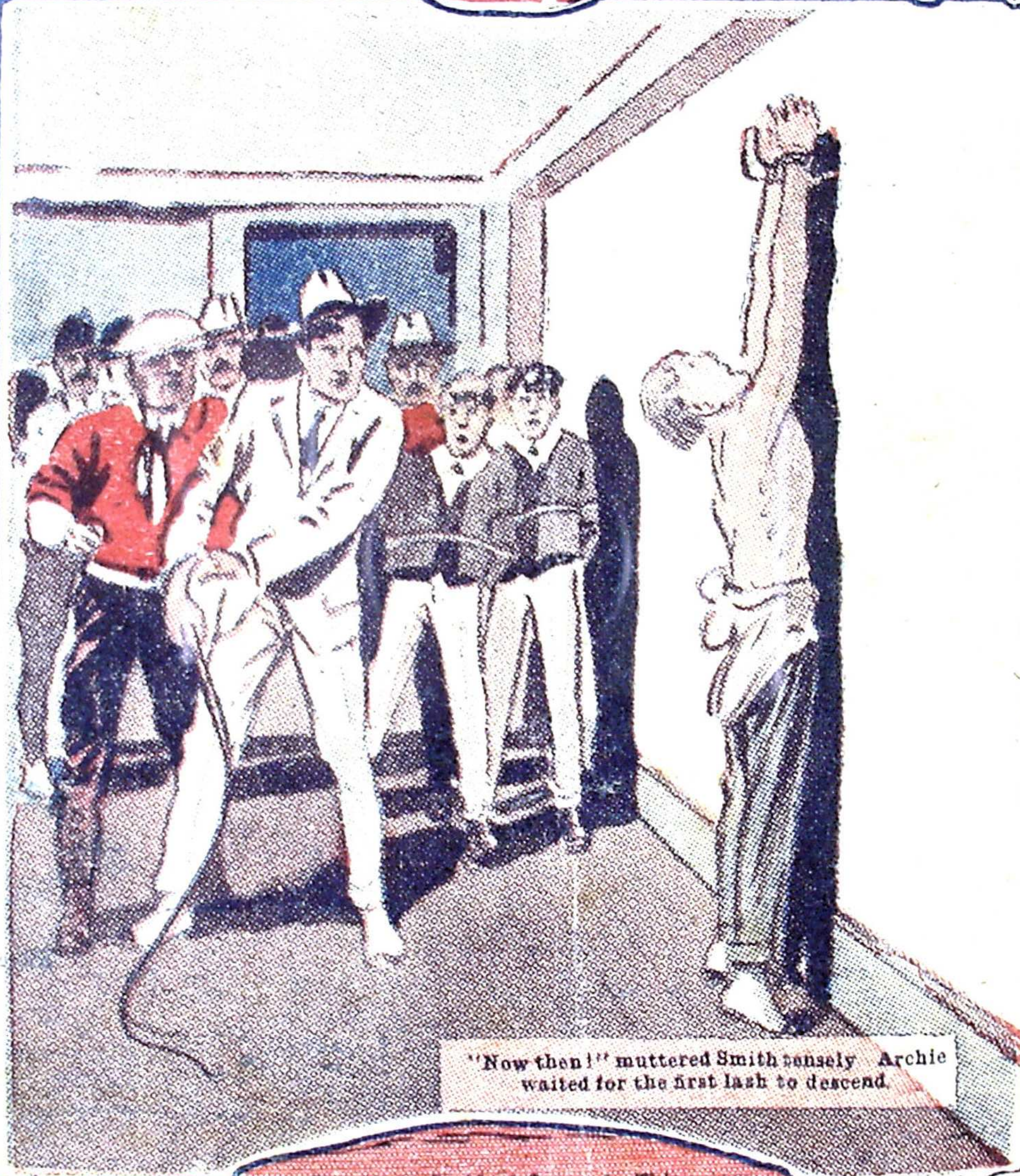


READ THIS WEEK'S FINE STORY OF THE ST. FRANK'S REBELLION!

THE Nelson Lee

LIBRARY **2** And St. Frank's Magazine



"Now then!" muttered Smith anxiously. Archie waited for the first lash to descend.

The Above Incident Occurs in This Week's Story.

THE ISLAND FORTRESS I



There was a splintering, rending thunder of noise. The doors simply vanished into matchwood, and the tractor charged in, unable to stop.

THE ISLAND FORTRESS!



Led by Nipper, the Remove are carrying on a determined resistance against the authority of Mr. W. K. Smith, the German-American magnate, who has bought up St. Frank's and adjoining estates, and has erected thereon

hideous factories, employing foreign labour, and undercutting British markets. The Remove have been driven to revolt by the petty restrictions of Mr. Ponsonby Small, the New Head installed by Mr. Smith, and last week they took possession of the power-station. They have, so far, successfully resisted the repeated onslaughts of Smith's men to drive them out. Smith, however, is a man of resource, and Nipper knows that before long the Remove will have to vacate their stronghold. In that case, what will Nipper do? Read the story and see how Nipper solves the problem.

THE EDITOR.

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

CHAPTER I.

MR. PONSONBY SMALL'S ADVENTURE!

MR. PONSONBY SMALL paused, and frowned. "Boy!" he commanded. "Come here!"

The Headmaster of St. Frank's spoke in an imperious tone, and Handforth minor, of the Third, approached him meekly, and looked up into the Head's face with an expression of perfect innocence.

"Want me, sir?" he asked cheerfully.

"Where have you been, Handforth minor?" demanded the Head.

"Oh, rather!" said Willy. "Where have I been, sir? Strolling about, you know—in the playing fields, and all that, sir. This April weather is pretty ripping, and it makes a chap feel good."

And, with a nod, Willy passed on, as though he had been holding converse with Tubbs, the page-boy, or somebody of similar station. Mr. Ponsonby Small looked after him, and frowned.

"Handforth minor, come back at once!" he commanded curtly.

"Oh, my hat! What's biting you now?" murmured Willy resignedly. "That's the worst of these masters, they never know when to stop. But if old Small thinks he can get round me, he's made a bloomer!"

The hero of the Third retraced his steps across the Triangle, and once more faced the Head. It was just after mid-day, and the April weather was bright and sunny, with a few white, fleecy clouds sailing leisurely across the intense blue sky.

"Yes, sir?" said Willy patiently.

"I asked you where you had been, and you gave me a vague reply!" said Mr. Small curtly. "I have reason to suspect, Handforth minor, that you have been communicating with those wretched rebels of the Remove. Is this a fact?"

"Yes, sir," said Willy promptly.

The Head started. Never for a moment had he expected that Willy would be quite so frank. He frowned, and an evil glitter came into his small, watery eyes. He adjusted his glasses and turned them upon the fag.

"Oh, indeed!" he said excitedly. "Indeed!"

"Yes, sir, indeed!" agreed Willy respectfully.

"Do not dare to mock me, boy!" thundered Mr. Ponsonby Small. "You have the audacity to confess that you have been consorting with those rebellious young hooligans of the Remove. How dare you, Handforth minor? How dare you?"

Willy Handforth looked injured.

"Well, I like that!" he protested. "You ask me a question, and I give you a truthful answer, and then you jump down my widdy throat! What would you prefer me to do, sir—tell a whopper?"

"A—a which?" gasped Mr. Small.

"Whopper, sir—a fib—a lie!" explained Willy.

"If you dare to tell me falsehoods, Handforth minor, I will thrash you within an inch of your life!" stormed Mr. Small. "And if you have been mixing with those rebels, I will flog you!"

"Then I seem to be in a bit of a hole, sir!" remarked Willy, with a sigh. "It's a case of the frying pan and the fire. But I'm not going to tell any whoppers, so I'll freely admit that I've just been in active communication with the young hooligans—in other words, sir, those ripping chaps who have had the pluck to stand up for their rights!"

This was deliberate cheek, and Mr. Small did not fail to appreciate it. His frown grew more dangerous, and he made a clutch at the spot where Willy's shoulder had been a second before.

"Come here, Handforth minor!" he said shrilly. "Come here, I say!"

"Yes, sir," said Willy. "I'm here, sir!"

"Understand me once and for all, you wretched boy, that I will not put up with such rank insolence!" shouted Mr. Small. "You are utterly incorrigible, and I can see that my only course is to administer a severe flogging. You are one of the worst boys in the Third Form!"

"I'm glad to hear I'm only one of the worst, sir," said Willy. "But I can't understand what you're getting so excited about. Surely, there's no harm in having a few words with those Remove chaps. Be reasonable, sir!"

For the Headmaster of St. Frank's to be addressed in this way by a mere fag was a novelty. No junior boy had ever before advised the Head to be reasonable. It wasn't at all a safe thing to do. But it happened that Willy Handforth was in the happy position of not caring what the outcome would be. Mr. Ponsonby Small was a beast, anyhow, and he was certainly the most unpopular Head that St. Frank's had ever had.

His administration had been a mass of blunders from the very start, and it was a well-known fact that he was merely the tool of Mr. William K. Smith, the German-American millionaire. So it was hardly to be supposed that he would command much respect from his boys.

"You have confessed enough, sir!" thundered Mr. Small. "Follow me at once to my study! I intend to flog you!"

"Flog me, sir?" asked Willy, as though he didn't know what it meant.

"Yes, boy—flog you!"

"Here, hold on, sir!" protested the fag. "I think it's my duty to warn you that if you carry out this scheme you'll have the

whole Third Form up in arms. And I shouldn't be surprised if they revolted, too!"

"Are—are you daring to threaten me, boy?" asked the Head harshly.

"Not at all, sir," replied Willy. "I'm just trying to make you understand that you're proposing a pretty risky business. It may give you some satisfaction to flog me, but I won't be answerable for what the Third will do. They're a bit on edge already, and as soon as they hear that I've been swished, they'll get up a meeting, and probably go on strike!"

The Head was almost speechless.

"Just a fair warning, sir," repeated Willy. "And I think I'd like to add that I can't see any reason why I should be flogged, either. So I think we'd better say no more about it."

And once again Willy started walking off. He thrust his hands into his trousers pockets, and whistled as though he hadn't a care in the world. Always a reckless young scamp, this afternoon he was feeling particularly rash. He was convinced of the Remove's ultimate victory, and if the worst came to the worst, he could always join the rebels. Besides, it was only right that he should be with his elder brother. Handforth major didn't see it in this light, but this was only a detail.

At the sight of Willy marching off in this calm way after dismissing the subject, Mr. Small recovered his full powers of speech. He took a step or two after Willy, and then paused.

"You insolent young jackanapes!" he shouted thickly. "Come back!"

Willy glanced over his shoulder.

"Sorry, sir; I've got an appointment!" he said hastily.

"You—you—"

"In fact, I'm late already, sir," added Willy. "Good afternoon, sir!"

The Head having taken one or two rapid strides towards him, Willy wisely decided that dignity was hardly necessary. So he bunched, and shot away towards the playing-fields like a young hare.

Under ordinary circumstances, he would have faced the matter out. But he had an instinctive feeling that he had gone rather too far this time, and as he liked floggings no more than any other junior, he fled.

And Mr. Ponsonby Small charged after him in full pursuit. This was a contingency that Willy had never even considered. It took him unawares, and he felt indignant.

It was like the Head's nerve to chase him! He had frequently been chased by prefects—this, in fact, was one of Willy's daily exercises—and on rare occasions an under-master had sometimes been provoked into pursuit. But for the reverend Head to indulge in this pastime was unprecedented.

And Willy further discovered that Mr. Small was no mean runner, in spite of his knock-knees. It had been the fag's inten-

tion to dodge round the hedge, and to calmly stroll into the the Ancient House by the rear door.

But this project was now abandoned, for Mr. Small was dashing along in full chase. And, for once in his short life, Willy made a bad miscalculation. He thought he had more time than he actually had.

Shooting behind the junior pavilion, he went down on his knees, and fumbled quickly in the tall, rank grass. There was only a small space between the rear wall of the building and the high hedges. This space had sometimes been used in the summer-time by reckless juniors for indulging in a quiet smoke, and on one particular red-letter day Willy himself had dragged Chubby Heath there, and had pushed his face into the earth.

But, ordinarily, the space behind the junior pavilion was a neglected spot. And yet, after Willy had tugged at the grass for a breathless moment, a big portion of the turf came up, like a door. And this, in short, was exactly what it was—a cunningly concealed trap-door.

And there, at Willy's feet, yawned a sloping shaft, which led straight down into the old tunnel which had originally led from the monastery ruins to a spot beneath Willard's Island. But a great part of that tunnel was now blocked up.

Handforth minor believed that he would have time to get into the shaft, and pull the trap-door over him before Mr. Small appeared. And this was where he made his mistake.

Even as he was bending over the chasm, preparatory to descending, Mr. Ponsonby Small came hurtling round the corner of the building like a charging bull. The Head had an idea that Willy was skulking here.

Mr. Small had a brief vision of Willy bending down. He saw nothing of the trap-door or the hole, because the fag's body hid this from his view. Besides, the thing happened so swiftly that Mr. Small had no opportunity of seeing anything clearly.

He reached Willy before he could check himself, tripped headlong over the junior's bending form—and dived head first down the shaft!

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW RECRUIT.



WILLY HANDFORTH picked himself up, and stared down the shaft with concern.

"That's done it!" he said briefly.

Even he could hardly realise exactly what had happened. He had caught a fleet glimpse of Mr. Small shooting round the corner of the building, he had received a terrific shove which nearly knocked all the wind out of him, and then

he had an excellent view of Mr. Small's legs vanishing down the shaft. A kind of thud had followed, and then silence.

"He's broken his neck!" said Willy, with concern. "Oh, my goodness! What a mad thing to do! He didn't give me time to stand up, or anything! And I suppose I shall be arrested for murder!"

The fag was absolutely alarmed, and he felt terribly guilty for having driven Mr. Small to chase him. It was all his fault! Much as he disliked the Head, he certainly had no wish to see him with such a terrible fate as a broken neck.

Willy leapt down into the shaft, with his heart beating madly against his ribs. The shaft was not a sheer drop, but it descended at a steep angle. The earth was not particularly hard, either. Recently, a ladder had been roughly constructed, but as a portion of this had collapsed, the whole crazy structure had been removed. The juniors found it easier to scramble up and down without any assistance save for that of two hanging ropes.

But Willy hardly waited to use the ropes. He skidded down the shaft at great speed, and it was only by a miracle that he saved himself from landing fully on the top of Mr. Ponsonby Small's face. For the Head was lying down there, utterly still.

The light which streamed down the shaft was ample to show Willy everything. And he breathed a great sigh of relief when he observed that Mr. Small was distinctly breathing. Grimy and dusty, and very dishevelled, but decidedly alive. It seemed that the fall had merely stunned him.

And as Willy stood there, quite still, considering what on earth he should do, he thought he heard the dull murmur of voices.

Quickly he stepped into the tunnel itself, and in the distance caught sight of one or two twinkling lights. Without hesitation, he rushed down the tunnel, and found himself face to face with Reginald Pitt, Buster Boots, and myself. We stared at him grimly.

"This won't do, my lad," I said. "You can't keep using this tunnel, especially in the daytime! It's too risky—"

"I couldn't help it!" gasped Willy. "Old Small was chasing me, and I had to get somewhere!"

"Well, thank goodness he didn't see where you went," said Pitt. "I suppose you dodged him all right?"

"Dodged him!" snorted Willy. "He's lying down here at the bottom of the shaft—knocked silly!"

"Good Heavens!" I exclaimed. "Then it's all up with us! You reckless young idiot! You've queered everything by your confounded nerve! And what about Mr. Small? Is he hurt?"

"No, he's not hurt—only knocked senseless!" said Willy.

"Not hurt!" breathed Pitt. "Oh, no! Not at all!"

We wasted no further time in words, but hurried along the tunnel and found Mr. Pensonby Small still lying there, oblivious to his surroundings. After a brief examination, I was satisfied that he had suffered only a few bruises, and was temporarily dazed.

"There's only one chance for us," I said quickly. "We've got to get him to the top. It's just possible that he won't remember what happened. It was so quick that when he wakes up he'll think he was dreaming. Anyhow, it's our only possible chance."

Without wasting any further time on discussion, we hoisted Mr. Small to the surface. It was a bit of a job, even though there were four of us. But at last we succeeded, and he was already showing signs of coming to.

We laid him face downwards near the hedge.

"When he comes to himself he may suspect things, but he won't know for certain," I said quickly. "Come on, we'll vanish now—"

"Wait a minute!" interrupted Willy. "I'll stay here! I'll soon know if Mr. Small suspects anything, and perhaps I shall be able to fool him. Besides, he'll expect me to be here, too. See you later!"

Mr. Small had uttered a slight groan, and so we slipped down into the shaft, and pulled the turf-covered trap-door into position. It was so well made that the closest scrutiny was necessary to detect it.

Willy Handforth bent over Mr. Small, whipped out his handkerchief, and commenced waving it in front of the unfortunate man's face. Whether it was the breeze thus caused or the powerful smell of bullseyes, can hardly be proved, but Mr. Small rapidly recovered.

Willy had forgotten all about the bullseyes in the handkerchief, and one of them became detached and hit Mr. Small in the eye. He gasped, struggled up, and looked round dazedly.

"That's better, sir," said Willy cheerfully. "You'll soon be all right now. I think you must have gone into a fit or something. As soon as I get you to the school I'll ring up the doctor."

The Head groaned.

"I am ill," he muttered hoarsely. "My head is splitting! What—what are you doing here, boy? Why am I lying in this grass— Ah! I—I seem to remember— Yes, yes, of course! Good gracious! I fell down somewhere—down into a pit, I believe."

"A pit, sir?" repeated Willy. "Oh, that was only your imagination!" he added indulgently. "You billed into me, sir, and then turned about two somersaults. You'll soon be all right, sir."

Mr. Small feebly got to his feet, his head throbbing agonisingly. His knees hurt him, too, and his elbow was badly bruised. He had a faint, hazy recollection of dropping

through space, but it was perfectly obvious that this had been a mere hallucination.

He had, of course, stumbled over Willy, and had crashed to the ground with such force that his senses had momentarily left him. And the very rapidity of his recovery eased Willy's conscience.

"I believe you deliberately bent down in that fashion so that I should crash over!" said Mr. Small harshly. "Very well, Handforth minor! Very well! You will pay for this, boy! I had intended giving you a flogging, but now I will double your punishment!"

"But—but it was an accident, sir!" protested Willy truthfully.

"Do not argue with me!" thundered Mr. Small. "Come at once!"

He went off round the pavilion, and Willy followed—not because he had any intention of receiving that flogging, but because he wanted to see Mr. Small safely away from this spot.

Handforth minor felt very content. For he had satisfied himself that the Head suspected nothing, and the rebels were quite safe in their retreat. But it had been a near thing.

Willy was rather disgusted at Mr. Small's increasing strength. He had been fully expecting that the Head would crawl indoors and take to his bed. But now that he had recovered his senses, he was apparently as vindictive as ever. The lag halted after a few paces had been taken across the playing-fields.

"Just a minute, sir," he said firmly. "I've got something to say."

"How dare you, Handforth minor!" snapped Mr. Small. "I have commanded you to come, and if you don't obey me I will—"

"Flog me?" asked Willy. "Look here, sir. I've decided that I'm fed-up with your discipline, and I mean to rebel; and if the Third doesn't back me up, it ought to. Anyhow, I'm not going to be flogged!"

Mr. Small was not feeling exactly well, and this open defiance acted upon him like a tonic. His lethargy left him, and he even forgot all about his bruises and his headache.

"I'm going to join the rebels," went on Willy. "If you had been reasonable, I wouldn't have taken this step; but I'm blessed if I'm going to be bullied! I don't mind giving you a chance, even now!"

"Giving me a chance?" gasped Mr. Small blankly.

"Yes, sir," said Willy. "If you promise not to flog me, I'll come back, and we'll forget all about it."

"You impertinent young puppy!" shouted the Head. "You dare to stand there and address me in that manner! You have the audacity to make terms!"

"There's nothing audacious about it, sir," said Handforth minor. "Will you promise not to flog me, or shall I join the rebels?"

"That's all it amounts to, and I'm giving you a choice."

"A choice?" stuttered Mr. Small.

"Exactly, sir," said Willy. "I leave it to you."

"Never, in the whole of my experience, have I encountered such an incorrigible young rascal as you are!" said Mr. Small thickly. "You will come with me, boy, and I will not only flog you, but expel you from the school. By Heaven! I will show you whether my authority is to be flouted or not!"

"In that case, sir, I'll go at once," said Willy calmly. "If I'm going to be expelled, I might as well clear off now, and save

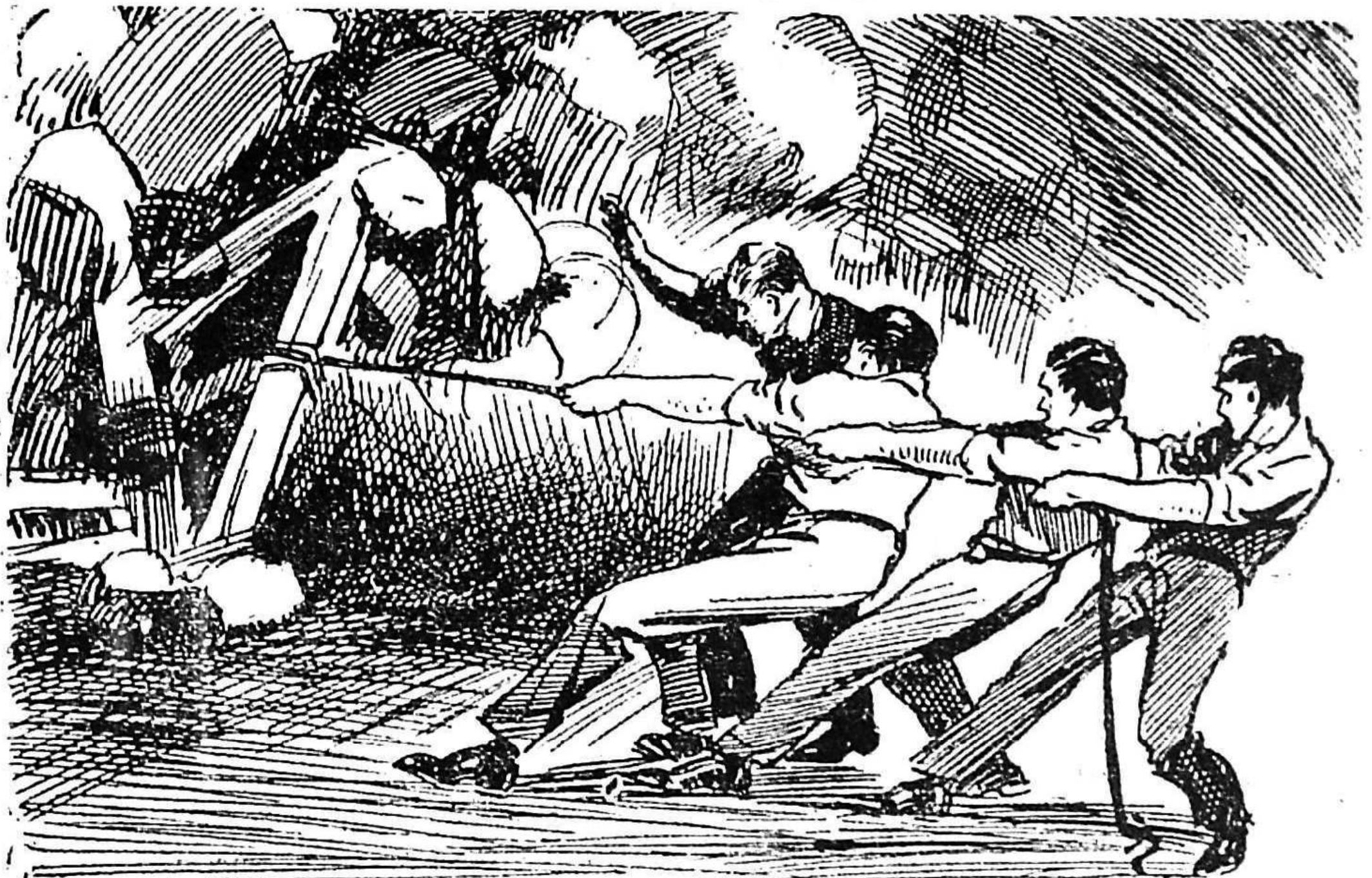
"Well?" I asked sharply, as Willy appeared out of the shaft.

"It's all right; he doesn't know a thing!" replied the fag. "He wanted to flog me and sack me, so I told him to go and eat coke, and now I'm going to join you chaps. You ought to be pleased."

"Pleased!" echoed Pitt. "Pleased at disaster?"

"Now chuck it!" said Willy. "Didn't I give the warning the other day, when Smith nearly routed you out? I reckon I deserve to be included in the rebels. I'll be quite satisfied with a modest position. Just give me one of the companies to command, and I won't say a word."

I grinned.



A number of us seized the rope, and at the word we gave one steady pull. With a splintering of woodwork, the supports gave way, and at exactly the same second a short section of the tunnel collapsed with a thunderous roar, and a swift, powerful rush of air.

myself the flogging. As for you, you old ogre, you can jolly well go and eat coke!" he added, feeling that it was now quite safe to reveal his true sentiments.

Leaving Mr. Small absolutely speechless, he raced away, feeling certain that the Head would not risk another chase. And he was right. Mr. Small went white with rage, and stalked off towards the school, inwardly alarmed at this fresh outbreak of rebellion. He had never believed it possible that the fags themselves would defy him.

Half an hour later, after seeing that the coast was thoroughly clear, Willy descended into the tunnel again, and found Reggie Pitt and Buster Boots and myself still waiting. We were very anxious.

"Why stop at one company?" I asked sarcastically. "Just say the word, my lad, and I'll stand down, and you can take my place. My hat! If there's any fellow in this world cheekier than you I've got to find him!"

"Good!" said Willy. "I always thought I was distinctive in some way."

"I suppose we'd better take him under our wing," said Pitt. "We can't very well see him sacked, can we? But there'll be a terrible rumpus as soon as old Handy gets to know."

"Oh, Ted?" said Willy. "That's all right; I'll deal with him."

He explained to us exactly how Mr. Small had recovered his wits, and we were all

satisfied in mind that no real harm had been done.

We had really come down into the tunnel to examine what supplies we had left—food supplies. The stock was running fairly low in the stronghold, and we were preparing to shift up the remainder.

Willy left us at our work, and soon presented himself in the power-station. He reached this by climbing a short, perpendicular shaft, and getting through a trap-door into the main building.

Almost the first junior he saw was Edward Oswald Handforth. The two brothers looked at one another, and Willy nodded.

"I've come!" he announced.

having any Third-Formers!" said Handforth obstinately. "Go back, and you can bet that old Small won't sack you. As for the flogging, you deserve it!"

"Hear, hear!" said Armstrong, nodding. "Eh?"

"I quite agree that we're not going to have this blessed fag here," went on Armstrong firmly. "He'll spoil everything. If he won't go on his own account, we'll drop him out of a window."

Handforth glared.

"Oh, will we?" he roared. "Look here, Armstrong, if you say a word against my young brother I'll biff you! So you're not going to have him here? You mean rotter!"

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"All right—go!" said Edward Oswald. "We don't want you here, my lad. I'll give you just two minutes to buzz off. No Third-Formers allowed. It's like your blessed cheek to come here at all!"

A crowd of Removites gathered round, and Willy patiently explained. It was realised by most of the fellows that Willy had burned his boats, and had no alternative but to join the rebellion.

"Rubbish!" said Handforth flatly. "You're not stopping here, you young rotter! I won't have it!"

"But Nipper's agreed, and Nipper's the commander-in-chief," argued Willy.

"I don't care about that! We're not

Willy stays. And the first chap who objects to it will get a black eye!"

The crowd gasped.

"But—but you just said you wouldn't let him stay at any price!" protested Armstrong weakly. "I was only——"

"I don't care what you were doing!" interrupted Handy. "If I like to rail at my minor I'll do it; but if any other chap starts on the same game, he's got to answer to me. All right, Willy, you can stay!"

"Thanks awfully," said Willy,—“for nothing.”

"For nothing?" howled Handforth.

"Of course," said his minor. "You don't

think I take any notice of you, I suppose? What you say, old man, is immaterial. My hat! I can smell grub. This is where I do the Trackett Grim stunt. I'll bet I follow the trail without a hitch."

And Handforth minor, now a fully-fledged rebel, made his way unerringly to Fatty Little's department, and proceeded at once to sample some of Fatty's latest confections.

CHAPTER III.

SIGNIFICANT PREPARATIONS!



FOR two days past the rebels had been practically undisturbed.

Mr. William K. Smith had apparently ceased his operations against the Remove. They remained in undisturbed possession of the power-station. And the rank and file of the Remove believed that they were unbeatable.

But I wasn't quite so sure.

I had more than a suspicion that Mr. Smith was biding his time. There had been quite a deal of unwelcome publicity on the first day of the rising, and Mr. Smith and his men had not come out of the battle with honour. They had, in fact, been hopelessly defeated time after time.

So the millionaire probably thought it better to delay matters for a day or two, in order to avoid further public comment.

We felt quite safe by daylight, for we were now satisfied that Smith would not attempt to give battle in full view of possible spectators. It was too public—too open.

His next assault, without question, would be delivered after dark.

So we always felt easy and comfortable by daylight, but kept a strict watch throughout the hours of the night, expecting an attack which never came.

It was hardly possible that Mr. Smith had abandoned his determination to drive us out. For we had seized his recently completed power-station. Without this he was held up; he could no longer carry on with his ambitious programme. Practically the whole work of his vast camp had been held up by the Remove's bold action.

Cyclone City, as the settlement of the Smith Manufacturing Co. was called, stretched out before us, and for two days everything had been calm and peaceful. I felt that it was merely a lull before the storm.

We felt quite justified in our action, and the very fact that Smith had kept the affair as private as possible proved that he was mortally afraid of any official investigation.

For the power-house was built in the middle of a meadow which was locally known as Curdle's Paddock, and which did not belong to Mr. Smith at all, but to the

Remove. Our old friend, Lord Dorrington, had purchased it for solid cash, and had made a present of it to the Remove. So, after all, we were only holding that which was ours.

At St. Frank's everything had been going fairly quietly. Mr. Ponsonby Small had inflicted no further restrictions upon the school, and in this he was wise. He had no desire for further rebellions.

The boys of the River House school were quite content. They regarded the Remove rising with complete satisfaction. For it gave them much more room in the junior school, and as they were not under Mr. Ponsonby Small's jurisdiction at all, they had no cause for grumbling.

Their very presence at St. Frank's was due to Mr. William K. Smith. He had bought the River House school for his own purposes, and Dr. Hogge had stipulated that his boys should be found full accommodation. And the millionaire, through his great influence, had forced the River House boys on to St. Frank's, thereby starting the whole trouble.

For the Remove had objected to the unexpected restrictions. Dr. Stafford had upheld them, and Mr. Smith had brought about the old Head's resignation, forcing the Governors to appoint Mr. Ponsonby Small instead.

Thus the trouble had gone from bad to worse, until now the Remove was in open revolt, determined to beat Mr. William K. Smith, and to restore St. Frank's to its normal happy state.

Whether the juniors would be successful in their daring enterprise remained to be seen. They had held out so far, but there was every indication that the worst was yet to come.

And I was already thinking of ways and means, in case the situation became too acute. On this sunny afternoon I certainly had no suspicion that we should be compelled to act practically at once.

Willy Handforth fell into the routine of things without any trouble at all. He was quite ready to do his bit, and I knew from past experience that he was probably far more valuable than most of the Removites. For Willy was a brainy youngster, and could be relied upon to do well in an emergency.

Everything in the fortress was going smoothly. We slept in watches, very much after the style of the crew of a ship. Half the rebels were always awake and active, even throughout the night. So there was no possibility of taking us by surprise.

At night, too, I posted scouts outside, and sometimes these fellows went beyond the Paddock, in the hope of finding out what the enemy was doing. Mr. Smith's very inactivity was, to my mind, significant.

As usual, a number of fellows were on the watch.

The roof of the power-station was quite flat, and made an ideal battlement. Here

we had fixed up four powerful hosepipes, and these had proved very effective weapons against every assault.

We also had Reggie Pitt's patent pea-shooters—these were not unlike machine-guns, operated by bellows, and capable of hurtling forth a continuous hail of pellets.

But we knew well enough that effective as these defences were against a charging crowd of unarmed men, they would be utterly useless against a real, serious attack. Mr. Smith had hesitated so far to use any drastic violence, but there was no telling how long his patience would last. He had not refrained because he was humane, but for the simple reason that he feared the publicity and the consequences.

Towards evening, after tea had been served, Fatty Little came up on the roof and announced that food supplies were running short. As we knew this already, his information was not exactly startling.

"We've got plenty of tea and flour and haricot beans, and things like that," said Fatty. "But we've practically run out of condensed milk, and the bacon's at the last gasp, and we haven't got an egg to our name. And how can I cook without eggs? The sardines have run short, and we've only got a few more tins of corned beef. Before long we shall be living on black coffee, or tea and heavy dumplings. Something's got to be done!"

"All right, Fatty; we'll think about it," I said. "But we can't do anything until to-night. We'll try and get out a plan."

Fatty went away, and I was rather thoughtful. When we had started the rebellion we had had plenty of food—enough to last weeks, by the look of it. But with about fifty hungry mouths to feed, morning, noon, and night, these supplies had diminished with remarkable rapidity.

I had hardly expected the rebellion to last as long as this. Perhaps Smith was deliberately delaying action in order to starve us out. If so, he would be disappointed, for we were not prisoners, as he supposed.

The millionaire had no knowledge of that secret tunnel underground. He believed that we had found our way into the power station by the ordinary means. Therefore, he assumed that we were as good as prisoners, and that if he succeeded in breaking into the building, we should be at his mercy.

And I was seriously thinking about forming a special party to pay a visit to Bannington. One fellow could go first, and purchase a large amount of supplies, and the rest could follow and carry the stuff away.

And in the middle of these half-formed plans, Reginald Pitt nudged my arm. We were both leaning over the parapet, looking idly over towards Cyclone City in the fading sunlight.

"What do you make of it, old man?" said Pitt.

"Eh? Make of what?" I asked.

"Those men have been busy over there for the last hour," said Reggie. "I can't exactly see what they're doing, but there's been all sorts of hammering and sawing going on."

I looked over in the direction which Pitt indicated. A number of Mr. Smith's men could be seen moving about leisurely. They had been at work for some time, but the wooden houses prevented the nature of their work from being actually seen. It was evident, however, that something unusual was afoot.

"Yes, we shall have to be cautious," I said. "It looks a bit significant, I'll admit. Later on, I'll send a scout out, and we'll do our best to find out what's afoot."

"I say, let me go!" said Willy Handforth eagerly.

I considered him.

"Yes, there's no reason why you shouldn't make yourself useful," I said. "Get off as soon as it's dark, and mind you're not captured."

"Oh, it's all right," said Willy. "I've spoken to lots of these men—cheeked 'em, you know. They don't look upon me as a rebel. So even if I'm spotted, it won't matter. They'll only chase me a bit."

This was a decided advantage, as I quickly saw. And, as soon as it was dark, Willy slipped quietly out and vanished into the gloom. In the meantime the sounds of activity had continued. But now that night had fallen everything was quiet.

The encampment was gleaming with lights here and there, and we could faintly hear the sounds of singing and playing from the camp saloon. There was certainly no indication that an attack was impending.

But less than half an hour had elapsed before Willy Handforth returned. And the first glance at his face assured me that something big was in the wind. He was looking unusually anxious.

"I say, we shall have to clear out!" he said breathlessly.

"Clear out!" echoed Edward Oswald. "What do you mean?"

"Not so loud," I warned. "We don't want the whole crowd to know!"

We were standing in a corner of the roof, and Willy proceeded to explain exactly what he had seen.

"Of course, I got through the lines without any trouble at all," he said. "It takes better eyes than these chaps have got to spot me! And old Smith's preparing something that'll put an end to our defence!"

"Well, get it out—don't keep us in suspense!" said Pitt.

"You know what happened the other evening?" went on Handforth minor.

"You remember how Smith fixed up a lorry with a battering-ram on it?"

"Of course we know!" growled Handforth. "Didn't we dig a trench, so that the front wheels of a lorry dived into it, and smashed up? That trench is all the way round now, so Smith can't use that dodge again!"

I nodded. We had been feeling particularly pleased about that trench of ours. There were barbed wire entanglements all round the power house, and a wide trench, too. Mr. Smith could not send any more of his specially prepared lorries to batter down the defences.

"He can't use that dodge again, eh?" repeated Willy. "That's just where you're wrong! He's getting ready for the attack now—and we'd better clear out before we're caught like rats in a trap. Thank goodness, I went out and spotted it!"

"Spotted what?" asked Pitt impatiently.

"That tank!" said Willy.

"Tank!"

"Three tanks, in fact!"

"Can't you make yourself clear, you young idiot?" snorted Handforth. "What do you mean—three tanks? Is old Smith going to use boiling oil, or something? Or is he going to flood us out?"

"Not those tanks," said Willy. "You know—like they use in the Army!"

"Great Scott!" I ejaculated, starting. "You don't mean to say that Smith has —"

"Well, they're not exactly tanks," admitted Willy. "I suppose you'd really call 'em tractors. But they look like tanks. Those things with caterpillar wheels. He's got three of 'em there, and they're all rigged up with battering-rams in front. I tell you, we've got to shift!"

"Rats!" said Handforth. "We can hold 'em back!"

"Willy's right—we've got to shift!" I agreed grimly. "This is the one thing I was afraid of. Those caterpillar tractors can get over our trench in a minute without any trouble. And our hose pipes and pea-shooters won't affect them in the least. We've got to quit—and the sooner we do it the better. The attack may come at any minute."

"But—but—"

"It's urgent!" I declared. "We simply daren't wait!"

And I meant what I said. Under no circumstances could we hope to hold back such formidable offensive weapons as these tractors. In spite of every effort that we could use they would charge through, and smash into the power-house. And it would be done so swiftly that we should never be able to escape through the tunnel."

Safety lay in instantaneous flight.

Word was passed round at once, from company to company—for the rebels were separated into six divisions of about eight juniors each. There was a good deal of

excitement, and almost consternation, but there was no help for it.

And, in a way, I was rather glad that this had happened. For it gave us something to do, and inactivity was beginning to pall. But Mr. William K. Smith was wrong in assuming that he had us beaten.

I was thankful that I had sent Willy out on that scouting trip, for we were just allowed sufficient time to evacuate the position in safety.

Every fellow took his own bedding and mattress. And, as orderly as possible, the whole rebel force went down the shaft through the trap-door. Our hose-pipes were taken, too, our machine-guns, and what little food there was left.

All this was accomplished in just under an hour. And I went up to the roof of the power station to have a last look round. I could hear the sound of powerful motor-engines. And then, at the same time, lights began to appear, and men were moving about in all directions. The attack was imminent.

I descended, passed down that narrow shaft under the floor, and joined all the rest of the fellows in the tunnel.

"What the dickens are we going to do here?" demanded Armstrong.

"Never mind that now," I said grimly. "We've got to see about this tunnel. If it's left open, it'll be a menace to us. We've done with the power station now. We can never hope to get back into it. So we might as well make things safe."

My scheme was a simple one.

The short tunnel leading under the power house was one that we had excavated ourselves, and was, in fact, a branch passage from the ancient tunnel which had already existed. In places it was very narrow, and at one spot, quite near the power station, we had been compelled to support it by means of heavy wooden props.

I tied the end of a rope to three of these props—three that formed the main support. The rope was a long one, and we all retreated along the tunnel until we were actually in the main thoroughfare, as it were. There was no danger whatever of this collapsing, for it was solidly built of stone.

Candles were burning all along, and the scene was rather weird in the flickering light.

"Grab hold of this rope, you fellows!" I said crisply. "And when I give the word, pull with all your might. We're going to jerk those supports away, so that the tunnel collapses at that weak spot. Then there'll be no fear of Smith's men following us."

"Yes, it's the only thing to do," said Pitt. "Blessed if I know what the next move's going to be, but we're safe so far—and that's the main consideration."

A number of us seized the rope, and at the word we gave one steady pull. With a

splintering of woodwork, the supports gave way, and at exactly the same second a short section of the tunnel collapsed with a thunderous roar, and a swift, powerful rush of air.

For one awful second some of the fellows believed that the whole tunnel would collapse, burying us alive. But I had known beforehand that such a possibility was out of the question.

And after the dust had cleared we found that the tunnel was hopelessly blocked. We had made our retreat secure!

CHAPTER IV.

A HOLLOW VICTORY!



MR. WILLIAM K. SMITH chewed his cigar complacently.

"You can take it from me, Small, that those boys will be back in your charge in less than an hour," he declared. "We are starting operations almost at once. And maybe you'd like to stand by and see the young brats hauled out, eh?"

"Yes," said Mr. Ponsonby Small. "A most gratifying sight, Mr. Smith. I am particularly anxious to find a boy named Handforth minor. I cannot imagine how he succeeded in joining the rebels—if, indeed, he has done so."

"Never mind that kid," said Mr. Smith. "You stand right here and watch. Those kids haven't got a dog's chance!"

The two men were standing just near the edge of Curdle's Paddock, and they were looking at the power station—which loomed up black and indistinct against the night sky. There was nothing to show that the place was quite deserted, for at night it had always presented this quiet, empty-looking appearance.

Everything was prepared to the very last detail, and only awaited Mr. Smith's word. The millionaire had decided to use only one tractor as a beginning. If anything happened to this, through unforeseen circumstances, the other two were held in reserve to come into action as required. This time Mr. Smith was prepared for anything.

The millionaire gave his command a moment later.

And everything worked smoothly, without a hitch. As the powerful tractor moved forward across the paddock, crowds of men followed behind, ready to sweep through the breach as soon as it was made. The object was to capture the boys before they could make any escape.

A searchlight sprang into life from somewhere, and concentrated its beam upon the brick walls of the building. And the tractor went forward like some charging monster.

In the excitement it was hardly noticed that there were no defensive measures. There were no streams of water from the hose pipes, no hail of peas. Not even a boy appeared at the parapet.

And Mr. Smith, watching, grinned with enjoyment. He naturally assumed that the rebels had been caught napping. Perhaps they were feeding, and were not even allowed time to man their feeble weapons.

For Mr. Smith had no suspicion whatever that there was a way of escape from this building. He had constructed it himself, so he ought to know that it was solid. And entirely surrounding the paddock were hundreds of men. A complete cordon had been formed.

If any of the rebels succeeded in escaping through the windows they would inevitably run into the arms of the enemy. Escape was absolutely out of the question. Defeat for the rebels was now merely a matter of seconds.

Mr. Small was quite excited, and he held his breath as the tractor lumbered over the rough ground, and lurched its way over that trench—which had proved so disastrous in the previous attack.

The tractor raised itself out of the trench, roaring defiance, and then, with a powerful thrust that was thrilling to witness, it charged full tilt into the great main doors of the power station.

Crash!

There was a splintering, rending thunder of noise. The doors simply vanished into matchwood, and the tractor charged in, unable to stop. The walls on both sides of the door collapsed and crumbled away, and for a brief second it seemed that a greater collapse was to follow.

The tractor, however, backed out instantly, leaving that enormous gap bare and open—for Smith's men to dash into. My only regret was that I was not on the spot to see this comedy. But I heard all about it afterwards, and the very description made me grin—and frown, too.

For it occurred to me that Smith was taking a great risk by acting in this ruthless way. He believed that the entire Remove lurked within that building. I trembled to think what might have happened if such had indeed been the case.

That cruel battering-ram, smashing through the doors, would assuredly have caught some of the juniors in its charge, and grave injury, and even death, might have followed. But Smith, in his determination to defeat us, had waved this consideration aside.

But nobody was hurt—for the simple reason that there was nobody in the building at the time. A special force of Smith's workmen, prepared with powerful torchlights, surged into the building like a flood.

Expecting to be met with a hail of mudbags or a perfect fusillade of peas, they were astonished to find that there was no

defence whatever. Their flashing lights, indeed, revealed that the main portion of the building was empty.

"It's all right, boys!" yelled one of the men. "The kids are on the roof!"

The excitement was now at its height. Other men were swarming in, eager to get some of their own back on these daring boys. In the meantime a number of the other attackers had ascended to the roof.

But the roof was empty!

Even so, it was some few minutes before the attacking force realised the amazing truth. Those on the roof thought that the boys had been captured below. And the

whole paddock is surrounded. They can't escape! Say, this is mighty queer! Not a sound of the young cubs! What do you know about that?"

Mr. Smith strode forward, his patience at an end. He had only hung back because he had no desire to get soaked through. It was now quite obvious that the rebels were not using the hose pipes. So Mr. Smith became courageous, and advanced.

He was met near the building by Dinty Todd, one of his foremen.

"Gee, boss, dis is sure fierce!" exclaimed Todd quickly. "For de love of Mike! Them young guys ain't here nowhere! Not a sign of one of 'em! Can youse beat dat!"



The bargeman hardly had a chance to see what was coming. He certainly had a brief vision of charging figures, but that was all. The next moment he was sent flying backwards into the river.

men below believed that the rebels were on the roof.

But Mr. Smith, watching from the distance, had a vague, uneasy feeling that all was not right. He had been intensely pleased to see the success of the charge.

But the total absence of boys' shouts was disquieting. Try as he would, he could only hear the voices of his own men.

Even Mr. Small became uneasy.

"This is remarkable, sir—quite remarkable!" he exclaimed. "I fail to see any sign of the young wretches! No doubt they are skulking somewhere in the rear. Or perhaps they have attempted to escape——"

"Don't be a fool!" snapped Smith. "The

"What d'you mean—not a sign of one of them?" snarled Smith, dimly realising that his victory was hollow. "The boys must be there—they can't have got away! It's impossible! The place has been watched all day and all the evening!"

"Sure, an' don't I know it?" growled Dinty, incensed by his employer's tone.

"Get out of my way!" shouted the millionaire harshly.

He pushed Todd aside, much to that individual's secret rage. Striding into the power-station, he was soon satisfied that the Remove had vanished as mysteriously as though they had flown into the sky.

It was nothing short of extraordinary. Mr. William K. Smith was staggered—utterly and positively staggered.

He would have wagered half his enormous fortune that the boys were within the building. And yet here was the evidence of his own eyes to prove that they were not.

But how had they gone? In what mysterious fashion had they spirited themselves away? Smith's men had kept a watch continuously, and were willing to swear that not even a mouse had left that building by any ordinary means.

And then, just as the enraged millionaire was beginning to wonder if some of his men had turned traitors, and let the boys out, some shouts of excitement attracted him to a corner of the building. He strode over at once, and his men made way for him.

And then the mystery was explained.

In the flooring there was a trapdoor, now open, revealing a shaft which led straight down into the bowels of the earth itself.

"By heck!" muttered Smith. "So this is the way it was done!"

Without a word, he grabbed one of the torches from a man standing by and descended the roughly-made ladder. At the bottom he found himself in a little, narrow tunnel. But he only advanced a few steps before he saw that the whole tunnel was blocked—having recently collapsed.

He stared at it grimly. For a moment he wondered if the boys were buried alive—if some disaster had occurred. But his knowledge of the Remove—knowledge that had been gained at so much expense—led him to conclude that this was merely another trick.

The rebels had escaped to some unknown retreat, and had made their position secure.

It was merely another ruse. And Mr. William K. Smith pursed his lips, and regarded the blocked tunnel with a kind of grim fury.

"Say, those young guys sure beat everything!" he muttered grudgingly.

To be quite truthful, Mr. William K. Smith was beginning to secretly admire the pluck and resource of his schoolboy opponents. But he had lost none of his determination to smash up this rebellion and crush it out of existence.

CHAPTER V.

BY RIGHT OF CONQUEST!



"WILLARD'S ISLAND?"

I said crisply.

"Eh?"

"What d'you mean?"

"Willard's Island," I repeated. "That's our new stronghold, my sons. We'll work like steam, and convert the island into a fortress before the gentle Mr. Smith knows what's happened. If he can spring surprises, so can we!"

"My goodness!"

"You—you really mean it?"

"Of course I mean it," I replied.

"Willard's Island is our only chance now, and it's ours for the mere taking. Smith has driven us off our own property, so I've got no compunction in seizing some of his."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Nipper!"

The rebels, so gloomy and scared a short time earlier, were now filled with a new excitement. And as the significance of my suggestion sank in, their enthusiasm soared.

We were all in the tunnel—crowded in there like sardines. Fortunately, there was an excellent current of air, and we could all breathe freely. And what with the candles and our electric-torches, there was plenty of light. And the part of the tunnel that we didn't occupy was filled up with our goods and chattels.

As I explained to the fellows, our one and only object had been to get out of the power-station before it was too late. Once down in the tunnel we were safe, and could take our time before deciding on the next step.

One thing, of course, went without saying—under no circumstances should we return to St. Frank's. This barring-out was going on, and I had already decided precisely what was to be done.

But it was one thing at a time—and now that we were safe from Smith's attack we could set about the next task. And the sooner we got to work the better. For my new plan involved much hard work, and, if successful, would prove to be a master-stroke against the enemy.

In short, we were to give him tit-for-tat!

He had seized our paddock, so we would seize his island. Two wrongs don't make a right; but if we weren't justified in this course, then there's no such thing as justice in existence. And we knew that our cause was a good one, and we went forward without hesitation.

I had better explain that this old tunnel we were in was one that had been used long years before. Originally, it had led from the monastery ruins at St. Frank's to the old cellars beneath the quaint building on Willard's Island. They were really more like dungeons than cellars, and nobody knew when the tunnel had been built, or for what reason.

But it was there, and why should we worry ourselves about its origin?

A portion of it had been closed up for many months, and it was impossible to reach the monastery ruins. But a new exit had been recently discovered—the shaft which led up behind the junior pavilion.

And so, in spite of our recent retreat, we were in an ideal position.

For we were safe from the enemy, so safe that he hadn't the faintest idea of our whereabouts, and we could reach the open air with perfect ease. The playing-fields

would be utterly deserted in the darkness, and nobody would suspect a thing.

We also had that secret door which led into the dungeons on Willard's Island. And it had immediately occurred to me that the island would provide us with an excellent stronghold—a fortress that would be a great improvement in many ways on the abandoned power-station.

As for food supplies, I had my plans fully prepared for this question, too.

Some of the fellows had suggested getting out, walking to Bannington, and taking the train for home. They thought it better that the Remove should become dispersed, and put the whole question before parents and guardians.

Although this might have been effective, it had undoubted drawbacks. For we should be robbed of the satisfaction of defeating Smith by our own efforts. And in my opinion there was every prospect of an early capitulation on the part of the millionaire.

Without question, we had the best of the situation.

He was afraid to act too ruthlessly, for this would only attract unwelcome public attention. And sooner or later we would wear him down, and once we had conquered his obstinacy, he would probably come to terms.

And by seizing Willard's Island we would make a move that would go a long way towards victory. And the juniors themselves, as soon as they heard my suggestion, were full of enthusiasm for it.

"But how can we seize the place?" asked Armstrong.

"How?" I repeated. "Why, it's there, simply waiting for us to grab. This tunnel leads direct to it, and it's pretty certain that there are no more than two or three men on the whole place. And think how easy it will be to defend!"

"By George, yes!" said Handforth.

"With water all round us, there'll be no fear of a sudden rush of attackers," I went on. "Smith will probably use boats, but we can easily deal with any landing parties."

"Rather!" declared Boots. "But what about food?"

"We'll have plenty of food," I replied. "Now look here. Don't get excited, and don't forget that every minute is of importance. I want to confer with the company commanders, and we'll decide on a course of action. Then you fellows have got to obey orders strictly to the letter."

"All right, we'll do it."

"Anything you say, Nipper."

"Hear, hear!"

"Blessed if I know how Nipper thinks of all these things!" remarked Church. "It doesn't matter what trouble happens, Nipper's all ready with another wheeze. That's the best of having a good brain."

"Dry up, and don't talk rot!" I growled. "We're just doing our best, and if we all pull together there'll be no question about victory."

"Hear, hear!"

The fellows talked among themselves while I gathered the six company commanders round me—Handforth, Armstrong, Pitt, Boots, Christine, and Clapson. They were all looking eager and keen.

"Now the sooner we get to work, the better chance of success," I pointed out. "I shall want you, Pitt, and you, Armstrong, to go on a special mission with your men out in the open. You won't come along with the rest of us to the island, but attend to another matter."

"What matter?" asked Armstrong.

"Food," I said. "But we'll talk of that in a minute. The rest of us will get along to the end of the tunnel, invade the island, and capture anybody who happens to be on it. And, if possible, we'll seize every boat we can and drag them on to the island."

"That's a good idea!" said Handforth, nodding. "Perhaps we could raid the St. Frank's boathouse, too?"

"Hardly necessary," I replied. "I don't know, though. Smith might seize those boats and use them for his own purpose. If we get a chance, we'll take them ourselves. But the first thing is to get our supplies out of this tunnel on to the island—the machine-guns, and most of the other things. I don't suppose we shall be able to use the hoses, but they're not so important now. Anyhow, we'll see."

I only talked to them for a few minutes.

But after that, Pitt and Armstrong led their men off on their own special errand, having received brief instructions. I relied upon Reggie Pitt to use his own judgment and discretion at the actual scene of operations.

And the rest of us began the occupation of Willard's Island.

I went on in advance with Tommy Watson and a few other picked rebels. The rest were to follow on with the various impedimenta. And the pea-shooting machine-guns were to receive first attention.

The tunnel took a sharp dip downwards at a certain part, and then passed right beneath the River Stowe. Then it rose steeply, and finally resolved itself into a flight of stone stairs.

At the top there was a heavy door, composed, in fact, of one solid slab of stone. Beyond this lay the dungeons, or cellars, of that quaint old building which was locally known as Willard's Folly.

Recently the island had been the scene of operations by William K. Smith's men. Some heavy machinery was being installed, and we knew that the place was being converted into an important section of Mr. Smith's plant.

In fact, he was preparing to harness the river, in order to supply power to his dynamos and generators. But this was a later development, and only the preliminaries had been so far mapped out. Willard's Island was not greatly changed, except for some small building operations, and some

heavy machinery which was not yet properly installed.

We fully expected to find several men on the island. But to our satisfaction the whole place proved to be deserted. The island was ours for the taking, and we took it.

Within ten minutes of our occupation, that little piece of land in the middle of the stowe was swarming with rebels. Every inch of the ground was examined, and we fully satisfied ourselves that we were in sole possession.

And the river banks on both sides were dark and deserted. Even now the enemy had no knowledge of our latest move. Mr. Smith was probably thinking that we had gone back to the school, or that we were still lurking in the open somewhere, beaten, but too ashamed to show ourselves.

And all the while we were working at fever pitch to consolidate our new position. There was something rather humorous in the situation. As I had told my supporters, we were fully justified in taking the island, as William K. Smith had unlawfully appropriated our own property. That paddock was ours, given to us by Lord Dorrimore, who had paid four hundred pounds for it in cash. Smith, with a fine audacity, had taken matters into his own hands, although he knew well enough that he had no more right to the meadow than he had a right to Buckingham Palace.

And if he could act in this high-handed way, so could we. And as Smith had set the example himself, he couldn't very well grumble at us. He had got our property—we had got his. As soon as he handed up that meadow to us and agreed to our terms, we would give him back the island. What more could he expect?

Our scheme, in a nutshell, was to hold the island as a hostage until we got our way. And the Remove worked with a mighty will. For they had grasped the possibilities in a very short time. Willard's Island was easier to hold than the power-station, for it was entirely surrounded by water, and the natural formation of the island itself easily lent itself to defensive methods.

We knew it, because we had held a kind of barring-out on this island on one former famous occasion, although it was in no way comparable to this. We should have preferred to have had Willard's Island at the outset, but had deemed it better to defy Smith on our own property.

But since he had driven us out, we took the only course possible, and gave Mr. Smith a Roland for an Oliver.

And now we were working desperately to make our new fortress absolutely secure. In the meantime, Mr. William K. Smith was at an absolute loss to account for our whereabouts.

But he wouldn't be in the dark for long.

CHAPTER VI.

FOOD IN PLENTY!



REGINALD PITT gave a warning hiss.

"Go easy, you chaps—keep well back!"

he murmured. "We're just on the spot now. Lie low, and wait till I come back. I want to get the hang of the land before we make the attack."

There were about sixteen juniors in the party, and Pitt was nominally in charge of it. Handforth was there, too, for he had insisted upon going at the last moment. He declared that this work was more important than taking the island. Because, vital though the island was, food was even more necessary. I had not argued, because Handforth was a good man for such a job.

The party had crept along, keeping to the hedges as much as possible. The gloom of the evening helped them, for the moon was hiding behind a bank of clouds, and the whole countryside was dim and indistinct. Once or twice the juniors had paused to stare towards Cyclone City. And they could see lights moving about, and the power-station itself, just visible, was alive with activity. The fellows grinned to themselves as they looked at all this.

One or two of them were rather wistful as they turned round and gazed towards St. Frank's, standing up there on the rising ground, agleam with lights. Rebelling was all very well, but the fellows were beginning to miss the comfort of their ordinary, well-ordered life.

"Oh, to be back in Study D!" said Church, with a sigh. "I wonder if we shall ever have things as usual again?"

"Don't wonder!" snapped Handforth. "We're going on with this thing until we win. As far as I can see, we're within sight of victory already. And we won't be satisfied until Smith's kicked out of the district, and Small's kicked out of the school, and all those River House chaps are cleared off into other quarters. Life ain't worth living at present."

"Don't jaw so much, you two," whispered one of the others. "Don't forget, we're on a secret mission, and this part of the country is fairly swarming with Smith's rotters. 'We've got to go easy.'"

And so they had gone on, keeping to the dark shadows, until they had reached the river bank. This was at a point some little distance lower down than Willard's Island—in fact, at a spot where the river

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ran parallel with the meadows that adjoined Cyclone City.

So there was a certain amount of risk attached to this raid. I had warned the juniors that if they were attacked, their best course was to abandon the whole project, and hurry to the island as quickly as possible.

But, so far, everything had gone well.

There had been no surprises, and Smith's men knew nothing of these lurking figures who crept along in the gloom.

And now Pitt gave his warning, everybody crouched down behind one of the hedges that almost bordered the River Stowe. Just beyond was the towing-path, and there, moored against it, was a big barge. It was one of the largest that had ever come up from Caistowe, and from the manner in which it lay low in the water, was obviously full of cargo.

There was no mere guesswork about this barge. We had known all about its presence, having seen it arrive late in the evening, before darkness had fallen.

Unloading had commenced at once, and we had come across scores of cases being packed on to lorries, and being carted away. And we had learned, without any difficulty, that the barge contained food—some urgently needed supplies for Smith's encampment.

Food in Cyclone City, in fact, was running short. And this barge-load of supplies had just come in time. It certainly had come in time, for its presence here in the darkness was most opportune.

Reggie Pitt, gliding forward like a shadow, took stock of the vessel. And he was able to see that there were two men in charge of the barge. They were standing together near the forward hatch, talking in low tones, and smoking. Pitt waited for awhile, and he was gratified to see one of the men pass down the companionway and vanish.

In less than a minute Reggie was back among the other fellows.

"Now's our time," he murmured. "There's only one man on deck. Four of us'll do. I want you, Handy, and Church, and Armstrong. The rest of you fellows keep under cover until you hear a whistle. Then swarm down on the barge as fast as you like."

There was no time for discussion. In fact, Pitt's tone was so crisp and decisive that none of the fellows even thought of arguing. Handforth and Church and Armstrong stealthily followed Reggie, and they all paused for a moment just before breaking out upon the towing-path. That one man was still on the deck, and he had no suspicion of coming troubles.

"Now then!" said Pitt crisply. "On him!"

As the four juniors rushed forward, the moon came out from behind the cloud-bank, and shed a soft light upon the whole scene. The bargeman hardly had a chance to see

what was coming. He certainly had a brief vision of charging figures, but that was all.

The next moment he was sent flying backwards into the river.

Splash!

"Fathead!" hissed Pitt. "Who told you to do that?"

"I only just touched him!" gasped Handforth.

"Only just touched him! You gave him a biff that was enough to knock his head off!" growled Reggie. "We wanted to capture him, and keep him quiet. But he's gone now, and so it can't be helped."

This wasn't quite so callous as it sounded. One might have imagined that the unfortunate bargeman had gone down. But, as a matter of fact, he was swimming towards the opposite bank of the river, and the juniors were relieved when they saw the man haul himself out into safety.

In the meantime, the other bargeman had come up from below, wondering what all the commotion was about. He wasn't left long in doubt. He was seized, run off the vessel, and told to clear off, if he valued his skin. Since the first man had got away, there was no object in capturing the second.

And as all the secrecy was at an end, the juniors concealed their movements no longer. Pitt had already given his whistle, and the other fellows were on the spot. Speed was now the order of the hour.

"Those ropes—quick!" said Pitt briskly. "Don't waste time; get the old barge unmoored, and then start towing. Some of us have got to be horses for the time being."

In less than five minutes the barge was on the move. A dozen fellows were at the lines, hauling the heavy vessel along with comparative ease. And, considering that they were going up stream, they made good speed.

The other few fellows were on board, using the oars. And the whole affair now resolved itself into a race against time. The bargemen, of course, would report to Smith as soon as possible, and it wouldn't be long before a rescue-party came along.

For this vessel contained a vast supply of food—a great deal more than one would have supposed. For these river barges are capable of holding scores of tons of cargo. And the barge was practically full, the main discharging of its cargo having been planned for the morrow.

And Smith's workmen would be absolutely enraged when they heard the truth, for it was their food that was going. Not that the loss was serious to them. If they were driven to buy supplies from the local shopkeepers, all the better. The Bellton tradesmen had bitterly complained of the boycott which Mr. Smith had maintained ever since his advent.

So we felt that we were doing an act of

real good by seizing this barge. I had expressly warned Pitt and his men to make all speed once the barge was seized, and they took me at my word.

With the bulk of the fellows pulling at the ropes, and the others plying the oars, the clumsy vessel fairly pushed her way up the stream towards Willard's Island. And, at length, a chorus of subdued cheers went up—from two parties.

The juniors on the island had seen the barge approach, and another crowd was waiting in readiness to receive it. Boats were out, lines were flung across, and now the hauling was taken up from the island, the towing-party on the river bank jumping on the vessel at the last moment.

The barge was drawn away from the main bank, pulled across the river, and then carried up stream parallel with the island bank until a kind of inlet was reached.

We knew this spot well—a favourite picnic ground in the summer terms. It was a kind of backwater almost in the centre of the island, and practically concealed by the overhanging trees.

By careful handling the barge was worked into the backwater foot by foot, crowds of Removites pulling and pushing and using all their efforts. And, finally, the prize was made secure, tucked away there in that inlet, almost hidden from the opposite shore.

"Congratulations, old man!" I said, grabbing Pitt's hand. "Now we're all right as regards grub. But there's no time for a breathing spell yet. Smith might be along at any minute, and we've got to get our defences in thorough order."

And so the work went on, the whole Rebel Remove now on the island, with all hands labouring at fever pitch. A party of fellows had already been up to the St. Frank's boat-house, and had come back with a whole fleet of small craft, which would probably come in useful later on.

The boats were pulled up high and dry, and utilised as temporary barricades, in case of a landing by the enemy. As a last resort, we could all retreat into the stone building which crowned the island on the high ground in the centre. This, indeed, was a veritable miniature fortress, having been built on the model of an ancient castle, with towers and battlements complete.

And Mr. Smith wouldn't be able to use any of his tractors to smash his way into it! From every point of view, we had improved our position by shifting our camp.

For we now felt that we were the real masters of the situation.

After days of work, the enemy had succeeded in smashing his way into the power-station. But instead of gaining a victory, he had gained nothing but defeat. And the Rebel Remove was more firmly entrenched than ever before.

CHAPTER VII.

A SHOCK FOR MR. SMITH.



MR. PONSONBY SMALL was looking anxious and worried.

"Really, I fail to understand what has happened," he said, in distress. "Perhaps you, my man, can tell me? Where are the boys? Why are they not brought out? This is most extraordinary."

Dinty Todd, who was not in the best of tempers, looked at Ponsonby Small with a kind of contempt. Todd was aware that Mr. Small was the Headmaster of St. Frank's, but he had no respect for this round-shouldered, weedy specimen of humanity—whom he also knew as Mr. Smith's tool.

"Aw, gee, nix!" he growled. "Go chase yourself!"

"Really!" protested Mr. Small, shocked. "Really! I fail to understand these terms, my—"

"Say, I'm handing it to you that I ain't your man!" snapped Dinty. "As for them young guys, dey ain't in dis outfit. For de love of Mike! Ain't I worried enough without youse croakin' around? Aw, youse only a cheap skate, anyway! Vainoose, you poor fish!"

Mr. Small drew himself up.

"I shall report your disgusting language to Mr. Smith!" he said stiffly. "I ask you a civil question, and you swear at me!"

"Can you beat dat?" exclaimed Mr. Todd. "Say, listen! If I was to start cussin', you'd sure see blue flames around in de atmosphere! Youse ain't hold nothin' yet!"

And Dinty, being an obliging fellow, proceeded to treat Mr. Small to some choice language which was much favoured in the neighbourhood of the New York Bowery district. Fortunately, it was all double-Dutch to the Head.

And just then Mr. William K. Smith himself came to relieve the situation. The millionaire was looking harsh and grim as he left the power-station and strode along on his way to his office. But he paused when the Head hove in sight.

"Well, Small, they've beat us to it," he said briefly.

"You—you mean the boys?"

"Sure I mean the boys."

"But—but, Mr. Smith!" protested the Head. "I understood you to say that all the boys would be back at St. Frank's within an hour! Has something gone wrong? I have seen no sign of the boys—"

"They've gone—quit!" growled Smith. "By heck! They're sure a bunch of snappy young guys! I've had less trouble with fifty thousand strikers! It sure beats me! They've gone, Small—burrowed their infernal way underground, and quit the ranch!"

Mr. Small went pale.

"Underground!" he exclaimed blankly.

And then the millionaire explained. Mr. Small was excited and indignant when he heard the truth.

"Then those wretched young hooligans have eluded us!" he exclaimed. "What are we to do, Mr. Smith? And where are the boys? Surely they must be somewhere in the open! They cannot possibly remain in a tunnel!"

"You can bet they're in the open somewhere," agreed Mr. Smith. "But until we can find where that tunnel leads to, we're kind of hung up. Say, what's this? What's all this doggone noise?"

One or two men were hurrying forward, talking excitedly. Dinty Todd was well in advance, with one of the bargemen from the vessel which had just been captured by the Remove.

"Say, boss, we've sure got a clue!" said Dinty. "Them young hoboes have grabbed our eats!"

"Eats?" repeated Mr. Small blankly.

"I suppose you mean the barge?" said Mr. Smith.

"Sure, boss," said Dinty. "This guy wants to tell youse what happened."

"Shoot!" invited Mr. Smith briefly.

The bargeman rapidly told his story, and Smith's frown grew blacker as he listened. It seemed that the bargeman had lost a certain amount of time by going straight to Mr. Smith's office at the River House. Of course, he had found it empty, and had been obliged to retrace his steps. Meanwhile, the Remove juniors were allowed the time they needed to get their prize up stream.

"How long ago did this happen?" demanded Smith.

"About twenty minutes ago," replied the man. "Mebbe half an hour."

"You infernal idiot!" snapped the millionaire. "Why couldn't you have come sooner? And the barge was going up stream, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now I wonder what in thunder those boys—"

Mr. Smith was talking half to himself, and he broke off as two or three other men came running to the spot. They brought the news that a number of boys were to be seen on Willard's Island, and that every available boat had vanished from the river bank, making any sort of crossing impossible.

The millionaire caught his breath in.

"By glory! Have those young dogs had the nerve to seize the island?" he muttered. "Better come with me, Todd!"

He marched off at once, and, having crossed the meadows, he reached the towing-path, and set off sharply up stream. Mr. Small came behind, still anxious and worried.

It did not take them long to arrive opposite Willard's Island. Mr. Smith's first



"We don't want the doggone flowers! Guess you're one o' them blamed gypsies, eh? Come inside an' dance, an' we'll give you a couple of dollars!" The drunken man clutched hold of Irene's arm.

glimpse at the place was sufficient. Lights were gleaming everywhere, and there was a sound of bustle and activity, and nimble figures were moving about, hard at work. Barricades of some kind were being erected near the water, so that a landing would be difficult.

"For de love of Mike!" said Mr. Todd, staring. "Say, boss, dis is sure fierce! Dem young guys have sure gotta line on us all right! Dey's kinder beat us to it dis time!"

"Good-evening, Mr. Smith!" came a clear voice from across the water. "Please don't trouble to come any further—that is, if you are able to find a boat. We shouldn't like to make you swim back!"

It was my voice, and a crowd of other rebels gathered round, staring across at Mr. Smith in the moonlight. The moon, indeed, was very welcome to us, for we were able to see both banks of the river quite clearly from the island.

"Nipper!" shouted Mr. Small fiercely. "How dare you? I command you and your wretched companions to return to the school at once!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A roar of laughter went up from the rebels.

"Go away, funnyface!"

"We'll never give in!"

"Liberty and freedom!"

"Hurrah!"

The cheering died down, and Mr. Smith spoke.

"Say, boys, you've beat me all right," he said frankly. "Well, what about it? Is this thing to go on, or can we come to some arrangement? I'm willing, I guess!"

"You'll accept our terms, Mr. Smith?" I asked.

"Well, maybe they'll be altered a piece, but I'll guarantee that none of you boys get punished—much as you deserve it," replied the millionaire. "I'd like you to get hold of the fact that I'm losing thousands of dollars a day because of this fool business!"

"Good!"

"You can afford to lose it!"

"Maybe I can, but that's not the point," continued Mr. Smith. "Say, listen! Go back to St. Frank's, sleep like decent human beings, and eat good food, and to-morrow I'll talk things over."

"Do you promise to accept our full terms?" I asked.

"We'll talk over them to-morrow," replied Mr. Smith.

"Oh, of course," I replied. "I can quite appreciate what your conversation will be like Mr. Smith. 'We've got you, and that's all there is to it!' That's about what you'll say to-morrow if we return to St. Frank's. I'm afraid it's not quite good enough for the Remove!"

"No fear!"

"We won't go back until we have full assurances that our terms will be met."

"Never!"

"You young fools!" shouted Smith, losing his patience. "I've been keeping my temper, but there's a limit, I guess. You'd best not try my patience too far, or there'll be bigger trouble than you ever dream of."

"Yab! We've got you beaten!"

"And this time I shan't be quite so gentle," continued Smith angrily. "You're trespassing on my property——"

"Here, wait a minute!" I interrupted. "When it comes to trespassing, Mr. Smith, don't you think you're the prime offender in that matter? You've not only been trespassing on our meadow, but you've driven us off it. The fact that we were in your building makes no difference. Because that place was put up after you knew the land was out of your hands. You give up that meadow, and accept our other terms, and we'll quietly vacate this island. That's fair, Mr. Smith. We're only holding out for our rights, and not a single other thing. We're making no unreasonable demands."

"And you refuse to quit?"

"Yes, we refuse!" I replied.

"Well, young man, you'll be sorry for this," shouted the millionaire. "You've added robbery to your other misdemeanours now——"

"If you are talking about the food on this barge, please allow me to correct you," I said. "We took the barge, certainly, but we'll keep a strict account of everything we

take, and pay you for it to the full value—or deduct it from the price of the meadow when you pay for it."

William K. Smith turned on his heel without another word.

As a matter of fact, he was baffled. After all his efforts of the day, it was certainly galling to find these confounded rebels in a stronger position than ever.

And it was most undignified to stand on that river bank shouting across to the Remove. Mr. Smith felt that nothing could be done to-night, but on the morrow he would prepare plans for driving these invaders off the island.

Just as the Remove would not admit defeat, so Mr. Smith was equally determined to hold on.

If it had been merely a business fight, between two financial monarchs, Mr. Smith would assuredly have won. He had never been beaten yet. Every one of his enterprises had been pushed through to victorious completion by sheer dogged strength and brute force.

Anybody who had got into Mr. Smith's way had been swept aside relentlessly and ruthlessly. Occasionally he had found himself up against a powerful combine, or a wealthy corporation. But in every case it was Mr. Smith who had come out at the top.

His whirlwind methods, backed up by his enormous wealth, had won him the day, and yet here he was, with his whole present enterprise hung up by a mere collection of junior schoolboys!

It was a situation that had never before come upon Mr. Smith's horizon, and he had thought that he could deal with it as he had dealt with other difficulties—swiftly, drastically.

And it amazed him when he found that all his force, and all his energy was countered at every turn. These schoolboys, without any fortunes to lose, could not be coerced by threats of financial destruction. And when it came to fighting, Mr. Smith found that he was up against a big proposition.

But he was determined that he would not give in.

Never would he allow these boys to dictate their will to him! It seemed that they were wearing down the millionaire's determination, but a few of the rebels couldn't help thinking that the most exciting part of the barring-out was yet to come.

But for the time being they were safe and secure on Willard's Island, and it was very doubtful if Mr. Smith would start another attack yet. So once again the Remove was provided with a breathing space.

Smith's men were becoming restless. Dinty Todd, one of the chief foremen, was decidedly tired of the whole proposition, and if he had had his way, he would have kicked Mr. Small out of St. Frank's and given the boys exactly what they wanted. And many of the other men were growling

among themselves. They didn't mind the enforced idleness so much, but they were growing thoroughly fed-up with these attacks upon the schoolboys.

It must not be supposed that these men had any kindly feeling towards the boys. They were mostly foreigners—Mexicans, half-breeds, negroes, Swedes, and the scum of a dozen other countries. But they all claimed American citizenship, and as they were good workers, they were satisfactory to Mr. Smith.

And their recent futile battles against the boys had filled them with a deep, burning hatred. Left to their own devices, they would have taken to throwing stones, bricks, and even more violent forms of assault.

But Mr. Smith had repeatedly warned his men that the boys were not to be harmed in any way. Any man who even so much as threw a stone would be sacked on the instant. For Mr. Smith knew well enough that violence of that kind would assuredly lead to police intervention.

And so the men felt that they were being held back. Left to their own methods, they would quickly reduce these boys to subjection. But Smith was firm, and so the position remained uncertain.

But the Remove was safe for the time being.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHOP SUEY, BAKED BEANS, AND SUGAR CORN.



FATTY LITTLE was dismayed.

It was morning, bright, sunny, and delightfully spring-like. The weather, indeed, was more like May than the beginning of April. Willard's Island looked gloriously green and picturesque in the slanting rays of the early sun.

And the River Stowe was shimmering and rippling invitingly.

The countryside all round was bright and fresh and green, the only blot upon the landscape being the ugly building of Cyclone City, and the square, raw power-station.

But Fatty Little had no eye for scenic beauty. He was a perfect judge of a good dinner, but he knew nothing about landscapes. And at the present moment he was surveying the contents of numerous cases which had just been unpacked—these same cases having been recently taken from the hold of the captured barge.

"It's grub all right," said Fatty critically. "But what kind of grub?"

"Tinned stuff mostly," said Griffith. "Look here—baked beans, spaghetti and tomato sauce, sugar corn, clam powder, and all sorts of other heathen stuff. If we've got to live on this food, we'll soon surrender."

There were all sorts of other foods that

the juniors had never even heard of—although many of them had been to America.

Fatty came to me, asking what he should do, and I told him not to grumble, but to prepare the best breakfast he could. After all, it was all wholesome food, and there was no lack of it.

"If the fellows grumble, I'll deal with them," I said grimly. "They'd soon start complaining if there was no food at all. And in a position like this, we've got to do the best we can."

In the meantime, about half the rebels were enjoying a bathe.

The river was cold, but it was a glorious sunlit morning, and the sparkling water was inviting. And after the recent battles, the fellows badly needed a clean.

Archie Glenthorne was so delighted that he bathed twice, and when he finally got dressed, he emerged in one of his most wonderful suits, looking as spotless as ever. For he had brought a huge suitcase full of clothes and clean linen with him.

"If there's fighting, dear old cups of tea, we'll dash in," he said. "But as long as we can remain decently clothed, why not? I mean to say, a chappie's simply got to feel like himself now and again."

There had been no sign of the enemy during the night, although a careful, continuous watch had been kept. And now that morning had come, we found that we had the island quite to ourselves, and that the whole landscape was barren of Smith's men.

It was still quite early, and I got three companies of the juniors at work on the defences before breakfast. My chief idea was to erect a kind of fence round the lower portion of the island, where a landing could be easily effected. There was plenty of wood, and it was surprising what progress we made, considering our lack of essential tools.

And then breakfast-time arrived, and, except for a few fellows who remained on the watch, we all went into the big, central room of the stone building and found that everything was ready.

Fatty Little and his special staff were handing out dishes of a strange-looking mixture, all the plates being piled up with steaming hot food that had a most peculiar odour.

"What's this?" demanded Handforth, as he took a plateful.

"Breakfast!" said Fatty briefly.

Handforth sniffed at it suspiciously.

"It niffs," he declared. "There's something squiffy about it. What the dickens have you been concocting, you ass? And what's all this stew-looking stuff?"

"That?" said Fatty Little. "That's chop suey."

"Chopped suet!" shouted Handforth, glaring.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear chap, it's chop suey," I grinned.

"Don't you remember all the chop suey

restaurants in New York? There must be hundreds of them. Hardly a breakfast dish, but perhaps we shall unpack some better grub by dinner-time. We've hardly looked into that barge yet."

"Chop suey!" growled Handforth, taking a spoonful. "Oh, my hat! I'm sick! I've never tasted such poison in my life!"

He dropped his plate with a crash, and Church uttered a fiendish yell and leapt into the air. For that plate had dropped on his knees, its entire contents—boiling hot—smothering him.

"Ow! You—you careless fathead!" roared Church.

Handforth uttered a gurgle and vanished. He was absent for several minutes, and when he returned he was looking rather pale.

"I've just been sick," he said weakly. "Look here, Fatty, if you can't give me something fit to eat, I'll smash you!"

"I've only got biscuits and some baked beans if you like," said Fatty. "But what was wrong with the other stuff?"

"Garlic!" said Handforth, with a shudder. "If there's one thing I absolutely hate, it's garlic. And that stuff you gave me reeked of it."

Handforth was not the only fellow who gibbed at Fatty Little's special breakfast. And, as a matter of fact, during the morning at least a dozen juniors were horribly bilious.

It was really Fatty's fault entirely.

Chop suey, alone, would probably have been quite eatable—for it didn't look at all bad as it came out of the tin. But Fatty had opened about a dozen different kinds of tinned food, and had boiled them all together in a huge cauldron—even including sugar corn—which was comparatively sweet.

And the odour of garlic pervaded the whole place. It was hardly surprising that Handforth had felt so bad.

I warned Fatty that in future he had better serve the dishes separately, so that the fellows could know exactly what they were eating. And Fatty, who regarded the whole fuss as a slight, growlingly consented to do so.

At dinner-time he made full amends.

For he came out with a really sumptuous dinner of corned beef, sizzling hot bacon—which he had found already sliced in glass jars—sweet potatoes, spinach, and green peas. All these vegetables had been found in this, and it was surprising how fresh and palatable they were.

And, as a second course, Fatty Little proudly served buckwheat cakes and maple syrup. And the Remove decided, after due consideration, that although some of the American foods were rummy, others were quite ripping. In future, Fatty would have to be careful.

We had seen no sign of Smith during the morning. And we had been left undisturbed to pursue our work of fortifying the island. Our "Pepperers"—Pitt's patent pea-

shooters—were placed in advantageous positions, and were constantly ready to be manned.

The hose-pipes were useless, for we had no water supply. But this was a small consideration now. The island was difficult to storm, in any case, for it could only be approached by boat.

I concentrated my attention upon other measures.

Large numbers of long poles were placed all round the shores, and these poles were fixed up with handles. And each one had its own crew, so to speak, and I drilled the fellows into learning their exact positions.

In the event of a party attempting to invade the island, these poles would be at once manned, and used to overturn any boats that came near. The advantage was entirely with us, and it would need to be a big craft that got over these defensive methods.

A number of Third-Formers arrived on the opposite bank soon after dinner, and watched us with a correct amount of awe. Chubby Heath shouted over that he and the rest of the Third would join us pretty soon if Mr. Ponsonby Small started any more of his tricks.

To which I replied that the Third had better keep quiet, and remain at St. Frank's. We were going on very well, and if we needed any reinforcement at all, we would prefer to have the Fifth.

Buster Boots made rather an interesting discovery. He was in one of the smaller rooms of the island building, looking through a collection of stores which Smith's men had left there.

He came across a tripod, with a kind of telescope fitted to it, on a swivel. Buster brought this out into the open, and commenced making experiments. I came up while he was doing so.

"Hallo, where did you find that?" I asked with interest.

"In one of the store-rooms," said Buster. "Looks like one of those surveyors' telescopes to me. I was thinking that we might be able to set it up somewhere and use it."

"Good idea," I declared. "We'll take it up to the rising ground and fix it solid. We may be able to see right into Cyclone City. And there's no telling—it may prove very useful."

We soon had the tripod fixed, and then, by adjusting the focus, I found that I was able to obtain a view as I had hoped. I could see into Mr. Smith's camp—could even see the men moving to and fro between the shacks, and looking uncannily close. Even their features were distinguishable.

And yet, with the naked eye, it was practically impossible to see anything except just the buildings themselves.

"We'll leave this here," I said. "And it'll be somebody's duty to come and have a look through the telescope every fifteen minutes. We may be warned of an im-

pending attack by means of this. There's never any telling—and it's just as well to be prepared for anything."

CHAPTER IX.

IRENE RUNS THE GAUNTLET.



IRENE MANNERS tossed her head.

"Oh, I daren't, eh?" she said indignantly.

"No, of course you daren't," said Doris. "Don't be so silly, Irene! You know very well that you wouldn't go among all those horrid men! I'm surprised at you boasting like this!"

"Oh, it's too bad!" protested Irene. "I'll go now, so there!"

"You won't, Renie—I won't let you!" declared Marjorie Temple. "Don't take any notice of Doris—she's always tantalising. How can you, Doris? You know that Irene is obstinate."

"Obstinate?" repeated Irene, stamping her foot. "You're both as bad as one another! I'll show you whether I dare go or not!"

Her blue eyes were flashing, and she looked more than usually pretty in her gaily-coloured Spanish costume. All three girls were looking very different from their usual selves.

Being pupils of the Moor View School, they generally went abroad in quiet tweed costumes, or fashionable jumpers and skirts. But on this very special occasion, Irene & Co. were thoroughly Spanish in appearance.

It was, in point of a fact, a flag-day.

And as it was a half-holiday, the three young ladies were selling little rosettes in Bellton. The fund was all in a good cause, the money being raised, it appeared, for the relief of some earthquake victims in Southern Spain.

At all events Irene & Co. had entered enthusiastically into the enterprise, and very pretty they looked in their gay attire. If Bellton had had anything of a population they could have sold out long ago.

The three girls were standing on the stone bridge, just at the end of the High Street, and they had been rather gloomily counting their remaining wares. And nothing could alter the fact that they had sold no more than a quarter of their roses.

And then Doris, in a moment of humour, had suggested penetrating into Mr. William K. Smith's camp, where, she declared, they could sell out in ten minutes. Irene had put her foot down on the proposal, and that had started the argument. And when Doris declared that Irene daren't go, there was an end of the matter. Or, to be exact, it was really the beginning.

"I'm going!" said Irene firmly. "And, after all, why not?"

"Because those men are all foreigners; they're awful, you know," protested

Marjorie. "Didn't Miss Bond particularly warn us not to go near any of them? Oh, Renie, you mustn't go—"

"I've made up my mind, and I'm going to show you that I'm not afraid!" interrupted Irene coldly. "It's ridiculous! We don't like these men being in the district, but they're not criminals. And why shouldn't they contribute to this fund as well as anybody else? Their money is just as good, and you see if I don't sell a lot of these imitation flowers!"

"Oh, well, we'll come with you, then!" said Marjorie.

"Indeed, you won't!" retorted Irene. "Doris dared me to go, and I simply won't have you with me!"

And she tossed her pretty head and walked away. Marjorie was about to follow, but Doris held her back.

"Don't be silly," she said. "Let her go. It won't be long before she comes back, and I'll bet she won't sell a dozen."

"But—but something might happen—"

"Oh, how can you be so dotty?" asked Doris. "It's only a construction camp, and anybody can go in. Just because those St. Frank's boys have been fighting Mr. Smith, everybody seems to think the men are criminals. I'm rather curious to see what happens."

And so Irene was allowed to enter the Smith Manufacturing Company's settlement alone. First of all she presented herself in the grounds of the River House, and she was much encouraged by selling half a dozen of her flowers straight off. And she got silver in every case, whereas in the village most of the contributions had been in coppers.

Irene was quite pleased, and she instantly received permission from Mr. Schwann, the engineer, when she asked if she might penetrate into Cyclone City itself. So Irene went on her way, selling flowers all the time.

Quite contrary to her belief, she found that all these rough-looking men were not only good-humoured, but very polite. They treated her with every respect, and bought the rosettes so quickly that her stock was soon reduced to a mere dozen.

And the girl was more than delighted. She smiled to herself as she thought what she would say to Doris and Marjorie when she emerged. She would show them whether she was afraid or not.

Many of the men eyed her with open admiration as she walked along daintily between the rough shacks. Irene was pretty enough under ordinary circumstances, but in her present attire she looked far more enchanting.

She was wondering whether she should retrace her steps, when she caught sight of several men talking round the door of one of the bigger buildings, and she thought that she might perhaps sell her remaining flowers.

So she approached, without quite realising that this building was the one that she

should really have avoided. For it was in the heart of the settlement, and was, in fact, the saloon.

And it was the haunt of the men who were off duty. And just at present there were any amount of idle hands. She didn't quite like the look of the fellows who paused in their conversation and stared at her.

They were different to the others. They were dressed very much the same, but they struck Irene as being half-breeds, or Mexicans. And, to tell the truth, they were not precisely sober. But as the girl had met with no disrespect so far, she felt that she had nothing to fear.

"Will you buy some flowers?" she asked as she paused.

"For the love of Mike! What's this, boys!" shouted one of the men thickly. "Say, look what's come to town! Gee! She's sure some swell dame!"

"You betcha!" agreed one of the others.

They surrounded Irene, and one or two other men came out of the saloon to see what the slight commotion was about. It happened that there were no foremen about at the moment, and the men had this part of the camp entirely to themselves.

And the two who had just emerged from the saloon were not merely intoxicated, but very much the worse for strong drink. They regarded Irene's arrival as the occasion for some fun.

"Say, boys, let's take the dame inside!" shouted one of the men. "We'll sure make her dance!"

"Sure!" said one of the others.

He tried to seize Irene's dainty arm, but she drew back.

"Please!" she said frigidly.

"Oh, say! Get that?" roared the fellow. "I'll allow she's some high-stepper! Say, gal, come inside an' show us how you do the Spanish dance. I guess we're in need of some fun."

"I'm only selling these flowers," said Irene firmly. "Will you buy—"

"Aw, cut out that stuff!" interrupted one of the drunken men. "We don't want the doggone flowers. Guess you're one o' them blamed gipsies, eh? Come inside an' dance an' we'll give you a couple o' dollars."

"Sure! Attaboy!"

Several of the other men, grinning, agreed. There was no real harm in the crowd, but Irene was quite frightened. And it was certainly a great indignity to be harassed by these evil-looking fellows. And the reek of their breath was quite nauseating.

Irene tried to get away, realising that there had been a great deal of truth in what Marjorie had said. She began to wish that she had not come into the camp at all. And she looked round for somebody she could appeal to.

"I can't dance for you," she said quietly. "I'm not a gipsy at all; I'm only wearing this dress because I'm selling flowers for the relief fund. I'm only a schoolgirl."

"Aw, that's the bunk!" said one of the

workmen. "Quit that stuff, gal, an' come along inside. You can't pull that line o' bull on us. Grab hold of her, boys!"

"You bet!"

The men had set their hearts upon Irene dancing, and her very refusal only made them all the more eager. They regarded Irene as a gipsy girl who had come just in time to provide them with some amusement.

And, to her horror, she was seized by three or four of the ruffians and dragged towards the saloon.

"Let me go!" she cried indignantly. "Oh, how dare you! Let me go at once!"

The men roared.

"Ain't she just cute?" grinned one. "Say, boys, this is worth another drink. Come in an' have one on me."

Up till this point Irene had refrained from struggling. But now she did so, and she found that she was utterly helpless in the grasp of these rough brutes. If Mr. Dinty Todd had come along at that minute, about half a dozen of the half-drunken ruffians would have gone over backwards with loose teeth. But Todd, in spite of his rough exterior, was gentlemanly enough to treat a lady with respect.

Unfortunately, however, it so happened that nobody in authority was near the saloon at the time. And so Irene was dragged right inside, in the midst of that crowd of rough drunkards.

Her position was in no way perilous, but humiliating to a degree. She felt as though she would like the ground to open and swallow her. And she furiously told herself that somebody would suffer for this later.

"Let me go—let me go!" she insisted breathlessly.

But her protests only made the men more insistent. They dragged her into the centre of the saloon and then formed in a circle round her.

"Now then—dance!" roared somebody.

"I won't—I won't!" cried Irene fiercely. "Oh, you ruffians! How dare you!"

The bar-tender, rather a decent-looking fellow, raised himself above the bar, and looked on with concern.

"Say, boys, quit that stuff!" he said sharply. "Who's the girl, anyway? If the boss come along you'll be fired for this. It's all right, miss, they don't mean any harm."

"Please make them let me go," said Irene, her voice trembling slightly. "They—they dragged me in this awful place against my will. I belong to the Moor View School, and I only came in the camp to sell some flowers for the relief fund."

The bar-tender leapt over his bar and pushed his way forward.

"Quit this, boys!" he said grimly. "This young lady is a visitor. She ain't a gipsy, but a high-toned schoolgirl! You'll get fired if the boss comes along," he repeated.

"Aw, you go to blazes!" shouted one of the intoxicated men. "Your job's behind

that bar, so get to it! An' don't interfere!"

"I'll see you outside, miss," said the barman. "I'm sorry—"

The next moment one of the drunken fellows caught the unfortunate bar-tender a blow on the side of the head that sent him sprawling. Irene screamed, and the crowd of men broke into a roar of coarse laughter.

"Say, this is dandy!" shouted somebody.

"Now then, we'll do the thing in style, boys. Gee whizz! Would you believe that, now?"

For Irene, thoroughly alarmed, had slapped the face of a man who held her wrist. The fellow staggered back, far more surprised than hurt. His companions roared with mirth.

And the man, scowling, rushed at Irene, and seized her in a grip from which there was no escaping.

"I'll sure make you pay for that, you little spitfire!" he snorted. "Up there, blame you, an' dance!"

And to the girl's utter horror, she was lifted upon one of the tables, and the men formed round in a circle.

"Now then, gal—dance!" came the command. "Dance, or by heck we'll make you!"

CHAPTER X.

REBELS TO THE RESCUE!



"**A**NYTHING doing?" asked Church, with interest.

"No, nothing," said McClure. "Just one or two men walking about, that's all. It'll be tea-time soon, and then we shall have to be looking out for an attack. Want a squint?"

"Yes," said Church.

The two juniors were on the little rise near the centre of the island, and McClure had just been looking through the fixed telescope. But, as he had said, everything seemed quiet and orderly in William K. Smith's camp.

Looking through the telescope, a few figures could be seen moving about, but there was not the slightest indication of any big activity. This indicated that no attack was impending, although it would be unwise to rely upon that telescope too much.

Handforth, hot and perspiring after some heavy work, glanced at the little mill, and saw his two chums idling about the telescope. He paused and glared at them.

"Now then, lazybones!" he commanded. "Come down and do some work. You're wanted up the other end of the island, on those defences!"

"We've only just come away," said Church. "Besides, Nipper wanted me to come along and have a look through this



In a breathless body, they arrived at the saloon, and burst pell-mell in. There was Irene on the table, with a crowd of rough men laughing uproariously all round.

telescope. We shan't be more than five minutes."

Handforth climbed up the hill, and frowned.

"I'll look after the telescope," he said. "You get to work!"

"Rats!"

"Did you say 'rats' to me, Arnold McClure?" demanded Handforth aggressively. "You seem to forget that I'm your commanding officer. And if any of my men are insubordinate they get this!"

Biff!

McClure sat down in the grass violently, and Handforth, without even looking at him, turned his attention to the telescope, and squinted through it. He closed his eye and opened it again, but there was nothing to be seen.

"The thing's no good," he grunted. "Call this a telescope? Huh! You can see better through a penny—"

He paused, looking up, and gave a roar.

"Get out of the way, fathead!" he shouted. "How the dickens do you think I can see through your silly back?"

Church had thoughtlessly been standing in front of the instrument, and, not being transparent, it was hardly surprising that Handforth had been unable to see anything. Church moved aside, grinning, and Handforth again applied his eye to the telescope.

"That's better," he said gruffly. "Why, hallo! There seems to be something special— By George, a girl, too! Why, I'm blessed if— Quick! Look here, you chaps!"

"What's the matter?" asked McClure

snappily. "And don't biff me like that again—"

"Can't you see?" shouted Handforth excitedly. "It's Irene!"

He apparently forgot that his chums were not endowed with telescopic vision, and he stood there, his face flushed, and quite eager. Church and McClure glanced at one another, and shook their heads.

"I always thought he was a bit gone," said Church sadly. "But this proves it! Fancy thinking he can see Irene in Smith's camp! Might as well expect to see a rose in an onion bed."

"A garlic bed, you mean," said McClure, with recollections of breakfast.

"You brutes!" roared Handforth abruptly. "Let her go! By George! I'll jolly well smash you—"

"Steady, old man!" shouted Church. "They can't hear you! What's wrong, anyhow? What are you getting excited about?"

Handforth came to himself for a moment.

"They—they've got Irene in there—in that camp!" he panted. "She's dressed like an Arab girl, or something; but I know it's Irene! And she's struggling like the dickens in the grasp of about four ruffians!"

"I don't believe it!" shouted Church.

He was so eager to have a look that he unceremoniously shoved Handforth aside, and applied his eye to the telescope. Then, instantly he became tense and alert.

That scene, almost invisible to the naked eye, sprang into prominence. And, sure enough, there was Irene Manners being forced against her will, in the grasp of some burly ruffians, into one of the buildings.

Church, in his turn, was pushed out of the way, and McClure had a look. But he only caught the briefest glimpse before Handforth sent him sprawling, and Edward Oswald was just in time to see the girl being forced into the saloon. As she vanished, Handforth leapt round, shouting.

"Rescue, Remove!" he bellowed. "Rebels, ahoy! Rescue! Rescue!"

He made such a noise that the juniors came rushing up from all directions. It was naturally assumed that an attack had suddenly developed, and when it was seen that all was quiet, dozens of fellows wanted to know what the excitement was about.

"We've got to go into Smith's camp!" roared Handforth fiercely. "I've just seen Irene being dragged into the saloon by a crowd of drunken ruffians! We've got to dash to the rescue! Quick! Get the boats!"

"You idiot!" shouted Armstrong. "We can't go into the camp!"

"We've got to—Irene's in peril!"

There was a great deal of excitement, and I came pushing through the crowd. I heard the story, but I doubted it. I knew Handforth of old.

And the prospect of Irene being in the camp was in itself hard to believe.

"You're mistaken, old man," I said. "It couldn't have been Irene—"

"I tell you it was!" hooted Handforth wildly.

"Yes, it was! I saw her, too!" exclaimed Church. "We were looking through the telescope, Nipper. About six of those ruffians were grabbing her, and forcing her into that horrible saloon!"

"Are you sure—honour bright?" I asked sharply.

"Absolutely positive!" said Church.

"Get the boats ready!" I snapped, whirling round. "We can't let this thing stand! It's a risk, but if we go with a rush, there might be a chance of getting back. Quick—the boats!"

In the sudden excitement the fellows didn't consider the risks. The very thought of Irene being in the hands of those men was enough to make the juniors forget all odds. But Reginald Pitt grasped my arm, and shook his head.

"I'll go with the crowd, but you'd better stop," he said quietly. "There might be some of us captured, and we should be in a fine mess without a proper leader. You've got to stop here, Nipper."

I looked at him, and calmed down.

"Yes, I suppose you're right," I said reluctantly. "All right! Hurry off! About twenty of you ought to be enough."

Two of the boats were launched in no time, and with nine or ten fellows crowding in each, they crossed to the opposite bank, and the juniors dashed away across country in a compact crowd, with Handforth leading the way.

They hardly realised the almost suicidal nature of their act. For they were dashing straight into the enemy's camp, and if it came to a close fight with the men, the twenty juniors stood no chance whatever.

But this rescue-party simply hurled itself into Cyclone City by surprise, and the whole thing was over almost before the inhabitants of the camp knew anything about it. Thus, the juniors only met with a sprinkling of Smith's men, instead of large numbers.

They tore through the camp, amid a cloud of dust, like cowboys through a Western township. And, indeed, the simile was most apt, considering that this settlement was modelled very much on the style of a Western American camp.

In a breathless body they arrived at the saloon, and burst pell-mell in. Handforth, leading the way, suddenly paused, his eyes blazing.

There was Irene on the table, with a crowd of rough men laughing uproariously all round. And the girl, considerably frightened, was being forced to dance. Handforth simply bellowed.

"You—you rotten scum!" he thundered wrathfully.

He dashed straight in, and one of the men who got in his way wondered if an earthquake had happened. Handforth's fist,

with all the weight of his shoulders behind it, struck him on the chin, and the fellow nearly turned a back somersault.

A moment later the interior of the saloon was in wild confusion.

The men were utterly startled to see these boys in their midst, and were so surprised that they hardly had time to fight. As for Irene, she gave a cry of joy as she recognised her rescuers.

In a moment she was whirled down from the table, and then she hardly seemed to know what happened next. But, somehow, she was out in the open, in the midst of the determined juniors.

They swept out in a flood that could not be stayed. Irene vaguely knew that Handforth and Church and Pitt were nearest to her, and that they were the ones who had got her down from the table.

"All together!" roared Pitt, at the top of his voice. "Don't stop to fight! Run for your lives!"

"Hurrah!"

Indeed, the only chance of getting away at all was to dash out of the camp as quickly as they had dashed into it. Irene was carried along with the rest of the crowd, and they all swept out of Cyclone City before the rank and file of Smith's men could hurry to the scene.

There was no time to count up and see if any of the fellows were missing. Even to pause for a moment was to invite complete disaster to the whole party. But, as far as Pitt could see, everybody was there.

They raced across the meadows towards the river, Irene being half-carried. And Pitt, glancing back, saw that only a few of the men were following. But he did not call a halt on this account.

Indeed, not until the river bank was reached, opposite Willard's Island, did the juniors pause. And then, in a breathless, triumphant throng, they halted. Irene, although flustered, was rapidly recovering.

"How did you know?" she said huskily. "Oh, how did you know that I was in that dreadful place?"

"We saw you—through a telescope!" said Handforth, with a gulp. "Thank goodness, we were able to go and fetch you away, Miss Irene!"

"It was wonderful of you, and I hardly know how to thank you!" exclaimed the girl, her face flushed with gratitude. "I don't know what would have happened if—"

"Sorry, Miss Irene, but we've got to get back on the island—daren't stop!" interrupted Pitt crisply. "If you go along the towing-path here, and then out across the St. Frank's playing-fields, you'll reach the lane all right. And you won't be bothered any more, that's certain."

Handforth didn't like to part with Irene so swiftly, but Pitt was right. Their task had been accomplished, and the girl was now in no further danger. The only sensible course was to get back on Willard's Island, and allow Irene to hurry off.

For if Smith's men swooped down, and caught this isolated crowd of fellows the result would be disastrous.

And so Irene, promising to thank them later, on a more favourable occasion, ran off. And the rescue-party took stock of themselves. Nobody knew exactly which fellows had gone, and which hadn't.

But, once back on the island, a roll-call was instantly taken. I was rather amazed that the crowd had come back at all. It was extraordinary that they had succeeded so splendidly in their enterprise.

And then came the bad news.

For the roll-call revealed the fact that four juniors were missing—Tommy Watson, Archie Glenthorne, Jack Grey, and McClure. They had gone with that party, and had failed to return!

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRUSSIAN.



MR. WILLIAM K. SMITH looked up sharply.

"Say, what in the name of heck—" he began.

And then he paused, for the door of his private office, having burst open, now admitted three or four burly men, with four dusty, hot, dishevelled juniors in their midst.

The luckless four were the prisoners of that raid.

Mr. Smith rose to his feet, his expression changing to one of evil satisfaction. The prisoners could not have been brought before him at a more inopportune moment. He had been busy on the telephone for over an hour, speaking with his agents in Caistowe, and trying to adjust matters, and get things into something like order.

His whole organisation had gone awry—solely, and absolutely owing to the petty interference of the Remove. Throughout the afternoon Mr. Smith had had aggravation after aggravation, until now he was in one of his most wild tempers.

The arrival of the rebel prisoners did nothing to allay his rage, but rather to enhance it. But it took another form. He became cold, grim, and fiendishly cruel in his expression. The inborn Prussian of his nature was coming to the surface.

"What's this?" he asked curtly.

"A party of them boys came into camp, and started trouble, boss," replied one of the men. "We caught these four, and brought them along to you."

"Do you think we care?" panted Watson defiantly. "We all came to rescue a girl from the hands of your rotten ruffians! And, thank goodness, they got her away all right! We saw that before we were brought in here!"

"Absolutely!" said Archie, who was very much of a wreck. "Allow me to inform you, Mr. Smith, that these bally workmen

of yours are nothing more nor less than reptiles! I mean to say, they're not fit to crawl! And I'm dashed if you're not just as bad!"

Dinty Todd came in at this moment, and Smith nodded.

"What do you know about this affair, Todd?" he demanded.

Todd claimed no knowledge of it whatever, having just come back from the village. He looked at the four dishevelled juniors with some concern. For Dinty knew something of his chief's present mood, and, in addition, he had a little soft spot in his heart for the juniors.

"Well, anyway, bind up their hands!" commanded Smith. "Yes, all of them! Bind them, and stand them in a row!"

"Say, boss, best let 'em go!" advised Dinty. "Or maybe youse can hand de young guys over to Mr. Small——"

"Silence!" snarled the millionaire.

Todd closed up rapidly, rather overawed by that fierce tone. And the four luckless prisoners were bound up, and placed in a row, as Mr. Smith had ordered. Then the men were ordered to go, with the exception of two—Dinty Todd, and another tough.

"Do you know what I'm going to do?" demanded Mr. Smith, his voice trembling with suppressed rage. "You boys are going to have a lesson now that you'll never forget in all your lives! By gosh, I've got you, and now you'll suffer! I'll make an example of you!"

Dinty Todd bit his lip, but said nothing. He had an instinctive fear that Mr. Smith was going to do something beyond all reason. He was in such a cold rage that he was capable of horrible torture. And he had been waiting so long for this opportunity that his hatred was concentrated.

"If you harm us, Mr. Smith, you'll be made to answer for it," said Jack Grey quietly. "You've got no right to touch us—you have no authority over us, and if you attempt to——"

"Another word, boy, and I'll knock your head off!" snarled Smith.

Somehow, Jack Grey's speech froze. He was plucky enough, but there was something so dreadfully menacing about Smith's manner that he could not say another word. A feeling of horror possessed him.

"Take the first boy, and strip him to the waist!" ordered Smith grimly.

Archie was jerked forward by Dinty's companion, and he was utterly helpless in the grasp of those strong men. He did try to struggle for a moment, but it was useless.

His upper clothing was removed, and he stood there, bare to the waist, the rippling muscles on his shoulders proving that he wasn't half so soft as some of the juniors imagined. His three companions in misfortune looked on with desperate fear.

"What are you going to do to him?" asked Tommy Watson hoarsely. "Oh, you

brute! You murderous coward! You—you wouldn't dare——"

Watson had uttered the startled exclamation as he observed that Mr. Smith had opened a drawer, and now held a dog-whip in his hand.

Archie paled slightly, but he was quite calm.

"The old Spanish Inquisition, what?" he observed. "Kindly allow me to remark, Mr. Smith, that if you tickle the good old spine with that interesting-looking object, I shall probably have you sent to chokey for a spell!"

"It's no good whining to me!" said Smith harshly.

"Whining?" repeated Archie. "Good gad!"

He closed his mouth with a snap, and didn't utter another sound. He would prove to Mr. Smith that he wasn't the kind of fellow to whine. Yet he knew well enough that the first lash of that cruel dog-whip would cut into his skin, and cause the most intense agony. A dozen lashes would leave his delicate skin a bleeding mass.

And Mr. Smith seemed capable of any atrocity in his present mood. And he not only seemed so, but was. Left to his own devices, the American-Prussian would have committed a crime too horrible for thought.

"Strap this cub to that nail in the wall!" commanded Smith.

Archie was taken over to the wall, his bound wrists were raised, and the rope fastened round a big hook in the wall. And Mr. Smith, with face distorted with hate, cracked the dog-whip viciously. He raised the whip in readiness for the first murderous blow.

The other three juniors were protesting frantically. McClure, indeed, was nearly sobbing with terror—not for his own safety, but because the very brutality of this thing frightened him.

But no notice was taken of their shouts. Dinty Todd stood by, his face grim and set. The other man was a villainous-looking ruffian who obviously took a keen enjoyment in the whole dastardly business.

"Now then!" muttered Smith tensely.

The whip was descending for the first lash, and Archie gripped himself firmly. But before that ghastly blow could descend, Dinty Todd grasped his employer's raised hand, and held it as though in a vice.

"Quit this, boss!" he said hoarsely. "Quit it, I say!"

Smith turned, amazed and inflamed. His eyes absolutely blazed with suddenly released fury.

"You infernal hound!" he snarled. "What the——"

"You'll kill the kid!" shouted Todd. "You can't do it, boss! You'll kill him!"

"You're fired!" raved Smith. "Get out, curse you!"

"Suffering cats!" shouted Todd, his voice rising to a perfect roar. "Yes, by gosh, I will get out! But I guess youse ain't gonna torture dis young guy! No, siree! Not while I'm around!"

Smith wrenched his arm free with a sudden maniacal wrench. The next second the whip descended across Todd's shoulders with a burning lash that made that leathery hide of his wince.

"By thunder!" he gasped hoarsely.

He pulled himself back, his enormous fist flashed out, and it shot forward like a battering-ram.

Crash!

Mr. Smith received the full, devastating force of that blow on his chin. He was lifted clean off his feet, and sent hurtling backwards with a force that turned him completely over, and he landed in a limp, quivering heap. His jaw wasn't broken, but it had been a near thing. In any case, Mr. William K. Smith had lost all interest in the proceedings.

"You fool!" gasped the other man. "You've hurt the boss——"

Crash!

Todd's fist landed again, and the other man went flying drunkenly across the room. Dinty Todd, be it remembered, was an ex-prize-fighter, and what he didn't know about boxing was not worth learning.

Todd grinned with sheer pleasure.

"Say, kiddoes, we'll quit!" he said, with a laugh. "And, by glory, we'll quit while de quitting's good! Dis outfit ain't healthy for youse, an' I guess it ain't healthy for me!"

In a moment he had torn Archie down from that wall. It only took a few seconds to throw a coat over his back, and to release the wrists of all four juniors. And then Mr. Todd rushed the juniors out of the building—just as Smith was beginning to show signs of recovery.

The fugitives got outside, and they took the shortest possible route to the towing-path—and no man dared to question what Todd was doing. His reputation as a fighting man was too well known.

And exactly ten minutes later the rebels on Willard's Island heard a roaring,

blustering hail. And there, on the opposite bank, stood a burly individual with the four missing juniors.

"Hurrah!"

"They're back! They've got here!"

"And Todd's with 'em—Dinty Todd!"

"Say, young fellers, quit de chin waggin', an' tote one of dem boats along," shouted Mr. Todd. "I guess we ain't got no time to lose. Make it snappy, kiddoes!"

The very words themselves proved that Mr. Todd was no enemy. And, in any case, it was highly necessary to fetch the four missing juniors over. We had just been holding a council as to what methods we could employ to rescue them. And here they were, safe and sound, back at the camp.

A few minutes later they were in our midst, gasping out their startling story. We listened with growing anger and indignation—and increasing admiration for Dinty Todd.

"Oh, he was a fiend—an absolute fiend!" panted Jack Grey. "If Dinty hadn't interfered, Archie would have been killed!"

"Dear old lads of the village, I never saw such a beauty in all my life!" murmured Archie dreamily. "I mean to say, it lifted the poisonous blighter absolutely off his feet, and nearly broke his bally neck! Todd, old lad, I'm dashed glad you're my pal!"

"Sure!" grinned Mr. Todd. "De fact is, young fellers, I've come along to join youse. Get me? I've quit dat doggone hog—for good! An' it'll sure please me a heap to stick around this outfit an' help youse to win!"

There was no doubting Dinty's sincerity. And after what he had done he was our friend for good. And there was great jubilation in the camp during the whole of the evening.

There had been a whirlwind of excitements and perils, but again the rebel Remove had come out on the top. But if we had only known it, the climax to the whole adventure was near at hand—and it was to prove a climax of such startling quality that everything that had gone before would be tame by comparison!

THE END.

MORE STARTLING AND THRILLING ADVENTURES

will be related next week in another top-hole story of this grand series, entitled:—

THE REBEL REMOVE!



MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

By the Author of our St. Frank's Stories.



No. 17. AMERICAN CLOTHES.

IT seems to be a fairly widespread impression that our American cousins walk about in wide, baggy trousers, square-shouldered jackets, and extra wide-brimmed hats—to say nothing of nobby boots.

Nothing is further from the actual truth.

In New York most of the men are quite well dressed, and it is an unusual sight to see a really shabby individual, and rags and tatters are practically unknown. The ordinarily well-dressed man is very little different in appearance from his prototype of London.

I never saw a baggy pair of trousers in America, and the jackets of all the suits are cut with extreme smartness, and the American clothes, if anything, fit more snugly and closely than English clothes. And wide-brimmed hats in New York are a myth.

My first impression, indeed, was that the New Yorkers wore hats with absurdly narrow brims—the favourite fashion being soft felt hats and velours. Comparatively few bowlers—or Derbys, as they call them over there—are worn.

Buying a suit of clothes in New York is very different from buying a suit of clothes in London. It is regarded as something of a discredit to an Englishman if he indulges in a ready-made suit. The really smart man has his clothes made to measure.

Not so in New York.

Tailors, as we know them, are few and far between, and are mainly patronised by the ultra-fashionable. The American man in the street always buys his clothing ready-made. But this does not mean that the American "ready-made" is the same as the British. It isn't. It is a far superior article.

The price of a good suit in New York is anything from ten to twenty pounds—not made to measure, but bought in the store, and brought away at the time of purchase. Gentlemen's suits in America are sold in the same way as condensed milk is sold in

Great Britain—that is to say, they are branded. A man will have his own favourite brand of clothing, and will generally stick to it.

Thus, there are hosts of people who prefer the Karl, Schaffer and Marx brand, others the Kuppenheimer, and so forth. These suits are made by the million in enormous factories, and sent out to the various retail stores by the thousand, every good shop having an enormous range of styles, in every size and design. It is also interesting to know that these ready-made clothes are beautifully tailored, and generally of fine material. The cut may not be quite favourable to British eyes, but this is a matter of opinion. It is also a fact that the more expensive suits are invariably made of British cloth.

I am compelled to admit—grudgingly, perhaps—that American women are much more smartly dressed than the women of the British Isles. There is something about the American girl which is absolutely distinctive.

One never sees a shabby or dowdy-looking girl in the streets of New York. All the members of the fair sex are attired with exquisite taste and charming judgment. In America the ladies are catered for by people who evidently know their business.

One sees much smarter cuts than our own—exquisite gowns, dainty dresses of every kind, and a thousand and one tricky little touches that are only found in the very smartest circles in Great Britain.

Even the poorest young ladies of New York manage to dress smartly, so that it is difficult to tell the rich from the needy. The American woman is determined to look smart and alluring, and she can obtain attractive clothes at ridiculously cheap prices in certain sections of the city. 125th Street, for example, is an absolute Mecca for reasonably-priced feminine clothing, and here the ladies' shops simply rub shoulders with one another in endless profusion.

SPECIAL—BOAT RACE STORY BY ARCHIE!

No. 19. Vol. 1.

Edited by Nipper.

April 5, 1924.



St. Frank's Magazine



FAMILIAR PHRASES FROM FICTION

As Seen By Our Artist

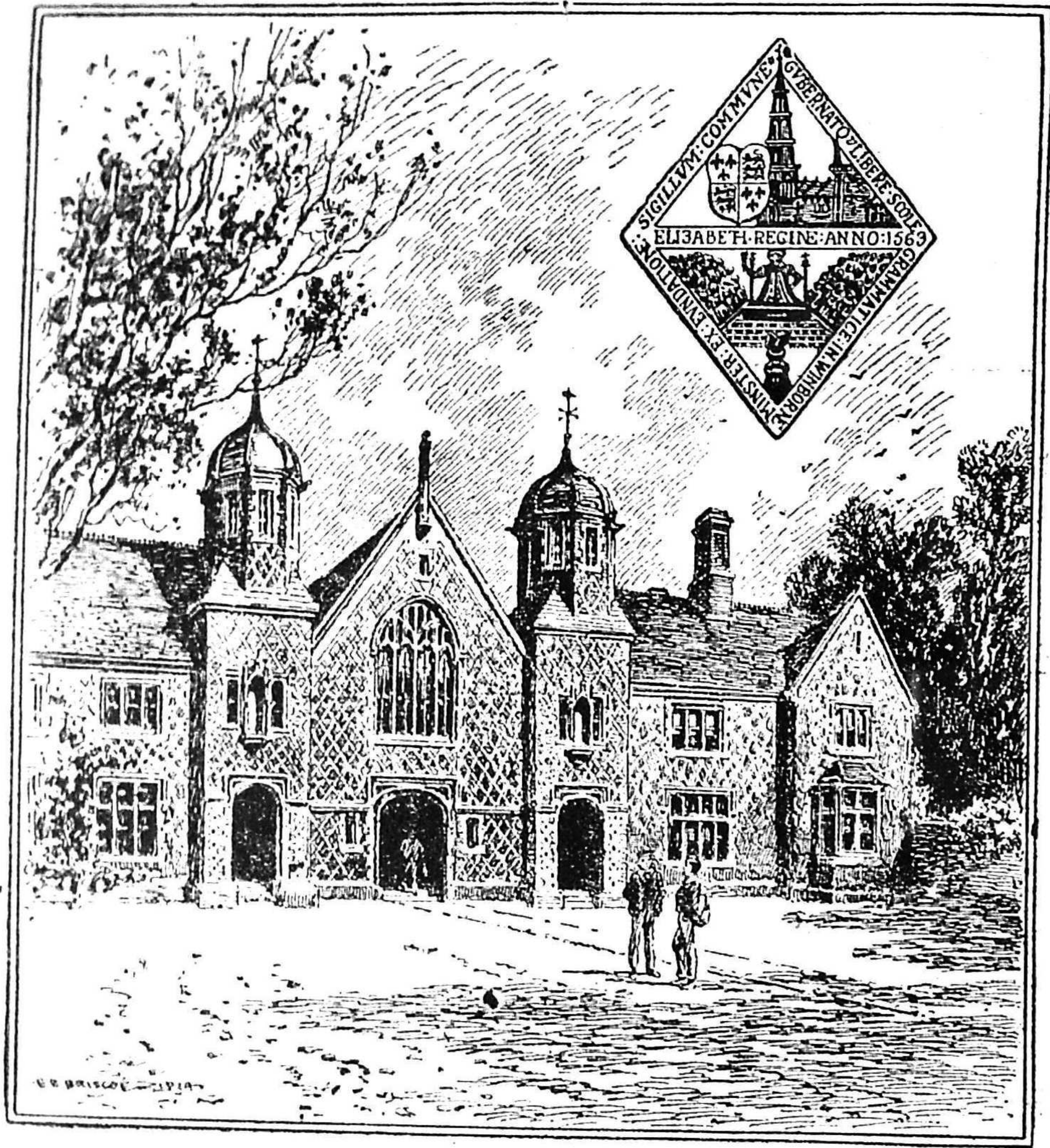


IT WAS A DOG'S CHANCE!

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

No. 21. WIMBORNE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.



The fourth oldest school in England, Wimborne Grammar School was founded by Lady Margaret Beaufort in 1509, during the reign of Henry VII, and was refounded by Queen Elizabeth in 1563. The present buildings were erected in 1849.

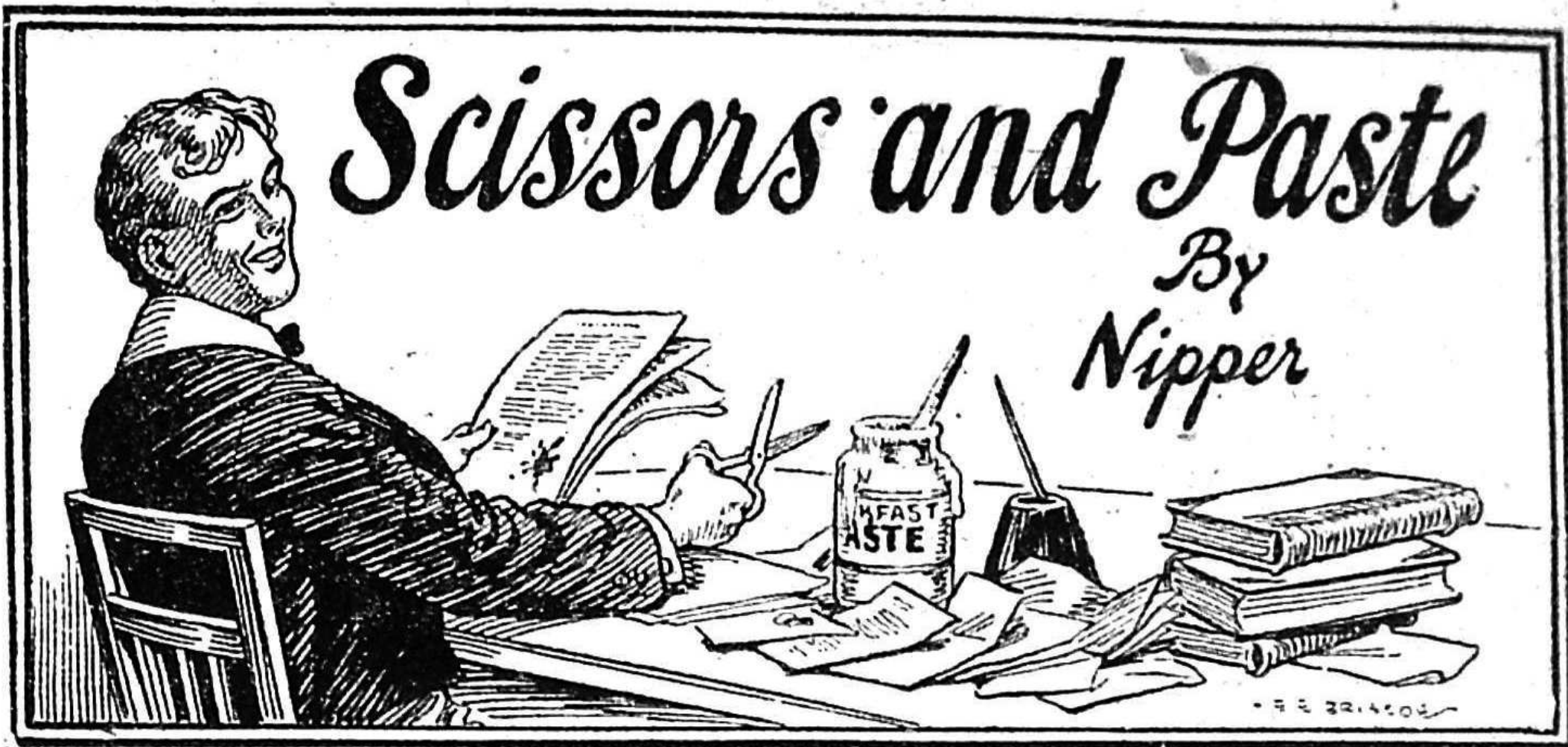
Here were educated the sons of gentry in the neighbourhood, and many scholars were sent to this school from some distance around.

Accommodation is provided for 200 boys.

The lowest form is the Preparatory, and the highest is the Sixth Form.

For the above, I am indebted to a reader, to whom I have sent the original drawing of the school duly signed by Mr. Briscoe.

(If your school has not appeared in this series, send photo, badge, and details of its history to the Editor, The Nelson Lee Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4., and the original sketch will be presented to you.)



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

My dear Chums,

You will observe that this issue is dated April 5, and that upon this day there will be considerable excitement on the banks of Old Father Thames between Putney and Mortlake, when the Dark Blues and Light Blues will be pulling with might and main for supremacy in that most popular of Varsity events—the Boat Race. Being on a Saturday, as it generally is, I expect a good few St. Frank's fellows will contrive to be there. I do not know which is the favourite eight at St. Frank's. Usually, both Varsities are fairly evenly represented.

OUR BOAT RACE STORY.

I had intended originally to make this a special Boat Race number, but instead I am giving you one of the most extraordinary Boat Race stories which has ever appeared in print. The author, Archie Glenthorne, worked like a Trojan to get it done in time for publication. So I trust you will make some allowances for a few discrepancies. It is strange that no one thought of writing something appropriate for Boat Race week. As a consequence, I had to persuade Archie to do this special story for the occasion at very short notice. If he had had a month to do it in, I don't think he could have written it better.

THE "AYES" HAVE IT!

You will remember quite recently I asked you to let me know whether you would like Mr. Clifford's "Pow-wows" to continue or not. Quite a number of chums wrote to me about it, and I am glad to say that those in favour of continuing the articles com-

pletely swept the board. I shall therefore keep Mr. Clifford exercising his pen in the interests of my numerous sporting chums for a little while longer. This week, however, I have had to hold over his article to make room for Archie's story, the other contributions having already gone to press.

FATTY LITTLE AND THE MAG.

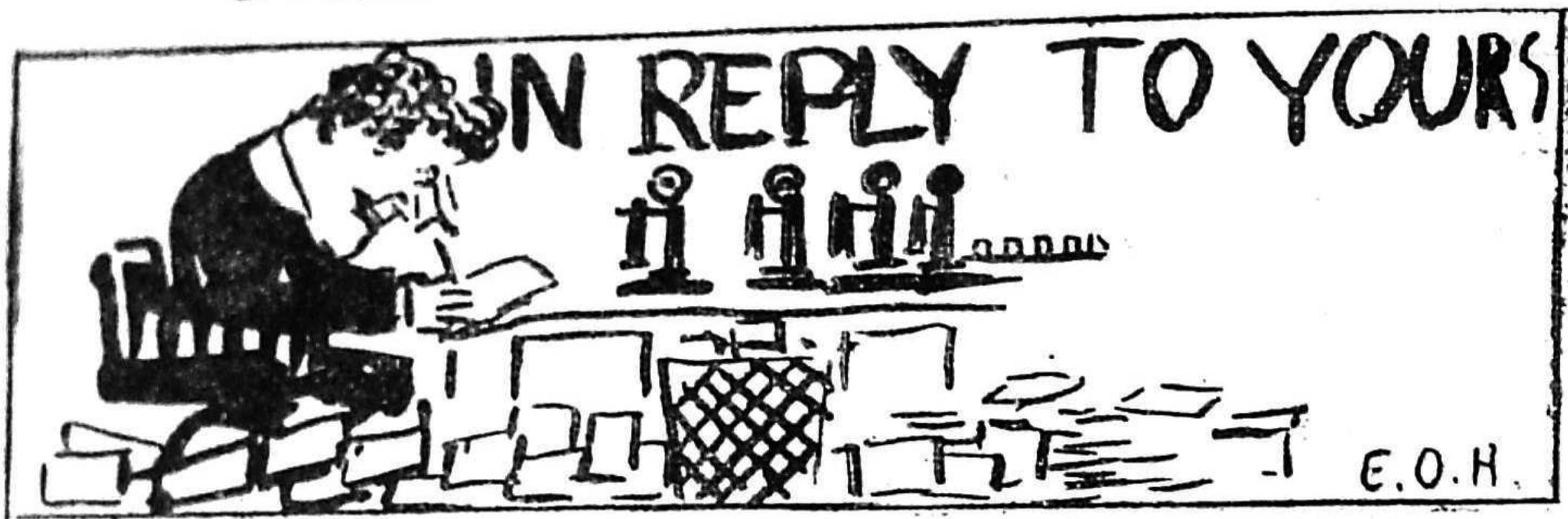
That Shrove Tuesday should have passed without an article from our food expert on the subject of pancakes is what I would call a waste of a good opportunity. Had he forgotten to celebrate this important day, there might have been an excuse. Anyway, he has tried to make amends this week, and he has promised not to forget to give us something appetising for Easter.

WHICH REMINDS ME.

That Easter will soon be upon us, and that unless Cyclone Smith succeeds in cicing down the school, I mean to bring out an extra special Easter number of the Mag. You will notice that I have purposely left out any reference to the War of the Remove in this journal. The fellows are only human after all, and do not want to be reminded of their present troubles. The appearance of the Mag. every week cheers them up more than anything. Of course, I have had some difficulty in smuggling out the copy to the printers at Bannington, but in spite of all the stirring times through which we have passed, I am thankful to say that the Old Paper has come out as regular as clockwork every Wednesday.

A novel feature next week will be an appreciative article on "The Young Master," by Phipps.

Your sincere chum,
NIPPER.



Correspondence Answered by Uncle Edward

NEEDY MONK.—No, white rabbits are not good to eat, and I should advise you to drop all idea of slaughtering one of your pets for the purpose of providing a tasty tea. This sort of thing is not done in the best circles.

ENTHUSIAST.—Your bitter complaint about the length of the Trackett Grim stories is timely. Of course, you can only mean that you consider them too short. I will do my utmost to convince the Editor that there is an ever-growing demand for more Trackett Grim, and still more. The author of these celebrated stories is quite ready to fill the entire magazine with the adventures of Trackett Grim—and no innovation could be more welcome than this one. I will use my influence to bring about this highly desirable improvement. But this is a world of prejudices, and I can promise nothing definite.

FATTY LITTLE.—How should I know how to make haggis? Don't be silly. Haggis is one of the mysteries of Scotland, and is popularly supposed to be a kind of pudding, mainly made with short-bread, oats, Scotch kipper, and Loch Fyne haddock. Anyhow, all ingredients are Scotch.

TROUBLED.—Your hands must be in a rotten condition. The best way to remove warts is to get half a brick, and rub the warts down until they are flush with the rest of the skin. If they appear again after this treatment, the best way is to use a heavy file.

ARCHIE GLENTHORNE.—Your desire to see a fashion column in the Mag. is about the pottiest idea I've ever heard of. Don't waste my valuable time with such piffle.

TIMOTHY TUCKER.—You want me to announce that you'll be giving a lecture on Communism and Soviet Rule in the small Lecture Hall next Tuesday evening at seven-thirty? I don't agree with this sort of thing at all, and I absolutely refuse to give your notice

the slightest publicity. I wouldn't demean myself by repeating it.

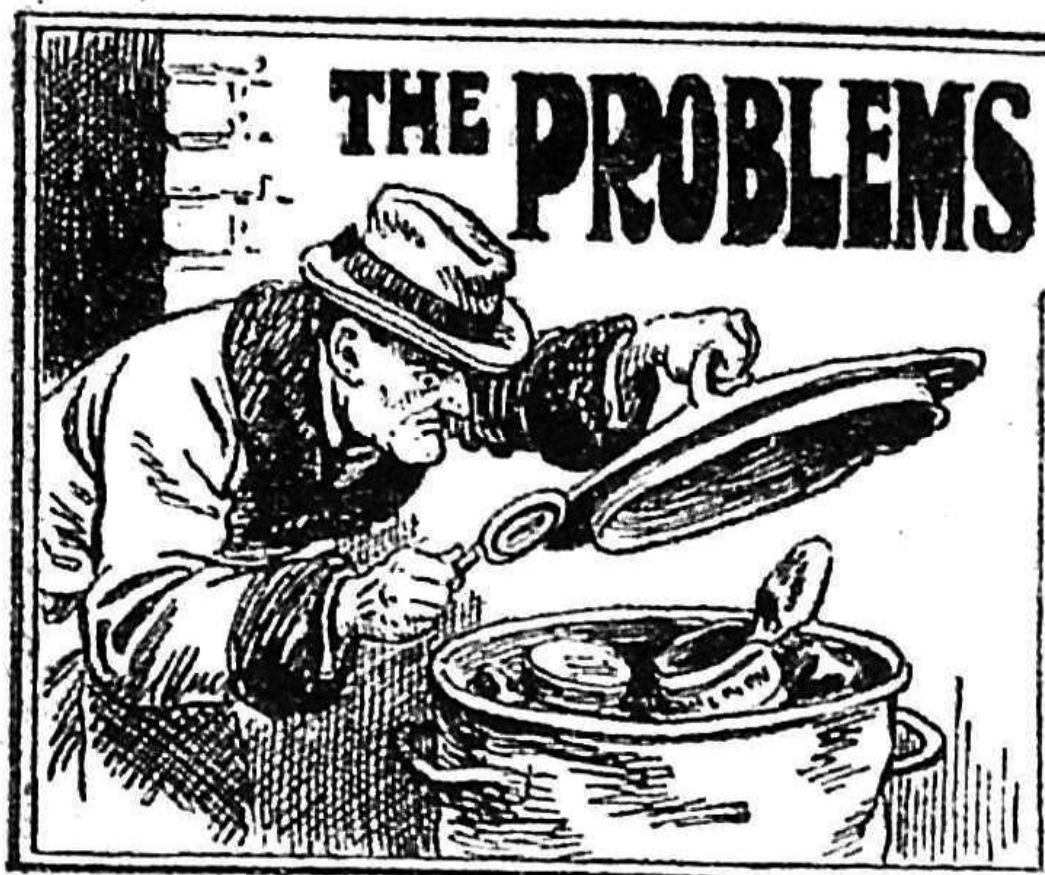
REGINALD P.—Your curiosity concerning my identity is flattering. I prefer to remain incog., and your somewhat wild guess that I am a native of Bedlam strikes me as being funny. Bedlam, I assume, is a district of Bedfordshire, and I was never there in my life.

W—Y H—D—H.—If you think you can spoof me with a signature like this, you're a young ass. I know well enough that you're my minor, and I absolutely refuse to tell you my real identity. See reply immediately above.

ANXIOUS.—You've been careless, of course. I can quite understand your desire to repair the six-inch tear in your jacket without taking it to the matron. As it happens, I can help you. Don't attempt to mend the jacket with a needle and thread. The best way is to unfasten the lining, and then get a stout piece of canvas. Smother this with liquid glue, and press it firmly upon the torn portion. Leave it for twenty-four hours, and the hole will then be effectively repaired. This method has many advantages over the old-fashioned way of darning.

FULLWOOD.—As I'm not on speaking terms with you, I won't answer your letter at all. In any case your inquiry about shoelaces is a dotty one. Everybody knows that shoelaces look rotten when they're tied into half a dozen knots, and I shouldn't advise you to try it. You can easily buy a pair of new laces for the same price as a packet of cigarettes.

OWEN MINOR.—You would like to see a stirring adventure serial in the Mag.? I am not sure that I can promise you this, but a wonderful story, called "In Quest of Gold," by one of our most brilliant contributors, will soon be appearing in book form at the price of seven-and-sixpence. You cannot do better than save your money for this great treat.



THE PROBLEMS OF TRACKETT GRIM

DARING DAVID, THE BAG-SNATCHER DEMON!

Being the Amazing Adventures of Trackett Grim, the Wonder Detective.

BY

ED. O. HANDFORTH.

NEWS OF DARING DAVID'S LATEST COUP.

SPLINTER looked at Trackett Grim with his sharp, brightly glowing eyes. "This is the limit, sir!" he exclaimed. "Something will have to be done!"

The famous criminal detective nodded.

"You are right, my boy—something indeed will have to be done!" he agreed, pacing up and down his consulting-room at Baker's Inn Road with short, quick strides. "It is not only the limit, but the extreme outside edge of it! Three distinguished clients have visited me within the last hour—all of them victims of the same dastardly scoundrel! But wait! Once I get on the track of Daring David his bag-snatching career will come to an abrupt termination—"

"Great Scott!" interrupted Splinter, as a knock sounded on the door. "Another of 'em!"

He dashed down the stairs to the hall door as he spoke, and presently returned with a large lady. She was looking tremendously agitated, and seemed to be on the point of tears as she sank down into a chair.

"Mr. Grim—Mr. Grim, I have been robbed!" she wailed piteously, fumbling in her pocket and producing a card-case. "I am Lady Bulkywad, and I have been the victim of some atrocious robberies!"

Trackett Grim nodded as he took the card.

"Ah, yes!" he murmured. "You have, I presume, had your hand-bag snatched?"

Lady Bulkywad looked at him in surprise.

"This is amazing, Mr. Grim—simply astounding!" she exclaimed. "I had no idea that your wonderful powers were so startling! How—how did you know that my hand-bag had been pinched?"

Trackett Grim smiled.

"It was very simple, my dear lady—extremely childish, in fact!" he replied. "Scotland Yard has informed me that Daring David, the Bag-Snatcher Demon, is

more than usually active to-day, and I observe that you are at this moment clutching the handle of a bag! I infer that the remainder of the article has been severed!"

Lady Bulkywad nodded.

"Yes, Mr. Grim—you are right!" she exclaimed. "This is the third bag which has been snatched from me to-day! The third—and all of them stolen near the same spot in Regent Street! The first two were mere trivialities, as they contained nothing but a few hundred pounds! But unless you recover my third bag, Mr. Grim, I am a ruined woman!"

Trackett Grim started back.

"Good heavens above!" he exclaimed huskily. "What—what did the bag contain?"

"The whole of the Bulkywad jewels!" said Lady Bulkywad, in a hoarse whisper. "They are the priceless heirloom of the family. Mr. Grim, and they are worth untold wealth! Recover them for me, and I will reward you with any sum you like to name!"

Trackett Grim held up his hand, and nodded.

"They are as good as recovered already, Lady Bulkywad!" he said, in his cold, even tones. "You shall have them to-night, at seven-thirty! I have just thought of a terrific wheeze to capture Daring David—and when I give my word of honour I never fail!"

TRACKETT GRIM SETS THE BAIT!

Twenty minutes later an elderly female, of uncertain age and richly dressed, was sauntering along Regent Street. She was apparently absorbed in the various shop-window displays, and seemed to pay no attention to the fact that her bulging hand-bag—slung carelessly upon her arm—was gaping open. Inside could be seen a fat purse, and a little sheaf of bank-notes. But appearances are sometimes deceptive. The elderly female was none other than

Trackett Grim, wearing one of his masterly and elaborate disguises. So complete was the change in the famous criminal detective's appearance that nobody on earth could possibly suspect his identity, and he strolled along looking perfectly contented and easy in mind.

But Trackett Grim's tremendous brain was working all the time, and his gimlet-like eyes were darting to and fro ceaselessly. He was waiting for the moment of action, and he knew that it would not be long delayed.

Splinter, his faithful assistant, was near at hand—keeping his master under observation, and ready to dash to his aid without a second's notice.

For several minutes Trackett Grim continued to saunter up and down the fashionable thoroughfare, and then his muscles stiffened with tense expectancy. Somebody was tampering with his hand-bag—somebody was actually cutting it from its handle!

But Trackett Grim remained inactive and immobile; he showed no sign whatever that he was aware of the thief's activities. For this master detective had a scheme in hand—a terrific scheme which he intended to use for the capturing of Daring David.

Trackett Grim smiled to himself as he observed the bag-snatcher hurry away. His trap was operating well, and he chuckled to himself as he felt a slight pull upon his coat pocket.

The pull was caused by a thin black thread—one end of which was attached to the hand-bag, while the other was wound round a wooden reel in his pocket! By means of the thread Trackett Grim intended to trace the thief to his lair, and he knew that his scheme could not fail. Every one of the detective's ideas was infallible, for his mighty brain could not evolve a dud scheme.

Trackett Grim allowed the bag-snatcher to run for twenty yards before following him. Then he turned, and set off after the thief—taking care that the thread should not become entangled in the legs of the various pedestrians who thronged the pavement. Such a task was simple to the world's cleverest criminologist, and within two minutes he found himself speeding along an evil-smelling alley—up which the nefarious criminal was sprinting.

Splinter, meanwhile, was close behind—alert and eager.

For another thirty yards the chase continued, and then the crook dived into a dingy doorway, and disappeared. But Trackett Grim was upon his heels in a trice. He entered the doorway practically at the same second as his quarry, and faced him grimly.

"Hands up, Daring Dave!" he rasped, in a voice thundering with triumph. "I have caught you in the very act! You need not deny your guilt—for you are surrounded by hundreds of purloined handbags!"

Daring Dave looked at the huge stack of bags behind him, and nodded.

"Trackett Grim!" he bellowed angrily. "By George! You have tracked me down where all the coppers in London have failed! But you shall not arrest me! I defy you—"

As he spoke the miscreant pressed a button on the wall, and instantly a trap-door in the floor opened under his feet, and



Instantly a trap-door in the floor opened under his feet, and allowed Daring Dave to vanish from sight.

allowed Daring Dave to vanish from sight.

Trackett Grim staggered back, and uttered a bellow of fury.

"Great pip!" he roared. "Do you think you can escape me now, you blithering imbecile? No—no! I will follow you to the ends of the earth, if necessary!"

The trapdoor had sprung back into place—but Grim stepped upon it without hesitation, and pressed the button. Instantly he commenced hurtling downwards into space, and in another second he found himself submerged in black, slimy water!

THE GREAT CRIMINAL DETECTIVE'S CAPTURE.

Trackett Grim found himself in a sewer, and he was compelled to swim for half an hour in the wake of his desperate quarry. Great rats brushed past his face as he swam along—but Trackett Grim cared nothing for these; he was out to get his man.

Suddenly he saw Daring David commence climbing a ladder leading to a man-hole, and before the criminal had mounted a dozen rungs Trackett Grim was after him. But Daring David was desperate, and he streaked up the ladder with lightning-like rapidity. On reaching the top he flung off the cover, and projected his head into the open air.

The man-hole opened into the very centre of Trafalgar Square—but this did not daunt the fugitive. He looked round quickly, saw that a cab was just about to cross the aperture, and the next moment he was grasping the axle of the cab as it passed overhead.

Daring David was just congratulating himself upon his astuteness when he received a rude shock. For he felt Trackett Grim's vice-like grip upon his ankles, and he knew that he was lost.

Two seconds later the Demon bag-snatcher was safely grasped by Trackett Grim and Splinter—who rushed up breathlessly at that moment, having sprinted through the traffic to his master's side. Handcuffs were snapped upon the criminal's wrists, and he was led across Trafalgar Square to Scotland Yard. And after he was safely locked up, Sir Coppen Sharp—the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department—accompanied the famous criminal



Daring Dave was just congratulating himself on his astuteness when he received a rude shock. For he felt Trackett Grim's vice-like grip upon his ankles, and he knew that he was lost.

detective to the alley in Regent Street. Here they found two constables on guard—placed there by Splinter.

They also found two thousand, three hundred and eighty-nine hand-bags—the proceeds of a week's work by Daring David. But, thanks to Trackett Grim's marvellous methods, he was now under lock and key—booked for at least fifty years' penal servitude.

Stolen property from the hand-bags was found in the house amounting to millions of pounds, and this was eventually returned to the owners, who rewarded Trackett Grim handsomely. Lady Bulkywad received her heirloom back promptly at the agreed time, and she gave Trackett Grim a cheque which made even him stagger with surprise.

But he was tremendously gratified—not on account of the cheque; but because his marvellous brain had been successful in the apprehension of the menace of the metropolis—Daring David, the Bag-Snatcher Demon!

Once again Trackett Grim had won.

THE END.

NEXT WEEK!

The Further Amazing Adventures of Trackett Grim in:—

HUNCHBACK HIRAM, THE HOUNDSDITCH HUSTLER!



E. Sopp's Fables

By
Edgar Sopp of the Fifth

No. 18. The Fable of the Fag's Revenge.

ONCE upon a time there lived a Senior who was known throughout the land as a Clothes Fiend. He chanced to be a Prefect, and his name was Frinton. In most respects he was Perfectly Sane, but when it came to a matter of Clothing, this Unhappy Fellow was

AN ABSOLUTE MANIAC.

And he was Terribly Particular, and always insisted that his various suits should be hung upon their hangers Neatly and Tidily. And he even employed a Fag especially for this Purpose. And it came to pass that one Fateful Day his previous Fag having failed in his duties, he enlisted the services of one Willy, a certain Leading Light of the Third Form, and

A CHEEKY YOUNG BOUNDER, TO BOOT.

And Willy entered upon his new duties disgustedly, saying unto his Bosom Chums that the whole thing was Dotty, and that fellows like Frinton were Far Safer locked away in a Home. However, being only a Fag, it was not his to question, but His to Do. And he Did. In fact, he did all sorts of things. And Frinton was angry, and

WAXED MIGHTILY WRATH.

And, behold, there was reason for this anger. For, chancing to Enter his Bedroom on the first day that Willy Took up his Duties, Frinton found that his Various Suits were in a condition that he could only describe as Ghastly. Instead of being upon their Hangers, they were in a Disordered Heap on the floor of the Cupboard, and the creases in them caused Frinton to raise his Face to the heavens,

GNASHING HIS TEETH.

And he wandered forth, and found Willy, and chastised him unmercifully, demanding to know the reason for his Crime. And Willy replied, saying that he had been Ordered to place the Clothes in the cupboard, and he had Done So. And Frinton thereupon warned him, instructing him to

place All Clothes upon their Hangers in Neat Order, and to tidy up Regularly. Furthermore, if ever he found any of Frinton's clothes lying about—no matter where they might be—he was to take them at once and treat them

AS THOUGH HE LOVED THEM.

And Willy, being a Youth of much discretion, promised to Obey Orders to the letter. He cared for Chastisements no more than Other Youths, and thereafter he was careful in the extreme. And it came to pass, one Glorious Day of sunshine, that Willy happened to be upon the River Bank

IN A SECLUDED SPOT.

And he stood gazing, wondering muchly. For, behold, he saw the sturdy form of Frinton Disporting himself in the Crystal Water. And, lo, upon the River Bank lay a neat pile of clothing. And the Fag reminded himself of his Strict Orders, and he Lost no Time in obeying. He had been told to take Frinton's clothes, no matter where they may be, and return them to their cupboard, neatly arranged upon their Respective Hangers. And Willy was

A CONSCIENTIOUS WORKER.

And he seized the clothes, knowing full well that he was doing the Right Thing. For was he not obeying orders? And was he not, forsooth, taking a somewhat happy revenge? And it came to pass that Frinton grew tired of the Cooling Water, and he emerged upon the bank, attired in the clothing that Nature had bestowed upon him. In other words, the unfortunate prefect was

ABSOLUTELY DESTITUTE OF A RAG.

And he had heart failure and Five Fits all within the space of Ten Seconds. For his clothing was not where it should have been, and No Sign of it remained. And it came to pass that Frinton had the Wind Up considerably. For, lo, he was upon the Open Countryside, and he was

as Scantily Attired as a new laid egg. And his horror was tremendous when he espied

FIGURES IN THE DISTANCE.

And he cried aloud with wrath against the miscreant who had robbed him of that which made him Respectable. But his luck was not entirely out, for he Chanced Upon an ancient sack, and into this he rapidly dived, the base of the sack being so full of holes that he had No Difficulty in finding spaces for his Arms and for his Head. Thus he was quite decent once more, although he looked

A SCARECROW.

And he ran like mad for home, hoping Against Hope that he would meet with no wayfarers in the Wilderness. But he had hardly traversed a hundred yards before he espied two Young Ladies strolling gracefully over the Sward. And Frinton turned himself into a rabbit and fled. And so, by devious routes and divers subterfuges, he at length reached the Triangle. And, behold, he came Face to Face with

THE HEAD HIMSELF.

And the Head glared with anger, and Demanded the Truth. But Frinton again fled, fearful of the Public Gaze. With relief, he reached his own bed-room. And he dived to his cupboard to Reach Down a suit. And his Amazement was staggering when he found that the Missing Clothes were in front of his eyes. They had been Lost, and they were Found. And Frinton Became Possessed of

A GREAT SUSPICION.

And he attired himself quickly, and Sallied Forth. And in the Lobby he came across Willy, who promptly smiled, and explained that he had Done his Duty. He had found the Clothes lying about, and he had Carried Out orders by returning them to their appointed place. And Frinton was so dumbfounded that he did not even trouble to Thrash this Young Bounder. Instead, he dismissed him from his sight for ever. And Willy departed, feeling that his Day's Work had earned a Fitting Reward.

MORAL: WHEN BATHING, ALWAYS PUT YOUR CLOTHES UNDER LOCK AND KEY!

E. Sopp is writing another of his popular fables for next week's Mag.

ONE - MINUTE SAVOURIES

Tea-time Recipes

By FATTY LITTLE

EGG-AND-SARDINE OMELETTE.

It frequently occurs that a few sardines are left over in the tin, and these can be utilised in a very profitable way by mashing them up to a pulp, and then adding one egg. Take a handful of flour, and mix thoroughly. Form into a thick batter, pour into a frying-pan, or a tin lid, and fry over a brisk fire. A little oil is advisable, and at a pinch, bicycle oil will serve. If the sardines are rather squiffy it won't matter, because the flavour is somewhat lost in the cooking, and this omelette is even excellent if the egg itself happens to be on the turn.

WELSH RAREBIT.

This is not a meat dish, as might be supposed, but mainly composed of cheese. Take half a pound of cheddar cheese and slice very finely. Don't trouble to cut off the rind, as this will all melt, and you won't know the difference. And if the cheese happens to be maggoty—and all good cheeses are in this condition—it won't matter, as everything cooks the same. Place the sliced cheese in a saucepan, add half a tin of condensed milk and two ounces of baking powder. Mix thoroughly with half a pint of water, and boil over a slow fire. Add pepper, salt, and mustard, and any odds and ends of jam and marmalade that may be available. Cook until thoroughly dissolved, pour over slices of hot toast, and serve.

MEAT PASTE CUTLETS.

A good way to use up odd scraps of potted meat is to mix them with water, make a smooth paste, and then add bits of stale bread or biscuit until nicely firm. Season with curry powder, mustard, and, if possible a sardine or two. Add one egg, and then form into cutlets. Fry over a hot fire until nicely brown. At a pinch, they can be fixed on the end of a ruler and toasted.

The Battle as it were of the Blues!

*Jolly old
Boat Race
Story . .*

By Archie Glenthorne

EDITOR'S NOTE.—So successful was Archie's last effort at a sporting yarn that I have asked him to do me a complete story of the Boat Race.

"**W**HAT-HO!" cried Tommy Flawless. "What-ho, old bean!" "Cheerio, and all that rot!" observed his brother Bertie.

I mean to say, Tommy and Bertie were brothers. They were the two twin sons of Mr. and Mrs. Flawless. Tommy was exactly twenty-one, by the old church clock, as you might say.



Tommy had splashed up to Oxford and Bertie had trickled along to Cambridge.

And Bertie was twenty-two—one. I mean to say, he was twenty-one, too. They were the same age, as it were. Twins, as I remarked before.

But that wasn't all, if you will pardon me for mentioning it.

There were other things; lots of other things; bags full of other things, in a manner of speaking.

For the priceless old beans had gone to different public schools. And after that, Tommy had splashed up to Oxford, and Bertie had trickled along to Cambridge.

Now both the jolly old chappies were utter sportsmen. I mean, they swam and rowed and wrestled and fished, and all that kind of strenuous stuff.

Not all at once, but separately. One at a time, so to speak. And now they were up at the Varsities, and both had been given their Blues, and what not.

And it came to this, if I may put it in a nutshell. Tommy was stroking the Oxford boat, and Bertie was stroking Cambridge.

That's what I've been trying to get at, to phrase it vulgarly. That's the old idea, if you follow me.

And then Mr. Flawless had blown in. I mean to say, he had trotted along to Putney, and all that. And he was now being wafted towards their hotel, if I can put it so, in his Rolls-Royce.

He dashed into the jolly old hotel and asked for the twins. They were in the lounge, and simply hustled up to him like anything.

"Boys, you naughty lads!" cried Mr. Flawless. "I have come here to offer you a priceless old wager."

"Cough it up, dad!" cried Bertie.

"Trot it out, papp!" added the other twin.

"Absolutely!" agreed the old fruit. "To put it plainly, and all that rot, it is about my will. Briefly, it amounts to this. I shall leave all my property, and all that

piffle, to the one of you who strokes the winning boat to Mortlake.

"Gadzooks!" ejaculated Tommy.

"Oddsfish!" hooted Bertie.

That was all they said. But they were brainy lads. I mean, they cottoned on to the jolly old chap's wheeze. Who ever stroked the winning boat would get the oof, so to speak. In other words, if I may put it so, the winner of the Boat Race would win a fortune.

My jolly old hat! Wasn't that a topping little bundle of excitement? An assorted bunch of the best coloured blooms, so to speak. A basket of hand-picked peaches at two bob each, if you follow me. Absolutely!

So on the morning of the great race they met in the lobby of their hotel and wished each other luck, and what not. They were utter sportsmen. Spiffers, as you might observe. Two little nuggets of gold, and all that kind of stuff.

But I must push ahead with the Boat Race.

The two teams turned out punctually to time, and the referee jumped into his boat, his whistle in one hand and his watch in the other.

Putney had never been so full of people, and all that. A million faces or thereabouts lined the bridge. And there were even more along the banks. It was a mighty concourse. I should say so.

Tommy and Bertie tossed for ends amidst a deathlike hush.

"Heads!" cried Tommy.

"Tails!" yelled Bertie.

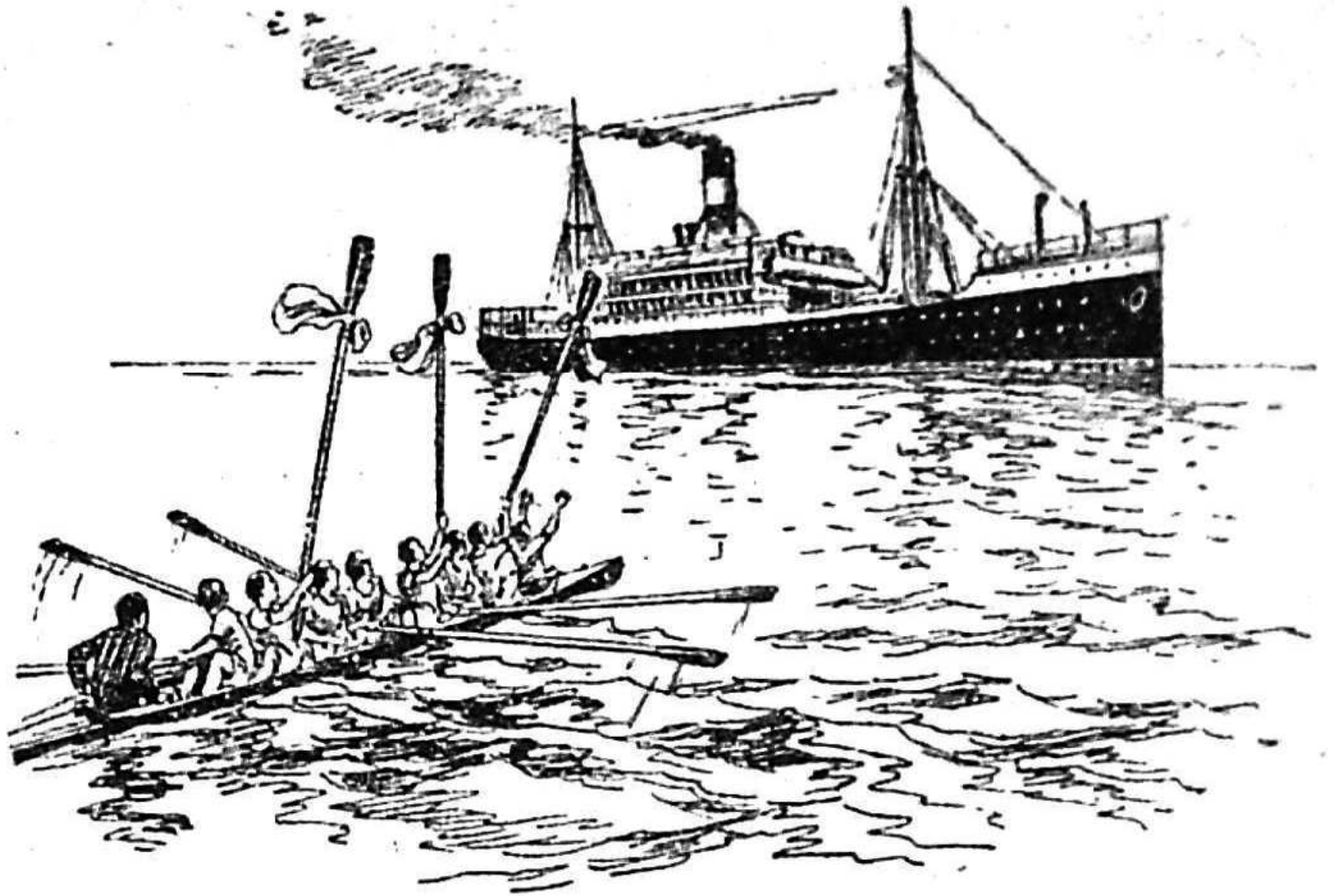
But both the old lads were wrong. The coin fell with loud splashes into the river.

"Foul!" hooted the crowd, and the brothers tossed again.

This time Tommy won, and he chose the Surrey side, as it might be. So Bertie had to choose the Middlesex side, as it were. At that moment the starter pressed his lever, and the tapes flew up.

"They're off!" shouted the crowd, and all the other people.

Oxford were first off the mark. Their forwards pulled their oars nobly. They were ably supported by their halves. And in the stern their backs and goalie pulled like madmen.



Cambridge were rescued by a French steamer in the Bay of Biscay.

But Cambridge were quite as good. Their wing men were very speedy, their centre-half feathered like a veteran, and their cox was as safe as the bank.

It was a glorious race, an all that stuff!

Up and down the river the two crews dashed. Harrod's warehouse was soon passed, and Hammersmith Bridge was reached in a few seconds. Millions more people stood on the bridge. They were packed like sardines as they waited for the crews to shoot the bridge.

Bang! Bang!

Almost simultaneously, as it were, the two shots rang out. The bridge swayed under the fierce onslaught, but did not give way. Women fainted, and strong men burst into floods of the good old wetness. Tears, so to speak.

Now the two boats were curving the long bend past the reservoirs. Neck and neck they raced. Tommy and Bertie rowed twice as fast as any other men in the boats.

But when Barnes Bridge came in sight the two eights were still dead level!

It was magnif!

I mean, it was wond.

It was absolutely splend.

Through the roars of applause the two boats dashed under the bridge side by side. They were in the straight for home. Tommy and Bertie urged their teams on with voice and whip.

And now there were only twenty yards to go. The winning-post loomed ahead, as they say. Twenty yards, and the first home would get the victory. Absolutely!

With a last burst of speed Tommy and

his men touched eighty-seven a minute. But Bertie responded like a priceless old bean he was. They touched eighty-seven, too!

And at that very moment the winning-post was reached. Both crews flashed past dead level. It was a jolly old tie!

And then Tommy leant over the rail of his boat.

"Never say tie!" he shouted. "We're not done yet. We'll race you back again. I'll win that wager yet!"

Without replying, Bertie nodded, and turned his boat round. The next second Oxford and Cambridge were rowing back towards Putney.

How the jolly old lads rowed!

Without pausing even for breath, they flashed up the river. Past Barnes and Hammersmith. Then they were back at Putney, and they were still level.

The spectators had left Putney, but when they heard the splash of oars they came dashing back. But they got a most frightful surprise, and all that.

For the crews never stopped rowing. Level, they passed under the bridge, and down the river towards London.

The spectators had never seen anything like it. In a moment the crews were out of view. They went past Westminster and Wapping, and that sort of place. And they passed Limehouse and the Isle of Dogs, and reached Southend.

By then the jolly old darkness had fallen, and the two boats, still level, passed out of the mouth of the Thames into the North Sea.

And that, so to speak, was that. Next afternoon Oxford were picked up off the Scilly Islands. And about the same time Cambridge were rescued by a French steamer in the Bay of Biscay. No one ever knew who had won. So Mr. Flawless had a jolly old brainwave. He refused to make a will at all. I mean to say, he was a brainy old boy. So Tommy and Bertie were quite happy, and all that sort of stuff. What-ho!

THE END.

FATTY LITTLE'S DIARY

(Continued from last week)

2.15 p.m.—I have been rather out of funds lately and have had to run up a bill at the tuckshop. And now Mrs. Hake actually refused to give me any more tick. At once an awful sinking feeling took hold of me as I realised another period of starvation was upon me. I asked one or two chaps to lend me a little cash, but they were all too mean. So I went back to my study and groaned aloud.

2.35 p.m.—I have just remembered something. My hunger the last ten minutes has been something awful. I feel as though I had eaten nothing all day. There are afternoon lessons to come. How can I possibly live through the terrible hours of privation. But what about the grub that Mr. Crowell confiscated so meanly?

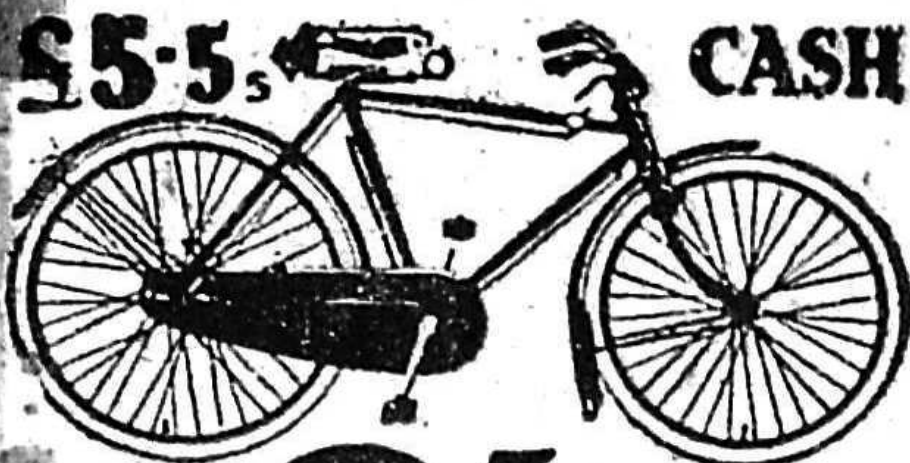
I suddenly remembered that, and made up my mind to see if I could get into the Form-room

and get it back. After all, it wasn't stealing, for it was my own tuck. The door was unlocked, and I crept up to Mr. C's desk. It was open, too. With a great gasp of relief, I seized the chocolate biscuits and dashed back to my study. I was so hungry I simply crammed the stuff into my mouth. Hunger drives a chap desperate.

5 p.m.—The afternoon is over at last, and it is time for tea. Mr. C. never remembered about my grub. But it was awful, having to sit through lessons with never a bite nor sup. But at last the tea-bell has rung. I am so faint I can scarcely crawl into my study for tea.

6.30 p.m.—No food! I have not had a crumb since tea. And then I only had a loaf of bread, some sardines, some potted meat, and some jam, and a few cakes. How can I ever exist till supper? I am getting quite thin with all this starving.

8 p.m.—Supper is over. I shall get no more food till to-morrow, for our study is absolutely bare. How terrible it is to think of the long hours of darkness! Already my inside is as empty as a drum. I do not know how I can face the terrors of the dormitory.



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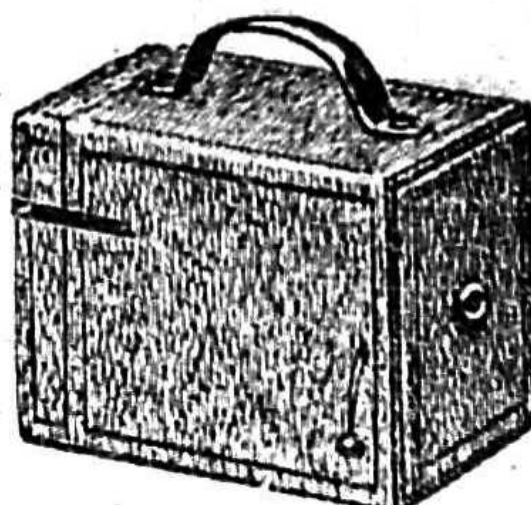
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