SPLENDID STORY OF THE GREAT REVOLT AT ST. FRANK'S!

THE
NELSON LEE
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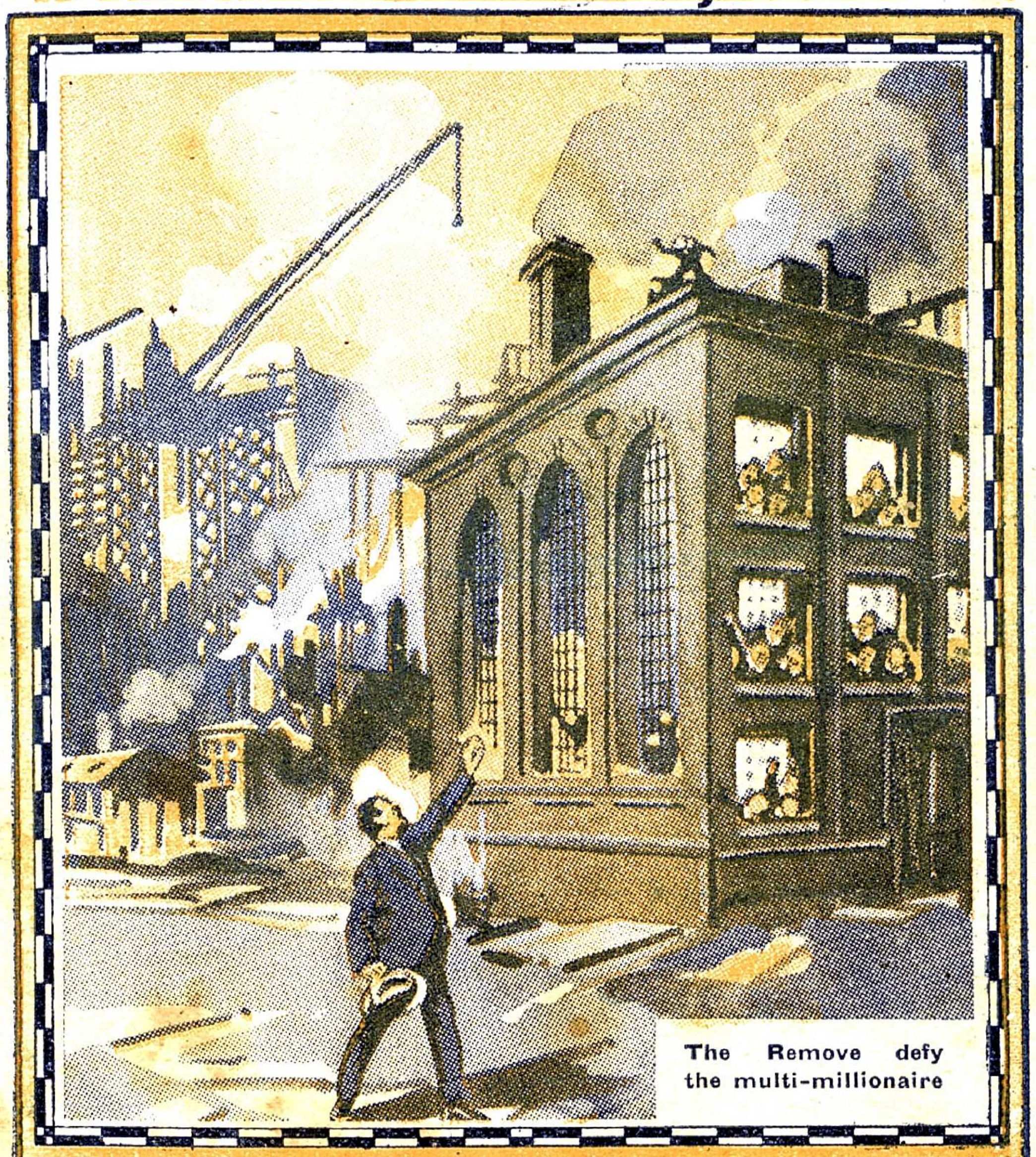
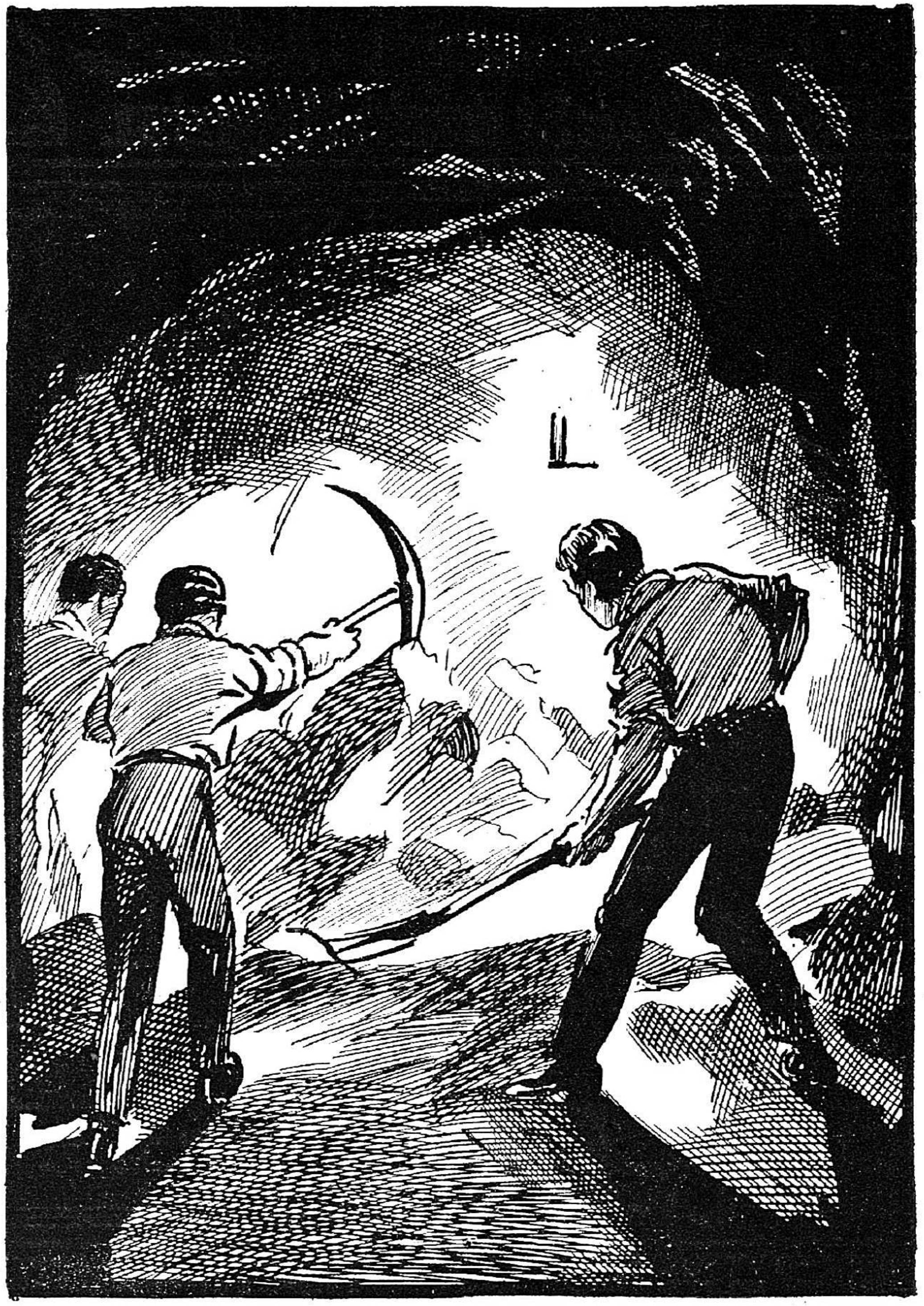


The Remove defy the multi-millionaire

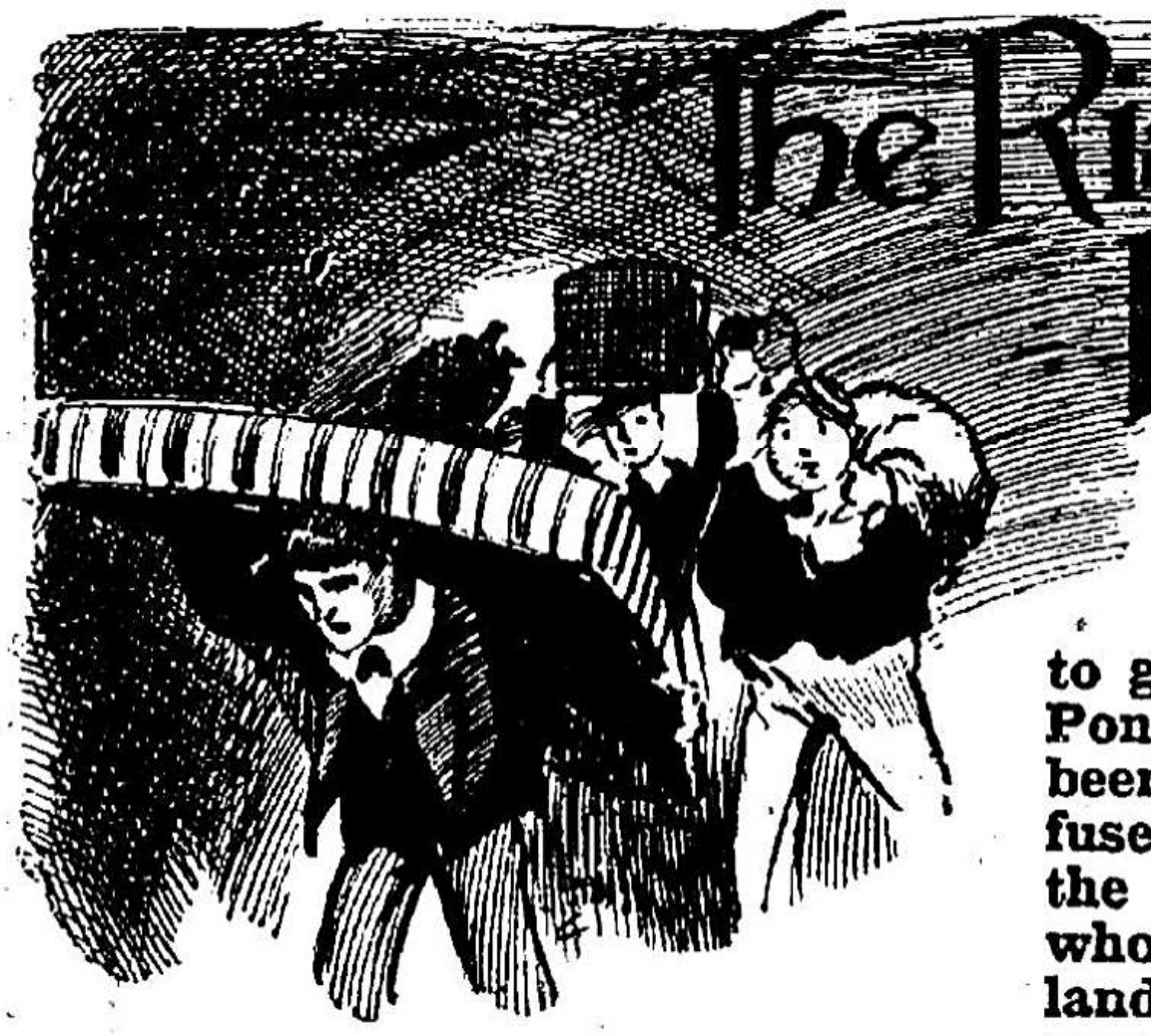
THE RISING OF THE REMOVE!

Story of the Great Barring-Out Led by Nipper.

No. 459. EVERY WEDNESDAY. March 22, 1924.



The gang of juniors in their shirt sleeves worked at their picks and shovels with an energy that would have been as good as a tonic to any ordinary gang of paid labourers.



The Rising of the Remove!

Last week's story described how Handforth led the Remove in a premature revolt that came to grief against the new Head, Mr. Ponsonby Small. Dr. Stafford has been forced to resign because he refused to be dictated to by Mr. Smith, the German-American millionaire, who has bought up St. Frank's and land adjoining, upon which he is erecting factories to the detriment of the school. The new Head, appointed by Mr. Smith, has imposed a number of impossible restrictions on the Remove, and the latter have accordingly declared war on the two men. But this time Nipper takes the helm, which means that serious trouble is brewing for Mr. Small.

THE EDITOR.

The Narrative Related by Nipper and Set Down by E. Searles Brooks

CHAPTER I.

WILLY'S DISCOVERY!

WILLY HANDFORTH gave an exclamation of startled, horrified dismay.

He clutched wildly at the air, but the ground opened beneath his feet, and he went slithering helplessly into the black abyss. There was a rattle of stones, of loose earth, and silence followed.

Three minutes earlier, Handforth minor had had no indication that any such disaster as this was about to occur to him. It came upon him by surprise, without the least warning, and he had no opportunity of saving himself.

To be quite accurate, the leading light of the Third Form at St. Frank's had been down to the village on a somewhat sinister errand. All juniors at the old school, in consequence of Mr. Ponsonby Small's orders, were forbidden to go beyond the school grounds.

And Willy had been breaking bounds with that cool calmness which was characteristic of him. It was evening, and faintly moonlight, but there were plenty of black shadows where a small figure might lurk—and Willy, after all, was capable of flitting about like a ghost.

He had met with no trouble down in the village.

He had, in fact, visited the chemist's, there to purchase the various ingredients of a kind of poison gas which Willy was manufacturing. The scheme, as he had outlined it to his chums, was to produce a perfectly ghastly perfume in the form of gas, and use this medium for the filling of perfectly harmless bladders.

Exactly what the Third-Formers meant to do with these noxious bladders remains a bit of a problem, but there can be no question that Mr. Suncliffe, the Third Form master, would subsequently know something about them.

Willy, triumphant, was on his way back from the village with his spoils, and with practically all his pocket-money gone. He had intended keeping five shillings intact, but a certain luscious odour halted him as he passed the village tuck shop, and his determination had been instantly sapped away.

Briefly, Willy had succumbed, and he emerged from the tuck shop two shillings short of his capital, but with a warm, comfortable feeling under his waistcoat. And he was in quite a happy mood as he nipped into the far corner of the playing fields.

He had thought it unwise to come up the lane in the ordinary way. Somebody might see him climbing up the wall and dropping into the Triangle. So it was safer, all round, to take to the fields, and then calmly saunter into the Triangle from the direction of Little Side. Even if he was suspected of breaking bounds, there could be no actual proof.

Willy had paused for a short time, watching the activities in Cyclone City—that busy encampment where the employees of the William K. Smith Manufacturing Co., Inc., had their temporary homes. Mr. Smith, the president, had come under Willy's watchful eye, too, as he went round on a tour of inspection.

At last Willy grew tired of watching, so he slipped under the hedge, and gained the playing-fields with no further casualty than an unfortunate tear in the left leg of his trousers. This was a mere detail, and Willy paid no attention to it.

But he was slightly grazed personally, and as he rubbed the tender spot, he informed the stars that all barbed wire was an abomination, and that if he had his own way he would make it a criminal offence to manufacture the stuff.

Having relieved himself in this way, Willy crept on with caution. Reckless young beggar though he was, he knew the consequences of detection, and he progressed with great caution.

It was a short cut to slip behind the pavilion, where there was a space of about four feet between the rear pavilion wall and the hedge. It was an easy matter to reach the Triangle after this point had been negotiated.

The fag felt his way with care, and his thoughts were far away as he stepped through the long grass and the dead leaves. And then, suddenly, before he could even attempt to pull himself up, the ground shook beneath him.

It was a most extraordinary sensation.

It seemed as though he had trodden on a loose brick. But it wasn't merely a brick, but the whole ground under his foot. Expecting to find solidity, and finding a quaking foothold, the junior was thrown completely off his balance.

"What the dickens——" he began, in alarm.

He attempted to pull himself back, but it was useless. The ground beneath his other foot crumbled away, too. And then, throwing his arms up, he dived headlong into the yawning black chasm which opened up before him.

As I have already described, Willy shot downwards, dazed, bewildered, and not a little scared.

He went slithering down giddily.

Bumped from side to side, bruised, battered, he suddenly came to a jarring halt. And a great mass of loose stones and earth came hurtling down on the top of him until he was nearly buried.

One would think that this was almost enough to gravely injure any human being. But Willy, according to his elder brother, was not a human being. It appeared that he was made of rubber. For, as soon as the avalanche had ceased, the pile of stones and earth heaved, and Willy emerged.

"Great pip!" he spluttered. "That's done it!"

He was utterly startled. It was impossible for him to have fallen down a cliff, or a gully, because there was nothing but solid ground behind the junior pavilion. Willy ought to know—he had seen it thousands of times. Comparatively flat grass land, sloping down towards the river.

How, therefore, had he plunged down in this way?

Obviously the ground wasn't as solid as it looked. And by some extraordinary chance he had tumbled down a kind of shaft. He made no efforts at investigation just yet, for he was in no fit condition.

In the first place, his mouth was full of earth, and his ears were choked up, about four pounds of gravel had slipped down his collar, and his eyes were full of dust.

For several minutes, therefore, Willy was fully occupied.

Some of the dirt he swallowed, this being a simple way of getting rid of it, and for some time he sneezed continuously. Feeling slightly better, he sat down—to rise abruptly—some of the stones having slipped right down, and now being in a most convenient spot. However, by shaking himself like a dog, Willy gained greater comfort.

He had several bruises, his arm was scratched, and his left knuckles were nastily grazed. But he took little notice of these hurts, and produced a box of matches. And after he had struck a light, he gazed in wonder.

Above him stretched a long, jagged kind of slit through the earth—a shaft which curved abruptly to the left, so that from his present position he could see no sign of the sky. Indeed, he had thought for an appalling moment that he was buried alive—that the earth had caved in over the opening at the top.

But a reassuring draught came down from above and blew the match out.

"Oh, well, I'm not so badly off, after all," Willy told himself. "It all depends whether the hole's big enough to slip through. I can climb the shaft, anyway. Thank goodness it's not perpendicular!"

A glance had told him that the opening in the rocky earth was so sloping, and so uneven that ascending would be a simple matter.

He struck another match, and then started.

He expected himself to be in a mere natural opening in the ground. And he was startled to find himself gazing upon stonework—a wall, old and crumbling, but most distinctly a man-made wall.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" muttered the fag.

He took a step forward and struck another match. The light was indifferent, for it persisted in flickering, but there was sufficient glow to show Willy a clear and unmistakable picture of a tunnel—a low tunnel with an arched roof which went mysteriously into the bowels of the earth.

There was something weird about it—and although the junior's nerves were strong enough, an overwhelming desire to get out of this place swept over him. And this desire became stronger after the match had flickered out.

And so, without wasting another moment, he felt his way to the shaft and commenced clawing his way upwards.

It was a ticklish business in the dark, and more than once Willy was obliged to pause and strike a match. Pieces of the rocky earth kept crumbling away as he mounted, and now and again Willy would slip back a few feet.

He was intensely relieved when he caught a vision of the stars gleaming above him to the left. And then, after a last effort, he hauled himself out of the gap in the ground, and sat there, near the edge, breathing in the cool air.

"Well, thank goodness I'm out," he muttered. "I don't mind a bit of excitement, but I'm blessed if I like being buried alive!"

He got to his feet, and stood staring down at the yawning abyss. It was simply a hole in the ground, about three feet long by two feet wide. It was impossible for anybody to walk between the pavilion and the hedge without tumbling into this cavity.

It struck Willy that more ground might give way, and he hastily moved away from the spot. The next time he might not be so lucky. And he badly needed to go indoors, to change his clothes. He fancied, too, that he needed a wash. So he made off towards the Triangle.

He was just passing the gymnasium when two or three figures loomed up, and it was too late for Willy to dodge. He found himself face to face with me. Reggie Pitt and Tommy Watson and Tregellis-West were there, too.

"What on earth——" I began, staring.

"It's all right—don't be scared!" said Willy. "It's only me."

"You're nothing but a walking scarecrow!" I said. "What on earth have you been doing to yourself, Handforth minor?"

"You mean what has the earth been doing to me?" retorted Willy. "I've just had a narrow escape. In fact, I was nearly buried alive!"

"That's rather hard lines on the Third!" remarked Pitt.

"What do you mean—nearly buried alive?" I said curiously.

"Exactly what I say," replied the fag. "I was walking along in the playing fields when the earth suddenly gave way, and I slid right down a shaft, and I was nearly buried by the avalanche."

"Anything else?" asked Watson.

"Yes—I struck some matches, and found that I was in a tunnel," replied Willy. "It strikes me as being jolly queer."

"It strikes me that if you can't invent a better yarn than that, the best thing you can do is to give up fiction altogether," said Pitt. "The nerve! Calmly asking us to swallow such rot! The fact is, you've been breaking bounds, and you've been having a fight with somebody."

"Look here——"

"I shouldn't be surprised if you've had a set-to with some of Smith's men," continued Pitt. "Listen to me, O youth of much rashness! One of these days you'll be sacked—like your giddy brother was last week."

Willy sniffed.

"Yes, and then my pater will come down and put things right," he said.

"You can't trust your pater to do that sort of thing a second time," put in Watson. "Things like that only happen once in a lifetime. Your major ought to think himself lucky that he's back, safe and sound."

Willy snorted.

"If you think I'm going to talk about my major, you've made a mistake!" he snapped. "I'm smothered in earth, and I've got to go and get changed. And I'm going back to investigate that shaft later on."

I took Handforth minor by the arm.

"Are you serious about that?" I asked keenly.

"Of course I am."

"It isn't just a yarn?"

"Have you ever known me to spoof anybody?" asked Willy indignantly. "I tell you it's a fact—honour bright! If you don't believe me, you can go and see for yourselves."

"Where's the spot?"

"Just behind the junior pavilion," said Willy. "But don't tell my major. I'm going to send him behind the pavilion for a lark, and let him fall down that shaft. I don't see why I should be the only one!"

And the hero of the Third marched off.

CHAPTER II.

INTO THE ENEMY'S CAMP!

REGGIE PITT looked at me dubiously.

"Do you believe it?" he asked.

"Yes—he gave us his word, honour bright," I replied. "He's a young bounder, but he's truthful enough. It wouldn't be a bad idea if we went along and had a look at this place. As a matter of fact, something has just occurred to me."

"Something's occurred to you?"

"Yes—an explanation."

"Good old Sherlock Holmes!" said Pitt. "Now then, my dear Watson, it's up to us to accompany the great man to this spot. The Adventure of the Hole in the Ground. Sounds quite romantic."

"What about our prep.?" asked Tommy Watson.

"Prep.!" repeated Pitt. "Ye gods and little goldfishes! He talks about prep. when there's an adventure in the wind! Work, my son, can wait. If pleasure interferes with work—drop work!"

"Begad! That's a shockin' axiom!" said Sir Montie, shaking his head.

At this moment Edward Oswald Handforth came striding up. He was evidently on his way to the playing fields, and he paused irresolutely as he caught sight of our dim figures in the gloom.

"Whither away, friend?" asked Pitt.

"Oh, just going for a stroll," said Handforth carelessly.

"A stroll!" echoed Pitt. "It strikes me you're going for a dive, too! I'm blessed if that little wretch hasn't kept his word! Calmly sending Handforth to his doom! And poor old Handy swallowed it!"

Handforth glared.

"What the dickens are you getting at?" he asked gruffly.

"Were you going behind the junior pavilion?" I asked.

"Why—yes!" said Handy. "How did you know?"

"Willy told us that he was going to send you there," I replied. "What yarn did he spin you to fool you like this?"

"Fool me!" repeated Handforth, giving a start. "Why, he—he told me that there were some footprints there, and that if I hurried up I might get on the track of something serious! He said I should probably drop into an interesting problem!"

"The young terror!" I said. "Handy, your minor sent you behind the pavilion on purpose to make you share his own fate. I'll give him a talking to later on."

We couldn't help grinning.

"You're mad!" said Handforth. "You're talking double Dutch! What do you mean—share his fate? I gave one glance at his appearance, and I deduced in a second that he'd been having a fight with a gang of ruffians! I'm just off to get some data, and make a hypothesis of the case!"

"Sorry, Mr. Trackett Grim, but your theory happens to be wrong," said Pitt. "Willy didn't fight with any ruffians—he fell down a hole in the ground. Apparently, he thought it too good to enjoy single-handed, so he sent you to join in the fun. It wouldn't be a bad idea if we explained."

Handforth evidently thought that we were lunatics—until we gave him a full account of Willy's strange adventure. And then Handforth's eagerness was so great that he almost forgot to be indignant.

"A tunnel!" he said keenly, his imagination beginning to work like lightning. "That must be one of the undiscovered secret passages that lead from the old vaults! I shouldn't be surprised if there's a treasure chamber down there, with chests of jewels——"

"And sundry bags of doubloons, and pieces of eight!" said Pitt, nodding. "Good old Handy! Always ready with a romantic explanation! But instead of talking, why not go and have a look at the tunnel?"

I was already making my preparations. Watson had bunked indoors to get his electric torch—mine was already in my pocket. By the time he returned, we had also secured a length of rope, and we felt that we were prepared for the enterprise.

And without making any display of our movments, we cautiously strolled across to the playing fields. We didn't want the whole Junior School to be talking about this discovery. If it turned out to be of no importance, the talk would be futile; if it turned out to be significant, any sort of talk would be dangerous. Silence, after all, is a golden rule.

There were five of us in the party, and we resolved to keep the matter entirely to ourselves for the time being. I had warned Willy to say nothing, and I was certain that he would keep faith.

Handforth was quite willing to follow my lead. After his disastrous experiment of the previous week, his usual arrogance was not quite so prominent. For Edward Oswald had found that the duties of a leader are both arduous and responsible.

Handforth's rebellion, leading to a barring-out, had collapsed after only a brief twelve hours. And this failure had left the leader of Study D in a bitter, disappointed state.

He had assumed the title of Remove captain—but, of course, the collapse of the barring-out had deprived him of this honour. And I was now skipper again by general vote. So everything was going on just as usual.

Handforth, indeed, had had a very narrow escape. After being expelled, he would have permanently suffered this fate but for the firm action of his father—who promptly brought him back to St. Frank's, and commanded Mr. Ponsonby Small to re-instate him. Either the Head obeyed, or received a sound thrashing—and the Head preferred to obey.

This, alone, proved the character of the man, and the little shred of respect he had engendered among certain fellows was now destroyed. Mr. Ponsonby Small was regarded as a mere figure-head—as the tool of William K. Smith, the millionaire.

And life at St. Frank's—particularly in the Junior School—was by no means pleasant. Without the use of our studies, with the boys of the River House School saddled upon us, with a hundred and one irksome restrictions in force, we felt that life was hardly worth living.

And Mr. Ponsonby Small was responsible only because he received his orders from the German-American. To jib was to invite

either a flogging or the sack. The earlier talk of revolt had died down, and some of the juniors were getting resigned to the new order of things.

But the Remove in general looked to me to mend all their troubles. Handforth had failed them—he was a wash-out. And so the juniors passed a vote of confidence in my ability, and calmly left me to overcome the problem. And unless I thought of something fairly soon, the Remove would lose faith in me, and I should be cast aside. It is no sinecure to be the leader of a crowd of irresponsible schoolboys. If you do well they idolise you—if you make a blunder, they are ready to condemn you unheard.

But I was not likely to make the same mistake that Handforth had made. He had learned the folly of unpreparedness. I was moving slowly—feeling my way with care, and making all sorts of preparations in secret. And Willy's discovery of an old tunnel recalled something to my mind that made my heart beat a little faster.

The matter demanded an instant investigation—for if the tunnel was what I thought it to be, Chance had played nicely into our hands. The evening was still quite young, and as there were no restrictions upon using the playing-fields, we felt quite secure.

Nevertheless, we moved with caution, and nobody saw the five dim figures creep along the hedge, and vanish behind the picturesque pavilion. I led the way, and as soon as we had gained the cover of the pavilion wall, I flashed out my electric torch.

By keeping the light directed towards the ground, there was little or no chance of anybody spotting us. And I gave a little whistle as I saw the gaping rent in the ground.

"By Jove!" I murmured. "It looks as though an earthquake had happened here. It goes right down, too—just as Willy said."

"But—but how on earth did it happen?" demanded Handforth.

"Willy says the earth gave way under his feet," exclaimed Pitt. "Of course, it must have been cracked beforehand—that's obvious. I suppose we'd better fix that rope somewhere, and use it as a support."

One end of the rope was tied to a stout sapling that grew near the hedge, and the other end was thrown down the inky chasm. I was the first to descend, after warning the others not to come down until I called up. For the rope, although stout, had its limitations.

I descended with greater ease than Willy had done. Nevertheless, by the time I reached the bottom I was pretty well smothered in gravel and dust. And one flash of my torch made me feel comfortable. For the thought had occurred to me that this ground might cave in at any moment,

He attempted to pull himself back, but it was useless. The ground beneath his other foot crumbled away, too. And then, throwing his arms up, he dived to the yawning black chasm which opened up before him.

burying me alive. I was convinced, however, that the place was safe.

I jerked the rope, and then the other juniors descended one after the other. After that we entered the stone tunnel, and examined it with interest.

"Don't you recognise an old friend?" I asked keenly.

"Yes, it seems a bit familiar," said Watson, scratching his head.

"Familiar!" repeated Pitt. "Why, this is the tunnel that leads to Willard's Island! Don't you remember? A part of it collapsed months ago— oh, when we were up against old Colonel Clinton, I think. Anyway, the roof caved in, and we couldn't use the tunnel any more."

"Then how is it that we're in the tunnel now?" asked Handforth obtusely.

"My dear ass, the collapse was nearer the school," I exclaimed. "Can't you see that we've dropped into it further along.

"And this means, barring accidents, that we can walk straight through to Willard's Island."

"By Jingo!" said Pitt, taking a deep breath.

"You've scented the possibilities then?" I asked.

"You've said a mouthful—as Adams would remark," replied Pitt. "My only hat! We'd better look into this straight away. It may be of the utmost importance to our future plans."

I nodded.

"Just what I was thinking," I agreed. "This tunnel is still blocked, and we can't

reach the school exit. But we ought to be able to get to the Willard's Island exit. I can see all sorts of possibilities, my sons! A plan begins to unfold itself in your uncle's mighty brain!"

"But what about this shaft?" asked Watson. "How did the earth collapse?"

"There can be only one explanation," I replied. "We are comparatively near to Cyclone City, as you know, and I needn't tell you that Mr. Smith's enormous lorries have been pounding to and fro for the past two or three weeks. It simply means that the tremendous vibration of the earth caused the tunnel roof to collapse at this point, and the floor as well! Everything for ever—from this side, at least. Nature had blocked the tunnel, and nature had reopened it.

Very shortly the tunnel descended steeply, and straight downwards—leading, as I knew, beneath the river. But this was not startling, for the Stowe was comparatively shallow near the island.

When the tunnel became level again, we saw that the walls were moist and mildewed, and we walked through puddles. But there was no large amount of water. And then, almost at once, the stone passage went upwards in a steep ascent.

Far underground as we were, we could

fell down into the cavity, and so the tunnel itself is still clear."

"Let's hope it doesn't collapse again, dear old boys," said Sir Montie, gazing at the roof. "Begad! It would be somewhat frightful if the good old roof caved in—it would, really."

"Not much chance of that," I replied. "The collapse has exhausted itself, by what I can see. But let's push on, and see where we get to."

I led the way, and we progressed along the tunnel without incident. It was in quite excellent condition, and it seemed strange for us to be walking along this old secret passage which we had thought closed tell without difficulty that we had passed beneath the river, and were now mounting to the exit which led out into the cellars beneath Willard's Folly—that curious old building which crowned the little hill in the middle of the island.

Finally, the tunnel resolved itself into a staircase—a steep, half-circular affair built of stone, and ending in a strong stone slab which was fitted with hinges and a heavy and elaborate catch. From this side it was obviously a door—but from the other side it looked like a part of the cellar wall. Unless in the secret, no one would ever guess the truth. And I knew well enough that neither William K. Smith nor his

employees had the faintest idea of this secret tunnel.

"Well, here we are," I whispered. "You fellows wait here, and I'll slip out and see what's doing. I don't suppose I shall be more than a minute or two, but don't attempt to follow."

"Suppose you don't come back at all?" demanded Handforth.

"That'll mean that I'm collared, I expect," I replied. "I'll tell you what. Give me half an hour. If I haven't returned by that time, come and look for me. But I don't suppose I shall be more than three minutes."

Handforth badly wanted to come, too, but I convinced him that it was unnecessary. I didn't explain that he would probably give us away with his clumsiness. With tact, it was quite easy to handle Edward Oswald.

The catch of the cellar door was raised, and without a creak the stone slab moved back. A glance showed me that all was dark beyond. I slipped through, and the door was closed again.

I heard a faint, dull thudding sound as the catch slipped back into place. And then it seemed that I was shut off utterly and absolutely. The darkness was intense. I ventured to press the button of my torch, and the brief flash of light showed me that I was in a square stone cellar, which was empty, save for some heavy packing-cases on the other side. The door was closed.

But to my relief it opened instantly as soon as I pulled it. I was now in a small passage, and I knew from previous experience, without the aid of the light, that a short flight of stone steps led up to the ground floor of the curious building.

It may be wondered why I was so cautious—why I was anxious to investigate this old place. And the explanation is simple. Wilhelm Karl Schmidt—or William K. Smith, as he preferred to call himself—was conducting certain secret operations on Willard's Island, which he had bought freehold.

Here was a chance to see what Smith was up to.

It was general knowledge that his scheme was to harness the river in some way, and to transfer the power to his new generating station, just across the meadows. But nobody knew how Smith's engineers were planning to attain this end.

As declared enemies of Smith, the Remove was more than anxious to find out the truth. For if it was possible to frustrate Smith's plans without infringing the law, the Remove was ready to go ahead.

I realised that I was trespassing now, but this was hardly unlawful. And I wanted to have a look round while I had the opportunity.

Softly, I crept up the steps, and found myself in the big, bare stone chamber which filled up most of the ground floor of the "Folly." It was empty, and cold and dark. But not so dark that I couldn't detect a few objects lying about, including two big barrels near one of the corners.

And as I stood there, wondering what my next move should be, the question was decided from another quarter. I caught a flicker of light, I heard voices, and they grew louder. Instinctively, I knew that they were coming in my direction—and I didn't wait to be discovered.

Unable to reach the cellar stairs in time, there was only one course open to me. I dodged neatly and rapidly behind those convenient barrels.

CHAPTER III.

THE OPTION ON CURDLE'S PADDOCK.

MR. DINTY TODD entered the stone chamber, carrying a brilliant hand-lamp. He was accompanied by another member of Mr. Smith's staff, whom I had seen on two or three occasions.

He was a bullet-headed individual, attired in blue overalls—short, stumpy, and rather pleasant-looking. His plump face was very good-humoured, and it seemed to radiate smiles. I knew his name to be Schwann, and he was one of Smith's most skilful engineers. He was American, but without question he came of German stock.

"We'll need to get busy around this place to-morrow, Todd," said the engineer, as the two men paused. "Mr. Smith seems kind of impatient, and he was telling me that we've got to show some speed."

"Aw, gee! De boss makes me tired!" said Dinty Todd gruffly. "Dis job ain't no cinch, I'll tell de woild! Say, dere's enough woik for a whole gang for de next two weeks outside—before we start in here."

"I think Mr. Smith is putting some extra men on," said Schwann. "I'm going to see him to-night, and we'll get to know what the new orders are."

The two men conversed for some time on technical matters, which meant little or nothing to me. And I was by no means happy in my position. Discovery would not be very disastrous, but decidedly uncomfortable.

It would mean explanations, and if there should be no boat handy, my dry condition would occasion comment and inquiry. At any moment one of these men might glance behind the barrels, and then I should be discovered.

I was getting more impatient when there came the sound of a brisk step from outside. And through the crack between the two barrels I saw Mr. William K. Smith enter—quick, alert, and with an expression of unusual worry on his face. Indeed, his countenance was alight with keen anxiety. He even lacked his usual cigar.

"Say, Schwann—the man I'm looking for!" said Mr. Smith curtly. "Todd, get around the end of the island, and hustle those men up. They seem to be slacking down."

Mr. Todd lost no time in going—for he was well accustomed to this tone on the part of his employer. Mr. Smith waited for a few moments, and then drew the engineer over towards the barrels—little dreaming that a pair of ears were so near by. He had come here for privacy—and actually talked to Schwann in the hearing of an enemy. Not that I wanted to listen, at first. But my position made it imperative that I should be an unwilling eavesdropper.

"That cursed Muller," snapped Mr. Smith curtly. "The hound has double-crossed me! I want you, Schwann, to go into Bannington right now, as fast as my best auto will take you."

"Why, boss, what's wrong?" asked Schwann, who was apparently on intimate terms with his employer.

"I haven't got time to explain fully, but I'll just put you wise to the main facts," replied the millionaire. "I guess you know that the power station is being built on a field that is known as Curdle's Paddock?"

"Why, sure!"

"Until half an hour ago, I thought that piece of ground was mine—bought and paid for," went on Smith. "But that infernal fool of a Muller held the sale up—and instead of it going through, it's still open."

Schwann stared blankly.

"But we've started building—all our plans——"

"Sure! All our plans will go to pieces unless this thing is fixed right now—this evening," interrupted the millionaire grimly. "Muller was the one man I thought I could trust. He had this real estate buying business in his hands weeks ago—before I came along. And it seems that he secured an option on Curdle's Paddock, and gave fifty pounds as deposit."

"Why, then, it's O.K.," remarked Mr. Schwann.

"Rubbish!" snapped the other. "That option expires this evening at eight o'clock! And the deal hasn't been closed. Get that, and maybe you'll understand."

"But you can surely close the deal before eight?"

"That's just what I'm getting busy on now," said Mr. Smith. "The agreed price for that paddock was a hundred and fifty pounds—fair money, too. But don't you see, it's worth ten times that amount to me? And this fellow, Curdle, knows it! If that option expires, we lose our deposit, and you can bet your last dollar that the price goes up like a rocket."

"Say, it's pretty serious."

"It's more than that—it's vital!" declared Mr. Smith. "It places me entirely in this man's hands, and if he refuses to sell, after the option has expired, I'll be in the blazes of a fix. Probably mean a law case, and delay. It doesn't matter what it costs, that deal has got to be closed—the option has got to be taken up before eight o'clock."

"But how did the thing get overlooked?" asked Schwann.

"Muller!" snapped the millionaire. "I guess there's been an arrangement between this Curdle guy and my crook secretary. It seems to me that Muller told the fellow to leave the thing entirely in his hands. And Muller, of course, meant to forget it until it was expired, and then make some durned excuse to me. And later, when I was forced to pay an exorbitant price for the ground, Muller would have shared. I guess that was the frame-up."

"Gee! I guess you feel sore."

"Not half so sore as Muller," declared Mr. Smith. "That guy's fired—and he's left town so quick that you can still see his dust! And there's still time to fix this thing—if we can find Curdle. And I guess that'll be easy, because he doesn't know that the game's gone wrong."

I could well understand Mr. Smith's agitation. If that option was allowed to expire, the cunning Mr. Curdle would have the millionaire just where he wanted him. For he knew that the paddock was absolutely essential to the millionaire's plans.

And he would probably raise his price to six or seven hundred pounds—a perfectly ridiculous figure for such a small piece of land, but Smith would be compelled to pay it. For he had probably acted against the law in commencing building operations before the ground was his own property. Curdle would have him on that point alone, if it came to an action.

Smith, therefore, would be bound to pay the man's own price.

But there was still sufficient time to avoid all this trouble, and take up the option before eight. Once the balance of one hundred pounds was paid, Curdle could do nothing. He would be compelled to accept it, and the legal bond would then be binding. In other words, the paddock would become absolutely Mr. Smith's property, and the clever little conspiracy—which was entirely within the law—would be frustrated.

It was just an example of Muller's wits being sharper than Mr. Smith's—for there was no doubt that the now dismissed secretary had deliberately worked this affair for his own ends. And Mr. Curdle had not hesitated to enter into it, because it was an honest transaction—legally—and meant much more money for him.

"What you've got to do, Schwann, is to get along to Bannington, find this cursed dairyman, and pay him that money," said Mr. Smith grimly. "I came along personally, so that I could grab you, and get you off on the job without delay."

"I'm ready, Mr. Smith—let's go!" said the other.

They took the powerful lamp from the ledge on which Mr. Todd had placed it, and walked out of the stone apartment. And I was safe. They had no suspicion of my presence, and I heard them walking away.

And my own mind was working like lightning.

For, in a flash, I saw that here was an opportunity for the Remove to deal a powerful blow against the enemy. My scheme wasn't quite clear—I couldn't see beyond the immediate future. But I did know that the main thing, at this present moment, was to get into Bannington before Mr. Schwann!

It was doubtful if such a thing could be accomplished, but if a fellow doesn't try, he can't expect to succeed.

So, although it seemed a forlorn hope, I was determined to attempt it.

In two strides I crossed the stone floor, reached the cellar steps, and descended.

Just as I got to the bottom, I remembered something.

I paused, took out my watch, and drew a deep breath.

"Eight minutes to seven!" I muttered. "By Jove!"

And the evening train for Bannington left Bannington at seven o'clock! Eight minutes! Eight minutes to get out of that tunnel, reach the lane, and make a dash to the station.

Could it be done?

CHAPTER IV.

THE BLOOD-CURDLING ADVENTURE OF MR. CURDLE!

"HERE he is!"

Handforth made that remark as the stone door swung open, and I appeared. I had found the secret catch without trouble—knowing, of course exactly where it was situated. My face was flushed as I closed the stone slab, and heard it snap into secure position.

"Twenty minutes!" said Reggie Pitt severely. "You ought to have found out an awful lot of information in this time—why, hallo! What's wrong? You're looking red in the face with excitement."

"No time to explain!" I panted. "We've got seven minutes to get to the station."

"Station!" repeated Handforth. "What the——"

"Train goes—at seven—must catch it!" I exclaimed, hurrying along the tunnel. "Come on—don't stop to talk!"

"But we can't go to the station—it's out of bounds!" snorted Handforth.

"Listen to the gentle child who never breaks bounds!" said Pitt. "My hat! I thought you didn't care a snap for school rules and regulations, Handy?"

"I don't!"

"Then come along without asking questions," said Reggie. "Nipper says we've got to go to the station—so we're going to the station! When Cæsar speaks, his slaves have got to obey!"

"You dithering idiot!"

"I accept your apology!" said Reggie blandly. "Let's hustle!"

Handforth really had no further opportunity of arguing, because we had reached the exit by this time. I was glad that Reggie had fallen in so promptly with my plan—but, after all, Pitt could always be relied upon to get into action on the instant, and ask questions afterwards.

Tommy Watson and Montie were puzzled, but they could see the urgency of the matter, and refrained from bothering. Handforth, on the other hand, insisted upon being answered. This doesn't mean to say that he was answered. Almost before he knew it, he was being rushed across the meadows on the outskirts of Mr. Smith's settlement, towards the lane.

We reached it without incident, and my anxiety was great as I heard the church clock in Bellton striking the hour of seven. We fairly tore down the lane, careless of whether we met any masters.

"Fathead!" gasped Handforth. "We can't catch that train! It's gone seven already!"

"That clock's three minutes fast!" I snapped. "Don't give up! Determination will do anything—even catch trains!"

I knew very well that even a slight pause would make all the difference between success and failure. When it comes to a matter of catching trains, seconds are of importance. And if we should miss this train it would be no good going to Bannington at all. For the only other method was walking—and we couldn't do it before eight.

But I realised that Schwann was even now only just setting off. Perhaps he had started. Even so, we should arrive in Bannington by about the same time as the engineer—if we caught that train.

So everything depended upon it.

As we reached the High Street we heard a whistle in the distance, and my heart sank again. The train was coming in! To catch it seemed impossible. But until the train was actually disappearing out of the station I wouldn't give up hope.

Panting, breathless, we tore through the High Street, and occasioned no comment among the residents. It was nothing unusual for a party of juniors to make a desperate rush for the station.

As we ran into the station approach, we saw that the train was standing against the platform. The guard's whistle sounded even as we rushed up. At the last second I swerved away from the booking-office.

"This way!" I gasped.

A little gate stood open near the booking hall—a gate which led direct on to the platform, and which was used for luggage, milk cans, and similar articles. We simply tore through the gateway, and arrived on the platform as the train was moving out.

"Begad! We can't do it!" said Sir Montie huskily

"Can't we? Watch this!" I panted.

I dashed at the train, caught the handle of the nearest door, and tore it open. And then, one after the other, we tumbled in, sprawling. The door slammed—and we had caught the train! We heard a few shouts from Mr Spense, the station-master, and from old Wiggins, the porter, who was distinctly heard to remark that "them dratted boys will kill theirselves one o' these 'ere days, bust 'em."

However, the seemingly impossible had been accomplished, and we lay in various attitudes all over the compartment, recovering our breath. Handforth, in fact, still sprawled flat on his back on the floor.

"I'm whacked!" he moaned. "I never ran so hard before! I—I think I must have strained my heart, or something!"

"And this," said Pitt, "is our champion runner! Only last week he was boasting that he could beat any chap in the Sixth!"

Handforth leapt to his feet.

"So I could!" he snorted.

"When I grow up, I shall be a doctor!" said Reggie. "I didn't know I had such marvellous powers of curing strained hearts! I think I ought to get out a patent for that remedy!"

"You—you funny fathead!" said Handforth. "You comedian!"

Reggie Pitt bowed.

"You flatter me!" he observed. "But enough of this dalliance! Tell us, O chief, how the wheels of your gear-box have been grinding? In other words, what's the wheeze?"

"Yes, it's about time you explained!" growled Handforth, glaring at me. "After yanking us out of that rotten tunnel, scrambling up that rotten shaft, and nearly filling our mouths with rotten dirt, and rushing like mad over those rotten meadows, what's the idea?"

"Strictly speaking, it ought to be rotten!" said Pitt.

"Why wouldn't the next train have done?" demanded Handforth.

"Because it doesn't leave until after eight!" I said.

"Marvellous!" snapped Handforth. "Listen to him! It doesn't leave until after eight. He's trying to tell us the time-table! Considering there are only about seven trains a day, we ought to know what time they leave!"

"If only you chaps'll stop jawing, and let me speak, I'll explain," I said patiently. "This train will be in Bannington in five minutes, and there's no time to be lost. As soon as we arrive, we're going to make a dash for Curdle's Dairy."

"Why not the Japanese Cafe?" asked Watson. "Milk's all right to drink, but I'd rather have an ice-cream soda."

"Who's talking about a drink?" I said, glaring. "We're going to Curdle's Dairy because we're going to kidnap Mr. Curdle!"

"Begad!" said Tregellis-West.

"Kidnap him?" repeated Pitt. "This is beginning to look interesting! Proceed to unfold the plot still further, chief. We don't happen to have many revolvers, and only one or two bludgeons; but I suppose that's only a detail."

"Will you be serious?" I demanded gruffly.

"Impossible!" said Reggie. "I was born laughing!"

"We're going to kidnap Mr. Curdle, not because we have any spite against him, but because we want him out of the way," I went on. "As soon as it strikes eight, we'll let him go."

"I can't understand," said Pitt, shaking his head. "I thought it was some scheme of revenge, because the gentleman supplies St. Frank's with his chalk and water! It wouldn't be a bad idea to duck him in his own milk—and swing him round until it turns into butter!"

"Which would never happen—because butter's made out of cream," I pointed out.

And without allowing them to joke further on the subject—which was quite a serious one—I gave them a swift outline of my scheme. They opened their eyes wide as the story was unfolded.

"It's a master stroke!" declared Pitt enthusiastically. "You mean to stop Smith from taking up the option, so that Curdle collars the deposit, and retains full possession of the land?"

"Exactly!"

"But why?" asked Handforth. "How can that help us?"

"Anything that delay's Smith's activity is to the good," I replied. "And don't forget, this is the first chance anybody has had of putting a spoke in Smith's wheel. Supposing somebody else buys that land from Mr. Curdle—supposing somebody goes to him to-night, and closes the deal?"

"Well?"

"Haven't you got enough sense to imagine the result?" I went on eagerly. "Smith will be done—because he'll awaken to the startling revelation that he's been building his power-station on somebody else's property!"

"It's a great idea," said Pitt. "But who'll buy it?"

"That doesn't matter at the moment—but there are lots of people who'd be only too glad to have the opportunity of 'putting one over' on the wily millionaire. There's Mr. Hewitt, of Bellton Chase, for example. He'd jump at this if we put it before him."

"By George, so he would!" exclaimed

Handforth breathlessly. "Anybody with money, in fact, would buy that land! At least, anybody who lives in this district, who's been incensed by Smith's arrogance. Nipper, my son, it's a good thing I urged you chaps to catch this 'rain!"

Reggie Pitt almost fainted on the spot, but rapidly recovered, for the train was even then pulling into Bannington station. We didn't waste a moment—only pausing a minute at the barrier to pay our fares. Then we hurried down towards the High Street, intent upon reaching Mr. Curdle's shop without delay.

Mr. Curdle was quite a prominent tradesman in Bannington—one of the chief milkmen, in fact, with an extensive business. He had all sorts of meadow property round the district.

Just before we reached the High Street, I caught sight of a cyclist, leisurely ambling along. And at the same moment he caught sight of us, and nearly fell off his machine.

"Archie!" I ejaculated. "By Jove! An idea!"

He dismounted as we ran up.

"What ho!" he observed, adjusting his monocle. "This, I mean to say, is somewhat staggering and so forth. Dash it all, dear old cups of tea, what's the scheme? I trust you are not breaking bounds?"

"Yes, we are——"

"Oddslife! Then it'll be absolutely ragged if you're spotted," said Archie, with alarm. "I mean to say, it'll result in nothing short of a ghastly massacre! Mr. Small will slaughter you in one foul swipe."

"It seems to me that you'll be included," said Pitt.

"Absolutely not!" replied Archie. "You see, I got permish. to come out—a dashed miracle, I know—but there it is! I suppose the delightful Ponsonby imagined that I was a harmless sort of cove."

"Well, look here, Archie—no questions, but listen!" I said tensely. "Rush to your pater's place as hard as you can go. If

"What you've got to do, Schwann, is to get along to Bannington, find this cursed dairyman, and pay him that money," said Mr. Smith grimly.

he's at home, ask him to grant us an interview at a quarter-past eight. Tell him it's vitally important. That's all—shoot off!"

Archie blinked for a minute, and then nodded.

"Absolutely!" he said stoutly. "Old Chappie, I fly!"

Something in my tone must have told him that the matter was urgent, for he leapt on his machine, and whizzed off with an energy that we had hardly given him credit for. Pitt looked after him and nodded.

"Now, that's what I call smart," he said. "Just imagine what would have happened if you had said the same things to Handforth! He would have wanted to know this,

that, and the other, and—— Eh? My hat! I'm talking to myself!"

I had no time to listen to Reggie's pleasantries, and we had left him standing still. But he soon caught us up, and when we turned out of the High Street into one of the smaller thoroughfares—where Mr. Curdle's shop was situated—we got a bit of a shock.

A big car was standing just outside the dairy, having come to a stop a bare second earlier. And I saw the short, squat figure of Mr. Schwann enter the shop. Even now it seemed that we were too late!

"Quick!" I gasped.

Like mad, we ran along, and I swerved into the dairy yard, the gateway of which lay just to our left. The other fellows followed. Mr. Schwann, having entered the shop, knew nothing about our arrival.

And as we ran into the yard a rear door opened somewhere, and a shrill, feminine voice sounded.

"John!" it called urgently. "Come ye in! John!"

"All right—just a minute!" came an answering voice from one of the many sheds which surrounded the yard.

And at the some moment I caught sight of a flickering lantern. I had heard enough, and I had seen enough. If the whole thing had been planned especially for our benefit, it couldn't have happened better.

Schwann had asked for the dairyman, and, presumably, Mrs. Curdle had called to her husband, who was out here, in the yard. And the yard was dark, and apparently deserted, save for its owner.

A man appeared from the shed—somewhat elderly, thin, and wizened. I recognised him at once as Mr. John Curdle, for I had often seen him about the streets in his cart. Mr. Curdle was one of those old-fashioned tradesmen who worked about double as hard as any of his employees, and who probably had a fat, bulging balance at the bank.

"Now's our chance!" I breathed. "On him! And don't let him cry out!"

We swept down upon the unsuspecting Mr. Curdle like a human avalanche. Never, in the whole course of his career, had this peaceable old fellow had such a blood-curdling adventure. Apparently from nowhere, five mysterious forms swept upon him, rushed him off his feet in one swoop, and carried him away to the rearmost corner of the yard. There he was whisked through a doorway, and into a deserted footpath.

The bewildered Mr. Curdle, too startled to make any outcry, had visions of highway robbers, and he accused himself roundly of carelessness for leaving that five-pound note in his pocket-book.

"Police! Thieves!" he gurgled in a weak voice.

"Keep your hair on, Mr. Curdle!" exclaimed Pitt tensely. "We're friends!"

The advice was somewhat superfluous, for Mr. Curdle happened to be bald, as Reggie could probably see, for our victim's hat had been swept off in the struggle. But Reggie was always facetious at such times.

"Why, drat me, if ye ain't a parcel o' boys!" gasped Mr. Curdle, glaring. "I'll have ye locked up for this, ye young varmints! Ye might have broken me back, an' that's a fact! An' me with the lumbago, too!"

"Finest treatment in the world for lumbago, Mr. Curdle," said Pitt briskly. "And don't accuse us of base deeds, because we're innocent. You don't seem to realise that we're putting money into your pocket."

Mr. Curdle, who had expected some money to be taken out, was decidedly relieved. At the same time, he was bewildered.

"Ye young varmints!" he repeated. "I don't hold with these games. I'll report ye to your teacher, that I will!"

"He thinks we're from the infants' school," said Handforth in disgust.

"The fact is, Mr. Curdle, we've come to you about an option," I explained. "It concerns that paddock of yours at Bellton——"

I paused, for the voice of Mrs. Curdle sounded in the offing.

"If ye don't let me go, I'll have the police on ye!" snapped the dairyman angrily. "There's my missus callin' of me, an'——"

"I'm afraid she'll have to call," I interrupted. "Quick, you chaps, we haven't taken him far enough!"

And, to Mr. Curdle's indignation and alarm, he was again whisked off down the footpath until we reached an open space, which appeared to be a deserted mews, with various stables all round. It only took us a couple of minutes to get our prisoner into one of these.

"Now we're safe," I said. "Don't misunderstand us, Mr. Curdle. We're your friends."

"Don't tell them lies to me, ye young rapscallions!" said Mr. Curdle breathlessly. "Do ye call it friendly to treat me in this way? I never did see! I'll have the police on ye——"

"Your conversation is very diverting, Mr. Curdle, but inclined to be monotonous," said Pitt. "You won't have the police on us, because we're doing you a good turn. Mr. William K. Smith holds an option on that meadow of yours, and the option expires at eight o'clock this evening."

Mr. Curdle started visibly.

"What do ye young rascals know about that?" he asked keenly.

"Everything," I replied. "And it happens that we don't want you to complete the deal. One of Mr. Smith's agents is in your shop now—waiting for you to appear. And when you don't appear, he'll make a frantic search for you. That's why we've got you out of harm's way. After eight

o'clock, it'll be all right, and the property'll still be yours, and the option so much scrap paper."

Mr. Curdle took a deep breath.

"Then I reckon I've got to thank ye young gents for gettin' me away safe," he said. "Why didn't ye explain this afore?"

"Thank us?" repeated Pitt. "You ought to grovel! That paddock of yours is worth ten pounds, if it's worth a penny. And here you've got a chance of getting twenty times the price!"

Mr. Curdle looked at Pitt suspiciously.

"Ten pound!" he repeated. "You don't know what ye'r talking about, me lad! That paddock is some o' the best ground——"

"Yes, we know all about it," I interrupted. "Before Mr. Smith came with his building scheme the paddock was worth next to nothing. But now I'll admit it's valuable property. That's business, and I don't blame you for seizing a chance when you've got it. But we want that meadow—at least, we want somebody to buy it who's opposed to old Smith."

"I don't understand ye," said Curdle.

"And it isn't necessary that you should," I went on. "You stay here, you fellows, and see that Mr. Curdle is entertained. I'm going along to look for Archie. He ought to be back by this time, and he'll probably be mooning up and down the High Street."

I went off, rather anxious.

So far, everything had gone swimmingly—even better than I had dared to hope. Mr. William K. Smith had received a bigger blow than he probably suspected, but there were still many points to be settled. We had prevented Smith from buying the meadow, but how could we find another purchaser?

I reached the town memorial, in the broadway that graced the centre of Bannington High Street. And here I looked up and down anxiously.

CHAPTER V.

THE RIGHT MAN AT THE RIGHT TIME.

ARCHIE GLENTHORNE came riding down the High Street, with an expression of sorrow on his aristocratic face. He spotted me at once, and as he dismounted, I detected that all was not right.

"Won't your pater see us?" I asked keenly.

"The fact is, old dicky bird, the pater happens to be gadding about among the bright lights," replied Archie sadly. "I mean, he's dashed off to London, and won't be back until to-morrow. Pretty ghastly—what?"

"Well, it's a disappointment," I said.

"Oh, rather!" said Archie. "Of course, I don't know why. I mean, you shoved me off home without a bally word, and I'm simply floundering in a sea of mystery, if you grasp the old trend. It wouldn't be a bad idea, old scout, if you proceeded to expound."

Archie left his bicycle against the kerb, and we stood there, in the shadow of the memorial, talking in low voices. I explained the situation to Glenthorne, and he instantly grasped the significance of the whole position.

"Why, laddie, this is, without exception, the most astounding thing in the whole reel of history," he declared. "I mean to say, we've absolutely got this chappie on a chunk of toast. We've got him dangling on the old fork. What I mean is, Mr. Smith appears to be somewhat foiled."

"He will be, if we can only get your pater to buy that paddock," I replied. "It's a terrible pity he's away. You remember Colonel Glenthorne's property—Willard's Island and the other land near it? Smith bought it from your pater without——"

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie. "You see, the old boy didn't know anything about it until afterwards. The pater's estate agents sold the land, and there you are. The guv'nor didn't know anything about it until too late. And the way he went up into the air was an absolute lesson to these aeroplane chappies. Never saw anything like it. The whole park round Glenthorne Manor absolutely quivered, and half the birds dropped dead!"

"I can quite believe that your pater was wild," I agreed. "And what would he say to this opportunity of getting his own back?"

"My dear old sportsman, it's not what he'd say—it's what he'd do!" replied Archie. "The pater would spend his last bally farthing to get his own back. Why, dash it, he'd go and pawn the family heirlooms, and mortgage the pigeon cote! When the pater gets roused, he's just like I am—absolutely bubbling with energy, and with his tissues surging like anything!"

"Well, it's no good talking," I said. "Your pater's out of reach, and, to be safe, we ought to have this thing settled to-night. Perhaps we could send him a wire, and close the deal in the morning. But that's awkward. We can't leave the school by daylight. What a confounded pity that——"

I broke off, and stood staring. A low, powerful racing-car was gliding leisurely down the High Street. And there was something about that car that seemed vaguely familiar. There was something about the driver that was more than vaguely familiar.

But it seemed too extraordinary to be true. In fact, I couldn't believe my eyes, and I felt myself go all hot as my first suspicion became an absolute certainty, and as recognition became sure.

"Archie!" I gasped. "Look!"

"Gadzooks!" ejaculated Archie. "What-ho! And so forth! I mean, why the sudden excitement, laddie?"

"It's Dorrie!" I ejaculated joyfully.

Archie spun round, and gazed at the racing-car, which was now nearly opposite. We both stood there, staring. There was not the slightest doubt on the point. The man in the car was the celebrated explorer, Lord Dorrimore himself! Our old friend Dorrie!

Actuated as though by the same impulse, Archie and I leapt forward. And as the racer glided by, we ran at it, and leapt on the two footboards—one on either side.

"Dorrie!" I exclaimed. "The one man in the world I wanted to see!"

"Good gad!" said Lord Dorrimore.

He leisurely depressed the clutch-lever and applied the brakes. At the same time he swerved the car over to the near-side pavement, and came to a standstill. His lordship was quite cool and calm, and his smooth, youthful, clean-shaven face was even more bronzed than usual.

"Well, my son, I expect startling things from you, but you really shouldn't give me these shocks," said Lord Dorrimore, as he warmly shook hands. "You gave me quite a turn when you dashed at me like that. I thought for a moment that I was in America, and that you were a couple of gunmen!"

"You'll think you're in America all right when you get to Bellton," I said. "But, Dorrie! You, of all people! You couldn't have come along at a more opportune moment."

"Absolutely not!" said Archie. "The hour and the man—what?"

"Somehow, I always seem to drop in just when I'm urgently required," smiled Lord Dorrimore. "What is it this time, young 'uns? Short of cash?"

"Exactly!" I said promptly.

"How much do you want—a fiver?"

"More than that—about five hundred!" I exclaimed eagerly.

"Don't mention it!" said Dorrie. "Why stop at five hundred? Why not five thousand? Say the word, and I'll give you the bally car!"

"Now, don't be sarcastic, Dorrie!" I protested. "This is a serious matter."

"So it appears," said his lordship. "Have you suddenly taken a violent fancy to half-a-dozen motor-bicycles, or something? I'm a reasonable man, and I'm a millionaire. So if you satisfy me that the five hundred is required for a good purpose, it's yours!"

Lord Dorrimore was eyeing us amusedly, and I could see that even now he didn't take us seriously. And perhaps I had been lacking in tact in springing the amount upon him too suddenly. Even to a millionaire, five hundred pounds is—well, five hundred pounds.

"I hardly expected to find you young beggars running about loose," went on Dorrie. "According to the professor, you're all hemmed in at St. Frank's like prisoners, and there appears to be a large amount of excitement in the district. I thought I'd come down to have a look at things. Excitement agrees with me, you know, and I should hate to miss something."

"You're just back from Egypt, aren't you?" I asked.

"Three days ago," said Dorrie. "Exploring in these tombs is all very well, but it's deuced monotonous. I went lion-hunting, but there weren't any bally lions, so I got fed up and came home. I'm off to South America next week, unless there's something good turns up in the meantime."

"Well, we've got you now, and we're going to stick to you," I said grimly. "Mr. Lee—or, as you call him, the professor—is doing practically nothing in our affair at St. Frank's, because he isn't required. But we want five hundred quid—to-night."

"The deuce you do!"

"Do you happen to have that amount on you, Dorrie?" I asked quickly.

"Well, I don't usually go about like a safe deposit, but it does happen that I've got six or seven hundred on me this evening—in cash, too. What on earth do you want it for?"

"Let's get out of the High Street, and I'll tell you," I replied. "We're attracting attention here—besides, old Schwann might come along and spot us, and get suspicious."

"Old Schwann, eh?" said Dorrie. "The plot thickens!"

But Dorrie offered no objection, and a few minutes' later we were quietly settled in an unfrequented side lane, sitting beside Dorrie in the car. Archie had quite forgotten his bicycle by the memorial, but it was probably safe.

And there, quietly and concisely, I explained the whole situation to his lordship. I could see his eyes gleaming as he considered the possibilities. I informed him on every point—including Mr. Smith's activities, and the general feeling of animosity which pervaded the district.

"This Smith seems to be several kinds of a hog?" commented Dorrie at length. "I don't blame you youngsters for being up against him. There's nothing like it! Keep these confounded enemies out! Smith comes here, thinking he can do just as he likes because he's rich, and most people are afraid of him. You boys are setting up a good example."

"But don't forget one thing, Dorrie," I pointed out. "We've got practically nothing to lose—and most of Smith's busi-

ness opponents have. They're afraid to act because he can smash them. But he can't smash us. That's why we've got the drop on him. His threats are useless."

Lord Dorrimore was quite enthusiastic about the paddock scheme. He frankly confessed that he didn't want the meadow at all, but he was perfectly willing to buy it for the sheer pleasure of spoiling Mr. Smith's plan, and helping the Remove.

Dorrie was very much of a boy himself, and he had a particularly soft spot for the St. Frank's juniors. For we had been through all sorts of adventures together. And as money meant practically nothing to his lordship, the expenditure of this amount on Curdle's Paddock was a mere trifle. And even though the meadow was not worth a tenth of the sum that Mr. Curdle would undoubtedly ask, the object was a worthy one. For by spending the money a great deal would be done towards foiling this invader.

Without wasting any further time, for it was now well after eight, and the option had expired, we drove along to those deserted mews where Mr. Curdle was still a prisoner in charge of the other juniors.

My plans were going beautifully.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REMOVE'S NEW PROPERTY.

THERE is no necessity for me to go into a full, detailed account of what took place in Bannington during the next hour. But certain events occurred that filled me with sheer joy, and I blessed the fates that had led Lord Dorrimore to appear in Bannington High Street at the moment he did.

Mr. Curdle proved to be a crafty old rascal.

Knowing the value of his meadow, he put the price up enormously. Mr. Schwann, of course, had gone off disappointed, and the dairyman had believed that Smith would be the purchaser.

Curdle wanted to know why Lord Dorrimore was anxious to buy, but Dorrie thought it advisable to leave his curiosity unsatisfied. Besides, his lordship pretended to be quite indifferent.

And when Mr. Curdle asked six hundred pounds for the paddock, a perfectly preposterous figure, he was laughed at. There was a good deal of haggling, and finally the price was fixed at four hundred pounds.

Mr. Curdle stuck out for five hundred, but Dorrie absolutely refused. And the cunning old Mr. Curdle, fearing that William K. Smith would not go so high, became satisfied with the four hundred. He was a lucky rascal, too. A month earlier he would have sold that paddock for a hundred pounds, and would have considered himself lucky.

The matter was not left in abeyance.

Mr. Curdle took us all to his own solicitor, who was interrupted in the middle of his dinner. This gentleman was most unwilling to transact any business at such an hour, until he learnt the identity of his client's friend. Mr. Curdle, in fact, whispered into the lawyer's ear that Lord Dorrimore was a millionaire.

Thereafter the gentleman of law became alert and active.

The cash was paid over, the deed was signed and sealed, and made absolutely legal and binding. That settled, Mr. Curdle bade good-night to us all, and departed, highly excited and joyous.

But Dorrie didn't show any haste to depart.

"The fact is, Nipper, a little idea had occurred to me," he said, while the solicitor was preparing some papers. "I don't want this bally meadow, but you do. I mean, I shan't be down in this part of the country for more than a day, and there might be legal difficulties if I'm absent. So how would you like the paddock for yourself?"

I stared.

"For myself?" I repeated breathlessly.

"Absolutely!"

"It's a great idea of yours, Dorrie, and you're a brick," I said, with enthusiasm. "But look here! This affair is just as much the Remove's as it is mine. Every fellow is equally interested. Couldn't you make the property over to the whole Remove?"

Lord Dorrimore chuckled.

"Gad, that's a very good idea!" he said. "I can see some fun coming out of this! Just as you like, young 'un. But I expect this solicitor chappie will want all the names, you know. In a legal document, names have got to be shoved in in full, I believe——"

"That's all right, I can reel them all off."

"That's one advantage of having a good memory," said his lordship. "All right. We'll fix it up like that. But, of course, you're under age, and I shall have to appoint a trustee. What about the professor?"

"Mr, Lee, you mean?" put in Handforth eagerly.

"The guv'nor would agree, I know," I said. "And he's on the spot, too, in case any questions arise. But he's not with us——"

"That doesn't matter," said Dorrie. "Leave it to me."

And for the next twenty minutes he and the solicitor prepared an important-looking document. In short, Dorrie signed over the paddock to the Remove, each boy to have an equal share. And Nelson Lee was named as the trustee. By the time we left the solicitor's office everybody was pleased, including the solicitor, who, as Reggie Pitt remarked, had made goodness knows how many six-and-eightpences.

We returned to Dorrie's motor-car with

sheer joy within us. The land on which William K. Smith was building his power-station now belonged to the Remove Form of St. Frank's—legally signed and sealed. There could be no question about it, because the whole thing was done openly and honourably, and without the slightest hitch. Mr. Smith could fight the case in the courts for years, and he would never win. In fact, he hadn't got an earthly chance. He had started his building operations illegally, if it came to rock-bottom facts, and if he refused to cease work on that ground we could have him.

"Dorrie, you're an absolute brick!" I said joyfully. "At teatime we hadn't the faintest idea that we could 'put it across' the wily Mr. Smith like this. By jingo! He's booked for a shock before long!"

"Hadn't we better wait until those documents are stamped at Somerset House, or somewhere?" asked Pitt cautiously.

"That doesn't matter a toss," said Dorrie. "Stamping's only a formality, after all. Just a way the Government has got of collecting a little more money. The whole business is legal, and there's an end of it. That meadow is yours, my lads. And now what about getting home? It's nearly half-past nine!"

"Great Scott!" gasped Handforth. "We shall be sacked!"

Archie had already gone off—over half an hour ago. He had found his bicycle untouched, and by this time he was probably home. And Dorrie soon settled the other question.

He piled us all into his car and calmly declared that he would smuggle us in—and do it before nine-thirty, so that there could be no questions asked. And the plan succeeded.

The gates, of course, were locked by the time we arrived at St. Frank's. But they were opened at once for Lord Dorrimore, and nobody suspected that he was getting a number of truants into the school grounds.

He conveniently extinguished his headlights as he pulled up in the Triangle, and in the gloom we slipped out and joined the crowd that had gathered round. It was nearly bedtime, but the fellows were enormously interested in the arrival of Dorrie.

Quite a number of fellows wanted to know where we had been and where we had sprung from, but they received no satisfaction. And fortunately we were not questioned by masters.

We acted the thing properly, and greeted Dorrie as though we had only just met him. He entered into the joke, and kept it up. And then, in the middle of it, the door of the Head's house opened and two figures appeared.

One was that of Mr. Ponsonby small, and the other that of Mr. William K. Smith. The Head strode forward, frowning.

"Go indoors at once!" he commanded. "How dare you make this commotion at this hour of the night? Is it not your bedtime?"

"Nearly, sir," said somebody. "We were just cheering old Dorrie, sir."

Mr. Ponsonby Small stared at the racing car, and he stared at Dorrie.

"And who, sir, may you be?" he demanded tartly.

"I may be the Sultan of Turkey, and I may be the King of Spain, but I'm not," replied Dorrie, with delightful sarcasm. "It happens that I'm a quite harmless fellow named Dorrimore. I just dropped in to see my old friend, Mr. Lee."

"Indeed!" said the Head. "Then, sir, I shall be obliged if you will make a little less commotion. I greatly object to my under-masters being visited at this hour of the night, in any case."

Dorrie looked at the insignificant Head wonderingly, and the crowd held its breath. They knew Dorrie of old.

"Good gad!" said his lordship. "Then it's true? I'd heard rumours that St. Frank's was converted into a kind of prison, but I wouldn't believe them. But I am rather puzzled about Mr. Lee. It's a piece of news to learn that he is now an under-master. I always had an idea that he was a person of some importance."

"I have no wish to argue with you, sir!" snapped the Head. "I——"

But at this moment Nelson Lee appeared, and greeted Dorrie warmly. After which he formally introduced his lordship to the Head. And the Head was confused. "Dorrimore" had conveyed nothing to him, but "Lord Dorrimore" made all the difference in the world. Mr. Ponsonby Small suddenly remembered that this peer was the famous explorer, to say nothing of being a millionaire.

"Pray accept my apologies, Lord Dorrimore, if I was at all rude to you," said the Head obsequiously. "It is rather a pity you did not make known your identity to me at once. Allow me to introduce Mr. William K. Smith, the gentleman who is doing such wonderful things in this district."

"Pleased to meet you," said Smith briefly. "Sorry I can't stay, I've got business elsewhere. My time's worth money."

"Good!" said Dorrie. "I want to claim a few minutes, anyhow. There's just a little question about some property of mine. Infernally awkward, and a bit of a nuisance, but these things must be mentioned."

I clutched at Reggie Pitt's arm, and we both listened intently. I knew well enough that Dorrie wouldn't reveal the fact that the meadow was really the Remove's; but there was no reason why he shouldn't have the pleasure of giving Mr. Smith a shock.

"I don't understand you," said the millionaire curtly.

"No?" said Dorrie. "Perhaps I'd better

be a little more lucid. I'd like to inform you, Mr. Smith, that you are building a structure of some kind on Curdle's Paddock, which happens to be my property. If you can remove that building of yours and all your material I shall be frightfully obliged."

William K. Smith stared.

"Say, what's the big idea?" he asked quietly.

"In that we differ," said Dorrie. "I didn't think it was big at all. Need I explain further? The paddock is my property, because I bought it and paid for it to-night. Allow me to address you, Mr. Smith, in your own language. You've got to quit, and you've got to show some speed!"

"Hurrah!" roared the juniors excitedly.

"Good old Dorrie!"

"He's bought Curdle's Paddock!"

"Yes, and done old Smith in the eye!"

"Hurrah!"

The excitement was intense, and it was some moments before Mr. Smith could make himself heard. When he did so, his voice was harsh and grating. But he managed to keep a firm control on his temper.

"What game is this you're trying to put over me?" he asked curtly. "That ground is mine, and this infernal impudence of yours——"

"You'll pardon me, I'm sure," interrupted Dorrie. "Look at these, Mr. Smith."

He passed over some documents—copies of the legal papers that pronounced Curdle's Paddock the property of Lord Dorrimore. But those documents contained no mention of the fact that the ground was signed to the Remove.

Mr. Smith snatched the papers with the utmost rudeness, glared at them contemptuously, and then started. His expression changed.

"Frightfully awkward, and all that, but you see what I mean?" said Lord Dorrimore. "The ground is mine, Mr. Smith, and I have rooted objections to other people building—er—buildings on it!"

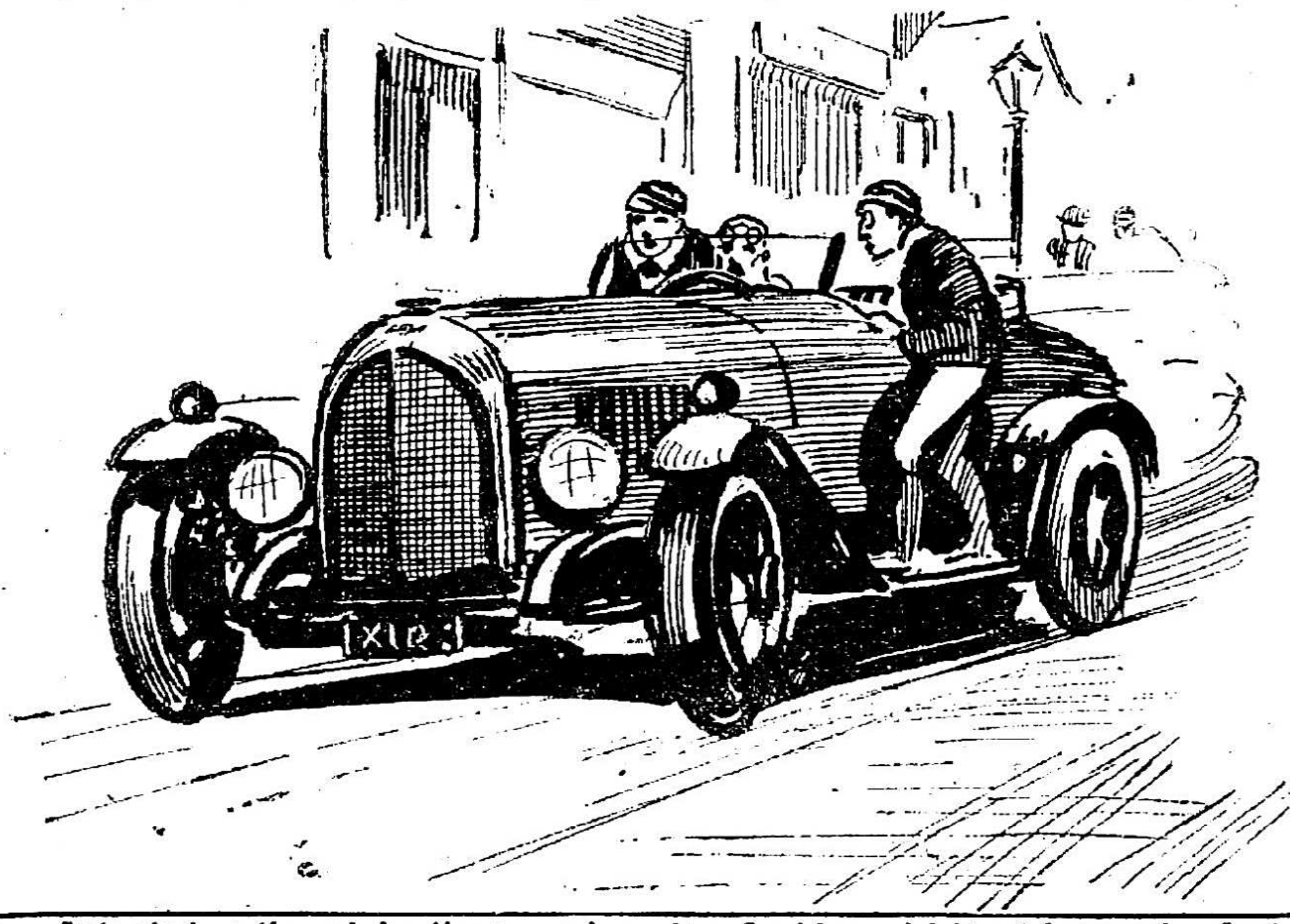
"By thunder!" raved Mr. Smith hoarsely.

"Just as you like," said Lord Dorrimore. "But you quite understand, don't you, Mr. Smith? I might mention that I am a reasonable man, and I will give you a week in which to remove your building material and other impedimenta."

William K. Smith nearly choked.

"This is a trick!" he shouted.

"Possibly," said Dorrie. "But then, Mr. Smith, this world is full of tricks, isn't it? By the way, please don't trouble to tear those documents up. They are merely



Actuated as though by the same impulse, Archie and I leapt forward. And as the racer glided by, we ran at it, and leapt on the two footboards—one on either side.

"Dorrie!" I exclaimed. "The one man in the world I wanted to see!"

copies, and it's an awful nuisance to get them replaced."

It seemed for a minute that Mr. William K. Smith was about to lose all control of his temper. He went nearly purple in the face, and he stood there, absolutely fighting to regain control of himself.

One glance had shown him that these documents were in order, and that he had, indeed, no legal authority to remain in possession of Curdle's Paddock. And the American millionaire was staggered.

For he knew the full truth now.

Obviously, Schwann had failed. In some way he had been unable to follow up the option before the time limit expired. And this calm-looking peer had forthwith purchased the meadow for no other purpose than to aim a blow at Mr. Smith.

The millionaire, as he saw the Remove fellows standing eagerly by, also guessed that they were mainly responsible. In some way unknown to him, they had put Lord Dorrimore on to this affair. And his hatred against the boys was increased a hundredfold from that moment.

It seemed a small matter—the possession of an insignificant patch of grassland. But in reality it was a vital matter, for that meadow was situated in what might be termed a key position. To build the power-station elsewhere would be awkward, and would involve a complete reconstruction of Mr. Smith's plans. It would create a prolonged delay. And all the work that had so far been accomplished on the power-station had been wasted.

But, as a business man, Mr. Smith knew that he had only himself to blame. He had failed to make certain that the ground was purchased. It was lucky for the wily Mr. Muller that he wasn't on the spot at this moment, or Mr. Smith, in his temper, might have given his late secretary a taste of lead.

But although he was nearly mad with mortification, he inwardly admired Lord Dorrimore for this stroke—which was exactly the kind of coup he himself had brought off on more than one occasion during his business career. But it was a bitter experience to suffer personally.

"Well, Mr. Smith, I am still waiting!" said Dorrie at length.

The millionaire pulled himself together.

"These documents mean nothing to me," he said harshly. "You can't pull this bluff on me, confound you!"

"There is no bluff about it——"

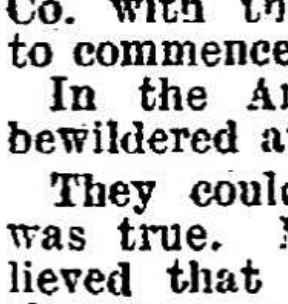
"Take your papers and do your infernal worst!" snarled Cyclone Smith. "I'll fight you—I'll fight you until you're beaten!"

Without another word, he swung past Lord Dorrimore unable to trust himself to further speech. Dorrie took the documents, tucked them into his pocket, and laughed softly.

"I rather fancy that Mr. Smith doesn't quite know precisely what he is fighting against," he said smoothly. "Upon my soul! I really do believe that the poor gentleman is in for another shock!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE NIGHT SHIFT!



THE Remove went to bed almost immediately afterwards.

And in the privacy of the dormitory I lost no time in explaining the full position.

The juniors had been greatly elated at Lord Dorrimore's arrival, and the manner in which he had treated Mr. William K. Smith. But their satisfaction over this was nothing compared to the excitement which prevailed when they knew the actual truth.

In the general commotion it was hardly noticed that Reginald Pitt had vanished. But he had, as a matter of fact, slipped away on a mission to the College House. I had entrusted Reggie with this, knowing well enough that he would accomplish it successfully.

It was most important that the Monks should know the truth. I could have waited until to-morrow, but it was far better to acquaint Buster Boots and Christine and Co. with the position. For I had decided to commence operations this very night.

In the Ancient House the fellows were bewildered at first.

They could hardly realise that my story was true. Many of the juniors firmly believed that I was pulling their legs. But they were convinced at last. I had been a little dubious about entrusting the secret with such fellows as Fullwood and Co. and Teddy Long. But there was no help for it.

It was impossible to exclude them from the affair, for they were part owners of the meadow—each fellow having an equal share. Moreover, in the present crisis they could be relied upon to keep their tongues still. For if one word of this proposed business leaked out, they, themselves, would suffer as much as anybody else. For the very safety of their own skins they would be discreet.

Quite apart from this, they were filled with enthusiasm, and entered into the spirit of the adventure as keenly as any of the other fellows. The persecutions of Mr. Ponsonby Small had drawn the Remove together by a kind of common bond, and all former differences were allowed to stand over. The Remove pulled as one man, and pledged itself to support me wholeheartedly.

"But you mustn't imagine there's going to be a barring-out to-night," I said quietly, addressing all the juniors with perfect calmness. "This isn't going to be one of those hasty affairs like last week——"

"Poor old Handy!"

"We'd rather have you as leader, Nipper!"

The Remove, in various stages of undress, commented warmly.

"Never mind about Handy now," I said, noticing that Edward Oswald had turned very red. "He's one of the best men I've got, only he happens to be a bit impulsive. There's no fellow I'd rather have by my side in a scrap than Handy. But there's going to be no scrap yet. I want to warn you chaps that we've got hard work in front of us—short nights, and plenty of toiling labour. Don't forget that any prize worth gaining has to be fought for!"

"What do you mean—short nights?" asked Armstrong.

"I mean that we're going to prepare the way for a real rebellion," I replied. "No half-and-half affair, but the greatest barring-out that St. Frank's has ever heard of. The Remove, in fact, is about to rise!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Nipper!"

"Thanks, but don't make so much noise," I went on. "This rising will not be so much against Ponsonby Small as against William K. Smith. That's what you've got to understand."

"But Small's the Head," protested Griffith.

"Exactly—but if we defeat Small we shall get nowhere," I pointed out. "On the other hand, if we defeat Smith, Small is automatically beaten, too. This German-American chap is our prey, and we're going for him hammer and tongs. But the secret of success is this—that when the time comes to strike we'll deliver a blow by absolute surprise. If Smith gets the faintest inkling of it beforehand, all our work will be for nothing. So you must all pledge yourselves to keep this secret."

The juniors solemnly and fervently declared that they would perish sooner than breathe a syllable. And they meant it.

"But how can this paddock help us?" asked Armstrong. "It was a great stunt of yours to get Dorrie to buy it, but what good will it do?"

"My hat! And I thought I'd explained!" I said patiently. "Don't you understand that we've got Smith on a piece of string? He's building his power-station on our property. Ours, mark you! The meadow belongs to the Remove, and every speck of dirt, and every blade of grass! You heard what Smith said? He practically refused to vacate the property."

"Yes, but he thinks it belongs to Dorrie," put in Owen major.

"And what would he do if he knew the land belonged to us?" I asked. "He'd be ten times more defiant. With all his millions, he thinks he can do anything. Even now he's probably trying to get up some scheme whereby he can ruin Lord Dorrimore if he persists in his attitude. But before anything can come of that, we'll make the pleasant announcement that the meadow belongs to us. And with all Smith's millions, and with all his influence, he won't be able to ruin the Remove."

"No fear!"

"Good!"

"It was a master-stroke of yours, Nipper!"

"Hear, hear!"

The enthusiasm swelled up again. The juniors could find no words to express their admiration of my coup in buying Curdle's Paddock above Mr. Smith's head.

"You see, Smith's building his power-station on that piece of land, and, legally, he's got no right to do it. That's the position. As matters were yesterday, we were helpless. We couldn't fight against Smith because it meant trespassing to even set foot on his property. But now, you see, we shall simply retain command of our own property—and, from a point of view of law, our position will be unassailable. We shall simply take charge of something which belongs to us, and which Smith is illegally holding."

"Hurrah!"

"By Jove, it's clever!" said Somerton enthusiastically.

"Absolutely!" put in Archie, who had come in from his own bed-room. "I mean to say, the scheme is so brainy that the old mind absolutely staggers when I think of it."

"But supposing Smith clears out of the paddock at once?" asked Owen major.

"If I know anything about Smith, he'll fight to the last ditch before he'll clear out," I replied grimly. "He's building that power-station on the paddock, and it's my opinion that he'll go forward with his plans with increased intensity. During the next day or two he'll have treble the amount of workmen on the job, and that power-station will spring up like magic. Smith is the kind of man who relies upon brute force. He'll take up the position that he's got the land, and he'll stick to it until he's driven off!"

"How do you mean?" asked Watson.

"Why, we'll suppose that Dorrie is the owner, and that Dorrie objects," I explained. "What can he do with this Mr. Smith? Nothing, except take action through the courts, and fight the affair out. Didn't you hear Smith say that he'd fight? He meant, of course, that he'd take the case to law. And any ass knows that that means weeks and months of delay. What does Smith care about legal expenses if he wins? And even if he loses, it'll be a year or two before there's a decision reached. Once these lawyers start litigation of that kind they hang it out until their clients go grey!"

"Then we don't stand much chance," said Armstrong.

"Don't we?" I said grimly. "Do you think we're going to law? Not likely! We'll take the law into our own hands—and we shall be fully justified. Smith says he's going to fight—but he hasn't got the faintest idea of what the fight will be like!

Because it's going to be a real battle—and not a law-courts affair. Smith doesn't reckon with the Remove at all—but he will do!"

Now that I had made the position so clear, the Remove was even more excited than before. The fellows were simply bubbling over with enthusiasm for my stroke of strategy. And even Fullwood and Co. and the other questionable fellows swore that they'd be loyal.

And then Reggie returned, by way of the window. He had, in fact, made his exit by that means, too, aided by a handy length of rope. He was calm and smiling, and announced that the Monks were absolutely off their rockers with undiluted joy.

Pitt had explained the position just the same as I had, going into every detail. And Christine and Boots and all the other College House fellows solemnly swore that they would hold themselves responsible to answer my call at any moment of the day or night.

Furthermore, Pitt had arranged that a council of war should be held at ten-thirty—the council consisting of Bob Christine, John Busterfield Boots, Reggie Pitt, and myself. And the council chamber was to be the tunnel behind the junior pavilion.

It was nearly ten-thirty already, so after advising the Remove to get to bed, and make as little noise as possible, Pitt and I slithered down that rope, and stealthily worked our way round the dark Triangle, and reached the playing fields. We found Bob Christine and John Busterfield Boots waiting behind the pavilion.

"Nipper, old man, it's great!" exclaimed Christine enthusiastically. "You're a wonder! How on earth did you think of such a thing?"

"Never mind that now," I said. "There's work to do—and precious little time to do it in. Let's go down this shaft!"

They were rather curious to know why the council of war should be held here. But I soon explained. Once below in the tunnel, with two or three electric torches gleaming, I spent some time in making careful, exhaustive calculations.

I even went to the surface twice, and got to work with a long tape-measure. Then, after a final calculation in the tunnel again, I looked at my puzzled chums with gleaming eyes.

"I was right!" I said, with satisfaction. "It struck me, as we were going through the tunnel, that it led pretty near to Curdle's Paddock. And now I am certain of it. Just before the tunnel gets to that steep dip it passes beneath a corner of the paddock, veering from that point towards the river."

"But—you mean——" Reggie Pitt paused, staring.

"I mean that, with some hard work, we can scoop out a branch tunnel," I said keenly. "We've got plenty of workers—why not do it? The excavating won't be so difficult—the ground is mostly gravel, and easy to shift. My idea is to make a branch tunnel right beneath the power-station!"

"My goodness!"

"It sounds big, but it isn't," I went on. "The distance is only about twenty yards from the curve. And any sort of tunnel will do, so long as we can get through it. Once we get to the end, we'll dig upwards, and come out beneath the foundations of the power-station itself! And we can do all this without even breaking bounds!"

"It's marvellous!" declared Christine. "But how long do you think it'll take?"

"Three days, I expect," I replied. "We can use every available minute. As long as we exercise ordinary caution, some of the fellows can be at work during to-morrow's half-holiday, and in the evening—and at night. How can they suspect anything fishy about the chaps going into the playing-fields? And once the tunnel is completed it'll provide a kind of back door of escape, in case things go against us."

The other members of the committee were eager, and we lost no time in getting back. It was now nearly eleven-thirty, but the work was not over for to-night. Soon after twelve, when St. Frank's was dark and silent, a party of two dozen juniors crept away to the tunnel—twelve Monks and twelve Fossils. We had made a raid on the tool-shed, but the result was disappointing. In addition to this, there would be inquiries about the missing tools. So we took nothing at all.

To tell the truth, I suddenly got an idea.

I remembered seeing stacks of picks and shovels just inside the fence which surrounded Mr. Smith's encampment. The tools were lying about in heaps, unguarded, and I decided to borrow as many implements as we needed.

The raid was a perfect success, and was carried out without any untoward incident. There were literally hundreds of picks and shovels in that great pile, and if the few we took were missed the matter would receive only scant attention. Certainly there would be no inquiry and no suspicion. But in all probability the tools would not even be missed.

"So far so good," I said, as we stood down in the tunnel. "We'll pay for these picks and shovels later—as soon as ever we reveal our hand. And we'll pay them more than they're worth, so that Smith can't accuse us of stealing. Now—get to work!"

And for two hours the gang toiled.

The enthusiasm was so great that the juniors never even thought of being tired. It was a strange scene in that tunnel. Candles were burning by the dozen, and the gang of juniors, in their shirt-sleeves, worked at the picks and shovels with an energy that would have been as good as a tonic to any ordinary gang of paid labourers.

We had made a discovery that had solved one of the minor difficulties. I had wondered what we could do with the excavated earth. But the problem was easily solved.

At the point where the chasm had opened there was a kind of slit which led down into a hollow cavity. I had been worried, expecting this might cave in. But by carting all the excavated earth, and tipping it into this crack, we would gradually fill up the danger spot, and get rid of our surplus earth at the same time.

It was not until three o'clock that the juniors went back to bed—utterly worn out and weary, but feeling satisfied. On the morrow it would be the turn of another gang.

And all this was being done without Mr. Small gaining the slightest inkling of what was in the wind.

Our plans were working gloriously!

CHAPTER VIII.

SECRET PREPARATIONS!

MR. PONSONBY SMALL was feeling very happy.

Three days had elapsed—three days of quiet, orderly routine. There had been no recurrence of the indignant demonstrations, and the Remove, apparently, had wearily resigned itself to the inevitable.

The fellows were completely changed.

No grumbles were heard, and even in the Form-room Mr. Crowell noticed a difference. The fellows were on such good behaviour that lines were almost unnecessary. Hardly anybody was detained.

Football went on as usual, and the juniors were now quite accustomed to being hemmed in within the school bounds. Indeed, there were hardly any requests for pass-outs, whereas previously the juniors had positively pestered the prefects and masters for this privilege.

And Mr. Ponsonby Small very foolishly came to the conclusion that his methods were absolutely successful. At last he had broken the spirit of these insubordinate young wretches! At last he had made them understand that his will was to be obeyed, and that he would stand no nonsense.

And Nelson Lee, fully aware of the change that had taken place, was not only suspicious, but certain in his mind that this change was significant. The Remove was up to something!

Certainly, Nelson Lee had had more cause to believe this than Mr. Small, for Lord Dorrimore had told him all about Curdle's Paddock, informing him that he was the trustee. But Dorrie gave nothing away. He left all else to Nelson Lee's imagination. And Lee, in fact, had formed a very shrewd idea as to what was in the wind.

In his position as Housemaster, it was really his duty to inquire into this, and put a stop to any proposed rebellion. But Nelson Lee chose to regard the matter differently.

Lord Dorrimore had told him the facts, not in his capacity as Housemaster, but as one friend to another. So the schoolmaster detective calmly told himself that he was not called upon to act in any official capacity.

And the Remove went ahead with its plans unhindered.

And these plans were now developing with amazing speed. During the three days, every kind of secret work had been accomplished. Even the juniors themselves could hardly realise that they had performed such feats.

In the meanwhile, Mr. William K. Smith was congratulating himself. He had heard no more from Lord Dorrimore regarding Curdle's Paddock, and Smith had simply placed the affair in the hands of his solicitors, instructing them to hang it out as long as possible. And, exactly as I had assumed, Mr. Smith was rushing work on the power-station in a manner that was truly American.

The building simply leapt into being. Hundreds of men swarmed on the job, and by the end of the three days, the power-station was practically up—walls, roof, everything. And at the same time Smith was speeding up the arrival of electrical dynamos, and other apparatus. His intention was to get the power on before any legal proceedings commenced.

Afterwards, he could hang the affair out indefinitely. And he was convinced that he would win—as he had always won. And if this plan suited Mr. Smith, there was no question that it fitted in beautifully with the ideas of the Remove.

For we needed that building that had just been erected. It was to be our stronghold. If only Mr. Smith had known how he was helping us, he would have stopped work days earlier.

The millionaire came to the conclusion that Lord Dorrimore was scared off, and the reports from Mr. Ponsonby Small about the juniors were satisfactory, too. Smith was certain that the Remove was cowed and beaten. Never had he made a greater blunder than this.

For, of course, exactly the opposite was the case.

With all Smith's business ability—and his worst enemy would not deny that he was a genius at finance—he had been unable to see through the mask which the St. Frank's juniors had adopted. And the reason was simple. The American millionaire was up against something he had never before experienced.

What Smith and Ponsonby Small mistook for listlessness among the boys was really nothing more nor less than physical exhaustion. The lack of sleep, too, made the fellows dull and heavy. And the desire to be free for every available minute made the fellows on their best behaviour in class.

Time after time the Remove enthusi-

astically declared that I was a great commander-in-chief, and their faith in me was supreme. Even Handforth freely confessed that he had been a blithering idiot to start that absurd barring-out of his, and he pledged himself to follow my leadership.

But I merely pointed out that there was nothing at all wonderful in my methods. I was simply going at the thing carefully, calmly, and making every possible preparation before showing my hand.

The tunnel was progressing with gratifying speed. According to my calculations, we should reach our objective on the night of this third day. And I was right.

That night—or, to be exact, at one a.m.—I was in charge of the gang that worked with picks and shovels. The tunnel was by no means insignificant, but quite a decent affair. In most places it was three feet wide, and over four feet high.

And at the spot where we decided to burrow upwards, a much bigger cavity had been excavated. The work of boring a shaft up through the earth was both difficult and risky. We ought, really, to have dug downwards. But this was impossible under the circumstances.

But by means of careful precautions, and using some hastily erected scaffolding, we were able to excavate the shaft by gradual degrees, without fear of a general collapse.

And at length we reached our objective.

Instead of earth and gravel above us, a black hole had appeared. I happened to be at work at the top of the scaffolding at the moment, and I at once gave the order to douse all lights and to maintain silence.

And then I wormed my way through the hole and found that I was in a kind of enclosed cavity, with boards above my head. I heard no sounds, and everything was pitch black. So I thought it safe to switch on my electric torch.

This I did, and my satisfaction was enormous.

I was under the foundations of the power-station. There were no cellars to the place, but just the trodden earth, with a space of about four feet between the floor-boards and the ground. And our shaft had come up in one of the corners. There was no possibility of discovery, because the whole floor was enclosed, with no means of getting down into this space.

The rest of our work that night was comparatively simple.

It consisted of enlarging the shaft, and making it absolutely safe. In addition, a roughly constructed ladder was lashed to one of the sides of the shaft, so that we could climb up easily from the tunnel.

Getting through the floor would be a comparatively simple matter when the time arrived. But until then, it would be better to touch nothing. Smith and his men could have no possible suspicion of what was in the wind.

And it must not be supposed that our emerging under the power-station was an accident, or a lucky chance. It had been planned in advance, and my calculations had proved correct. It was just the result of careful thought before starting any actual labour.

And the Remove's satisfaction was enormous.

Success had crowned our efforts, and now practically everything was ready for the great coup. Mr. William K. Smith and Mr. Ponsonby Small, congratulating themselves that all was well, would have received a very big shock if they had known the actual state of affairs.

CHAPTER IX.

ZERO HOUR!

"ELEVEN o'clock to-night!" said Reggie Pitt seriously.

"Eh?"

"Eleven o'clock to-night."

Jack Grey stared.

"What the dickens are you talking about?" he asked. "What do you mean—eleven o'clock to-night?"

"Zero hour!"

"Oh!" Jack Grey looked suddenly alert. "To-night? At eleven? I say, is this absolutely fixed?"

"Official!" replied Reggie comfortably. "At last, sweet youth, the great hour approacheth! To-night, as the clock strikes eleven, the Remove will proceed to remove itself! And to-morrow our excellent friend, Mr. William K. Smith, will entertain us by going into three fits in succession!"

Two more days had passed—nearly a week since the purchasing of Curdle's Paddock. And now at length the plans for the great Remove Rising were complete in every detail.

Before another twenty-four hours had elapsed, the truth would be out, and the barring-out, instead of being a dream, would be a reality. Just when Mr. Ponsonby Small thought he had reduced us to complete subjection, he would find that we were more rebellious than ever.

And word was now being passed round secretly, from junior to junior; and each fellow was warned not to breathe a single word to anybody else, but to go on exactly as though nothing had happened.

It would never do for the Remove to gather in excited clumps, discussing the coming rebellion. A word overheard, an incautious whisper here, or a few words there, and Mr. Small might get to know of the plan. And an investigation would instantly disclose the truth. All our plans of the last week would be undone in an hour.

Fortunately, the Remove realised this, and behaved splendidly. This was really one result of being fully prepared in advance. Day after day I had dinned into the fellows the absolute necessity for complete union.

The slightest slip of the tongue might lead to detection.

Teddy Long, the most likely culprit of all, had been threatened with every kind of ghastly torture if he so much as winked an eyelid. For once in his life Teddy was grimly determined to keep his mouth shut.

There had been all sorts of other plans developed, in addition to the tunnel. The excavation, in fact, had been but a single part of the whole. Food had been stacked away; the water supply had been prepared; sleeping accommodation made ready, and a hundred and one other details.

Archie Glenthorne had helped amazingly with cash. For this he was excused all manual labour, and informed that he could be a mere looker-on. And Archie, of course, answered this by ripping off his coat and piling into the work as heartily and as enthusiastically as any of the others.

His languid manner was more of a pose than anything else. When it came to the point, Archie was as strong and as energetic as anybody. I suspected that his father was "in the know," and had handed Archie as much money as the elegant junior asked for.

At all events, Glenthorne had whacked out five-pound notes by the dozen, remarking that it was all for the good of the cause. Everybody else in the Remove had contributed to his last penny. And during the past few days food had been bought in large quantities.

There had been a little difficulty about this at first, until some Fifth-Formers were taken into our confidence and sworn to secrecy. And these fellows, being seniors, were not restricted. And they took big orders into Bannington, and parcels were arriving in one continuous stream. But it was all done so unostentatiously that nothing was suspected.

With regard to water, we had discovered, by various means, that this was laid on from the main at the power-station itself. So there would be no trouble in that respect—except in the event of Mr. Smith cutting off the supply. And he would hardly do this, because it would mean cutting off his own supply, too. Anyhow, we should have to risk it.

The council of war held meetings regularly, and all other matters were thoroughly gone into—such questions as ammunition, weapons, and so forth. For we were firmly convinced that there would be a lot of fighting.

Furthermore, I had instructed the fellows so thoroughly as to what should be done when the hour of zero came, that the whole business ought to have run as though on oiled wheels. The Remove, in fact, was letter perfect in the part it had to play.

And this had only been done by constant and continuous persistence. And, even then, I was quite prepared for any blunders, and instructed my chief lieutenants to be strictly on the look-out for mistakes.

The Remove was divided into six companies—three of Fossils, and three of Monks. Boots was commander of one, Christine of another,

Raising a thick blanket that we had brought, we sprang on the fellow from behind, and in a second his head was smothered.

and Clapson of a third. In the Ancient House, Handforth was at the head of one company, Pitt captained another, and Armstrong the third. And I, of course, was commander-in-chief of the lot.

When eleven o'clock struck that night, the Rebel Army moved like clockwork itself.

In the Ancient House, Handforth's company was the first to get dressed. The others didn't move until Handforth and his men had gone—silently, mysteriously, without the slightest confusion or commotion. Everything worked with wonderful precision, and even if Mr. Small had been on the alert, he would have known nothing.

My own anxiety was enormous.

It had been a trying day, for in spite of all my efforts, a number of the juniors had displayed an unusual excitement. It was only natural, for the great hour was so near at hand. During the evening, especially, I had expected inquiries to be made.

But if the prefects suspected anything, they gave no sign of this. And Mr. Small was so convinced of his complete success that he now regarded the Remove with contempt. He looked upon the juniors as a beaten crowd. And this, just when they were on the point of commencing the biggest rising in the history of the school!

Hoping that everything would go smoothly, I was overjoyed at the delightful placidity of the night's movements. Without the slightest hitch, the Remove dormitories were evacuated. By two o'clock not a single fellow of the Remove remained in the school.

Every mattress, every sheet, and every blanket had vanished, too. And not only the

ones that we were using, but a complete fresh supply from the school store-rooms.

And the rebels were massing down in the tunnel, where everything was bustle and excitement and activity.

With half a dozen picked supporters, I went off on the most important mission of the night—to seize the power-station and gain full control. This had to be done in complete silence, so that no alarm should be raised. If possible, we wanted Mr. Smith to know nothing of the seizure until the morning. This would give us a chance to use the small hours to consolidate our position. We were in no case to fight.

My companions were Pitt, Grey, Archie, Christine, Yorke, and Watson. Handforth wanted to come, but he was a bit too reckless for my liking—and I had assured him that his services were absolutely invaluable elsewhere.

Our little party knew exactly what had to be done. There were two men on guard in the power station—night watchmen. Exactly why Mr. Smith had placed them there was puzzling, but perhaps he felt that his position was insecure, and was taking no chances.

In any case, those two watchmen had to be dealt with before we could comfortably gain possession. And the first thing to be done was to get through the floor in silence.

It was no easy job.

We had come provided with a key-hole saw, and other implements. But we found, after all, that these were not necessary. For as we looked round that confined space beneath the floor, we saw that a hole had been left in the brick foundation for the fitting of a ventilator. The ventilator not being in position, there was just sufficient room for a slim fellow to worm his way through.

We all managed it with success, and found ourselves standing in the open, at the rear of the building—which still had an odour of mortar and newness about it. And, creeping round, we discovered a doorway, and peeped in. We got a bit of a surprise.

Sitting with his back to us, was a rough looking man, smoking. He was seated on a box, and only the glow of his pipe showed, for the moonlight was dim. We didn't hesitate a moment.

Raising a thick blanket that we had brought, we sprang on the fellow from behind, and in a second his head was smothered. He went to the ground in a heap, gurgling and struggling, but making no outcry.

In three minutes he was trussed up—gagged and bound so that he could give no alarm. And we had hardly finished this task when we heard footsteps. Like shadows we retreated. Another man came marching round the building.

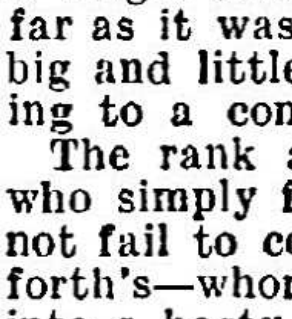
He was pounced upon in exactly the same way, taken utterly by surprise, and hurled to the ground before he could put up the slightest semblance of a fight. The blanket alone confused him.

And he, too, was swiftly carried into the building and placed beside his helpless companion. And we gazed at one another with gleaming eyes.

The way was now clear—the power-station was ours!

CHAPTER X.

THE RISING OF THE REMOVE!



ALL night the work went on, unchecked. Sleep was not even thought of. Or, even if it was, the juniors were so animated by the work on hand that they wouldn't have slept, even if they had had the opportunity.

Silently, stealthily, figures flitted to and fro in the power-station—along the tunnel—across the playing-fields—through the Triangle. They were everywhere. But so silent and cautious that nothing was disturbed.

And these figures were not going about haphazard, but on definite errands, in charge of leaders who had fixed instructions. It was only in this way that success was assured.

If the Remove had wondered why so many councils of war had been necessary during the last three or four days, they didn't wonder any longer. For now, on this eventful night, the results were apparent. Not a single thing had been left to chance. As far as it was humanly possible, every detail, big and little, had been mapped out according to a complete schedule.

The rank and file of the juniors—fellows who simply followed the lead of others—did not fail to contrast my methods with Handforth's—whom they had blindly followed into a hasty rebellion only just over a week earlier.

Everything had seemed very rosy at the commencement of that affair, but the rebels had soon found that the barring-out was a mistake—that it had been entered into without any planning.

The completeness of my preparations was startling by comparison. Yet the credit was not due to me alone, but to the Council of War. These plans had been thought out and decided upon by the committee as a whole. The juniors remembered that I had advised Handforth to appoint such a committee—but they had shouted me down.

And now, on this fateful night, they remembered, and they marvelled that they had ever been able to last out for nearly a whole day.

The present rising was totally different. For it involved everybody in the Remove, including all the fellows in the College House. Right into the small hours, all hands were busy.

Food, bedding, and all sorts of other

things were carried through the tunnel, up the shaft, and into the power-station. An investigation had shown us that the place was comparatively empty, except for some great cases of machinery which were stacked away in one corner.

But the walls were built, the windows were fitted in, and the doors were in position. Long before daylight, the place was transformed.

And it was very gratifying to know that we had the tunnel—a secret which nobody else knew—whereby we could gain the open country if we wanted to. Indeed, I had already decided that visits should be occasionally made into Bannington—by picked fellows, who could be trusted to do their work thoroughly. There were bound to be all sorts of things that we should need.

The tunnel exit was cunningly concealed.

It would never have done to leave this fully exposed, thus laying ourselves open to an attack from the rear—or worse still, the closing of the tunnel. We fixed boards across the cavity, and made them in the form of a big hinged door, with turf so carefully fixed to it that when the door was closed the ground looked absolutely solid.

At the other end of the tunnel, beneath the power station, a door had been carefully cut in the flooring. We had provided ourselves with screws and tools, and the square of flooring was soon converted into a stout trap-door, with hinges complete.

Thus, when we were all in possession of the building, and there were no others to come through, a mattress was placed over the trap-door, concealing its presence. Mr. William K. Smith would be sorely puzzled as to how we had penetrated his guard in such numbers. He would be at a complete loss to understand how we had carried all our stuff into the power-station without being observed. And we had taken such precautions that it was practically impossible for him to learn the truth.

At length, just before dawn, we took a respite.

The power-station consisted of one great central building, with various smaller apartments adjoining. Everything was in a rough and unfinished state—which was not surprising, considering the fact that a week earlier the place had been hardly commenced.

The roof was flat—a huge space with a low parapet running entirely round. A little distance away there was a furnace-house, with a short factory chimney already built. It was clear that Mr. Smith intended getting his electric power by means of steam-driven appliances—until the plans for harnessing the Stowe were complete.

But our seizure of the building would probably cause complete confusion to the millionaire's plans.

The whole Remove stood or lounged in the main part of the building—resting after the strenuous exertions of the night. And Fatty Little was serving round sandwiches by the dozen. Crockery, knives and forks, etc., had not been forgotten. Fatty had been left in charge of this department, and he had done well. He had brought enough cooking utensils for the feeding of an army.

"Well, you chaps, we've done it," I said quietly. "And I'd like to congratulate you all on the way you've worked to-night. You've backed me up wonderfully. There hasn't been a hitch. As far as I can see, the whole scheme has worked as smooth as glass from start to finish. And we're in full possession, and nobody has the slightest inkling of it."

"Yes, but where should we have been without your generalship?" asked Pitt.

"Hear, hear!"

"Nipper's the right chap for the job!"

"Better than old Handy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth turned rather red as he heard that soft ripple of laughter. But he couldn't help grinning, too.

"No need to rub it in!" he growled. "I know I made a mess of that affair last week, but that wasn't supposed to be as big as this. If we all stick to Nipper, and obey orders, there'll be no trouble."

"That's the idea," said Bob Christine. "No army can have more than one commander-in-chief. In my opinion, everything has worked smoothly to-night because all hands have obeyed orders."

"Absolutely, old sandwich!" said Archie. "Dash it, I never believed that we were capable of it. I mean, it's somewhat staggering!"

"Good old Archie!" grinned Boots. "Where's your collar?"

Archie, who was a perfectly fearsome spectacle in grubby flannel trousers, a torn shirt, collarless, and with a ragged blazer over his shoulders, smiled serenely.

"As it happens, old slice of cake, I don't particularly care a bally rap about a collar," he observed. "When hard labour has to be done, the Glenthornes never jib! What I mean is, this is a time when we've got to rally round and absolutely show what we can do."

"Yes, by Jove, and you've shown us!" I said approvingly. "In fact, Archie, you've been the surprise of the party! Good man! If everybody follows your example, there'll be no question of victory. Now, I'd like to point out one important fact."

"Go ahead!"

"We're all listening, field-marshal!"

"It's about this ground we're on," I said. "If I know anything about Smith, he'll adopt drastic methods to defeat us. He's got a thousand ruffians to his hand, and I don't think he'll hesitate to set them loose upon us."

"You told us this before we started the rebellion," said somebody.

"Yes, I know—but I'm telling you again," I said quietly. "I want you to thoroughly understand what we've got to expect. No half measures—no school rag,

or a half-holiday scrap. It'll be something grim and determined—something more deadly than we've ever experienced."

"We're ready for it," said Fullwood. "Hang Smith an' all his crowd! If they swarm on us, we'll smash 'em!"

"Hear, hear!"

I was very pleased to hear that remark from Fullwood—proving, as it did, that the fighting spirit had even entered his usually caddish composition. In this crisis, the very worst of the fellows were proving that they possessed a portion of good, at all events.

"We've taken certain measures that will help us to combat these attacks," I went on. "For the attacks will come—without any question. But remember, all the time, that we are defending our own property."

"Hurrah!"

"Smith was told to get off this land, and he refused," I continued. "He was given a week, and during that week he has continued his building operations with increased intensity——"

"For which we thank him in chunks!" observed Pitt, grinning.

"Yes, it's provided us with this stronghold," I admitted. "But he didn't know that, and he has acted directly against the law by persisting in his attitude. This ground is ours, and we'll hold it against all comers. So, when the battle is at the thickest, bear in mind that we are not invaders, but the absolute owners."

"Good for you, Nipper!"

"We'll fight until we drop!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And we'll be victorious, too!"

"That's what we're out for," I declared. "Our terms will be that Ponsonby Small must go, Dr. Stafford must be brought back, and William K. Smith must keep his hands off the school in the future. On the top of that, he's got to hand us the exact price that Lord Dorrimore paid for this meadow."

"Why not double?" asked Solomon Levi, always businesslike.

"Because we don't want to make any profit," I replied. "If we did that, people would say that we engineered the whole barring-out for the purpose of getting money, and our whole object would be defeated. We're revolting simply and purely to restore St. Frank's to its original state."

"That's right enough," agreed Pitt. "We can't be too careful."

"And now that we've had a snack, we can't do better than make a few final preparations, and fix up our defences," I continued. "Numbers one and two companies will proceed with me to the roof."

A few brisk orders were issued by the company commanders, and the fellows obeyed with alacrity—rather enjoying the novelty of the situation. And the defences were given full attention.

By daylight all was ready for the battle.

CHAPTER XI.

IN FULL POSSESSION!

MR. PONSONBY SMALL looked up irritably as Fenton, of the Sixth, entered the library. It was quite early morning, and breakfast had not yet been served. The Head disliked being disturbed at this hour.

"What is it, Fenton, what is it?" he asked testily.

"The Remove has vanished, sir!" said Fenton. "That's all!"

Mr. Small stared.

"The Remove has vanished?" he repeated. "What nonsense is this? How dare you come to me with such a preposterous tale? The boys are out in the grounds, no doubt——"

"Not at all, sir," interrupted Fenton, with a kind of relish. "I believe there's another barring-out."

Mr. Small leapt to his feet.

"Another barring-out!" he shouted excitedly. "Impossible! Utterly impossible! Those wretched boys have been subdued ever since that other preposterous affair! You're mistaken, Fenton—there must be some other explanation!"

"If there is, sir, I fail to see it," replied the prefect.

Mr. Ponsonby Small paced agitatedly up and down the study, his mind in a chaos of thoughts. During that previous revolt, which had collapsed so dramatically, Mr. Small had been informed by William K. Smith that another such affair would mean his finish as Headmaster.

And Mr. Small had been calmly assuring himself that the Remove was quelled. This piece of information from Fenton was staggering. It was beyond belief. In fact, Mr. Small quite refused to believe it.

"Why do you jump to such foolish conclusions, boy?" he demanded harshly.

Fenton smiled.

"I don't know that I've jumped to any conclusions, sir," he replied. "The Remove dormitory is quite empty, and even the mattresses and blankets and sheets have gone. It's just the same in the College House, and there's not a sign of any Remove boy in the whole school."

Mr. Small began to have grave, disturbing fears.

"How dare you smile, confound you?" he snarled. "Have those infernal boys dared to take possession of those attics again——"

"No, sir—we've looked there," said Fenton cheerfully.

"You've looked there?" echoed Mr. Small. "Bah! You make me sick! A vital matter like this, and you have the audacity to treat it lightly!"

The Head stormed out of his study, too agitated to say more. And during the next twenty minutes he raged up and down

the school like a maniac. His anxiety and his panic increased with every minute.

One glance at the dormitory had shown him that the Remove had indeed gone. It was the same in the College House. The whole school was searched. Every available inch of space was examined for some sign of the mysteriously missing juniors.

Not only the attics, but the cellars, and the cupboards and store-rooms. The discovery that many spare blankets were gone was disconcerting, to say nothing of the fact that a really remarkable amount of crockery and knives and forks and spoons had also disappeared. Two of the food store-rooms were found to be practically empty.

Mr. Small was at his wits' end.

This was ten times worse than he had feared. The boys had not only revolted, but they had cleared out of the school altogether. The publicity of it! The Head nearly fainted with horror. The other barring-out he had been able to hush up, but if the Remove had left the school altogether, what could be the ending?

In desperation, as on the previous occasion, Mr. Ponsonby Small thought of William K. Smith. And so, after failing to obtain any satisfaction from his search, he went to the telephone, and within two minutes he was talking to the millionaire.

Mr. Smith was curt and brief.

He declared that he would be with Mr. Small in a few minutes, and that unless the boys were found and subdued, there would be trouble, with a capital T.

William K. Smith, who had been in his office, started off at once. But before he reached the door one of his men came up, flushed, and rather excited.

"Say, Mr. Smith——" he began.

"Wait—I'm busy!" snapped the millionaire.

"But it's important, sir!" panted the other. "There is something wrong at the power-station."

Mr. Smith checked, and removed the cigar from his mouth.

"Something?" he repeated curtly. "Say, shoot it out!"

"We don't know what it is, sir, but the windows are barricaded, and the doors are locked," said the man. "One of the fellows said he could hear voices, too. We can't understand——"

"By heck!" muttered Mr. Smith slowly.

A startling thought had come to him. The power-station was barred and bolted! Voices had been heard from within. And Mr. Ponsonby Small had just rung up to say that the Remove had disappeared!

Incredible, amazing as it seemed, was it possible that——

Mr. Smith pulled his thoughts up with a jerk, and almost ran to the rear of the River House School, where his offices were situated, and then hurried through the lower quarter of the settlement to the newly-built power-station, which was now standing stark and new-looking in the morning sunlight, with its red bricks, its squat shape, and flat roof.

Mr. Smith got within about ten yards, and then he came to a sudden halt.

For suddenly, without the slightest warning, a united yell of defiance arose from a large number of voices.

And the millionaire stared, his face turning purple with rage.

The roof had become lined with youthful figures. The windows were crowded with other boys, and they were all looking cheerful and excited. The central window was open, and one boy leaned out.

This individual, I need hardly say, was myself.

"Good-morning, Mr. Smith!" I shouted cheerfully.

"Say, what's the idea?" thundered Mr. Smith. "Who in blazes told you to get in this building?"

"Well, nobody told us, but we thought it would make rather a nice camping ground," I replied. "We've got this place, Mr. Smith, and we mean to keep it. And as this property isn't yours, allow me to order you off!"

"Hurrah!" roared the Remove.

"Yah! Tyrant!"

"Go back to Chicago!"

"Hun!"

"Clear off this ground, it's our's!"

"We give you two minutes to clear off!"

Mr. Smith stood there, staring upwards, furious and helpless. The storm that had suddenly been let loose upon his head came as a complete shock to him. But with a big effort he gained control of himself and strode away.

The rebels were disappointed.

They wanted to inform Mr. Smith that this ground was theirs, and that they intended to defy him to the final limit. But Mr. William K. Smith did not wait. He strode off, followed by the jeers of the juniors.

"It's all right! don't worry!" I shouted. "He'll come back!"

As a matter of fact, Mr. Smith had gone straight to St. Frank's—there to learn what details he could from Ponsonby Small. He gained very little satisfaction, and Mr. Small was left quivering and shaky from the millionaire's vituperative abuse.

The revolt had started. But how would it finish?

Read Next Week How the Remove Defied Mr. W. K. Smith in Another Exciting Story:

THE SIEGE OF THE REBELS!

THE END.

MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

By the Author of our St Frank's Stories.

No. 15. NEW YORK CINEMAS

THE CAPITOL, in New York, is reputed to be the largest cinema in the world, and I see no reason to doubt this statement. For The Capitol is certainly a most astounding place. It is undoubtedly the largest cinema I have ever been in, although it does not recommend itself to me on that score.

For real comfort and enjoyment, I consider that a fairly small cinema is far better than these enormous super picture houses. But that, after all, is a matter of opinion—and I am not writing these notes to give my opinions, but to set down my impressions of what I saw in America.

The Capitol is capable of seating five thousand people, and I think the picture is visible, and clearly defined, from every seat in the house. The throw is necessarily an enormously long one, and in any British picture house, the thick tobacco smoke would undoubtedly affect the clarity of the picture.

But in New York smoking is strictly prohibited in all the cinemas, and this is a regulation that I thoroughly approve of. Don't imagine that I am a non-smoker, because I am not. When I first entered a New York picture theatre I was rather disgusted because I had to throw my cigarette away, and refrain from smoking until I emerged once more.

But after only a very few visits to the "movies," I came to the conclusion that the prohibition of smoking in cinemas is not only beneficial to the audience, but absolutely necessary to the perfect showing of the picture itself.

They show the films much better in New York than we show them in London. That, at least, is my impression, and although it rather goes against the grain to admit it, I must, in all fairness, do so. Even in our latest palatial cinemas I have not seen the marvellously clear-cut picture that delighted me so much in New York.

One is impressed by this as soon as one enters. The screen is absolutely brilliant, but not over-dazzling. The explanation, I think, is that in New York they use more electric current, and get such a light through the film that every tiny detail is perfectly clear. And I fancy they use better projectors than we do—and the absence of smoke, of course, contributes largely to this crystal clearness.

There is another cause, too, which has just occurred to me. The air in New York is nearly always clear, fog being almost unknown. At the worst, they have a white mist—although this generally comes in the early hours of the morning.

Every picture-goer, I am sure, has seen many a good film ruined by bad or indifferent operating. Sometimes a brown smudge will obscure over a quarter of the picture for minutes at a time. There is, of course, no necessity for this; it simply means that the operator is neglecting his job.

The whole of the time I was in America, I never saw this happen. I fancy there must be much more strict supervision of operators over there. And this is undoubtedly all to the good. It has sometimes amazed me to see atrocious operating in some of our most famous cinemas.

The Mark Strand, the Rialto, the Rivoli, the Criterion—all these great New York picture theatres are situated on Broadway, in Times Square, or within a stone's throw of it. And there are, as you will guess, dozens of others, too—to say nothing of the hundreds of well-appointed suburban cinemas.

In the super picture houses, such as the Mark Strand and the Capitol, the orchestras are very different from what one would assume. They are enormous symphony orchestras of the most superb character, providing music of a classical order that one would hardly associate with pictures. They have an orchestra of this kind, I think, at the Regent, in Brighton—and the Regent is, indeed, modelled in very much the same style as the big American cinemas.

But in America the show does not merely consist of pictures. The audience is entertained by highly-paid concert artists, and elaborately staged scenas, and the programmes are always highly refined.

The majority of the New York cinemas open their doors at noon or one o'clock, and the prices are a half, or less than one half, during the afternoon. And the performance goes on continuously till eleven o'clock, midnight, and in some cases until one a.m.

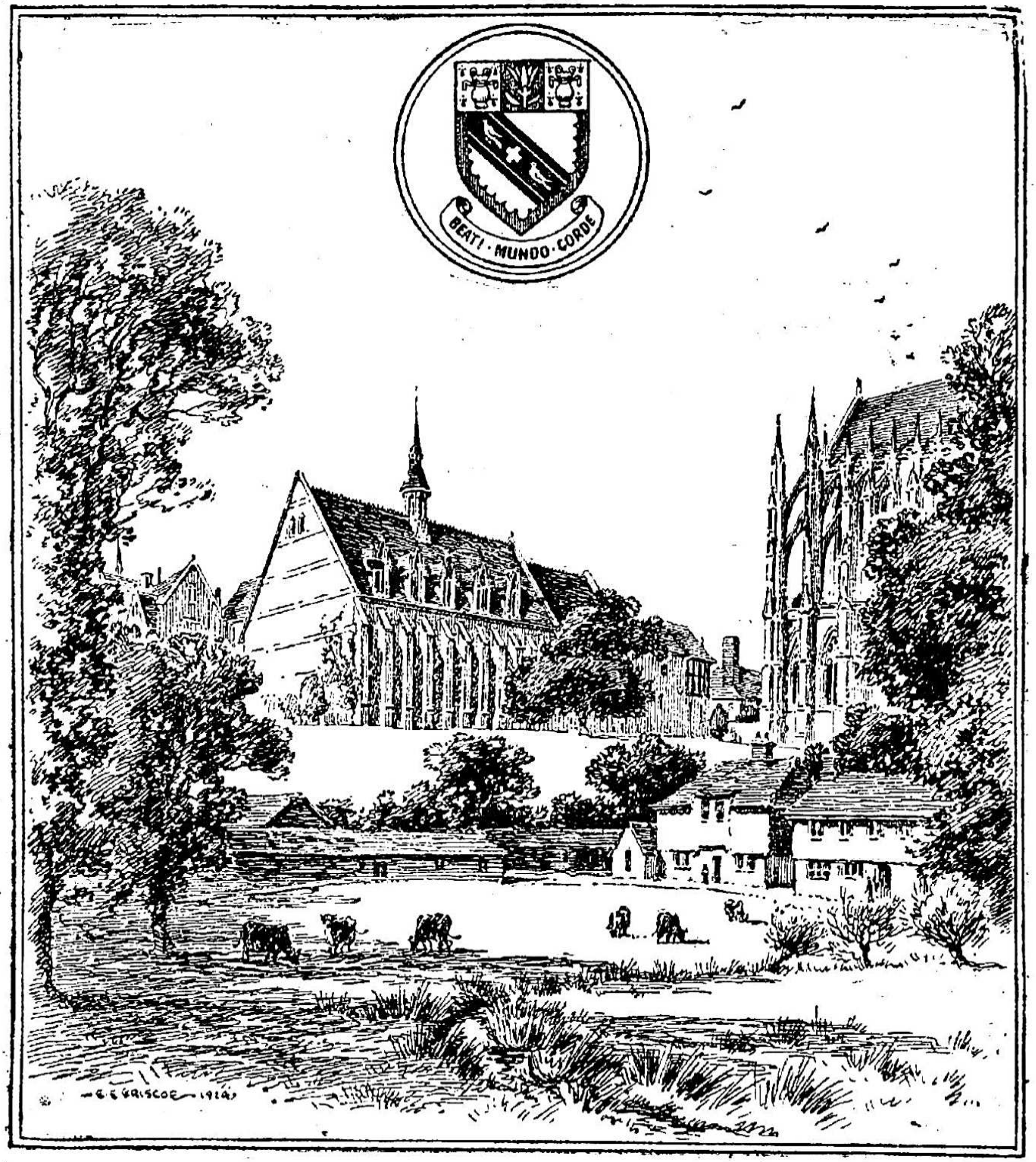
"Footballers' Names" Contest.

A complete list of the names and addresses of all the prize-winners down to the winner of the smallest consolation prize in our recent "Footballers' Names" Contest will appear, part by part, in "Young Britain" every week. This full list will only appear in "Young Britain." Get your copy early. There is bound to be a great demand for that paper.

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

SPECIAL SERIES OF ART SKETCHES BY MR. E. E. BRISCOE.

No. 19. LANCING COLLEGE.



St. Nicholas College, usually known as Lancing College, is the senior of a group of schools founded by the Rev. N. Woodward in 1848. It has accommodation for 300 boys, and is conducted on Anglican lines.

The College is situated on the Downs, within two miles of the sea. It possesses 240 acres of grounds.

In addition to the large, imposing chapel and the great school, there are a well-equipped science building, library, gymnasium, swimming-bath, sanatorium, etc.

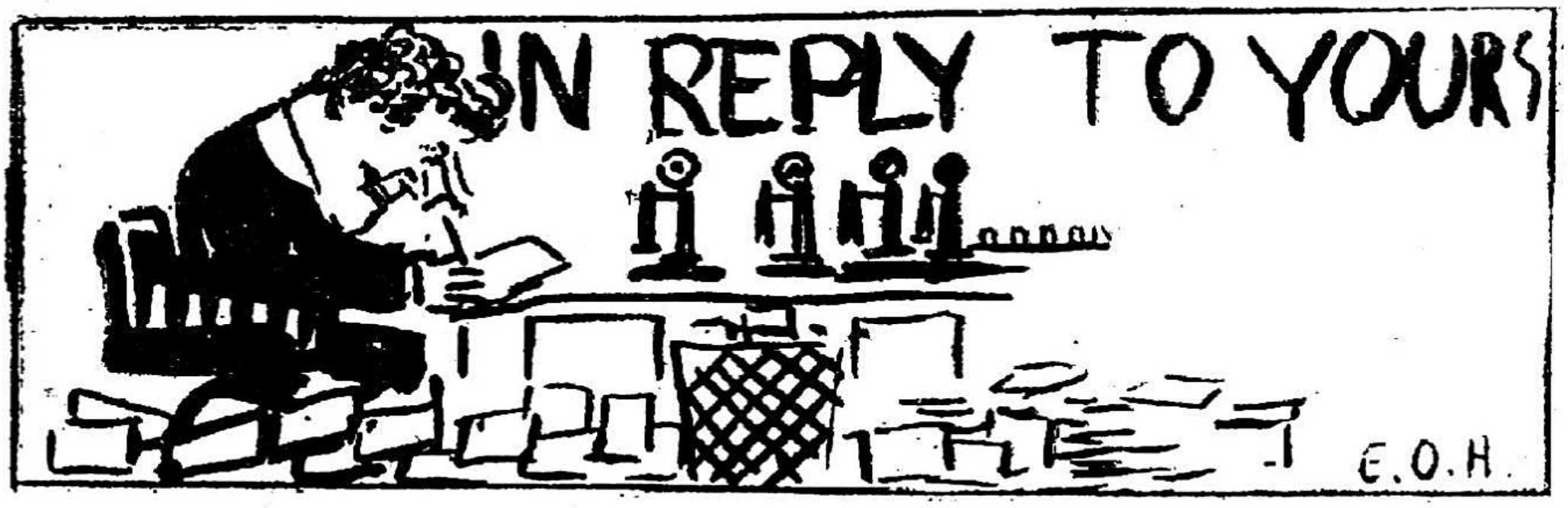
The Upper School is divided into Classical and Modern Sides, with a special Army Class.

The College supplies a contingent to the Officers Training Corps.

The Paper with a PUNCH on Every Page !

A PORTRAIT OF YOUR EDITOR BY HIMSELF.

St Frank's Magazine



NOTE BY YOUR EDITOR.—Since taking over the control of "The St. Frank's Magazine," I have found a large pile of correspondence that needs answering. So I have decided to show the late Editor how a paper should be run, and in future this page will be a regular feature of the "Mag." I have commissioned a member of my staff, under the disguised name of Uncle Edward, to deal with all letters of inquiry, and to reply in full.

YOUR GO-AHEAD EDITOR.

CUTHBERT CHAMBERS.—Your three manuscripts have apparently got lost, but the blame for that is not accepted by our new Editor. I understand that the list of contributors is now settled for some time to come, so there is no opening for outside stuff. Other would-be contributors please note.

FED-UP.—Your letter, running down the Trackett Grim stories, is so insulting that I won't answer it. The Trackett Grim stories, written by our famous Editor, are renowned throughout the world, and speak for themselves. They are recognised as the supreme pinnacle of detective fiction.

H. MINOR.—Your question is an unusual one. Should a fag's elder brother supply him with unlimited pocket-money? Certainly not! Two shillings a week is enough cash for any fag, and if you take advantage of my position and come bothering me for money, you'll get a thick ear.

TIMOTHY TUCKER.—I have been instructed by the Editor to warn you that if you carry out your threat and write a fifty-page article on ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CIVILISATION, it will be quite useless submitting it to me. I am only publishing brilliant stories and articles in future, and there is no room for your trash.

CHUBBY.—I don't think it is advisable to feed rabbits on sardines, and I am very doubtful if they would eat bluebottles. These questions are silly, and the next time you write in this manner, your letter will be burnt. You shouldn't keep white rabbits unless you know what to feed them on. It's like your nerve to write to the Editor at all!

ENTHUSIASTIC.—I cannot share your enthusiasm for the "E. Sopp's Fables" and the "Painful Parodies." I think you are a fathead for raving about such tripe. In my opinion, these features were rotten, and, as you will see by this issue of the "Mag.," they have been discontinued. The Editor has secured much better work for the forthcoming numbers.

T. ARMSTRONG.—Your complaints regarding the illustrations in the "Mag." have been quite justified. But from this issue onwards our pictures are being drawn by a renowned artist, and you will have no further cause for grumbling. If you do grumble, your letters will be destroyed.

DISGUSTED.—You are quite justified in what you say about bullying. As it happens, we have an article by a famous author in this issue, so there is no need for me to go further into the matter.

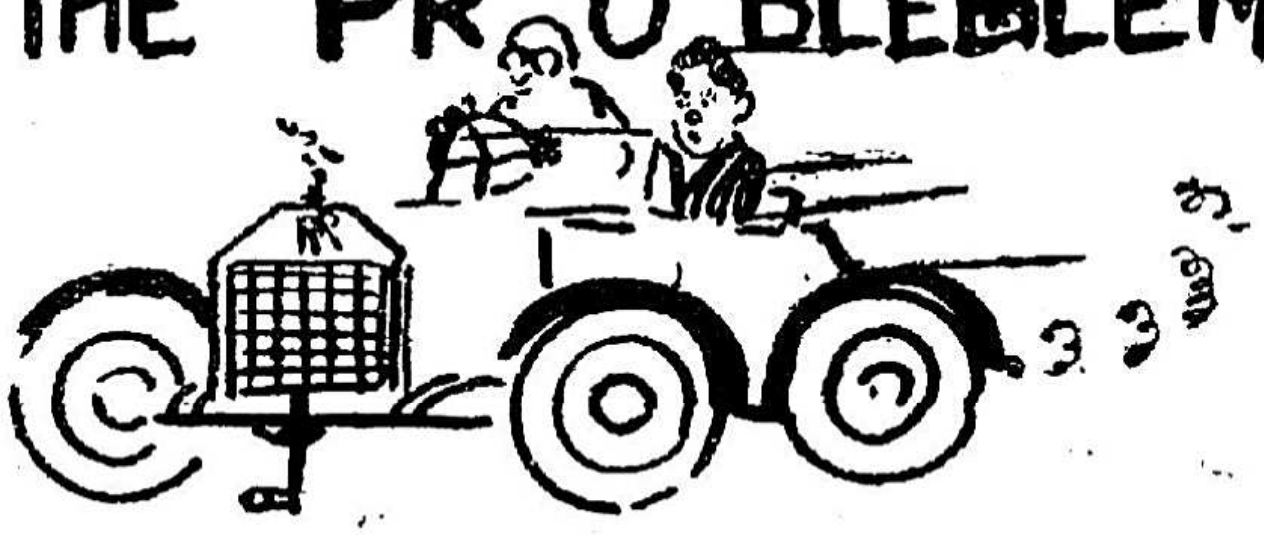
REGULAR READER.—I think you are mad. It's ridiculous to say that the "Magazine," in its previous form, was too good to be given away, and ought to be priced at a penny a copy. In my opinion, there was only one author on the staff who knew how to write, and modesty forbids my mentioning his name. With the exception of these contributions, the paper wasn't worth burning. But I am sure you will agree that sixpence wouldn't be too much to ask for it now.

ARCHIE G.—Are you trying to be funny? How do you expect the Editor to answer questions regarding neckties? And, as for asking whether a waistcoat should have five buttons or six buttons, I think you are a dithering idiot.

JACK GREY.—The only thing I can suggest in your trouble is to take drastic measures. Every time the chump starts spouting in your study, kick him out. Personally, I wouldn't put up with him for two minutes.

UNCLE EDWARD

THE PROBLEMS OF TRACKETT GRIM



THE FRIGHTFUL PHANTOM OF FINCHLEY FOREST!

The Greatest Detective Story Ever Written—ED.

By E. O. HANDFORTH.

AT THE HOUR OF MIDNIGHT.

TRACKETT GRIM brought his powerful racing-car to a halt so abruptly that Splinter was nearly pitched through the wind-screen.

"Hark!" said Trackett Grim tensely. "I heard a scream!"

It was midnight, and the world-famous pair were homeward-bound, after a successful case in the Midlands. And now they were passing the dense expanse of Finchley Forest, where all was gloomy and forbidding in the murky March night. The darkness was so intense that even a cat could have seen nothing.

"Great Scott!" shouted Splinter. "Look, sir!"

But Trackett Grim needed no telling. His eyes, keener than those of an eagle, were already glued to the figure that came tearing out of the wood in the clear moonlight. And a moment later a man fell headlong in the road, his strength spent.

Trackett Grim bent over him, and was aware of a strong odour of alcohol. But whisky was not the cause of the man's condition. He was in the last stages of terror, and his face was as pale as a sheet of paper, except for his nose, which stood out like a danger-signal on the railway, red and menacing.

"Drunk, sir!" said Splinter shrewdly.

"An elementary deduction, my dear Splinter," snapped Trackett Grim. "This man has been drinking, but he is not drunk. A doctor would declare that he has had one over the eight, but a man with a nose like this is capable of holding sixteen! He is not drunk, but off his rocker with fright. Come! We will take him to our chambers. There is a mystery here that needs probing."

THE HAUNTED MAN!

Ten minutes later, Trackett Grim and Splinter had carried their unfortunate companion into their rooms in Baker's Inn Road. And at the first sniff of the great detective's whisky-flask, the man recovered.

"The ghost!" he screamed hoarsely. "Take it away! Take it——"

"Please pull yourself together, Mr. Skotchan Soader!" interrupted Trackett Grim sternly. "If you are in trouble, I will help you. My name is Trackett Grim, and as this is my Special Bargain Week. I won't charge you anything extra for working after hours. Tell me your trouble."

"But—but how did you know my name?" gasped the client.

"It is on the hanger of your overcoat," said Trackett Grim carelessly. "And your name, my dear sir, is also written upon your face. Why did you scream like a hyena in the dense recesses of Finchley Forest?"

"The phantom!" muttered Mr. Skotchan Soader, rolling his eyes until they nearly fell out of his head. "The frightful phantom! I have seen it once! If I see it again, I shall have no alternative but to take my life! For upon the third time of seeing it, death will come to me with awful torture!"

For a moment Trackett Grim was suspicious. He suspected that Mr. Soader had had one actually over the sixteen. But the man's eyes were sober, and it was evident that he was suffering from intense emotion.

THE LEGEND OF THE SKOTCHAN SOADERS!

"Ah," said Trackett Grim, "You have been threatened?"

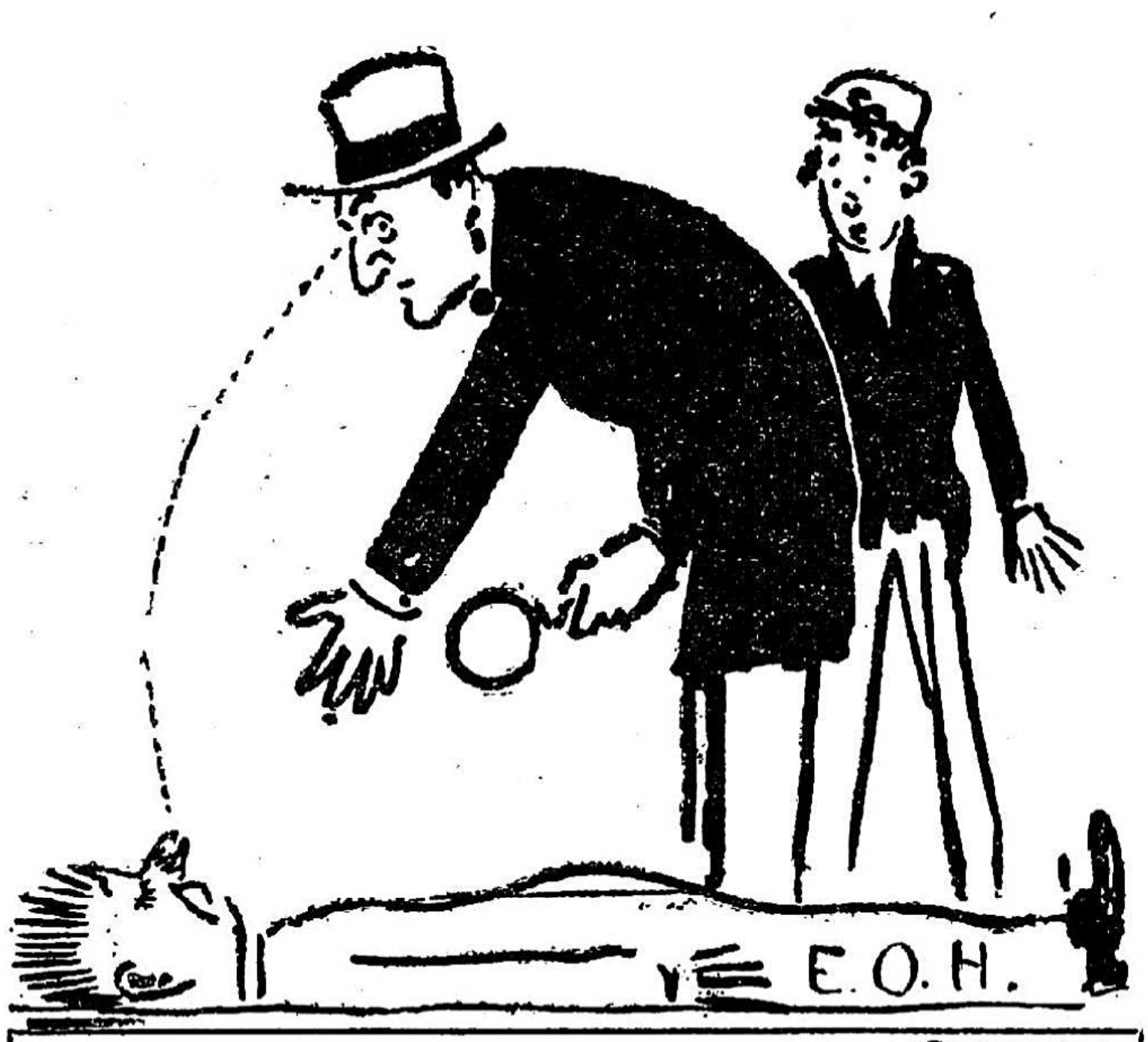
"Ay, threatened by spooks!" breathed the client. "Let me tell you the legend of our family, Mr. Grim. Hundreds of years ago, in the Middle Ages, a certain famous ancestor of mine named Sir Haig de Skotchan Soader committed a brutal murder, and since that day he has haunted the Soader estates at regular intervals. And the eldest son of each third generation has either committed suicide or suffered a torturing death."

"Great goodness!" said Trackett Grim hoarsely.

"But let me finish—I must tell you all!" proceeded Mr. Soader. "Three generations ago my grandfather took his own life in order to avert the torture. I have read it in the famous legend-book. The first appearance of the Frightful Phantom is a warning, the second appearance is to give the wretched victim a chance to take his own life. If he fails to do so, and sees the phantom for a third time, his death is made horrible by untold tortures!"

"You seem to be in a bit of a mess," remarked Trackett Grim tersely.

"A mess!" echoed Mr. Soader, his voice hollow and husky. "I am undone, Mr. Grim—I am undone!"



His face was as pale as a sheet of paper—except for his nose, which stood out like a danger signal, red and menacing.

"Then do yourself up, sir!" commanded the detective.

"I have seen the phantom once," whispered Mr. Soader, buttoning up his waistcoat. "It is the first warning. If I see it again, I shall take my life, for I shall not wait for the torture. What can you do for me, Mr. Grim?"

"You must go home," said Trackett Grim. "Take a good sleep, Mr. Soader, and I will come and investigate to-morrow."

And the unfortunate man reeled out of Trackett Grim's consulting-room, and went home.

THE VOICE OVER THE TELEPHONE.

An hour later, Trackett Grim was roused out of bed by the furious ringing of the telephone. He dressed himself in a thrice, rushed to the instrument, and clapped the receiver to his ear.

"Good-bye, Mr. Grim!" came a tragic voice. "I have taken prussic acid, and by the time you reach me I shall be dead. I have seen the phantom for a second time. It appeared before me as I went home through the forest. Good-bye! I have eaten six ounces of prussic acid, and there is no hope for me!"

The voice trailed away, and Trackett Grim staggered back from the telephone, his eyes blazing with horror. Splinter came in, and found his great master almost fighting for air.

"Quick, Splinter!" gasped Trackett Grim. "Unless we reach Mr. Soader's side before he dies, I shall be unable to collect my fee! And then what shall we do for dinner to-morrow?"

Never before had Trackett Grim raced as he raced now. He and Splinter dashed in their car to Finchley, drove through the dense forest, and arrived at the old manor house within a few minutes. They smashed down the front door, searched the house, and found Mr. Skotchan Soader gasping out his last breath on the dining-room hearthrug.

"He is gone!" said Splinter hoarsely. "We are too late!"

But in a couple of thrices Trackett Grim whipped out a hypodermic syringe full of antidote, and plunged it into the dying man's neck. The antidote surged into his veins in a flood, and two minutes later he was fully restored to perfect health. Such were the marvellous powers of Trackett Grim.

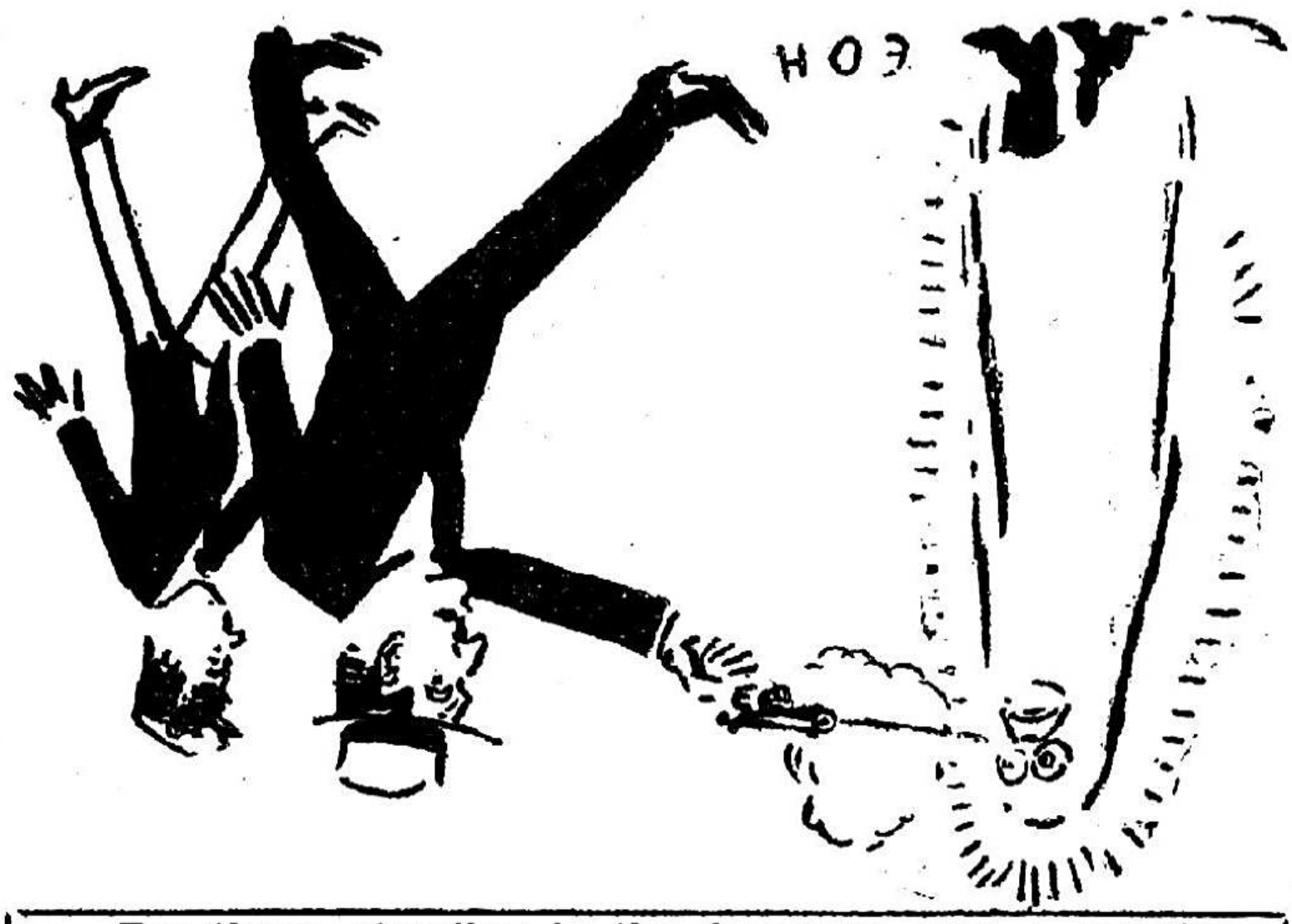
"Why have you let me live?" groaned Mr. Skotchan Soader. "I have seen the phantom twice, and —— A-a-a-h-h-h!"

He uttered a long drawn out scream, and stood there absolutely frozen to the floor with such horror that no pen could describe it.

THE FRIGHTFUL PHANTOM!

For there, standing in the doorway, was a spectre of ghastly shape. It was like that of a man with a hood over his face, and it was all greenish with an unearthly light. Trackett Grim and Splinter recoiled, but the detective whipped out his revolver and fired.

The spectre uttered a demoniacal howl, and vanished. And Trackett Grim went rushing after him. The phantom was just at the bottom of the stairs. Trackett Grim took a deep breath, and hurled himself outwards and downwards. And he landed on the shoulders of the ghost, and bore him to the ground. A brief struggle and the spectre was laid.



For there, standing in the doorway, was a spectre of ghastly shape. The detective whipped out his revolver and fired.

MR. SKOTCHAN SOADER'S GRATITUDE!

"Good heavens! My cousin, Roderick Soader!" shouted the client, in a great voice, as the ghost was unmasked. "You deep-dyed villain! What is the meaning of this?"

"It means that I should have won, but for this rotter's interference!" snarled the wicked cousin. "I am the next heir to the estates, and it was I who invented the legend of the Frightful Phantom! My plan was to make you commit suicide, and thus escape all penalties of the law! Even now, you cannot accuse me of anything bad, for I have only played the ghost!"

Mr. Skotchan Soader pointed a quivering finger to the door.

"Go!" he said hoarsely. And the wretched miscreant went.

And a few minutes later Trackett Grim and Splinter went, too, with a fat cheque, and with satisfaction in their hearts. They had laid the Frightful Spectre of Finchley Forest, and everything was O.K.

A QUIET LIFE

By WALTER CHURCH

I HAVE been persuaded by the Editor of the St. Frank's Mag. to write a short article for this number.

I didn't want to do it; but it is difficult not to yield to gentle persuasion when properly applied. Anyway, I yielded. I didn't want both my eyes blacked.

And besides, if I suffered some permanent injury, I shouldn't be able to play any more footer. Therefore I let myself be persuaded. But it's very hard to know what to write about.

The only things I can think of is a Quiet Life. It must be lovely to have a quiet life! I never get one here. And when I leave, that's what I intend to do.

Instead of becoming a Member of Parliament, or a soldier, or a lawyer, I am going to retire to a small place in the country. It will be very nice after the sort of life I lead now.

Just imagine! I shall live in a cottage and have one room entirely to myself. No one else will ever be allowed to come in. It will have one big, huge, comfortable easy-chair, in which I shall always sit.

There will never be anyone to come along and say:

"Look here, Church, you lazy bounder, that's my chair!"

And I shall have a great, big, blazing fire, and someone always to put the coal on for me I shall sit right in front of it whenever I want to. No one will ever come in and shout:

"Out of it, you rotter! I suppose you want all the fire!"

As no one except the servants will ever come into my room, I shall never have to argue. I hate arguing. They say it takes two to make a quarrel. It doesn't take two to make one in Study D!

And then it'll be so jolly to live in a place where you never get your head punched or your jaw swiped.

Think of it! You can choose exactly what you are going to do. If you want to go for a walk, no one will stop you. If you want to go to sleep in front of the fire, no one will blunder in and wake you up.

You can, in fact, lead a glorious life of peace and quiet. Some boys want to lead a life of action. They want always to be scrapping and fighting. I don't. Somehow, I feel I have done enough of that already.

Instead of running away to sea, I advise them to come to St. Frank's and spend a week in Study D. They'd get enough excitement there!

(I suppose the author is referring to McClure, who, I admit, is rather difficult to manage, at times.—ED.)

MODESTY

By ARNOLD McCLURE

I HATE writing.

And it's still more beastly having to write when you've got ear-ache. I often suffer from ear-ache. Sometimes it's because the Editor of this week's Mag. has been practising boxing.

At other times it's just because of listening to the rotten noise that's always going on in this study.

When you come to think of it, Modesty is a very funny thing. It makes people think they can't do things when they can.

In the case of our new Editor, it makes him think he can do things that he can't!

One of the queerest things about Modesty is that a chap who has it never shows it. He only talks about it. It is heard of, but never seen. At least, that's my experience.

But you can always tell when it's there. For instance, I will give you an example. The other evening I had some arithmetic to do for prep.

I had a problem to solve which was very hard. I had to find out how many men it would take to plough a field of ten acres, working ten hours a day, if three men ploughed it in four days, working five hours a day.

I couldn't get the answer. And then our modest Editor chipped in and said he would do it. I gave it to him, and he said:

"That's jolly simple. I can do it in my head."

He did it in his head, and told me the answer was seven acres. I thanked him, but he said:

"It's nothing. I can always do these problems."

The next day I showed up the problems to Mr. Crowell. He looked through them and then called me up to his desk.

"All the answers are right except one," he said. "The last one is wretchedly, hopelessly wrong. I can't think how you got such a useless, stupid answer!"

And that was the answer to the problem I had been helped with! But did the chap who was really responsible get the blame? Not he! He was too modest. He never said a word——

("That's a rotten lie, Arnold McClure! What gratitude! I'll never jolly well help you with your lessons again!"

—ED., "St. Frank's Mag.")

THE MODERN SCHOOLGIRL

BY E. OSWALD

THERE'S no doubt that schoolgirls are a pretty senseless lot. All they can think about is getting new hats, and buying blouses, and bottles of scent, and all that sort of trash. I've got a sister, and I know how absolutely brainless she can be. It's dress all the time—dress, and powder, and high-heeled shoes, and all sorts of other flummeries.

Now and again you meet a schoolgirl who dresses with a certain amount of commonsense, and wears low-heeled shoes, and sensible hats. But as a rule they don't care what discomfort they're in, as long as they look attractive.

At least, they think they look attractive. Personally, I wouldn't give a penny for any girl. They're too expensive, and too flighty. And you never know when they're going to change their minds, and give you the go-by. And they can insult you just as they like, and you can't do a blessed thing.

If the fellow calls you a donkey, you can give him a black eye, but if a girl calls you a donkey, all you can do is to boil inwardly, and pretend to like it. And if you don't keep paying them compliments, they think you're no good.

The girls nowadays expect a chap to notice a new hat in half a second. What does he care whether she's got a new hat on or an old one? But if you don't spot it, and pay compliments, you'll get the cold shoulder, and won't know why.

As everybody knows, I don't care a jot about girls, and it wouldn't worry me if the whole lot of them were cleared off the earth. But the Editor has asked me to write this article, and I'm doing it with the full force of my great ability. After all, a real writer can discuss any subject with success, whether he knows anything about it or not.

So, to sum up, I repeat that the modern schoolgirl is altogether flighty and unreliable. As a matter of fact, I've only met one girl who is really pretty and worth talking to. But I won't say any more, because, as I have intimated, girls don't interest me in the slightest degree.

THE BLIGHT OF BULLYING

BY EDWARD OSWALD

THE Editor has requested me to make a few bold remarks about bullying. It's quite time somebody came out with a plucky article on this important subject to all schoolboys. And there's nobody better qualified than me to deal with it, because I look upon bullying as a blight.

I'm not going to mention any names, but there are one or two fellows who take a delight in biffing weaker chaps. Now, I can't condemn this behaviour too strongly. Everybody knows how caddish it is to slosh a fellow who isn't capable of sloshing back. It's not only cowardly, but mean.

Now and again I have been accused of bullying myself, but that's all rot. I only punch a fellow on the nose when he deserves it. I only knock him into the middle of next week when he asks for it. And that's a different thing to bullying. There's nothing worse than being a bully.

It is particularly bad when a senior biffs a fag. The fag is so small that he can't stand up for himself, and sooner or later he becomes crafty and cunning, and gets his own back by underhand methods.

Quite recently two Third Formers stretched a string across the passage, so that I tripped over it, just because I happened to knock their heads together for being cheeky. This is the sort of thing I mean. These fags get so cunning that you don't know what to do with them. And the only thing to stop this kind of business is to kill the blight of bullying altogether.

If any fags want protection, I advise them to complain to our Fighting Editor, who will lose no time in dealing with such cases promptly. He's just as much against bullying as I am, and deals with it straight from the shoulder. The only way to cure a bully is to smash him until he howls for mercy.

MY FOOTBALL POW-WOW!

By E. O. H.

I THINK Mr. Clifford is a very nice kind of fellow. And I am glad he has found time to write for the Mag. I am sure all that he has written has been of immense use to those who read it.

But, unfortunately, he cannot know everything. Very few chaps can. And I notice that in his articles he has not dealt with the problem that is more baffling to footer experts than any other.

I refer to the problem of goalkeeping.

So I propose to write the article this week myself. Everybody knows that I am a modest kind of chap. The only reason I am writing this article is that I know most about the subject.

That's obvious, surely! Mr. Clifford, good fellow that he is, and good soccer player that he has been, has never kept goal. Well, I have!

And, without boasting, I think I may say I know all there is to know about it. Very few people in the world know as much as that.

The first point I want to mention is this:

The goalkeeper is the most important man on the field.

This fact is not sufficiently realised by many who play or read about the game. But it is quite true. I can prove it if you won't take my word, like this:

There are ten men on each side to score goals, counting the halves and backs. How many are there to save goals?

Only ONE!

People don't always recognise the immense importance of the goalkeeper. Yet he has to be good enough to play against TEN of the opposing team.

Without much exaggeration, I could say he takes on the whole opposition. His skill is pitted against that of the combined forces of the rival side.

Yet some people think forward play is more important! They cheer like mad when a forward scores a goal. To hear them shouting you would think it was the most wonderful thing in the world. Well, I will tell you why they cheer forwards when they score goals.

It is due to rotten jealousy!

They are jealous of the goalie! He has a whole team against him trying to score goals. For half an hour, or even longer, they don't succeed. This annoys the crowd, because they think it is luck, while all the time it is really the supreme skill of the goalkeeper.

Then, when a forward or one of the opposing team shoots a goal, they cheer like anything. They are all jealous because one man can be so clever.

Having explained that, I will pass on to other matters and give a little advice to would-be goalkeepers.

First you want to cultivate a big pair of hands. If your hands are not very big to start with, you must exercise them. The best way is to get a punching-ball and practice punching it—morning, noon, and night. If you cannot get a punching-ball, it is a good idea to punch the heads of your friends.

This is the way I have tried, with great success!

Some of them may object; but that, again, is only their jealousy. They will soon come round to your way of thinking if you are polite but firm.

There is an awful lot of of rot written about footer!

That is because the authors never play themselves. Without any swanking, I can claim to be jolly good at the game. And therefore it stands to reason I can write well about it.

That brings me to my second point. I have been accused sometimes of letting the ball get by me into the net. There are various explanations of this unusual occurence. Very often it is the fault of the backs. When trying to clear, they very often obscure a good view of the ball.

If they should mis-kick, the goalkeeper becomes unsighted. So, of course, he can't save the goal. Backs should always try not to mis-kick.

Sometimes the spectators are to blame. I have heard them shout out rude remarks just as I was going to make á brilliant save. Of course, their shouting has completely put me off.

Very often it is the half-backs, especially the centre-half, who is responsible for putting the side a goal down. Everyone knows the centre-half should mark his opposing centre-forward. Very often he does it badly. And the result is the centre runs up the field and shoots a goal.

The crowd in such a case often blames the goalie. It is absurd to suppose he can mark the whole of the other side as well as stop the goals!

My last piece of advice to boys who want to become first-class goalkeepers is always to keep perfectly cool and never lose your heads. I have found the greatest reason for my success in goal has been due to this.

Luckily I am by nature a patient and easy-going chap. Therefore I never lose my wool when things are going badly. Whatever insults are hurled at me, even if they are bits of mud, I quietly put up with them.

In short, it is this habitual calmness and coolness that makes me—and I say it without boasting—the best goalkeeper at St. Frank's, though the fatheads who run the First Eleven have never given me a trial yet. My hat, they'll get a shock when they do!

E. O. Handforth.

WHAT I SAY!

A STRAIGHT TALK BY THE EDITOR.

Editorial Office,
Study D,
St. Frank's.

My dear Removites,

Nipper thinks himself mighty clever, but after reading this week's number of the Mag, he's bound to admit himself beaten to a frazzle. None of his issues can compare with the present one for variety of interest, stunning stories and tophole illustrations. I know you will all agree with me, with what I say, and that ought to be sufficient to convince Nipper that he is a hopeless ass when it comes to running a Mag. If there's a single fellow who thinks otherwise, let him come to Study D, and I will show him in a jiffy what I mean, though he mustn't grumble afterwards if his nose should feel a little tender when he goes out. I have found from experience that some fellows are just like dogs—they show remarkable intelligence when anything comes in contact with their noses.

WHY I BECAME EDITOR.

For a long time past I have had quite a lot to do with the Mag., and the most brilliant ideas adopted by Nipper were really mine. In fact, I was the brains behind the paper. I don't believe in boasting, and I would be the last fellow to take advantage of my position as Editor to blow my own trumpet. But it is only fair that I should get credit where credit is due. When I told Nipper time after time that the Mag. was absolutely going to pot, he would not listen to my advice. Instead, he told me to go and eat cake, and not to waste his time with idiotic ideas. Now I am not the sort of chap to be choked off like that. So I told him a few home truths. In the end he said he was getting fed up with me, that I was an obstructionist, and used a lot of other insulting words, after which he told me that I had better run the paper myself. Naturally, I kept him to to his word, and he resigned. Whereupon, as I happened to know more about what was wanted in the paper than anyone else, Nipper handed the editorship over to me.

WHERE PERSONALITY COUNTS!

Nipper's great failing as an editor was that he kept too much in the background. This is a mistake I don't intend to make. The editor should make himself associated with everything he publishes; he should wield the pen fearlessly without favour or prejudice, and he should let the reader know that HE and the paper are ONE! That is just where I have scored over Nipper in this number. Everything that matters I have done myself. The portrait on the cover, for instance, was drawn by myself. The portrait on the cover, for instance, was drawn by myself for the simple reason that good artists are scarce. Church and Clurey say it's a wonderful likeness—and they ought to know. They asked me how I did it. I don't mind confessing that I drew myself as I saw myself in a mirror. That probably accounts for the mouth slewing round a trifle. Of course, that is a mere detail, and does not make any difference to the portrait as a whole. The sketches, by the same artist, are equally true to life in the main. Considering that the author had to write most of the stories and articles as well, I think they are top-hole drawings.

MY STAFF.

The author, artist, and editor, has had a very busy week doing everything himself for the Mag. Church and Clurey are supposed to lend a hand, but they are no better than dummies. I have had to do it all. Hence, if you notice a few slips here and there, I hope you will make some allowances to

Yours hopefully,

ED. OS. HANDFORTH
(your Editor).

St Frank's Magazine

A Marvellous New Serial of Breathless Adventure in the Klondike and Alaska.——BY THE CELEBRATED AUTHOR——

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

THE CLAIM-JUMPERS OF ROARING CREEK!

THE snow came down in myriads of flakes.

Bob Brave and Claude Courage, two sturdy British lads, trudged through the snow, knee-deep, and with their packs bearing heavily upon their shoulders. They were on the march through the endless snows to the gold fields of the Klondike.

For weeks they had been travelling, walking across Canada, in order to gain their goal. And now, at last, they were within a week of their wonderful dreams. They were in Alaska, and the gold fields were near by.

"Halt!" snarled a coarse voice. "Hand over your grub stakes!"

The two fearless youngsters started back in dismay, as two burly forms loomed up out of the snow. They were the figures of Six-Chamber Sid and Cross-Eyed Carl, the two worst gunmen of the Far North.

In a trice, the two brave youngsters were sent hurtling back down a steep ravine, and Six-Chamber Sid and Cross-Eyed Carl gave vent to horrible laughs of mirth as they made off with the spoils.

And the snow came down in myriads of flakes.

"Never fear!" cried Bob Brave valiantly. "We've got no food left, Claude, but we'll win through!"

"We'll trudge on until we get to the Klondike;" declared Claude Courage, his voice ringing on the crisp, frosty air. "And one day, Bob, we'll make those ruffians pay for their dirty work!"

"Curse the brats!" snarled Cross-Eyed Carl, as he lurched out of the saloon, and saw Bob and Claude. "They've got here, in spite of us! But as soon as they discover the gold, we'll wrest it from them!"

And two days later our heroes staked a claim out on the banks of Roaring Creek. It didn't take them long to build their shack, and soon afterwards they commenced digging for gold.

On the third day Bob Brave gave a yell of triumph, and held up a great nugget of gold as big as a brick. The gold glittered and shone in the rays of the Northern sun, and Claude Courage gasped with admiration.

"Our fortunes are made!" he panted. "Is there any more, Bob?"

"The whole hillside is nothing else but gold!" cried Bob Brave victoriously. "We have succeeded, Claude! Within a week from to-day we shall be millionaires, and then we can go home, and live in luxury for the rest of our lives!"

All the rest of that day they worked like mad, digging out gold in such quantities that all the ground round their shack shone yellow in the sunlight. The two boys were determined to go into Dawson City with their first load, and they were perfectly happy, because their claim was staked, and nothing could harm them.

And then, in their hour of triumph, two villainous forms appeared on the hillside, among the dense fir trees. Two shots rang out, and our heroes fled into their shack for shelter.

And then commenced a battle for the mastery. Bob and Claude fought gamely until their last cartridge had gone, and then they sank down, exhausted. Six-Chamber Sid and Cross-Eyed Carl charged in through the doorway, and the next moment they were levelling their revolvers at the helpless, unarmed lads.

(Can you imagine what happens in this breathless situation? If you wish to know more about Bob Brave and Claude Courage, read next week's number, where our talented author describes further breathless adventures).

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