

THE NELSON LEE

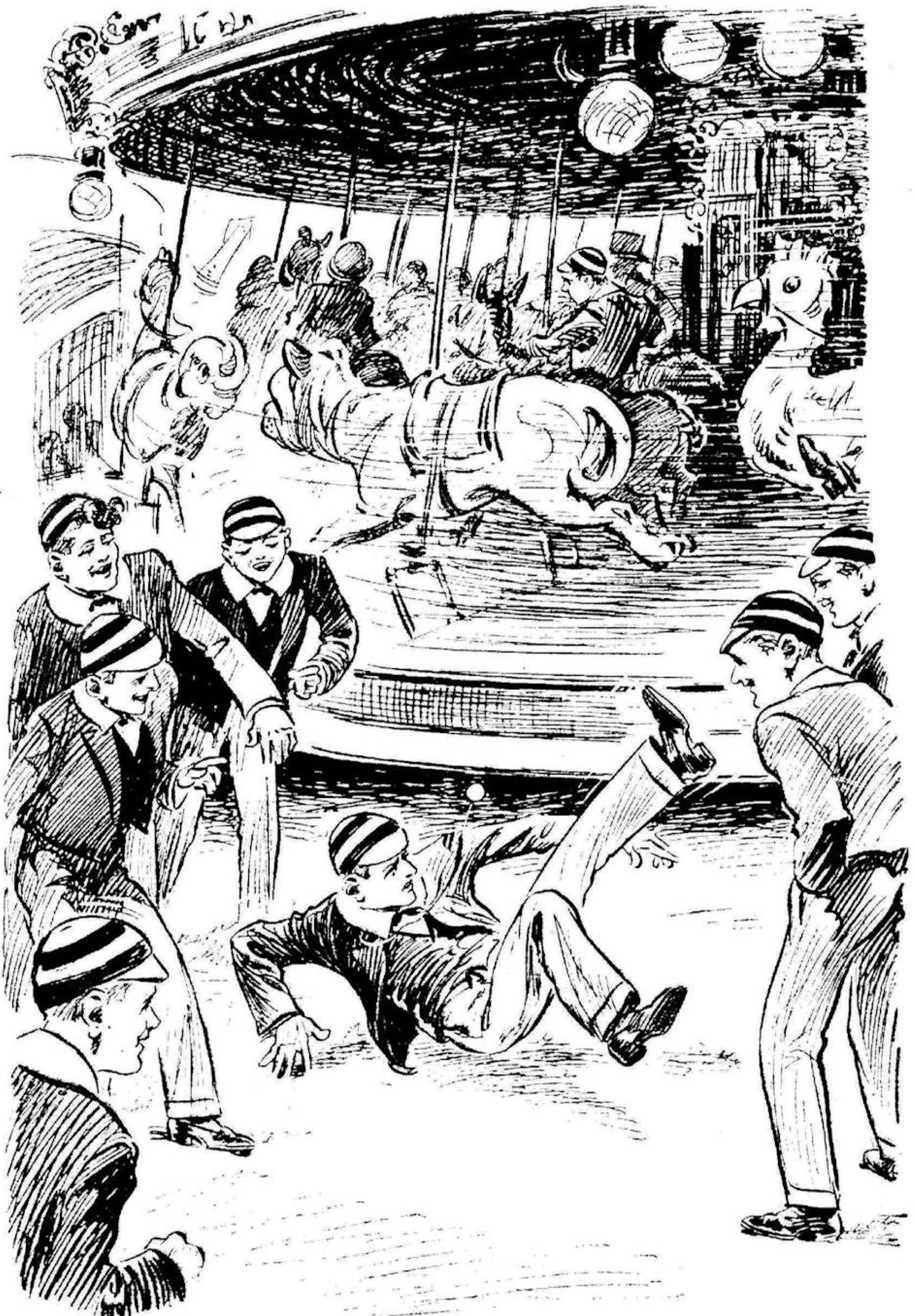
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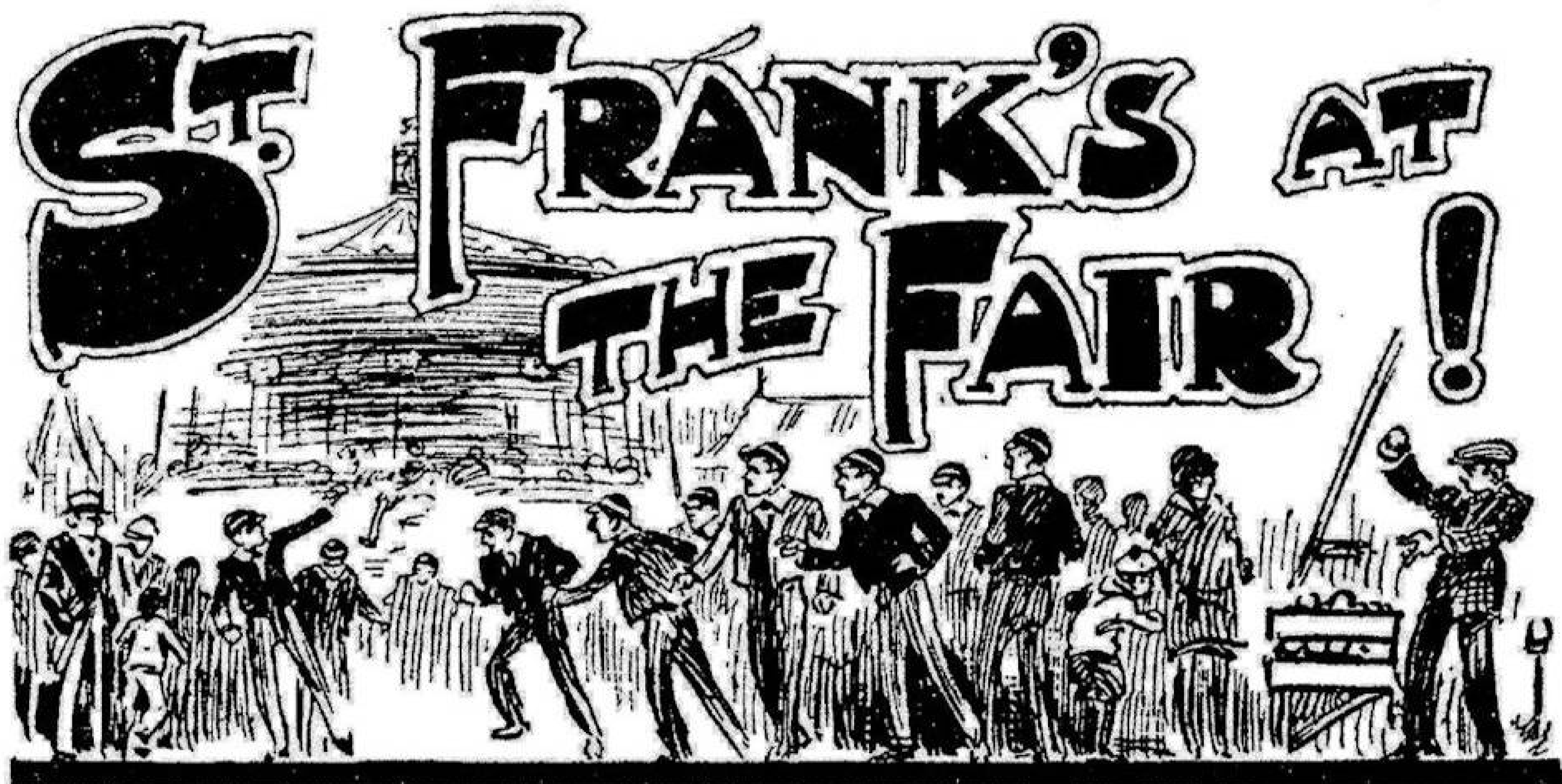


ST. FRANK'S AT THE FAIR!

A grand special Easter-holiday yarn, featuring the Boys of St. Frank's and Lord Dorrimore.



The laughter of the juniors caused Archie Glenthorne to start; indeed, he started so violently that he slipped off his seat, fell backwards, and came hurtling off the roundabout, to land in a disordered heap at the feet of Handforth & Co.

*All the Fun of the Fair!**Handy and Archie in Love!*

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

When Lord Dorrimore suggests that a party of St. Frank's juniors should spend Easter Bank Holiday at the fair at Hampstead, and gives them all a fiver each, there is another motive in his mind other than that they should enjoy themselves. He wants to help a roundabout proprietor who has fallen on bad times. The juniors all rally round enthusiastically, with results which are amusing, exciting—and successful!—ED.

CHAPTER 1.

Dorrie's Smash!

LORD DORRIMORE opened the throttle caressingly, and the powerful car, answering as though some magic hand had affected her, purred effortlessly as the engine received the additional gas.

"By glory!" murmured his lordship. "She's a peach!"

He was lounging back behind the wheel, rather exhilarated by the sense of complete power. The engine responded instantaneously to his lightest touch, and the stretch of road ahead was certainly tempting.

Dorrie depressed the accelerator a trifle further, and the big car fairly leapt. She was brand-new, and the famous explorer-peer had only received delivery the previous day. This, indeed, was the first ride he had taken in her, and he was highly satisfied. To a millionaire like Lord Dorrimore, cars were not calculated to give him any kind of a

thrill. But this super sports had done the trick.

"Ye gods" he exclaimed suddenly.

He had glanced at the speedometer dial, and it gave him rather a shock to see that he was hurtling along the road at eighty miles an hour. The motion was so smooth and effortless that he had not realised his actual speed.

"This won't do!" he told himself sternly. "The next thing will be a police trap, and then up we go before the beaks! No self-respecting citizen should travel at more than fifty miles an hour on the open road."

Lord Dorrimore—that old favourite of the boys of Frank's, and their companion on many an exciting and strange adventure in other lands—regarded fifty as a purely nominal speed. In fact, it was just pottering along. But he had competed in many races at Brooklands and in France and Italy, and such a man, contrary to the general belief, is a very careful driver on the public highways.

Therefore, feeling very guilty, Dorrie throttled down and proceeded at the mere

crawl of forty. To a car like this it was cruelty. She was bursting with energy, and hated being held in leash.

It was Sunday morning—Easter Sunday morning, in fact—and Dorrie was travelling along the road between Edgware and St. Alban's. It had been immaterial to him which route he took, for he was only giving the car a trial run before luncheon. And he had left London quite at random, passing through Kilburn, Cricklewood and Hendon. Now that he was on the open road he felt the desire to go at speed. The car asked for it. But his lordship wasn't tempted again.

"Too much traffic on this road," he decided. "This looks a nice little lot to meet on a corner, anyhow!"

Some distance ahead, just appearing round a curve, a lumbering procession had come into sight—a traction-engine drawing a small train of gaudy coloured, heavily-loaded wagons.

"The astute observer, my dear Watson, will immediately deduce that here we have a showman—probably on his way to Hampstead Heath," grinned Lord Dorrimore to himself. "All the fun of the fair, my gad! Personally, I don't care a great deal about switchbacks and roundabouts."

He was now within two hundred yards of the thundering monster, and as there was plenty of room for him to pass and he had the right of way, he made no attempt to slacken speed.

And then one of those acute crises occurred which every motorist must be prepared for. A small child leapt gleefully through a gap in the hedge and ran out into the road, evidently excited by the sight of the traction-engine. He was a boy of about five, and he stood full in the path of Lord Dorrimore's oncoming car.

"Good glory!" muttered his lordship.

Acute distress was mingled with alarm, for he had a very soft spot in his heart for children, and he didn't want to maim one on the road, even if he were in no way to blame.

He jammed the brakes on, every one of his senses alert.

There came a wild shout from the driver of the traction-engine, and the child, sensing its danger, did just the wrong thing, and ran further across.

Crash!

It was a terrific, splintering concussion. Dorrie had taken the only possible course, and had cut right across the front of the traction-engine, avoiding the child altogether. His car leapt wildly as it took the ditch, and the extreme rear of it came into violent collision with the near-side front wheel of the traction-engine.

And the latter, sagging over, was hopelessly ditched. For the driver of the engine had swerved right in, too. The child ran back through the gap in the hedge howling vigorously from fright.

Lord Dorrimore, quite unhurt, climbed out.

"Lumme, guv'nor, you was quick!"

Dorrie looked up and found that one of the traction-engine men was looking at him with a scared face.

"I had to be quick," replied his lordship. "Everything's all right, though. The kiddie wasn't touched."

"All right?" said the man, staring.

"Absolutely all right," said Dorrie, nodding.

"Well, you're a cool card, blamed if you ain't!" said the driver. "It's bad enough for me, ditched like this, but I don't think we've come to any harm."

"That's fortunate, anyway," said Lord Dorrimore. "And if it comes to quickness, you didn't hesitate long, old man. Sorry I had to swerve right in front of you, but it was the only way. I liked the way you took the ditch instead of getting that youngster under your wheels."

"Them kids is worse than dogs!" growled the man, recovering his composure. "Lumme, if a dog gets in the way he has to stand his chance. But you can't do that sort o' thing with kids!"

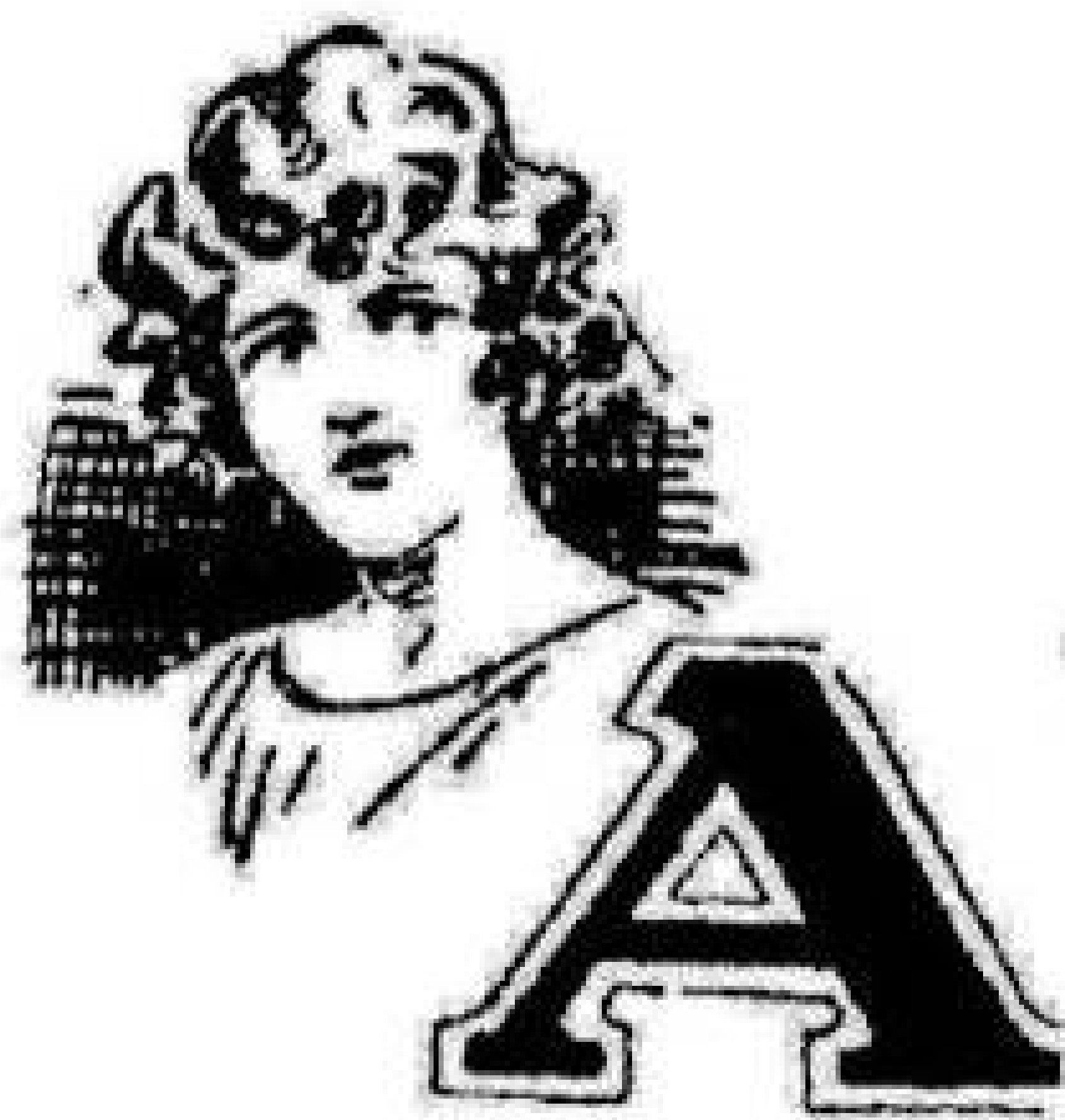
"I'm glad to hear that you have such sound, humane views," said Dorrie calmly. "H'm! Rather a nasty, messy sight," he added, as he glanced at the back of his car. "Oh, well, they have worse troubles at sea!"

"Blow me, if you ain't a caution, guv'nor!" said the traction-engine man frankly.

"So," said Lord Dorrimore, "I have been frequently told."

CHAPTER 2.

The Anguish of Mr. Christopher Weggs!



At this moment a vision came up, and Lord Dorrimore politely raised his cap.

"Frightfully sorry," he apologised, waving his hand towards the ditched traction-engine.

"Oh, what's happened?" asked the vision breathlessly.

She was a girl of about fifteen. Quite one of the prettiest girls of her age that Lord Dorrimore had ever seen. She was hatless, and her dark, bobbed hair was very wavy, and where the sunlight caught its wind-blown strands, it was like burnished copper. A pair of dark, inquiring eyes were turned towards Lord Dorrimore.

"Not guilty!" said Dorrie, reading her glance.

"Lumme, no, Miss Jessie," said the driver quickly. "It wasn't this gent's fault. I ain't got nothin' against kids in general, seein' as I've got two o' my own, but when they runs across in front o' my engine, I gets all hot. If this gent hadn't deliberately busted his car up, the poor little feller would have been under his wheels."

By this time Lord Dorrimore was on the road, and now another individual arrived. He was a short, jovial-looking man, with a round, clean-shaven face, ornamented by two chins. But just at the moment his expression was one of anxiety and alarm, and the deep bags beneath his eyes indicated that life had been weighing heavily upon him. He took one look at the ditched engine, and then wrung his hands.

"We're fair ruined, Sam!" he said dully.

"It ain't so bad as that, gov'nor——"

"But you can't get her out, can you?" asked the newcomer.

"Not without help," replied the driver.

"And to-day's Sunday!" said the stout little man. "To-day's Sunday! And we ought to be at the pitch by three o'clock, or there won't be time to get rigged up. This is terrible—terrible!"

His anguish was so marked that Lord Dorrimore felt touched. No blame attached to him, but, at the same time, he felt that he would like to do something by way of help, if he could.

"You're the proprietor, I assume?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said the stout man. "That's me, sir. Chris Weggs. This is a bad job, Jessie," he added, returning to his own troubles. "I don't know what we shall do—I don't know what we shall do! Sam, couldn't you get her out?"

The driver shook his head.

"Not without help, boss," he repeated stolidly.

"Oh, uncle, please come back to the caravan!" said the girl quickly. "This has upset you, and you'll only have another of your attacks."

Mr. Christopher Weggs was indeed looking ill.

"It's my heart, sir," he said, in an explanatory aside to Lord Dorrimore. "It ain't what it was. Worry, I suppose."

He was like a broken man, and he allowed the girl to lead him back to the rear of the wagons, where a comfortable, if shabby-looking, caravan formed the end of the load.

They went in, and Lord Dorrimore, who had followed, hesitated on the steps.

"May I?" he asked, as the girl caught his eye.

"Yes, please do," she replied. "And if you have a little brandy, I am sure my uncle would be glad of it. No, he doesn't drink, sir—that's why the brandy would do him good."

As it happened, Lord Dorrimore had a flask on him, and a moment later Mr. Weggs was taking some of the spirit. Dorrie felt very sorry for him, for the man was obviously weighed down with worry. There was something about this man and this girl which attracted him, too.

"Thank you, sir—thank you," said Mr. Weggs gratefully. "I needed that. I did, indeed. I don't know what I'm going to do

now. We're stuck here, and we ought to be on the Heath by this afternoon. Not that it's your fault, sir——"

"Perhaps I can help somehow?" suggested Dorrie.

Mr. Christopher Weggs looked surprised.

"Help, sir?" he repeated. "But you've got your own troubles. Your car looked proper smashed——"

"Only the rear of the body," said Lord Dorrimore. "I don't worry over a trifle like that. And this smash hasn't affected me as it appears to have affected you. It'll be a serious business if you don't get to your pitch on time, won't it?"

Mr. Weggs groaned.

"It'll mean ruin, sir," he said dully.

"Oh, uncle!" cried the girl.

"It will, lass—and I won't deceive you," said the showman. "I never have deceived you, have I? This means ruin to us. I'm sorry, sir!" he added, with a start. "I don't want to tell my troubles to you—a stranger. I don't know your name, sir—not that it really matters——"

"Oh, Dorrimore!"

"You're very kind, Mr. Dorrimore, to be so sympathetic," said the showman. "But I'm afraid you can't help——"

"Nonsense," said Dorrie. "I think my car is still able to run. The wheels weren't smashed. Anyhow, we'll see. Couldn't I get hold of an engine to come and pull you out?"

Mr. Weggs opened his eyes wide.

"Would you try, sir?" he asked eagerly.

"Oh, that's ever so good of you," said Jessie. "Cheer up, uncle. This gentleman will do something——"

"But it's Sunday!" muttered Mr. Weggs. "You won't get an engine on a Sunday. Besides, where can you get it from?"

Lord Dorrimore had been regarding the pair curiously.

"Shut me up if I sound inquisitive," he said, "but there seems to be a little mystery here. Why is it so dreadfully important that you should get to the Heath to-day?"

"Why, it's Bank Holiday to-morrow, sir," replied Mr. Weggs.

"I know, but you won't make a fortune in one day, will you?"

"Not exactly a fortune, sir, but I was reckoning to clear a hundred pounds," replied the showman dully. "That would have just seen me right. But if I can't get to the Heath, I'm finished. On Tuesday the whole show will go bust."

He spoke almost to himself, and Lord Dorrimore felt that he was justified in pressing his inquiries a little further. Mr. Christopher Weggs' hopeless misery was so utterly real that Dorrie's heart was touched. There was nothing tricky about this man. Dorrie was a good judge of character, and he could easily tell that old Weggs was one of Nature's gentlemen. And his niece, Jessie, showed every sign of the same honest blood. It

isn't always the aristocrats who are blue-blooded.

"What kind of show do you run, Mr. Weggs?" asked Dorrie.

"Eh? Beg pardon, sir," said Mr. Weggs, looking up. "Oh, the show? A roundabout, sir. Horses, you know, sir—ostriches, and dragons, and them things."

"Sounds excitin'," remarked Dorrie dryly. "But you really must be a little more frank with me, Mr. Weggs. I didn't understand what you said about Tuesday."

"What did I say about Tuesday, sir?" asked Mr. Weggs, starting.

"Only that the show is liable to go bust," replied his lordship.

"Did I, sir?" muttered the showman. "I didn't mean to. Sorry, sir. My troubles ain't your concern—"

"I'd like to make them mine, if you don't think I'm infernally interferin'," said Lord Dorrimore gently. "I'd like to help you, Mr. Weggs—if I may."



CHAPTER 3.

The Troubles of a Showman I

MR. CHRISTOPHER WEGGS slowly shook his head.

"I've no right to be going on like this, sir," he said gruffly. "I didn't mean to say anything about what might happen on Tuesday."

"That's all right," said Dorrie. "As you have said it, why not go the whole hog, and let me know a bit more? I'm not inquisitive, but it's one of my fatal weaknesses to have a ridiculously pulpy heart. If people are in trouble, I like to help them out a bit. At least, you'll allow me to do something to get you out of this ditch?"

"I'm afraid the luck's against me, sir," muttered Mr. Weggs.

"Nonsense! You mustn't lose heart—"

"I've lost it, sir—that's what I've done!" put in Mr. Weggs drearily. "This is the last straw, as you might say. The old engine hasn't been pulling any too well, and we're two or three hours late now. I was half expecting her to go bust, or something."

Dorrie grinned.

"It seems to me that you're expectin' everythin' to go bust," he said. "But why Tuesday? That's what I can't understand."

"I'll tell you, sir," put in Jessie quickly.

She had been regarding Dorrie closely out of her bright, dark eyes, and she had set him down as one of the right sort. There was something about the genial peer which was not merely pleasant, but positively lovable. Among the boys of St. Frank's, he was a kind of uncle. They didn't regard him with awe, as a hero. They were always free and easy with good old Dorrie. There was just

that in his composition which made everybody feel free and easy.

"It's a mortgage, sir," went on the girl. "It's due—"

"Jessie—Jessie!" protested her uncle weakly. "It isn't right that the gentleman should be told this. Good gracious, sir, you don't suppose we're trying to—"

"I don't suppose anythin'," interrupted Dorrie. "You've got a mortgage on the old show—that's clear, isn't it? Personally, I don't know much about mortgages, because I'm one of the world's lucky blighters. But I understand that a mortgage is one of those animals which look very docile when you first acquire it, but which has a habit of bitin' you if you don't feed it properly."

"You've hit it, sir," said Mr. Weggs, with feeling. "This one's going to bite me on Tuesday all right."

"But just now it's only snarlin', eh?" said Dorrie. "Well, let's see if we can't kill it before Tuesday. What's the amount?"

"Well, sir—"

"I know I'm disgustingly inquisitive, an' you've a perfect right to kick me out of this caravan for my impertinence," continued Dorrie smoothly. "But I'll risk it. How much do you need to pay off this infernal mortgage?"

The girl was looking at him with wide-open eyes.

"Oh, uncle!" she breathed.

But Mr. Weggs' weakness had suddenly changed to a firm, stubborn strength. He seemed a different man.

"No, sir!" he said firmly. "I'm not going to accept any money from you, if that's what you mean. This mortgage is nearly paid off. There's a last instalment due on Tuesday, and if I don't pay it Simon Winch will have the law on his side when he pinches my show."

"I imagine that Simon Winch must be one of the world's monsters," said Lord Dorrimore calmly. "What's the figure of this last instalment?"

"Two-fifty, sir," said Mr. Weggs.

"Great glory!" gasped his lordship. "Two-fifty pounds?"

"Ah, I thought you'd change your tone, sir—"

"I'm amazed at the ridiculous smallness of it!" growled Lord Dorrimore, frowning. "All this stuff of yours must be worth thousands."

"I figure it at a couple of thousand, perhaps, sir."

"And you're liable to lose it for the sake of two-fifty?"

"For the sake of a hundred, sir," explained Mr. Weggs bitterly. "Isn't it enough to make a man fed up and cause him to lose heart completely? You see, I struck a bad patch last year, and Winch financed me. But I've done pretty well since, and I've nearly paid him off. But that mortgage is not cleared until I've paid the last instalment."

"Well, I'm hanged!"

"You see, Winch is another showman, sir—owns lots of roundabouts," continued Mr.

Weggs. "He's a rare cunning devil, too. Rare cunning, sir! All smooth and nice until recently. But he'll pinch my show if I don't pay him to the last penny on Tuesday."

"Why, hang it all, it's iniquitous!" snapped Dorrie.

"It doesn't matter what it is, sir, I'm up against it," said Mr. Weggs, keeping to hard fact. "I've got a hundred and fifty ready, and I was counting on a hundred pounds tomorrow on the Heath. This weather, too!" he added, with a glance at the sunshine. "Best we've had for years!"

Dorrie felt a tumult within him.

"Look here, Mr. Weggs," he said grimly. "I'm not goin' to take any refusals. I feel partly responsible for this hold-up. Perhaps your driver wouldn't have gone into the ditch but for me."

"Why, sir, it was that little kiddie——"

"Never mind about that," said his lordship hastily, as he took out his pocket-book. "Now, look here, you've just got to put these notes in your pocket, and forget all your troubles. Only a trifle. Two hundred pounds, to be exact. I won't embarrass you by offerin' more, although I'd like to."

"Oh, uncle, I knew everything would be all right!" cried the girl happily.

But Mr. Christopher Weggs had risen to his feet, his expression fixed.

"I'm not taking it, sir," he said quietly.

"But, hang it all, look here——"

"I borrowed once, sir, but it's taught me a lesson," continued Mr. Weggs, breathing hard. "It's mighty difficult to refuse this kindness of yours, sir—it makes a sort of chokey feeling in me, sir. But I'm a stubborn brute, sir, and it's no good——"

"Rubbish!" said Dorrie. "I'm not offerin' to lend you this money. I want you to take it as a gift!"

Mr. Weggs looked at him uncomprehendingly for a moment. Dorrie grinned cheerfully. The difficulty was smoothed out easily.

"A gift, sir?" repeated Mr. Weggs incredulously.

"Of course! So it's all right, eh?"

"Begging your pardon, sir, it's not all right," replied the shownman. "If I'd been weak, I might have borrowed the money—but only a rascal would have accepted it as a gift. I've got no call on you, sir. I couldn't take it—I won't take it!"

Dorrie was utterly dismayed.

"Yes, but be reasonable——"

"Money for nothing, sir, is worth nothing," argued Mr. Weggs. "People don't value money if they don't work for it. By gosh, I'm not done!" he added fiercely. "I've still got some fight in me! I'll get out and see what can be done about the old engine."

He blundered out of the caravan, feeling, perhaps, that if he remained his will would weaken. Lord Dorrimore felt unutterably miserable. With all his millions, he was learning that he couldn't always get rid of money. It hit him like a blow when he

realised that Mr. Weggs had refused the offer because it savoured of charity. The old fellow had his pride.

"I'm sorry, kiddie!" muttered Dorrie, turning to the girl. "I apologise to your uncle. I didn't quite realise what a staunch old fellow he is. I believe I insulted him."

"No, no!" said Jessie miserably.

"I'd offer you this money, only it would be involving you in my own trickery," he went on. "I'm proud of Mr. Weggs—he's true blue."

"He's one of the best, sir!" said the girl gently.

Dorrie went out of the caravan, and he bit his lip hard as he detected the faint sound of sobbing behind him. For a moment or two he stood there, gazing disgustedly at the bank-notes in his hand.

"By the Lord Harry!" he muttered fiercely. "I'll make things move! I'll get a dozen engines, if necessary, and I'll get a hundred men to have that show fixed up on the appointed pitch! If old Weggs won't let me help him in one way, I'll help in another! He may be an obstinate mule, but, by gad, there's another one not far off!"



CHAPTER 4.

Handy's Party!

"WELL, here we are!" said Nipper genially.

"Good!" said Edward Oswald

Handforth. "Come in, old sons!"

Nipper and his two special chums of the St. Frank's Remove had just arrived at the stately town residence of Sir Edward Handforth—the one and only Handy's pater. It was Monday morning—Bank Holiday—and the hour was just ten o'clock.

Edward Oswald Handforth had been greeting his guests for over half an hour, and it seemed, at a casual glance, that half the St. Frank's Junior School had turned up. The big hall, the dining-room, and other reception-rooms, were full of the fellows.

It wasn't merely a Bank Holiday celebration, but Edward Oswald was giving a party. And the large number of guests could be explained by Handforth's fatal obstinacy. The previous week he had been told by his father that he could have a little party if he liked, and that he could invite all his special friends.

Sir Edward had imagined, of course, that his hopeful son would gather a circle of five or six round him, and that they would arrive in the evening. Sir Edward made the fatal mistake of taking other people's parties as a precedent. He didn't know Edward Oswald, even though the latter was his own son!

For Handforth, once he got down to the grim task of the invitations, had found him-

self in a hopeless plight. He had brought Church and McClure over to help him. They had tried to help him, but, as usual, he asked for their advice, and then contemptuously ignored it after they had given him freely of their best.

The trouble was. Handforth was just a trifle egotistical. He imagined that everybody in the Remove was a special friend! It seemed impossible to him that any of the fellows could be regarded as outsiders—with the exception, of course, of such rank non-starters as Claude Gore-Pearce, and similar pieces of rubbish.

But the rest were all on Handforth's list—Reggie Pitt and his chums, Nipper & Co., Archie Glenthorpe, Singleton, De Valerie, and all the prominent fellows in the Remove. In vain, Church and McClure told Handforth to put his blue pencil through over half the list. He had ignored them. And, to his father's utter consternation, he learnt that Handforth had invited something like thirty-five guests, and that Willy, his minor, had taken advantage of this singular opportunity to gather a crowd of his own Third Form cronies into the congregation, too! And, to cap the lot, Handforth had invited them to breakfast!

Imagine, therefore, the noble Handforth home being invaded by this mob of over forty, arriving in a continuous stream from eight-thirty onwards! Sir Edward had a straight, plain talk with his rash offspring, and Handforth had emerged from the ordeal utterly unaffected. As he had confided to Willy afterwards, why the dickens did the pater want to interfere? What did he know about parties?

To make matters worse, Sir Edward had promised, in a moment of unbelievable rashness, to buy tickets for Handforth and his guests for one of the London theatres, to finish off the evening. The unfortunate gentleman had almost collapsed from apoplexy when he had found it necessary to sign a cheque for a sum approaching twenty-five pounds—for Handforth maintained that nothing but stalls would uphold the dignities of the Handforth name. Besides, wasn't it a special holiday occasion?

It was impossible to get out of it, for Handforth had mentioned the theatre business in all his invitations. But he hadn't mentioned how large the party would be. So everybody came, believing that they were the honoured members of a special few. And here they were, over-running Sir Edward's home like rabbits in a warren.

The unhappy head of the house had fled precipitately to his club, and Lady Handforth had been taken "ill" so suddenly that she was confined to her boudoir. Actually, she wasn't ill, but she knew that she soon would be if she came down. She waited desperately to hear a diminution of the noise from below, which sounded like the cries of the mob, off-stage, in a French Revolution melodrama. She was hoping against hope

that Handforth would get the bright idea of taking his guests out somewhere.

Nipper expressed a little polite surprise. "Oh, these?" said Handforth, indicating the rabble. "Guests, you know. All here by special invite."

"Oh!" said Nipper. "I see!"

"There's nothing like a crowd," went on Handforth enthusiastically. "Hallo, Fullwood, old son! Half a tick, Nipper! Must dash off to greet old Fully, and that Canadian ass, Russell."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Nipper, grinning.

Ralph Leslie Fullwood and Clive Russell were the last to arrive—but Handforth brushed aside their apologies.

"We're all here now!" he said genially. "Come on, you chaps!"

The crowds gathered round him in the big hall.

"Good old Handy!" sang out Reggie Pitt. "This is what I call an oversize in parties. When Handy does a thing, he does it properly!"

"Rather!" shouted somebody else. "Let's give him a cheer!"

"Good old Handy!"

"Hurrah!"

Lady Handforth, upstairs, winced, for the flooring and the walls had quivered. But she needn't have worried. The juniors had breakfasted well. They were all agreed that Handforth's people did things properly. The breakfast-room was now deserted—a mere pitiful wreckage of its former self. The apartment looked as though a herd of bullocks had swept through it.

"Well, what about it?" shouted Handforth, beaming round. "By George! This is what I like to see! Everybody merry and bright! What are you going to do?"

"Haven't you mapped out the day?" asked Nipper, in surprise.

"I thought we'd discuss it, and put it to the vote," replied Handforth. "We've got the tickets for the theatre to-night, of course, but it's like a summer's morning, and I think we ought to go out on the spree. I'll pay exes, of course."

"Good old Handy!"

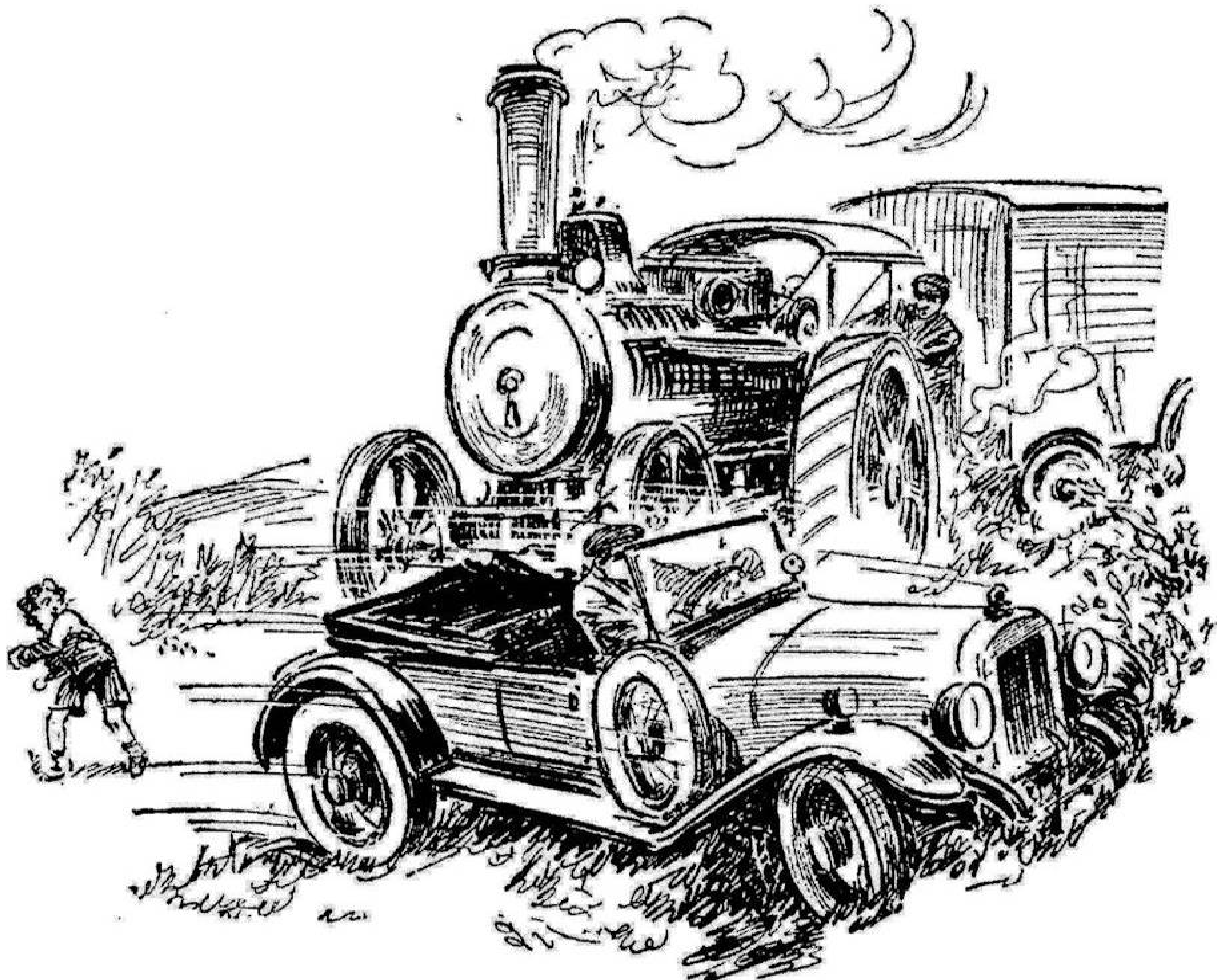
This was another thorn in Sir Edward's side. Handforth had firmly demanded twenty pounds in cash to do the honours of the day. As a matter of fact, he had asked for fifty, but Sir Edward had whittled it down to twenty—after feebly putting up a fight with a suggested ten.

"This is awkward," said Reggie Pitt. "We thought you'd have everything fixed up, Handy. Well, what's the voting? Shall we go to Brooklands to see the motor-racing? Or to the Zoo, to see the animals?"

"Let's go to the Zoo!" said several voices.

"Oh, rot!" interrupted Handforth. "We've been to the Zoo before—and there's nothing fresh there. We want some excitement."

"We might all go for a ride in your Austin Seven," said Reggie thoughtfully.



There was only one way to avoid running over the child. Lord Dorrimore took it; he jammed on the brakes, then, cutting right across the front of the traction engine, sent his car crashing into the ditch.

"You ass!" said Handforth, staring. "There wouldn't be room!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, I haven't got the Austin here," continued Handforth, taking the suggestion quite seriously. "Of course, we could hire a charabanc, and go for a ride in the country — By George! That's it! A picnic!"

"Who votes for a picnic?" asked Nipper.

"We say the Zoo!"

"No fear! Let's go to Brooklands!"

The tower of Babel may have been a place of noise and confusion, but the hall of Sir Edward Handforth's house ran it a close second. In fact, it was Reggie Pitt's considered opinion that the tower of Babel was many lengths behind.

It was all Handforth's fault. If he had only taken the trouble to plan the days' programme, this contretemps would have been avoided. For his guests, as guests, could not have grumbled, whatever the nature of the spree. After all, politeness would not have allowed them to quibble. But when Handforth frankly left it for them to vote, he was simply asking for trouble in quantities.

And at this crucial moment Lord Dorrimore blew in.



CHAPTER 5.

Dorrie's Little Way!

"G OOD glory!" ejaculated his lordship blankly.

He had found the door wide open, and had naturally walked

into the lobby. And there, in the hall, the whole of St. Frank's was gathered, with two or three other schools thrown in. At least, that was the impression that his lordship received at first glance.

His surprise changed to satisfaction a moment later, when he appreciated the possibilities. He had heard from Nipper on the previous Saturday that he and his two chums would be at Handforth's that morning. And Dorrie, remembering Church's and McClure's glue-like adhesion to Handforth, had counted on finding at least six stalwarts. Seven, including Willy.

But when he beheld over forty he was overjoyed.

"Any room for another?" he shouted cheerily.

The juniors turned and spotted him.

"My hat! It's old Dorrie!"

"Hurrah!"

There was a wild rush.

"Good old Dorrie!"

"Here, steady!" gasped his lordship, as he swirled about in the eddies like a loose piece of seaweed in a ground swell. "I'm frightfully pleased to see you all, but what's the idea of this murder scene?"

Nobody had any awe for Dorrie. He was thumped on the back, hauled this way and hauled that way. The fact that he was a millionaire and a peer weighed for nothing. The fellows always treated him as one of themselves.

"We didn't know you'd been invited, Dorrie!" said Fullwood delightedly.

"Invited?" gasped his lordship, looking on the floor in the hope of spotting his necktie. "Invited to what?"

"Why, Handy's party!"

"By Jove, yes!" said his lordship. "Just a moment before we proceed," he went on, continuing his search. "Has anybody seen my collar?"

"Your collar?"

"To say nothing of a dream in neckties?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A search revealed the missing articles. They were, of course, quite useless, being trampled to shreds. Handforth kindly offered to put things right. He invited Lord Dorrimore to pop upstairs to his pater's room and help himself, an offer which Dorrie politely declined.

"Never mind about trifles," he said cheerfully. "We'll adjust that later. What about all you fellows? I take it that you're Handy's guests?"

"That's it, Dorrie," said Nipper, nodding.

"Handy all over—always wholesale!" said his lordship. "Well, I admire him. The bigger the crowd, the more the fun. And I've got a suggestion to make. Hold your ears back and listen."

"Hurrah!"

"Dorrie's got something up his sleeve!"

Everybody was excited and expectant.

"How about going to Hampstead Heath for the fun of the fair?" said Dorrie.

There was a moment's tense silence.

"Rats!" said Handforth. "You're joking, sir!"

"Of course he's joking!"

Lord Dorrimore was pained.

"Doesn't Hampstead Heath appeal to you?" he asked, in a disappointed voice. "Haven't you ever been to 'Appy 'Ampstead on a Bank 'Oliday? Do you despise these simple pleasures of the populace?"

"Rather not," said Nipper quickly. "We've been there often enough."

The silence continued, and Dorrie read the general thoughts.

"But it's hardly what you expected of me," he went on. "Owing to my being a bloated millionaire, you took it for granted that I was going to invite you to an aeroplane trip to France, or a cruise round the world in the old Wanderer?"

"Well, it does seem a little beneath your usual, sir!"

"You've always given us such surprises, sir!"

His lordship grinned.

"Then I'm keepin' up to my reputation," he said, with relief. "Isn't this a surprise? You expected a nice juicy pineapple, and I've handed you a lemon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cheese it, Dorrie! You're only joking!"

"Never," said Dorrie, "was I more serious. An' I don't mind tellin' you that I'm frightfully pleased to see so many of you. The more, the merrier! I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a fiver each all round, just to spend."

This made the proposition much more attractive.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Dorrie!"

"We'll go!"

"Half a minute!" said Nipper. "There's something behind this, you chaps. Dorrie wouldn't ask us to go particularly to Hampstead Heath unless he had an axe to grind. He's got something up his sleeve!"

Dorrie looked at Nipper wonderingly.

"Training always tells," he observed. "This is what comes of bein' associated with good old Nelson Lee. 'It is my business to know things, my dear Watson.' That sort of stuff, eh?"

"But I'm right, aren't I?" asked Nipper, chuckling.

"As a matter of fact, you've hit it slosh on the cranium!" replied Lord Dorrimore. "There's a very special reason for this request of mine. And before I hand out those fivers, I want to make a stipulation that a good proportion will be spent on Weggs' Stupendous Roundabout. The idea is for you to ride on the thing until you're dizzy!"

"Until we're dizzy?" asked Fullwood, amazed.

"Then, after you've recovered, take more rides until you're dizzy again," said Dorrie enthusiastically. "I always maintain that there's nothing like a good old-fashioned roundabout for gettin' plenty of fun."

"Oh, chuck it, you old spoofer!"

"Ring off, Dorrie!"

"You're not serious, are you, sir?" asked Pitt.

"Honest Injun, I'm serious," said his lordship earnestly.

The juniors were amazed, and they expressed themselves frankly.

"Mad!"

"Poor old Dorrie's gone off his rocker!"

"His millions must have turned his giddy head!"

"Absolutely crazy!" asserted Archie Glen-thorne firmly. "Off the track as clean as a whistle! Absolutely and positively derailed!"

Lord Dorrimore grinned as he heard these candid opinions.

"Yes, it sounds a bit dotty, doesn't it?" he said. "But it isn't. There's a reason for everythin'. An' if you'll stop all this noisy

hubbub for a moment or two, an' behave like rational human bein's instead of chimpanzees, I'll tell you what that reason is."

Nipper could see that Lord Dorrimore was becoming serious. And it was so unusual for Lord Dorrimore to become serious that Nipper cautioned the others.

"There's something important in this, you fellows," he said. "Now, shut up! Let Dorrie have the chair. Go ahead, sir!"



CHAPTER 6.

All in a Good Cause!

ORD DORRIMORE looked round at the eager, excited faces.

"Now, I'm aware that this surprise of

mine isn't particularly dashin'," he said, "but you've only heard half of it!"

"The fiver bit's all right, sir!" said Fullwood.

"Rather!"

"Dry up!" said Dorrie sternly. "Order, there! Well, knowin' you youngsters as I do, I don't think you'll be averse to doin' somebody a good turn. I want you to go to Hampstead Heath——"

"Stop!" said Nipper. "I see it all!"

"You young ass——"

"We've got the guilty secret, you chaps!" went on Nipper. "Dorrie's been trying to push money on to the proprietor of Weggs' Roundabout, and he wouldn't take it. So he's planning to make us the innocent instruments of his munificence."

Lord Dorrimore looked at Nipper strangely.

"Gad, it's wonderful!" he said. "There must be somethin' in this deduction business, after all! How the thunder did you guess?"

"We know you, Dorrie," grinned Nipper. "We know your fatal propensity for helping others along. But what's the exact idea?"

And Dorrie related to his interested audience exactly what had happened on the St. Alban's road. He explained how Mr. Christopher Weggs had refused to take the proffered money. And Dorrie, having explained that he was speaking in confidence, made no secret of the mortgage trouble. He knew that he could trust these St. Frank's fellows.

"It's just between ourselves, of course," he said, "an' I shan't expect you to talk about it. But there's the position. Poor old Weggs is in danger of losin' his whole show to-morrow. If he takes a hundred pounds to-day, all well and good. But if he doesn't take a hundred pounds, all's ill and bad! There you have it in a nutshell!"

"How about his show?" asked Nipper. "Did it get to the Heath?"

"You can take it from me that it got there!" replied his lordship. "I made things hum a bit after leavin' Mr. Weggs. An' his whole contraption was in workin' order long

before dark. Fortunately, I didn't see him, although I skirted round the position in the dusk. I expect he knows I sent the help, an' all the rest of it, but he doesn't know my address, so I'm safe."

"Just like you, Dorrie!" said Nipper.

"Rats!" growled his lordship. "There's nothin' in it——"

"Nothing for you financially, sir," put in Reggie Pitt. "But what about the thought behind it all? By Jove, you chaps, we've got to back Dorrie up all along the line!"

"Rather!"

"Let's do all we can to help old Weggs!" "Hear, hear!"

"Dorrie knows them when he sees them," said Nipper confidently. "He may be easy-going, but you have to be up early to catch him napping! And Dorrie's opinion is good enough for me. Mr. Weggs must be the goods!"

"You see," said Dorrie hastily, "there's no certainty of the poor old beggar takin' that hundred quid to-day, an' I hate to think of his whole show bein' in danger. He won't let anybody lend him money, he won't take it as a gift, so we've got to get at him by guile. See the idea?"

"He ought to take a hundred pounds, though, sir," said Handforth. "Look at the fine weather!"

"Yes, and look at the other roundabouts on Hampstead Heath!" retorted Dorrie. "These are the days of keen competition, my lad. It's quite likely that Weggs' show will be outshone by several others all round him—like a candle tryin' to look bright between a couple of motor headlamps! If he has some bad luck of that sort, he won't take twenty pounds—an' that'll mean ruin for him to-morrow."

"So you want us to go along and boost up the business, sir?" asked Handforth. "By George, you chaps! It's a topping idea!"

"Absolutely a pippin!" agreed Archie. "I confess I'm not a frightfully keen roundabout addict, but, dash it, a chappie must put himself out on these occasions. I mean, all for the good old cause, what?"

"Well put, Archie," said Lord Dorrimore. "All for the good old cause! I'm going to give you a fiver each—an' that'll work out, roughly, at about two hundred pounds. If you spend about a quid each with old Weggs, it'll be a big help, an'——"

"You leave it to us, Dorrie," said Nipper briskly.

"I couldn't leave it to anybody better," said his lordship. "Of course, you needn't spend the whole day with this Weggs' outfit—it might look a bit rummy, if you did. There are plenty of other quiet, subdued pleasures on Hampstead Heath, I understand."

"Aren't you coming with us, Dorrie?" shouted the crowd.

"I'd like to, but it's impossible," replied Dorrie, shaking his head. "Old Weggs knows me, an' he would smell a rat on the instant, if he saw me waltzing round on his

blessed ostriches. No, I'm sendin' you as my ambassadors, an' I think it's jolly decent of you to be so sporty. Just the sort of thing I've learned to expect of St. Frank's."

"Cheese it, sir!"

"It's nothing!" growled Handforth. "We didn't know where to go, anyhow, and this has settled the point. Might as well spend the day at Hampstead Heath as anywhere else. We're bound to get plenty of fun."

"Particularly with a fiver each!" murmured Church.

"You needn't worry about money," said Handforth coldly. "I've got pots of it. I'm going to spend all my fiver on rides on that roundabout—every penny of it!"

"Handy means to make a dash for it as soon as he gets there, and he'll stick on till they chuck him off at closin' time," grinned Dorrie. "That's the spirit I like. How many sixpenny rides in five pounds? Come on—who's the best chap at mental arithmetic? It's as much as I can do to figure out that three and four make nine!"

"It'll be two hundred rides, Handy!" grinned Reggie Pitt.

Dorrie pointed.

"Move to the top of the class," he said. "That was quick work!"



CHAPTER 7.

'Appy 'Ampstead!

THERE was a good deal of enthusiasm, and Lord Dorrimore felt that it was genuine enthusiasm—not just assumed for his benefit.

The idea of helping Mr. Christopher Weggs by stealth had strongly appealed to the sporting instincts of Handforth and his guests.

There was everything in favour of adopting Dorrie's plan. First and foremost, of course, came the fiver. That, in itself, stamped the whole scheme as twenty-two carat. But, in addition to this consideration, there was the fact that nobody had known where to go. The point was now settled. And Hampstead Heath, when all was said and done, was quite a jovial, merry sort of place to go to on a Bank Holiday. And to enjoy these pleasures with the additional knowledge that an unfortunate man was being saved from ruin—well, the scheme was not only ripe, but rosy-cheeked.

"When I trotted along here," said Lord Dorrimore, "I expected to find a small and select company of about six or seven. An' I can tell you that I was deucedly worried. I was wonderin' how I could give them twenty pounds each, an' expect them to spend most of it on that blessed roundabout! But Handy's idea of a party is thoroughly sound, an' when I saw all your merry faces, I knew that the problem was solved. So dash

off, young 'uns, an' get busy in your own celebrated way."

The fivers were distributed, and Dorrie knew that his wishes would be honoured. It would probably be irksome, riding on that roundabout half the day, but the youthful human organism can stand much. The very thought of it gave Dorrie a dizzy sensation, but most of the juniors were rather looking forward to the experience.

Many a time they had stood by roundabouts, jealous of the people who could ride, and jingling a few odd coppers in their pockets—insufficient to warrant their participating in the general gaiety. But here they could patronise this particular roundabout to their hearts' content.

"Well, you chaps, let's be going," said Handforth briskly. "Don't forget it's my party, and that you're my guests. So I'm the leader!" he added, with a glance at Nipper.

"Go ahead!" grinned Nipper. "I shan't claim that it's my party, and try to dish you, old man."

"Ass!" said Handforth politely.

Lord Dorrimore discreetly stole away while the juniors were preparing to go. He went happily, feeling that all would now be well. Mr. Weggs had refused ordinary help, so he was having help of another kind thrust upon him—and the whole joke of the affair was that Mr. Weggs would never know anything about it.

The juniors were rather sorry that Lord Dorrimore could not accompany them, for his companionship was cheery. However, he had a sound argument for staying away. If Mr. Weggs caught sight of him, there would certainly be a cat running about, escaped from his bag.

"We'll go by bus," said Handforth, as all the fellows were turning over sundry piles of overcoats and caps, in search of their own particular apparel. "How much longer are you fatheads going to be?"

"Better go by tube," suggested Willy.

"Tube?" jeered his major. "Rats!"

"Quicker!" said Willy, nodding.

"Quicker, eh?" repeated Handforth. "Yes, but on a fine morning like this we ought to get all the fresh air."

"We shall have plenty of fresh air on the Heath," said Nipper. "And Willy's right. There's a tube station right near here, and we shall be at Hampstead Heath in no time. We're not just going for pleasure now, remember, and we want to put some speed on."

Handforth glared.

"I thought you weren't going to butt in, you bounder?" he said.

"Sorry!" chuckled Nipper. "But the tube, you know—"

"We're going by tube!" said Handforth firmly. "I meant the tube at first!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They were all off within ten minutes, and

the Handforth household gradually sorted itself out, and dazedly recovered from the shock. In the meantime, the mob scenes had been transferred to the tube.

Happily, there were no mishaps. Handforth certainly wanted to get on the wrong train, and but for Nipper would have ultimately led his party down to the environs of the Elephant & Castle, or some such spot. Handforth had a marvellous faculty for taking wrong trains.

But Hampstead Heath was reached safely at last, and the juniors soon responded to the holiday spirit. It was abroad everywhere. The wonderful weather of the past week had continued, and the day was warm and sunny and altogether summer-like.

The Heath—or that section of it which gives itself over on Bank Holidays to riotous amusement—was seething with people. Mechanical organs were vying with one another strenuously, and when one reached a spot at the converging point between three or four of them, the result was ear-splitting, and somewhat resembled the oscillation of half a dozen super-valve sets at one and the same time. But nobody seemed to mind.

"We've got a job on!" said Handforth, as he led his gang through the crowds. "How the dickens can we find Meggs' Menagerie?"

"You mean Weggs' Roundabout!" said Church.

"What's the difference?" demanded Handforth. "It's like looking for a needle in a haystack. There's no sign of Weggs' Roundabout here, that I can see."

"We've got a clue, anyhow," said Nipper. "Dorrie made some remark about ostriches. Careless of him not to describe the show more fully."

It was no light task, marshalling that gathering along, and keeping it together. Some of the fellows kept on wanting to stop, in order to sample a side-show, or to have a go at the coco-nut shies, or to try the switchback. But Handforth was grim and determined. There would be no rest for him until he had located Meggs' Menagerie, as he repeatedly called it. He had given Lord Dorrimore his word, and Handy, if headstrong, was conscientious. With him a promise was a promise. But it was very difficult work, keeping everybody near at hand.

"This looks a likely one," said Nipper, nodding over to the left, where the grass sloped down into a hollow. "What's that roundabout there?"

"That's not it!" said Handforth. "They're motor-cars——"

"Not that one," said Nipper. "The other!"

"By George!" said Handforth, who had been heading off in another direction. "Perhaps you're right! Come on!"

They went down into the hollow, and came upon the big roundabout first. It was a huge, super affair, a kind of circular switch-

back, with a double line of motor-cars whirling round, and shooting up hill and down dale. Handforth was outraged when he noted that the cars were an insulting imitation of his Austin Seven. They were running on real wheels, too, with pneumatic tyres. At least, so it appeared.

"Come on," growled Handforth. "I wouldn't go on this thing for a pension! Huh! Pinching the Austin Seven design for a giddy roundabout!"

They passed by, having some difficulty in getting through the crush. And then they beheld a smaller roundabout beyond. It was rather shabby by comparison with its majestic neighbour, but was a big, substantial affair, nevertheless. One rode on tigers, ostriches, zebras, and so forth. And just then the mechanism slowed down, and the juniors read the inscription which encircled the top—"Weggs' Imperial Galloping Menagerie."

Handforth came to a halt and pointed. "There you are!" he said triumphantly. "I told you it was a menagerie!"



CHAPTER 8.

Jessie Creates an Impression!

THEY all stood looking at the roundabout for a minute or two.

"No wonder old Dorrie was keen," said Nipper. "Imagine this show being pinched by old Winch for the sake of a mere hundred pounds! By Jove, it's a first-class affair! I shan't object to taking a few dozen rides."

"We can try all the animals, and see which are the best!" said Reggie Pitt enthusiastically. "Personally, I rather like the look of that brontosarus with the pink spots."

"You ass!" said Jack Grey. "That's a giraffe!"

"Well, how was I to know?" said Reggie.

"Just a minute!" said Nipper, pulling at Pitt's sleeve. "Have a look at this, old man. Significant, eh?"

"Eh? What's that?" said Handforth, turning.

"Don't point or stare too much," said Nipper. "But look at the name on the top of this super-roundabout next door!"

The others turned and read the ornate words in great gilt letters. The inscription ran: "Simon Winch's Marvellous Twentieth Century Race-Track." Handforth drew his breath in deeply.

"Simon Winch!" he ejaculated. "That's the swindler!"

"Dry up, you ass!" gasped Nipper.

"Eh?"

"Don't shout like that!" went on Nipper. "There's no swindle about it. If this man Winch has lent Mr. Weggs some money, he's

got the law on his side. But it's not wise to hawl that sort of thing all over the place. I'm struck by the fact that Winch is next door!"

"Pretty rotten for old Weggs!" said Pitt thoughtfully.

"Enough to kill his trade!" growled Handforth.

"By the look of the menagerie, it's half-killed already," muttered Nipper. "There's no coincidence about this, you chaps. Winch didn't dump himself down here by chance—and you can bet your last sixpence that Mr. Weggs wouldn't select such a site!"

"It's—it's a deliberate trick, you mean?" asked Handforth blankly.

"It looks like it," said Nipper. "It's in Winch's interests that this other roundabout shouldn't do much business to-day."

"Well, let's buck things up!" said Handforth briskly. "Come on! They're just starting. Hi, you chaps!" he roared. "Follow me!"

The roundabout was just getting into motion, but the faithful Sam, at the controls, brought it to a halt at once as he observed the determined party of schoolboys swooping down. Here was enough trade to fill the whole roundabout, and still leave some over.

"Come on!"

"I've got the giraffe!"

"Me for the ostrich!"

"Buck up, St. Frank's!"

The juniors piled on, some of them scrambling up on the grotesque animals after they were already occupied.

They felt that they were starting well.

Mr. Christopher Weggs, standing in the centre of the great affair, with the full blast of the "music" pouring into his ear, bucked up considerably. After a night of unusual contentment, occasioned by Dorrie's timely help, he had suffered a reaction of depression. In the night, like some sinister monster, Simon Winch's enormous show had come up, and settled itself on the next pitch. Mr. Weggs did not know how his rival had managed it, but Winch was a man with many roundabouts, operating in all parts of the country. And this particular one was his biggest. He always managed it himself.

It was small wonder that Mr. Weggs was depressed.

Business had been very slack. People were not likely to take much notice of his fare while there was something much more gorgeous next door. In a country fair Mr. Weggs' menagerie would have created something like a sensation, for it was a big roundabout, as roundabouts go. But in immediate comparison to Winch's, it seemed insignificant.

However, the weather was good, and there were crowds and crowds of people. Some were bound to patronise the animals after trying the motor-cars—since this type of holiday-maker loves his variety. All the same, things remained quiet with Mr. Weggs—until

the St. Frank's fellows took entire possession of his roundabout.

"What-ho!" exclaimed Archie, as he straddled an enormous caricature of a cat. "I mean to say, what-absolutely-ho! Here we go, as it were, round the jolly old mulberry bush!"

"Mulberry bush?" said Pitt, who was sitting on a bear next to him. "You may be right, Archie, but it smells to me like a traction-engine!"

"Oh, I see what you mean!" said Archie. "The jolly old works, what? You mean the thingummyjig which makes the old wheels go round?"

"Well, come on, we mustn't grumble—we've got the music to soothe us," said Pitt, as they swung past the face of the organ and got the full blast broadside on. "Whoa! That was an earful, if you like!"

Archie winched.

"If I may say so, laddie, two earsful," he protested. "Or should it be two earsfuls? One of those dashed catchy words, I mean. Just the sort that Mr. Crowell is liable to spring on us when we're indulging in forty of the best. I wish you wouldn't keep dashing up into the upper stratas, laddie!"

"Don't blame me," said Pitt. "Whoa! We're down again!"

The roundabout was of the galloping type, the animals rising up and down and increasing their oscillation as the whole affair gathered speed.

"Fares, please!"

"Eh?" said Archie, as the girlish voice came to his ear. "What-ho!"

"Fares, please!"

"Oh, I see!" said Archie. "You mean the jolly old fares? Good gad! I'm afraid I've got nothing smaller than a fiver at the fingertips. Pitt, old companion, perhaps——"

"I'll pay, Archie," nodded Reggie.

"One is apt to forget that sundry people will appear out of the offing, demanding the good old backsheesh. Of course—— Odds visions and dreams! I mean to say—— Oh, rather! What?"

Archie was rather confused, and as his cat gave a playful leap, he was almost flung out of his seat. The fact was, he had become careless. He had ceased to take any interest in the actual revelry.

A girl had suddenly appeared, worming her way—absolutely worming her way—between Archie's cat and Reggie Pitt's grizzly bear. Exactly how she managed to maintain the good old balance was more than Archie could understand. The fact that the roundabout was now hurtling through space at about five hundred miles an hour had no effect upon the good old pins at all. There she stood, as calm as dash it, smiling like the dickens, and asking for sixpences. Archie could hardly do anything else but goggle.

"I mean to say!" he spluttered, shocked.

This sort of thing needed looking into. He meant to say, it wasn't done. A dashed pretty girl, with hair like chunks of copper,

and eyes like X-rays that looked a chappie through and through! And here was this sweet young thing collecting fares!

"Thank you, sir!" said Jessie, as Pitt handed her a shilling. "Fares, please! Fares, please!"

"This is more than we bargained for," said Reggie Pitt genially. "The roundabout's all right, but we've got the additional advantage of having a pretty girl to collect the fares! It makes the future more promising."

Archie frowned at Reggie as he passed him on the upward grade.

"Pretty?" he repeated. "Good gad! Do you call her pretty?"

"Well, I rather thought so," said Pitt. "What do you call her?"

"You frightful chump, there aren't any words in the English language ripping enough!" replied Archie dreamily. "I mean to say, pretty! A dashed insult to the damsel!"



CHAPTER 9.

Strange Behaviour of Archie!

JESSIE SELWYN was very cheerful as she finished collecting the fares on her half of the roundabout.

One of her uncle's men was "working" the other half. Jessie generally helped at busy times, and she had spent so many of her days actually on the roundabout that her system had become attuned to it.

Dizziness never affected her now, and she could whirl round with the thing for hours without noticing it. Her uncle didn't like her doing this work, but she was a girl who had a habit of getting her own way. She saw no reason why another man should be paid while she stood looking on doing nothing.

She flashed Sam a glance of satisfaction as the latter pushed over the stopping lever. If they could only get loads like this every time there wouldn't be any question of that hundred pounds.

"Hallo!" shouted Handforth, as the roundabout grew slower. "What's the giddy idea?"

"We're stoppin', sir," said the fair collector—the male one, who was near by. "Ride's over."

"Over?" snorted Handforth. "Why, of all the silly rot—Eh?"

He had caught a wink from Church, and he suddenly realised that the shorter these rides were the better. According to their promise to Dorie, they were booked for scores of them.

"Bank Holiday, you know, sir," said the attendant. "We give longer rides at other times—"

"Rot!" interrupted Handforth. "In my opinion they're a jolly sight too long as it is. You ought to charge a bob, instead of sixpence!"

"Hey?" said the man, staring.

"Of course you ought to charge a bob!" went on Handforth. "It's a silly business, giving everybody a long ride like this for six—Hi! What the dickens are you chaps doing?" he bawled, as several juniors prepared to alight.

"Just getting off," said Fullwood.

"Then don't be asses!" roared Handforth. "This is a jolly good roundabout! I vote we stick on here for a couple of hours!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the juniors saw Handforth's point, so they kept their seats when the motion ceased, and the few holiday makers who were waiting to jump on turned their attention to other attractions. The roundabout started again with its old load.

"That's a good idea!" murmured Nipper, bending over towards Tregellis-West, who looked dignified between the two humps of a camel.

"What is, dear old boy?" asked Sir Montie.

"Why, if we stay on here for two or three times, a crowd will collect," replied Nipper. "Nothing like a crowd to give a show an advertisement! And crowds are funny things—they collect like magic. When we get off, there'll be a rush for these animals."

"Old boy, it's a toppin' wheeze," decided Sir Montie.

Round they went again, and Reggie Pitt engaged Archie in conversation.

"Rummy thing, how Handy's voice beats the organ," he said. "Can't you hear it rising and falling as we go round?"

"Dash it all, it's heavenly!" said Archie firmly.

"What! Handy's voice!"

"I mean to say, so dashed fluffy!"

"Well, I suppose you might describe it as being fluffy," agreed Reggie. "Thank goodness, we can't overtake him—that's one comfort!"

"Isn't she coming?" asked Archie anxiously. "Good gad! She's not going to forget the fares this time surely? Of course, I've seen a few priceless maidens in my time, but when it comes to absolute—"

"Fares, please!"

"Oh, I say!" breathed Archie, turning pale.

Reggie Pitt regarded him curiously.

"Feeling dizzy?" he asked.

"Absolutely," said Archie. "Dizzy? Don't be a frightful ass!" he added sternly. "I could ride on this jolly old thing all day, and never feel a quiver! I could—Eh? Oh, I mean—"

He broke off, and he gazed rather dazedly at the vision which had once again appeared beside him. Jessie was bare-headed and she was wearing a perfectly priceless jumper

thing. Her face was all fresh, and her smile was too devastating for words.

"Fares, please!" she said pleasantly.

"Eh? you mean fares?" breathed Archie. "Oh, rather! Absolutely! You want the good old fare, I take it?"

He dragged out a five-pound note, and stuffed it into Jessie's hand. For a moment his fingers came into contact with hers, and the contact sent a thrill through him.

"I'm awfully sorry," smiled Jessie. "I haven't change."

"Change?" repeated Archie, with a gulp. "You don't mean change? I mean to say, not absolutely? What rot! Good gad! I—I didn't mean that. At least, not exactly. Kindly take the whole beastly fiver."

"Please!" said Jessie, "I'm in a hurry."

"But, I mean, can't you waive the change?" asked Archie.

"You can't mean it!" said Jessie, looking at him curiously.

"I'll take a couple more rides, old chestnut!" said Archie in confusion. "I should say, old cherry! That is, of course, not! Of course not! I mean, the fact is—"

"I'll pay for him, miss," said Reggie, coming to the rescue.

"Thank you so much," said the girl.

She gave Archie another glance, evidently under the impression that he was touched somewhere. But Archie misunderstood that glance altogether. It had just a tinge of sympathy in it, and it looked to Archie like a heavenly light. He drooped back over his seat after the girl had gone, and hung there like a limp sock.

"I'm sure you're ill, Archie!" said Pitt. "Take this fiver, you lunatic! What's the idea of trying to spoil everything?"

But Archie wasn't listening. He had recovered a little of his composure and was watching Jessie with admiring eyes, as she tripped from passenger to passenger ahead.

The ride came to an end, and by this time there were a lot of people waiting—having been attracted by the fact that the boys were enjoying themselves so tremendously.

The juniors hopped off, and a fresh crowd surged on.

"Jolly good!" said Handforth, with satisfaction. "I vote we get on again after the next round, and then keep on doing it. It's bound to tell in the long run."

The roundabout swept off on another cruise, and Archie Glenthorne clung to his cat with a firm, resolute determination.



CHAPTER 10.

All For the Cause!

"SOMETHING," said Reggie Pitt, "is decidedly wrong with Archie."

"Where is he?"

asked Nipper.

"If you wait for the sky-blue cat to come

round, you'll spot him," replied Reggie. "I've tried to drag him off, but he wouldn't move. Said he loved it. And, for some reason, he seemed to be glad to get rid of me."

"He seems to be enjoying himself," said Nipper.

They watched Archie as he came into sight. The genial ass of the Remove was looking alert and expectant. He knew that the girl attendant came up from the rear, and he was waiting to hear her voice. The fact that he had nothing smaller than a fiver on him escaped his notice.

"It's strange, too," said Nipper, frowning.

"Significant," nodded Pitt.

"Archie's about the last fellow on earth to enjoy this kind of amusement," put in Tommy Watson. "He hates anything rowdy or noisy. You say you couldn't drag him off, Pitt?"

"I couldn't have hauled him off with a cable!" replied Reggie. "Of course, if he had been on the other side of the roundabout, the whole thing would be inexplicable. But as he's on that cat, I can understand it."

"Is he so fond of cats?" asked Nipper.

"I think he is fond of that girl!" said Reggie, grinning. "Don't whisper it, you chaps, but I've got an idea that Archie's smitten."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, it's too impossible!" chuckled Nipper. "Archie's a fearfully particular chap. He wouldn't be fascinated by a roundabout girl!"

"Have you seen her?" asked Pitt.

"No; I was on the other side."

"Then don't talk without your book, my lad," said Reggie. "Being a level-headed chap myself, I've sternly subdued the flutterings of my heart. But this particular girl is an absolute corker. One of the prettiest I've ever seen—and so jolly refined-looking, too. There she is—look! Now what about it?"

They had a full view of Jessie as she pulled herself round one of the brass uprights. She cut a very graceful figure as she balanced herself there, with her hair waving, and in her gay jumper and short pleated skirt she looked very charming indeed.

"This is indeed grave!" said Nipper solemnly. "My sons, Reggie is right! This girl appears to be a public danger! When they're as pretty as that they oughtn't to be allowed out!"

"I think we shall have to take action soon," said Reggie thoughtfully. "Archie's got no change on him, and he'll be in trouble."

Archie, sublimely forgetful of his changeless condition, was listening raptly to the sweet music of Jessie's voice. He felt that it was a decided blot on the scheme of things that she should come up from the rear. How much better if she approached from the other way. Then, of course, he could obtain



A wild and seething rage welled up like a flood within Handforth as he saw Archie Glenthorne appear from behind a neighbouring caravan. For the elegant Archie, carrying a pail of water, was prattling gaily to the pretty girl who walked by his side; and Handforth was jealous!

wonderful views of her as she trickled to and from between the other customers. As it was, he had to content himself with an admiration of the back of her head; and this, though perfectly priceless, was hardly as fascinating as the view of her devastatingly pretty face.

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie, jumping.

He had just caught sight of a small, unpleasant-looking infant three animals away from him. This infant—a child of about seven with a face littered with Hampstead rock—was absolutely facing him, and shoving forth the good old tongue. Absolutely revealing it to Archie in all its horror. To make things worse, the youngster was looking him straight in the eye and making mystic signs at him with a chunk of rock as long as a barber's pole. The spectacle completely upset Archie's system, and as Jessie herself appeared at that very moment before him, he simply regarded her with a dazed, glassy gaze.

"Fares, please!" smiled Jessie.

"Here we are again!" said Archie, getting a grip on himself with an effort. "I mean, fares, and all that business!"

He tore his gaze away from that rocky child, and the soothing effect of Jessie was

too wonderful for words. It poured through the good old tissues like a healing balm. His spirits recovered. He looked at Jessie tenderly, and pulled out that fiver again.

"Absolutely!" he said, handing it to her.

"Why, you're the boy who had no change last time," said Jessie.

"And let me assure you, dear old thing, I have no change this time," said Archie. "I don't want any change, and won't dashed well have any. Frightfully awkward stuff to bother with. I mean——"

"But I can't accept this five-pound note!" said the girl impatiently. "Aren't you feeling quite well?"

"No!" replied Archie truthfully. "I mean, of course, yes! What? When I see you I feel—— Eh? No, of course not! Where were we? Oh, about the old fiver? Rather!"

Jessie put it firmly back into his hand.

"You'll have to pay your fare later," she said.

Then she tripped off to the other riders, and Archie felt lost and forlorn. He had the slight consolation of watching Jessie as she continued her work. But he nearly fell off his feline steed when he observed that horrible child thrust his stick of rock absolutely into Jessie's face. He didn't know

that she had to put up with this sort of thing as a part of her duty.

"Good gad!" he murmured feebly.

He was aware of a peculiar, empty sensation at the pit of his stomach, and every time the cat jumped it got worse. The downward plunges were simply awful. But he clung to his seat. It was all for the good old cause. Nothing would shift him.

Just then the roundabout stopped, and Handforth shifted him.

Handforth was assisted by Nipper, Tommy Watson and Reggie Pitt. They hauled Archie off, and led him away.

"Did you pay your fare?" asked Pitt sternly.

"Well, the fact is— Odds whirlings and twistings!" mumbled Archie. "Where are we? The whole dashed scenery is revolving, I mean! Great gad! There's absolutely two of you, Handy!"

"Where?" asked Handforth with a start, glancing round.

"Absolutely next to you, laddie!" said Archie, staring in horror. "It's a frightfully serious thing to have one of you facing me, but when it comes to two, the old system ceases to function. I mean, one can have too much, if you grasp—"

"If you're trying to be insulting about my face, you'd better drop it!" roared Handforth.

"I'd like to, old boy—I'd absolutely love to!"

"Love to what?"

"Drop your face!" said Archie in anguish. "The fact is, I'm not feeling absolutely fit."

"You don't look fit," said Reggie. "Hold him tightly, you chaps. I'll go and pay that girl the sixpence. We mustn't let Archie go near her again. She's the cause of all this!"

Archie pulled himself together as though he had been stung.

"You—you don't mean to say— Pitt, dash you!" he shouted. "If there's any sixpence to be paid, I'm the laddie—"

He broke off, for Reggie had gone. He turned back to the others, and found Handforth eyeing him with stern accusation.

"You—you hopeless idiot!" said Handforth grimly. "You're in love!"

"Absolutely!" said Archie unguardedly. "I mean, absolutely not, dash you!"

CHAPTER 11.

Nothing Succeeds Like
Success!



HANDFORTH sniffed.

"We heard you the first time!" he said tartly.

"But, my dear old

raspberry—"

"It's no good you denying it," interrupted

Handforth. "You're in love! How else can you account for that mooney look in your eye?"

"Oh, I say! Not really? I mean, mooney—"

"Well, perhaps it's not mooney," said Handforth. "It's sippy!"

"Good gad! Sippy!" bleated Archie.

"Absolutely sippy!" said Handforth firmly. "Do you think I don't know the signs? I'm surprised at you, coming out here to Hampstead Heath to fall in love with—"

"Stop!" gasped Archie. "It's absolutely false, dash it! I mean, I've never been introduced to the dear young thing! Dash it, she's hardly said anything to me, except 'Fares, please!'"

"It doesn't sound like love to me," said Nipper, shaking his head.

"Well, I'm not going to have it!" said Handforth.

"Archie's got it—not you!" grinned Watson.

"I'm not going to put up with it, Archie," continued Handforth sternly. "Do you think I brought you out on a spree so that you could go falling in love with roundabout girls?"

"Brought me out?" repeated Archie dazedly. "Kindly take this disturbing thing away! Remove it, dash him! In another two frightful seconds he'll be telling somebody to get my pram!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Reggie Pitt came back.

"She gave me a lovely smile!" he said contentedly.

Archie looked at him in awe.

"Her lovely smile?" he repeated. "Laddies, I'm most frightfully sorry, but I've got to dash away. I've absolutely got to leave you, and—"

"Hold him!" said Nipper. "He's only going on that roundabout again!"

"Absolutely!" said Archie curtly.

"We'll teach you—"

"If it's all the same to you, Handy, old fright, I don't absolutely need teaching!" interrupted Archie. "Why, dash it, aren't we supposed to go on this roundabout? Isn't it the wheeze? Didn't we regard the whole thing as a sound investment? I mean, there was old Dorrie asking us to do this thing, and the dear old chappie nearly had tears in his eyes. We're not going to let him down, old tops!"

"There's something in what he says," agreed Pitt. "The fact is, Archie, we're all keen on carrying out the scheme, but it looks a bit too suspicious if we hang round here all the time. So we're going off for a bit, and then we're coming back at intervals. Some of the others have gone off already."

"I know they have," said Handforth anxiously. "The rotters! While my back was turned! We shan't see them again—"

"I think we shall," said Nipper. "They all promised me faithfully that they'd return within a quarter of an hour for another menagerie ride."

"Oh, they promised you?" asked Handforth.

"Yes, I——"

"And who do you think I am?" demanded Edward Oswald. "Isn't this my party? I'm the host, and you——"

"You weren't here, Handy," said Nipper diplomatically. "I think you were having a little chat with Church and McClure. Anyhow, I saw you shoving a squashy orange down Church's neck, and I thought you were rather too busy. I don't like to interrupt these private conferences."

Handforth coughed.

"That was nothing," he said hastily. "Church said I'd got a face like one of those animals in the menagerie——"

"Don't harrow us with the details," said Pitt, pained. "We're dealing with the question of Archie. We've got to look into this love-making business. It's a serious thing. Here we have a fine, healthy chap, in the prime of his youth, slithering helplessly into the quicksands of love!"

"You absolutely frightful ass!" said Archie wrathfully. "You frightfully absolute ass! You assfully abso—— I mean—— Dash, it, you're getting the old tongue twisted! This sort of thing makes a chappie go right off his stroke. Why, you fatheads, I haven't even been introduced to the sweet angel—— That is to say, the—the girl!"

"There's no doubt about it," said Pitt. "He's a goner!"

"If it comes to a question of an introduction, you needn't worry about that!" said Handforth tartly. "She's one of Weggs' crowd, and we've only got to find old Weggs, tell him that we're here at Dorrie's suggestion, and there you are!"

"Is that all we've got to do?" asked Nipper.

"Yes."

"And then there we are?"

"Of course," said Handforth. "There's nothing easier——"

"The easiest thing at the moment is to jump on this dangerous idiot, and squash him!" said Nipper. "Come on, all together! One—two—three!"

They leapt upon Handforth, and held him grimly.

"Hi!" he gasped. "What the——"

"You ass!" said Nipper sternly. "You forgetful idiot!"

Handforth struggled in vain.

"Is this the way to treat your host?" he gasped.

"It's the way to treat a lunatic!" replied Pitt. "Don't you realise that we mustn't let old Weggs know a thing about our interest in him?"

"Eh?"

"Don't you know that we're supposed to be just ordinary strangers?" demanded Nipper. "Dorrie doesn't want Weggs to know anything about our little game. He mustn't know that we're doing this on purpose."

Handforth looked astonished.

"By George, no!" he ejaculated. "I'd forgotten that! I suppose it would be a bit risky if we said anything to Weggs about Dorrie?"

"He jumps on Archie for being in love, and he's over three parts gone in lunacy himself!" said Pitt. "The sooner you realise that we've got to be cautious, Handy, the better. When you go on that roundabout next time you mustn't say an incautious word or do anything to spoil the game."

"I'll remember," said Handforth, in a subdued voice.

"You'd better!" said Nipper. "If Mr. Weggs finds out, and we find out that he's found out, we shall know who's done it. Then we shall smash you to pulp, Handy, and chuck you in the nearest pond. There's one along the Spaniards Road——"

"Chuck it!" said Handforth. "I can make a slip, I suppose, can't I? Let's go on the roundabout again. It's time now."

"We've got to keep Archie off," said Pitt. "It won't do—— Hallo! He's gone! Archie's gone! He must have slipped off while we were grabbing Handy. Well, we know where to look!"

They all stared at Weggs' roundabout, but this time they were wrong. Archie Glen-thorne was not to be seen. As a matter of fact, he had just thought of a rather sound idea, and he had dashed off to buy a box of chocolates. He vaguely remembered having heard somewhere that a box of chocolates is nearly as good as a formal introduction, and, after all, perhaps one didn't need to be so frightfully formal on a roundabout.

A good few of the St. Frank's fellows were sticking to the task, and the general effect was marked. Nothing succeeds like success, and the fact that the menagerie was repeatedly patronised by these boys had an immediate result. People were attracted on to the roundabout in spite of themselves, and things grew better and better.

Nipper had suggested the idea of the juniors going about in twos and threes in the neighbourhood of Mr. Weggs' outfit, and these little groups talked loudly and enthusiastically about the wonderful delights of that particular merry-go-round. They were overheard by hundreds of people in the crowds, as they pushed to and fro, and this simple little idea proved to be an amazingly successful advertisement.

Twenty-five per cent. of the people who heard made straight for the roundabout, and went on it. Whether they were thrilled or not remained open to question. But the very fact that the accommodation was strained to its limit caused other people to come clamouring round. Success brought success, and on a Bank Holiday people are not apt to think deeply. They saw these scores enjoying themselves, and they wanted to join in the fun. Already the juniors were responsible for a seventy-five per cent. increase in Mr. Weggs' takings. He was, in fact, doing a roaring trade.

CHAPTER 12.

Archie at it Again!



ARCHIE GLEN-
THORNE was
dismayed.

The roundabout had just slowed down, and he had scrambled wildly in order to get his cat. He had no intention of chancing one of the other animals, in case he got on one that was attended to by the wrong money-taker. This thought, indeed, caused him such dismay that he thrust it aside as some baleful menace. Nothing but the cat would please him.

But the cat was occupied, and he had to wait and watch, catching a glimpse of Jessie as she was whirled round. It was dizzy work, although Archie was now feeling recovered after his previous whirl. Not that he hadn't considered that point. Since close contact with Jessie was only to be obtained by getting on the roundabout, he made for the roundabout as a piece of steel will make for a magnet.

There was a noticeable difference at the super-affair on the next pitch, too. Winch's colossal show was not doing anything like the business it had been. The motor-cars were half deserted. The crowd, in fact, had transferred its attentions to the humbler outfit.

It was a perfectly natural process.

New crowds were coming up all the time, to make place for the old ones which were going. And when they found the motor-cars half empty, and the galloping menagerie packed at every spin, they naturally concluded that the motor-cars were a wash-out. And this sort of thing, now it was fairly started, was liable to go on automatically. The St. Frank's fellows had started the ball rolling, and they were feeling highly pleased with themselves. They had met with much greater success than they had ever expected.

Mr. Weggs himself was puzzled, as well as being amazed. The whole thing was a mystery to him. He had anticipated wretched business, and here he was, doing such a roaring trade that he was perfectly justified in shortening the journeys by a minute. Again he was feeling happy.

Archie's chance came at last.

While two people were scrambling for the grizzly bear on the outside, Archie forced his way to the cat, and leapt on its back. But he made no mistake this time. He sat back to front.

That this procedure might excite comment did not interest him. He was quite beyond that. He only knew that by making this manoeuvre he would now be facing Jessie, as she came along collecting the fares. And that was a consideration of the highest importance. Archie's wooing was, in many ways, awkward. It bristled with difficulties.

After all, it is certainly a Herculean task

to get on affectionate terms with a young lady whose whole time is filled up with collecting fares on a packed roundabout.

"Ere, young man," said a voice, "you're sittin' wrong way round!"

Archie started, but took no notice.

"Talkin' to you, young 'un!" said the voice, and something prodded Archie sharply in the ribs.

He glanced round and saw a man sitting on the bear.

"Are you addressing me?" asked Archie frigidly.

"Better looked aht!" said the man. "They're just startin'!"

"I'll be frightfully obliged if you'll keep your dashed digits out of the old rib department," said Archie sternly. "I'm sitting this way because—because— If it comes to that, dash it, what the dickens does it matter to you how I'm sitting?"

"Oh, all right—ave your own way!" said the man.

They started, and Archie was now faced with a new embarrassment—one which he had not counted upon at all. As he was sitting back to front, he naturally faced an array of riders who followed behind. And, to his consternation, they seemed to be concentrating their entire gaze upon him. He rather regretted having taken the tip from that rock-plastered child. It wasn't half such a good bet as he had supposed. The dashed thing had lots of flaws in it.

However, he brightened up when Jessie appeared. She was taking the fares as briskly as ever, and Archie watched her fascinatedly. There was something so frightfully priceless about the way in which her hair floated in the good old breeze. She was upon him almost before he realised it, and he fumbled in his jacket and produced a large box of chocolates.

"What-ho!" he said, tendering the chocolates.

Jessie looked at him curiously.

"Why, it's you again!" she said, smiling.

"Absolutely on the good old spot!" agreed Archie, brightly. "Here we are, I mean, and here you are, as it were, and here I am, what?"

"Sixpence, please," said the girl, always businesslike.

"Oh, yes," said Archie, confused, "you mean sixpence! One of those jolly little silver things! Those frightful little chap-pies which get lost at the bottom of your pocket. I know!" said Archie, nodding cheerily. "You mean a sixpence!"

"I don't want this parcel," said Jessie, handing it back. "I want—"

"Oh, but you've got to have it!" interrupted Archie firmly. "Absolutely without qualifications! A pound of the good old choicest!"

"Oh, dear!" said the girl. "I shall never get the fares collected if you keep me like this! Please do be sensible!"

"I should clout him over the ear, missie!" said the man, sitting on the bear.

"Good gad" gasped Archie. "You don't mean— Kindly be good enough to mind

your own frightful business!" exclaimed Archie indignantly. "I'm just having a little chat with this young lady, and——"

"I must go—really!" cried Jessie. "Pay me later!"

She hurried off. She had many fares to collect yet, and the roundabout was already beginning to slow down. Archie sat there, looking forlorn and hopeless. This was beginning to wear him down. He simply couldn't get two words with the sweet thing!

Standing near by, on the grass, a group of juniors were watching him, and as he allowed his weary gaze to wander outwards, he saw their grinning faces. They broke into a yell of laughter as he passed by.

Archie started so violently that he slipped off the cat, fell backwards, and turned a somersault to the outer step. He was sent hurtling off, and he landed in a disordered heap at the very feet of Handforth & Co.



CHAPTER 13.

Catching!

ARCHIE sat up, dusty and dazed.

"We've been watching you!" said Handforth severely.

"Don't chip the poor chap now—lend him a hand!" said Church. "Come on, Archie! Stand up, old son!"

"You're not hurt," said McClure.

Archie groaned as he was helped up.

"I rather think, laddie, that I'm the blighter to know whether I'm hurt or not!" he said hoarsely. "I'm not only hurt, but positively mangled. Did the thing back-fire, or what?"

"When a chap's in love, he imagines all sorts of things," said Church gently. "We saw you making eyes at that girl."

"Which girl?" said Handforth.

"My hat, he hasn't seen her!" grinned McClure. "He's been watching Archie all this time, and——"

"If I was watching Archie, how could I be looking at the girl!" demanded Handforth. "I've a good mind to go on this thing and tick her off! She's no right to lead Archie on, and make him more dotty than he really is!"

Archie bristled.

"You insulting fright!" he said indignantly. "You frightful insult! The dear girl never led me on at all. In fact, it's dashed hard to get a word in edgeways, what with that cat jumping up and down all the time, and a frightful blighter next door to me butting in with his remarks! Why, she wouldn't even accept this box of chocolates!"

"Which box of chocolates?" asked Church.

"Odds disasters! I must have lost the dashed thing!" said Archie in alarm.

"Oh, so it's got to chocolates, has it?" asked Handforth. "Did you hear that, you chaps? He's actually giving chocolates to

the girl! Take him away while I get aboard and have a word with her! She's got to be stopped at this game!"

He hurried off, and Archie tried to run after him. But Church and McClure held him firm. He struggled desperately.

"Let me go, you poisonous traitors!" he shouted.

"Chuck it, Archie!" grinned Church. "No need for you to get worried. You know what Handy is—he'll only speak to the wrong girl, or something. Besides, you're all dusty, and you can't go about like this. We'll take you and brush you down."

Archie succumbed.

"Perhaps you're right, laddies," he said with a sigh. "But I don't like Handforth barging in, you know, and shoving himself into the presence of——"

"Oh, leave him alone!" said McClure. "He'll be all right."

They took Archie off, and Handforth, in the meantime, found an empty seat, taking care to be on the right side. By some curious chance, he had hitherto had his fares collected by a man. He wasn't going to let this happen again.

Archie was one of his guests—a member of his own party—and it was a bit thick when girl attendants got familiar with him. They needed to be seriously told about it.

So Handforth, with this fixed motive in his mind, sat and waited.

The roundabout went on its way, and in due course came the cheery "Fares, please!" from the energetic Jessie.

"There she is!" muttered Handforth.

He waited, making his face as stern as he possibly could. It wasn't any good looking cheerful at this minx, and a smile would possibly do nothing but encourage her. A stern, unbending attitude was the stuff to give her.

"Fares, please!" said Jessie brightly.

She had arrived next to Handforth, and he gazed at her with all that aggressiveness for which he was famous. The girl, glancing up into his face, recoiled slightly.

"Oh!" she murmured, startled.

She couldn't possibly understand why he was glaring at her so ferociously. She looked again, holding out her hand for the fare. And now she saw a remarkable difference.

Edward Oswald's expression had become rather dazed. He was looking at Jessie wonderingly, and he was aware that his heart was thumping like a sledge-hammer.

"I—I say!" he babbled. "Frightfully sorry!"

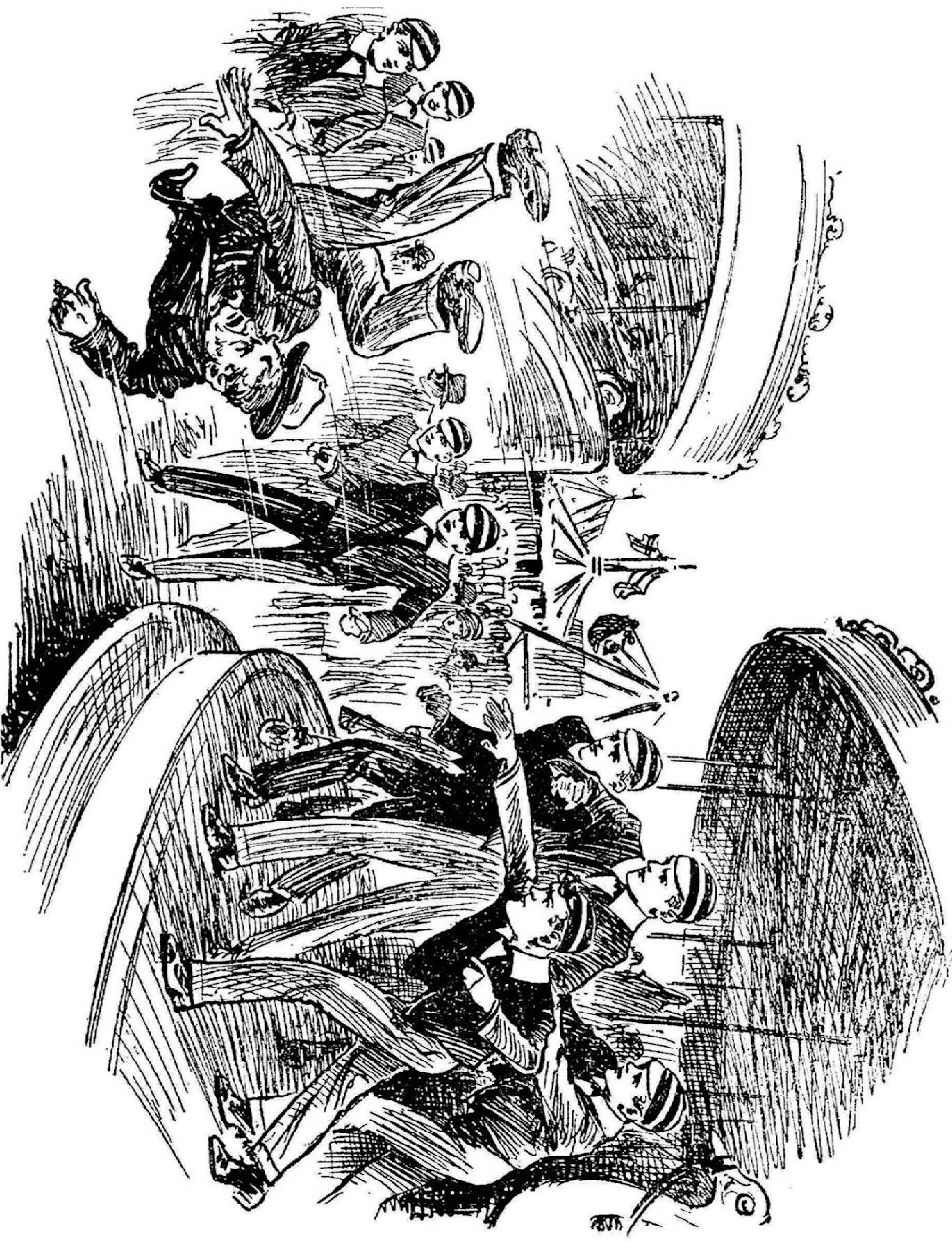
"Sixpence, please," said Jessie.

"I mean, I'm sorry because I gave you such an awful look just now," said Handforth penitently. "I didn't know. I thought you were just—that is to say, Archie didn't say——"

He broke off, realising that she couldn't possibly be interested in Archie.

Somehow he managed to get a sixpence out of his pocket, and he paid it over. He watched Jessie fascinatedly. Deep down

“Biff him out!” yelled the juniors. Next moment Mr. Winch was grabbed, hauled to the edge of the platform, and pitched h—long off the roundabout.



within him he was aware of a growing admiration for Archie Glenthorne. By George, the chap knew what he had been doing!

And then, as Jessie went away, Handforth's admiration slowly turned to jealousy. He watched Jessie with wondering eyes. He had seen some pretty girls in his time, but this one fairly took the biscuit. She was so jolly dainty, and her hair looked so—

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Handforth.

The realisation came over him that he had failed in his self-imposed duty. He knew that he was smitten. He had had these experiences before, and they always hit him like a blow. He had once fallen in love with a waitress at Wembley. The effects were generally devastating. One minute Handforth was all right, and the next minute he was a goner.

He even forgot Archie Glenthorne in his intense determination to sit where he was for the rest of the day. It wasn't exactly what he could have desired, but she would come round for fares every time, and if business were slack he might be able to get a few words with her.

Handforth had gone on that roundabout firm and resolute, but he now sat there with all his famous aggressiveness evaporated. His eyes were feverish with anxiety, and he even wondered if it would be possible to get off his animal and jump on another one further round, so that he could pay his fare twice. He felt that he wanted to have another jolly good look at her. One close minute had been marvellous—so what would the next be?

While Handforth was in this turmoil, Archie Glenthorne was standing in the centre of a circle of juniors, looking dignified and cold.

He was now looking almost his usual spick-and-span self, for a number of the juniors had taken him to a quiet portion of the Heath and given him a thorough, not to say vigorous, dusting down. In fact, they had been so vigorous in their methods that Archie was forced to protest in no uncertain voice. And during the process the juniors had chipped him unmercifully over his "love" affair.

At first the elegant genial ass had treated them with a dignified scorn; then, after a particularly witty, but quite good-natured, remark from Reggie Pitt, he had become annoyed. The juniors thought the remark was especially humorous, and laughed loudly. Not so Archie. He entirely failed to see the humour, and showed his annoyance by rushing at Reggie with the obvious intention of giving him a piece of his mind. He was prevented in time by the other grinning juniors, who, to cure the elegant Archie

thoroughly, gave him a gentle bumping there and then.

This had the effect of causing Archie to sober down, and, after being dusted down afresh, the party had strolled round to Weggs' Menagerie again. They were all rather anxious to know how Handforth had fared in his "ticking off" business. And Archie was now speaking.

"If you want to know, you inquisitive blighters, I regard the girl with absolute admiration," he said defiantly.



"Biff him out!" yelled the juniors. No the platform, and pi

"My hat!" said Fullwood. "He admits he's in love!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In love with a giddy side-show girl?"

Archie clenched his fists.

"Any more of these dashed insulting comments, dash you, and I'll smash you!" he said fiercely. "I don't mind telling you that I'm absolutely biffed in the old heart department. I took one look at the sweet thing.

and—zing! There you are! The whole damage was done! A priceless girl, and you can all go and eat coke!

"I say!" shouted Pitt. "Look at old Handy!"

The roundabout had stopped, and Hand-



inch was grabbed, hauled to the edge of the roundabout.

Handforth was sitting grimly on one of the animals. Evidently he had made up his mind to remain there. But there was a certain something about his expression which could not be mistaken. He didn't exactly look silly, but his eyes were dreamy, and his rugged features had become softly relaxed.

"Oh, my hat!" said Church. "He went on there to tell that girl not to interfere with Archie—and I'm jiggered if he hasn't caught

the same fever! He's in love! Can't you see that sloppy look?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth, unconscious of the hilarity he was causing, straightened his tie and carefully placed a sixpence in his waistcoat pocket as the roundabout whirled off once more. This was a stunning device. He meant to search all his other pockets first so that he could be looking at Jessie in the meantime. Then he would find that sixpence at the last minute. Alas for this masterly piece of strategy!

"Fares, please!"

Handforth jumped round, staring. A perfectly hideous-looking specimen of manhood was holding out a grubby hand for the fare!

CHAPTER 14.

Handforth Learns Something!



GREAT SCOTT!" breathed Handforth thickly.

He stared at the unfortunate attendant as though he were some loathsome reptile. Here he had been making all sorts of plans to see Jessie again—had even framed several choice sentences in his mind—and instead of the girl, this blot splashed itself before his vision.

"Fares, please!" said the man briskly. "Urry up, young gent!"

Handforth still stared at him. He dimly recognised him as a fellow he had seen loitering about near the traction-engine which supplied the show with power. As a matter of fact, he was one of Mr. Weggs' most faithful employees, and was quite a good-looking young man, with a cheery, friendly smile. But Handforth saw none of these good points. To him this man was a perfectly useless encumbrance.

"Deaf, young gent?" said the young fellow.

"What do you want?" demanded Handforth, still glaring.

"Sixpence."

"Sixpence?"

"Come off it!" grinned the other. "'Aven't you bin on this 'ere roundabout eight or nine times already? Do you think I haven't spotted you? What's the game? I want the fare."

"The fare?"

"Lumme," said the collector, "what's this—a new game?"

"Look here," said Handforth, "where's the girl?"

"Buck up, there, Jimmy!" sang out somebody from the centre.

"Come along, young 'un!" urged Jimmy. "I shall get the sack if you don't pay up. I can't stand 'ere——"

"Where's that girl?" demanded Handforth fiercely. "I've been sitting here all this time, expecting to see her, and now you blow up! Go away! I hate the sight of you!"

"Well, I'm busted!" said Jimmy. "If you ain't a caution! And, look 'ere, don't you start no——" He broke off, apparently struck by the significance of Handforth's recent words. "Oh, so that's the game, is it?" he said darkly. "You're after Miss Jessie!"

"Jessie!" said Handforth. "By George, that's a nice name!"

"You'd best forgit it!" snapped Jimmy wrathfully. "Any funny business, my lad, an' you gets something in the neck you don't bargain for! The boss don't allow nobody to interfere with 'is niece! Come along with that sixpence or there might be trouble. I don't want to be nasty, seein' that you're a good customer, but there's a limit!"

Jimmy felt aggrieved. He was one of the best-tempered fellows in the world, but this sort of thing had to be stopped. It wasn't the first time that youngsters had made themselves objectionable to young Miss Jessie—whom all of Mr. Weggs' employees respected highly.

Handforth handed over his sixpence mechanically, and drifted off the roundabout so carelessly that he failed to notice that it had not stopped. He sat down with a violent thud, and made no effort to rise.

"Jessie!" he murmured. "What a name!"

When he looked up he found that Church, McClure, and several other juniors were gathering round. They had been watching him for some little time, and that far-away look was still on his face.

"What's that you were saying about Jessie?" asked Church.

"It's her name!" said Handforth tenderly.

"What!"

"Whose name?"

"Jessie!" said Edward Oswald. "One of the loveliest names—Eh? What the—— Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Handy's in love again!"

Handforth leapt to his feet as though the ground had become red-hot.

"Who—who said that?" he roared fiercely.

"Said what?"

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"Who said that I'm in—in——" Handforth nearly choked over the word. "Who said that I'm in love?" he blurted out.

"I did!" replied Nipper coolly.

"Then I'm going to smash you!"

There was a chorus of laughs.

"Better smash me, too, Handy, because I say the same thing," grinned Reggie Pitt. "Come on, take the two of us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better still, the whole dozen!" said Fullwood. "Come on, you chaps—let's say it all together, so that he can hear it!"

He held up his finger, and then dropped it.

"Poor old Handy's in love!" chanted the chorus.

The leader of Study D backed away, beaten.

"You're dotty!" he gasped. "I—I went on that roundabout to see the girl and—and give her a piece of my mind!"

"You were too liberal, Handy—you evidently gave her the lot!" said Pitt. "Anyhow, you don't seem to have much mind left!"

Handforth opened his mouth, uttered a curious gurgling sound, and then fled. It always made him terribly self-conscious if the other fellows talked about his being in love. Under such conditions, all his aggressiveness vanished. His fists, usually so hard and muscular, seemed to change to lumps of dough. His only course was to flee.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In the distance he heard an echo of the laughter, and he didn't stop until he had got right on the other side of the roundabout, where numbers of side-shows were dotted about. Just beyond, down the grassy dip, were some caravans, in a sort of back-water.

"Oh, my goodness!" murmured Handforth huskily.

He stood still, his heart beating rapidly.

This sort of thing always affected him deeply. He didn't know how he would face the fellows again. They would chip him until further orders. And, the worst of it was, his thoughts regarding Jessie were just as tumultuous as ever.

He was suddenly filled with dark, grim suspicions. Archie had vanished somewhere—and now Jessie had gone! What did it mean? What possible construction could be put on this double disappearance? To Handforth's mind the thing was suspicious.

He remembered that encounter on the roundabout. Just as he had been expecting Jessie, that—that beastly man had come up! And the beastly man hadn't given him any information regarding the girl's whereabouts! Where had she gone? And why had she gone? Where was Archie? Where could they both——

"By Jove!" exclaimed Handforth, with a start.

He had suddenly noted that one of the caravans had a name printed over the top of the door, and it seemed to stand out and hit him in the face. "Chris. Weggs." So this was Mr. Weggs' caravan! Handforth

jumped. And that beastly fellow had told him that Jessie was Mr. Weggs' niece!

Handforth suddenly felt warm all over. He remembered that it was well after mid-day, and it was quite likely that Mr. Weggs' niece had gone into this very caravan for dinner!

He racked his brain for some excuse. How could he go to the door? What reason could he offer for sauntering carelessly up, and—

Again his train of thought was shattered, and this time he fairly goggled. A wild and seething rage welled up like a flood within him. Archie Glenthorne had just appeared from behind a neighbouring caravan. The elegant Archie was carrying a pail of water, and he was prattling gaily to Miss Jessie, who walked by his side!

CHAPTER 15.

Trouble!



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ANDFORTH could hardly believe his eyes. This thing was too staggering to take in all at once.

Handforth had thought it good to sit on that roundabout, with a chance of speaking to Jessie when she came round to collect the fares.

But here was Archie, carrying pails of water for her, and talking to her as though he had known her for years! Handforth wasn't naturally a jealous fellow, but just now he went almost green. If Handforth had been a bull, Archie was the red flag.

"By George!" he choked. "I'll—I'll—"

He started forward, but pulled himself up by a supreme effort. After all, he couldn't very well reduce Archie to mincemeat before Jessie's very eyes; common sense suggested that the girl wouldn't accept this sort of thing as a good recommendation. So he pulled himself up and waited, glaring balefully.

He forgot that this was Easter Monday, that he was on Hampstead Heath, surrounded by thousands of merry holiday-makers. He forgot that he and his chums had come here to help Mr. Weggs by stealth. He only knew that Jessie was a jolly ripping girl, and that Archie Glenthorne had scraped up an acquaintance, and was actually chatting and laughing with her.

As for Archie, his happiness was supreme.

Wandering about, he had met Jessie quite by accident as she had been running to her uncle's caravan, after being relieved from duty by Jimmy. On a day like this—and with business booming so well—there was not much time for meals, but they had to eat.

Archie had watched Jessie go into the caravan like a fellow in a dream. He, too, guessed the truth—for he had not failed to notice the name over the door. Then Jessie had come out with a pail, and had suddenly

vanished again. Archie had come to himself with a start, and he rushed off in pursuit. And when he came upon the girl struggling with a full pail of water, nervousness vanished, and gallantry came to the fore.

"Oh, I say!" he said quickly. "Pray let me?"

"Why, you're the boy with the chocolates!" smiled Jessie, setting the pail down. "I'm Mr. Weggs' niece, you know. I couldn't possibly speak to you while I was collecting fares. There wasn't time."

"Oh, rather!" said Archie, with rising confidence.

He marvelled that the girl should condescend to speak to him like this. He didn't know that she was frankly curious, and that she wanted to ask a question that had been troubling her for some time.

"Do you belong to a big school?" she said, glancing at Archie's cap.

"Oh, rather!" said Archie, wondering why she should smile at him like this. "St. Frank's, you know."

"St. Frank's?"

"A big school down in Sussex."

"I'm afraid I haven't heard of it," confessed Jessie, shaking her head.

Archie started back in amazement.

"Good gad!" he ejaculated. "Never heard of St. Frank's! Oh, really! Oh, I say! You can't mean that, dear old thing!"

"I do," laughed Jessie. "But don't look so shocked."

"Oh, rather not!" said Archie hastily. "I was only thinking what a frightful amount of people must be in ignorance of St. Frank's, don't you know. It sort of makes a chappie think. I mean, we're not so dashed important, after all, if you see what I mean. I expect this sort of life is somewhat jolly different from living in houses, and working in the City, and what not and so forth!"

"I really can't stop," smiled Jessie. "I just wanted to ask you about the school. There seemed to be so many of you about this morning."

"Oh, rather," said Archie. "Swarms!"

"I thought so."

"Absolutely swarms!" declared Archie. "I mean, you've only to look across the old Heath and you'll see the dear old souls dotted here and there, and strolling hither and thither, and coming back and going again. You know what I mean, all over the place."

Archie gave Jessie the impression that half the people on Hampstead Heath had come from St. Frank's College. At any rate, it afforded her a good explanation of the persistent ubiquity of the St. Frank's juniors during the morning. She wasn't to know that they were solely confined to a hundred yards' radius.

"I'm so glad to have had a word with you," she said brightly. "I don't know your name, but—"

"Oh, I say!" gasped Archie with remorse. "I'd absolutely forgotten that we haven't been introduced. Dashed careless of me."

and all that, but you know how it is. Chappie meets a girl, and the girl say 'What-ho!' or words to that effect, and he forgets all about the good old intro."

"I think you've still forgotten it," laughed Jessie.

"Oh, my name's Glenthorne," said Archie. "Absolutely, Glenthorne. That is to say, Archie. Archibald, to be absolutely exact, but all the good old lads call me Archie."

Jessie laughed merrily, amused by his way of speaking.

"Well, Archie, let's make a move," she said.

She reached down for the pail, but Archie got it first, and insisted upon carrying it. And so they went to the caravan, chatting with perfect friendliness. Archie delivered up the pail at the caravan door.

"Thanks!" said Jessie.

"Don't mention it, dear old girl!" Archie hastened to say. "See you on the jolly old roundabout, later, what?"

"Yes, I shall be out in ten minutes," said the girl. "But you're surely not going on again? Aren't you sick of it?"

"Why, dear old soul, it's the most marvellous thing that's ever been invented," said Archie, with conviction. "I'm absolutely going to live on that dashed roundabout for the rest of the day!"

She tripped in, and Archie turned away, happy and inwardly excited. It wasn't often that he was affected in this way. But there was something about Jessie which had intrigued him. She was so free and easy, so ladylike and refined, and so—

"Put up your hands!" said an angry voice.

A shadow fell in front of him, and he looked up with a start. He was astonished to see Handforth. But it wasn't the usual Handforth. This was a kind of wild edition, with tousled hair, feverish eyes, and burning cheeks. Archie had often seen Handforth in one of his tempers, but seldom had he seen

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him in exactly this kind of temper. It was different, somehow.

"Dear old man, what's wrong?" asked Archie.

"Put up your hands, blow you!" breathed Handforth thickly.

"Good gad! You don't want to fight me?" gasped Archie.

"Fight you!" panted Handforth. "I'm going to smash you into matchwood. I'm going to pulp you up into a jelly! You—you rotter! What do you mean by talking to that girl?"

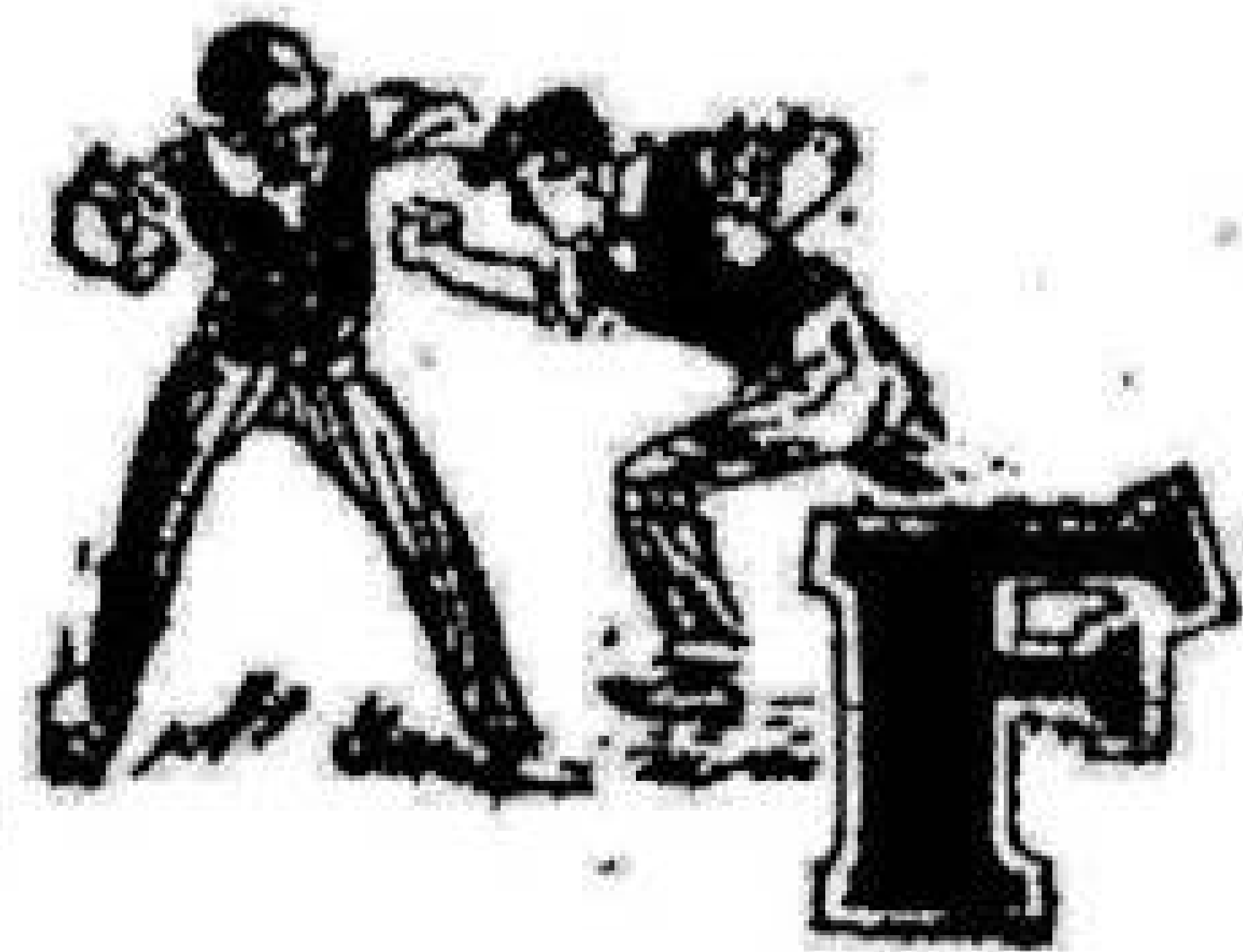
Archie drew himself up frigidly.

"Am I to understand, you frightful chunk of frightfulness, that you've been absolutely watching me?" he asked. "I mean to say, I don't see what dashed business——"

"If anybody's going to speak to that girl, it's me!" said Handforth tensely. "You've tried to cut me out, you rotter, and I'm going to clear you out of my path!"

The truth flashed upon Archie like a lightning flash.

"Odds life!" he ejaculated, staring. "You're absolutely in love, too!"



CHAPTER 16.

A Little Scrap.

FOR a moment they gazed at one another like a couple of cats about to fly at each other's throat. It is astonishing what love can do—even when it is only the calf love of callow youth! As a rule, Archie Glenthorne and Handforth were the cheeriest of friends. They had only met this girl this morning, and now they were the bitterest enemies!

"Never you mind whether I'm in love with her!" shouted Handforth. "I'm jolly well not going to let you talk to her!"

"Why, you frightful chump, I saw her first!" said Archie indignantly.

This was such an obvious truth that Handforth ignored it.

"I'm not going to let you speak to her!" he repeated.

"I saw her first," insisted Archie, "and not only that, blight you, we're introduced! Absolutely introduced! If you dare to address the young lady, I'll find myself compelled to have a good old dash at you!"

"You'll do what?"

"Have a dash at you, dash you!"

"Put 'em up!" said Handforth curtly.

He felt that the affair had got beyond the point where mere conversation sufficed. It was time for action. And Handforth was ever ready to supply action when it was of a warlike type. He lunged out, and Archie only just dodged in the nick of time.

"Then you mean it, by gad!" panted the Pride of the Glenthornes.

"Yes, I do!"

"In that case, laddie it'll give me a slice

of pleasure to thrash you," said Archie, with cold directness. "I don't like doing it, but I'm not going to take this sort of thing lying down."

Archie had all the advantage since he was perfectly cool, while Handforth was wildly excited. And the next minute, forgetful of their public surroundings, they were at a hammer and tongs.

Crash! Biff! Thud!

Two of Handforth's blows went wide, and another caught Archie in the chest. But the dandy of the Remove knew as much about boxing as Handforth did, and when it came to a real fight, he was all there. He got home one beautiful sloss on Edward Oswald's left eye that caused Handforth to rock back on his heels.

"Take that, blow you!" panted Archie. "And this, to say nothing of that! Good gad! There's a sort of limit."

Handforth came on again, vaguely aware of an inward amazement. He had meant to reduce Archie to a limp heap in the first round, but it seemed to him that Archie was made of iron, with leather joints. Handforth could do nothing with him.

It was fortunate that they were conducting this informal scrap in that little backwater—and more fortunate still that a group of Removites happened to spot them before the general public took an interest. Nipper, Fullwood, and a number of others came running up, alarmed and dismayed.

Church and McClure were there, too.

"It's Handy!" yelled Church.

"Scrapping with Archie!" ejaculated McClure, in amazement.

"And by what I can see of it, Archie's winning!" said Nipper. "Come on—we can't allow this! We mustn't let Handy fight one of his own guests. What's he thinking about? Part them, you chaps!"

The juniors swooped down, and dragged the combatants apart.

"Lemme get at him!" breathed Handforth thickly.

"Absolutely!" shouted Archie. "Let the blighter get at me! I mean, dash you, let me get at the blighter! What's the idea of stopping the old combat just when it was waxing into a ripe and juicy stage? I was thrashing him!"

"Great Scott!" said Pitt. "I believe you were!"

"You fatheads!" howled Handforth. "I was slaughtering him!"

"Well, it's got to stop," said Nipper. "Do you want the police to get hold of you, you fatheads? This isn't the Triangle at St. Frank's. You can't do this sort of thing in public!"

"Odds realisation and eye-openers!" ejaculated Archie. "When you come to put it like that, laddie, you're absolutely right! But Handy biffed at me and I biffed at Handy, and there it was."

"Did you start this, Handy?" asked McClure, aghast.

"Yes, I did!" growled Handforth.

"Started fighting your guest!" shouted McClure.

"Eh? Oh, my hat!" gasped Handforth.

"I—I'd forgotten! I'm sorry, Archie! I—I didn't mean——"

"That's all right, old strawberry!" said Archie. "I suppose we've been a couple of frightful chumps, when you come to turn it this way, and look at it that way. Absolute chumps, I mean."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves!" said Nipper severely.

"Rats!" said Handforth. "Here's my fist, Archie."

Archie shook hands.

"Good!" he said. "So that's wiped out, what?"

"Of course it is!" said Handforth gruffly. "And as long as you don't speak to my girl again—I—I mean the girl that——"

"You dashed bounder!" roared Archie. "She's mine!"

"Rats!" hooted Handforth. "Put 'em up!"

"Absolutely!" yelled Archie.

They tried to tear themselves free.

"My hat! They're at it again!" exclaimed Nipper, a grin coming over his features. "This isn't an ordinary scrap—it's a duel! The winner takes the girl!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Archie and Handy fighting over a girl!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The juniors yelled with uncontrollable laughter. The situation struck them as being excruciatingly funny. At first they had assumed that the pair had fallen out over something quite different, but now that they knew the truth they fairly howled. This ridicule had the effect of bringing the quarrel to an abrupt finish again. It was quite impossible to go on fighting while everybody was laughing their heads off.

Just then the caravan door opened and Mr. Christopher Weggs came out. Disturbed in the middle of his hasty dinner, he was full of curiosity. He wanted to know what all the noise was about.

"Is anything the matter?" he asked, coming down the caravan steps, and joining the juniors. "Ah, I see! A little quarrel, eh? A little disagreement. H'm! Perhaps I'd better not make too many inquiries. No, perhaps not!"

He had caught sight of Handforth's eye, and his own eyes were twinkling.

"It's nothing, Mr. Weggs," said Nipper. "Only two of our chaps having a bit of fun. I suppose you're Mr. Weggs?"

"I am," replied the showman, "I am. And let me take this opportunity of thanking you boys for patronising my roundabout so handsomely. I think I have to thank you quite a lot for the good business of this morning. I'm sure you've helped a great deal."

"Oh, it was nothing," said Nipper carelessly. "Well, come on, you chaps—let's be going."

They realised that it might be as well to clear off before Mr. Weggs asked too many close questions. It seemed almost that he was beginning to smell a rat now.

Jessie was in the doorway of the caravan, and her eyes were twinkling.

"Come in, uncle," she called. "And I think you'd better ask those two boys to come in, too. They look as if they need attending to!"



CHAPTER 17.

A Staggering Shock!

MR. CHRISTOPHER WEGGS smiled.

"To be sure!" he said. "Now that I come to look at them, they are a trifle war-worn. Come in, boys, come in! Jessie seems to know you. She's been talking quite a lot about you in particular," he added turning his twinkling eyes upon Archie Glenthorne.

"Not—not absolutely?" asked Archie faintly. "I mean, not really?"

"Come along in and——"

But at this point a dramatic interruption occurred. It was one that took Mr. Weggs almost off his feet—one which caused the St. Frank's fellows to gather round in a fever of sudden excitement and anger, although they made no attempt to interfere.

Sam, the engine driver, came running up at the double.

He was evidently making for his employer's caravan, but came to an abrupt halt as he saw Mr. Weggs outside. The man was white with alarm, and so breathless that he could hardly speak; his excitement led him to address Mr. Weggs out there, in public.

"Boss," he panted desperately, "they've pinched the show!"

"What?" ejaculated Mr. Weggs, with a start.

"Winch and his men!" gasped Sam. "They've pinched the show!"

For a moment Mr. Weggs stood perfectly still. The news had hit him like a thunderbolt. In fact, he couldn't believe it. It was so ridiculous—so outrageously impossible. Simon Winch had no claim whatever to the property until to-morrow—and not even then, if the mortgage were paid off. The thing was outrageous.

Mr. Weggs had just been feeling happy, too—so happy, indeed, that he had confidentially informed Jessie that his anxiety over the morrow was almost at an end. By the way things were going now, he felt sure that he would have more than enough money at the end of the day.

And now, like a bomb explosion, this shock! The St. Frank's fellows seemed rooted to the spot, too. They knew all the facts, but they weren't supposed to. So they couldn't interfere. But they had heard, and they knew



Handforth was jealous because Archie had got on so well with the pretty girl on the roundabout, and now matters had reached such a stage that a fight was imminent. "It will give me a slice of pleasure to thrash you!" said Archie, with cold directness, and he started taking off his coat.

that something had gone wrong with the works. Lord Dorrimore hadn't mentioned any such possibility as this.

"Winch!" said Mr. Weggs, in a strange, dulled voice. "Winch has done what?"

"Him and his men have chucked us out, boss!" shouted Sam. "They came up before we could know what their game was. They chucked us out, and we were done!"

"It's absurd!" choked Mr. Weggs. "It's—it's utterly insane! Winch couldn't do a thing like that! He's no right! He's no authority! Good heavens! Has the man had the nerve to— Where is he, Sam?" added Mr. Weggs fiercely. "Is Mr. Winch there himself?"

"On my bloomin' engine!" said Sam, nearly crying with mortification. "An' he's got his men taking the money!"

"Oh, uncle!" cried Jessie. "What does it mean?"

"I don't know—I don't know!"

"But you said that to-morrow——"

"I know!" interrupted Mr. Weggs. "It's a mistake! It's all wrong! Winch can't keep this thing up! I'll see him!"

He hurried away, his former contented face full of anxiety and trouble. He had not said anything to Jessie, but he suspected that Mr. Simon Winch was a man of unscrupulous methods, and he had had a secret dread of something untoward happening for some weeks past. But at last he had tried to think that he had done Winch an injustice.

And now, at the eleventh hour, Simon Winch had taken action.

Perhaps the bigger showman would not have done so but for the activities of the St. Frank's fellows, so it would seem that Dorrie's good offices had really precipitated a crisis. All unconsciously, Handforth and his party had caused Mr. Simon Winch to foreclose prematurely.

For an hour or two, Winch had been getting furious. He had been laughing up his sleeve nearly all the morning previous to that. He had expected Weggs' roundabout to operate with practically empty seats, and at first this had actually been the case.

Then the change had come. Winch took no particular notice of the schoolboys. If he had been asked, he wouldn't have known

that there were any schoolboys there. He only knew that the public was patronising his insignificant rival in the most unaccountable way. But when his own business had become affected, his chagrin had turned to rage. While his stupendous affair turned round half empty, Weggs' ridiculous animals were packed! Winch had seen his business being taken away—robbed from him by this man whom he had determined to break! Why, he had occupied this very pitch so that he could be certain of his prey on the morrow!

And the knowledge that Weggs would probably get the money with which to pay off the mortgage had caused the bigger showman to take drastic action.

Mr. Christopher Weggs ran up, and found the roundabout just stopping. Four strange men were on it, ready to take the money. Two other strange men were at the engine, in the middle. Simon Winch stood there, too—a huge, coarse-looking brute of a man, with a red, bloated face. Mr. Weggs was a midget compared to him.

"What does this mean?" demanded Mr. Weggs, as he crossed the platform and dropped into the well beyond, where a certain amount of privacy could be obtained. "Winch, what have you done?"

Simon Winch removed a big cigar from his mouth.

"You've got eyes, haven't you?" he asked jeeringly.

"You scoundrel!" fumed Mr. Weggs. "You've no right to place your men on my property! Tell them to leave at once!"

"Easy—easy!" interrupted Winch. "You'd better be careful what you call me, Chris Weggs! For two pins, I'll have you thrown out of here!"

"Thrown out!" shouted Mr. Weggs. "But this is mine—mine!"

"You're a liar!" sneered Winch. "It's mine! Possession is nine points of the law, isn't it?"

"But I've got until to-morrow," said Mr. Weggs, his face as pale as chalk, one hand pressed to his side. "I've got until to-morrow, Winch! You know that as well as I do!"

"I know that I've took possession of this show, an' I know that I'm going to keep it!" retorted Simon Winch.

"But you can't—you can't!" said the showman hoarsely. "You can't do that, Winch!"

"I'm doin' it, ain't I?"

"I'll have you thrown off!" shouted Mr. Weggs, a momentary spasm having passed. "You can't act like this, you swindler! I've got until to-morrow—by law! I'll fetch the police! Do you hear me? I'll fetch the police!"

Winch looked down contemptuously at the unhappy little man. It seemed so futile for Mr. Weggs to be putting up any sort of fight. After all, Winch had his men there, and the whole roundabout was in their possession. Mr. Weggs was like a child against them.

"Oh, so you're going to fetch the police, are you?" said Simon Winch contemptuously. "Go ahead, then! I won't stop you. An' what good do you think the police are going to do?"

"They'll—they'll arrest you for—for——"

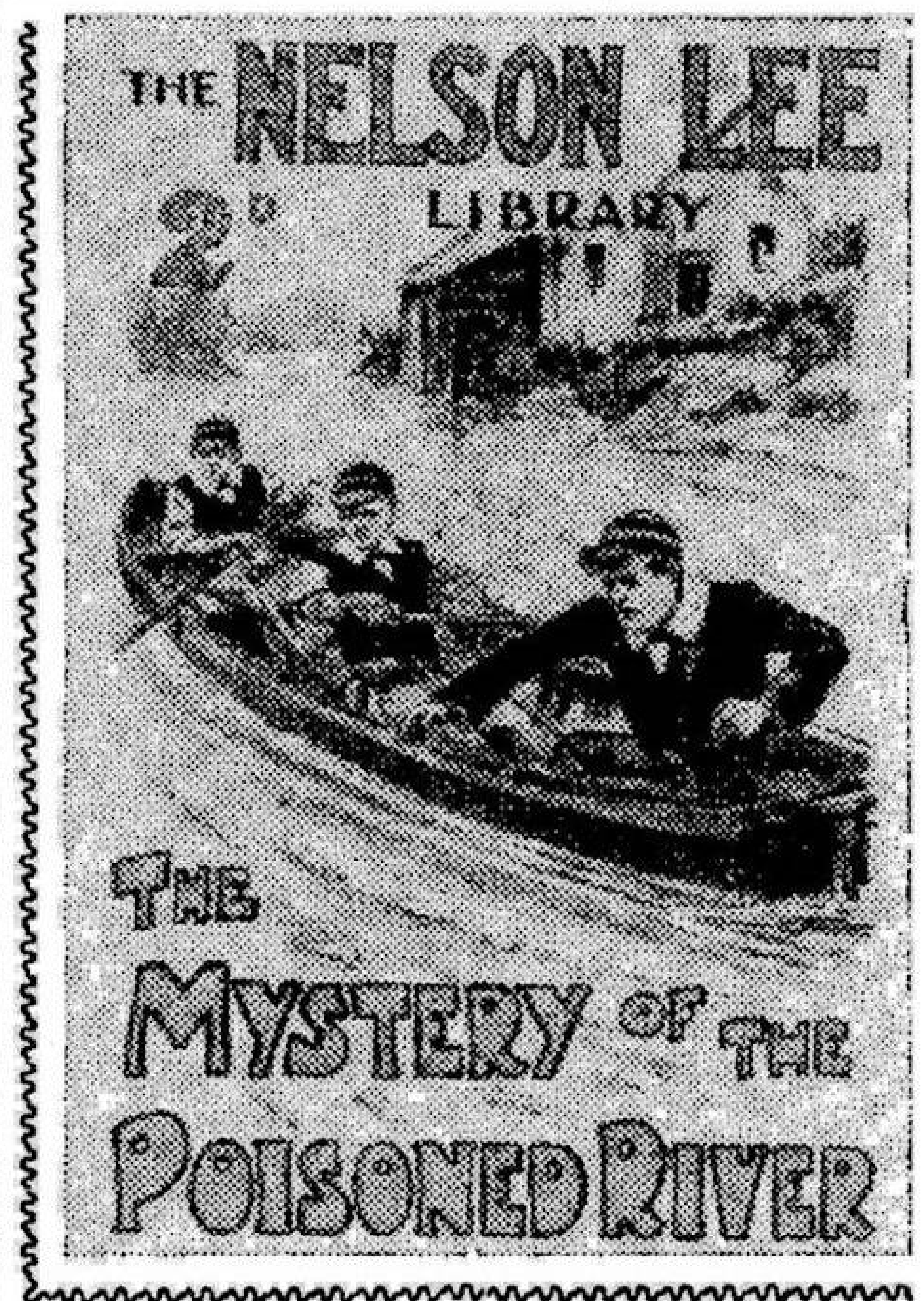
"Well," jeered Winch, "for what?"

Mr. Weggs paused, as though he realised his utter helplessness.

"You'll fetch a lot of police!" continued Simon Winch. "Have you forgotten that it's Bank Holiday? Do you want to cause a riot on the Heath? An' what can you do if the police do come? They won't believe your word any more than mine!"

Mr. Weggs looked up, with fierce but hopeless anger.

NEXT WEDNESDAY! ~~~~~



"I've got proofs!" he panted. "I've got the documents——"

"Might as well show them to your grandmother!" interrupted the big man. "What do you think a policeman can do? He's no scholar! He's no judge, as you know, Weggs. The only thing you can do is to prosecute."

"I will—I will!" shouted Mr. Weggs hoarsely.

"You can't do anything until to-morrow—and then it'll be too late!" laughed Simon Winch. "I shall have the law on my side then, Chris. So this is what I'm goin' to do to you!"

And he snapped his fingers mockingly in Mr. Christopher Weggs' face.



CHAPTER 18.

Something to Get
Wild About!

I T was a significant gesture.

"I snap my fingers at you—see?" continued Winch.

"That's what I do. You can do just what you like, Chris Weggs. But I'm in possession, an' I'm runnin' this show."

Mr. Weggs seemed to choke.

"You—you infernal rogue!" he exclaimed,

"THE MYSTERY OF THE POISONED RIVER!"

A river full of dead fish!

St. Frank's juniors turning yellow!

Bank bandits!!!

Those are the three principal ingredients in next week's yarn of mystery, adventure and fun, and served up by Edwy Searles Brooks, the result is one of the best stories that has ever appeared in the Old Paper.

There is also a spot of detective work, too, with Nelson Lee figuring prominently. Thus this yarn will appeal to readers of all tastes. Tell your pals about it—and look out for it Next Wednesday!

"THE AIR PATROL!"

The next instalment of this grand serial is as thrilling as ever!

ORDER IN ADVANCE!

his voice almost a whisper. "You contemptible cur! You know I'm weak—you know I've got no men with me to beat yours!"

"Get out!" snarled Winch abruptly.

"You—you——"

"Get out, or I'll have you thrown out!"

Mr. Weggs was no coward, but he knew that his rival meant what he said. And, truth to tell, Mr. Weggs was on the point of collapse. The shock of this thing had crumpled him up.

He went back to his caravan, a broken man.

The St. Frank's fellows were still hanging about, and they saw Mr. Weggs come by. They watched him mount the caravan steps,

dragging his feet like an old man of ninety. He passed inside, a bowed, bent and care-worn figure.

"Uncle!" breathed Jessie compassionately.

He didn't say a word, but sat down on one of the chairs in the roomy caravan, and stared straight before him. He was looking like a man in a daze. His face was leaden, and his eyes were dulled. His breathing was heavy and irregular.

"Uncle!" repeated Jessie, dropping on her knees before him in her alarm. "Oh, uncle, what does it mean? You told me they couldn't take anything until to-morrow!"

Mr. Weggs raised a listless hand, and patted her head.

"They can't, child—they can't," he muttered wearily.

"But they've done it, uncle!" cried Jessie. "I went up and saw. Winch has got four or five of his men there——"

"They can't do it, but they have done it!" interrupted Mr. Weggs dully. "I didn't deceive you, girlie. I didn't deceive you. I've got until to-morrow by law."

"Oh, but—but——"

"Winch has taken the law into his own hands," muttered Mr. Weggs. "He's going to hold my show until to-morrow, and then he'll crush me. I can't do anything, Jessie, girl. I'm not a fighter. I can't do anything against those hounds. It's my own fault—every bit of it. I shouldn't have gone to Winch, in the first place. I ought to have known."

He lay back in his chair, his eyes half closed.

"I ought to have known!" he repeated forlornly. "And now it's too late. They've got the old show, and everything's ended for me!"

Rap, rap, rap!

"Oh, go away!" cried Jessie in anguish, the tears welling into her eyes. "Please—please go away!"

The door opened, and Nipper stood on the threshold, with Handforth and many of the other St. Frank's fellows behind him. They were all looking excited and furious. Handforth had some difficulty in holding himself in check. Nipper was about the only cool one.

"Can we come in?" asked Nipper quietly. Jessie sprang to her feet.

"Oh, how dare you!" she panted. "Can't you see that this is private?"

"Yes, but——"

"My uncle isn't well," said the girl huskily. "You mustn't come here now! You're only strangers, after all——"

"Hardly!" interrupted Nipper quickly. "It may seem an intrusion, but we've got a reason. We know about the mortgage—and about Winch."

Mr. Weggs turned in his chair, staring.

"You know?" he said.

"Yes," replied Nipper. "I'm afraid we've been playing a little trick on you, Mr. Weggs. We didn't mean to tell you, but I understand that Simon Winch has seized your property

unlawfully. If you'll give us permission, we'll throw him and his men out!"

Mr. Weggs rose to his feet, trembling.

"But—but how do you know?" he asked, in amazement.

"We've been riding on your roundabout all the morning on purpose to boost the business," said Nipper quickly. "We did a little advertising, too, and helped things along."

"I—I don't understand!" muttered the old showman.

"Oh," whispered Jessie, "I'm sorry I spoke —"

"It wasn't our idea," put in Handforth. "Lord Dorrimore put us up to it. You met him yesterday afternoon, on the St. Albans road—"

"Lord Dorrimore?" repeated Mr. Weggs, his eyes opening wide. "He—he didn't tell me—"

"He wouldn't," interrupted Nipper. "But Dorrie's one of the finest sportsmen alive. He told us that you wouldn't accept any money from him, so he suggested this little scheme. He told us in confidence, of course, and we should never have let you know if Winch hadn't thrown your men off your property."

"Good gracious!" said Mr. Weggs, thoroughly startled. "Then—then all that business we did this morning was false?"

"It was genuine," said Nipper. "And, what's more, Mr. Weggs, you're going to do plenty more business yet. The evening's your best time. Has Winch any right—legally—to seize your show?"

Mr. Weggs' eyes flashed.

"No right whatever!" he replied fiercely. "Not an atom of right! Not a trace! Not a fragment! That scoundrel ought to be put in prison! His mortgage does not become due until to-morrow, and if I pay the last instalment I'm out of his clutches. I could pay it, too—I shall have the money!"

He seemed suddenly to crumple up, all his fire gone.

"But what's the use?" he added drearily. "The cur is in possession, and it's of no use to call the police. I can't do anything—"

"Yes, but we can!" shouted Handforth.

"You!"

"With your permission, Mr. Weggs, we'll go along and pitch those brutes out!" said Nipper. "You needn't worry about our success. There are about forty of us, all told."

The old showman looked at them with fresh hope.

"But would you?" he asked. "I've no right to ask this of you, young gentlemen! I can't drag you into my troubles!"

"We don't want to be dragged in!" said Handforth. "It was Nipper's idea to come here and ask permission! I wanted to chuck the brutes out straight away!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Let's go and do it!"

"Rather!"

"Absolutely swift-o!"

The juniors were thoroughly enraged. The sight of Mr. Christopher Weggs' broken figure had aroused them to fever pitch.

After all they had done, he was to be cheated! They couldn't quite see the hang of it.

"Well?" asked Nipper. "Shall we do it, Mr. Weggs? I've asked you, because I want to be on the safe side. If Winch has acted unlawfully, then we'll soon kick him out, neck and crop!"

"If—if you would!" muttered Mr. Weggs feverishly. "If you would, my boys, it would be the saving of me. But it is not fair to ask you. It's not right for you to—"

"That's all right, sir," interrupted Nipper cheerily. "Winch took possession of your property unlawfully, and by force—so we'll throw him out by force!"

CHAPTER 19.

A Surprise For Simon Winch!



B

BEFORE Mr. Weggs could say anything further, the boys had withdrawn.

"Can—can they mean it?" muttered the old showman, looking at his niece with burning eyes. "Can they mean it, Jessie? Why should they do this for me?"

"Because they can see the injustice of the whole thing," replied Jessie. "Oh, I knew they were all right, those boys! I could see it all the time. I was sure of it, uncle!"

"But—but they might get themselves into trouble," muttered Mr. Weggs anxiously. "Winch is a brute—and there might possibly be a big row. Imagine it, Jessie! The police coming, and some of those boys becoming involved! I've got to stop them!"

"No, uncle—no!" she insisted. "They've offered to do it and it's our only chance. They'll be all right."

The St. Frank's fellows would have been heartened if they could have heard her. But they were outside, making plans for the swift attack. If the truth must be told, they were by no means averse to this exciting diversion. It was generally felt that the affair would make a nice wind-up for the afternoon. In fact, it would make it the most enjoyable Easter Monday they had ever spent.

"Come on—it's no good messing about!" said Handforth briskly. "We've got to pitch those rotters out, so let's get on with the job."

"Hear, hear!"

"Don't forget they're taking money all the time!"

"By George, yes!" roared Handforth.

"They're robbers!"

"Absolute highwaymen, dash it!"

"They're all that," agreed Nipper. "But we don't want to cause a riot. Look out, Church! Get hold of Handy, Mac! We've got to be careful!"

"Careful?" repeated Handforth. "Why?"

"Because it won't do the show any good if we pitch those men out publicly," replied Nipper quickly. "Don't you understand? The whole place is crowded—packed! You know how crowds gather if there's a bit of excitement. There'll be an awful inferno if we do anything rash."

"But isn't there going to be a fight?" asked Handforth fiercely.

"Not if we can help it."

"Then you'r mad," said Edward Oswald in disgust.

"Nipper's quite right, Handy," said Reggie Pitt. "The quieter we can conduct this eviction, the better, for Mr. Weggs. And we're working in his interest, don't forget."

"What do you propose then?"

"Why, that we form ourselves into a number of groups," replied Nipper, who was always a strategist as well as a fighter. "We'll spot our men, and crowd round them. Each rotter will have about eight of us round him, and we'll point out that unless he clears quietly he'll be pulverised. Don't you think it'll be the best way?"

"Absolutely," said Archie. "Let's agree to it, laddies."

"Hear, hear!"

"No fighting, Handy, unless we're forced."

Handforth shrugged his shoulders, beaten.

"Oh, all right," he said. "Have your giddy w... But we'll see how every-
g will go wrong. I maintain that there's
nothing to equal a genuine scrap. It's the
only safe way."

But not many of the others took much notice of him. Direct fighting was the only method in certain cases, but this was obviously a time for caution. Hampstead Heath was packed with the holiday crowd, and at the first sign of any brawling, the crowds would come surging round. And the police would come surging round, too.

Five minutes later, the groups of St. Frank's fellows were waiting round the "menagerie." And when the thing stopped, and the people got off, the juniors siezed their chance. They all mounted the platform at the same time. But they acted very differently from the ordinary pleasure-goers. Instead of getting into their seats, they took definite action. Each group surrounded one of the attendants. Handforth and Nipper, leading a full dozen, leapt straight down into the central well, where Mr. Simon Winch and two of his men were talking. The whole thing was done so swiftly that the crowds hardly noticed it.

Winch had just been congratulating himself.

Congratulating himself because he felt the presence of the constantly moving crowds made him safe. He knew that Mr. Weggs had no men capable of battling with him, and he knew that Weggs wouldn't dare to precipitate a riot, in any case. He would

be equally reluctant to go to the police, for the simple reason that the police could do nothing.

But the St. Frank's fellows could!

They were an unknown quantity to Simon Winch—a quantity that he had never reckoned with.

While the outer groups were hustling the attendants away—a comparatively simple task, for the men were taken by surprise, and forced off—Nipper and his immediate followers surrounded Simon Winch completely.

"What the thunder——" began the showman.

"Mr. Winch?" said Nipper curtly.

"You infernal young busybody!" roared Mr. Winch. "Get out of here! This part isn't for the public——"

"We're not the public!" shouted Handforth. "We've come here to chuck you out!"

"You've come here to *what?*" bellowed Winch.

"It's no good trying your bluff with us, Mr. Winch, we know your little game," said Nipper coolly. "We've had it from Mr. Weggs that you have no lawful right here, and we give you one minute to leave."

Simon Winch was staggered.

A minute before he had been gloating. And now these schoolboys were threatening to upset everything. It was an unheard-of complication. Winch simply didn't know what to do. He was flabbergasted.

But he certainly wasn't going to surrender.

"Get out!" he snarled.

Nipper grinned.

"That doesn't cut much ice, Mr. Winch," he said. "Your four men have been removed already so you needn't expect much help from them. Do you prefer to walk out of this quietly, or shall we carry you?"

Simon Winch recovered some of his wits. He—the great showman, who owned four or five complete fairs—he, being ordered about by a parcel of cheeky schoolboys! There was only one point which gave him grave uneasiness. He knew he had no right here, and he had a feeling that his bluff had failed. He felt the ground very unsafe beneath him.

Instead of a weakly old rival to deal with, he had a formidable number of virile, determined schoolboys!



CHAPTER 20.

Many Happy Returns!

"W E'RE waiting, Mr. Winch, said Nipper suggestively.

"You can wait!" snarled Winch. "By

thunder! Do you think I am going to be

intimidated by a gang of young hooligans—"

"Steady!" snapped Handforth. "Your minute's up! Come on, you chaps—never mind the crowd! Out with him!"

"Hurrah!"

"Grab him!"

"Biff him out!"

There was no holding them now. Mr. Winch, before he could utter another word, was simply hurled over. A dozen pairs of hands grabbed him, hauled him to the platform, and sent him pitching headlong off the roundabout. He was a heavy man and he hit the grass with a terrific thud.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Winch sat up, dusty and dazed.

"Awfully sorry, Mr. Winch!" sang out Pitt. "Hope we didn't make you dusty!"

"It's only our playful way!" yelled Handforth.

"We love a little rough stuff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Winch picked himself up and bolted. Without any question, he bolted. It was a most undignified proceeding, considering what a big man he was, but it seemed to him that the neighbourhood of Weggs' Menagerie was exceedingly unhealthy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now for the others!" roared Handforth.

He and Church and McClure turned back, but they halted in disgust. Mr. Winch's other two myrmidons had followed the example of their boss. It was so much easier to run for it while they were safe.

"It's all right—it's all right!" shouted Nipper, addressing the crowd which had come swelling up. "Nothing to get excited about. We've just had a little trouble with somebody. The show will be going again in two minutes. Come on, you chaps—let's get off here!"

Nipper had spotted Sam, and he ran up to him.

"It's all clear!" he panted. "Get the engine going! Where are the others? If you're quick, the whole incident will be over in two ticks, and there won't be any commotion."

Sam was quick.

He got the organ blaring again in next to no time, and the two attendants shouted to the people to step up. As it happened, the whole affair had served as an excellent advertisement, and more crowds flocked on to the roundabout.

Within five minutes everything seemed normal.

"Well, that's that!" said Nipper, with satisfaction. "I'll tell you what we'll do now. As long as the crowds are swelling up nicely, we'll keep off—but we'll form a sort of guard all round. And if Winch and his men come back, they'll find us ready."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's the way to dish the beast!"

And so, at last, peace came. Mr. Weggs continued to do a roaring business. His success continued, for the crowd consistently fol-

lowed the example of those ahead of them.

Mr. Weggs himself came over to the spot where Nipper and Pitt were standing with a little group.

"I don't know how to thank you, boys," said Mr. Weggs gratefully.

"In that case, we're all satisfied," smiled Nipper. "What we did was nothing. In fact, we rather enjoyed it."

"It may have been nothing to you, my good young gentlemen, but it means everything to me," said Mr. Weggs. "Somehow, it makes me realise how many good friends we have in the world without knowing it. You had no reason to assist me like this—"

"Mr. Weggs, I can assure you that we've thoroughly enjoyed ourselves," said Nipper rather uncomfortably. "It's been one of the jolliest Easter Mondays we've ever spent, too. It was Handforth's party—he's the fellow with the big voice."

"Ah, a fine boy," said Mr. Weggs. "I rather think he's a little struck on my Jessie—"

"By the way," said Pitt. "Where's Handy now?"

"Goodness knows!"

"And where's Archie?"

Nipper turned to Mr. Weggs.

"Can you tell us where your niece is?" he asked.

"Well, I think she's in the caravan, preparing tea," replied Mr. Weggs.

The juniors looked at one another.

"I think we can risk it ten minutes," said Nipper. "I don't think old Winch will try any more of his tricks. In fact, I rather fancy he's had a stomach-full. Do you mind if we pay a call on Miss Jessie, sir?"

"Good gracious, my boys, it will be an honour," declared Mr. Weggs happily.

He was still in a kind of dream, and he shook his head as he watched the juniors going.

"Where should I have been without them?" he murmured. "And now, with this business, I've almost taken enough money to clear the debt! In another hour—perhaps less—"

And while he ruminated, the juniors arrived at the caravan, and looked in.

"Well, of all the nerve!" said Nipper indignantly.

"Just in time, laddies, for a cup of the merry old India-and-Ceylon!" said Archie invitingly. "How's everything?"

The juniors stared into the caravan even harder. There were four people within. Jessie, radiant and smiling, was pouring out tea for Archie Glenthorpe, Edward Oswald Handforth, and Lord Dorrimore.

"I thought I'd pop in, you know," said his lordship apologetically.

"Why, you old fraud!" shouted Nipper.

"I know it—so you needn't tell me!" grinned Dorrie. "Well, I've heard all about the little adventures. You youngsters seem to have been doin' some good, sound work. Are you sorry that you came to Hampstead Heath for the Bank Holiday?"

"Rather not, sir!"

"We've had a ripping time!"

"It was a wonderful idea of yours, Dorrie!"

"You see, brains always tell!" said his lordship dryly. "This master scheme occurred to me last night—but I must admit that there were one or two complications which I didn't foresee. Another case of brains tellin', Miss Jessie. You wouldn't believe it to look at them, but these youngsters are the most celebrated set of young fighters——"

"Dry up, Dorrie!"

"Don't give us away!"

But Jessie had formed her own opinion of the St. Frank's fellows—and it was an opinion which would have rather startled them, could they have known it. They would have been greatly embarrassed.

Half an hour later Mr. Christopher Weggs came in, his face glowing, his eyes shining happily. He was waving a paper.

"It's paid, Jessie, girl!" he exclaimed. "The instant I had taken enough money, I went straight to Winch, and paid the scoundrel. Now we're safe—safe! And we've got to thank these good people."

So, when the St. Frank's fellows went off in the dusk, with Lord Dorrimore among them, they felt very contented. They had spent a good day, and there was a pleasant evening ahead of them.

For once, Archie and Handforth were hobnobbing. It was hard to imagine that they had been fighting less than three hours earlier.

"A jolly nice girl," said Handforth enthusiastically. "But after all, when I think of Irene——"

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "I mean to say, Jessie is an absolute stunner—a good old sportsman of the first order. But then, don't you know, there's Marjorie——"

"I know!" said Handforth confidentially.

And if Jessie's ears were burning at that moment, it is quite safe to say that the ears of Irene Manners and Marjorie Temple, of the Moor View School, were burning, too!

(Next week the juniors are back at St. Frank's again, and they find themselves involved in a most remarkable mystery. The title of this grand yarn is "The Mystery of the Poisoned River!" and it's a yarn you'll all enjoy. Don't miss it.)

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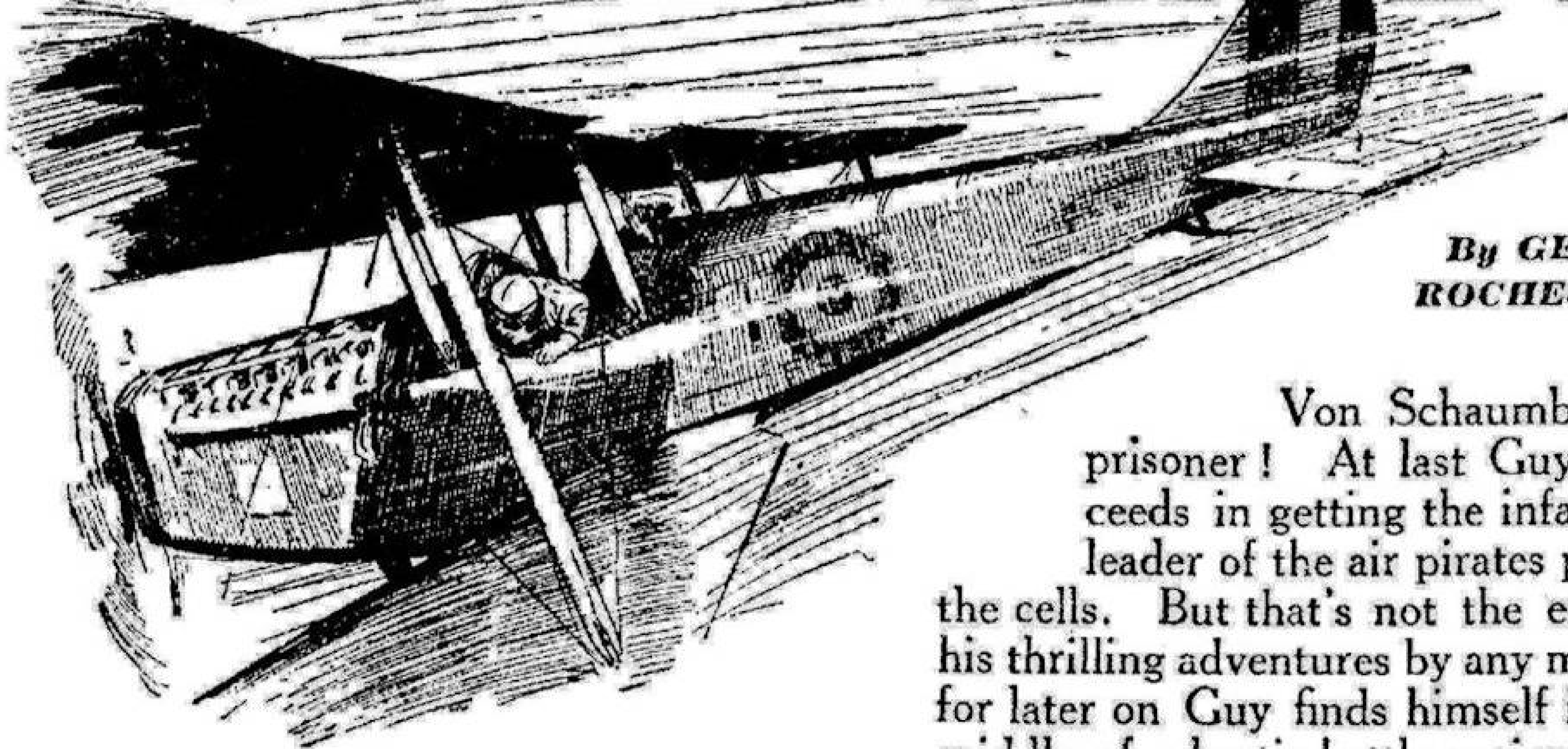


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THE AIR PATROL!



By **GEO. E. ROCHESTER**

Von Schaumberg a prisoner! At last Guy succeeds in getting the infamous leader of the air pirates put in the cells. But that's not the end of his thrilling adventures by any means, for later on Guy finds himself in the middle of a hectic battle against Von Schaumberg's ruthless air pirates!

WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENED:

GUY HOWARD, youngest and most intrepid "scout" in the Atlantic Rangers—whose duty it is to guard the air routes between Britain and America—is attached to Aerodrome D, one of the six huge floating aerodromes placed across the Atlantic Ocean. Just recently the big bullion and passenger-carrying air liners have been attacked by air pirates, whose leader is **VON SCHAUMBERG**. The headquarters of the pirates is unknown. Guy has sworn to exterminate them, and Von Schaumberg, on his part, has vowed vengeance against Guy for killing one of his confederates. Guy obtains a roving commission, and sets out to discover the pirates' headquarters. On the way he is met by four of Schaumberg's fighting

planes, and in the resulting battle Guy disposes of two of them, and forces a third to land on the water, while the remaining plane escapes. The young ranger then thinks of a daring idea. He changes places with the pilot of the machine that has landed, undamaged, and follows the air pirate who has escaped to Von Schaumberg's headquarters. Nobody sees through Guy's imposture until he suddenly whips the handcuffs on the pirate leader's hands. Then, at the point of the revolver, the ranger takes Von Schaumberg to a waiting seaplane. A number of men come rushing up to rescue their leader, but Guy shouts: "Back, you dogs. Back, or your leader dies!"

(Now read on.)

The Whaler!

"**B**ACK, you dogs! Back, or your leader dies!"

As Guy roared the words, the men who had come rushing out of the cave hesitated.

Perhaps, even then, they would have risked a shot at the ranger, but the chances of hitting Von Schaumberg were too great. And Von Schaumberg knew it, for his great, bull-like voice roared:

"Stop, you fools! Stop!"

The men stood impotent, whilst their leader mounted to the cockpit, Guy's gun pressed against his back. The huge bulk of Von Schaumberg almost filled the cockpit, but the ranger squeezed in and his hand groped for the switch.

And it was then that Von Schaumberg's voice roared:

"Vorsetzen, you'll follow! You'll reach us at dawn—bring every mach—"

The remainder of the sentence was drowned in the sudden shattering roar of the engine. The seaplane forged slowly ahead then, swinging away from the jetty, was swallowed up in the darkness as it tore across the water for the take-off.

Guy knew only too well why Von Schaumberg had submitted comparatively quietly once he had realised that the ranger was determined either to take him or kill him.

His great heavy bulk would have a deadening effect on the speed of the small seaplane, and lighter machines following would have little difficulty in overhauling him when once daylight came.

Even now Vorsetzen and the remainder of Von Schaumberg's squadron might be

taking the air in pursuit. The chances were that they would expect the ranger to fly southwards towards the shipping routes.

But Guy had no such intention. For one thing, he was none too sure how long his petrol would last him, for his tank had not been refilled since leaving the "Guillemot."

At one thousand feet he banked till the compass needle was flickering at due west. This course would take him to the coast of Greenland. The fog had lifted by now and the night was clear and starry.

Von Schaumberg, pressed against the side of the cockpit, had sense enough to know that any hostile move on his part might send the machine spinning seawards out of control. And that would mean certain death for him, handcuffed as he was.

Hackneyed it may be, but none the less true, is the old adage which says that whilst there's life there's hope. And Von Schaumberg was clinging to life, hoping against hope that Vorzetzen would not fail him.

Guy, cramped over his controls, paid little heed to his prisoner. He was watching his speedometer and dashboard watch; and keeping a wary eye on pressure and temperature gauges. A forced landing now would ruin everything.

For an hour and a half he flew, at a speed of one hundred and forty-five miles per hour. Then below him he saw a thin, ragged line of white. It was waves, breaking on a lonely and desolate shore. It was the mainland.

He had taken care to note the definite location of Von Schaumberg's base. It lay approximately two hundred and twenty miles from the mainland. Swinging southwards, Guy followed the coast-line for another twenty minutes. Then below him he saw a few scattered lights.

Throttling down, he dived, and, landing on the water, ran in towards the shore. Closing his throttle till his propeller was barely ticking over, he sent a stentorian hail across the water.

"Ahoy!"

He saw dark forms on the beach launching a small boat, and waited patiently whilst it crept towards him, propelled by strokes of two pairs of oars.

"What place is this?" he shouted, leaning over the fuselage as the boat bumped against his port float and the rowers shipped their oars.

"Nevinsha, mister!" replied a hoarse voice.

"Where's the nearest wireless station?"

"At Vladmir, seventy miles south'ards of here," was the reply.

"Right. Thanks. I'm going to take-off. Get your boat clear of my backwash."

"You listen to me, Howard, you dog——" snarled Von Schaumberg.

Fear was again laying icy fingers on his heart. He had not been expecting this move on the part of the ranger. But Guy cut short the words by opening up his engine with a roar.

Thirty minutes later, flying at five hundred feet, the ranger saw below him, a few miles ahead, the twinkling lights of the wooden water-front of Vladmir. Gliding down, Guy ran his seaplane close in under the lee of a stout timbered whaling vessel riding at anchor. As he switched off his engine, a tousled head appeared above the bulwarks and a voice drawled in good, honest Scotch:

"An' whit may ye be wantin', ma mannie?"

"What ship are you?" demanded Guy.

"Weel noo," replied the lazy voice, "as far as A ken, we're reegeestered as th' Pride o' Macbride, an' we're fra' Dundee."

"Right, Scotty!" laughed Guy. "Is your skipper aboard?"

"Oh, aye! Ye wantin' him, like?"

"Yes. I have a prisoner here, and——"

"Eh? Ye've git whit?"

"I've got a prisoner!"

"Oh, aye, a preesoner—oh, aye! A'll tell t'owd man!"

There was blank amazement in Scotty's voice as, two minutes later, he prodded Captain Hector Mactavish, the skipper of the Pride o' Macbride, into wakefulness.

"A crazy loon's droppit oot o' th' skee!" he informed that worthy individual. "But he dos'na look like a copper tae me——"

"What the dickens do you mean by waking me up at this time of night to listen to your confounded poetry?" roared the master of the whaler. "Don't you know I've just turned in and we sail at eight bells? I'll——"

"Man, man!" wailed Scotty. "Dinna fash ye'sel! It's no poetry A'm tellin' ye! There's a laddie ootboards yonder, wi' a fleein' machine, an' he's git a preesoner wi him in th' fleein' machine, an' he's——"

But Captain Hector Mactavish, after one long, searching look at Scotty's face, had bounded out of his bunk and was already half way up the deck ladder, struggling into his heavily-lined sou'wester as he went.

"What the devil's this yarn that second mate of mine's telling me?" he roared, peering down over the bulwarks at Guy and Von Schaumberg in the cockpit of the seaplane.



The men came rushing out of the cave, revolvers in their hands. In spite of Guy, they would probably have risked a shot at the ranger—but the chances of hitting Von Schaumberg were too great.

"I'm Howard of the Atlantic Rangers!" replied Guy. "I have a prisoner here, and I require assistance from the master of this vessel!"

"Jumpin' jiminy!" gasped the skipper, then turned and bellowed for his crew.

They came tumbling out of the fo'c'sle, where they had been snatching a brief sleep before starting out for the whaling grounds.

Captain Mactavish was alert enough now. Strong hands hauled Von Schaumberg on deck, and, after seeing to the safe mooring of the seaplane to the whaler, Guy followed the skipper to his cabin, where Von Schaumberg had already been taken by two burly seamen.

Wireless!

ONCE Captain Mactavish got the brief facts from Guy, he expressed his utmost willingness to assist the boy all he could.

Just one word he spoke to the sullen Von Schaumberg, hunched in a chair, and it was a biting word, utterly unprintable.

"But you look about all in, lad!" he said kindly, his eyes on the drawn and haggard face of the young ranger. "Best turn in for an hour or so—"

"No, no, thanks awfully!" replied Guy. "I must get ashore and send a message through to headquarters."

"Then see Stefansen," replied the skipper. "He's the overseer of this whaling station. He's a Dane, but a thundering good fellow. I'll send that second mate of mine with you."

"Thanks very much," said Guy, rising. "I'll make arrangements to have the prisoner transferred ashore."

"He'll be safe enough here in the

meantime, so don't you worry about that," remarked Captain Mactavish grimly, as he followed the ranger on deck.

A few minutes later Guy was sitting in the stern sheets of the whaler's boat as three lusty British seamen pulled at the oars, heading for the water-front.

And then, accompanied by the tousle-headed second mate, he set off for the overseer's office.

"Man, man! A'll hae sumthin' tae wrecete hame aboot noo!" babbled that individual. "Whit's his name? Whit's yon feller's name? A'll hae tae tell them at hame whit his name is, ye ken!"

"You mean my prisoner, Scotty?" laughed Guy.

"Ma name's Alec!" corrected the second mate with dignity. "It's no Scotty!" Then eagerly: "Aye, th' name o' yon preesoner!"

"I'll tell you later, maybe, Alec," replied Guy. "Is this the overseer's office?"

It was, and a thundering tattoo on the door by Alec brought Stefansen out from the sleeping quarters at the rear.

A very few words was needed to put the

level-headed Dane in possession of the main facts.

"Bud yes, yes, I understand," he said. "I will lodge dis Von Schaumberg in de stone gaol. He will stay dere dill you want him, yes!"

"Right," replied the ranger. "I'm going on to the wireless station now. I will meet you here as I come back and we'll go across to the whaler together."

He and Alec left the overseer, who retreated to his living-room and, after struggling into his clothes, smoked a stolid and reflective pipe over steaming hot coffee, whilst he awaited the ranger's return.

The wireless station lay on the outskirts of the township, and Alec led the way there.

"I want to send a message through, in code," said Guy to the operator on duty, and displayed his ranger's badge of authority.

Ten minutes later, on D Aerodrome far to the south, Sparks, the wireless operator, dashed from his room and sprinted madly for Colonel Malcolm's quarters.

"A message just come through from Howard, sir!" he cried, dashing into the office, where Colonel Malcolm was sitting late at his littered desk.

"From Howard?" exclaimed the colonel sharply.

He literally snatched the blue message form from the hand of Sparks, and read the scribbled, pencilled words which that youth had jotted down as they came out of the ether.

"Have got Von Schaumberg — have located pirates' base one hundred and twenty miles north of Vladmir, and two hundred and twenty miles east of mainland — am standing by for reply. — Howard."

Colonel Malcolm leapt to his feet, crushing the paper in his hand.

"Well done, Howard!" he cried.

He wheeled on Sparks.

"Take a message," he snapped. "Transmit it to the flagship of the Atlantic Fleet!"

He spoke rapidly for a few moments, and, as Sparks' pencil raced across the page of his note-book, Sparks' eyes were glowing excitedly.

An hour passed. Guy, heavy-eyed and utterly weary, was still seated in the wireless-room of Vladmir. Then suddenly the Morse receiving set buzzed loudly.

"For you, sir," said the Danish operator, and vacated his chair.

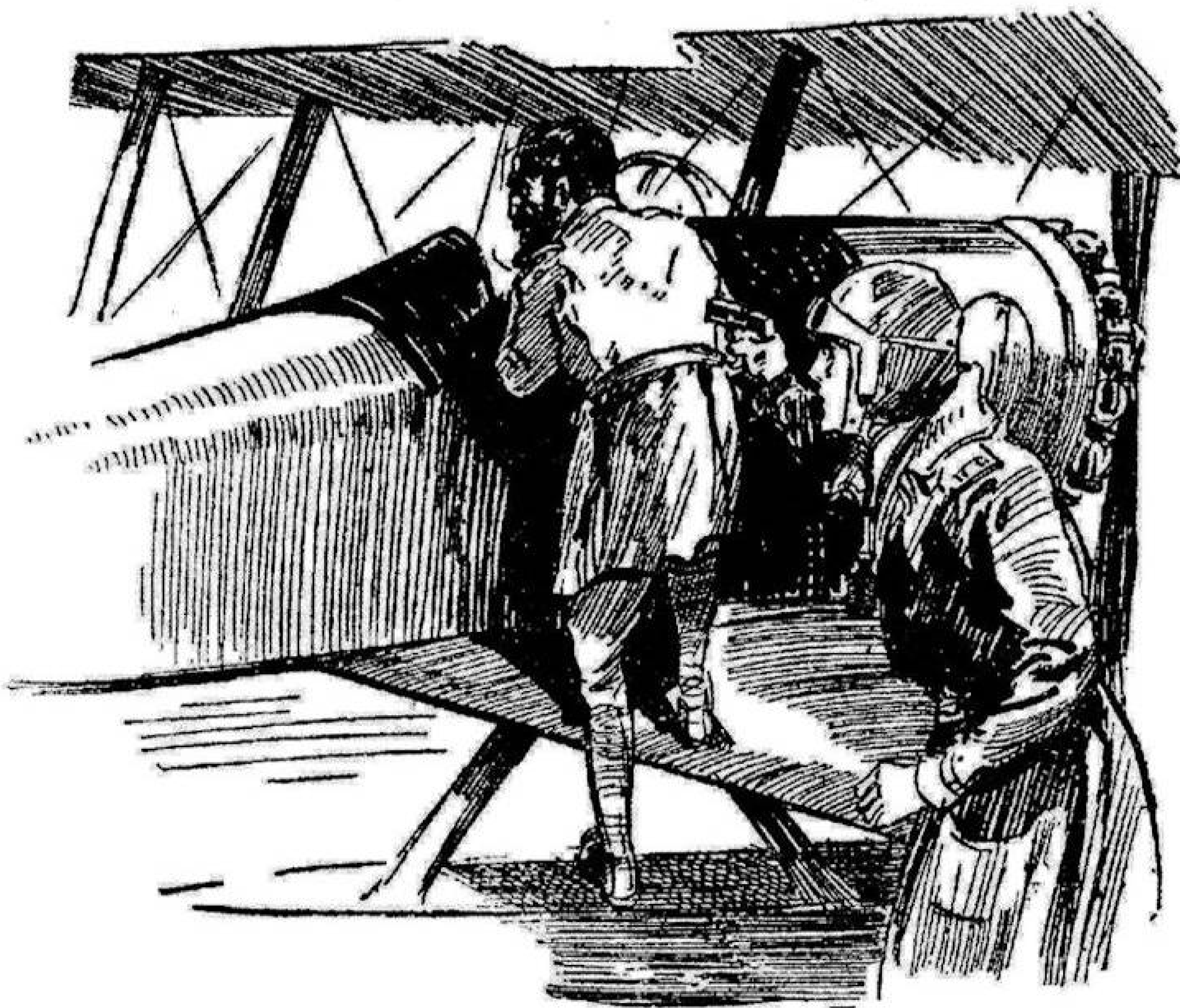
Three minutes later Guy was staring at the scrap of paper upon which he had decoded his message.

"H.M. Aircraft Carrier Eagle proceeding under full steam to pirates' base—report to Captain Ellison in command, who will take prisoner from Vladmir—congratulations on magnificent piece of work.—Malcolm."

Slowly, thoughtfully, Guy tore the scrap of paper into little pieces and deposited them in the glowing stove.

Then, whirling on the second mate, who was waiting for him, he linked arms with that somewhat startled youth.

"Come on, Alec," he cried. "It seems to be all over but the shouting! Let's pick up Stefansen and get back to the ship."



—Von Schaumberg realised this, for his great bull-like voice roared: "Stop, you fools! Stop!" And so the men stood impotent while their leader mounted to the cockpit. Guy's revolver pressed in his back.

Prelude to Battle!

WITH the coming of the cold, grey dawn Guy took the air in the pirate seaplane. He had snatched a brief ninety minutes' sleep on board the *Pride of Macbride*, and, after a meal of bacon and eggs, washed down by piping hot coffee, he felt a new man.

Von Schaumberg was safely lodged in Stefansen's stone gaol, awaiting the coming of the *Eagle*. And it was to meet the great aircraft carrying vessel that the ranger was now flying southwards.

All that remained to be done now was to clean up the gang at the base. Von Schaumberg's pilots might have cleared off, of course, but their capture was only a matter of time. No country in the world dare give them sanctuary.

In any case, the ground staff were still at the base, unless some vessel had picked them up. It was unlikely that they would surrender without a struggle.

Guy climbed to twenty thousand feet. The engine of his seaplane was thundering in that deep, pulsating rhythm which told of perfect tuning. For two hours the ranger flew southwards, scanning the distant horizon through powerful glasses.

It was a clear, bright morning now. A cold sun swung low in a cloudless sky and the sea, far below, glittered like silver.

Suddenly the ranger stiffened in his seat, glasses pressed to his eyes. Far to starboard, little more than a smudge on the horizon, was a large vessel heading northwards under full steam. Smoke was pouring from her great towering, encased stacks set well aft. For'ard of the stacks, she was strangely flat and symmetrical.

"The *Eagle*!" cried Guy and, whipping the glasses into their rack, he shoved forward the control stick.

Down he went in a tearing dive, throttle full open. Wind whined and shrieked madly through flying-wires and struts. But the ranger, crouched behind his windshield, had eyes only for that mighty vessel below—that triumph of Britain's dockyards.

A magnificent sight she was indeed, as she drove her way through the glittering sea. Water cascaded high away from her sharp bows as, driven by her thundering two thousand horse-power engines, she tore northwards at a full forty-five knots.

Her flying deck, eleven hundred feet in length, gleamed white as driven snow. And Guy knew that, below the flying deck, were housed eighty-four fast-flying fighting scouts and a squadron of heavy bombers.

He roared over her at less than one hundred feet and, shooting on ahead, cut off his engine and landed on the water. His undercarriage was fitted for aquatic landings only.

Slowly the great steel aircraft-carrier lost way. A boat splashed down, and, within a few minutes, Guy was on board.

Captain Ellison, in command of the *Eagle*, glanced appraisingly at the young ranger, who confronted him with a snap salute.

"Acting under instructions, sir, from Colonel Malcolm of D Aerodrome, Atlantic Airways, I have come aboard to report," said Guy.

"You are Howard, who has located the base of this air pirate, Von Schaumberg?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir!"

"Can you lead a squadron there now, if we take off from here?" demanded grizzled Major Boyd, who was in command of the flying section. "We will let you have a machine."

"Yes, sir."

"Very good. We will get off at once. Do you anticipate a fight?"

"Yes, sir, unless Von Schaumberg's pilots have vacated the base."

Rapidly Guy put the two officers in possession of fuller data than they had obtained from the flagship.

"Very good!" snapped Major Boyd. "We will take twelve fighting scouts and two bombers. Four of the scouts will act as escort for the bombers should we fall in with these rogues."

He rapped out an order. Hydraulic lifts brought the fighting scouts up on to the flying deck from the bowels of the mighty *Eagle*.

Within eight minutes twelve leather-clad pilots were sitting in the cockpits of the twelve fighting scouts, drawn up in a line across the flying deck.

In front of the scouts stood the two giant bombers, their two, fifteen hundred horse-power Moucrieff engines thundering into roaring life.

Chocks were whipped away from the thick tyred wheels of the undercarriages and, side by side, the two bombers tore across the flying deck. Gracefully, seemingly without effort, they rose into the air in a long upward glide.

Then, side by side in perfect air drill, the scouts swept forward like greyhounds from the slips. Guy, in the machine next to Major Boyd, saw a thick white line, painted on the deck, whirling towards him.

It was the take-off point and, as he pulled on his control stick, the scouts took

the air in one long unbroken line before they wheeled off, banking for position.

Then, at the head of a V-shaped formation, the ranger swung his machine till the compass needle flickered towards the north. He kept her steady on that course and the fourteen machines roared away from the Eagle, heading for Von Schaumberg's base.

And at length Guy sighted it, rising stark and grim from the waters far ahead. His gloved hand shot up, then pointed. Major Boyd, flying just behind Guy, nodded grimly to himself.

So that was the place—that was Von Schaumberg's base?

Then his eyes narrowed and, instinctively, his hand moved towards the trigger of his synchronised gun. For, rising from the foot of the beetling cliffs, were sixteen black pirate seaplanes.

Like vultures, they hovered, circling above the bleak and barren isle of rock, taking up fighting formation.

Guy, in his cockpit, smiled mirthlessly. So they hadn't gone to the aid of their leader, after all. They hadn't pursued the seaplane in which he had been taken away. And they hadn't left the base, either.

There must be some explanation, of course, for it was madness to have remained.

Then all speculation was swept from his mind as his finger curled round the trigger of his synchronised gun. For Von Schaumberg's wolves were roaring towards the naval squadron in perfect fighting formation!

Battle!

A WHITE Verey light flared and dropped slowly seawards from Major Boyd's cockpit. In response to the signal, the four rearmost machines broke formation and, wheeling, took up diamond-shaped defensive formation around the two big bombers.

The remaining eight scouts closed up, wing-tip to wing-tip, still holding their fighting V-formation. They were fully eight hundred feet above the approaching pirate squadron.

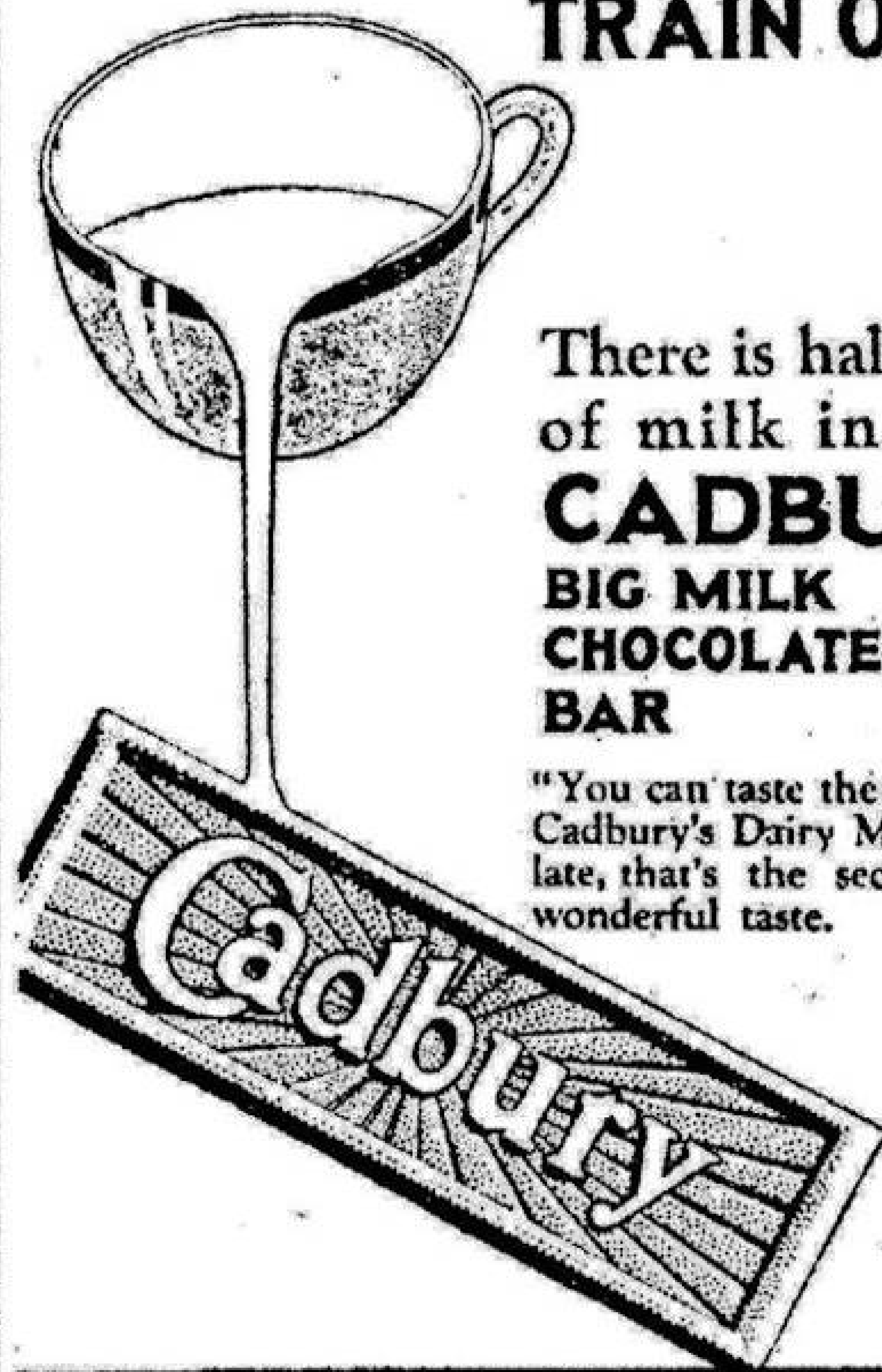
What reckless fool of a leader was bringing the pirates forward to the attack without first gaining at least an altitude equal to that of the naval 'planes, Guy did not know.

Some may argue that there had been little time in which to attain altitude; but it could have been gained had the pirates turned and flown northwards, climbing as they went.

Suddenly Major Boyd's gloved hand whipped up. Down went the noses of the fighting scouts. Fingers closed steadily on synchronised guns. With rotary engines thundering at full revolutions and guns aflame, the naval squadron tore downwards towards the pirates!

(A battle in mid-air! Geo. E. Rochester is the author to describe that with the best effect, and he does it well and truly in next Wednesday's exciting chapters!)

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Cheers For Easter!

OUR topping Easter Number, full of tip-top features, will, I know, be found extra handy this holiday time. Where ere you be take Nelson Lee. Easter is a prime time, and should mark the final break away from the grim grip of winter. If you have not ridden the jigger all through the months of snow, fog and frost you hie to the shed and drag the good old thing out. It will want a wipe over, maybe a touch of smart enamel and a dash of oil. What a lot of cheery reminders come up as you put the finishing touches to the whole equipment! I have lots of letters to hand from chums who meditate tramps abroad, that is up hill and down dale in the old country. Good luck to 'em! Others are thinking of camping, and they should do well. But in holiday time, rain or shine, whether the rain let's up or not, a holiday can be enjoyed if the right spirit's there. A tip to be remembered: Don't select a professional grouser as a companion.

Old Scenes Made New!

I expect on these holiday occasions when you foot it or bike the distance across the Surrey commons, or aim for any other special countryside, that the experience is almost as good, if not quite, as when you visited the place last; there is the church which looked so picturesque, while there are other details which catch the eye. A good bit of country, or a belt of woodland, never gets worn out, loses none of its charm. There is more to see each time, and that's the beauty of it. Occasionally there is a big find, say a fresh stretch of water, settled down for a permanency, thanks to the tremendous floods of a few months since. It seems to me a good thing that there is more travelling done on holidays these times than ever before. I don't mean the scudding motorist or the fellow on the two-wheeler buzzer who scoots by leaving a sweet young whiff of petrol in the ambience. I am thinking of the real traveller who sees things as he goes, otherwise the chap on Shanks's pony, or the trusty cyclist who rides a bit and then takes stock of the land.

Speed Trials!

Don't make any mistake. This paragraph has nothing to do with the tearing hurry of champions at Pendine Sands or Daytona Beach. I am referring to a Leicestershire reader who asks what has been done in the way of speed in (1) Shorthand; (2) Typewriting. The late E. T. Reed is reported to have touched the two hundred words a minute mark with shorthand, but one hundred and fifty is a splendid speed. It has got to be remembered that practically any speed rate attained permits fractional increase at given seconds. That's where the difficulty of gauging creeps in. A fine typewriting speed is seventy per minute, and that wants a bit of doing. Conditions have to be very favourable for this to be reached.

A Poet!

I am breaking no confidence when I mention a matter to which a correspondent calls attention. The writer wants to be a poet. Well, where's the harm? Only I would strongly urge him not to broadcast the fact, else he may get ragged baldheaded. Oddly enough, poets in the main are not popular. Why is this? I give it up. Maybe if the race went cropped-eared the astounding prejudice would fade out. The fact is one may earn his living, but he must not yearn or tramp round in the silvery moonlight reciting "little things" he has written to the stars, or to a rose-petal. But often enough the real poet passes unnoticed. He is a grand sportsman. He plays the game and plays up better on some losing side, winning the plaudits of all. He may never write a jingle, but it is just in him to think kindly of the world, and to wish to serve. And if that sort of thing does not make the best kind of poet, shiver my timbers, as Captain Black Jack used to say when excited, I don't know what does.

A Letter From Canada!

From Winchester, Ontario, comes a plain statement of facts concerning life in the West. "This is a fine, healthy life," says my chum, "and it makes a man of you. I came out

under the British Emigration Association, and I sincerely advise any boy who loves the open air and has no bright prospects for the future to emigrate. Farming takes a great hold on one, and you learn to like it, and find there is nothing in the world like good health." Good old Canada!

A Note of Warning.

Members of the St. Frank's League are warned against having any dealings with any persons calling themselves "high officials" or "representatives" of the League.

The St. Frank's League is run entirely from this office by correspondence, and the Chief Officer can take no responsibility for the bona fides of any person who may approach members personally with the object of organising camps, excursions, etc., under the auspices of the League.

CORRESPONDENTS WANTED.

Miss Dora Cantor, 107, Luipaard Street, Krugersdorp, Transvaal, **South Africa**, wishes to hear from girls readers only in Canada.

Daniel Livingstone, 5, Newmains Row, Newmains, Lanarkshire, **N.B.**, wants to hear from members in his district.

Fred Clitheroe, 5, West Hill, **St. Leonard's-on-Sea**, Sussex, wishes to hear from readers anywhere; interested in stamps and printing; has stamps for exchange.

Miss R. Bond, 40, Erith Road, **Bexley Heath, Kent**, wishes to hear from girl readers only in France.

Len Sayers, 33, Harrison Street, Bendigo, **Australia**, would like to correspond with readers in England, America and India about match brands; he would exchange cigarette cards for them.

Leslie Howard, Gorwydd Road, Gowerton, **Swansea**, South Wales, wishes to exchange picture postcards with readers overseas.

Stanley Dean, 43, New Chester Road, **New Ferry**, Cheshire, wishes to correspond with readers interested in autographs. He has 450 signatures of famous personages. He is also keen on sport.

Arthur Wall, 19, Collin Street, Surry Hills, Sydney, New South Wales, **Australia**, wants to hear from readers in England.

J. Williams, 117, Portman Buildings, Lisson Grove, Marylebone, **London, W.**, wishes to correspond with readers in the British Empire and Egypt; all letters answered.

Harry Clark (14), 15, Harrison Street, **Carlisle**, wishes to correspond with stamp collectors anywhere. All letters answered.

A. R. Thomas, 13, Oakland Road, Mumbles, **Swansea**, South Wales, wants N.L.L. Nos. 366 to 380, 424 to 432, 465 and 467. Good condition. State price.

M. Koji Mohamed, Portonovo, **Southern India**, wants to correspond with readers in U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, China and Japan. Also with readers in France, Germany and Italy. Specialises in S.S. Stamps.

Harry Nihill, 2, Clarence Street, Flemington, Victoria, **Australia**, wishes to correspond with readers.

Ernest M. Looch, c/o Customs, Knysna, Cape Province, **South Africa**, wishes to correspond with readers.

W. Bain, 13, Hurlock Street, Highbury, **London, N.5**, wants to hear from readers in his district interested in chess.

Charles Malcolm, 28, Priory Lane, **Dunfermline, N.B.**, has for sale a complete set of N.L.L. (new series). Good condition. He would be glad to hear from members who are interested in arts and crafts; he is an expert in stencilling, leather work, transfer work, wood painting, enamelling, batik work, lampshade making, raffia, sealing-wax work, etc.

Peter Coppenhall, 6, New Street, **Congleton**, Cheshire, would like to buy back numbers of the N.L.L.; also to hear from members willing to join his stamp collecting club.

Fredk. Clark, 5, Coventry Road, Wavertree, **Liverpool**, wishes to hear from readers.

P. Raghavendra Bhat, c/o P. S. Bhat, Postal Inspector, Leelavilasam, Calicut, Malabar, **India**, wishes to hear from readers anywhere on matters of general interest and topical subjects. Ages 17-20. All letters promptly answered.

Harry Smith, 38, Bushbery Road, Homerton, **London, E.9**, wishes to correspond with readers aged about 14 in Australia, Canada and elsewhere.

Len Naughton, 11, Noel Street, East Brunswick, Melbourne, Victoria, **Australia**, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere, especially those interested in wrestling and ju-jitsu. All letters answered.

A. Brodie, 71, Dr. Clanbrassil Street, S. O. Road, **Dublin**, wishes to hear from readers anywhere, especially those interested in photographs. All letters answered.

Miss Elsie Eves, 2, Edmunds Cott., Erith Road, **Bexley Heath, Kent**, wishes to hear from girl readers only who will join her Pen Friend Club.

Ronald Arthur Woollan, 1, Victoria Road, Old Town, **Eastbourne**, wants Nos. 46-54 (new series), N.L.L.

D. Dickinson, 45, Prior's Well Road, **Work-sop**, Notts, wants to form a sports club in the Worksop area. Will readers please write, also those interested in pigeons.

Arthur F. Harris, 16, Beecher Street, Colley Gate, **Cradley**, Staffs, wishes to hear from readers who have back numbers of the N.L.L. (new series) before 75. Also from stamp collectors.

G. Lester, 194, Brunswick Street, **Leicester**, wishes to hear from readers anywhere.

Gerald Pannell Yeates, 28, Tennyson Street, **Nottingham**, wants to hear from readers.

Wilkin m Rigg, 19, Edith Street, **Nelson**, has old and new series N.L.L. to sell.

H. Faragher, 11, Hawthorn, Levenshulme, **Manchester**, wishes to hear from readers in Canada.

A. Weston, 40, Leswell Lane, **Kidderminster**, wants N.L.L. (old series) before No. 300.

W. Matthews, 173, Junction Road, Highgate, **London, N.19**, wishes to correspond with readers in the Straits Settlements, Madeira, Gibraltar and South America.

Eric Stredder, 20, Hope Street, Highfield Avenue, Blackpool, has N.L.L.'s for sale; the new series complete, also 23 odd numbers between 98 and 344, and 347-568 (old series).

J. H. Thomas, 23, Ashcombe Street, Fulham, London, S.W.6, wants to hear from a reader who keeps pigeons and who can give him hints.

W. C. Kitchen, 33, South Avenue, Buxton, Derbyshire, would like to correspond with readers anywhere.

Bob Whaite, Box 306a, G.P.O., Adelaide, South Australia, would like to correspond with readers overseas. All letters answered.

Harry Clark, 15, Harrison Street, Carlisle, wishes to buy Nos. 66, 71 and 73 of N.L.L., and also wishes to correspond with stamp collectors in the British Empire. He wishes to form a club among Carlisle readers.

Alan F. White, 22, Trevelyan Street, Wayville, South Australia, wishes to hear from G. B., Bath; Stanley Horne, Bexley Heath; Peter Young, Govan, Glasgow, Wal Cox, Biggleswade. Also from readers anywhere. All letters answered.

Miss Elizabeth Hare, 27, Chester Street, Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1, wishes to hear from girl readers about gym work.

Leslie Dullroy, 48, Llanover Road, Plumstead, London, S.E.18, would like to hear from C. Webster or pals of his in Australia.

Ernest Skelton, 18, Plowright Street, Wood-

borough Road, Nottingham, would like to correspond with readers in Honolulu, Fiji, Suva, Malacca, New York, Falkland Isles; also with readers in England. All letters answered.

Miss D. Cotton, 155, College Road, Deal, Kent, wishes to correspond with girl readers anywhere.

A. D. Luke, 3, Paradise Place, Plymouth, wishes to correspond with readers, especially those overseas; also with a French boy.

Harry McMahon, 50, Long Street, West Broken Hill, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to hear from readers anywhere. All letters answered. He wants to hear especially from correspondents in Los Angeles, New York, Gibraltar, Paris, Berlin, Egypt, Palestine, and the South Seas.

Tan Ak Bee, 5, Fisher Street, Singapore, Straits Settlements, wants to hear from readers anywhere, especially stamp collectors; all letters answered.

Reg J. Cunningham, 20, Cardigan Road, Kingston, Portsmouth, wants to hear from readers in India, Ireland, and elsewhere who are interested in stamps and engineering; all letters answered.

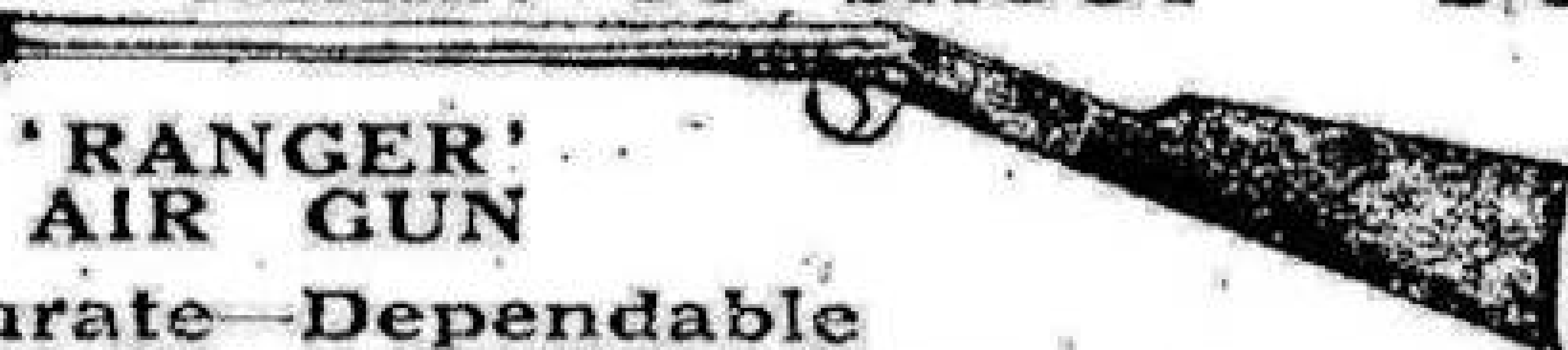
L. C. W. Owen James, 56, Westbury Street, Swansea, South Wales, wishes to hear from readers in his district.

R. Cox, 22, Victoria Street, Parkside, South Australia, wants West House Rebellion series of the "N.L.L.," old series.

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