

TWO NEW FEATURES START IN THIS NUMBER!

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The air was full of Pa, dog and rockets

PECK'S BAD BOY AND HIS PA.

*(The book that has been filmed
and made all America laugh.)*

has been secured for

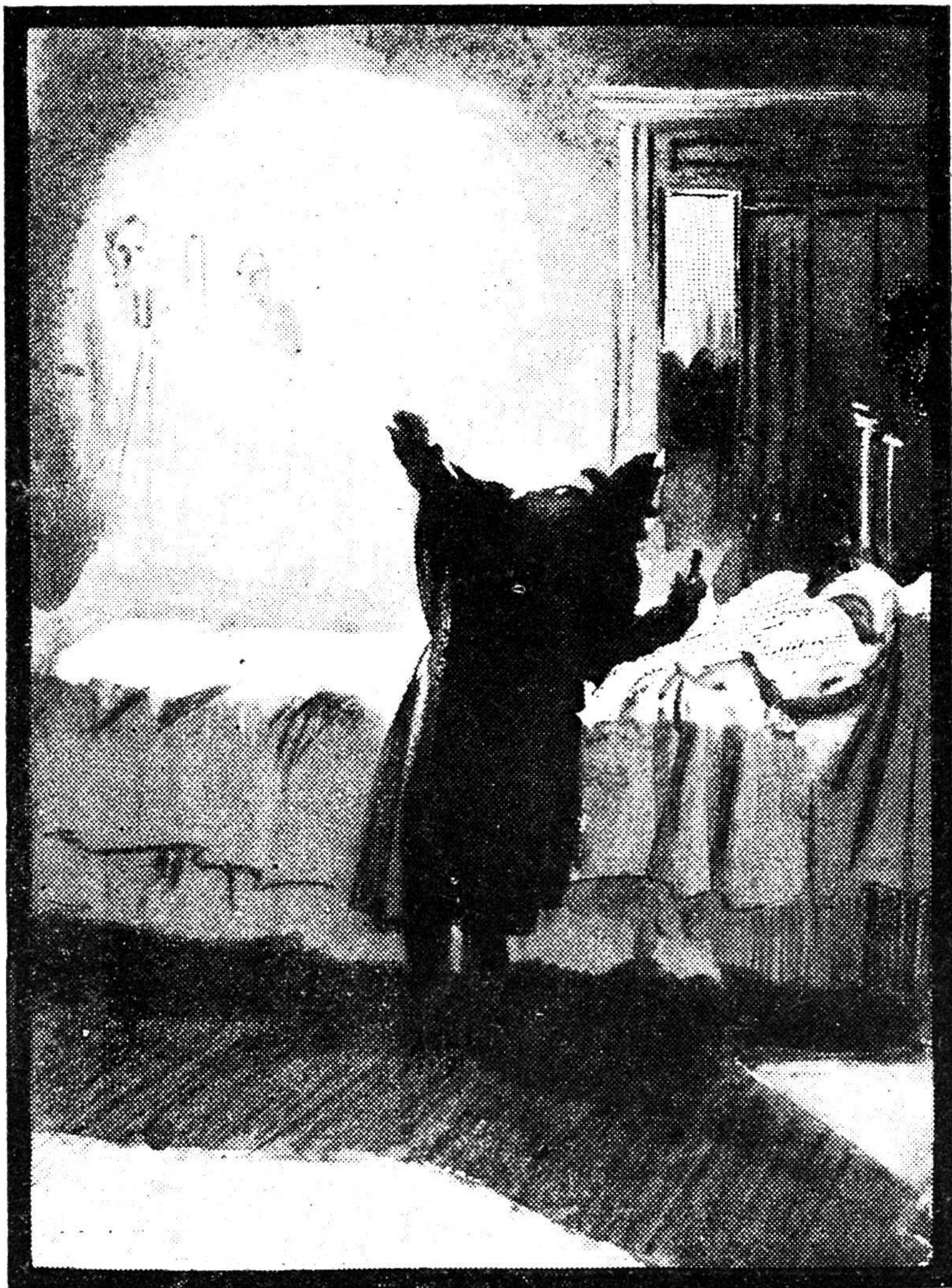
NIPPER'S MAGAZINE

The first instalment of these
screamingly funny adventures
appears in this issue (see
inside) under the title of:

THE BAD BOY'S FOURTH OF JULY!

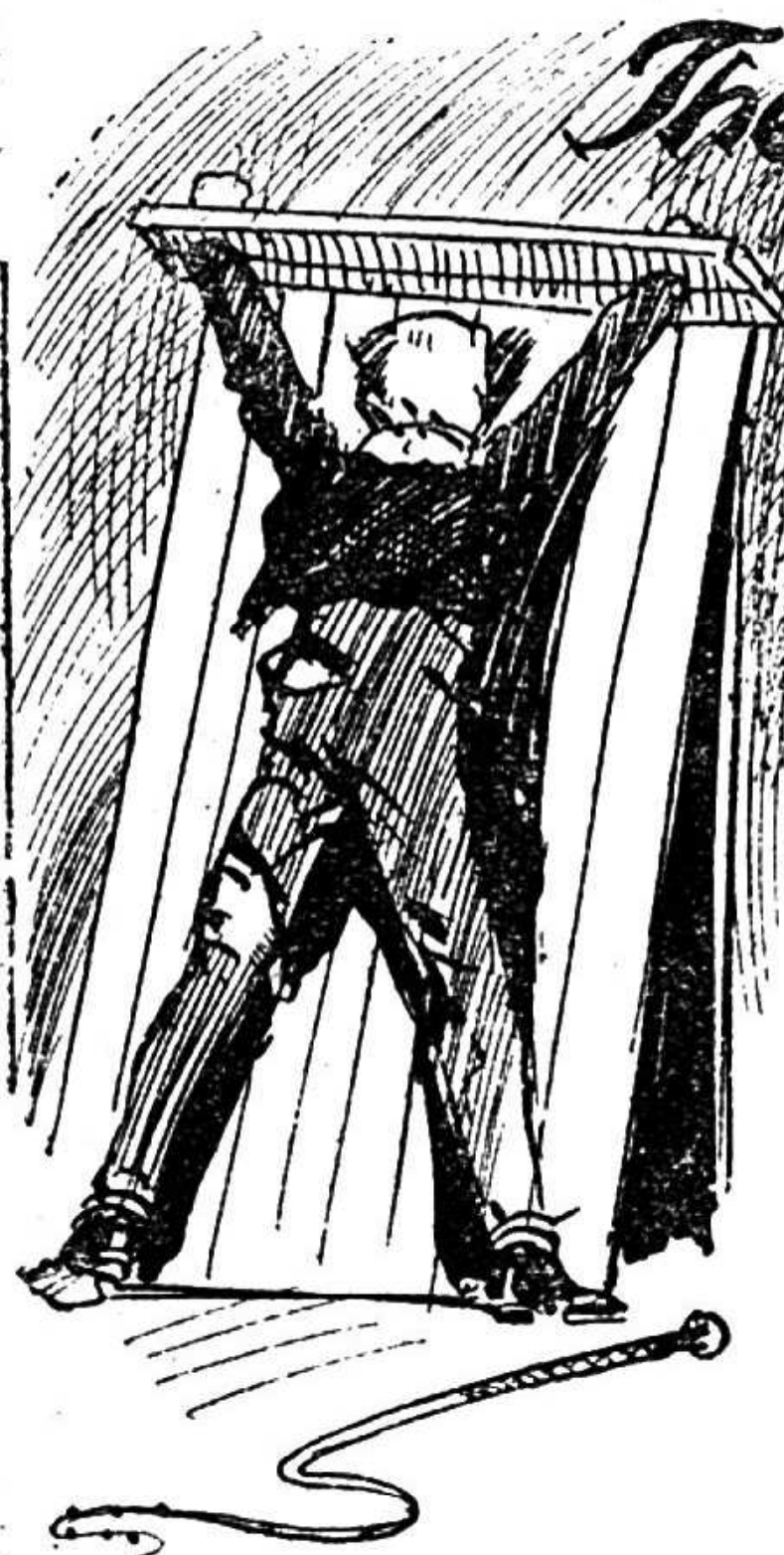
*This week's Long, Com-
plete Story of St. Frank's
is entitled:—*

THE SUPREME COUNCIL



Sizzzz! Without the slightest warning there was a hissing sizzle and a blinding flash. Mr. Trenton uttered a hoarse cry and staggered back.

The SUPREME COUNCIL.



A Splendid Long Complete Story of School Life and Detective Adventure at St. Frank's College, introducing **NELSON LEE, NIPPER**, and the Boys of St. Frank's. By the Author of "The Schoolboy Soviet," "The Communist School," "Staunch to the School," and many other Stirring Tales.

(THE STORY RELATED THROUGHOUT BY NIPPER.)

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSPIRATORS!

THE Supreme Council of St. Frank's Revolution was sitting in special session, and all the six members of the Council were looking serious and concerned. For the situation under discussion was as serious as it could possibly be.

"The biggest piece of impudence I've ever heard of!" said Kenmore, of the Sixth. "Walking out without giving us any proper warning, and leaving us absolutely in the lurch!"

"Disgraceful, that's what it is!" said Chambers, of the Fifth. "If I had my way I'd punish the whole crowd jolly severely. They don't seem to realise the dignity and importance of the Supreme Council. We're the sole and absolute controllers of St. Frank's, and yet we're defied!"

"The situation is quite lamentable, my comrades," observed the President of the Supreme Council. "Quite so! H'm! I regret to state that the difficulties are far greater than I had anticipated. But we are not beaten. There are other servants to be obtained, and until we can engage a new staff, we will carry on alone."

The other members of the Supreme Council looked dubious. And for a short while there was silence, as each member considered the position.

The scene was the Council Chamber of the Schoolboys' Union, or the St. Frank's Soviet. It was referred to in various terms, in fact and the Loyalist section of the boys at St. Frank's was not very particular about what they called the Rebels. They were invariably uncomplimentary.



The Supreme Council consisted of six members, Kenmore and Carlile, of the Sixth; Chambers and Grayson, of the Fifth; and Timothy Tucker and Armstrong, of the Remove. These six fellows ran the whole school. And it can hardly be said that their control had been an unqualified success.

The Schoolboy Communists were being given a chance to see what they could do. The Headmaster was confined to his rooms for the present, and Nelson Lee was quite willing to let the boys give this Communism a trial. In a way, the famous schoolmaster-detective was very wise and broadminded in giving the fellows their chance.

There had been trouble at St. Frank's for some weeks, mainly owing to the repeated outbursts of unaccountable violence on the part of Dr. Stafford. And, at last, just after the Christmas holidays, the discontented ones had broken out into open revolt. Timothy Tucker, the tame Bolshevik of the Remove, had seriously suggested practical Communism as a way out of all the difficulties, and to the amazement of everybody. Tucker's manifesto to the Headmaster had been accepted.

And even now only one or two fellows knew that the Head's acceptance had really been a forgery; a practical joke on the part of no less a person than Reginald Pitt, of the Remove.

Nelson Lee, needless to say, had been absent from the school at the time, and when he returned he found the Communists just getting into their stride. And, instead of quashing the whole thing then and there, Nelson Lee had had the foresight to let it go on. For the alternative was a serious one. To quell the Rebels and put them down would have been quite possible but discontent would have been rife throughout the whole school, and the trouble would probably have got worse and worse.

And so Nelson Lee had let the Communists continue; feeling morally certain that they would make a dismal failure of the whole thing, and would be in a much more humble frame of mind, and more contented generally, when they surrendered.

Timothy Tucker was the fount of knowledge in all Communist matters, and he, therefore had proclaimed himself President of the Supreme Council. The senior members did not exactly like this, but they agreed. And all manner of Communist schemes had recently been put into operation.

Success, however, had not been very pronounced. The masters of St. Frank's no longer had any power. They were merely servants of the Soviet, and their sole duty was to attend in the class rooms and teach the various Forms. They had absolutely no power to inflict punishment.

Form Councils had been inaugurated for this purpose, and the fellows were rapidly discovering that the Form Councils were ten times more arbitrary and tyrannous than

any Form-master. And the punishments administered by the Supreme Council were of the most drastic and terrifying description.

This, of course, had been foreseen by Nelson Lee. He knew what boys were, and once they had the full control of the school in their hands they would proceed to show their power in no unmistakable way. Lee believed that the "common ruck" of the Communists would soon grow tired of their leaders.

Grumbles were already being heard, in fact, and, the previous evening, disaster had fallen upon the Communists by the action of the entire household staff, which had walked out of the Ancient House in a body. The staff, in fact, point blank refused to take any further orders from the boys.

As a consequence, supper had been a farce, and breakfast, to-day, had been so badly arranged that many fellows received none at all. Growls and grumbles were being heard on every side.

So the Supreme Council had met, and the situation was being discussed. A decision of some kind was absolutely necessary. Something would have to be done, and with as little delay as possible.

"It's all very well to talk about getting on until we can engage a staff, and in the second place, how can we get on until they arrive? What about cooking and preparing meals; what about making the beds and cleaning the rooms, and all the rest of it? We're absolutely stumped, if you ask me."

"By no means, my dear sir, by no means!" said Tucker gently. "With regard to the household duties, these shall be performed by special sections of the boys. We shall give the orders and they shall have to obey."

"Yes; but supposing they don't obey?"

Timothy Tucker blinked.

"In that case, Comrade Armstrong, force will be necessary," he said gently. "We have the power in our hands, and we shall use it. Having started on this system, we must continue, no matter what the cost. And if our comrades prove obstinate, we shall at once institute measures to bring them to reason. H'm! That is so!"

It might be possible to get the housework done, but there's still the difficulty of preparing the grub," remarked Carlile. "Hang it all, we can't go on like this! Breakfast was rotten this morning, simply ghastly, in fact. All I had was some dry bread and a cup of horrible stuff that was supposed to be tea. And there's dinner to think of. Who's preparing it?"

"Nobody!" said Chambers bluntly.

"The Loyalist cads are all right," growled Armstrong. "They're all together over in the College House, and the servants are still doing their duties. We're the only chaps who will suffer. That's the rotten part of it, you know. We control the school, and yet the Loyalists are getting the best of it!"

"Dear, dear! There is really no necessity

to get into such a panic!" said T. T. "We have met together, my comrades, in order to decide upon these points. A cook is a vital necessity, I will agree. Without proper food, our followers will become discontented and troublesome. I have been turning the question over in my mind, and I have been trying to think of any particular boy who is expert in the art of cooking."

"Blessed if I can think of anybody!" growled Chambers. "How many chaps know how to cook, anyway? There are plenty of fellows in the Fifth who can fry a kipper over the fire, or poach a couple of eggs; but it's a different thing when they're required to cook potatoes and greens and make Irish stews and all that kind of thing. They'd end up by making a hash of it!"

"Well, a hash is better than nothing!" said Armstrong.

"Oh, don't try any of your idiotic jokes now!" snapped Kenmore. "We've got to find somebody who can cook properly. 'I always understood there was a kid in the Remove who was an expert——'"

"You mean Fatty Little," said Armstrong.

"Yes!"

"You know jolly well he's a Loyalist, and over in the College House," put in Carlile. "He's the very fellow if we could only persuade him to join us. But I don't think it would be possible."

"I'm afraid, my dear sir, that Little would raise serious objections to the suggestion," said T. T., shaking his head. "He is, indeed, a rabid opponent, and would never consent to join our ranks."

"What about using force?" suggested Kenmore.

"Dear, dear, dear!" said Tucker dreamily. "Force! H'm! H'm! I must admit that the idea has possibilities. Quite so. Yes, Comrade Kenmore, it certainly has possibilities! Since Fatty Little will not join our ranks of his own free will, why should we not seize him, and hold him a prisoner, and make him cook!"

"By Jove, that's a ripping wheeze!" said Armstrong enthusiastically.

"Well, I thought of it!" said Kenmore. "You juniors think you can rule the whole blessed show, but when it comes to ideas, you're hopeless. It takes a brainy chap like me to suggest something really practical."

Kenmore, of the Sixth was a bully by nature, and it was quite natural for him to think of forcible methods in preference to any other. And the more the Supreme Council discussed this kidnapping idea, the more they liked it.

It suggested an excellent way out of all their troubles. Fatty Little was a really remarkable cook, not merely handy at poaching eggs, and so forth, but he was capable of preparing a full-sized dinner, running to several courses. He was equally adept at making stews, puddings, pies and so forth. Fatty Little had the real knack, and, supplied with all the necessary materials, he would certainly make a big success of it.

And there were materials in plenty in the Ancient House store-room. With such supplies ready to hand, the fat boy of the Ancient House would work wonders, he would fairly revel in his job.

"I think the plan will work out admirably, comrades," said Tucker softly. "Indeed, it may not even be necessary to apply force. Little is naturally a greedy fellow, and the prospect of being in the midst of such eatable stuff will appeal to him. I have no doubt that he will come at the first suggestion——"

"We can't afford to take any risks," interrupted Kenmore. "If Fatty Little refuses, his pals will get the tip that we're after him, and then they will be on their guard. The only safe way is to kidnap him, and ask questions afterwards. We shall be on the safe side by doing that."

"But how are we going to get hold of him?" asked Armstrong.

The President rubbed his hands together.

"That, Comrade Armstrong, will be a matter of extreme simplicity," he observed gently. "I have a scheme in mind already. You will see, Comrade Kenmore, that you are not the only one who can think of things. That is so."

"Trot out the idea, and I'll tell you if it's any good," said Kenmore bluntly.

T. T. trotted it out, and the Supreme Council all agreed that it was satisfactory in every way. They put their heads together, and arranged the final details. And then a number of juniors were summoned, and instructions were handed out to them.

It certainly seemed that Fatty Little was booked for some trouble!

CHAPTER II.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP!



FATTY LITTLE emerged from the tuckshop in the corner of the Triangle. One or two crumbs still lingered on his ample waistcoat, and he was looking cheerful and satisfied.

The fact that Fatty had enjoyed an excellent breakfast only three-quarters of an hour earlier was a mere trifle. He had just partaken of enough tuck to satisfy any ordinary fellow for the remainder of the day. Fatty Little's appetite was a peculiar one, it needed stoking so to speak, at very frequent intervals.

Morning lessons would be commencing very soon, and Fatty was just reckoning that he would be able to last until midday. It would be something of an effort, of course, but it was better to be well-packed beforehand. Sometimes, when he was hard up, and passing through a lean period, he would not be able to obtain tuck to supplement breakfast. And on these occasions he

would groan through morning lessons, whispering to all and sundry that he was in the final stages of starvation.

The morning was fairly bright and crisp, a keen frost being in the air. Fatty strolled across the Triangle in the direction of the College House. Really and truly, he was an Ancient House boy; but there had been drastic alterations of late. They would probably be only temporary alterations.

The Rebels, or Communists, being in much superior forces, had pitched the small band of Loyalists out of the Ancient House completely, and had taken full possession. But the Loyalists were getting on quite well. Although taking no part in this Communism scheme, they were vastly enjoying it. It was interesting to watch the progress, and there was much speculation among the fellows as to how long it would be before the Communists suffered a general and ghastly collapse.

At one time Fatty had been on the verge of going over to the Rebels; not because he believed in their principles, but because he had an idea that he would be able to get more food. He argued that with the boys in control of the Ancient House, he would be able to do very much as he liked, and could obtain meals whenever he felt inclined.

But now he was tremendously glad that he had remained a Loyalist, for the Rebels were in sore trouble regarding food. Fatty had heard many grumbles during the morning, and he gathered that the supporters of the Supreme Council had had practically no breakfast at all.

While he was strolling towards the College House, two juniors lounged by. Fatty did not seem to observe that they obviously wandered in his direction so that they would pass well within earshot. They were Griffith and Doyle, and they appeared to be in earnest conversation.

"The most lovely grub you could think of!" said Doyle audibly. "Tons of it, too—enough for a giddy army! And it's all within reach—"

Doyle and Griffith passed on, and Fatty Little came to a halt. He had heard the words. Anything about food always impressed itself upon his ears. He looked after the two juniors thoughtfully, but stood quite still. Griffith and Doyle were apparently wandering aimlessly, for they came back.

"And do you mean to tell me that all this tuck is handy, so that anybody can go and have it?" asked Griffith, apparently unaware of Fatty's proximity.

"My dear chap, anybody can help himself to as much as he likes," said Doyle. "Jam-puffs, mince-pies, cakes, cream tarts—"

Again the voices faded away, and the two Rebels passed on, and Fatty Little found himself unconsciously licking his lips. Although he was full up, his mouth had suddenly begun to water.

"Great pancakes!" he muttered. "What the red pepper did they mean? Grub—as

much as you like! By gravy! They've stopped against the gym, and I might be able to hear a bit more."

Griffith and Doyle as a matter of fact had ceased their wanderings, and were now leaning carelessly against the corner of the gymnasium. They were in such a position that it would be quite easy for anybody to creep round the other side, and reach that same corner unobserved.

Fatty Little was not slow to realise this. He stuck his hands in his pockets, whistled with exaggerated carelessness, and strolled away. He made his way to the back of the gymnasium, and then, with bated breath, he crept round until he was quite close to the corner. Voices floated round the angle of the building.

"Beastly rotten breakfast, if you like!" Griffith was saying. "Still, we made up for it by helping ourselves to that tuck, didn't we? And fancy all that tuck being there, and we're the only chaps who know about it!"

"Don't you breathe a word!" said Doyle warningly. "If the crowd gets to know, the stuff will vanish in no time. It's as safe as houses in that little shed at the back of the Ancient House."

"Is the door locked?"

"No."

"What if somebody gets in?"

"That won't matter," said Doyle. "All the grub is packed in cases, and nobody would know that it was really there. I expect it came from the confectioners in Banington. Anyhow, we've got a supply there that'll last us for days, providing we don't give the wheeze to anybody else. The chief thing is to keep mum about it."

"Rather!" agreed Armstrong. "We can find that shed in the dark, too; it's the little one up in the corner. But don't you think it would be a good wheeze to cart the stuff to a safer place?"

"Perhaps so," said Doyle thoughtfully. "Yes, we'll do that after morning lessons, and then we shall be absolutely certain of keeping it to ourselves. Well, come on, we'd better get indoors."

They walked away, and Fatty leaned back against the wall of the gymnasium, breathing hard. His eyes were gleaming, and his chubby face was decidedly flushed. Never for a moment did he suspect that that conversation had been concocted for his own particular benefit.

It had seemed so natural—so plausible—that the fat junior was completely deceived. Certainly, it was easy enough to spoof him, when it came to a question of food, although on all other matters he was as keen as most juniors. Fatty was no fool.

The prospect of obtaining unlimited supplies of tuck free of all charge, however, deadened his natural astuteness. He had no scruples about taking the stuff. It belonged to the Rebels, and it was a recognised privilege at St. Frank's for rival juniors to raid one another's tuck.

Fatty pictured to himself how he would be able to get this glorious supply and transfer it to a safe place. He would then be able to help himself just as he liked. And it afforded him keen pleasure to picture the dismay of Armstrong and Doyle when they arrived in the shed after morning lessons to find their prize vanished.

If Fatty's mind had not been so fixed on the food, he might have thought it peculiar that the Rebels had been so definite regarding the nature of the tuck, and its exact whereabouts. And it certainly seemed strange that it should be placed in a shed, with the door unlocked.

However, Fatty was not troubled by any suspicions, and he made his way fairly quickly, and by a round-about route, to the rear of the Ancient House. The yard there was quite deserted and bare. There was no sign of any living soul. There were several sheds and outhouses, but there was one in a corner with a closed door. It was smaller than the rest, and was undoubtedly the one which Griffith and Doyle had been discussing.

Fatty Little made his way towards it, with his heart beating at a more rapid rate. He glanced over his shoulder once or twice, but there was no sign that he was being observed.

He reached the door, placed his fingers upon the handle, and turned it. To his joy, the door opened at once. He crept in on tip-toe, and found that the interior of the shed was dim and gloomy. For some reason, the door closed with a slam as soon as he was inside, and he started.

"Great bloaters!" he gasped. "Who—who—"

"As neat as you like!" exclaimed a chuckling voice. "Come into my parlour, said the spider to the fly! Grab him, you chaps!"

Fatty started back, utterly staggered, for a dozen forms loomed out of the dimness, and surrounded him. A second before he had believed himself to be absolutely alone. Now, in a flash, he knew that there was some trick about the whole business!

"Leggo, you rotters!" he gasped, struggling in the grasp of the Rebels. "You—you awful bounders! By chutney! You'd better not touch me—"

"My dear fat porpoise, we have touched you," exclaimed Armstrong. "You will please understand that you are in the hands of the enemy. Any resistance is useless. You are a captive of war!"

"I suppose you did this on purpose, just to dish me out of that tuck!" snorted Fatty Little indignantly.

"My dear ass, there never was any tuck; it was just a myth!" grinned Hubbard. "Doyle and Griffith did their part very well, evidently, because you swallowed the giddy bait whole. It was a trap—and you're collared!"

At last Fatty Little realised the truth.

"Great apple-dumplings!" he exclaimed.

"You—you cads! So it was all spoof about that grub?"

"Sheer moonshine!"

"Why, you—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Rebels roared at the expression on Fatty's face. Then he was held more firmly, and Armstrong gave a sharp order.

"Bring him along to the Council Chamber!" he exclaimed. "The other members of the Supreme Council are sitting, and awaiting the arrival of the prisoner. There's not much time, so we'd better buck up."

Fatty vainly struggled.

"What's the idea, you rotters?" he demanded hotly. "What have you collared me for. If you think I'll take up your rotten Communism, you've made a bloomer! I'm not going to be starved to death—"

"Bring him along!" ordered Armstrong.

"In spite of his protests, Fatty Little was forced out of the shed, across the yard, and through the rear doorway. He was taken along numerous passages until he arrived at the apartment which had originally been Mr. Crowell's old study. It was now the Council Chamber of the Supreme Council.

Armstrong threw the door open, and a moment later Fatty was forced in. He found the Supreme Council sitting. Armstrong had already taken his place. And they were all looking stern and determined.

"Stand the prisoner immediately in front of us!" commanded Kenmore.

Fatty Little was forced forward until he was standing right against the long table behind which the Council was sitting. He was left to himself, his guards falling back and standing at attention. There was no hope of escape for the captive, for he was completely surrounded by the enemy.

"You will please understand that you are a prisoner in the hands of the Communist forces!" said Armstrong curtly. "What is your name?"

"You mad fathead!" shouted Fatty. "You know what my name is—"

"That is no way to address a member of the St. Frank's Supreme Council!" said Armstrong harshly. "Unless you can talk respectfully, you will be immediately sentenced to severe punishment. It is not the object of the Council, however, to inflict any harm on you."

"What have you brought me here for?" demanded the fat junior.

"You are a prisoner—"

"I've heard about that ten times!" snapped Fatty. "Not that I need telling, anyhow!"

"You will be held as a prisoner during the pleasure of the Supreme Council!" exclaimed Timothy Tucker gently. "You will please realise, my dear sir, that we are serious, and any attempt to escape on your part will meet with dire consequences. You have been brought here because we intended you to work. Quite so. You will be forced to labour."

"Labour!" gasped Fatty. "What the toasted crumpets do you mean?"

"Really, my dear sir, what an absurd expression!" said T.T. reprovingly. "The Supreme Council has decided to appoint you Chief Cook of the Ancient House——"

"Chief Cook!" repeated Fatty brightening.

"Exactly," said Tucker. "You will be taken to the kitchen, and it will be your duty to prepare all meals for the entire Communist forces. You will be guarded constantly, and you will not be allowed to partake of any food in between meals. It will be your first duty to prepare dinner!"

Fatty Little laughed contemptuously.

"You funny asses!" he exclaimed. "How do you suppose I'm going to prepare dinner for such a big crowd? I couldn't possibly do it! Why, it takes five or six people to——"

"You will have a staff of assistants, composed of Third Form comrades!" said Tucker. "They will be at your service to peel potatoes, wash dishes, and so forth. But you will be constantly guarded, and——"

"You might as well save your breath!" interrupted Fatty. "I'm not cooking for a set of beastly Rebels, I can tell you!"

"Do you mean to say you refuse?" roared Kenmore.

"By pancakes! I should think I do!"

The Supreme Council glared at him.

"You fat rotter!" snapped Armstrong. "You've got to agree, understand?"

"If he doesn't, we'll give him a taste of the birch!" said Kenmore.

"Dear, dear, dear! Surely that is not necessary?" murmured T.T. "I think, my dear sirs, that there is one very effective way of bringing the prisoner to a state of submission. He will be taken to the cells, and starved until he agrees to our terms. Stewards, remove the prisoner at once!"

"The birch would be better!" declared Kenmore.

But the other members of the Council supported Tucker's suggestion, and Fatty Little was seized again, and forcibly taken to the cellar. The door was unbolted and opened, and he was thrust down into the cold darkness. The cellar was fairly large, but dreary and dismal. And Fatty Little was not feeling exactly happy as he reviewed the situation.

"The cads—the awful cads!" he muttered. "They're going to starve me down here! All right, they can do it! I'll never give in! I'll never work for such a crowd of rotters! They can starve me until I'm as thin as a rail!"

He was not exceedingly hungry at the moment, and so he murmured these words with confidence. Later on, when he felt certain pangs in the region of the waistcoat, he would probably alter his mind.

The Supreme Council was well satisfied with the position.

"It'll be all right if he gives in," said Armstrong. "I don't think there's much

doubt about that. But supposing he doesn't give in until the middle of the day? There won't be any time left to prepare dinner."

"It would have been a lot better to have swiped him until he gave in!" declared Kenmore. "What do you say, Grayson?"

"Swiping's a good game, and I'm generally in favour of it," said Grayson, of the Fifth. "But in this case I reckon it was better to starve the young bounder. He'd only be vindictive after a touch of the birch, and he might have made a mess of the dinner out of pure spite. I reckon if we go to him in an hour he'll be as tame as a lamb, and ready to agree to anything."

"That is my opinion, Comrade Grayson," said Timothy Tucker. "It is merely necessary to exhibit just a little diplomacy in these matters."

And the Supreme Council broke up.

CHAPTER III.

MORE CONSPIRATORS!



"HEARD the latest?" asked Reginald Pitt.

He approached a group of Loyalists who were standing in the College House lobby; waiting, in fact, for morning lessons. There was not sufficient time for football practice or anything of that sort, and so the fellows were content to stand chatting.

I was included in the group, and I was just discussing with Tommy Watson and Sir Monty Tregellis-West what we should do about our immediate football fixtures. We couldn't very well play our regular team, for some of its members belonged to the Rebel forces. The position, from the point of view of sport, was somewhat awkward.

We turned as Pitt came up.

"What's the latest, anyway?" asked Tommy Watson.

"The Rebels have got hold of Fatty!" said Pitt, grinning. "One or two of the Rebel fags were talking, and I heard it. I demanded to know the full truth, and they blabbed it out."

"They've got hold of Fatty?" I repeated. "What for?"

"They've trapped him by luring him to some grub——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Which didn't actually exist!" went on Pitt. "And then, having got him where they wanted him, they fell upon the poor bony boy, and seized him. And they carried him with due pomp and solemnity before the Great and Glorious Council of Extremists!"

"Are you trying to be funny?" demanded Handforth grimly.

"Not at all!" smiled Pitt. "Some fellows can be funny without knowing it, but I'm not one of those happy individuals. Now, you're always funny, Handy. One glance at your face——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you prize ass!" roared Edward Oswald Handforth. "If you're going to be personal, I'll punch your silly nose. I want to know why the Rebels have got hold of Fatty Little?"

"The answer is—grub!" said Pitt. They've made him their chief cook, and the poor chap is forced to do all the work with guards looking on all the time. He won't even be able to have a snack now and again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all very well for you chaps to laugh, but I regard this seriously," I said. "Of all the nerve! Collaring one of our chaps and forcing him to work! My sons, this must be attended to."

"That's what I was thinking," said Pitt. "Poor old Fatty! But he didn't knuckle under—he's made of the right stuff, and plenty of it. He point blank refused to serve the Rebels."

"Good for Fatty!" said Jack Grey.

"But we ain't going to stand this!" shouted Handforth indignantly. "Huh! It's likely that we're going to let these Communists pinch one of our fellows and turn him into a slave!"

"And they call it freedom!" said Tommy Watson.

"And if Fatty knuckles under in the finish, I'll punch him until he's one big bruise from head to foot!" went on Handforth. "What's he doing now, anyway? If he refused to work, the Rebels must have done something to him——"

"By what I could understand, he defied the Supreme Council, and they ordered him to be imprisoned until he caved in," said Pitt. "In other words, they're going to starve him into submission."

"That'll take about ten minutes!" grinned De Valerie.

"I don't know; I saw him having a terrific feed in the tuck shop not long ago," remarked Bob Christine. "He's pretty well packed up, I should think. We've got to think of something to help him."

Handforth sniffed.

"That'll take you all the morning, I suppose?" he sneered. "Think of something! That's all you chaps are good for, instead of getting straight to action, you mess about thinking out plans! You're just like a forward in front of an open goal, who starts playing about with the ball instead of shooting! I vote we dash across to the Ancient House, and rescue Fatty straight off!"

"Splendid!" I said. "And how's it going to be done?"

"How's it going to be done?" repeated Handforth. "Nothing easier! We've simply got to go over in force, have a terrific scrap with the Rebels, and rescue Fatty Little. That's all!"

"To mention nothing about being whacked to the wide, and chucked out on our necks!" I said. "It's easy enough to have a scrap,



Seizing a moment when he was not observed, Fatty emptied the contents of the tin box into the stew.

I'll admit. But you seem to forget, Handy, that the Rebels are practically two-to-one against us, and we couldn't possibly hope to win in an open scrap. Direct action is all very well under certain circumstances, but it wouldn't work here."

"Well, I'm going to try it," snorted Handforth. "You can jolly well have a go at your own beastly methods. I'll work independently!"

Handforth stalked towards the doorway. He paused just before going out, and looked back. His gaze was fixed upon Church and McClure, who were studiously examining the wall.

"Come on, you fatheads!" he said gruffly. Church and McClure evidently knew their names, for they looked round at once.

"We're not coming!" said Church shortly.

"Oh, ain't you?" roared Handforth. "We'll jolly well see about that! You—you deserters! You traitors! We're going to show Nipper and his crowd that we can go and rescue Fatty without any help at all!"

Church and McClure were reluctant to go, but in order to save trouble they followed

their impulsive leader into the Triangle. In the meantime I went with my chums to Study Q, and made certain suggestions which caused the juniors to go off into a condition closely resembling hysterics. By the time they had recovered from their laughter I was well on my way to the laboratory.

I was lucky enough to have the place to myself, and with rapid fingers I compounded a powdery mixture consisting of various drugs and chemicals. They were all perfectly harmless, even when mixed, but I was inclined to believe that they would not be precisely comfortable.

Armed with this mysterious concoction, I placed it in a little tin box, and then sallied out. I wandered across the Triangle, and at the first opportunity I dodged into the old monastery ruins, without being observed.

Then I hurried as fast as I could down the circular steps, crumbling with age, which led down into the Ancient vault. This had been the scene of many adventures in the past, and I knew every inch of the place.

And I knew, also, that a secret tunnel led from the vault right into the Ancient House cellars. This passage, indeed, had been used quite recently, since the Rebels had formed themselves into a party. But the Communists were still unaware of its existence.

It was not a very long passage, and I soon traversed it. Finally making my way up some steps, I was confronted by a strong stone door. It was quite obviously a door from this side; but from the other side it resembled a portion of the wall, and could not be detected.

This door had jammed a bit, owing to the fact that Handforth had slammed it to with unnecessary vigour. This incidentally, had led to a whole crowd of us being trapped in the cellar without any possibility of escape. For it was impossible to open the secret door from the other side.

But I made short work of it now—for all the clumsy but effective mechanism was in full view. I soon found where the fault lay, and put it right. Then I cautiously opened the door and gazed through.

All was dim and dark in the cellar. It was only provided with ventilators, and these scarcely gave any light, although they kept the air pure and fresh. I waited for a moment or two, half fearing that Fatty had been removed.

Then I heard a shuffling footstep.

"The rotters!" came a muttered voice. "By pancakes! They're going to serve me out, are they? I'll show 'em!"

I grinned to myself.

"Fatty!" I whispered softly.

The shuffling footstep came to an abrupt halt.

"Did—did somebody speak?" asked a startled voice.

"It's all right—don't be scared!" I murmured. "I'm Nipper—I've just arrived.

Don't speak loud, or the Rebels might hear you."

"Great frying pans!" gasped Fatty Little, coming forward in the gloom. "How—how did you get in here, Nipper? You must have been here all the time, you bounder! I thought I was alone—"

"I've just arrived," I interrupted. "Don't be so startled, my portly youth! I've come in through a secret tunnel!"

Fatty was fairly amazed, but when he saw the opening of the tunnel he jumped with delight, and made a rush for it. But I pulled him back.

"Oh, good!" said Fatty. "I can escape this way, and those beastly Rebels won't be able to know how I got away! I'm starving! I shall just have time for a snack before morning lessons—"

"You're not going to have a snack, and you're not starving!" I interrupted. "And what's more, you're not going to clear out of this cellar just yet."

Fatty Little stared at me indignantly.

"But didn't you come here to rescue me?" he demanded.

"No!"

"What! You—you—"

"Keep your hair on!" I grinned. "You'll understand in a minute. You've got to remain here, my son, and follow my instructions—to the letter. And you've got to surrender to the Rebels and become their chief cook!"

Fatty was now fairly amazed.

"Why, you—you traitor!" he gasped. "You—the leader of the Loyalists—tell me to go over to the Rebels! By gravy! I'm surprised at you, Nipper! You must be off your giddy rocker!"

"No, I'm not!" I grinned. "And if you'll stand still and listen, instead of jawing like a gramophone, I'll explain."

"Yes, but this is a good chance for me to get away—"

"No, it isn't," I said. "If you vanish out of this cellar the Rebels will know that there must be some kind of an exit—and that'll be a distinct disadvantage to us. Besides, we can't afford to miss this chance of giving 'em a knock."

"Which chance?"

"Don't I keep telling you that I want to explain?" I asked patiently. "If you'll only listen, you'll soon find that you'll have plenty of chances to give the Rebels the slip. And you can give 'em something else, too!"

I proceeded to explain. Fatty looked rather impatient at first, then he became attentive, and, finally, his fat face broke out into wide grins. One or two deep chuckles caused his chin to ripple up and down.

"Great jumping pancakes!" he breathed. "What a wheeze! Oh, my only hat! We'll make the Rebels wish they'd never been born!"

"You'll do it?" I asked.

"Rather!" said Fatty enthusiastically.

"Why, it's as safe as houses—and I shall be able to escape at dinner time, at the latest! Gimme that giddy powder! Can I use the lot?"

"Every crumb!" I grinned. "It's as harmless as Epsom salts—but about ten times as bad! I know a good bit about chemicals and drugs, or I wouldn't have undertaken anything of this kind at all. I don't believe in chaps playing about with drugs and chemicals unless they know what they're doing—it might be dangerous. But this stuff is as safe as houses."

"Good!" said Fatty. "I'll take it, and now——"

"Sh-s-s-s-h!" I hissed. "The door's being opened!"

I gave his arm a squeeze, and then moved silently back to the secret door. I slipped through, and held the door nearly closed. It was impossible for anyone to see me in that dark corner of the cellar.

Fatty Little went to the foot of the stairs and gave a hollow groan. Four Rebels came down, and at the same moment the cellar was flooded with electric light. I had been expecting something of this kind, and I was thankful that I had retreated into cover. I closed the door completely, so as to be on the safe side. I knew that I could trust Fatty to do his part well.

The four Rebels were Doyle, Griffith, and Hubbard, and Shaw, of the Fifth. Shaw was Grayson's particular pal, and a well-known bully.

"Well, my fat lubber?" he grinned. "How do you feel now?"

"Ow! I'm nearly dead!" groaned Fatty, in anguish.

"Scared, you mean—afraid of being in the dark——"

"You—you cad!" moaned Fatty. "It's not that—I'm starving—I'm fading away to a shadow! You—you torturer! You Spanish Inquisitors! You're starving me to a skeleton, and one day you'll suffer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can laugh!" went on the fat junior in a hollow voice. "I sha'n't live now—I'm past all help now! This'll be the finish of me! And when I'm buried, you'll have my death on your conscience."

"I've got an idea he'll be pretty reasonable now," grinned Doyle. "You fat ass! You haven't been imprisoned more than half-an-hour——"

"Half-an-hour!" said Fatty dazedly. "Why, it seems hours and hours!"

"What it seems, and what it actually is, are two different things," said Doyle.

"Well, what's the verdict? Shall we shut you up again—to starve some more? Or will you surrender, and accept the official post of Chief Cook to the Communists? What's the verdict?"

Fatty Little gave a deep, mournful sigh.

"I'm beaten!" he said brokenly. "Starvation is the worst torture of any! Nobody can stand out against it! Yes, I—I give in

—I surrender! I'll prepare the grub, if you like!"

"Oh, good!" said Griffith.

"I thought the fat young glutton would throw up the sponge," said Shaw. "Right—bring him up. We'll set him to work at once. We've got to have something decent for dinner to-day, or we shall have a split in the ranks. No army has ever succeeded on bad grub. And it stands to reason that a revolution can't keep going if the chaps aren't fed!"

Fatty Little seemed to take his lot with sullen resignation. He gave his word that he would not attempt to escape while he was at work, and he was known to be a fellow who would not give a false promise.

And so, shortly afterwards, he was installed in the spacious and well-appointed kitchen of the Ancient House. He was in his full glory, and his spirits were bucked up enormously. Attired in a white coat and a chef's cap, he looked the part to the life.

He had a staff of twelve fags under him, and he soon set these to work—some washing up, some peeling potatoes, and so forth. There were two Fifth Form fellows, in the kitchen, acting as guards.

The fags didn't mind a bit—they were revelling in it. As Owen minor remarked: "This was better than stewing at lessons, any old day!" The Third Formers, in fact, thoroughly approved of the whole scheme, and did not need to be pressed into service.

Fatty, after having a look at the available supplies, found that two or three half-finished joints were on hand, with plentiful quantities of carrots, onions, potatoes, and other vegetables.

He decided to make an Irish stew, and for this purpose he half-filled a gigantic cauldron with the various ingredients. And Fatty knew exactly what to do. He had a touch about him that stamped him as a true chef. He knew exactly how much water to use, precisely how much seasoning and sauce, and he knew when to put the carrots in, and when to thicken the liquor. In fact, there wasn't a thing about cooking he didn't know. He had made a study of it for years.

His knowledge also came in handy regarding the other vegetables. And when everything was going ahead nicely, Fatty glanced at the clock and grinned.

"Another hour of lessons yet," he said. "This ain't so bad, after all, you know."

"I reckon you ought to think yourself lucky!" said one of the Fifth Formers. "We're all missing lessons, and this kitchen is comfy and warm. We're having the best of it, if you ask me."

"I—I say!" piped one of the fags eagerly. "Can we do this to-morrow?"

"You bet!" grinned the Fifth Former.

"Hurrah!"

"Oh, it's all very well for you fags to cheer, but you've only tasted the sweet yet!" said the senior. "The bitter's got to come! Just wait until you're set to the task of

washing up! You won't like that very much. And you'll have to be on duty here most of the evening—getting supper ready. And you'll have to do the washing up afterwards! And you'll have to be up two hours before the rest of the fellows in the morning, to get breakfast ready!"

The fags looked utterly dismayed.

"Oh, my goodness!" said Owen minor.

"We—we haven't got to do all that?"

"Oh, yes, you have!"

The Third Formers were by no means happy at the prospect. They had thought only of the present; but now they knew what this task really entailed, they suddenly lost all enthusiasm for it.

Fatty Little went over to the big range, where the fire was roaring cheerfully, and examined his numerous pans and saucepans. All were boiling, and when he lifted the cover from the stew, a delicious odour came wafting across the kitchen. That stew was certainly a good one.

"We shall want something to finish with, of course," said Fatty thoughtfully. "Now, lemme see. There's plenty of flour here—and currents—and sultanas, and all that kind of thing. I'll tell you what—we'll have plum-and-currant duff for the second course. I've got a special recipe of my own for it!"

Fatty Little at once proceeded with the manufacture of a huge pudding. He merely did this in order to pass the time, and because he revelled in the whole affair. To have exactly what ingredients he liked was a rare novelty, and he made that pudding really well.

By the time it was nicely on the boil, morning lessons were over, and several members of the Supreme Council came down to see how things were going on. Kenmore was among the first, and he sniffed the air hungrily as he entered.

"Topping niff!" he observed. "That's the way, Fatty—serve up a good dinner, and we'll grant you a few favours, you know. But you won't be allowed to move out of the Ancient House—that's understood. You're a prisoner here!"

"I know all about it," growled Fatty. "And don't come bothering here—because you'll make things go wrong. Your face is enough to make the stew curdle, anyhow!"

"Why, you—you cheeky young elephant!" roared Kenmore. "I'll clip your ear for that!"

But Kenmore thought better of it, as Fatty was smothered in flour. And active preparations for serving dinner were got under way.

Fatty Little tasted his stew liberally before finally serving it up. It was so good that he had two helpings, and he looked really sorrowful as he took the small tin box out of his waistcoat pocket.

"It's a pity to spoil it all!" he murmured. "Still, it's got to be done!"

He took some comfort in the thought that it wasn't right, anyhow, for these beastly

Rebels to enjoy his cooking. And, seizing a moment when he was not observed, he emptied the contents of the tin box into the stew. Then he proceeded to stir vigorously.

A little later on he took a tiny sip of the liquor. It tasted delicious—the powdery mixture had not affected the flavour to any noticeable extent. But Fatty knew better than to partake of a large amount. He had had his share beforehand!

Dinner time came, and the stew was served up. Fatty had made a liberal quantity, and there was more than enough to go round. Without any doubt at all, that stew was a triumph. It was so delicious that not a scrap of it was left.

And the pudding to follow was equally good. The Rebels declared that they had never eaten a better dinner, and they were full of praise for their captive cook. They resolved to keep him, under all circumstances.

But something was in store!

CHAPTER IV.

MORE CONSPIRATORS!



"YOW—yow!" exclaimed Armstrong wildly. "Yaroooh!" "Yow!" echoed Griffith. "Ooooh!"

Dinner had been over about half-an-hour, and Griffith and Armstrong were in the Ancient House lobby. They were both in extraordinary positions, doubled up, and holding their waistcoats tightly. They were still making sounds when Doyle and Hubbard appeared. The two juniors stopped abruptly, and stared at the agonised ones.

"Hallo!" said Doyle. "What's wrong with you fellows?"

"They seem to be ill!" said Hubbard. "What's the matter, Armstrong?"

"Yow—ow!" said Armstrong gaspingly. "Oh, my hat! I—I'm dying—Yaroooh!"

He doubled himself up afresh, and rolled on the floor.

"Here, I say!" said Doyle, in alarm. "There's something badly wrong with him, you know! We'd better fetch Dr. Brett! There's no telling—I—I—"

Doyle came to a full stop, and a peculiar expression entered his face. A gasp came from between his lips, and he made a clutch at his middle. Then he doubled himself up into a knot.

"Ooooooh!" he panted faintly. "I—I've got a pain! Yow! Oh, my only hat! Ow! Yaroooh!"

Doyle fairly went off into a howl, and Hubbard stared at the three writhing juniors in absolute amazement.

"They must have eaten some poison!" he gasped. "What on earth—Oh, my only

aunt! I—I can feel something— Help! Help! Ow!”

Without warning, Hubbard closed himself up like a penknife, and within a few moments he was gasping and howling just as vigorously as the others. It was astounding—unaccountable. And it was frightfully alarming. What on earth could be the meaning of this strange and terrible attack?

The four juniors, to tell the truth, were filled with wild alarm. They were filled with pain, too. They all suffered frightful spasms internally. And these spasms seemed to come upon them without warning, and without allowing them any time to get their breath.

A stranger entering the Ancient House just then would have been exceedingly astounded. In the lobby there were four juniors rolling about on the floor. In the Remove passage about six others were also smothering themselves with dust. Fullwood and Gulliver clung desperately to the doorway of Study A, and Bell was lying in a heap in an easy-chair.

The most weird and wonderful sounds came from all quarters. They were groans and gasps and agonised howls. It was the same in every part of the Ancient House. As though by some gigantic hand, everybody was struck down at the same time.

The Supreme Council was sitting—at least, the Supreme Council had been sitting.

At present it was either rolling on the floor, or attempting to tie itself up. Such pains had never before been experienced by any of the fellows.

All constitutions were not alike, and some of the victims, of course, were more seriously effected than others. One or two, in fact, hardly noticed any discomfort at all. But these were in the minority. Nine fellows out of ten were prostrated.

It was the same in other parts of the school.

In the Triangle five Rebels were attacked with the strange malady at once. They valiantly attempted to reach the privacy of the Ancient House before doubling up, but it was impossible. And there they were, in various parts of the Triangle, making public exhibitions of themselves. The Loyalists, far from being sympathetic, simply howled with laughter.

For the truth had got round by this time.

“Did you ever know anything so rich?” grinned Pitt. “It was Nipper’s wheeze—he got Fatty to ‘doctor’ the Rebels’ dinner, and this is the result! All the bounders are helpless with tummy trouble!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“But, dash it all, it looks serious!” said Tommy Watson. Just listen to the howls! I hope some of the chaps won’t peg out!”

“You ass!” I grinned. “The stuff’s absolutely harmless—but I’ll admit it gives you what-ho at first. All these chaps will feel a lot better for it afterwards. It’s done

them a rare amount of good, although they don’t know it.”

“They don’t seem very grateful!” grinned Church.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“You—you murderers!” gasped Owen major, who was near by, tightly holding his belt. “You—you heartless torturers! If I die, it’ll be your fault, and—Ow! Yaroooh! I’m dying now!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

In the Ancient House, the Supreme Tribunal was feeling the first signs of recovery. Fortunately, the acute spasms did not last very long. The pains, instead of enduring, came all at once, and the victims knew all about it! Happily for them, the period of agony was soon over.

In the Council Chamber, Armstrong and Kenmore were the first to recover. Armstrong had crawled into the Council Chamber to see if his fellow Councillors were similarly affected—and he found that they were. But now he was getting better. He was able to stand upright.

“Oh, my goodness!” he said faintly. “They’re not quite so bad now. I—I thought I was dying, you know! I hope to goodness they don’t come back!”

“We’ve been poisoned!” said Kenmore savagely. “That’s the truth of it—we’ve deliberately been poisoned!”

“Oh, don’t talk rot!” said Armstrong. “It can’t be poison! I suppose you’re trying to suggest that Fatty Little put something in the dinner?”

“I know jolly well he did!” snapped Kenmore. “I’m going to skin him alive for it! The artful young porpoise! I suppose he thought he’d take it out of us like that! And we were praising him up, too!”

“Dear, dear, dear!” said Timothy Tucker faintly, as he sat on the edge of a chair. “I am feeling better—yes; I am thankful to say I am feeling better. How frightful—how truly appalling! I never expected to breathe again! I never expected to recover! Comrade Little is a vindictive, deceitful fellow——”

“What on earth could he have put in the dinner, that’s what I want to know?” groaned Carlile. “Oh, help! I’ve still got ‘em bad! That young cad ought to be horse-whipped!”

“He’s going to be birched, anyhow!” snarled Kenmore. “I’ll teach him to play these sort of tricks!”

But when a party of enraged Rebels, led by Kenmore, went down into the kitchen, they found the guards only just recovering. Fatty Little was not there, and the guards neither cared nor troubled where he was. They hadn’t even seen him depart. They had had concerns of their own.

Fatty Little, as a matter of fact, was over in the College House surrounded by an admiring throng. He told the grinning juniors how he had put the special concoction in the stew. The College House rang with yells of laughter.



And there, sure enough, a dim figure was crouching against the wall on the lower level of the windows.

By the time afternoon lessons commenced practically everybody had recovered. But the knowledge that they had been deliberately victimised made the Rebels fairly green with fury. Fatty Little made his appearance in the Form-room grinning. He was surrounded by Handforth & Co., and a good few other Loyalists, who thought it necessary to guard the chief culprit.

At one time it seemed that the Rebels were about to make a free fight of it and seize Fatty. But they decided not to do so, and afternoon lessons proceeded fairly well, taking everything into consideration.

By teatime, of course, all the fellows had completely recovered, and not one had the slightest thing the matter with him. But they all remembered the agony they had passed through.

And the Supreme Council unanimously decided that it was not exactly a wise policy to choose a cook out of the ranks of the enemy.

Two cooks were appointed. One was Bryant, of the Fifth, and the other Ellmore, of the Remove. Both these fellows claimed to be experts in the culinary art, and they were given a trial. There was nothing else to be done, since ordinary servants could not be procured.

The regular staff of the Ancient House was over in the College House—waiting until things recovered their normal level. Every servant steadfastly declared that they would not go back while the Communists held sway.

Supper that evening was a terrible failure. The food that had been prepared by the two cooks was not only ruined, but almost uneatable. Consequently, Ellmore and Bryant were summarily dismissed, and the Rebel forces went to bed hungry, discontented, and full of grumbles.

Breakfast the following morning was even worse. Three cooks had been appointed this time—all of them from the Fifth. They sent to the table a concoction which was supposed to be porridge, followed by scrambled eggs—this latter being an alleged luxury. The food was accompanied by a ghastly liquid which the cooks proclaimed to be coffee. It was variously described as bilge-water, dish-water, mud, pig-swill, and washing-up waste. It also had a decided flavour of soap, and was not altogether unlike paraffin. It slightly resembled coffee in appearance, but in no other respect whatever. The Rebels, undoubtedly, had many grounds for complaint.

The scrambled egg mixture was also reminiscent of paraffin, and it was fairly evident that the cooks had made some horrible blunders in the kitchen. Somebody positively declared that the porridge had been made from chicken mixture and bran, but this was obviously an exaggeration.

The cooks were dismayed when they found that fully ninety per cent of their food was left uneaten. And the grumbles which arose amongst the hungry Communists were fearful and appalling. Nothing causes discontent so much as empty stomachs—and Timothy Tucker, as President of the Communists, was well aware of this fact.

Naturally, a raid was made upon Mrs. Hake's tuckshop, and all her available supplies were quickly exhausted. This was better than nothing—but the fellows did not care to pay for their breakfast out of their own pockets. And the grumbles were renewed, and there was quite a lot of talk about overthrowing the leaders and setting up a new Supreme Council altogether.

This, of course, was alarming.

The Supreme Council held a special session, and they met with long faces and there was no doubt that this situation was by far the most serious they had yet had to deal with.

"What's going to be done—that's the question?" asked Kenmore. "Unless we're careful, these idiots will get up a movement against us!"

"They've already done that!" said Carlile. "In fact, I'm pretty well fed up with the whole business, and for two pins I'd go straight over to the Loyalists! This Communism is a failure!"

The President wrung his hands.

"Dear, dear, dear! This is sad—this is quite disastrous!" he exclaimed mildly. "Really, Comrade Carlile, I am staggered that you should talk in such terms! We have hardly commenced our operations, and yet you talk of becoming a turncoat!"

"Oh, rats!" said Carlile gruffly. "I'm sick of all this kiddish nonsense. We thought we could control the school at first, but we can't! What's the good of trying to make out that black's white? We may kid ourselves, but the plain truth is that we've failed absolutely to keep the chaps under control."

"That does not mean to say that we shall not be sure to get a firm grasp on the situation," said Tucker. "Until now I have hesitated before adopting really drastic measures. I can see, however, that drastic measures are necessary—and not merely necessary, but vital."

"What do you call drastic measures?" asked Armstrong.

Tucker looked at the others mysteriously. "I have a scheme!" he said softly. "If we agree to adopt this scheme, all will be well. Quite so. You've got to realise, my dear sirs, that we are the leaders of a new system. If we lose the grasp of it now, we shall never regain it. There is only one method that we can employ. These discontented followers must be brought into line. They must be shown that they cannot have any opinions of their own. Under Communism, they must do the bidding of the Supreme Council!"

"Something like Russia!" said Grayson. "The workmen there are nothing better than slaves——"

"Dear, dear, dear!" interrupted Tucker. "You must not believe all that you hear regarding Russia, my dear sir. This is St. Frank's, not Russia! Our form of Communism is our own, and we shall proceed to enforce it. Listen, comrades, and I will explain my schemes!"

The Supreme Council listened, and their faces grew rather startled as Timothy Tucker proceeded.

"I say, it's a bit too thick!" muttered Armstrong, at length.

"Too thick altogether!" said Carlile.

"Nothing of the sort," put in Kenmore.

"Tucker's right—it's the only way we can

retain control. It's the only way we can keep full command. I agree with the whole plan."

"So do I!" said Grayson.

Carlile still objected, but when the vote was taken at the end of the discussion, it was found that there was a majority for the adoption of T. T.'s ideas. Dark and sinister plans were decided upon.

The beginning of the real terror was at hand!

CHAPTER V.

THE TELL-TALE DISC!



NELSON LEE smiled at me amusedly.

"Yes, my dear Nipper, our young friends across the Triangle are passing through a somewhat strenuous time," he observed. "Their troubles are growing day by day, and I'd willingly wager ten-to-one that their whole precious system collapses like a house of cards before the end of the week!"

I grinned.

"No takers!" I said. "I'm of the same opinion, guv'nor. Without any servants, they're getting tied into horrible knots every hour. Breakfast this morning was a fearful nightmare, I hear, and all the Rebels are nearly starving!"

"So much the better," said the famous schoolmaster-detective. "A little trouble of that kind would not do them any harm. And it will bring about the collapse all the sooner."

As was my custom, I had come along to Nelson Lee's study, to have a quiet chat with him—or, to be more exact, he had sent for me. I didn't precisely know why at the moment, but it made very little difference, since I should have come in any case.

It was growing dark outside, for teatime was near at hand, and lessons for the day were over. I wanted to hear how things were progressing, and I was not long in broaching the subject.

"First of all, guv'nor," I said, "why did you send for me?"

"My dear Nipper, your company is quite enjoyable at times," smiled Nelson Lee. "I felt that I should like a chat with you, and so I told Tubbs to pass you the word that you were to come along here as soon after lessons as possible."

I felt flattered.

"Anything doing, sir?" I asked eagerly.

"Not yet, young 'un, but possibly there will be some work to-night," said Nelson Lee. "My net is growing tighter, and——"

"You mean that Trenton will soon be at the end of his rope?" I broke in. "I say, guv'nor, how long will it be before you expose him? How long will it be before you bring out the truth about these attacks of the Head?"

"It may be only a matter of hours, but, on the other hand, the final exposure will probably be delayed for a day or two," said Nelson Lee. "Our cunning science-master is very cautious, Nipper, and he does not lay himself open to many traps. But I think I have gained his measure, and it is more than likely that he will walk into the web."

"What web?" I demanded.

"You'll probably know about that later," said the gov'nor. "It is unnecessary for me to tell you, Nipper, that Mr. Hugh Trenton is not working alone in this conspiracy. There are others with him—for example, an eminent scientist known by the name of Professor Holroyd Garth. In reality, this man is a dangerous enemy to the country. There is a Dr. Roger Paxton, of Bayswater, and still another man named Chandler. They are all concerned in the plot. At St. Frank's their scheme is to get Dr. Stafford dismissed from his post in disgrace."

"But why?"

"They have no personal enmity against the Head, but they mean to get Trenton installed in the position of Headmaster, if such a thing is possible," said Nelson Lee. "They have done the same kind of thing at other schools, I believe, but they regard St. Frank's as the most important of them all. That is why they have been taking such pains to attain their object. Trenton is already popular with the bulk of the boys—the preliminary work has been completed. If Dr. Stafford and myself were suddenly disgraced, the majority of the school would welcome the appointment of Trenton as Headmaster."

"Yes, I believe that, sir," I said.

"That is what these men have been working for—cunningly, insidiously," said Nelson Lee, with a grim note in his voice. "Trenton has been doing his part to perfection. He has already caused a great deal of trouble at St. Frank's. This rebellion affair is a direct result of Trenton's efforts. By administering his deadly drug to the Headmaster, the boys have all turned against Dr. Stafford. And it needs but one more outburst of violence on the Head's part to clinch matters. Trenton is even now awaiting his opportunity to bring off this final coup."

"But what is this drug, sir?"

"I have already told you, Nipper, that it is a discovery of Trenton's," said Lee. "He calls it Zaxzol," I think, but that is merely a fancy name. "It is deadly in effect, but quite harmless to the system. It temporarily destroys all the kindly functions of the human brain, leaving only the savage instinct which is latent in us all. A dose of this drug converts an ordinarily humane man into a fiend. You have every reason to know that yourself!"

I shivered slightly.

"Rather, sir!" I said softly. "You had a dose of the rotten stuff yourself—and I shall never forget it! I was scared out of my

wits that night!" And do you really think that Trenton will try to make some move?"

"I do."

"But he can't get at the Head," I said. "Dr. Stafford is confined to a suite of rooms upstairs, and he is constantly guarded. Trenton can't possibly get anywhere near him."

"Strong as our safeguards are, they are not absolutely insuperable," said Nelson Lee gravely. "Therefore, Nipper, we must not relax our vigilance. Within two days from now the school governors are coming down."

"The dickens they are!" I exclaimed, with a whistle. "They'll find things in a mess!"

"Perhaps they will, and perhaps they won't!" said Lee. "It all depends. At all events, they have heard of this trouble, and they mean to hold an inquiry on the spot. I rather welcome the plan, since it will enable me to bring this whole affair to a head. Our greatest difficulty, Nipper, lies in the fact that we have a total lack of knowledge regarding these mysterious attacks of Dr. Stafford's. They are not only unaccountable, but startlingly strange."

I looked up at Nelson Lee in astonishment. His tone had not altered at all, but he was speaking slightly louder than he had spoken before. And the words he had said, were, of course, obviously untrue. For we did know the cause of the Head's mysterious attacks.

"Why, gov'nor——" I paused, for Nelson Lee shot me a quick, warning glance. And, instantly realising that he had an excellent reason for his changed attitude, I proceeded: "Why, gov'nor, that's just the trouble," I said. "The Headmaster seems to go off into these violent fits without any reason at all—and between you and me I've got an idea that he's going off his nut!"

Nelson Lee gave a quick, approving smile.

"Well, there is something in that suggestion," he said. "In many ways the Head's symptoms seem to point to mental collapse. It will probably be necessary for him to take a prolonged rest in the near future. At one time I half believed that some outside influence was responsible."

"How do you mean, sir?" I asked, still completely mystified.

"Well, Nipper, it seemed to me that some enemies of Dr. Stafford might be using some deadly power which is beyond our own knowledge," said Nelson Lee. "But I have dismissed that idea as unfeasible. Dr. Stafford has no enemies at St. Frank's—that much is obvious."

"Oh, absolutely!" I said, with a huge wink.

"Indeed, I am so convinced," went on Lee, giving me a severe glance, "that I have had a little talk with Dr. Brett to-day. And both he and I consider that our precautions regarding Dr. Stafford are quite unnecessary. They have been really absurd from the very first."

"Why, don't you think there's any need to watch over him?"

"I am convinced that there is no necessity whatever for such measures," replied Nelson Lee. "In future—from to-night onwards, in fact—Dr. Stafford will be left quite to himself. Indeed, he dislikes all this fuss, and it is really by his own wish that Dr. Brett and I are ceasing our efforts. I am beginning to think that I have been making a mountain out of a molehill. The simple truth, Nipper, is that Dr. Stafford is suffering from a slightly affected brain. His belief that enemies are working against him is obviously absurd. When the governors arrive I shall make it my business to suggest that he is allowed a long vacation."

"Yes, it would be a good idea, sir," I agreed.

"We cannot be too careful, my lad," said Lee, smiling. "There is now no further necessity for us to keep up the false conversation which has been puzzling you so mightily. No, Nipper, I am not going out of my mind, as you probably suspect."

I took a deep breath.

"I'm blessed if I can make it out, sir!" I exclaimed. "Did you suspect that somebody was listening?"

"I did not suspect, Nipper—I knew for an absolute fact that somebody was listening," replied Lee quietly. "I knew for another absolute fact that the somebody was Mr. Trenton!"

I stared blankly.

"But—but that's impossible, sir!" I protested. "You're not a wizard! You couldn't tell that the listener was one certain individual! And I don't see how you could tell that anybody was listening at all!"

"No?" smiled Lee. "It certainly is rather mystifying, eh?"

"It's—it's staggering, sir!" I declared. "I'm sitting nearer to the door than you are, and I didn't hear a sound. I heard nothing when you first started that spoof conversation, and I heard nothing when you finished it."

"I heard nothing, but I saw," said Nelson Lee calmly.

"You saw!" I gasped, staring at the closed door. "But—but—"

"Here, on my desk!" said the guv'nor?" I asked.

I really thought he was joking at first. I went to his desk, and there, hidden behind a little calendar, I spotted a strange little contrivance which was not usually to be seen on a gentleman's desk. It was a tiny wooden box with a glass front, and, behind this glass there were two little white discs. Both of them were hanging downwards.

"What on earth is this, guv'nor?" I asked.

"It is a little patent of my own," smiled Lee. "Or, to be more exact, it is an adaptation, since I can make no claim to having invented anything fresh. It is worked something after the style of an electric bell indicator, such as one sees in the kitchen of any well ordered household."

"But—but—"

"Just watch those little discs," said the guv'nor. "Watch them closely."

He got up from his chair, and went to the door. Opening it, he passed outside, and I saw him stand on the mat. He was looking thoughtfully at his watch, as though undecided whether to go or not. Even now Nelson Lee was taking every precaution.

But my attention was fixed upon the discs. As Lee stepped upon the mat, one of them immediately sprang into an upright position, and remained there. The instant he moved off the mat, however, the little disc dropped back into its original position. Lee closed the door, and came over to me.

"Well I'm jiggered!" I exclaimed blankly.

"You see, Nipper, it is worked by electricity—merely a battery," said Nelson Lee. "I fitted it up quite secretly, and did all the wiring during the night. I never hoped that it would be so successful as this."

"I'm as dense as a London fog, guv'nor!" I said hopelessly. "I'm blessed if I can catch on to the wheeze even now."

"And yet, my dear Nipper, it is so obvious," smiled Lee. "While I was talking to you a little while ago, the left hand disc rose up, and remained up. This proved, absolutely conclusively, that somebody was standing on the mat. It was not necessary for me to hear any sound, the movement of the disc was enough. If somebody had merely trodden on the mat in passing, the disc would have simply gone up and dropped again. The fact that it remained up was all the proof I needed."

"Great!" I said admiringly. "But I'm blessed if I can understand how you knew the listener was Trenton. It might have been one of the servants—"

"No, the listener was Trenton," said Nelson Lee. "You know the formation of this passage, Nipper? Further on there is no exit; at the end there is merely a boxroom. But near the entrance to this passage Mr. Trenton's study is situated. Of that you are fully aware."

"Yes, I know," I said keenly.

"Well, my second little disc operates from the end of the passage," explained Nelson Lee. "If anybody leaves this corridor, or enters it, that disc indicates the fact. Accordingly, if a servant or anybody else had come along I should have known it by the fact that the disc moved. It did not alter its position in the slightest degree."

"Proving that nobody entered the passage?"

"Exactly," said the guv'nor. "And proving at the same time, that Trenton must have come out of his study, crept along, and listened outside my door. I think you fully understand now?"

"By Jingo, rather!" I said enthusiastically. "What a stunning wheeze! I've never seen anything so cute, sir. It must have been Trenton, those indicators tell you the whole thing as clearly as if you had seen him on the job!"

"And I sent for you, my lad, for this purpose," said Nelson Lee. "Trenton, of course, would witness your arrival, at least, he would hear your step in the passage. He knew, therefore, that we were together, and the inference was that we should talk. I hoped that Trenton would swallow the bait, and listen to our conversation. He did swallow the bait, to say nothing of a considerable amount of false information."

"My only hat!" I breathed. "This is going to be interesting."

"From our point of view—yes!" said Nelson Lee grimly.

CHAPTER VI.

UNDER THE TERROR!



TEA was over in the Ancient House.

It had been the only decent meal of the day.

The fellows had prepared it in their own respective studies, and they had had their fill. At least, those who could afford it had.

But quite a number of boys, particularly juniors, were hard up. This was not an unusual state of affairs in the Remove. And those unfortunate fellows who had not been able to afford a hearty tea had necessarily gone hungry.

Tea in the hall had been a failure, just the same as all the other meals of the day. There had been plentiful supplies of bread and butter, it is true, but the tea was washy and unsatisfactory. And there had been a great deal of muddle, resulting in a number of fellows being missed out altogether.

Discontent, therefore, was growing apace.

And now, out in the dark Triangle, Owen major was on his hind legs, so to speak, making a few vigorous remarks. With him were Hubbard and Skelton and Holroyd and Cobb. The five juniors were holding a miniature indignation meeting on their own.

"We ain't going to stand it, that's the plain truth!" said Owen major flatly.

"Not likely!"

"We're fed up with it already."

"This Communist business is all very well up to a certain point," said Cobb. "It's a great idea for the chaps to run the school. But the whole scheme has been messed up by Tucker and Kenmore and those other rotters. They reckon to control the school, and all they've done is to make an awful hash of it."

"I reckon we ought to go over to the Loyalists!" said Hubbard.

"That's what I'd like," declared Owen major. "We were fools to go in for this rotten Communism! But we were led away by all the talk, and by the Head being so beastly violent!"

"I'm not so sure that we did make a bloomer," said Cobb. "This Communism is great, but it's being worked wrong, that's

the trouble. If you chaps want to go back to the Loyalists—"

"There's no question of going back," said Owen major. "If we went over there, they'd kick us out! They wouldn't have us back at any price. We've either got to chuck up the whole thing in a body, or stick it out. I'd like to get all the chaps to agree to a surrender—"

"They'd never do that," said Hubbard. "They wouldn't suffer the indignity. That's just the trouble. Armstrong and Doyle and that crowd—they are too stuck up. They'd say that surrender was a come down, and all that kind of rot. The best thing we can do is to overthrow the Supreme Council."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good wheeze!"

"That's what I was about to suggest," declared Owen major. "What we've got to do is to go about among the fellows, and we'll organise the whole scheme. And at a given time we'll sweep the Supreme Council completely away, and elect a new one."

"That's the idea," said Cobb. "Why wasn't the Council elected in the first place? These chaps shoved themselves into power, and we can't say a word! And it's not only the Supreme Council, but the Form Council, too! They've all got us taped, you know! Every movement we make is watched, and if we happen to be late for lessons we're chucked down the cellar, and there's that horrible punishment block in the Council Chamber. Why, it's like the torturer of the Middle Ages!"

"Something's got to be done, anyway," growled Hubbard. "We're not standing this kind of treatment for long. And we're afraid to speak out, because we shall be reported to the Supreme Council, and they'll drop on us. And we shall get a taste of that giddy block, and the birch as well!"

"That's just the trouble," said Holroyd. "We can't say a word, even now we've got to come out here in the dark, because of those rotten stewards. They're always spying over us!"

"We might as well be slaves, and done with it!" said Cobb.

"Things are in a rotten state altogether!" went on Owen major. "An election is what we need, but the Supreme Council has got such a hold over us all that we can't even suggest it!"

And these were not the only juniors who were complaining in this way. There were groups of fellows in other parts of the Triangle, also whispering sedition against the Supreme Council.

Even the seniors were up in arms, but they too, were equally helpless. The leaders of Communism had such power that it was almost hopeless to fight against them. Seniors were treated in just the same way as juniors. They were imprisoned and punished regardless of their age.

But, even with things in this state, it was not too late for the fellows to take a hand.

(Continued on page 25.)

NIPPER'S MAGAZINE

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THE JOURNAL OF THE REMOVE OF ST. FRANK'S
Edited By Nipper.

Jan. 21,
1922.



PECK'S BAD BOY AND HIS "PA".

THE BAD BOY'S FOURTH OF JULY

Special Arrangements for the Fourth of July—A Grand Supply of Fireworks—The Explosion—The Air full of Pa and Dog and Rockets



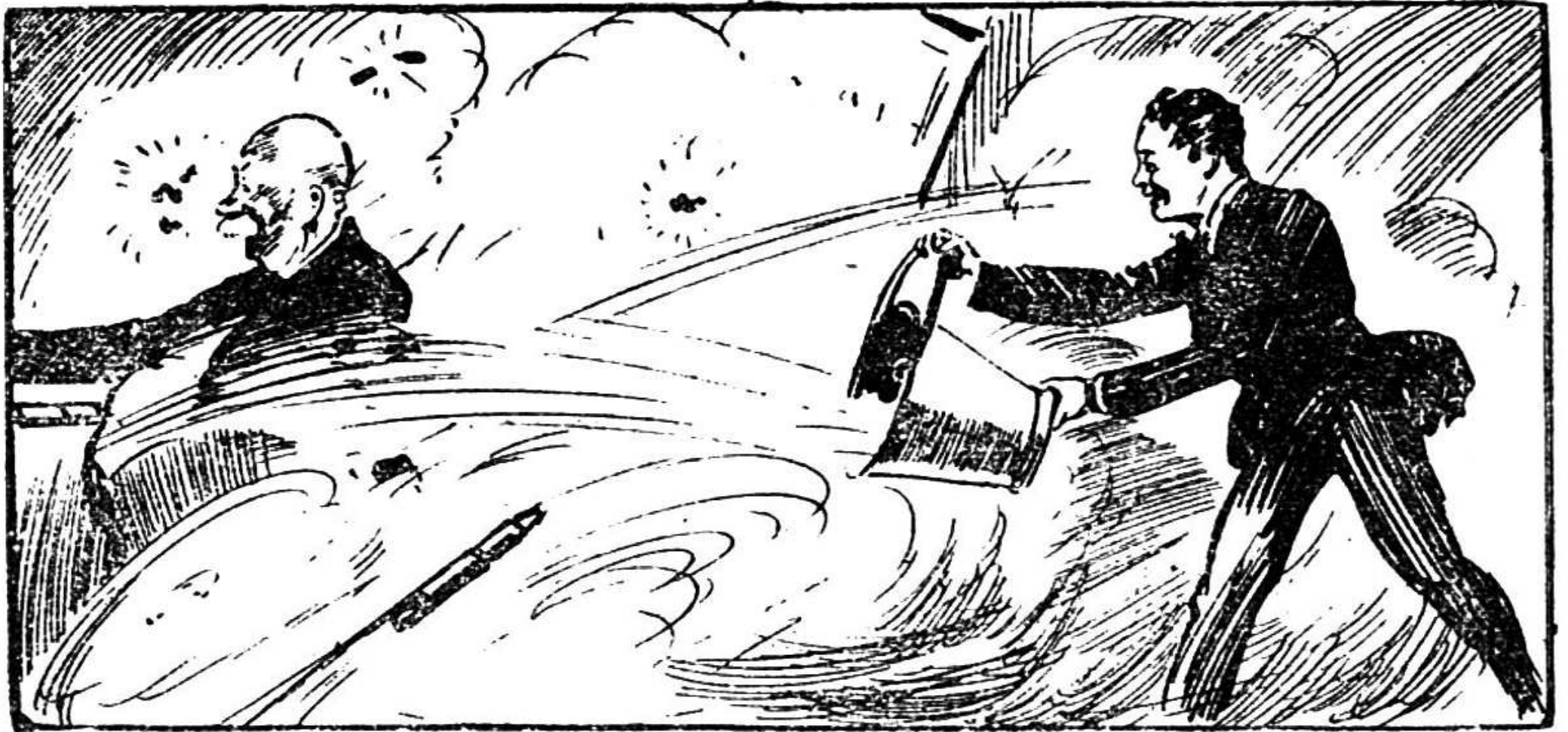
"**H**OW long do you think it will be before your father will be able to come down to the office?" asked the chemist of the bad boy as he was buying some arnica and court plaster.

"Oh, the doc. says he could come down

clothes made. Say, do you wet this court plaster and stick it on?"

The druggist told him how the court plaster worked, and then asked him if his pa couldn't ride.

"Ride down? Well, I guess not. He



"I grabbed a pail of indigo water that Ma had been rinsing clothes with and poured it on Pa."

now if he would come along some street where there were no horses to scare," said the boy as he bought some sweets, "but he says he ain't in no hurry to come down till his hair grows and he gets some new

would have to sit down if he rode down town, and pa is no sitter this trip, he is a pointer. That's where the pin-wheel struck him."

(Continued on next page)

"Well, how did it all happen?" asked the chemist, as he wrapped a yellow paper over the bottle of arnica and twisted the ends, and then helped the boy to stick the strip of court plaster on his nose.

"Nobody knows how it happened but pa, and when I come near to ask him about it he tells me to leave his sight for ever, and I leave, too, quick.

"You see he is afraid I will get hurt every fourth of July, and he told me if I wouldn't fire a cracker all day he would let me get four dollars' worth of nice fireworks and he would fire them off for me in the evening in the back yard.

"I promised, and he gave me the money and I bought a dandy lot of fireworks, and don't you forget it. I had a lot of rockets and roman candles, and six pin-wheels, and a lot of double crackers, and some of these cannon fire-crackers and torpedoes, and a box of parlour matches.

"I took them home and put the packages in our big stuffed chair and put a newspaper over them.



I put the packages in our big stuffed chair and put a newspaper over them.

"Pa always takes a nap in that stuffed chair after dinner, and he went into the sitting-room and I heard him driving our poodle dog out of the chair, and I heard him ask the dog what he was a-chewing, and just then the explosion took place, and we all rushed in there.

"I tell you what I honestly think. I think that dog was chewing that box of parlour matches. The kind that pop so when you step on them.

"Pa was just going to sit down, when the whole air was filled with dog, and Pa, and rockets, and everything.

"When I got in Pa had a soft pillow trying to put the dog out, and in the meantime Pa's pants were a-fire.

"I grabbed a pail of this indigo water that Ma had been rinsing clothes with and throwed it on Pa, or there wouldn't have been a place on him bigger'n a six-pence that wasn't burnt, and then he threw a camp-chair at me and told me to go to—the new place they have got up in the revised edition for bad boys.

"When Pa's trousers were out his coat-tail blazed up and a roman candle was firing blue and red balls at his legs, and a rocket got into his white vest.

"The scene beggared description.

"A double-cracker got after Ma and treed her on top of the sofa, and another one took after a girl that Ma invited to dinner.

"After things got a little quiet, and we opened the doors and windows to let out the smoke and the smell of burnt dog-hair, and Pa's whiskers, the big fire-crackers began to go off, and a policeman came to the door and asked what was the matter.

"Well, there was nobody hurt much but the dog and Pa. I felt awful sorry for the dog. He hasn't got hair enough to cover hisself. Pa didn't have much hair, anyway, except by the ears, but he thought a good deal of his whiskers.

"Say, couldn't you send this arnachy up to the house? This is the last fourth of July you'll catch me celebrating. I am going to work in a glue factory, where nobody will ever come to see me."

And the boy went out to pick up some squib fire-crackers, that had failed to explode, in front of the drug store.



I heard him ask the dog what he was a-chewing

**NEXT WEEK—Further Adventures,
Related by G. W. PÉCK, entitled**

**"HIS PA IS
A COWARD."**

THE EDITOR'S DEN

EDITORIAL OFFICE,
Study C, Ancient House,
St. Frank's College.

My dear Readers,—An editor is one of a few privileged individuals who is permitted to blow his own trumpet—except, perhaps, the one and only Edward Oswald—for the simple reason that he is safely out of sight and can take refuge in the editorial “we.” Besides, the poor fellow must sell his paper. I am only saying this to prepare you, and excuse myself for blowing my own trumpet, which I will now proceed to do. WE think WE ought to be heartily congratulated for securing the laughter-splitting series of “PECK’S BAD BOY,” not forgetting “HIS PA.” I shall be glad to have your opinions on the Bad Boy’s Adventures, which will continue from week to week in the Mag. It is no use saying they are bad or they are good, for they can be both. They are certainly bad if taken seriously,

that is, as a model example of how a boy should behave to his father. But I do not believe any of my chums would be so lacking in humour as to copy every rascal that amuses them in fiction. Just as we can laugh with the youngest member of the audience at the villainous Punch, of Punch and Judy fame, we are not inspired to follow Mr. Punch’s wicked example. In the same way I hope you will derive the maximum amount of laughter from Peck’s Bad Boy without wanting to do likewise.

The other new feature, “Schoolboy Howlers,” will form another mirth-provoking series for some weeks to come. These “Howlers” are selected from various schools in different parts of the country. A little variety of this kind will come as a welcome change.

Your sincere friend,

NIPPER (Editor).

TOPICAL MIXTURE

Kenmore and Grayson, we believe, are the chief punishment-inflictors on the Communist Supreme Council. The former Kenmore than do his share of this sort of thing, and the latter is positively dis-Grayson the Fifth!

Hawke, of the River House School, had the cheek to come up to St. Frank’s the other day, trying to sell a cheap line of pocket-knives he’d got hold of. Dash it all, there’s no need for a chap to hawk stuff about like this. If Hawke does it again, he’ll find himself in a hawkward position!



There is no truth in the rumour that Teddy Long is sickening for the measles. This is rather strange, as he has quite a reputation for being measly!

Dick Goodwin is getting keen on carpentry. He’s busily planning to make a hutch for his pet rabbit, and a coal-box for his study. He wants the rabbit-hutch to be thoroughly weather-proof, and invites suggestions. How can he make the rabbit-hutch last? Easy! Make the coal-box first!

“We must get round this somehow!” Armstrong and Co. might have remarked, as they crossed the Triangle and found Fatty Little lounging in their path.

“I’m taking things as they come,” Church might have philosophised, as he received Handforth’s fist on his nose.

“It’s never too late to mend!” the Duke of Somerton might have declared, as he noticed the latest rent in his trousers.

“This is really too highly coloured for my fancy!” Tregellis-West might have criticised, as he surveyed his latest waistcoat after some japer had painted it a brilliant scarlet with green stripes.

Some of the fellows are bitterly complaining of draughts in the College House Junior Common-room. This is serious, as it will probably lead to chess trouble!

Talking of indoor games, reminds us that Oldfield got very ratty because Clapson and Nation insisted upon using the table in Study Z for a quiet hour of table-croquet. What’s the matter with Oldfield? Surely there was no need to get croaky about it?

THE H'OPINIONS OF MARY JANE

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We all know Mary Jane, with her dust-pan and broom. We have met her in various parts of the Ancient House, busy at her work. She never seems too busy, however, for a chatty word about the general news of the day. She differs from most of the other domestics at St. Frank's, because she always has her special "h'opinions" about everything—and does not hesitate to express them.

If you was to ask me, I'd have 'em all horse-whipped, the saucy young varmint (said Mary Jane indignantly, as she leaned on her broom, and shook her dust-pan vigorously in the air). I never did hold with the likes o' them—no, an' never will, neither! Give 'em all a good whippin'—that's what I says to Mrs. Poulter yesterday. I never see the like—never!



You asked me what I thought o' these young gents what 'ave been turnin' the whole school topsy-turvey with their Commerism, or whatever they calls it! In my h'opinion, sech goings hon oughter be stopped by law. An as for them what started it all, prison ain't bad enough, that it ain't! I says what I thinks, an' I don't care who hears me, neither. Boys is boys, an' good enough in their proper place. It ain't for the likes o' me to say anythin' agin 'em. But when it comes to bossin' the school, and turnin' the servants all upside-down—well, I ain't afraid to say what my h'opinion is!

There's that there Master Tucker, now. He's the cause of it all, the young scamp! Just between ourselves, like, I ain't sure but what he ain't a little bit touched! Never did I see sech a queer young gent. Many's the time I've come acrost him in one of the passages, and— Well, there! If he ain't been a-talkin' to hisself an' makin' the most disagree-some faces! An' for him to go an' start all this here tommy-foolery about Communerism an' what not!

What fair beats me is why the 'Eadmaster allowed it! But, there! We've had sech queer things happenin' lately, I don't rightly know whether I'm on me head or me heels. If it wasn't for that there Master Tucker nothin' wouldn't 'ave gone wrong. In my h'opinion,

Master Tucker ought to be in a 'ome, not in a school! There's real nice places for the likes of him.

An' what about Master Kenmore an' Master Grayson? Two big hulkin' bullies—that's what they are, an' I don't care who hears me a-sayin' of it, neither! They'll make things 'ot for me? I'd like to see 'em try! I ain't afraid of nobody, an' if any of the young gents gets too saucy I soon ups with me broom—an' don't you forgit it! I've got me rights, same as anybody else.

Them young gents oughter know better, that they ought! Big fellers in the Sixth Form they are—old enough to be workin' an' earnin' their own livin', too. It fair gits over me, it does. What their fathers are a'thinkin' of I don't know! They ain't boys at all—they're men. Jest fancy our Bob bein' at school, wastin' his time in this 'ere way! Why, he ain't so old as Master Grayson, an' he's only in the Fifth—an' our Bob's been in steady work for nigh on two year now!

When young fellers gits to eighteen they oughter to be thinkin' of settlin' down in a payin' job or a trade—not makin' themselves big an' important in a school. Schools is meant for boys. Leastaways, that's what I've allus understood. I ain't sayin' anything agin Master Fenton or Master Morrow. Nice young gents they is—rare nice young gents, like. Master Fenton has got the loveliest curly hair, ain't 'e? An' his eyes are just the beautifulest deep blue. Oh, my! He do seem a good sort, too.

But as for that there Master Kenmore, I wouldn't like to say what I thought. Never did I come acrost sech a rough, unmannerly feller! An' his going's on jest lately have been fair wicked—that they have! There's lots of things that I could tell, if I was to be spiteful. But that ain't my nature. I don't want to do nobody a bad turn, not even if I despises 'em. An' if Master Kenmore an' Master Grayson don't like what I've been a-sayin' they can lump it! I don't care a button for either of 'em! I'd say it all to their faces—I ain't afraid of 'em.

Then there's Master Armstrong. He ain't sech a bad sort, like, but in my h'opinion, he was led away by that there Master Tucker. It was Master Armstrong what first started the rebellyon—although I will say as how he's seen the horror of his ways. If I had my way, I'd make all sorts of alterations— Sakes alive! If that ain't Mrs. Poulter a-callin' of me! Where's my broom? Where's my dust-pan? I shall 'ave to give you my h'opinions about the alterations some other time! All right, Mrs. Poulter—be quiet, do! I'm a'comin' as fast as I can!

SCHOOLBOY HOWLERS

(This Grand New Feature will appear every week until further notice.—Ed.)



IN a certain country village a kindly disposed lady opened an evening school for the youths of the place. Most of the pupils were rough farm hands of the very lowest type.

One evening, during a lesson in arithmetic, the lady set the following easy

sum for the rustics to work on their slates.

"If four herrings cost threepence, what will six cost?"

The lady left the class for a time to do some needlework, and presently she returned to see how many had finished the sum. Most of them, after most laborious figuring, had arrived at some sort of solution, and she called on a youth called "Tom," an arrant thickhead, for his answer.

"Twelve shillings and fourpence, mum!" he replied, looking at his slate.

"Oh, you are a long way wrong," cried the lady. "I think you must have mistaken what I said. Shall I dictate the sum again?"

"Yes, please, mum," answered Tom.

"Well, what I said was, 'If four herrings——'"

"What?" interrupted the rustic, "herrings? That's where I've got wrong, then. I've been counting 'em as haddocks!"

* * *

Some "school-managers" in remote country districts are so ill-educated and ignorant that the teachers have good grounds for complaining that such men should be placed in a position of authority.

One of these individuals—a farmer who could scarcely write his own name—was in



the habit of calling in at the village school, looking over the work, and having a chat with the lads. On one occasion he entered the school with an air of much importance, and asked the schoolmaster if he would allow him to test the boys in a matter of spelling. The master consented. The manager then placed himself before a class, pulled from his pocket a bit of paper on which he had written a certain word, and commenced operations.

"Now, my lads," he said, "I've jotted a word down on this slip of paper which I see in the newspaper this morning, and I want to know how many of you can spell it right. The word, lads, is egg-wipt." (For so the farmer pronounced it.)

One smart boy immediately stood up prepared to spell the word, and cried out: "Eggwhipped."

"No," said the manager, looking down at his slip, "you're wrong!"

Another lad stood up and spelt the word as:

"Eggwhipt."

"No," giggled the farmer, "you're wrong, too. Try again, lads!"

Several other scholars made the attempt, but they were all pronounced to be incorrect. At length, the farmer said, with a grin:

"Well, lads, I'll write the words for you on the blackboard, and then you'll see what a long way you was wrong."

Then the man took up the chalk, and, copying from the slip, wrote the following word in an awkward and disjointed scrawl, on the board:

"E G Y P T."

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FAGGING

By a Fag,

FAGGING is one of the many trials of the new junior schoolboy. It does not matter whether you are the son of a lord or your father keeps a pork shop, you've got to go through the mill as a fag when you first come to a Public school. Some of the new chaps make an orful fuss about it. But after a few

wackings and blubbings, they soon find out that it is useless to resist. The new fag who causes the greatest trouble with his fag master is generally pampered at home. This type of fag, if he is a generous sort, often finds many friends to advise and help him along, becoz his fond mother or doting sisters always keep him well suplied with hampers.

THE WILLING FAG.

Some kids take to fagging as naturally as a duck takes to water. They're mostly of the nervous, easily led kind, who'll beleive and do anything they're told. We have grate larks with them. For instanse, Wilkins junior, new this term, used to doff his cap whenever he past old Cuttle. We made him think that the school porter was Colonel Spiffins, one of the governors on a visit to the Head.

VARIOUS KINDS OF FAGGING.

There are two kinds of fagging, School fagging and House fagging. There is not much School fagging except in the summer term when we play cricket. Then the fags have to field at the nets while the teams are practicing. As this only happens about three or four times in the season, School fagging is not very arduous. House fagging is much worse, spes-hilly on a cold winter's morning. When you are on duty, wich is once a fortnight, you must turn out at 6.30 a.m. and take hot water to all the Sixth Formers. Next you get their baths ready, and then see that the fires in the Sixth Form rooms are all right. If you are late or let the fires out, woe betide you! You either get extra fag duty or a wacking—sometimes both.

MY FAG MASTER.

Every Sixth Former has a speshil fag, who waits on him, gets him his meals and makes himself generally useful. Some fag masters are jolly decent, others are stand-offish, offishus

or bad tempered. They vary just like Form masters. The one I got is topping. He takes a lot of interest in me, helps me with my prep. and often rewards me with tuck money. Jones minor would like to swop. His fag master is a beast. Most probably when he was a fag his fag master treated him badly, and when Jones minor becomes a Sixth Former he will do the same. But the majoroty of fag masters are all right.

A NESESARY EVEL.

The masters do not interfere with fagging. The duties are given by the Sixth Formers who also give punishments when their orders are not obeyed. This is a very old custom and will never change. It is seldem a fag master ill-uses his power, and when a fag is wacked he mostly deserves it. No one likes fagging. It is a nesenary evel wich gratefully benifits the fag when he grows older, for he lerns to respekt his elders insted of checking them. Another advantige is that it teeches a boy to do something he doesn't like doing and be cheerfull about it.

NOT SO BAD.

Fagging is not so bad as many people think. It is not degrading, becoz most of the Sixth Formers have been fags themselves. Some day I hope to be a "slave-driver," that is, a head fag. All I have to do then is to warn the day fags and School fags and report those who do not turn up. When I reach the Remove, I shan't have to do any more fagging.

Who's Who at St. Frank's

GEORGE BELL—The third and least important member of the infamous trio of Study A. Bell is more to be pitied than the other two. He is weak in character, and easily led. Fullwood's evil propensities arouse admiration from Bell. This misguided youth might have turned out differently had he not allowed himself to be inveigled and contaminated by associating with rotters like Fullwood and Gulliver. Left to himself, Bell's lack of grit would never carry him very far either along the path of virtue or that of wrong-doing. His role is that of a supernumerary, blindly following on the trail of a leader. As an aider and abetter, he is exceedingly useful to his disreputable leader. But when in a tight corner, he would more often give away his leader than suffer the consequences himself. Like Gulliver, his name crops up in nearly every story featuring Fullwood.

THE ST. FRANK'S PAPERCHASE.**By E. O. HANDFORTH** (Our Official Reporter.)

THE other day on going into Study C I found Nipper and Tommy Watson busily tearing up old newspapers into little fragments. The sight of the small pieces of paper at once gave me an idea.

I don't say it wouldn't have given an idea to other chaps. But you must be pretty sharp to notice a thing as quickly as I do.

"Nipper," I said, "I've thought of a great wheeze. Why shouldn't the Remove have a paperchase?"

Nipper nodded. I was a bit surprised at him agreeing. He's quite a good sort, of course, but he often seems unable to appreciate a clever suggestion. Without wishing to boast, I think a paperchase was rather a clever suggestion.

"Yes. We're going to have a paperchase," Nipper continued. "Tommy and the others think it's quite a good notion of mine."

"Of—of yours!" I gasped. "Why, you—you silly chump, I've just come to suggest it!"

"Then you're a bit too late," said Watson. "It's all arranged."

I tried to argue with them, but it was no good. Besides, Nipper caught hold of my wrists. I think I was justified in being a little bit annoyed. It isn't very nice to have your ideas—well, I won't say stolen.

"We're just choosing the hares," said Nipper when he saw I wasn't going to waste any more time arguing. "We must have someone who's a good runner, light on his feet and can think quickly. There aren't many chaps who fit that."

I saw at once that he wanted me to be one of the hares.

"All right," I said. "I don't mind giving you a run. I——"

I was surprised to see Nipper and Watson burst out laughing. I had not meant to make a joke.

"Nipper's going to be one of the hares," said Watson, "and I think Farman would do for the other."

Just then a lot more Removites crowded into the study. They were rather noisy, and I don't think Nipper heard what I said. It is rather hard to make yourself heard without shouting. And I never

like to shout. And it must have been while I was talking that Nipper and the others arranged about the run. At any rate I couldn't catch what they said.

The paperchase took place the next Saturday afternoon. Nipper and Farman were given five minutes start, and then the hounds followed. I think myself it is much more difficult to lead the hounds than to be one of the hares.

But though the scent was very difficult to follow I was able to lead the hounds all right. We passed through Bellton Woods without much trouble, though I got a little annoyed at the way Pitt and some of the others kept running in front of me.

At the farther edge of the wood we came to a stream, a small tributary of the Stowe. There is a bridge over it, but as it is not very wide I considered it would be better to jump it. It was quite an easy jump, and naturally I expected the others to follow me. I took a run and got practically over. Anyway, there was no reason for the silly champs to laugh as they did. Unfortunately my foot slipped on the muddy bank and I got a little wet.

It was rather difficult to run with my clothes streaming with water, but I managed to go on leading the hounds. A little further on we reached a field. The gate was open, and I saw that the scent led through it. I dashed through the gate and—suddenly pulled up. For just in front of me was a large bull. I don't take any credit for not being frightened. Some chaps don't know what fear is. But I turned back at once to warn the others.

There was nothing very brave in this action. But the bull had given me a bit of a shock. Some chaps have died of a shock like that, you know. As I was shutting the gate a yokel came up and began to be rude to me. He had a large pail in his hand and wanted to go through the gate. I told him about the bull.

I was very surprised when he started to laugh.

"It's only a cow, mister," he said. "I'm going to milk 'er."

I don't know why the other chaps suddenly began to laugh. It wasn't funny.

(Continued on page 24)

(Continued from page 23)

In fact it's rather sad to think that these country farm-hands don't know the difference between a cow and a bull.

By now we had reached the cross-roads leading to Caistowe and

Bellton. The hares had thrown the scent very badly, and I was not quite sure in which direction they had gone. That is where my training as a detective came in useful, and I knew that they had taken the road to Bellton. Pitt and some of the others were very stubborn and refused to believe my explanation. They say the minority is always right. It certainly was in this case.

The others went off towards Caistowe and I took the Bellton Road. The scent had been very badly laid and I scarcely saw another bit of paper for miles. It is not much use having a paper chase if you don't lay any scent, is it? But I kept running and made my way back to the College. Luckily my detective training has made me very keen, and I divined that I should run down the hares near St. Frank's.

And so I did, though I don't want to be thought boastful about it. I saw Nipper and Farman standing a few yards from the College gates with their backs to me.

I had run them to earth at last!

Without boasting, I consider this was rather clever of me. I left the lane and scrambled behind the hedge. In this way I reached Nipper without him seeing me. Then I jumped out and collared him. Unfortunately the hedge had hidden a deep ditch. Accidentally my foot slipped as I jumped and I came heavily down on my face. As I got up the two silly chumps burst out laughing!

"Well, it's been a good run, old chap," I said; "but you're not quite clever enough. You gulled the other chaps all right. But as a detective I was able——"

I must say I expected Nipper to be a bit annoyed. But he just laughed.

"That's rich, Handy," he said. "We've been home over a quarter of an hour. And the hounds are all home, too. They're changing. They didn't get us."

Well, there you are. If they had only followed me they would have shared in the credit of the capture.

A PIRATE'S LIFE. By **BOB CHRISTINE.**

(Christine has evidently been reading stories of old time adventure. I didn't dare leave this contribution out in case he should blow up Study C with gunpowder. But I have cut out a tremendous lot of blood—about 15 buckets full.—ED.)

Yo ho! Yo ho! for a pirate's life
On an old freebooting ship,
With a sword in a sheath and a knife in
your teeth
You cannot get the pip.
You can shiver your timbers all day long,
And walk the giddy planks,
That's life at sea under Nelson (Lee)
On the good old ship St. Frank's.

Yo ho! Yo ho! for a pirate's life
As you roll about on the main,
And every morn you are shot at dawn
Till you reach the coast of Spain.
Skulls and crossbones are piled every day
On deck for the sun to bleach,
And ingots of gold after tea are sold
At a penny or twopence each.

Yo ho! Yo ho! for a pirate's life,
You are strung to the mizzen mast;
Though sometimes instead they cut off
your head,
And into the hold you are cast.
But you soon get used to losing your head,
It doesn't matter a bean,
For the bearded mate brings it back on a
plate
And sticks it with seccotine!

Yo ho! Yo ho! for a pirate's life,
Avast and belay! you scum!
If things are dry when the tide is high
Well, a sailor's life is "rum."
Nothing can daunt the bold buccaneers,
Though the rain comes down in lumps,
For the bo'sun comes up with grog in his cup
And pipes all hands to the pumps!

Yo ho! Yo ho! for a pirate's life,
For a pirate's life Yo ho!
There's never a trip like that on a ship
Where the jolly Rogers grow!
I shall never forget how the red sun sank
Like a ball of blood in the west—
Oh, rats to the sun—my five verses are
done—
So yo ho! for a few days of rest!

(Continued from page 16.)

If they had only made one bold bid, they could have overthrown the Supreme Council within half an hour. But the great difficulty was to organise. They could not get themselves together. And, without organisation, any attempt to beat down this tyranny was doomed to failure.

Owen major and the four other juniors were still talking heatedly, still making all sorts of plans for the overthrow of their leaders. After a while Holroyd and Cobb went off, leaving the other three by themselves. And only about five minutes had elapsed before a rather startling thing took place.

Out of the gloom of the Triangle some black figures appeared. They seemed to loom up out of nothingness. There were quite a few of them, and without warning, Owen major and Hubbard and Skelton were flung to the ground. And it was almost impossible for them to make any outcry.

Thick woollen bags were thrust over their heads, drawn down, and gathered up tightly about their necks. The suddenness of this attack startled them and took all their vigour away.

They became half-stifled and thoroughly scared.

Then they were dragged to their feet, and marched forward. They had no idea as to the direction they were taking. No sound was uttered. The whole thing had been performed in deadly, mysterious silence. At last they reached their destination; but not one of them could see where this actually was.

Owen major was taken in first, into a kind of room. He could feel this by the fact that he was treading on boards. And the air was warmer, too. Then he felt his hands being thrust through some circular holes. A clamp was placed down over the top, securing them into position. And his feet were tightly secured by ropes to the floor. Owen major was still in an upright position.

If he could have seen, which was quite impossible, he would have been enraged even more than he actually was. A rough wooden contrivance had been constructed in this room, which was really a small harness-room far away at the back of the Ancient House, in close proximity to the stables.

The wooden contrivance was made something after the style of the stocks, of old. There was a big framework, with a sawn plank fixed in the top. In this plank there were two holes. The victim's wrists were placed in them, and the upper part of the plank was then brought down into position; thus securing the wrists so that escape was impossible.

Owen major's feet were tied to wooden blocks in the flooring. And there he stood, utterly and absolutely helpless

Swish!

Without the slightest warning something

whirled through the air, and struck him across the legs.

"Oh—ooooh!" gasped Owen major, in agony.

The slash had been a severe one, and his legs were burning with pain. Owen major knew, instinctively, that the weapon was a dog whip, not merely a birch. The whip cut like a knife.

Slash!

Again it descended, this time across his back. He yelled with pain, but, muffled up in that cloth bag, his voice was hardly audible. And the unfortunate junior was stifled.

Slash!

Again and again the whip descended, until, indeed, Owen major was so terrified that he hung limply and twistedly. He was racked with pain from head to foot. He felt that he would faint if more punishment was administered.

And then a voice came to him through the bag. He could not recognise it, for it was obviously disguised.

"This is the reward which falls upon all those who are traitors to the Supreme Council and the Communist Cause!" said the voice, in deep, solemn tones. "Take heed, wretch! Let these words sink in deeply. If one word against the Supreme Council is again uttered by you this punishment will be doubled. If you breathe a sound to your comrades regarding this incident, you will be immediately seized again and whipped until you beg for mercy! Remember what has been said. Take heed! The Supreme Council holds full sway!"

Owen major heard all these words, they sank deeply into his mind. And then, at last, he was released from the "stocks" and led away. He staggered drunkenly, for the unfortunate junior was so filled with pain that he could hardly walk. At last he found himself hoisted to the top of a high wall. And there he hovered for a moment until he was lowered over the other end. Suddenly he was released, and he fell into the tall grass on all fours. The bag which had covered his head automatically came off as he fell.

The cold night air seemed trebly cold after the stifling heat of that bag. And he looked up dazedly.

He was utterly alone.

He found himself just out in the lane. He had been hoisted over the high wall of St. Frank's. And, of course, it was quite impossible for him to know who the fellows were who had treated him in such a way. He guessed that they were the members of the Supreme Council, but he had no actual proof of this.

He limped down the lane until he came to the main gates. They were open, and he passed painfully into the Triangle.

Fifteen minutes later Hubbard came into the Triangle, too. He and Owen major met. They looked at one another curiously, but not a word did they exchange as to what had occurred, for Hubbard had gone through

the ordeal also. His eyes were red, and he had plainly been blubbing. He could not altogether be blamed, for even now he was sore all over.

Altogether, ten juniors were seized and treated in this way before supper time arrived. And these ten were terrified beyond measure. They were utterly subdued. Their punishment had been so great that the very thought of suffering in a similar way closed their mouths and stilled their tongues.

Many of the juniors were quite certain that others had suffered. But still they did not speak. They feared that the Communist stewards were watching, and that they would be reported.

It must be stated, in all fairness, that the majority of the stewards had no knowledge of what actually took place. They merely thought that these culprits were punished; but they did not know how appalling this punishment was.

Bedtime came soon afterwards. Most of the fellows were subdued in the Remove dormitory. Those who had not suffered seemed to realise, instinctively, that some strange terror was hovering over them. There were many discomforts, too, for the beds had not been made, and each fellow had to prepare his own as best he could. This constant muddle was seriously affecting the morale of all the Rebels.

By eleven o'clock the whole dormitory was asleep. And then, just after the hour had struck, several dim figures appeared in the dormitory. They went straight to the bed of Noys. This junior had been making some rather caustic remarks about the Supreme Council, and so far he had not suffered.

But he suffered now.

He was practically smothered as he lay in bed, so that he could utter no sound. He was forcibly carried out, and in one of the spare box-rooms, he was lashed with the dog whip, not so severely as the other victims, because he was wearing no clothes. But Noys was almost a wreck by the time his captors had done with him.

Six other fellows who had been agitating were seized one by one from their beds before midnight had struck.

They were all treated in the same way.

And they dare not say one word, for they had all received the same warning, and they all knew that a worse fate awaited them if they "blabbed." It was like some ghastly nightmare.

This, of course, was rank terrorism in its worst aspect.

The Communist leaders were beating down the opposition; they were making their followers fall into line. True to the traditions of such methods, the St. Frank's Communists were not slow. The leaders knew only too well that their only chance of retaining control was to spread utter terror throughout the rank and file.

This was real Communism, or, at all events, Communism as it has always been

practised. Although this regime had started at St. Frank's as an ideal system, it had thus degenerated into the very opposite to what was intended.

Instead of freedom and liberty, the majority of the boys were only getting the worst kind of tyranny possible and literal slavery.

It had one redeeming feature.

It was so harsh and cruel that it would necessarily collapse in a very short time. With healthy British boys such methods could not be a success in the long run. But for the moment, the Communist leaders held the whip hand—in more senses than one!

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT THE FLASHLIGHT TOLD!



THE College House lay still and silent.

One o'clock had boomed out from the old clock tower a few minutes earlier. Everybody was sound asleep—or ought to have been. The whole school, in fact, appeared to be peacefully slumbering.

Nelson Lee had gone to his own bedroom shortly after eleven, and his light had disappeared just before midnight. Dr. Brett—who had been co-operating with Nelson Lee in the watching of Dr. Stafford—had apparently gone home shortly after ten o'clock.

And Dr. Malcolm Stafford, the Headmaster, was quite alone in his bedroom. There was nothing to indicate that this was not actually the fact. Even Mr. Trenton was snugly in his own bedchamber for the night.

The College House was quite a separate building—but, in a way, it joined up with the rest of the school. The same can be said of the Ancient House. They were placed on two sides of a Triangle. And in the middle there were the Head's own private quarters—quite a little house of its own. Both the College House and the Ancient House joined up with this portion here.

The passage outside the door of Trenton's bedroom was a long one, and quite bare. There seemed to be no possible place for any chance watcher to be hiding. Yet I was there.

And I was watching.

I had been there, as a matter of fact, since midnight. The gov'nor had instructed me that it would be useless to get on duty earlier, for Trenton would certainly make no move until after the midnight hour.

I was securely esconced in a little hidden recess up the corridor. My position was a very cramped one, and that corridor was not particularly warm. By the time one o'clock struck I was feeling extremely fed up.

But I had a strong conviction that Mr. Trenton would make some move. Nelson Lee was similarly convinced. Perhaps we were both wrong—perhaps the science master

would leave us both in the lurch, and would take no action whatever.

And then, at just about ten past one, I heard a faint click. It was so soft that at first I thought my imagination had led me astray. A moment later I knew that my ears had not deceived me.

A faint black shadow had appeared in the passage—a mere darkening of the blackness. And this shadow had appeared from the door of Trenton's bedroom. The science master was on the prowl!

There could be no doubt that he was intent upon some evil towards the Head—whom he fondly supposed to be unguarded. Trenton had swallowed the bait! He had believed that false conversation between the gov'nor and I—he thought that we had been speaking genuinely.

And he was acting upon the supposed information.

I felt a throb pass through me as I crouched in the recess. I knew that there would be something doing now, and I was filled with inward excitement.

With scarcely a sound, Trenton came along the corridor—right in my direction. He would have to pass within a few inches of me. But I had no fear that he would learn of my presence, for the recess was dark, and Trenton would have no cause to examine it.

He came along, slipped by, and then turned a corner. Like a second shadow, I followed.

I wondered what the science master's game actually was. It was impossible for him to reach the Head's bedroom direct—for Dr. Stafford's private suite was cut off from the remainder of the building by means of a locked baize door. Trenton would never be able to pass this.

What was his plan, therefore, for getting into the Head's apartment?

It was my duty to find out, and to deliver a warning to Nelson Lee—so that the latter would be well prepared. A great deal depended upon me, for if I made a mess of this, the whole thing would be ruined.

Trenton would know that we had set a trap for him, and in future he would be fifty times more cautious. So I made up my mind that I would perform my part of the work without a fault.

Trenton certainly had no suspicion that he was being shadowed. He was so certain, in fact, that he was utterly alone, that never once did he glance back. Even if he had done so, he would have met with no reward, for I should not have been visible.

He passed along corridor after corridor, always making in the direction of the Head's own bedroom.

And, at last, he got as near as it was possible to get, for just a little way ahead the baize-covered door confronted him—barring all further progress. In order to reach this position, Mr. Trenton had traversed a great portion of the College House—going past the dormitories, seniors' bedrooms, and so forth. And he had moved like a ghost the whole time. And I had followed him like another ghost.

And now that he had come to the end of his run, so to speak, he turned into a doorway. It was not the doorway of a bedroom, as I knew—but a kind of box-room. What could be Mr. Trenton's object in going into this apartment? It was not long before I found out.

He passed into the room, and closed the door behind him, and inch by inch I crept up.

I was feeling rather nervous about this. If Trenton suddenly came out there would be no escape for me—discovery would be inevitable. But, in order to fulfil my trust, I felt that I had to discover what was going on. And almost the first sound I heard when I drew abreast of the door was a faint, momentary creak.

I recognised the sound on the instant.

It was caused by the raising of a window-sash!

Trenton, then, was making his way out of the window! I thought rapidly, and then, with a little intake of breath, I remembered that a narrow ledge ran along this part of the building. It was only on the first floor, and not a very great distance from the ground.

"My only hat!" I muttered. "I've got it now—but I'd better make certain!"

Like lightning I ran away, my stockinged feet making no sound. I pelted upstairs to the next floor as hard as I could run, and then went to one of the windows. They were of the casement type on this floor, and I opened one without a sound, and cautiously peered over the windowsill. And there, sure enough, a dim figure was crouching against the wall on the lower level of the windows.

Mr. Trenton was making his way into the Head's bedroom by means of the bedroom window. It would be a slow business, for he could only move forward an inch at a time—the ledge being so narrow.

And he had some little way to go, too.

I left my point of vantage, raced down to the lower floor, and immediately pulled a key out of my pocket. I inserted this in the door of a spare bedroom. Entering, I closed the door, went into a cupboard, and felt before me. I knew exactly what I had come for, and where to find it.

My fingers came into contact with the receiver of a small private telephone. I touched a bell-push, and then listened.

"Well?" came the faintest of faint whispers through the receiver.

"Can you hear me, gov'nor?" I breathed.

"Yes, distinctly."

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2:

"He's on his way now!" I said tensely. "He got out of a window, and he's creeping along the ledge towards your window. You can expect him to enter in about three minutes from now."

"Good lad!" came Nelson Lee's whisper. "Splendid!"

He said no more, and the wire became dead. I hung up my receiver, and breathed a long sigh. My part was done. I had given the gov'nor the warning, and now he knew exactly what to expect.

This small private telephone had been installed by Nelson Lee a day or two earlier, and I was surprised at the extent of the preparations the gov'nor had been making. Although apparently idle, the great detective had been very active. Quietly, most unobtrusively, he had been perfecting his plans for the trapping of this snaky scoundrel.

The private telephone was of quite a common type, except for the fact that it had no buzzer and no bell. Instead, it was fitted with a tiny indicator. Lee had seen this move as I had lifted my receiver, and he knew that I was at the other end of the wire. A bell, of course, would have been out of the question under such circumstances.

"Well, I'd give a quid to be in his bedroom just now!" I muttered. "Still, I shall know all about it soon, I suppose. The gov'nor's getting hot stuff with these electrical indicators, and all the rest of it!"

In the meantime, Trenton was getting nearer and nearer to the window of Dr. Stafford's bedroom. More than once as he edged his way along that precarious foothold he feared that he would fall.

But grim determination kept him going, and now he was at his goal. And he was very thankful to see that the window was slightly open at the top. There would thus be no difficulty in making an entry.

And, this time, Trenton would make no mistake.

He intended, in fact, to administer a dose of his terrible drug which would have the most appalling consequences. He intended the Head to go off into one of his raging fits in the dead of night. This would have a tremendous effect upon the whole school, and the Head's presence as Principal of St. Frank's would no longer be possible. Resignation would be his only move.

Trenton breathed a sigh of relief as he felt the broad windowsill beneath his feet. Then, inch by inch, he commenced raising the lower sash. It slid noiselessly, and he was enabled to get the sash right up without making the slightest sound. He stepped into the bedroom.

The darkness was not absolute.

Somewhere in the sky there was a moon, but it was hidden behind banks of clouds, and only a subdued dimness clothed the old buildings. A faint reflection of this dim light entered the bedroom. And it was possible to see the bed itself, with the snowy-white

sheets and the figure of Dr. Stafford reposing between them.

Trenton lost no time.

He stepped silently forward, and bent over the bed.

Sizzzzzz!

Without the slightest warning there was a hissing sizzle, and a blinding, blazing flash of bluey fire. At the same second there was a distinct click. The whole thing had happened so abruptly that Trenton was nearly ready to faint with the surprise of it.

He uttered a hoarse cry and staggered back.

If ever a man was frightened, Trenton was at that moment. He was terrified, in fact, for this thing had come so dramatically—so utterly mysteriously. The next second Trenton staggered to the window, and toppled out.

Whether he intended to fall right out was a question. Probably he overbalanced in his dazed condition. At all events, he gave a wild cry as he fell headlong. There was a moment's awful silence.

Then came the sound of crackling and splintering. Nelson Lee, in the Head's bedroom, knew immediately what had occurred. Directly below this window there were a number of thick, strong laurel bushes.

Trenton had fallen into one of them!

In a flash Nelson Lee was at the window, gazing out. He saw Trenton roll over and over, and then pick himself up. He swayed, staggered, and broke into a stumbling run.

"Upon my soul!" murmured Nelson Lee softly.

This move on Trenton's part had been as unexpected to Lee as it probably was to Trenton himself. The detective had not intended making a capture—his motive in planning this affair was quite different.

Trenton, however, had got away, and nobody else in the whole building had been disturbed. By all appearances, the science master was only superficially hurt, probably a scratch or two, and a number of bruises. The distance he had fallen, after all, had not been great.

Nelson Lee considered the position.

"Perhaps it is all the better," he murmured. "I'll guarantee that Trenton has no idea what really took place. He will probably suspect later on—but he cannot know the truth."

Nelson Lee closed the window, and moved towards the bed. The Headmaster was not between the sheets. That which lay there was merely a couple of pillows and a dark object at the top. In the gloom this fake had looked exactly like a real human figure.

Dr. Stafford, in reality, was in Nelson Lee's own bedroom, and Dr. Brett was with him, on guard. Nelson Lee had meant to take no chances.

He moved forward now, and removed from a little stand a small camera. It had been placed there in readiness—quite invisible in

the darkness. The plate in that camera had received the impression of Trenton as he bent over the bed.

In other words, Nelson Lee had taken a flashlight photograph.

He required this for evidence. It would certainly be conclusive enough, for it would show the cunning science master actually bending over the bed. Nelson Lee had taken great pains to obtain this item of proof.

With the camera in his hands, he left the bedroom, and then came along the corridor to the green baize door. He unlocked this, and found me waiting anxiously on the other side.

"I thought you'd be a lot longer than this, sir!" I whispered. "What's happened?"

"Well, Nipper, things have not gone exactly as we anticipated," said Nelson Lee.

"Haven't you got the photograph?" I asked blankly.

"Yes, I've got that."

"Then what—"

"Trenton placed himself exactly as I required," went on the guv'nor. "I believe that I have obtained a splendid impression. Trenton himself, however, was so startled by the sudden blaze of light from the magnesium that he staggered to the window and toppled out."

I stared.

"You—you mean he's killed himself?" I gasped.

"My dear Nipper, I didn't say that!" exclaimed Lee. "Trenton is quite unharmed. I believe. He fell into one of those laurel bushes, and got away. It will probably be an hour or so before he plucks up enough courage to come back to the school. We need not worry about him, however."

"Isn't it possible that he'll clear off altogether?"

"Possible," admitted Lee, "but by no means probable. If he clears off, Nipper, it will mean that he has given the whole game up. And I don't think Trenton admits defeat just yet. But for the photograph, he could easily bluff this out if he was accused. For in the darkness it would be impossible to swear that Trenton was actually the man who entered."

"But the photograph will prove his identity all right, sir," I said.

"It certainly ought to," agreed Lee. "You did your part well, young 'un, for I was warned in good time, and was able to fix my apparatus to exactly the right direction. You had better run off to bed now."

"And what are you going to do, sir?"

"I shall develop this photograph—"

"And I'll jolly well come along with you!" I declared. "It's likely I'm going to be left out in the cold after all this. Dash it all, guv'nor, I'm blowed if I'm going to be sent off to bed!"

Nelson Lee chuckled.

"Come along then!" he said. "I suppose you'll get your own way!"

We made our way downstairs and along

one of the passages until we arrived at a small cupboard-like apartment which Nelson Lee had recently turned into a dark room. It was now getting on for two o'clock.

If Trenton returned he could have no knowledge that we were about, for no light escaped from this dark room. And we were careful to make no sounds, and to speak only in whispers.

And there, with the red lamp glowing upon our features, we bent over the small bench while Nelson Lee took out the slide from the camera, and then carefully dropped the plate into the developer.

We watched anxiously as the negative came out into sharp relief.

"A ripping photograph, by the look of it, sir," I said.

"Yes, it appears to be quite satisfactory," Lee replied.

At last the negative was fully developed and fixed. The guv'nor had one of those special drying machines, and, after a little patience, the negative was dried and ready for a print.

Using gaslight paper, the guv'nor soon had a print in the developing bath. And, as we watched, the photograph sprang into life. It was fixed, and then I slipped out the red slide from the lamp, and we examined the completed photograph in the full white light.

"Why, what's this, guv'nor?" I exclaimed, startled. "It's not Trenton at all!"

I stared at the photograph rather dazedly. Nelson Lee was examining it with close care and attention. And there was a grim light in his eyes.

"Clever, Nipper—very clever!" he murmured.

"But the man isn't Trenton!" I insisted. "Look at the face, sir—it's blank and expressionless! In fact, it looks more like a wax dummy. It's—it's ghastly!"

The photograph was, indeed, horrible.

"My dear Nipper, there is nothing whatever to be alarmed about," said Nelson Lee. "The astute Mr. Trenton has foiled us. Our work has been practically for nothing. Well, a setback of this sort does not discourage me."

"But—but I can't understand!" I protested.

"And yet the explanation is simplicity itself," said Lee. "Trenton was wearing a tight-fitting mask—a whole mask which covers his entire face. It is probably made of some tightly-drawn silken material—which gives this expressionless appearance to the features."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" exclaimed. "The awful rotter!"

"He took precautions—that is all," said Nelson Lee. "Well, young 'un, the little incident has been quite interesting. We now know for certain that Trenton is sparing no efforts."

"What do you think he'll do next, sir?" Nelson Lee looked grave.

"I cannot tell you," he replied slowly. "But, whatever the next move is, Nipper, it will be grim and desperate!"

CHAPTER VIII.

SLAVERY!



FOR the first time since the Communists had come into power things were going fairly smoothly.

No fellows were late for morning lessons, and in the Remove, particularly, all the juniors had an air of being subdued. The loyalists looked on wonderingly, and could not understand what had brought about this change.

Many of the Rebels appeared to be sore, and it did not take long to gather that they had been through the mill. But it was curious that they should keep so quiet about it.

There was some kind of a despotism here.

Without a doubt, the Supreme Council was holding full sway now—but only because of its terrorist methods and harsh punishments. The Supreme Council was not leading because it was loved.

In fact, the leaders of the Schoolboy Communists were absolutely hated and feared. And yet hardly any junior dared breathe a word against the Council. The punishments which had been inflicted the previous evening, and during the night, had struck a regular pang of terror into the boys' hearts. And they were in mortal fear of what would happen if they agitated again.

The Remove, in fact, was unnaturally quiet.

There was something almost uncanny about it. Even in the Fifth the fellows were subdued. Some of them were still aching from the whippings they had received. And, in spite of all efforts, whispers were going about—softly, and from boy to boy—regarding the terrible "stocks," and the still more terrible dog-whip.

But there were, of course, a number of boys—both senior and junior—who had not suffered in this severe manner at the hands of the Supreme Council. And these boys, although they suspected that dire consequences would follow if they talked sedition, could not help letting out their views in different ways here and there. Nicodemus Trotwood, for example, had resigned his post as chief of the Remove Form Council—stating that the Rebels were altogether too hot for him, and that he wouldn't be associated with them any longer.

Trotwood, in fact, was keenly anxious to come back to the Loyalists, but did not like to humiliate himself by coming across the Triangle. But, while he was with the Rebels he would have nothing more to do with them—that is to say, nothing more to do with the control.

He was marked down for immediate attention.

Before mid-day several other fellows had been marked down. Several Sixth Formers were very outspoken indeed. They had come into this Communist business in a good-natured spirit, hoping that they would be working for the good of the school. Many of them had had rather advanced ideas. But even the most active admirers of Communism in the Sixth were now beginning to realise that theory and practice were two very different things.

"Personally, I've finished with the whole mad business!" declared Wilson. "Kenmore is nothing more nor less than a fool to associate himself with these extreme lunatics."

Rees smiled.

"It's just the kind of thing that Kenmore likes," he said. "Kenmore's a bully by nature, and he never ought to have been allowed on the Supreme Council. I'll guarantee he's mainly responsible for the terrifying punishments that have been handed out to some of the juniors!"

"What terrifying punishments?" asked Conroy major.

"Haven't you heard?"

"A few rumours—but nothing definite!"

"Rumours are good enough for me, anyhow," said Rees, of the Sixth. "There must be a large amount of truth in 'em, because half a glance is enough to tell anybody that some of the kids are almost too sore to walk. I am absolutely with Wilson—I'm fed up with the whole system. It sounds ideal enough for the chaps to be running the school, but I sha'n't grumble if we go back to the old conditions to-morrow."

"Rather!" said Wilson. "Why, hang it all, the fellows had altogether more liberty before this Communism came in. Most of the juniors are simply living in a state of slavery now."

"And they seem to take it lying down, too!"

"What else can they do?" asked Wilson.

"Directly any of them start making objections they're hauled before the Supreme Council and punished. The whole thing is a reign of terror—but it serves the kids right!"

The three seniors were chatting in Conroy major's study, and this little discussion took place just previous to morning lessons. They failed to notice that the door was slightly ajar, and they certainly did not hear a soft footfall out in the corridor.

"Serves them right?" repeated Conroy major. "How do you make that out?"

"Well, they were all mad after this Communism, and wanted it," replied Wilson. "They agitated for it, rebelled against all authority, and it was finally decided to give the thing a trial. Behold the result! Things are ten times as bad, and rank terrorism is ruling over the whole school. This is what comes of putting the control of things into the hands of the fellows themselves."

"But you were rather in favour of it once!" Rees reminded him.

"I was!" admitted Wilson frankly. "But I'm perfectly ready to confess my idiocy—and that's a lot more than some chaps will do. I've seen quite enough of Communism to satisfy me! Give me the good, old-fashioned style of things every time! And I'm going to do my very utmost to kill the whole cranky plan."

"You can't do anything single-handed," said Conroy major.

"Won't you help?" asked Wilson. "And what about you, Rees? From now onwards we'll speak to as many chaps as possible, and convince them that the only plan is to return to the old style. Within a couple of days we shall have hosts of supporters, and we shall be able to strike. What do you say?"

"Good idea!" said Rees. "I'm with you. And the Supreme Council won't do anything to us—we're too big for 'em. And they wouldn't have the nerve to try any of their rotten tricks with the Sixth."

"Oh, wouldn't they?" murmured Simon Kenmore grimly. "We'll see about that!"

Kenmore, as a matter of fact, had been listening outside the door for two or three minutes. Passing down the Sixth Form corridor, he had overheard a few words, and he had paused to listen to the rest.

He went on his way with a fixed expression in his eyes, and five minutes later he had reported the matter to the Supreme Council—an the Supreme Council immediately set about making plans.

Morning lessons began soon afterwards, and they passed off fairly evenly and without many jolts. One or two fellows from the Fifth were absent for about half an hour, and there were also some absentees from the Sixth and Remove. They could come and go as they liked, for they were either members of the Supreme Council, or instructed by the Council. And this was the highest control in the school.

As soon as lessons were over Conroy major and Rees and Wilson strolled off together. They were intent upon making plans to get ahead with their scheme. They were about to decide, in fact, which seniors they should start on.

They arrived at Conroy's study and entered. Conroy major was the first to go in, and he suddenly came to an abrupt halt and gasped. His eyes nearly started out of his head.

"Why, what on earth—Good heavens!" he shouted thickly.

He stared before him, amazed and furious. The blood rushed up into his face, and for a few moments he was absolutely speechless. And there was every reason for his outburst and his amazement.

The study was a scene of utter desolation.

It was, in fact, wrecked—and wrecked in such a manner that not a single article within the four walls was any further use. The whole scene of destruction formed a picture which caused the three seniors to stare blankly.

The furniture—which Conroy major had been rather proud of—was chopped and splintered up into small fragments. These fragments were scattered about all over the floor, piled into heaps. The carpet was up one corner—ripped and slashed to ribbons. All the pictures were still hanging, but the glasses were smashed, and the frames hacked about ruthlessly.

And, over everything, a horrible mixture of tar and soot and paint and cinders had been liberally smothered. The air of the study reeked with the smell and Conroy breathed hard and clenched his fists.

"The hounds—the cowardly curs!" he shouted violently. "Look at this, Rees—look at it!"

"It's—it's awful!" said Rees huskily.

"Everything ruined—everything smashed and destroyed!" went on Conroy major. "I've never seen anything like it in all my life! I paid quids and quids for this furniture, and it was the best in the whole corridor."

"But—but who's done it?" asked Wilson faintly.

"Who's done it?" shouted Conroy major. "Why the Supreme Council, of course! Who else? Somebody must have overheard us talking this morning, and this—this is the result! Cowards! Destructive hounds!"

"This is going too far!" exclaimed Rees hotly. "Look here, we shall have to see Mr. Lee, or—"

"What on earth's the good of that?" demanded Conroy. "Mr. Lee calmly tells everybody who goes to him that he's got nothing to do with the control of the school now, and can't take any action!"

"The rotter!" said Rees.

"No, he isn't!" snapped Conroy major. "Mr. Lee's right—absolutely right! These Communists are running the school, and Mr. Lee is doing the proper thing in letting them run their own road. Any interference on his part would be a mistake. We've simply got to suffer this in silence—or, rather, I have!"

"Do you mean to say you're not going to do anything—"

"What can I do?" shouted Conroy, nearly beside himself with rage and indignation. "What can I do? Yell the whole thing about the school, and bring the Supreme Council down on me? That wouldn't do any good! This is simply a way of showing us that we're as much under the thumbs of the leaders as the fags are! I tell you, it's terrorism in its worst form! We're nothing better than slaves!"

Wilson looked at the ruin rather dazedly.

"Everything!" he said. "Not merely the furniture and the carpet, but everything else! What a rotten shame! Those books of yours, Conroy—presents you had from your pater, I believe—"

"Torn up and burnt in a heap in the fireplace!" exclaimed Conroy huskily. "Oh, the curs! That set of Greek volumes was

bound in the finest leather, and it cost my pater something like ten pounds!"

"The chaps who did this ought to be locked up!" said Rees fiercely. "I'm awfully sorry, Conroy— Great Scott!" he added blankly.

"What's the matter?" asked Wilson.

"Why, they—they might have been to our studies, too—"

"Good heavens!"

Without another word the two seniors rushed out, and went to their own studies. Each Sixth Former had a study to himself at St. Frank's. And Rees's fear proved only too true.

His own study, and Wilson's study, were in exactly the same condition as Conroy major's. They were wrecked and ruined beyond all hope. Everything was destroyed—ruthlessly, relentlessly.

The Supreme Council was showing its power all the time!

The three seniors were so enraged that they nearly went off their heads at first. Other Sixth Formers came along, and they were staggered. Frinton was so indignant about it all that he suggested a prompt reprisal.

"Reprisal?" repeated Wilson irritably. "Don't talk rot! We don't know who did this—we may suspect, but we don't know for certain. The Supreme Council started the whole thing, no doubt—"

"Then I suggest we wreck every study belonging to members of the Supreme Council," shouted Frinton.

"Hear, hear!"

"Two wrongs don't make a right!" objected Conroy major. "These rotters don't care a hang about destroying good property, but I wouldn't be a party to it. Besides, four of the chaps on the Supreme Council belong to the Fifth and Remove—and they share their studies with other fellows, who probably don't agree with this kind of blackguardism. It's no good talking, we can't do a thing in the way of reprisals. But we'll make the cads pay every farthing of expense!"

"Rather!" said Frinton. "If you don't do it now, you can do it later on. This Communism is the rottenest system that was ever devised! They think they can terrify us with this sort of thing, but they can't!"

Indignation ran high, but even the most aggressive senior realised that it would be wise for them to keep their tongues still. To openly denounce the Supreme Council was evidently a dangerous game.

And, although the fellows boiled within themselves, this latest example of Communist frightfulness had its effect. Nearly all the seniors and juniors were subdued. Frinton, however, boldly defied the Supreme Council.

"They can wreck my study if they like!" he declared warmly. "There's not much in it—nothing of any particular value, anyway. I've never been able to afford much in the way of decent furniture. If they wreck it

all, it'll be rather a good excuse for me to drop on my pater for some better stuff!"

"You artful bounder!" grinned Hodder major.

Before an hour had elapsed, another discovery was made. Conroy major happened to go upstairs for something, and he came down like a raging bull. He had discovered that his best clothing had been cut into shreds. His spare neckties ripped to pieces, and all his best shirts torn to rags. The same disaster had befallen the clothing of Wilson and Rees. Not content with merely wrecking the studies of these three seniors, the Communists had gone a step further.

There was a great deal more indignation, but, for the most part, it was kept within check. Everybody resolved that this kind of thing would have to stop—but nobody exactly knew how the stoppage could be effected.

When afternoon lessons were over, Frinton's first task was to hurry to his study. He opened the door and gazed within. Everything was in order, and it was clear at once that the Communists had not visited the place. Frinton grinned, and looked rather triumphantly at Hodder major, who was with him.

"There you are!" said Frinton. "They haven't touched my stuff—and I can tell you that it'll be as safe as eggs in future. If we only agitate in the right way we'll have this despotism crushed within a few hours. We want to all combine—"

"Frinton—Frinton!"

"Hallo!" said Frinton, turning.

Chubby Heath, of the Third, stood in the doorway. His face was flushed, and his breath was coming in short gasps. He had been running hard, and he looked rather scared, too.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded the Sixth Former.

"Have—have you seen your bike?" gasped Chubby Heath.

"My bike?" repeated Frinton sharply.

"What's the matter with it?"

"It's wrecked—"

The fag didn't get any further, for Frinton and Hodder major tore out of the study, pelted down the corridor, and made a bee-line for the bicycle shed. They entered, and then they saw the cause of Chubby Heath's excitement.

The Supreme Council had been at it again! Knowing full well that Frinton would not mind much if his study was wrecked, the Communists had acted in another way. They had utterly ruined his bicycle. The destruction was complete.

"I—I say, this is worse than ever!" exclaimed Hodder major indignantly. "A ripping jigger like that, too! I hope mine's all right!"

A glance round assured him that Frinton's machine was the only one to suffer. Frinton himself was staring dazedly at the wreck.

"Do you know anything about this?" asked Hodder major, turning to Chubby Heath, who was in the doorway.

"Of course, I don't!" said the fag.
 "You didn't see anybody interfering?"
 "No, I came here to get my own jigger out," said Heath. "I spotted Frinton's bike at once, and thought I'd come along and tell him. Ain't it awful? But I'm not going to say anything against the Supreme Council, I can tell you!"

Chubby Heath went off, rather scared.

"I'm sorry, old man," said Hodder major softly. "This is the worst yet!"

Frinton fairly boiled over with rage.

"The destructive young demons!" he shouted violently. "By George! I'll make it my business to discover the culprits, and they'll have to pay up. I've never known such wanton ruin in all my life!"

"Wrecking those studies and destroying the clothing was bad enough, but this goes

all manner of shapes, and tyres were slashed to ribbons, the handlebars were bent and broken, the frame was buckled out of all recognised shape. Even the saddle had not escaped. This was sawn right through, jagged and uneven.

"And we can't do anything," said Hodder major. "That's the rotten part of it, you know! I'm awfully sorry, old man—"

"I know you are, but that doesn't help me, does it?" said Frinton, rather ungraciously—but he was not without excuse. "I can't complain to the Head, or Mr. Lee, or anybody! They don't accept responsibility for anything that happens nowadays. They're right, too! The school is to be controlled by the fellows, and this is the result! These kind of things happen, and there's no appeal, no redress of any kind!"

"It'll have to come to an end soon, that's

Without any previous warning, Nicodemus Trotwood and Canham were grasped, flung to the ground and held there. They struggled in vain.



even a step further!" exclaimed Hodder major hotly. "It simply can't go on, Frinton—there must be an end to it soon!"

"There will be!" said Frinton grimly.

The two Sixth Formers continued to stare at the remains of the bicycle. Only a week before it had been a brand new machine, a glorious, spanking jigger that had cost Frinton's pater well over twenty pounds to buy. as a matter of fact, it was a Christmas box which had been ordered at the festive season, and it had been delivered at St. Frank's, direct from the makers, only the previous week.

There was little wonder that Frinton was nearly off his head with fury.

The bicycle was smashed beyond repair. The destruction was so complete that not a foot of the framework was whole. The entire machine was buckled and bent and cracked up. The wheels were twisted into

absolutely certain," exclaimed Hodder major. "And later on, when you find who the culprits really are, you'll be able to get compensation."

"If they don't dub up, I'll get my pater to prosecute them!" declared Frinton darkly. "After all, we're living in a civilised country, and this kind of thing can't go on without somebody suffering."

It seemed that somebody had already suffered, principally Frinton. But these destructive efforts on the part of the Communists were really a sign of growing weakness, and not a sign of increasing power. For it was an open confession that they were only able to control by these methods of frightfulness.

The terror was at its height; but it had gone rather too high to be safe. It had over-reached itself, and was destined to come toppling down with a mighty crash!

CHAPTER IX.

THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM!



O WEN major peered cautiously over the crumbling old wall. "Somebody else coming!" he whispered tensely. "Stand still, you chaps, don't even breathe!"

Three other juniors stood perfectly still in the darkness. They waited with bated breath, and the dim figure crept nearer and nearer, and at last resolved itself into Nicodemus Trotwood.

"Who's that?" whispered Hubbard.

"Friend!" said Trotwood coolly. "All right, my sons, keep your giddy hair on! So this is the secret meeting, eh? Better be careful, or it won't be a secret for long! Rather too public for my liking!"

It was evening, and the darkness was pitchy. The moon was not due to rise until something after ten, and the sky was clouded. It was almost impossible to see ten yards through the thick gloom of the Triangle.

The bolder spirits among the Rebel forces were defying all the dictates of the Supreme Council, and they were holding a secret meeting. It was the first active organised effort against the Dictators.

Exactly who originated the scheme, nobody knew. Nicodemus Trotwood thought that he was the first to suggest it. Hubbard claimed that it was his idea. Owen major was just as positive that he had hit upon the wheeze originally. In actual truth, it was quite probable that two or three of them had got the idea at the same time.

At all events, this meeting had almost formed itself. Without any actual arrangements being made, without any definite time being fixed, certain juniors were turning up. Some of them were not even sure a meeting was being held. But all these juniors were those who were heart and soul opposed to the Hunnish methods of the Supreme Council.

And the majority of the fellows had suffered; they had been treated to a taste of that awful dog-whip. And now they were sharing notes, and whispering confidences. They were amazed when they learned the extent of the Communist power.

"A regular reign of terror, that's what it is," declared Owen major. "I was quite ready to go in for this Communism with all my heart. But I understood that it meant freedom for the chaps, not slavery! And we're worse than slaves just now!" Communism is a rotten swindle, and I'm fed up with it."

"Same here!" declared Hubbard.

"It's a rank tyranny!" said Trotwood. "I found that out soon after I was appointed chief of the Form Council. In fact, I got so fed up with it that I chucked the

whole job, as you know. But look here, my sons; we haven't come here just to jaw, I suppose?"

"Then what have we come for?"

"What for? Why, to make plans for overthrowing these terrible torturers!" said Nicodemus Trotwood grimly. "I haven't tested that dog whip myself, but I've heard quite enough about it. If the members of the Supreme Council have all been doing this sort of thing I'll never speak to Tucker again as long as I'm at St. Frank's, and I'll never speak to Armstrong, either. The whole thing's brutal and savage and blackguardly."

"Not so loud, Trotty!" whispered Owen major.

"I'm feeling pretty reckless this evening," said Trotwood. "I can tell you the time has come for us to strike—and strike properly. It's no good getting up an agitation and collaring the Supreme Council—"

"Why not?" asked Hubbard. "That's what I was going to suggest. Why can't we collar all the members of the Supreme Council, and kick them round the Triangle? That would be pretty good, you know."

"Rather!" said one or two others.

"Crude!" said Trotwood, shaking his head. "And it would serve no really good purpose. The Supreme Council could deny all knowledge of these dog-whip ruffians, and we couldn't prove that they are really connected. No, my sons, our only chance is to lay a trap for the rotters."

"A trap?"

"Yes!"

"How can it be done?"

"Well, it ought to be pretty easy," said Trotwood. "But we shall need at least two dozen fellows. There are not enough of us here. If we can find about sixteen more trustworthy chaps, we shall be all right. It simply means one bold act now, and these Huns will be exposed. Once we've made a public exhibition of their methods, they'll be done; they'll be finished for good!"

"By Jingo, you're right!" declared Owen major. "I think I can promise to collect the chaps together. I know eight or nine College House fellows who are as keen as mustard to get back to their old quarters. They're fed up with this business. I've only got to whisper a word to 'em, and they'll be buzzing round us. There are a lot more of our own chaps, too."

"All right," said Trotwood. "You get them together, but do it carefully, or the stewards will smell a rat. At seven o'clock to the minute Canham and I will be having a chat on the Ancient House steps, and that chat will be pretty interesting. Now listen, I'll give you an outline of what's to be done."

The other juniors did listen, and they were highly satisfied with Trotwood's suggestion. Then, one by one, the conspirators dispersed. They went about in just the same manner as usual, without giving any inkling of what was afoot.

Just before seven, when everything appeared to be quiet and subdued, Trotwood strolled out through the Ancient House lobby. Canham was with him, and the two juniors lounged against the Ancient House steps in the dark, and fell into conversation. They did not take the precaution to lower their voices and they seemed to be unaware of the fact that Teddy Long was hanging about fairly near by. Teddy Long, as they knew, was the chief spy of the Communists. He had informed against dozens of fellows.

"If those brutes on the Supreme Council think we're going to stand it much longer, they've made a bloomer!" exclaimed Trotwood angrily. "They're all a set of cads, and I don't care who hears me saying so."

"Better go easy!" interrupted Canham, with exaggerated caution.

"Rats!" said Trotwood. "They can't hurt me—let them lay fingers on me, that's all! I'll soon show them what's what! This Communist business is rotten to the core, and I'm going to get up a big agitation to chuck the Supreme Council off its giddy pedestal!"

"We've certainly been putting up with their rot for long enough!" declared Canham. "They've messed up the whole school. Everything's going wrong, and before long there'll be nothing but hopeless confusion. But it won't be possible to do much, Trotty."

"Won't it?" said Trotwood grimly. "We'll see about that! These cads are getting too big for their boots, and they think they're so independent that it'll be easy enough to topple them over. You help me, and we'll be on velvet! When we go indoors we'll slip round to all the studies, one after the other. And we'll tip the word to the chaps. If we organise the thing properly, the Supreme Council won't have an earthly chance. Anyhow, we're going to stop this fearful rot. It's making life a misery and there's no joy in living! Communism is a fool's game; there's nothing good in it at all. It's the rankest idiocy. Communism is simply the outcome of ignorance and envy. And whenever it's put into practice, it's a dismal, horrible failure!"

Teddy Long had heard quite enough by this time, and he scurried round the Ancient House in the dark and got indoors by means of one of the rear entrances. He raced along the passages until he came to Kenmore's study. The Sixth Former was at home—very much so.

He had visitors—Grayson and Shaw, of the Fifth. The trio were smoking openly, without making any attempt to conceal the fact. It was not necessary to do so now. Teddy Long found himself looking at the seniors through a blue haze.

"Well what is it?" asked Kenmore eagerly.

(Continued on next page.)

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(Continued from page 35.)

"Two chaps in the Triangle!" panted Long. "They've been saying awful things, you know! Running Communism down, and saying that they're going to overthrow the Supreme Council, and——"

"Who are they?" put in Grayson sharply.

"Trotwood and Canham, of the Remove!"

"Oh!" said Kenmore savagely. "So Trotwood's havin' a go, is he? He's the little blighter who chucked up his job on the Form Council. All right! These two traitors will soon be dealt with. Here you are, Long!"

Teddy eagerly seized a shilling, stuffed it into his pocket, and scuttled away. He had an arrangement with Kenmore, as a matter of fact, which entitled him to a shilling every time he brought information which would lead to the discovery and punishment of traitors to the Cause.

Meanwhile, Trotwood and Canham were still talking.

And as they talked their conversation grew more and more violent. Treachery was not the word for it, they were indulging in every kind of abuse they could think of.

There was hardly a well recognised term that they did not make use of. And then the blow came, sudden and swift.

Without any previous warning, some black figures loomed up out of the darkness. Nicodemus Trotwood and Canham were grasped, flung to the ground, and held there. They struggled in vain.

"My hat!" panted Trotwood. "Wow—ow! You—you rotters! Lemme go! I—I didn't mean to say anything against the Council! Gug—gug—gruuuugh!"

His words were completely drowned by the cloth bag which was pulled over his head. And then, a minute later, he and Canham were forced across the Triangle, through the gloom. They were being taken to that little harness room, which was the Supreme Council's punishment chamber.

But now things were different.

From beneath the chestnuts in the Triangle, two figures emerged. They belonged to Owen major and Hubbard. They had been there for half an hour, watching and listening, but absolutely unseen. They had witnessed the sudden capture of the two agitators. And now they were creeping along in the rear of the Communist party, and it was necessary to approach fairly close, owing to the blackness.

But the juniors did their work well. Owen major went on in advance, Hubbard dropped behind. And, at intervals, other juniors fell in a like procession. They came from all sorts of odd corners, materialising out of the shadows, as it were. It was hard to realise that these juniors had been waiting and watching for well over an hour. The Communist tyrants suspected nothing. So great was their confidence in themselves, that they believed it impossible for them to be defied.

But, if they had only known it, retribution was at hand!

They hauled their two victims into the harness-room, and Trotwood was the first to be thrust into the roughly constructed stocks. One of the black figures seized the dog whip, and held it aloft, in readiness to strike the first blow. But the whip never descended.

Even as the brutal punishment was about to commence, an ear-splitting yell went up outside the door. In the almost complete silence it was startlingly loud. The Communist tyrants gazed at one another fearfully.

The yell was answered by others, not one or two, but well over a score. A cheer went up, a wildly, excited exultant cheer.

"Got 'em!" roared Hubbard. "Come on, barge in!"

"We've caught the rotters red-handed!"

"Watch the window, you chaps! Keep your eye on the window!"

The door was closed, but it had not been locked, and before the key could be turned the crowd of fellows smashed against it, and burst in. Others on the outskirts were lighting specially prepared torches, made of tar and wood, and so forth. Trotwood had no intention of letting the captives slip away in the darkness.

A dozen of these torches blazed out, illuminating the yard with flickering brilliance.

The Communists vainly attempted to get out. Two of them climbed through the window, and fell into the hands of a waiting crowd. Two others dashed through the doorway, were tripped up, and held. The others succumbed without even making a fight. The surprise was complete and absolute.

The uproar was terrific.

And the methods of these terrorists was exposed in all its brutality. Nothing could have been more telling—more horrifying.

Entering the harness-room, Owen major and Hubbard held their torches aloft, so that the light played fully upon the victim who had been about to receive punishment. Nicodemus Trotwood was fixed in the stocks. It was impossible for him to drag his hands free, and his feet were roped to the ground. And there, on the floor, lay the dog whip, just where it had fallen.

Trotwood was not able to say anything, for the bag was still over his head. It was quickly pulled off, and he took a deep breath, and grinned cheerfully.

"All serene?" he asked.

"You bet!" said Owen major. "They're all collared!"

"Good!" said Trotwood. "No, don't take me out of this. Rush round and tell the whole school—spread the news! Line up the prisoners, and put them in a row. We'll have a little exhibition! The school can come and see me in this position, dog whip and all, and the school can have a look at the tyrants, too. By the way, who are they?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Owen major. "I haven't looked! But that's a ripping stunt of yours, Trotwood. Communism's dead!"

"As defunct as the dodo!" said Trotwood cheerfully.

Passing outside, Owen major shouted some instructions. The prisoners were lined up. All were wearing black kind of cloaks, but now they were visible and easily identified. They comprised Kenmore, Grayson, Shaw, Fullwood, Gulliver, Bell, and two or three other well-known cads and bullies. Tucker was not there, neither was Armstrong.

It was unnecessary for Owen major to go and tell the school, for the school already knew. And, exactly as Trotwood had anticipated, there was a great revulsion of feeling.

From that very moment Communism was a dead letter at St. Frank's.

The juniors were enraged when they saw what was about to happen to Trotwood. So these were the methods which the Supreme Council employed! It was an exposure which put the death-knell on the Communist system in one second.

And those fellows who had had their property destroyed vowed that Grayson, Shaw and Co. should pay the damage, or suffer dire consequences.

All the bullies were seized, and ragged unmercifully. Armstrong went through it, too; but Armstrong hotly declared that he knew nothing of this. He had not been a party to the scheme. Tucker was not only rolled in the snow, but bruised and battered until he could hardly breathe. He was told in the plainest of plain terms that if he spoke another word of Communism at St. Frank's he would be slaughtered. The school had had enough!

And, then and there a deputation was formed, and it went straight away across to Nelson Lee. The deputation was led by none

other than Armstrong himself. He humbly begged for the complete return of former conditions. He admitted that Communism was a failure, and that the school, under the control of the boys, was a hopeless proposition.

Nelson Lee had known that this was coming from the very first. He listened gravely and attentively to the deputation, acting on behalf of the Headmaster. And, meanwhile, the Triangle was thronged with dense crowds of fellows.

Sternly, Nelson Lee told the deputation that the Communists had caused a great deal of trouble and worry. He hoped that they would realise the foolishness of their ways, and that they would settle down to serious work in the future. Lee sent the deputation away happy, deliriously happy, for he said that there would be no punishments providing the boys behaved themselves well.

Verily, punishments had been inflicted in plenty of late. While under the yoke of the terror, life itself had been a punishment. And the cheering out in the Triangle when the news spread, was heard miles away.

Communism at St. Frank's was over, a thing of the past.

Personally, Nelson Lee was quite delighted. The debacle could not have come at a more appropriate time. For the school governors would be down on the morrow, and Nelson Lee was all ready to launch his final plan for the exposure of Mr. Trenton and his fellow conspirators.

Nelson Lee little realised what was to occur!

Things would not go as smoothly as he anticipated, and a terrible hitch was even now looming up!

The whole of St. Frank's was joyful; but a black shadow was gathering, and before long the darkest hour would be at hand!

THE END.

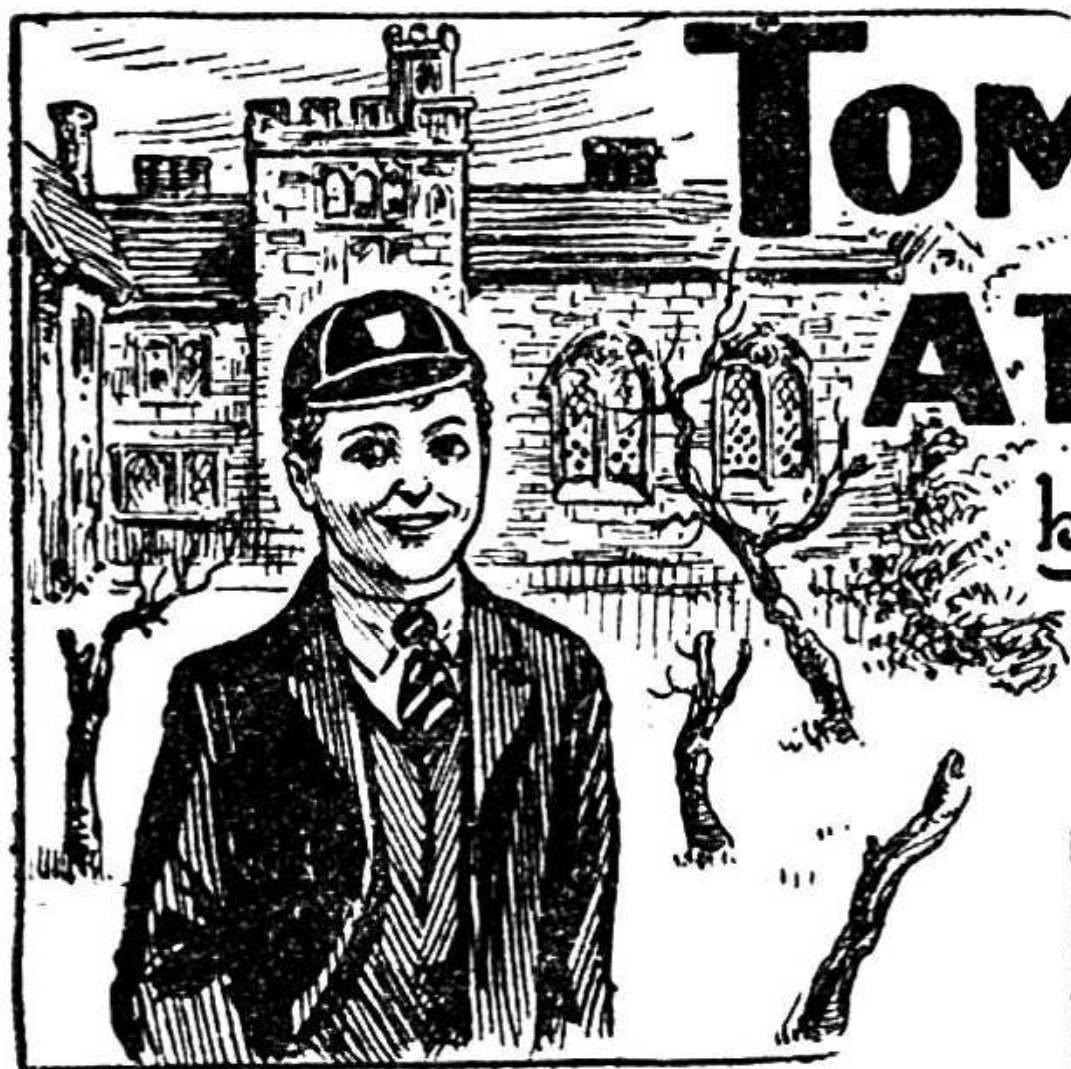
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TOM TARTAR AT SCHOOL

by HARCOURT BURRAGE

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School Story).

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Tom Tartar arrives at Mr. Wrasper's school, where discipline is maintained by moral force only. Tom makes several friends and a few enemies. He is initiated into the "Eagles," a party opposed to the "Cuckoos," or the rotters of the school. After distinguishing himself at a football match, Tom spends the week-end with Sir Claude Freshley, whose son, Cecil, he had rescued from drowning.

(Now read on.)

CHAPTER XIII.

Pubsey Gets into "Bad Odour!"

THEY seemed to be angry and excited about something, and Rosy Ralph, squatting on the ground alongside them, and munching a slab of Widow Blake's famous plum-duff, quickly gathered what was wrong.

Noddy Berrill and his mates were indignant about a remark which Pubsey Wrasper had chosen to utter publicly.

"He may be the schoolmaster's son," declared Noddy, "but that don't give him the right to insult us. 'Why didn't I play in the match on Saturday?' he sez. 'I'll tell you why I didn't play,' he sez. 'It's because I don't choose to demean myself by playin' wi' a low lot o' blackguardly quarry louts!' That's what this precious Pubsey Wrasper sez," concluded Noddy, his face hot with anger. "Are we goin' to stand sich an insult as that, mates?"

"Are ye quite sure he did say it?" asked one of the lads.

"There ain't no doubt about it," replied Noddy. "My father heard him say it to Deaf Durdles. Young Wrasper had to bawl it out at the top o' his voice to make Durdles hear, so there can't be no mistakin' the words he used. Besides, I've

heard as he said the same thing to others than Deaf Durdles."

"What can we do about it, Noddy?"

"Dang him!" cried Noddy. "He ought to be rotten-egged!"

"I can get you plenty," put in Rosy Ralph eagerly; "old Durdles has a lot in his hens' nests."

"What do you say, boys?" asked Noddy Berrill. "I know that Pubsey Wrasper is comin' up to the manager's to tea to-night. Shall we send him back with old Durdles' nest eggs about him?"

The answer was an emphatic "yes!" and Ralph was commissioned to collect the ammunition, a task eminently congenial to him, for two reasons.

It was in perfect harmony with his inborn poaching instincts, and there was a spice of danger in the task, for if discovered he would certainly get a taste of a horsewhip.

"I'll do it," said Rosy Ralph. "He's a bad 'un be young Pubsey—a mean 'un! He said I ought to roll the grass for tuppence! 'It are enough for you,' he sez, 'an' more 'an enuff, you ragged scamp.' Yes, I'll get them there eggs, and plenty on 'em!"

Pubsey Wrasper, although a pupil at his father's school, was not as other pupils. Being a spoiled only son, he did pretty much as he liked, taking his place in class—or leaving his place—just whenever it suited his convenience.

No surprise was, therefore, manifested by the other boys when, at four o'clock on this particular afternoon, he suddenly rose from his seat, and, with a careless nod to his father—who was conducting the class—slouched out of the school-room.

About a quarter of an hour later, McLara, from his seat near a window which commanded a corner of the lawn, caught a glimpse of Pubsey hurrying towards the front gate.

"All dressed up in his Sunday best!" added McLara, after communicating the news in a whisper to Tom Tartar and Turrell, who sat near him.

"Ugh!" grunted Turrell. "That means the slimy reptile is going to tea somewhere. Fancy inviting a thing like that to tea!"

Must be jolly hard up for male guests when they have to fall back on Pubsey to——"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Wrasper suddenly. "I will not tolerate idle chattering during class! Do you hear me, Tartar?"

"Yes, sir, I hear you," answered Tom calmly.

"Very well, then! Let me have no more of it!"

"No more of what, sir?" inquired Tom.

"Ah! You choose to be impudent! But have a care, Thomas Tartar—have a care! I am a patient man, but even my patience has its limits! For the last ten minutes you have been whispering to your companions, and——"

"I absolutely deny it!" interrupted Tom. "I haven't whispered a single word!"

Which was perfectly true, seeing that McLara and Turrell had been the real offenders.

"Silence!" again commanded Mr. Wrasper. "Did I not hear you with my own ears? Did I not with my own eyes see your lips moving?"

Tom shrugged his shoulders resignedly, and made no reply. He would have liked to persist in his denials; but to have done so might have involved McLara and Turrell.

Mr. Wrasper, too, now that he had asserted his authority, decided to let the matter drop. The interrupted lesson was resumed, and the usual school routine went on until five o'clock.

And then, just as the class was being dismissed, a startling thing happened!

The door of the class-room was thrown violently open, and in rushed a wild, dishevelled figure, which, for a moment, it was difficult to recognise as that of Pubsey Wrasper.

But Pubsey it was—a hatless, odoriferous Pubsey, who looked as if he had been dipped in a huge gum-pot! The suit which McLara had described as his "Sunday best," was absolutely ruined. No cleaning process yet invented could remove those viscous yellow stains; no disinfectant on the market could successfully combat the noisome effluvia which emanated from those same yellow stains!

So terrific was the smell that several boys literally reeled backwards as it smote their nostrils.

"Phew!" gasped Sam Smith, as he held his nose 'twixt finger and thumb. "Whad is id—poisud gas?"

"No!" grinned Tom Tartar. "It's violets!"

The fragrant Pubsey halted in front of Mr. Wrasper, who recoiled a step, with crinkled nose and arm outstretched to keep his son at a distance.

"Father!" half shrieked the dishevelled youth. "I've been set upon and nearly murdered by the quarry boys! They—they've pelted me with rotten eggs! It was Tartar set 'em on to do it!"

"It's a lie!" cried Tom indignantly.

"Tartar," said Mr. Wrasper, since your arrival here we have had nothing but scenes

of this description! My son would not make a false accusation. I have no desire to believe you guilty, but, under the circumstances, I cannot do otherwise."

"You may believe what you like," said Tom, "but why should I set the quarry boys on to assault him?"

"Because you hate me!" cried Pubsey, advancing a step, the boys nearest him falling back and holding their noses.

"It was near the quarry," went on Pubsey, addressing his father, "when they all came for me. Rosy Ralph was with them. They smothered me. I had to run for my life, and I heard them say they did it for Tom Tartar."

"Moore," said Mr. Wrasper, "take Tartar away! Let him have a night of solitary."

"I won't go!" said Tom. "I have done nothing! Hands off, Mr. Moore!"

A strange hush, dreadful to some of the boys, fell upon all. Never before had a pupil exhibited such open defiance.

Foster Moore broke the silence.

"All but Tartar leave the room," he said. In a body the boys trooped out, Pubsey alone remaining.

"You, too!" said Foster Moore roughly.

"Can't I stop, father?" asked Pubsey.

"I—I think you had better go, my son," stammered Mr. Wrasper.

The boy looked sullenly at the tutor, and then reluctantly departed.

Tom Tartar and the two men were left together.

Tom's face was rather pale, but his air was proud and defiant. He had right at his back this time, so why should he be afraid?

After a short silence Foster Moore said to Mr. Wrasper:

"Have your say; then I will have mine."

"Tartar," said the schoolmaster, with an effort, "you have shown a spirit of rebellion, not only to-day, but ever since you came here, which is not to be tolerated."

"Pardon me, sir," returned Tom, "but I have done nothing of the sort. Tell me how I rebel?"

"You resist authority."

"When have I done so?"

"Only just now."

"Because I am innocent of what I am accused," said Tom. "I should just as soon think of cutting my right hand off as set a lot of boys upon anyone I don't happen to like. Pubsey knows I did nothing of the sort."

"Wrasper, you are making a mess of things, as usual," interposed Foster Moore. "Tartar, you have been sentenced to a night in solitary, and into solitary you're going!"

"I must be carried there by force, then," replied Tom, "and that, you know, is a thing you don't use here. Physical force isn't permitted in Mr. Wrasper's school. My father told me so. That was what fetched him in the prospectus, and made him send me here in preference to fifty other schools he might have chosen for me!"

A curious expression came into Foster Moore's face. Mr. Wrasper turned the colour of a beetroot.

"You've got to go!" snarled Moore.

"I don't mind taking moral punishment for breaking rules," returned Tom stoutly, "but I'm not going to stand punishment meekly for doing nothing at all! I— Oh, you cowardly brute!"

Foster Moore had leapt upon him with a tigerish action hardly to be expected from a man of his bulk. Tom felt as if he were in the hug of a bear; but, for all that, he struggled gamely to get free.

The usher, however, was altogether too powerful for him, and, well-built youngster though he was, with plenty of muscle and sinew about him, he was practically helpless in that rib-crushing embrace.

Still, he wasn't quite beaten yet.

"I won't go, you brute—I won't!" he panted, and suddenly threw his right leg round the support of one of the desks near him.

The desk was screwed down to the floor, and was not to be moved. Foster Moore, with an exclamation of fury, tried to tear Tom away, but the youngster held on grimly.

Then, through his gritted teeth, Foster Moore gave vent to an oath; while into his eyes came such a look that caused Mr. Wrasper to suddenly spring forward and throw himself upon his burly assistant.

"For heaven's sake, Moore," he said, "control yourself!"

There was need for the warning. A deadly look was in the eyes of the angry man. He was thoroughly roused, and when roused he was as dangerous as a wild beast.

"Don't interfere, Wrasper," he panted. "No boy yet ever conquered me."

"But think—think," said Mr. Wrasper, fairly quivering, "we profess to—use—no—physical—force."

For a moment it seemed as if the tutor would have turned a deaf ear to his voice. But suddenly he released Tom, and gave vent to a harsh laugh.

"Oh, very well," he remarked. "I leave him to you!"

The brief struggle had been terrible to the boy, and the wrench he received from the hands of the giant tutor seemed to have fairly loosened some of his bones.

"Get up, Tartar," said Mr. Wrasper.

Tom rose slowly, doing his best to hide the pain he was enduring. Foster Moore took a seat on one of the forms, and, with folded arms, stared at him sullenly.

"Tartar," said Mr. Wrasper, "you have brought this punishment upon yourself. If Mr. Moore has for a moment allowed my rule of 'no physical force' to escape him, it is your own fault. You goaded him beyond endurance."

"I was accused of something I didn't do!" protested Tom.

"Well, we will look into that by-and-by," said Mr. Wrasper. "For the present, go up to your bedroom, and stay there."

Tom walked slowly from the school-room, and, for a few moments, the two men were silent. Mr. Wrasper was the first to speak.

"Moore," he said, "if you do not control yourself you will do serious mischief some day."

"I should have done serious mischief to that young beggar if you had not interfered," replied the tutor grimly. "So far, I am obliged to you. But let me ask, what you propose to do with him?"

"I don't know," replied Mr. Wrasper.

"Then I'll tell you! Send him home."

"I can't do that! I have taken him for a year, and the fees have been paid in advance. His father says that he is a good boy in the main, but inclined to be wild, and really you know, Moore, I—"

"Go on, don't stutter over it," said the tutor angrily.

"Well," said Mr. Wrasper, "between you and me, what has he done to be sent home in disgrace?"

"I hate him!" said Foster Moore. "I did so the first moment I saw him. He is impudent, and he flouts our authority!"

"I like him no better than you do," said Mr. Wrasper, "but this is nothing new. You and I dislike others, but we have to live, and it won't do to have a scandal that might break up the school. Sir Claude Freshley is his friend—"

"Oh, hang Sir Claude!"

"That is all very well, Moore, but Sir Claude is everything here. If he took it into his head to champion Tartar's cause, he could bowl us over very easily."

"Oh, you are nervous about nothing, Wrasper. How is Sir Claude to know anything about him?"

"He could tell, couldn't he?"

"Yes, he could, but he won't," said the tutor. "That boy will neither write home complaints, nor drivel to any of his friends. He will fight out his own cause, and die rather than ask for help. Oh, I know the breed. They make what the world call heroes!"

"Moore, you are in one of your bitter moods," said Mr. Wrasper. "We will talk more about Tartar when you are calmer. But I really must beg of you to try to keep your temper more under control."

Moore growled out some incoherent reply, and the two parted.

Meanwhile, Tom had gone up to the bedroom, with its little alcoves partitioned off. Sitting down on an old chest by the window he gave way to reflections that were not entirely satisfactory.

He felt that he had come out of that struggle victorious.

But there was another side of the affair. Foster Moore had shown that he was a dangerous man, and Tom was keen enough to see that if Mr. Wrasper had not been in the room the struggle might have ended seriously.

(Continued on page iii of Cover.)

(Continued from page 40.)

"He would have half-killed me!" thought Tom.

"Hallo, old chap! How goes it?" came from the doorway in a subdued voice.

Tom looked up to find Sam Smith standing there.

"Oh, I'm all right," replied Tom. "But, I say, it's risky you coming up like this. You had better not be found here."

"I've got to be found," said Sam, as he came in. "Tell me what they did to you after we left the room."

"Oh, we had a bit of a struggle," replied Tom indifferently, "and Wrasper interfered."

"Then I know what sort of a struggle it was," replied Sam. "Moore was in one of his dangerous moods. I have seen him in them two or three times. Isn't it awful? Talk of wild beasts—why, he is one."

"He certainly has got a rotten bad temper," said Tom. "But you had better go. Tell the fellows I am all right."

"Did he hurt you much?" persisted Sam.

Tom laughed.

"Well, he made my ribs ache a bit. He's got a thundering strong grip. And now, Sam, you really must go! Listen—somebody's coming! Hook it, old chap!"

Sam vanished not a moment too soon, for half a minute later Mr. Wrasper appeared with Wooden Jerry at his heels, the latter bearing a tray, on which was some bread and a mug of water.

"That is you fare for twenty-four hours," said Wrasper.

Wooden Jerry's face wore a malicious grin, but of him, Tom, of course, took no notice.

Mr. Wrasper stood fidgeting for a few moments as if he had something more to say, but finally walked out without another word.

Wooden Jerry lingered behind under pretence of putting some of the things in the room in order.

"Hope you'll enjoy yourself, Master Tartar!" he said.

Tom did not answer or even look at him.

"I spoke to you, Master Tartar," said Jerry again. "I said I hoped as how you'd like it."

Tom seemed to be totally unconscious of his presence. Wooden Jerry's grin became a snarl.

"I likes to see you here," he said, "and others will be glad to hear on it. I'll tell 'em as how you cried, and asked to be forgiven, and it will get to the ears of a certain young lady at Cecilia Semin'ry."

"Get out of this room," said Tom, "or I'll put you out!"

"Oh, will you?" retorted Jerry, all the colour forsaking his beer-soddened cheeks.

Tom's answer was a push towards the door, and Wooden Jerry thought it better to go. On the landing he fired a parting shot.

"Girls despises boys who cry!" he said. And then he fled.

Tom closed the door and returned to his seat.

Strange to say he felt this trumpery encounter more deeply than he did the struggle in the school-room.

He wondered uneasily whether Jerry would carry out his threat, and whether, if he did so, Lottie Fern would believe the fellow!

(To be continued.)

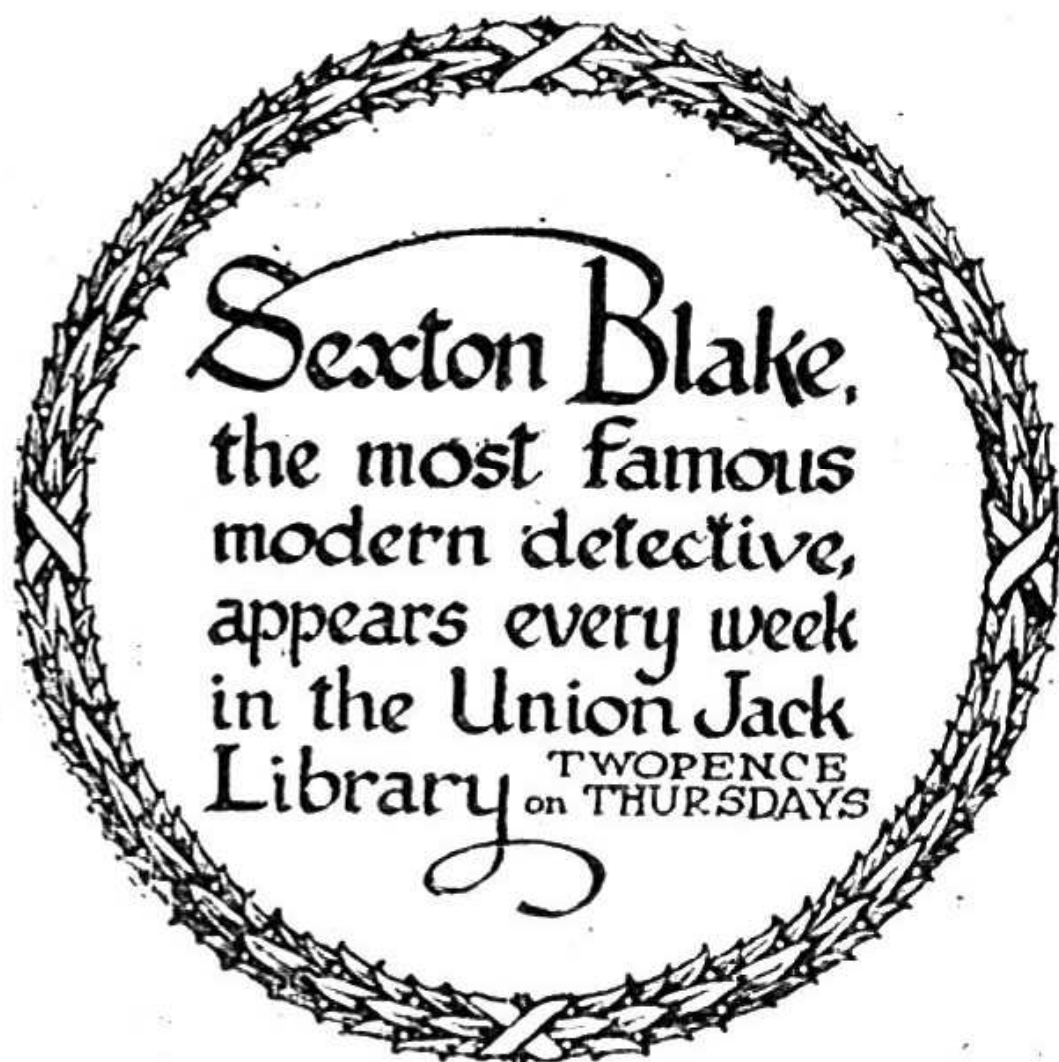
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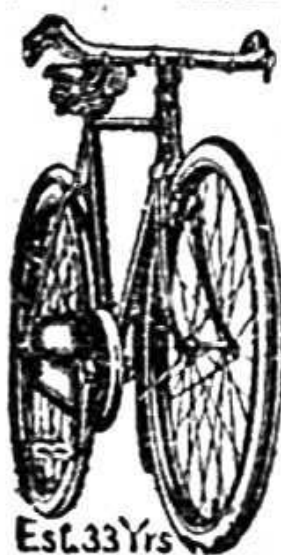
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