully dressed, were soon awake. Jerry hastily explained what he had seen. They lost no time in hurrying down the circular, crumbling stairway to the main part of the ruins. The trap was opened, and in a moment, Handforth and Dodd dropped down. In another moment, Browne closed the trap, then secured the

He went down on his knees, removed the little slab of stone, and released the safety catch. A push opened the larger slab, and he wedged it. He pressed the switch of an electric torch, and the beam of light shot down. He saw two figures stretched on the bed of dried ferns below. One of them moved.

"Must be morning!" came Jerry Dodd's muttered voice. "The sun's coming in somehow—Hallo! That's queer! I say, Handy!"

Handforth appeared to wake up. In fact, he woke up with such exaggerated effort that Jerry Dodd thought it advisable to take some sort of action. He leapt to his feet.

"What's the idea?" he asked angrily. "It's you, Rutter, I suppose?"

"Wrong, cobber," said Jim Sayers, grinning. "Everything all right with you fellers down there?"

He flashed the light on his own face for a moment, and then returned it to the prisoners.

"You miserable cad!" said Dodd hotly. "You're an Aussie—like me. You helped Rutter to imprison us here. You'll suffer for it, too—"

"Easy does it, Dodd," interrupted Sayers, and now his

grin had vanished. "That's what I came to tell you. Rutter trapped you in this place before I knew anything about it. It was all his doing."

"Do you think that makes your own part any different?" demanded Handforth. "How many days have we been bottled up in this horrible hole? What are you here for? Have you come to rescue us?"

"Sorry, but I can't let you out just yet," said Sayers. "All the same, I can tell you that you won't be here long. Rutter went a bit too far, in my opinion."

"If you don't mean to rescue us, you might as well clear off," said Jerry Dodd. "You're as big a crook as Rutter—or you wouldn't be a party to his dirty games."

"I can't help myself," said Sayers. "That's true, coppers. One day, perhaps, you'll understand. But if Rutter tries to go too far, I'll stop him—"

He broke off abruptly, for clinging to the buttons on the sleeve of Handforth's jacket he had seen a little scrap of creeper—with brown leaves! In the strong light of Sayers' torch, the leaves looked fresh; he could even see the end of the broken twig, and it was quite white at the fracture. Handforth, in hurrying down from the tower in the darkness, had caught his arm against the creepers, and that scrap had attached itself to him.

Sayers knew that there could be no creeper down in the dungeon. How, then, could those few fresh leaves have become fixed to Handforth's arm? It was incredible to suppose that Handforth had been out, for if he had been out, why hadn't he stayed out? He dismissed the idea at once.

But he knew, too, that the creeper with the brown leaves grew in abundance on the upper section of the old abbey tower. There wasn't a scrap of that kind of creeper within twelve feet of the ground. Sayers had a good memory, and he had seen the ruins by daylight more than once.

What could it mean?

"Well, you were saying?" said Jerry Dodd.

Sayers did not answer. He snapped off his electric torch, released the wedge, and the slab rose into place. A moment later he had secured the catch and replaced the smaller stone. Then he rose to his feet and looked about him. Even in the moonlight he could see that there was none of the brown creeper near the ground. It was all higher up, clinging to the outer walls of the tower, far above. Perhaps there was some of it on the old staircase, too. He moved in that direction.

He found himself at the bottom of the stairway; it gaped in front of him, black, mysterious. He took one or two steps upwards, and then he moved faster. He would have a look up there—just to make sure.

Only a few feet from him, William Napoleon Browne, in his hiding-place, was filled with alarm. He knew just where Sayers was going. At all costs, Sayers must be prevented from going up to the tower-room!

Browne, ever sharp witted, acted. He suddenly remembered a secret of this old tower. It was Stevens, of the Fifth, who had told him, two or three terms ago. Like a shadow Browne crept from behind his cover, and he put his mouth into an opening in the ancient stonework. He remembered Stevens demonstrating that a whispered voice here sounded far above, on the tower staircase. There was a shaft of some kind, and the echoes had a curious effect upon the acoustics of the place.

Sayers, mounting steadily, abruptly halted. Right in his ear, it seemed, a ghostly whisper had sounded! He spun round, a cold sensation running down his spine.

"Who—who's that?" he panted, his own voice sounding like a croak in his ears.

He flashed his torchlight, but he knew that he was alone. Then, mysteriously, eerily, the whisper came again. It was in the very air about him, intangible, inhuman. He remembered the stories he had heard about the abbey ruins being haunted.

"'Tis death, foolish one, to lurk here. Get ye gone!" Sayers jumped, and clutched at the wall. He could not be certain that he had heard the words; perhaps they had merely sounded only in his imagination. But he was ready to swear that he had heard a whisper. It seemed, this time, that it came from somewhere above him—just round the bend of the staircase.

He had had enough. With a gasping cry, he flashed his torch on, and went stumbling down the stairs. He ran out of the ruins as though they were accursed, and a minute

later he was bolting across the meadows to the river, casting, now and again, a frightened look behind him.

"Good work, Brother Napoleon," murmured Browne complacently.

It was some time before Jim Sayers recovered his composure. He was drawing near to the River House School, and his mind was somewhat disturbed. Calmer now, he believed that he had allowed his imagination to get the better of him, but he would not have returned to the ruins for anything. By this time, no doubt, Curly Baines and the others would be asleep. That meant that he could get in all right. The place would be locked, but he could easily get in through a window.

He was distracted by the quiet purr of a car. He turned his attention towards a little country lane which was visible in the moonlight, fifty yards away.

There was a big car, without lights, gliding along the lane; it came to a halt just outside a charming little cottage with a thatched roof. Sayers remembered that the cottage was to let, furnished. It had been empty for a week or two.

Standing in shadow, he saw two men get out of the car. They went up the little garden path silently. He saw the door open, and they both vanished. But not a light appeared in any window.

A minute later, one of the men emerged; like a shadow he went to the car, and then the car moved off.

The Man in the Cottage!

"THERE he is!" said Curly Baines grimly.

He and a crowd of his chums were in the quadrangle of the River House School. They had slept soundly, and when they finally came downstairs, it was long past the usual breakfast time. Not that it mattered. There were no masters in the school yet, and, of course, there had been no rising bell. The boys could do almost as they liked until the rest of the school, including the masters, came down from London, in accordance with the original plan.

Jim Sayers had just emerged from a doorway on the other side of the quad. He had slept, as a matter of fact, in Mr. Rutter's own bed-room—deeming himself to be safe there.

"What's the big idea?" he asked disdainfully, as Curly and his chums came sweeping round him in an aggressive crowd.

"You thought you'd get away with it, did you?" asked McVittie fiercely. "You dirty rotter! You're going to get it in the neck!"

"Don't talk rot," said Sayers impatiently. "What's all this fuss about? You shoved a lot of sheep into St. Frank's, and I drove a herd of cows in. What's the difference?"

"I don't suppose you'd see any," said Curly Baines, glaring. "But the sheep did no harm; the cows trampled all over the St. Frank's cricket pitch, ruining it. It was a dirty trick, and we're going to kick you right out of the school. And every time you come back, we're going to kick you out again. We don't own you as an Aussie."

"Just a minute," said a cold, stern voice. The Australian boys turned, and they glared aggressively when they saw that the newcomer was Mr. Rutter.

"Look here, sir, we're going to deal with Sayers," said Curly indignantly. "Ever since we've been here, he's given us a bad name."

"I have already punished Sayers once," said Rutter curtly. "I've heard all about the disgraceful practical joke of last night. Your own part in that affair, Baines, was not too creditable."

"But ours was only a good-natured jape," protested Curly. "It was an outrage," cut in Mr. Rutter harshly. "The headmaster of St. Frank's has already laid a serious complaint, and I can tell you at once that every boy who took a part in the affair will be severely punished. Sayers, here, made things much worse by letting a herd of cows into the St. Frank's playing fields. I'm going to deal with you now, Sayers. I'm going to give you a thrashing."

"No, sir," gasped Sayers, in apparent terror. "I'll complain to my people! You half-skinned me last time. I won't stand it—"

"You'll come with me, boy!" grated Rutter, seizing Sayers by the scruff of the neck.

He forced him indoors, and soon afterwards ominous sounds of swishing came from Mr. Rutter's study. Several

COMING SHORTLY!

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS' MASTERPIECE!

The St. Frank's stories of a lifetime! Starring ten boys in eerie mystery and nerve-tingling adventures



Mr. E. S. Brooks welcomes letters from readers. Write to him c/o The Editor, The GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

IN answer to your query about the "Nelson Lee Library," J. Meltz, Shepherd's Bush, all I can now say is that it is useless to cry over spilt milk. The best thing you can do to back me up and show your appreciation of the St. Frank's stories, is to buy the GEM regularly and to get as many of your friends as you can to give it their full support. In this way, we can build up the St. Frank's section of the paper, and, who knows but that this may lead to bigger things in the future!

Sorry you missed Names List No. 2, Myer Mendelson, Moncton. I'll repeat it briefly. Study E: Glenthorpe, Brent; Study F: Dodd, Jarro, Bangs; Study G: De Valerie, Somerton; Study H: Travers, Potts, Viscount Bellton. I'll include Names

of the Australian boys, gathered in the quad, distinctly saw Mr. Rutter through the study window; they saw him wielding a birch. And presently, when Sayers emerged, he was nearly as white as a sheet, and his face was racked with agony.

"The—hoand!" he muttered. "He half killed me!" Curly Baines and his chums looked at one another. After this, what could they do? It never occurred to any of them that the "swishing," as on an earlier occasion, had been a mere fake. They were convinced that he had received a thrashing.

"Better let it drop," growled Curly. "Sayers has had his medicine."

That afternoon, when the rest of the school had come down, Rutter made his report to the headmaster of the Australian School. Trouble came for Curly Baines & Co., too; they were given lines and detention. So the affair blew over—although, in the afternoon edition of the local paper, a long account appeared of the "new outrage" at St. Frank's. Jim Sayers' name was made prominent as the chief culprit.

Greatly to the relief of Curly Baines & Co., the newspaper report exonerated them completely; it stated that their own practical joke was harmless and funny. Sayers came in for bitter condemnation. He was pilloried by the newspaper as a worthless young scamp, a menace to the peace of the countryside, and the newspaper article concluded by saying that the sooner Jim Sayers sailed for Australia the better.

"Good work, Rutter," grinned Sayers, in the privacy of Mr. Rutter's study that afternoon. "This article is great. You'll send it to old Easton, won't you?"

"It's in the post already," said Rutter, nodding. "I've had a wire from Easton, and he's getting angry already." He looked thoughtful. "That part of the game has gone well," he added. "I wish I knew what to do with those infernal boys in the abbey dungeon. We shall have to keep them there a bit longer."

Sayers thought of telling Rutter about that scrap of creeper, but he hesitated. He did not want to make himself foolish. So he kept silent.

It was unfortunate that Curly Baines & Co. were "gated." For Curly was unable to keep his promise to repair the damage done to the turf. However, he telephoned, and Nipper understood. That afternoon the St. Frank's fellows worked at high pressure on Little Side, trying to get the turf shipshape again. There had been a good deal of talk amongst the fellows regarding Handforth and Jerry Dodd. Nobody could understand why they had not returned. It was prophesied by most fellows that when they did return they would find a whole packet of trouble.

But as yet, there was no alarm. During the evening, Nipper strolled across the fields with Church and McClure. "Might as well see how things are going on," said Nipper.

"Think there's any risk?" asked Mac.

"Not a bit," said Nipper. "Everything will be quiet at the ruins this evening, and if we take a stroll there we shall be safe enough. Neither Rutter nor Sayers are likely to be anywhere near the spot during daylight."

List No. 9 in this paragraph, so here it is. East House, Fourth Form. Study No. 11: John Holroyd, Edwin Munroe, Peter Cobb; Study No. 12: Timothy Armstrong, Louis Griffith; Study No. 13: Clement Turner, Joseph Page, Donald Harron; Study No. 14: Julian Clifton, Robert Simmons.

By the way, Myer Mendelson, my 4d. book, "The Schemer of St. Frank's," was, of course, an original story, written especially for that issue of the "Boys' Friend Library." It had never before appeared in any form.

Many thanks for your long and chatty letter, Peter L. Gomm, Bristol. All I can say in reply to your query about the old "Nelson Lee" is to refer you to my answer to J. Meltz, of Shepherd's Bush. Glad you enjoyed reading the 4d. books. There are others coming along.

I think I have had other sinister characters, apart from Dr. Karnak and Ezra Quirke, in the St. Frank's stories, W. C. Leitch, Aberdeen. But I can't call them to mind just at the moment. Thanks for another beautifully written and "illuminated" letter. Thanks also for your picture postcard from Montrose, when you were on holiday with your charming sister. Hope you both had a good time. This might interest you: I am now at work on a new St. Frank's series, which for "creepiness" beats, I believe, even Quirke and Karnak. This seems to be just what you are asking for.

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

They strolled leisurely, and it was Nipper who noticed a coil of smoke coming from the pretty little cottage.

"Hallo!" he said. "So the cottage is let again? I wonder who has taken it this time?"

Church and McClure were not interested. They went fairly near the cottage, and it so happened that a man came out in full view of them. He was elderly in appearance, with a grey moustache and spectacles. He was dressed in a Norfolk suit, with knickerbockers, and he was carrying a rod and basket.

"Hallo, an angler," said Nipper. "If he's a stranger, he might not know the best spots. We'll give him a few tips."

They hurried forward, leaving the towing path, and making straight for the lane. The angler saw them coming, and halted abruptly. The man took one look at them, and then he suddenly turned, ignoring their call, and went straight back into the cottage.

Nipper halted, frowning.

"Did you see that?" he asked. "The man knew we called to him, but he seemed scared for some reason. He bolted like a rabbit."

"Shall we go and knock?" asked Church.

"Look there!" exclaimed Mac, with a jump.

A face had appeared at one of the cottage windows—but it was not the face of the man who had just entered. It was a lean, cadaverous-looking face, with hollow, deep-set eyes. For one moment only was that face at the window: then, with a jerk, the casement curtains were pulled right across.

At that very moment Handforth was looking through Browne's telescope. Browne himself, with the assistance of Jerry Dodd, was preparing the evening meal. Everything was very cosy and comfortable in that tower room of the ruins.

"I think we're going to have visitors," said Handforth suddenly. "I've just spotted Nipper, Churchy, and Mac coming this way."

"Splendid!" said Browne. "Perhaps they will have news—to say nothing of a few additional supplies."

Handforth turned away from the telescope. "Have you got that list ready, Jerry?" he asked. "There are all sorts of things we need. I made out a list, but you weren't satisfied with it—"

"Don't worry—I've got it all ready," said Jerry. "Let's have a look through that telescope."

He went across, and applied his eye to the instrument. He was just in time to see Nipper and Church and McClure hurrying towards the little cottage. He saw, too, the angler turn back as though to avoid the boys.

"That's funny—" began Jerry. "But—" He broke off, and caught his breath in with a sharp hiss. For he had seen something which had given him a shock.

A face had appeared at the window; and Jerry could see every feature of that gaunt countenance.

And in a flash he knew that it was the face of old Bartholomew Easton, the man who was Jim Sayers' guardian, and who was supposed to be many thousands of miles away, in Australia!

(What new development is this? Don't miss the final full-of-thrills chapters next week.)

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THE BOY WHO CAME BACK!

(Continued from page 22.)

who discovered that Lumley was only in a trance. Mr. Lumley wants to see him before he goes, and he's asked me to send him up. Where is he?"

"In his study," said Mellish, with a grin.

Tom Merry looked at him.

"In his study. Sure?"

"Yes, rather! He went there immediately after lessons, and the fellows haven't been able to induce him to come out."

"Oh, he's tired of yawning, I suppose! Come on, Wharton. We pass Levison's study going up to the Shell quarters. We'll have tea going in two jiffies!"

Harry Wharton nodded, and walked with Tom Merry into the Fourth Form passage. Tom Merry tapped at Levison's door, and turned the handle.

The door was locked.

Tom Merry knocked again.

"Who's that?" called out Levison's voice from within.

"Tom Merry!"

"I can't be disturbed now!"

"Mr. Lumley wants you. He's upstairs in Lumley's room," said Tom Merry, through the door. "He wants to see you before he goes."

"Oh, all right!"

The door was unlocked. It swung open, and Levison came out into the passage, without a suspicion that Tom Merry was not alone.

He came face to face with Harry Wharton.

As he saw the Greyfriars fellow his face paled, and he made a hasty movement as if to retreat into the study, but it was too late.

Harry Wharton was staring at him with blank surprise.

"Wharton!" muttered Levison. "Oh, what rotten luck!"

"Levison!"

CHAPTER 15.

Levison's Secret!

TOM MERRY looked from one to the other.

"You know each other?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!" said Harry Wharton. "Levison was at Greyfriars some time back. He was in my Form. How do you do, Levison?"

"Oh, out with it!" said Levison savagely, his face flushing.

"Tell them before me—not behind my back! Have it out! I had to leave Greyfriars, and now I shall have to leave St. Jim's! Hang you! What did you want to come here for?"

Harry Wharton eyed him steadily.

"Still the same old Levison!" he said. "I never intended to say a word about your being expelled from Greyfriars; it was no business of mine. You had no right to enter this school without letting the Head know; but I should not have interfered."

"Had to leave Greyfriars!"

"Expelled!"

The words were buzzing along the studies. A dozen fellows had heard them.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, adjusting his eyeglass, and favouring Levison with a steady stare. "So that's the secret, is it? Gweyfwiahs was your old coll. Bai Jove! I

wemembah you now. You played some wassally conjuwin' twicks on me when I was at Gweyfwiahs on a visit." "Conjuring tricks," said Monty Lowther. "Yes; I remember hearing of them. So that accounts for the mice in the jampot, and the postcard in Tom Merry's pocket—eh?"

Levison laughed cynically.

"I suppose I may as well own up," he said. "Yes; you've got it right. I was turned out of Greyfriars, for no fault of my own, as I think. I kept it dark, because I knew I shouldn't be admitted to St. Jim's if it were known here. It's a good distance from Greyfriars, and I thought I could keep out of the way of any of the fellows who might come over here to play matches. When I found that Wharton was coming, I—"

"So that is why you took the postcard?"

"Because I saw it was in Wharton's hand—yes. I wanted to know if he was coming over, and exactly when, so that I could lie low. You see how it's turned out!" And Levison laughed recklessly. "Now, go and tell the Head, and get rid of me from St. Jim's. You all want to!"

"I shall say nothing," said Tom Merry. "I suppose it must come to Dr. Holmes' ears, as it's already buzzed over the whole House. If it does, you will have to face it out, that's all."

Levison laughed savagely.

"I shall tell the Head myself, now. It's the only thing to be done!"

"I have an ideah—"

"Oh, ring off, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to wing off! I was as eagah as anybody to be believied of the pwesence of this decidedly unpleasant person," said the swell of St. Jim's, with dignity; "but, undah the cires of his havin' wescued Lumley-Lumley from the gwave, I think we might ovahlook his wotten conduct genewally, and give him a chance. My ideah is— Pway don't walk away, Levison. My ideah is for your benefit, deah boy!"

"What do you mean?" asked Levison, stopping.

"I mean that if you ask Mr. Lumley to intahcede for you with the Head, Dr. Holmes will very likely allow you to wemain, in wecognition of what you have done."

Levison started. Curiously enough, the thought had not occurred to him. But a plain and straightforward course seldom does occur to one accustomed to following devious paths.

"Thank you!" he said. "There may be something in it. I'll try."

And he did—with good results for himself. For the Head, although shocked and annoyed to discover that a boy who had been expelled from another school had been entered at St. Jim's, was not inclined to be hard on the boy who had saved the life of Jerrold Lumley.

Under other circumstances, Levison would have been sternly, "I should have sent you away long ago, if you had not given me a chance. I hope you will prove my go!"

So Levison had his chance, but whether he proved worthy of it is another story. That afternoon the tea party at Tom Merry's study was interrupted by the announcement that Jerrold Lumley was going away.

The boys crowded out to see him carried into the big motor-car. They cheered Mr. Lumley and his son as the car rolled away, and the fellow who had been called the Outsider of St. Jim's smiled cheerily and waved his hand.

THE END.

(NEXT WEDNESDAY—The sailor-lad who came to St. Jim's as a viscount! Read all about it in "UNDER FALSE COLOURS!")

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