

"They may all be fastened," said Blake, who had a fashion of looking at the dark side of things.

"The door's locked," exclaimed Richardson in an angry tone as he tried the door.

"Don't make so much noise, you chump; you'll raise the dead," warned Blake in an emphatic undertone.

"We must get in at the window," said Richardson, descending the steps, followed by Blake.

Pierce assisted by his companions climbed up to one of the windows, but found it fastened solidly.

"There's no use trying," grumbled Blake. "Everything is locked up tight; and, if we had gotten in, there's not one chance in a thousand that we would have found the questions."

"Cold-footer," retorted Richardson. "The very security of the place makes me think those questions are in there, and, if we don't find them, I positively know that it means another year of rhetoric for me. I'll get in if I have to break in," he added in such a determined manner that he would, doubtless, have carried out his threat if it had been necessary.

As Richardson and Blake were talking, Pierce had gone around the corner of the building looking for some means of ingress, and now returned, calling excitedly, "Come on, fellows; I've found a window that's loose."

They followed Pierce to one of the small windows on the north side of the building and soon, they were inside. By means of one of Pierce's skeleton keys, an entrance was effected to the Rhetoric room, and the three conspirators stealthily approached the desk.

Blake lighted the candle, which he tried to conceal under his coat to avoid illuminating the room.

As Richardson and Blake were examining the contents of the drawer, Pierce, making a quick step backward, exclaimed in a voice of alarm, "Who's that!"

Richardson raised his arms in an attitude of fear, and prepared himself for flight; while Blake jumped as if he had been bitten, dropped the candle, which was extinguished,