

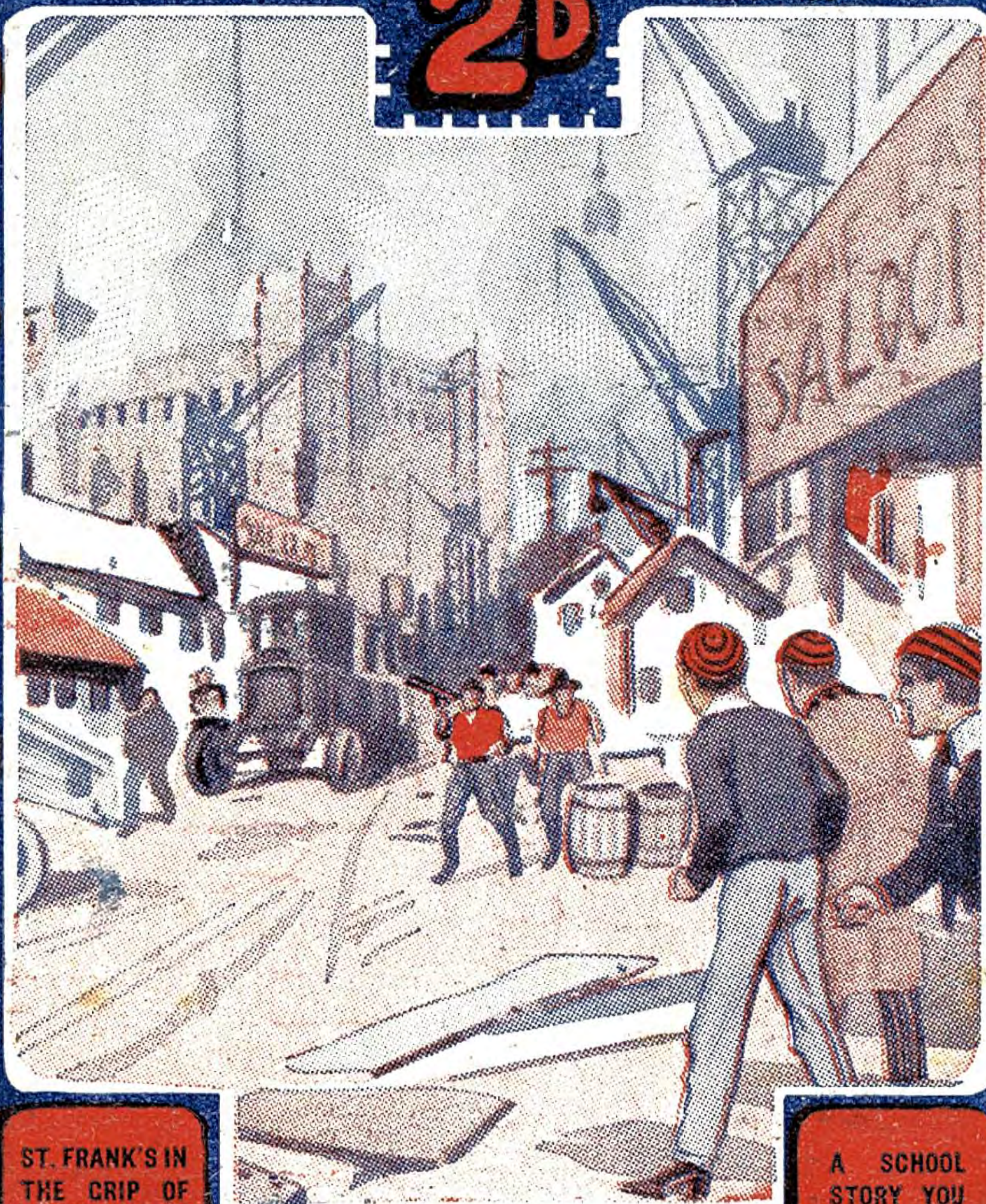
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ST. FRANK'S IN
THE CRIP OF
THE MIGHTY
DOLLAR!

THE
AMAZING MR. SMITH!

A SCHOOL
STORY YOU
MUST NOT
MISS!

No. 456.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

March 1, 1924.



Hardly had we reached the road, when the cottage collapsed like a house of cards.



The AMAZING MR. SMITH!

Great changes have taken place at St. Frank's during the past week. Much to the sorrow of everyone, Dr. Malcolm Stafford has resigned the Headmastership, and Mr. Ponsonby Small, a

wizened little man, has assumed the vacant position. The River House School has likewise experienced a shock, though of a different kind. Instead of losing their Head, they have lost their school, and accommodation has been found for them at St. Frank's, the Remove being ordered by Mr. Ponsonby Small to give up their Studies and their Common Rooms for this purpose. This was not altogether a good beginning for the new Head's reign of office. It is clear that he is the willing servant of a certain influential person, who is responsible for the recent unpopular changes. And that person is Cyclone Smith, a German-American millionaire, who has bought up the Bellton estate and is soon destined to make the whole countryside hum with vast factories. He has, however, to reckon with the determined opposition of the boys of St. Frank's, supported by the inhabitants of Bellton. Such, briefly, is the state of affairs at St. Frank's at the commencement of the following narrative.

THE EDITOR.

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

CHAPTER I.

HOUSE FULL!

ARCHIE GLENTHORNE awoke with a start.

"What-ho! Oddslife, and all that sort of thing!" he exclaimed mildly. "It appears that the good old forty winks are slightly interrupted!"

The Genial Ass of the Remove at St. Frank's sat up on his luxurious couch, and adjusted his monocle. By the aid of this he inspected the visitor who had just charged into the study like a human avalanche.

"Welcome, Handy, old tomato!" said Archie genially. "Come in! Pray don't trouble to knock, laddie!"

"Fathead!" said Handforth aggressively. "I'm in!"

"So," said Archie, "I observe. I mean to say, you're not only in, but absolutely filling the old apartment, as it were. And is it really necessary to do these dashed imitations of an earthquake? I'm not the

chappie to criticise, but the old nerves are somewhat strained at present. All this bother, you know—this frightful business about Mr. Ponsonby Small, and the River House contingent, and what not. I mean, too much is—too much!"

Edward Oswald Handforth grunted.

"Yes, you're suffering a lot!" he sneered. "While all the other fellows are kicked out of their studies, you calmly remain in possession of yours! Just because you're a hopeless fathead, you're privileged!"

"Dash it!" protested Archie. "I don't want to be impolite, old lad, but I must remark that your conversation is frightfully personal. Only yesterday, I put the whole posish. before the school, and it was unanimously voted that Brent and I should keep our study."

"I know that," said Handforth, nodding. "As a matter of fact, it was jolly decent of you. You offered your study for general use, and you couldn't have done more. But

that's not the point. I've come here to talk—"

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie. "The fact, old onion, is obvious."

"To talk!" proceeded Handforth grimly. "I've come here to lay the whole position in front of you, and to awaken you into a sense of revolt! Something's got to be done—and I'm going to do it!"

Archie gave a kind of moan, and settled himself down in his seat. His monocle dropped listlessly from his eye, and he gave himself up for lost. From past experience, he knew what to expect. However, he didn't give in without a struggle.

"But, sweet one, I know the whole situash.!" he protested feebly.

"That doesn't matter," said Handforth. "Even if you know it, you don't realise the horrible gravity of the case. Here we are, the Junior School of St. Frank's, with all these River House chaps pushed on us. Forty-two of them! Or, to be exact, forty-four! I hear that two new kids are coming—actually coming here, mark you!"

"Disgusting!" said Archie sadly.

"Disgusting? It's the limit!" snapped Handforth. "Not content with palming off his whole giddy school on us, Dr. Hogge even invites his blessed new kids to come here!"

"I admit, old companion, that it's somewhat jagged," said Archie. "But, at the same time, what, I mean, can be done? If these River House chappies are signed on, or have got their licences, or whatever it is, they've bally well got to arrive, if you grasp my meaning. Because, between you and me and the sideboard, this, in a manner of speaking, is the River House School, what?"

"By George, so it is!" said Handforth. "And why have we got these chaps—these forty-four outsiders—pushed on us? Why? I'll tell you!"

"Thanks awfully," said Archie. "Pretty priceless of you, old horse!"

"Don't interrupt!" commanded Handforth. "These River House chaps are shoved on St. Frank's because Dr. Hogge has sold his giddy school to Mr. William K. Smith! And who is Mr. William K. Smith?"

"According to report, a somewhat foul proposition!" said Archie.

"Smith is a beast—a German-American millionaire—in fact, a dirty dog!" roared Handforth, waxing indignant. "Dr. Stafford refused to give way to the rotter, and Dr. Stafford was forced to resign! And now we've got this—this Mr. Ponsonby Small as a Headmaster!"

"The whole affair is, of course, somewhat ragged at the edge," said Archie, nodding. "I mean to say, the whole thing is not only ghastly, but dashed pestiferous! It appears to me that the peace of St. Frank's is rather shredded."

"Torn to ribbons!" agreed Handforth. "And in order to make way for this invad-

ing horde, we've been pushed out of our studies, and they've been converted into bed-rooms! We can't use the Lecture-hall, and even the Common-room is barred! We're simply shoved about like pawns!"

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "The outlook, in fact, is murky."

"You've got nothing to grumble at, my lad," said Handforth darkly. "This study of yours happens to be an odd one—a kind of misfit, between the Fifth Form and the Remove passages. And so you're exempt! But what about the rest of us, mooching about without anywhere to go?"

"Dear old locomotive, I weep!" said Archie sorrowfully. "Dash it, if you observe closely, you'll absolutely see the good old tears! I mean, I'm absolutely hot and cold and dithery! My heart, as it were, goes forth to you, and absolutely bleeds!"

Archie lay back, and closed his eyes—apparently pondering over the sad situation. As a matter of fact, he was fed-up, and bored stiff. Handforth's presence, instead of filling him with a burst of energy, had the effect of making him extremely languid.

This was just one of Handforth's little ways—to tell a fellow everything that he already knew. There was no question whatever that the position at St. Frank's was decidedly awkward. And by all appearances, there was no prospect of any immediate improvement.

The River House School, in its entirety, had been saddled upon the Remove—for it was the juniors who were most affected—for a couple of days now, and although the first confusion was lessened, there was still a great amount of overcrowding. And the feelings against Mr. Ponsonby Small, the new Headmaster, ran high.

Handforth appeared to be lost in a fit of deep thought, and in the meantime, Archie gently and peacefully dozed off. He was lulled into slumber. The door opened, quietly and insidiously, and a head appeared.

It was the head of Willy Handforth, of the Third, and he gazed full into the eyes of his major. To tell the truth, Willy was taken aback, but he didn't show it. His assurance was marvellous.

"Hallo, Ted!" he said brightly. "I didn't expect to find you here. What's the idea? Trying to touch Archie for half-a-quid?"

"You young insect!" snapped Handforth. "You know as well as I do that I never borrow money! And what are you doing here? I'll bet you came to wangle some tin out of this soft ass!"

"Very singular, my dear Watson—your deductions are elementary!" said Willy briskly. "In other words, you've got it! I tried to find you, but couldn't. I come to find Archie, and, behold, I find you! So fork out, old son! Five bob!"

Handforth seemed to discover something in his throat.

"You—you cheeky young sweep!" he

gasped thickly. "If you think I'm going to lend you five bob—"

"I don't!" interrupted Willy calmly.

"Eh?"

"Now, don't be silly!" said the fag. "You're going to give it to me—I don't borrow from my own brother! Of course, seven-and-six would be better, but five bob'll do at a pinch. "I'm hung up in making a new wireless set."

Edward Oswald reached forward, and grasped his minor firmly.

"For two weeks, you've been asking for it," he said, his voice grim and hard. "It's not usually my habit to biff you, but it's time you had a lesson! Take that!"

Exactly how it happened, Handforth didn't know, but his fist struck nothing, Willy having slipped away as though he were some dematerialised spirit. And Handforth lunged forward, and dived head-foremost into the unfortunate Archie.

"Wow! Gadzooks and help!" gasped Archie. "S.O.S.! Phipps! Phipps! The young master is sinking fast!"

"You—you fathead!" roared Handforth, struggling up. "Who told you to get in my way? Where's that young brother of mine?"

"I suppose you're going to blame me now?" asked Willy, from the rear. "Never knew such an unreasonable chap! You deliberately push Archie through the back of his own couch, and then blame me for it!"

Handforth turned, pushing up his sleeves. "By George!" he said darkly. "Now you're going to get it!"

"The five bob?" asked Willy. "Thanks!"

Handforth suddenly calmed down, and his expression became contemptuous. This was one of his little habits. With the most astonishing suddenness, he would change all his tactics.

"What's the good?" he asked sourly. "Why should I waste my time in biffing a young donkey like you! Take your giddy five bob and clear out! I'm fed up with you!"

He pulled out two half-crowns, and tossed them to Willy, who caught them deftly. There was a cheerful smile on the fag's face.

"Of course, I meant to get it, but I didn't expect it'd be so easy," he remarked. "Good old Ted! Always toes the mark sooner or later. Now I'm off to my study to finish that wireless set."

As though by magic, Willy vanished. Handforth, in the act of speaking, blinked. In some extraordinary way, his young brother had gone. He had slipped round the door like a streak.

"He's gone to his study!" said Handforth in a hoarse whisper. "Did you hear that, Archie? He's gone to his study! By George! And it never struck me before! He's gone to his study!"

"I believe you mentioned that before,"

moaned Archie, who was still in pain. "But, dash it, the statement doesn't appear to be absolutely sensational. I say! I say! Don't look at me like that, you know! You make me go all jellied and unstable in the spine!"

Handforth continued to gaze at Archie with a grim, intense look of slowly growing triumph.

"Willy's gone to his study!" he repeated, in a soft, mysterious voice, as though he were discussing some anarchist plot. "Don't you understand, you dummy? Don't you understand?"

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "Willy's gone to his study!"

"Exactly!" said Handforth triumphantly.

"Of course, it may be clever, but I'm shaking his head. "I mean to say, there's dashed if I can see it!" confessed Archie, Willy, and there's his study, and you seem to think that—"

"Idiot!" hissed Handforth. "Don't you realise that all these Third-form kids have got studies, and all the Remove haven't got studies? Is that right? Do you think we're going to allow these blessed fags to keep 'em?"

Before Archie could reply, Handforth dashed out, and shot along to the lobby. Here he found several juniors moodily standing in a group, and discussing the inevitable subject. Church and McClure were there, and Armstrong and Grey, and a few others.

"Good!" said Handforth breathlessly. "Come on!"

"Come on where?" asked Church. "What's the hurry? Blessed if I can see anything to get excited about! There's nowhere to go, and everything's getting worse day by day, and—"

"Don't grumble!" snapped Handforth. "I've got an idea! I don't mind telling you chaps in confidence that it's an absolute brain-wave."

"Do you usually tell confidences in a shout?" asked Armstrong.

"Don't argue with me!" roared Handforth. "I've got an idea for supplying the Remove with studies—at least, private rooms. They're pretty rotten holes, strictly speaking, but they're better than nothing."

"He's mad!" said Grey. "This is the result of too much strain!"

But Handforth's excited appearance had aroused interest, and the crowd of juniors surrounded him, and waited for him to reveal his great secret. And Handforth lost no time in explaining the position.

"You fellows have got no memories!" he said calmly. "You know as well as I do that the Third pinched a lot of box-rooms last year, and turned them into studies. And we never thought of it! For two or three days we've been absolutely homeless, and those cheeky fags have had their own rooms! It's up to us to go straight along, and commandeer the whole lot!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good idea!"

The excitement grew, and so did the crowd. The news of this scheme spread like lightning. The Remove had utterly no compunction in falling upon the unfortunate Third-formers, and pitching them out of their quarters, neck and crop. Indeed, it was considered a piece of unadulterated nerve that the fags hadn't offered their studies long ago.

Without any delay, the Remove fellows, led by Handforth, swept into the Third-form passage, and then turned into a rather dark, narrow corridor which contained a number of doors. Strictly speaking, this passage was one that had not been designed for general use. But Willy and his merry men had converted it wonderfully, and had made the cramped box-rooms into very comfortable little dens.

One of the doors opened, and Handforth minor appeared.

"Hallo! What's the excitement?" he asked. "Who told you Remove chaps to come here? Clear off! All this noise bothers me!"

"Out of my way!" said Handforth curtly. "I want your study!"

"Don't mention it!" said Willy. "How would you like it, in a parcel, or will you take it in a jug?"

"Fathead! I'm going to use it!" roared Handforth.

Willy smiled rather sadly.

"It's queer how you will get these hallucinations, old man," he said sorrowfully. "I thought it was a joke at first, but it seems to be serious. So you fondly believe that you've come here to pitch us out? The sinister idea, in fact, is to give us the boot?"

"Another word from you, my lad, and I'll slaughter you!" shouted Handforth.

"Take my advice, and don't argue. I was going to give you ten minutes to clear out of your study, but now I won't."

"Considering I'm not in the study, your generosity is staggering," said Willy. "But this matter appears to need some attention. Hi!" he roared suddenly. "Up, the Third! Help! Rescue, you chaps!"

Willy's voice rang shrilly down the passage, and a moment later doors opened magically, and fags poured out, excited and curious. They waited to ask no questions. Hurling themselves into the fray with a fine abandon, they half pushed the Remove crowd out of the corridor before the enemy knew what had happened.

The fags were fighting for their property, and they went at it hammer and tongs. The Remove were grim, however, and went into the affair with a determination that made victory certain.

And then, in the middle of all the excitement, a sharp, unpleasant voice fell upon the ears of the invaders and invaded.

"Stop!" it shouted angrily. "How dare you? What is the meaning of this unseemly commotion? Cease this disgusting fighting at once!"

The command was instantly obeyed, for the newcomer was Mr. Ponsonby Small, the new Head. He stood there, frowning heavily, and his unpleasant face was slightly flushed. Mr. Small was not a handsome man. His features were ugly, his body was thin, and his legs were knock-kneed. Even if he had possessed strong personal character, his very appearance would have robbed him of all dignity.

"It's all right, sir—only a little joke," panted Handforth.

"Such jokes as this are not to my liking," snapped the Head. "I understand that you boys have come here to deliberately turn the Third-Formers out of their rooms."

"We've got more right to them than they have, sir," shouted Armstrong. "They're only fags. We've been turned out of our studies—"

"It is not my intention to argue," interrupted Mr. Small coldly. "Therefore I will settle this question at once and for all time. Go—all of you! These rooms are required for storage purposes, and henceforth are out of bounds to you all. Enough! Go, before I—"

"But they're our studies, sir," yelled Willy. "We're not going to be turned out. We took a lot of trouble to convert these rooms—"

"Boy, you will report to my study in one hour's time, for a severe caning!" interrupted the Head pleasantly. "Good gracious! Am I to be defied by my youngest pupils? Go at once! These passages are now out of bounds!"

The crowd went. The Third now as miserable as the Remove. There seemed to be no end to Mr. Ponsonby Small's petty interferences. And the hatred of him was spreading over the entire school.

CHAPTER II.

ORDERED OFF!



SO here we are, what?" asked Archie Glen-thorne genially.

He had just stepped ashore on Willard's Island—that quaint little secluded spot in the middle of the River Stowe. Reggie Pitt and Tommy Watson greeted him cheerily as he landed.

"Just been making a few experiments, old son," said Reggie. "This broadcasting set of yours is absolutely the cat's-whiskers!"

"Really!" said Archie. "I'm dashed if I can get the hang of all this wireless business, you know! I had a distinct impression that cat's-whiskers were only used on crystal sets."

"Just an expression," said Reggie. "Come on, let's go inside. But how is it you've drawn upon the stock of energy to make this momentous journey?" he added. "You're always doing something staggering, Archie."

Glenthorne waved a hand towards the sky. "Spring, and all that," he said vaguely. "I mean to say, the good old sunshine absolutely beckoned to me. It burst through the old window, grabbed me by the neck, and yanked me out. There's absolutely nothing like it. Sunshine and fresh air, and all that kind of stuff. I don't mind telling you that the old tissues are positively gambolling with life."

"Good!" grinned Tommy Watson. "It certainly is a ripping afternoon."

They entered the little stone building which crowned the island, and where the big wireless set had been recently fixed up. It was Archie's property, strictly speaking, because he had paid for everything. But

They had, however, got on very intimate terms with Fullwood and Co., which was only to be expected, for they were all of a feather.

The Remove, although simmering with constant indignation, had made no actual move of any kind. Their liberties had been greatly restricted, and without any studies, or even Common-rooms, the fellows had no alternative but to go out of doors. Nobody cared to think of what the situation would be like on a rainy half-holiday.

Since the arrival of Mr. Ponsonby Small, everything had gone wrong. And everybody was giving credit to the rumour that the new Head was merely a tool of Mr. William K. Smith's.



Mr. Ponsonby Small stood there, frowning heavily, his unpleasant face slightly flushed.

"It's all right, sir—only a little joke," panted Handforth.

Archie positively declared that the set belonged to the Remove in general.

He had grown tired of lolling in his study, mainly because Phipps, his valet, had urged him to take the air. And Archie always had faith in Phipps' advice. It was a fine, mild afternoon, with almost a touch of Spring in the air. And as it was a half-holiday, most of the fellows were getting out.

The River House boys were keeping as much to themselves as possible, for the majority of them realised that they were really in the way. Brewster and his chums were on quite friendly terms with the Remove. But the other section of the River House invaders—Wellborne and Co.—were not quite so popular.

This latter individual, whose real name was Wilhelm Karl Schmidt, was a German-American millionaire—a business man, who controlled fabulous wealth, and who, for years past, had had his own way in all things. But nobody knew exactly why he had come to this quiet section of Sussex where St. Frank's was situated. It was quite a mystery.

Archie came into the little stone building on Willard's Island, and found two or three other juniors inside, including myself. We were making some improvements to the broadcasting set, for we intended giving a special programme during the evening. Listeners-in at Bannington Grammar School had arranged to have their headphones and loud-speakers ready at six-thirty.

"Just the man I wanted," I said briskly, as Archie appeared. "Have you rehearsed your speech yet?"

"Absolutely not!" replied Archie. "Why, odds heart? You don't imagine that I'm going to spout into that bally contrivance, do you? Dash it all, it's absolutely impos, dear old cucumber! This is one of those things that a Glenthorne never does."

"Rats!" I grinned. "You've got to speak about the latest Spring fashions—"

"What-ho! Of course!" said Archie brightly. "The good old subject that skidded off the plates of memory for the moment. Fashions, what? Well, I mean to say, when it comes to that, I'm the very

island without having these merchants butting in."

Archie passed outside with dignity, and we followed. But we didn't walk far. For the newcomer had already landed and was approaching us. He was a big, powerful man, attired in breeches, gaiters, a jazzy sweater, and a tweed cap. He possessed a bulging jaw, and his face was generally unhandsome.

"Why it's Dinty Todd!" I said. "He looks more like himself this time."

We had met the gentleman only a few days earlier. But on that occasion he had been attired in a huge fur coat, and had been thoughtless enough to wreck his motor-

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chap for the job. We'll broadcast the old stuff to the lads of the village—"

"Some rough-looking chap coming over in a boat," announced Watson, at the doorway. We turned and looked at him.

"What do you mean—a stranger?" I asked.

"Don't know; I've only seen his back," replied Tommy. "But he's not one of our chaps, anyhow. Better come out and see what he's after. This island's private property—belongs to Glenthorne's pater."

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "Kindly allow me to deal with this foul chunk of fungus. I mean, it's a bit dashed thick when a chappie can't stagger over his own

car in the River Stowe. Mr. Todd was a New York tough—a regular guy, in his own estimation. And we had every reason to know that he was capable of being quite decent.

He came to a halt as we faced him, and grinned.

"How do, folks!" he said cheerily. "Say, I'm real sorry to come buttin' in like this, but youse sure gotta quit. I'm handin' it to youse right now dat dis island is private property."

"Tell us something we don't know," said Pitt. "And seeing that it's private property, oughtn't you to apologise for pushing on to it like this? Not that we care—"

"For the love of Mike! Can youse beat dat?" asked Mr. Todd. "Say, kiddoes, youse got me wrong. Dis island belongs to my boss—get me? An' I'm here to see that youse quit good an' quick. But I guess I'm a good-tempered guy, so I won't say a thing if youse get away by five o'clock."

Archie Glenthorne adjusted his eyeglass. "Look here, laddie, what, I mean, is the scheme?" he asked. "Without wishing to be impolite, allow me to regard you as a dashed intruder! This island—in fact, the whole bally landscape—belongs to my pater. So pray cease this somewhat priceless rot."

"Say, how do youse get dat way?" asked Dinty Todd, losing his smile. "Aw, gee! Quit dat bunk, an' show some speed. I guess youse got some wireless junk around dis outfit, hey? Well, can all dis dope, an' make a move. Youse got until five o'clock to vamoose, with all your trash!"

"We don't want to quarrel with you, Dinty," I said quietly. "But if you persist in this attitude, we shall be compelled to chuck you in the river. This island belongs to Colonel Glenthorne, and it's like your nerve to come here and order us to quit!"

"Gee! Youse sure got noive on your own account!" exclaimed Mr. Todd. "Say, listen! Ever hoid of William K. Smith? Dat guy is my boss—an' what he says goes. You betcha! An' dis property has sure been bought by William K. So now youse got de tip!"

"Rubbish!" said Pitt warmly. "You're not going to tell me that Colonel Glenthorne's sold his land to a German-American beast like William K. Smith. You've got hold of it wrong, Dinty."

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"I've given you de whisper, an' if youse don't quit—well, dere'll sure be blazes to pay. Get me? Say, youse ain't hoid nothin' yet!"

And Mr. Todd gave a few mysterious hints about coming activity. As before, he was quite secretive, but he indicated quite clearly that some big enterprise was afoot. And again he advised us to go quietly, for our own good. We told him to go and eat coke.

And Mr. Dinty Todd got back into his boat and vanished. But there was something about his expression which wasn't exceedingly promising.

CHAPTER III.

CYCLONE SMITH HITS A SNAG!



REGINALD PITT looked rather thoughtful.

"There's something behind this," he declared slowly. "I don't know what it is, but Todd wouldn't come here without

reason. Look here, Archie, are you sure that your pater still owns this island?"

"Absolutely!" replied Archie. "Why, dash it, the pater wouldn't sell his property to a poisonous blighter like Smith!"

"Perhaps not; but Smith's a cunning man," I pointed out. "He's got agents all over the place. And it's quite possible that Colonel Glenthorne's estate manager had a big offer and sold the land off his own bat. He might have told your pater something about it, but—"

"Good gad! Perhaps you're right!" said Archie startled. "The pater's a frightfully absent-minded old bird, and he'll go and sign things like anything. I mean, if his solicitors got busy and did this, the pater wouldn't know a dashed thing. I say! This begins to look somewhat weather-beaten."

"Well, we're not clearing off," I said grimly. "At least, not until we know for certain. After all the trouble we've taken with this wireless set, too!"

We were still discussing the situation when another surprise came. A small motor-launch appeared down the river—quite an unusual sight. For this launch was a beautiful little craft, all white and glittering. The brasswork absolutely scintillated in the sunlight.

It approached rapidly, drew near to the island, and a tall, lithe man leapt ashore. At the first glance I knew him to be Mr. William K. Smith in person. We regarded the millionaire with interest.

He was a typical American. Brisk, alert, with thin features, and a big cigar sticking out of his mouth. His eyes were hard and steely, and there was a set about his jaw and a grim twist to his thin lips that plainly told of his firm, relentless nature.

His activities had occasioned a great deal of comment in the district. Nobody knew why he had bought the River House School, or why he had taken up his quarters there. For, surprisingly enough, the millionaire had entered into possession of Dr. Hogge's late academy as soon as ever the River House boys had vacated it.

Although we had seen nothing, we had heard that a great vanload of luxurious furniture had been delivered, and a small army of workmen were making all sorts of alterations to the building.

And William K. Smith had set up a kind of office. This fact alone was significant. A man of his wealth and power would never do a thing like this unless he had some powerful interest in the district.

The millionaire advanced towards us, calm and cool.

"I hear you boys treated my representative with contempt," he said, removing the cigar from his mouth. "Listen! This property's mine, and you quit within the hour. That's all—get busy!"

His tone was crisp and final.

"Wait a minute, Mr. Smith," I said, striding up to him. "As far as we know this island belongs to Colonel Glenthorne—"

"You're wrong!" interrupted Mr. Smith. "It belongs to me!"

"If that's the case, we'll take our wireless set away as soon as we can," I replied quietly. "But we can't do it in an hour, and we shan't attempt to. It'll be impossible for us to leave until to-morrow—"

"You'll shift your junk within an hour, or it'll be dumped in the river!" broke in Mr. Smith curtly. "I won't stand for any defiance from you young whelps! You'd best get moving while you've got the chance!"

His tone made us absolutely furious. It was quite apparent that Mr. William K. Smith was so accustomed to being obeyed that he issued his orders mechanically. He even appeared surprised when we failed to quail. His bullying, aggressive manner did not scare us in the least.

"Kindly leave this matter in my hands, dear old boy," said Archie stiffly. "Mr. Smith, I'll get on the telephone to my pater and dig out the old facts, if you know what I mean. And if I find that this island has been sold—"

"By Heaven! Do you doubt my word?" snapped Mr. Smith.

"Absolutely!" retorted Archie. "In fact, and to be perfectly frank, absolutely with knobs on! Why, dash it, I regard you as one of those things that ooze forth after a bally shower. And, what's more, laddie, you can dashed well buzz off, or we'll duck you!"

"Good old Archie!" grinned Pitt. "That's the stuff!"

"What-ho!" said Archie, flushed with indignation. "I mean, when the blood of the Glenthornes is properly aroused things bally-well move!"

Mr. Smith didn't alter a hair. He stood there, his jaw set, his eyes glittering cruelly. But although he displayed no outward emotion, he was inwardly staggered at this defiance.

"See here!" he said, his words short and thick. "Enough of this foolishness! Remember, you've got one hour—and not a second longer. Listen! If all your wireless junk isn't shifted off my property at the end of sixty minutes, it goes to the bottom of the river. Get that?"

His tone enraged me.

"And get this, Mr. Smith," I said hotly. "We've had no previous warning—until this afternoon we have continued to believe that this island belonged to Colonel Glenthorne. You can't come here with your blustering ways and give us notice to remove our apparatus within an hour. We absolutely refuse to agree to this unreasonable demand, and if you dare to lay a finger on our property we'll defend it regardless of the consequences."

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "That, dear old lad, is the stuff!"

"Give us a fair amount of time and we'll shift our stuff without trouble," I went on grimly. "But we're not going to be bullied into anything, Mr. Smith. You're dealing with schoolboys now, and not with business men you can ruin if they don't obey your autocratic commands!"

Mr. William K. Smith clenched his fists convulsively.

"Young man, you'll make me lose my temper!" he snarled. "My orders are always obeyed—always! Those who defy me live to regret it. Be sensible, and keep at peace with me."

"We are quite ready to keep at peace if you'll act like a gentleman, and not like a tyrant," I replied. "We're not doubting your word. You say this is your property; very well, we won't dispute it. But there's an expensive wireless apparatus fitted up, and that belongs to us. We can't shift it to-day."

"Then it goes in the river!" snapped Cyclone Smith.

"What's this?" demanded Handforth, pushing his way through, and facing Mr. Smith. "I thought something was up, and so I came across. What's all the trouble about, anyhow?"

Pitt briefly explained.

"Don't make a fuss, Handy," added Reggie. "We want to keep the peace, if possible. Although it seems a bit difficult—"

"Keep the peace!" shouted Handforth. "And this man wants us to shift everything in an hour? Look here, Mr. Smith," added Handforth, turning on the millionaire. "You can't play any of your funny games here! I don't believe you've bought the island, anyhow! Clear off before we duck you!"

William K. Smith went nearly purple.

"You blamed young cub!" he snarled thickly.

Slash!

He had brought a stick with him, and he raised this, and brought it down across Handforth's shoulders with brutal force. The millionaire would not have acted so rashly if he had known the spirit of the St. Frank's fellows. He was still labouring under the delusion that his greatness preserved him from all attack.

He didn't labour for long!

"By George!" gasped Handforth, his face wrinkled with pain. "Why, you—you—Take that!" he roared abruptly.

Crash!

Mr. Smith was in no way prepared for the powerful uppercut which Handforth delivered—a swinging, tremendous blow which caught the millionaire under the chin. The effect was devastating.

Mr. William K. Smith staggered drunkenly backwards, hovered for a second on the sloping bank, and then plunged headlong into the river!

CHAPTER IV.

SOMETHING BIG IN THE WIND!



S PLASH!

Mr. Smith descended beneath the surface amid a smother of foam. And Edward Oswald Handforth, rubbing his knuckles, grinned with sheer enjoyment. He hadn't delivered a blow like that for weeks, and it thrilled him.

"I'll show him!" he said breathlessly.

"It seems to me, laddie, that you've already shown him!" remarked Archie mildly. "I mean to say, Mr. Smith knows precisely what your good old fist is like. Dash it all, you nearly lifted the blighter into Kent!"

There was complete consternation among Mr. William K. Smith's attendants. These consisted of Dinty Todd, and two other men who were on the launch. These faithful fellows—careless of the consequences—dashed into the water to the assistance of this man who paid such high wages. And, very much like a drowned rat, Mr. Smith was hauled on to the launch—gasping, spluttering, but very much alive.

We expected an outburst of Hunnish hate, for we were aware of Mr. Smith's ancestry. But it didn't come. The millionaire uttered one curt command, and the launch left the island, and went rapidly down-stream.

"H'm!" I said slowly. "It looks unhealthy!"

"Eh? Unhealthy?" repeated Handforth. "You ass! I gave Mr. Smith what he asked for, and he's bolted! All you've got to do is to leave these sort of things in my hands. Trust me to do the right thing!"

"As it happens, old son, I believe you did the wrong thing," I replied. "Of course, it was—a sight for sore eyes to see Mr. Smith take a bath. I quite enjoyed it. But was it quite wise?"

"It was the only thing to be done!" snorted Handforth.

"In your opinion, yes," I agreed. "You're such a ram-headed fellow. But don't forget that our delightful Headmaster is under the thumb of this Mr. Smith—at least, we believe he is. We shall know for certain soon. If Ponsonby Small doesn't drop on us like a ton of bricks, I'll be surprised!"

"Wise words, O my father!" said Pitt solemnly. "Methinks 'twill be a sore reckoning! In other words, we'd better get some pads ready, and resin wouldn't be a bad idea. Quite effective, you know."

My fears were very well founded.

For less than half an hour later, Mr. William K. Smith rolled into the Triangle of St. Frank's in his huge motor-car. The millionaire had changed, and was looking rather dangerous. Within two minutes he was speaking to the Headmaster in the latter's study. In about fifty words, Mr. Smith explained exactly what had occurred.

"I am very sorry, Mr. Smith," faltered the Head. "These boys shall be punished for their ruffianly behaviour—"

"You can cut that out!" interrupted Mr. Smith curtly. "Listen, my friend! Those boys have got to get their rubbish off that island before five o'clock! And if you can't make these young imps obey you—you'll have to quit! See that this thing's done, Mr. Small. I'm through!"

Mr. William K. Smith turned on his heel, walked out, and climbed back into his car. He hadn't stayed at St. Frank's more than three minutes, but he left Mr. Ponsonby Small agitated, angry and nervous. There had been something in the millionaire's tone that the Head feared.

Mr. Small wasted no time. He strode out, made his way across the playing-fields, and in a short time he arrived opposite Willard's Island. It so happened that we were just coming ashore, and the Head waited for our boat to draw up. We looked at one another rather concernedly.

"Are you the boys who defied Mr. Smith a short time ago?" demanded the Head, as we faced him.

"Yes, sir," I replied. "Mr. Smith was unreasonable."

"Enough!" snapped Mr. Small. "Obey my orders; and you shall not be punished for your unwarrantable assault. I understand that you have some wireless apparatus on the island?"

"Yes, sir—a big broadcasting set—"

"The time is now five minutes past three," interrupted the Head. "Unless that apparatus is removed from the island and taken completely away from Mr. Smith's property, by five o'clock—you will all be expelled from the school!"

We stared at him dazedly.

"But—but—"

"I mean what I say!" shouted Mr. Small wildly. "I am not going to be defied, you young wretches! You have two hours—make full use of your time! Failure to obey my order means public expulsion! Enough!"

He turned on his heel, and walked away.

"And he means it, too," I said grimly. "Of course, Smith's been at him—given him his orders in fact. It's no good kicking, you chaps—it's no good making a fuss. We've got to get that stuff away—or be sacked."

"Rot!" snorted Handforth. "It's only bluff!"

"Well, we can't afford to put it to the test," said Reggie Pitt. "Personally, I'm not hankering after the sack. My hat! The genial Ponsonby was in a bit of a panic, if you ask me. Otherwise, he would never have threatened us with the sack."

It was no good standing there and arguing. We decided to get to work at once, and dismantle the whole wireless set. It went against the grain to give in like this, but there was no alternative—unless we were prepared to risk expulsion.

A number of other juniors had come along,

attracted by Mr. Small's attitude. Hal Brewster and a few other River House fellows also had put in an appearance. And we got down to work in earnest.

"We'll leave all grumbling and talking until afterwards," I said crisply. "The main thing is to get the job done, and to make ourselves safe. There's a lot more in this than we know of."

Rather to our relief, Handforth and Co. went off on their own. Handforth's absence was more welcome than his company when work of this kind was afoot. He was rather liable to get into the way.

Handy had drawn his two chums aside, and he proceeded to talk to them in rather a mysterious manner.

"We're going over to Caistowe," he said confidentially. "We're going to get our bikes out, and investigate these rumours."

"Which rumours?"

"Haven't you heard?"

"Heard all sorts of things," said Church. "In fact, we don't know where we are nowadays. What with having no studies, and Mr. Smith causing all this commotion, and the River House chaps—"

"We'll leave that alone for the present," interrupted Handforth. "I've heard that some rummy things are going on in Caistowe—strange men there, and all sorts of other extraordinary stories. So we're going over, to see for ourselves. So don't you argue."

Church and McClure had no intention of doing so. As a matter of fact, they were quite pleased at the prospect. It was not nearly so bad as they had anticipated. Handforth was always so erratic.

The three juniors quite enjoyed the ride into the small seaside town, for the roads were in excellent condition, and the bright sunshine, after a period of dull weather, was most cheering.

Both Church and McClure were quite convinced, privately, that they were going to Caistowe on a fool's errand. But for once Handforth was justified. There were indeed some strange things to be seen in the seaside town.

Handforth and Co. had a good view of Caistowe and the water-front from the top of the long hill, before actually descending. And they paused, for a few minutes, to look—struck by the change which had come over the place.

In the summertime Caistowe was fairly well patronised as a holiday resort, although it was never crowded. For, after all, Caistowe was a small port, with an excellent harbour and a pier. It did not cater for the holiday-maker, and was considered to be backward in that respect.

But at this time of the year—late in February—the little town was practically dead. An occasional ship would come into the port, but there was really nothing doing that mattered. And at the present moment, Caistowe was in a pretty bad way, according to all the stories. There were any

amount of unemployed, and a good deal of hardship prevailed.

As Handforth and Co. could see, however, Caistowe was changed.

Last week dead—this week fairly teeming with activity. It was quite a startling revelation to the juniors. Even at this distance they could see that a new temporary pier had been built, and there was a big cargo steamer in the harbour, with men swarming the quay-side, and with cranes and winches working at full power. The big steamer was flying the American flag.

And bales and boxes and enormous cases were being unloaded in thousands. The whole water-front had an appearance of life that had hitherto been completely absent.

"What did I tell you?" said Handforth.

"By Jingo, it looks as though there's something pretty big in the wind," admitted Church. "Let's go down, and have a closer look."

By the time they reached the unimportant docks, they found themselves in the thick of the activity. But they were rather surprised to see the glum, morose expressions on many of the men's faces—men who were lounging about, idle and rather listless.

In a great space near the disused promenade an enormous number of brand new motor lorries were parked. Even these were American, as the juniors could easily see. The docks were becoming stacked with boxes and bales.

"What's all the excitement?" asked Handforth, addressing one of the loungers.

The man frowned, and gave a grunt.

"Better ask this 'ere Mr. William K. Smith!" he replied savagely. "Folks say as he's at the bottom of it. An American millionaire, mark ye! Strikes me as everything's American! Ship, cargo, motor-lorries, men, an' everything! The town ain't any too pleased, young gents."

"Why not?" asked Church. "Don't the men want employment?"

The man, who appeared to be a strong, willing sort of fellow, removed a short pipe from his mouth, and spat contemptuously.

"Ay, there's many in this town as wants work," he agreed. "Not as they're like to get it from this blamed German fellow! Not as I'm agin the Germans—the war's over. In fact, I'd rather 'ave a German than this bloke what comes 'ere callin' himself an American! An insult to the good, friendly Americans—that's what I says! They wouldn't hold with this!"

"Why? What's Mr. Smith been doing?" asked Handforth eagerly.

"'Tain't what he's been doin'—it's what he ain't been doin'," replied the man, replacing his pipe. "He ain't offered work to any of us chaps, what would be only too ready to find a job. This 'ere Smith 'as brought his own crowd—gangs of dirty niggers an' Mexicans, an' such like, collected up from the Liverpool and Cardiff docks, so they say. It's all the police can do to keep the scum in order! An' they're

workin' on this job, an' gettin' good pay, while the rest of us are nigh starvin'!"

"H'm! It doesn't seem right," agreed Handforth. "Just what I expected of Smith—he's a beast. We chucked him in the River Stowe this morning," he added casually, much to the man's interest. "But what's all this commotion about? All this stuff being unloaded?" asked Handforth.

"No good asking me," replied the man. "Nobody knows. But there's more behind it than what we guess," he added darkly. "Why, this Mr. Smith has bought half the town! It's cost him hundreds of thousands to get all this property—stretching from here to Bellton. 'Eaven knows what 'is game is."

And Handforth and Co. could get no further satisfaction. They asked some of the other loungers, but to no purpose. Nobody knew what Mr. Smith's plans were, but they were all convinced that something tremendously big was afoot.

And so at last the juniors turned back to St. Frank's, much puzzled, and very thoughtful. They had reached Bellton Lane, and were pedalling up towards the school, when they observed two boys walking along just ahead. Handforth started. He could see at a glance that they were strangers. But, according to their back view, they were well dressed, and well set-up youngsters.

"My hat!" said Handforth softly. "Those two new kids!"

"Which new kids?" asked McClure. "What are you talking about?"

"Brewster was saying this morning that—"

"Oh, River House chaps, you mean?"

"Of course," said Handforth. "Brewster says they ought to have come a week ago, before any of this moving to St. Frank's was even thought of. And, of course, Dr. Hogge couldn't keep them away indefinitely, so they're coming to St. Frank's, to join the rest of the gang."

Handforth was always as keen as mustard to interrogate newcomers. He regarded it as his privilege to put them through their paces, as he called it. The fact that these two newcomers were not for St. Frank's at all, but for the River House School, made no difference.

As Handforth and Co. cycled up, the two boys stood aside. But the chums of Study jumped off their machines, and regarded the strangers with frank and open curiosity. Their looks were fully reciprocated.

The two new fellows for the River House School were rather interesting. They were both dressed in quiet lounge suits, were well built, and there was just a faint similarity between them. One was slightly taller than the other, and his face was cheerful, freckled, and appeared to wear a continuous smile—which was most infectious.

The other boy was precisely the opposite, for his face was gloomy, and he looked as though he had the cares of the world on his



Mr. William K. Smith staggered drunkenly backwards, hovered for a second on the sloping bank, and then plunged headlong into the river.

shoulders. And yet, in spite of this, the expression seemed to be pleasant.

"I suppose you're the two new kids for the River House gang?" asked Handforth bluntly. "I'm Handforth—St. Frank's Remove. Your crowd's staying with us for the time being."

"Yes, we're for the River House," said the taller of the pair. "Glad to meet you. My name's Onions—Johnny Onions."

Handforth and Co. stared. "Look here, my lad, if you try to be funny, you'll get biffed," said Handforth darkly. "Onions! Might as well call yourself Carrots or Turnips! I want to know your real name."

The smiling one smiled even more. "Fact, I assure you," he said. "Honest Injun. Onions is our name. Haven't you ever heard of Professor Onions, the Circus King?"

"By George!" said Handforth blankly. "Then you ain't spoofing? Now I come to think of it, I saw something in the paper about Professor Onions. Retired, hasn't he, with pots of tin? Suddenly struck rich with something, or—or something?"

"That's it," said Johnny Onions, nodding. "That's why we're coming to a swell school."

"Huh! Call the River House swell?" asked Handforth scoffingly. "And what about this chap?" he asked, turning to the melancholy one. "What's the matter with you—got a pain? What's your name, my lad?"

"Ertie Bunions," said the other.

"Eh?"

"Pardon! I should say, Bertie Onions," went on the gloomy junior. "I'm Johnny's brother, you know."

"You might as well know everything, while we're about it," said Johnny obligingly. "I'm Onions major, and he's Onions minor. But I expect we shall both go in the same form. Don't take any notice of his expression—he's one of the best, really. He's got queer little ways, and talks rummy sometimes, but that's because he was going to be trained for a clown."

"Clown!" grinned Church. "He doesn't look it!"

"Our dad always declared that a melancholy face is funnier than a grinning one," said Onions major. "That's why I was trained as an acrobat—not that we shall ever appear in the ring now. Our dad's suddenly got big ideas."

"Acrobat?" repeated Handforth sceptically. "Rats! I'll bet you couldn't turn a giddy somersault. You can't spoof me, my son—why, what the—Great Scott!"

Handforth broke off, gasping, for Onions major had suddenly performed a most extraordinary feat. Without any preliminary preparations, he leapt upwards as lightly as a squirrel, turned a beautiful somersault overhead, and landed with hardly a jar.

"Watch this!" he said, his smile never fading.

He grabbed one of the bicycles, leapt into the saddle, and gaily rode off on one wheel. Then he proceeded to go into a spin, turning round like a top. Handforth and Co. watched, startled.

Johnny Onions was determined to prove, at the very outset, that he was no boaster! He put the bicycle aside, leapt lightly to the grassy bank, and concluded by turning a really marvellous treble somersault into the road—his movements as quick as lightning. The fellow seemed to be made of rubber, and when he had finished he was as cool and smiling as ever.

"Bravo!" said Church enthusiastically.

"Well I'm jiggered!" exclaimed Handforth.

"Oh, that's nothing," said Onions minor gloomily. "You ought to see Johnny do the tight-rope act! But I expect he'll soon forget all his tricks now that he's a honeyed mass?"

Onions minor coughed.

"Pardon!" he said. "I meant moneyed ass, of course. Just a little habit of mine—can't get out of it. I had a half-warmed fish to keep it on, but dad said it would be a blushing crow to him if I did."

Handforth and Co. stared rather dazedly.

"He's mad!" said Handforth flatly. "I believe he's escaped from an asylum! How the dickens can he have a half-warmed fish?"

"Pardon," said Onions minor. "My mistake. I should have said I had a half-formed wish. Just a slip."

"You said something about a blushing crow," exclaimed Church. "How can a crow blush?"

"Of course, I meant a crushing blow," explained Bertie sorrowfully. "My dad would have had a crushing blow, I mean. Just a slip."

Onions major was grinning widely.

"You'll get used to him in time," he said. "I know his little ways, and so I take no notice. Dad thought it would be a good idea if Bertie started twisting his words about—good training for a clown, you see. But the young ass has got into such a habit that he can't help himself now."

Bertie Onions nodded.

"It's very embarrassing sometimes," he said sadly. "You see, it isn't always that the words run kite—I should say, come right. Pardon! I even slade a mip then—or, to be exact, I made a slip. It's really shocking, you know. Sometimes I wish I could break the habit. But my dumb and mad don't mind; so I suppose it's all right. They say I'm a baking toy, on the whole."

"Baking toy!" said Handforth faintly.

"Your dumb and mad!" ejaculated McClure.

Onions minor shook his head gloomily.

"Pardon!" he said again. "I simply can't help these mistakes. I mean my mum and dad, you know. They say I'm a baking toy—really! I mean, a taking boy!"

Handforth snorted.

"You mean you're a filly sathead!" he said sourly. "My—my hat! I—I believe I blade a moomer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Church and McClure.

"This silly ass has mixed me all up!" roared Handforth, red as a beetroot. "The ithering blidiot! I—I mean, the blithering idiot! I'm so mixed up that I don't know what the sickens I'm daying! With this idiot at St. Frank's we shall always be nied into tots."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Church and McClure nearly expired.

"I—I suppose you mean tied into knots?" asked Onions minor, who hadn't even smiled. "That's just how I go. Awkward, isn't it? You'll have to be careful, or you'll get into a shocking habit. I tried to convince my dad, but he talks a lot, you know. Taters are always porky."

"Who's talking about potatoes?" growled Handforth. "And sometimes potatoes are muttoney—"

"No, no! Pardon!" put in Bertie Onions. "I wasn't really talking about potatoes. My dad, you know. I said that paters are always talky. I do hope I shall be able to get out of this spay of weaking—I mean this way of speaking."

Handforth glared.

"If you don't I'll jolly well niff you on the bosc!" he said threateningly. "Pate grip! I—I mean, Great pip! I say, I'll biff you on the nose if you keep up this rot! Why, it's a thit too bick!" he added, hot and flustered with confusion.

"You mean a bit too thick?" asked Onions minor. "Of course, I agree——"

"Let's—let's get away from here!" said Handforth faintly, grabbing his bicycle and staring glassily in front of him. "This chap's like a nightmare! I shall boss in ted over this to-night—— I—I mean, toss in bed! Oh, help! I'm wetting gurse!"

Handforth certainly did seem to be getting worse, and he crawled on to his bicycle, and wobbled away up the lane without even glancing at the extraordinary Onion brothers. Church and McClure, nearly exhausted with laughter, followed.

And Onions minor turned to Onions major, and shook his head.

"Their icycles seem to be well-boiled, don't they?" he asked gloomily.

Even Johnny Onions was slightly staggered.

"What?" he gasped. "Oh! I see! You mean their bicycles seem to be well-oiled. Yes, rather! But they seem to be decent chaps, and I think we shall like school life."

"Yes, said Bertie. "They seem to be very light brads!"

In the meantime, the light brads—or, to be more exact, the bright lads—were busily spreading the news about these strange arrivals.

CHAPTER V.

SOMETHING LIKE A SHOCK!



LESSONS the next morning were not as studious as usual.

The Onions brothers, although River House fellows, had made themselves enormously popular, among the Removites. Johnny had startled the natives by many acrobatic feats the previous evening, and Bertie had completely convulsed the junior school by his quaint, but unconscious twisting of words. Quite a number of the juniors found themselves doing it by accident.

And there was something else this morning, too.

Towards the end of the second lesson a curious rumbling sound came from outside. At first it seemed to be just the sound of a heavily laden motor-lorry passing along the road. Nobody took much notice, but when this sound was repeated, until it became almost continuous, the fellows began to look at one another.

And now and again the very windows shook with vibration. And in addition to the rumbling, a kind of throbbing roar

filled the air. And, occasionally, rough voices could be heard.

"What's happening out there?" whispered Reggie Pitt curiously.

"Sounds like a giddy army going by," replied Jack Grey. "Hallo! Handy's getting up to have a look!"

Handforth, in fact, was taking advantage of the fact that Mr. Crowell's rear was towards the Form. Handy gingerly stood on his feet, and was on tip toe when Mr. Crowell turned round. The Form, however, was looking at Handforth, anxious to hear the result of this investigation. From the ordinary sitting position it was impossible to look out of the windows.

"Splendid, Handforth — splendid!" said Mr. Crowell sarcastically. "I had no idea you were so expert at standing on tip-toe."

Handforth gulped, looked round, and collapsed. He sat down violently on the head of Church, the pair rolled on the floor, amid papers, lesson-books, pens and ink-pots.

The Remove looked on, considerably bucked.

"What was it—an earthquake?" moaned Church, from somewhere beneath. "I knew that rumbling meant something——"

"Dry up, ass!" said Handforth. "I only slipped!"

Mr. Crowell waited patiently.

"When you have quite finished your entertainment, Handforth, perhaps you will be good enough to explain this little matter," he said, with charming politeness. "I have no wish to be curious, but is it essential for you to create this commotion in order to conduct your studies?"

Handforth sat up, with ink running down his face.

"Sorry, sir!" he gasped. "Quite an accident, sir! I—I was just looking out of the window, you know."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Crowell. "You surprise me! You will write me five hundred lines, Handforth, for disturbing the work of the class in this outrageous manner. Go and wash yourself at once!"

"Yes, sir!" said Handforth eagerly.

He made a dash for the door, his relief so absolutely obvious that Mr. Crowell called him back.

"On second thoughts, Handforth, there is no necessity for you to wash," he said coldly. "Wipe your face with a duster, and return to your seat."

"But—but my ace is all finky, sir!" said Handforth.

Mr. Crowell started.

"What did you say, Handforth? he asked sharply.

"My face is all iuky, sir!" gasped Handforth. "Sorry, sir! It's that Onions chap, you know—I can't help getting mixed up sometimes."

"Upon my word! What is all this nonsense?" asked Mr. Crowell, angrily. "How dare you talk about vegetables——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove.

"He's not a vegetable, sir—he's one of those River House chaps," said Handforth gruffly. "A chap with a name like Onions ought to absolutely weep at it! And just because I was trying to look out of the window, I get five hundred lines!"

Handforth went back into his seat, grumbling, and order was restored.

"I am well aware, Handforth, that you were curious concerning the remarkable rumbling sounds which are still audible," said Mr. Crowell. "I may say that I am curious, also. But there is work to be done—and our curiosity must be curbed. Let me have no more of this disturbance."

But lessons did not proceed smoothly. The remarkable sounds from outside, like that of heavy continuous traffic, swelled even louder. The juniors couldn't possibly understand, because traffic along this quiet lane was unprecedented. An occasional dog-cart, perhaps, a butcher's trap, or the doctor's car—but heavy traffic, never.

Long before the bell rang for dismissal, the juniors were simply bubbling over with impatience. They chafed so much that Mr. Crowell felt inclined to detain the whole Form. Perhaps he would have done, only his own curiosity was considerable.

The Remove was not the only Form that wanted information. The Fifth and the Sixth were just as anxious to find out the explanation of the mystery. The River House fellows, at lessons in the Lecture-hall and the Common-room—their temporary class rooms—were all on the stretch. Dr. Hogge was taking the seniors, and Mr. Wragge the juniors.

And it did not serve to help matters for the Remove when they heard a couple of prefects walking by in the Triangle, talking excitedly, and in amazed voices.

"Extraordinary—whole place swarming—unheard of—"

Just a few words came floating through the window, and the Remove fellows looked at one another wonderingly. It seemed hours before the final fifteen minutes dragged by. And work was nothing more nor less than a farce. As soon as the time for dismissal came, and Mr. Crowell gave the word, the rush for the door was so terrific that Mr. Crowell was nearly swept away like a straw down a drain-pipe.

At last the juniors crowded out excitedly into the Triangle, expecting to see the Territorials going by, or some such unusual sight. Instead, the Triangle was empty and peaceful, the lane looked deserted, and there was nothing unusual within sight.

"Well I'm blessed!" ejaculated Armstrong. "I—I thought—"

"Quick, you chaps!" yelled Hal Brewster, rushing up. "Never saw such a sight in my life! The whole country is swarming with workmen and lorries and steam-wagons! They're cutting across from the lane, straight into the meadows."

I was feeling a little excited myself by this time. And I followed the crowd across the Triangle, into the playing fields. From here it was possible to gain a view of the gently sloping meadows down to the River Stowe, and along to the grounds of the River House School, the red roof of which was just visible amid the trees.

And we stood there and stared blankly.

For the sight was, indeed, stupendous.

Those meadows, which had been so peaceful and empty when last we had looked upon them, were now literally humming and throbbing with active energetic life. Without any exaggeration, there were at least a thousand men at work.

A thousand! Double and treble the population of Bellton itself! A continuous succession of motor-lorries were lumbering and plugging over the uneven ground. I saw at a glance that they were entering the meadows from the gateway in Bellton Lane. That's why we had seen nothing from the Triangle.

Those lorries that were coming were heavily laden. And as fast as they arrived they were seized upon, and unloaded with the regularity of clockwork, men swarming round like ants, and performing miracles of rapid work.

And so these lorries went empty in the other direction, joining the road lower down. And the stream was never ending.

"What—what can it mean?" gasped Tommy Watson.

"Dear Nipper, it's amazing—it is, really!" said Sir Montie. "Who are these men—and what are they doin' here?"

"You'd better ask Mr. William K. Smith" I replied grimly. "He's bought all this land, as we know. The bubble's burst, old son. The secret's out, and Mr. Smith has exploded his bombshell. He's going to start building."

"Building!" said Pitt, with a whistle.

"What else?"

All the lorries were filled with materials for building—not bricks and stone and so forth, but woodwork. As far as I could see, the material was being dumped for the construction of hundreds of wooden shacks. They were all in sections, and were handled with remarkable skill.

These men, rough-looking customers though they were, knew their work to the last degree. Otherwise the absolute smoothness of unloading and construction could never have proceeded. We were gazing upon a wonderful example of highly organised labour—in fact, high-speed American methods.

At different points men were stationed,

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2s

giving orders. One of these was Dinty Todd, and he was doing his work calmly and methodically. He laboured only with his voice and his brain, directing his own section of the crowd with skill and complete efficiency. The other "gang bosses" were just as busy.

The smoothness of the whole enormous undertaking, in fact, was decidedly startling to the surprised juniors. This was about the last thing in the world they had expected to see.

I was no less astounded. I had known that Mr. "Cyclone" Smith had bought a great deal of land for some reason, but it had never entered into my head that he was planning to do any building.

The noise from that great gathering came over the playing-fields to us like the throbbing sounds of a gigantic bee-hive. There was one continuous hum of voices, the rattle and clatter of unloading lorries, and the racing of powerful engines.

And it was really impossible to look upon the scene without feeling thrilled through and through. There was something invigorating about it. The usual quietness of St. Frank's was somewhat monotonous. But this new activity was exactly the opposite.

And what could it mean?

CHAPTER VI.

THE MUSHROOM CITY!



ULYSSES SPENCER ADAMS turned a flushed, eager face towards me.

"Say, this is sure the dope!" he exclaimed, with enthusiasm. "Geewinnikers!"

"This looks the real goods, I'll tell the world! Mr. Smith is sure handing it straight out to you fellows. Say, just fix your lamps on that scene of activity. Guess it's sure snappy!"

"You said it!" grinned Reggie Pitt. "Ain't it cute?"

U.S.A. frowned.

"Aw, gee! That's the bunk!" he replied. "I guess you're thinking that's a wise crack! Forget it! You British guys don't know a darned bit about the American language! Say, Mr. Smith's spilling the beans all right now. My land! There's sure gonna be some excitement some place. Oh, boy!"

"It seems to me that we're getting choked up with Americans!" said Handforth tartly. "I thought it was about enough to have Adams in the school—without a blessed city coming along!"

"I'm sure some little booster!" said Ulysses calmly. "Say, when I see this sort of stuff I sure go dopey. Attaboy! What do you know about this?"

"Nothing!" said Handforth. "But we know that you're wasting a lot of hot air. By George! If you think this is good, I don't! They're absolutely ruining the scenery!"

"Aw, can that dope!" growled the American boy. "Say, the best scenery is a whole bunch of sky-scrapers and factories! Forget that trees and meadows stuff! I'm telling you that this is nifty."

"In other words, you're praising Mr. Smith—just because he's from Chicago!" snorted Handforth. "The man's a beast. He's turned us off Willard's Island, he's palmed the River House chaps on us, he's given us Ponsonby Small instead of Dr. Stafford, and you praise him up! Why, it's treason! I'm jolly well going to slaughter you!"

Biff!

Handforth lunged out, and Ulysses sat down violently.

"Gee whizz!" he gasped. "Suffering cats! Say, quit that stuff! Nix, kiddo—nix! I guess I was carried away."

"You will be in about two minutes!" said Handforth firmly. "That is, after I've done with you!"

"Gee! You've sure got me wrong!" said U. S. A., getting to his feet. "I was thinking I was over in home State just for the minute! But I'm telling you that this Smith guy is a big stiff! Get me? He's sure a cheap skate, and you can take it from me that I don't give a bean for him!"

It was only natural, perhaps, that Adams should wax enthusiastic over this scene, for it was typically American—and absolutely opposed to all English methods. Even in America it would have been a bit startling—for they don't work with such a rush over there, except on rare occasions.

Mr. Smith's claim that he had bought Willard's Island had since been confirmed by Archie—much to the latter's indignation. But it turned out that Colonel Glenthorne had sold the property without knowing the nature of the transaction. And now that it was too late, the worthy colonel was furious.

He had had an excellent offer for the land, a most exceptional price being suggested, and, believing that it was to be used for agricultural purposes, Colonel Glenthorne had instructed his estate agents to close the deal. It was not until the whole transaction was signed and sealed that Archie's pater discovered that the new owner was Mr. William K. Smith.

We had succeeded in getting our wireless set away successfully. And the whole Remove was dismayed to find that not only was Willard's Island out of bounds, but all the meadows, and every bit of land beyond the playing-fields. The school was, indeed, forbidden to use the river—a stunning blow. Mr. Ponsonby Small did not realise the storm that he was initiating. Already it was beginning to brew.

At first we failed to understand why the meadows were so strictly out of bounds. But now, of course, we knew. Without any previous warning, without any hint of his intentions, Mr. Smith had swept down like a whirlwind, loosing all his hordes upon the countryside in this dramatic manner. It was

easy to understand why he was called Cyclone.

For quite a long time we stood watching that active scene, fascinated. There was something about it that held us enthralled. And by this time over half the school had come on to the playing-fields, standing there, and gazing in bewilderment and amazement that was not far from consternation.

"This is too much of a good thing!" I declared grimly. "Goodness knows what Mr. Smith's scheme is, but this scene is enough to tell us that it's big. And it's going to ruin St. Frank's, my sons. The old school will never be the same if Smith erects an array of ugly factories here."

"Factories?" gasped Handforth.

"What else would he build?" I said. "You don't think he's making all these preparations for fun, I suppose? It seems to me that it's up to us to do something. Left to himself, this lordly millionaire will change the whole landscape, and turn a beauty spot into a scar on the country."

"But—but what can we do?" asked Tommy Watson.

"That's just it," I replied. "On the face of it, it seems a bit of a nerve to suggest that we can do anything. But it doesn't seem right to me that this millionaire—an avowed enemy of England—should have the power of a feudal baron. Just because of his wealth, he thinks he can do exactly as he pleases."

"And he's doing it," said Pitt pointedly.

"Yes, and the whole countryside is unable to interfere," I said. "Smith's using his own men, and his own property, so he's on the right side of the law. There's nothing to stop him. But perhaps the Remove will be able to do something that the biggest financial powers in England can't do."

It sounded pretty big, but every fellow in the Remove was with me. And if we could do anything at all to put a spoke in Mr. Smith's wheel, we would do it. But just at the moment we did not know the nature of his plans.

A number of juniors, including Handforth, passed over into the forbidden territory. Their curiosity got the better of them, and they wanted to see this remarkable spectacle at close quarters. I went along, too, in order to bring the fellows back.

After the affair of yesterday, when Mr. Small had threatened us with expulsion, it wasn't worth while taking any unnecessary risks. And although we had a complete contempt for Mr. Ponsonby Small, it was no good blinking the fact that he was Headmaster, and in a position to satisfy every petty spite that assailed him. Indeed, because of his weak character, and his general unfitness to rule St. Frank's, he was all the more likely to expel a few of us in a moment of anger.

Once on Mr. William K. Smith's property, we were in the whirl of the uproar. We looked on with new interest. This great

army of workmen was an extraordinary one to see in these peaceful English meadows.

For they were not British workmen at all, but a collection of nondescript characters, chiefly remarkable for their brawn and strength. There were negroes, Mexicans, Swedes, Poles, and men of many other nationalities. And yet, somehow, in spite of their mixed origin, they all seemed to bear the indefinable stamp of the American. Perhaps it was their clothing—perhaps their habits. They spoke in a dozen different languages while they worked.

Never for a moment did the work cease. And in the midst of all this hustle and bustle, Dinty Todd found time to come over to us, and look us up and down rather unfavourably. The New York tough had been rather attracted towards us at first, but he was changing, somehow.

"Say, you kids, what's de big idea?" he asked harshly. "Don't youse know dis property is private? Quit! An' if youse ain't slick, you'll sure find a whole packet of trouble, I'll tell de woild! Quit, sonnies—show some speed! An', say, make it snappy!"

"We're only looking on," said Church.

"Can't help dat!" said Mr. Todd. "If de boss gets around, dere'll sure be blazin' thunder! Gosh darn it! Ain't youse got no more sense dan to come buttin' in dis outfit?"

"What's the scheme, Dinty?" I asked. "What's happening here?"

"Youse have sure asked a mouthful!" replied Mr. Todd. "Let me introduce you to Cyclone City! Dis blamed township will be settled an' sure runnin' full swing by to-morrow. Yep, sirree! I guess we do things slick around dis lay-out! Gee! De boss!" he added hurriedly.

Mr. William K. Smith was walking among his men, looking on at the great activity with obvious approval. Dinty Todd left us, and we saw him having a few words with the millionaire. And soon afterwards Mr. Smith walked briskly over to us, and removed his cigar from his mouth. The expression on his face was forbidding.

"You kids have got some nerve!" he said curtly. "Get back to your own corrals, and stay there! I guess I won't tell you twice! Smartly now, sonnies—these meadows are out of your bounds. Get that—and quit!"

"All right, Mr. Smith, we're going," I said quietly. "But can I ask you one question?"

"Sure!" said the millionaire. "Shoot!"

"What's all this preparation for?" I asked. "And why are you employing all these foreigners, instead of British workmen?"

"Not so fast, young man," said Mr. Smith. "I guess you said one question. But I'm a reasonable man. I'm making these preparations because this corner of your little island is going to be the liveliest spot on the map. And I'm employing American

labour because British labour is too darned slow!"

The Remove fellows glared.

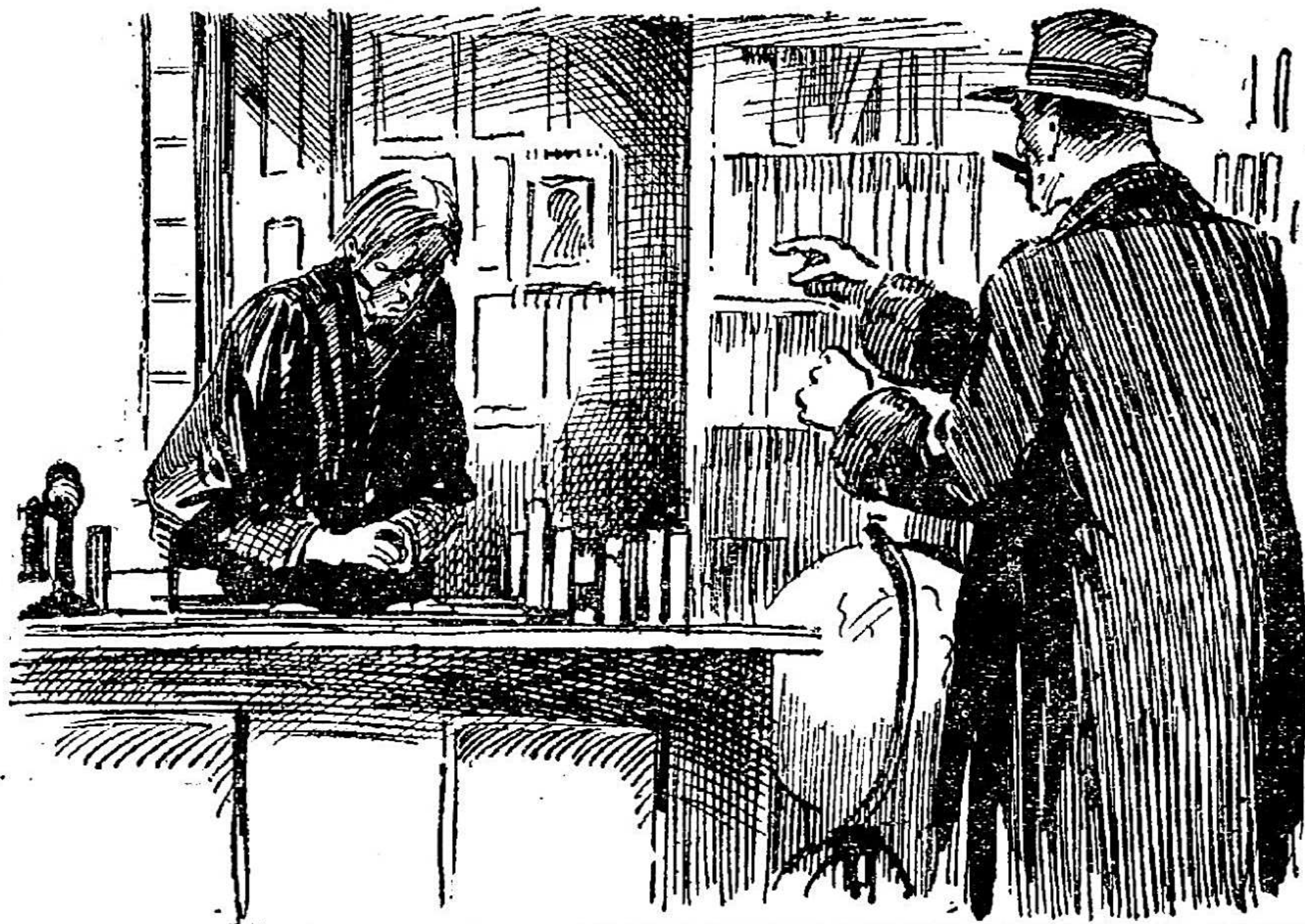
"And do you call this crowd American?" demanded Handforth.

"You bet they're American," said Mr. Smith. "Surest thing you know, sonny. Free American citizens. I collected this bunch around the docks, and I guess they're a smart crowd. Now you'll quit!"

I was rather surprised that Mr. Smith had deigned to say so much. But it evidently pleased him to see the effect of his sneering words—his insults against the British workman. The millionaire had apparently

It seemed incredible that this German-American autocrat could openly come here with his hordes of foreign labour—men recruited in Cardiff, Liverpool, and other British ports. It was a deliberate and studied affront to the British labourers—for there were thousands of unemployed men—honest, hard-working fellows—who would have given much to get work of this kind.

Mr. Smith preferred to employ his "American" host. They were mostly sea-faring men—the majority of whom had deserted from ships in order to take on this work. And the millionaire apparently had no trouble with the authorities because he had



"Listen, my friend!" interrupted Mr. Smith curtly. "Those boys have got to get their rubbish off that island before five o'clock! And if you can't make these young imps obey you—you'll have to quit!"

forgotten the drastic way in which he had been treated the previous afternoon. He made no reference to it, and seemed to bear no animosity. But I knew well enough that he inwardly hated us.

Not wishing to bring trouble on ourselves, we departed at once—Handforth rather reluctantly. I believed he wanted to have another go at Mr. Smith, and probably would have risked it if we hadn't dragged him away.

The facts were soon known all over the school. And fellows were indignantly asking if something couldn't be done. This affair was overwhelming, stupendous. Even now the stunning effect had not worn off.

acted in a high-handed fashion, and taken the bull by the horns. It would probably be weeks before the slow-moving machinery of inquiry and investigation led to official action. And during these weeks these ruffianly crowds would be working at full pitch. It might even be necessary to bring the matter up in Parliament before anything was done.

And the whole of St. Frank's discussed the situation feverishly. And even if the seniors talked vaguely about writing to their fathers, and bringing the matter to the notice of the Governors, the Remove was more practical.

For the Remove was already thinking of

taking action on their own account! While officialdom wasted time, the juniors would get busy!

CHAPTER VII.

MR. PONSONBY SMALL THINKS NOT!



CUTHBERT CHAMBERS waved his arms wildly. "Are you fellows going to stand this?" he roared. "I ask you, are we going to stand by and see this going on? I call

upon the Fifth to rise—to rise, and do something!"

A few members of the Fifth listened with interest, and a crowd of Removites gathered round, and clapped enthusiastically. They thought it was another of Chambers' little jokes. It was Cuthbert's standing grievance that he was never taken seriously.

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it, Cuthy!"

"That's the way—lay down the giddy law!"

"If some of you fellows will support me, I'll lead a deputation to the Head!" shouted Chambers stoutly. "Do you hear that? A deputation to the Head! We'll demand that the School Governors shall be acquainted with the facts, so that this blight can be stopped!"

"Hear, hear!"

A good many of the listeners were quite serious, and supported Chambers noisily. Handforth was one of these enthusiasts. But, standing on the outskirts of the crowd with Reggie Pitt, I shook my head.

"This is no good," I said. "A sheer waste of time. Does Chambers think the Governors don't know already? And does he think they can do anything, in any case?"

"Seems like it," said Reggie. "But, then, Chambers has got an attic to let. In other words, his roof is empty."

"And that ass, Handforth, is supporting him," I grumbled. "I never knew such an impulsive chap. He never stops to consider. Ponsonby Small is the last man in the world to go to—because he's Smith's tool. And these excited idiots don't realise it. It wouldn't be any good appealing to the police, even. The police know. They'll soon have a dozen of officers down here, to control the traffic and keep order. And weeks will go by while the officials of the Board of Trade, or some other Department, come and investigate. After that they'll probably have to pass a Bill in the House of Commons before Mr. Smith can be squashed. Are we going to allow it?"

"Not likely!" said Reggie, shaking his head. "If the Remove can't do anything in the meantime, then the Remove isn't worth its salt. But what's the idea, old son?" he added eagerly. "Got a scheme?"

"Well, no," I replied. "This is about the tallest order we ever had, and it can't be fulfilled quickly. It needs a lot of

thought and plenty of careful preparation. But the Remove will act, never fear, sooner or later."

In the meantime, Chambers had worked his audience up to a fine pitch of excitement. And half a dozen fellows, including Handforth, supported Chambers forming a deputation.

And without any unnecessary waste of time, and without pausing to think seriously on the subject, the deputation marched to the Head's house and knocked loudly and authoritatively upon the door. Chambers gave the bell a long ring, as though to emphasise the importance of the occasion.

Strictly speaking, the whole business was a piece of shocking nerve.

The Head of a big school like St. Frank's is not the kind of gentleman to treat with levity. He lives in a world apart, and he is generally regarded by the school as an exalted being.

Mr. Ponsonby Small, however, had not succeeded in maintaining this attitude of awe. He was a very ordinary person, and he had instilled into the fellows little or no feeling of respect.

If Chambers and Handforth and the others had calmed down for even a single minute they would have saved themselves the trouble of this visit. But it was giving them some little satisfaction, so it was not entirely futile. Besides, they were letting off steam.

The door opened and Tubbs, the pageboy, appeared.

"Where's the Head?" demanded Chambers briskly.

"Sorry, Master Chambers, but the 'Ead's sent me to tell you to go away," said Tubbs nervously. "The 'Ead's in 'is study, an' I think 'e must have seen you comin'. 'If them boys wants to see me,' he said, 'tell 'em as I'm too busy, and make 'em clear off,' he says, or words to that effect."

Handforth glared.

"The nerve!" he said wrathfully. "Are you going to take any notice of this, Chambers? Because if so, I'll take charge—"

"You'll stay where you are, you cheeky Remove bounder!" interrupted Chambers gruffly. "I'm going in to see the Head, whether he wants it or not. You've got too much to say!"

Handforth turned red.

"Why, you Fifth-Form fathead!" he roared. "If it wasn't for me, this deputation would never have happened! Take that!"

Handforth would have commenced a fearful battle on the spot, but the other fellows seized him and dragged him back before he could attack the startled Cuthbert. And order was restored after a few minutes.

Chambers strode into the hall, hammered on the door of the Head's study, and marched in, the deputation supporting him loyally. They were not feeling quite so

secure now, but the die was cast. They were intruding—they had forced themselves into Mr. Ponsonby Small's presence, and it was by no means certain that he would approve.

The Head, flushed and angry, jumped up from his desk.

"What is this?" he asked sharply. "How dare you come into my study in this way! You impudent young rascals——"

"No impudence intended, sir," interrupted Chambers firmly. "We've come here to make a complaint about all this disturbance—this ruining of the countryside. Something ought to be done."

"Indeed, Chambers!" said the Head, his voice taking on a sneering, sarcastic note. "This is very interesting. And what, pray, do you suggest? I shall be most happy to hear your views!"

The Fifth-former was rather taken aback.

"We want something done about this man Smith——" began Handforth.

"Silence!" commanded the Head, turning on him. "I am speaking to Chambers, not to you! There is a limit to my patience, and it is nearly reached. Another word, Handforth, and you will be flogged. Well, Chambers, I am waiting!"

"Handforth's right, sir," said Chambers. "We want something done about William K. Smith. He's bringing his rotten men here and messing up the whole landscape. Something ought to be done——"

"You are tiresome, Chambers," broke in Mr. Ponsonby Small sourly. "This repetition is unworthy of your great mental powers. And what, may I ask, do you expect to be done? Am I the Prime Minister of England, that I can remove this offending gentleman with a wave of my hand?"

"You're—you're the Head of St. Frank's, sir," said Chambers.

"Precisely!" agreed Mr. Small. "Precisely! And I can assure you that I am fully capable of conducting this school firmly and with justice. But it is not my habit to interfere in the private business of other people. Good gracious! Are you an imbecile, that you expect me to stop the operations of a man who has bought this property freehold, paid for it, and is now employing his own labour for his own purposes? What business is it of yours, Chambers?" thundered the Head, his anger suddenly bursting out. "How dare you come to me with this preposterous, childish complaint!"

The deputation was rather startled.

"But, sir——"

"Enough!" shouted Mr. Small. "I will not hear another word! The whole grievance is absurd and preposterous. Each boy will take a punishment of one thousand lines."

The Head clearly proved his weak nature. Like all men of puny character, he had allowed these boys to go on, and had then burst into a sudden rage for no apparent reason. And the punishment he had inflicted was severe.

"A thousand lines, sir!" gasped Hand-

forth blankly. "But we've only come in the interests of the school——"

"If either of you speak again I will inflict such a caning as you will remember for years!" shrilled Mr. Small. "Go! Not another word! Under no circumstances will I submit to insubordination and defiance. Go!"

Handforth opened his mouth to speak, but something told him to close it. Even he was not quite so reckless as to deliberately invite a flogging. He nearly choked, and made for the door. The other members of the deputation were already on the move.

"Wait!" commanded the Head. "There is just one thing more I wish to say. It is apparent that your motive in coming to me is to stir up animosity against Mr. William K. Smith. Let me make it quite clear that there must be no ill-feeling against our new neighbour. Any boy who defies Mr. Smith, and who deliberately ferments bad feeling against him, will be promptly and summarily expelled from the school."

The deputation went.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEARNING A FEW THINGS!



REGGIE PITT grinned as Handforth entered the gymnasium. He was the only member of the deputation to appear, and he looked fierce.

"Well, Sir Oracle?" asked Pitt. "What miracles?"

"The rotter!" said Handforth indignantly. "The beast! Gave us a thousand lines each, and threatened to flog the first chap who spoke another word! My only hat! I never knew that such human worms existed!"

"It was your own fault, old man," I pointed out. "If you had paused to consider, you would never have supported an ass like Chambers. You know as well as I do that Ponsonby Small is hand-in-glove with Smith."

Handforth looked at me rather blankly.

"By George, so he is!" he ejaculated. "I'd forgotten that, you know. And now I've got a thousand lines to do. Rats! I'm blowed if I'm going to do 'em! He'll have to whistle for 'em!"

"Unhappy youth!" said Pitt gravely. "If you ignore those lines you'll be flogged, and the imps. will be doubled. Take the advice of a sage and swallow your giddy medicine."

And after Handforth had cooled down, he realised that it was worse than useless to be openly defiant. Alone, he could do nothing. And after tea—partaken of in Hall, since we had no studies—Handforth was more sensible.

"I'll wait a bit," he said grimly. "I suppose I'd better do those lines—blow 'em! But I'll have my revenge. I've decided to do some investigation and to lie low."

"Fine!" I said enthusiastically. "That sounds commonsense!"

Handforth looked at me rather suspiciously, but I happened to be quite serious. And I added that although we were chafing painfully against the irksome restrictions, and although we detested Mr. Smith and all his works, it would be far better to let things develop, and then decide on our plan of action later. And for once the impulsive Handforth agreed.

By the time it was dark a remarkable change had come over the countryside between St. Frank's and the river. Indeed, it is quite true that the map was altered all the way along to Caistowe.

The first outburst of indignation which had swept over the school was now tempered somewhat by a natural curiosity. Even the seniors had now lost some of their dignity, and were now displaying quite a big interest in the whole proceedings.

I was not at all surprised therefore when I went out on the playing-fields to find quite a large number of Fifth-Formers and Sixth-Formers mingling with the juniors. There was a large crowd gazing upon Cyclone City.

The place was well named.

Where there had been nothing but empty meadows and fields during the morning, now a typical American camp city had sprung up. It was like some miracle. One felt the necessity to rub one's eyes and make sure that this thing actually did exist.

For it seemed incredible that mere human hands could have created such a wonder of speed and organisation. Out of all the confusion of dumps a township of wooden shacks had appeared.

For during the afternoon gangs of men had worked at lightning speed, piecing the sections of the small wooden houses together. Walls had been put up like magic, roofs fitted, and doors and windows placed in position with the regularity and precision of clockwork.

And these shacks were not just dumped down at random. The ground had all been marked out beforehand, and although these marks had been invisible at a distance, the result was now obvious.

For on this elevated piece of ground we could see that the shacks were placed in streets, with cross-sections, and one or two larger buildings at various corners.

"I don't believe it!" said Tommy Watson breathlessly.

"Don't believe what?" I asked.

"All this, you know," said Tommy. "It couldn't have happened since this morning! We must have been to sleep for a week, or something. Why, there's a whole town here—with streets and lighting, and every thing!"

"Just an example of organisation," I explained. "You seem to forget that everything was prepared beforehand. Mr. Smith, for all his hustling methods, could never have achieved this end without men,

materials, and weeks and weeks of well thought out preparation."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Watson thoughtfully.

"The site was marked out, all these houses were built in sections, and a hundred and one other details were planned and executed. As a matter of fact, I expect the scheme was originated in America months ago. All this stuff was loaded on to lorries at Caistowe, straight off the ship. So, when you come to analyse it, it isn't so very marvellous."

"The spoofer!" said Watson indignantly.

"You've soon changed your tone," I grinned. "Knowing exactly what had to be done, Smith had his men here, and they were like so many machines. All the foremen knew the work in detail, so it was easy enough to keep on without a hitch. As the lorries arrived they were unloaded, and these sections were whisked up in no time. It doesn't take long to build one of these wooden shacks. They've just got to be hooked into position and they hang there."

Even now the men were still at work, labouring by means of hundreds of great flares. These were of the acetylene gas type, such as one sees in big cities during night road repairs. But they differed in one respect—they were very tall, resembling lamp-posts.

The effect, therefore, was remarkable. Gazing down at that mushroom city, it looked practically settled. What with the streets and houses, and the glaring lights lighting the roads, the effect was startling. And men were swarming in hundreds.

The clatter of a thousand hammers caused an incessant din, and it was really impossible to watch without feeling a thrill—a sense of pride that such a thing was possible to human hands. But to say that this "city" was an improvement to the landscape was the opposite of the truth.

It certainly looked very picturesque at night, with all the lights blazing. But this is a peculiarity I have noticed about real American cities—cities that have been settled for many years. You see them at night, with all the twinkling electric lights and the imposing signs, and you imagine the place to be big, important, and really beautiful.

And then you see it in the daytime, and get a shock. For in all probability you will find that the town is as ugly as human ingenuity could make it, with atrocious shacks, festooned telegraph and telephone wires, and not a single feature to redeem it.

This camp of Mr. Smith's was typical. And the fellows who looked on were rather inclined to think it far more marvellous than it actually was. On the morrow, when they saw the place in all its gaunt ugliness, they would think differently.

"Suppose we go a little nearer?" suggested Tommy Watson.

"All right—but we don't want to take any

risks," I said. "Just at present we'll try and steer clear of Mr. Smith. He's determined to keep us down, and if we trespass on his property, he'll only report to the Head, and that might mean the sack. There's no sense in being rash."

But we left the playing-fields and edged gradually in the direction of bustling activity near by. William K. Smith's property was fenced off, so that there was no excuse for trespassing."

"I'll tell you what," I said, coming to a halt. "There's one thing we could do without much risk."

"Dear old Nipper, name it," murmured Sir Montie.

"Well, we'll take a boat and slip down the river," I said. "A good bit of the Stowe is out of bounds, and Willard's Island is now a part of Smith's property. But we'll be careful to avoid landing. Hang it all, there can't be any objection to our using a boat!"

And so we left the spot, and went through the darkness to the new, temporary boat-house. The old one, which had not been built upon actual school property, was now in the possession of Smith.

We collected Reggie Pitt on the way, for he spotted us creeping along, and asked what the game was. He was only too pleased to join in the little adventure; and in due course we pushed a small boat into the stream, and allowed it to glide noiselessly down.

"This'll be safe enough," murmured Pitt. "We shall be invisible, and yet we can see everything that's going on. I say! What do you make of it, Nipper? What in the name of all that's extraordinary can this place mean?"

"My dear chap, I'm completely puzzled!" I replied. "I can't think of any reason why this American millionaire should come here and build this city of huts. Of course, you don't need any telling that it's simply a building camp."

"A building camp?"

"Exactly."

"And what's going to be built?"

"That's what I can't fathom," I replied. "But this big army has got to be housed somewhere, and Cyclone City is the result. If they continue at the present speed, there'll be other surprises in a few days."

We were getting nearer to the encampment now.

But we took good care to speak in low voices, and to let our boat drift downstream on the far side of the river. The numerous huts and shacks came almost down to the water's edge, and the blazing fires, and the hundreds of men moving about, made up a picture that was so unfamiliar that we simply could not get accustomed to it.

"Hey, there!"

It was a hail from the bank nearest to us. Glancing round, I saw a solitary figure standing on a grassy knoll. He came down

to the water's edge, and we recognised him as Dinty Todd.

Somehow, I felt just a little guilty. I don't know why, because I took it for granted that we had a perfect right to use the river. But it seemed that we had been discovered in doing something surreptitious. Mr. Todd was grinning as he took hold of the bows of our boat, which we had directed towards the bank, nosing through the long reeds.

"Say, kiddoes, I ain't de guy to hand out a pile of talk, but youse ain't got no right around dis ranch," said Dinty. "Youse best quit. Youse don't need to pull dis game, sonnies."

"Pull what game?" I asked.

"Aw, gee! Dat innocent stuff don't cut no ice!" replied Mr. Todd. "Ain't youse trespassing? Ain't youse on dis river, when youse know dat it ain't allowed?"

"Rats!" said Reggie Pitt. "Mr. Smith may have bought the land, but he hasn't bought the river."

"Can you beat dat?" exclaimed the man. "Dis river around here is Mr. Smith's property. Get me? Between you and me, sonny, I like youse. I like de whole crowd of youse, by golly! Say, I guess youse a bunch of real snappy kiddoes. But in dis outfit dere's no time for personal matters. So youse got to quit, an' I sure guess I'd like you to quit peacefully."

"Are you saying that this water is Mr. Smith's?" demanded Pitt.

"Sure!"

"You're wrong," replied Reggie. "We just drifted down on the stream, and the water we're using came from higher up the river. Therefore, it can't be Mr. Smith's."

Dinty Todd grinned.

"Gee! Youse sure a reg'lar feller!" he observed. "But I ain't a dumb-bell, an' don't youse get me wrong. Youse can't pull a line o' bull on me like dat. No, sirree! Dere's sure a heap of boneheads around, but dis guy ain't one of 'em. Take my advice, an' don't give Mr. Smith any of dis trespassing dope. He sure gets kinder fierce, an' den we've gotta look slippy. It don't help us, an' it sure don't help youse."

"Thanks, Dinty, for the tip," I said, smiling. "You're one of the enemy, but it's nice to know that you're partially on our side. I always thought you were a decent chap. Why are you working for this rotter Smith?"

Dinty grinned.

"Say, ain't youse a wise guy!" he exclaimed. "Aw, don't pull dat bunk! I'm after de dollar—de bank-roll! Say, dis is sure de best job I ever had. Mr. Smith ain't a guy you kids like, but he's sure de alligator's elbow when it comes to dopping out de dollars."

"And what's his game?" I asked. "What's the reason for this big camp, and all the tremendous activity?"

The man scratched his rather scrubby chin.

"Well, seein' as de truth is just about to come out, I ain't doin' no harm by puttin' you wise," he replied. "Say, dere's over a thousand men around dis outfit right now. It's sure, a pity de school is so near. I didn't want youse young guys to be mixed up in dis game—an' if youse take my advice, you'll lie good and low. Youse can't do no sort of good by buttin' in. So get dat—an' get it right. I'm tellin' you dat the Smith Construction Company is around here for the purpose of buildin' the biggest factory——"

"Factory?" echoed Tommy Watson.

"Youse said it," nodded Dinty. "An', say, de foist ting is de power-station. Say, de boss' engineers will be getting speed up soon, an' den you'll see de power-station."

"Power-station!"

"Sure! Dat's de foist piece o' work to be done," replied Mr. Todd confidentially. "I guess dere's goin' to be some big work on de island, harnessin' dis blamed river. Say, has de boss got a whole bunch of machinery comin' here? You bet he has. I'm tellin' de woild dat dis county is gonna make history."

"Power-station—harnessing the Stowe—a factory!" I muttered. "By Jove! Mr. Smith has got some pretty ambitious schemes. And I suppose the factory is to be used for building motor-cars?"

"Youse hit it," agreed Mr. Todd. "Say, de boss has started buildin' a special railroad of his own from Caistowe. Get dat? A railroad, kiddoes, an' dis part of de country is gonna be like Pittsboig!"

"If that's the case, it won't be worth living in," I declared. "Peaceful, rural Sussex. My hat! I thought Mr. Smith was going it pretty strong, but he seems to be a very lion for work. Well, Dinty, it sounds all right from Mr. Smith's point of view, but, between you and me, there's goin' to be some trouble. I won't say any more, an' we'll take your advice and quit. Thanks for giving us the information."

"You're welcome," said Dinty Todd. "S'long."

A minute later we were pulling back up the river, and we were very thoughtful.

CHAPTER IX.

NOT POPULAR.



"DO you believe it?" asked Tommy Watson dubiously, as we landed.

"Of course I believe it," I replied. "At least, I believe that Mr. Smith has got all these ambitious plans, and means to push them forward as swiftly as he knows how. But I don't believe he'll succeed."

"If he does, this part of the country will be ruined!" snorted Tommy.

"From a scenic point of view—yes," I

agreed. "But from an industrial point of view—no. And that's the point. If Smith was building his factory for the benefit of British workers, we couldn't object—particularly in these times of much unemployment. But the beast is simply insulting the nation. He's brought his own workmen, and probably means to use his own skilled engineers after the factory is built. I don't suppose the Government would approve, but what can the Government do? They're fighting against a man with hundreds of millions, and a man like that generally has his own way."

"Then we've got a fat chance of doing anything!" growled Watson.

"It all depends," I said slowly. "Where a giant fails, a pigmy might succeed. And in this business the Remove can look upon itself as a pigmy. It's quite possible that we can do more to spoil Mr. Smith's game than the whole forces of the Government put together."

"Modesty," said Pitt, "is a virtue."

"Oh, don't be funny!" I growled. "There's no question of modesty about it. It's just a case of us being on the spot, and ready to act. We are looked upon as nobodies, and Smith doesn't even take us into his calculations. And in that way we might be able to do something big. But for the present we'll keep our eyes open, and do nothing."

"Good!" said Reggie. "Then how about a stroll round? A kind of scouting expedition into the enemy's territory, and then round by the village? We'll get the lie of the land."

We all agreed to this suggestion, and having put the boat away, we crept away through the darkness, and made off towards Bellton Wood. A portion of this miniature forest almost jutted on to William K. Smith's new property. Among the trees we should be almost unseen, and would be able to obtain a much clearer view of the general situation.

In order to reach the wood we had to climb over Mr. Smith's fence and trespass on his property for a short distance, but this was accomplished without any untoward incident.

I believe one or two of the workmen saw us, but we kept to the shadows, and it was impossible that we could have been recognised. And soon afterwards we were standing at the edge of the wood, with a clear view of the River House School to our left.

We could see the playing-fields and the grounds in general. The school itself was brilliantly lit up, for the millionaire was in possession. He had, as we knew, made the building his headquarters.

It was now quite clear why he had bought this property. His new power-station was to be erected on the flat, solid ground which was now the old River House football-field. We didn't know the technical details, but

it had been absolutely essential for Smith's plans that he acquired the property.

"Things seem to be quieting down a bit now," remarked Pitt. "But it's amazing how they've got all these huts up in less than twelve hours. Why, in a week's time they'll probably have theatres and department stores."

"And a railway-station!" growled Tommy Watson.

"Begad!" murmured Sir Montie. "It's frightfully interestin', dear old boys. I don't like admittin' it, but I'm absolutely thrilled. I am, really."

We didn't wait there long, but skirted the wood, and at length found ourselves on the road near the stone bridge which spanned the river. This had recently been smashed by Mr. Dinty Todd in a motor-car accident. But it was still quite safe, and a temporary wooden repair had been made.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Watson blankly.

He stood there, staring at the road. This was the first time we had been on the highway since the previous day—before all this invasion had commenced. And the change was rather startling.

For Bellton Lane was no longer a smooth, well-kept highway. It was quite a common practice for the St. Frank's fellows to grumble at the flinty condition of the road, which, after all, was not a main artery, and the county council had therefore dealt with it indifferently.

But in spite of these grumbles, the road had been pretty good on the whole. Now, however, it was a sheer morass. The hundreds of motor-lorries, passing to and fro in one continuous string throughout the day, had wrought their deadly havoc.

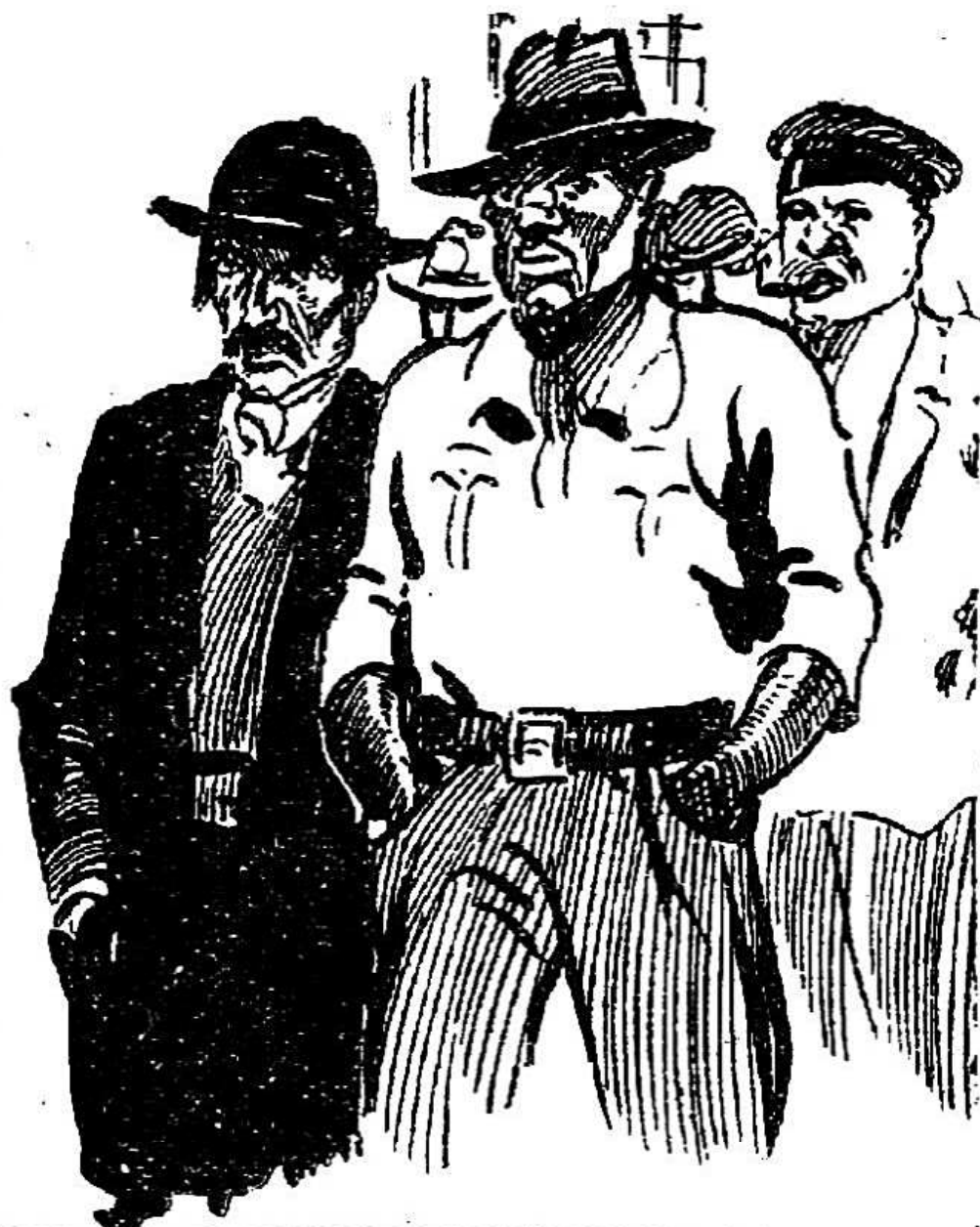
The lane was churned up into a horrible, muddy, stony mass, full of pot-holes, ridges, and dips. It was just about usable for private motoring, but cycling was out of the question.

"They seem to have made a nice hash of it," remarked Pitt. "But it's not surprising. This road was only made for light traffic. These tremendous lorries have ruined it for good. What on earth's the road going to be like by this time next week?"

"Dear boy, I tremble to think," said Sir Montie.

While we were speaking, six of the great lorries came thundering along over the bridge, all heavily loaded. The clatter and rumble they made was tremendous. The very ground shook beneath our feet.

We crossed the bridge, and found that Bellton High Street was in no better case. Indeed, the road seemed to be churned up even more here. The recent rains had left the surface soft and spongy, and the continuous traffic of the day had made the road like a quagmire. It was almost impossible to cross without sinking ankle-deep into the stones and mud.



They were not British workmen at all, but a collection of nondescript characters, chiefly remarkable for their brawn and strength.

But we didn't pay much attention to the road, for on the little green, just opposite the George Tavern, a considerable crowd had collected. They were centred round the village pump, and there seemed to be quite a good deal of excitement.

We came upon Handforth and Co., hovering near the outskirts of the crowd, and a few other St. Frank's fellows, including some seniors. They had been listening to a speech of some kind, I gathered.

"What's the rumpus?" I asked, patting Handforth on the shoulder.

"Eh? Oh, it's you!" said Handy. "What do you think of it? If you ask my opinion, we ought to go and grab Smith, chuck him in the pond, and then boil him in oil!"

"We're not Spanish Inquisitors," said Reggie Pitt. "In some ways, I have a kind of sneaking sympathy for those chaps, but they used to torture the wrong kind of people. It wouldn't do Smith any harm to have a touch of the rack, or sample the thumb-screws, or have a shot at walking on spikes. In fact, it would improve his general health."

Handforth snorted.

"Who wants to improve his health?" he asked. "He's a cad—a tyrant! And if he's not careful, there'll be a riot, and he'll be lynched."

"Well, as long as we don't take any hand in it, it won't matter," I said. "But what's the trouble, old man? Don't look so startled. I know what Smith's been up

to, and I'm just as indignant as you are. But what's the immediate cause of this heated gathering?"

"I'll tell you," said Handforth fiercely. "What do you think the latest is?"

"My hat! I thought you were going to tell us!"

"Smith has given strict orders to all his employees that they mustn't patronise any of the village shops," said Handforth hotly. "They mustn't even enter the public-houses or spend a penny. In other words, this rotten German-American beast is boycotting not only Caistowe, but Bellton and the whole district. And that means that the local people won't get a penn'orth of benefit out of these interlopers."

I whistled.

"That's a bit of impudence," I said slowly. "And, in my opinion, Smith's made a technical blunder. Of course, he thinks he's so powerful that he can do just as he likes. He regards everybody here as so much dirt, to be trodden on and ignored. I think it pleases him to insult the country people as much as he can. But are you sure of this, Handy?"

"Of course I'm sure," replied Handforth. "The whole village is talking about it—and so is Caistowe. In fact, two of Smith's labourers went into a pub in Caistowe, and they were sacked on the spot. And another man went into a tobacconist's for some cigars, and he was sacked, too. I tell you, this Smith is an absolute king! He rules over his giddy mob like a feudal lord."

"That's why he's been so successful," I said. "He makes his plans, and goes straight ahead with them as though he ruled the world. And he's got so much money behind him, and he's such a bully, that he has always managed to come out on top."

"A go-getter," said Reggie. "That's what they call them in America—a snappy guy. My only aunt! I think it's a good thing we haven't got any chaps like him over this side."

"He'll find that the British public is not quite so tame and sheep-like as the public he's been accustomed to," I said grimly. "It'll probably take these country people a week or so to get worked-up, but when they do start something, it'll be big. And Smith thinks he's the boss."

Handforth, we found, had not exaggerated. The villagers were fiercely indignant over the whole business. The very fact of this stranger coming here and turning the place upside down was bad enough, but the ruining of the road and the boycotting of all the village shops fairly made the people furious. I had never thought them capable of such rage.

This millionaire—this German-American—an avowed enemy of the country, was doing exactly as he liked. He had bought all this land, and he was a kind of king of his own domain.

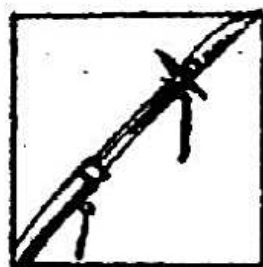
He was well nicknamed, for his descent

upon the district had been very much like that of a cyclone. And Mr. William K. Smith, hearing of all this indignation, smiled grimly to himself.

"I thought I'd wake up these sluggish Britons!" he said, with a calm smile. "But they haven't seen a thing yet."

CHAPTER X.

THE BRUTE.



JOE CATCHPOLE touched his cap respectfully and paused.

"Evening, young gents," he said. "Fine goin's on to-day, ain't they? Never seed the like on it,

not in all me born days. Seems like we don't know whether we're on our head or our heels."

We paused, and saw that Mr. Catchpole was flushed with the same anger that affected all the other residents. He was one of Farmer Holt's labourers, and quite a decent fellow. We had seen very little of him since Christmas, when we had taken a few things to Catchpole's children.

"Nice goin's on!" repeated Mr. Catchpole darkly. "That's wot I sez."

"I think we all say the same, Joe," I replied. "I've got an idea that Mr. Smith isn't very popular in the village. And to-morrow morning all the London papers will be full of the affair."

"They do say as the furrin gent is mad," said Mr. Catchpole. "No sane man could do these 'ere things, anyways."

"Of course he's mad!" snorted Handforth. "How the dickens does he expect people to buy his rotten motor-cars after he's made 'em? There'll be such a feeling against him that he'll be boycotted, just the same way as he's boycotting these people."

I shook my head.

"I don't think so," I said. "We're a bit too easy-going, old man. And Mr. Smith is aware of it, too. He believes that after his factory is going full blast, and he puts his products on the market, he'll have everything his own way. And he's probably right. He'll produce such a cheap article that people will be simply bound to buy it. It's all wrong, of course, but it's human nature. In these days everybody thinks of his own pocket. If Smith puts a car on the market that's better than the others, and is only half the price, he'll sell them like steam. The public will forget their animosity."

"I believe you're right, Nipper," said Reggie Pitt. "Smith is laughing up his sleeve all the time—it's a big joke to him to get up a big outcry against him. I expect he thinks that his ultimate triumph will be all the greater—and that's just why he's acting in this way now."

"Well, he hasn't triumphed yet," I

replied. "And if we can help it, he won't!"

It sounded very ridiculous, I know. The very thought of the Remove attempting to stay Mr. Smith's progress was somewhat reminiscent of the celebrated Canute attempting to stay the tide. But Canute had tried to stop nature—and we weren't quite so foolish as that.

"A reg'lar bad business—that's what it is, young gents," said Joe Catchpole, looking worried. "It wouldn't matter so much if all these chaps was local men. There's plenty out of work, an' no mistake!"

He paused, as a string of lorries came thundering by, drowning every sound of the human voice. The condition of the road was getting worse and worse every hour. And as the ruts grew deeper, the pot-holes larger, so the vibration increased.

"Drat them waggins!" said Mr. Catchpole darkly. "They make me fair worried, that they do! My old aunt, over in the corner cottage, is fair shook up with fright. She reckons that that cottage will come tumbling down afore long."

"I don't wonder at it," I said. "This road was never made to stand all this heavy traffic."

"I just come from the old woman, an' left her fair skeered," continued Mr. Catchpole. "She lives practically alone, ye know, an' is more than half paralysed. An' them flint walls o' that cottage ain't any too strong. Seems like there's a gret big crack in one of 'em already."

"Why, is the place in danger of collapsing?" asked Pitt.

"I do believe so, young gent," said Catchpole. "I don't know what to do, an' that's a fact. Fair worried, I am. I reckon as I'll 'ave to take old Aunt Mary over to my own cottage."

"I'll tell you what," I said. "Let's go along and have a look."

I felt rather concerned over this piece of news. I had often seen Catchpole's aunt hobbling about in the tiny garden of her detached cottage—which was right on the High Street, a little further along. She was quite a pleasant old lady, and nothing had ever come into her life to worry her. And here she was, in her old age, frightened out of her wits by all this commotion, and fearful that the roof would collapse over her head. It was a cruel business.

I thought it would be a good idea to have a look at the cottage, and satisfy ourselves that it was perfectly secure. Then we might be able to reassure the old lady.

Joe Catchpole was only too pleased at the suggestion, and we all went along to the tiny dwelling, and examined it. Even the first glance was sufficient. There would be no reassuring of Aunt Mary.

In the front wall there was a great crack—extending from near the ground right up to the roof. And as we were looking

at it, another string of lorries came lumbering by, and the ground shook and trembled.

"Look out!" exclaimed Watson suddenly.

With a creaking sound, the crack in the wall had widened—even as we looked at it. A few fragments became detached, and tumbled to the ground. And some of the ancient tiles dislodged themselves from the roof and slithered down on to the paved path, smashing to fragments.

"Ye see that, young gents?" asked Catchpole huskily.

"Yes, we do see it—and something's got to be done," I said grimly. "This place isn't safe. Another few shakings of that sort, and it'll probably crumble to bits. I think it's all right at present, but by this time to-morrow evening goodness knows what shape it will be in."

"Let's go and see Mr. Smith," suggested Handforth eagerly.

"For once," I said, "you've made a good suggestion. Yes, by Jove, we will go and see Mr. Smith! And if he's got the decency of a toad, he'll send some of his workmen to prop these walls up, and reinforce them. And he ought to compensate old Mrs. Catchpole handsomely for the damage."

Joe looked at us hopefully.

"Will ye do it, Master Nipper?" he asked. "Bless ye, young gent, I'll be main pleased if ye do! Mr. Smith wouldn't take no sort o' notice o' me, bein' a plain, iggerant chap. Like as not he'll listen to you young gents."

"He'll have to listen," I replied grimly. "This damage is entirely Smith's doing. And every lorry that passes makes the vibration worse. I don't suppose there was much shaking this morning, when the road was fairly smooth. But as it gets more uneven, the vibration is naturally increased."

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Catchpole's cottage was not the only dwelling that was suffering from the continuous miniature earthquake. Half the ancient buildings in the High Street were affected. People were complaining of pictures falling, ceilings cracking, and sundry other inconveniences. The heavy lorry traffic was fatal for these old places—many of them dating back for hundreds of years.

The other juniors supported me loyally, and in a body we marched to the River House School, and walked boldly in at the open door. The big hall was brilliantly lighted, and a great many changes had occurred. A door stood wide open, and we knew that the room beyond was really the senior class-room. But now it was filled with luxurious modern furniture.

And Mr. William K. Smith himself was visible, seated before a big desk, in a luxurious swivel chair. He was giving some orders to two or three of his men, and the inevitable cigar was sticking out of his mouth at an acute angle.

"Come on!" I muttered. "Let's take the bull by the horns!"

We marched in, without waiting for anybody to ask our business. And Mr. Smith, turning his head sharply, gazed at us with narrowing eyes. But he didn't lose his perpetual calm.

"Well, see who's here!" he exclaimed crisply. "Say, boys, what's the big idea? Getting sensible all at once?"

"We haven't come here on pleasure, Mr. Smith," I replied, as I stood up to the desk and faced him. "We are here on behalf of an old lady who lives in one of the cottages in the High Street."

"Is that so?" said the millionaire. "Wonderful!"

In spite of his facetious tone, I described exactly to him what his heavy lorries were doing to Mrs. Catchpole's cottage. He lolled back in his chair, smoking the cigar, transferring it occasionally from one corner of his mouth to the other. He was looking rather bored.

"That's the case, Mr. Smith, and we've come to ask you what you mean to do," I concluded. "Unless something is done quickly, that cottage will fall to pieces. You ought to send some of your men this evening."

William K. Smith pointed to the door.

"Get!" he said briefly.

"What's that?" snorted Handforth. "Look here, Mr. Smith—"

"I'll give you just ten seconds to remove yourselves!" rapped out the millionaire, his voice becoming harsh. "By heck! Am I to be dictated to in my own office? I accept no responsibility for what happens to these blamed cottages. The road is for public use, and that's all there is to it. Quit, or by gosh, I'll hurry you!"

He sat there, cold, hard-hearted, and absolutely brutal in his manner. I had put the case before him calmly, clearly, and in such a manner that he could not fail to appreciate the humanity of it. And I had taken particular care to be polite and respectful. This attitude on his part made me go white with rage.

"You inhuman brute!" I shouted hotly. "What do you care, as long as you get your work done? What does it matter to you how many poor people are trampled under foot, and how many lives are lost, so long as you gain your way?"

William K. Smith rose to his feet, his face working with subdued anger.

"Get out of here!" he said thickly. "By thunder! Am I to be talked to like this by a bunch of kids?"

"Yes, it looks like it!" I broke in. "You think that you're so high that you're beyond the reach of any punishment, Mr. Smith—but you're not! You're a millionaire, with enormous power in the financial world. But you don't happen to have any power over us! You may be a prince of industry, but you've gained your fortune through the blood of your victims! You're just as bad as an anarchist who stirs up a

revolution, and causes thousands of deaths. In fact, you're worse, because you make money out of it."

Without another word, I turned on my heels, and marched out. The other juniors, rather nonplussed, followed. It was just as well they did, for it saved us the indignity of being thrown out.

But I had told Mr. William K. Smith what I thought of him, and from now onwards there could be no possibility of peace.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DECLARATION OF WAR!

HANDFORTH stood in the road, clenching and unclenching his fists. "I'm going back!" he declared fiercely. "I'm going back, and I'm going to punch Smith into the middle of Devonshire! By George! The cad! The brute! The beast! The hog! I'll—I'll—I'll—"

Handforth became somewhat incoherent, and Pitt grabbed his arm.

"Steady, old son," he said quietly. "No need to have apoplexy. I agree with everything you say about Smith, but the most important thing at the moment is to go and attend to old Mrs. Catchpole. The Hog won't do anything, so we must."

By the time we got back to the cottage, we found that Joe Catchpole was hastily propping some big lengths of wood against the front wall, assisted by two or three men. He looked at us eagerly as we hurried up.

"Sorry, Joe—Smith won't do anything," I said. "He's an inhuman cur."

"What about your aunt?" I broke in.

"She says she won't shift, not for nobody," replied Joe. "Fair obstinate, she is. Sez she's allus lived here, an' won't move, not for the President of America hisself!"

"Let's go and see her, you fellows," I said quietly.

We went inside, the front door opening right into the little parlour. A candle was burning, and Mrs. Catchpole sat in an old-fashioned chair, looking grim and unbending.

"Come along, Mrs. Catchpole," I said gently. "We're going to take you outside for a bit—"

The old lady looked at us stubbornly.

"I won't have none of it!" she declared. "My Joe was in here five minutes past, but I sent him off. For nigh on fifty years I have lived in this cottage, an' I ain't goin' to shift now. So there! You young gentlemen can go outside, an' mind your own business! Never did I hear of such impertence."

And just then the whole place began to shake ominously. We learned, afterwards, that a dozen fully laden lorries had come thundering by at high speed. I really

believe that the drivers of these great vehicles took a sort of fiendish delight in disturbing the peace as much as possible. For Mr. Smith's hatred of the villagers had spread throughout his men.

In any case, the vibration was too much. The crack in the wall widened into a great gap, and there was a sudden burst of debris as half the wall crumbled into dust and fragments. The ceiling overhead cracked and showered us with plaster.

"Quick!" I yelled.

We didn't waste a fraction of a second. In one movement, Handforth and I grabbed Mrs. Catchpole, pulled her out of her chair, and we simply rushed outside, and emerged, smothered with dust and dirt, and half choking.

Crash!

Hardly had we reached the road, when the cottage collapsed like a house of cards. It was really quite an impressive sight. The walls simply ceased to exist, and the whole place fell to the ground in a confused mass of debris. But it was invisible at the time, for the dust enveloped it.

"My goodness!" I breathed. "That was a narrow shave!"

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" wheezed Mrs. Catchpole.

Two or three neighbours had hurried up, and we placed Mrs. Catchpole in their care, rather glad to get rid of our charge. But we felt intensely pleased that we had been in time. For she would have perished with-

out question if we had not taken such prompt measures.

Her cottage, the only possession she had, was now but a heap of wreckage—brought to the ground by the continuous vibration. And William K. Smith, the man who was the cause of it, refused to accept any responsibility!

"I don't know how to thank ye, young gents!" said Joe Catchpole, after the excitement had died down. "Ye saved the old lady's life, an' that's a fact! But I don't know rightly what we can do—"

"At the present, you can leave her in one of these other cottages," I said. "They're more strongly built, and in no danger. And we'll see that Smith is forced to pay up!"

We left the scene of bustling activity, and it seemed strangely peaceful when we got into the Triangle. As a rule, it was just the opposite—for St. Frank's had seemed quite bustling after the peaceful village. That was all ended now.

It wasn't long before the news of the wrecked cottage, and William K. Smith's attitude, spread throughout the school. Indignation ran high, and there were all sorts of meetings.

A declaration of war was made by the juniors against the millionaire and his horde. If Smith had heard of it, he would have laughed heartily and with much scorn.

But Cyclone Smith didn't know what the Remove was capable of when it got thoroughly aroused!

THE END.

Editorial Announcement.

My Dear Readers,

It looks as though Cyclone Smith will have done irreparable damage to the neighbourhood of St. Frank's before he can be stopped. The old school that used to stand out as an imposing landmark for miles around is now concealed behind huge steel scaffolding, ugly cranes, and the belching smoke of furnaces. Small wonder that the Remove feel that drastic action is necessary, and that it is up to them to put a stop to Cyclone Smith's activities. Consequently, Nipper has decided to declare war on the multi-millionaire, and in next week's story, "DRIVEN TO REVOLT!" he will open his campaign.

"POTS OF MONEY."

This is the title of a fine, long 60,000 words story of St. Frank's, by Mr. Brooks, now appearing in "The Boys' Friend Library." Every reader of "The Nelson Lee Library" should secure a copy before they are all sold out. There is another St. Frank's story by the same author in "The Boys' Friend Library" out this month, and yet another appearing in April.

A PICTURE TOUR OF THE WORLD.

Have you seen "Countries of the World" yet? This new fortnightly part publication, which takes you on a wonderful picture world tour for one penny a day is proving a very big success. Part 1 sold out very rapidly, and there will be an equally large demand for Part 2, on sale to-day, which contains a host of splendid photographs, including eight full colour plates of Andalusia, in Sunny Spain.

The complete work will contain 5,000 photographs altogether, and nearly 400 of these will be full-page plates in colour. Every country, city, town, or village of interest throughout the world will be pictured in the pages of "Countries of the World," to which vivid pen descriptions will be contributed by 130 of the leading travel writers and explorers of the day.

The fortnightly parts cost 1s. 3d. each, and readers anxious to make certain of each one as it is published should give their nearest newsagent a regular order.

THE EDITOR.



MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

By the Author of our St Frank's Stories.



NO. 13. NEW YORK THEATRES

THERE are so many first-class Theatres in New York that the newcomer is sorely puzzled when making a tour of the "white-light" district. All the chief theatres are situated in a kind of clustered group and about Times Square. It is this section of Broadway which has become so famous for its brilliant night signs.

It is my intention, in this little article, to give my impressions of the theatres themselves. On the whole, they compare very favourably with the West-End theatres of London. In some respects they are more up-to-date, and there is no question that the seating accommodation for the cheaper class of patron is infinitely superior.

In New York you can book any seat in any good theatre. There is no gallery, as London knows it. Generally, there is one balcony, with comfortable plush tip-up seats. The pit does not exist in American theatres, for the whole lower floor is called the "Orchestra."

The prices, on the average, are somewhat high. In many theatres the best seats are an appalling figure, for the evening performance. But this only applies to such expensive productions as the Ziegfeld Follies, at the New Amsterdam Theatre. The majority of the theatres price their best seats at any figure between two and four dollars.

But it is the general rule in New York—and a very good rule, I think—that matinee performances can be witnessed at half-price. One can obtain a very fine seat for fifty or seventy-five cents, and book it in advance without extra charge. And nobody grumbles at two or three shillings for an excellent seat.

The entertainment tax is in vogue in America, and there would not be half so much grumbling in England if our own entertainment tax was based on the same principle. For over there they do it properly, inflicting a ten per cent. tax on all seats. Thus, for a fifty-cent seat you pay fifty-five cents; for a dollar seat, you pay one dollar and ten cents, and so on. By adopting this system there can be no possible grumbling, for all classes pay the same percentage. It is distinctly and sensibly fair—which is more than can be said for our own entertainment tax.

There is one universal convenience in American theatres which greatly appealed to me, and which I have missed sadly since returning to London. Every seat in the American entertainment houses is provided with a hat-rack. It is such a simple device that I am surprised our own theatres have not followed suit. Even when you go into the better seats, it is not always convenient to take your hat to the cloak-room. And there are drawbacks to placing it on the floor—especially if the hat is a new one, and happens to be light-coloured.

The American theatre-goer never finds it necessary to search half-way down the row to discover what's happened to his hat, after being kicked about and trampled upon. He sits in his seat, and slips his hat in the metal rack, and forgets all about it until the show is over. The rack is fitted to the under-side of the seat, and it is in nobody's way, and neither is the hat.

Another fine institution in America is that all programmes are free. There is no such imposition as paying sixpence for a programme in the stalls, and threepence for the same programme in the balcony. And it must not be imagined that the American programmes are inferior because they are given away. Quite the contrary.

The average New York theatre programme is a work of art—a neat, beautifully printed, bound booklet, with every kind of information within the covers—even including instructions as to your nearest exit in case of fire.

I have painful recollections of first nights in some London theatres, when programmes are given away. But they are handed out so grudgingly that if there are three or four of you in a party you sometimes feel quite uncomfortable. In New York, where programmes are given away at every performance, you can have as many as you please. For instance, if there are four of you together, the attendant will instantly hand you four programmes. Indeed, in some theatres there are clips fitted on the backs of the seats, and you find your programme waiting for you. I wonder when we shall progress to that extent in London!

I find that I have a very great deal more to say on the subject of American theatres, but, as my space is limited, I must reluctantly hold over any further remarks until next week.

The Truth About Willy Handforth's Spelling!

No. 14. Vol. 1.

Edited by Nipper.

March 1, 1924.



St. Frank's Magazine

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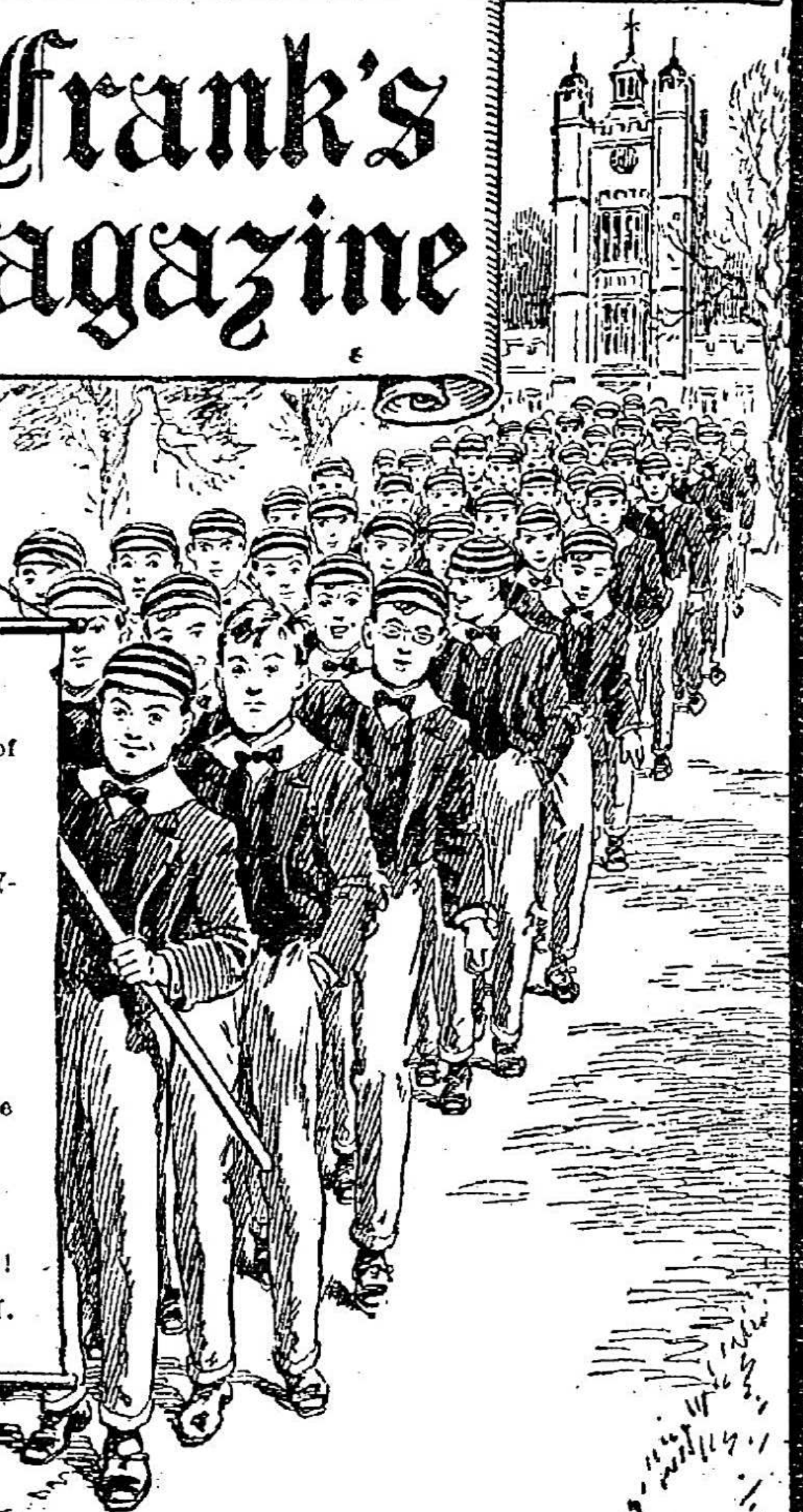
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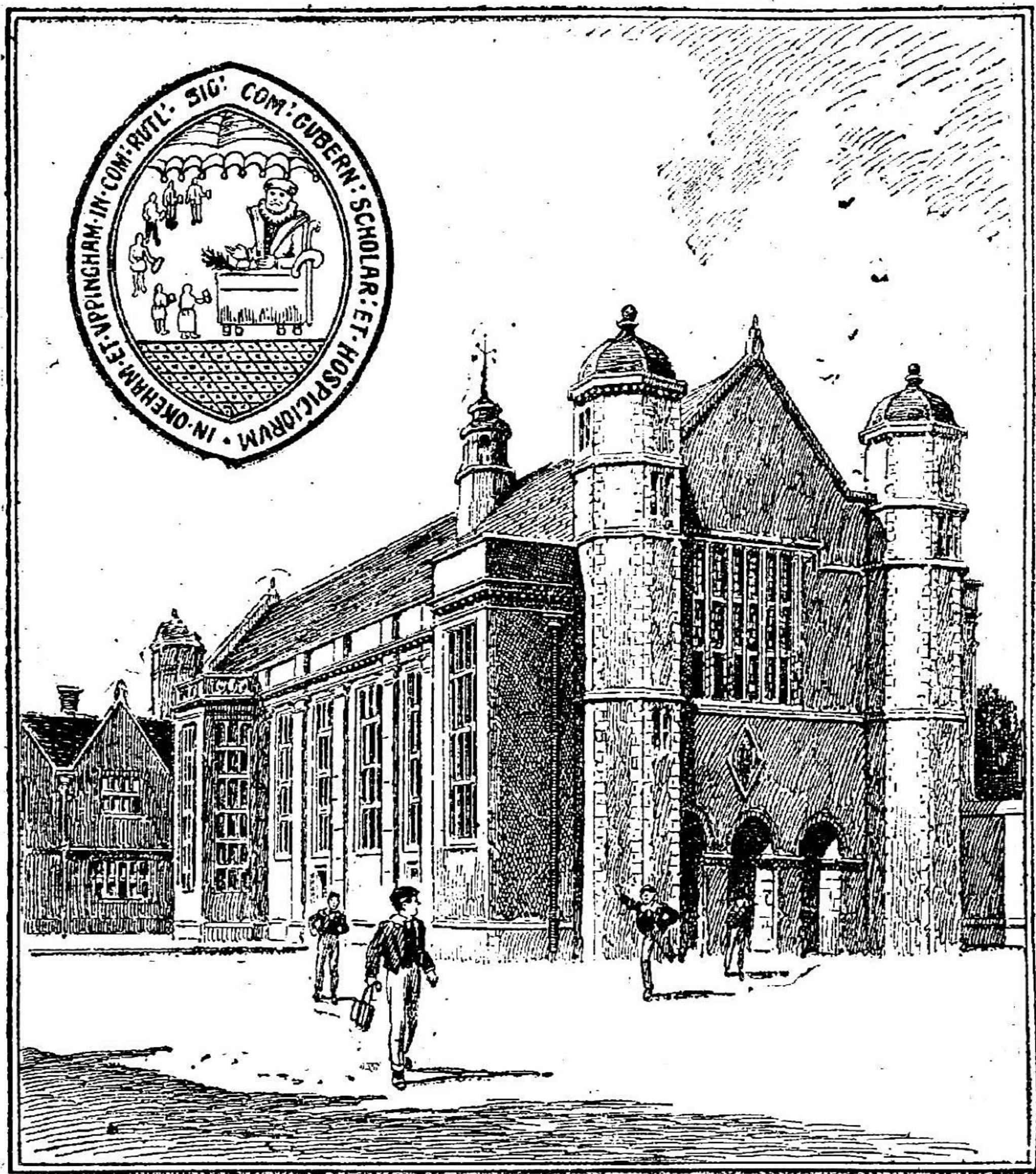


IN EVERY WAY THE MAG. IS GETTING BETTER EVERY DAY!

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

No. 16. UPPINGHAM SCHOOL.



This celebrated public school was founded by Robert Johnson in 1584 as a country grammar school. But under the very able headmastership of Edward Thring (1853-87), it attained its present high position as a public school. Under Thring the school grew from 25 to 300 boys, and his success was due to his strong personality, the great moral force behind his teaching, and the introduction of wider interests in school life.

As a result many new buildings were added, including science laboratories, a museum, swimming baths, etc. The chapel was built in 1891. There are now 450 boys divided into upper, middle and lower divisions. The above sketch shows in the foreground the magnificent War Memorial Hall, costing £50,000, subscribed by the Old Boys' Fund. It is a handsome tribute to the 430 heroes from the school who sacrificed their lives in the Great War.



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

My Dear Chums,
So it appears that Willy Handforth, whose simplified spelling has been a humorous feature of his articles, is more sinned against than sinning. I must therefore apologise to Willy, for our worthy sub-editor, who was really responsible for most of the atrocious spelling attributed to Handforth minor. Our sub-editor says that he thought it palpably obvious to everyone that Willy's spelling had been tampered with—that even a kid would not write "mi" for "my." Apparently it was done merely for adding a humorous effect to the articles, and as Willy did not seem to object to this distortion of his spelling, the practice was continued by our sub-editor with all Willy's contributions.

SIR EDWARD HANDFORTH TAKES ACTION.

Not long ago the "Mag." chanced to fall into the hands of Sir Edward Handforth, Willy's pater. With natural pride, Sir Edward began reading one of his younger son's contributions. He had not progressed very far before he was somewhat shocked. That is a mild way of putting it, for I do not like to imagine what this righteously indignant gentleman must have said in the heat of the moment. Anyway, a letter reached the Head to the effect that Willy's spelling was a thorough disgrace to St. Frank's, and that he, Sir Edward, was considering the advisability of sending Willy to another school, where better attention would be given to correct spelling.

WILLY EXPLAINS.

It was not to be expected that Sir Edward would see that the whole thing was a joke. Happily, it has now all been explained, and we publish Willy's version of the affair this week with his original

spelling. Although it is not by any means free of howlers, it will be observed that Willy's unadulterated spelling is not quite so bad as the other variety.

MISS MANNERS' PROMISED ARTICLE.

Some weeks ago I referred to the great interest taken in the "Mag." by a number of the girls belonging to the Moor View High School. I believe I spoke of a promise made by Miss Irene Manners in one of her letters to write a special article for the "Mag.," giving her impressions of some of the boys. Since then, I have had several inquiries from chums asking when Miss Irene's article will appear. It seems that our fair contributor had forgotten all about her promise, for a letter has just come to hand from her saying that she is busy writing her impressions, and hopes to let me have them in time for next week's number of the "Mag."

THE NEW COVER.

Look out next week for the first of a new series of humorous sketches which will appear on the cover of the "Mag." Many of you will be sorry to hear, no doubt, that the old cover, which has seen such excellent service, is to be discarded after this week. But as some of you have remarked, it is rather a waste of space when one might have something new every week. The badge and title, however, I am retaining, the humorous sketch coming underneath. Thus, we are not wholly scrapping the old cover—only the part that really does not matter.

I find I have just enough space to announce Handy's next Trackett Grim story. It is called "THE PINK EYE OF PUT!" and is described by the author as the most amazing case ever undertaken by Trackett Grim. So it ought to be some story.

Your faithful chum,

NIPPER.



On Anything and Everything

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK

By HUBERT JARROW

WITHOUT wishing to be personal, I really do think that Timothy Tucker ought to be put in a Home, or something. The chap's absolutely queer. I mean, on Monday morning, he stopped me, and insisted on telling me all about the Ancient Peruvians. Extraordinary, when you come to think about it.

It seems that Tucker was disappointed over a lecture, or something. Nobody turned up, and he's having a sort of revenge by button-holing all the chaps, one after the other, and delivering the lecture piecemeal. And it's a lot of frightful piffle, by what I can make of it. It's a wonder to me Tucker's parents don't send him to one of these nice sanatoriums.

I'm sorry to say that Griffith is in the school sanatorium at the moment. Strictly speaking, it was Handforth's fault. Because how was Griffith to know that Handforth had been eating a banana at the top of the stairs? I don't think I've ever seen anybody make such a beautiful dive before. Griffith took the whole flight in one go, and landed on his head. I mean, he might have knocked all his teeth out, instead of only three.

Lots of chaps don't realise how important teeth are. They've got good teeth, and don't appreciate them. Nobody on earth can truthfully say that it improves the teeth to use them as nutcrackers, or to see who can chew through a piece of string first. This sort of thing is absolutely wrong. And I want to condemn it in the strongest possible terms.

Terms are too long. In my opinion, the holidays ought to be just as long as the terms. Then we should enjoy life more. And it's really astonishing how easily you can get things nowadays on gradual terms. Even one or two fellows in the Remove are buying books like that.

Books have their uses. In fact, there's nothing handier than a good sound volume when you come to look at the matter squarely. A book will do to sling at a chap who comes interrupting, it will prop up a table that's got a short leg, and a good,

heavy book can be used with great success for keeping a door open.

Of course, it isn't necessary to prop doors open at this time of the year. The trouble is to keep them shut. I wonder why fellows will keep coming into a study when you want to be quiet? And it's a ten-to-one chance that they'll leave the door open as they go out. It's really a very bad habit.

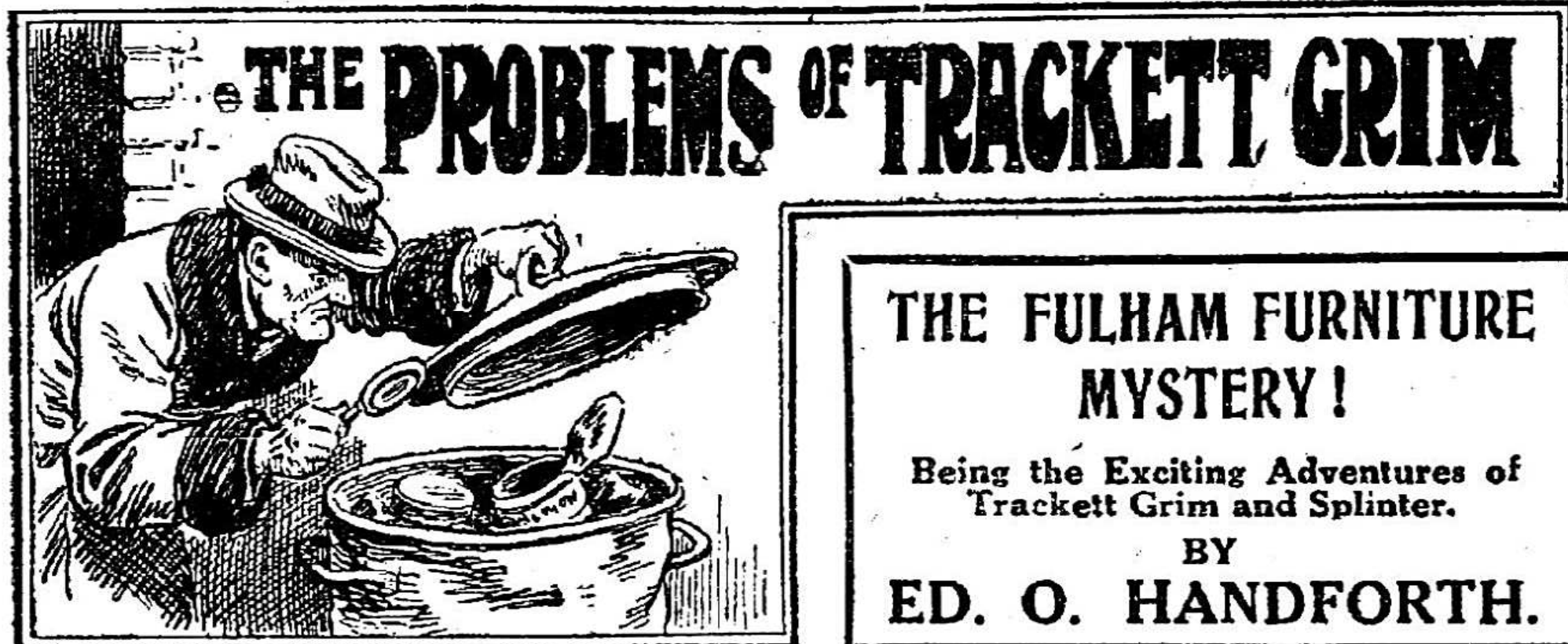
But, then, there are so many bad habits that, if I once got on the subject, I could write pages and pages. And the Editor wouldn't even look at them. And I don't blame him, because he wants interesting stuff. It's always a wonder to me how on earth he prints this rubbish.

Not that mine's the only rubbish in the Mag. What about Handforth and his Trackett Grim stuff? I can't understand Handforth at all. He seems to think that these Trackett Grim stories are masterpieces of fiction. On Wednesday he was going about so deep in thought that he walked right into the fountain. And then it turned out that he was getting an idea for one of his stories! I mean, it's jolly queer, because his stories haven't got any ideas!

What, after all, is an idea? As far as I can see, it's nothing more nor less than an effort of memory. You think of something you've heard before, or something you've read, you turn it upside down, and call it an idea. But everybody knows there's nothing new under the sun.

I'm glad we're seeing more of the sun this week. We've had quite enough dull weather, and when it's raining, and when the skies are all cloudy, it seems to have an effect on the chaps. On a sunny day you get nothing else but smiles, and everybody seems to be full of spirits.

I'd like to condemn some of those fat-heads in the Remove who say that spirits can be materialised. Of course, it's all Dr. Karnak's fault, but now that he has gone, these chaps ought to have more sense. The only spirits I've seen have appeared out of a bottle. But at St. Frank's spirits of that sort aren't allowed.



THE FULHAM FURNITURE MYSTERY!

Being the Exciting Adventures of Trackett Grim and Splinter.

BY

ED. O. HANDFORTH.

IN THE NICK OF TIME!

LOOK, sir—look!” shouted Splinter, dumb with horror.

Trackett Grim, rooted to the ground with sudden dismay, dashed forward like lightning. He and his young assistant were taking a breath of fresh air on the Embankment, and their consternation was easy to be understood. For, in front of their eyes, a man suddenly leapt over the parapet and cast himself into the swirling depths of the mighty Thames.

“Leave this to me, Splinter!” cried Trackett Grim in a great voice.

And as the moon looked down on this dramatic scene, Trackett Grim gave one tremendous dive over the Embankment, and he went deep, deep down into the clear, crystal water.

More by instinct than anything else, he clutched the half-drowning man, for the Thames was as murky and muddy as ever. But at last Trackett Grim grasped the poor fellow by his collar, and with one tremendous heave he hurled him out of the water, over the parapet, and into Splinter’s arms.

In a trice the great detective followed. The fact that he and his companion were soaked mattered little, for the rain was coming down in torrents. Trackett Grim found that the rescued man was a well-dressed individual of about thirty, and he was looking ferocious.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING FURNITURE!

“Why did you rescue me?” he asked with a snarl. “I have nothing to live for!”

“Piffle!” said Trackett Grim tersely. “Come, my friend! If you wish to commit suicide, all you need do is try to get on one of the Tube trains at the rush hour. But why are you tired of life?”

“Why?” echoed the man in a hollow voice. “Because my furniture has gone!”

“Great heavens!” shouted Trackett Grim hoarsely

“Every stick and stone!” gasped the man. “For a week I have been away on business, and to-day I returned to my house in Fulham. What did I find? Ah, merciful goodness! What did I find? My house is empty—my furniture gone! Piano, dining-room suite, kitchen table—everything! Even my wife’s sewing-machine!”

“Ah! You are married!” asked Trackett Grim shrewdly.

“This—this is marvellous!” stammered the other. “How did you know?”

“A mere deduction,” said the detective lightly. “But your wife—what of her?”

“Oh, she is missing, too!” replied the man indifferently. “But my furniture—what shall I do without it? What have I to live for, without a table to eat from, and a bed to sleep in?”

“Perhaps I can help you—I am Trackett Grim.”

“Trackett Grim!” cried the man, gazing at the detective in awe. “Oh, Mr. Grim, I might have known! Thank you for saving my life! Perhaps you will be able to recover my furniture? My name is O. N. Moore—”

“Yes, you will be,” said Trackett Grim absently.

“Ah?”

“You will be owing more after I’ve finished this case,” replied Trackett Grim. “But tell me, where is your house? I should like to investigate on the spot, and get on the track of the miscreants who burgled your house. I intend to recover the swag, including your wife.”

“Hardly swag, sir,” put in Splinter. “You can class her as booty.”

“On the contrary,” said Mr. O. N. Moore, “she is quite ugly.”

TRACKETT GRIM ON THE JOB!

In less than five minutes they had reached Fulham. It was midday, and the sun was

shining with brilliance. And Mr. Moore led the way to a small suburban villa just off Edgware Road. It was looking deserted and dreary, and the three entered the house and looked round.

"The place is empty!" said Trackett Grim dramatically.

They walked into the front room, where not a stick of furniture could be seen. There was nothing whatever in the apartment except a few odds and ends of paper in the fireplace. Trackett Grim drew a chair to the table and pulled out his pocket-book.

"Please give me a list of the missing goods," he said crisply.

This was soon done, and in the meantime Splinter was making a thorough examination of the premises. Then Trackett Grim looked round, and gave a soft, inscrutable laugh.

"Obviously a ticklish case," he said. "A gang of crooks have been at work here. Burglary and abduction. The scheme, Mr. Moore, is to extract ransom from you for your wife."

"Impossible!" gasped Mr. O. N. Moore. "I'm broke!"

"But have no fear—leave the matter in my hands," said Trackett Grim. "Within the hour I will have your furniture back again, and within two hours I will have found your wife—possibly before. And remember that Trackett Grim never fails."

THE FIRST CLUE!

Ten minutes later Trackett Grim and Splinter were out in the road. Trackett Grim walked firmly and with brisk strides. It was clear that he had a certain mission. Splinter, however, was completely in the dark. Evening was settling upon the great Metropolis.

Suddenly Trackett Grim came to a halt, and stared across the road. A furniture van was drawn up against the curb. A kitchen table was being removed by two men in green aprons. Like an eagle, Trackett Grim swooped across the road, and examined the table with his magnifying lens.

"Ah!" he cried. "The mark of a flat-iron with a chipped point! A clue. Splinter—a positive clue!"

Trackett Grim grasped one of the men by the arm and drew him aside.

"Thirsty?" he asked curtly. "Come into the pub!"

Without a word, the man followed, licking his lips in anticipation. And one of the other furniture men who was carrying a trayful of glassware, staggered back in sheer disappointment, and there came a dreadful crashing of glass.

Trackett Grim soon emerged from the public-house—alone. He had left Splinter with the furniture removers. And now the great detective was wearing the green apron, and was thus disguised as one of the gang.

THE EXPLANATION OF THE MYSTERY!

In a very short time the goods had been delivered, and the furniture van started off up the road, and Trackett Grim,



Trackett Grim grasped the poor fellow by his collar, and with one tremendous heave, he hurled him out of the water, over the parapet and into Splinter's arms.

unsuspected among the other members of the gang, was gloating with triumph. For by this astute ruse, he knew that he would soon find himself at the headquarters of the gang.

In due course the van turned into a yard, and a stout man came out, rubbing his hands. Trackett Grim instantly recognised him as the master crook, and in a trice his revolver was out.

"Hands up!" he commanded curtly. "I am Trackett Grim, and I arrest you all for burgling the house of Mr. O. N. Moore, and pinching his wife!"

The fat man staggered back.

"Fathead!" he howled. "You're off your rocker!"

"Do you dare to speak to me thus?" hooted Trackett Grim.

"This time, Mr. Grim, you have made a mistake," said the other. "I am the manager of the Hirem and Pinchum Furniture Company. Mr. O. N. Moore failed to pay us his third instalment, and we went and took the goods, in accordance with our Hire-Pinchum agreement."

Trackett Grim staggered back, bemused.

"But—but Mr. Moore's wife?" he gasped. "What have you done with her?"

"Nothing!" snapped the manager. "She wasn't worth taking! As a matter of fact, as soon as she saw that the goods had gone she went off to her mother's. You couldn't expect the woman to live in an empty house. And the furniture has already been delivered, brand new, to another customer."

Five minutes later Trackett Grim went sadly away. He did not see Mr. O. N. Moore again, and when he arrived at his chambers in Baker's Inn Road, he did nothing to satisfy Splinter's curiosity.



And now the great detective was wearing the green apron, and was thus disguised as one of the gang.

For the great detective regarded this case as a washout. He had not failed—for he never failed—but the case was a rotten one, because Mr. O. N. Moore was quite unable to pay his fees. And thus Trackett Grim set the affair down as one of his financial failures.

RIDDLEMEREE

By Jack Grey

My first is in pink but not in red,
My second's in chin but not in head;
My third is in pineapple but not in plum,
My fourth is in thumping but not in thumb.
My fifth is in turkey but not in stuffin',
And my last is in crumpet but not in muffin;

My whole is a junior who very high ranks,
In fact he's the best known in all St. Frank's.

My first is in warm but not in cold,
My second's in silver, but not in gold;

My third is in clothes but not in suit,
My fourth is in shoe but not in boot.
My fifth is in thin but not in tall,
My Sixth is in everything but not in all;
My whole is a fellow who constantly dozes.
The last half of his name you'll find where there's roses.

My first is in listen but not in see,
My second's in keyhole but not in key;
My third is in spying but not in spy,
My fourth is in prying but not in pry.
My whole is a most objectionable chap,
But this little verse may stop him, mayhap.

(No prizes are offered for solutions to the above, but any readers who are clever enough to find the correct answers may have a jolly good feed in the tuckshop—at their own expense—Ed.)



E. Sopp's Fables

By
Edgar Sopp of the Fifth

No. 14.—The Fable of The Dandy, The Bicycle, and The Ditch.

IT came to pass that one Bright Day, when the sun shone forth in all its glory, an Elegant Youth wandered into the Wilderness, mounted upon his Jigger. And the Elegant Youth blithely informed the Atmosphere that he was feeling Dashed Braced and Absolutely in the Pink. As a matter of fact, he was on his way back from Bannington, where he had been

VISITING THE HAIRDRESSER'S.

And he was looking smart, and felt that his time had been Well Spent. But, alas, even while these thoughts were occurring to him, it chanced that his attention was attracted by a Dainty Form passing along a footpath over an Adjoining Rise. And the Heart of the Elegant Youth fluttered somewhat, for it occurred to him that the Dainty Form was that of

A MOOR VIEW GIRL.

And his disappointment was keen when he discovered that such was Not The Case. And in the meantime he had Ambled On, failing to observe that he was riding Perilously Near to the Ditch. And, behold, when the Danger became known to him it was Too Late. With Great Presence of Mind, he wrenched at the handle-bar, but this only caused him to Skid. And thereupon he went head foremost.

INTO THE DITCH.

And, behold, the ditch was in that condition which is known Throughout the Land as Squelchy. It contained Little Water, but Much Mud. And as the No-Longer-Elegant Youth crawled out, he viewed the Situation with Horror. To his startled mind the position was not only Foul, but

ABSOLUTELY RAGGED AT THE EDGE.

And he raised his voice unto the Sky, and called Long and Loudly in strange terms, sounding the Good Old S.O.S., and wailing in a futile manner for the assistance of Phipps. And, lo, when he found that none

came, he Sought Valiantly to improve his appearance. But he was muddy from head to foot, his linen was crumpled, and he was, in fact,

A GHASTLY SIGHT.

And it filled him with Horror to realise that the sun shone, and that he Must Needs traverse the Public Highway in order to reach a Haven of Refuge. It was true that he could take the by-lane which Led Towards Edgemoor, and Cut Across the footpath to Bellton Wood. And he thereupon decided to Take this Course, inwardly praying that his Journey would be Solitary. So he staggered off

INTO THE WILDERNESS.

And he began to feel Somewhat Bucked when he observed that the Lane was Empty, and he hastened his pace, using, indeed, Much More Energy than he was popularly supposed to Possess. And, lo, even as he turned one of the bends he pulled himself up short and stood there, as though Frozen With Horror. For within ten yards of him, and looking at him with Eyes of Much Astonishment, was a Benevolent Gentleman whom Archie recognised as the Vicar of Bellton. And the Unhappy Youth made one Headlong Plunge through

A GAP IN THE HEDGE.

And he neither looked behind him, nor to the sides of him, but Fled Onwards, his heart filled with Dread. For he, the One And Only Archie, had been seen by the Vicar in this Horrid Condish! It must be recorded that the Youth felt absolutely Wobbly at the Knees, and he knew not how he would ever Reach his Destination. But at last he arrived in Bellton Wood, and his Mind was Relieved. He told himself that he had now Nought to Fear. But it came to pass that he turned a Bend in the Footpath, and

BEHOLD! THERE WERE TWO YOUNG LADIES.

And Archie again stood Rooted to the Spot, and this time his distress was Pitiful

to Witness. For the Young Ladies were none other than Irene Manners and Marjorie Temple. And it chanced that Archie was Greatly Attracted towards Miss Marjorie. And for Her to see Him thus was Positively Jagged. It was Useless to Flee. There was no place to Flee to. And it relieved him Muchly when he observed that the girls did not smile, but inquired with Great Concern regarding his Unusual Appearance. And the Hapless Youth stammered out a few hasty words, and then Took to His Heels. He felt that he could Explain with Much Greater Satisfaction in the Near Future. And in Due Course he arrived at the rustic stile in Bellton Lane. And it must be observed that this appeared to be

HIS UNLUCKY DAY.

And he felt faint within him, and his heart throbbed with Inward Pain. For his gaze rested upon Dr. Brett, a learned Man of Medicine, who healed all and sundry Throughout the Land. It seemed to Archie that he was meeting Everybody he didn't want to meet. And he remembered, bitterly, that on the Previous Day, when he had gone Forth Dressed to Kill, he had not seen a soul that mattered. But now he was Nearing his Destination, and gratitude glowed in his eyes when he gazed upon the

WELCOME WALLS OF ST. FRANK'S.

And he actually burst into a run, and, behold, as he entered the gateway, he ran into the Head himself. And the Head was angry, and he Sternly Demanded to know what had happened. And, alas, poor Archie was compelled to stay there and explain, horrified, because

A GREAT CROWD GATHERED.

And thus it Came About that the whole school knew of his Plight, and his mortification was complete. And when, later, he found himself Alone with Phipps, he feebly told his Faithful Servant that everything was Poisonous. The Vicar would gaze upon him coldly hereafter, Miss Marjorie would shun him, Dr. Brett would eye him with Contempt, and others would Scorn him. But Phipps

COMFORTED HIS YOUNG MASTER.

And Archie was comforted. For Phipps did point out that All would be Well on the Morrow. And, behold, when Archie went forth the next day, Once Again the Elegant Youth, anxious to meet all those Who Mattered, he met not a soul! For such is the Fickleness of Chance. But Archie rejoiced later, for he discovered that no Real Harm had been done. His fears had been groundless, and his Relief was Absolutely Priceless.

Moral: If your friends are real friends, they won't mind your appearance.



PAINFUL PARODIES

PERPETRATED
By
Clarence Fellowe

A LITTLE SHOVE, A LITTLE KICK

With apologies to that famous song:
"A Little Love, a Little Kiss."

When from Study D come sounds of battle,
And the air with strife is turning green;
When you hear the cups and saucers rattle,
Then you know that Handy's on the scene.

Just a little shove, a little kick,
Just a punch that feels like half a brick;
Eyes that blacken as they're slowly closing,
And the hefty biff that's no supposing!
Just a little shove, a little kick,
Church and Clurey crawl out, sore and sick,
As old Handy slowly dusts his Eton,
And you hear him whispering: "You're beaten!"

Fights will pass and peace will follow after,
Other things will happen for a spell; —
Yet if there is any ribald laughter,
Handy's fists the merriment dispel.

Just a little shove, a little kick,
Through the window goes Church awful quick,
And McClure will gasp out: "Don't be silly!"
As his blood begins to go all chilly.
Just a little shove, a little kick,
Handy's rash, and not at all partic,
How these chaps can stand him is a mystery,
Heroes both—they'll find a place in history!



No. 4. Getting Fit for Footer.

WELL, here we are again, though not so bright and chirpy as usual, for I've got a beast of a cold, all caused by doing something which I ought not to have done, and which shall most certainly be telling you not to do in this article before I am much older. Still, even sportsmasters are liable to forget at times, I suppose, though it's pretty rotten, when you come to think of it, that a little forgetfulness should bring about such a heavy penalty. It happened like this—and see that it doesn't happen in a like manner to you. I was taking part in a footer match the other afternoon when I happened to spot your jolly old editor. I forgot I was only in footer togs, and instead of going into the dressing-room at half-time with the rest of the team, I stood on the touch-line talking to him. As a result, I've got this, blow it!

A DRASTIC CURE.

Still, it's not too bad at the moment, and I've a little treatment of my own invention which usually proves very efficacious in such cases, and which I intend to put into practice to-night. It's a drastic treatment, consisting of a long, non-stop run of about five miles, a brisk rub down on return, and then half an hour's furious exercise with dumbbells and boxing gloves; after that another brisk rub down and then to bed. If I'm not well again in the morning after that lot I shall be dead, that's all, so, in case of the latter possibility, we'll get this week's pow-wow off our chest while I've still a few kicks left in me.

Soccer, of course, is still our theme. We've been through the rules of the game, and now, I think, we understand them sufficiently to get ahead with the game itself. This week, therefore, I'm going to start with a series of action articles, dealing with play and other matters which directly appertain to play. In this series I shall endeavour to give you advice which you might, with advantage, put into useful practise on the field.

Tell me if you like the series, and if you do we'll carry on until you say "Stop!" If you don't like 'em, tell me all the same,

and then we'll likewise stop and get on to something else. In any case, here goes for the first of the series.

GETTING FIT FOR SOCCER.

Now before I launch into discussion upon actual play, I want to say a few words about training, and as those few words are likely to take up all my available space this week I think we'd best devote the whole blessed pow-wow to this all-important question, and get down to the brass tacks of the other business next week. I know that it is a question which is greatly exercising the minds of many of my readers and pupils at the moment, and it is a matter which is as vitally important to success in football as accurate shooting or kicking or anything else like that. After all, you might know everything there is to know about football from a theoretical point of view, but you can't play footer until, in the first place, you've properly fitted yourself for it.

I'm not going to give you a hard and fast set of rules. I don't believe in 'em for boys of your ages, though they're all very well for professionals, who make their living by the game and, therefore, can spare the time for training. Most of you are lads who have just started in business, or who are still at school, and in giving you these hints I'm considering that.

THE ROAD TO HEALTH.

A man in training is one who is always thoroughly fit, so here are a few hints which will enable you to keep yourself fit, and following them are a few more hints, more directly applied to football which, if followed carefully, will make you a man of inestimable value to your side. If you like a clean, healthy life, shun alcoholic drinks and smoking, and eat sparingly of such dainty, but indigestive foods as sweetstuffs, pastries, new bread and "doughy" puddings, and observe with this a few exercises in the morning, a good walk or a run in the evening—or, if you have cycles a cycle ride—you should be in that desirable condition of physical fitness which is every real healthy lad's ambition to attain. If you don't and realise you are physically unfit, then you'd

better get into the habit I have outlined above very quickly.

Out of school or business hours get into the fresh air as much as possible, and when you're in the fresh air get the full benefit of it by running, or walking, or cycling, or indulging in some healthy athletic game. This is the road to health and fitness—a road which, if pursued diligently, will finally make you as strong and as robust as a young lion with a perfect constitution and a ton of steel-like stamina. Only, be careful in following this road that at first you don't go too far along it, and therefore have to stop a long period for rest before you can complete the next lap of the journey. In other words, if you haven't been used to doing this sort of a thing before, don't rush in at it like a mad bull at a gate and try and get about three months training crammed into one night.

DO IT GRADUALLY.

Don't smile! I'm not so old that I have forgotten my own youth and what my ideas were when I was about fourteen are very probably yours now, for I was one of you. There is a temptation, having decided to take the plunge, to overdo things at first. You'll say to yourself, "Well, I'll give this chap a chance anyway, and see if what he says comes off," for, of course, you want to become strong and robust. Therefore, by way of a trial you push off on a five or six mile run, come back, panting and flushed, and crawl into bed with a happy, satisfied smile, feeling that at that you are laying the foundation of a career like that of Samson. Next morning you are considerably pained and surprised to find that every muscle in your body aches as though it had been massaged with a steel wire brush.

That's because you've overdone it, and to overdo this sort of thing is nearly as bad as not to do it at all. Take it gently at first. If you run, run till you become pleasantly conscious that you are getting tired, and then chuck it without attempting to do any more. The next night you find that you will be able to run a little longer before arriving at the stage of pleasant tiredness, and each succeeding night the time will increase. By that you will know that you are becoming healthier and stronger and already beginning to lay a reserve of stamina. Build up fitness by gradual stages, and help it along by eating and drinking the right sort of things—which is everything except those I have told you to steer clear of.

HOW TO GET GOALS.

Now for some football training hints. If you're a forward you naturally want to know how to get goals, and here's a little exercise which, I have often discovered, has met with astonishing success. Chalk a mark on the wall, or a tree, or anything else that might be convenient about five or six feet from the ground, and try pot shooting at the mark with a football, noticing how

many times you hit it, and how many times you miss it. I can tell you quite truthfully that you will be astonished at the number of times you miss the mark at first, but you will be more pleasantly surprised, after some little time spent in this exercise, how frequently you will hit it or get near to it. And when you have succeeded in conquering the mark with shots from a given spot, try dribbling up and shooting at it on the run. Try also to hit the mark from all sorts of angles. It's wonderful what this sort of practise will do for young would-be goal-getters.

Practise is the keynote of success. Practise wherever you can. If you haven't got a football at the moment don't let that worry you; improvise one out of rags and paper and string, and try passing and dribbling with one of your pals. A good trick to try in order to develop your passing prowess, is to run with the ball parallel to a wall, flicking the ball smartly at the wall, catching it on the rebound, and receiving and passing again. If you are a goalie, mark out a run about twice the size of an ordinary run and get some of your footballing pals to bombard you with shots. A back should do everything that forwards do in their training, and, in addition, concentrate up developing a strong kick.

USE BOTH FEET.

And in training there are other things to remember. You should try shooting in with both left and right feet, you should try passing with the left side of the foot and the right side of the boot so that you may avoid the danger that so many of our present day footballers have fallen into—that of being a one wing man only. Many people who do not understand Association football as it should be understood, have often argued why a right wing forward should turn out to be an absolute failure on the left wing, and vice versa. That is simply because the right wing forward has been so accustomed to using his right foot, and brought suddenly into a position where most of the work falls upon his left, he finds himself right out of practise.

No, boys, don't be a 'one footer.' Train both of those feet in the way they should go, so that you may be as useful to your team on the right wing as on the left.

This is all I have to say this week. But to vary the monotony of giving you a long string of questions with which to supply answers, I am this week giving you a little essay, based upon the above pow-wow. I want you all to have a shot at it, and the best efforts which I receive I shall publish in these pages in due course. The little essay is:

HOW I TRAIN FOR FOOTER.

and must deal with your own personal experiences.

Get into it, lads!

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

By Willy Handforth

EDITORIAL NOTE.—We have received the following contribution from our most youthful author. With a great show of heat, Willy demanded that this effort should be published verbatim. His grievance, it seems, was that his previous contributions to the Magazine were deliberately mutilated for the purpose of making them funny. It is our duty to admit that one of our sub-editors—discretion prohibits the name being given—altered the spelling of our young author's previous efforts, in the belief that this would add to their humour. In deference to Willy's wishes, the present article is printed exactly as received. We leave it to our readers to judge for themselves. Although Willy's spelling now appears in its unvarnished glory, we really think that some sub-editing was necessary. However, we have refrained from altering the manuscript by even a comma or a full stop.

I DON'T want to make a fuss over nothing, but I think that I've been treated pretty rottenly. It's a bit thick when my perfectly correct spelling is absolutely mutilated out of all recognition and made to appear worse than the spelling of a solomon islander I'm not the chap to grumble and I don't make a fuss over nothing but I don't call it funny to make a chap look horribly ignorant when he isn't so I demand that this article shall be published like it is.

And this isn't the first time I've complained either over three weeks ago I went into the editors office and looked him straight in the face, and I thumped my fist on the desk.

Look here, I said, what about my spelling. Go away, said the editor, don't come bothering now. But I want satisfaction I snorted I want nothing but the truth. Too busy, said the editor. Clear off, or you'll get a thick ear.

And that's all the satisfaction I got and if that's not thick what is? I've spoken to my major about it until I'm tired, and at last I've taken a stand. I'm not going to write any more articles for the Mag. unless I have a promise that everything I write shall be put in the Mag. without being altered. I think it's a dirty trick to mess a chap about like this.

I don't mind writing all sorts of things if I get justice but just think of the harm it's doing to the school? What will people say about St. Franks if they get hold of the Mag. and see my articles! As a matter of fact I heard two ladies in the Japanese restaurant in Bannington I'd gone in there for some cakes, and I needn't tell you how wild I was.

In fact I was so jolly ratty that I paid for the cakes and forgot to take them out now you can understand my feelings. And why? I'll tell you what these ladies said and then you'll understand somethings got to be done so I'm doing it.

Shocking said one of the ladies I can't understand any boy spelling like it can you Martha? I call it disgraceful replied the other lady, in a kind of pitying voice just fancy a boy not being able to spell my! My little jimmy is only six and he can spell twice as good of course, said the other lady.

I don't want you to think I was listening, but I couldn't help it, because I was standing at the counter and these ladies were sitting among the tables of course I looked round. And then I had a fit. Because they had the Mag. in their hands and were looking at that article called Spoofing My Major, although it was spelt all wrong.

Wait a minute I said, going up to the table, and facing the two ladies. Who are you? asked Martha. I'm the author of that article I said then you ought to be ashamed of yourself said the lady. I'm not I shouted indignantly. Then you're a bad ignorant boy and you ought to be cained snapped the lady.

I kept my temper. Ah, you don't know the truth about that article I said, as calm as you like. I suppose you think all the chaps at St. Franks spell like that, it looks like it said the lady? Then appearances are deceptive I replied, because that article has been messed about, and I've been messed about, and I'm jolly well going to kick up the dickens after this.

And I told em all about it, and they were jolly pleased but it only shows what a bad name St. Frank's is getting. It isn't fair to me and it isn't fair to the school and if this article isn't printed in the Mag. I'll send it to the bannington gazette, and ask the editor to print it in the cause of Justice!

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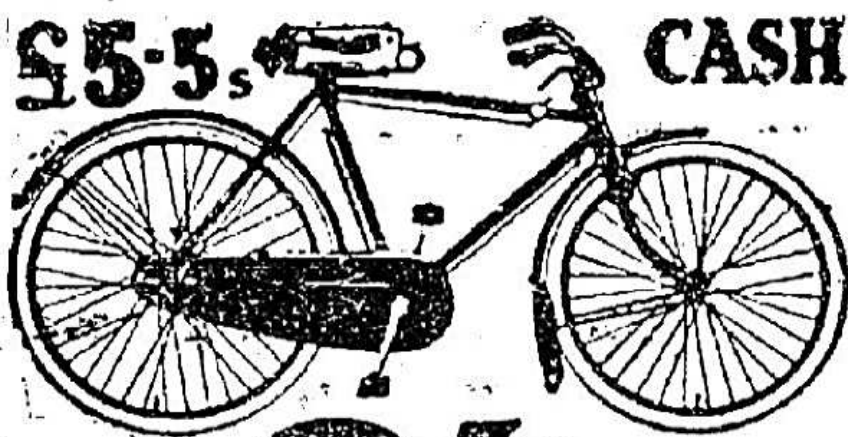


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