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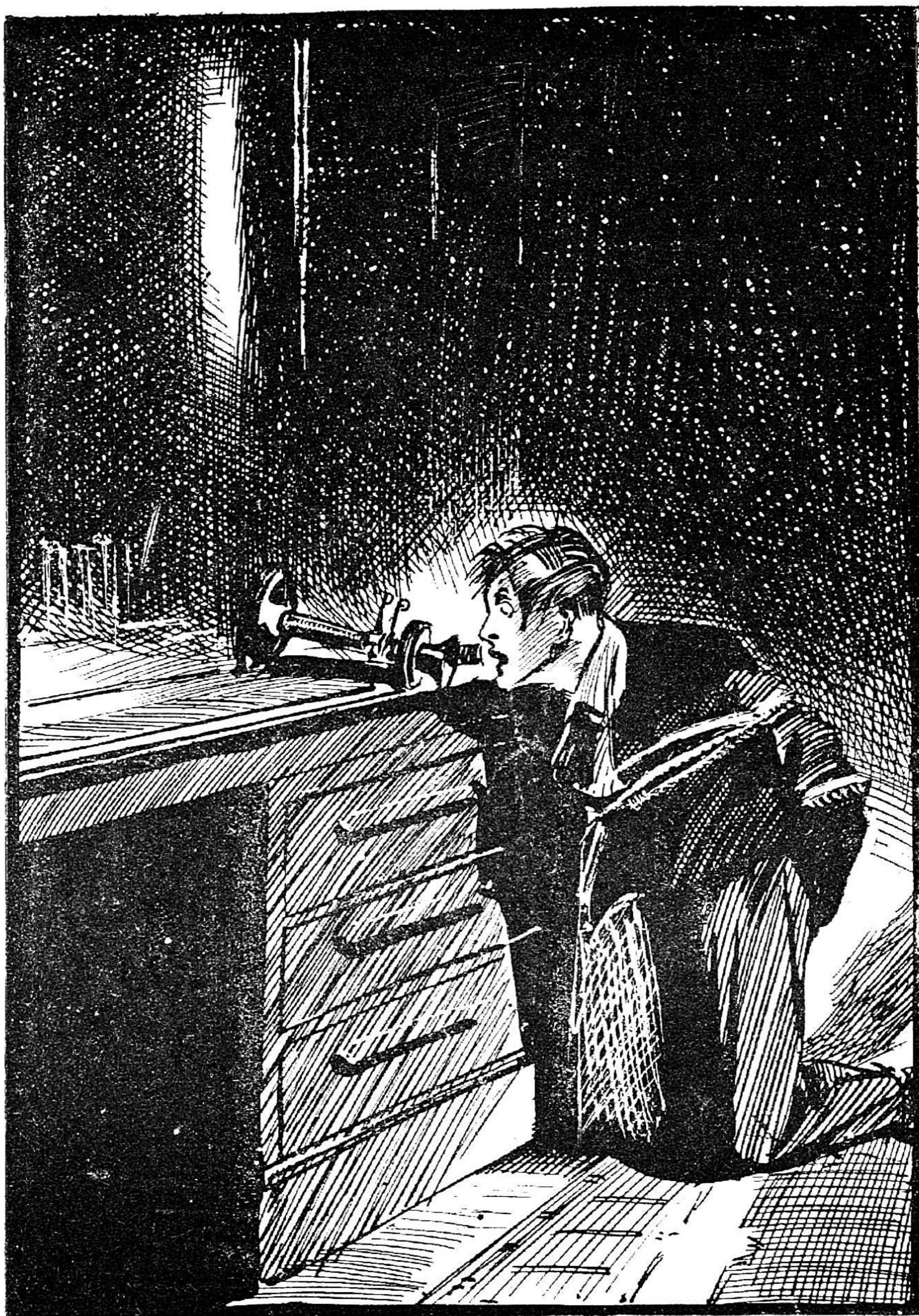
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THE ATTACK ON THE POWER-STATION

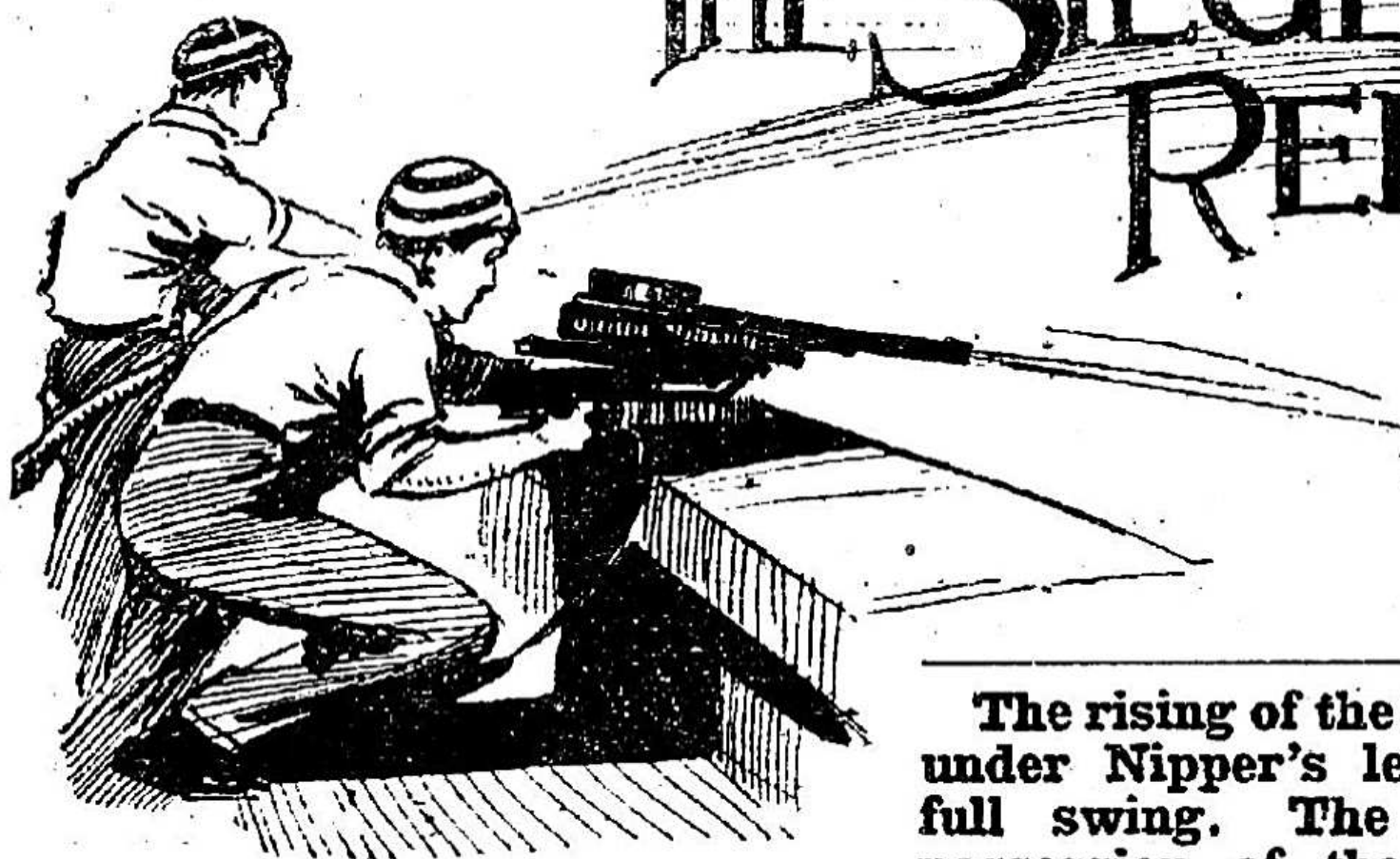
See This Week's Great Story of the Remove Rebellion:—

THE SIEGE OF THE REBELS!



"I am bound up, and a prisoner in Smith's hands!" hissed Pitt.
 "Smith's got us whacked! Warn Nipper to clear out while there's time!"

THE SIEGE OF THE REBELS!



A Rousing School
Story of the Great
Barring-Out at St.
Frank's.

The rising of the Remove at St. Frank's under Nipper's leadership is now in full swing. The Juniors have taken possession of the power station in

defiance of Mr. W. K. Smith, the German-American multi-millionaire, who is now controlling the old school with the assistance of Mr. Ponsonby Small, whom he has installed as Headmaster in place of Dr. Stafford. Mr. Smith, otherwise known as "Cyclone Smith," has bought up St. Frank's and adjoining estates, and upon this land he has erected large factories and established an American township for his foreign labourers. The Remove are driven to revolt against this intrusion on the ancient school preserves, as well as the insufferable restrictions imposed on them by the new Head.

THE EDITOR.

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

CHAPTER I.

THE REMOVE IN REVOLT.

"HALT!"

I rapped out the command sharply, and Mr. Dinty Todd and several other men who were approaching the main door of the power-station came to a full-stop and stared up at me.

"Say, kiddoes, what's de big idea?" inquired Mr. Todd grimly. "For de love of Mike! You young guys is sure de snappiest bunch ever, I'll tell de wold. Listen! You'd best quit dis doggone dope, and——"

"Sorry, Dinty, but there's nothing doing," I called down. "In any case, our quarrel isn't with you. We're up against Mr. William K. Smith. Our only regret is that you should be associated with such a Hun!"

Dinty Todd frowned.

"Aw, gee, forget it!" he exclaimed. "You'se ain't got de boss right! Treat him with tact, and dat guy is sure de most reasonable feller you ever met. Say, I'm tellin' you'se! There'll sure be trouble——"

"Your voice is musical, Dinty, and I hate interrupting it, but let me warn you that if you step much nearer, we shall be compelled to take action," I put in. "Kindly step back a few paces. The same applies to your friends."

The man looked angry and startled, and those with him were equally annoyed. But they laughed sneeringly at this threat from a mere schoolboy. Dinty Todd glanced round, and then spoke to his men.

"Guess we'll smash that door down right away," he said. "Come on!"

The crowd of men advanced towards the door. I gave a significant glance at Reggie Pitt out of the corner of my eye, and Reggie gave a few brisk orders among the members of No. 3 Company, which he commanded.

"Now, you chaps—this is where the fun begins," said Reggie. "We didn't hope for so early an entertainment, but the fates have been kind. When I drop my hand, let fly! And see that your aim is good."

Pitt glanced over the parapet, and down went his hand.

Whiz, whiz! Swish!

Dinty Todd and his companions, taken completely by surprise, received several kinds of a shock. They also received several kinds of missile, including obsolete eggs, questionable fruit, and paper-bags which were extremely deceptive until investigated. Dinty Todd investigated one with his face. The paper-bag burst with a kind of pop, and the surprised Mr. Todd was quite obliterated for a moment in a mass of thin, oozy mud.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Remove for ever!"

"Down with the servants of tyranny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Present arms—fire!" commanded Pitt, with relish.

Swish! Whizzz!

Another fusilade swept down from the power-station, and the crowd of men broke ranks and fled. They had not been prepared for any such encounter as this, and as they went, the Rebel Remove roared with derision and victory.

"Hurrah!"

"When you come back you'll get another dose!"

The Remove roared with laughter, and as I glanced at all the flushed faces, I could see that the fellows were greatly excited. And with excellent reason. For, strictly speaking, this was the first hour of the rebellion.

"You mustn't think it's going to be as easy as this all along the line," I warned them. "We've taken up this stand, and we'll stick to our guns like glue. But it's going to be a grim business."

"We're ready for it!"

"Rather!"

"Good old Nipper—you'll lead us to victory!"

"Hurrah!"

I was certainly complimented, but the responsibility of commanding the entire rebel force was a big one. And I knew, better than the rank and file of the fellows did, that this rebellion was not to be all honey.

However, it had started well, and although there is an old saying to the effect that a good start means a bad finish, I was by no means discouraged by this. It would be Mr. William K. Smith who came to a bad finish.

Our revolt against authority was directed more against the Chicago German-American millionaire than it was against Mr. Ponsonby Small, the headmaster of St. Frank's.

For Ponsonby Small, after all, was a mere tool in Smith's hands—a weakling who had been placed in power, so that Mr. Smith could give orders as he chose. To rebel against the Head was useless, but to defy William K. Smith was a very different matter.

Our coup had been planned a week earlier.

And during the last five or six days, while the Remove appeared to be dull, listless,

and resigned to its fate, it had actually been preparing the way for this great rising. And so carefully had our plans matured, that when the zero hour arrived there had not been the slightest hitch.

We had evacuated St. Frank's, so to speak, in the silence of the night, and had taken up our positions in this newly-built power-house without the enemy becoming aware of the fact. We had certainly overpowered two watchmen, and these fellows had been kept prisoners until the secret was out. They had now been released, since we preferred their room to their company.

We felt that we had a perfect right to take possession of the power-house, which was a squat, red brick building, with a flat roof, which was most convenient for defensive measures. Over half the rebels were on this roof now, leaning over the parapet on all sides, watching for every move of the enemy.

The building had only been erected during the last week. Hundreds of men had been employed on the job, and it was certainly exasperating for Mr. Smith to see that his recent labours had been mainly for the benefit of the Remove.

But Smith was in the wrong—and he knew it.

The meadow on which this building had been erected was locally known as Curdle's Paddock. And it belonged—every blade of grass and every pebble—to the Remove Form of St. Frank's.

This seems remarkable, but it happens to be a fact. And it was really due to a master-stroke on our part. For weeks the Remove had been anxious to strike this blow against William K. Smith's arrogance. But it would have been impossible to trespass on his property and defy the law.

And just when it seemed unlikely that we should ever have our chance, it came almost without warning. We learned that Mr. Smith's agents had failed to take up an option regarding Curdle's Paddock. And, as a result of our swift move, the wily American millionaire had lost the meadow, and it had been purchased by our old friend, Lord Dorrimore, who immediately signed it over to the Remove, each fellow to have an equal share.

This gave us a lever which we were now wielding.

Smith had learned of his loss with rage, for it happened that the paddock was a key position in Smith's plans. He was building his power-station on this meadow, in conjunction with Willard's Island, where he was erecting costly apparatus to harness the River Stowe.

For Smith had come here with a thousand men, and a big encampment had sprung up all over these meadows which lie between the river and Bellton Wood, extending right down to the grounds of the River House School. The camp looked like a rough

Western American township, and had already been dubbed "Cyclone City."

Smith, furious at the trick that had been played upon him, had point-blank refused to give up Curdle's Paddock, which was no more his property than Trafalgar Square was. He believed that his financial position made him safe. His motto was that might conquers over right.

But, in all his schemings, Mr. Smith quite failed to reckon with that collection of determined youngsters known as the St. Frank's Remove.

And it came as a shock to the great business man that he could be so worried and harassed by a mere parcel of school-boys.

But that was just where we had him.

Business opponents he could smash by his financial wizardry. If they opposed him, he could bring about their ruin. But not the Remove. Smith's only weapon against this new force was an exhibition of brute strength.

The millionaire had made plans to erect vast factories, and to convert the whole peaceful countryside into a black, grimy manufacturing centre. Nobody would have objected, perhaps, because this meant industry. But Smith was employing his own workmen—a motley collection of half-breeds, Mexicans, negroes, and all manner of other "American" citizens. And the whole countryside was up in arms against him.

But the Remove did more than talk—it acted.

Life had become so intolerable at St. Frank's that something simply had to be done. And we gloated, too, over the fact that we were making a decisive move against this German-American invader. And we had merely taken possession of our own property. And surely we had the right to do that?

And there we were, in full possession of the power-station, awaiting the arrival of Mr. William K. Smith. He had been once already, but only for a brief spell. We were anxious to communicate our terms to him. I had no expectation that he would calmly give in to us. If I knew anything about the man, he was a fighter, and would hold out to the last ditch.

So it seemed that some excitement was brewing.

"About time Smith returned, isn't it?" asked Tommy Watson. "I say, do you think he'll be reasonable?"

I smiled.

"Judging by the expression on his face when he left, I don't think Ponsonby Small is finding him very reasonable just now," I replied. "You can be quite certain, my son, that large slices of trouble are near at hand."

"Good!" said Edward Oswald Handforth. "I hope there'll be a fight! This siege business is all very well, but I want to go

out, and lead my company against these rotten foreigners!"

"Then you'll have to want," I replied grimly. "By remaining here we are within our own rights, but as soon as we leave the paddock we're trespassing. We've got to be careful, and——"

"Hallo!" interrupted Pitt. "The enemy returns."

About twenty-five of Smith's workmen, curious and indignant, were moving towards the power-station. The settlement, of course, was in full view from our roof, and we overlooked the whole straggling place. There were hundreds of men moving about among the wooden shacks. But the majority of them had taken very little notice of us after the first stares of curiosity.

But these men who were approaching were a number of those who should have been working on the building at the moment. Our seizure of the power-house had brought all their labours to a standstill.

Without waiting to parley, they made a determined rush at the main door. The battle was short and sharp and intense. Those bags of mud had been prepared by the dozen, and they were hurled down with unerring effect. Eggs whizzed upon the enemy, too.

"Go it, you chaps—let 'em have it!"

"Hurrah!"

"Down with the enemy!"

Whizz! Swish! Whiz!

The workmen below had determined to smash that door down at all costs, being prepared for defiance. But they had hardly expected such a concentrated assault as this. In spite of all their determination, they simply couldn't stand against the overwhelming hail of unpleasant material that rained upon them.

And at last, cursing and roaring with rage, they fled, followed by the rousing cheers of the Rebel Remove.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRICE OF SURRENDER.



MR. WILLIAM K. SMITH strode through the hall in the Head's house at St. Frank's, and burst into Mr. Ponsonby Small's study like a whirlwind.

The American millionaire was a tall man, lithe and active. He had a keen, clean-shaven face, with cruel lips and steely eyes. There was nothing of the German about his appearance. But it remained a fact that he had been christened Wilhelm Karl Schmidt, and that his ancestors were pure Prussian.

He found himself face to face with Ponsonby Small—who was as insignificant as Mr. Smith was imposing. The man who ruled over all St. Frank's was a weedy,

unpleasant-looking little man, with somewhat watery eyes. At the present moment he was shivering with apprehension.

"Mr. Smith!" he said eagerly and nervously. "I—I am glad you have come! Good—good-morning, sir! This is a dreadful business—a perfectly dreadful business! Really, I am at my wits' end."

Mr. Smith grunted.

"I guess you didn't need to go far!" he snapped caustically. "Say, what sense have you got, anyway? I'm here to know why those boys were allowed to quit the school and play this fool game!"

"Really, I—I am at a total loss," said Mr. Small feebly. "Only half an hour ago I discovered that the boys had vanished. It is a complete mystery. An utter problem. If I only knew where they were——"

"You're not wise to their game, then?"

"No—they appear to have gone off somewhere," said the Head. "But I assure you, Mr. Smith, that it was through no fault of mine. These wretched boys vanished during the night without creating the slightest commotion. How was I to know? How was I to suspect?"

Cyclone Smith cursed savagely.

"Cut out the whining!" he snarled.

"You're a cursed fool, Small!"

"But, really, Mr. Smith!" protested the Head. "I—I must insist——"

"Listen! Those boys are down on Curdle's Paddock," broke in Mr. Smith harshly. "They've seized the power-station, and they're in open defiance."

The Head looked eagerly at the other.

"In—in Curdle's Paddock?" he repeated.

"Oh, splendid—splendid! Then we know where they are! What a relief, Mr. Smith—what an infinite relief! I'd begun to fear something much worse."

"And isn't it bad enough?" roared Smith.

"See here, you fool head! If those boys are not back in this school within three hours, you'll quit! I'm not standing any nonsense from you! Through sheer incompetence, you let these boys defy you, and now the whole work of my camp is being held up, and it's costing me thousands of dollars every hour that passes."

Mr. Ponsonby Small gathered together a few shreds of his dignity.

"I must protest, sir!" he said stiffly.

"When you lay the blame at my door, you are doing me a gross injustice. Have I not been carrying out your instructions—to the letter?"

"You let those boys defy you——"

"I let them!" broke in Mr. Small hotly.

"Nothing of the sort, sir—nothing of the sort! I have already told you that they went off during the night, without the slightest commotion. Until this morning, I had no inkling of what was brewing."

"Then you should have had," snapped the millionaire.

"Really, sir, you make it difficult for me to keep my temper," exclaimed the Head.

"Only yesterday you told me that the junior

boys were completely cowed, and well in hand. I was of the same opinion. Why, good gracious, it was impossible to suspect this disaster. It is a deep-laid plot, Mr. Smith—the boys had evidently been preparing in secret. And I ask you, in all fairness, how can I possibly have guarded against such a movement?"

William K. Smith calmed down somewhat.

"Well, I guess it's no good sitting around here talking," he said curtly. "You'll come with me, Mr. Small, and order these boys back to their duties. If they refuse, there'll be some big trouble."

The Head succeeded in convincing Mr. Smith that the whole affair had been a complete surprise, and that he was not to blame in any way. Indeed, Mr. Small went further.

"You appear to forget, sir, that the Remove has not rebelled against my authority so much as it has rebelled against yours," he pointed out.

"What the blazes do you mean?"

"Surely I make myself clear?" said Mr. Small, feeling more confidence. "It is idle to delude ourselves that the boys know nothing of our relations. Let me tell you, Mr. Smith, that they are fully aware of your position—they know that you have the reins of authority practically in your own hands."

"Well?"

"My dear sir, surely the facts speak for themselves?" said the Head. "The Remove, instead of defying me on these premises, has actually invaded your own camp. The boys, in fact, are in possession of your new power-station. And it seems to me that it is your task, and not mine, to dislodge them. It would be grossly unfair to make me suffer if these young ruffians are defiant. For what can I do in a position such as this? The boys are no longer in the school."

Mr. Smith grunted.

"Say, Small, you've got more sense than I gave you credit for," he growled. "All right—leave this to me. But you'd best come along and give the cubs their orders. If they refuse—well, I guess I'll get busy."

Mr. Ponsonby Small was feeling easier as he and the millionaire stepped briskly across the Triangle through the sharp March air. He had clearly shown Mr. Smith that it was not his job to quell the Remove, since the Remove had taken up its stand within Smith's territory.

By the time they arrived in the paddock, there were obvious signs of conflict. Some of the workmen were standing about in angry groups. Others were cleaning themselves, and all sorts of harsh remarks were being made about the boys. But the power-station was left severely alone.

Mr. Ponsonby Small approached with caution. He didn't actually fear any fusillade of bad eggs, or similar atrocities, but, at the same time, he did not neglect the possibility of such an event.

"Boys!" he called sharply, holding himself ready to bolt at the first warning. "Who is in charge of this—this rebellion?"

The whole flat roof of the power-house was crowded with juniors, and they leaned over the parapet with a feeling of great security. This building was a first-class fortress.

"Good-morning, Mr. Small!" I shouted crisply. "It would be better, perhaps, if you came a little nearer. So much easier for talking, sir. Have no fear—we will regard this as a truce."

Mr. Small walked nearer, William K. Smith remaining in the rear.

"I am very angry with you," declared the Head, gazing up at us with glittering eyes. "What is the meaning of this outrageous insurrection? I demand to know the name of the ringleader."

"You're speaking to him now, Mr. Small," I replied calmly.

"You accept full responsibility, Nipper?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't you believe him, sir!" roared Handforth. "We're all in this together—every fellow takes the same share of blame."

"Credit, you mean!" said Reggie Pitt.

"Hear, hear!"

"We are perfectly willing to walk straight back to St. Frank's at once," I continued.

"But you will quite understand, Mr. Small, that we have certain proposals to put forward. And our quarrel is with Mr. William K. Smith, and not with yourself."

"Indeed!" said the Head, not without relief. "Against Mr. William K. Smith, eh? Are you insane? I am your headmaster! Mr. Smith is in no way connected with the school—"

"That may be so, but he is connected with you, Mr. Small," I interrupted. "And all the indignities which have recently been inflicted upon the Junior School are his doing. It is therefore quite a waste of time for me to talk with you. Kindly ask Mr. Smith to step forward."

I was quite polite, and I had previously warned the rebels that under no circumstances were they to offer violence to the headmaster's person unless he deliberately invited an attack.

"You are impertinent, boy!" snapped the Head. "I am your headmaster, and it is not my intention to parley with you. You will obey my commands. Come out of this building at once, and return to the school."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The rebels quite enjoyed the joke.

"Sorry, sir, but I am afraid the scheme doesn't meet with our approval," I replied sweetly. "We want to speak with Mr. Smith."

"How dare you?" stormed Mr. Small. "I never met with such gross insubordination in all my experience! Will you obey me or not?"

"Not!" chanted the Remove, in one voice.

"The ringleaders will be expelled forthwith unless this nonsense ceases at once!"



Whizz! Handforth hurled that bag of mud with unerring aim. It caught Mr. William K. Smith full in the face, and the millionaire staggered back, practically obliterated.

stormed the Head. "As for you, Nipper, you will be flogged and expelled, in any case. I have had enough of this detestable insolence. You are an absolute disgrace to the school."

"Quite so, sir," I said calmly. "Somehow, I had an idea that you would take that view. I can only say that we are still wasting time. We don't intend to surrender, and we'll do nothing whatever until we have spoken with Mr. Smith."

"Go away—we don't want you!" shouted some of the fellows.

"Yah! Do your worst!"

"You're not a Head! You're only a figurehead!" exclaimed Pitt.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Small stood there, quivering with rage.

"Very well!" he snarled. "Oh, very well! We will see about this, you young ruffians! Yes, we will see!"

He stalked off, looking quite ludicrous with his knock-knees. This was no fault of his own, but a pure misfortune. However, it was impossible for such a man to look dignified.

"You heard, sir?" panted Mr. Small, as he faced the millionaire. "These young dogs are utterly out of hand—"

"I heard!" broke in Mr. Smith. "Leave this to me!"

He walked forward, and the rebels ceased their laughter and jeering. There was something grim and commanding about William K. Smith—something indefinable that compelled the boys to cool down. All round

the paddock were crowds of Smith's workmen, looking on with interest.

"Good-morning, Mr. Smith!" I said smoothly. "Forgive us for spoiling your breakfast, but life's full of these little troubles. Do I understand that you have come to hear our terms?"

"I don't discuss terms with young whelps of your calibre!" replied Mr. Smith curtly. "You'll quit this property within the hour, or I'll turn a crowd of my men loose on you and have you kicked out! Is that clear enough, or shall I speak some more?"

"You are apparently assuming, Mr. Smith, that you are in a position to dictate," I pointed out. "Allow me to correct this

"Trespassing?" repeated Mr. Smith harshly.

"Exactly. This paddock belongs to the Remove," I explained sweetly. "It is, in fact, our own property. You built this power-station upon it at your own risk——"

"Say, what bluff is this?" snarled Smith. "The meadow was bought by that infernal fool, Lord Dorrimore——"

"Then you admit that you are trespassing?" I put in. "That's something to be going on with, at all events. But let me tell you, Mr. Smith, that Lord Dorrimore signed over this piece of ground to us, and if you wish to have the legal proofs, they will be readily forthcoming.

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little misapprehension on your part. It is we who hold the trump card, and it would simplify matters all round if you accepted that fact at once."

"By heck! You've got some nerve!" shouted the millionaire.

"A little," I agreed.

"But if you think you can adopt this tone with me, you've got off at the wrong station!" declared the millionaire. "I'm in no mood to argue. I believe in action—not in words——"

"Just a minute, Mr. Smith," I interrupted. "It would be as well, before proceeding further, to make it clear to you that you are trespassing."

However, we do not wish to be arbitrary. Knowing that this property is valuable to your own enterprise, we are quite open to negotiation."

The millionaire was nonplussed. The calm way in which I was speaking to him took his breath away. He had expected something quite different. The Remove fellows were crowding against the parapet, listening eagerly to my carefully prepared words.

"Good old Nipper!" murmured Church. "He's a wonder at this sort of thing!"

"Talks like a giddy politician!" said Armstrong.

"Say, boy, you're some little guy!" exclaimed Mr. Smith, after a pause. "So you're open to negotiations, eh? I'm sure interested. What's your price for quitting this paddock?"

"That's the way, Mr. Smith," I said briskly. "This is just a matter of business, so we'll conduct it in a business way. Our price is rather stiff, I am afraid, but we have considered it carefully, and you must take it or leave it. Firstly, we demand the instant dismissal of Mr. Ponsonby Small; secondly, we desire the return of Dr. Stafford as early as possible; thirdly, we insist that all our former liberties are restored to us in the school; fourthly, you must find different accommodation for the boys of the River House School; and, fifthly and lastly, we must have four hundred pounds in cash."

Mr. Smith looked at me with glowering rage.

"Say, what's this—a joke?" he rapped out.

"Not at all—I am in deadly earnest," I replied.

"What's this four hundred pound stuff?" demanded Mr. Smith. "Gosh, you've got some assurance, kid! Why, the figure is absurd—"

"It is the exact figure that Lord Dorrimore paid to Mr. John Curdle," I pointed out. "You will therefore appreciate that we desire to make no profit for ourselves in cash; but to reimburse Lord Dorrimore. Our sole and only object is to secure the dismissal of Mr. Ponsonby Small, and the restoration of the old regime. That, Mr. Smith, is the position in a nutshell."

Mr. Smith nearly choked for a moment. He had been growing angrier and angrier, and now he shook his fist at us menacingly.

"You young fools!" he thundered. "Do you think I'm going to stand for this nonsense? You'll quit that building, or I'll set my men on to you!"

"Set them on to us—and do your worst!" I replied curtly. "And let me point out once more, Mr. Smith, that you are trespassing on our property."

The millionaire turned away, nearly foaming at the mouth. His eyes were hard and steely, and he looked dangerous. This was the first time in his whole business career that he had been dictated to—and he didn't like it!

CHAPTER III.

NO SURRENDER.



THERE was an expression of grim hardness in William K. Smith's eyes as he turned away. His anger was still intense, but he controlled himself. He returned to Mr. Ponsonby Small, and stood there without speaking.

He jerked a cigar from his pocket, and jammed it between his teeth and proceeded to chew it fiercely. His eyebrows were contracted, and he seemed to be in such deep thought that Mr. Small made no remark.

As a matter of fact, the millionaire was startled.

Once or twice he had been openly defied by his own workpeople, but never once had he got the worst of a battle. He assumed that these schoolboys would knuckle under completely, once he gave his orders. For them to defy him in this bold manner was staggering.

"Well, sir, what shall we do?" ventured Mr. Small at length. "It appears that the wretched youngsters have taken up quite a stand. Most unfortunate—most distressing! I really fail to see—"

"Say, cut out that snivelling!" snarled Smith, his voice sounding harsh even in his own ears. "These young fools will regret defying me! By heck! I'll make them suffer as they've never suffered before!"

The Head looked rather nervous.

"I trust, Mr. Smith, that you are not contemplating any—er—violence," he said tentatively. "It would be extremely unfortunate if any of the boys were injured. They deserve it, of course, but nowadays the newspapers are so inquisitive and so arrogant—"

"You'll leave this affair to me, Small!" interrupted Smith curtly. "I have smashed strikes in my own factories, and I have quelled mutinies among thousands of men! Gos—durn it! Am I to be defied by this crowd of young cubs? I'll reduce them to reason within the hour, or my name's not Smith!"

He paced up and down, chewing the still unlighted cigar. Then, abruptly, he called to several of his men, and gave them some sharp, curt orders. Mr. Small, standing by, became more nervous than ever. He gathered that Mr. Smith was contemplating a vigorous attack upon the power-station. But he wanted to be sure.

"Do I understand, sir, that you are making preparations for an attack upon these boys?" he asked. "Pray let me urge you, Mr. Smith, to use every care! Remember the high social standing of many of these boys. Some have titled parents, others are the sons of rich, influential men. It behoves us to be very careful—"

"Say, what's your grouch, anyhow?" snapped Cyclone Smith fiercely.

"I have just been remarking, sir—"

"I didn't hear you," interrupted the other. "I was thinking."

"Is it safe to proceed with this extremely drastic measure, sir?" asked the Head timidly. "Do you not think it would be better to exhaust every other method of persuasion first? And, after all, this paddock actually does belong to Lord Dorrimore—or to the boys themselves, as they maintain. It is at least a certainty that

we are, in the eyes of the law, trespassers upon this field. I tremble to think of the consequences if the police——"

"See here, Small, you'd best get right along to the school!" cut in Mr. Smith harshly. "I've got no use for your sort around here! This is a job for men—not for weak-kneed simpletons!"

Mr. Small flushed at the imputation.

"Very well, sir," he said stiffly. "Very well! If that is the way you feel, I will retire at once. But let me warn you that the consequences will be grave if any of the boys are harmed——"

"Go!" roared Cyclone Smith, volcano-like in his vehemence.

The Head nearly jumped a yard, and made haste to depart. The millionaire's demeanour was so threatening that Mr. Small half-expected to be attacked. He lost no time in making himself scarce.

In the meantime, William K. Smith was making grim, active preparations. He had decided to put an end to this impossible position in one swift blow. The whole work of his camp was held up by the seizure of the power-station, and he had not the slightest intention of waiting.

The stoppage of work was costing him hundreds of pounds in money, and a delay that was even more serious. For if this affair continued, his army of men in Caistowe would also be held up, and his whole great organisation would become clogged.

The Remove seizure of the power-station seemed small enough, compared to all the rest of the William K. Smith Manufacturing Company's enterprises, but it was, in reality, of vast importance. It was like a piece of grit in the smoothly-running works of a watch—an obstruction which, unless removed, would sooner or later bring the entire mechanism to a standstill.

Therefore, this piece of grit—in other words, the Remove—had to be got out of the way without loss of time.

When I had planned this rebellion, I had known full well what the result of our seizure would be. Some of the juniors had not realised the strategic importance of our capture, but there were many who did. By taking up our stand in the powerhouse, we had penetrated the most vulnerable spot in Mr. William K. Smith's armour.

It was therefore impossible for him to ignore us. If we had rebelled elsewhere—for example, in the old barn near the playing-fields—it is quite possible that Smith would have told Mr. Small to deal with us, and then forget all about us.

But we had acted with carefully prepared, cunning forethought.

And we watched the present preparations for our dislodgment with great interest. Apparently, it was to be an imposing attack, and Mr. Smith was deliberately making his preparations in full view, so that we should be properly awed.

Fully three hundred men were collected together, and divided into three separate divisions—a hundred men in each crowd. And then, while these men waited, eager enough to hurl themselves at us, William K. Smith walked forward with his brisk, businesslike stride.

"Say, boys, just a word!" he said, looking up at us. "Maybe you've seen what's in the wind, eh? I'd advise you to look over these men, and reckon up your own chances."

I glanced at the waiting battalions.

"They don't scare me," I said calmly. "And our terms remain unaltered."

At the same time, I knew well enough that many of the rebels were feeling a little startled. They had hardly expected Smith to take such drastic measures so promptly.

"Is that so?" said the millionaire. "Well, let me tell you something. I'll give you just five minutes by my watch to think things over. If you raise a white flag of surrender at the sixtieth second of the fifth minute, I'll let you all go back to the school, and you can take my word for it there'll be no more said. But if that final second ticks by, you'll be for it!"

"Go ahead, Mr. Smith!" I said grimly. "We'll consider."

He noted the time on his watch, and walked away.

"I say, this looks pretty serious," said Bob Christine gravely. "All these hundreds of men, you know. They're rotten-looking ruffians, and there's no telling what they'll do once they get started!"

"I think we can deal with them," I said.

"Think!" snorted Handforth aggressively. "I wouldn't care if there were a thousand men! They'll only get in this place over my dead body! We've started this rebellion, and we'll carry on to victory!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Handy!"

"I'm not suggesting that we should back out!" growled Bob Christine. "But there's no sense in blinking at the facts. We're going to have a stiff time——"

"I warned you of this before we even started the rebellion," I pointed out. "And if I hadn't thought us capable of dealing with the situation, I would never have started the affair. When Mr. Smith sends his men on to the attack, he'll get one or two nasty surprises."

"If we surrender, we'll be allowed to go back, and nobody will be punished!" jeered Buster Boots. "Who believes that giddy Prussian? If we walk out of here, we'll be scalped—and poor old Nipper will get the sack!"

"Yes, rather! We don't care for this beast!"

Practically all the rebels were eagerness itself for the battle to commence. They would have considered themselves badly swindled if the rebellion had come to an end

at this early stage. The surrender of Mr. Smith was about the last thing they desired.

But I was just a little anxious—and would be until we had thoroughly tested our defences. And here, indeed, was the material for a good test! Three hundred men against a mere fifty boys! If we could hold out against such an assault, we should have every reason to congratulate ourselves.

The five minutes ticked away, and, as I had half expected, Mr. Smith gave no immediate order for an attack, but walked forward again. He had obviously believed that we should surrender, and was surprised at our continuous defiance.

"I'm giving you one more chance," he announced curtly. "Say, I don't want to cause a heap of trouble among you boys. Show some sense, and walk back to the school. There'll be no punishments of any kind. But if you maintain this fool stand, you'll be thrown out, and all the leaders will be fired from St. Frank's. That's final!"

"Thanks, Mr. Smith," I said, leaning over the parapet. "But it happens that we don't recognise you in any official capacity. You have no authority over us, and therefore we cannot accept your word. Apart from all that, you are trespassing on our property, and if you instruct your men to make an unprovoked assault, you'll have to take the consequences."

The millionaire opened his mouth to speak, but then snapped his teeth together with a click, and swung sharply on his heel.

"Now it's coming!" I said grimly. "Be ready, you chaps! Boots, you'd better take your company over the other side, and keep guard there. Armstrong, keep your men where they are, and be on the look-out."

I gave some more crisp orders, and final preparations were made. We were already in a strong position, and felt that we could deal with the coming assault. Hidden by the parapet were hundreds and hundreds of paper bags filled with mud—quite an ideal form of ammunition. Whilst being perfectly harmless, they were nevertheless extremely unpleasant. Some dozen rebels were even now filling further bags as fast as they could make the mud—this special contingent being at work below, in the main building.

And then the men came forward to the attack—not with a desperate rush, but quietly, in an orderly fashion, and with Smith leading the way. Handforth, who was fairly bubbling over with impatience, grabbed one of the mud bags.

"Stop!" he roared. "Are you going to give in, or not?"

Smith made no reply to him, but halted. Sharply, he ordered his men to make one swift rush for the main door when he gave the word. It was perfectly obvious that he had no intention of further parleying.

Whizz!

Handforth hurled that bag of mud with unerring aim. It caught Mr. William K.

Smith full in the face, and the millionaire staggered back, practically obliterated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on—we're ready for you!"

The rebels roared and jeered with derision. And Cyclone Smith gasped out an almost inarticulate order. His men, with a chorus of great yells, swept on to the attack.

They swarmed round the power-station with the obvious intention of making their chief assault upon the main door. Once inside, the end would come swiftly, for at close quarters we could never hope to defend ourselves.

On the face of things, matters looked bad for the rebel Remove.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BATTLE!



ONE minute seemed to be about the full extent of grace before the attackers would sweep into the power-station, and have the rebels at bay.

Mr. William K. Smith, having cleaned himself slightly, was standing by, glowering at the scene. He was filled with inward amazement that the rebels could be so utterly insane as to believe that they had the slightest chance of victory.

Mud bags or no mud bags, they would never be able to hold off these three hundred men—men who were ruffianly in themselves, and who had taken part in many a riot in their native lands.

But Mr. Smith, in the words of his own country, "knew nothing yet!"

I was not such a fool as to expect victory on the strength of a few bags filled with mud. I had other methods of defence ready at hand. Four hours the Remove had toiled ceaselessly in making the secret preparations. Reggie Pitt himself had a stunt of his own—which would only be brought into action as a last resort.

Over on the playing fields, near St. Frank's, over half the school had collected together to watch the swift and dramatic destruction of the rebel force. For it was universally believed that we had committed an act of madness by seizing the power-station, and that it could only be a matter of minutes before we were taught the error of our ways.

The ground sloped upwards towards the St. Frank's property, and so the fellows were able to overlook the scene with ease. In the distance, across the sunlit meadows, they could see the ugly shacks of Cyclone City, and the stark new power-station, with its flat roof swarming with juniors.

"Young fatheads!" said Chambers, of the Fifth, with a growl. "I can't help sympathising with them, but they're off their nuts! They'll be cleared out of that place like rats out of a hole!"

"I'm not so sure," said Bryant. "Nipper's the leader, you know!"

"I thought he had more sense!" snapped Chambers, sniffing.

And his opinion was shared by almost all the other fellows—until certain things began to happen which caused the crowd to look on with gradually increasing interest—which caused the Third to grow wild with excitement.

At the power-station the attackers were swarming round in dense crowds, concentrating their efforts upon the three doors of the building. And as they swept into range the rebels sprang into action.

Whizz! Whizz! Whizz! Swish!

A perfect rain of bags swept down upon the crowd of men below—and the mud burst in showers, causing many of the ruffians to hold back. At the same time, it infuriated them to an extent which had an instantaneous effect. Instead of retiring, they redoubled their efforts.

"Hose squadron forward!" I shouted urgently. "Prepare for action!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" sang out Pitt.

There was not a second wasted. And the next moment the attacking party received the surprise of its life. For simultaneously four hose-pipes sprang into activity.

Hisssssss!

Four powerful streams of water hissed down through the sunlit air, and the attackers staggered under this unexpected blow. The nearest men were drenched to the skin in a moment.

And, although it was advantageous from the point of view of cleaning off the mud, this new weapon of defence had nothing to commend it—from the point of view of the victims.

"Hurrah!"

"Let 'em have it!"

"Three cheers for the rebel Remove!"

Swish! Swish!

The fellows at the hose-nozzles, carefully directed by Pitt and Handforth and myself, took every advantage of the new situation. The swarms of men below were caught and drenched before they could run. And others who were running were hastened on their way.

Over on the playing fields the Third-formers cheered shrilly.

"Good old Remove! They're winning!"

"Look!" yelled Willy Handforth. "They've got hose-pipes!"

"Hurrah! Smith's men are bunking!"

"By gad, so they are!" said Chambers, staring. "The whole blessed crowd! Those Remove kids aren't so slow after all!"

"They're holding their own," said Phillips enthusiastically. "I say, this is great! I never thought they'd last as long as this."

"You big fathead!" said Willy Handforth witheringly.

"Eh?" gasped Phillips.

"If you think the Remove is going to knuckle under to these ruffians, you'd better think again!" said Handforth minor. "Why,

the Remove is ten times more go-ahead than the Fifth. In fact, it's nearly as go-ahead as the Third!"

"You're looking for a thick ear!" said Phillips darkly.

"Not from you!" jeered Willy. "You couldn't hit me if you tried! The trouble is, you Fifth-form chaps look upon yourselves as dignified seniors, and you're full of airs and importance. And yet, as a matter of fact, you're nothing but a crowd of listless weaklings who'll stand by and see the Remove show you how things ought to be done!"

And Willy retreated to a more secure spot, Phillips having become somewhat aggressive. But the fag had spoken very much of the truth. If the Fifth had had any gumption, it would have backed up the Remove in this enterprise, and the result would then have been as good as certain. For the Remove to act entirely on its own was bold, but precarious. If it failed in its object, the results would be disastrous.

But the Remove had taken on tasks like this before, and it had won. So there were no feelings of pessimism now—especially as the battle was going well.

Mr. William K. Smith stood looking on, his face black with anger and disappointment. He had taken it for granted that these three hundred men would be able to smash their way into the power-station with comparatively little trouble.

And yet here they were, running in all directions, drenched to the skin, with no further stomach for the fight. It is remarkable how a thorough soaking will deprive any man of his enthusiasm.

"These blamed boys!" snarled Smith harshly. "Say, Schwann, what do you know about this? We're having trouble all the way along!"

Schwann, one of Smith's engineers, nodded.

"And it's not over yet, boss," he replied.

"These kids have got more pep than you gave them credit for. Gee! It was a good stunt to get those hoses at work, although I don't like to admit it."

"Can't we turn this water off?" demanded the millionaire.

Schwann shook his head.

"The main runs right beneath the powerhouse," he replied. "The supply tap is underneath the floor. So the water can only be turned off from inside. Either that, or disconnect the whole district."

Mr. Smith suddenly looked keen.

"You mean, cut off the supply at the waterworks?" he said.

"Yes; but that's impossible!"

"We've got to do something, Schwann. We can't let this infernal situation continue," snapped Cyclone Smith. "Look at these men! Say, don't they make you tired? They've got no more pluck than a crowd of worms! Falling back because of a little water!"

Mr. Smith had incautiously moved forward in order to gain a better view of the

battle. And I was watching him closely. I knew the range of our hose-pipes, and I judged that if Mr. Smith came a few yards nearer he would be within comfortable distance.

So I quickly ordered the fellows at the nozzles, to confine their attentions to the men near at hand—although there were precious few of these left. A number of determined spirits had made a grim rush at the door, carrying pickaxes and other implements with which to hack the door down.

But the streams of water descending upon them quenched every atom of their ardour. They were finally compelled to retreat.

And by this time Mr. Smith was comfortably within range.

"Now, my sons—let him have it!" I said crisply.

I grabbed one of the hoses myself, to set the example. With a jerk, I swung the nozzle round, and a solid stream of icy-cold water hit Mr. Smith in the chest.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let him have it!"

Smith was taken utterly by surprise. He was nearly knocked over backwards, and almost vanished in the great shower of spray which enveloped him. And then, before he could make any move, two other hose-pipes found the range, and the concentrated efforts of the three streams of water caused the unfortunate Mr. Smith to stagger over backwards, and sit down violently in a great pool of sticky mud.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! German tyrant!"

"We'll show you whether we're in earnest or not!"

"Rebels for ever!"

"Down with autocracy!"

Mr. Smith got to his feet with difficulty, the hoses having been directed elsewhere. He stood there, a drenched, sorry figure, closely resembling a drowned rat. His hat had gone, water dripped from every inch of him, and he was well-nigh exhausted, gasping from the effects of the cold water and the rage that welled up within him.

Very foolishly he shook his fist at the rebels and commenced speaking.

Swish! Swish!

Nobody heard what Mr. Smith had to say. With unerring aim the streams of water again caught him, and sent him flying backwards. And this time he turned his back to the enemy, staggered up, and lurched into safety.

And he was followed by a roaring, derisive cheer.

And the last of the attackers had retreated, too. The power-station still remained in the sole possession of the rebel Remove, and there was no question that the first engagement was a complete victory for us.



And each party was provided with an advance guard with the battering rams. They would go for the doors, using every possible effort to smash through in one great rush.

CHAPTER V.

CYCLONE SMITH'S STRATAGEM!



PEACE reigned for the time being, and everything was calm.

At the power house, the rebels were hard at work preparing further ammunition, and making other movements which were obscure to anybody who happened to be watching. But it seemed that some curious looking contrivances were being placed in position at the four corners of the roof.

Great enthusiasm prevailed.

And this enthusiasm was not merely noticeable among the rebel forces, but also at St. Frank's, and throughout the entire district. The Third-Formers and the Fifth-Formers talked animatedly over the glorious manner in which the Remove had beaten back the enemy. And in Belton village, and throughout the surrounding hamlets, the news of the affray spread rapidly.

And the sympathy of the country people was entirely with the schoolboys. The Remove was looked upon as a collection of heroes. For Cyclone Smith and all his men were hated like poison by all.

And they were hated with excellent reason.

For Smith was employing his own ruffians on this work when there were hundreds of unemployed men round about who would have been glad enough to earn an honest wage.

This was their district, and they considered that they had a grievance against this intruder who came here with his in-

vading horde of "furriners." Any step taken against him was a joy to all hearts.

As for William K. Smith himself, he maintained his dignity with difficulty. For him to look ridiculous in the eyes of his own men was not only humiliating, but positively risky. He was the big boss—the chief of the whole concern. And his men regarded him with awe. Once they lost this awe, there might be trouble.

So Smith lost no time in getting back to the River House school, and changing into dry things. For the River House was now his own headquarters, where he not only had private apartments, but his own offices. And in the spacious playing-fields attached to the school the foundations of his great manufacturing plant were already being laid.

An hour after the engagement Smith was sitting at his desk, grim and deadly calm. His rage had entirely left him, and he was just beginning to realise that the rebels could not be treated with contempt.

They were an active, well-organised force, and not a mere crowd of irresponsible schoolboys, as Mr. Smith had first assumed. He had had no suspicion that they were so well provided for.

With Mr. Smith were two of his chief lieutenants—Schwann, the engineer, and a construction expert named Gimble. Both men were looking serious and concerned.

"Well, boys, we're up against it," said Mr. Smith quietly. "These young guys have got more pep than we expected. But they only succeeded in driving our men back because of those blamed hosepipes."

"That's all," said Schwann. "But for the water, the kids would have been thrown out by this time, and our work would be going on as usual. What are we going to do, boss?"

"We've got to do something that'll rout those young cubs out of that building as quickly as possible," replied Smith. "We've lost the whole morning already, and I'm not going to stand for any more of this delay. Those kids are going to be fetched right out."

"Yes, but how?" asked Gimble.

"By cutting off the water from the power-station," replied Smith. "But it won't be cut off until my men are just about to attack. The boys won't have a chance—they'll be driven out before they can recover from the shock."

Mr. Smith's companions stared.

"But how are you going to cut the water off?" asked Schwann. "As I told you before, the only tap is in the building itself."

"When I make up my mind to a thing, that thing is as good as done!" replied Cyclone Smith. "If we don't get these boys out quickly, there'll be trouble in camp. And if these men once get out of hand, we'll never be able to control them. Work has got to go on—and I'm not allowing a

pack of blamed schoolboys to stand in my way."

It sounded very much like bluff—until Mr. Smith gave a brief outline of his scheme, and told his companions exactly what they were to do in the forthcoming action.

They went off to make preparations, smiling with satisfaction. And Mr. Smith unhooked the receiver from his telephone.

"Bannington Seven-O," he said, giving the Head's number.

And in a few moments Mr. Ponsonby Small himself answered—from his own study at St. Frank's.

"I am terribly sorry, Mr. Smith, that this unfortunate position has arisen," exclaimed the Head, for want of something better to say. "These boys are nothing but young hooligans—"

"Listen!" interrupted Mr. Smith. "The time is just ten-thirty. At eleven o'clock, I want you to ring up the Bannington Waterworks."

"Really!" came Mr. Small's voice. "But I don't understand."

"It's not necessary for you to understand," cut in Smith. "Ring up the waterworks, and make it so snappy that they'll jump some. Tell them their main has burst near the school, and that the whole building is being flooded. Tell them to cut the water supply off on the instant."

"But—but, really, this is extraordinary!" protested Ponsonby Small. "The main has not burst, I assure you, and there might be some trouble—"

"Say, you make me tired," interrupted Smith curtly. "It don't matter a hang to you whether the main has burst or not. Give the message, and say that the water has got to be cut off instantly. And do this at eleven o'clock. And listen! If that water isn't cut off by five after eleven you quit this district before noon! That's all!"

Cyclone Smith hung up his receiver without another word, and the Head, in his study, sat back, looking rather startled. He knew that he would have to obey, for Smith was a perfect tyrant. He never made a threat unless he meant to keep it. And it would necessarily mean a lie, for Small knew well enough that this affair was a mere piece of trickery. However, the Head was in a cleft stick, and had to do as he was ordered.

In the meantime, William K. Smith returned to the battlefield.

He prepared his men for a second attack—and again he performed all his operations in the open, so that the rebels could see everything, and be duly impressed. And this time the preparations were more elaborate.

Mr. Smith not only got his parties of men together, but he armed them with something more formidable than pickaxes. Apparently he had offered them extra pay, for there was no hesitation among the crowd to enter into this fight. Their previous drenching had not deprived them of their

spirit. Or perhaps their very enmity against the schoolboys was now so fierce that they were keen enough to attack without any promise of reward.

"Looks like being serious this time," I remarked, as I watched the movements below. But if we stick to our guns, we shall be the winners. Those battering-rams look pretty grim, though."

Bob Christine nodded.

"Yes," he agreed. "If they once get to close quarters, they'll smash down the doors in less than half a minute. And we can never hope to fight at close quarters. We mustn't let them get in."

"Let them get in?" repeated Handforth. "Personally, I don't care if they do! I wouldn't mind a hand-to-hand fight! I'm just longing to biff some of these chaps into the middle of May!"

"It's all very well to be enthusiastic, Handy, but a hand-to-hand fight would be fatal," I pointed out. "We've got to use every effort to beat off the enemy from outside. And we ought to have better defences round this building, too. If we win this next battle, I'll see what can be done."

At the moment, however, we were obliged to concentrate our attention upon making ready for the affray. There were now no on-lookers from the school playing fields—for morning lessons were in progress.

But up on the hill-side, near Bellton Wood, a number of villagers had collected, and were watching with considerable interest and excitement. We felt that defeat would be too humiliating for words.

But it certainly seemed that Smith's new preparations were to be on a big scale. For he was providing his men with a number of powerful battering-rams.

These had been built under our very eyes. There were stacks and stacks of wood within the confines of Cyclone City—building material by the ton. And Mr. Smith had given orders for a number of huge scaffold poles to be fitted with cross-pieces—these cross-pieces forming handles.

And then we saw that each scaffold-pole was manned by two dozen workers—twelve on each side. We could easily guess the result of a determined charge by these terrific battering-rams.

Even one of these scaffold poles, carried forward in one blind rush, would smash against the doors so fiercely that a breach would be made. And I doubted if our defensive methods would keep back such an attack.

But I said nothing to my followers. My object was to keep them filled up with enthusiasm—not to put doubts into their heads. And my own fears would have been greatly intensified if I had had any suspicion of William K. Smith's stratagem. For at this time I knew nothing of his scheme to cut off the water.

By eleven o'clock all was ready.

Four parties of attackers placed themselves in position—one for each wall. And

each party was provided with an advance guard with the battering-rams. They would go for doors and windows indiscriminately—using every possible effort to smash through in one great rush.

There were other men armed with huge logs—probably to use in case the scaffold poles proved unavailing. And then, a few minutes after the hour, Smith gave the order to advance.

Simultaneously, the four parties rushed forward to the attack.

And the rebels sprang into activity. The hosepipes were levelled, and the water was turned on. And the attackers were drenched to the skin as they advanced. In face of this great deluge of icy water, the foremost men hesitated, staggered, and fell back.

Blinded, almost knocked off their feet, it was impossible to advance. And William K. Smith looked on grimly, and with set lips. He believed that he had given the order too soon. And he watched the hoses with keen anxiety.

Would the water supply fail—or not?

There was certainly no sign of it at present. A rousing cheer went up from the rebels as they saw that this fierce attack was halting. Bags of mud were sent hurtling down in one continuous shower upon the already soaked vanguard.

"We are holding them!"

"Hurrah!"

"Don't let them advance!"

"Keep calm—don't get excited!" I shouted warningly. "This battle isn't over yet, and—"

I broke off, startled.

For at that moment the great rush of water from the hose-pipes seemed to hesitate. It spluttered, and then dwindled down to a faint stream, and then gave out altogether.

"Oh, my goodness!" shouted Christine.

"What happened?"

"Who's turned the water off?"

There was complete consternation among the rebels. And, below, Mr. William K. Smith smiled grimly to himself and inwardly congratulated Ponsonby Small.

"Now," said Mr. Smith, "we've sure got them beat!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE SURPRISE!



DISORGANISED for the moment, the rebels showed signs of getting into a panic. It was only by shouting vigorously that the company commanders restored the fellows to comparative calm.

Two or three juniors rushed down into the main building to see if somebody had been tampering with the supply tap. But this was found to be fully turned on, and there was only one conclusion to be drawn.

"This is Smith's doing," I said grimly.

"But it can't be!" protested Pitt. "The tap's turned full on, and—and— My hat! You mean he's had it turned off at the source?"

"Of course—he's probably 'phoned to the water-works."

"The awful rotter!" panted Christine. "What are we going to do?"

"Fight!" I said promptly. "We're not done yet. And here's a good opportunity to put Reggie's invention to an acid test. If it saves us now, all our trouble will be rewarded."

"Thank goodness we made four!" said Grey. "We've got all our fronts protected, so to speak. But what's up? There seems to be a pause."

"And that's all to our advantage," I pointed out crisply. "Reggie, get your men primed up so that they can start operations on the instant. And see that everything is in perfect order. The slightest hitch at the critical moment may make all the difference between victory and defeat."

"You needn't worry," said Pitt. "Everything's in apple-pie order already."

"Good! But we can't be too sure."

I watched the attackers with interest. Only the foremost among them had been drenched. The rearguard men were still quite dry, and intensely angry—although their anger was now being changed into joy. For it seemed that we were at their mercy.

Even Mr. Smith himself fell into this regrettable error.

And while he delayed we were allowed the opportunity of a breathing space, so that we could make full preparations.

Mr. Smith, in fact, made the mistake of assuming that our water supply was our chief means of defence. He knew about the mud bags, of course. But these, alone, would prove futile against the coming assault.

And the millionaire hesitated. He wasn't thinking of us—he had no merciful intentions for the Remove—but he certainly did think it would be as well to save the power-station from any unnecessary damage.

We were now at his mercy, with the water supply cut off, and he assumed that we would be ready to capitulate. So Mr. Smith strode briskly forward, holding a white handkerchief carelessly in his hand. He obviously meant us to take this for a flag of truce. Cyclone Smith was not exactly bubbling with anxiety to convert himself into a target for a hail of mud bags.

"Well, boys, feeling ready to give it up?" he asked genially.

He was so pleased at his own success that

he even smiled. As master of the situation, he felt that he could afford to be pleasant. It was a wise policy, too. Later, when the rebels surrendered, he would be able to show his teeth without hypocrisy.

Besides, while he was parleying in this way, his men were reforming. Those who were drenched were being replaced by new men.

"You'd better clear off, Mr. Smith, unless you want to be buried in a heap of mud!" shouted Handforth aggressively. "We'll respect that white flag, but only for two minutes!"

"Leave this to me, old man," I said. "What's the idea, Mr. Smith?" I added, raising my voice. "Have you decided to accept our terms? Will you pay our price for this paddock?"

"Can you beat that?" said Mr. Smith, his voice becoming grim. "Say, young fellow, you've got a heap of nerve! You're beat, and yet you ask me if I'm ready to accept terms."

"Beat?" I repeated, in astonishment. "Why, Mr. Smith, what put that idea into your head? Kindly allow me to remove this strange delusion. We are just as determined as ever, and if your men continue the attack, they will have only themselves to blame for the consequences."

Mr. Smith lost his good humour.

"Cut that out, you young mutt!" he shouted. "Say, what do you think I am—a dumb-bell? You've got no chance, my lad! As soon as I send my men forward they'll smash through, and there'll be an end of this durned business! But I'm disposed to be gentle with you."

"Don't be quite so kind, Mr. Smith," I said quickly. "We're not asking for any gentleness from you—only justice."

"Listen!" went on Smith. "If you boys will throw up this foolery and march back to the school, I'll make it right with your headmaster, and we'll forget the affair. Now I reckon that's a dandy proposition, and if you don't accept it you'll be the biggest bunch of simps that ever saw light."

"You mean we've got to go back, leaving the position exactly as it is?" I asked. "It's not good enough, Mr. Smith. Thanks all the same, but we'll continue to fight."

The millionaire scowled. He had wanted to avoid the smashing down of the doors and windows. But apparently the Remove was in a grim humour, and would not surrender. There was only one thing for it—to go ahead and break down the doors by sheer force.

Mr. Smith didn't argue. It wasn't his way to waste words. He turned on his heel, gave some quick orders to his various contingents, and stood well back to watch the result of the action.

In his own mind he felt absolutely certain that the end would be swift. One concerted rush and the doors and windows would be demolished, and his horde of men would be over-running the place.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

"Get ready now," I warned tensely. "Everything will depend upon the next minute. If we fail to hold this crowd back we're done!"

"Don't worry," said Pitt; "we'll hold them!"

The battering-ram parties came on with a grim determination. Behind them swept nearly two hundred men, ready to smash through the breach, once it had been made. And Mr. Smith had now altered his tactics.

For instead of having his force divided, he had formed it into one main assault. It was his plan to carry the front of the building and to get clean through it at the first onslaught.

And this helped us considerably, for we were able to concentrate our own defences. I stood against the parapet, watching intently. The other rebels waited, eager and anxious.

The attacking force got within ten yards, making straight for the main doors with their deadly battering-rams. Judgment of a fine quality was necessary, and for a second I feared that I had left it until too late. The delay of one moment and all would be lost. The miscalculation of a second might be the prelude to disaster.

"Fire!" I shouted urgently.

Whirr! Hiss! Zurrh!

Almost as my shout rang out, a most extraordinary sound cut through the shouts of the attackers. It was a sound that they had never heard before, and unlike anything they could have imagined.

And they were allowed no time to think, in any case. For the battering-ram parties, on the point of victory, were sent reeling back under a fierce, devastating hail of stinging pellets.

It was the biggest surprise they had ever received.

To the accompaniment of that whirring, hissing sound the pellets shot among their ranks with such overwhelming force that the men were scattered in agony, believing for a moment that they were being shot.

They scattered like flies, staggering away in all directions. The battering-rams were dropped, and the whole attacking party was demoralised into utter confusion.

Zurrh!

And still that sound continued. And still the pellets went hissing round the men like bullets from a machine-gun. And these pellets, although harmless to life, were utterly stinging and agonising in their effect. They came with such force that the receipt of one in the face was devastating.

And the pellets not only hit the attacking force in the face, but on the arms, the neck, and every other part of their persons. The rain of missiles continued without the slightest halt—one blinding onslaught.

And within a minute the rout was complete.

Smith's men, scattering, got out of range as quickly as they knew how, leaving their battering-rams abandoned.

"Cease fire!" I commanded.

"Hurrah!"

"We've beaten them!"

I turned to Reggie Pitt with a flushed face.

"Fine!" I shouted. "Congratulations, old man!"

"Thanks!" grinned Pitt. "Not so dusty, eh?"

And while the rebels cheered themselves nearly hoarse, Mr. William K. Smith stood out there, nearly beside himself with rage and mortification. He had miscalculated, and he knew it. And he was a man who never miscalculated. It was a blow to his pride.

Without his suspecting it, the Remove had another weapon up its sleeve, which had not come into play until this minute. And once again Cyclone Smith was reluctantly compelled to admit that these "durned young guys" were not so helpless as they looked.

It was over five minutes before Smith could even rally his forces, and during this time the rebels were able to get ready for the next assault—not that any getting ready was really necessary.

Smith had been rather puzzled about some curious looking objects which he had seen peeping over the stone parapet of the roof. But he had never dreamed that they were ingenious weapons of war—cunningly constructed mechanical devices for the purpose of defence.

And yet that is exactly what they were.

Machine-guns! Machine-guns for propelling peas!

It seems insignificant enough, to think of it in cold blood, but Smith's workmen were ready to vouch for the efficiency of these home-made contrivances. They were already known in the rebel stronghold as "Pitt's Peppers." They had proved their worth in this action, and no mistake!

Reggie Pitt was the proud inventor, and he had spent quite a lot of time during the previous week in perfecting the device. At first he had wanted to keep it secret, but he had been obliged to take over a dozen juniors into his confidence, with the result that four machine pea-shooters had been constructed.

And they had been brought along the underground tunnel to the stronghold with all the other stores. And the rebels had not forgotten to bring several sacks of peas, to provide the necessary ammunition.

The guns themselves were ingenious in the extreme—an adaptation of the hand-operated vacuum-cleaner device. The gun was a formidable-looking instrument, constructed of gas-barrel, wooden supports, and all sorts of square metal parts sticking out from various angles. And below were powerful bellows, easily operated by means of a foot control.

The method of projection was simple—and, by reason of this very simplicity, was extremely effective.

The peas were dropped from a container into the barrel of the gun, descending in one continuous stream, and a simple controlling device made it almost impossible for the peas to jam, and thus stop the flow.

At the rear of the barrel there was a stoutly-built compressed air chamber; with an automatic valve. The foot-operated bellows kept this compressed air chamber at a high, intensive pressure, the valve allowing the air to rush down the barrel with such terrific force that the peas, dropping in one continuous stream from the container, were sent shooting out at the enemy.

As far as I had been able to see, when examining the "gun," failure to operate perfectly was almost impossible. We had given these Pitt Pepperers a thorough trial, but it had been really impossible to judge them properly until they were brought into a real action.

The first model had been such a success that I had urged the manufacture of three more, and this had been successfully accomplished. We now had reason to congratulate ourselves—and Pitt—for our industry.

"They're ten times more effective than I ever dreamed of," I said enthusiastically. "And they just strike the happy medium, too. They're powerful enough without being dangerous. They inflict pain without injury. Even if a chap got a pea in his eye, it wouldn't cause any permanent harm."

"Anyway, it made these beggars sit up, didn't it?" grinned Reggie. "We'd better fill up the containers again, so as to be ready for the next onslaught. Peas, you chaps!"

A big sack of peas stood at hand, and the strong containers of the automatic shooters were filled again to the brim. The guns could be handled with ease by one fellow, but two were better. Thus, while one junior operated the bellows, the other could confine himself solely to the directing of the fire.

And the guns, in operation, made such a hissing, whirring noise that they almost seemed as formidable as genuine machine-guns. They were a marvellous advance on the old mouth-operated pea-shooter. One of these contrivances could do more damage than a hundred ordinary pea-shooters. And the patent Pepperer could keep up a continuous fire without getting tired.

No wonder the rebels cheered!

And William K. Smith, listening, gritted his teeth with rage. He went among his men, cursing and shouting—almost beside himself. He urged them to reform and to rush back to the assault.

The only possible way was to smash through now, before the rebels were enabled to prepare any further ingenious methods of defence. Matters would only get worse by waiting.

And so the whole force was rallied, and

somebody suggested sacks. This was an excellent idea, and one that seemed likely to bring about the downfall of the rebels.

Hundreds of sacks were hastily got ready. The men put them over their heads, and tied them with string, so as to form protective hoods. No matter how thickly the peas came now, they could do little damage.

This fight was resolving itself more into a battle of wits than a battle of sheer brute force. Mr. Smith prepared one form of attack, and we countered it. We altered our defence to meet the new form of attack, and Smith countered this in turn. And so it went on, until now, it seemed, the finish was about to come.

For, after all, this was no real warfare, but a mockery. And its very harmlessness was one of the main causes of Smith's rage. Here he was, being defied by an insignificant party of schoolboys, who were armed with nothing more formidable than hosepipes and pea-shooters. And yet they had been able to more than hold their own!

It was not only exasperating, but a sheer humiliation.

And it had to stop; this action would go on until the rebels were hounded out of their retreat. This was what Smith decided.

His men advanced once again—now thoroughly protected against the pea-shooters. Even Reggie Pitt himself was looking anxious, a most unusual expression to see upon his sunny countenance. He felt that his own honour was at stake. If these guns failed now, after all the trouble that had been taken upon them, it would prove that they were nothing like so formidable as we had at first believed. We watched the preparations with outward defiance, but with inward concern. Our guns were compelled to point downwards, and those protective hoods would completely guard the attackers against the hail of peas.

Then I caught my breath.

"I wonder if——" I broke off, studying the attacking party. "Yes, they mean to come on in just the same way—one straight rush. Reggie, there's a chance! We'll probably be able to beat off this attack!"

"How?" asked Pitt anxiously. "Speak, O wise chief, for I vow I am sorely puzzled! In other words, choke it up!"

"Smith is counting on these sacks to protect his men," I said sharply. "But they're only protective when the hail of peas rain down from above. A direct frontal assault would get under those hoods, and cause more damage than ever. We've got to shoot two of these machine-guns to the lower windows."

Reggie Pitt looked at me, and then bowed low.

"Magician, I worship you!" he said solemnly.

"Don't rot, but get busy!" I broke in.

Reggie was all action in a moment. Two of the Pepperers were swiftly lowered to the main floor of the building. And then,

without giving the enemy the slightest hint of our intention, these two guns were placed in position at the front windows, one on either side of the main door.

And only just in time, for the attack started at that moment.

Protected by their sacks, the men ran for the main door, carrying their battering-rams easily. And as soon as they got within range, the Pepperers on the roof got into action.

Zurrrh! Zizzz!

The peas rained down devastatingly—not that they had much effect upon the attackers. For, by bending, the pellets hit harmlessly against the sack cowls. And Smith's men roared with defiance as they felt that victory was theirs.

And then the lower Pepperers came into action—at the last moment, and when least expected. The shattering hail of pellets whizzed out in a direct horizontal line, peppering the enemy in no uncertain manner. The peas found their way under the cowls by the score.

Once again the attack wavered, and the result was uncertain.

On the roof, Handforth was using one of the guns, and he was nearly knocked over backwards, and drenched to the skin by a tremendous surge of water which came from the nozzle of a hosepipe. It had been lying there, idle and useless, when suddenly the pipe whipped itself into life like a snake. And the full force of the water hit Handforth in the face.

"Hurrah!" roared Buster Boots. "The water's on again!"

"Quick—grab the hose!"

It only took about twenty seconds for the Juniors to seize the pipes. Careless as to whether they drenched their own comrades, the nozzles were swung down and directed over the parapets.

And the concentrated force of the four hose-pipes sent down a hissing deluge of icy water upon the wavering enemy. It proved to be the last straw. The two Pepperers below had had due effect, but this unexpected drenching from above—after Mr. Smith had assured his men that such an event was impossible—proved to be the deciding factor.

For the third time the enemy was demoralised into a rabble. Cursing, shouting, and gasping, the men scattered in all directions, and ran.

And the rebel Remove held the power-station as firmly as ever!

CHAPTER VII.

A BREATHING SPELL!



THE great question was—why had the water come on again?

Excitedly, and triumphantly, the rebels asked themselves this question. Was it a pure accident, or had somebody deliberately countered



To his great satisfaction he found that he was able to overhear every word that was spoken above.

Mr. William K. Smith's piece of strategy? In any event, the result was highly satisfactory for the Remove.

For the enemy had completely abandoned the attempt to rout the rebels out. They had all retired into the recesses of Cyclone City. Even Mr. Smith himself had gone, and the rebels looked out upon the field of victory with entire jubilation.

Curdle's Paddock, indeed, was now completely deserted, and only the drenched, muddy condition of the ground, and the abandoned battering-rams, were visible to tell of the recent failure.

But if the Remove had only known it they had a great deal to thank Willy Handforth for. Because it was this young gentleman who had spoilt Mr. Smith's chances at the last moment.

The hero of the Third, in fact, had got to know of the cutting off of the water-supply in a rather curious way. In the first place, Willy was out in the Ancient House lobby, and at eleven o'clock in the morning, he had no actual right to be in the Ancient House lobby at all.

But Willy had felt rather bad that morning. He had gone so pale, in fact, and he had staggered so piteously when Mr. Suncliffe ordered him to stand up, that he had been ordered to go out and get a little fresh air.

But it was remarkable how quickly Willy recovered as soon as he found himself outside the Third-form room. He felt rather pleased with himself for thinking of the simple expedient of hiding a little French chalk in his desk. A few judicious rubs, and his paleness had been quite realistic. And Willy was such a good actor that he carried out the deception with ease.

His anxiety to get outside was simply and solely to ascertain how the battle was going. He wanted to return to the Third-form with certain information. But as he was going out of the Ancient House, he ran across Tubbs in the lobby.

"Anything fresh, Tubby?" asked the fag eagerly.

"Not 'arf there ain't, Master Handforth," said Tubbs. "It ain't my place to say anythin' agin the 'Ead, but 'e's a fair caution—that's what 'e is! A reg'lar liar, too—though I sez it as shouldn't," he added in a low whisper.

Willy looked at the page-boy curiously.

"What do you mean—a liar?" he asked.

"Why, only a few minutes ago, I happened to be passin' the 'Ead's study," said Tubbs, with a mysterious wink. "Mr. Small was talkin' on the telephone, an' I could hear what he said."

"You—you giddy eavesdropper!" said Willy indignantly. "You blessed spy!" He paused for a moment, considering. "Well, what did you hear the Head saying?" he added carelessly. "After all, I suppose you were justified. He's a beast!"

"Mr. Small was talkin' to somebody, an' I reckon it must 'ave been the water-works

at Bannington," said Tubbs shrewdly. "Leastways, the 'Ead was sayin' that the water main had busted, an' that the school was bein' flooded. An' if that ain't a lie, what is? The 'Ead give instructions to 'ave the water cut off straight away."

"What!" gasped Willy anxiously. "Oh, my only aunt! The rotter—the awful beast! I'll bet Smith put him up to it."

Without another word, Willy rushed upstairs, and went to one of the windows which overlooked the gently sloping ground in the direction of Cyclone City. He could see the Paddock, and the power-station. There were signs of great activity. A big crowd of men was surging round the building. And the rebels were apparently in sore straits. At all events, there were no hose pipes on the go—proving, clearly enough, that the water was already cut off.

"This," said Willy, "has got to be altered!"

He dashed out into the corridor, pelted downstairs, and ran almost full tilt into Chambers of the Fifth. Chambers was just off to the laboratories to join the rest of the Fifth. He looked at Willy severely.

"What are you doing here at this time of the morning?" he asked magisterially.

"Don't ride the high horse now!" snapped Willy. "Look here, Chambers. You've got to ring up the water-works, and tell them that there's no burst main here, and that the water should be turned on again. Don't argue! Go and do it! There's not a second to be lost!"

Chambers went red.

"Who the dickens are you ordering about?" he growled.

"You!" said Willy crisply.

"Why, you young sweep—"

"Now, don't be silly—I'm not a sweep!" interrupted Willy impatiently. "This is a matter of importance. The Remove is in danger of being wiped out! Old Small has done the dirty!"

"Done the dirty!" repeated Chambers blankly.

"He rang up the water-works, and the rebels haven't got any juice left!" explained Handforth minor. "It's a trick, and we've got to circumvent it. That's rather a good word—I saw it in a book yesterday."

"You're mad!" said Chambers curtly. "Clear off, before I box your grubby ears!"

But Willy needed more discouragement than this. As patiently as possible, he explained the position to Chambers, using a tired voice which seemed to indicate that he regarded the Fifth-former as a kind of dull-witted subordinate. And at last Chambers grasped the situation.

"You want me to ring up the water-works, and tell them to turn the water on again?" he asked eagerly.

"Ye gods!" sighed Willy. "Haven't I just been saying so?"

"By George! And those Remove chaps

haven't got any water!" said Chambers. "I don't exactly approve of this rebellion—it's contrary to all discipline—but the circumstances are unusual. I'll do it!"

"Then don't jaw—move yourself!" said Willy.

The Fifth-former was so excited about the Remove's plight that he hardly noticed this gross disrespect on Willy's part. He hurried off to the prefect's room, went to the telephone, and was soon through to the water-works.

Assuming a deep voice, he announced that he was speaking from St. Frank's, and that there had been a regrettable error. The main had not burst, and he requested that the water should be turned on again at once. He was informed that an inspector was on his way to have a look at the trouble, but that the water would be again supplied.

Thus, solely owing to Willy's whirlwind methods, the rebels secured the precious water supply just when it was most urgently needed. And after the withdrawal of Smith's men, there was a breathing spell. It was well needed, too.

The Remove was very hungry, to say nothing of being sleepy and tired. There had been no rest for them during the previous night, and quite a number of the fellows were dozing off under the influence of the warm sun.

The power-station was no mere temporary stronghold, but a carefully prepared fortress. We had bedding, blankets, mattresses, and everything necessary for comfort.

All these essential articles had been brought by way of the underground tunnel—that ancient passage which really ran to Willard's Island. We, ourselves, had burrowed the tunnel under the power-house. In this way we had been able to take possession in secret without Mr. Smith knowing anything until the morning.

And now the power-station was a veritable hive of industry. Beds were being put up, food was being prepared, and other measures were being taken for the defence of our stronghold.

A third of the juniors were ordered to sleep for a spell of four hours immediately after feeding—and Fatty Little and his special squadron had provided a hearty, excellent meal. There were spirit stoves, cooking utensils, and everything necessary for the preparation of hot food. And Fatty had covered himself with glory—to say nothing of flour, jam, frying fat, and other similar substances.

The juniors who were told off to rest declared that they couldn't sleep a wink. But five minutes after they had lain down, they were sound asleep, oblivious to the din that went on around them.

They would be aroused, of course, in case of emergency—but it struck me that there would be no further attack yet awhile.

As a matter of fact, Mr. William K.

Smith had decided to wait until after dark. The attempts of his men to drive us out had been such a signal failure that he had no wish to invite further disasters. There would be far more chance of success by waiting until darkness, and leaving us uncertain in the meantime.

And while some of the rebels seized the opportunity to sleep, the rest were by no means idle. As I had explained to the fellows, Smith was obviously preparing a more determined form of assault, and it was up to us to be ready. And I went on the roof to have a look round, accompanied by Reggie Pitt.

It was afternoon now, and everything was quiet. A certain amount of work was going on in the Smith camp, but a great many of the men were idle. Our seizure of the power-station had put a full stop to much activity.

"It strikes me that we ought to be using this time," said Pitt, looking round thoughtfully. "There's too much open ground round the building."

"Just what I was thinking," I replied. "If only we had a mass of barbed-wire entanglements circling the fortress, there couldn't be any more of those rushes. And at night such a protective measure is more necessary than it is now. We don't want any surprise assaults."

"Then why not fix up the entanglements?" said Pitt coolly.

"But how can we?"

"Cast your eye slightly to the north-east corner," said Reggie. "Don't you observe a big roll of wire standing against that fence? And don't you also observe that stack of pointed stakes?"

"By Jove!" I said breathlessly. "You mean—"

"A raid!" said Reggie briefly. "One rush, and it's done!"

"I believe you're right!" I said, suddenly keen. "And now is just the opportunity—when everything's quiet. We could make a sortie, and have the stuff here before the enemy knew a thing. We'll do it, Reggie."

"Good man!" said Pitt. "There's nothing like action."

CHAPTER VIII.

BARBED WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS!

HANDFORTH was enthusiastic.

"Jolly good idea!" he declared when he heard the programme. "As a matter of fact, I was going to suggest something of the same sort myself. But we oughtn't to stop at barbed wire entanglements. Why not a few trenches as well? Might as well do it properly!"

"We'll leave the trenches until afterwards," I said diplomatically. "If we can only get up these entanglements, our posi-

tion will be much more secure. We'll be protected against any surprise rush."

"Absolutely!" said Archie Glenthorne. "I sincerely trust, old commander, that you'll include me in the jolly old raiding party. I mean to say, I feel that I ought to be up and doing."

"You'd better go to bed, Archie," I advised.

"Absolutely not," said Archie firmly. "I'm bursting with anxiety to dash about, and whizz here and there, and do something to help the old cause. It's up to everybody to rally round and do his jolly old bit!"

And Archie was not merely talking. He had already proved that he was as good as two ordinary juniors. A languid youth usually, when it came to the point of action, he was fairly bubbling with energy. And he threw himself into the work with an enthusiasm that surprised the Remove.

He insisted upon going out with the raiding party—and he proved his worth, for he worked as hard and vigorously as any of the others. The raiders consisted of Number Three Company, under Pitt, and Number Four Company, under Buster Boots. I remained in the power-station, in case of an attack. For it would be unwise to leave the fortress without any commander.

Besides, this raid was a comparatively safe affair. It depended entirely upon surprising the enemy, and accomplishing the work with speed. And there seemed nothing to spoil the programme.

At a given word, the sixteen juniors comprising the two Companies charged out through the quickly opened door, and made a swift rush for the great roll of barbed wire which stood so invitingly in the open, unguarded, and with none of the enemy in the near vicinity.

It was the duty of eight juniors to seize this roll of wire, and convey it swiftly to the power-station. The other eight juniors would concentrate their attention upon grabbing as many of the stakes as they could carry. And it was reckoned that each fellow could bring a dozen of the wooden poles. If all went well, we should be amply supplied.

In the meantime, Handforth and his Company were at the hoses, on the roof—ready to bring them into operation if the enemy started a sudden charge. Armstrong and Christine were manning the Peppers.

But the whole affair was carried through so swiftly that defensive operations were hardly necessary. The great roll of barbed wire was reached, it was turned on its side, and then sent rolling down the slope towards the power station. It only required a little guidance, and it conveyed itself to the desired spot. And while this was being done the other members of the party made havoc with the wooden stakes.

There was a certain amount of excitement among the enemy. All sorts of shouts went up, and a number of Smith's men

came rushing to the scene, and gave instant chase. But they were no match for the agile, active juniors. The wire was no sooner at the end of its journey, and the raiders with the stakes had no sooner put their loads down, when they all dashed into the power-station, and the doors were slammed.

And then the hoses hissed out, and the men who had been incautious enough to run up were sent scurrying away, drenched once again. They were beginning to realise that it was a risky business to interfere with the Remove.

"Great!" I said enthusiastically. "You've done magnificently!"

"We've got the stuff, anyway!" said Reggie Pitt. "And now, all hands to the pump! We might as well get these entanglements up at once. We want pickaxes, and anything else that can be used for hammering in those stakes. And while we work, we'd better be protected by the roof defences."

As it happened, no defence was necessary. For we ventured outside, and proceeded at once to fix up the entanglements entirely round the power-station. The wooden stakes were driven in at intervals, and the wire was festooned from stake to stake in such confusion that by the time we had finished it was utterly impossible for anybody to approach the building without getting caught in the treacherous, spiky wire.

But by the time the job was done, evening had fallen, and the rebels were hungry and tired. Of course, we had worked in parties, one set of fellows relieving the next, and so on. And throughout the entire operation we had received no attention from the enemy. They had made not the slightest attempt to hinder us.

Indeed, Mr. Smith himself came and looked on from a distance, and I couldn't help observing that he was smiling in a contemptuous kind of way. He didn't seem to mind our preparations in the least.

St. Frank's fellows were watching from the distant playing-fields, too. And the Third, at least, was sadly disappointed at the lack of activity. They felt that they had been swindled, after waiting all day to see a battle.

There was no denying that we felt far more comfortable with all that barbed wire completely encircling the power-station. But I couldn't help feeling uneasy. Smith's indifference was significant. It was clear that he didn't care a hang what we did.

It almost seemed as though he had prepared some move which would render our efforts futile. In this case, it could not be another attack, similar to the last.

For any body of men, charging at the power-house, would inevitably become entangled in that treacherous wire. I didn't like Mr. Smith's attitude in the least, and although I said nothing, I was considerably worried when darkness fell.

More of the juniors were now asleep, and quite a different set of fellows remained on watch. But Reggie Pitt remained with me on the roof, and together we stared out continuously towards the encampment and the River House School.

"Do you notice something queer?" asked Pitt, presently.

"You mean no lights?" I asked.

"Yes," he whispered. "As a rule, Cyclone City is ablaze with acetylene flares, and the shacks are all lit up, too. But now there's not a light of any kind showing."

"Smith's orders, obviously," I remarked.

"There's dirty work!" said Reggie. "There's trouble in the air—I can smell it. But I wish to goodness we knew something for certain. I'll bet Smith means to make a terrific assault upon us later on. And he's keeping us in suspense like this on purpose—so that our nerves will be on edge."

I nodded.

"Well, we can't do more than wait," I replied. "Thank goodness we've got that tunnel. If the worst comes to the worst, we shall be able to escape through there. That's one big consolation. And even if we have to give up the power-house, we'll still keep up the rebellion."

"That's the way to talk," said Reggie. "No surrender! But, look here! Doesn't it strike you that this darkness might be of advantage to us? Smith hadn't thought of that, of course; but why shouldn't somebody slip out and do a bit of scouting work?"

"It's a good suggestion," I said slowly. "He wouldn't stand much risk in this gloom, and he might be able to hear a few things. Forewarned is forearmed, you know. I'd give anything to know what the enemy's plans are. But who'll go, Reggie?"

"I will!" replied Pitt. "So that's settled!"

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP!



"YOU'RE one of my best men," I pointed out slowly. "I can't afford to lose you, Reggie. And if you got collared—"

"My dear fathead, I don't propose to get collared," interrupted Reggie. "Besides, it's all rot to say I'm one of your best men. In an affair like this, one chap is as good as another. I'm rather keen on this scouting stunt, so don't you make any objections."

I knew that it was quite useless to do so, for Pitt had made up his mind. Apart from all this, he was about the best fellow for the job. I could trust him to accomplish it satisfactorily.

He was off almost at once, and I was rather thankful that Handforth was indulging in some much-needed rest. If he had

been wakeful, he would probably have insisted upon doing some scouting himself.

Reggie provided himself with a pair of rubber-soled shoes, and, except for a thin piece of cane, he was quite unarmed. He relied upon the darkness and his own agility to elude capture.

His object was to reach the River House school.

Smith was most likely to be there, and there was quite a good chance of Reggie picking up some stray scraps of conversation. For if any plan had been decided upon, there would be no secret about it in Smith's own camp.

Reggie had practically no trouble.

By sticking to the hedges and crouching low every time he heard footsteps or a voice, he slipped through the enemy's lines without the least trouble. The risk of capture was slight. For, even if he was spotted, he would be able to nip away and vanish into the darkness. The absence of lights helped him considerably.

Mr. Smith had not considered this. His object in keeping the encampment in darkness was probably in order to keep us in suspense, not to conceal any preparations that might be made.

Pitt found himself at the rear of the River House, and his knowledge of the building served him well. He had frequently visited the River House boys, when Dr. Hogge's school had been in its normal state, and he knew almost every window and door of the whole establishment.

And he was aware that Mr. William K. Smith had selected Dr. Hogge's old study for use as an office. There were lights behind the window-blind of this room now. Scarcely any glimmer came out, however.

Pitt, crouching low, paused for a short time beneath the window. He had no scruples whatever about listening. This was no case of eavesdropping, but a scout at work attempting to obtain information of the enemy's plans. He was performing a perfectly legitimate act.

Not that he heard anything. The window was tightly closed, and only the dull, indistinguishable murmur of voices came out to him. There was just a little chink at the bottom of the blind through which he could obtain a glimpse of the interior. And he saw that Cyclone Smith was in conversation with Mr. Gimble, the construction expert.

That office of Smith's was up-to-date in every respect—luxurious furniture, beautiful carpets, and as exquisite as a millionaire manufacturer's sanctum was expected to be.

It seemed strange to Pitt that this great man should be so determined to rout the Remove out of the power-station by sheer force. Surely it would have been better if he had agreed to the modest terms the Remove asked, and thus have settled the matter out of hand?

But, at the same time, Reggie felt a slight glow of pride in the fact that the

Remove was holding out so tenaciously against the powers of this great multi-millionaire, with all his horde of helpers. And it also occurred to Pitt that he was not only wasting his time in remaining at the window, but inviting discovery.

So he crept round and made his way direct to the grating of a cellar. It was an old, neglected gap in the ground. Pitt remembered that Wellborne and some of the other cads of the River House School had been in the habit of using this grating as a means of getting in and out of the school after lights-out.

Reggie had feared that it might be made secure, but to his relief he saw that admittance was easily possible. So he slid down, wormed his way into the cellar, and dropped.

He landed without hurting himself, and then produced a small electric torch. One flash sufficed to give him his bearings, and then he passed from this cellar into the next. He knew that he was now beneath Mr. Smith's office. And the mumble of voices from above was sufficiently informative, too.

Faint moonlight streamed through the grating of this cellar, which was quite intact and strong. The dim light was sufficient to show Pitt all he needed. And in a very few minutes he had shifted a big box into a more central division, and he took up his stand upon it.

This brought him so close to the ceiling that he could place his ear to it without straining. And, to his great satisfaction, he found that he was able to overhear every word that was spoken above.

It was almost uncanny, the way those voices came through to him. But, of course, neither Mr. Smith nor his companion were lowering their voices, and they certainly had no suspicion that a representative of the enemy was below.

"Well, Gimble, we've decided to get these boys out at ten o'clock," Mr. Smith was saying. "Now that that little matter of the steel contract is settled, I don't mind telling you how we're going to deal with these young cubs."

"I'd sure be interested to know," said the other man.

And, to Reggie Pitt's great satisfaction, Mr. Smith proceeded to go into a few details. It could not have happened better if Smith had been deliberately saying all this for Pitt's benefit. Without the slightest doubt, Reggie was meeting with unexpected luck.

And he heard the plan—simplicity itself.

One of Smith's biggest motor-lorries was being prepared even now. A great wooden battering-ram had been designed by Mr. Schwann, and this was being lashed to the front of the lorry.

And at ten o'clock, when everything seemed utterly quiet and at peace, a big force of Smith's men would make a swift, tremendous dash at the Power Station.

And the motor-lorry, fixed with that ram, would lead the way. One rush would suffice to send the great vehicle hurtling through the futile entanglements, and the ram would smash down the main door in one rapid charge.

It mattered not how many hose-pipes or how many pea-shooters the Remove brought into action. Nothing short of heavy artillery would stay the progress of that big, covered lorry.

It was planned to the last detail. The big lorry would make its dash in dramatic fashion, the rebels knowing nothing about the coming peril until the last moment—when all possibility of defence was at an end.

And Reggie Pitt was thunderstruck.

For it seemed to him that being forewarned was not being forearmed. For in this case nothing, apparently, could be done. Even if he hurried back with all speed, he would be able to do nothing, except advise an immediate evacuation of the position.

So there would be no more satisfaction than leaving Mr. Smith with an empty shell as his capture. The rebels would flee before the clock struck. But to avert the disaster seemed an impossibility.

For that lorry would just be the vanguard. Behind it a great crowd of Smith's men would surge through the breach, and make short work of any hand-to-hand defence. The scheme, in fact, was not to disperse the juniors, but to capture every one of them, and march them as prisoners back to St. Frank's. And once there, with the rebellion squashed, there would be no chance of a further rising.

"Very nice—the outlook is pretty gloomy," he said to himself. "What the dickens can we do now? I suppose we're lucky to be warned in advance, so that we can have plenty of time to clear out."

It seemed to him that there was no object to be gained by remaining longer in the enemy's camp. So he got down from the box, and stood for a few moments considering. A wild sort of idea had entered his head that he might be able to frustrate the scheme by finding the lorry, and putting it out of commission.

But he put this out of his head as a wild notion. Even if this lorry was incapacitated there were scores of others. And by venturing into the camp itself he would only invite capture, thus leaving the rebels utterly unwarned of their coming peril.

It was Reggie's Pitt's plain duty to speed back to the power-station with as little delay as possible. So he left the cellar, went into the adjoining one, and crawled out through the broken grating.

He was rising to his feet when a dim figure approached from behind. The next moment Pitt found himself being borne swiftly to the ground.

CHAPTER X.

A DESPERATE CHANCE!



REGINALD PITT was usually a cool, level-headed junior.

But it must be confessed that in this moment of disaster he nearly lost his head. He fought madly, furious with himself for having fallen into this trap. He hit out blindly, and for a few moments he was like a young tiger. But his efforts were all in vain. His assailant had all the advantage of the fight, for Pitt had been seized from behind, and was sprawling on the ground.

Smith will sure be a heap interested to hear of this!"

Pitt made no reply; he felt too utterly wretched. He had failed; he had blundered into a trap at the very moment of success. And he felt that he would never be able to forgive himself. His fellow rebels were relying upon him to return with information—and they would wait in vain! At ten o'clock the surprise would be sprung, and they would fall hopelessly into William K. Smith's clutches.

Having been taken round to the front of the building, Pitt was delivered into the hands of a burly ruffian who was standing at the door. They all entered the well-lit hall. And Mr. Schwann passed through into Smith's private office alone.



He was rising to his feet when a dim figure approached from behind. The next moment Pitt found himself being borne swiftly to the ground.

At last, common-sense returning, he realised his helplessness.

"Well, you've got me!" he muttered thickly. "Do your worst!"

"You're coming round to Mr. Smith's office," said a grim voice. "The Chief will be interested to know what you were doing in this cellar. One of the boys, eh? I figured as much."

The man who had seized him was Mr. Schwann, the chief engineer of the camp.

"I saw you go in," said Mr. Schwann obligingly, as he deftly tied Reggie's hands behind his back. "So I waited, reckoning that you'd come out by the same route. Eavesdropping, eh? Spying, I guess! Mr.

Pitt did not even attempt to break away.

His new captor was even more formidable than Schwann, and his hands were now tied behind his back. He might as well face defeat with dignity. He wondered if he would be flogged. It occurred to him that the German-American millionaire might put him to a kind of mild torture in order to make him explain his presence. But Pitt set his teeth and resolved that he would not answer a word, come what may.

After a moment or two, Mr. Schwann returned, and beckoned. And Reggie Pitt was led forward by the ruffian, and they passed into the millionaire's private office. Mr. William K. Smith was sitting at his desk.

cigar in mouth, and his eyes were grim as he gazed at the prisoner.

"So you were found sneaking around the cellars," he said harshly. "Listen, sonny! You were there for no good purpose, and if you want to save your hide from the lash, you'd better explain."

Pitt looked at Mr. Smith defiantly.

"I've got nothing to say," he replied.

And in spite of Smith's threats he maintained a stony silence thereafter. It was fairly obvious that Smith suspected him of knowing the secret of the plan, for he gave orders for the prisoner to be bound even more securely, and to be gagged.

And in front of Smith's eyes the unfortunate junior was roped up so securely that there was no possibility of getting free. True, Pitt had used every atom of cunning that he knew. He had braced his muscles so that the ropes appeared tight, but would relax when he went limp. Even so, he doubted if he would be able to conquer the formidable knots.

And a thick scarf was bound tightly round his face, so that his mouth was completely covered. Only his nostrils were left free, so that he would be able to breathe.

"Best throw him into the next room," said Smith curtly. "He'll be safe there until this business is over. We can get him out later."

And Reginald Pitt was forthwith carried into an adjoining room, and the door was closed and locked. He found himself in darkness, except for a faint stream of moonlight which came through the window. But even this was blotted out a moment later, for somebody came and closed the outer shutters.

Even if Pitt got his gag free he would be helpless. He could shout until he was hoarse, but his voice would not carry far. Besides, at the first shout, he would bring some of his captors upon him, to readjust the gag.

He lay there on the floor, hunched against one of the walls, miserable and furious. He was more furious with himself than anything else. For he placed the blame of his capture entirely at his own door. He had been careless. Just at the moment when he should have been supremely cautious, he had blundered out through the grating without taking any preliminary survey.

"Fool! Idiot! Dolt!" he told himself bitterly. "My hat! And Nipper was dotty enough to trust you to go scouting! You're not fit to call yourself a rebel at all!"

Pitt was thoroughly disgusted with himself, and his alarm for his unsuspecting chums was acute. So far as he could see, nothing could be done. He judged the time to be about eight-thirty—perhaps not quite so much.

There was still a decent amount of time before the proposed onslaught, over an hour and a half at least. But what could he do? He was not only bound and gagged, but freedom from his bonds would do little to improve his position.

He had a wild kind of hope that he might get his limbs free, and escape by the window. But how could he do that now, with the window closely shuttered? And the door was locked—with Smith and his men beyond.

Reggie found himself going hot and cold, and he racked his brain for some kind of an inspiration. But none would come—and small wonder. In that dark room, alone and helpless, there was precious little prospect of getting free.

And Pitt thought of the rest of the rebels, anxiously awaiting his return. They would wait in vain—and would have no warning of that master-stroke of Smith's which would bring the great rebellion to a swift and ignominious conclusion.

Pitt consoled himself by coming to the conclusion that it would make little difference whether he escaped or not. After all, he could only tell the rebels to clear out. Nothing could be done to stop this latest plan of action. Pea-shooters and hose-pipes are hardly effective weapons against a roaring, charging, ten-ton lorry.

"Oh, what's the good?" muttered Pitt under his gag. "We are dished! The whole thing's finished! And Smith's the winner —"

He suddenly felt his hair tingling. A creepy sensation passed over his skin. Something had happened on the other side of the room—a sound had come to his ears. It was a familiar sound, too.

And Pitt's sudden excitement was not due to fright, but to hope. He had heard the faint tinkle of a bell. Nothing much, but it told him a great deal. There was a telephone in the room!

Possibly an extension, and that accounted for the tinkle of the bell, for someone was probably using the main instrument in another department. But even the extension was a direct line when the other instrument was not being used. And Pitt suddenly felt his heart beating rapidly.

A train of thought began to form itself in the junior's mind. And the first essential was to rid himself of that gag—and, if possible, get his hands free.

Five minutes earlier he had been telling himself that he couldn't possibly do anything. And yet, now that he had a great incentive, he managed to roll over towards the centre of the room, and found himself against the table. Kneeling there, he felt the corner of the table with his face—his hands, of course, being still behind him, bound.

By working his head up and down, he managed to catch the scarf against the table edge, loosening it gradually until he was finally able to wrench it completely off. This done, he breathed more freely, and he tried to slip out of his wrist bonds.

But this proved too much for him, and he gave it up. Perhaps it wasn't even necessary. He managed to get to his feet, and he leaned over the table backwards, his bound hands feeling carefully. And after a short

search, he felt the telephone. He drew it towards him, nearer the edge of the table, and was just about to jerk the receiver off the hook when he paused.

He knew something about extension lines, and he remembered that he had not heard another tinkle—announcing that the main instrument was finished with. He believed that somebody was still on the line—probably Mr. Smith himself.

So he waited. And less than a minute afterwards he heard the bells give another little tinkle, and dead silence followed. Reggie felt pleased with himself for having remembered in time.

After three tries he managed to jerk the receiver off its hook—but at the same time he knocked the whole instrument over, and was momentarily alarmed. But this was really an advantage, as he soon found.

For the receiver and the mouthpiece were now lying close together on the table. Pitt turned round, leaned over the table, and in the intense darkness he tried to find the receiver. A faint, uncanny voice came to him, sounding quite peculiar in that blackness, without the receiver to his ear.

"Number, please!" said a voice impatiently. "Hallo! Number, please!"

"Bannington seven-one!" said Pitt huskily.

"Bannington seven-one," repeated the operator mechanically.

"Yes, please," said Pitt.

He waited, breathless with inward excitement. Everything was working fine. But had the bells of the main instrument tinkled, as these other bells had tinkled? Would Smith guess what was going on, and investigate?

It seemed not, for after a very brief wait another voice came through the wire.

"Hallo! Who's that?"

"It's Pitt—Reggie Pitt speaking!" exclaimed the imprisoned junior in a soft, husky voice. "Is that you, Morrow? Oh, good! Just the fellow I wanted to speak to! I say, Morrow—do me a favour, please!"

"Well I'm hanged!" came Morrow's voice, close to Pitt's ear. "Where on earth are you speaking from, young man? I thought you were bottled up in that power-station? How are things going?"

"Please don't ask any questions, Morrow!" pleaded Pitt urgently. "Things are bad—with me, I mean. I've been collared by Smith! I'm a prisoner in his hands!"

"Don't spring those yarns on me!" growled Morrow. "If you're a prisoner, how can you be talking on the telephone?"

"I am—but I can't explain," said Pitt. "Oh, don't waste time! Somebody might come in and collar me! I want you to get hold of young Willy Handforth, and bring him to the telephone. And please be quick! It's vital!"

Something in Pitt's tone caused Morrow to realise that this was no joke. He promised to do as he was asked, and silence followed. It seemed that hours passed, and

every unfortunate mishap was expected by Reggie. Smith would come—Smith would use the other instrument—the Exchange would cut off the line—somebody would want to use the telephone at St. Frank's in Morrow's absence.

But none of these contingencies arose. The line remained quite clear, and Pitt himself was not interrupted. He wondered if he had done wisely in asking for Willy. Perhaps it would have been better to tell Morrow, while he had had the chance. And in the middle of these torturing reflections a clear voice sounded over the wire:

"Hallo!" it said cheerfully.

"Oh, good!" breathed Pitt. "That you, Willy?"

"Can't you see it is?" asked Handforth minor, from the other end of the wire.

"What's up, Pitt? I didn't know you had a telephone in that giddy power station! Congratulations from the Third, old man! The way you've been dishing old Smith all day is terrific! Good luck! I've a good mind to join—"

"Don't speak so much!" hissed Pitt.

"I'm not in the power station. I'm in the River House! I'm bound up, and a prisoner in Smith's hands! Look here, Willy, I want you to shoot to the tunnel, and take a warning to Nipper! Smith's got us whacked! I want Nipper to have time to clear out!"

"Crikey!" said Willy graphically. "What's up?"

And Pitt explained in as few words as he possibly could—his mind in a fever of anxiety. Willy listened with growing excitement, and when he had heard all, his reply was characteristic.

"Cheer up, old stick!" he said briefly.

"I'll shoot off now—and if Nipper can't spoil this new stunt of Smith's, I'll eat my overcoat!"

A click followed, announcing that Willy had hung up the receiver. And Pitt sank away from the table, and lay on the floor, realising that he was aching in almost every limb, as the result of the unnatural attitude he had been forced to assume.

But a kind of song of triumph was throbbing within him. In spite of the apparently insuperable difficulties, he had managed to get his message through to the rebels.

Perhaps the disaster wouldn't be so overwhelming, after all!

CHAPTER XI.

THE FAILURE!



HANDFORTH MINOR wasted no time.

It was a famous fact that Willy closely resembled a streak of lightning when he was in a hurry. The manner in which

he shot out of the prefect's room was remarkable. The Sixth-formers happened to be coming down the passage at the moment.

They were aware of a black form which suddenly appeared in front of them. It flashed between them, and there was a kind of scurry. But by the time they had turned and looked round, the passage was empty. Willy, indeed, was almost in the lobby, making a bee-line for the Triangle.

Mr. Ponsonby Small happened to be coming in at the moment. In the nick of time Willy swerved, and passed round Mr. Small with such a strange motion that the Head felt rather giddy. He didn't know who the junior was, but it was clearly evident that he was in a hurry.

"Boy!" shouted Mr. Small. "Come here!"

"Sorry! No time to waste!" came back a receding voice.

"Upon my soul!" gasped Mr. Small indignantly. "The unmitigated young rascal!"

He strode out on to the steps, and gazed across the Triangle. But he saw nothing but the outline of the school buildings, and the chestnut trees swaying in the stiff March breeze.

And in the meantime Willy had reached the playing fields. A glance at the school clock had informed him that the time was twenty minutes to nine—although he doubted this. His own watch said ten past nine, and it occurred to him that the school clock was half an hour slow. The fact that Willy had been sticking pins into his watch all the afternoon weighed little with him.

Once on the deserted playing fields, he made his way straight to the junior pavilion, and passed behind it, where there was a narrow space between the rear wall and the high hedge. And here Willy proceeded to grovel down in the damp grass. After a few moments he succeeded in lifting a huge chunk of the earth up. At least, this is what it looked like in the pale moonlight.

As a matter of fact, he had raised the cunningly concealed trap-door which led down into the shaft, with the tunnel below. It was by the means of this tunnel that the rebels had gained possession of the power house.

Having lowered himself on to the ledge below, Willy closed the trap-door, and pulled out an electric torch. He always carried this with him nowadays, in case of emergencies. Remarkably enough, the torch burst into light when Willy touched the switch. It must have been a very good one, for not only had Willy used the thing as a hammer on two or three occasions, but it had been twice dropped in the mud, and on one celebrated morning it had rolled downstairs from top to bottom. The very fact that it lighted was akin to a miracle.

The shaft was a steep one—a kind of natural fissure which had been caused by the constant vibration of traffic. The rebels had constructed a hasty ladder, by which descent could be easily made. Willy got to the bottom, and then tore along the tunnel with all speed—finally mounting the per-

pendicular shaft which led straight up into the power station.

He found everything peaceful and quiet. This was mainly because his elder brother was sound asleep, together with half the other rebels—who were weary and tired after their strenuous fighting, and rather fed-up with the recent hours of inactivity.

Willy was escorted to the roof by Buster Boots and Bob Christine, who were looking rather grim. They came over to the spot where I was leaning on the parapet, gazing into the dark encampment beyond, and chatting with Archie.

"I can't understand why Reggie doesn't come back," I was saying. "I can't help feeling that something's happened to him, Archie."

"The possibility is absolutely frightful, but it certainly seems that all is not bright and gay," replied Archie. "I mean to say, Pitt is the kind of chappie who bustles about like anything and does things rapidly. It seems to me, old companion, that—What ho! Who comes here, what?"

"We found this fag crawling up through the trap-door," said Boots briefly.

"Handforth minor!" I exclaimed, peering at him. "Look here, Willy, this won't do, you know! You oughtn't to come here—"

"That's right—rag me!" said Willy bitterly. "I've come here with news—I've come here with important dispatches, as it were, and all you can do it to jump down my giddy throat! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"You cheeky young bounder," I growled. "Well, what's the message? Something about the Third, I suppose?"

"No—it's from Pitt," replied the fag. "He's been collared, and he managed to telephone a warning through to me. So I've brought it."

At first we suspected that Willy was trying to be funny. But for once his cheekiness vanished, as he became deadly serious. Tensely, he described exactly what had happened, and gave us Reggie's full message.

"Ten o'clock!" I said quickly. "It's nearly nine now! There's hardly time to prepare anything—and I doubt if we can save ourselves, in any case. This is a terrible piece of news!"

Willy stared at me.

"You're going to give in?" he asked, in amazement. "You! Why, I told Pitt that if you didn't whack old Smith I'd eat my overcoat! So it's up to you to think of something—because I need that overcoat to wear!"

"Don't be funny!" I growled. "Let me think!"

Willy discreetly became silent. But the other rebels were spreading the news throughout the rest of the Remove like wild-fire. The sleepers were awakened, and before five minutes had elapsed the whole rebel camp was seething with consternation and alarm.

But just as the school clock chimed the hour of nine, I decided upon a course of action. After careful thought, I had come to the conclusion that there was only one possible way of defeating Smith's latest move. And the advance information enabled us to prepare.

Willy was sent back to St. Frank's—much to his disgust. But I sent him for his own sake, because it was nearly the Third's bedtime, and he would only get into serious trouble if he was missed. And over three parts of the rebel force crept out into the darkness and started work.

We were constantly guarded by a small force on the roof, who were ready with the hose pipes, in case of emergency. But nothing happened. We worked like slaves until five minutes to ten.

And then, our task accomplished—hurriedly, it is true—we retreated into the power station, and secured the doors. And I warned all the fellows to be ready on the instant to make a dash for the tunnel if things went wrong.

Hardly had I reached the roof, when the dazzling rays of a search-light cut through the darkness in Smith's camp. The bright beams swung round, passed over the power house, hovered, and then settled into a steady glare upon the newly-built walls.

At the same moment there came a roar of powerful engines. Mr. Smith was carrying out his scheme to the letter—springing his attack without losing a second. The events of the next few minutes were so swift that we were in the thick of a battle before we could properly realise it.

We saw the huge covered lorry come hurtling across the paddock, making a bee-line for the main door of the building. And the thing resembled some charging juggernaut. The front was entirely disguised by a great wooden battering-ram, which projected outwards menacingly. The van being covered, its load of men were completely protected.

"Get ready!" I shouted. "Fire!"

Everything was prepared, and at the word the four hose-pipes commenced action, and Pitt's Peppers commenced their hissing roar. A continuous hail of water and pellets were sent downwards.

Behind the charging lorry came Smith's motley crew of workmen. It was their task to sweep into the power station after the breach had been made. One dash through the hail of peas and the streams of water, and they would win the position.

The lorry, at full speed, tore through the barbed wire entanglements as though they did not exist. And then, when only fifteen yards away from its objective, sudden and unexpected disaster overtook the charging monster.

I heard the driver give a sudden shout of alarm. The lorry swerved, but it was too late. The front wheels descended with a jarring jolt into a deep trench, and the stop-

page was so dramatic that the front axle was snapped like a twig, and the lorry nearly overturned. The men within it were sent sprawling, but came to no harm, except for a few bruises.

"Now then!" I thundered. "Let 'em have it!"

Added to the streams of water and the roaring hail of stinging peas, were hundreds of mud bags. And the enemy, completely bewildered by this disaster, checked and wavered.

The foremost ranks were knocked flying by the streams of water, and they were peppered so drastically by the peas that they had absolutely no fight left in them. Mr. Smith, watching from the rear, was staggered.

He cursed madly, and shouted to his men to advance.

But the situation was saved. During that hour we had dug a deep trench right across the front of the building. Thus, the lorry, charging at full speed, had dropped into this trench, preventing it from reaching its objective. And now the lorry was a wreck, a derelict to remind Mr. Smith of his latest failure.

The momentary confusion among the enemy spread, and the continuous "fire" from the roof of the power station proved too devastating. In less than a minute the enemy lost heart, wavered again, and then surged back in full retreat.

"Hurrah!"

The rebels roared with sheer joy and victory. And to make our satisfaction quite complete, Reggie Pitt himself turned up in all the confusion, and was admitted, breathless, dishevelled, but happy.

He had used this last hour to advantage, too, working his bonds free. And although his wrists were grazed, and he was sore, his joy was unbounded when he found that we still held the fortress. He had no difficulty in getting out of the room once free from his ropes.

And while the Remove cheered itself hoarse, Mr. William K. Smith returned to his office, baffled, and dangerous with rage.

There was not the slightest doubt that the Rebel Remove was more than holding its own! And although we knew that the end was far from being in sight, we felt that we had every reason to view the future with confidence.

The war on Mr. Smith will be continued in another fine story next week!—

**THE
ISLAND FORTRESS**



MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

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



No. 16. GREENWICH VILLAGE.

THE Bohemian section of New York is known as Greenwich Village, and corresponds more or less to our own Chelsea. In this part of the city one is supposed to see artists in picturesque attire, with flowing hair and pointed beards, and enormous bows.

It is quite possible that such interesting individuals exist in New York, but I must confess that I never saw one, although I visited Greenwich Village quite a few times. Artists in America, as in Great Britain—that is real artists—are invariably the most prosaic and harmless looking citizens. The picturesque type are generally imitation artists at the best.

One would gather from the name that Greenwich Village is a kind of sleepy corner of New York, tucked away to itself somewhere. But nothing is further from the truth. To be quite frank, the visitor has a little difficulty in finding where Greenwich Village starts, and where it ends—and he is by no means charmed by the district, in any case.

For, bluntly, this part of New York City is frankly squalid. It lies just near Washington Square, in the older quarter. Half a century ago, no doubt, Greenwich Village

was in the very best section of the town. But nowadays there is every evidence that the quarter has been going down and down.

About the only distinguishing feature about Greenwich Village is the fact that the narrow streets are ornamented here and there by some bizarre restaurant or other—which, upon investigation, proves to be very ordinary, after all.

These places are designed, firstly and lastly, for attracting custom, and do not rely upon a regular clientele. There are some which provide excellent fare at a low figure, but others charge exorbitant prices for the merest trifles, and only a fool would visit them regularly.

By daylight, Greenwich Village is practically given over to heavy commercial traffic, urchins, and similar evidences of a poor

district. It is only at night that the "Village" comes into its own.

The glamour of the place is more or less artificial—at least, nowadays. What it was in the past, I cannot say. One goes down the narrow streets, and in all sorts of odd corners one sees the illuminated signs over the various restaurants—all of them grotesque in one way or another.

Let me say at once that most of these places are perfectly innocuous, and do not come under the heading of Night Clubs. They are just there to drop into for a few minutes, to be amused. One will see parties of ladies and gentlemen in evening dress enter the "Pirates' Den," for example—this latter being a mere shed, faked up to resemble parts of a ship. The waiters and the members of the orchestra are all attired after the fashion of pirates, wearing belts festooned with cutlasses and daggers and old-fashioned pistols.

Other restaurants are got up in imitation of a two-century old English inn, with everybody in the costume of the period. Others are purely jazzy, and one can be quite certain of spending a good deal of money on a round of visits to these quaint resorts.

The real artists probably view the places with contempt. For the proprietors of such establishments cater for the novelty-loving public, and not for the artistic fraternity.

Of course, a great number of artists occupy studios in this district, but it is probably a fact that the majority of them have too high a regard for their money to throw it away in these grotesque restaurants. But there are one or two which really do supply first-class fare at an absurdly low price.

At the "Samovar," for example, a splendid luncheon is served for the modest sum of fifty cents—two shillings. And to obtain a four or five-course luncheon for such a sum in New York is indeed a rarity. I lunched in the "Samovar" once or twice, and I found the food ample and delicious. In all probability, such places as this really do cater for genuine artists!

Why Nipper Resumes Control of the Mag.!

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St. Frank's Magazine



FAMILIAR PHRASES FROM FICTION

As Seen By Our Artist

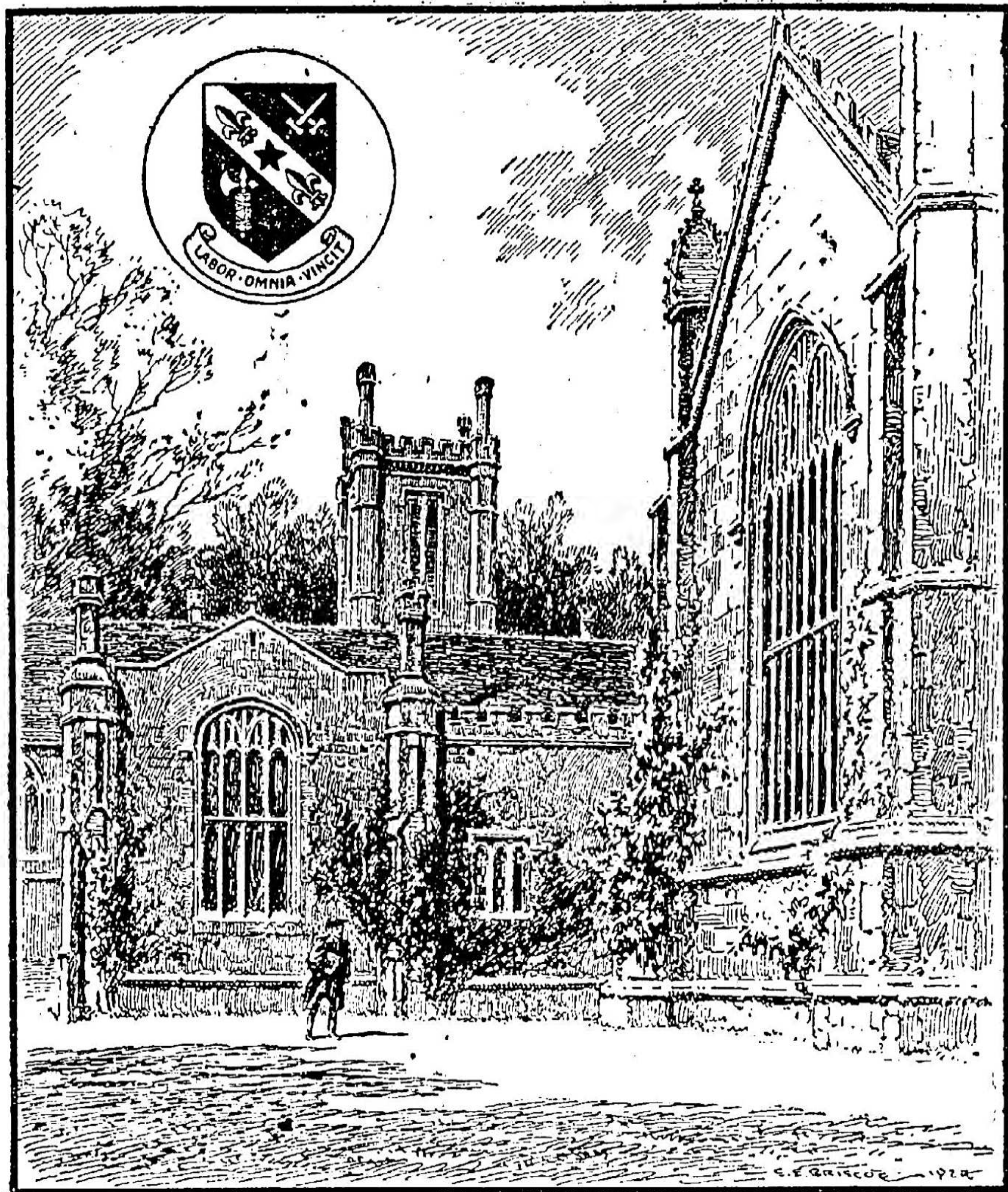


HE STOOD ROOTED TO THE GROUND

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

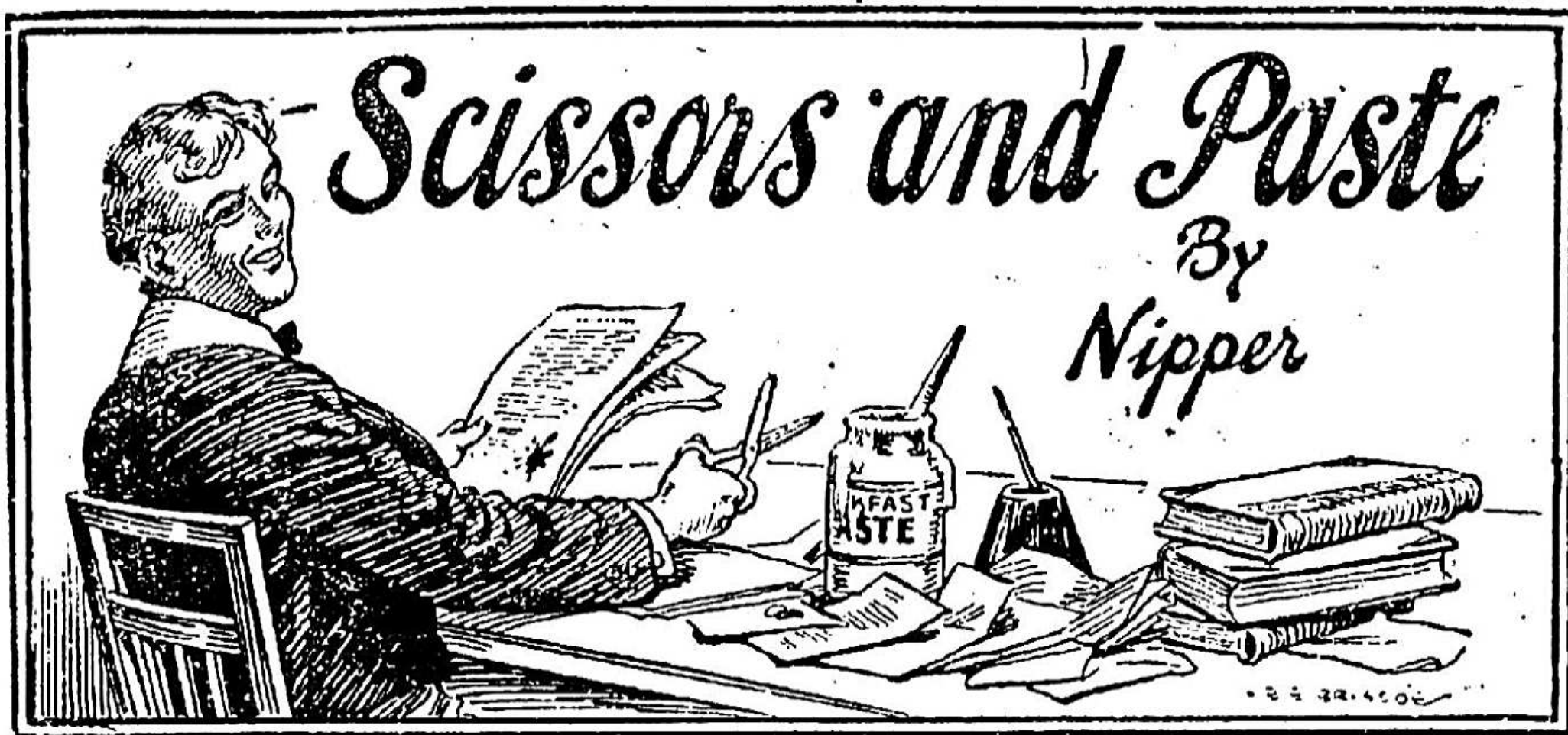
SPECIAL SERIES OF ART SKETCHES BY MR. E. E. BRISCOE.

No. 20. CHELTENHAM COLLEGE.



The leading English public school founded in Victorian times, Cheltenham was established in 1840, to provide a classical, mathematical and general education of the highest kind for the sons of gentlemen at a moderate cost, the teaching being conducted in strict conformity with the doctrines of the Church of England. The school is divided into senior and junior,

with a modern and classical side, and a special department for military and engineering instruction. There are eight houses, with one for Jewish boys, the number of boys totalling about 640. Special attention is paid to preparing boys for the Army, and the school supplies a contingent to the Officers Training Corps.



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

My dear Chums,

Here I am, back again, with the dear old Mag. to look after. When I resigned a fortnight ago, I thought it would be for good, or anyhow, for some considerable time. The Remove were thunderstruck at my giving way to Handforth. Letters, begging me to reconsider my decision, came in scores, and a deputation arrived at the office threatening to boycott the Mag. if Handy edited it. While I much appreciated the good intentions of my supporters, it would not have been playing the game quite to have allowed them to carry out their threat. I was determined that Handy should have an opportunity of showing the fellows how he would run the Mag.

HANDFORTHIAN POLICY.

Have you ever heard of a one-man band? Absurd as it may sound, it characterises what Handforth has been attempting with the Mag.—with the big drum very much in evidence. It was certainly a one-man Mag., the great E.O.H. officiating as author, artist, and editor. Very entertaining while it lasted, it undoubtedly produced a mighty big noise. Considered as a feat, it was decidedly clever. But it is not editing, and the results are not edifying, at least, so someone rather unkindly remarked about the portrait on the cover. Somehow or other, the verdict of the Remove did not please Handy. The ribald laughter that greeted him wherever he went was scarcely befitting the respect due to an editor. No doubt if the fellows had condescended to bow and scrape before this Leviathan of the pen, pencil and pastepot, he would have been delighted with himself.

THE UNGRATEFUL BOUNDERS!

If there is one thing that Handy hates more than anything else, it is being laughed

at. One cannot really blame the fellows for chipping him over the Mag. Eventually things became so bad that the poor chap had to take refuge in his study and lock himself in. He now wishes he had never taken on the job of editing the Mag. for such a lot of ungrateful bounders. He says he is fed up with it, and that I can jolly well do it myself. Rather than let the Mag. fizzle out, I have agreed to conduct it again, as a result of a request from the Remove, including its late temporary editor.

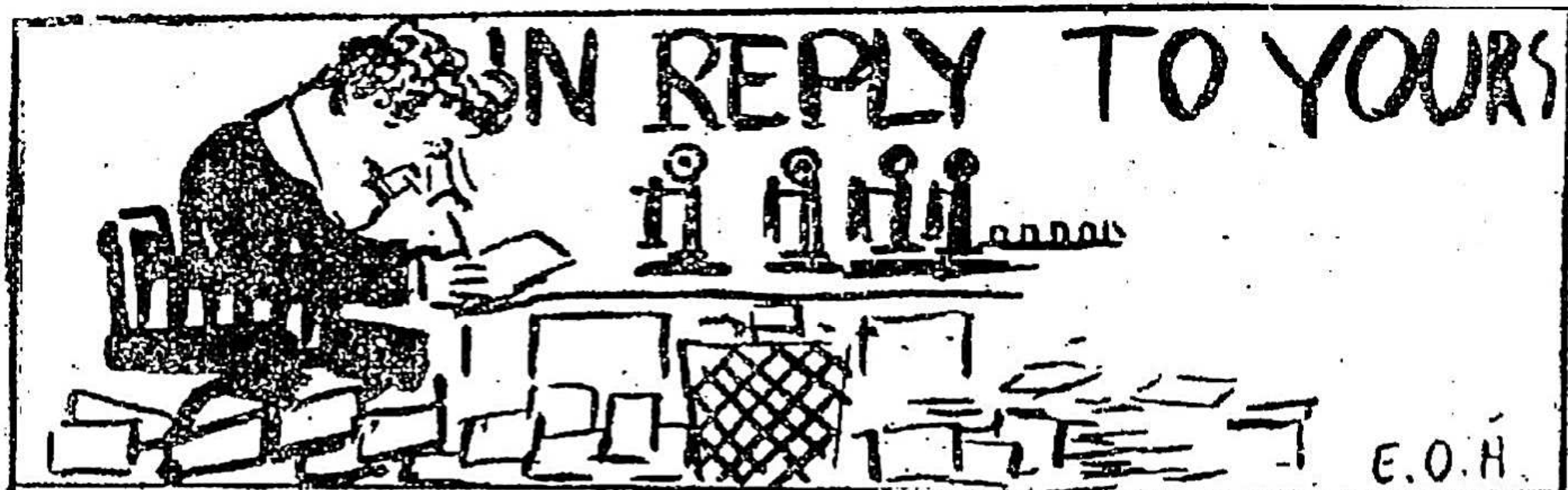
IN REPLY TO YOURS.

One of Handy's features—nothing to do with his portrait study—struck me as being well worth continuing. It is entitled, "In Reply to Yours," and, as you will see, I have persuaded the author to do some more of these snappy pars for the present issue. He has promised to turn in a limited quantity every week. Thus some good has been derived from the Handforth number of the Mag. In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, the Mag. under Handy's editorship was a howling success.

WHY NOT AN ARCHIE NUMBER?

This leads me to think that a change of editorship for one week might be repeated with some of the other fellows. For instance, we might induce Archie to do it for one number. Imagine the Mag. written and illustrated by the Genial Ass! He wouldn't have the nerve to charge anything for it, because it would be priceless. Then, later on, we might invite Timothy Tucker, the Bo'sun, Solly Levi, Alf Brent, and a few more, to occupy the Editorial Chair for the period of one week. Besides, a rest now and again would be appreciated by

Your faithful chum,
NIPPER.



Correspondence Answered by Uncle Edward

EDITOR'S NOTE.—This feature was started last week by Edward Oswald Handforth, who, as you all know, had taken over the Editorship of the Mag. For reasons explained elsewhere, I have now resumed the occupation of the editorial chair. But this particular feature, "In Reply To Yours," strikes me as being quite an excellent innovation, and I have requested E. O. H. to continue it. In this feature you may look for perfectly frank and truthful answers to your queries—and I must add, in my own defence, that I do not hold myself responsible for the replies which may be given. **NIPPER (Editor).**

WILLY H.: Your letter concerning the quality of the illustrations in last week's number is an insult. It has been burnt, and any future communication on the same style will be rammed down your throat. Please understand that personal insults levelled at the editorial staff are not allowed.

WOULD-BE DANDY: No, I don't know any recipe for making hair cream. Why not try a little corn-flour? Mix the corn-flour into stiff paste, add boiling water, and you will have enough hair cream to last for six months. But my advice is—don't do it. Hair cream is rotten stuff, anyhow. The first time I find you using some, I'll duck you in the fountain.

REGINALD: So pleased with your frank expression of delight concerning the first instalment of "In Quest Of Gold," which appeared last week. The celebrated author who wrote this has been prevailed upon by the Editor, however, to discontinue publication, as the story is altogether too good for these columns.

ARNOLD Mc.: You drivelling idiot! Do you think you can fool me with a mere shortening of your giddy name? Your insulting reference to the last Trackett Grim story is beneath contempt. And as the famous author of our marvellous detective stories has already given you a black eye, I'll make no further reference to the subject here.

TIMOTHY ARMSTRONG: Your comment regarding authors is absolutely without foundation. You ask why they are

generally so conceited and full of swank? Nothing is further from the truth. The cleverer the author, the less likelihood of conceit, and a real genius is always the most modest of beings. As an example, let me mention the talented author of our Trackett Grim stories. As everybody knows, modesty and self-effacement are second nature to him.

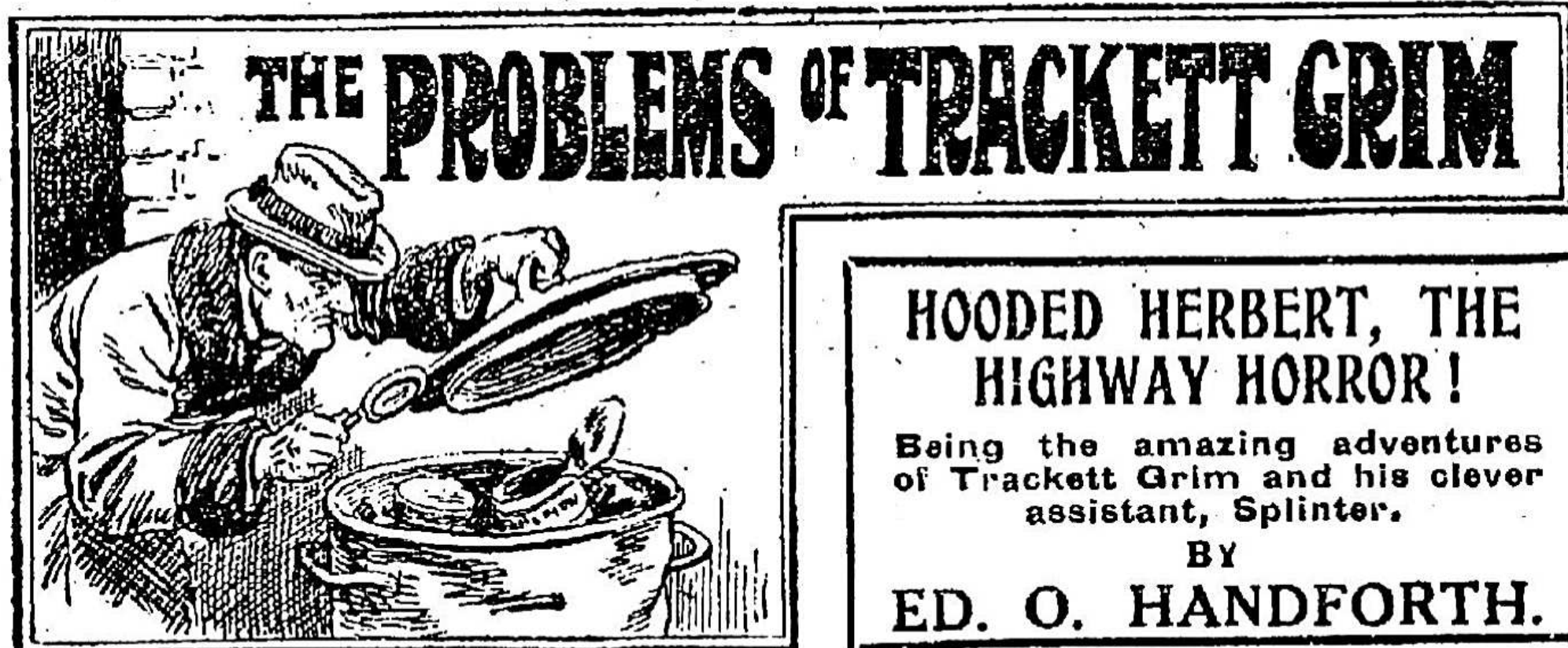
GRIFFITHS: What the dickens is the good of complaining to me about the seats being hard in the Form-room? However, I have given your name to the House-master, adding that you desire a cushion. No doubt you will hear further on this subject in due course. But take my advice, and have some padding ready.

ARTHUR MORROW: Your appreciation of "In Quest Of Gold" has been conveyed to the writer of this marvellous story. Unfortunately you will not see the rest of the story in the Mag., as the author was advised by Nipper that the yarn was altogether too classical and deep for our readers. Acting upon this advice, the great author has sent his wonderful work to a famous London magazine, and you may look out for its publication at an early date. It will afterwards appear in book form at the price of seven-and-six.

CHUBBY: Your query is a curious one. Where do flies go in the winter-time? I have some inkling that this matter had already been threshed out elsewhere, but treating it upon a scientific basis, I gather that all flies either die at the end of Autumn, or else dig themselves in until the following Spring. But please note that I do not encourage these deep scientific inquiries. This is a humorous journal, and not a naturalists' information bureau.

SERIAL FAN: I can understand your disappointment regarding the shortness of the first instalment of "In Quest Of Gold." Please see replies to "Reginald" and "Arthur Morrow," above. I may add that the author of "In Quest Of Gold" has been informed that his great story is worth ten thousand pounds—but this estimate of its value is probably a modest one.

UNCLE EDWARD.



HOODED HERBERT, THE HIGHWAY HORROR!

Being the amazing adventures of Trackett Grim and his clever assistant, Splinter.

BY

ED. O. HANDFORTH.

THE FIEND OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD!

HALT! Halt, or I'll blow you into shreds!"

Lord Sunn, of Toyle, the latest Cabinet Minister, jammed on the brakes of his powerful touring car as the voice slashed through the darkness of the night. A yellow racing car had come alongside, and Lord Sunn, of Toyle, found himself gazing into the muzzle of a whacking great revolver.

"Good 'eavins!" he gasped. "Hooded Herbert!"

The two cars came to a stop, and Lord Sunn, of Toyle, was so agitated that the clay pipe dropped from his teeth. He was a brave man—the very fact that he was in the Government proved that—but Hooded Herbert was the most dastardly miscreant the world had ever known.

"Your money!" snarled the Highway Horror. "Come on—every quid you've got!"

And three minutes later Hooded Herbert roared on his way, along the Great North Road, leaving Lord Sunn, of Toyle, with a feeling that there had just been a capital levy.

And Hooded Herbert, the Highway Horror, brought off nineteen more dastardly robberies that night. Two of his victims had resisted. And these two now lay in tiny fragments, strewn over the road. For Hooded Herbert knew no mercy. Resistance meant death.

TEN THOUSAND POUNDS REWARD!

Trackett Grim, the celebrated monarch of crime, sat in his consulting-room in Baker's Inn Road surrounded by gloom. He picked up his pipe, struck a match, and found that the pipe was empty. With a grating laugh, he hurled the pipe out of the window. Just then Splinter came in.

"What about dinner, sir?" asked Splinter nervously.

"Dinner!" exclaimed Trackett Grim bitterly. "There's no dinner for us, Splinter! I'm broke! In spite of my marvellous successes my cash has gone! I can't even buy a packet of shag! Unless a client comes soon, Splinter, I shall have no alternative but to go out and find some work!"

"Well, sir, work will be a change to you," said Splinter hopefully. "By the way, I found a newspaper. It's three days old, but I thought you might like to see it. I think it's been used for fish and chips, but it only niffs a bit."

Trackett Grim seized the paper hungrily, and his eyes leapt out of his head as he read the headlines. Such was his present poverty he had not been able to buy a newspaper, and was thus behind with all his news. His eyes, glued to the paper, became fixed.

"Hooded Herbert, the Highway Horror!" he hissed hoarsely. "Ten thousand pounds offered for his capture, dead or alive! Ah, Splinter! Even if we have no supper, we will at least have a royal breakfast."

Splinter staggered back.

"You mean you're going after the Hooded Horror, sir?" he panted.

"Not at all!" said Trackett Grim. "I'm going to capture the Hooded Horror!"

THE HOODED HORROR AT WORK!

Behind a bushy hedge on the Brighton Road lurked the yellow car—waiting for another victim to come along. Nobody knew who this desperate man was. He sat there, at the wheel, wearing a yellow hood. He was exactly the same colour as the car, and thus almost invisible.

For weeks he had terrorised the whole country, swooping down on passing motor-

ists, plundering, robbing, and even thieving. Murder was the least of his crimes. At the slightest show of resistance his victims were blown to fragments—for the bullets from Hooded Herbert's revolver were like shrapnel shells, and exploded with terrific force. There was no escaping from this beastly rotter.

The police of a dozen counties had failed to capture the crook, and even Scotland Yard had given it up as a bad job. True, they had offered ten thousand pounds reward, but nobody expected to claim it. For the Hooded Horror was so dangerous that at the first sight of him people fled. Even the chickens had been seen to scurry wildly off the road when Hooded Herbert's car appeared.

A low hum came through the air and hit against the waiting miscreant's ears. Another victim! Even nowadays, when the whole land was afraid to travel, a few daring spirits still had pluck enough to venture forth.

After a little while the sound grew louder, and now it was accompanied by squeaking, rattling, and wheezing.

"Ah!" muttered Hooded Herbert. "A Ford!"

He was right. The car which came into sight was plugging along steadily, with a desperate man at the wheel, gazing into the night with anxiety. A moment later the Highway Horror swept down on him, and demanded his cash.

"Impossible!" cried the stranger. "I am Mr. Drury Lane, the celebrated actor. Be reasonable, laddie! Do you expect to get money from an actor?"

"Bah!" said Hooded Herbert.

And, without compunction, he strewed Mr. Drury Lane and the Ford car over the road, and whizzed away for more profitable victims. He regarded it as an insult that any motorist should come along without money.

And while he was engaged upon emptying the pockets of a rich, but rash cigarette manufacturer, he failed to observe a dark blob in the sky overhead. But if the Highway Horror had known the truth, his confidence would have vanished. At last he would have felt the pang of fear.

TRACKETT GRIM DROPS ON HIS MAN

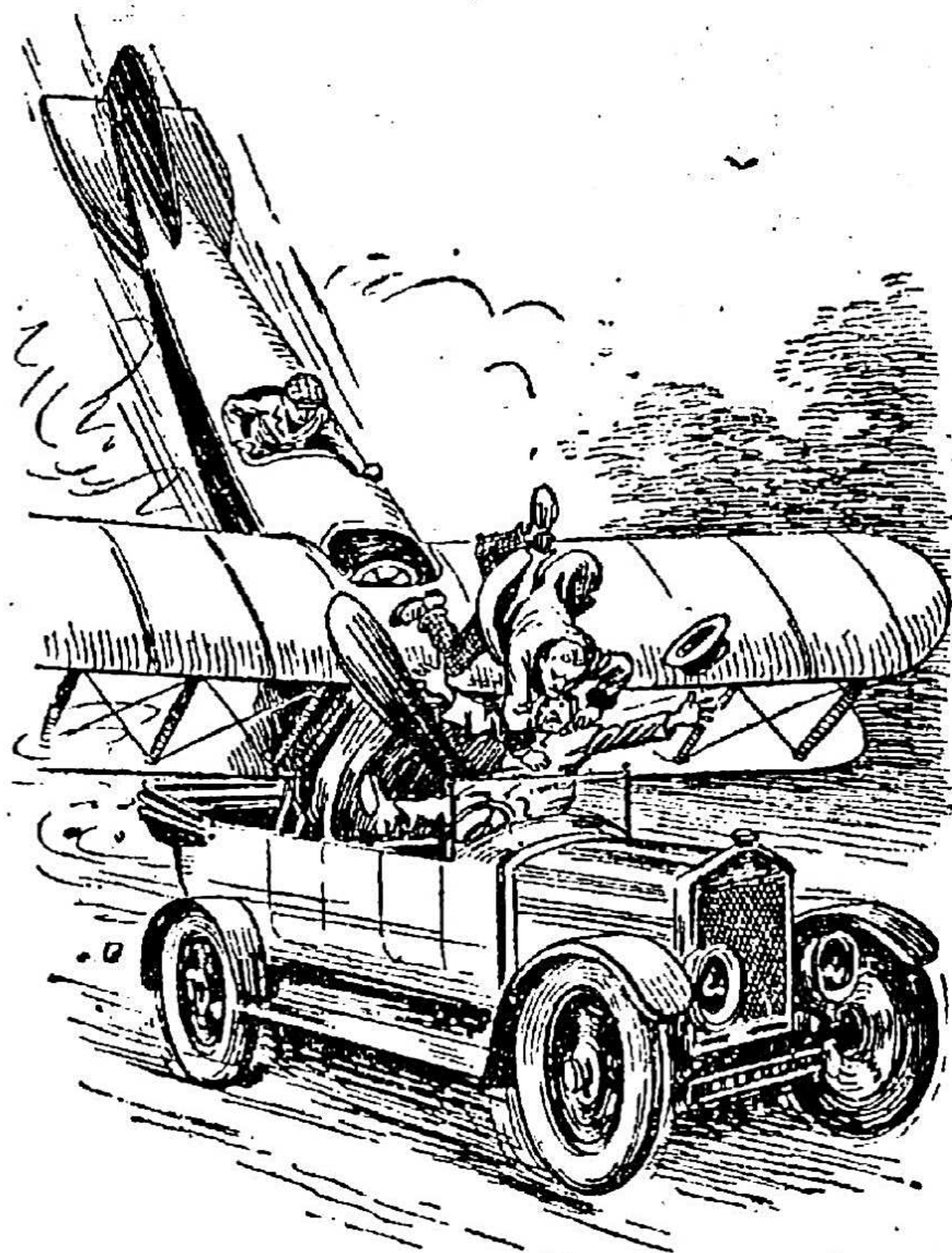
For overhead hovered an aeroplane containing Trackett Grim and Splinter. They had hired the machine from Croydon, Trackett Grim paying the fees by means of a cheque. He had felt safe in doing so, because the banks were closed, and on the morrow he would be able to pay in ten thousand pounds.

"Our time is at hand, Splinter!" murmured Trackett Grim keenly.

The words made Splinter wince. But Trackett Grim didn't mean that he and his assistant were about to die. He merely indicated that the period of waiting was over.

And as the Hooded Horror sped along the highway, Trackett Grim touched the throttle, let in the clutch, and the aeroplane swooped in pursuit. It only took Hooded Herbert a minute to realise that he was being chased.

Like mad he drove, and again and again he fired aimlessly into the air. But by a marvellous piece of work, Trackett Grim brought the aeroplane immediately over the car, both rushing along at eighty miles an hour.



And in a trice Trackett Grim dove down and pounced upon his prey.

And then, with a touch of the lever, the aeroplane dropped. The landing-wheels fitted securely into the open rear of the fugitive automobile. And in a trice Trackett Grim dived down and pounced upon his prey.

THE END OF HOODED HERBERT.

The car was still roaring along, for never for a second had the miscreant closed the throttle. He fought like mad as Trackett Grim grappled with him, and they were so intent upon their scrap that they failed to observe that the car was heading straight for an awful precipice.

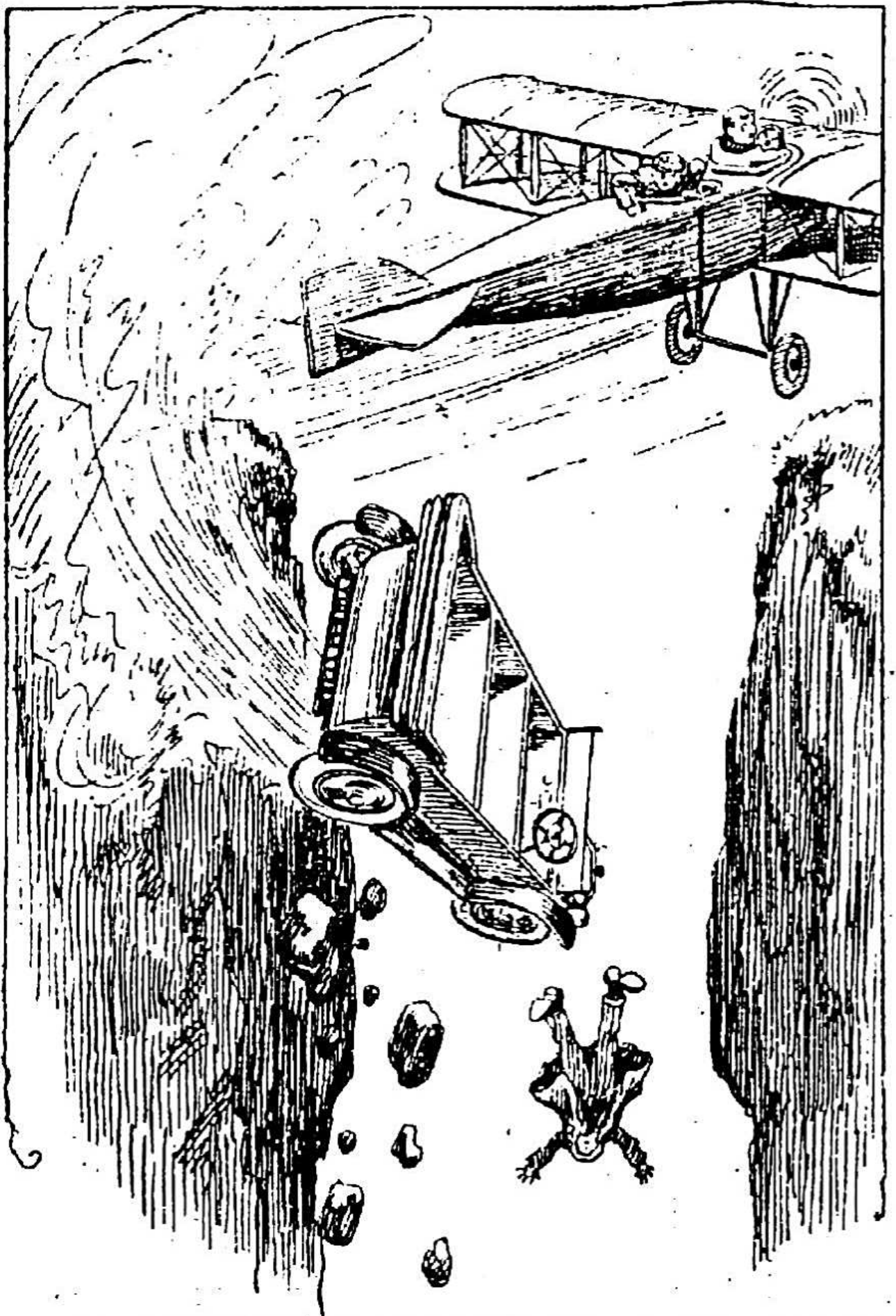
"Look out, sir!" yelled Splinter madly. "Jump!"

At the same second the end came. Hooded Herbert knew nothing, but Trackett Grim possessed such marvellous instinct that he knew, even without looking, that danger lurked ahead. With one mighty swing he jumped into the landing carriage of the aeroplane.

And only in the nick of time. For at that second the car swooped headlong over the edge of the precipice, and plunged down to destruction five thousand feet below. But the aeroplane, of course, continued onwards, soaring safely after the slight jerk that told of the car dropping away.

Two minutes later, Trackett Grim brought the aeroplane to the ground, and he grinned with triumph as he gazed upon the wreckage of the yellow car. It only took the detective a couple of seconds to sling Hooded Herbert into the luggage van. The man was dead—having been killed on the instant.

And away the aeroplane rushed towards London. In the small hours of the morning Trackett Grim landed just outside the doors of Scotland Yard, to the amazement of crowds of policemen and detectives who swarmed out. He was cheered madly when



The car swooped headlong over the precipice and plunged down to destruction, four thousand feet below.

the facts became known that Hooded Herbert was captured.

And soon afterwards Trackett Grim and Splinter travelled to Baker's Inn Road with their pockets bulging with money. Exactly as Trackett Grim had foretold, they sat down to a ripping breakfast. And they had earned it!

THE END.

We have observed that Mr. Pagett, the respected master of the Fifth Form, has recently got into the habit of walking thoughtfully up and down in the Triangle, with his head down, and his hands behind his back. This is apparently one of the results of seeing Felix the Cat so often at the cinema.

We wish to officially denounce the practice of putting bent pins on Mr. Crowell's chair. In spite of the age of this particular trick, it was played as recently as Thursday last. And Mr. Crowell, feeling strongly on the subject, failed to see the point of the joke.



E. Sopp's Fables

By
Edgar Sopp of the Fifth

No. 17.—The Fable of The Fellow Who Tried To Do Everything.

THERE once lived an extremely Arrogant Youth, who went through life in the Belief that he Knew Everything, and that his way of Doing Things was far better than anybody else's. And it chanced that he was an Author, although it would be better to set him down as

AN ALLEGED AUTHOR.

And this Arrogant Youth, not content with writing his own Contribution to a certain Far Famed Publication, did press his ideas upon the Editor so forcibly and so persistently, that at length the Much Harassed Editor, in sheer despair, relinquished his post, and gave it up to the Arrogant Youth. And, behold, there was

MUCH EXCITEMENT IN THE LAND.

And the New Editor set about his duties with a Hustle and a Bustle that promised Great Things. He appointed only two subs, who were not subs at all, but merely Slaves. They were required to be at the Beck and Call of their Chief, and their Lot was Hard. Their position was not even as dignified as that of an Office Boy, and yet they dared not protest, since the New Editor possessed

A LIGHTNING PUNCH.

And, lo, the regular contributors to the Far Famed Publication received a succession of Nasty Jolts. For, upon taking their usual copy into the Editorial Sanctum, this copy was treated with the Utmost Disregard—being, in fact, forthwith Chucked on the Fire. And there was Much Indignation abounding, and many were the expressions of Fear for the future of

THE GOOD OLD RAG.

And the Editor laughed, and declared that the Next Issue would be a masterpiece of journalism. How could it be Otherwise, considering that he was doing all the work of it Himself? And, behold, it came to pass that Everything was written by this Arrogant Youth, with the Exception of Mere Trifles by his subs, which were used for Filling In purposes, and which, indeed, had been penned under

THE DIREST OF THREATS.

And this Arrogant Youth, who thought he could Do Everything, was even foolish enough to believe that he could Blossom Forth as an artist. And so it transpired that when the paper went to press, it resembled a Chinese Puzzle more than Anything Else. For the New Editor had his Own Ideas of how a paper should be Made Up, and he Absolutely Refused the Advice that was showered upon him from All Sides. And the Editorial Sanctum resembled

A BEAR GARDEN.

And it came to pass that the copy was dispatched to the printers—which, in itself, was Remarkable Enough, for many Sages had foretold that the whole affair would end in an Unholy Mess. It did, but not quite the Unholy Mess that the Sages had imagined. And the Arrogant Youth boasted much, and his Unfortunate Subs spent days in recovering their Normal Health. So the Great Day arrived when the Proofs came from the Printers. Now, it chanced that the Editor was in the middle of

ONE OF HIS BUSY DAYS.

And the Proofs lay unheeded and unread. For the Editor was Elsewhere, being, in fact, busily engaged behind the Gymnasium in converting a certain Unfortunate Youth into pulp. But it also chanced that the Editor Himself did not escape unscathed, and for the remainder of the day he had

NO INTEREST IN LIFE.

And thus the Proofs remained untouched. And as they were Already Late, in consequence of the Tardy Dispatch of the Copy, there was no time to be lost if the publication was to Appear on the Correct Day. Now, the Editor regarded Proofs as a Lot of Rot, asking what were printers for? Why were they paid, unless they performed Their Work without having the stuff examined? And the Arrogant Youth gave No Attention to the proofs, but returned them to the printers

ABSOLUTELY UNCORRECTED.

And this, it need scarcely be recorded, was a Frightful Bloomer. For if ever proofs Needed Correction, those proofs Surely Did—since, to be truthful, the Whole Paper needed re-writing, from first page to last. And thus it happened that the Old Rag arrived in time for General Publication on the Correct Day. Now, when the copies were distributed, in the Usual Way, a sensation was caused, and more than one Hardy Youth

SAGGED AT THE KNEES.

And others saw strange mists before their eyes, and gazed at this atrocity with Feelings of Horror. For, behold, the Old Paper was no longer a paper, but a sinister-looking Abomination. There were those who Wept, but it must be explained that they wept with Mirth. For this Arrogant Youth, in his determination to produce a Masterpiece of Literature, had turned loose

A FARCICAL ABSURDITY.

And even he was astonished at the Terrible Blunders which were now so Painfully Apparent, and which he blamed entirely on the printers—who, however, were innocent. Not for One Moment did the Editor realise that the Tragedy was due to his own Self Importance. And after the humour of the Situation had Died Off, it came to pass that

A GREAT STORM BROKE.

And beneath its fury the Editor was unanimously declared to be a Chump, and a Dismal Failure. Thus the Truth is Revealed. Let it be known Far and Wide, throughout the Length and Breadth of the land, that last week's issue was a Mis-fire, and that no such Effort of Frightfulness will Occur Again. A special word must be set down regarding

"IN QUEST OF GOLD."

And there can be no question that this Serial is, without exception, the most dire and Pitiful Drivel that has ever found its way into Print. Indeed, it is only Just to describe this Story as Tripe, not to say Slush. And it rather adds to the humour of the situation to realise that the Perpetrator of this Foul Literary Crime has been spoofed into believing that it is Worth Publication in a London magazine. Behold, I, Edgar Sopp, do hereby explode this Bubble, and reveal the Arrogant Youth in all his Naked Flummery!

MORAL: ONE FELLOW CANNOT DO THE WORK OF SIX—ESPECIALLY WHEN THE SIX ARE COMPETENT AND THE ONE IS A DUD!

(NOTE.—Our contributor is rather caustic in the above effort, and it appears that he is somewhat peeved over last week's fiasco. I think most of our readers will agree that the "Arrogant Youth" has been dealt with as he deserves.—Ed., "St. Frank's Mag.")

HOW TO EDIT THE MAG!

By WILLIE HANDFORTH

NOTE.—As this little article is topical, we are publishing it in place of our usual Painful Parody. We hinted to Willy that the consequences might be serious for him, but he informed us that he was quite capable of looking after himself.—ED.

I HAVE just been speaking to my major whose in the middle of bemoaning the fact that he's got the chuck. He told me exactly how to edit the Mag. So now I know. It's easy. I never knew editing was so cushy before, even a kid could do it.

All you have to do is to take over the paper, kick out all the regular contributors, and start writing the whole thing yourself. So jolly easy. No writers to worry you because there arnt any. And it doesnt matter how rotten your storys and articles are because youve written them yourself, and you naturally think they're good, although theyre absolutely mouldy.

Ted showed me one or two of his that he'd got ready for the next issue (which won't come out) and I nearly had an epilecktic fit. Just the kind of stuff you read in a nightmare, only worse. Still what does it matter if youre the editor and can put in what you like? That's just the beauty of it.

By what Ted told me I could go and edit the mag. straight off. All you have to do is to sack the staff (as I said before) get a paste pot and a pair of scissors and then write all the rubbish that comes into your head first. Mix it all up, paste a few bits here and there and then shove it across to the printer.

Thats all there is in it! The result is a complete paper, as everybody has seen, and the only thing that surprised me is that Ted is still alive. Strictly speaking he ought to have been made into a bonfire with all his own stories, and made to frizzle in the heat. If I had the chance of editing the Mag. I'd make a stipulation that Ted should be put in a padded cell until the paper was published. Of course, he ought to be in a padded cell all the time, and it was only through a sheer oversight that he wasnt chucked in the dustbin before he was an hour old.

As for Trackett Grim, he's the rottenest detective—

(The latter part of our contributor's article degenerates into a mere tirade which is too personal for publication.—Ed.)



No. 7. Centre-forward Styles.

I WAS absent from these pages last week, but that was no fault of mine. As you will remember Handforth assumed the reins of government for one week, and the fate of this organ was left in his hands. Handforth is an admirable fellow in many ways, and in some sphere of activity will doubtless make a big name for himself when his school-days are over. I am quite confident, however, that that sphere will not be journalism; nor will he make a name for himself as a sporting expert.

However, this is not a chat designed to discuss the prospects of Handforth, and if I don't pack up I shall have our truculent warrior of the Remove accusing me of jealousy, besides which I have none too much space to spare this week. Now what were we talking about last time I contributed to this magazine? The art of passing I think it was. Righto, then, this week we'll make a start on positions.

I am going to deal with the centre-forward first, as he plays the principal part in his team's attack and is the connecting link in the forward line.

Now a centre-forward should embody all the qualities of his comrades on either wing. He should be an expert at distribution and trapping, he should be able to play with both feet; above all, he must be a straight and strong shot.

The reason for this is too obvious to need discussion here. Next to the centre half, who is the pivot of the team, the centre-forward is the most important man on the field, for it is in his power to model the method of attack, and to mar or make the game by the tactics he adopts.

Different centre-forwards have different ideas as to what style of play it is best to adopt. Artists like Andrew Wilson of Chelsea, and Charles Buchan of Sunderland

hold that the best game for a centre-forward to play is that of lying well upfield, watching for opportunities and turning to account the transferences of his comrades. There are undeniable advantages of this style of game, of course, but there are also disadvantages. In the first place such a centre ceases to do a great deal of foraging for the ball, and simply turns himself into a goalscoring machine. In the second place, however, the outside men always know exactly where to find him, and are, therefore, more accurate in their passing than they might be otherwise. Also there is always a great peril, unless this sort of centre-forward has his wits remarkably well about him, of being placed frequently offside.

Indeed, except in first class soccer, it is rarely that a centre-forward of this nature makes a success of his job when his team are ranged against an artful defence who set out to exploit the offside law—of which, more anon.

I cannot say that I am in favour of this style of play though, of course, when handled by such experts as Buchan and Wilson it is a pleasure to watch. It appeals to me as a style wherein the player neglects one of his principal duties—that is to make openings for other forwards as well as taking advantage of openings himself.

I have said, already, that such a player must be a good shot. He must be more. He must be deadly if he is to make a success of his job. Also he must be an accomplished dribbler for it is certain that not many of his chances will come to him when he is dead in front of the goal, and, therefore, it will frequently happen that he will find himself called upon to beat one or two men at least in his dash to score. And as this will naturally mean

that this dash must be made at a good speed, this style of centre-forward should be a man quick upon his feet.

Personally, I prefer the centre who makes it his aim to maintain combination, who takes on a fair share of the forward work himself and who, while endeavouring to turn to account the openings presented to him by his comrades, does not hesitate to make openings for them.

This player is of much more value to the junior side such as I imagine most of you play in, and from a spectacular point of view is much more interesting to watch. But his qualifications and his duties are many and manifold, and in the short space at my disposal I cannot adequately describe them. Therefore, I will leave the question over till next week, and meantime—as I know most of you are anxiously awaiting them—provide the answers to the second series of questions, which appeared in this feature a few weeks ago.

1. A goal kick should be taken from the side of the goal area from which the ball went out of play.

2. A corner kick should be taken from the side of the net from which the ball went out of play.

3. The goalkeeper who has been guilty of carrying earns a free kick against his own side.

4. A free kick may not be taken while the ball is on the move.

5. A goal may not be scored direct from free kicks awarded for the following offences:—

(A) Players playing a ball a second time without it having been touched by another player after a throw in, a free kick or a penalty kick has been taken.

(B) Offside

(C) Carrying by goalkeeper.

(D) Charging goalkeeper at wrong time. (This only applies, of course, when such a charge has been absolutely fair.)

(E) Playing the ball before it has touched the ground, after being dropped by the referee to restart the game after a temporary stoppage.

(F) Ball not kicked forward from a penalty kick.

(G) Improper throw-in.

6. A footballer may not wear boots whose laceholes are protected by metal slips.

7. A ball is "dead" when it is out of play.

8. If the referee dropped the ball over the touchline in restarting the game after a stoppage the referee must drop it again.

IT IS A FACT—

That Archie has disobeyed an order of Phipps'.

And that in consequence he will lose the services of that capable man.

That Fullwood has entirely given up smoking cigarettes.

And that Gulliver and Bell have subscribed to buy him a little gift in honour of his decision.

That the three Nuts have now got places in the First Eleven.

That Church has driven Handforth out of Study D.

That Handy daren't come back.

And that McClure has threatened to punch his old leader's nose if he shows it again in the study.

That Sir Montie has given up wearing his pince-nez.

That Tommy Watson has bought an eye-glass.

That Fatty Little is on hunger strike.

That Teddy Long goes about with cotton-wool in his ears.

That Buster Boots has been elected captain of St. Frank's.

That Timothy Tucker has been silent for three days.

That the Duke of Somerton has bought six new suits.

That Willy Handforth has learnt to spell correctly.

That de Valerie never smiles.

That Pitt has chucked footer.

That Clarence Fellowes has been congratulated by Dr. Stafford on his poetry.

That Josh Cuttle doesn't like this gloomy weather.

That Nipper is not on speaking terms with Nelson Lee.

And finally that there is not a word of truth in any of the above statements!

FATTY LITTLE'S DIARY

Editor's Note.—By great good fortune, a few pages of a diary that Fatty Little has been keeping, have come into our possession. We are very pleased to print them—without the author's permission!

7 a.m. Time to get up. Another day has begun. I have had a very long night. I feel quite famished. After all, nights are very long. Why, I have not had a mouthful since half-past nine last evening!

But luckily I always keep a small box of biscuits by my bed.

Had half a dozen biscuits and started to dress. I think it is a good thing not to have breakfast on an empty stomach.

8 a.m. Good! Breakfast! I am very fond of this meal. Of course, at St. Frank's they don't give you half enough to eat. For instance, all I could get this morning was a plate of porridge, two rashers of bacon, two fried eggs, a couple of sausages, a rasher of ham, and some bread and marmalade. Washed down with four cups of tea. It's something to be going on with, but hardly enough for a chap with a healthy appetite.

9 a.m. Have been trying to find a little something to supplement my breakfast. There was no food in my study so I looked in Study D.

Luckily Church had a few sardines. Felt better after my little snack.

9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. I sometimes wonder how I ever get through lessons. Think of it! Over three hours without a bite. Often I get quite faint during the morning. And no wonder. In order that I shan't collapse completely, I always provide myself with a box of confectionery which I keep in my desk.

You would think Mr. Crowell would be pleased that I go to all that trouble and expense in order that I may keep fit and do my work well.

But that's where you would be wrong. He seems to like a chap to be half starved. To-day he

happened to see my jaw moving as I was consuming a mouthful of chocolate biscuits.

He immediately accused me of eating. I didn't deny that. Then he called me up to his desk and made me hand over all my tuck. "I shall confiscate this," he said. "I will not have this greediness. You get plenty to eat out of school hours."

I tried to explain that I only eat in order to keep my brain working properly. But he wouldn't listen. It is wicked.

During the rest of the morning I thought I should die. My inside was as empty as a bell. Somehow I managed to get along without collapsing. Then the bell went for dinner.

1 p.m. How welcome the bell was. Only those who have been half starved for hours can imagine my intense relief at the sound. But there wasn't much of a meal. I got two helpings of roast pork with apple sauce. And then I had three helpings of suet roll. I could have done with a bit more. But at any rate it was something to be going along with.

2 p.m. This is the hour I look forward to most of all. The tuckshop opens at two. I am nearly always the first inside, and get a seat right up close to the counter, where I can help myself without giving Mrs. Hake any trouble.

I was first in to-day, with the hope that the great aching void inside me would at last be filled. There were some wonderful cream buns. I had half a dozen to whet my appetite with. Golly, they were good!

Then I had a few jam-tarts, and felt a little better. After that, I began really to enjoy my food. There were some excellent doughnuts. But would you believe it, Mrs. Hake refused to give me any more tuck!

(To be concluded next week.—Ed.)

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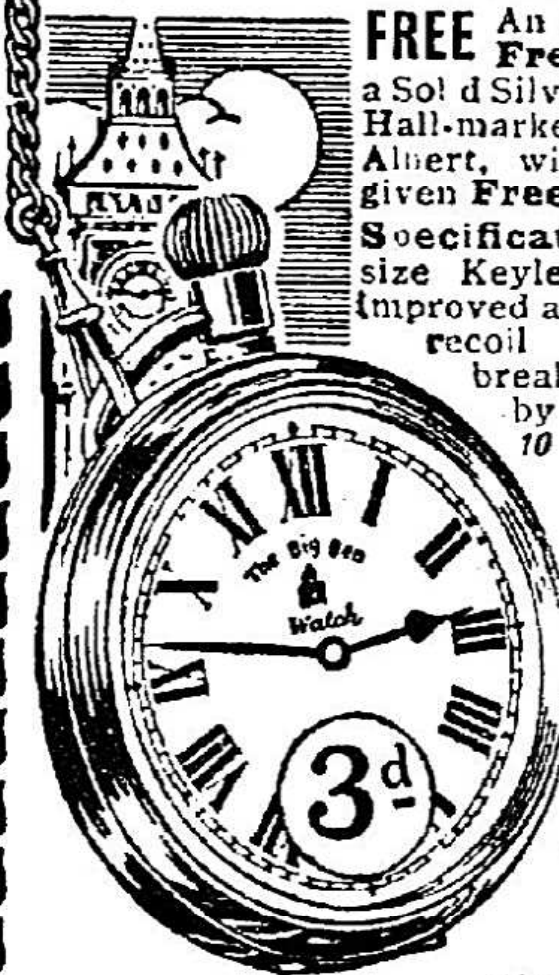
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