

HALF-CROWNS AWARDED FOR READERS' JOKES! (See Page 9.)

The GEM 2!

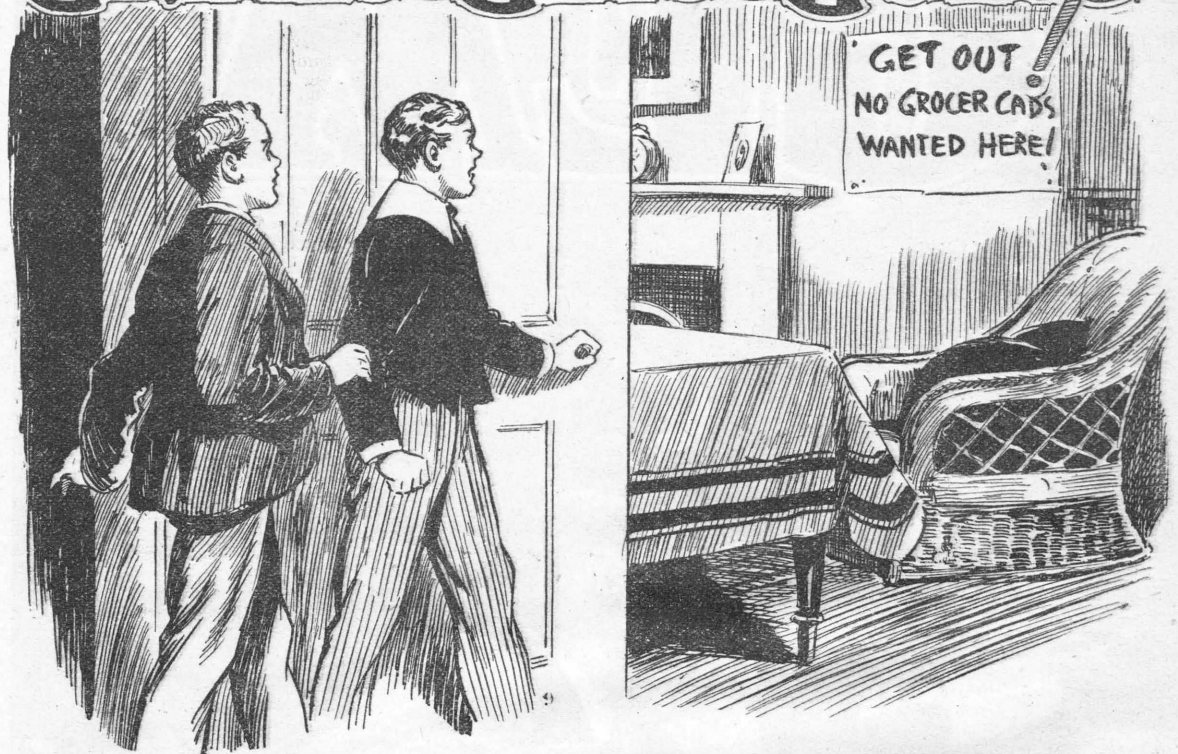
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EVERY WEDNESDAY.
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*R.O.'s for a
Couple of Cads!*

"GRIMES GETS GOING!"—Powerful Long Yarn of the Chums of St. Jim's—INSIDE.

GRIMES GETS GOING



As Lumley-Lumley and Grimes entered Study No. 9 they saw a large paper pinned on the wall opposite. It bore the inscription: "GET OUT! NO GROCER CADS WANTED HERE!" It was not a pleasant welcome for the new boy!

CHAPTER 1. In Style!

TROTTER, the School House page, put his head into Tom Merry's study in the Shell passage with a grinning countenance.

Tom Merry was inflating a footer, and he paused in that important occupation and looked round at Trotter.

Manners was reading a book, and Monty Lowther was compiling puns for the comic column in the next issue of "Tom Merry's Weekly." Both of them paused to look at Trotter.

The School House page carried a large silver salver in his hand, and upon the salver were a number of addressed letters.

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Monty Lowther. "You've started bringing up the letters in style, Trotter! Is this a new order of the Head?"

"Hand 'em over, Trotter!" said Tom Merry. "Might be a postal order in mine. Don't stand there understudying a Cheshire cat."

Trotter grinned. "They ain't letters, Master Merry," he said.

"What on earth are they, then?" asked Tom Merry.

"Invites, Master Merry."

Tom Merry laid down the footer and stared at Trotter.

"Invites!" he repeated. "What in the name of all that's idiotic is an invite?"

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"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Lowther. "Trotter means invites, which is Trotterian for invitations."

"Oh, invitations, are they?" said Tom Merry.

"Yes, invites, Master Merry," said Trotter, evidently quite satisfied with his own pronunciation. "From Master Lumley-Lumley!"

"Master Lumley-Lumley is sending out his invites in style," grinned Manners. "What is he playing the giddy ox like this for?"

"Some jape, I suppose," said Monty Lowther.

The Terrible Three selected from the salver the invitations addressed to themselves. There were half a dozen more, addressed to other juniors in the School House.

Trotter was grinning broadly. Evidently he regarded the written invitations and the silver salver from a humorous point of view.

"Well, I must say that this takes the cake!" said Monty Lowther. "Where did you burgle that salver, Trotter?"

Trotter chuckled.

"It's the same wot I takes in to the 'Ead," he explained. "Master Lumley-Lumley give me a bob to bring 'em round, 'e did. Very generous young gent, Master Lumley-Lumley."

And Trotter retired from the study, with the same broad grin upon his countenance, carrying the salver very carefully with the remainder of the "invites."

Tom Merry opened his envelope. There was a written invitation inside, in the handwriting of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth.

"J. Lumley-Lumley requests the pleasure of your presence at a feed in his study, No. 9 in the Fourth Form passage, this afternoon, at 6 p.m., to celebrate the visit of a distinguished guest.

"R.S.V.P. Study No. 9.

"Clean collars."

Tom Merry read his invitation, and read it again, and chuckled. Monty Lowther and Manners were chuckling, too.

"I suppose yours is just the same as this?" said Tom Merry, holding up the missive.

"Just the same," grinned Lowther. "I wonder who the distinguished guest is?"

"Lumley's pater, perhaps."

"You notice the direction as to the dress for the occasion," said Tom Merry. "Clean collars. The cheeky bounder!"

"Serve him right not to go," said Lowther. "Only——"

"Only he stands such jolly good feeds," remarked Manners.

"Exactly."

"Oh, we'll go!" said Tom Merry. "I want to see the distinguished guest, and we've got enough clean collars to go round at a pinch."

By
Martin Clifford

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will be a good feed if it's in keeping with the giddy invitations and the silver salver," said Tom Merry, laughing. "That's the best of being the only son and heir of a giddy millionaire—you get plenty of filthy lucre. And as a matter of fact, funds are low in this study just now."

"We'd better go and tell Lumley we're coming," said Lowther. "He says 'R.S.V.P.' Of course, that generally stands for really spiffing veal pies, but it may mean that he wants an answer."

And the Terrible Three, putting other matters aside, left their study and walked down to No. 9 in the Fourth Form passage.

There was a bright fire burning in the study, and the table was set with a spotless tablecloth and an unusual array of crockeryware.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was not to be seen, but Mellish and Levison of the Fourth, who shared the study with him, were there. The two cads cast a rather aggressive look at the Terrible Three.

"Hallo, what do you want?" demanded Levison.

"We want Lumley."

"He's gone down to the tuckshop. Seems to be standing a feed," said Percy Mellish. "Are you fellows asked?"

Tom Merry held up the invitation.

"Repondez, s'il vous plait!" said Lowther. "We're repondez s'il vous plaiting."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who's the distinguished guest?" said Percy Mellish.

"Don't you fellows know?"

"No; unless it's Lumley's pater, the giddy millionaire. I believe he's coming down to see the Outsider this week," said Levison. "We're not invited to the feed. Lumley had the cheek to ask us to get out—get out of our own study, you know. He says we're not class enough to meet his guests. What do you think of that for cheek?"

"Awful cheek, isn't it?" said Mellish. "He's a chap that chums with grocer kids. He's as pally as anything with Grimes, the grocer's boy in Rylcombe—kid who brings home grocery in a basket, you know. Disgusting, I call it!"

"I don't know what we should do for grocery if Grimes didn't bring it," said Tom Merry good humouredly.

"I think a St. Jim's chap ought to be above speaking to such persons," said Mellish loftily.

"Time you got a new thinking-machine, then," remarked Monty Lowther. "Mellish, old man, you should try to get out of these aristocratic prejudices of yours. They must make you awfully unpopular in the holidays, when you go home to the family butcher's shop."

"My father ain't a butcher!" roared Mellish.

"My mistake—I mean pawnbroker," said Lowther blandly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You know he's not a pawnbroker!" shrieked Mellish. "You—you rotter!"

"Well, he might be worse; and I

dare say he is, if he's anything like his son Percy," said Monty Lowther. "My dear chap, Grimes is worth an army of you, with a hundred Levisons thrown in. But never mind Grimes—what about the feed? If you fellows are not going to be present, you may as well clear out now, and I'll have that armchair until Lumley-Lumley comes in."

"Good idea!" said Tom Merry approvingly.

"I'm jolly well not going to get out!" said Mellish, with a scowl. "If Lumley stands a feed in our study, we're on it, I can tell you!"

"Yes, rather!" said Levison emphatically.

"Not class enough to meet his distinguished guest," growled Mellish. "We'll jolly well show him, won't we, Levison?"

"We jolly well will!" said Levison. The Terrible Three grinned and came into the study.

Levison and Mellish would gladly have ejected them, but that was rather too big an order for the cads of the Fourth. They scowled and held their peace. And Tom Merry and his chums,

When Grimes, the village grocer's boy, took his place in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, the snobs sneered and made things unpleasant for the new boy. But Grimes was not slow to return the "compliment"—with interest!

in a state of considerable wonder, waited for Jerrold Lumley-Lumley to return and explain the mystery of the unknown guest.

CHAPTER 2.

A Slight Disturbance!

"BAI Jove! I see you've awwived, deah boys!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form came into Study No. 9, followed by Blake, Herries, and Digby.

D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, had more than carried out the instruction as to dress. His collar was not only clean, it was brilliant, and the gloss on his boots was only equalled by the glimmer of his eyeglass.

"Lumley-Lumley here?" asked Blake, looking round.

"Not at home," said Monty Lowther; "we're waiting for him—likewise the feed! Did you chaps get the invites?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wegard Lumley-Lumley as doin' this thing in vevy good style. I quite approve of Lumley-Lumley. But who is this distinguished guest?"

"Name unknown," said Manners. "It's a giddy mystery. Of course, it might be myself."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Or perhaps it might be Gussy," suggested Blake. "Gussy is distinguished!"

"Yaas, wathah! Weally, Blake, I wegard that as a sensible suggestion!"

"Very distinguished," went on Blake. "Not exactly what the French call distong, but really distinguished—distinguished as a tailor's dummy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Distinguished as an ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Distinguished as a human gramophone!"

"You uttah ass, Blake! If we were not in anothah fellow's quartahs, I should wegard it as impewative to give you a feahful thwashin'!" said the wive of St. Jim's, frowning.

Kangaroo of the Shell looked into the study. He had one of the invitations in his hand. The Cornstalk junior was grinning.

"Hallo! All the family at home?" he asked. "Who's the distinguished guest?"

"Not arrived yet," said Tom Merry. "Apparently, the feed has not arrived yet, either. How many more chaps are coming, I wonder? This is quite a giddy gathering."

"Faith, and I'm coming entoirely!" said Reilly of the Fourth, as he stepped into the study.

"We didn't expect you to come in pieces," said Monty Lowther.

"Nice giddy crowd!" growled Mellish. "No room to breathe!"

The guests looked at Mellish.

"Bai Jove, I must say that that is a vevy wude wemark towards visitahs to your study, Mellish!" said D'Arcy stiffly. "I shall immediately wetiah!"

"Hold on," said Tom Merry. "No need to retire. Mellish isn't invited to the feed, and he is ratty! You are Lumley's guest, not Mellish's."

Arthur Augustus paused.

"Yaas, that altahs the case," he remarked thoughtfully.

"I don't see that it does!" said Mellish, with a sneer. "This is my study, and I don't want you fellows in it! You can get out as soon as you like!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his monocle a little tighter in his eye, and turned it upon the cad of the Fourth.

"Mellish, deah boy, I wegard this as Lumley-Lumley's study for the time bein'," he said. "I wefuse to admit you as havin' any wights in the mattah. I considah, howevah, that you are decidedly wude. I undahstand fwom Tom Mewwy that you are not a guest here."

"The Outsider hasn't invited me, if that's what you mean!" snapped Mellish. "I'm going to stay in to tea, all the same."

"But Lumley-Lumley hasn't extended you an invitation, deah boy?"

"No, he hasn't!"

"In that case, you are not entitled to be tweated as a guest of my host," said Arthur Augustus, pushing back his cuffs. "There is, then, no weason why I should not give you a feahful thwashin'."

"Eh! What— Keep off!"

"Pway keep off your hands!"

"You silly ass! Ow—ow—ow!"

Bump!

Mellish rolled out of the chair on the hearthrug as D'Arcy smote him. He jumped up in a fury, and grasped the swell of St. Jim's, and they whirled round the study in a deadly embrace. The fender was kicked aside, and a couple of chairs rolled over.

"Look out!" roared Herries. "You'll have the table over next!"

"Look out for the crocks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash!

The two combatants staggered, and fell against the table. The table reeled and rocked, and half the crockery went to the floor at one fell swoop.

D'Arcy and Mellish rolled over on the floor, D'Arcy, unfortunately, underneath. Mellish sprawled over him, pinning him down.

"Gwoogh!" gasped D'Arcy. "Gewwoff, you beast!"

"Chuck it off your chest, Gussy!"

"You howwid wottah! You're wumplin' my waistcoat!" roared D'Arcy. "You are uttahy wuinin' the cwease in my twousahs! Let me gewwup, so that I can thwash you, you wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "I call that a cool request. Let him get up, Mellish, and look out for squalls."

"I'll knock his silly brains out!" growled Mellish.

"I wufuse to have my silly bwains knocked out—I mean, my brains! You uttah wottah, if you do not immediately welease me—"

"Hallo!" said a cool voice at the door. "I guess you're having a lively time! Who's been breaking up the happy home?"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley came into the study.

The junior who had once been known as the Outsider of St. Jim's, but who was now as popular as any fellow in the Fourth, nodded cheerfully to his guests, and stared at the swell of St. Jim's, as he lay sprawling under the weight of Percy Mellish.

"Enjoying yourself?" he asked.

"I'm givin' Mellish a feahful thwashin'!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see anythin' whatevah to cackle at, Jewwold Lumley-Lumley!"

"Well, it looks to me as if you're getting the feahful thrashing!" grinned Lumley-Lumley. "My mistake, I suppose. Go on with the thrashing! Are you feeling damaged, Mellish?"

Mellish chuckled.

"Upon the whole, I am willing to make it pax," said D'Arcy. "I do not want to make a wov in anothah fellow's quartahs. I will let you off that thwashin', Mellish."

"Go hon!"

"Dragimoff, deah boys! He is spoilin' my clothes!"

Percy Mellish jumped up as the juniors made a forward movement.

"All serene, it's pax!" he said. "But you'd better keep your paws to yourself next time, D'Arcy. I shan't let you off so lightly again!"

D'Arcy staggered to his feet and groped for his eyeglass. He jammed it into his eye, and gazed at the cad of the Fourth with withering scorn.

"You uttah wottah!" he exclaimed.

"You let me off lightly! If you will step into the gym with me, I will give you a feahful thwashin' any time."

Mellish yawned.

"Bai Jove, I'll thwash you now!"

Tom Merry and Blake seized Arthur Augustus D'Arcy simultaneously and backed him into the armchair and sat him down there.

Arthur Augustus gasped and collapsed into the chair.

"You uttah duffahs!"

"You've made it pax, and you're going to keep it pax!" said Blake severely. "We can't have this hooligan bisney in a chap's study just when he's expecting a distinguished guest."

"Bai Jove, I forgot that! Lumley-Lumley, deah boy, I owe you an apology!"

"Go hon!"

"Pway welease me, you asses! I must go and bwush down my clothes, and change my collah. That wottah Mellish has ewumped it up."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in a somewhat dishevelled state, made his way out of the study.

Lumley-Lumley looked at the wrecked tea-table with perfect good humour.

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"I guess we shall want some more crocks," he said. "As you've smashed these, you'd better go along the passage and get some more."

"Where's the distinguished guest?" demanded Kangaroo.

"Not arrived yet," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, with a chuckle.

"Who is he?"

"You'll see him when he comes, I guess."

"Is it a secret?" asked Tom Merry. "Yes, I want you to be properly impressed. The chap wouldn't come at first, but I wanted him badly, and I had to use a lot of persuasion."

"Old friend of yours?" asked Blake, with some curiosity.

The Outsider of St. Jim's nodded.

"I guess so. A chap who stood by me when I needed it. One of the best pals a fellow ever had. Are you going for those crocks?"

"Right-ho!"

And Tom Merry & Co. left Study No. 9 in search of new crocks.

They raided the studies up and down the passages impartially, and soon returned to Lumley-Lumley's quarters with an ample supply of cups and saucers and plates.

When they re-entered the study they looked round curiously enough for the distinguished guest. But only the three owners of the study were there. The great man, evidently, had not arrived.

CHAPTER 3.

A Surprising Announcement!

JERROLD LUMLEY-LUMLEY had placed a large parcel on the table, and was unpacking it.

He had paid a visit to Dame Taggles' tuckshop, in the corner of the quadrangle, and, to judge by the quantity of provisions he had brought in, he had made a serious inroad upon the good dame's stock.

Tom Merry & Co. helped him to unpack and set out the things. The supply of good things almost took their breath away. The table—to borrow an expression from the novelist—groaned under the goodly viands.

"Well, you're going to do us down all right, I must say," said Monty Lowther, in great admiration. "Have you been robbing a bank, by any chance?"

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"I wanted this feed to be something extra-special," he replied. "It's an important occasion—a very important occasion. This isn't the lot; there's some more coming."

"Great Scott!"

"Grimes is bringing them from the village," Lumley-Lumley explained. "He'll be here soon with his basket."

Mellish sniffed.

"One of your pals, that grocer kid?" he remarked.

"I guess so," agreed Lumley-Lumley. "I've got some guests coming from the New House, too. Figgins & Co., and Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence."

"All on silver salvers?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes. You see, this is a very special feed."

"Here comes the giddy family!" said Monty Lowther.

Six juniors appeared at the open doorway of the study. They were Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn and Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence—all of the Fourth Form, and of the New House at St. Jim's.

Figgins & Co. and Redfern & Co. were rivals in the New House, as the Terrible Three and Blake & Co. were in the

School House. But there was no sign of rivalry about them now. They were all smiles, especially Fatty Wynn.

"Come in!" said Lumley-Lumley cordially. "Jolly glad to see you!"

"Hear, hear!" said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened as he glanced at the table.

"I must say that you're doing the decent thing, Lumley," he remarked. "I hope we're not late."

"No; you're early, as a matter of fact," said Lumley-Lumley. "But it's all right—the sooner the quicker, you know. The party's complete now, excepting for the distinguished guest and the rest of the grub."

"The rest of it?" said Fatty Wynn, with a start. "Is there more coming?"

"Yes; Grimes is bringing it from the village."

"Oh, good!"

"We shall have to carry Fatty home," said Kerr, with a chuckle. "Only, I think we shall want a crane to lift him when he's finished."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus came back into the study. He was in spotless array once more. A brilliant clean collar encircled his aristocratic neck, and every speck of dust had disappeared from his elegant Eton jacket and his immaculate bags.

"All in!" said Lumley-Lumley. "That makes the party I've invited—fifteen. I'm afraid it's a bit of a squeeze."

"Pway don't mench, deah boy!" said D'Arcy graciously.

"We'll find room!" grinned Blake.

"After all, the grub's the thing," Fatty Wynn remarked.

"Fifteen, did you say, Lumley?" asked Levison. "You mean seventeen."

"I guess I mean fifteen."

"What about Mellish and me?" demanded Levison.

"You're not in this crowd, I guess."

"We're jolly well going to stay in our own study," granted Mellish.

"Can't be did!"

"What's the trouble with them?" asked Blake. "Why can't they stay to the feed, Lumley?"

"Not class enough."

"Eh?"

"They're not class enough to meet my distinguished guest!" Lumley-Lumley explained calmly.

"Oh, I say—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Suppose they promise to behave themselves?" said Tom Merry, laughing. "They will promise to be very good—won't you, you chaps?"

"We'll be civil to the fellow, whoever he is," said Levison.

"Certainly," said Mellish. "I must say you're acting in a rotten mean way, Lumley."

"Well, if you behave yourselves, I guess you can stay," said Lumley-Lumley. "But it's understood that if you're uncivil to my distinguished guest, you go out on your necks."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

There was a step in the passage, and a sound of deep breathing. Grimes, the grocer's boy from Rylcombe, appeared in the doorway, with a heavy grocery basket on his arm. He nodded to the assembled juniors respectfully, and grinned at the Outsider.

"Here you are!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Shove the basket on the chair, Grimey, and the chaps will unpack it. Pile in you fellows!"

"My only aunt!" said Fatty Wynn. "This—this is gorgeous! Lumley,

you're a giddy prince! You're a monarch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The basket, which was a large one, was packed full. The juniors unpacked it with enthusiasm. Many and various were the good things they turned out. Cakes and pies galore, and tongue and ham, and cold chicken, and all kinds of things in tins, and all kinds of things in jars, and all kinds of things in bottles.

Lumley-Lumley was a millionaire's son, and his fond father allowed him unlimited pocket-money; and he was generally lavish in spending it. But seldom or never had Lumley-Lumley spread himself to this extent before.

Fatty Wynn uttered a series of ejaculations of breathless admiration as he handed out article after article.

"Prime! Ripping! Spiffing! Gorgeous! Oh, my aunt! Splendid! Ripping! Oh, good!"

"Bai Jove! I must say that this is a wathah wemarkable spweed, Lumley-Lumley, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I guess it's a remarkable occasion!"

"Are we waiting for somebody?" asked Fatty Wynn, yearningly gazing at the good things, when the basket was unpacked at last.

"Yes, the distinguished guest!" said Redfern.

"Who is it, Lumley?"

"Yaas, wathah! Who is it, deah boy?"

"When is he coming, Lumley?"

"I hope he'll buck up!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

Lumley-Lumley slipped his arm through Grimes', and drew the blushing grocer's boy fairly into the study. Grimes fingered his cap nervously.

"Gentlemen!" said Lumley-Lumley. "The distinguished guest has arrived! Pray allow me to present you to my old pal, Grimes—the distinguished guest on the present festive occasion!"

CHAPTER 4.

The Distinguished Guest!

"GRIMES!"

"Grimey!"

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Some exclamation broke from every fellow in the study.

They had wondered whom Lumley-Lumley's distinguished and unknown guest might be. They had turned over names in their minds, but they had certainly never turned over the name of Grimes.

It was the biggest surprise Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had ever sprung upon his friends in the Lower School at St. Jim's.

Grimes fidgeted with his cap.

"I—I—I say, this 'ere is one of Master Lumley's little jokes," he said.

"I wouldn't come, only Master Lumley, he made me come, didn't you, Master Lumley?"

"I guess I did, Master Grimes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It ain't right to 'ave me 'ere," said Grimes. "Your friends won't like it, Master Lumley."

"Why shouldn't they like it, Grimey? I haven't any snobs or cads among my friends, I hope!" said Lumley-Lumley cheerfully.

"Wathah not!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, taking the lead in his graceful way. "Gwimes, old man, pway give me your fin! I am vewy glad to see you!"

Grimes shyly gave his hand to the

swell of St. Jim's. It was a very rough hand—roughened by honest toil. Taking down shutters, sweeping up a grocer's shop, scrubbing counters, and carrying heavy baskets, did not soften the hands—quite the reverse.

But it was clean—as clean as Grimes could make it for a special occasion—and it was the hand of an honest and true-hearted lad.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave it a cordial grip, and then every member of the Co. followed suit—School House fellows and New House fellows alike. There were only two juniors in the study who did not extend a hearty welcome to Grimes, and those two, needless to say, were Levison and Mellish.

The two cads of the Fourth drew back, as if the touch of that honest hand would have contaminated their own palms.

"Do you mean to say you've asked Grimes to feed here, Lumley-Lumley?" demanded Levison hotly.

Lumley-Lumley nodded.

"I guess so," he replied.

"You've had the awful cheek—" began Mellish.

"Shut up, you cad!" said Tom Merry sharply.

"I'm not going to shut up!" roared Mellish. "Do you think I'm going to sit down to table with a grocer's boy?"

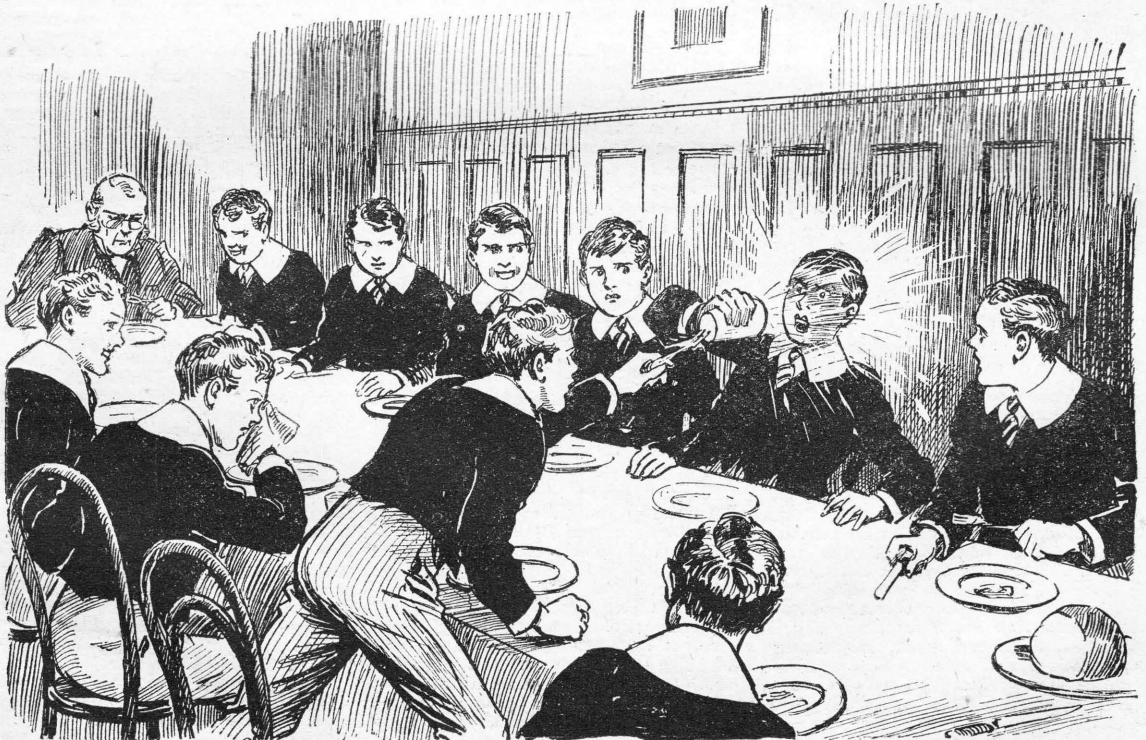
Grimes turned crimson.

"Lemme get out, Master Lumley!" he said pleadingly.

"Stay where you are, Master Grimes."

"B-but, Master Lumley—"

"Rats! You mustn't think that those two low cads are friends of mine," said Lumley-Lumley. "They're only here because they share this study with me, and they haven't manners



Just as Levison began to drink, Lumley-Lumley reached across the table and knocked the bottom of the glass with his fork. The ginger-beer shot into Levison's mouth, into his nose, into his eyes, and down his neck. "Ooooh!" he gasped.

enough to get out when they're not wanted!"

"Why—you—you—" yelled Levison, infuriated at being apologised for to a grocer's boy. "You—you rotten outsider—"

"I've explained to them that they're not class enough to meet you, but they won't go," said Lumley-Lumley calmly. "I never saw such a pair of pushing bounders, I guess."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotter!" yelled Mellish.

"But as they can't behave themselves, I guess I shall request them to leave the study," said Lumley-Lumley. "Now, you two toads, do you prefer to go out on your feet or on your necks?"

"We—we—"

"I—I—"

"Buzz off! I can't have you disgracing the Form in this way in the eyes of my guest!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Your guest!" roared Levison. "Ha, ha, ha! Ripping guest for a St. Jim's fellow! A blessed grocer cad—rotter who brings the ham and jam to the servants' entrance—"

Levison did not get any further. Tom Merry, Blake, Figgins, and Redfern closed in on him at the same moment, and yanked him towards the door. Hurling forth by four strong pairs of arms, Levison shot into the passage and rolled along the linoleum with a wild yell.

Mellish made a spring for the door as the juniors grasped at him.

He reached the doorway, and three boots reached him at the same time.

Biff, biff, biff!

Mellish shot out of the study, with a roar, and stumbled over Levison, and sprawled at full length in the passage.

Slam!

The door closed on Levison and Mellish, though their voices could still be heard in the passage.

Grimes was grinning now, though he was still looking flushed.

Lumley-Lumley caught him by the shoulder and shoved him into a seat.

"Squat there, old man!" he said. "You fellows sit down, if you can find room!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Oh, we'll be all right!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "Grimey, old man, I'm glad to see your cheerful chivvy at the festive board! We couldn't guess who Lumley-Lumley's distinguished guest was; but we're all pleased it's Grimey—ch, you fellows?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'm sure you're very good!" said Grimes. "I know I ain't—"

Crash!

The door flew violently open, and Levison glared into the study.

"You rotters!" he roared. "I'll bring the prefects here! I'll have that grocer cad turned out! I— Oooch—ooch! Grooch!"

An egg, skilfully aimed by Jack Blake, caught Levison full in the mouth. It was a good egg, but it was not pleasant taken that way. It burst over the junior's face as he was spattered with yolk, and a considerable amount of it swamped into his mouth.

Levison staggered back, spluttering and gasping, and there was a yell of laughter from Lumley-Lumley's tea-party, in which the distinguished guest joined.

"Grooch! Goo—oooh!"

Lumley-Lumley slammed the door again.

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"I think Levison's had enough now!" he remarked.

Lumley-Lumley was right. Strange sounds were heard from the passage, but the study door did not open.

Lumley-Lumley made the tea. The good things crowded the table, and every fellow helped himself. There was not enough room for all to sit down; indeed, there was not half enough chairs for so numerous a party. But the juniors did not mind that; they were accustomed to crowded quarters on such festive occasions.

Grimes' uneasiness gradually left him under the cheery influence of good nature, good fellowship, and genial kindness on all sides.

Tea progressed amid cheery talk, and Grimes joined in it. The only fellow who was at all silent was Fatty Wynn. Fatty Wynn's jaws were working busily, but not in conversation. He had more important matters to claim his attention.

"Gentlemen," said Lumley-Lumley, when there was a lull in the proceedings, the keen edge of the juniors' appetites being worn off—"gentlemen, I have a little communication to make, and—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Speech!" yelled Kangaroo.

"Go it, Lumley!"

"On the ball!"

Lumley-Lumley stood up.

"Gentlemen, I have asked you all here to meet my old pal Grimes—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Grimes!"

"I needn't tell you what Grimes is like," said Lumley-Lumley. "You know Grimes. You know he always comes round to time with the groceries—"

"Hear, hear!"

"You know that at a time when I was down on my luck and had to get out of St. Jim's, Grimes stood by me like a brother!"

"Good old Grimes!"

"Bwavo, Gwimes!"

"He took me in and fed me, and looked after me like a Good Samaritan," continued Lumley-Lumley. "He stood by me like a good pal."

"Oh, chuck it, Master Lumley!" murmured the blushing Grimes.

"I guess I've been thinking over it ever since," said Lumley-Lumley. "I'm not a sentimental chap. I guess I've knocked about too much for that. I was knocking about the Bowery in New York and the Latin Quarter in Paris at a time when you fellows were at your preparatory schools or learning from giddy tutors at home. I was learning to hit out for myself and to keep my end up. It knocked all the rot out of me, you bet. But though I ain't sentimental, I know when a chap does me a good turn, and it makes me want to do him one. I owe Grimes a lot. I want to make it good somehow. I want you chaps to help me."

"Hear, hear!"

"Anything you like, Lumley, deah boy! Pass the jam, Blake!"

"Bravo! This ham is prime! Bravo! Go on!"

"Pile in, Lumley!"

"I guess I've thought of a scheme," went on Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, "and I guess it's a good one—a real corker! And I've got you fellows together specially to tell you about it and get you to back me up. You've all got to help me to persuade Grimes to let me do it. I don't know whether he'll need persuading. But I know that he's not going out of this study till he's persuaded!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat!" murmured Grimes, looking alarmed. "I say, Master Lumley, I—"

"Gentlemen, I have written my idea to my pater, and my pater, like the sensible old bird he is, has agreed to my idea. He generally does agree to what I say in the long run. He knows I know best. I've always brought up my pater in the way he should go!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, I wish you'd give me some tips about managin' patahs, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy anxiously. "My govannah cuts up wusty at times!"

"Go on, Lumley! What's the idea?"

"My pater has agreed, and he's communicated with the Head, and the Head has agreed. Only Grimes has got to agree now, and he's going to agree before he leaves this study, or else we're going to rag him baldheaded!"

"Oh crikey!" murmured Grimes.

"Gentlemen, this is the wheeze. My popper is going to pay the fees for Grimey, and Grimey is coming to St. Jim's!"

"Wh-what!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Great pip!"

Lumley-Lumley waved his hand to the astounded and dismayed Grimes.

"Gentlemen," he said, "allow me to introduce Grimes of the Fourth!"

CHAPTER 5.

Lumley-Lumley's Scheme!

GRIMES sprang to his feet. His face was crimson, and his looks were agitated. He waved his hand excitedly.

"No, no, Master Lumley!" he cried.

"Yes, yes, Master Grimes!" replied Lumley-Lumley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"B-but, I—I say," stammered Grimes, "I ain't fit to come 'ere! I can't do it! I ain't got the clothes to come in, Master Lumley!"

"Didn't you lend me some of your clothes a long time back, when you took me in and sheltered me?" demanded Lumley-Lumley. "The time I got a job at Sands', I mean."

"Yes, but—"

"Didn't they fit me?"

"Yes, but—"

"Well, if your clothes fit me, my clothes fit you, and you can wear mine till you get your new rig-out. I suppose you're not going to be haughty and refuse to wear some of my clothes, after I've worn some of yours?" demanded Lumley-Lumley.

"I ain't 'aughty," said poor Grimes. "I ain't 'aughty at all, Master Lumley. I know I ain't fit to come 'ere. Why, I've brought groceries to this wery school!"

"Yes. What should we have done without them?"

"Yaas, wathah! That's a vewy sensible remark. I've often weflected, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sagely, "that we shouldn't be able to live without workin' if there weren't some vewy kind and self-sacrificin' people doin' all the work. I considah that we ought to be vewy much obliged to chaps like Gwimes."

"Hear, hear!"

Grimes rubbed his nose.

"I ain't never 'eard anybody put it like that afore," he remarked. "I must say it's vewy kind of you, Master D'Arcy. You always was a nice young gentleman."

"Thank you vewy much, Gwimey, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus

D'Arcy, rising to his feet and bowing gracefully to Grimes.

"But—but I can't come 'ere!" said Grimes.

"Why can't you?" asked Tom Merry. "I suppose you needn't object to Lumley-Lumley's pater paying your fees. My uncle pays mine, and I don't object."

"Yes, but Mr. Lumley-Lumley ain't my uncle."

"He's somebody's uncle," said Tom Merry argumentatively. "If he's got any nephews or nieces, he must be an uncle. Well, one uncle is as good as another, isn't he?"

"I—I s'pose so."

"Then you'll be here on exactly the same footing as I am—your fees paid by your uncle," said Tom Merry.

Grimes seemed bewildered by this kind of logic. But he had not got to the end of his objections yet. He was scared at the idea of coming to St. Jim's as one of the juniors.

"I—I say, it—it won't be possible!" he stammered.

Lumley-Lumley shook his head sorrowfully.

"Grimes is proud!" he said. "That's Grimes's fault; he's proud!"

"I ain't, Master Lumley," said Grimes. "It ain't that. It's very kind of your father to pay my fees 'ere. I'm much obliged to 'im. He's a kind-hearted man, though a stern old gent I always thought 'im. I don't object to it. It would be ungrateful of me to object. I'm thankful, I 'ope!"

"Then what's the matter?"

"I ain't fit to come 'ere."

"Rats!"

"The young gentlemen will object."

"Any young gentleman who objects to my best pal will get a prize thick ear, I know that," said Lumley-Lumley.

"But—but—"

"That's why I've called these fellows together chiefly," said Lumley-Lumley. "They're all good chaps, and they will stand by a good chap, whether he's a duke or a dustman. My dear old Grimey, these fellows will welcome you. They're all decent right through. What do you chaps say?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Grimey!"

"We'll back you up!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You're all very kind," said Grimes.

"I don't know 'ow to thank you—"

"Don't trouble," said Tom Merry.

"Call it settled, and wire into the feed."

"Hear, hear!"

"I ain't 'ad any education," said Grimes. "I've 'ad only a little bit at a Board school, and it was a country Board school at that."

"Grimes, old man, you're insulting me," said Redfern of the Fourth Form solemnly. "If you start saying things about Board schools, I shall dot you on the boko!"

"Why, Master Redfern—"

"Look at me!" said Redfern, standing up. "Do I look respectable?"

"Why, yes, Master Redfern," said the wondering Grimes.

"Clean and decent?" asked Redfern.

"Why, of course!"

"Well," said Redfern genially, "I hadn't a giddy millionaire to pay fees for me. I had to get a scholarship at a County Council school. So had Owen. So had Lawrence. And we consider one another good enough to speak to, don't we, you chaps?"

"We do!" said Lawrence.

"We does!" said Owen, grinning.

"I speak to Lawrence every morning, and to Owen regularly every afternoon," said Redfern. "I think them

quite good enough. They think me good enough. So don't let's have any more rot about your Board school, or you will get a thick ear. Pass the cake!" And Redfern sat down.

"You're very kind, Master Redfern," said Grimes. "But it's different. You've 'ad more advantages than I have. You know Latin and Greek and such."

"The only chap here who knows any Greek is Kerr," said Figgins; "and he only knows it because he's a Scotsman. As for Latin, we will all sit round you every evening and teach you Latin. It's quite easy. All you have to do is to learn all the words, and what they mean, and get into your head how to decline the nouns and conjugate the verbs, and a few things like that, and—and there you are—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"P'raps that ain't so easy as it sounds!" said Grimes.

"My dear chap, it's as easy as rolling off a wall. Look at Brooke of the Fourth, how he learned Latin," said Monty Lowther. "He's a day-boy, you know, and his father taught him Latin before he ever went to school."

"That's all right," said Lumley-Lumley. "We'll all teach you something, Grimey. Kerr will teach you Latin, Blake and Tom Merry will teach you English, I'll teach you American. I guess I learned the language when I was there with my popper."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Reddy will teach you French, and Gussy will teach you the accent of the House of Lords."

"Weally, Lumley—"

"Brooke of the Fourth will knock some German into you. He's a clever beast, and as patient as anything. Owen can teach you mathematics. Kerr can give you some drawing lessons. Kerr can do anything."

"Hear, hear!" said Figgins.

"You'll get ahead like anything," said Lumley-Lumley confidently. "In a few weeks we shall have you head of the Fourth and putting Mr. Lathom right in construing the Ænid."

"Oh, Master Lumley!"

"It's settled, then?"

"It ain't!" exclaimed Grimes, alarmed. "I—I can't come, Master Lumley! I—I got my living to earn, you know."

"That's all right, Grimey. You'll have an allowance from my popper. Chaps can take allowances from uncles, you know."

"Of course, they can," said Tom Merry. "I do!"

"So do I," said Monty Lowther. "And a regular screw I have to get any little extra tip out of him, by Jove!"

If Lumley-Lumley recommends me to his pater for an allowance, I shan't be as proud as Grimey about it."

"But—but there's my future—"

stammered Grimes. "I got to get on in the grocery business."

"You'll manage that better after a few terms at St. Jim's," said Lumley-Lumley. "Besides, there are other openings besides grocery. You might become a bishop or a general in the army. They are better paid jobs."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Grimes could not speak. The idea of becoming a bishop took his breath away. Lumley-Lumley took advantage of his silence.

"It's settled, then," he said. "Grimes agrees!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Bravo, Grimes!"

"I say, young gentleman—"

"Grimes of the Fourth!" said Blake. "I hope it will be the Fourth! We'll make you feel quite at home, Grimey!"

"Yaas, wathah! I shall wegard you as a vewy particulah fwiend, Gwimey."

"And you can depend upon the Shell," said Tom Merry. "We'll back you up all along the line, Grimes, old son."

"Oh, Master Merry!"

"I guess it's time for me to take Grimes to the Head!" said Lumley-Lumley, looking at his watch. "Come on, Grimey!"

"The—the 'Ead!" gasped Grimes.

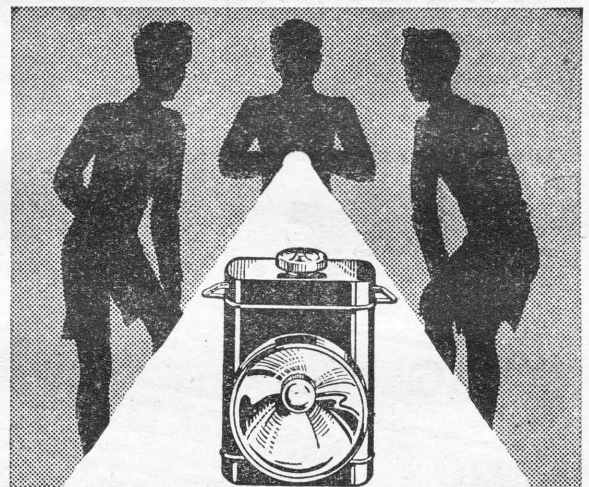
"Yes; Dr. Holmes!"

"But I—I dursn't—"

"Oh, I'll back you up! Dr. Holmes is a rare old bird," said Lumley-Lumley encouragingly. "You'll find him simply ripping, Grimey. Come on!"

Grimes, who seemed hardly to know whether he was upon his head or his heels, allowed the Outsider of St. Jim's to lead him from the study.

(Continued on the next page.)



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Tom Merry & Co. struck up a chorus as he went, and the strains of "He's a Jolly Good Fellow" rang pleasantly in Grimes' ears as he walked away with Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, when the chorus was finished. "This is weally a wemarkable ideah of Lumley-Lumley's; but I wathah think I appwove!"

"Go hon!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Jolly good thing for Grimes," said Blake. "Lumley-Lumley's a brick. Fancy, that's the chap who used to be called the Outsider of St. Jim's. He's changed."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Grimey will have some troublous times, I'm afraid," said Tom Merry. "But if we back him up all the time he'll pull through all right."

"And we're going to back him up," said Figgins. "Fatty, old man, you haven't said a word! What do you think about it?"

"Prime!" said Fatty Wynn, with his mouth full.

"Eh?"

"Ripping!"

"You like the idea—eh?" asked Redfern.

"Idea!" said Fatty Wynn. "Who's talking about ideas? I'm speaking of this rabbit-pie! It's simply spiffing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 6.

Grimes Joins St. Jim's!

DR. HOLMES, the Head of St. Jim's, was in his study when Lumley-Lumley tapped at the door, and entered with Grimes.

Grimes had left his cap in the junior study and he was fidgeting with his fingers instead. Grimes had dressed in his best to come to Lumley-Lumley's tea-party. But Grimes' best was shabby enough, and he felt it keenly as the well-dressed St. Jim's junior brought him into the handsome, well-lighted study of the Head of St. Jim's.

But Dr. Holmes' kindly glance was reassuring.

"Ah!" he said, adjusting his pince-nez. "This is Grimes, I presume?"

"I guess so—I mean, yes, sir!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Very good! How do you do, Grimes?" Dr. Holmes shook hands with the grocer's boy, who turned crimson, and gasped. "I've heard from Mr. Lumley-Lumley concerning you."

"Ye-es, sir," gasped Grimes.

Dr. Holmes glanced at an open letter on his desk.

"Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley recommends you to me, and explains that you are an old friend of his son, Grimes," said Dr. Holmes. "He answers for you, and takes all responsibility for you. You are very fortunate in having a protector like Mr. Lumley-Lumley!"

"Ye-es, sir," said Grimes, with another gasp.

"Mr. Lumley-Lumley desires to pay your fees as a pupil here," went on the Head. "He wishes you to be entered as a pupil at St. Jim's."

"Yes, sir."

"You wish to enter the school?"

"I—I—"

"I take it that you do, as you have come here with Lumley-Lumley," said the Head. "Have you consulted your people, Grimes—your parents?"

"I ain't got no parents, sir," said Grimes.

"Ahem! Excuse me—I am sorry! But your natural guardians—"

"I've got a nunkle," said Grimes; "but he don't worry about me."

"H'm! Then there is no one to consult in the matter?"

"Nobody, sir," cept Mr. Sands."

"Mr.—er—Sands," said the Head.

"I think I have heard that name. Who is Mr. Sands?"

Grimes grinned, in spite of his agitation.

"The grocer, sir!"

Dr. Holmes started.

"The grocer! Yes, of course. I was certain I had heard the name," he said.

"Mr. Sands is your employer?"

"Yes, sir. I can't leave 'im in the lurch, sir, and unless he lets me go—"

"Quite so. I am pleased to see, Grimes, that you have a proper sense of duty towards your employer," said Dr. Holmes, approvingly. "Unless Mr. Sands can suit himself immediately with another lad, it will be your duty to give him a week's notice, I presume?"

"Yes, sir."

"I guess Sands can manage it, sir," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "He won't stand in Grimey's light, sir."

"No; probably not. Grimes had better return to Rylcombe, and arrange matters with Mr. Sands. If Mr. Sands releases him immediately, he can enter at this school to-morrow."

"Oh, sir!" said Grimes.

"It will be a great change for you, Grimes; but I am sure you will do your best to make yourself worthy of this great change—the chance of a lifetime," said the Head. "About the Form you will enter, I shall have to consider. I am afraid the state of your—er—knowledge will hardly be up to a Form in the Middle School, and at the same time, you are too old to be put in the First or Second Form. It would be best, I think, for you to enter the Fourth Form with your friend, Lumley-Lumley, and you can share his study.

But at first you will require instruction separate from the rest of the Form. I shall ask Mr. Latham to take you in hand specially, until you are suited to undertake the regular Form work."

"Oh, sir!"

"Your young friends will also do their best to help you," said the Head. "I guess so, sir!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Grimes is a friend already of all the best fellows in the Lower School, sir, and they've all promised to help."

Dr. Holmes nodded.

"I am glad to hear it," he said—"very glad. That will make matters much simpler for Grimes. Grimes, your admission to St. Jim's will be something in the nature of an experiment. It is for you to prove whether you are deserving of Mr. Lascelles Lumley-Lumley's great kindness, and of being a member of a Form at this ancient foundation. That rests with you, Grimes."

"I'll do my best, sir," said Grimes.

"Very good! No one can do more than that," agreed the Head. "You may go, Grimes. I shall expect you at the school to-morrow if Mr. Sands releases you immediately. Otherwise, you will inform me."

"Yes, sir."

And Dr. Holmes shook hands with Grimes again, and dismissed the boys. Out in the passage again, Grimes breathed hard, and blinked at Lumley-Lumley, and seemed uncertain whether he was on his head or his heels.

"I—I s'pose it ain't a dream, Master Lumley?" he gasped.

Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"No; it ain't a dream, Master Grimes," he replied.

"It seems like one," murmured Grimes. "I've been a grocer's boy. I've brought up the groceries to this 'ere school. Some of the young gents—Master Mellish, Master Levison, and Master Crooke, for instance—they think I'm dirt under their feet."

"They're rotters, you know," Lumley-Lumley explained.

"I know they ain't like you, or Master Merry, or Master D'Arcy," said Grimes, nodding. "I know a real gent when I sees one, I 'ope!"

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"Well, look in the glass when you get home, Grimey, and you'll see one!" he said.

"Me?" said Grimes.

"I guess so!"

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"You're 'avin' your little joke, Master Lumley!"

"I'm telling you the truth, Master Grimes. Being a gentleman doesn't mean simply wearing expensive clothes and having an affected accent. It means being a decent, honest chap, and a true pal—and that's you, Grimey, all over. I guess you're all right, Grimey, only you're too modest. You must learn to have more cheek."

"Yes, Master Lumley!"

"And you're not to call me Master Lumley any more. I'm Lumley of the Fourth, and you're Grimes of the Fourth."

"Yes, Master—I mean, Lumley."

"Never mind. I'll call you Master Grimes, and make it level," said the Outsider of St. Jim's cheerfully. "Now, you've got to pitch it to Sandy so that he lets you off. He can easily get another boy. There are heaps of 'em in Rylcombe. Tell him you'll be a good customer at the old shop, and your pal Lumley will be a good customer. That will make it all right with Sands, I guess."

Grimes chuckled.

"Orlright, Master Lumley."

"Now, come and say good-night to the fellows!"

"My 'at!" murmured Grimes. "What will old Pilcher say? What will old Craggs say? My only hat!"

"Never mind what they say," said Lumley-Lumley. "You're Grimes of St. Jim's now."

"Blessed if I can't 'ardly believe it yet!" said Grimes.

Lumley-Lumley led the new boy into his study. The fellows were still there, chatting, and Fatty Wynn had not quite finished. Even Fatty Wynn, however, was showing signs of slackening down. The boundless supply of good things was beyond even his extensive powers.

"Is it all right, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Right as rain!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Gwimes is one of us?"

"I guess so."

"Bwavo!"

"Hurrah!" shouted Tom Merry & Co.

"He's coming to St. Jim's to-morrow," said Lumley-Lumley. "He's going to be in the Fourth, and to have special toot till he's up to the Form work. Come to see him off!"

"Right-ho!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Tom Merry & Co. streamed out of the study to escort Grimes to the gates. Grimes took his basket on his arm.

Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, was chatting with Darrell of the Sixth in the hall when the crowd of juniors came down.

Cutts of the Fifth was standing there, and he stared at the youth with the basket.

"My word! Who's that?" he asked.

"Grimes of St. Jim's!" said Lumley-Lumley coolly.

"What!" yelled Cutts.

"Getting deaf?" asked Lumley-Lumley coolly. "Grimes of St. Jim's. My old pal Grimey!"

"You young ass! What's the rotten joke?" asked Cutts. "Don't think that I believe your rot! I don't!"

"I guess it's honest Injun!"

"Rats!"

"You'll see to-morrow, I guess!" grinned Lumley-Lumley. "Come on, Grimey!"

"Hold on!" said Kildare, raising his hand. "Is this really true, Lumley-Lumley, or are you talking out of your hat?"

"True as a die!"

"Wight as wain, Kildare, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I'm sorry, Master Kildare, if you think it's a cheek of me," said Grimes; "but Master Lumley-Lumley 'e will 'ave his way, and there's no sayin' 'No' to Master Lumley. And the 'Ead 'e says I am to come, and so I s'pose I'm comin'!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Kildare smiled.

"Right-ho!" he said. "You are a decent kid, Grimes; I know that. And I hope you'll make a success of this. Give us your fist!"

The captain of St. Jim's shook hands with Grimes, and Darrell followed his example.

Kildare looked at Cutts. The Fifth Former put his hands into his pockets and walked away. Kildare frowned; but Grimes was too happy in the kind notice taken of him by the St. Jim's captain, to notice Cutts.

Lumley-Lumley dragged his friend away.

"Ain't he a nib, Master Lumley?" said Grimes, in great admiration.

"I guess he's a k-nut!" said Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "This way!"

And Grimes was marched across the quadrangle, and Taggles let him out at the gates, and Tom Merry & Co. shook hands with him all round before he departed.

CHAPTER 7.

Three Cads in a Rage!

TOM MERRY & CO. sauntered into the Junior Common-room in the School House.

Quite a crowd of juniors had gathered there, and there was a considerable amount of excited discussion going on.

Levison and Mellish were looking very excited, and they had evidently been holding forth to the juniors. Crooke of the Shell wore a most indignant look. But most of the fellows were grinning, as at a good joke.

Tom Merry smiled as the crowd swung round at his entrance; he saw that the news was out already.

"Is it true?" demanded Clifton Dane.

"Is Grimes coming here?" asked Kerruish.

"The giddy grocer's boy?" said Bishop.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes."

"It's true!" exclaimed a score of amazed voices.

"Quite true!"

"But he can't come!" exclaimed Bishop. "How is he going to pay the fees? They're jolly stiff fees here. Where's he going to get the money?"

"Unless he robs old Sandy's till!" grinned Hancock of the Fourth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He wouldn't find enough there," said Gore of the Shell. "It can't be true!"

"There's no secret about it," said Tom Merry. "I believe there are some fellows at St. Jim's who have their fees paid for them. Grimes' fees are going to be paid by the father of another St. Jim's chap."

"Who?" asked Gore.

"Mr. Lumley-Lumley!"

"Oh! The Outsider's pater?"

"I guess so!" said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"My hat!"

"Dear me!" said Skimpole of the Shell, who had Deterministic tendencies, except, as Blake had remarked, in his lucid intervals. "I regard that as an excellent arrangement. Mr. Lascelles

(Continued on the next page.)



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THE SLACKER.

Clerk: "Hey, come back here! The boss wants to see you."

Office-boy: "Did he ask for me personally?"

Clerk: "Well, he said he'd like to see the fellow who could loaf for eight hours a day and get paid for it!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Norman, The Vedw, Devauden, Chepstow.

LUCKY FOR HIM.

The conjurer's turn had not been going at all well, but he stuck to his task.

"Now," he said, "will one of the audience please oblige me with an egg, and I will perform a remarkable trick!"

There was a moment's silence, then someone in the gallery shouted:

"If anybody 'ad an egg you'd 'ave 'ad it long ago!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Nixon, 324, Beaufort Street, Toxteth, Liverpool 8.

LIKE FATHER LIKE SON.

Pa (to Tommy arriving home late): "Where have you been, young man?"

Tommy: "Teacher kept me in because I didn't know where the Azores were."

Pa: "Well, in future you remember where you put your things!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to L. Jenkins, Saltwood House, South Parade, Tenby, S. Wales.

APPROPRIATE.

Mother: "I hope the boys at school don't give you nasty nicknames."

Jimmy: "They do, ma. They call me 'Corns' because I'm at the foot of the class!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Richards, Lyndene, Potters Bank, Ketley, Salop.

HONEST.

Teacher: "There's only one honest boy in this class."

Smith (in an undertone): "That's me."

Teacher: "Did you speak, Smith?"

Smith: "No, sir!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to P. Bishop, 21, Swanmore Road, Boscombe, Hants.

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Lumley-Lumley will be handing back a portion of his wealth to a representative of the producing class from whom he has obtained it. I regard that as a very proper proceeding on the part of Lumley's father."

"I guess I'll tell him, Skimmy," said the Outsider gravely. "He won't be happy till he knows that you approve."

"My dear Lumley-Lumley, I shall be very pleased to allow you to acquaint Mr. Lumley-Lumley with the fact that I approve of his conduct," said Skimpole. "I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Skimpole blinked round through his big spectacles at the yelling juniors.

"I do not see any cause for laughter," he remarked. "I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I don't see anything to laugh at in a grocer cad coming to St. Jim's, either," said Crooke. "I call it disgraceful."

"Rotten!" said Levison. "Shameful!" said Mellish.

"It is rather thick," agreed Bishop. "I guess Grimes will manage to get on without your approval," Lumley-Lumley remarked. "Of course, he won't have anything to say to you chaps. My pal Grimey is rather particular whom he speaks to."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "The best thing you two chaps can do," continued Lumley-Lumley, addressing Mellish and Levison, "is to change studies. There won't be much room for four in No. 9, anyway."

Levison gasped. "Do you mean to say that Grimes is coming into our study?" he asked.

"I guess so." "Grimes in our study!" yelled Mellish.

"I guess that's right. I want you two chaps to clear out. I've warned you already that you're not smart enough to meet my pal Grimes."

The juniors roared. "He shan't come into the study!" yelled Levison. "I'll kick him out."

"Good! Let me know when you begin the kicking. I should like to see it going on," yawned Lumley-Lumley.

"Yaas, wathah! I think you will find Gwimes a wuff customer, Levison."

"I—I'll smash him! I'll—"

"You're welcome to try, I guess." "I think the whole school ought to unite on this subject, and send a round robin to the Head," said Crooke.

"No good," said Lumley-Lumley. "There aren't enough cads in the school to make up enough signatures."

"Wathah not!"

"I know I shan't speak to him," said Crooke savagely. "Quite right; always respect your betters!"

"My—my betters!" yelled Crooke. "Why, you rotter—"

"Grimey will be civil to you," said Lumley-Lumley. "He knows you're a rotter, but Grimey isn't haughty. Of course, you couldn't expect a chap like Grimey to chum with you. He would draw a line at that."

Crooke gasped with rage. But he did not feel equal to carrying on a wordy warfare with Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, and he stamped out of the Common-room in a fury.

The juniors roared with laughter. Most of the fellows seemed to take the idea of Grimes of the Fourth as a great joke; and Levison & Co., much to their disappointment, did not see any chance of getting up a general demonstration on the subject.

The fact that Tom Merry & Co. had

swallowed Grimes whole, so to speak, made a very great deal of difference. Fellows who might have been inclined to be snobbish felt that what was good enough for Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was good enough for them. If Grimes had not been a decent fellow, they would certainly not have taken him up. And if they had taken him up, there was no reason why the rest of the school shouldn't.

And the fact that Kildare had shaken hands with Grimes in public was already known, and that fact had great influence with the juniors.

Kildare was the idol of the Lower School, and in the eyes of the juniors the captain of St. Jim's could do no wrong.

"If he comes into my study, I'll make him glad enough to get out, anyway," said Levison.

"Anybody would be glad to get out if you're there," agreed Lumley-Lumley. "You're not exactly what one would call a nice chap to dig with. Of course, there's no need for anybody to explain to Grimes that you were nearly expelled from St. Jim's for imitating another chap's handwriting in a letter. Grimes wouldn't like to be in the same study with that kind of fellow, if he knew."

Levison turned livid with rage and stamped away.

Mellish tried to think of something exceedingly bitter to say, but it wouldn't come, and he stamped away after Levison. The cads of the School House had been put to rout.

Lumley-Lumley chuckled softly.

"My pal Grimes will be here tomorrow," he said. "Any chap who doesn't think Grimes good enough to know can drop my acquaintance, too. And any chap who is unconvincing to Grimes will be asked to step into the gym and have the gloves on with me. That's all. I guess I'm going to do my prep."

And Lumley-Lumley strolled away, leaving the Common-room in a buzz over the extraordinary news.

But it seemed pretty clear that the School House juniors, upon the whole, were going to take the arrival of Grimes good-humouredly, and that only a few fellows meant to make things unpleasant for him. And with Tom Merry & Co. backing him up, it seemed pretty certain that Grimes would be able to hold his own at St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 8.

Enough for Mellish!

GRIMES arrived the next morning. Grimes had evidently been able to arrange matters with his old employer, Mr. Sands, of course, was greatly astonished. But probably he was not insensible to the honour of having his old errand-boy taken in as a pupil at St. Jim's.

And as Grimes had many friends there already, it would probably mean a good deal of custom for Mr. Sands.

Grimes walked into the quadrangle of St. Jim's just after the boys were released from morning lessons.

The fellows were crowding out into the quadrangle when Grimes was seen entering at the old gates.

There was a shout at once. "Here he comes!"

"Here's the giddy grocer!"

"Where's your basket, Grimes?"

"What price eggs to-day?"

"How's bacon?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grimes came on with a good-humoured grin upon his countenance.

The fellows who hailed him were laughing, and they were ragging him in a good-humoured way.

Grimes did not mind a joke, and as he was not ashamed of his trade, he did not object in the least to the allusions to the grocer's shop.

"Did you take the shutters down this morning, Grimey?" asked Bishop.

"Yes, Master Bishop," said Grimes. "Weighed out the bacon?" asked Levison.

"No," said Grimes. "Mr. Sands 'ave got a new boy. I shan't be weighin' out any more bacon, Master Levison."

"Smells of cheese, doesn't he?" said Mellish. "What a ripping chap to come here and mix with the sons of gentlemen—I don't think!"

"They ain't raised any objection to me, Master Mellish," said Grimes. "All the gentlemen as I've met 'ere 'ave been very good to me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kangaroo. "He's got you there, Mellish. You haven't been good to him."

Mellish turned red with rage. "Why, you—you grocer—" he gasped.

"There ain't any 'arm in bein' a grocer, is there?" said Grimes.

"This isn't the place for a grocer," said Mellish loftily. "Chaps ought to keep in their proper place. It's not right for a low cad to come to this school!"

"Wot are you doin' 'ere, then?" inquired Grimes politely.

There was a roar of laughter. "Good for Grimes!" yelled Blake.

"First good to Grimes! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Mellish clenched his hands. Mellish was not a fighting man; but he was bigger than Grimes, and he felt that the grocer's boy would hardly dare to stand up to him. He advanced upon Grimes with his hands up, and his eyes gleaming.

"You rotten cad!" he yelled. "I'm going to lick you!"

"Go ahead, Master Mellish!" said Grimes.

"Bravo! Go it, Grimey!" yelled Figgins.

Grimes looked round for Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. Lumley-Lumley was at his side at once.

"You don't mind if I fight with Master Mellish, Master Lumley?" asked Grimes.

Lumley-Lumley chuckled. "I don't mind at all," he said. "Go in and win, Master Grimes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grimes put up his hands promptly. Mellish was already hitting out. More than once Grimes, Pilcher and Craggs, of Rylcombe, had had their little rubs with the St. Jim's fellows. Grimes knew how to use his hands quite as well as Percy Mellish did, and he had heaps of pluck, which was much more than Mellish had.

He met the cad of the Fourth more than half-way. Mellish's fists were knocked up as they drove at Grimes' face, and Grimes' right came home on Mellish's nose, and Percy sat down in the quadrangle with a mighty bump.

"Yow!" gasped Mellish.

There was a yell. "Bravo, Grimey!"

"Go it, Grimes!"

"Jump up and tackle him, Mellish!" shouted Crooke.

"I'm waitin'," said Grimes.

"I wathah think you'll have to wait, deah boy," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his famous monocle upon Mellish. "Our fwiend Percy is not in a huwwy."

"Ow!" groaned Percy.

"Get up, you funk!" growled Tom Merry. "Don't disgrace the school! You started the row, now go on with it!"

"Ow!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Redfern.
 "Mellish is done!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"

Mellish sat and caressed his nose. A stream of red was running over his fingers. Grimes of the Fourth had hit hard.

Levison helped him to his feet. Grimes dropped his hands. He saw that Mellish did not want any more, and Grimes was too generous a lad to want to triumph over a defeated enemy.

"Go in and win, Mellish!" whispered Levison.

"Go in and win yourself!" Mellish growled. "The beast has knuckles like chunks of iron! This is what comes of fighting with a cad! Groogh!"

"Very good," said Mr. Lathom. "Dr. Holmes has spoken to me about you, Grimes. It appears that you are to be in my Form."

"Yes, sir," said Grimes.
 "Very well. You will come into the Fourth Form Room for afternoon lessons, and you will listen to what is done," said Mr. Lathom. "After lessons you can come to my study at half-past five, and I will give you an hour. I hope it will soon be possible for you to do your work with the Form."

"Thank you, sir! You're very kind, sir."

"Not at all," said Mr. Lathom graciously.

And he shook hands with the new boy, just as if Grimes had been an ordinary new boy, and not the grocer's lad from the village.

"Come up and see the study," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"A-a chap don't like comin' in where he ain't wanted, Master Lumley," said Grimes.

"Bless your innocent heart, you'll have to get over that!" said Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "This is a rough and ready place, Grimey. All those fastidious ideas you've learned in a grocery business won't do for a Public school. You mustn't put on side here."

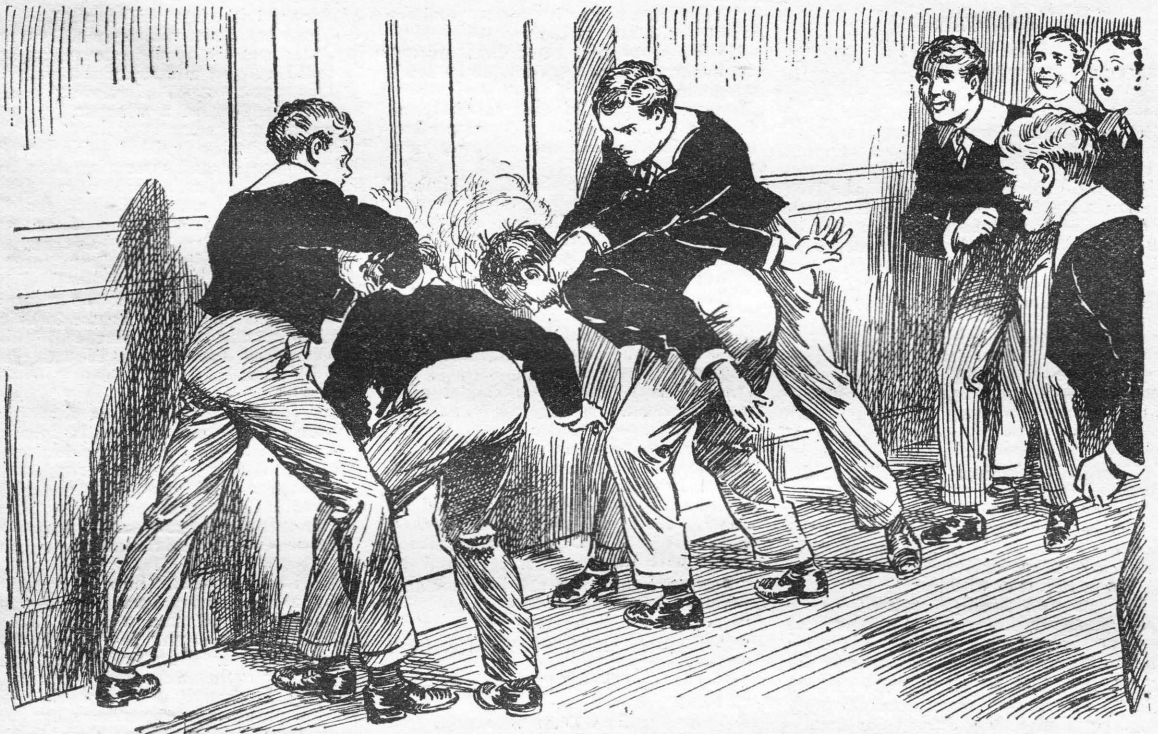
"Side, Master Lumley?" ejaculated Grimes.

"Yes. You mustn't be haughty."
 "'Aughty? Oh, Master Lumley!"

"You must take things as they come, and be ready to rough it. If you're too sensitive, you'll soon get that knocked out of you. If a chap goes for you, go for him and hit him as hard as you can. That's the game."

"I can do that, Master Lumley."

"That's right. And don't wear your heart on your sleeve for daws to peck at, as Shakespeare puts it," said



"Rub away, Grimey!" said Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "I guess we'll teach the cads not to chalk cheeky messages on the study door!" And the wildly dishevelled heads of Levison and Mellish were rubbed roughly over the door, erasing the offensive lettering.

"Finished with me, Master Mellish?" asked Grimes respectfully.

"I'm not going to fight a grocer!" snarled Mellish.

"Not when he's too much for you," grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Percy Mellish walked away, holding his handkerchief to his nose.

Lumley-Lumley slipped his arm through Grimes', and walked him on towards the School House.

A good many fellows gathered round to say a cheery word or two to Grimes. Grimes' look grew more confident and cheerful.

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, was in the hall when they entered the School House, and he looked at Grimes over his spectacles.

"New boy, sir," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Ah!" said Mr. Lathom. "Is this—or—Grimes?"

"Yes, sir," said Grimes.

Lumley-Lumley led his chum up to the Fourth Form passage, and opened the door of No. 9. Then a dark frown came over his face.

A large paper had been pinned on the wall opposite the door, and it bore the inscription in large letters, daubed in ink with a brush:

"GET OUT! NO GROCER CADS WANTED HERE!"

Grimes saw it the same moment as his companion, and he turned crimson.

"Oh!" he exclaimed.

Lumley-Lumley strode across the study and snatched down the paper, tore it into fragments, and tossed it into the grate.

"I guess that's Levison's work," he said. "You're not to take any notice of his rot, Grimey. There's a precious few chaps like Levison at this school, thank goodness."

Lumley-Lumley. "If you do that, you'll find plenty of daws ready to peck. I'll answer for that."

"I s'pose you're right, Master Lumley."

"Grin and bear it, if there's trouble, and always keep your end up," said Lumley-Lumley. "Don't bear malice, but always look out for yourself. Never take advantage of anybody else, and never let anybody take advantage of you. If a chap doesn't like you, let him lump you. There are always chaps who will like you, and you can let the others alone. Don't be too jolly sensitive, and don't mind what fellows say."

"I won't, Master Lumley."

"Levison and Mellish will both try to make you uncomfy in this study. All you've got to do is to give 'em as good as they send—make 'em uncomfy."
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Instead of being shoved out, make them glad to get out. See?"

Grimes grinned.

"I see, Master Lumley."

"There are your books," said Lumley-Lumley, nodding towards a parcel that lay on the table. "You'll find the whole lot you want there. You won't be able to read some of them yet, but we'll soon alter all that. Now come up to the dorm, and get into your clobber. You will have to wear my clothes until you've been to the tailor's. I'll stand you my best Sunday suit."

"Oh, Master Lumley!"

"Come on, and not so much of your Master Lumley!"

Lumley-Lumley marched his protegee off to the Fourth Form dormitory.

A quarter of an hour later Grimes came down in Etons, feeling a little uncomfortable in them, but looking very nice indeed.

CHAPTER 9.

Joke for Joke!

TOM MERRY nodded pleasantly to Grimes as he met him going into the dining-room for dinner.

Grimes was feeling very uneasy, and holding tight to Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's arm.

Grimes grinned sheepishly at Tom Merry. He felt every eye in St. Jim's was upon his new Etons. As a matter of fact, he attracted less attention in Etons than in his former clothes.

"Here we are again!" said Tom Merry. "Been fighting anybody since Mellish?"

"No, Master Merry."

"Let me know when you've got another one on, and I'll hold your jacket," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"I want you to show me that drive with the right in the gym, after lessons, Grimey, if you will."

"Pleased to, Master Merry," said the gratified Grimes.

They went in to dinner.

Grimes was given a place at the Fourth Form table next to Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, and with Jack Blake on the other side of him.

Levison and Mellish wanted to be near him, for the amiable purpose of ragging him during dinner, but they had to be content with being opposite.

However, they hoped to make Grimes feel exceedingly uncomfortable by watching him closely during the meal.

They succeeded in that kindly object. With two pairs of unfriendly eyes fastened on him from the other side of the long table, Grimes felt very awkward. His fingers seemed to be all thumbs, and he turned red, and spilt the salt, and shook pepper into Lumley-Lumley's face and made him sneeze, and dropped his knife with a loud clang.

Mellish sniffed.

"Nice kind of chap to bring to a decent table!" he muttered, loud enough for Grimes and most of the fellows to hear.

Grimes' face went crimson.

"Disgusting!" said Levison. "See how he eats?"

"Yes. I say—Wowp!"

Mellish had not meant to say "Wowp!"; he said that quite suddenly as Jack Blake reached under the table with his boot and hacked him.

"Yowp! Yarooop! Oh!"

Mr. Lathom looked down the long table over his glasses.

"Dear me, what are you making this

disturbance for, Mellish?" he asked peevishly.

"Yow! Somebody hacked my shins, sir!" yelled Mellish. "Oh! Ow!"

"Bless my soul! Did somebody kick Mellish?" asked Mr. Lathom.

Silence.

"Who kicked Mellish?" demanded the Form-master.

"I did, sir," said Blake.

"Dear me! What did you kick Mellish for, Blake?"

"Bad manners, sir."

"Really, Blake—"

"I thought Mellish ought not to be encouraged in bad manners, sir," said Blake demurely. "I thought it was a bad example for him to set the new fellow, sir."

"Yaas, watah! Bai Jove!"

"What did you do, Mellish?" asked Mr. Lathom, eyeing the cad of the Fourth suspiciously. He knew Percy Mellish!

"Ow! I didn't do anything, sir. Yow!"

"Well, don't do it again, and be quiet!" said Mr. Lathom.

Mellish was quiet after that, excepting for an occasional grunt, as he felt a twinge in his shin.

Levison, keeping his legs carefully out of Blake's reach, continued his persecution of the unfortunate Grimes, however.

"Will you pass me the salt, Grimes?" he asked.

"Certainly!" said Grimes.

"Thank you!" said Levison politely.

"May I have the pepper?"

"Ere you are!" said Grimes.

"What did you say?"

"Ere you are."

Levison looked round.

"Have you dropped something, Grimes?"

"Me?" said Grimes. "No, I ain't dropped nothin'."

"Sure?"

"Quite sure, Master Levison."

"I thought I heard an 'h' drop!" explained Levison.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy extracted his monocle from his waistcoat pocket, jammed it into his eye, and regarded Levison with scorn.

"I weward that as a caddish wemark, Levison!" he exclaimed.

"Go hon!" said Levison.

"You are an uttah wottah, Levison."

"Thank you!"

"And a beastly cad!"

"Good!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy relaxed into silence. Evidently Levison was impervious to his remarks. Levison took up the pepper-caster and contrived to loosen the lid, and send a spurt of pepper across the table into Grimes' face.

Grimes was just raising a morsel upon his fork to his mouth, when the pepper reached him.

Fork and morsel dropped into his plate, and Grimes gave a choking gasp, and burst into a terrific sneeze.

"Atchoo! Atchoo! Atchoo-oo-oo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear me!" said the worried Form-master. "What is the matter now?"

"Atchoo! Atchoo!"

"Grimes—"

"Choo—choo—atchoo-oo-oo!"

Grimes was upon his feet now, the water streaming from his eyes, and his face a fiery red. He sneezed and sneezed and sneezed. Every eye in the old School House dining-room was turned upon the new boy.

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, who was at the Sixth Form table, frowned. Mr. Lathom looked very uncomfortable and annoyed.

"Grimes, I really wish you would try to control yourself—"

"Groogh—groogh! Atchoo-oo-oo!"

"Grimes—"

"Atchoo! Ow, ow! Groogh!"

"He can't help it, sir," said Levison.

"It's the way he's brought up, sir. He doesn't know how to behave decently at table, sir!"

"Silence, Levison! Really, Grimes, you—"

"Atchoo! I—I'm sorry, sir!" gasped the unfortunate Grimes. "It was the pepper, sir. Atchoo! I'm sorry—I'm sorry—atchoo! Ow—ow—ow—atchoo!"

Grimes did not say a word about the pepper having been projected at him across the table. Mr. Lathom had no suspicion of Levison's trick.

"You must be more careful, Grimes!" he said reprovingly.

"Yes, sir! Atchoo-oo-oo!"

"You must try to eat like the other boys," said Mr. Lathom. "Pray be more careful in the use of condiments, Grimes."

"Atchoo! Atchoo! Yes, sir."

Grimes sat down with eyes still watering. He was too upset to be angry, and he could only sit and suffer discomfort.

"Oh, you cad, Levison!" said Lumley-Lumley, in a whisper.

Levison grinned.

Lumley-Lumley gritted his teeth. Grimes' purple and streaming face was funny from Levison's point of view.

But Lumley-Lumley did not see the fun. He kept his eyes on Levison, and looked for an opportunity. Levison had a bottle of ginger-beer on the table, and after his meal was finished he filled his glass to drink. He lifted the glass to his lips, and just as he began to drink Lumley-Lumley reached across the table and knocked the bottom of the glass with his fork.

Splash!

The contents of the glass shot over Levison's face—into his mouth, into his nose, into his eyes, and down his neck, and over his chest. Levison dropped the glass with a wild gasp. It was shattered to a dozen pieces upon his plate, and the plate was smashed as well.

The crash caused Mr. Lathom to jump up.

"Levison," he said, "how dare you!"

The Form-master was too short-sighted to see all that went on at the table, and his eyes had not been in that direction when Lumley-Lumley performed his little manoeuvre. He only saw that Levison had broken his glass and his plate, and was streaming with ginger-beer, and coughing violently.

"Levison, this is disgraceful! I will not allow boys to guzzle in this disgusting way at my table!"

"He can't help it, sir!" said Lumley-Lumley, parodying Levison's own words. "It's the way he was brought up, sir. He doesn't know how to behave decently at table!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Indeed, I think you are right, Lumley!" said Mr. Lathom. "Levison, leave the table at once! Your greediness in choking over your ginger-beer is simply disgusting. Go away! Not a word! Get out of my sight at once!"

And Levison, still gasping and spluttering, went, leaving the Fourth Form table in a ripple of laughter behind him.

CHAPTER 10.

A Nap in Class!

ABELL rang, and the fellows in the quadrangle converged towards the School House.

Grimes caught hold of Lumley-Lumley's sleeve.

The Fourth Formers and some of the Shell fellows had been punting a footer about in the Close while they were waiting for afternoon lessons.

Grimes had bucked up very much, and he was enjoying himself. But as the bell rang for lessons, all Grimey's uneasiness returned.

The Form-room was full of terrors for him. It amazed him to see the juniors streaming cheerfully towards the Form-room, which to him was indeed a place where all hope must be abandoned on entering.

"Buck up, Grimey!" said Lumley-Lumley. "What's the matter?"

"I—I s'pose I got to go in?" stammered Grimes.

Lumley-Lumley laughed. "I guess so!" he said. "Why not?" "I—I feel afraid, Master Lumley-Lumley!"

"What for?"

"Everything!" said poor Grimes. "I guess there's nothing to be afraid of. Lathom's a good-tempered old duck, and you're not going through the lessons. You've only got to sit tight and listen," said Lumley-Lumley. "Keep hold of my sleeve, if you like, and I'll steer you through."

Grimes grinned faintly. "It's a big change for me, Master Lumley," he said. "If I was still at Mr. Sands, I should be going on the afternoon round now."

"I guess you'll have to do harder work than that now," said Lumley-Lumley. "But cheer up! There won't be any shutters to take down to-morrow morning!"

"I—I'd feel safer takin' down the shutters!" murmured Grimes.

"Come on, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, slipping his arm through Grimes'. "Time for lessons, you know."

"I'm coming, Master D'Arcy!" Piloted by Lumley-Lumley and Arthur Augustus, Grimes made his way to the Form-room in the crowd of juniors.

"Pound of bacon, please!" yelled a voice in the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What price eggs?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grimes walked into the Form-room, with a red face. He took his seat at the end of a form, and Lumley-Lumley sat down beside him. Blake & Co. and Figgins & Co. placed themselves as near to Grimes as they could, anticipating some ragging during afternoon lessons, if Levison and Mellish could contrive it.

Mr. Lathom blinked at Grimes over his glasses.

"Ah, Grimes!" he said. "Yes, sir!" said Grimes.

"You will not—er—share in the work in the Form at present," said Mr. Lathom. "You will—er—listen, and mark, learn, and inwardly digest, Grimes. That is all you have to do at present."

"Yessir!"

Grimes was only too happy to have to take no part in the lesson. The lessons, when he listened, were so much Greek to him. Grimes was no fool, and he could have beaten most of the Fourth at mental arithmetic, which he had been obliged to excel in at Mr. Sands' shop.

But in the ordinary work of the Form Grimes was, of course, utterly unversed. He knew there was such a language as Latin, but that was all he knew of the tongue of Horace and Cicero. When the fellows stood up and construed, Grimes watched them, open-mouthed. He felt some respect even for Mellish and Levison then. Even Mellish, who

JUST MY FUN



Monty Lowther Calling

Hallo, everybody! Taggles was boasting about the new gas-fire in his lodge. "Yes, I've had this one six months now, and it hasn't gone out once yet!" Wait till he gets the bill! Football story: "How did you come to miss that goal?" asked the spectator. "I didn't come to miss it," snapped the centre-forward; "I came to score." "Tennis Player Loses Two-Hour Fight." He couldn't stand the "racket." "Nothing can hurry the tide," says Blake. Ah, but have you seen it "dashing" against a cliff? Story: "Ah!" cried the poet, stepping from the train. "Just look at those hills tipped with gold!" "Yes," sighed the porter; "and to think there was a time when I was as lucky as them hills!" Did you hear about the new waiter who started with a "big break"? He left with a "crash"! Then there was the golfing beginner, who, told to drive off from the first tee, went off to

was a duffer, especially at classics, and blundered through endless errors, seemed a marvellously clever youth to the hapless Grimes.

Grimes wondered whether he would ever be able to stand up and construe that unknown tongue, and he felt quite hopeless about it.

Geography was more familiar to him, and he heard words he knew. But Euclid was more terrible to his eyes than Latin.

Grimes' attention began to wander. He had dutifully listened for a long time, as he had been bidden to do; but, not understanding what he heard, he could not keep his attention fixed. It was a cold day without, and there was a fire in the Form-room, and Grimes found himself staring at the fire and nodding.

"My 'at!" he murmured to himself quite suddenly. "I'm going to sleep!" He straightened up, and made an effort to keep awake.

Mr. Lathom was on ancient history now. There was a drone in his voice, and the Form-room seemed stuffy and close to Grimes. He nodded again, and the Fourth Form master's voice assumed a deep and far-away sound.

Grimes was asleep! He slept peacefully.

Then there came an interruption to the drowsy proceedings in the Form-room.

Mr. Lathom was speaking when a rumbling noise proceeded from somewhere, and he paused quite suddenly.

Sn-o-o-ore!

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom.

Snore!

"What—what is that?"

Snore!

There was a giggle in the class. "Thunder, sir!" said Bishop. "I think there's going to be a storm, sir!"

Snore!

"Silence, boys! I forbid you to laugh! Someone has fallen asleep!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom angrily. "Dear me! A boy asleep in the Form-room! Who is he?"

fetch his car! Physical culture classes are held in American prisons. But prisoners are not allowed to "skip"! A Wayland dairyman was spotted watering a quart of milk. "Quart" in the act! News: A Wayland bell-ringer has just completed fifty years' service. Fifty years all "tolled." "No," said the man, as he walked over the precipice, "if one keeps one's chin up one never comes to harm!" Story: "You'll have to accompany me, my man!" said the policeman to the street singer. "O.K.," said the musician. "What will you sing?" Watch repairers are busy, I hear. Spring cleaning? Think how bus conductors enjoy themselves. All the fun of the "fare." Advert from "Wayland Courier": "For sale, baker's oven; owner been in it for years." Quite "cooked"! Quickly, now: What runs without feet? A river. It has teeth, but cannot eat? A saw. In Russia you cannot be imprisoned for debt. "Owe," what a place! A foreign zoo has a 100-year-old alligator. An old "croc"! Mr. Selby upholds corporal punishment because it makes boys "smart." Ow, yes! A reader says he would like to see a joke about a football, because when one comes "round," it will be in his "sphere"! Last: Wally D'Arcy was firing a pistol repeatedly under Mr. Selby's window, when Mr. Selby asked if he meant to be disrespectful. "Disrespectful, sir?" asked Wally in surprise. "I'm giving you a salute of twenty-one guns!" Cheer-ho!

Snore! Lumley-Lumley had begun to shake his friend. But Grimes was a heavy sleeper and difficult to awaken. He snored.

"Wake up, you ass!" whispered Lumley-Lumley.

He gave Grimes a violent shake. Grimes started to his feet.

"All right, sir!" he called out loudly. "I'm comin' sir! I wasn't asleep! I was sweeping the cellar floor, sir! I'm comin'!"

There was a yell of laughter in the Form-room.

Grimes had evidently forgotten where he was, and had awakened fancying that he was back in the grocery shop at Rylcombe.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Mr. Lathom smiled, "Grimes!" he exclaimed.

"Oh!" stammered Grimes, realising where he was, and gazing about him in great confusion. "I—I—I— Oh!"

"You have fallen asleep, Grimes," said Mr. Lathom.

"I—I s'pose I did, sir," stammered Grimes. "I'm sorry, sir."

"Well, try to keep awake now," said Mr. Lathom.

"Yes, sir. Oh, yes, sir!"

And Grimes sat with a face like a beetroot as the lesson proceeded.

He did not fall asleep again. Lumley-Lumley took care of that.

"It's all right, Grimey," he said, in a whisper. "If you look drowsy again I'll pinch you, and keep you awake."

"Thank you, Master Lumley!" said Grimes.

Five minutes later Grimes nodded, and Lumley-Lumley kept his word.

Grimes started up with a fearful yell that rang through the Form-room.

Mr. Lathom dropped his book. "Goodness gracious! What is that?" he ejaculated.

Grimes dropped into his seat again, covered with blushes and confusion.

"It's—it's all right, sir," he said. "I'm sorry, sir! I won't go for to do it no more, sir!"

"You had better not, Grimes," said Mr. Latham testily.

"Well, you ass," murmured Lumley-Lumley, "you'll have to keep awake by yourself after this. I guess I'm not going to pinch you any more."

"Thank you, Master Lumley!"

Grimes did not feel inclined to sleep again. He sat bolt upright and widely awake until the lesson ended, and then he heard the word dismiss with more gladness than he had ever heard Mr. Sands tell him that he could go home, late on a busy Saturday night.

Tom Merry & Co. met the chums of the Fourth as they came out. Tom Merry clapped the new junior on the shoulder in his cheery way.

"Well, what do you think of it, Grimey?" he asked.

"Orrible!" said Grimes.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That was Grimes' candid expression. But Lumley-Lumley assured him cheerfully that he would get used to it. Grimes said he hoped he would, but he could not help feeling doubtful.

CHAPTER 11.

Heads To It!

NO GROCERIES WANTED!" That notice was chalked up on the outside of the door of Study No. 9, as Lumley-Lumley and Grimes came up at tea-time.

Grimes reddened as he saw it. Lumley-Lumley opened the door of the study and looked in.

Mellish and Levison were there. Lumley-Lumley pointed to the inscription on the door.

"Who put that there?" he asked.

"Guess!" said Levison.

"One of you, or both of you?" asked Lumley-Lumley quietly.

"You can put it down to both of us," said Levison, yawning. "It states the facts, you know. We're not thinking of going into the grocery business, and we don't want any budding grocers in this study."

Lumley-Lumley raised his hand, and pointed to the chalked notice.

"I guess you'll rub it out!" he said.

"Wrong!" said Levison. "Guess again!"

Mellish giggled.

"Do you want us to rub it out?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"You'll have to, if you want it rubbed out at all," said Levison.

"Very well. Grimey, old boy, will you lend me a hand?"

"Certainly, Master Lumley!" said Grimes.

"Take one of those mops, and help me rub it out, then."

Grimes looked round the study for the mops. He could not see any. But he soon caught on to Lumley-Lumley's meaning. Lumley-Lumley caught Levison by the shoulder and yanked him out of his chair.

"Hallo! What are you up to?" roared Levison, struggling.

"I guess I'm going to rub out that chalking."

"Lemme alone! I'm not going to help you—"

"Yes you are, my boy. I haven't got any other mop handy, and I'm going to use your topknot!" explained the Outsider.

"What!" yelled Levison. "You—"

"This way!"

"Leggo!" shrieked Levison, struggling wildly. "I tell you— Ow! Groogh!"

Levison's struggles were not of much use. The Outsider of St. Jim's had a grasp like iron. He drove his knuckles into Levison's neck as he gripped his collar with both hands, and dragged the cad of the Fourth over to the open door.

Levison's strangled yells echoed down the passage, and there was a rush of feet as the Fourth Formers rushed to see what was the matter.

"Better not wriggle," said Lumley-Lumley calmly. "You may get a knock or two on the napper if you do. There, I told you so!"

Crack!

Levison gave a yell of anguish as his head came into violent contact with the door.

"Yaroooh!"

"I guess you'd better take it quietly. Bring the other mop here, Grimey!"

"W o t t o!" chuckled Grimes.

Mellish jumped up in great alarm and backed round the table. He had had one taste of Grimes' quality, and he did not want any more. Grimes chased him round the table, and Mellish caught up the poker desperately.

"Stand off!" he yelled.

"Hands off, or—ow!"

Grimes' right caught Mellish on the chin as he was speaking. The poker went to the floor with a crash; and Mellish would have gone to the floor, too, if the grocer's boy had not caught him. Grimes' strong grip closed upon Mellish, and he was yanked over to the door beside Levison.

"Rub away!" said Lumley-Lumley cheerfully.

"I guess we'll teach the cads not to chalk cheeky messages on the study door!"

"Ha, -ha, ha! Orlright, Master Lumley!"

And two wildly dishevelled heads were rubbed roughly and and down the door, to rub out the offensive chalking.

"Gweat Scott!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, dashing along the passage in great excitement. "What's the mattah, deah boys? It sounds like a murdah bein' done."

"Nothing's the matter, I guess."

"What are you doing to those chaps?" shouted Tom Merry.

"They've been chalking on the door," exclaimed Lumley-Lumley, rubbing away with Levison's hair. "We haven't any dusters handy, so we're using Mellish and Levison as mops."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! What a wippin' ideah! I wergard that as funny, deah boy! Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors crowded in the passage yelled at the peculiar scene. Mellish and Levison were still struggling, but they had no chance.

Levison's struggles were frantic, and Mellish's were feeble; but they were useless in both cases. Their heads were rubbed over the panels till their hair resembled chalky mops, and every letter of the offensive inscription was rubbed out.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from the crowd in the passage. "Go it! Rub it in!"



"You rotters!" roared Levison. He sprang up and entered the dormitory at that moment and caught it napping." gasp

"Rub it out, you mean!" grinned Lumley-Lumley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" gurgled Mellish. "Leggo! Yow! I won't do it any more! Groogh! Oh! Yah!"

"You—you beast!" shrieked Levison.

"Let me go!"

"I guess it's all rubbed out now," remarked Lumley-Lumley. "We've done with these mops. Chuck 'em away! Look out, you fellows!"

The juniors in the passage crowded back. Mellish and Levison were hurled forth, and they went sprawling along the linoleum.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two cads of the Fourth sat up, gasping wildly. Their heads were wildly dishevelled and their collars were torn out, and they looked complete wrecks.

"Bai Jove! Ha, ha, ha!"

The passage rang with laughter. Levison staggered to his feet and shook his fist furiously at Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"You rotter!" he howled. "I'll make you sorry for this! Ow! I'll make you squirm—you and your grocer chum! Ow!"

"Groo!" gasped Mellish. "I'll complain to the Housemaster! Ow!"

"Complain away!" said Lumley-Lumley calmly. "Here, where are you coming, Levison?"



hurled the bolster blindly. There was a yell from Kildare, who
 round the neck. The head prefect went staggering back with a
 of surprise.

"Ow! Ow!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors. "Go for him, Levison! Go and have some more! You want 'em!"

Levison staggered to his feet, red with rage.

"You rotter!" he panted. "If you keep me out of my study I'll go and fetch a prefect."

"Fetch one, if you like!"
 "Sneak!" roared the juniors.

"I'm not going to be kept out of my study!" shrieked Levison.

"Apologise to Grimes, then, for insulting him, you worm!" said Tom Merry warmly.

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "I'm not apologising to any grocer cads! I'm going to fetch Kildare!"

And Levison tramped away furiously down the passage. A yell of derision and scorn followed him. To bring a prefect into a junior row was against all the rules. But Levison did not care whether he was called a sneak or not; he had not much reputation to lose.

"Look out for squalls, Lumley-Lumley, old man," said Jack Blake. "The cad really means to bring Kildare here."

"I guess I don't care."
 "You wait till Kildare comes, you rotter!" snarled Mellish, mopping his nose, which had come into violent contact with the door during the rubbing-out process, and was streaming red. "You wait till Kildare comes! Ow! My nose! Oh!"

"Here he is!" shouted Kangaroo.

Kildare came striding upon the scene. Kildare had been interrupted at tea with Darrell and Langton, and he did not look good-tempered.

"What's all this?" he asked sharply. "What are you keeping Levison out of his study for, Lumley-Lumley?"

"Cheek!" said Lumley-Lumley coolly. "What? What do you mean?"

"Have you told Kildare what you did, Levison?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"I've told him that you won't let me come into my study!" roared Levison. "If Kildare won't keep you in order I'll go to the Head!"

"Hold your tongue!" said Kildare sharply. "Now, Lumley-Lumley, tell me what Levison has done?"

"Insulted my pal Grimes," said the Outsider.

"Yaas, wathah! An insultin' inscription on the door of the study, Kildare, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy indignantly.

Kildare knitted his brows. "I'm not letting him come in again till he's apologised to Grimes," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Quite wight, deah boy!"
 "Did you fellows see the inscription?" asked Kildare, looking round at the juniors.

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "Was it insulting to Grimes?"

"Yes, it was!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"

"Then you've only got what you deserve, Levison, and you, Mellish!"

said Kildare. "Apologise to Grimes at once!"

"What!" yelled Levison. "You hear me?"

"Apologise to a grocer's boy?"
 "A rotten errand-boy!" yelled Mellish.

"You will apologise to Grimes at once, or I shall take you direct to my study and cane you, both of you," said Kildare. "Choose—sharp!"

"I—I apologise!" stammered Mellish. "I—I'm sorry, Grimes!"

"Now, you, Levison!"
 "I—I—I'm sorry!" gasped Levison, almost speechless with rage.

"Good!" said Kildare. "Now, you shan't use your study again this evening, as a punishment for your caddishness. You can have your tea in Hall and do your preparation in the Form-room. If they come in, Lumley, throw them out; and if I hear any row I'll come up here with a cane, and they'll be sorry for themselves."

And Kildare strode away. A loud cheer from the juniors followed him. Never had the captain of St. Jim's been more popular with the School House fellows than at that moment.

"Bravo, Kildare!"
 "Hurrah!"

Levison and Mellish exchanged glances, and, almost stuttering with fury, they stumbled away down the passage, and the juniors hissed them as they went.

"Gentlemen," said Lumley-Lumley politely, "the circus is over!"

And he withdrew into his study. The crowd dispersed, laughing; and Lumley-Lumley closed the door of the study.

CHAPTER 12.

A Little Latin!

LUMLEY-LUMLEY chuckled as he closed the door. But Grimes did not chuckle. He was looking very serious and a little distressed.

"Wherefore that brow like a corrugated roof?" demanded Lumley-Lumley. "We've licked them hollow, I guess!"

"I wish they wouldn't be so 'ard on a chap!" said Grimes.

"Oh, that's their little way! It is their nature to, you know," said Lumley-Lumley. "Don't waste a thought on the cads—they're not worth it!"

"I s'pose they ain't, Master Lumley-Lumley, but—"

"Then shut up," said Lumley-Lumley. "I say, Grimey, can you cook sossingers?"

Grimes' eyes glistened. "Try me!" he said.

"Yes; I guess I remember the feed we had when I was digging with you in Rylcombe," said Lumley-Lumley, with a chuckle. "The time I quarrelled with my pater, I mean. If the pater hadn't come round, I guess I should be there still—in the grocery business, Grimey."

Grimes chuckled. "Yes, Master Lumley. Instead of me bein' 'ere, a St. Jim's chap!"

"Life's full of ups and downs," said Lumley-Lumley. "I guess I've had a good share of them in my time, though I'm only a boy yet—more than a lot of men, I reckon. You shared the downs with me that time, Grimey. I'm going to share the ups with you."

There are sosses in that bag. Chuck 'em out while I grease the frying-pan."

"Right you are, Master Lumley." Lumley-Lumley stirred the fire. He greased the frying-pan, and the sausages were tossed into it. Grimes cut bread for toast, and Lumley-Lumley made the toast while Grimes was attending to the frying-pan. A grateful and comforting odour filled the study, and was wafted into the passage, and made more than one junior sniff appreciatively as he passed the door of Study No. 9.

"Wot about chips?" asked Grimes, after a pause, which was broken only by the sizzling of the sausages in the frying-pan.

"Can you do 'em?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"Wotto!"
"Then I'll get some potatoes. I'll borrow some out of Study No. 6—I know Blake's got more than he wants."

Lumley-Lumley left the study and returned in a few minutes with the potatoes.

Grimes had finished the sausages and turned them out into a dish, beautifully brown, and placed the dish to keep warm before the fire.

"Now, you handle the chips, while I attend to the toast, Grimey," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Right-ho!" said Grimes.

Grimes might be no hand at Latin, and he might never have heard of Euclid; but at cooking sausages and chips Grimes had no superior at St. Jim's.

He turned out a most appetising dish, and Lumley-Lumley's eyes glistened as he looked at it on the table.

"I guess that's prime!" said Lumley-Lumley.

Grimes beamed.

"It's a bit of orlright!" he remarked.

And they sat down to tea with great satisfaction.

The sausages and chips claimed all their attention at first. But as the meal wore on, Lumley-Lumley came to the subject that was in his mind.

"I'm going to give you a lesson after tea," he said.

"Thank you, Master Lumley!"

"You've seen Mr. Lathom since classes?"

"Yes," said Grimes, with rather a doleful look.

"How did you get on with him?"
"He was very kind, he was," said Grimes.

"You've got an idea of the Form work from him?"

"I—I think so."

"Of course, you'll find it a bit of a tackle at first," said Lumley-Lumley. "So did I, when I first came. I hadn't had much of it, you know, before I came to St. Jim's. I was knocking about the world with my father before we made our pile. Learning things a jolly lot more useful than Latin, I can tell you, and piling up the dollars."

"You must 'ave 'ad a good time," said Grimes. "I've been in the village all the time, while you was goin' about the world."

"Rough time, too, as well," said Lumley-Lumley. "I remember the time, not so very long ago, either, when the dad and I were stony in San Francisco, and we stood on the quay wondering where we were going to get our next meal. We got it by helping to shift cargo for a Mexican coaster. But I

guess it wasn't a bad time, either; there was more excitement in that. That was why I went over the line a bit when I first came to school. It seemed so jolly quiet for me. When I was a kid of eleven I used to play poker with the miners in the camps of Sierra Nevada."

"My eye!" said Grimes.

Lumley-Lumley chuckled.
"I suppose it wasn't good for me," he said. "But I was used to it. I used to break bounds at night, and play cards with a rotten set down at the Green Man. But that's all over now. Tom Merry and the chaps brought me round. I was jolly nearly sacked; but I pulled through that, and I turned my back on it all. I owe Tom Merry more than he knows himself. You won't start here under the disadvantages I had, Grimey. You're all right in everything but classes; you haven't any bad habits to get out of."

"No," said Grimes.

"Only some good ones to get into," said Lumley-Lumley. "Now, if you've finished tea, we'll clear the table and start."

"Right-ho!" said Grimes, as heartily as he could.

And the table was cleared, and Lumley-Lumley got out the books.

Grimes watched him with a sinking heart, but he tried to be cheerful.

"We'll tackle the Latin for a start," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes, Master Lumley."

"You've heard of Rome, of course?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yes," said Grimes, quite brightly; "where the Pope lives."

"Ye-es," said Lumley-Lumley. "Quite so. But it's celebrated for other things besides that. The chaps who lived in Rome in the old times used to jaw Latin at one another. It's a dead language, you know, excepting in schools. We keep it alive. Jolly lucky for you you didn't come to St. Jim's a dozen years ago. They used to have compulsory Greek then, and it was one degree worse than German, I guess."

"I s'pose you don't meet many Latins now, Master Lumley?" ventured Grimes.

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"Well, no; I guess I shan't meet any till I get to the place they've all gone to."

"Then wot's the good of it?"

"Good for your education; enables you to swank over chaps who don't know it," said Lumley-Lumley. "Also, it helps you to read the Latin authors. Of every thousand chaps who study Latin, about two or three like reading Cicero and Virgil, and do it for pleasure. Then, if you know Latin, it's quite easy to pick up modern languages derived from it—Spanish and Italian—and also it helps you with your French. Anyway, you've got to learn it at school, until it's chucked out of the curriculum. Thank goodness we don't have to take Greek and geology. Now, here we are! Do you know what a declension is?"

Grimes rubbed his nose.

"I can't say as I do, Master Lumley."

Lumley-Lumley rubbed his chin.

"Ahem! Well, let's begin. First of all, there isn't any article in Latin."

"Ain't there?" said Grimes.

"No; that's a jolly good thing. Thank goodness it isn't Greek, with thirty forms of the definite article!"

"Oh crumbs!" said Grimes, dismayed at the bare idea.

"There are five declensions—different brands of nouns, you know. We'll begin with the first declension. Take that pen!"

Grimes heaved a sigh, and took the pen. One declension would have been

enough for him, and he would have declined the whole language with pleasure.

"Write down what I tell you," said Lumley-Lumley. "Mensa."

Grimes wrote it down.

"Show it to me."

Grimes handed over the paper, and Lumley-Lumley read what he had written.

"Men, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lumley-Lumley. "Scratch that out! M-e-n-s-a!"

"Orlright!"

Grimes wrote it down.

"That means a table," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Does it really?" said Grimes. "Oh, good!"

"Now, in English, if you want to use the genitive case—"

"The which?"

"The genitive or possessive," said Lumley-Lumley patiently. "You'd say 'of a table.'"

"Ye-es."

"In Latin you don't. In Latin you wangle the end of the word."

"My 'at!" said Grimes.

"You spell it m-e-n-s-a-e," said Lumley-Lumley, "and that means 'of a table.' See?"

"Yes, I see."

"That's the genitive case."

"Good!" said Grimes.

"Now for the dative case. Dative means to or for anything, you know. Instead of saying to or for, as we do, the Latins wangled the end of the word in the same way—m-e-n-s-a-e."

"Then 'ow did they know whether it meant of a table or to a table?" asked Grimes.

"They had to guess that."

"Sorter guessing competition, when they was talking to one another, I s'pose?" said Grimes, in wonder.

Lumley-Lumley grinned.

"Now the accusative case. The accusative case means the object—the thing you are jawing at, you know. For instance, in the sentence, 'I punch your nose,' your nose is the object."

"Course it is," said Grimes, drawing back a little, as if he feared an actual demonstration of the accusative case, with his nose as the object.

Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"Well, for the accusative case, you wangle the end of the word in a different way. You spell it m-e-n-s-a-m."

"Ear, ear!" said Grimes, writing it down. "Mensam, when the table is an object. I s'pose they call tables objects because they 'adn't any articles."

"Eh?"

"Course, we should say that a table was an article—an article of furniture," said Grimes. "But I s'pose the Latins said it was an object, 'cause there wasn't any articles in their language."

Lumley-Lumley fanned himself with the blotting-paper.

"Not exactly that," he said. "My hat, I'm beginning to think that school-masters earn their money. Never mind. Write it down. Got it?"

"Yes; mensam, an object."

"Not mensam, an object!" yelled Lumley-Lumley. "Mensam, a table."

"But you said mensa was a table!"

"Mensa is a table in the nominative case. Mensam is a table in the accusative case," explained Lumley-Lumley.

"Take my word for it, and you'll get it to rights afterwards. Now, the vocative case comes next."

"Good!" said Grimes. "This is getting interesting. What is the vockytive case?"

"When you speak to a table,"

(Continued on page 18.)



**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! A reader wrote to me a little while back, offering a suggestion for a story, and curiously enough his idea coincided exactly with the theme of Martin Clifford's latest yarn, which I was then preparing for publication. The reader's plot centred around the coming of Grimes, the grocer's boy, to St. Jim's, and it was the same in every detail as the theme of this week's story. But, what is more curious, he further suggested that one of the cads of St. Jim's should scheme to bring disgrace upon Grimes by making it appear that the grocer's boy was a thief. When you read next Wednesday's great yarn, which is called:

"ONE O' THE BEST!"

you will see how near this reader's idea was to the plot of the second story Martin Clifford had already written.

In this yarn Grimes is forced to admit that swotting Latin and other subjects is far more difficult than delivering groceries. But while the chums of St. Jim's give him every encouragement, Levison and his set allow their snobbish prejudices full sway in making the newcomer's life at the school unpleasant. The cad of the Fourth, with his usual cunning, sets a trap for the honest Grimes, but it has painful results for Levison, and establishes the grocer's boy to all St. Jim's as one of the best.

"THE BLACK HAND AT ST. FRANK'S!"

Without a doubt the next chapters of this super-serial are the most thrilling yet. Nelson Lee and the boys of St. Frank's are still a big menace to Dr.

Zangari's mysterious "game," in spite of the latter's attempt to "silence" them by sinister methods. So it is that Zangari is at last forced out into the open to fight his schoolboy foes. The outcome is a sensational attack on St. Frank's by his gangsters. Read all about it in next Wednesday's gripping instalment.

From thrills we turn to laughs, and as usual you will find all the best laughs of the week in the "Jester" column, and in "Just My Fun." Don't leave the getting of your GEM to chance. Order your copy in advance.

THE TEST TESTER!

The school teacher's lot is not always an easy one, and the job of correcting and checking pupils' examination papers must be among the most laborious of his duties. With this tedious task in mind, two American masters set to work to invent a machine to perform this job in a rapid, accurate, and labour-saving way. The result is that they have made a machine which will be a blessing to many masters. The invention is designed to correct exam papers where the answers are given in the affirmative or the negative. A set of problems is given to the pupil, and instead of answering "yes" or "no," whichever the case may be, beside each, he will make a perforation to indicate his answer. This perforation is the means by which

PEN PALS COUPON

28-9-35



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.

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C. L. Woods, Coney Burrow, Brandon, Suffolk, wants to hear from readers interested in acquiring early issues of the old "Nelson Lee."

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Billie Lloyd, Albemarle Hotel, Marine Parade, Brighton; age 13-15; stamps.

Richard Billington, 32, Chipperfield Road, Manor Estate, Hemel Hempstead, Herts; age 12-14; stamps, engineering; Canada, Australia.

Miss Irene Hayes, 21, Ascot Terrace, O'Connell Avenue, Limerick, Ireland; girl correspondents; sports, old GEM stories; age 13-14.

Willie Hayes, 21, Ascot Terrace, O'Connell Avenue, Limerick, Ireland; sports, old GEMS; age 11-13.

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his paper is checked. When it is put through the machine the number of questions right or wrong is accurately recorded. It only takes two and a half seconds to correct one exam paper!

It now remains for some enterprising person to invent something to ease the work of the schoolboy, which most of you will readily agree, would be more to your advantage!

LOST AND FOUND!

A man was bathing in the sea off New Jersey when suddenly his false teeth slipped out of his mouth and disappeared in the water before he could grab them. It was a bit of bad luck, and the man didn't expect to see his false teeth again. The next day he went in for another swim, and just as he reached the water, a wave came in, bearing something with it. It was his false teeth! But what is more amazing about this story—a relative dreamed the night before that the teeth would be found again!

MYSTERIES OF THE PACIFIC!

It was the Asiatic Prince, a British cargo steamer (J. Barnes, of Portsmouth), which disappeared so mysteriously in the Northern Pacific. She set sail from Los Angeles on March 16th, 1923, bound for Yokohama, but nothing was heard of her again after March 24th, when she was in wireless communication with another vessel. What happened to the Asiatic Prince can never be known, but it must have been a very sudden and overwhelming disaster for the wireless operator to be unable to send out an SOS. The course taken by the vessel is far from being a lonely one, and there must have been many ships in the vicinity.

The disappearance of the Asiatic Prince, however, is only one of the mysteries of the Northern Pacific. In recent years three other ships, all seaworthy and wireless-equipped vessels, have vanished without trace. One theory advanced is that disturbances on the ocean bed set up mighty whirlpools from time to time, and if a ship happens to run into one—well, it just gets sucked down before anyone can move a hand.

TAILPIECE.

Teacher: "What is blotting-paper?"
Boy: "It is something you have to hunt about all over the place for while the ink is getting dry!"

THE EDITOR.

said Lumley-Lumley. "M-e-n-s-a—O table!"

Grimes regarded him with astonishment not unmixed with alarm.

"When you speak to a table!" he repeated.

"That's it."

"But you don't speak to a table, surely?" said Grimes. "Ow can you talk to a wooden object?"

Lumley-Lumley gasped.

"Did the Latins talk to their tables?" asked Grimes.

"No, you ass!"

"But you say they had a special word for the table when they was talkin' to it," said Grimes, in surprise.

"It's the vocative case," said Lumley-Lumley faintly. "You see, there are other nouns that follow the same rules. You wouldn't talk to a table, but you would talk to somebody, and you shove his name into the vocative case. F'rinstance, if you knew a chap named Crassus, when you were talking to him you'd say Crasse."

"Should I?" said Grimes, in wonder.

"Take my word for it," said Lumley-Lumley. "Now for the ablative case." "Ow many more of them?" asked Grimes.

"That's the lot."

"Thank goodness!"

"The singulars, of course," said Lumley-Lumley. "We'll leave over the plurals for a bit."

"Thank you, Master Lumley!"

"Do you know what the ablative case is?"

"Fraid not."

"It's the instrumental—by, with, or from a table."

"Must be a table, I suppose?" said Grimes curiously. "I s'pose the Latins had a lot of tables in their 'ouses, p'r'aps?"

"Table is the word we've chosen as an example," said Lumley-Lumley. "It might be anything. F'rinstance, nauta, a sailor; puella, a girl; aquila, an eagle; and so on, in the first declension."

Grimes looked alarmed.

"If you're talkin' about them things, do you 'ave to twist the words round in this way every time?" he asked.

"Of course you do!"

"Oh, lor'!" groaned Grimes.

"F'rinstance, aquila, an eagle; aquile, of an eagle. See?"

"Ye-e-es, I see."

"It's as easy as falling off a form when you get used to it!" said Lumley-Lumley encouragingly. "Asses like Mellish can do it quite easily."

"One declension will be enough for this evening," he continued. "We'll tackle the bisney on the instalment system. Now I'm going to give you six nouns of the first declension, and you're going to wangle them through their forms for all the cases, in the singular number. You've only the singular, so far."

"Yes; it seems like it," said Grimes.

"Eh?"

"It seems rather singular to me," said Grimes. "I don't know 'ow the Latins could ever 'ave talked in this language, Master Lumley. Wonderful memories they must 'ave 'ad!" Grimes rubbed his nose thoughtfully. "I s'pose they didn't have any other language for everyday use, neither?"

"Well, there was a popular Latin, too, which wasn't so hard as this," said Lumley-Lumley; "but that's not our business. This isn't really hard. When you've learned to wangle the case-endings, you'll be all right. Now, take down six giddy nouns. Mensa—"

"Got it! That's an object!"

"A table, you fathead!"

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"Orlright; make it a table."

"Aquila—that's an eagle."

"Got it!"

"Columba—that's a dove."

"Good!"

"Roma—that's Rome; regina, a queen; and insula, an island. That's enough to go on with. Now shove them through the case-endings, same as you have mensa."

Grimes wrinkled his brows and dropped blots over his paper. But, with Lumley-Lumley's aid he succeeded in "wangling" the case-endings, and Lumley-Lumley announced that the first lesson was over—greatly to Grimes' relief.

"It's 'arder than weighin' up butter," he said, with a sigh. "But I'll do it if you want me to, Master Lumley."

"That's right," said Lumley-Lumley. "Now you can go and have a jaw with the fellows in the Common-room while I do my prep."

"Right-o, Master Lumley! I s'pose I can't 'elp you?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Not yet. Buzz off!"

And Lumley-Lumley went on with his preparation, and Grimes descended to the Common-room, very pleased that, so far, he had no preparation to do.

CHAPTER 13.

Grimes Aims His Knowledge!

TOM MERRY & CO. were in the Common-room, and they greeted Grimes in a very friendly way.

Mellish and Levison were there, too, and they shrugged up their shoulders, sniffed, and walked out of the room with their noses high in the air.

But Grimes did not even notice them. He had mensa, a table, and aquila, an eagle, and regina, a queen, buzzing in his head, and he had no attention to spare for Levison and Mellish.

"Been through it, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sympathetically.

Grimes nodded.

"Yes, Master D'Arcy," he said. "Master Lumley 'ave give me a lesson. I'm learnin' Latin."

"Vewy good, deah boy!"

"How far have you got?" asked Blake, with a grin.

"First singular genitive," said Grimes, his memory rather hazy. "If you want to say an eagle, you say mensa; but if you're talkin' to an eagle, then it's an object."

"Eh?"

"If you're using an instrument, then it's in the ablative case," pursued Grimes brightly. "I s'pose that refers to chaps usin' saws and 'ammers and such. But wot seems queerest to me is that the Latins used to talk to their tables."

"Bai Jove!"

"Used to what?" asked Tom Merry, in amazement.

"Talk to their tables," said Grimes.

"Funny, ain't it?"

"Who told you that?" gasped Manners.

"Master Lumley-Lumley did."

"He must have been pulling your leg, then, you ass! I've never heard of the Latins talking to their tables," said Blake, in astonishment.

"Master Lumley says so, and he knows," said Grimes, with perfect faith in his instructor. "There ain't any articles in Latin, so you call a table an object. And when you want to talk to it, you say mensa. I ain't surprised at you larfin'. Master Lumley 'imself said it was all singular, and I think it is."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I s'pose I shall get used to it in

time," said Grimes. "But what knocks me over is, wot a funny lot them Latins must 'ave been. Fancy a man talkin' to his table!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or to an eagle, for that matter!"

"Funny, ain't it?"

"Bai Jove!"

"You're a bit mixed, Grimey," said Tom Merry, laughing. "You'll get used to it in time, and then it will come clear."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Grimes nodded.

"I suppose that's so," he agreed. "But it will take some getting used to, the idea of a man talking to his table. But I suppose it will come in time."

"Yaas, it will come in time, deah boy!" said D'Arcy.

Grimes sat down, looking very thoughtful. The mysteries of the vocative case were evidently still occupying his mind.

Lumley-Lumley came into the room later on. He joined Tom Merry & Co. and Grimes.

Grimes looked up, with a cheerful grin.

"I ain't forgotten it, Master Lumley," he said.

"Good!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Give me the Latin words—what's eagle?"

"Aquila!" said Grimes proudly. "It's jest the same thing when you're talking to it, but if you punch its nose it's aquilam."

The juniors shrieked.

Lumley-Lumley dropped into a chair with a gasp.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Isn't that right?" asked Grimes anxiously.

"I guess so; but call it the accusative case, for goodness' sake!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"I don't mind," said Grimes. "I'll call it what you like, Master Lumley."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Gwimey is a vewy obligin' pupil, Lumley, deah boy!"

"What's regina?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"A queen," said Grimes promptly; "and if you punch her nose—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then she's reginam."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said Blake. "Grimey, you're going on the right way to sweep off all the giddy prizes! Ha, ha, ha!"

"But if you buy her a table," continued Grimes, "then you say mensa."

"What?"

"That's right, ain't it?"

"Oh crickey!" said his instructor.

"My mistake, p'r'aps," said Grimes anxiously. "But I'm almost sure you said that mensa means buy a table, Master Lumley."

"By a table—by, with, or from!" shrieked Lumley-Lumley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, give Grimey a rest!" said Monty Lowther. "Let him sleep on it! Tomorrow morning he will be telling us lots of things we don't know about Latin. It would be good practice for you, Grimey, to talk to your tutor in Latin, and I can give you a tip. When you address Lumley, you say anser—vocative case, anser, just the same—and that will be the correct form for addressing Lumley."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Lumley-Lumley, laughing.

"But I think that's a good idea, Master Lumley," said Grimes thoughtfully. "Anser—"

"Eh?"

"Anser!" said Grimes. "I don't know what it means—"

"It means a goose, you fathead!"
 "Oh!" said Grimes.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Kildare looked into the Common-room.
 "Bed!" he said. "Grimes, your bed is next to Lumley-Lumley's in the dorm. Buzz off, you kids!"
 And the juniors went up to their dormitories.
 Grimes looked round the lofty, well-lighted Fourth Form dormitory with considerable satisfaction. It was a great improvement upon his little garret in River Lane, in Rylcombe.
 "So the grocer's sleeping in here, is he?" said Levison.
 "Squash!"
 "Yow!"
 Levison went flying backwards as a wet sponge caught him in the face and a bolster on the chest.
 The sponge had come from Lumley-Lumley, and the bolster from Jack Blake.
 Levison sat down.
 "You rotters!" he roared. "You—you—you—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Levison sprang up and hurled the bolster blindly. There was a yell from Kildare, who entered the dormitory at that moment and caught it round his neck.
 Kildare went staggering back against the door with a gasp of surprise.
 "Who threw that bolster?" he roared.
 "Oh!" gasped Levison.
 "Was it you, Levison?"
 "Yes. I—I didn't mean—ow, ow, ow!"
 Spank, spank, spank!
 "Yaroooh!" roared Levison. "Leggo! Oh! Ow! Yow!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "There!" gasped the captain of St. Jim's, as he released Levison. "That'll teach you not to biff bolsters at prefects, Levison!"
 "Ow, ow!" groaned Levison.
 "Groogh! I—I—"
 "That's enough! Turn in!"
 "But I tell you—ow!"
 "Get into bed!" roared Kildare.
 And Levison turned in without trying to explain further.
 After Kildare had put the lights out and retired from the dormitory, Levison could be heard gasping from his bed. Kildare had spanked hard.

CHAPTER 14.
A Dormitory Rag!

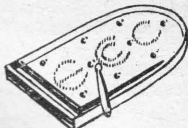
GRIMES did not fall asleep very soon.
 There was the usual buzz of talk in the dormitory after lights out, and when it died away, and

the Fourth Formers had dropped off to sleep one by one, Grimes remained awake.
 He lay very quiet, thinking.
 The change in his way of life was great, and it had come so suddenly that he had had no time to get used to it.
 Lumley-Lumley had given him no hint of his intentions until he had obtained his father's consent and assistance in carrying out his project.
 The previous day Grimes had risen to go to the grocer's shop and take down the shutters as usual. To-day he was a St. Jim's fellow, dressed in Etons, learning Latin; and, what was most surprising of all, on friendly terms with the best fellows in the Lower School. With a few exceptions, all the St. Jim's fellows had been decent to him. Grimes was grateful.
 And yet perhaps the change in his life did not wholly satisfy him. He had been taken away from all he knew, all he understood. His old pals—Pilcher, the butcher's boy, and Craggs, the chemist's boy—would be far enough off from him now. The little garret in River Lane had been bare enough and poor enough, but it had been his own. He had had some prospect of rising in his trade; what his new prospects might be he did not know.
 He had been following a youthful calling; his new life undoubtedly had its advantages, but he did not see that it was equally useful. He would not feel dissatisfied, for he felt that that would smack of ingratitude to his pal and protector.
 But he wondered, as he lay there, whether, in his heart of hearts, he really preferred being a St. Jim's fellow or Mr. Sands' grocer-boy. He could hardly tell.
 He was dozing off at last; eleven had rung out from the school tower, and the Fourth Form dormitory was very silent.
 There was slight sound in the stillness, but Grimes did not notice it. He was gliding away into slumber.
 Suddenly he started up with a wild yell.
 Swoosh! Splash! Splash!
 A shower of icy water descended upon him in the darkness.
 "Yaroooh!" yelled Grimes.
 He leaped up in bed.
 There was a faint sound of a chuckle in the darkness. It was drowned by Grimes' terrific bellow:
 "Ow! Oh! Ow! Yow!"
 "Gweat Scott! What's the mattah?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, starting out of his sleep and sitting up in bed. "What's that awful wow?"
 "Yow-ow-ow!"
 "Is that you, Gwimes?"
 "Yes," gasped the unhappy Grimes.

"Wake up! Jump up, all of you! It's raining, and the roof's given in!"
 "Wats!"
 "I'm drenched!" roared Grimes.
 "Ow!"
 "Gweat Scott! It must be a wag!"
 "A—a what?"
 "Gussy means a rag!" chuckled Jack Blake. "Anybody got a match?"
 Reilly struck a match and lighted a candle-end. The glimmer of light showed the unfortunate Grimes standing beside his bed, his pyjamas dripping with water. He was rubbing the water out of his eyes.
 "My hat!" exclaimed Blake indignantly. "What a rotten trick! Towel yourself down, my son, or you'll catch a cold!"
 "Right-ho!" said Grimes.
 And he caught up a towel and began to towel away industriously.
 Arthur Augustus jumped out of bed. "What feahful wottah thwew that watah ovah Gwimes?" he asked.
 There was no reply to the question. Levison and Mellish, upon whom suspicion immediately turned, were lying apparently fast asleep, breathing heavily.
 "Levison!" shouted Blake.
 Levison opened his eyes and yawned.
 "Hallo!" he said drowsily. "What's the row? 'Tain't rising-bell yet!"
 "Did you chuck that water over Grimes?"
 "What water? Hallo! You look wet, Grimes!"
 "I am wet!" gasped Grimes, towel-ling away. "I say, it was a rotten trick. I might catch cold. Ow! If you did it, Master Levison, I'll trouble you to get outer bed and put up your 'ands."
 "Hear, hear!" said Herries.
 "I don't know anything about it," said Levison.
 "Was it you, Mellish?" asked Blake.
 "Don't know anything about it," said Mellish.
 "Well, whoever it was, he funks own-ning up," said Digby contemptuously.
 Levison turned red.
 "I don't know about that," he said quickly. "I'm not afraid to own up. If you're so mighty particular to know, I did it. I thought the grocer might want washing!"
 "He, he, he!" cackled Mellish.
 "Oh, you did, did you?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Then you will kindly get out of bed, Levison, and take a feahful thwashin'!"
 "Rats!" said Levison.
 "You leave 'im to me," said Grimes. "I can manage him. Master D'Arcy."
 "He's biggah than you, deah boy."
 "I guess he's bigger than you, too, Gussy!" grinned Lumley-Lumley.
 "That is a diffewent mattah, my dear

(Continued on the next page.)

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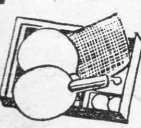


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Lumley. I shall have gweat pleasuah in givin' Levison a feahful thwashin'!"

"Oh, go home!" said Levison, yawning.

Grimes finished towelling himself; he came over to Levison's bed.

"You'll get up!" he said.

"I think not," said Levison.

"You've drenched me with cold water, and I ain't done nothing to you," said Grimes. "You'll get out of bed, Master Levison, and put your 'ands up!"

"Not this evening," drawled Levison. "Some other evening."

"If you funk it—"

"Thank you, I don't fight with grocers!"

"You'll fight with this grocer!" said Grimes. "If you funk it, I'll swamp you with water, same as you did me. That's fair!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!" said Herries.

"Can't oblige you," said Levison.

"I'm rather particular about soiling my hands, you know."

Grimes did not reply; he turned to the nearest washstand.

As he laid hands on the jug Levison jumped out of bed on the other side. He saw that the new junior was in deadly earnest.

"Don't you bring that water near me!" he roared.

"Will you put your 'ands up, then?"

"Yes, you cad—and give you the licking of your life!" said Levison, between his teeth.

"I'm willing to take that if you can give it to me, Master Levison," said Grimes.

"Hold on!" said Jack Blake. "We'll have this thing in order, Levison, you've acted like a rotten cad! A rag is all very well; but drenching a chap with cold water when he's asleep isn't a rag—it's rotten hooliganism! What you want is a jolly good hiding—and I hope Grimes will give you one!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, don't jaw at me!" said Levison. "I'm ready for the grocer cad, and I'm willing to give him all he wants. When I'm done with him he'll wish he'd stayed at home in the grocer's shop, sanding the sugar."

"I've never mixed sand with the sugar!" said Grimes indignantly.

"And mixing up water with the butter to make it weigh heavier!" said Levison.

"I ain't never done so!"

"We know you haven't, Grimey," said Blake.

"Don't mind what the cad says. I'll be your second, Grimey—"

"I guess you won't!" said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "I'm going to be Grimey's second. Make a ring and let 'em have it out in style."

"Better leave it till to-morrow, and have it out in the gym," yawned Digby.

"I'll thrash the grocer now," said Levison.

"I'm ready!" said Grimes.

The whole Form were awake now, and very few of them were averse to a little "scrap" in the dormitory.

Some of the fellows sat up in bed, and others turned out to form a ring. Candle-ends were lighted and stuck on washstands, and a blanket was laid along the door to prevent any tell-tale rays of light from escaping into the corridor.

Grimes and Levison donned their trousers, but no other garments; and then they faced each other in the midst of the circle of juniors in pyjamas.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was Grimes' second, and Mellish acted for Levison. Their bare feet made little sound on the floor as they moved. Arthur Augustus

D'Arcy, who had constituted himself referee and timekeeper, produced his famous twenty-five guinea ticker.

"Weady, deah boys?" he asked.

"Yes," growled Levison.

"Yes, Master D'Arcy," said Grimes.

"Time!"

And then there was a chorus.

"Go it, Grimes!"

Not a voice was raised for the cad of the Fourth.

CHAPTER 15.

A Fight to a Finish!

"TIME!"

Levison advanced to the attack, his eyes gleaming over his clenched fists.

Grimes met him steadily. Grimes knew at a glance that Levison was not likely to be so easy an opponent as Percy Mellish had been.

Levison was harder than Mellish. He was in better condition, and he was a good boxer. Levison seldom resorted to fisticuffs, preferring slyer and safer methods of wreaking his dislikes upon fellows he had trouble with. But he had looked over Grimes carefully, and thought the matter out, and he believed that he could lick the grocer.

And if he could lick Grimes to start with, his victory would give him a great advantage in persecuting the new boy. That Grimes was an inoffensive lad who harmed nobody did not matter in the least to Levison. The mere fact that he was befriended by Tom Merry & Co. was sufficient to make Ernest Levison "down" upon him.

The juniors looked on with keen interest as the first round started.

They were curious to see how the grocer would shape. They had a pardonable belief that in boxing—as most other things—the real article was only to be found in Public schools. Their sympathy was with Grimes, as the injured party, and also because Levison was generally unpopular in the Form. But there were few present who did not expect to see Levison walk over the grocer.

Grimes' victory over Mellish counted for nothing. D'Arcy minor of the Third had licked Mellish of the Fourth. Indeed, Mellish was known to funk trouble with the fags in the Second Form. But Levison was a harder nut to crack. He was cautious and sly, and he was a cad; but he was not a coward, and if he chose he could put up a good fight. And it was pretty certain that he would put in all he knew rather than be licked by the lad he affected to despise.

Lumley-Lumley looked confident enough. He had unbounded faith in his chum. But the other fellows were very doubtful. They expected at the most that Grimes would show pluck and take a licking handsomely.

And in the first round Levison certainly had the advantage. He had more science than Grimes. After a good deal of sparring, Grimes was knocked back into the arms of his second at the end of the round.

"Time, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Grimes sank upon a bed, gasping. Levison, with a sneering grin, leaned against the wall.

"Had enough, grocer?" he asked.

"No," said Grimes.

"You won't be fit to take down the shutters to-morrow after Levison has finished with you!" giggled Mellish.

"I ain't done yet!" said Grimes.

Lumley-Lumley sponged his heated face.

"Keep him at armslength, Grimey," he whispered, "and let him have that drive with the right! Let him have it on the mark!"

Grimes nodded.

"Yes, Master Lumley; I think I can beat him."

"I guess you've got to! If you let him beat you, I'll lick you myself!" growled Lumley-Lumley.

Grimes grinned.

"Time!" said D'Arcy.

The two adversaries walked up briskly enough. Levison attacked again in the same way, but he did not find Grimes quite so easy to handle this time. Grimes gave ground for a time, and then suddenly let out his right when Levison wasn't looking for it.

Levison caught Grimes' hard knuckles on the chin, and he fairly flew backwards, seeing more stars than were ever revealed by a telescope.

Crash!

Levison landed on his back, and lay there, panting. There was a yell.

"Well hit, Grimey!"

"Count, Gussy!" shouted Blake.

"Count, you ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Count!" roared the juniors.

"In the circs—"

Blake jerked the timekeeper's watch away, and began to count.

"One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight—nine—"

Levison sprang up.

But for the delay of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in starting to count, Levison would certainly have been counted out. As it was, he looked extremely groggy as he renewed the round. Grimes could have knocked him flying if he had chosen, but he contented himself with acting on the defensive till time was called.

At the call of time Levison staggered into Mellish's arms, and Mellish helped him to a bed, where he sat down.

Lumley-Lumley sponged Grimes' face. "You silly ass!" he said politely.

"Eh?" said Grimes.

"What do you mean by it, you fat-head?"

"Oh, Master Lumley—"

"You could have knocked him into a cocked hat, and you let him off, you duffer!" growled Lumley-Lumley. "Do you think he would have let you off?"

"I s'pose not," murmured Grimes.

"Ass! Of course he wouldn't!"

"I think I can 'andle 'im all right, Master Lumley."

"Time!"

The third round started. Levison pressed the fighting. But Grimes was warning to the work now, and he pressed as hard as Levison, and so it was hot enough in the third round.

The two juniors gave and received punishment, but at the end of the round it was clear that Levison had had the worst of it.

He was panting breathlessly as he sat down at the call of time. Grimes was breathing very hard, but it was easily to be seen that he was not nearly so pumped as his adversary.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "Gwimes is goin' to win, you fellows!"

"I guess I could have told you that!" grinned Lumley-Lumley.

"Looks like it," said Blake. "But Levison isn't beaten yet."

"I'm not going to be beaten, either!" snarled Levison. "I'm not going to be done by a grocer cad! I'll lick him before I've done!"

"I'm afwaid that's imposs, deah boy. But pile in! It's a jolly good swap,

anyway! I weally didn't think you had so much gwit, Levison!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Levison.

"Weally, you wottah—"

"Isn't it time yet?" shouted Reilly.

"Weally, Weilly—"

"Time!" roared Blake. "You ass, Gussy! Are you keeping time, or aren't you keeping time? This isn't the time for long speeches, you fathead!"

"I wufuse to be called a fathead!"

"Are you keeping time, you chump?"

"Bai Jove! They've had two minutes! Time, deah boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The lengthening of the interval was not unwelcome to Levison. He was still gasping, and moved with an effort when he came up to the scratch again.

Levison went reeling backwards and fell.

"Time!" said Arthur Augustus.

He called time again, but Levison did not move.

Mellish was kneeling by his side, and he looked round with a scowl.

"Time!" said Arthur Augustus.

"My man's done!" said Mellish.

"Grimey wins!" yelled Lumley-Lumley. "Hurrah!"

"Good 'old Grimes!"

"Bravo!"

"Hold on!" gasped Blake. "We'll have the prefects here if you make such a thundering row! My hat! Cave!"

The handle of the door turned.

The Fourth Formers made a wild rush for their beds.

The door swung open, and Mr.

It was not really necessary to ask what it meant. Levison staggered to his feet, dabbing savagely at his nose with his handkerchief. He had been licked, but he was so sore and exhausted that he had hardly enough energy left to be furious.

He reeled towards his bed.

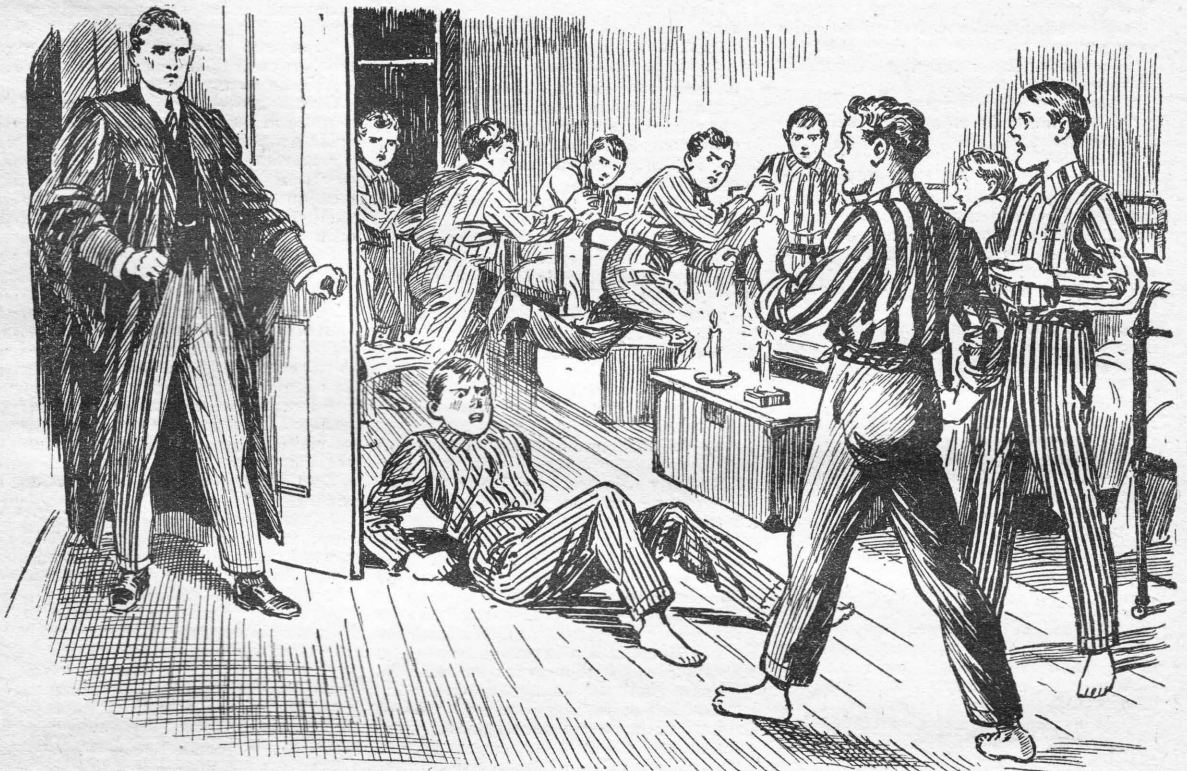
"You have been fighting!" the Housemaster exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said Grimes.

"Every boy in the dormitory will take two hundred lines, and stay in the Form-room to-morrow afternoon till they are written out!" said Mr. Railton sternly. "Now, go back to bed!"

The juniors turned in.

Mr. Railton made a collection of candle-ends—quite an extensive collection—and retired from the dormitory.



Suddenly the dormitory door swung open and Mr. Railton stood looking in with a stern brow. Juniors were scampering for their beds on all sides, while Levison was lying gasping on the floor, where Grimes had knocked him. "Boys!" said Mr. Railton. "What does this mean?"

Grimes stepped forward lightly enough. His wind was evidently sounder. Perhaps Levison's little habit of smoking cigarettes in his study accounted for the difference.

The fourth round was hard and fast, amid growing excitement among the juniors. All the fellows were out of bed now, watching. In their keen interest in the combat, the juniors forgot that they were in dorm, and supposed to be in bed, and that it was past eleven o'clock.

They clapped and shouted encouragement to the combatants, with growing enthusiasm. It was at the close of the fourth round that Grimes brought his right into play with that heavy drive Levison was learning to know the weight of.

His hard knuckles smashed upon Levison's jaw with a crash that seemed to loosen every tooth in the junior's head.

Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, stood looking in with a stern brow.

He looked upon a very peculiar sight. Juniors were vanishing into their beds on all sides. One or two, quicker than the others, had dragged the bedclothes over them, and were snoring loudly.

Others were plunging in, and some were sprawling on the floor, knocked over in the wild rush for the beds.

Levison was still gasping on his back, and Grimes was standing, gasping, too.

Arthur Augustus stood, watch in hand, quite taken by surprise.

"Boys!" came Mr. Railton's deep voice.

"Bai Jove!"

Snore! came from several beds.

Mr. Railton could hardly repress a smile. The hope that he would be taken in by that snoring showed a trustful innocence on the part of the snorers which was really touching.

"Boys, what does this mean?"

Blake chuckled when he had gone.

"Two hundred lines each ain't so bad, considering," he said. "If it had been Linton, it would have been lickings. How are you feeling, Grimey?"

"Pretty rotten!" said Grimes frankly.

"Never mind. I expect the other man is feeling rottener."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Grimes sat up in bed.

"Levison!" he called out.

"What do you want, you grocer cad?" came a groaning voice from Levison's bed.

"It's all over now," said Grimes. "We've 'ad a good scrap, and I don't bear no malice. I don't want to be nobody's enemy. If you're willing to be friends, Master Levison—why, I'm more than willing. That's all I've got to say."

"Hear, hear!" said Blake.

"Yaas; I wegard that as put vevy decently, Gwimes, deah boy! I quite

approve of your remarks, Gwimes! What do you say, Levison, deah boy?"

"I'll make the grocer cad sorry for this!" groaned Levison. "That's what I say. As for being friends with him, I don't go into grocer's shops for my friends. Ow!"

"I veward you as a wottah, Levison!" "Orlright," said Grimes. "I'm sorry it 'appened, and I don't bear no malice. That's all. Good-night, Master Lumley, and all!"

"Good-night, Master Grimes!" And the Fourth Form settled down to sleep. It was time!

CHAPTER 16.

A Goal for Grimes!

GRIMES showed signs of damage when he came down in the morning.

Mr. Lathom looked at him very severely at the breakfast-table. "You have been fighting, Grimes?" he said.

"Yes, sir," said Grimes. "Then don't do it again!" said the Form-master.

"Very well, sir!" And Mr. Lathom let the subject drop with that. Probably he guessed that the new boy had not had much choice about fighting, especially when he noted that Levison's face, too, bore signs of recent conflict.

The Fourth Form—or, rather, the School House portion of it—looked rather gloomy in the class-room that morning. It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and all the School House fellows in the Form had to stay in after dinner and write out the lines Mr. Railton had imposed for the disturbance in the dormitory.

"Bai Jove, it's wotten!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, when the juniors came out after morning lessons. "And it's weally good weathah."

"What's the row?" asked Figgins. "Detained, deah boy; wow in the dorm."

"All Grimes' fault!" growled Mellish. "All through Grimes kicking up a row last night. Railton came down on us."

"I don't see that it was my fault any more than Levison's," said Grimes mildly. "I'm sorry the fellers is detained."

"Oh, my hat! What a beautiful flow of language for a St. Jim's chap!" said Mellish, with a grunt of contempt.

Grimes reddened. "I ain't 'ad your chances to learn, Master Mellish," he said. "I've no doubt it will be better in time, when I've had a chance."

"You'll always be a rotten outsider!" said Mellish scornfully. "Ow! What are you up to, Figgins, you beast? Ow!"

"Pulling your ear!" said Figgins cheerfully.

"Ow! Ow! Leggo!" Figgins let go, and Blake pushed Mellish's knees from behind at the same moment, and the cad of the Fourth sat down with a bump.

He roared. "What's the row?" asked Kildare, coming out of the Sixth Form passage.

"Ow! These beasts have pushed me over!" yelled Mellish.

"Serve you right!" said Kildare, and passed on.

The juniors chuckled. "Doesn't pay to sneak in these days, Mellish, old man," said Blake, with a shake of the head. "My advice to you is to keep your eye on Grimes, and learn to be a decent chap."

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"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mellish slouched away, scowling.

After dinner Tom Merry came out with a footer under his arm, and tapped Blake on the shoulder in the doorway. "Bring Grimey out," he said. "I'm going to see what he can do at footer. He used to play up well for the village when we played Rylcombe."

Blake groaned.

"Can't!" he said.

"Why not?"

"Detained. I wish somebody would boil Levison! He picked a row with Grimes in the dorm last night, and we're all detained—two hundred lines each."

"Hard cheese!" said Tom Merry sympathetically. "Buck up and get 'em done, and then come down to the footer, and bring Grimes."

"Right-ho!"

And the School House Fourth Formers went into the Form-room, and sat down to their lines.

Grimes went in with them, as he was detained with the rest, but he did not do any lines. He sat down and watched the others. At the end of half an hour Mr. Railton looked into the Form-room.

"Are you boys playing football this afternoon?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Blake eagerly.

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"Very well, you may go," said Mr. Railton. "I will not deprive you of the fine weather. But please let there be no more disturbances in the dormitory."

"No fear, sir!"

"Thank you, sir!"

"This is vewy kind of you indeed, Mr. Wailton!"

And the Fourth Formers marched out joyfully.

"Regular nib, ain't he?" said Grimes admiringly, as he went out with Lumley-Lumley.

"I guess he is," said Lumley-Lumley. "Now, Grimey, old boy, would you rather tackle the second declension, or come down to the footer?"

Grimes' face showed pretty clearly what he would rather do, and Lumley-Lumley burst into a laugh as he slipped his arm through that of his friend.

"Come on!" he said.

"The Latin, Master Lumley?" asked Grimes, with forced cheerfulness.

"No; the footer."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Grimes, brightening up. "I'm on!"

Tom Merry & Co. were at practice on the footer ground. They had no match on that afternoon, as it happened, and they were filling in with shooting and passing practice for the whole Form.

Both Mellish and Levison were on the ground when Lumley-Lumley arrived there with the new junior.

Levison was in goal, keeping out a bombardment of shots, Levison rather prided himself upon his ability to keep goal. He did not care for footer, but he liked to be able to say that he could have a place in the junior team, if he chose.

"Hallo! Is the grocer going to play footer?" he called out.

"I guess so," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Well, I'm done, then," said Levison.

"I draw the line at playing with grocers."

"Just as well for you to clear off," said Blake. "Grimey would beat you before you could say jam."

Levison scowled.

"I'll jolly well bet you that the grocer couldn't score against me!" he exclaimed angrily.

"Give him a shot, Grimey," said Tom Merry, passing the ball to Grimes.

"Certainly, Master Merry!" Grimes trapped the ball, and dribbled it down to goal.

Levison watched him eagerly. He did not mean to let the leather pass him. Grimes stopped, and made a feint of kicking with his left into the corner of the net, and Levison half-started across to intercept.

At the same moment Grimes changed feet with lightning quickness, and drove the ball in with his right, and it went clean between the posts, and lodged in the net.

There was a roar of laughter from the juniors.

"Goal!"

"You're no good, Levison!" "Buzz off! You can't keep goal for toffee!"

Levison came swinging out of the goal.

"I'm not keeping goal for grocer cads, anyway!" he exclaimed. "Rats!" And he swung away.

Grimes kicked the ball out, and picked it up, and looked after Levison.

He dropped the ball and caught it on the rebound with his instep. It was as smart a half-volley as had ever been seen on the St. Jim's ground; the ball whizzed after Levison, and caught him on the back of the head.

Levison gave a wild plunge forward and dropped upon his hands and knees.

"Who was that?" yelled Levison. "Who bumped my head?"

Levison gazed round him in bewilderment. There was no one close enough to have touched him, least of all Grimes. The juniors shrieked with laughter at the bewildered expression on Levison's face. He turned away, and swung off with his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his footer shorts.

Tom Merry clapped Grimes on the back.

"Good old Grimey!" he said. "Look here, you're going to practice with us now. I've got an idea in my head about you. I didn't know you were a giddy Dixie Dean in disguise."

And Grimes practised with the juniors for the next hour; and when the practice was over and the juniors, with coats on over their footer rig, trooped off to the tuckshop for drinks and sandwiches, Tom Merry had something to say. He patted Grimes on the shoulder in the crowded tuckshop, and then filled his glass.

"Gentlemen of St. Jim's Junior Football Club—" he said.

"Hear, hear!" said Blake. "Pass the lemonade!"

"And the sandwiches!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Gentlemen, allow me to present Grimes, the latest recruit to the St. Jim's Junior Eleven!" said Tom Merry.

"Grimes is going to play for the school in the next match."

"Bravo!"

"And when we spring him on the Grammarians, I fancy the Grammarians will be surprised."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Bravo!"

"Good man!"

And the juniors filled their glasses, and drank lemonade with enthusiasm to the new member of the Junior Eleven.

As for Grimes, he could only blush and stammer. His cup of happiness was full. In all St. Jim's that day there was no happier fellow than Grimes of the Fourth!

(Next Wednesday: "ONE O' THE BEST!"—another grand long yarn featuring Grimes' adventures at St. Jim's. Watch out for it.)

TWO MORE VICTIMS FALL TO THE SINISTER BLACK HAND!

The BLACK HAND at ST. FRANK'S!



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

The Fourth Victim!

THE murder of an unknown airman, followed by the murder of the airman's assassin, provides Nelson Lee, the schoolmaster-detective of St. Frank's, with as baffling a case as he has ever had to deal with. Lee is aware that Nipper & Co. of the Remove Form are concerned with the mystery, but they cannot tell him anything because they were pledged to secrecy by the airman before he died. He gave the juniors a package to take to Gallows Mere, the residence of Dr. Zangari, making them promise to keep their mission a secret.

To all appearances, Dr. Zangari is a harmless astronomer, but Nipper & Co. get the impression that astronomy is only a mask to his secret and lawless activities. Their suspicions are confirmed when Handforth and his two chums, making investigations one night at Gallows Mere, are caught by masked men. The juniors, however, escape, but are followed to St. Frank's by Luigi Lombardo, a gunman, whom they capture. Nelson Lee appears on the scene, but Handforth & Co., without breaking their word to the airman, are unable to tell all that has happened. Lee warns them that they are playing with fire. The gunman is taken to Bannington Police Station, while the juniors return to bed.

Meanwhile, a spy has reported to Zangari that Lombardo has been captured. Nervous that Handforth & Co. will talk, Zangari sends the spy to St. Frank's to "silence" them. Stealthily reaching the school premises, the man hurls a small metal globe into the juniors' dormitory, and from the globe comes a poison gas!

As the man in black moved away from the dormitory window, after hurling his deadly missile within, he experienced a great shock. Apparently materialising out of the very darkness, a figure was beside him, and a hand was laid on his shoulder.

"One moment!" said a grim, steady voice.

It was the voice of Nelson Lee. West Square had not been so deserted as Dr. Zangari's emissary had believed. The man, realising his peril, stepped back like lightning, and his right hand went for his gun.

Crash!
Nelson Lee was not a gunman; he preferred, like Handforth, to use his fists. Luigi Lombardo had been beaten by a fist, and his colleague shared the same fate. That punch from Nelson Lee lifted the man clean off his feet; he turned an almost complete somersault, sprawled back, and collapsed in an untidy heap on the flagstones of West Square. Nelson Lee stood rubbing his lacerated knuckles.

Things had been happening, too, in Handforth's dormitory.

Even as the globe of death alighted on the sleeping junior's bed, a shadowy figure leaped forward from the dark corner near the door. An electric torch blazed; a hand reached out, grasped the small metal globe, and in one movement sent it through the window.

So swift had the action been that scarcely a whiff of poison gas had escaped into the air. But, even so, Inspector Lennard—for the shadowy figure belonged to that hard-headed Scotland Yard man—clapped his lips shut, ran to the door, and swiftly opened it—so that there would be an immediate draught.

He was glad that the boys had not awakened; they were, indeed, dog tired after their hectic adventures, and it would have taken a great deal more disturbance than this to arouse them.

Next moment Lennard was at the window, staring anxiously down.

"You there, Lee?" he called softly. "Did you get him?"

"Yes, I got him," came Lee's voice. "He tried to pull on me, but I knocked him out first. Everything all right up there?"

"The devil threw a bomb, or something, into the room," replied the inspector. "I suspect poison gas. You'd better get clear. I threw it out of the window ten seconds ago. Didn't you hear it drop?"

"No, I heard nothing—"
In that same second Lee experienced a ghastly sensation. His throat became paralysed, and the agony was such that if his vocal chord had permitted, he would have cried aloud in anguish.

His senses reeled, and lights blazed in front of his eyes. With his last scrap of consciousness he ran, reeling from side to side, until he had passed through West Arch.

In the Triangle he stumbled, fell, and lay still. Yet he had only caught the merest whiff of that terrible poison gas!

Lennard acted swiftly. He closed the dormitory window, and as he did so he realised that other windows must be open. Yet the danger was very slight; ghastly as the gas was, it could not reach this height. In any case, there was nothing he could do.

As he left the dormitory he remembered, thankfully, that a strong wind was blowing through the square. It was this wind, of course, which had blown a puff of the gas towards Lee. By now the vile vapour would have been dispersed.

The inspector ran rapidly downstairs. As he let himself out into the Triangle, Lee came towards him, walking unsteadily.

"I'm mighty glad to see you!" said Lennard, in a low voice. "I imagine you got a whiff of the stuff? Feeling all right?"

"I'm better," said Nelson Lee, articulating with difficulty. "It's a mercy, Lennard, that we decided to remain on guard until dawn!"

"Yes," said the Yard man. "Gosh! We're up against something pretty steep, aren't we? I don't mind admitting I'm baffled. Why in the name of

goodness should these people, whoever they are, try to kill schoolboys?"

Lee was silent. Although he had had only a slight whiff of the poison gas, he was still feeling rocky. He knew the undiluted gas would cause almost instantaneous death. If he had not elected to remain on guard, hidden in the darkness, Handforth and Church and McClure, by this time, would have been lying lifeless!

"Come!" said the detective suddenly. "We'd better secure the man I knocked down. We don't want him to escape." "Too risky, isn't it?" asked Lennard. "Better not go there yet. Give that gas a few minutes more—"

"No, with this wind blowing, there's virtually no danger now," interrupted Lee. "We mustn't risk it, Lennard. This man may not have been alone."

The wind which blew into their faces as they entered West Square was fresh enough. Clearly, then, the gas bomb had expended itself, and the last of the fumes had been dispersed.

As the pair advanced, Lee switched on his electric torch, and at the same moment he gripped his automatic.

The detective was ready for further trouble. But, as he had half expected, there were no other enemies. One man had been sent on this deadly mission, and he had been deemed enough.

"Look!" muttered the inspector, pointing.

A black figure, motionless, was sprawling on the flagstones.

"You must have given him a tidy tap," added Lennard, as they approached.

"My punch was effective, but I don't think—" Lee paused, and moved forward more quickly. "By Heaven! Look at that, Lennard! Now you can understand why I didn't hear the impact of the bomb after you had flung it out of the window!"

On the blackly-clothed chest of the prostrate figure was a tiny metal globe, no larger than a golf ball! By some freak of chance, the deadly thing had fallen right on top of the would-be murderer.

"Poetic justice," said Lennard, with a nod. "Well, there's no more gas. Better have a look at him."

They ripped off the black headgear and found themselves looking down upon the face of a thin-featured man, who was obviously foreign—probably Italian. The muscles of the neck were so contorted that Lennard shuddered at the sight of them.

"Dead?" muttered the inspector.

"Nothing could be more dead," replied Lee. "The gas must have got him before he recovered from the effects of the blow. Queer, Lennard, that this wretched fellow should die, by the merest fluke, virtually by his own hand. Well, dead or alive, he's captive No. 2. Not a bad night's work!"

"Well, I'm glad we bagged this one!" grunted the inspector. "Until now your schoolboys seem to have been doing everything in this confounded case!"

They searched the body, but found nothing on it but an automatic pistol hidden in a cunningly concealed pocket.

"What are we going to do next?" asked Lennard.

"I want you to go indoors and ring up Bannington," replied Lee promptly. "Get them to send the van again. The sooner this dead man is removed the better."

"You'll be all right out here?"

"I don't think there'll be any further

activity to-night," replied Lee. "If there is—well, I'm on my guard. Hurry, Lennard!"

The inspector was back within five minutes. He found everything quiet. He and Lee withdrew into the shadows of the rear doorway of the Ancient House. Here they could see out into the gloom of West Square, and yet remain quite hidden.

Lennard was strangely agitated; and this was an unusual condition for him, for he was by nature a calm, matter-of-fact individual.

"Lee, this thing's getting under my skin," he muttered. "What do you think I've just heard? Luigi Lombardo is dead!"

"What!"

"Jameson was on the point of ringing us up when I phoned him," went on Lennard, breathing hard. "Lombardo was killed in exactly the same way as that fellow out there. One of the constables at the Bannington Police Station is in a pretty bad way, and has had to be rushed to hospital. It seems he smelt something queer in one of the corridors, gave a yell, and then collapsed. After a bit they were able to investigate—they put gas-masks on, in fact—and they found Lombardo dead in his cell, with one of those poison gas globes on the floor near him. Lee, there's something absolutely ghastly about this whole infernal business! Lombardo must have had that bomb concealed on him—"

"You are suggesting that he committed suicide?" interrupted Lee.

"No, Lennard; you're wrong. If a tiny bomb of that kind can be flung into a dormitory window, a similar bomb can be flung through the bars of a police station cell."

"You mean—"

"It was murder," said Lee. "Lombardo had failed; he had got himself into the hands of the police. Failures are of no use to the grim people who are behind this mysterious enterprise. So they killed him."

"But this implies that there must be spies all over the place—lurking everywhere," said the inspector. "It isn't often I'm nery, but I'll confess to being in that condition now."

"You needn't be. There's no reason to suppose that the entire countryside is overrun by murderous men in black," said Nelson Lee dryly. "It is quite certain, however, that the criminals have their headquarters at no great distance from St. Frank's. Lombardo failed in the thing he had been told to do. Two men, therefore, were sent out—one to St. Frank's, the other to Bannington. Easy enough for a man to throw that little bomb through the cell window."

"But how did he know which cell Lombardo was in?"

"There, I will confess, I cannot answer you," said Lee gravely. "We can only assume that the police station was being watched; that a light was seen to appear in the cell. The explanation may be quite simple, Lennard. The thing which is worrying me at present is the danger of the boys. I am convinced they know more than they will say."

"Can't you make them speak?" asked the inspector.

"I questioned Nipper in the late evening, and some of the other boys, too," replied Lee thoughtfully. "From their attitude I believe there is some secret between them. In fact, I have a theory."

"Let's hear it."

"A number of boys were on their way home from the River House School

when that aeroplane crashed," said Lee. "The pilot, as we know, had been shot. I believe he was not dead when the boys found him. He told them something, and swore them to secrecy. If so, it is very serious, Lennard. Naturally, they won't break their oath."

"But, in the circumstances, surely they'll see that they are not bound by such an oath?" asked the inspector. "What of these three boys to-night?"

"Handforth is characteristically reckless. He can't avoid getting into trouble," said the schoolmaster detective. "I imagine he broke bounds to-night—with his two friends. Where they went I do not know, but I am certain they left the school with some definite objective."

"The secret headquarters of this gang?"

"Yes. I'm going to tell you something, Lennard," said Lee. "You remember I found traces of a peculiar green paint on the hand of the dead Ethiopian?"

"Yes. You said it might be a clue."

"Well, I found similar paint on the clothes of one of the schoolboys," interrupted Lee grimly. "Further, I found that three of the boys were drenched to the skin, as though they had fallen into a pond. Yet, when I questioned them they froze up. Now, there's no doubt in my mind that the boys were involved in some desperate adventure. Handforth, like the reckless young idiot he is, got up at midnight and went back to the same spot. As a result, Lombardo was given orders to destroy the boys. He failed; so this second fellow was sent."

"It seems to me you'd better get the headmaster of this school to keep every boy indoors until we've got to the bottom of the mystery," said the inspector gruffly. "In addition, we'd better have police guards on the spot."

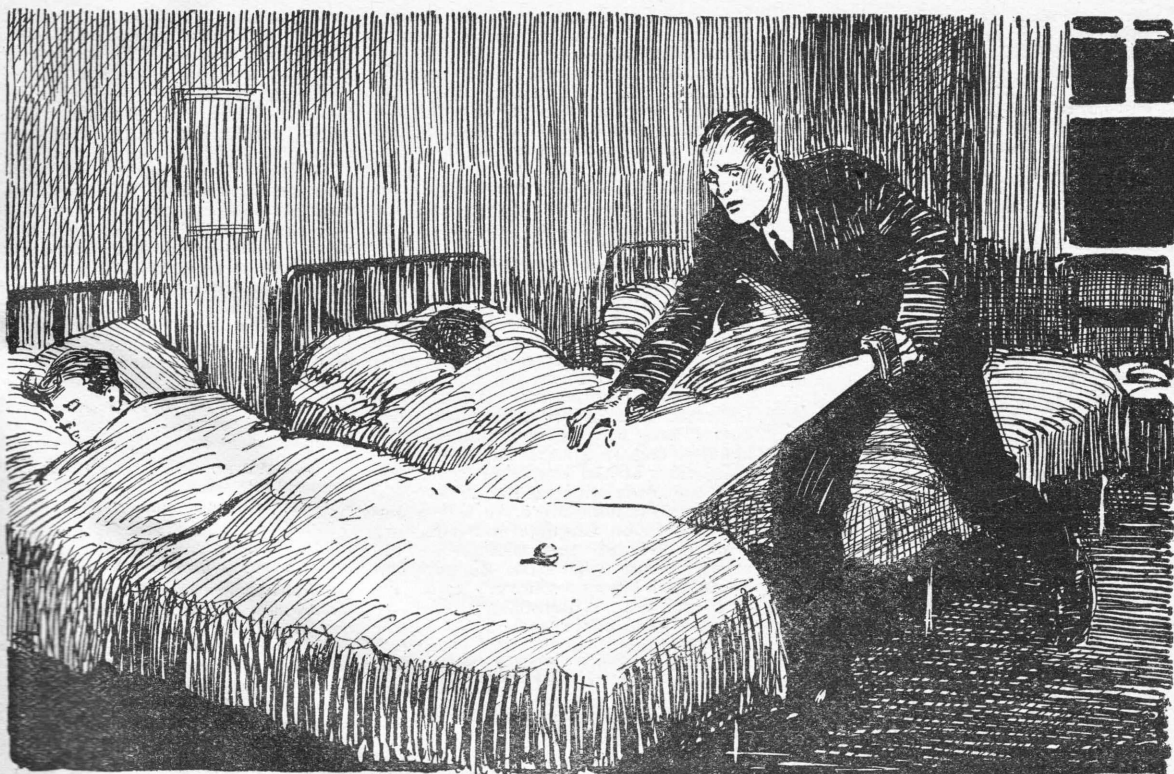
"I don't think the boys are in any danger, unless they actively interfere, and that's what Handforth and his chums were obviously doing to-night," said Nelson Lee. "I'm going to have a straight talk with them in the morning, Lennard. I think I can persuade them. You'd better take charge of the body. I can hear the van coming up the rise. Dawn is at hand, and with daylight there will be no further danger."

Inspector Jameson himself, very excited, accompanied the van. He was bubbling over with the staggering story of Luigi Lombardo's death in the police station cell. He was very startled when he saw the second dead man. Nelson Lee managed to calm him, and presently the van started off on its return journey. Inspector Lennard went with it, and in the grey dawn St. Frank's was left in silence and peace.

Nelson Lee felt justified now in snatching some sleep. He was only in his bed two hours, however. He awoke refreshed; dressed, shaved, and before six o'clock—before there was any sign of activity in the school—he went quietly to the Remove passage, and peeped into Handforth's dormitory. The chums of Study D were sleeping peacefully; no harm had befallen them.

Lee took out his car and drove off on a tour of the countryside. He had promised himself this jaunt last night, and the events in the hours of darkness had made him all the more keen on it.

It was not a random trip; he meant to proceed leisurely along the country lanes, through Edgmore and beyond, until he came to the spot near the spinney—the spinney where the dead



Even as the globe of death came through the window and alighted on Handforth's bed, Inspector Lennard leaped forward. His torch blazed out, and he grasped the deadly missile before more than a whiff of poison gas had escaped.

Ethiopian had been found. Somewhere along that road, Lee was convinced, he would find a gate, or a fence, with green paint.

Some little distance beyond Edgmore, however, he met somebody in the quiet lane, and he was made a present of his first real clue in this most singular and terrible case.

Three Dead Sheep!

THERE was nothing startling in the appearance of the man whom Lee encountered in the quiet, narrow lane. He was a stoutish, middle-aged man, dressed in a rough tweed suit. He was wearing gaiters and heavy boots. In a word, Mr. John Wilkinson, of Edge Farm. Nelson Lee knew him slightly, and he nodded with friendly recognition as he was about to pass. The farmer, who was looking hot and angry, raised his stick and waved it vigorously in the air.

"Hey! Hold on, sir!" he shouted. "Just a minute!"

The detective brought the car to a stop.

"Anything wrong, Mr. Wilkinson?" he asked.

"Ay, that there is!" retorted the farmer. "You'll be Mr. Lee, from the school? If you're going through to Bannington, I'd like you to take a message to the police."

"I'm not going to Bannington, as it happens, but perhaps I can do something?" suggested Nelson Lee, giving the farmer a hard look. "What's wrong?"

"Plenty's wrong, sir! Three of my sheep dead! That's what's wrong!" ejaculated Mr. Wilkinson vehemently. "They was all right last night, when my lad turned them into the long meadow. Now three of 'em are dead."

"Why do you suppose the police can

help you? Wouldn't a veterinary surgeon render you more service?"

"It wasn't sickness that struck 'em down, sir. They were shot!"

"Oh, I see!"

"Shot with a rifle, too," continued the farmer hotly. "This is no poacher's work. Poachers don't go for sheep."

"I'd like to have a look at the animals," said Lee, getting out of the car. "Are they anywhere near by?"

"Come with me, sir," said the farmer. "I'll show ye. It's the queerest thing I've ever come across."

They walked along the lane for a few yards, climbed over a stile, and went across the fields. There was no house of any kind in sight—not even a labourer's cottage. Edge Farm lay in a dip, nearly a couple of miles away.

Soon Mr. Wilkinson passed through a gap in the hedge, and Lee found himself in the long meadow, on the other side of which, visible in the distance, but half-hidden by trees, was an old thatched barn. There were sheep in the meadow—and three of them were lying stiff and cold in death.

"Look at 'em, sir," said Mr. Wilkinson. "One of 'em shot clean through the brain, and the others—"

"Have you seen this?" interrupted Lee. "H'm! Most remarkable!"

Tied to one of the sheep was an electric torch!

"Why, that's rare queer, sir!" said the farmer. "I hadn't noticed it before—leastways, not until you moved the animal. What do you make of it? Who in the name of wonder could have tied that thing to the creature? And why?"

Nelson Lee did not answer. He was thinking hard. He believed he knew why. He was, in fact, inwardly excited. He remembered all the mysterious events of the night—as far as he knew them. Handforth, Church, and McClure had left the school, bent on a secret

mission of their own. They had been followed back to the school by Lombardo, who had tried to shoot them.

Lee shrewdly put two and two together. The boys, suspecting they were followed, had adopted a ruse; they had tied an electric torch to a sheep. Lombardo, thinking the torch was held by a boy, had shot the sheep dead—killing two other sheep, too. Discovering his mistake too late, he had then rushed to the school, only arriving when Handforth and his chums were crossing the playing fields. He had attempted to rectify his error—with disastrous results to himself.

To Lee, it seemed as clear as daylight. "Mr. Wilkinson," he said abruptly, "do any of your employees know of this?"

"No, sir. I was out early this morning, and I happened to see the sheep lying here as I was crossing the meadow towards the big field—"

"Then I want you to conceal these carcasses—in fact, I'll help you," said Lee crisply. "Say nothing to a soul."

"That's all very well, Mr. Lee—"

"No doubt you have heard of the mysterious murder of an unknown airman, and the second murder of a black man?" asked Lee. "I have every reason to believe that your sheep were killed by mistake—and by the people who are responsible for the murders. I don't want them to know anything about these sheep, for the man who killed them was arrested last night, but is now dead. In fact, he, too, was murdered."

"Sakes alive!" ejaculated the farmer, his jaw dropping. "There's been a rare amount of killing, sir! Why, we shan't be safe to walk about the fields next! What's come over the countryside?"

"I can't explain now—for, to tell you the truth, the affair is an absolute mystery," replied Nelson Lee. "But you will be helping the Scotland Yard

investigators if you do as I suggest. I will give you my personal guarantee that you will be compensated for the loss of the sheep. But it is most essential that you say nothing. Your shepherd will notice that three sheep are missing, of course, but he must be allowed to believe they have strayed."

The farmer made no pretence of understanding, but the promise of compensation satisfied him. Without further delay he and Nelson Lee carried the sheep to a deep ditch close by—a ditch which was choked with blackberry brambles and dead leaves. The carcasses, under Nelson Lee's direction, were so cunningly concealed that they might not be discovered for months.

"They're likely to make a rare bad smell after a few days," said the farmer.

"They'll have no chance of doing that," replied Lee. "This evening, after dark, I shall return here with several police officers armed with spades, and the sheep will be buried in the ditch bottom."

"Why not bury 'em now, sir?" asked Mr. Wilkinson in surprise. "I've got men—" He broke off. "Ah, but ye don't want my men to know, eh? I understand, sir. But I'm hanged if I understand why you're willing to go to all this trouble."

"One day—and perhaps soon—you will know why I have done this," replied Nelson Lee. "Now, Mr. Wilkinson, your farmhouse, I believe, lies over in this direction?" He pointed and the farmer nodded. "Are there any other houses in the neighbourhood?"

"Well, sir, there's Whitaker's, just here," said the farmer, nodding in the direction of the partially visible barn.

"Whitaker's?"

"It's the old house that used to be known as Gallows Mere, sir," said the farmer. "But it's been called 'Whitaker's' for more years than I care to remember. That Italian gentleman lives there—Dr. Zangari, the astronomer. A rare nice gentleman, too. He buys butter and milk from me. Hired some of my men, too, when he was making the alterations, and gave 'em better wages than they could get elsewhere. A well-spoken gent—"

Nelson Lee was not listening. A startling thought had occurred to him. He remembered that Nipper, on the morning after the first murder, had asked him if he had ever heard of a place called Gallows Mere. Lee had not. He had thought little of it at the time.

Now, unexpectedly, he heard that Whitaker's, occupied by Dr. Zangari, the astronomer, had been known in earlier years as Gallows Mere.

The information came to him as a surprise. And in this very meadow, not a quarter of a mile from Gallows Mere, three sheep had been shot dead in mistake for three schoolboys!

At the very outset, of course, Nelson Lee had thought of the Italian astronomer, and he had advised Inspector Lennard to check up on Dr. Zangari—advising Lennard, at the same time, not to be influenced by the

fact that Dr. Zangari was an Italian. His nationality might have been a mere coincidence.

Lennard, in fact, had quickly obtained the information that Dr. Zangari was a man of the highest repute in astronomical circles. It had seemed incredible that he could be connected in any way with the grim events which had been occurring in the district of late. Even Nelson Lee had not seriously considered Dr. Zangari as a possible suspect.

But the great detective was now "getting hot." Yet he did not lose sight of the possibility that Dr. Zangari might be a mere victim of the gang which was located somewhere in this rural countryside. Certainly, every scrap of information which could be gathered concerning Dr. Zangari indicated that he was a harmless astronomer and a man of unimpeachable honesty and integrity. But—

In view of the events of the night, and the proximity of the three dead sheep to Gallows Mere, it was a big "but." Nelson Lee determined to have a close look at this picturesque old country house where Dr. Zangari had established his observatory.

He and Mr. Wilkinson parted—after Lee had once again warned the farmer to say nothing. He returned to his car, and then drove slowly on until, presently, he passed the gates of Gallows Mere and saw the quaint old house standing back from the road. He saw something else. The mere! And, in a flash, he remembered how Nipper, Watson, and Handforth had returned last night—soaked to the skin!

Lee was willing to allow one coincidence. But two, no. And when his keen eyes detected a rough fence on the inner side of the Gallows Mere hedge, he was convinced. That fence was green, and had been painted so that it exactly resembled the evergreen foliage of the hedge, and was thus less noticeable.

"This," said Lee, alighting from the car, "is most interesting!"

At this early hour the house showed no sign of activity. The blinds of the upper windows were drawn. Everything was very peaceful.

Yet Nelson Lee had a feeling, which he could not rid himself of, that hidden eyes were watching him. He wondered if he was in any danger, and decided that, daring as the mysterious criminals were they would not venture to take any definite action in broad daylight and on the public road. But if Lee entered the grounds of Gallows Mere, as he felt inclined, he might not be so safe. He was trying to make up his mind what move he should make, if any, when his attention was attracted by the purring approach of a small car. He glanced round and his lips tightened. The car was a small Morris saloon, and in it were Handforth, Church, and McClure.

Too late, Handforth saw Nelson Lee. It was impossible to turn in that narrow road, so Handforth immediately accelerated with the intention of driving straight past. But the detective quickly stepped into the middle of the road, and held up a detaining hand.

"Now you've done it, Handy," said Church. "Oh, my hat! We told you not to come!"

"How the dickens

was I to know that Mr. Lee would be here?" grumbled Handforth, as he applied the brakes. "He doesn't know anything about Gallows Mere."

Church and McClure were more than fed-up. They were nervous. Handforth, awakening early, had routed them out, and had insisted upon taking this jaunt. He wanted, he said, to have another look at Gallows Mere by daylight. There wasn't any chance that they would be in danger, and it would probably be their last opportunity. For, as he grumblingly explained, as soon as the rising bell went it was any odds—after what had happened during the night—that Nelson Lee would come along and tell them that they were gated, as he had half-threatened.

It was a shock to Handforth to find Nelson Lee outside the very gates of Gallows Mere itself.

"You are up early, young man," said Nelson Lee smoothly, as the boys alighted from the car.

"Yes, sir," said Handforth. "Just having a little run, you know. Nothing like the early morning."

"Considering you had so little sleep, Handforth, I am surprised that you should get up long before the rising-bell," replied Lee. "Come now. You needn't think you can hoodwink me. Why did you come in this particular direction? You were not, by any chance, interested in this old house?"

"By George! House?" said Handforth, looking at the rambling buildings with a start of surprise. "What do you think of that, you chaps? There's a house here!"

"And somebody's coming out of it," said McClure. "It's Dr. Zangari himself!"

Lee turned sharply, and his hand went swiftly and mechanically to his gun. However, there seemed no reason for alarm. The figure which came down the drive was that of a benevolent-looking man wearing a quaint smoking-cap. It was, indeed, Dr. Zangari, and he was smiling with charming amiability as he reached the gate.

"You will pardon me, yes?" he said apologetically. "But I think, sir, I recognise you. Are you not Mr. Lee, of the big school? You will permit me to introduce myself, sir? I am Dr. Zangari, and it is with pleasure I regard myself as your neighbour. I have been here more than a year, yet I regret we have not before met."

"I was just asking the boys why they were out so early, Dr. Zangari," said Lee. "Perhaps you wondered why we had halted opposite your gate—"

"But no. I am glad," said Dr. Zangari quickly. "I wonder, mio caro amico, if you will do me the honour of entering my house, and then, perhaps, you will inspect my observatory? I am so proud of it. You will come, yes? The boys, too. They are welcome."

"It is very kind of you, Dr. Zangari," replied Lee, thinking rapidly.

Handforth, his face flushed, had started whistling, and the tune, although wobbly, instantly impressed itself on Lee. "Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to the fly?" Handforth could not have made his meaning clearer if he had actually spoken the words. And Nelson Lee knew that Handforth was trying to convey a warning. Indeed, the invitation of Dr. Zangari's might well be a sinister one—behind its apparent innocence.

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But the detective, rapidly reviewing the possibilities, deemed it fantastic that Zangari should attempt any treachery. Nelson Lee was armed, and he was on his guard.

"I shall be delighted to accept, Dr. Zangari," he said, looking straight into the other's eyes. "The boys, too."

"If you go, sir, we'll go!" replied Handforth promptly. "Yes, rather!"

Dr. Zangari, charming, courteous, led the way up the drive to the house. They all entered. A dignified-looking manservant was bowing and scraping; a maidservant, dustpan and brush in hand, came out of one of the rooms. No scene could have been more innocent.

"You will take breakfast, yes?" asked Dr. Zangari. "It will give me much pleasure—"

"I am sorry, but we shall have to be back at the school for breakfast," interrupted Lee. "If you will show us your observatory, however, we shall be most gratified."

"As you wish, my good friend," said Dr. Zangari. "You will come this way, please. My observatory, it is my great pride."

They passed out through a rear doorway at the back of the hall. The garden was well kept, and some distance away from the house rose the quaint-looking building which Handforth & Co. had seen, in the gloom of the night. Dr. Zangari led the way towards it, unlocked a door, and soon they were climbing stairs. Nelson Lee, by this time, was convinced that he was to be shown a perfectly authentic observatory. He was right.

The place was a marvel of modern science. The telescopes, and the various other instruments, were beautiful pieces of work. Dr. Zangari showed his visitors charts; he told them of new stars he had discovered. He was writing a book, he said, and his knowledge of astronomy was profound.

At last the inspection was over, and they all went out again. Handforth and his chums, their first fears allayed, were nevertheless jumpy. From here they could see the orchard—yes, and in the distance, the sinister barn. Somehow, it didn't look sinister by daylight.

"Is this your orchard, sir?" asked Handforth boldly.

"Ah, my young friend, I'm afraid I take not the interest in orchards," replied Dr. Zangari, with a shrug. "The trees, I fear, have been neglected. Come, you shall see. Many of them bear no fruit, for they are choked with creepers."

There seemed to be a hidden meaning in his words. He led the way under the trees, and pointed out the creepers. He touched them. They were real creepers. The boys said nothing, but they looked at one another strangely. There were no steel cables festooned among the trees now.

"Anything in that old barn?" asked Handforth, pointing.

Church and McClure held their breaths, and, inwardly, they called Handforth a crazy chump.

"The barn?" repeated Dr. Zangari, puzzled. "Ah, I see! The little building with the roof of straw? You call it 'barn'. The word is new to me, I fear. It is a building I do not use," he added indifferently. "I believe, at one time, it belonged to a farm. There is nothing in it. You would like to see, yes?"

Before they could answer he led the way to that building—which, Handforth & Co. knew, was full of mysterious machinery. Dr. Zangari opened a ramshackle tarred door, and the daylight flooded the interior.

The barn was empty—with a dusty, chaff-littered floor!

The Car of Death!

NELSON LEE was the only one, perhaps, who did not appreciate the grim comedy. Yet he suspected that something was going on. There was a slight change in Dr. Zangari's expression; his smile had become suggestively mocking.

Handforth, Church, and McClure could only stand there blinking. But they knew why they had been brought here. Since their dramatic adventure of last night, the barn had been cleared of its machinery; everything had been taken out, even the electric light wires, and the engine which provided the motive power. There was nothing left. The floor had been littered with chaff until the barn looked exactly the same as any other barn would look which had been long disused.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" ejaculated Handforth, at length.

"You expected something—different?" asked Dr. Zangari, his voice as mocking as his smile.

"Nunno, sir. I—I mean—"

Handforth could find no words. He knew that he and his chums had been robbed of their sensational story. If they had gone to the police, telling them that they had been brought to this barn, bound hand and foot, and had escaped after spilling some mysterious boiling chemicals, the story, after investigation, would have been set down as a school-boy jape.

There was no evidence against Dr. Zangari whatever. He had deliberately invited Nelson Lee and the three juniors

in so that he could show them his authentic observatory, and the orchard and the barn, now stripped of their former mysteries. Zangari, in short, was safeguarding himself.

Handforth and his chums were too inwardly excited to take notice of the polite conversation between Nelson Lee and Dr. Zangari. They were flabbergasted. They found themselves, at last, on the front drive, after shaking hands with their host.

"But how was it done?" Handforth kept whispering to his chums. "How did they shift all that stuff in the time?"

"What are you talking about, Handforth?" asked Lee, giving him a keen look.

"Oh, nothing, sir!" said Handforth hurriedly.

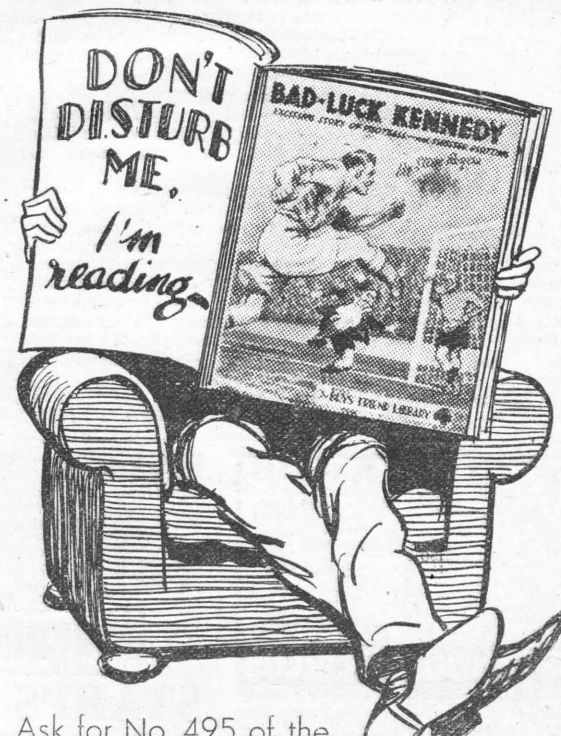
"You acted rather strangely in the back garden, young man," continued Lee. "Why did you want to see into the barn?"

"I—I thought there might be something interesting in there, sir," said Handforth. "Well, we'll be getting into our car. Better drive straight back to the school, hadn't we, sir?"

"Yes, I think so," said Lee, and his voice was unusually grim.

They started off; but scarcely had they travelled half a mile before another car came along the narrow road. It was driven by William Napoleon Browne of the Fifth—and the passengers were Nipper, Tommy Watson, Tregellis-West, and Archie Glenthorne! The five other boys "in the know"!

"Well, this is very interesting," said Nelson Lee, as he stopped his car and got out. "Precisely the eight boys who were on the scene when the aeroplane



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crashed the other night. How is it, Nipper, that you came in this direction this morning, too?"

"Nipper had no answer ready. As a matter of fact, he had been alarmed to find Handforth & Co. missing when he had looked into their dormitory. Knowing Handforth's recklessness, and suspecting where he had gone, he had immediately aroused Browne and the others, and they had set off for Gallows Mere. Little had they expected to run into Nelson Lee!"

"You'd better not try to invent any answer, Nipper," continued Lee gravely. "I think the time has come for me to speak some plain words to you fellows. You have been playing with fire—and I believe that some of you have only escaped being burnt by the merest fluke." He looked at Handforth. "I can't force you to tell me what I want to know, Handforth, so I'm going to tell you!"

"Tell me what, sir?"

"During the night, you and Church and McClure came to Gallows Mere—but you went to the rear of the house," said Lee relentlessly. "Whether you entered that old barn or not, I don't know; but on your way back to the school you suspected that you were being followed. You played a trick on your shadower. You tied an electric torch to a sheep—"

"Great Scott!" gasped Handforth. "How—how did you know, sir?"

"I did not know—but I know now," replied Lee. "Those three sheep were found dead this morning. They were shot. The bullets were intended for your three boys. Now, listen to me, Handforth—and everybody else. The man who was captured at St. Frank's last night was murdered in his cell at Bannington Police Station. Another man came to the school after you had gone to sleep, Handforth—and attempted to kill you. He, too, is dead—a victim of his own poison gas."

"Poison gas!"

"Begad!"

"Ods ghastliness and horrors!"

"Two more dead during the night," muttered Nipper. "It's—it's horrible!"

"I'm glad you realise it, Nipper," continued Lee, almost harshly. "I'm speaking to you in this way now because it is high time we had a 'show down.' You boys are in deadly danger, and you had better realise it. I know that you have definite suspicions of Dr. Zangari and Gallows Mere. I suspect that you know more than I do—and I am telling you to give me your information at once. What is it you know? Why did you come to Gallows Mere last night, Nipper? You nearly met your death in the mere, did you not?"

"I'd rather not say, sir!" said Nipper steadily.

"Then I'll say!" burst out Church, in a sudden flood. "Blow the oath we gave! The man was a crook, wasn't he? And these people at Gallows Mere are crooks. They did try to murder Nipper last night, sir. We had a package—that aeroplane pilot gave it to us, and made us swear that we would deliver it at Gallows Mere—"

"Stop!" shouted Nipper. "You can't break your word—"

"Handforth and Mac and I came here during the night, too, sir. We were seized by men wearing black, and taken into that barn. It was full of machinery and—horrible chemicals. Handforth got us out by a trick, and he was jolly smart, too. But it was only by a miracle we escaped with our lives—and then we nearly got killed near St. Frank's, too. It's—it's too horrible for words!"

There was every excuse for Church. He was as honest as the day, and his word, in normal circumstances, was his bond. But just now he was on the verge of panic, and he scarcely knew what he was saying.

"You're ruining everything, you fat-head!" hissed Handforth.

"I am glad of this outburst, Church—which, I suspect, you will later regret," said Nelson Lee. "It is all for the best. I am beginning to see daylight now; and it is more than ever essential that you boys should be kept out of danger. I am not altogether sure that you are safe, even in daylight."

Never had Nelson Lee spoken truer words! For at that very moment, Dr. Zangari, at an upper window, was gazing down the road through powerful binoculars. One of his men had told him that the late visitors had halted on the road; that others had joined them. And now, Zangari, watching, could not keep the gloating evil from blazing in his eyes.

There were nine people on that lonely, deserted road—Nelson Lee, who had elected to investigate the case, and the eight boys who had been bound to secrecy.

"It is an opportunity which will never come again!" muttered Zangari feverishly. "Now! One swoop, and they are all silent for ever! Another mystery, yes, but who can connect it with me or my house? For they are the only ones in the world who believe that this house contains hidden secrets. They know nothing—but they suspect. They are dangerous. If I rid myself of them now I save endless trouble."

It was an idea borne of desperation. For Dr. Zangari, seeing Nelson Lee so

interested in his house, knew that his peril was acute. There would be risk in the wholesale slaughter he had in mind. But what of the alternative? What if he neglected this chance, and allowed Nelson Lee and the eight school-boys to return to St. Frank's? Then, indeed, would it be too late.

With a quick clenching of his fists he left the window and ran downstairs. He was apparently alone. Out in the back garden, so charming, so well kept, he strode to a raised bank of mossy grass, on either side of which rocks were arranged with pretty flower-beds amongst them. He bent down and pressed something beneath one of the rocks. Instantly, an extraordinary thing happened. The grassy bank began moving backwards, into a green mass of creepers and ferns! A narrow concrete runway, sloping steeply, was revealed. It was the entrance of a secret garage! And there stood a gleaming automobile of the racing type. It was ordinary in appearance.

"This morning, the death car shall be put to the test!" muttered Dr. Zangari, as he made some quick preparations. "The time is not yet ripe, but circumstances compel me to act."

He examined the long, torpedo-shaped headlamps of the car; he switched them on, and lights blazed out. Actually, each lamp was a silent machine-gun, its mechanism hidden within the torpedo casing—silent, deadly weapons. The lights, which switched on, would show up the victims, and a touch of a button would send death streaming out from each lamp. Dr. Zangari leaped into the driving-seat. He touched the button. Phut-phut-phut! There was hardly a sound, but a stream of bullets splattered against the back wall of Gallows Mere.

"So! As they stand in the road they shall die!" vowed Zangari evilly. "And if the car must be sacrificed, so be it. A year of work for nothing! But it is early; the roads are empty. I may be able to get back."

A minute later he was driving the car out; he passed through a gateway at the side of the house, but before he emerged upon the road he had concealed himself in a massive crash helmet and goggles. His features were completely hidden.

He drove out into the road, and he uttered a low cry of satisfaction; for his nine intended victims were in full sight.

He drove on, and his hand was on the button which would spread death!

(Can Nelson Lee and the St. Frank's boys escape being wiped out by Zangari? Move big-thrill chapters next week.)

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