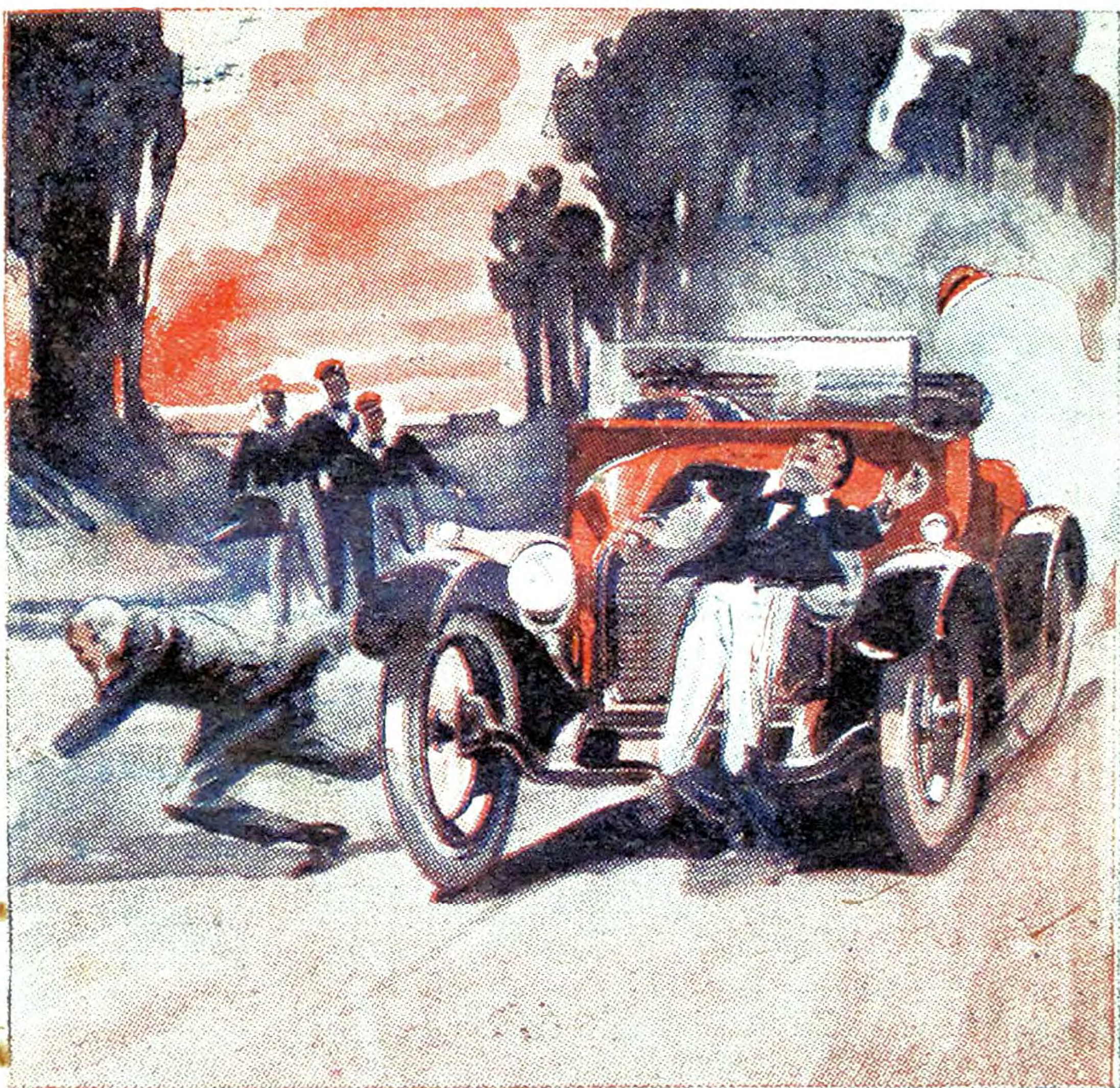


No. 285.—HOW SOLOMON LEVI ARRIVED AT ST. FRANK'S!

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Levi clung desperately to the radiator of the on-rushing car.

THE JEW OF ST. FRANK'S

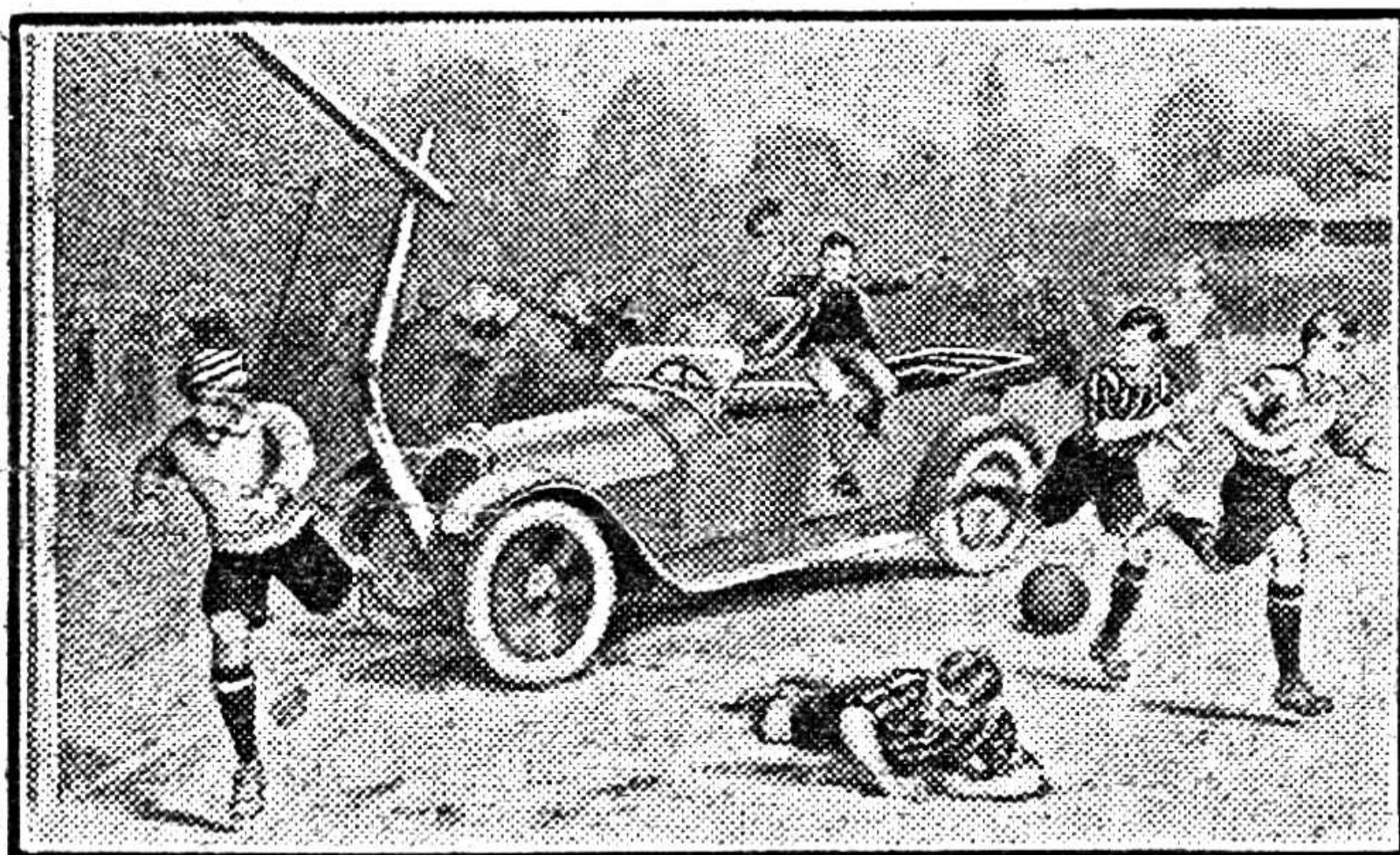
A Story of School Life and Detective Adventure at St. Frank's, introducing NELSON LEE and NIPPER and the Boys of St. Frank's. By the Author of "Nipper and Co. in Lancashire," "Handforth's Great Triumph," "Fatty Little's Hunger-Strike," and many other stirring Tales.

November 20, 1920.

The Interrupted Match

is the title of a very fine yarn of Football, Fun and Adventure at St. Frank's. It introduces NIPPER & CO., and all your old friends at the famous school, as well as a fresh character named Cecil Harker.

It is Harker you see jumping from the car in the picture below. He is a scapegrace and a schemer. His schemes hinge on the fact that his guardian offers him £100 if he succeeds in playing for the



Remove football team, shows that he possesses pluck, proves himself the best boxer in the Remove, wins a cross-country race, finishes within five of the top at the exams., and is praised by the Head for some praiseworthy object.

Harker intends to win the £100, by fair means or trickery, and how he demonstrates his pluck is the subject of the story mentioned above.

IT APPEARS THIS WEEK IN

THE BOYS' REALM

Out on Friday

ed.



The Jew of St. Frank's.

A Story of School Life and Detective Adventure at St. Frank's, introducing NELSON LEE and NIPPER and the Boys of St. Frank's. By the Author of "Nipper and Co. in Lancashire," "Handforth's Great Triumph," "Fatty Little's Hunger Strike," and many other Stirring Tales.

(THE NARRATIVE RELATED THROUGHOUT BY NIPPER.)

CHAPTER I.

NOT WANTED!

"HALLO! What's the excitement about?"

Cecil De Valerie, of the Remove Form at St. Frank's, asked that question as he entered the Ancient House lobby. De Valerie had just come in from the Triangle, and he was rather surprised to see a crowd of juniors surging round the notice board. It was quite evident that something of exceptional interest was attracting their attention.

"Anything special?" asked De Valerie, as Handforth detached himself from the crowd, and was about to pass by.

"Oh, nothing much!" replied the leader of Study D. "Only one of Nipper's stunts!"

De Valerie nodded, and pushed his way through the crowd until he came to the notice board. He saw a sheet of exercise-book paper pinned on to the green baize, and the notice, which was quite short, read as follows:

"IMPORTANT NOTICE.

"I wish to call the attention of every Remove fellow to the fact that a meeting will be held in the common room immediately after dinner. The matter is one of great urgency, and I am particularly anxious that every Remove fellow should be present. It is my inten-

tion to say a few words on a subject which is of interest to every member of the Remove. Don't fail to turn up!

"NIPPER (Form Captain)."

"Well, that's not very lucid!" remarked De Valerie. "What's this most important matter that Nipper wants to jaw about?"

"Goodness knows!" said Reginald Pitt. "I met Nipper a minute or two ago, but he wouldn't say a thing—he told me to wait until after dinner."

"A bit of a mystery, then!" said Owen major. "I suppose we shall have to go along!"

And most of the other juniors came to the same conclusion; in fact, by the time the dinner-bell rang, almost every member of the Remove had mentally decided that he would make a bee line for the common room as soon as the meal was over.

It was always a somewhat difficult matter to get all the fellows to attend a Form meeting. As a general rule, only half of them turned up; but generally, the matter under discussion was not one of general interest.

Therefore, on this occasion, I had made the juniors curious, by refraining from mentioning what my subject was. They were all filled with curiosity, and they were all determined to come to the meeting. And, once I had them there, I should be able to make my speech with ease. Anything that is mysterious always interests the crowd.

Exactly as I had anticipated, the common room was just about full up when I went in there a few minutes after the Remove had been dismissed from the dining-hall. My chums of Study C were with me, and both Tommy Watson and Sir Montio Tregellis-West smiled.

"Dear old boy, you said that that notice would do the trick!" observed Sir Montie, adjusting his pince-nez, and eyeing the crowd. "You were right, begad! I think everybody is here!"

"Even Fullwood and Co.!" chuckled Tommy Watson. "Curiosity is a wonderful thing!"

As I walked across the common room I was questioned by a dozen voices, all wanting to know what the precise game was.

"All right, my sons, don't be impatient!" I said cheerfully. "If you'll wait just a minute or two longer I shall satisfy you. I am going to get on my hind legs, and I shall make a speech!"

"Hear, hear!"

"What's the subject, you ass?" demanded Handforth.

"You'll soon hear what that is!" I replied. "I'll have that chair, if you don't mind, Hubbard!"

"You can have the table, too, if you like!" said Hubbard generously.

"Thanks, I will!"

I stepped from the chair on to the table, and in this position I could look into the faces of everybody, and make my speech in comfort. The fellows crowded round, eager to hear what I had to say.

"You'd better buck up, Nipper!" remarked De Valerie. "There's not much time before afternoon lessons——"

"You ass!" grinned Pitt. "It's a half-holiday!"

"By George!" said De Valerie mildly. "So it is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

I gave a preliminary cough.

"Gentlemen of the Remove," I began, "I have called you together——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it, Nipper!"

"I have called you together because I wish to address a few words to you on a subject which interests us all," I continued. "Some of you, perhaps, will be rather obstinate, but I want you to listen to me carefully, and to pay heed to what I say."

"Cut the cackle, you ass, and get to the point!"

"Don't beat about the bush, Nipper!"

"All right, I won't!" I replied. "I think everybody here knows that a new kid is coming into the Remove this afternoon; he will probably arrive before tea, and his name is Solomon Levi!"

There was an uproar at once.

"A beastly Jew!"

"Like his nerve to come here!"

"We won't stand him!"

"Rather not!"

"When you've quite finished, I'll get on!" I said coldly. "This new boy, Solomon Levi, is a Jew—that's pretty obvious, by his name. And we know for a fact that he has been allotted to the Ancient House, and that he is to come into the Remove. In short, he'll become one of us——"

"No, he won't!" put in Hubbard warmly. "We won't accept him!"

"Rather not—a dirty Jew!"

"We've got to draw the line somewhere, Nipper!" said Owen major.

"A chap of that sort will never be one of us!"

I regarded the excited Removites, and managed to keep my temper.

"You haven't seen Levi, and you don't know a single thing about him!" I said. "And I think it's contemptible to refer to him as 'a dirty Jew'——"

"Hear, hear!" said Handforth. "I think it was Armstrong who said that; and he always goes about with enough dirt on his neck to grow potatoes in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you silly ass!" said Armstrong, going red.

"Did you call me a silly ass, Armstrong?" roared Handforth, pushing up his sleeves.

"Order!" I shouted. "If you want to do any punching, Handy, wait until I've finished. I want to make these chaps see the thing in its true light. Why should there be anything against this new chap simply because he's Jewish?"

"You seem to be jolly fond of Jews!" sneered Fullwood. "Perhaps you know a few of them; perhaps they're your pals?"

"I certainly do know one or two Jews, and they are jolly decent people!" I replied promptly. "A Jew can be just as good as anybody else, if he likes. Some of them are rotters, I've no doubt; but plenty of Christians are rotters, too! So there's no sense in arguing in that

way. If this new chap happened to be a Japanese, a negro, or a Spaniard, it would be just the same. If you fellows started running him down, I should defend him—not because he's any particular friend of mine, but because it's only right that we should give him a fair chance!"

"Hear, hear!" said De Valerie.

"I agree with every word, old man!" put in the Honourable Douglas Singleton.

"I've never seen Levi yet—I don't know who he is, or what he's like," I went on. "That's not the point. But for you fellows to make up your minds to give this new chap the cold shoulder—well, it's rotten!"

"But, hang it all, Nipper, we must draw the line somewhere!" protested Griffith. "There's never been a Jew at St. Frank's, that I know of, and it's not right that he should come here. There are plenty of Jewish schools—why can't he go to one of them?"

"It isn't our business to inquire why Levi is coming here!" I retorted warmly. "If his pater likes to pay the fees and send his son to St. Frank's, he's just as much at liberty to do so as your pater is, Griffith!"

"Oh, that's rot!" said Griffith.

"It's piffle!"

"Rubbish!"

"This chap's a Jew, and we're not going to stand him!"

"I knew you'd be obstinate!" I said grimly. "Well, I'm not surprised; but I'm jolly disappointed. I thought you fellows were more open-minded than this—I thought you were decent. What have you got against this new chap? Nothing—nothing at all——"

"He's a Jew!" put in somebody.

"That's nothing!" I retorted quickly.

"It's a mere question of nationality or religion. Levi can't help being a Jew, and there's no disgrace in it, anyhow. We're not living in the Middle Ages! What do you know about Levi? Nothing! You haven't even seen the chap, and you don't even know who his father is, or where he has come from. Is it fair to judge him? Is it fair to say that he's a rotter, and that you won't stand him? No, it's not fair; it's absolutely un-British and unsportsmanlike!"

"Oh!"

There was an uproar at once, and the juniors all talked at once—angrily. I

could see that I had aroused their tempers, and the meeting was becoming somewhat stormy. But I did not care; I fully intended to have my say before I had finished.

Personally, I didn't care a rap about the new boy. I couldn't very well, for I had never seen him, and I didn't know him from Adam. At the same time, it made me wild to hear all the fellows, or a great number of them, running Levi down in this way. It was positively cad-dish.

"You'd better take back what you just said, Nipper!" shouted Armstrong angrily.

"I'm not taking back anything!"

"Well, we're not going to be called un-British and unsportsmanlike!" shouted Griffith.

"Rather not!"

"Take back those words, Nipper!"

"Apologise, you ass!"

"I'll do nothing of the sort!" I exclaimed warmly. "If you still keep up this attitude about Levi, I shall say far worse things than I have done."

"Oh!"

"It's the first time I knew that Nipper was so much in love with Jews!" sneered Fullwood. "There must be something behind this, you chaps. Perhaps Nipper is a Jew himself——"

"Well, I shouldn't think it a disgrace if I was!" I said. "I can understand ignorant people being down on Jews; but you chaps are among the gentlemen, and you know better. I know as well as you do that there are plenty of Jews who are swindlers; but it's not fair to paint them all with the same brush. There are swindlers and rogues in every nation, if it comes to that. It would be just as fair for me to run all you chaps down because an Englishman has been sentenced to prison for stealing!"

"Quite right!" said Handforth, nodding. "I believe in judging a fellow on his merits. And, after all, it would be only decent to give this Jewish chap a fair chance when he comes to St. Frank's. It's quite likely he'll turn out to be a rotter; if so, we'll give him the cold shoulder, and I'll be one of the first to punch him on the nose. But, if he turns out to be a good sort—which is just as likely—then we'll treat him just the same as we should treat anybody else!"

"No; that idea might work with any

ordinary chap, Handforth; but not with a Jew!"

"Why not?" I shouted angrily.

"Why not?" said Hubbard. "Well, because this Levi fellow is a Jew—that's why! I should think that ought to be sufficient reason, Nipper. The rotter is a Jew, and we don't want any Jews in the Remove!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We won't stand him!"

"We'll give him the order of the boot as soon as he arrives!"

I glared at the crowd, flushed.

"Well, you have to answer to me!" I said grimly. "If any chap interferes with Levi when he arrives, I'll make him pay for it!"

"If the chap can't look after himself, he won't be worth much, old man!" put in Do Valerie.

"That's quite right!" I agreed. "At the same time, a new fellow is always rather liable to be nervous, and to have a biting crowd of snobs at his heels isn't particularly encouraging!"

The Removites were now becoming highly incensed.

"Biting crowd of snobs!" repeated Hubbard fiercely. "Did you hear that, you chaps?"

"Yes, we did!" shouted Gulliver. "And we're not going to stand it, either!"

"You're not?" I said. "Then what are you going to do?"

"We'll kick you out of the captaincy, if you ain't careful!" snorted Bell.

"Oh, don't talk rot!" said Church. "We're not likely to get a skipper as good as Nipper—and, after all, he's pretty right in what he's been saying."

"What has it got to do with Nipper, anyhow?" demanded Gulliver. "He's got no right to——"

"Wait a minute!" I interrupted curtly. "I'll tell you what it's got to do with me. During the last day or so I've heard a good few remarks about this Jewish chap, and the majority of those remarks were nasty ones. Well, I am captain of the Remove, and, as I'm in that position, I'm going to have my say. And my say at this present moment is that you are a lot of miserable cads!"

"What?"

"I'm talking to those chaps who are determined to give Levi a warm time when he arrives," I went on. "I know well enough that a good few of you before me are on my side."

"Rather!" said Handforth. "I'm one!"

"And I'm another!" said Fatty Little. "Great pancakes! What does it matter to me whether the chap's a Jew or not? It's quite likely he's able to make ripping cakes and toffee, and all that sort of thing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to laugh at here!" snapped Owen major. "We've been insulted by Nipper——"

"You'll pardon me, Owen, but I've not insulted you at all!" I interrupted. "I called you a set of cads. And every fellow here who believes in the policy of condemning a chap before he even appears on the scene is a cad—he is a contemptible rotter! As captain of the Form, I take exception to this bitter, narrow-minded feeling."

"Rot!" said Gulliver. "There's nothing narrow-minded about it at all!"

"Of course there isn't! It's Nipper who's narrow-minded!" said Merrell. "He ought to know that we can't stick a Jew in the Remove! Levi isn't wanted, and he'll find that out before long!"

"Rather!"

"For a chap like that to come to St. Frank's is a 'comedown' for the school!" said Marriott. "It's lowering the tone of the whole place!"

"The tone of the Remove couldn't be much lower than it is at the present moment, anyhow!" I said scathingly. "I thought the majority of you fellows were decent, open-minded chaps. But you're not; you're snobbish to the core!"

"I sincerely trust, my dear sir, I am not included?" put in Timothy Tucker mildly. "I wish to state here, publicly, that I have no bitter feelings towards Levi. I believe he is of the Hebrew race, but that does not concern me in the slightest degree. Why should it? Levi may turn out to be quite a splendid fellow!"

"Exactly!" said Handforth. "So, until he proves himself otherwise, I vote that we give him a fair chance!"

"Hear, hear!" said Reginald Pitt.

There were quite a number of fellows with me, anxious to bring the rest of the Remove into the same way of thinking. But this was not to be. Fullwood and Co., Merrell and his chums, Owen major and Hubbard, and a good many others like them, had made up their

minds. The majority of them were quite decent fellows, as a rule, but in this particular case they had chosen to be very caddish.

"I am not going to say much more!" I exclaimed. "I only ask you to give this Jewish boy a chance. He's coming here among all of us, and I want you to remember that you're British. Set this Jewish kid a good example—be sportsmen!"

"Is the lecture over yet?" asked Gulliver, sneering.

"There's no lecture here!" I retorted. "I'm simply giving you some good advice—advice which you ought not to need."

"Well, you can keep that kind of advice to yourself!" snapped Owen major. "We shall show Levi quite plainly that his presence at St. Frank's is resented; we'll show him that we don't want him!"

"Rather!"

"It's like his beastly cheek to come here at all!"

"We'll have him kicked out within a week!"

"We'll send him back to Petticoat Lane!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

I clenched my fists, and stared down at the excited Removites.

"I'm fed up with the lot of you!" I shouted angrily. "I think you're a lot of beastly snobs, and I don't want anything more to do with you, until you change your tone!"

And, jumping down from the table, I pushed my way through the juniors, and stalked out of the common room.

CHAPTER II.

SOLOMON LEVI ARRIVES!

RALPH LESLIE FULLWOOD was looking very thoughtful.

He lay back in the easy-chair in Study A, and a curl of blue smoke rose lazily towards the ceiling from the cigarette which reposed between Fullwood's lips. And the cad of the Remove was looking very much absorbed.

"Well, what's the programme?"

asked Gulliver. "What do we do this afternoon, Fully?"

"Eh?" said Fullwood, with a start. "Did you speak to me?"

"Yes, I did," said Gulliver. "We've wasted nearly half an hour in the study already, and it's a ripping day outside. What's the idea of remaining here?"

"I've been thinking," said Fullwood slowly.

"What about?" asked Bell. "There's no need for us to be worried, Fully!"

"It doesn't mean to say you're worried because you're thinking, you ass!" said Fullwood. "As a matter of fact, I'm rather interested in the new kid—this Jew who's coming this afternoon."

Gulliver and Bell stared.

"You're interested in him?" repeated Bell.

"Yes."

"Why, you ass, you told us you wouldn't have anything to do with him!" said Gulliver. "You mentioned that you wouldn't touch the Jewish cad with a barge pole!"

"My dear idiot, you don't seem to understand!" said Fullwood calmly. "I'm interested in Levi, but not in the way you appear to think. I've heard that he's coming down by the afternoon train—the second one. That means to say that he arrives in Bellton at about half-past three. My idea is for us to go down and meet the train."

"Meet—meet this Jewish rotter?" asked Gulliver blankly.

"Exactly!" said Fullwood. "We'll meet him, and we'll rag him to death! We'll show him that we don't want him here, and we'll give him a plain word of warning that, if he dares to show his face at St. Frank's, he'll be pushed out before he knows what's happened to him."

Gulliver and Bell grinned.

"Well, that's not a bad idea!" said Bell. "We'll go down to meet the train, and then we'll give this rotter a deuce of a time. But how can we know which is Levi? We've never seen him."

"We sha'n't have any difficulty in recognising the cad!" said Fullwood. "He's a Jew, don't forget. He'll have greasy black hair, a great hook nose, and beastly thick lips. Anybody can tell a Jew—they're all alike."

"Rather!" grinned Bell. "I expect he'll waggle his hands in the air, and hunch his shoulders, and say 'Oy-yoy!'"

and all that sort of rot! Oh, we'll easily spot him!"

"He's bound to be dirty!" said Fullwood. "All Jews are dirty. And he'll probably stink of garlic; Jews eat heaps of garlic!"

"Rats!" said Gulliver. "You're thinking of Italians!"

"Well, Jews are just the same!" said Fullwood. "I vote we stroll down to the station now; it's after three, you know! We shall just get to the station in time, and we can take it easy."

Gulliver and Bell agreed, and a few minutes later the three precious knuts of Study A set out on their mission.

The November afternoon was quite bright and cheerful and not particularly cold. Over on Littleaside a football match was in progress. Fullwood and Co. took no interest in sports. They passed down the lane towards the village, feeling highly pleased with themselves. The knuts were always happy when they were about to commit an action that was particularly caddish.

They had passed over the bridge which spanned the River Stowe when they noticed a cheerful-looking junior in Etons. This youth was leaning comfortably against the gate, and he was engaged in the pleasant task of cracking walnuts and devouring the contents. He looked up as Fullwood and Co. were about to pass.

The three St. Frank's juniors knew at once that this boy belonged to the River House School. This establishment was a comparatively small one, and a certain amount of rivalry existed between the River House and St. Frank's. And this boy was evidently a newcomer, for Fullwood and Co. did not remember having seen him before. He was wearing the River House junior colours, his cap being a red one with a blue ring round it.

The River House junior nodded cheerfully and smiled. He was a well set up, good-looking boy with dark, curly hair, and keen, twinkling eyes. His features were well cut and refined, and there was a certain lightness about them which could not be missed. The junior, in fact, appeared to be very much "all there."

"Hallo!" he said genially.

Fullwood and Co. halted.

"New chap, ain't you?" said Fullwood, staring.

The boy nodded.

"Don't I look it?" he asked. "This cap doesn't fit me, for one thing, and I'm a stranger in the land. I suppose you fellows belong to St. Frank's?"

"Of course we do!" said Gulliver. "Can't you see our caps? You're in the Fourth Form, I suppose?"

"I believe so," said the other. "They call it something like that."

"What's your name?" asked Fullwood.

The junior hesitated, and then smiled.

"Ivel," he said coolly.

"But no relation to St. Ivel cheese, I take it?" said Bell humorously.

"Oh, cheese it!" grinned the new River House boy.

"Well, you seem to be a pretty fresh young merchant!" said Fullwood. "I suppose you've met Brewster and the other chaps at the River House?"

"Oh, yes!" said Ivel. "Brewster and Glynn and one or two others."

"What you want to do is to get pally with the Honourable Aubrey Wellborne," said Fullwood. "A bit of a sport, you know. He's a pal of mine, too."

Fullwood, in fact, did not see any reason why he should not get rather pally with this new River House boy. His very appearance spoke of affluence. He was exceedingly well dressed; his Eton suit was cut to perfection, and was of the finest material. A superb diamond pin twinkled in his neck-tie, and a massive gold watch-chain adorned his waistcoat. Fellows of his age did not generally sport such luxuries as these. It merely went to prove that Ivel was exceedingly well off. It was quite likely that he had heaps of pocket-money.

And Fullwood and Co. always made a point of becoming quite pally with juniors who had plenty of money. It was just a habit of theirs. In any case, Fullwood meant to put the matter to the test.

"It's a pity you didn't come to St. Frank's, Ivel," he said. "St. Frank's is a lot better than that mouldy River House. Well, you couldn't help it, I suppose. By the way, do you happen to have change for a fiver on you?"

"I might have," said Ivel, feeling in his breast pocket. "I'll soon see."

He produced a pocket-book, and Fullwood and Co.'s eyes glittered as they saw three or four Bank of England

notes and a number of Treasury notes. The new River House junior had at least thirty-five or forty pounds on him.

"Yes, I think I can do it," said Ivel. "What would you like—pound notes?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter," said Fullwood hastily. "I don't think I need the change, after all, old man; I've just remembered that I've got a couple of loose pound notes on me. Thanks all the same."

"That's all right!" said Ivel. "But I can let you have the change if you like."

Fullwood didn't like, for the reason that he had no siver on him. And the end of the Remove was tremendously impressed by that show of wealth on Ivel's part. The boy was simply rolling in money. The Honourable Douglas Singleton, at St. Frank's, was generally supposed to be one of the richest chaps of his age, but he couldn't show such an amount of money as this.

"I rather like you, Ivel," said Fullwood. "Perhaps you'll stroll through the village with us?"

"I've no objection," said the River House boy. "I'm in no hurry, anyhow."

"Then, later on, perhaps you'll come along to St. Frank's?" said Fullwood. "We've got a ripping study there, and we can have tea together—what?"

"Anything you like," said Ivel. "I'm not particular. Thanks for the invitation, though!"

"The fact is," said Fullwood, "we're just going to the station."

"To have a look at the trains?" inquired Ivel politely.

Gulliver and Bell chuckled, and Fullwood frowned.

"No, you ass!" he said. "We're going to meet the three-thirty train—we're expecting somebody on it, you know. A beastly Jew—"

"Eh?" said Ivel.

"There's a rotten end of a Jew coming to St. Frank's!" went on Fullwood. "A beast named Solomon Levi!"

"By gad! What a name—what a frightful name! Solomon Levi! He sounds like a bally moneylender, or a Petticoat Lane merchant!"

The River House boy smiled.

"You don't seem to like this Jewish chap much?" he remarked. "If that's the case, why are you going to meet him?"

"We'll soon tell you why!" said Fullwood grimly. "We're going to rag the cad up to the skies! We're going to show him quite plainly that he's not wanted at St. Frank's! It's like his bally nerve to come near the place! We're not putting up with any stinking Jews in the Remove, I can tell you! My people would nearly faint if they knew anything about it!"

"Is this Jew boy a fishmonger?" inquired Ivel.

"A what?"

"Well, you said something about stinking," said Ivel. "Fish stinks when it gets a bit stale—"

"I didn't mean it literally, you ass!" said Fullwood. "I simply draw the line at having Jews in the Remove! It ought to be stopped. We're taking matters into our own hands, and we're going to show this Jew cad a few things he won't like!"

Ivel nodded thoughtfully.

"It'll be awfully interesting!" he said. "And this Jewish chap is coming by the three-thirty train?"

"Yes," said Bell. "We shall have to hurry, too."

"Are all the fellows at St. Frank's kicking up a dust because Levi is coming?" asked the River House junior.

"Not all of them, of course!" said Gulliver. "The Fifth and Sixth don't care anything about it; he's not going in the senior school, anyhow. But the bulk of the fellows in the Remove are jolly wild about it, I can tell you. A few of the rotters—chaps like Nipper and Handforth and De Valerie—they say that this Jewish cad ought to be given a chance. But that's all piffle! He oughtn't to come here at all; we know what he is before he arrives."

"Oh, I see," said Ivel. "You know all about him?"

"Well, we know that he'll be a black-haired, greasy rotter, with thick lips and a hook nose!" said Fullwood. "We're not going to stand a cad of that sort at St. Frank's! Jews oughtn't to be allowed to mix with decent people; they are a swindling, thieving crowd! If I had my way, all the Jews would be chucked out of England! They're a rotten disgrace to the country!"

The River House junior nodded.

"Well, of course, opinions differ," he remarked. "I'm not particularly down on Jews. I've no reason to be—a Jew has never done me any harm. Still wo

won't go into an argument about it. I think I can see the train coming, and if we're not quick we shall be late."

"By gad, yes!" said Fullwood. "Hurry up!"

They arrived at the station just in time to see the train pulling up against the little platform. Fullwood and Co. looked out keenly for Solomon Levi to descend from the train. They were rather disappointed, for the only passenger who alighted was an aged countryman with a sack on his back. And, under no circumstances, could this individual be mistaken for the Jewish schoolboy.

The train only stopped a moment or two, and then continued on its way towards Caistowe. Fullwood and Co. looked at one another in a somewhat disappointed fashion.

"By gad!" said Fullwood. "The beast hasn't come!"

"Doesn't seem like it, unless he's invisible!" said Bell, with a grin.

"I expect he's coming by the next train, which doesn't get in until nearly five," said Gulliver. "Well, I'm not coming down to meet that train, Fully! We'll wait until the cad gets to the school, then we'll rag him."

"Yes, that seems to be the best idea," remarked Ivel. "In any case, it's not exactly sportsmanlike to go for the kid as soon as he arrives at the station. Give him a chance!"

Fullwood realised that it would be better to be tactful with the River House junior.

"As a matter of fact, I don't think I shall bother about this Levi chap at all!" said Fullwood carelessly. "I won't waste any time on him. What's going to be done now? How about coming up to St. Frank's, and having a little smoke in the study?"

Ivel raised his eyebrows.

"Why, are you allowed to smoke at St. Frank's?" he inquired.

Fullwood grinned.

"Well, hardly!" said Bell. "We ain't allowed to, but we do it. Of course, we might be caught, and reported, but we risk that."

"Oh, there's no harm in it," said Fullwood; "in fact, I should die if I didn't have a smoke now and again. Look here, Ivel, why not come up to St. Frank's now? We'll introduce you to some of the fellows. I rather like

you, you know, and I'm sure that we shall get on famously together."

"That's very nice of you!" said Ivel calmly. "Yes, I'll come along to St. Frank's."

"Good!"

Fullwood looked upon the matter as an exceedingly fortunate occurrence. He regarded Ivel as his property already—including the money which the new River House boy had on him—for Fullwood intended to suggest a game of cards as soon as they arrived at Study A. And then it would only be a matter of time before a good proportion of Ivel's cash was transferred into the pockets of Fullwood and Gulliver and Bell.

So they all strolled through the village and took the walk up to St. Frank's quite easily. When they arrived, the Triangle was rather filled with juniors. Handforth and Co. were the first to observe Ivel and the knuts of Study A, and Handforth and Church and McClure came strolling across.

"Hallo!" said Handforth. "Who's this merchant?"

"His name's Ivel, and he's a new fellow in the River House," said Gulliver shortly. "He's a pal of ours, if you want to know."

"Good enough!" said Handforth. "If he's a pal of yours, he won't be a pal of mine!"

And Handforth turned on his heel and walked away.

"Quite a cheerful young gentleman!" said Ivel smoothly.

"Don't take any notice of that cad!" said Fullwood, frowning. "He's an aggressive rotter, and you'd better have nothing to do with him."

But Handforth had turned back, and now he was regarding the River House junior rather grimly.

"Just a word with you, my son!" he said.

"A dozen, if you like!" said Ivel generously.

"You're a new fellow, ain't you?" went on Handforth. "I don't think you've met Fullwood and these other chaps until to-day?"

"No."

"Very well, then, take a tip from me, and drop the rotters at once!" said Handforth. "They're cads, and they're sneaks, and they are bounders."

"Look here——" began Fullwood furiously.

"Shut up!" snapped Handforth. "These chaps, Ivel, have probably invited you into their study. I can see you're pretty flush, and you can bet your boots that Fullwood means to skin you if he can. Take my tip, and don't have anything to do with him. He'll probably get you on to playing a game of cards, and then he and his precious chums will swindle you!"

"Thanks!" said Ivel. "But I can look after myself."

"If you can, it's all right, then," said Handforth. "I'm just giving you the tip—that's all."

"I appreciate it," said Ivel. "It's quite decent of you."

He nodded, and Handforth walked away.

"Why the thunder did you take any notice of that fool?" said Fullwood hotly. "He was telling lies. He doesn't know——"

"It's all right, Fullwood," interrupted Ivel. "I know a decent chap when I see one. You needn't worry; we're sportsmen together, eh?"

"Rather!" said Fullwood promptly.

He was startled a second later by the fact that the River House junior produced a cigarette-case. He opened this, revealing a layer of very expensive-looking smokes. The River House boy proceeded to remove one.

"I say," put in Fullwood quickly, "you can't smoke here, you know!"

"Can't I?" said Ivel. "Why not?"

"Because you'd have a master on you in half a tick!" said Fullwood. "Then you'd be reported to old Hoggo, at the River House, and you'd get into frightful hot water. Put that case away, you ass!"

Ivel smiled.

"Be a sport!" he said. "Have a cigarette with me, Fullwood?"

"Not likely!" said Fullwood. "Put that case away, I tell you!"

Quite a crowd of juniors had collected round by this time, and they were looking on with interest, and with a certain amount of hostility. This new friend of Fullwood's did not seem to be a particularly bright specimen. For him to suggest smoking in the open Triangle was positively scandalous. I was present, and I had taken no action so far; but, if Fullwood or that other junior lit one of those cigarettes, I should certainly take a hand, and a pretty heavy one, too.

"You won't smoke?" said Ivel calmly.

"No!"

"Well, I'm a sportsman, and I believe you're a sportsman," said the River House junior. "Look here, Fullwood, I'll bet you twenty to one—in quids—that you won't take twenty puffs of this cigarette here, in the Triangle!"

Fullwood's eyes opened.

"What's that?" he said. "You'll bet me twenty quids to one quid that I won't take twenty puffs of that cigarette here?"

"That's the bet!"

"Don't you do it, you ass!" hissed Bell, as Fullwood hesitated.

But Fullwood had made up his mind already. Twenty puffs would not take long. It was quite likely that no prefect or master would witness the incident. And Fullwood would then get twenty pounds—he knew that, because Ivel had far more money than that on him. And, argued Fullwood, even if he was seen, he would only receive a flogging. And a flogging was easily worth twenty quid any day.

"Done!" said Fullwood. "I'll take that bet, Ivel!"

"Good enough!" said the River House boy. "If you take twenty puffs of this cigarette, I'll give you twenty quid—one quid for each puff!"

"Look here, Nipper, are you going to allow this?" shouted Handforth warmly. "Are you going to see Fullwood smoking in the Triangle?"

"Let him do it!" I said. "If he's spotted by a master, all the better. But he's certainly not going to draw any twenty quid from that River House boy. Betting ain't allowed, and he's not going to practice it here. If he gets into hot water, it'll be his own fault, and he won't have any compensation!"

Many juniors about me chuckled, but they saw my point. We would allow Fullwood to take the cigarette and smoke it, but we should certainly not allow him to accept any money from Ivel. Fullwood took the cigarette, and Ivel obligingly struck a match. He applied the match to the end of the cigarette, and Fullwood took one big puff.

"One!" he said.

"Right!" agreed Ivel. "Go it!"

Fullwood took another puff—and then something happened.

Puff!

Without the slightest warning, the entire end of the cigarette exploded—a soft, silent explosion, and a huge cloud of black vapour spouted into Fullwood's face. It smothered him completely, and he staggered back. He was not hurt in the slightest degree, but he was scared.

"You've lost!" said Ivel calmly.

Fullwood was roaring at the top of his voice, and he emerged from that puff of black smoke. As he did so, all the juniors gasped with astonishment, and then yelled—they simply howled with merriment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my only hat!"

"What price the minstrels?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was certainly some reason for their laughter, for Fullwood was no longer recognisable. His face was as black as soot, and his collar and the upper part of his jacket was smothered in a similar fashion. The knut of the Ancient House presented a most extraordinary appearance.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you beast!" snarled Fullwood. "You did that on purpose; you knew I couldn't take twenty puffs of the cigarette——"

"Exactly!" said Ivel smoothly. "I think you owe me a quid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Still, I won't bother you for that money," went on Ivel. "As it happens, I don't bet—so the whole thing is off. But I just wanted to teach you a lesson, my lad—and I hope it will go home. Smoking is a filthy game, anyhow, for a boy. But I always keep these cigarettes on me in case a sportsman such as yourself——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ivel was not allowed to finish, for everybody was roaring afresh. And the feeling of the juniors had altered. They now regarded Ivel as a really smart fellow. The manner in which he had taught Fullwood a lesson was extremely neat.

Fullwood didn't think so, for he was in a terrible state. That trick cigarette was about the most effective one he had ever heard of, and he was boiling with rage against this humorous fellow of the River House.

"Jolly good!" said Handforth, grinning. "At the same time, we mustn't forget that this chap is a River House boy, and it's like his cheek to iape one

of our fellows. Of course, it's decent of him to make Fullwood look small, but I think he ought to be bumped——"

"Rats!" said Church. "The chap's absolutely a good 'un!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I wish he was at St. Frank's, instead of the River House!" said Owen major.

"Rather!"

And just then there was a bit of a commotion at the gateway. Glancing round, I saw Mr. Josh Cuttle, the school porter, having a little altercation with three flustered-looking juniors. I recognised the three at once—Brewster and Co., of the River House. And Brewster and Glynne and Ascott were very excited.

"There was times when a man must put his foot down!" said Mr. Cuttle gloomily. "And this was one of them times. Why was it? Ask me! Because I wasn't allowed to admit no hout-siders——"

"Oh, cut that off!" said Brewster. "We're looking for somebody!"

"Everybody was looking for somebody!" said Mr. Cuttle heavily. "I was looking for a man what owes me ten shillings. But was I able to find him? Ask me! I was not. Men what owes me money was like shadows—— By hokey!"

Mr. Cuttle broke off, for Brewster and Co. had suddenly dashed past him, and were already in the Triangle. Mr. Cuttle was fresh to his post, for he had only been the school porter a day or two, and he did not know that on a half-holiday it was quite permissible for the River House juniors to walk in, if they wished to do so.

"There he is!" shouted Brewster suddenly. "Collar him, you chaps!"

"I—I say!" panted Glynne. "It'll be a bit risky here, among all these other chaps——"

"Pax!" grinned Ivel, coming forward. "Bury the hatchet, you fellows; we had a bit of a dust up, but no harm was done."

"No harm!" roared Brewster. "Well, my hat! Didn't you knock me down? And didn't you push Ascott over? And didn't you——"

"Oh, it was all in the game!" grinned Ivel. "By the way, I'll be obliged if I can have my own cap back. At the same time, I am exceedingly delighted that I was wearing this one, because I was able to make the acquaintance of

three most charming young gentlemen."

"What do you mean?" demanded Handforth. "Ain't that your cap?"

"No; it's mine!" said Brewster, who was wearing a tweed cap. "We met this chap in the train—the early afternoon train—as we were coming back from Bannington. He was a bit fresh, and so we went for him."

"By Jingo!" said Ascott. "We went for him, but he went for us! And the way he made the dust fly was a bit terrific! Take my advice, you St. Frank's chaps, and look out for him; he's a corker!"

"Then—then he doesn't belong to the River House?" demanded Gulliver, staring.

Brewster stared, too.

"Of course he doesn't belong to the River House!" he said. "He's a new chap for the Remove, here! Don't you know him?"

"Yes; his name's Ivel——"

"What rot!" grinned Brewster. "His name's no more Ivel than mine is Horatio Bottomley! This chap is Solomon Levi!"

"What?"

Everybody roared out that word at once.

And they stared at the new junior open-mouthed.

The boy who had taught Fullwood such a well-needed lesson was no less a person than Solomon Levi himself—the Jew of St. Frank's!

CHAPTER III.

SETTLING DOWN.

"**G**REAT!" I chuckled, hugging Tommy Watson and Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "Great, my sons!"

"Eh?" said Watson.

"Really, dear old boy!"

"Don't you see the joke of it?" I chuckled. "Fullwood and Co. were dished, and everybody else was dished. They hadn't the faintest idea that this chap was Levi! They'd all been expecting to see a chap with greasy black hair and hook nose! Instead of that, Levi is a good-looking chap, and he speaks perfect English, just the same as any other

fellow here; in fact, it's hardly possible to tell that he is a Jew, unless you know it beforehand. These narrow-minded asses don't seem to realise that there are thousands of Jews walking about with fair hair and snub noses, and other characteristics of an ordinary Englishman. Jews aren't like the caricatures you see in the comic papers!"

"Begad!" said Sir Montie.

"And the joke's all the richer because Fullwood and Co. were ready to pal up with this chap!" I grinned. "And Owen major said that he wished that Ivel was a St. Frank's chap, instead of a River House boy. I dare say Owen major will change his opinion now, but he'll be a cad if he does."

"You—you spoofer!" shouted Gulliver hotly. "You—you beastly rotten Jew! We're going to——"

"Hold on!" interrupted Levi quietly. "Fullwood insulted me and the whole Jewish race while we were down in the village. He said the most beastly things. And I taught him a lesson by giving him that cigarette to smoke. But if anybody else insults me I'll use my fists; and Brewster will tell you that I'm not quite a baby when it comes to boxing!"

"A baby!" said Brewster. "My hat! He's a miniature Dempsey!"

The fellows gathered round, staring.

And I noticed that a great many expressions had changed. Before they knew that this junior was the Jewish boy they had been quite ready to welcome him with open arms. They had been rather sorry that he did not belong to St. Frank's. But now that the truth was out—now that it was known that "Ivel" was really Solomon Levi, and that he belonged to the Remove, a great many juniors were looking hostile. Such was the power of prejudice.

I walked forward, and extended my hand openly.

"I'm very pleased to meet you, Levi," I said. "My name is Nipper, and I'm the Captain of the Remove. I want to welcome you publicly; and I'd like to thank you, too, for the way in which you taught Fullwood a lesson."

"Thanks!" said Levi. "I appreciate this, Nipper. And I'm delighted to meet you. I've heard a great deal about you, and Mr. Nelson Lee, too. I was prepared for a certain amount of opposition when I arrived here, and it pleases me more than I can say to find

that you're a good sort. Thanks awfully!"

"Don't mention it," I said. "There's nothing for you to thank me for. I think you'll find all the decent fellows will—well, they'll be decent. You mustn't take any notice of the others."

"The chap's a liar, anyhow!" said Gulliver. "He told us his name was Ivel!"

"So it is," smiled Levi. "I've got the right to reverse the spelling of my name, if I like, I suppose?"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Bell. "Ivel—Ivel! Fancy us missing that before!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but he doesn't look a bit like a Jew!" said Owen major blankly. "I'd never have known he was Jewish!"

"It only shows you mustn't take too much notice of comic papers," put in Handforth. "You've never been mixed with Jews—that's why you don't know anything about them."

"Well, I'm not going to have anything to do with this chap," said Owen major obstinately. "I don't see why we should mix with Jews at St. Frank's. I'm going to ignore him!"

"Then you're a cad!" said Handforth.

"What?"

"A beastly, snobbish cad!" said Handforth. "Not long ago you were full of praise for Levi—but that was before you knew who he was. If you had an ounce of decency in you, Owen, you'd go up to Levi and take his hand!"

Owen major had turned very red.

"Rats!" he said, turning on his heel.

And this attitude on Owen major's part was taken up, mainly, by a great many other fellows. They simply regarded Levi with curiosity, but made no advances whatever towards him. They were determined to ignore the Jewish boy.

It was an undoubted fact, however, that Solomon Levi had made a very good beginning at St. Frank's. It was quite easy to realise how Fullwood and Co. had made the mistake.

For it turned out that Levi had had quite a tussle with Brewster and Co. in the train. And, somehow, the juniors' caps had got mixed up, and Levi had been left with one of the River House boys'. He had worn the cap in preference to nothing, and thus Fullwood

and Co. had mistaken him for one of Dr. Hoggo's boys.

Fullwood, of course, was positively furious, and his enmity towards the Jewish boy knew no bounds. The leader of Study A had been humiliated and made a laughing-stock before all the fellows, and Fullwood was not the kind to forget that. It was quite certain that Levi had made an enemy.

Reginald Pitt stepped forward.

"I just want to tell you, Levi, that you are welcome to St. Frank's—as far as I'm concerned," he said simply. "I think you'll find that all the decent fellows here will treat you well, but there are others—some of them quite good chaps in ordinary ways—who will lead you a bit of a dance."

"Thanks!" said Levi. "But I came here fully prepared for opposition, so I don't mind much. I can only hope that I shall prove myself to be worthy of the Remove."

"That's the way!" said Pitt. "By what I've seen of you, Levi, you appear to be the right sort. Be decent all through, and you'll come out on top."

At that moment Nelson Lee appeared, and he picked his way through the crowd until he was standing in front of Solomon Levi.

"I think you are Levi, the new boy?" said Nelson Lee.

"Yes, sir."

"I want you to come to my study, Levi," said the House-master detective. "My name is Mr. Lee, and I am your House-master. I should like to have just a few words with you, my boy."

"Yes, sir," said Levi. "Thank you, sir."

He was calm and collected, and not in the slightest degree nervous. This was rather unusual for a new boy, but it had been obvious to everybody that the Jewish junior was very much "all there." His eyes were keen, and there was a look of active briskness on his face. I came to the conclusion that Solomon Levi would make quite a place for himself in the Remove.

When he arrived in Nelson Lee's study, the House-master sat down at his desk, and faced the junior.

"Well, Levi, I am glad that you have arrived," he said. "As you are probably aware, you will be placed in the Remove Form, in the Ancient House—that is, this house. I have already ar-

ranged your study; you will share a room with Goodwin."

"Thank you, sir," said Levi.

"Your study is the end one in the Remove passage," went on Nelson Lee. "And now, Levi, I just wish to say a few personal words to you. It is quite likely that you will meet with some opposition in the Remove. I believe that many of the boys are discourteous enough to look down upon you because you happen to be of the Jewish race. You must not be offended at this."

"I'm not, sir. I expected it," said Levi.

"That is all the better, then," said Nelson Lee. "I shall leave you to fight your own battles, my boy, and I have an idea that you will succeed. But if there is any organised attack upon you—if you think that the boys are deliberately insulting you, I want you to appeal to me."

"I don't think I shall, sir," said Levi quietly. "If any of the fellows choose to be nasty, I can deal with them myself. I don't want to run to you with tales, sir. I shall stick to your advice to the letter. I shall fight my own battles, sir."

"I admire that spirit, Levi, and I'm quite sure that you will be successful," said Nelson Lee. "Well, it is not necessary for me to delay you any longer. The House matron has everything in hand regarding your food and your sleeping accommodation. I hope that you will soon settle down at St. Frank's, and that you will like your life here."

"Thank you, sir," said Levi. "It is very good of you, sir."

A few minutes later he had left Nelson Lee's study, and his eyes were sparkling. By what he had seen, life was not to be so very dull, after all. Levi had expected unanimous opposition to him—he had anticipated a kind of severe trial at St. Frank's. His father had warned him that there would be prejudices. But Levi was coming to the conclusion that nearly all the decent fellows were broad-minded and good-hearted. He could afford to snap his fingers at the rest.

He was rather anxious about his study mate, however. It appeared that he was to share the end study with Dick Goodwin. He had not seen Goodwin yet, and much would depend upon that junior's attitude. If Goodwin turned out to be

a snob, like some of the others, Levi's study life would not be very happy.

It was not difficult for him to find the apartment. The Remove passage was a long one, with study doors on either side, and there was one door at the extreme end. This, undoubtedly, was the end study. Levi went up to it, tapped upon the door, and entered.

He found quite a cosy little room, with a cheerful fire burning. A junior with a frank, open face, and with a cheerful expression in his eyes, was sitting in front of the fire, making toast. He looked up as Levi entered, and nodded.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed. "By gum! It was champion the way you made Fullwood look small!"

"Are you Goodwin?" asked Levi, entering the study, and closing the door.

"Yes; and you're Levi," said the Lancashire lad. "You're going to share this study with me, you know."

"Oh, you've been told, then?" said the new boy.

"Of course. Mr. Lee told me about it this morning," said Goodwin. "That's why I'm making something special for tea—just a celebration. I've been all alone in this study up till now, and it will be grand to have a study mate!"

"You come from Lancashire, don't you?" asked Levi.

"Yes; how did you know?"

The Jewish boy smiled.

"You told me yourself," he replied. "Your dialect isn't at all pronounced, but there's just that little melodious touch about it that can be recognised. Now, look here, Goodwin, I want us to start properly, with a clear understanding."

"Eh, lad, what do you mean?" said Goodwin.

"Well, it's just this. A good many of the fellows here are rather inclined to look down upon me because I'm a Jew," said Levi quietly. "That's not my fault, and I'm not at all worried. I'm proud to be a Jew. I don't see why I should be anything else. And I hope——"

"By gum!" said Dick Goodwin, looking rather uncomfortable. "Why do you talk like this, Levi? It doesn't matter to me whether you're a Jew, or whether you're a Gentile. We're going to be study mates, and we're both in the Remove. You're a boy, and I'm a boy. What difference does it make about our religions here, in the study? Eh, don't

he daft, but sit down and have some of this toast!"

"I shall like you, Goodwin," said Levi frankly. "It's very decent of you to take it like this."

Dick Goodwin scoffed at the idea. As a matter of fact, he had been rather pleased at the prospect. It made no difference to him whether Levi was a Jew, or whether he was anything else. If he turned out to be a decent fellow, he would be very welcome in the end study. Dick Goodwin had no prejudices of that sort. He had lived in Lancashire for years, and his childhood had not been extremely luxurious. He was, therefore, far from being a snob, and he was open and frank.

Levi enjoyed his tea tremendously, and when the meal was over he came to the conclusion that he and Dick Goodwin would get on famously together. This was a distinct step in the right direction. To have a decent study mate was a very important point.

"I'm going over to Bannington after tea," said Goodwin. "I want to buy a few things, and I was thinking that perhaps you'd like to come, Levi."

"I passed through Bannington on my way here," said Levi.

"Yes; you changed there; it's a junction," explained Goodwin. "It's only just about two and a half miles from St. Frank's, and we often do the trip on our bikes. If you'd like to come with me, I shall be glad. I will that. And I can show you the village, and the road, and we can have a look round Bannington, too."

Solomon Levi nodded.

"I'd like to come, but I don't see exactly how I can," he said. "I haven't got a bicycle."

"Eh, that's nothing, lad!" smiled Goodwin. "You can borrow one."

"Easier said than done," declared Levi. "Who's going to lend me a bike? Most of the chaps here seem to be against me——"

"Not all of them," interrupted Goodwin quickly. "Nipper and Watson and Pitt and some of the others—they look upon you just as an ordinary Removite. They haven't got any prejudices. I'll borrow a bike if you like——"

"No," put in Levi quickly. "If I'm going to borrow a bicycle, I'll do the borrowing myself."

"Then go along to Study M., just along the passage," said Goodwin.

"You'll find Somerton and De Valerie there. They'll lend you a bike quickly enough—unless they're going to use them this evening."

"Thanks!" said Levi. "I'll go along now."

He passed out of the study, and entered the Remove passage. It was only necessary for him to go along a few steps before he came to a door upon which was painted the letter "M." He tapped upon the panel, and opened the door.

Cecil de Valerie and the Duke of Somerton were just finishing their tea. They looked up and nodded.

"Welcome!" said De Valerie, with a wave of his hand. "Enter, fair youth—I should say, dark youth. Our door is always wide open to visitors, and you will be honoured."

"Thanks!" said Levi. "I just came——"

"Step inside, you ass!" said De Valerie. "We want to see more than your head. And don't forget that you're always welcome here. There are no race prejudices in Study M. Come in and shut the door—there's a draught."

Levi obeyed.

"I only came to ask a favour," he said hesitatingly. "I know it's a bit thick to start borrowing things when I haven't been in the school more than a couple of hours. But Goodwin is going in to Bannington after tea, and I'd like to go with him. Can either of you lend me a bicycle?"

"You can have two if you like," said De Valerie obligingly. "But I suppose one will be enough. Mine's at liberty——"

"I hardly think so, old son," interrupted the Duke of Somerton. "Unless my memory fails me, your front tyre is punctured."

"By gad! So it is!" said De Valerie. "I'm sorry, Levi——"

"It's all right; you can have mine," said Somerton. "You'll find it in the bicycle shed—a green one, with a gear case, and a three-speed gear, and all the rest of it. Take it, and welcome. As a matter of fact, I don't like the jigger at all!"

"Somerton's an ass!" said De Valerie. "His bike is nearly a new one, and it's one of the best in the bike shed—a regular ripper. And just because the saddle doesn't fit him, or the handlebars are a bit too low, or some silly

thing like that, he's talking about selling it and buying a new one. It's a first-class jigger."

"Rot!" said Somerton. "I hate the thing! You can take it, Levi, and you can borrow it whenever you like."

"Thanks very much!" said Levi. "It's very decent of you."

He went back and reported to Dick Goodwin, who was very pleased. Levi was pleased, too, for he had been treated well. But, before long, he was to receive indications that all the juniors were not like Goodwin, Somerton, and De Valerie.

For as Levi and the Lancashire boy passed out of the lobby, Owen major and Hubbard and two or three others made their sentiments quite clear. For as soon as Levi appeared, the knot of juniors stood aside, and got as far away as possible—as though they feared contamination.

It was, of course, a direct insult, but Levi took no notice. His face went a trifle pale, and his eyes gleamed. But he kept himself in check, and walked out into the Triangle without saying a word.

And a few minutes later he and Goodwin were on their bicycles, and were speeding down towards Bellon. Levi was quite impressed with Somerton's machine. It was, indeed, a beauty—a bicycle which was enamelled all over, including the handle-bars and all the other parts which are generally bright nickel. The jigger was nearly a new one, and it had hardly been scratched.

As the juniors rode along Dick Goodwin pointed out every spot of interest. He was, in fact, doing his utmost to make Levi feel at home. Goodwin felt it was up to him to make up, in some degree, for the unpleasant spirit which was being shown by a large number of Removites.

Dick was very interested in Levi. Somehow, he could hardly believe that this clear-featured junior was really a Jew. The Lancashire lad was very impressed, and he felt sure that he would like Levi very much indeed. As a matter of fact, the Jewish junior was a likeable fellow.

They continued their journey, and when they were half way to Bannington both the juniors observed a solitary figure along the road in front of them. It was the figure of an old man, bent, and with white hair.

The two youthful cyclists were coming

up, the old man turned, and both Goodwin and Levi were rather struck by the remarkable appearance of this pedestrian.

He was wearing very curious clothes, a rusty black frock-coat being combined with a bowler hat. His boots were muddy, and they were not particularly good boots. And yet the man was not a tramp. That could be seen at once.

His face was sun-burnt, and all wrinkled. He wore a pair of heavily-smoked goggles, which gave him a gnome-like appearance. A small wisp of white beard adorned his chin, and the white hair from his head straggled out under his old bowler hat.

"Queer looking fellow!" remarked Goodwin.

"He is, believe me!" said Levi. "A local character?"

"No; I've never seen him before," replied Goodwin. "He must be a stranger."

They cycled on, and soon forgot all about the queer old fellow they had passed on the road. Before very long, however, they were destined to remember that meeting.

Arriving at Bannington, Levi was greatly interested in the quaint, old-fashioned town.

Goodwin went off to do some shopping, and Levi was left to himself for the time being. He was in charge of the bicycles, and kept his eye on them practically all the time.

He was only absent for about one minute, during which time he entered a confectioner's shop, and purchased some chocolates. He came out munching one of them, and then saw that a stranger was regarding Somerton's bicycle quite intently.

Levi stood there, a little way back on the pavement, watching the man. He was only a young fellow, well dressed, and he was eyeing the green bicycle very carefully. He bent down continuously, looking at the various parts. Finally he looked up, and searched about. It was apparent that he was looking to see if the owner was anywhere within the vicinity.

Solomon Levi strolled forward.

"Is this bicycle yours, my lad?" asked the stranger.

"Well, yes; I'm riding it!" replied Levi. "Is there anything the matter with it?"

"By Jove, no!" said the other. "It's

about the best machine I've seen for many a day. I was just admiring it, to tell you the truth."

Levi nodded.

"It's not a bad bike," he said shortly.

"Are you open to sell it?" asked the stranger.

"Eh?"

"Do you want to sell the machine?"

"Well, no—that is, yes!" said the Jewish boy. "I'm open to sell anything, if it comes to that!"

"Well, if we can fix up a deal about this bicycle, I shall be glad," said the stranger. "My name is Greene, and I live in this district. You see, I'm a commercial traveller, and I do a lot of travelling about the country villages. A motor bike is too expensive for me, and my ordinary jigger is just about finished up. I've been looking for a decent all-weather bicycle, and this seems to fit the bill exactly. There's not a particle of plating to go rusty, and the bike is just my mark."

"Oh, I see," said Levi. "You want to buy it, then?"

"Yes, if you're willing to sell."

"How much are you willing to give for it?" asked Levi abruptly.

"Well, let me see," said Mr. Greene, taking a critical look at the bicycle once again. "Do you mind if I try it?"

"Not just yet," said Levi. "I'm not making any insinuations, but we're strangers, and——"

"I see your point," said Mr. Greene smiling. "There are a good many bicycle thieves about, I believe. But I'm not one of those sort, young man. I am anxious to make a proper deal of it. I don't want to steal the bicycle. I'll give you sixteen pound for it—cash!"

Levi smiled.

"Nothing doing!" he said briefly.

"It's a good offer——"

"That may be, but it's not enough," replied the Jewish boy. "That bicycle is nearly new, and it's in perfect condition. There's not a scratch on it, and the tyres are perfect. I'm not selling for sixteen, thanks."

"What's your price?"

"Twenty pounds!" replied Levi.

"You can take it away for twenty—not a penny less!"

Considering that the bicycle was not Levi's to sell, this was rather a surprising statement on the Jewish boy's part. However, he was always open to do

business, and did not see any reason why he should not seize this opportunity.

If he fixed up this deal, and then Somerton refused to sell under twenty-four—well, Levi would be compelled to sacrifice the four pounds. He was quite prepared for that, but he did not think that he would have to sacrifice anything. The Jewish boy had a keen eye for business, and he was very alert.

"Twenty pounds!" said the stranger.

"No, that's too much!"

"All right. There's nothing doing?" said Levi.

"Look here, we'll split the difference," said Mr. Greene. "You want twenty, and I'm willing to give sixteen. We'll say eighteen, and it's a bargain!"

"It would be a bargain—for eighteen!"

"You'll do it?"

"Twenty pounds is my price," said Levi calmly. "I think I told you that before, sir."

"Yes, but look here——"

"It won't do any good if we stand here arguing," interrupted Levi. "You can offer me twenty pounds all but a penny, but I sha'n't take it. I stated my price, that's my last word."

"Hang it all, you're a bit stiff!" said Mr. Greene. "Twenty pounds is more than I wanted to give, and I don't think the bicycle is worth it, as a matter of fact. Look here, I'll go a step further, I'll make it eighteen guineas. Will that suit you?"

"No."

"You're a hard fellow to make a bargain with!" said Mr. Greene frowning.

"You ought to be reasonable——"

"I am reasonable," said Levi promptly. "I told you that I want twenty pounds for the bicycle, and I'm not going to take anything else. If you like to pay twenty pounds, you can have it—but not without. And you'd better make up your mind quickly, because in exactly two minutes from now the price will be twenty-one."

Mr. Green stared.

"Well, I'm hanged!" he exclaimed, "you are just about the limit!"

Solomon Levi turned away, smiling. He knew well enough that he had completed the deal. And he was feeling quite satisfied. Twenty pounds for that bicycle was a good price. Of course, it would be impossible to obtain one like it, brand new, for under twenty-five guineas. But this machine was second-



Without the slightest warning the entire end of the cigarette exploded—a soft, silent explosion, and a huge cloud of black vapour spouted into Fullwood's face.

hand, and Somerton had stated quite plainly that he didn't want the machine. Therefore Levi would be doing him a good turn by selling it. That is the way the Jewish boy looked at the matter.

"Half a minute, young man," said Mr. Greene. "I'll accept your offer—confound you! I'll give you twenty pounds!"

"Done!" said Levi.

"I can't pay you exactly at the minute," went on Mr. Greene. "If you can bring the bicycle round to No. 15 —"

"I'm sorry, but that can't be done. I'm just off back to St. Frank's," said Levi. "But if you care to call at the school in about two hours' time, the bicycle will be ready for you. I'll have it cleaned up, oiled, and made to look like new. Is that a bargain?"

"Yes," said Mr. Greene. "I'll be at St. Frank's at exactly half-past seven. I'll bring the cash with me."

"Good enough!" said Levi. "I'll be ready. Good-evening."

He nodded, and turned to look in one of the shops. He had completed the bargain, coolly and collectedly, and with perfect sang-froid. Mr. Greene looked at the junior for a moment or two, smiled to himself, and then walked off.

Personally, he considered that he had done rather well—for twenty pounds. The bicycle was just exactly what he wanted. If he had ordered a machine of the same type at a local shop, it would be a week or two before it arrived, and the price would be five or six guineas higher.

As for Solomon Levi, he knew that he had taken a chance—and he was prepared for the consequences.

CHAPTER IV.

SHOWING HIS PLUCK.

DICK GOODWIN appeared a moment or two later, and he knew nothing whatever of the bicycle transaction. He found Levi examining the contents of a window near by.

"Sorry to keep you waiting," said Goodwin. "But the shop was crowded —"

"That's all right," said Levi. "I'm rather glad you were a long time. I was able to transact a little piece of business on my own account."

"Ay, that's all right, then!" said the Lancashire boy.

They decided to start back for St. Frank's at once. By so doing they would be able to get in well before lighting-up time. This was necessary, for Dick Goodwin had no lamps with him.

As they cycled down the main street they passed the Bannington Cinema. There were some glaring posters outside, advertising the feature film for the current three days—a film which stated plainly that it was for adults only. Nobody under fourteen was allowed to enter.

"I see you've got a picture palace here," remarked Levi.

"Yes, but it's not much of a place," replied Goodwin. "Ay, and it's a pity, too. It's the only cinema in the town, and the proprietor has everything his own way. He can show any rubbish he likes, and nobody can grumble."

"Then it's about time somebody else set up a picture theatre," said Levi promptly. "There seems to be a good chance here. Competition generally has the effect of waking people up. Why, in a pretty big town of this sort, there's room for two or three cinemas. I should think so, anyhow."

"I'm sure there is," said Goodwin. "This place is always packed to suffocation, and some of the films are pretty rotten, too. Ay, I felt quite ashamed, sometimes, and I don't go in the place at all now!"

They continued on their way, and were presently speeding along the quiet country road, which led straight to Bell-ton. The evening was bright, and quite mild, so the trip was very pleasant.

Just at the bottom of the little dip there was a very rough piece of road. The surface was full of potholes and ruts. And Dick Goodwin was riding over this at a fair speed when he suddenly uttered a yell, and there was a clattering noise.

Levi applied his brakes at once, and looked round. Dick Goodwin was standing in the road, gazing down at his bicycle.

"Anything wrong?" asked the Jewish boy.

"Ay, there is that!" said Goodwin.

"It's this chain again. These roads are champion for knocking it off. I meant to tighten the chain up two or three times, but I neglected it."

"Oh, is that all," said Levi. "Well, it won't take long to put the chain on again."

"No," said Goodwin.

Levi propped his machine against the hedge, and then held Goodwin's bicycle while the Lancashire boy fiddled about with the chain.

It was a somewhat dirty job, for the chain was greasy and black. And while Goodwin was engaged upon the task Levi looked up and down the road with casual interest.

He noticed that a bent old man was coming along the road towards them, and Levi recognised the figure as that of the man they had passed on their way to Bannington.

It was the old, white-headed fellow who wore smoked goggles.

There was something very strange about his appearance, something which attracted attention. And Levi was rather interested in him as he approached.

The old man was now only about twenty yards away, and he was coming along at a steady pace, assisted by a heavy, knobbly wooden stick.

Levi noticed something else, too.

There was other traffic on the road. About a hundred yards behind the old man three or four juniors were coming along on bicycles. They were, as a matter of fact, Tommy Watson, Sir Montie Tregellis-West, myself, and Reginald Pitt. We were just going into Bannington, and reckoned that we should have time to get back in time for calling over. So we were hurrying.

Levi watched us coming along with interest. And then he noticed that, some little distance in our rear, a two-seater motor-car was speeding towards us—also on its way to Bannington.

And Levi was particularly interested in this car. He could see it, but we couldn't, although we could hear it approaching. But Solomon Levi was interested because the car was behaving in a somewhat erratic manner.

It swayed from side to side as it came along, and it was quite evident that the driver was either drunk or seriously ill. In any case, he was not controlling the car properly, and Levi fully expected to see it go into the ditch at any moment.

"Look at that car!" he exclaimed suddenly. "It seems to be dangerous to me!"

Dick Goodwin looked up.

"Ay, there's something wrong!" he declared. "By gum! Those chaps——"

Dick Goodwin broke off with a shout of alarm.

For, at that moment, the two-seater car was about to pass us on our bicycles. It came roaring up, lurching from side to side. I happened to glance behind me, and I saw at once that our position was by no means safe. We were on the left-hand side of the road, but so was the motor-car.

"Look out!" I yelled. "Draw in, you chaps—right into the hedge!"

We were only just in time. The car gave a swerve exactly as it came opposite us, and it only shaved by my shoulder by a bare inch. Indeed, the off-side pedal of Montie's machine was scraped as the car went by, and Montie was nearly thrown over.

"The silly fool!" I said angrily.

"Who—who was it?" demanded Watson, panting.

"Why, that chap Webb," I replied. "He's the proprietor of the Bannington Cinema, and I think he's a bit of a rotter. Anyhow, I've often seen him drunk."

"My only hat!" said Pitt suddenly. "Look here, he'll run into that——"

Pitt paused, and could say no more, for he was really startled.

Solomon Levi, too, was startled. For he could see that an accident was inevitable unless something miraculous took place.

The car was still lurching on its way, and was now making a bee-line for the white-headed old man who was trudging along the road. The old man was apparently unaware of his peril, for he did not turn his head.

"Hi! Look out!" shouted Levi, at the top of his voice.

The old man took no notice, but still trudged on, and, twenty yards behind him, the car was speeding on its way. The man at the wheel was not even attempting to swerve.

"Good heavens!" gasped Levi.

He acted on the instant.

Not for a second did the Jewish lad hesitate. He rushed forward with amazing speed, and arrived by the old man's side just one second before the car was upon him.

Levi gave the old man a push—a terrific, violent push, and the man was sent flying into the ditch, where he alighted on his back.

"Oh!" gasped Dick Goodwin, in horrified tones.

For he had seen something which brought a great lump into his throat. Solomon Levi had had sufficient time to push the old man out of danger, but he had not had time to get clear himself, and the motor-car, now travelling at a decreased speed—for the drunken driver had had sufficient presence of mind to apply his brakes—ran full tilt into the Jewish boy.

We, who were behind, went as pale as death, for we believed that Levi had been run over, and probably killed.

But this was not the case.

With astounding presence of mind, Levi flung up his arms and clutched at the radiator of the car. His fingers closed round it, and he was carried along, clinging to the front of the car for his life. He was badly bruised, for the impact had been forcible, but, so far, he was safe.

But it was a miraculous escape from terrible injury, and only the Jewish boy's presence of mind had saved him. In order to help the white-haired old man, Levi had endangered his own life.

We had all seen it, and we knew that the Jewish boy possessed pluck of the most sterling quality. He had not hesitated, but, blindly, he had flung himself into danger in order to help another, a perfect stranger.

What happened immediately afterwards was very exciting.

Webb, the driver of the car, knew at once that his recklessness had led him into serious trouble, and he pulled up as quickly as possible—and only just in time to save Levi from terrible injury. For the Jewish lad was nearly losing his hold, and, if he had fallen, the car would have passed over him, and he would have been crushed by the heavy machinery beneath the car.

Meanwhile, Tommy Watson and Tregellis-West and I were taking a hand in the affair. The old man had been flung into the ditch, and we were only just a few yards distant at the time. Without knowing exactly what had happened to Levi, we flung ourselves from our machines, and rushed across to the old man with the goggles, and we were

in time to see something of exceptional interest.

The man was lying on his back, for he had been flung all in a heap by Levi's tremendous shove, and as he commenced to scramble up I distinctly saw his white hair move—in short, it was a wig!

Not only this, but his eyes seemed quite keen, and the goggles were apparently quite unnecessary. They were more for show than anything else; in fact, this quaint old character was disguised!

Who was he, and why was he going about in this get-up? I was interested in him, and I decided that I would give him a little more attention later on, if I got the chance. He got to his feet, and he shook a fist quiveringly at the rear of the motor-car.

"The fool!" he snarled. "He nearly killed me!"

"You would have been killed if that chap hadn't pushed you out of the way!" said Watson. "You've got to thank Levi for saving your life!"

"A man isn't safe anywhere nowadays!" snapped the stranger with the goggles. "Bah! These motorists ought to be kicked off the road! I'll have the law on this madman for this—I'll prosecute him!"

He hobbled away down the road, and we followed. We arrived just as Mr. Webb was alighting from the car. He was pale, and rather unsteady on his feet, and there was a confused look in his eyes.

"You infernal scoundrel!" shouted the stranger. "You might have killed me—By thunder!"

He paused, and stared hard at Mr. Webb.

"By thunder!" he repeated, in a startled tone.

Then, without another word, he turned away and broke through a convenient gap in the hedge. We heard him smashing his way through the twigs and bushes, and then he had gone.

What did this mean? Why had the man stopped so abruptly? Obviously, because he had recognised Webb, and that recognition had been a surprise. There was something about this affair which made me decidedly curious.

But there was no time to think about that mysterious stranger; I was exceedingly anxious regarding Solomon Levi. The Jewish boy was on his feet, but he

looked pale and shaken, and he was smothered with dust, and one of his wrists was bleeding.

"Ay, it was champion!" exclaimed Dick Goodwin enthusiastically. "By gum! I thought he was going to be killed—I did that!"

"It's all right—don't make a fuss!" said Levi. "There's nothing the matter with me, fortunately."

"But you might have been killed, all the same, Levi," I said. "The way you rushed to that old chap's assistance was wonderful. St. Frank's ought to be proud of you!"

"Ay, and St. Frank's will be proud, too!" said Dick Goodwin.

"I say, draw it mild!" exclaimed Levi. "There was nothing in what I did, anyhow. I don't exactly remember doing it. I simply went forward by instinct, in any case."

"Dear old boy, you're a hero—you are, really!" declared Sir Montie Tregellis-West. "It was an amazin' piece of pluck, an' I think you are a brick! You risked your own life to help that old stranger!"

"Oh, don't make so much noise about it, boys!" interrupted Webb thickly. "It was nothing—nothing at all! And, if you dare to say anything about this to the police, I'll——"

"Well, what will you do, Mr. Webb?" I interrupted grimly. "You were driving your car in a way that was dangerous to the public, and you ought to be prosecuted——"

"You insolent young whelp!" snarled the man. "How dare you dictate to me?"

"There's no question about dictating," I said. "You know as well as I do, Mr. Webb, that you're not in a fit state to be in charge of a motor-car. If there had been a tragedy here, you would have been put into the dock on a charge of manslaughter!"

"By heaven!" said Webb. "If you dare to say things like that to me——"

"Oh, don't make a row about it, please!" said Levi. "This is only my first day at St. Frank's, and I don't want to appear in any trouble. You'd better get back into your car, sir, and continue your journey."

Webb was rather confused, for he had certainly been drinking a great deal too much. And, after blustering for a bit, he got back in his car and drove on. He ought to have considered himself

very lucky for having escaped so lightly.

Mr. Robert Webb was the proprietor of the Bannington Cinema—not a particularly select place. But it was the only picture theatre in the town, and so Mr. Webb had a monopoly.

"Well, we'll give up our trip to Bannington now," I said, glancing at my watch. "The best thing we can do is to get back to St. Frank's as soon as possible; it's nearly seven. Do you think you'll be able to ride your bike, Levi?"

The Jewish boy nodded.

"Yes, I shall be all right!" he said lightly.

But, when he got into the saddle, he found that it was not so easy as he had imagined. His face was screwed up with pain for a moment or two, but he declared that it was nothing.

In any case, I forced him to open his waistcoat and shirt, so that I could examine his chest. There were one or two nasty bruises, and the skin was grazed here and there. But, on the whole, Levi was unharmed. This was truly wonderful, considering the experience he had just passed through.

By the time we arrived at the school it was nearly dark, and there were not many fellows in the Triangle.

Just before we went in, Levi looked at us in a strange manner.

"I say!" he said. "I—er—I——"

"Well?" I said.

"Look here, there's no need to say anything about what happened!" exclaimed Levi uncomfortably. "I mean, don't tell the other fellows——"

"Oh, no!" said Watson. "Not at all. We won't breathe a word!"

"Really, Tommy boy——"

"You ass!" said Watson. "We're going to tell this yarn to everybody—we're going to show those rotten snobs that Levi is a dashed sight better than they are!"

"But, look here——" began the Jewish boy.

"Rats!" said Tommy Watson.

He marched into the lobby, and, finding nobody there, he continued his progress and went down into the common room. We followed, and Levi brought up the rear. He was still looking slightly pale, and I could see that he was in pain.

And when we went into the common room we found that apartment rather crowded. The evening was chilly, and there was a nice fire in the common

room, and it attracted quite a number of fellows.

"Three cheers for the hero!" exclaimed Watson, as he entered the common room.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Which hero?"

The juniors stared at us.

"Hallo! There's Ikey back again!" said Owen major. "He looks a bit dusty, too——"

"And so would you look dusty if you had been knocked down by a motor-car!" I broke in grimly.

"What?"

"Knocked down by a motor-car?" said Handforth, coming forward. "Has Levi been knocked down?"

"Yes, he has!"

"Then he's a silly ass!" said Handforth frankly. "If he hasn't got enough sense to keep out of the way of motor-cars——"

"You—you silly fathead!" roared Tommy Watson. "Levi saved the life of an old man!"

"My only hat!"

"Here, I say!" protested Levi. "There's no need to make a song——"

"We're not making a song—we're just telling the truth!" said Watson. "Listen to me, you chaps. Levi risked his life to save the life of somebody else—an absolute stranger to him, and it's a wonder that the chap is now alive to tell the tale. It was about the pluckiest thing I've ever seen!"

"Oh, rats!" said Owen major. "You're not going to tell us that that Jewish chap has done anything plucky! I won't believe it!"

Solomon Levi was looking rather pale now.

"Please don't say anything more!" he said quietly. "You will please me if you will drop the subject at once!"

I shook my head.

"We're not going to drop it now, Levi," I replied. "A lot of these fellows here seem to imagine that we're spinning a yarn, and that we have only done it to give them a better opinion of you. I intend to tell the whole story, and then they will know the whole truth."

"That's right! Go it, Nipper!"

"On the ball!"

"What did Levi do, anyhow?" asked Hubbard. "Nothing much, I'll bet!"

It did not take me very long to ex-

plain the precise circumstances, and to tell the story in detail. As I did so, the juniors listened with great interest, and with a certain amount of wonder.

"And do you mean to tell me that Levi did this?" asked Handforth, at length.

"Yes, he did!"

"Well, it doesn't surprise me!" said Edward Oswald. "I always thought he was a decent sort. I say, Abe, shake hands!"

He extended a huge fist towards Levi, and the Jewish boy took it with a smile.

"But I don't understand it!" he said. "There is really nothing to make all this noise about. What I did was simply an ordinary action. I couldn't help myself, you know. I thought that the old fellow was in danger, and I went to his help without realising it!"

"That only proves that you're made of the right stuff!" said Handforth. "You didn't wait—you simply went into action without thinking—without considering your own peril. You're the real goods, Solly!"

"Hear, hear!" said Reginald Pitt.

"Rather!" agreed Grey. "We're proud of you, Levi!"

"We're jolly glad to have you in the Remove!"

The Jewish boy flushed.

"It's—it's very decent of you to say that!" he said, agitatedly. "I hope to goodness you won't think I went to that old chap's rescue just so that I could create a good impression——"

"Of course you did!" sneered Fullwood. "I saw that from the first. It was simply a wheeze on your part, just to play the part of a hero—— Ow! Yaroooh! What the deuce——"

"And if you insult Levi again," roared Handforth, "I'll wipe up the floor with you, you cad!"

Fullwood was already sitting down, having received a terrific punch in the chest from the energetic Handforth.

"I—I say, Levi!" exclaimed Owen major, hesitatingly.

"Well?" said the Jewish boy.

"I—I—well, I've been a bit of a rotter!" said Owen major, confused and red. "I wouldn't shake hands with you this afternoon, and I realise that I was a beastly snob. I didn't mean it, you know—and I'm sorry! Will you take my hand?"

Levi extended his own hand, and the two juniors gripped warmly.

"That's all right!" said Levi. "I'm jolly pleased to be friends with you, although I don't know what your name is."

"Owen major."

"Then we're all right!" said Levi, smiling. "Dash it all, I didn't expect to be treated decently on my first day at St. Frank's. I was prepared for a tremendous opposition. I think the majority of you chaps are jolly decent, and I'm perfectly happy."

"Good!" said Handforth. "Then we're all serene!"

"You don't bear any malice for what I said this afternoon?" said Owen major.

"Not a bit!" replied Levi. "My dear chap, I've forgotten about it already. Please don't say any more. And there's no need to talk about that motor-car business, either. For goodness' sake, don't let it get all over the school!"

"We sha'n't be able to prevent it, Levi," I said. "We can't keep all these mouths shut, you know, and there's bound to be a lot of talk. When you wake up in the morning, you'll find yourself a hero."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Levi, looking rather startled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Solly!"

It was with extreme pleasure that I noticed that the whole attitude of the Remove had changed. There was no longer a feeling of resentment against Levi for being at St. Frank's. Nearly all the fellows who had regarded him with a kind of mild contempt were now speaking about him warmly, and many of them started cheering.

In fact, that little incident about the motor-car had done wonders for Levi.

And then, in the middle of it, Tubbs, the pageboy, appeared. He put his grinning face into the doorway of the common room, and waited for somebody to ask why he had come.

It was not long before the pageboy was noticed.

"What the dickens do you want, Tubby?" demanded Handforth.

"Excuse me, young gents," said Tubbs, "but there's a gent waiting at the gate——"

"A gent?"

"Yes, Master Handforth," said Tubbs. "I don't know who he is, but he said his name was Mr. Greene——"

"Oh!" exclaimed Solomon Levi suddenly.

"That was the name, young gents!" said the pageboy. "Mr. Greene—and he's come here about a bicycle——"

"A bicycle?" I repeated curiously.

"Yes, Master Nipper," said Tubbs. "He says that he's arranged with one of the young gentlemen to buy a bicycle."

"Yes, that's right! I'm the fellow!" And Solomon Levi walked forward, nodding.

CHAPTER V.

BUSINESS ABILITY.

EVERYBODY looked at the Jewish junior as he made that statement.

"Ay, lad, what do you mean?" said Dick Goodwin.

"How can you have a bicycle to sell? You told me you hadn't got one, and you borrowed Somerton's——"

"It's all right," said Levi calmly.

"Is Somerton here, by the way?"

"No," said De Valerie. "I left him in Study M."

"Thanks!" said Levi.

He walked towards the door, and paused when he found himself opposite Tubbs.

"You might just go up to Mr. Greene, and tell him I sha'n't be long!" he said. "Tell him we'll soon have everything fixed up."

"Yes, Master Levi!" said Tubbs, who was always quick at telling the names of new fellows.

The Jewish boy went up the few steps which led from the common room, and very soon he was tapping on the door of Study M.

"Come in!" said a languid voice.

Levi entered, and he found the Duke of Somerton lounging somewhat languidly on the sofa. He was reading a book, and no one could possibly have mistaken him for a duke. His fingers were inky, his collar was crumpled, and his clothing looked as though it had been worn many weeks without a press. But Somerton was always like this; he didn't care a rap about his personal appearance. Although he had heaps of money to spend, he was about the most careless junior in the Ancient House. He was repeatedly getting into hot water with Mr. Crowell for appearing

in class with untidy clothing and inky collars.

"Oh, it's you, Abraham!" he said, as he looked up. "How did the bike go?"

"Oh, ripping!" said Levi. "In fact, I rather like it."

"Well, I don't!" said Somerton. "I think it's a dud jigger, and I don't suppose I shall use it much this term."

Levi stepped forward, after closing the door.

"I was going to make a suggestion to you," he said. "Are you willing to sell that bicycle?"

"I might be."

"I mean, do you want to sell it?" asked Levi.

"Well, if I'm going to get a new one, I sha'n't want two," said the duke.

"Yes, I'll sell it if you like to buy it, Levi."

"How much do you want for it?"

Somerton lay back, and looked thoughtful.

"I'm blessed if I know how much I paid for the thing now!" he said. "But that doesn't matter, of course; it's second-hand, and a lot of its value has gone. Can't you make me an offer, Levi?"

"Certainly!"

"All right—make it!"

"I'll give you sixteen pounds for that jigger—cash down!" said the Jewish boy promptly.

Somerton nodded.

"Done!" he said, without hesitation.

"You accept the offer?"

"Yes."

"Right-ho! We'll call that settled," said Levi calmly. "Sixteen quid—money down!"

"I'm not particular about the cash, old man," said Somerton. "You can pay me when it is convenient, if you like—so much a week, if it'll suit you better. I'm pretty flush at the moment—"

"Oh, but that doesn't matter at all; I don't do business in that way," said Levi. "If I buy a thing for cash, I pay cash."

"Just as you wish," said Somerton. "I'm satisfied, anyhow."

He looked on with mild interest as Solomon Levi produced his pocket-book, and then counted out three five-pound notes and one pound currency note. He placed these on the table, and Somerton picked them up carelessly.

"You appear to be somewhat wealthy!" he remarked.

"My pater generally gives me a nice lot of pocket-money," said Levi.

"That's correct, isn't it?"

"Well, I'm not particularly good at arithmetic, but I don't think I've made a mistake here," smiled Somerton.

"Yes, this is correct."

"Good! Just let me have a receipt, will you?"

"Eh?"

"A receipt, you know."

Somerton looked surprised.

"But, my dear chap, it isn't usual for us fellows to give receipts——"

"But it's a matter of business," interrupted Levi. "Business ought to be conducted properly, and I'd like it much better if you would give me a receipt for the amount."

Somerton shrugged his shoulders.

"All right, if you want it," he said; "but I'm blessed if I can see where it comes in. I sha'n't ask you for the sixteen pounds again!"

"I'm not suggesting that you will," replied Levi. "But business is business, and if a sale is transacted, and money paid in cash, it's only right that a receipt should be given."

Somerton was rather surprised, for the juniors were not in the habit of conducting business on such strict lines. However, he was quite willing to give the receipt, and he soon made it out. When it was finished, Levi took it and glanced over it.

"That's all right!" he said. "You are perfectly satisfied with the deal, aren't you?"

"Perfectly!"

"You think sixteen pounds is a fair price?"

"Of course I do!" said Somerton. "What's the idea? I sold you the bike for sixteen pounds, and there it is. It's yours now, to do what you like with."

"Exactly," said Levi, smiling; "to do what I like with!"

He passed out of the study, still smiling, and the Duke of Somerton looked after him with a kind of mild wonderment.

Levi went straight down the passage, through the lobby, and out into the Triangle. Just near the Ancient House steps he came across Mr. Greene, the stranger he had met in the High Street of Bannington. Mr. Greene was look-

ing rather impatient, but he bucked up as soon as he saw Levi.

"Oh, here you are!" he said. "Well, is the bicycle ready?"

"I'm awfully sorry," said Levi, "but I hadn't the chance to dust it down. We were delayed on the way home, you know. If you would wait a little while, I'll have the bike cleaned up——"

"Oh, that doesn't matter at all!" said Mr. Greene. "If the machine is ready, I'll take it at once."

"Right!" said Levi. "I'll fetch it, if you'll wait a minute or two."

He hurried to the bicycle shed, and appeared almost at once with the Duke of Somerton's machine. Quite a crowd of juniors had collected round by now, for they were interested in this transaction. They were all the more interested when they saw that Levi was about to dispose of the machine which everybody believed to be Somerton's.

"There you are, Mr. Greene," said the Jewish boy. "The bike is as good as new, and it's in perfect running order. It's hardly had any wear, and

"There's no need to tell me all that!" smiled Mr. Greene. "I suppose you haven't altered your mind about the price?"

"No."

"You still want the twenty pounds?"

"Exactly; not a farthing less!"

"You're a hard fellow to make a bargain with," smiled Mr. Greene. "However, we settled upon it, so I'm not going to argue. Just count that to see if it is correct, will you?"

He handed over a bundle of one-pound Treasury notes. Solomon Levi counted them quickly, and then nodded. The other juniors were looking on with great interest.

"Yes—twenty pounds!" said Levi. "Thank you, Mr. Greene. If you'll wait just a minute, I'll make out a receipt and sign it."

"Thank you!"

It only took the Jewish boy a minute or two to make out the receipt; then he handed it over to Mr. Greene, and the latter was quite satisfied. He mounted his purchase, nodded a good-bye to all the fellows, and then rode out of the Triangle into the lane. That was the last we saw of him. He had gone off on the Duke of Somerton's bicycle, and Solomon Levi had twenty pounds in his hands.

"I say, what the dickens does this mean?" asked Handforth. "Who told you that you could sell Somerton's bike?"

"I haven't sold Somerton's bike!" replied Levi calmly.

"I'll bet you anything you like that that bike belongs to Somerton!" said Handforth. "Do you think I don't know——"

"The bicycle was mine," interrupted Levi. "I bought it off Somerton only five minutes before I came out."

"Oh!"

"You bought it off Somerton?" I repeated. "Well, that's rather a queer thing, Levi. If you bought it, why did you wish to sell it?"

"Merely a matter of business," smiled Levi.

"Queer business!" said Watson, staring.

Some of the fellows were in the lobby, and they looked round as Somerton appeared. The schoolboy-duke was looking rather interested, for he was just wondering what the commotion was about.

"I say, Somerton!" exclaimed Pitt. "You've just sold your bicycle to Levi, haven't you?"

"Yes," said Somerton. "He took a fancy to it, I believe."

"But that's impossible!" protested Grey. "He's just sold it!"

"By Jove! Sold it?"

"Yes!"

"Really, I don't understand this!" said Somerton. "If Levi didn't want the bicycle, why did he buy it? It was pretty swift, anyhow."

"How much did he give you for it?" asked Hubbard.

"Sixteen pounds!"

There was a yell from the juniors.

"What?"

"Sixteen pounds!" shouted Hubbard.

"Yes."

"Then—then you've been swindled!" roared Armstrong. "I knew the chap was a rotter. He's swindled you out of four quid, Somerton!"

Somerton raised his eyebrows.

"I can't see that!" he said. "Levi came into my study and asked me if I wanted to sell my jigger. I said I did, and he offered me sixteen pounds for it, cash down. I accepted that offer, and that's all I know. I've got the sixteen pounds, so I don't see how I can have

been swindled. I was satisfied with the price."

"But—but he's just sold the jigger for twenty quid!" roared Hubbard.

"Eh?"

"For twenty quid!" repeated Hubbard. "He bought it off you for sixteen, and sold it for twenty—that means to say that he's put a clear four quid into his pocket!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Begad!"

"The awful swindler!"

"It's robbery!"

"Of course it's robbery!" sneered Fullwood. "Did you expect anything else from this Jewish cad? Everybody knows that Jews are swindlers and robbers; they're famous for it! But I think it's a bit thick for this bouncer to start his beastly games on his first day at the school!"

"Rather!" said Gulliver. "He ought to be kicked out!"

"Neck and crop!" added Bell.

"What do you think about it, Nipper?" asked Tommy Watson, in a low voice. "It certainly does seem a bit offside, you know!"

I grinned.

"Well, it's certainly jolly smart!" I said. "And, after all, there was no swindle about it, as some of these chips seem to think. It was purely a matter of business."

"But Levi has collared a clear four quid over the deal!" said Tommy.

"Exactly; that's where the business comes in."

"But how can it be right—honest. I mean—if Levi has pocketed four pounds over a deal of this sort?" argued Watson. "It didn't take five minutes from first to last, and you can't tell me that Levi earned four pounds during that time!"

"He certainly did!" I exclaimed. "He bought Somerton's bicycle for sixteen pounds, and sold it for twenty. That was a piece of smart business."

"But, dear old boy, you don't seem to realise that the bicycle was not Levi's to sell!" put in Sir Montie mildly.

"It was. He'd already paid Somerton in cash before he accepted any money from this stranger," I pointed out.

"That's very likely. But he opened negotiations, so to speak, in Bannington," said Watson. "He must have arranged it all while he was there—

before he had any right to say whether the bicycle could be sold or not."

I nodded.

"He took a chance over that, I'll admit," I said. "But a thing of that sort cuts both ways, you know."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, supposing Somerton had refused to sell his bicycle for less than twenty-four pounds," I exclaimed. "Levi had already fixed up the sale with this stranger. In that case he would have been obliged to fish out four pounds of his own, because he would have had to pay Somerton twenty-four, and he would only receive twenty back. Levi wasn't certain about it, but he risked it, purely as a matter of business."

"Well, it seems pretty sharp to me," said Watson gruffly. "I don't quite like it, as a matter of fact."

And a good many other fellows didn't like it, either. There was quite an uproar, indeed.

"And a thing of this sort ought to be reported to the Head," shouted Hubbard warmly. "I've never heard of such a swindle in all my life! This new chap gave Somerton sixteen pounds for his bicycle, and sold it the next minute for twenty!"

"Rotten!"

"A swindle!"

"That four quid really belongs to Somerton!" shouted somebody. "I vote we make Ikey pay up!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Dish out that four quid, Levi!" yelled Armstrong. "It belongs to Somerton!"

Solomon Levi shook his head.

"Your mistake!" he said calmly.

"The four pounds belongs to me."

"Rats!"

"Swindler!"

"Look here, I don't quite like these unpleasant accusations," said the Jewish boy quietly. "I'll just explain the whole position to you, and then perhaps you'll realise I merely transacted a piece of business."

"A giddy fraud, you mean!"

Levi shook his head.

"There's no fraud about it," he declared. "As it happens, I have cleared four pounds over the deal, but I had no guarantee of that. It was just possible that I might have lost. But I took the chance—purely as a matter of business."

"What do you mean, you spoofer?"

"Well, I didn't know that Somerton would be willing to sell his bicycle for sixteen pounds," said Levi. "This man met me in Bannington, and he offered me sixteen pounds for the bicycle. I refused, and told him he could have it for twenty——"

"But it wasn't yours to sell!"

"I know it wasn't. But I intended to buy it as soon as I got here," said Levi. "Anyhow, I arranged to sell it for twenty pounds to this man. He was satisfied, and I was satisfied. I didn't take the cash then, because I couldn't. It wasn't my bicycle to sell at the moment. So I told the man to come here during the evening."

"After you had bought the bike off Somerton?"

"Exactly," said Levi. "I went to Somerton, and I asked him if he could sell the machine. He said he could."

"Well?"

"Somerton asked me how much I would give for the machine, and I told him I would give sixteen pounds for it," went on Levi. "That seemed quite satisfactory, and Somerton agreed at once. He told me that sixteen pounds was good enough, and he was fully satisfied with the bargain."

"That's right enough," said Somerton. "I am satisfied, too. If Levi made a profit—good luck to him. But I must say he's pretty smart—he's keen as mustard when it comes to a business transaction!"

"A swindle, you mean!" shouted Hubbard.

"Rats!" said Handforth. "There was no swindle about it. I can see the whole thing now. Somerton said he was satisfied with the sixteen quid, and Levi paid up on the moment—in cash. If Somerton was satisfied, there's nothing more to be said. Levi simply sold this bike to the other man for twenty quid. That merely goes to prove that Levi is a jolly smart chap for business!"

"He ought to give that four pounds to Somerton!"

"Of course!"

"Hand it over, you Jewish rotter!"

"Don't you do anything of the sort, Levi," said Somerton. "That four pounds belongs to you. I sold the bike for sixteen pounds, and I had nothing to grumble at. These chaps ought to know better than to accuse you of swindling."

"Well, I hope I haven't offended anybody, but I merely looked upon the whole thing as a business deal," said Levi. "I never lose an opportunity when I see one. I thought it quite likely that I should make a nice margin of profit over this affair, and so I took the chance. As it happened, I raked in four pounds, but that four pounds belongs to me."

"Hear, hear!" said Church. "Of course it belongs to you, Solomon!"

Some of the juniors tried to get up a row, but they failed. As a matter of fact, a great many fellows were chuckling rather hilariously over the affair.

It certainly had its humorous side, for the Duke of Somerton, quite contented with sixteen pounds, had come out of the Ancient House in time to see his bicycle being resold for twenty.

Without the slightest shadow of a doubt, Solomon Levi had a clear head on him for a business deal.

Many of the juniors, however, could not see it in this light. They considered that the Jewish boy had deliberately swindled Somerton out of four pounds. This, of course, was quite wrong, for Levi had done nothing of the sort. He was perfectly entitled to that money, and Somerton himself appreciated this.

But Armstrong and Hubbard and Doyle, and several other made a bit of an uproar.

"The rotter ought to be made to refund the money!" shouted Armstrong warmly.

"Hear, hear!"

"And, in any case, he ought to be bumped!" shouted Griffith.

"Rather!"

"Grab him—on the ball, you fellows!"

A certain number of juniors surged forward excitedly. And before Solomon Levi could do anything he was seized by many hands, and whirled off his feet.

"I say, you fellows!" I shouted. "I don't think it's quite right to——"

"Rats! You don't come in this act, Nipper!" yelled Armstrong. "We're going to bump this rotter!"

"You'd better not!" I exclaimed grimly.

"Why not?"

"Because Levi isn't in a fit state to be bumped!" I replied. "After that motor-car accident he's bruised, and in no fit state to be handled roughly——"

"Rats!"

"He's going to be taught a lesson!" "You'd better let him go!" shouted

Handforth aggressively. "If you don't, we'll take a hand, and then you'll be bumped, instead! Who takes my side in this matter?"

"I do! I do!"

A chorus of shouts went up.

"Good!" said Handforth. "Come on, then! As soon as these rotters start bumping Levi we'll go for them—and we'll wipe them up to nothing!"

"Hurrah!"

"Lend a hand, you fellows!"

It really seemed as though the Remove would be engaged in a kind of free fight before very long. For this is exactly what it would have amounted to—if the proceedings had been allowed to go on. For Armstrong and Griffith and the other juniors were determined to treat Solomon Levi roughly. Handforth and another crowd of fellows were just as determined to see that Levi was not touched.

However, just as the strife was about to commence, Nelson Lee appeared in the Ancient House doorway. He stood looking on at the scene for a moment or two, and then he came hurrying down the steps.

"Boys!" he said sharply.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Cave!"

"Release Levi at once!" exclaimed Nelson Lee. "How dare you treat him in that manner?"

The Jewish boy was dropped as though he had suddenly become red hot. He fell to the ground, scrambled up, and then stood facing Nelson Lee. The other juniors crowded round in a dumb circle—a complete and unearthly silence had fallen upon them.

"I came out, boys, because I have heard some story concerning Levi," went on Nelson Lee grimly. "Certain facts have come to my ears, and I wish to ask a few questions."

"Oh, good!" muttered Armstrong. "The rotter's going to be made to fork out that four quid!"

"Serve him jolly well right!"

"Levi," said Nelson Lee, "how are you feeling, my boy?"

"Oh, I am all right, sir!" said the Jewish junior.

"You are quite sure?"

"Quite, sir."

"I understand, Levi, that you performed a somewhat reckless action this evening," went on Nelson Lee. "It was reckless, but, at the same time, it

was wonderfully courageous. I should just like to ask——"

"I say, sir, please don't make a fuss about that affair!" protested Levi. "It was nothing much, sir. I don't want anybody to hear about it——"

"When a boy performs a plucky action, Levi, that action is generally spoken about," interrupted Nelson Lee. "By everything that I can hear, you rescued an old man from certain death by throwing yourself in front of a motor car. You were caught by the car yourself, and it was only by a miracle that you saved yourself from being crushed to death."

"That's quite right, sir," put in Tommy Watson. "It was wonderful. One of the pluckiest things I've ever seen."

"Oh, dry up!" muttered Levi, going very red.

"I uphold Tommy, dear boy. I—I mean, I believe—— The fact is, sir, Levi is a hero!" exclaimed Sir Montio Tregellis-West. "Begad! My admiration for him knows no bounds, sir. It was an amazing piece of work, sir—it was, really! Levi was hurt, too—his ribs are frightfully bruised!"

"Dear me!" said Nelson Lee. "I am sorry to hear that. And yet I find a number of boys attempting to treat Levi roughly. What is the meaning of this?"

"Nun-nothing, sir!" stammered Armstrong.

"We—we were only having a lark, sir!" said another junior.

"No harm meant, sir!"

"I am quite sure of that," said Nelson Lee. "For it is obvious to me that Levi is a very plucky boy, and well worthy of being a member of the Remove."

"Rathor, sir!"

"You ought to be very proud that Levi is among you, boys," went on Nelson Lee. "He has started his career at St. Frank's in a most auspicious manner, and I only trust that he continues well. I am quite sure in my own mind that Levi will make good, that he will prove himself to be one of our best scholars. And I wish to thank him here, publicly, for his plucky behaviour of this evening."

"Good old Ikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Three cheers for Solomon!"

"Hurrah!"

"I will not inquire what the disagree-

ment was just now," went on Nelson Lee. "But I sincerely trust, boys, that you will have more commonsense than to indulge in any rough behaviour with Levi at the present moment."

"It's all right, sir. I can take care of myself!" put in Solomon Levi. "They were only having a bit of a lark, sir, and I shouldn't have come to any harm. It was really a misunderstanding!"

Nelson Lee nodded.

"Well, Levi, it is not my habit to inquire into the little disagreements which arise now and again among the juniors. I generally leave them to settle these matters on their own account. And I can quite believe you when you say you are quite capable of looking after yourself. By what I have seen of you, my boy, you appear to be a very capable young man."

And Nelson Lee, after a few words more, went into the Ancient House.

And Armstrong, Griffith and Co. came to the conclusion that they had better

leave Solomon Levi alone. And, after all, they could not help secretly admiring the Jewish boy for the astuteness he had shown in the matter of the bicycle incident.

After all, he had only transacted a very keen piece of business. And if he had pocketed four pounds over the deal, it was certainly what he deserved. It was true, the Duke of Somerton did not want any of the money.

Levi had proved that he was as keen as mustard when it came to business matters.

The Jewish boy's first day at St. Frank's had been filled with excitement and adventure. But if the Remove thought that everything would settle down quietly now—well, the Remove was mistaken.

For Solomon Levi was destined to create something like a sensation before so very long.

His business career, in fact, had only just commenced!

THE END.

TO MY READERS.

IN next week's story: "Barred by the Head!" it will be told how the Bannington Cinema comes to be put out of bounds to the boys of St. Frank's. It is the only picture-house in the town, and not renowned for the elevating character of its films. The proprietor, Mr. Webb, is more often drunk than sober, and utterly indifferent to the kind of entertainment he offers his patrons. Levi and Goodwin, Nipper and Co., Handforth and his chums visit the cinema when a particularly atrocious film is shown. The boys are disgusted, and Handforth creates a disturbance. A free fight ensues, and the boys are ejected. The affair is reported in the local paper against the interrupters, and causes a sensation at the school. The story is full of excitement and interest.

One of my chums suggests that I should publish a map of the school and its surroundings. This is quite a good notion, and one I mean to carry out. But I should like first to give all my chums an opportunity of trying their hand at sketching this map from the descriptions of the district given in the stories. As an encouragement, a small prize will be awarded to the chum who, in my opinion, sends in the best map. More particulars will be given next week.

THE EDITOR.

Thrilling New Serial of Brother and Sister Detectives!



KIT & CORA

Mysterious Detectives

A TALE OF DETECTIVE
ADVENTURE IN LONDON.

INTRODUCTION.

LIN FLEET, a lad of fifteen, wrongfully accused of stealing, loses his job at a motor garage. His parents being dead, he lives with an unscrupulous pair known as Uncle and Aunt Pawley, the former being better acquainted with the thefts at the garage than he would care to admit. Lin meets a stranger in a grey suit, who takes an interest in him, and the boy nicknames him "Mr. Mysterious." The stranger sends him on an errand to deliver a packet to a Mr. Crawson-Crake, who behaves like a madman and threatens to shoot the lad unless he discloses the name of his employer. Lin escapes and recounts his experiences to "Mr. Mysterious" at the latter's house in Hampstead. After some exciting adventures, with a diamond pendant entrusted to his care, Lin proves his capabilities, and is employed on a much more dangerous mission. He is to shadow Crawson-Crake on the embankment at midnight, in an interview with Cora, and give a low whistle when he sees danger.

(Now read on)

The Forgotten Signal.

WARNED by a slight motion of the old woman's other hand—which hung in seeming carelessness over the back of the seat Lin checked the impulse and stayed at his post. But it cost an effort, for he thought that her life was in danger!

But the man's arm was lowered without the threatened blow; and she, who had not drawn back an inch or betrayed the least sign of fear, calmly continued her story, as though the man beside her was no living volcano of deadly passions.

"Spicer's secret didn't sound much when it was told. It was simply that he knew of a bit of land out in Rhodesia where he had seen indications of a rich deposit of gold, although it was far away from the gold-bearing districts, and believed not to be worth even prospecting. It was for the most part worthless scrub, he said, and might be bought outright for a mere song. But there was untold wealth beneath it, he declared, only waiting to be claimed! It might have been his, he lamented, only that his health broke, and he had to come home to England as the only hope of re-

covery. He never had recovered enough for such an adventure, and he knew that he never could recover now. His great secret, and a much-worn map of Rhodesia, with the site of his supposed Eldorado marked in red, was his last bequest.

"Mrs. Hearne thought little of it; it was only a fantastic tale to her. But it worked like wildfire in the brain of young Charlie, until he came to believe it, and was mad to go out and secure a vast fortune, and come back and set his mother up as a fine lady!

"Probably because she guessed that Charlie had got in with a bad set, and would sooner or later go back to them if he stayed in England, but that life in a new land, away from evil influences might make a man of him, Mrs. Hearne yielded at last, and agreed to his going. And, although he was supposed to be going out to pick up a huge fortune, she took care that he should not starve while he was looking for it. She had a bit of money put by—the careful saving of years. She gave him all, and he set off in high spirits—quite convinced that he would be back again in no great length of time, a wealthy man. And it might have been so, had he gone alone, or in less evil company!"

"My patience is running out!" growled Crawson-Crake, as she paused again. "Have you finished this twaddle?"

"No," responded the old woman. "The best—or the worst—has yet to come!"

He growled menacingly again. But she went on as calmly as before.

"Charlie Hearne came to London to book his passage, buy his outfit, and then wait for his ship to sail. He had to wait over a week, and he chose to stay in London and have a final 'sprees,' instead of going back home for the time. It was a fatal choice!

"Several months had passed since he had last seen you or any of the disreputable set you headed. And he did not seek you now; that luckless meeting came about by chance. In the interval you and your crony Markel had struck bad times. Certain shady little schemes had gone wrong; you were both broke, and without the price of a bed between you, had come to the Embankment to look for a night's lodgings. This is the seat you chose. Of course you remember that well. It all comes back to you to-night!"

She tittered softly. He cursed her under his breath.

"It was about this time, a little after midnight, when Charlie Hearne happened to pass this very seat. You happened to see him, and hailed him eagerly. He came rather unwillingly, but, being always weak, and just then not quite sober, he was soon on the old terms with you both, and, of course, blurted out all about his coming journey to Rhodesia, and the huge fortune that awaited him there.

"Probably you and Markel only regarded Spicer's great secret as a fairy tale, and thought Charlie Hearne a bigger fool than ever because he seemed to believe in it. But it was plain that he had a bit of money, and while it lasted he was worth sticking to. Also, the pair of you were rather keen to get out of England just then. For, if some of your little schemes came out, the police might prove troublesome! Anyhow, you pretended to believe in the great secret, to envy him his wonderful luck, and to long to go with him—'Just as chums to see him through with it.' They were your words, weren't they?" she asked. "Don't you recall them?"

A low, wolfish snarl was the only response. "Well, in any case, you so worked matters that Charlie Hearne—poor fool!—was soon as eager to have you with him as you were to go. And it ended by all three going; he paying the expenses out of the money his mother had given him."

Again she paused; then, with a little intake of breath, said:

"Now comes the wonderful part of the story. For it is wonderful. The great secret turned out to be no myth! Gold was found on the spot that Spicer had indicated on that rough map! And it proved to be a far, far richer deposit than even he had dreamed of! Charlie Hearne had bought the seemingly worthless strip of barren scrub outright for a paltry sum, and it was his—all his!

"Even sooner than he had hoped for, he might have gone back to England, rich beyond his wildest dreams. But it was not to be. He never came back!

"The pair of villains he had taken with him showed their true natures then. Hearne was quite alone with them, hundreds of miles from the next man, white or black. Why should he, a mere fool, reap such a splendid harvest, while they, men with brains, had nothing but such paltry gleanings as he chose to give them? So Charlie Hearne was killed with a blow of the camp axe one night as he lay sleeping by the camp fire. His bones lie hidden deep in some cleft of rock out in that wild land. But murder cannot be hidden—it will out at last!"

She paused once more. And then it was the man who laughed; a hoarse attempt at scorn and mockery.

"So the cat has jumped, has it!" he sneered huskily. "You are that fool's mother, and you want money of me? It is blackmail, mind, for young Hearne met his death by an accident. But I am willing to

help his old mother. How much d'you want?"

"If I am his mother, do you think to silence me with money out of the very hand that slew him?" said the old woman, in a voice still low-pitched, yet thrilling in its intensity of feeling. "Fool! You cannot silence a mother with a bribe!"

The rest all happened, as it seemed to Lin, in a few flying moments!

He drew back closer against the lamp-standard, as Crawson-Crake threw a swift glance around. It so chanced that the wide stretch of pavement from the river parapet to the kerb, and far to the right and left, was absolutely deserted. No casual wayfarer had passed for some minutes. No shadowy policeman was visible. Not even one of those forlorn vagrants lurked near enough to see—and perchance to help in time!

Those two upon the seat, and Lin himself, seemed alone upon that broad, bare space.

"Then it must be the other way!" growled Crawson-Crake.

A swift movement, and he sprang up with the frail, slight form of the old woman clutched in his powerful arms. A few unsteady but rapid strides and he was at the parapet; his victim held aloft as he drew his shoulders back to hurl her into the river.

Orders and instructions were nothing to Lin Fleet then. He could not think—only act.

He dashed swiftly across the pavement, and, by an impulse born of the terrible emergency, sprang up and bit fiercely at the man's wrist—bared as his coatsleeve fell back from the uplifted arm.

A strange mode of attack! But it was effective!

With a snarl of pain and rage Crawson-Crake let go his hold on his intended victim, who, instead of falling, leapt lightly to the ground at some distance from him, with an agility surprising for her apparent age and feebleness.

Mad with baffled fury, the huge man now turned upon Lin with a savage oath, and, seizing him by his clothing with one mighty hand, swung him to and fro as a terrier swings a rat, before hurling him over the parapet into the river. But, on the very swing for the fatal throw, he suddenly let the boy drop unhurt, as his own arms were seized, dragged down and held in a grip that mastered even his gigantic strength.

It was an instance of science versus mere brute force, for the man who thus overcame him was of far slighter build. Yet it did not seem that the effort had cost him a breath; for, in even, measured tones, he said to the man who fiercely struggled in his grasp:

"It is useless, Rolf Jarman—or Crawson-Crake, as you now choose to call yourself—the game is finished for you! Your accomplice in the murder of Charles Hearne—James Markel—is now in safe keeping, and has told the story of the crime and confessed

to his share. To-night you have proved your identity, and your own deeper guilt! Here is your man, Inspector Barrows." Lin knew that voice! It was Mr. Mysterious who had done that amazing thing!

Three fresh figures, a police-inspector and two constables, now appeared; and, for the first time in his life, Lin saw the glint of steel handcuffs, and heard their grim snap as they closed upon a man's wrists. A gruff, low-spoken order, and the three stern-faced men marched their prisoner away.

When they were gone, Lin's strange employer, never even glancing his way, turned to the old woman, and said:

"Come, Cora, I have the car waiting. Home!"

Cora—Miss Twyford! Lin could hardly believe his ears; not even when the girl, in her natural voice, young, fresh, and musical, responded:

"I'm ready! And—ugh!—glad to get away from this wretched spot and back to light and warmth!" Then she added, as she took her brother's arm, "But, Kit, there's Lin. What about Lin? Haven't you a word for him?"

"He failed," was the curt, sternly-spoken response.

"Oh, but, Kit—Kit! He saved my life!" pleaded the girl.

"He failed," said Twyford, as sternly as before. "The moment for the signal came—and he forgot!"

And without one look in the direction of the boy, he led his sister away.

Lin was left alone, like a thing that had been proved worthless and was discarded without the least hesitation or sign of regret!

"How could I remember in a rush of things like that!" he muttered, in keen resentment of what he felt to be harsh and unjust treatment. "I know that I ought to have given the call he taught me the moment I saw, or thought that I saw, that the woman was in danger of her life. But it all happened in such a rush! The man had her up in his arms over by the river wall all in a flash. I couldn't remember about orders! And if I'd stopped to think—oh, only for a moment—she would have been hurled into the water, and no signal could have saved her! Mr. Twyford might have thought of that. But he says that I failed—failed! And now he has done with me! I'm turned down as no good! He will not give me another chance. I don't suppose that I shall ever see him again!"

And, mingled with his feeling of anger and resentment was a touch of genuine sorrow and regret. He found, not a little to his own surprise, that he had grown intensely interested in the queer sort of work "Mr. Mysterious" had set him to do. He wanted more of it; if only to win a word of approval from that strange man himself, and a smile from the bright, friendly eyes of that lovely young lady.

But that was over now. He had been tried and had failed. They were done with him! If only he had another chance!

N D S Y

(To be continued.)

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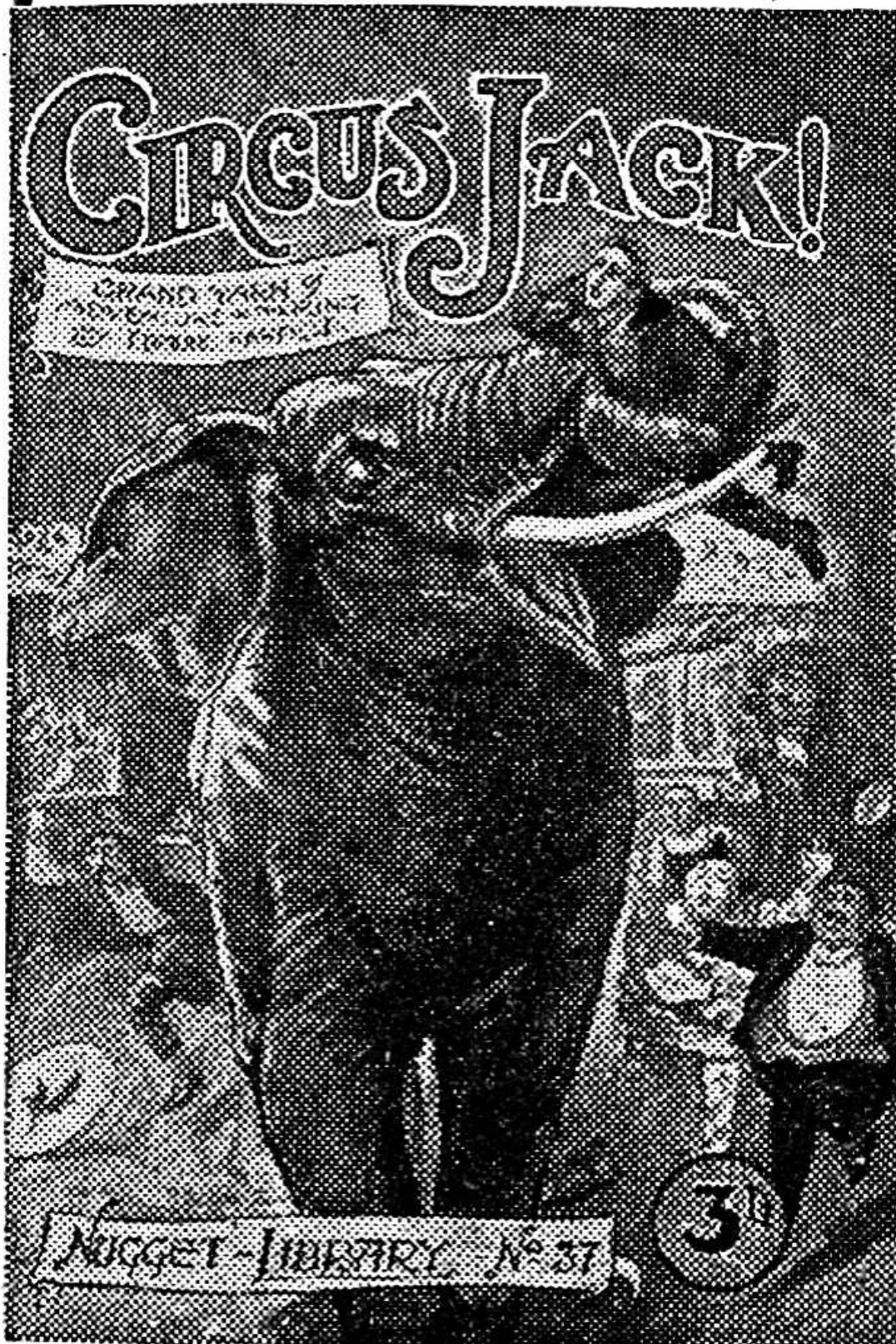
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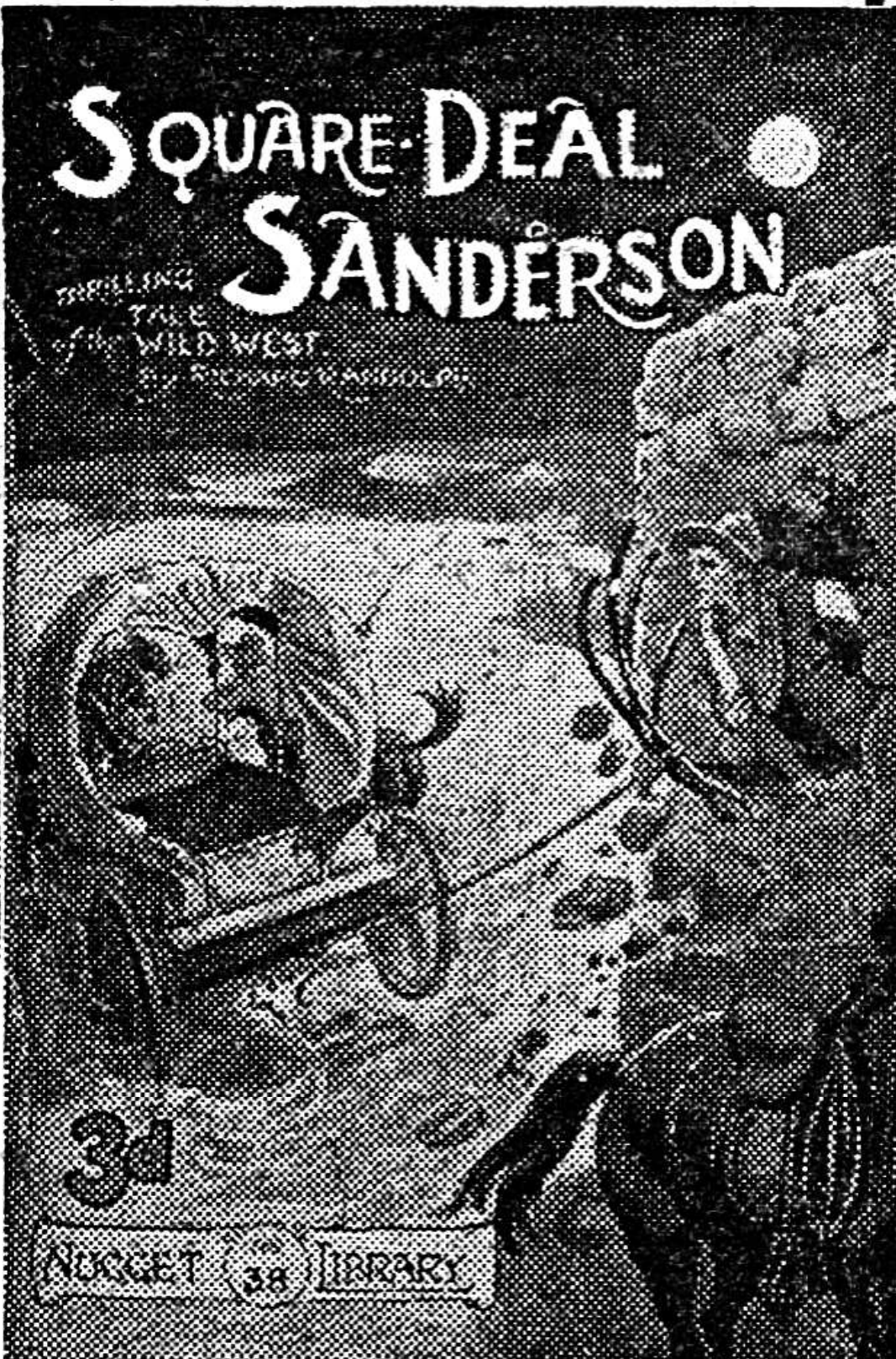
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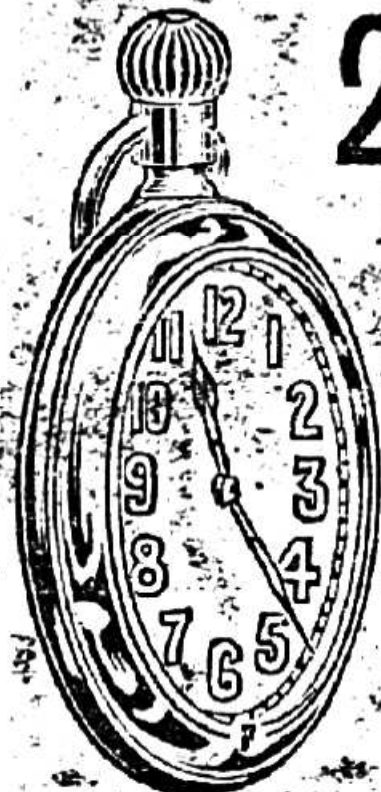
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