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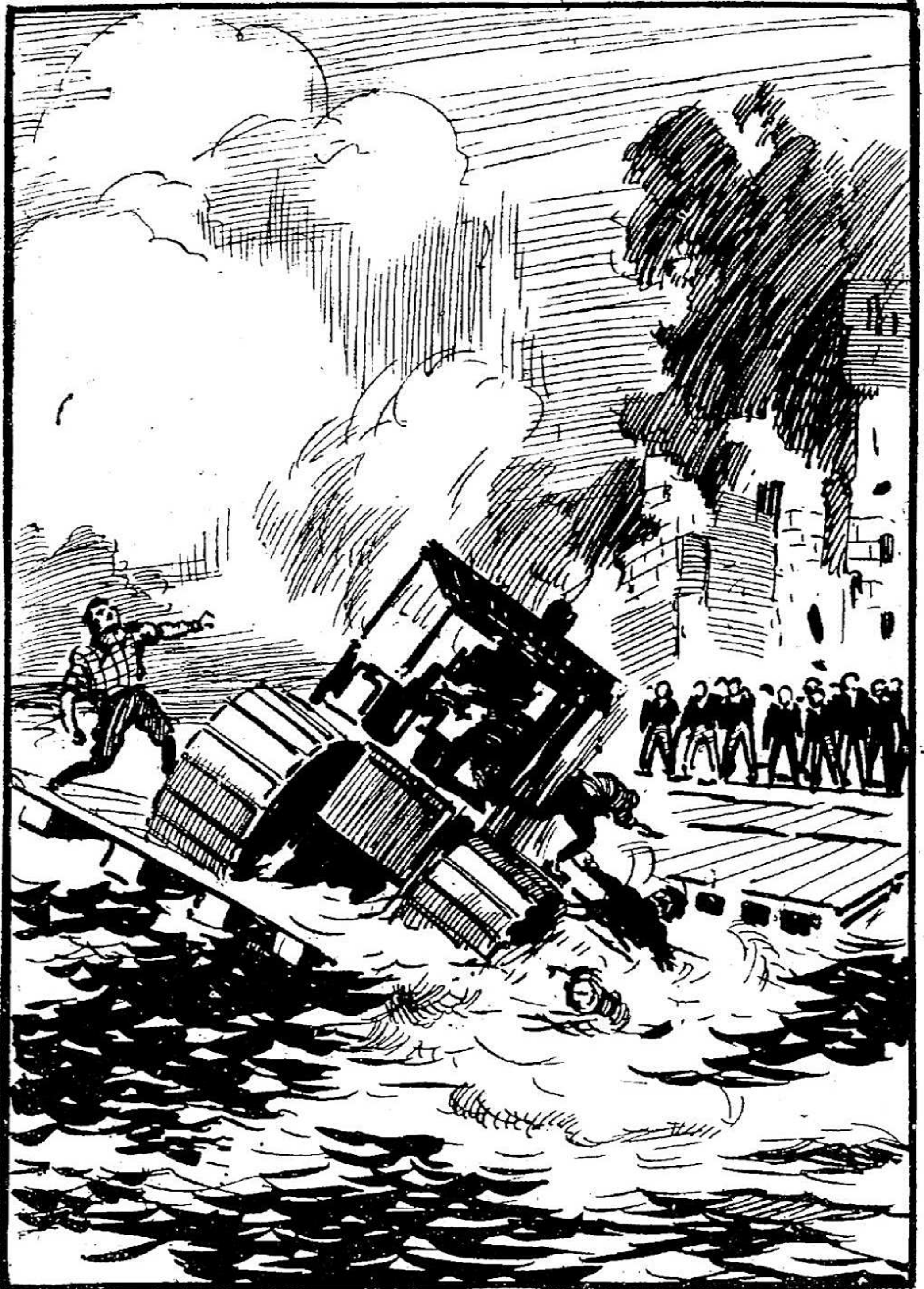
Magazine

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The great battle for the island begins.

See This Week's Exciting Story of St. Frank's:—
THE REBEL REMOVE !



The tractor got fairly on to the first raft, and then plunged sideways into the river with a tremendous splash.

The Rebel Remove!



**STORY OF THE GREAT BATTLE
OF THE REMOVE AT ST. FRANK'S
AGAINST CYCLONE SMITH AND
HIS FOREIGN LABOURERS.**

The struggle against the authority of W. K. Smith, the German-American multi-millionaire, continues with unabated fury. The Juniors have been driven out of the power-station and have retreated by

means of a secret passage to Willard's Island, which they now occupy. For new readers, it should be explained that Mr. Smith has bought up St. Frank's and adjacent property, disfiguring the countryside with hideous factories for the introduction of his own foreign-made goods, and employing hundreds of foreign labourers. St. Frank's, however, has proved a thorn in the side of the millionaire ever since he appointed Mr. Ponsonby Small to take the place of Dr. Stafford as Headmaster. The fight for the island is magnificently described in the following story and foreshadows the approaching climax to this splendid series.

THE EDITOR.

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

CHAPTER I.

THE HEAD LOSES HIS HEAD!

"**C**AVE, you asses—cave!"
"Eh? What the—"
"The Ponsonby bird!" hissed Chubby Heath. "Coming across the Triangle with all his feathers up! I believe he's spotted us, but we'll chance it!"

Owen minor and Lemon looked rather scared, and they crouched back under cover of the hedge which divided the St. Frank's playing fields from the old Triangle. Lemon, indeed, crept away, and scooted off in the direction of the pavilion.

"Fathead!" breathed Chubby Heath. "He'll get himself spotted now!"

"I think we ought to bunk, too!" muttered Owen minor.

The two Third-formers watched through a little hole in the hedge, and saw the undignified figure of Mr. Ponsonby Small, the Headmaster of St. Frank's, coming rapidly towards the spot where they crouched.

The fags were hot, breathless, and somewhat alarmed. True, they had done nothing very terrible, and they would never have hidden from any ordinary master. But they always gave Mr. Ponsonby Small a wide berth, by sheer instinct. The Head had a most inquisitive nature.

It was a fine April evening, and the Head ought to have been in quite a good humour. But he strode forward, his face scowling.

"What are you boys doing there?" he demanded harshly.

"I knew it!" muttered Owen minor. "We ought to have bunked!"

Chubby Heath knew it now, and he didn't quite like being reminded of it. And they had made things much worse for themselves by hiding—for this, in itself, was a suspicious circumstance.

The two fags emerged into the Triangle from the hedge, and stood facing the Head, who fixed a baleful glare upon them. The

fags said nothing. They were waiting for the hatchet to descend.

"What were you boys doing?" demanded Mr. Small curtly.

"We—we just came in from a stroll over the playing fields, sir," said Heath, plucking up some courage. "Ripping evening, isn't it, sir?"

"The evening does not interest me, Heath!" retorted the Head. "I suspect that you have been consorting with those wretched Remove boys on Willard's Island. Deny it if you dare!"

The fags took the safer course, and said nothing.

"Well?" snapped Mr. Ponsonby Small impatiently.

"Yes, sir," said Chubby.

"What do you mean—'yes, sir'?" demanded the Head. "That is no answer, boy! Have you, or have you not, been in communication with the rebels? Upon my soul! This is getting past all endurance!"

"Yes, sir!" said Chubby nervously.

"Don't dare to say that again!" roared Mr. Small.

"Yes, sir!" said Heath, flustered. "I—I mean—"

"I suspect, Heath, that you are deliberately provoking me!" panted the Head.

"And I will make you realise that I am in no humour to be provoked! This insolence is beyond all endurance! You hear me, sir? Beyond all endurance! I won't have it!"

Mr. Small hardly realised that he was making himself undignified by thus arguing with two mere fags. The Head was not a man of much originality, and it was one of his favourite tricks to repeat himself. Possibly he believed that his commonplace words would gain a certain eloquence by this repetition.

"I won't have it!" he declared emphatically.

"Yes, sir!" said Chubby.

"What?"

"I—I mean, no, sir!" stammered the fag.

"This is nothing more nor less than deliberate impertinence!" stormed Mr. Small.

"And I demand to know the truth of this escapade. You hear me, sir? The truth!"

Mr. Small was now working himself up into one of his favourite moods. When dealing with juniors, he invariably raved at them until they were hopelessly confused, so that they gave nervous answers, and then he accused them of insolence. It was, to be candid, playing dirty.

"We've told you the truth, sir!" put in Owen minor, who had so far been neglected by Mr. Small. "We've just come back from a stroll in the playing fields. No harm in that, sir, I suppose? And now we're going indoors to do our prep!"

"Ah, to be sure!" said Mr. Small sourly. "Since when, may I ask, have you developed such an eagerness to work? You will not go indoors! You will remain here!"

"Yes, sir," said Owen minor meekly.

"And, furthermore, you will tell me what

you have been doing this evening. You know well enough that all junior boys are confined to the school boundaries, and I strongly suspect that you have been breaking bounds. If you do not tell me the truth, I will take you indoors and flog you!"

A crowd of other Third-Formers had appeared in the offing, so to speak. They were just near enough to hear all that was being said, but they took great care to remain at a safe distance.

Mr. Small was, fortunately, short-sighted, and even his glasses did not fully make up for this imperfection of nature. And, in the event of the fags being suddenly spotted, they would be able to melt into the distance without being recognised.

But they were anxious to hear what the Head was saying to their two leaders.

For Chubby Heath and Owen minor were now the leading lights of the Third. Handforth minor was, of course, the supreme ruler. The redoubtable Willy had been wont to lead the Third with an iron hand, and any fag who had dared to question his authority had lived to regret it.

But Willy was an absentee.

To be exact, he had joined the Rebel Remove, and was now on Willard's Island, consorting with the revolutionaries, and it was this fact, indeed, which aroused Mr. Small's ire to such an extent.

Handforth minor had defied him, and Mr. Small was in constant dread of the rest of the Third following Willy's example. He deemed it necessary, therefore, to keep a firm clutch on the fags.

Nothing was more opposed to common-sense.

If the Head had possessed a grain of diplomacy, he would have been very easy with the Third, winking his eye at all the various minor delinquencies. In that way he would have killed any desire to join the revolt.

But the Head, being a man of little tact, decided that his better course was to be harsh and absolutely unbending. He would make these fags realise that they were hardly human beings at all, but just ciphers, to obey orders without questioning their reason.

And, as a consequence, the fags were seething with unrest. During the last few days they had suffered indignities untold, and had been ground down until they could hardly call their souls their own—as Chubby Heath had graphically put it.

On this particular evening Mr. Small found the Third in a somewhat ripe condition—bubbling over, and almost ready to defy him openly. But the Third had never revolted in the whole history of St. Frank's, and to take such a step was unheard of.

The Remove had held more than one barring-out, but for the Third to join in such an enterprise was practically beyond the realms of possibility. This was so firmly fixed in Mr. Small's mind that he failed to observe the danger-signals.

Owen minor and Chubby Heath were already recovering themselves. Finding themselves suddenly faced by the Head, they had had a momentary weakness, but it was passing.

"I am waiting!" exclaimed Mr. Small harshly. "Have you, or have you not, been communicating with the rebels?"

"We've been for a walk, sir," said Chubby Heath vaguely.

"Are you deliberately provoking me, boy?"

"No, sir—I'm just telling you the truth," replied Heath. "Owen minor and I went to the other side of the playing fields, to see if we could spot what was going on at the Island—"

"Ah! Then you admit your guilt?" snapped Mr. Small triumphantly.

"No, sir—certainly not!" retorted Owen minor. "The playing fields aren't out of bounds, and we can look at Willard's Island, can't we?"

"No, you may not look at Willard's Island!" stormed the Head.

"Can we use our eyes at all, sir?" asked Heath bitterly.

"Oh! So it has come to open impertinence, has it?" shouted Mr. Small, dancing with rage. "Not content with disobeying my orders, you now have the audacity to use impertinence to my face! Have a care, boy! You will both write me one thousand lines—"

"A thousand lines, sir!" gasped Heath blankly.

"Another word, boy, and I will double the imposition!"

"But we've done nothing, sir—absolutely nothing!" shouted Heath, indignation depriving him of caution. "What about the Fifth-Form chaps? There's some of them over there now—looking across at Willard's Island! Are you going to give them a thousand lines each?"

Mr. Small raised his cane menacingly.

"One more word, you young hound, and I will thrash you!" he snarled.

"All right—do it!" shouted Chubby Heath recklessly. "Yah, bully!"

The listening Third-Formers nearly fainted. Mr. Suncliffe, standing by his window, and gazing at the scene with strong disapproval, failed to hear Chubby's defiance, but gathered that the situation was acute.

Mr. Ponsonby Small stood there, his face going pale, and the Third waited for a few tense seconds while the world stood still.

"You—you insolent young dog!" shouted Mr. Small shrilly.

"I—I'm sorry, sir!" growled Chubby. "I didn't mean to be insulting like that! But you made me wild!"

The apology was of no avail.

"If you think you can mend matters by snivelling, you are mistaken!" said Mr. Small, his rage only just in control. "You will follow me to my study, Heath, and submit to a birching!"

Chubby Heath swallowed something that arose in his throat.

"It's not fair!" he burst out passionately. "I've said I'm sorry! I'm not going to be flogged for nothing!"

"By Heaven!" panted the Head thickly.

In that second he lost control of himself, and with one sweep of his cane—a heavy walking cane—he raised it through the air with a swish. The Third-Formers saw it descending, and gasped.

Slash!

Chubby Heath saw the cane coming down towards his back with fearful force. Instinctively, he ducked, and this was the worst possible thing he could have done. For he was a shade too late.

And the full force of the blow caught him across the side of the head as he twisted round and dived for safety. The unfortunate sag was brought up with a sickening jerk, and he gave a low groan and collapsed to the ground.

And there he lay—still and silent!

CHAPTER II.

THE THIRD ON STRIKE!



MR. PONSONBY SMALL stood back, horrified.

During that moment when he had lost his head, he had hardly realised what he was doing, and now he was startled by his own action. Not that he felt the slightest atom of remorse.

His chief emotions were those of fear and rage—fear for the feeling that would be aroused in the school, and rage against Chubby Heath for being such a mad young idiot to duck.

Had that blow struck him across the shoulders it would have been brutal enough, but in no way serious. But now there was no telling what injury had been caused.

Mr. Small stared down at the still form in a daze.

And a roar of horror and indignation went up from the crowd of watching Third-Formers. Forgetting all their trepidation, they came rushing forward, and surrounded the trio, a shouting, babbling mob.

"You've killed him!"

"Oh, you brute! You coward!"

"He's—he's hurt!" muttered Owen minor, as pale as a sheet. "Quick, Mr. Small! Carry him indoors! You'll have to get a doctor! Chubby—Chubby! Are you hurt much, old man?"

Owen minor went down on his knees, and lifted Heath's head. He saw an ugly red mark just above the ear, and a rapidly increasing bump a little higher. Chubby Heath opened his eyes dazedly.

"As I thought—as I thought!" snarled Mr. Small, beside himself. "Get up, you wretched malingerer, and have done with

this nonsense! You are lucky to have escaped so lightly!"

Such words as these were the essence of foolishness. The fags, already highly incensed, broke into a roar of anger. The whole Third Form arose with rage at this display of utter callousness.

"Brute!"

"Yah! Cowardly bully!"

"We'll go and join the rebels!"

"Hurrah!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Small. "Good gracious! How dare you? Do you realise that I am your Headmaster? This boy is shamming!" he added, in a sneering voice of contempt—thus provoking the Third to even greater mutiny. "Do you hear me? He is shamming!"

It is to be feared that Mr. Small would have been whirled off his feet and ducked in his own fountain, but for the timely arrival of Mr. Suncliffe. The Third-Form master was usually a mild man, and not given to anger. Being the master of the Third, it was necessary for him to possess patience untold. But he had witnessed Mr. Small's brutality from his study window, and now he came charging through the crowd, not only angry, but nearly purple with indignation.

"How dare you, sir?" he thundered, fixing Mr. Small with a glare that nearly caused the Head to collapse. "I am amazed, Mr. Small, that you should behave in such a manner to one of my boys! You might have killed him! Heath, my poor boy!"

Mr. Suncliffe went on his knees beside Owen minor, who was still nursing his chum's head. And Mr. Suncliffe almost winced as he saw that ugly bruise on Chubby Heath's scalp. He took the fag up, and was relieved to find that his senses were returning.

"It's all right, sir—only a bit of a bruise!" muttered Heath.

"I am relieved, Heath, to find that you are still conscious!" said the Third-Form master huskily. "You must go to bed at once—"

"Oh, I say, sir, cheese it!" protested Chubby. "I'll be all right in a minute, sir. These chaps are looking on, and they'll chip me like anything! Please let me down, sir!"

Heath was in great pain, and his head throbbed in the most ghastly fashion, but his dignity revolted at the thought of being held in Mr. Suncliffe's arms like a child. He was ready to suffer any torture but that. And Mr. Suncliffe, knowing his boys, complied.

He was, in fact, enormously gratified to find that Heath was not seriously hurt—although this formed no excuse for Mr. Ponsonby Small. That vicious blow, an inch lower, might well have been fatal.

For any master to commit such an offence was atrocious, but for the Head himself to descend to the level of a brute was nothing

short of staggering. Mr. Suncliffe turned to Mr. Small, still fuming with rage.

"I trust, sir, that you will make due compensation to the boy for your extraordinary conduct!" said the Third-Form master, between his teeth. "I am amazed, Mr. Small, that you should have forgotten yourself to such an extent!"

The Head nearly choked.

"Good heavens! Are you daring to criticise me, Mr. Suncliffe?" he shouted.

"There is no question of criticism, Mr. Small!" retorted the Form Master. "I am condemning you, and I do so in the strongest possible terms. Your action towards this boy was ruffianly, sir!"

The Head seemed to see the Triangle swim before his eyes.

"You are dismissed, sir!" he screamed. "Do you hear me? Dismissed! I will not tolerate this—"

"One more word, Mr. Small, and I will not be responsible for my actions!" interrupted Mr. Suncliffe furiously. "You not only provoked these boys to something approaching mutiny, but you now have the temerity to treat me as a mere nonentity in their very presence!"

The Third-Formers stood looking on, startled. Further back, a number of seniors had paused to watch this astounding scene. For the Head to be openly quarrelling with one of his masters in the Triangle was a sight that St. Frank's had never before witnessed.

And the onlookers half-expected an earthquake to happen. Nothing seemed impossible now that this staggering thing was taking place.

"Go, sir!" shouted the Head, pointing his cane towards the school. "You will leave St. Frank's to-day, and I shall take very good care to see that you do not obtain another appointment! You are utterly unfit to have control of schoolboys! You are an insolent hound!"

"Oh!" went up a murmur from the Third.

"Have a care, sir!" snapped Mr. Suncliffe dangerously. "I warn you, that one more word will be more than sufficient—"

"Will you obey me, or shall I strike you?" panted the Head.

"Strike me?" exclaimed Mr. Suncliffe, with contempt in his tone. "I fancy, Mr. Small, that it is more within your capacity to strike these helpless juniors! You would not dare to—"

"Would not dare?" thundered the Head. "You insolent hooligan!"

Slash!

He brought his cane down against the Third-Form master's legs, and to the watching juniors it really seemed that the end of the world had come. Mr. Suncliffe was, by no means the mild-mannered gentleman the Third-Formers had always known. That blow—humiliating as it was—bereft him of his last atom of restraint.

"You go too far, sir!" he said thickly.

And, with one driving blow, he knocked

Mr. Ponsonby Small flat on his back. It was a punch straight from the shoulder, and the Head took it beautifully on the point of his jaw. He collapsed with a shriek of pain.

And Mr. Suncliffe turned deathly pale, and the heat left him in a flash. He had committed the unpardonable sin of striking his superior. But there was not a single onlooker who blamed him. He had been goaded to the limit of his endurance, and he had acted, not as a master, but as a man.

"My resignation will be ready within half an hour, Mr. Small," he said tensely. "I take no notice whatever of your dismissal. Entirely on my own account, I resign my position as master of the Third Form, and I shall place the entire facts before the school Governors. To serve under you is impossible!"

Mr. Suncliffe turned away, and marched towards the Ancient House, his face still pale, and his jaws set. He was, in fact, trembling in every limb, and would probably feel the effects of this scene for days. Similar to all men of his mild temperament, when he was aroused by some extraordinary provocation, the consequences were devastating to his immediate health.

And the Head picked himself up, almost too bewildered by this ghastly occurrence to believe that it had actually happened. He—Mr. Ponsonby Small—had been knocked down by one of his under-masters!

And, to make matters worse, the fags were jeering at him!

"Yah! Bully!"

"Clear out of St. Frank's—you're not wanted!"

"Go back to Dartmoor!"

"We've finished with you, tyrant!"

"Booh! Booh!"

Somebody started the booing and hooting, and in a moment the whole Triangle was resounding with the sounds, which presently developed into fierce hissing. And the Third could hardly be blamed. Mr. Ponsonby Small had invited this display of mutiny, and he could have expected no other result.

He stood there, in the centre of the storm, and was in danger of being mobbed for a few tense moments. Then he charged through the crowd towards his own House. And Mr. Suncliffe, striding towards the Ancient House, ran into Mr. Pagett, the master of the Fifth.

"My dear Suncliffe—how dreadful!" exclaimed the Fifth-Form master. "This is surely the most shocking occurrence——"

"Are you condemning me, Pagett?" asked Mr. Suncliffe shakily.

"Good heavens, no!" snorted Mr. Pagett. "Man alive, I absolutely uphold you! In the circumstances, you could have done nothing else! Let me add that I intend to support you by resigning at once!"

Mr. Suncliffe started.



Mr. Suncliffe was by no means the mild-mannered gentleman the Third Formers had always known. That blow—humiliating as it was—bereft him of his last atom of restraint. "You go too far, sir!" he said thickly.

"I have no wish to involve you in this quarrel, Pagett——" he began.

"Involve me, be hanged!" broke in the other master. "After what has happened, I find it impossible to work under this—figurehead! My own self-respect would not allow it. I resign with you, Suncliffe, and we will leave together. The Governors, make no doubt, will hold a fully and complete inquiry."

"Hurrah!"

The fags cheered excitedly as they heard the news—for somebody had overheard Mr. Pagett's decision, and it spread like wild-fire. Even the Fifth-Formers in the Triangle joined in the cheering. It was their own master who had resigned, and they were now involved.

"Well, things are in a nice mess now!" said Chambers, of the Fifth. "I shouldn't be surprised if the other masters resigned, too."

"All the better!" said Phillips. "It would bring matters to a head, and then perhaps we might get Dr. Stafford back again. It's a pity Mr. Lee isn't here to shove things in order."

"He is here, isn't he?" asked Bryant.

"No—he went to London yesterday," said Phillips. "I don't blame him, either—I'll bet he's cleared off so as to be out of this rotten business until it's over."

"Rubbish!" said Chambers, with his lordly air. "Mr. Lee went up to London to look into a murder case—Scotland Yard sent for him. I heard all about it from old Pagett himself."

As a matter of fact, Chambers was quite correct. Nelson Lee had been called away on a most important mission—much to Mr.

Small's secret gratification. For Lee was the only man in the school whom the Head really feared. And Lee, indeed, was the only man who could have restored control in this dangerous situation. For both the Third and the Fifth were almost on the point of revolt.

The fags, indeed, waited no longer.

"Are we going to stay at St. Frank's after Mr. Suncliffe has been kicked out?" shouted Owen minor rebelliously. "Are we going to take orders from Ponsonby Small, after he's done his best to kill old Chubby?"

"No!" roared the Third, in one voice.

"We'll go on strike!" shouted Lemon excitedly. "We'll refuse to obey orders!"

an abundance of witnesses that there was no question whatever about Mr. Small's guilt. He had brought the situation entirely on his own shoulders.

And now it seemed that he had got more than he bargained for.

The Third was in open revolt, and point-blank refused to take any notice of orders. Chubby Heath was active and apparently well, although that bump on his head was fairly serious. But Chubby absolutely refused to go to bed. And if his hurt was examined by one senior, it was examined by a score.

The Fifth maintained a neutral attitude.

They approved of Mr. Pagett's action in re-

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"Hear, hear!"

"Let's join the rebels! Let's go to Wilford's Island!"

And the revolt of the Third was an established fact.

CHAPTER III. THE REBEL REMOVE.



ST. FRANK'S was certainly in a turmoil.

The whole school was talking about the manner in which Mr. Ponsonby Small had lost his head, and he was condemned on all sides. There had been such

signing in support of Mr. Suncliffe. But it was beneath the dignity of the Fifth to do anything so drastic as revolt. At a Form meeting the Fifth decided to remain quite passive, and to see how things developed.

The Third, in the meantime, remained exceedingly quiet—much to the surprise of the seniors. Instead of being noisy, and out of hand, the fags copied the example of the Remove, and conducted their rebellion in an orderly fashion. It was, in fact, more like a strike than a revolt. The Third-Formers simply refused to recognise any authority, and clung together tenaciously.

Mr. Small discreetly remained unseen. Perhaps he felt that if he interfered again the

Third would become violent. As a matter of fact, Mr. Stockdale, the Housemaster of the College House, was mainly responsible. He had strongly advised the Head to take no action, believing that the fags' rebellion would die a natural death if left alone.

The prefects were all in sympathy with the Third. They deplored the gross departure from discipline, but in their hearts they knew the fags were justified, and so they simply couldn't interfere.

And Owen minor decided upon the course of action.

The Third held a grim meeting in the gymnasium—not a rowdy, noisy affair, but remarkably peaceful, under the circumstances. This thing was so big, in fact, that the fags were awed by its immensity.

"While you chaps stay here, I'm going to Willard's Island!" declared Owen minor. "I'm going to explain everything to Nipper and all the other rebels. And I'm going to ask the Remove to let us join 'em!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll all go!"

"No!" shouted Owen. "Let me go first as a kind of—of ambassador. We'll see what the Remove has got to say."

"It's all rot!" declared Kerrigan. "The Remove chaps are bound to welcome us. The more the merrier! The best way is for us all to march to Willard's Island, and join up!"

"Hear, hear!" said Hobbs.

"Yes, we'll do it!" yelled Dicky Jones.

"What do you say, Chubby?"

"Blessed if I know what to say!" growled Heath. "But I think Owen's right. We don't want to spring this thing as too much of a surprise. Let's give the Remove a fair warning, so that they can be ready for us."

"That's what I say!" declared Owen minor. "Anyway, let's put it to the vote."

And when the vote was taken it was found that the majority were in favour of Owen minor going off as a kind of herald, to give warning of the Third's impending descent.

In case of eventualities, Owen minor was provided with a guard of honour, consisting of half the Third. They all marched across the playing-fields to the extreme end of the school property. But they needn't have worried. They were not interfered with in any way.

Owen minor went on alone from this point, dodging across the meadows at lightning speed, until he finally arrived on the towing-path, with the River Stowe gleaming and shimmering in the golden light of the setting sun.

It was a scene of exquisite spring beauty, for the whole countryside was awakened into fresh greenness under the influence of the warm April sunshine. During the last two or three days there had been a period of unusual mildness, and the fine weather seemed likely to continue.

The only sight which spoilt the whole

picturesque scene was the ugly blotch of Cyclone City, which was the name given to the encampment of shacks and huts which constituted the settlement of the William K. Smith Manufacturing Co. In this direction the scenery was quite spoilt.

But over and beyond the river the fair meadows and fields stretched away towards Bannington, as picturesque as ever. And just lower down the river, Willard's Island was set in the middle of the stream, wooded and most pleasing to the eye. But there was something unusual about it.

The island was a long strip of land, rising to a small hill centrally, with trees almost down to the water's edge. And in the very centre stood a grey stone building which resembled an ancient castle, with battlements and towers. The quaint structure had been put up many years earlier by an eccentric gentleman from whom the island obtained its name.

But now, instead of being deserted as usual, the island was apparently swarming with youthful life. Barbed wire hung in festoons round every shore, so that any approach was not only difficult, but hazardous.

The curling smoke from more than one camp-fire arose, for the rebels were taking full advantage of the fine weather, and were mostly living out of doors. The Remove, to be exact, was thoroughly enjoying itself.

There had been many ups and downs during this great barring-out, but the juniors had every reason to call themselves the Conquering Remove—which they did. From the very beginning of the revolt they had conquered. All along they had defied their millionaire enemy, with all his hordes of men, and had come out on top in every engagement.

Gwen minor was looking flushed and excited as he came to a halt, panting, opposite the island. He had little fear of being detained by any of Mr. Smith's men, for he was known to be a Third-Former, and therefore no rebel.

He gazed across to the island, and saw various members of the Remove taking their ease in the evening cool. The Remove had been at work all day, improving the defences, and preparing for any attack which might come.

And most of the fellows were going about without collars, and with open shirts, free and easy, as befitted a camp. And Owen minor was instantly spotted as he stood there, waving to attract attention.

"I say, you chaps, send a boat over!" called the fag.

"Rats!" came the unmistakable voice of Edward Oswald Handforth. "Clear off, my lad! We've got no time to bother with you."

Owen minor glared across the water.

"You go and eat coke!" he said indignantly. "I want to speak to Nipper! He's the commander-in-chief, ain't he?"

I'm a messenger, and I've brought vital news— Oh, there he is! I say, Nipper!"

I had just appeared from the trees, having returned from a visit to the northern end of the island. I came down to the water's edge, and nodded cheerfully to the fag.

"Want to speak to me?" I asked. "All right! Go ahead!"

"Look here, I can't speak like this!" snorted Owen minor. "Can't you send a boat over? It's important! There's been a fearful shindy at St. Frank's and—and— But I'll tell you all about it in a minute!"

I grinned, and turned to Reggie Pitt.

"Artful young bounder!" I said. "He gets us curious, and then dries up. A shindy, eh? I'm not surprised to hear it. I suppose we'd better send that boat over, and bring him across. Will you go, Reggie?"

"It is yours to command, and mine to obey!" said Pitt. "I go, O chief! But if that fag is spoofing us, I'll obtain satisfaction by making him swim back!"

Pitt took one of the small boats—there were plenty of them on the island—launched it, and quickly sculled across. Owen minor jumped in, and within two minutes he stepped on the island.

"Like your cheek!" said Willy Handforth, strolling up and shaking Owen minor by the hand. "Jolly glad to see you! Everything going all right? Who the dickens told you to come here, you cheeky rotter?"

"My hat! I wish you'd been in the Triangle an hour ago, Willy!" said Owen minor. "You've missed something that was worth quids to see! Old Ponsonby nearly killed Chubby Heath!"

"That must have been a delightful spectacle!" said Willy. "You callous rotter! Do you mean to tell me that—"

"I don't mean that was worth seeing!" snapped Owen minor. "Old Small nearly killed Chubby, and then the trouble started. Mr. Suncliffe came out, and in two minutes he'd biffed the Head on the jaw and knocked him flying. Then he resigned, and old Pagett resigned in sympathy!"

In this brief, unadorned way, Owen minor delivered his news. He was not much of a story teller, and flowery language was out of his line. However, in response to dozens of questions, he went into further details, and gave us a fairly vivid description of the recent events.

"Phew!" whistled John Busterfield Boots at length. "Things seem to be looking up! Suncliffe and Pagett resigned, the Third on strike, and the prefects doing nothing to regain control! If this goes on, the Ponsonby reptile will find himself kicked out!"

"I hardly think so," I said slowly. "This new development doesn't affect our own position much. After all, we're up against Cyclone Smith—not the Head. And if I know anything about Smith, he won't rest until we're beaten."

"Poor old Smith!" said Pitt. "Then he'll never get any rest!"

"And I'm not sure that this news from St. Frank's is good," I went on. "With Pagett and Suncliffe away, there'll be more trouble—especially as old Crowell is taking a holiday. And Mr. Lee's gone to London, so there's only Mr. Stockdale and old Langton and the French master and Mr. Clifford. They can't do much to control the school. I don't count the Head, because he's nothing."

Owen minor looked at me in dismay.

"What about the Third?" he asked. "They're all getting ready. The Third's coming along to join you in about half an hour! We're going to enlist under your banner of liberty!"

"Oh, are you?" put in Handforth. "It's like your cheek to think we'd accept the Third! It's bad enough having my young brother here, without the rest of the gang following."

"But we want to help!" roared Owen minor.

"Yes, I know that," I said quietly. "Don't get excited, and don't take any notice of Handforth—"

"What?" said Handforth, staring.

"You look at this thing in the wrong way, old man," I went on. "It is our duty to thank the Third in the most generous terms for their bold spirit. Good luck to the Third! They've come up to the scratch like men! But that doesn't mean to say we want them here."

"Oh, I say!" protested Owen minor blankly.

"The fact is, old son, we haven't got room," I went on. "I dare say you'd be of some use here, in case of an attack, but too many is worse than not enough. You'd only be in the way."

"Well, there's gratitude!" snorted the fag indignantly.

"You see, we're all trained," I went on. "We've been at this job for well over a week now, and we know the game in every phase of it. But you youngsters are just raw recruits, and there's no time to train you. I expect Smith to make his biggest attack of all to-morrow at the latest—and we can't afford to be hampered. So please take my earnest thanks to the Third for their generous offer, and ask them to remain at St. Frank's, lying low."

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed Owen minor again. "This is rotten!"

He was so disappointed that he lost all his excitement, and became downcast. But I slapped him on the back and laughed.

"Cheer up!" I said. "You don't know how welcome this news is. We don't want the Third here, but we certainly do want the Third as a reserve force."

"A reserve force?" repeated Owen minor eagerly.

"Exactly!" I replied. "What the Third has got to do is to hold itself in readiness for instant action when called upon. You fellows will just fit in where I most want

you. When Smith makes his next attack it will probably be a regular snorter, and we shall have to go all out to hold our own."

"Well?" asked the sag tensely.

"Well, there you are—that's where the Third comes in," I explained. "We've got the island well fortified, and we're ready for anything—but if things come to an extremity, an outside force will be of huge value. You fellows will hold yourselves ready to come along, and take the enemy on the flank, so to speak. It will be your job to harass them, and thus relieve any possible pressure. And you can do that far better by remaining at St. Frank's—ready to come at the moment you're wanted."

"My hat! It's great!" declared Owen minor, his eyes gleaming. "But—but how shall we know?"

"Why, there'll be no need to tell you," I replied. "You're bound to hear the commotion as soon as it starts, and even if you don't, we'll be able to get a messenger through."

So Owen minor went off with his news to the Third.

CHAPTER IV.

SIGNIFICANT PREPARATIONS.



MR. DINTY TODD looked round with satisfaction.

"Well, kiddoes, I guess we've sure got things lined up real swell!" he remarked approvingly. "Gee!

That blamed guy of a Smith won't have no easy job when he attacks dis outfit. No, sir! You betcha life he won't!"

"You said it, Dinty!" agreed Ulysses Spencer Adams.

"All the same, we mustn't be too confident," I pointed out. "Smith's been quiet for a couple of days now, and I've got a feeling in my bones that he's going to make the fur fly pretty soon. It might be to-night, or it might not be until to-morrow. But it's coming!"

"Sure it's coming," agreed Dinty. "But we don't need to worry any."

It was nearly dark now, and a small group of us were standing on watch, and lounging easily against the south wall of the "castle." Beyond the river we could see the twinkling lights in Smith's camp. But there were no indications of great activity.

I felt rather thoughtful as I looked. We had had some fair excitement during the last week or so, but it was an absolute fact that the Remove had come out of every engagement with flying colours.

Mr. Wilhelm Karl Schmidt, the Prussian-American millionaire, may have found it fairly easy to deal with ten thousand strikers. But he was right up against it when merely fifty schoolboys defied him.

For he could deal with strikers in a different way. He could use gunmen, he could employ firearms, and bring any disturbance to a gory finish. But against the Remove he could use nothing but half-measures, with strict orders to his men to harm nobody. For if, indeed, any junior happened to get badly hurt in one of these mock engagements, the consequences for Mr. William K. Smith would be deadly serious—and it was even within the bounds of possibility that he would find himself in the hands of Scotland Yard.

So, in spite of his hordes of men—numbering a thousand, at the least—he found to his utter chagrin that the Remove was still master of the situation. Originally, we had seized the power-station on Curdle's Paddock—this meadow having been purchased by Lord Dorrimore and presented to the Remove. But Mr. Smith had unlawfully driven us out of this position, and so we had retaliated by seizing the island.

Thus, by a swift, bold stroke, we had turned a seeming defeat into a great victory. And our defences on the island were of the most elaborate order.

Mr. Smith was an arrogant bully, and he had come to the district with the intention of converting Bellton into a vast manufacturing centre. Nobody could have objected to this, only for the fact that Mr. Smith employed his own workmen, and intended running his entire factory with American labour.

The whole countryside was up in arms against this high-handed behaviour, and Cyclone Smith had merely laughed—for he was a multi-millionaire, and considered himself powerful enough to smash down all opposition.

He had bought the old River House School, had converted it into his headquarters, and all the River House boys were now staying at St. Frank's. Before the Remove rebellion there had been much overcrowding, and even Dr. Stafford himself had protested, refusing to allow the invasion.

Thereupon, Smith, with all his influence, had literally forced the Governors to request Dr. Stafford's resignation, and Ponsonby Small had been appointed in his place. And Small was merely one of Smith's creatures, a mere figurehead to do the bidding of his master.

The apparently ridiculous opposition of the juniors had incensed the multi-millionaire, and he had taken a certain amount of pleasure in crushing the boys down, so that all the spirit would be knocked out of them.

But he had got the surprise of his life when the Remove took independent action and defied him. The Remove's policy was a clear one. "Hands off St. Frank's!" That was the slogan.

We could not hope to put an end to Smith's activities in the district, much as we disliked them. But his unwarrantable interference in the affairs of the school had

incensed us to such a degree that we had pledged ourselves to carry on until we gained complete victory.

Upon Mr. Smith restoring St. Frank's to its normal condition, the Remove would come quietly back, and everything would go on as before. But until the millionaire took his hands off St. Frank's, the fight would continue.

And just now, although there was a lull, the affair was at its most acute point. The Remove was still determined, and Mr. Smith was making preparations for a vast final attack which would give him the mastery.

One of his own foremen—Mr. Dinty Todd of New York—had come over to our side, and we were glad of it, because Todd was not at all a bad fellow at heart, and a most useful man in a scrap.

Our defences were as complete as possible.

The island was fortified ingeniously. From every shore stretched long stakes, containing barbed wire, so that invading boats would be badly hampered. And we were armed with long poles, to keep the enemy from effecting a landing. In addition, we had all sorts of weapons of defence. If Smith's men attacked the island, they would meet with a warm reception.

Some of the rebels were feeling rather disappointed. They had expected Smith to give in. They had believed that the millionaire would be fed up with this prolonged warfare, and would grant our demands, in order to get on with his big enterprise. For the Remove was hanging up the whole operation, and Smith was losing thousands of dollars daily.

But his obstinacy was greater than his wisdom. He had never once been defeated, and he had sworn that he would not be defied by a party of mere schoolboys. If he succumbed, and the story got abroad, his prestige would be badly damaged. He didn't care how much money it cost, but he was going to have victory.

Night came, and Willard's Island remained as active and as watchful as ever. Some of the rebels slept, but they were prepared to spring to the defences at a moment's notice. There were watchers on every part of the island. And scouts had been sent out in all directions on the "mainland," to give the warning in case of a surprise attack.

For it was at night that we expected trouble. It seemed very unlikely that Smith would attempt to drive us off in broad daylight, for he would stand a much better chance by swooping down on us at dead of night.

Possibly it was the fine weather that saved us from such an attack, for the clear skies were continuing, and during this week there was a full moon. So even at night the whole countryside was bathed in silvery light—quite sufficient to prevent any secret movements of Smith's horde.

And so the next morning arrived, clear, sunny, and as peaceful as ever. In spite

of our constant watch upon Cyclone City, we failed to see any sign of activity. And the explanation of this was simple.

Well over a mile up the river, and practically concealed by a little spinney, a gang of workmen were busily engaged in constructing half a dozen strong, enormous rafts. William K. Smith was there in person, superintending the work.

The rafts were solid, and fully capable of carrying twenty-five or thirty men each—and still capable of floating down the river over the most shallow parts of the stream. The rafts were so constructed that they could be navigated with ease, and they had other peculiarities, too.

They had been designed by Smith himself, and were specially made to deal with the defences by which Willard's Island was surrounded. And Smith was pleased because the work was nearly completed, and he had already given instructions for the moment of attack.

The last detail had been arranged, and the millionaire was feeling more pleased than he had felt for many days. He was quite certain in his own mind that the full work of his camp would be going on at high pressure by this hour on the morrow.

And the Remove would be dispersed, and forced to return to St. Frank's. And with the rebellion at an end, and the whole schoolboy force disorganised, they would have no further opportunity of opposition.

Having seen that everything was going on satisfactorily, Mr. Smith left the temporary construction camp by the river, and entered his car to be driven to Bellton for breakfast.

It was rather a roundabout route through the narrow by-lanes, almost skirting the hamlet of Edgemore, and finally the car took the road which led past the gates of St. Frank's.

Mr. Smith smiled rather grimly to himself as he caught sight of the fine old buildings of the school. And he was just about to glide past the gates when a figure appeared. It was that of Mr. Ponsonby Small.

The Head recognised the car at once, and signalled for it to stop. It did so, and Mr. Small approached, and was rather surprised to see his chief's expression of amiable contentment.

"Well, Small, it'll soon be finished now," said the millionaire. "Say, what's wrong? You're sure looking queer this morning."

"I am afraid, Mr. Smith, that the situation is becoming intolerable," said the Head nervously. "I tried to see you last night, but I was informed that you had taken a trip to London."

"Sure—got back two hours after midnight."

"It was most regrettable!" said Mr. Small. "I was just off to the River House, in order to confer with you. This meeting is most opportune. I must acquaint you of the dreadful developments, Mr. Smith."

The millionaire waved his cigar.

"Come in here and sit down," he said.

He gave a brief order to the chauffeur, who drew the car to the side of the lane, and Mr. Small climbed in at the rear, and took his seat beside Mr. Smith.

"Now then!" said the millionaire. "Shoot!"

"Er—exactly!" said Mr. Small. "I have to inform you, sir, that two of my under-masters have resigned their appointments—Mr. Suncliffe and Mr. Pagett. They left the school yesterday evening, and I am afraid that chaos has resulted. I am at my wits' end!"

thereupon resigned. And I have to report that the Third Form has followed the example of the Remove, and is now in a state of open rebellion."

The millionaire frowned.

"Say, you dumb-bell, can't you get busy and stop it?" he snapped.

"But—but you don't realise the difficulties!" exclaimed Mr. Small hurriedly. "The masters will not interfere—indeed, two of them have gone—and I find it absolutely impossible to persuade the prefects to exercise their authority. As a consequence, the Third Form is refusing to obey all orders, and the confounded youngsters are defying



"Ye gods and little tiddlers!" he ejaculated blankly.

There was some reason for this extraordinary exclamation of Willy's. Down the Stowe a veritable armada of rafts came floating serenely down the current.

"Is that so?" said Mr. Smith grimly. "I guess you didn't need to travel far! Say, Small, what are you, anyway? What kind of a break have you been making this time?"

"A—a break?"

"See here, my friend, I gave you this appointment because I thought you were capable of making good," retorted Mr. Smith. "But it seems to me you've made an unholy mess of the whole darned concern. What's this foolery about chaos? I'm waiting to hear from you!"

"Mr. Suncliffe was grossly insulting," declared the Head, waxing indignant. "I dismissed him on the spot, and Mr. Pagett

me right and left. And now the Fifth Form seems likely to revolt, too. Another day, Mr. Smith, and I am convinced that the entire school will be out of hand."

Mr. William K. Smith nodded thoughtfully.

"By to-morrow morning, my friend, there will be a different complexion on this affair," he declared grimly. "Once these Remove boys are sent back with their tails between their legs, I guess the rest of the school will quieten down. By this evening you'll have full control again."

Mr. Ponsonby Small, who had been expecting an outburst of fury from his superior, was relieved and rather excited.

"But—but I don't understand!" he exclaimed.

"No, I guess you wouldn't!" agreed Mr. Smith. "And it doesn't matter a darn whether you understand or not. What you've got to do, Small, is to hang around and wait. I guess you'll see some pretty things this afternoon."

And Smith declined to speak any further on the subject. Small got out of the car, and stood looking after it thoughtfully as it continued its way down the lane towards Bellton.

It was obvious that Cyclone Smith had something up his sleeve, and it was equally obvious that he was certain of success.

But Mr. Small was dubious.

He was getting afraid of these schoolboys, and the idea persistently lurked in the back of his mind that they would prove more than equal to William K. Smith's cunning.

CHAPTER V.

THE ATTACK!



HALT! Who goes there?"

Edward Oswald Handforth rapped out the command briskly. It was quite unnecessary, because he had excellent eyesight, and he could see very well that the individual was his younger brother.

"Poor old Ted!" said Willy sadly.

"What's the matter? Eyesight failing, or what? And why should I halt?"

"I don't want any of your cheek!" growled Handforth curtly.

"Cheek?" repeated Willy. "What is cheek? If you mean my cool assurance, and my perfect composure, then I can understand you. As a matter of fact, I'm just taking one of these small boats across the river, and I'd like to let you know that I'm in a hurry!"

The pair were at the Extreme Northern end of the island, where all was quiet. Handforth was on duty here, keeping watch. It was just after the dinner hour, and the April sunshine was more glorious than it had been at any period through the past week. Indeed, the very air hummed with insect life, and the month seemed more like June than April.

"Oh!" said Handforth glaring. "You're going ashore, are you? Let me tell you, my son, that I've got something to say!"

"You generally have," said Willy, sighing. "And the funny thing is, after you've said it, I haven't heard a thing!"

"You—you cheeky young beggar!" snorted Handforth. "You know as well as I do that nobody is allowed ashore."

"Oh, my hat!" said Willy, impatiently. "Must I go into full explanations? Nipper has appointed me to a scout's job, and I'm just off up the river to see if there's anything doing. There was a rumour that some

of Smith's men were seen a mile up-stream, and I'm going to investigate. So kindly stand aside, my lad, and let me take one of these skiffs."

Handforth went red.

"Well, if that's not the limit!" he said indignantly. "I asked Nipper to let me go scouting this morning, and he refused! And now he calmly sends you! You!"

"It's all right—I'm human!" said Willy. "Don't look at me as if I were a tadpole, or something. And I'm your brother, don't forget—although I don't take any blame for that. Every chap has his own misfortunes. You're mine!"

"By George!" roared Handforth. "Just for that, I won't let you go!"

"All right—you'll have to answer to the C.O.," replied Willy. "And you know what that'll mean, I suppose? You'll be court-martialled, sentenced, and shot at dawn! Mutiny is a grave offence. That's meant to be a pun, but I don't suppose you'll see it!"

"A pun?" repeated Handforth witheringly. "You don't know what a pun is! Anyhow, you're not taking one of these boats! I've said it, and I mean it!"

"Cæsar has spoken!" said Willy. "But, somehow, I think that Cæsar is wrong. See that little skiff? Well, I'm just going to Cæsar! Now, who can't make puns?"

The leader of the Third dodged in the nick of time, and before Handforth could even look round, the skiff was not only seized, but pushed neatly out into the stream. Edward Oswald made one wild grab, but his younger brother was as elusive as a shadow.

It was only by a supreme effort that Handforth saved himself from falling into the river. But he pulled himself up in time to see Willy bringing out the oars and setting off for the opposite bank.

"Come back, you young rotter!" howled Handforth.

"And echo answers, 'Come back,'" retorted Willy. "Strictly speaking, echo wouldn't answer anything of the sort, because you called me a rotter. Don't worry, Ted. When I come back with some important news, you'll feel happy. So long, old son. Better days are coming!"

Two minutes later, Willy had reached the opposite bank, and had vanished amid the willows. Handforth fumed, but he could do nothing. And he was still staring at the willows, when Willy appeared again.

"Forgot something!" called the fag. "Be careful not to go to sleep, because your snoring will kill all the fish in the river! Ta-ta!"

Handforth fairly quivered.

"You wait till you come back!" he roared. "You think you're safe now, don't you?"

"No," replied Willy. "I know it!"

"As soon as I lay my hands on you, I'll—"

"Cover me up?" asked Willy blandly.

"You insulting young bounder!" bawled Handforth. "It's a downright shame that I should have to own you as a brother! As soon as I catch hold of you, I'll give you a piece of my mind!"

"Don't!" said Willy. "You need it all yourself!"

And with this final shot he vanished, leaving Handforth fairly dancing up and down on the grass with rage. It was seldom that Willy got such a fine opportunity of saying exactly what he liked without fear of instant disaster, and he had not been able to resist it. Later on, of course, Handforth would have forgotten all about the affair, and Willy would be safe. Hand's rage only lasted a few seconds, as a rule.

Willy made his way up-stream, along the towing-path, lighthearted and cheerful. He decided that after he had gone on his scouting trip he would probably make a detour, and drop in at St. Frank's, just to see how things were going on.

But this programme was not carried out.

For his scouting work proved far more profitable than he had suspected. Willy, indeed, believed that he was going up the stream for nothing. But this supposition was falsified.

For he had got about half a mile away when he turned round a clump of willows, and came within full sight of a wide, broad reach of the river. And the fog came to a sudden halt, staring.

"Ye gods and little fiddlers!" he ejaculated blankly.

There was some reason for this extraordinary exclamation of Willy's. Down the Stowe a veritable armada of rafts came floating serenely on the current, and assisted by means of long sweeps, to say nothing of ropes which were guiding them from either shore.

Willy was quick-witted, and it took him about a tenth part of a second to realise that William K. Smith's big offensive had already commenced. And it struck Willy that the rebels would need every ounce of their resourcefulness to combat this grim attack.

There were six of the rafts altogether, coming down-stream in a long string, and each raft was filled with men. At a rough estimate, Willy calculated that there were not less than a hundred and fifty men—a truly formidable force to land on the island in one rush.

The rafts were curiously built, for in front they seemed to be provided with big wooden shields. And there could be little doubt that these shields were there for the purpose of protecting the men against missiles when the rafts came to close quarters with the island.

There were scores of men on the river banks, too, keeping pace with the clumsy craft, and keeping them in control. It struck Willy that he had better scoot back to the island as fast as his legs would carry

him. Even then he would only be able to give a brief warning.

For the current would take these rafts down to the island in less than fifteen minutes. And then the battle would commence—a battle that was more than likely to end in victory for William K. Smith. The fog didn't deceive himself. He could see disaster as clearly as he could see the sunshine.

"This is where I scoot!" he muttered grimly.

He knew that he hadn't been seen, and he turned and ran like the wind down the towing path towards the island stronghold. He knew that his boat was still hidden among the willows, so there would be no delay in getting across. And if the worst came to the worst, he would swim, after shouting his news.

And as Willy ran he realised the cunning of Mr. Smith's plan.

The rebels had been expecting the attack from the direction of Cyclone City, or, at least, from down stream. They had had no knowledge of this plan to sweep down upon the island with the current.

A bit of a rumour had come in earlier, and it was for this reason that Willy was investigating. But the rebels had never actually thought that there was any truth in it. But Willy could see that the situation was acute.

These rafts would sweep down on the island, and the current itself would bear them right upon the Northern end of the tiny piece of land—just where the defences were at the weakest.

And nothing could stop them.

No matter how strenuously the rebels tried to beat off this attack, they must fail. For they would be fighting against the river itself, and even with all their guarding poles, they could not beat the flow of the stream.

No matter what precautions were taken, these rafts would collide with the island, and thus allow their human cargoes to sweep ashore. And with a hundred and fifty men on the job, the fight would indeed be serious.

Willy reached his little boat, pushed it out from the willows in one swing, and he hardly needed to use the oars. For what with the current, and that heave, the little craft was carried nearly across to the island. For one side the channel was narrow, being less than a short stone's-throw. The channel on the opposite side of the island was much wider.

"Oh, so here you are?" exclaimed Handforth, who was still on duty. "I didn't expect you back——"

"Quick! Give the alarm!" shouted Willy. "They're coming!"

"Eh?" said Handforth, staring. "Coming? Look here, my lad, if you're trying to spoof me——"

"Oh, don't start now, Ted!" shouted Willy. "Smith and his gang are swooping down on us in rafts! There's not a second

to lose! They'll land on this end of the island, and there isn't a soul here!"

"What about me?" roared Handforth. "Don't you call me a soul? If those rotters try to land here, they'll find out their mistake!"

It was certainly valiant of Handforth to propose guarding the island on his own, something after the style of the brave Horatius of old. And he probably meant it, too. But Willy looked at him, and gasped.

"You're mad!" he declared flatly. "You don't realise the game! While Nipper's guarding the bottom of the island, and expecting an attack, Smith's coming along from this quarter. We've got to hustle, I tell you!"

And Willy dashed off down the island without waiting for his major to get out another word. And a few minutes later the flag came tearing into camp with his news, and excitement reigned supreme.

"Six rafts, you say?" I asked sharply.

"Yes—they'll be here any minute!"

"I'll admit this is more than I had bargained for," I said, looking grim. "Smith's sprung a surprise on us! But it's not too late, even now. If we keep our heads, we shall probably beat off the attack."

And I proceeded to give rapid orders. In less than three minutes over half our forces were hurrying away to the Northern end of the island, to deal with the would-be invaders.

Other fellows were left on the other part of the island, in case of a flanking attack. And the juniors were all excited and eager, and as keen as mustard to see the battle joined. The rebels had full confidence in their ability to break this attack up, and emerge victorious.

"Let him come—we'll deal with his gang!"

"Hurrah!"

"Onward, the Remove!"

And, with that battle-cry, the rebels stood ready to defend the shores of their island fortress. But when they saw the six rafts sweeping down in such formidable fashion, they lost some of their enthusiasm.

"We'll never keep 'em back!" declared Armstrong. "It's too big a job! We'd better abandon the island while we've got the chance!"

"Hear, hear!"

"You rotters!" shouted Buster Boots. "A fine company commander you are, Armstrong, to talk about retreating before the battle has even commenced! That's no example to give to your men!"

"But it's hopeless, I tell you!" said Armstrong gruffly.

"Rats!"

Boots turned and stared at the oncoming enemy. The rafts were now quite close, and all secrecy was at an end. William R. Smith's men were shouting defiance, and the attack was at hand!

CHAPTER VI.

GETTING SERIOUS!

"FIRE!"



The order rang out sharply, and on the instant two machine guns commenced sending their devastating hail of bullets into the ranks of the oncoming enemy.

This sounds a lot worse than it actually was. The machine guns were really an invention of Reginald Pitt's. They were designed for the continuous firing of peas, operated by bellows and compressed air chambers.

The device was a most effective one, and had proved decidedly useful against attack when we were holding the power station. This was the first time they had really been brought into use on the island.

A perfect hail of bullets went rattling against the wooden guards of the oncoming rafts. But they rebounded harmlessly into the water, and hardly a single member of the enemy was hit.

I looked on grimly.

The "Pepperers," as they were called, were sending in a deadly fire, but the result was practically nil. Mr. Smith had learned by experience, and this time he had protected his men against this form of attack. They would be under fire, perhaps, at the moment of landing, but this was not likely to hold them back for long. And at close quarters the pea-shooters were useless.

All round the bank of the island dozens of fellows were standing ready with long poles, determined to push these rafts away. It was rather a forlorn hope, for an attack of this kind was not what had been expected. There was every indication that we should be forced to retreat, and take up a final stand within the stone building.

Here, at all events, we should be comparatively safe, for it was an ideal stronghold. But if possible, we intended to keep the enemy off the island altogether.

The six rafts came swooping down. They were all crowded with Smith's ruffians, and these men had needed no urging. They had every reason to hate the juniors, for they had suffered much at the Remove's hands. Now was their chance to get some of their own back. And the men entered into the attack with tremendous spirit. They were certain of victory, and this alone gave them added determination.

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By clever movements the six rafts had been swung into the smaller channel of the river. There was not so much room here for turning or manipulating, but the water was deep and the current swift. And Smith and his engineers had taken all this into account with a very definite object.

At the last moment three of the rafts were swung aside and turned round until they were practically broadside on. And then, jamming together, they spread themselves completely across the channel.

There was a moment of confusion, and the air was filled with shouting. The rebels were 'peppering' the nearest attackers in earnest. But they could do nothing against the current.

This swept those three rafts round, and the next moment there came a splintering of wood and the sound of surging water. And then I saw the cunning nature of the stratagem.

The three rafts had jammed so securely that they now stretched from the island to the river bank—held there firmly in position by the very force of the current. A dozen juniors were pushing and heaving with their poles, but all these efforts were in vain.

Those rafts were in position, and they formed a bridge.

In short, the island was now an island no longer, for these rafts served as a crossing by which any number of the enemy could sweep upon the rebels. And in the meantime another swift move had been made.

For the other three rafts had separated, and had charged full tilt at the island round on the other shore. The machine-guns were useless here, for the willows grew right down to the water's edge, and the rafts were well protected.

Handforth and his men were on duty at this point, and they did everything possible to prevent the landing. But it was like attempting to hold back the tide. Nothing could stay this grim, determined rush.

The three rafts landed their full cargoes of men. And these latter were now breaking through the trees to the attack. I knew that the moment had come for retreat.

For a fight at close quarters was impossible.

And one glance at the faces of these ruffians somewhat alarmed me. Originally, Smith's men had looked upon this kind of fighting as something of a joke. They had entered into battle with jeers and shouts of laughter. But they had been beaten off so many times, and humiliated so frequently, that their temper was now grim and vindictive.

Not only this, but it struck me that the men had been drinking. Perhaps Smith had purposely primed them up for this job. But I fancied not. It was just a coincidence. The men, knowing what was before them, had probably celebrated in advance.

In any case, a hand-to-hand fight would be dangerous. No doubt the enemy had orders to go easy—to confine their attentions to driving us off the island. But men of this type are not always ready to obey orders. A decidedly personal feeling had come into the warfare, and these ruffians would attempt to get some of their own back.

So I gave the order for retreat.

I shouted out my instructions at the top of my voice, and even Handforth was ready to obey. In spite of his dogged fighting nature, he had sense enough to see that these men were in a dangerous mood. Handforth wouldn't have minded having a shot at them himself, but he was thinking of his company.

And Dinty Todd was equally anxious.

"You'd best get back to de building, boys!" he shouted. "Dese guys are sure sore, an' I guess they'll be a durned dangerous bunch! Quit, while the quit'n's good!"

The confusion was apparently complete. And yet there was really very little confusion at all. Smith's men were swarming over the island, and they believed that they held the upper hand. The rebels were running back in all directions.

But there was order in all this apparent chaos.

The juniors knew exactly what to do, for I had repeatedly dinned it into their heads that at the first landing of Smith's men a retreat should be made for the old building.

I had ordered the ranks to break, and the rebels to reach the stronghold as quickly as they possibly could.

And this is what they were doing. It seemed to Smith and his men that confusion reigned, for the juniors were fairly on the run. They were on the run, but not in fear. They were merely making their way to a more strongly fortified position. It was an ordinary incident of warfare.

It worried me somewhat to realise that the island was no longer ours. But this couldn't be helped. Against such a strong attack we had been quite helpless, and any attempt to hinder the landing of Smith's men further would have led to serious fighting, with the odds all against us.

There was no question that the situation was becoming serious.

For a new move on Smith's part was revealed.

Across that temporary bridge another army of men was rushing. Obviously, this thing had been carefully planned out in advance, and fully two hundred men were waiting in hiding—waiting for the signal for them to spring out. And this they were now doing, and surging across on to the island in great numbers.

Without doubt, this was to be one sweeping attack, which would finish off the rebels once and for all. That was Mr. Smith's idea. And, although I wouldn't admit it, I was filled with keen anxiety.

I had seen that these other men—this crowd that came over to the island so unexpectedly—were not merely flushed, but more than half intoxicated. They had remained in camp until the time was at hand for action. And, probably against Smith's orders, they had been indulging heavily in drink.

And now they were reckless, dangerous, and like so many hooligans. And I realised the peril of the situation. I think it was even more acute than Smith himself realised.

So long as these half-breeds and Mexicans and all the rest were kept strictly in check, all would be well. Under orders, they would hold themselves in hand. But once let them start anything on their own, and the danger point would be passed. It only needed one slight example to set these hooligans off. One act of violence would probably lead to a dozen others, and then the elements of a riot would begin to creep into the hostilities. And if a riot started, even among a small section of the mob, it would inevitably spread.

I could see it all coming, and for this reason alone I urged the fellows to race like mad for the cover of that building. In their present mood, the men would stop at nothing.

We received an indication of this almost at once, for one of the half-drunken Mexicans hurled a great spiked piece of wood between two of the rebels. If it had struck, the injury would have been ghastly.

"Stop that, you brutes!" shouted Christine hotly. "Do you want to kill some of us?"

Whizz!

A number of stones came hurtling through the air, and not only Christine, but one of the other juniors cried out in pain as they were struck. Fortunately their heads and faces had escaped. They turned, and raced for safety.

The enemy was shouting wildly with victory. These ruffians believed that we were on the run, and that the island was theirs. But they had made a mistake.

For by the time they reached the centre of the rising ground they were met with volley after volley of stinging pellets. The pea-shooters were getting to work in earnest, and from their new positions they got in some deadly fire.

The retreat had been, carried out in masterly fashion.

Seemingly a rout, it was just the opposite. The machine-gun crews had been the first to go, and by the time the rest of the rebels surged into the building, the four pepperers were mounted on the battlements.

And as the final stragglers of the defence were running in, a swift roll-call was taken. To my relief it was found that only three fellows were missing—Handforth, Jack Grey, and Tom Burton.

Burton arrived a minute later, his face ghastly, with blood streaming down from a bad cut on the side of his head. He had

been struck by a stone, and nearly rendered unconscious.

Handforth and Jack Grey turned up immediately afterwards, breathless, grim, and much the worse for wear. They had been nearly trapped, and only just managed to get away in safety.

The instant they were inside, the massive door was closed and made secure. And now we were within the fortress, in desperate straits, but still as grimly determined as ever to hold out.

CHAPTER VII.

PEPPING UP THE FIFTH.



FORTUNATELY for us, that stone building was ideal for the purpose.

Here we could make a last stand, and we had every prospect of defying Smith with complete success. For this old building was designed in the fashion of a castle and a veritable fort.

There were only two entrances, and these were so well protected that a hundred men would never be able to get in. The doors were of solid oak, immense, iron-studded doors, nothing less than eight inches thick. They were so heavy, indeed, that several fellows were required to swing them to.

And once closed they could be barred on the inside in such a manner that a gigantic battering-ram would have little or no effect. Thus we had no particular fear of Smith's men breaking in.

The windows were similarly safe.

They were mere slits—the majority of them being six-inch openings in the solid stone walls. No human being could possibly squeeze through. So, even unguarded, they were no menace to us.

And above were the battlements—miniature affairs, but all the better because of this. We not only had our machine-guns stationed up there—one on each of the corner towers—but other ammunition, too.

And as the enemy came surging round the fortress, in the belief that final victory was theirs, they suffered a serious check. They were absolutely peppered, and driven back by the sheer force of our defence.

"Hurrah!"

"Rebels for ever!"

"Down with Smith and his rotten crew!"

"Take that, you beast—and that!"

A perfect hail of mud-bags went shooting down at the enemy, and the half-drunken ruffians ran out of range, and stood there, cursing wildly. They used frightful language, but, fortunately, a good deal of it was in Mexican.

"I say!" panted Willy Handforth, clutching my arm. "I've got an idea!"

"Can't stop now, young 'un——" I began.

"But it's urgent!" insisted Willy. "Why not let me slip down into the dungeons, get

out through the passage, and fetch the Fifth along?"

"The Fifth?" I repeated quickly.

"Why not?" asked Handforth minor. "They're just about ready for revolt, and when they hear how serious things are, they might dash along and lend a hand. It won't take me long, and I'll promise to be careful when I slip out of the tunnel. Is it a go?"

I considered for a few moments, thinking rapidly.

"The Third as well," said Willy, as an afterthought. "They're a pretty mouldy lot, but any help's better than none."

I hardly heard him, for I was considering

act promptly. And Smith would act, too. Indeed, if the Fifth came in at this crucial hour, it might mean Cyclone Smith's capitulation, whether he won the field or not. He would be compelled to meet our terms in order to restore order.

"Well?" asked Willy impatiently. "Gone to sleep?"

I looked at him grimly.

"No," I replied. "Clear off!"

"Eh? Oh, look here——" he began indignantly.

"Clear off—to the Fifth!" I said briefly. "Bring them along to help. Try and make them begin a flanking attack——"

"Leave it to me!" said Handforth minor



Burton arrived a minute later, his face ghastly, with blood streaming down from a bad cut on the side of the head.

the position. I didn't want to involve the Fifth in any defeat, for that would not improve our position in the least. But it struck me that if the Fifth joined in, the Third would certainly do the same, and thus the whole school, with the exception of the lordly Sixth, would be in open rebellion.

And this fact alone would necessarily bring about a speedy end. The Fifth, once pledged to our cause, would never knuckle under—and they were seniors. In this alone they had the advantage, for it was practically unprecedented for the seniors to join a junior barring-out.

The Head would be compelled to act—and

promptly. "Good egg! I knew you had plenty of sense, Nipper, although it's not always visible! Leave it to me, and the thing's done!"

He was off in a moment, and he was grimly determined to carry out his mission with success. He knew that there was every necessity for hurry, for even seconds were of value. The Third, of course, would obey his call to a man. Willy had but to say the word, and the Third would jump.

But the Fifth was a different proposition. It had struck me that it was a bit of a nerve for a mere fag to go alone on such an important mission. Perhaps it would

have been better to send a fellow like Pitt. But then I could ill spare one of my own men, and I remembered, too, that Willy was a bit of a hard nut to crack. If he couldn't induce the Fifth to throw in their lot with the rebels, nobody could.

Having reached the cellars beneath the old building—and these were fashioned after the style of dungeons—Willy entered one of them, and quickly switched on an electric torch.

The walls were all bare, without any sign of an opening. But Handforth minor went to one of the corners, bent low, and pushed hard against one of the lower bricks of the wall. As he did so, a portion of the solid wall moved inwards, revealing a dark opening.

Still flashing his torch. Willy passed through, and found himself in an airy, well-built tunnel. He closed the door, and was soon descending a flight of stone steps, which apparently led down into the bowels of the earth.

But the tunnel was soon resumed. And presently the sag came upon a steep, jagged shaft, leading upwards. And this was no man-made affair, but a natural split in the rocky ground. The shaft sloped upwards acutely, and there were one or two ropes hanging down to assist the climber.

In a few moments Willy was at the top. He clung there, heaved upwards with his shoulders, and the apparently solid earth moved, letting in a dazzling beam of brilliant sunlight.

Through the merest crack, Willy saw that the coast was clear, and he slipped out, opening a kind of natural trapdoor. It was covered on the top with turf, and dropped back into position so cunningly that it was difficult to detect the secret door at all. The grass and the earth looked all the same.

"Good!" murmured Willy. "Now for the sweat!"

It was clear that he regarded his task as a pretty stiff one, and that he was under no delusions as to the opposition he might meet with. But in one characteristic he was like Mr. William K. Smith—if he started a thing, he finished it!

The tunnel he had just passed through was the rebels' safety valve, so to speak. If things became too hot on the island, if the fort fell, that tunnel was there as a way of retreat. And the very knowledge that a retreat could be made caused the Remove to fight with all the greater determination. Smith's men believed, of course, that the juniors were trapped in that building, and perhaps it wouldn't be long before they found out their error.

And Willy urgently wanted the Fifth to join up, so that an attack could be made from the land. The sudden arrival of a new force might put Smith's men into complete confusion, and once on the run, the island would be regained. And after such a defeat as this, William K. Smith would undoubtedly come to terms.

Handforth minor marched into the Triangle boldly. He was instantly surrounded by Chubby Heath, Owen minor, and half the Third.

"How's your head?" demanded Willy practically.

"Oh, better," said Chubby. "I say, there's something going on, isn't there?"

"Battle!" said Willy briefly. "Dash round, and find all the other members of the Third. You're wanted. Things are pretty desperate, and it's a case of all hands to the pump."

"Hurrah!"

"We'll rush off straight away!"

"Who said so?" snapped Willy. "You'll stay here, and obey orders! Gather together in the Triangle, and wait till I come back!"

He wasted no further time, but ran into the Ancient House, and dashed for the Fifth-Form passage. He looked into one or two studies, and found them empty. He paused, frowning.

"Rummy!" he wondered. "Nobody at home!"

And then he suddenly started, and glanced at his watch. An expression of pitiful contempt came into his face as he realised that the Fifth was probably meekly working at lessons in the class-room! This wasn't a half-holiday, of course—and Willy had lost all count of hours and days.

Besides, the Third, in the Triangle, had caused him to forget lessons, too. But the Third was on strike, and had revolted so grimly that Mr. Small had taken no action, fearing to fire another train of gunpowder.

Willy dashed into the Fifth-Form class-room, and came to a halt, staring. As he had supposed, the Fifth was at lessons, and there was not even any master—Mr. Pagett having resigned. The Fifth felt that it was called upon to act in a dignified way, as befitting seniors, and they had gone in to lessons as usual. True, there was very little work being done. But that was a detail. Dignity was being maintained.

Willy stood there, gazing at the seniors witheringly. Inwardly, he was very pleased that he found them all together, for this was an advantage. The thought didn't strike him that he was like Daniel in the lions' den. Like his brother, he recklessly refused to consider the odds.

"You worms!" he said scornfully.

The Fifth started, and regarded Willy with anger and indignation. It was bad enough for this sag to butt in at all, but to calmly stand there, and call them worms was rather beyond the limit. Willy, in his grim execution of duty, entirely overlooked the peril of his position. He had come here to speak his mind, and to put some pep into the Fifth.

"Look here, my lad, you buzz off," said Chambers, rising majestically in his seat. "Who the dickens told you to come here? I don't altogether approve of this Third-Form rebellion—"

"I'm a chap of few words!" interrupted

Willy. "The Remove is hard pressed. Smith's set a gang of his ruffians to the attack, and the Remove chaps are bottled up in the old castle. Reinforcements are urgently needed. Follow me!"

The Fifth failed to comply with the invitation.

"You young ass!" said Phillips. "We're seniors! We can't have anything to do with this silly rebellion. What do you take us for?"

"I'm ashamed to say!" replied Willy bitterly. "It makes me go all hot and indignant when I think of you chaps! What are you? A set of giddy slackers! A crowd of rotters with tons of false dignity! A bunch of weak-kneed fatheads who haven't got the spirit of a November house-fly!"

The Fifth rose as one man.

In their vast experience they had been called many things, but to be likened unto a November house-fly was rather too much. And by a mere fag, too! It was almost tantamount to sacrilege.

"Grab him!" roared Stevens. "We'll turn him over, and tan him until he can't see straight!"

"Do you think I carry my eyes in my back?" asked Willy sarcastically. "And if you touch me, I won't be answerable for the consequences! Stop! Stand back! Don't move another inch!"

He flung up his hand, and the Fifth halted in surprise.

"That's right!" said Willy curtly. "Why, it'll only take a few hours to train you into a decent body of chaps, instead of a rabble!"

"Rabble!" howled Bryant.

"Don't be offended—the truth always hurts!" said Willy calmly. "Are you coming to the rescue of the Remove or not? You've just got two minutes to decide! If you fail, you'll be outcasts for the rest of your lives! You'll be looked upon with scorn and disdain! Here's your chance—take it!"

A crowd of the Fifth-Formers swept forward to take Willy, but Chambers intervened in the nick of time—which was rather surprising, for Chambers was generally the most dignified Fifth-Former of all. But something of the spirit of rebellion was beginning to stir within Cuthbert's breast.

"He's right!" he shouted. "Don't touch him!"

"He's right?" roared the Fifth, aghast.

"Of course he's right!" snorted Chambers.

"I'm going to give him a tanning for being cheeky, but that can wait. It's high time the Fifth woke up!"

Handforth minor swayed back, and mopped his brow.

"At last!" he panted. "And Chambers, of all chaps! Water!"

"Stop that, you young ass!" growled Chambers, glaring.

The Fifth surged round, excited and divided. One or two fellows wanted to support Chambers, but were half afraid to. The rest considered their dignity, and shook

their heads. And yet every one of those seniors was fairly bubbling with eagerness to join the rebellion in earnest.

"Listen to me!" shouted Willy. "I know it's a bit of a nerve for me to come here at all—but we'll let that pass. You chaps are seniors—you belong to the Upper School. But does that make any difference? Aren't you just as interested in the welfare of St. Frank's as the Third or the Remove?"

"Of course we are!" snapped Phillips.

"Then what's the idea of kidding yourselves that dignity is the most important thing in the world?" demanded Willy. "We're fighting for the honour of the school—and if you fellows refuse to lend a hand the Remove might be wiped out! Smith will win, and everlasting disgrace will fall upon the Fifth! If you don't take this chance, you ain't worth using as doormats!"

"But—but—" began Bryant.

"There's no but about it!" snapped Willy.

"And there's no time for argument, either. The Remove is fighting like mad while we are talking here. Are you coming or not? I want an answer now—yes or no! Will you allow Smith to win, or will you step into the breach and help the Remove to win the day?"

The Fifth looked at the fag excitedly. They forgot that he was a mere Third-Former. His words had fired them with enthusiasm, and in a moment they were shouting at the top of their voices.

"We'll go!" roared Chambers. "We'll help the Remove!"

"Hurrah!"

"Down with Cyclone Smith!"

"Come on—let's go and join the fighting!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The Fifth to the rescue!"

And, sweeping Willy aside, the Fifth-Formers rushed out of the class-room in a shouting, excited mob. And Willy grinned to himself with triumph.

"Well, they needed a bit of ginger, but they've come up to the scratch all right now," he said cheerfully. "And if we don't see the end of the barring-out to-day I'm no judge!"

Willy hurried out, and found the Third Form eager and anxious to hurry off to the scene of battle. The Fifth had already gone—speeding towards Willard's Island as hard as they could run.

Not that the Fifth was likely to do much fighting. They were untrained, and, with all their new-born enthusiasm, they would probably make a hash of things. But Willy didn't care. The chief idea had been to get the Fifth to join up, and thus involve practically the whole school.

Chambers had constituted himself leader of the senior rebels, and he was not a fellow of any particular imagination. He fondly believed that the Fifth had only to rush to the rescue, and Smith's men would melt away.

But neither Smith nor the Fifth Form had the slightest idea of the actual position—and, for that matter, neither had the Remove!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNEMPLOYED!



"HERE they come!"
"Hurrah!"

Ringing cheers went up from the Remove when the Fifth-Formers were seen dashing across the meadows from the direction of St. Frank's. There was something rather inspiring in that sight.

The Remove was hard pressed. There was no immediate danger, for the enemy were up against a stiff proposition, and would not find it at all easy to smash into the miniature castle, which was now the last fortress of the rebels.

The heavy doors, the narrow, slit-like windows, and the immense stone walls, made any rush futile. And Smith's mob found it rather painful to approach too close. The rebels were still full of fight, and kept up a continuous hail of missiles—all of these latter, however, being quite harmless.

The enemy retaliated in a different way.

The men had taken to throwing stones, half bricks, and anything else that they could lay their hands to. There were plentiful supplies of stones at hand, for the ground on the island was of a rather rocky nature, and jagged chunks of flint could be picked up almost at random.

And William K. Smith's army, infuriated at finding itself cheated of its prey, was resorting to violence. These men had expected to take their revenge swiftly and drastically.

Once on the island, they believed that all resistance would be at an end, and that these infernal schoolboys would be thrown out of possession, and dispersed in all directions.

At first it had seemed that the millionaire's plan was a complete success. Indeed, Smith himself, watching from one of the banks, had been flushed with premature triumph. He had seen the rebels running, he had seen every sign of a rout, and he had told himself that the end was at hand.

And then, to his mortification, he saw that the Remove was far from being beaten. Once within that sturdy stone building, the juniors defied their enemies. And although the ruffians made charge after charge, the stronghold remained as impregnable as ever.

And then the infuriated hooligans—many of them more than half drunk—had resorted to the expedient of throwing stones. One man had set the example, and the others followed like sheep. And now, indeed, a perfect hail of deadly missiles was being hurled at the battlements in a continuous stream—to the accompaniment of shouts, curses and vile language.

And William K. Smith became uneasy. He had given his men instructions to drive these rebels out at all costs, but he had also warned them against harming the juniors. And this stone-throwing was against all orders—the men were getting out of hand. Their chagrin at being resisted in this way, and their evil tempers, were getting the better of them. Smith could easily see that unless this tendency was checked, the attackers would become a dangerous mob, and the consequences might be grave.

Not that Mr. Smith was thinking of any possible casualties to the Remove. His only emotion was one of selfishness. If anything serious happened, he would have to accept the responsibility, since he had ordered his men to embark upon this dangerous adventure.

Stone-throwing was against orders, and it had to be stopped. In fact, Smith decided that his only course now was to withdraw the men at once. Thus he admitted that he had failed. Filled with inward rage at the non-success of his plan, he nevertheless had wisdom enough to see that it would be sheer madness to let this affair develop.

It had gone too far already. His men must retreat, leave the island, and allow the Remove full possession again. Smith would never have come to this decision if his workmen had continued to behave with discretion. He would have pursued the attack until the castle was reduced, and until surrender by the rebels was complete.

But, under the present circumstances, it was too risky. Smith had seen crowds of men in an ugly mood on many an occasion, and he knew—better than anybody else, perhaps—how quickly a well-ordered crowd may become a rioting, murderous mob.

He shouted some quick orders to one or two of his lieutenants, and these men, who were also getting a bit scared, shouted the new commands to the men. But these latter were so excited and enraged that they hardly heard. The few who did take notice were not slow to answer.

"Retreat now?" shouted one man. "You bet we don't retreat! These blamed kids are comin' out o' this place before we quit the job!"

And there were many other answers of a similar nature. The men, in fact, were already beginning to disobey orders. It seemed that Smith had delayed his commands until too late.

The rebels were compelled to leave the battlements, taking their patent machine-guns with them. The stones were now flying in such numbers, and from all directions, that it was positively dangerous to remain in the open.

"Stand away from the windows!" I shouted again and again. "These devils are dangerous now—they won't care what steps they take. Keep away from the windows at all costs!"

"The brutes! The heathen beasts!"

panted Armstrong. "Hadn't we better clear out—while there's time?"

"Not yet!" I replied.

And it was at this point that the Fifth-Formers were observed rushing across the meadows to the rescue. In spite of the danger, many of the juniors insisted upon crowding at the windows.

The foolishness of this was made apparent a few moments later, for Griffith, who took a peep out, reeled back almost stunned—a nasty, jagged cut on his forehead. A piece of stone had caught him between the eyes, and the poor chap was nearly knocked out.

He was swiftly carried away, and bathed and bandaged. In the meantime, I was superintending the fixing of boards over the window-slits, so that we should have a measure of protection.

And, outside, the Fifth had unconsciously run into great danger. With Chambers at the head of the seniors, they came dashing across the temporary bridge of rafts, and were in the thick of the battle before they knew it.

We couldn't tell exactly what happened, for the fight took place almost beyond our range of vision. But we learned, afterwards, that the scrap was swift, and of a somewhat deadly nature. Three of the seniors were knocked clean out by the ruffianly enemy, and the rest of the Fifth became scared. They had not dreamed of anything so dangerous as this.

Not that the seniors were frightened for themselves. But they saw that they were hopelessly outnumbered, and that Smith's men were a half-drunken, rioting gang. To fight against such brutes was to invite disaster.

And so the Fifth retreated, taking their injured members with them. Their active help in the fight was of no great benefit, but this was no discredit to them. Their intervention, it seemed, merely served to drive the enemy to further excesses. And this was deplorable in one way, it certainly helped to make the end of the affair more speedy.

In the meantime, further excitement was taking place in Cyclone City itself—excitement that we knew nothing of until afterwards. But it all had a great bearing on the events of the day.

A considerable force of the Bannington unemployed had marched into Bellton, collecting various supporters on the way. These men joined the procession at different spots, until, at the time Bellton was reached, the unemployed numbered well over a hundred and fifty—quite an imposing-looking procession as it passed through the village.

The men had come with the fixed determination of entering William K. Smith's encampment, and demanding work. Perhaps it was a little high-handed, but nobody could deny that the men were justified. They were all honest fellows—a real band of workmen who were out of employment. There wasn't a single fellow in

that crowd who was a deliberate slacker and shirker. They had not come to make a disturbance, but to ask for work.

Smith, of course, wasn't available. And the unemployed had heard, long before they reached the encampment, startling rumours concerning a wild battle on Willard's Island. It incensed them to hear that this rabble was using violent means against the St. Frank's schoolboys.

So they entered Cyclone City in no amiable humour. And matters were made ten times more serious almost at once, for the unemployed were informed that Smith wasn't there, and that there was no work for them, anyhow. It is possible that the procession would have marched away again. But the encampment was still full of Smith's men. They were fully three hundred strong, many of them working, others idling. And they turned on the Bannington unemployed, jeering, abusing, and shouting contemptuous remarks.

This, in itself, was not enough. Two or three of the Mexicans threw stones, and that started the trouble. A burly brick-layer from Bannington sprang forward, knocked one of the ruffians flying, and then the fur began to fly. It was like a spark to a train of gunpowder.

More fights took place, and in less than five minutes a riot was in progress. The unemployed from Bannington found themselves beset on all sides, and now they were fighting grimly and with righteous fury.

Smith heard this piece of news soon afterwards, and he turned rather pale. He had observed that his orders were being flatly ignored, and all his ravings were of no avail.

By every appearance the riot was spreading, and the thing which William K. Smith had started was getting beyond his control.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RIOT ON THE ISLAND.



MR. PONSONBY SMALL stood quite still, staring in a kind of dazed horror.

He was on a little rising piece of ground near the St. Frank's playing-fields. He stood in the warm sunshine, but his face looked ghastly. There was a wild expression of fear and terror in his eyes.

Slightly to the left of him he could see Willard's Island, and the whole scene was clearly visible. The Fifth-Formers, fighting desperately with the rioters, and the determined attack on the picturesque stone building. This was surrounded by Smith's men, who were throwing stones in hundreds, shouting, capering, and generally behaving like madmen.

On Mr. Small's right he could see Cyclone City. And this was every bit as wild

and disordered as the island. For a free fight was in progress between the remainder of Smith's men and the Bannington unemployed. The very air, in fact, was filled with the noise of conflict.

It was hardly surprising that Mr. Ponsonby Small was staggered.

Only about half an hour earlier he had learned by telephone that the Remove would soon be straggling back to St. Frank's, a disordered mob. And Mr. Small had received instructions to make himself ready to assert his authority, and to maintain discipline at all costs. The rebels, he was informed, would be so disorganised that they would have no fight left in them.

And Mr. Small had waited impatiently, with a great admiration surging within him for Mr. William K. Smith and his whirlwind methods. And at last his impatience had proved too great, and so he had sallied out to see how the battle was faring.

It must be admitted that he was hastened upon this trip by the sight of the Fifth Form charging across the Triangle, followed by the Third. This didn't look very much as though discipline was being restored. In fact, it was clearly evident that the Fifth had at last revolted, and that the seniors were dashing off to the aid of the Remove.

And so Mr. Ponsonby Small had deemed it wise to have a look at things at close quarters. His impatience was such that he could not remain in his study, waiting for the vanquished Remove to straggle in.

And now he was quite horrified by what he saw. Obviously, the affairs of the afternoon had not progressed in the way that William K. Smith had anticipated. The Remove had not been driven off the island, and was, indeed, putting up a fierce and determined resistance.

And Smith's men, it seemed, had got completely out of hand. For even Mr. Small could hardly believe that the millionaire had urged his employees to go to such lengths as this.

The Head caught sight of a figure on the towing-path, some little distance away. And he noticed that it was Mr. William K. Smith. Mr. Small started running, and he finally broke upon the towing-path, and came face to face with Cyclone Smith, hot and breathless.

"Mr. Smith! What—what has happened?" he demanded huskily.

"See here, Small, you'd best get quit of this!" snapped the other, his eyes hard and vicious. "These cursed boys have held out so long that my men are beyond control. I guess there's going to be some ugly trouble around here! Once these fellers get inside that building, there'll be blazes to pay!"

"But the boys?" faltered Mr. Small. "They—they may be hurt—"

"Hurt?" repeated William K. Smith, with a harsh laugh. "You can bet your life they'll be hurt! I guess a few of the young guys will be half killed! These men have

been drinking, hang them! I can't do a thing! I've given orders, but they won't take any notice!"

"But they must—they must!" shouted Mr. Small desperately. "Think, sir—think! If any of these boys are injured there will be a terrible scandal! The whole country will echo and re-echo with the story until my name is a by-word!"

"Say, stop that snivelling!" snarled Mr. Smith. "Your voice is out of tune! I'm in no mood to listen to your drivel now!"

And Mr. Smith strode off, and hurried across to the island. He went among his men, shouting orders, commanding them to withdraw, and threatening all who disobeyed with instant dismissal.

But he might as well have talked to a pack of wolves. The ruffians were too much inflamed now to heed any words of command. This affair had become a personal one. They would have these schoolboys out, and they would make them suffer!

A wave of hatred against St. Frank's had swept through the men, and even if they had been reasonably calm, they would have taken drastic action. But, inflamed as they were, they were ready for any active violence. The riot was becoming more and more fierce as the minutes went by.

The mob was possessed of one thought, and one thought only. They were determined to get these boys out, and to wreak their vengeance upon them. All control was lost, and all Smith's efforts to regain it were futile.

Even the millionaire was alarmed by this. He was, indeed, frantic, although he attempted to keep a strong grip on himself. Yet he could see the ruination of his whole enterprise in this afternoon's work.

With the mob in this mood, it would not be surprising if one or more of the boys got killed. And in that case it would be a police job—indeed, the police were probably informed already, and were hastening to the scene to restore order.

The monster which Mr. Smith had created had got beyond his control, and seemed likely to destroy its creator. For unless this riot was quelled very soon the consequences would be so far-reaching that even Smith, with all his wealth and power, would be overwhelmed in the catastrophe.

It was not merely a quarrel between himself and the schoolboys now. Mr. Smith had always looked upon his employees as mere units, to be moved about as he willed, and to obey orders without question.

But it was clear that these men no longer regarded themselves as pawns upon a chess-board, and they were acting on their own initiative. And, without any controlling hand to guide them, there was no telling to what excesses they would run.

In addition, the men of the district were involved in the fight. The unemployed from Bannington and the near-by villages were taking a hand. The battle in Cyclone City had died down a bit, but it was almost

certain that this lull was only temporary. Other men, probably, were hastening to the scene to take part in the warfare—to drive these ruffianly invaders away.

And Mr. William K. Smith cursed roundly and harshly in his helpless rage. He would have been better employed in addressing his abuse against himself. For, after all, he was the main cause of the whole catastrophe. Without his engineering, this riot would never have taken place.

Now that it was too late, his obstinacy was brought home to him.

He realised that it would have been better if he had given in to the schoolboys—to have restored St. Frank's to its normal condition, with Dr. Stafford in command. But that would have meant an admission of defeat, and William K. Smith had never before made such a confession. To be beaten by a handful of junior schoolboys was too much of a humiliation.

But even that humiliation would have been bearable compared to this disaster. For it would have been private, and the news of it would have remained nothing but local gossip.

But this present affair was likely to find a leading place in the daily newspapers of the whole country. The police would come—the Government might even take action! Mr. Smith's whole structure was on the verge of collapsing about his ears, and he had to admit that he was beaten.

And in the meantime, the result of his obstinacy was growing more desperate. The fighting round the building on Willard's Island was becoming a dangerous affair.

Not content with merely throwing stones—which, indeed, proved futile—the rioters sought other means to drive these boys out of their stronghold. And the first thing they attempted was an indication of their madness.

Sober, in full possession of their wits, these inflamed men could never have put such a plan into action. But they were so excited with spirits and with rage that they scarcely knew what they were doing.

A number of them had rushed off into one of the neighbouring meadows, where one of Mr. Smith's motor tractors stood, covered with a tarpaulin. It was the very tractor, with caterpillar wheels, which had been used for the purpose of smashing into the power-station, several days earlier, and it was still fitted with a clumsy, improvised battering-ram.

A dozen Mexicans and half-breeds swarmed round the tractor, and soon had it going. And then the clumsy vehicle was guided towards that bridge of rafts which led from the towing-path to the island.

The sight of the heavy monster coming along even sobered some of the rioters. And two of the men, more sane than the others, ran up, shouting.

"Stop, you fools!" shouted one of them. "You'll never get across that bridge! Are you mad? These rafts are afloat—"



With a curse, he whipped out a revolver from his hip pocket, and fired almost blindly.

"Stand away!" yelled the man who was driving.

Indeed, the objector was only just in the nick of time, for the tractor missed him by an inch. And then, with a final plunging roar, with the engine racing at full power, the tractor was sent hurtling on to the bridge.

Perhaps these inflamed fools believed that the thing would be carried over with one rush. In any case, the tractor got fairly on to the first raft, and then plunged sideways into the river with a tremendous splash, tractor, raft, men, and everything overturning into the water with a terrific commotion that easily reached the rebels in their stronghold.

Several members of the Fifth Form saw the accident, too, and gazed horrified. At least two of the Mexicans had been caught by the overturning tractor, and carried down to the river-bed beneath it.

For several tense moments there was a kind of horrified lull. The whole battle ceased, and the rioters surged round, trying to find out what had actually happened.

The screams of the two men, as they fell into the river, had been plainly heard. They didn't come up again. Caught by that heavy vehicle, they had had no chance whatever, but had been borne to the river-bed, to be crushed to death before they could even drown.

And it was, of course, entirely their own fault. In their mad rage they had attempted the impossible, and the result of this exploit was to have a definite effect upon the ensuing events.

For the rioters, once convinced of the

tragedy, placed all the blame at the door of the juniors, and their former violence changed into maniacal fury. The full force of their hatred was turned against the juniors, and the rioters turned back to their task of smashing into the fort with even greater determination than before.

The first tragedy had occurred—lives had been lost—and now there was no telling what the next development would be.

CHAPTER X.

OUT OF HAND!



WILLY HANDFORTH stood looking on critically.

"This, my sons," he said, "is no place for us!"

"It's—it's awful!" muttered Chubby Heath. "And what the dickens are we going to do? What about those Remove chaps? I can see 'em being dragged out of that place, and murdered!"

"You've got wonderful vision, then!" said Willy tartly. "Fathead! What about the secret passage?"

"Oh! I—I'd forgotten that!"

"Of course you'd forgotten it," said Willy. "A brain like yours can only think of one thing at a time. There's no need to worry about the Remove. Nipper's in charge, and as soon as things get too hot, he and his men will quietly vamoose into the tunnel, and come out safe. And I should think that's about the best thing to do. After this, Smith ought to be only too pleased to make terms."

Willy, with the rest of the Third, stood on the grass of a hillside, some little distance from the river. The Fifth-Formers were straggling there, too, out of harm's way. They were all realising that fighting was too risky. The only thing was to remain spectators.

And, in the island stronghold, I was discussing the situation with Reggie Pitt—on very much the lines that Willy had imagined. Pitt had declared that it was time for us to clear out.

"I don't want to go just yet," I replied.

"By clearing out now we might get nothing but defeat, while by waiting another half-hour we shall obtain complete victory."

"How do you mean?"

"If we clear out of here, it will mean returning to St. Frank's," I replied. "We've got no guarantee from Smith that he will agree to our terms, and it would be just like him to take advantage of our position. But if we wait, and prove that we're as determined as ever, Smith himself will probably be ready enough to agree to our full demands."

"But how can he let us know?" said Pitt.

"He'll find a way, if he's the man I believe him to be," I said.

"Quick! Come and look here!" shouted Handforth, from the other side of the big, stone apartment. "I can see old Smith—standing on the towing-path! He's waving a white flag!"

I looked at Reggie Pitt quickly.

"Didn't I tell you he'd find a way?" I exclaimed. "He's surrendered!"

We hurried across to the slit-like window, and there, sure enough, stood William K. Smith, waving a stick with a white rag attached to it. Unmistakably, it was intended to be a token of surrender.

"Look! The white flag!"

"Smith's given in to us!"

"Hurrah!"

The rebels fairly shouted with excitement and enthusiasm.

"Not so much of it!" I exclaimed gruffly.

"It's a pity Smith didn't take this action an hour ago. He's too late now!"

"Too late?" repeated Boots, staring.

"Of course. He may be willing to surrender, and I'm not surprised at it—because all his men are out of hand," I said grimly. "He'd give anything to restore peace now. But what's the good of Smith agreeing to our terms while his men are all acting like a lot of maniacs?"

"It's a bit awkward!" admitted Christine.

"If we come out of this place now, we'll be pounced upon and mobbed by this ruffianly crowd," I went on. "They're in an ugly mood—a wicked, destructive mood. Our only course will be to take to the tunnel and slip away quietly, without the enemy knowing. And once we get safely back to St. Frank's we'll make Smith stick to his word—after we've got it!"

"After we've got it?" repeated Reggie Pitt.

"Yes," I replied. "We can't afford to take chances, and I want something more definite than the mere waving of a handkerchief. As soon as we get definite terms of surrender from Smith, we'll evacuate our position."

The excitement was rapidly spreading, and the Remove ceased to worry over the immediate position. The knowledge that a way of escape was open to us gave the fellows confidence.

And while the attack became more vicious outside, I was turning over a few ideas in my mind. And I was rather worried about the whole situation. Was it wise to move at all?

That was the point I had to decide. As long as we remained on the island, the full fury of the rioters would vent itself against this sturdy old stone building. But if we went back to the school, the men, in their maddened condition might transfer their attentions to St. Frank's itself—and that would indeed be a catastrophe.

Upon the whole, I considered it better to remain—until the madness had passed, and until these men were again like human beings, and not like wild animals. In this,

I was thinking entirely of the school, and not of ourselves.

And it was necessary, too, to get Mr. Smith's complete surrender.

But how? Speed was necessary, and I could see only one method. A messenger would have to get out of the tunnel, approach Smith, and obtain the full terms. And after a brief consultation with my lieutenants, I entrusted the task to Reggie Pitt, he being a diplomatic fellow.

Reggie was off almost at once, and wasted no time about the business. For within ten minutes we caught sight of him hurrying across the meadows towards the towing-path. Mr. Smith was still standing there, isolated, and utterly impotent. He could do nothing but watch, for his men would obey no orders.

A rousing cheer went up from the rebels when it was seen that Pitt was approaching. It was impossible to get too near the windows for now and again a stone would come crashing against the hurriedly fixed wooden barricades. However, quite a number of fellows managed to see what was going on.

Pitt approached Mr. Smith breathlessly.

"I'm a messenger," announced Reggie. "Just come from the island."

The millionaire turned, and stared at him with a kind of hope.

"Say, what's the big idea?" he asked grimly. "You can't pull that tale on me, boy. I've been watching the island the whole time—"

"Very likely, but you can't see everything, Mr. Smith," interrupted Pitt. "You waved a white flag a short time ago. Are we to take that as an indication that you will agree to our terms?"

"Yes!" said Smith, between his teeth. "Quit this island at once, and go back to the school, and you'll get everything you want. I guess you've got me in a corner, and I'm forced to agree. These cursed men of mine have lost their heads, and I've got to knuckle under."

"Don't blame your men, Mr. Smith," said Pitt. "You drove them to this, and you can't put the responsibility on their shoulders. Sign this, please."

Smith started, and stared at the paper that Reggie had produced.

"Sign?" he snapped. "By gosh! I'll see you in blazes before I sign anything! My word is all that I'll give."

"In that event, sir, the position remains unchanged," said Pitt, with perfect calmness. "We are dealing with you fairly, and if you are in earnest about this agreement, you will not hesitate to sign. Our terms are here briefly set forth. The dismissal of Mr. Small—restoration of all junior liberties—the return of Dr. Stafford—and the removal of the River House fellows to a more fitting environment. All we want is for the school to be restored to its usual condition. Nothing less, and nothing more."

Pitt was crisp and business-like, and Smith

snatched the paper from him, and glanced over it. For a moment he hesitated, his keen, active face working curiously. Then, with a characteristic twist to his mouth, he pulled out a fountain pen.

"Say, boy, you've got me!" he snapped. "I guess I'll sign!"

He had the grace to admit defeat, and that was something. Reggie Pitt watched him eagerly as he affixed his name to the document. Pitt took it, and carefully stowed it in his pocket.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "In half an hour, Mr. Smith, the Remove will be back in the school."

Without waiting for the millionaire to reply, Pitt turned and hurried off. He knew only too well that he was in a position of considerable danger, and would he half murdered if some of these rioters caught him. But they were so engrossed in their task on the island that they took no notice of what occurred elsewhere.

Mr. Smith gazed after Pitt, puzzled but grim.

"In half an hour!" he murmured tensely. "You young fool! Do you think I will care a snap about that signature? When this affair's over, and those kids are back at St. Frank's, I'll have something different to say, by heck! The young cubs won't crow for long!"

So it was clearly evident that Mr. William K. Smith was still a Prussian of the worst type, in spite of his Americanised name and manners. Once the boys were back in the school, he would repudiate his signature and ignore all the provisions of the agreement. Even now, after all these lessons, Smith was still ignorant of the Remove's determination.

Reggie Pitt succeeded in getting back into the tunnel without anyone observing him—which, after all, was easy to understand. For that little space between the high hedge and the rear of the junior pavilion was quite private, and safe from any spying eyes.

Pitt turned up in the island fortress, hot, breathless, and triumphant. He was instantly surrounded by a crowd of excited rebels.

"It's all right—don't push!" said Reggie. "I've got his signature! He's agreed to our terms, and the good old conquering Remove has won the day! The armistice is signed, and all is well!"

"Hurrah!"

But the signing of this "armistice" was something of a paradox. Smith was willing enough to cease hostilities, but his men weren't. Thus, although there was peace between the two C.O.'s, the peace was really a myth. For the battle was progressing with even greater intensity than before.

There came sounds of thunderous battering upon the great iron-studded door. A score of the rioters were using a tree-trunk as a battering ram. Dozens of others were still hurling stones with vicious intent.

It was at this moment that Pitt looked out of one of the windows. He was trying to ascertain how serious this new peril was. But just then a stone, glancing off the corner of the building, rebounded and struck a villainous-looking Mexican on the side of the head.

The man staggered, swearing vilely, and his gaze fixed itself upon the head and shoulders of Reggie Pitt. Possibly the fellow believed that Pitt had hurled that stone. At all events, he acted with lightning-like rapidity.

With a curse, he whipped out a revolver from his hip pocket, and fired almost blindly.

Reggie Pitt drooped back from the window, his knees sagged, and he fell in a crumpled heap to the floor!

CHAPTER XI.

THE RETREAT!

ONLY two or three of the rebels had seen this happening. I was one of them. I noticed the flash of the revolver in the sunlight, the spurt of fire, and I saw Reggie Pitt sag to the floor.

For an instant I stood stock still, fear gripping me. I simply dare not put my thoughts into shape. And then action returned, and I rushed to Reggie's side, and helped to lift him up.

"It's all right!" he muttered. "Something—something hit me, I think. I'll be all right in two ticks!"

I gazed at him with infinite relief, and could see no sign of a wound.

"Where were you hit?" I asked hoarsely.

"Up here—on the shoulder!" replied Reggie. "It seemed to numb me all over just for a second, but I'm all right now—My hat! Look at that!"

Handforth, who had gone to the window, staggered back with an ugly gash on his left cheek. A jagged stone had struck him, tearing the skin deeply. He was exceedingly surprised.

"The brutes!" he roared, as he dabbed his cheek, and felt the warm blood. "I'm going outside, and I'll smash——"

"Don't be an idiot, Handy!" I shouted. "If you go outside, they'll kill you! Quick! Get some cold water, and bathe that gash! We shall have to clear out of this place at once—the fight's getting too hot!"

While I was speaking, I tore Pitt's shirt away from his shoulder, and was greatly relieved to see that the bullet wound was only a deep furrow. It was bleeding considerably, but was by no means serious.

"The fiends!" I said harshly. "They're ready for murder, even!"

It was not long before Pitt and Handforth were hastily bandaged. And they were not

the only casualties either. Armstrong had a bad graze on one arm, Fatty Little had been hit by a stone on the left ear, and several other fellows were similarly injured.

And we had no means of retaliating. It was impossible for us to throw stones in return, for that would have incensed the rioters to lengths of violence that might lead to real tragedy. So far the entire blame for this catastrophe lay with William K. Smith—and we were resolved to do nothing to aggravate the disturbance.

And it was a positive peril for us to remain.

For, indeed, if these ruffians broke through into the building, they would exact a terrible vengeance. In their madness, they would trample the juniors down, and probably commit atrocities of the most brutal description. This was no mere mock battle now. And the only course was to retreat.

The peril was even nearer than we imagined.

For, outside, a number of the men were preparing a new stunt. The battering ram had failed, for that great oaken door resisted every attempt to beat it down. And as the men paused, more violent than ever, a number of others came running up.

They had brought a box containing blasting charges—in short, dynamite! And it was their evil intention to blow the door down, careless of whether the juniors within were killed or injured in the explosion.

In a more sober frame of mind, even these ruffians would have hesitated. But the lust for violence was upon them now, and they were entirely out of hand. The riot was assuming ghastly proportions.

Meanwhile, unconscious of the impending danger, the Remove prepared for retreat. In quite orderly fashion, company after company descended to the cellars, and passed in single file along the underground passage.

I was the last to leave, and I smiled rather grimly to myself as I realised what an empty victory the rioters would gain if they succeeded in smashing into the building.

Perhaps the discovery would cool their fury—or perhaps it would increase it. Probably the latter. But it couldn't be helped—our only possible course was to get out of this acute peril.

The rioting was not merely confined to the island, either.

Only half of Smith's men were attacking the Remove. The remainder were scattered about the district in crowds. The spirit of revolt was upon them all, and, aided by strong drink, their courage was increased. They were like a lot of wild beasts let loose from a menagerie.

While kept under strict discipline they had behaved themselves with a fair amount of decency. But now all discipline was at an end, and the riot which had started on Willard's Island was spreading through-

out Cyclone City, into Bellton itself. And it was William K. Smith who had destroyed the discipline by forcing his men to act as hooligans. He could hardly blame them now for going a step further.

The Fifth Form and the Third Form, having met with one or two casualties in the various skirmishes, had wisely retired into the school grounds—indeed, right into the Triangle itself.

For it was felt that the rioters would not hesitate to turn their attention towards St. Frank's at the slightest provocation. And what chance would the old school have against this half-drunken, insensate mob?

And a keen and acute anxiety was felt for the Remove.

It was impossible to relieve the juniors—as the Fifth had proved by their own valiant dash into the fight. That dash had been futile, it is true. But it was none the less plucky because of that. Against such methods of fighting, the Fifth was helpless.

And they had been in the open—not protected by strong stone walls, like the Remove. They had had no other course but to retire.

Mr. Stockdale had sent an urgent telephone message to the Bannington police, giving information of the riot, and requesting help. But this was not much comfort. The entire Bannington police force would be able to do very little against this maddened, infuriated gang of foreigners—for, after all, although calling themselves Americans, Smith's men were nothing of the sort. No decent American would have owned them as fellow countrymen.

They were a thousand strong, and by this time the spirit of violence had reached them all. Every vestige of discipline had been abandoned long since, and the mobs had not only raided the camp sagoon, but had utterly destroyed the place, finally setting it on fire.

The Bannington unemployed, not prepared for such a reception, had retired into Bellton, and over two hundred of Smith's men had followed. Shops had been sacked, and the White Hart and the George Tavern were absolutely in the hands of the rioters, the proprietors and householders having been compelled to flee, in order to save their lives. The whole affair, in fact, was assuming the most sinister proportions.

The Remove had no exact knowledge of all this.

They were aware that the rioting had become serious, but they still thought that it was mainly directed against themselves. And all the boys had a feeling that as soon as they got to St. Frank's, the trouble would die completely down.

And, triumphantly, the Remove emerged from the secret tunnel behind the junior pavilion, and collected on Little Side in double columns. And at last the whole Remove had come out into the open.

"March!" came the command.

And, in perfect, order, the conquering Remove went forward towards the Triangle. There was no mistake about the victory. It was complete in every detail. Smith had been smashed—and he had been beaten.

But the quarrel had spread, and now that the Remove's affair was over, a situation of far greater gravity had arisen.

There were many shouts in the Triangle as the columns of juniors were observed marching.

"Hurrah!"

"Here comes the Remove!"

"Oh, thank goodness!"

"They're all safe and sound! Give 'em another cheer!"

"Hurrah!"

And the Remove received a great welcome as it entered the Triangle. The Third nearly went off its head with excitement, and even the Fifth cheered to the echo. Many of the Sixth Form fellows were looking on, too—glad enough that the end of the rebellion had come.

"It's all right, you chaps!" shouted Handforth. "Smith's given in, and he's agreed to all our terms!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Nipper—he's the fellow who worked it!"

"Yes, rather!"

"You'd better save your cheering for a bit!" I shouted grimly, trying to make myself heard. "This affair isn't over yet—not by a long way! Smith has given in, but his men are out of control! The best thing we can do is to make active preparations to defend the school!"

"Defend the school!" shouted Morrow, of the Sixth.

"Yes—these rioters may attempt to storm St. Frank's!" I replied.

The cheering soon died down when it was realised that St. Frank's itself was in a position of danger. The Remove had won the day—the barring-out was over—but how was this riot to end?

Even while we were all in the Triangle, the rioters were becoming more and more violent. And it would not be long before the actual disaster happened. For, in very truth, the whole of St. Frank's would soon find itself fighting desperately to save the old school from destruction!

THE END.

The final story of this magnificent series, in which the whole school combines to fight for its existence against Smith's ruffians, will appear next week under the title of

"FIGHTING FOR ST. FRANK'S!"



MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

By the Author of our St Frank's Stories.



No. 18. WINTER WEATHER IN NEW YORK.

WE who live in the British Isles are rather apt to grumble at our weather conditions, and commiserate with one another on the fact that we have the worst climate in the world.

Londoners are particularly guilty in this respect—little realising that our weather, in spite of its vagaries, is perhaps the best of all. We may get frequent changes, we may have bitter east winds, we may have drizzle, but we very seldom get acute extremes.

In New York the general public appears to have the impression that London is fog-bound from January to December, year in and year out, and the Americans one meets over there sympathise with the Londoner for having such a terrible climate. But this is only because they don't know London.

Winter in New York undoubtedly has its attractive side, for many of the days are brilliantly sunny, with a clear, crisp air, and a nip in the atmosphere that makes life feel good. Unfortunately, there are other days as well.

I venture to suggest that New York runs London a very close second when it comes to rapid climatic changes, and the weather's antics in a single day in the great American metropolis are sometimes extremely acrobatic.

I have known it to be freezingly cold in the early morning, with a clear turquoise sky; cloudy at noon, with a muggy temperature; and snowing frantically by tea-time, smothering the streets, with a wet, slushy mass of melting snow that forms a sodden carpet for the feet. And by supper-time rain will be coming down in torrents. And all this within the space of twelve hours! Even London would find it hard to beat such conditions as these.

In fairness, however, I must admit that it frequently remains clear and sunny for days on end in New York during the winter months. And then, perhaps, there will be a whole day of snow. This is all very nice for the children, with their hundreds of sledges, but it is very trying for the normal business of the city.

I have been told that the winter was unusually mild at the period of my stay, so it must not be imagined that I am giving an impression of an average New York winter. According to my own observations, the weather was by no means severe, even the blizzards being comparatively innocuous.

These blinding snowstorms sweep over the city, disorganise street car and electric train traffic for a short period, and leave the roads swamped in masses of melting snow that, sooner or later, turn to the most atrocious slush I have ever had the misfortune to wade in.

Goloshes are an absolute necessity in New York during the winter-time. To venture out without these "rubbers" covering your foot-gear is to take an imminent risk of getting wet feet. For you never know what's going to happen. Everybody in New York wears goloshes in winter-time—even the newsboys.

When a cold snap arrives, you are left in no doubt that it is there. The wind comes shooting across the Hudson, and the pedestrian on such an open thoroughfare as Riverside Drive is knocked almost breathless by the acute cold and the buffeting wind. And if snow happens to be falling during one of these periods, it descends in the finest of crystal sprays—not in flakes, but in infinitesimal particles, to alight on one's coat like tiny fragments of broken glass—spiky little icicles that sting the face severely. And this snow lies upon the ground like so much white powder, perfectly dry and feathery.

I have ridden several miles on the top of an omnibus during one of these snowstorms, and I have painful recollections of nearly falling down the steps when attempting to get off, being so cramped with cold that almost all feeling had temporarily deserted my limbs.

One wonderful feature of New York's winter is the almost total absence of smoke. And this is due to the fact that the city authorities will only allow anthracite coal to be used. It is a scheme which London would be very wise to copy.

PHIPPS WRITES AN APPRECIATION OF "THE YOUNG MASTER!"

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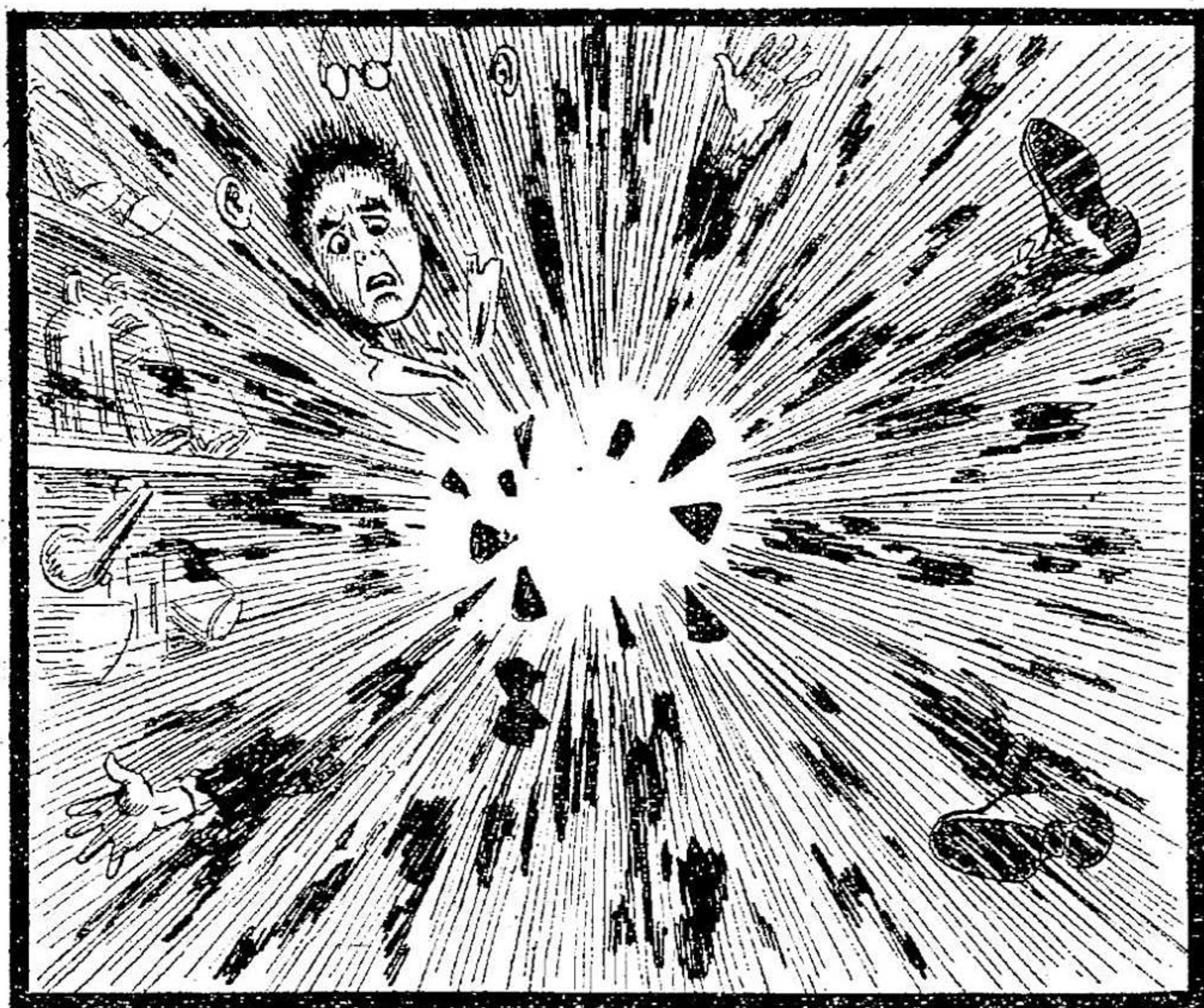


St. Frank's Magazine



FAMILIAR PHRASES FROM FICTION

As Seen By Our Artist

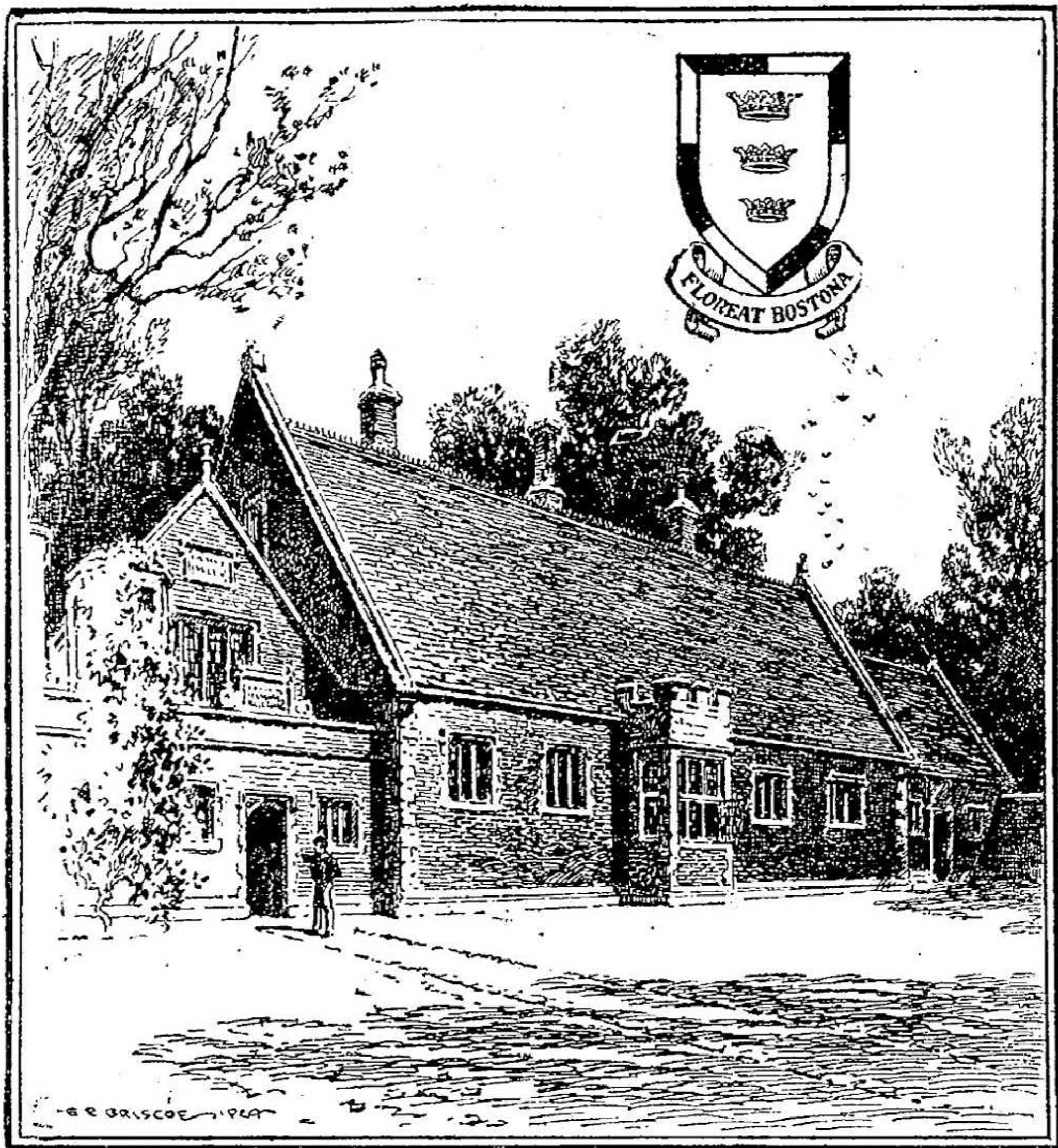


"HE WENT ALL TO PIECES!"

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

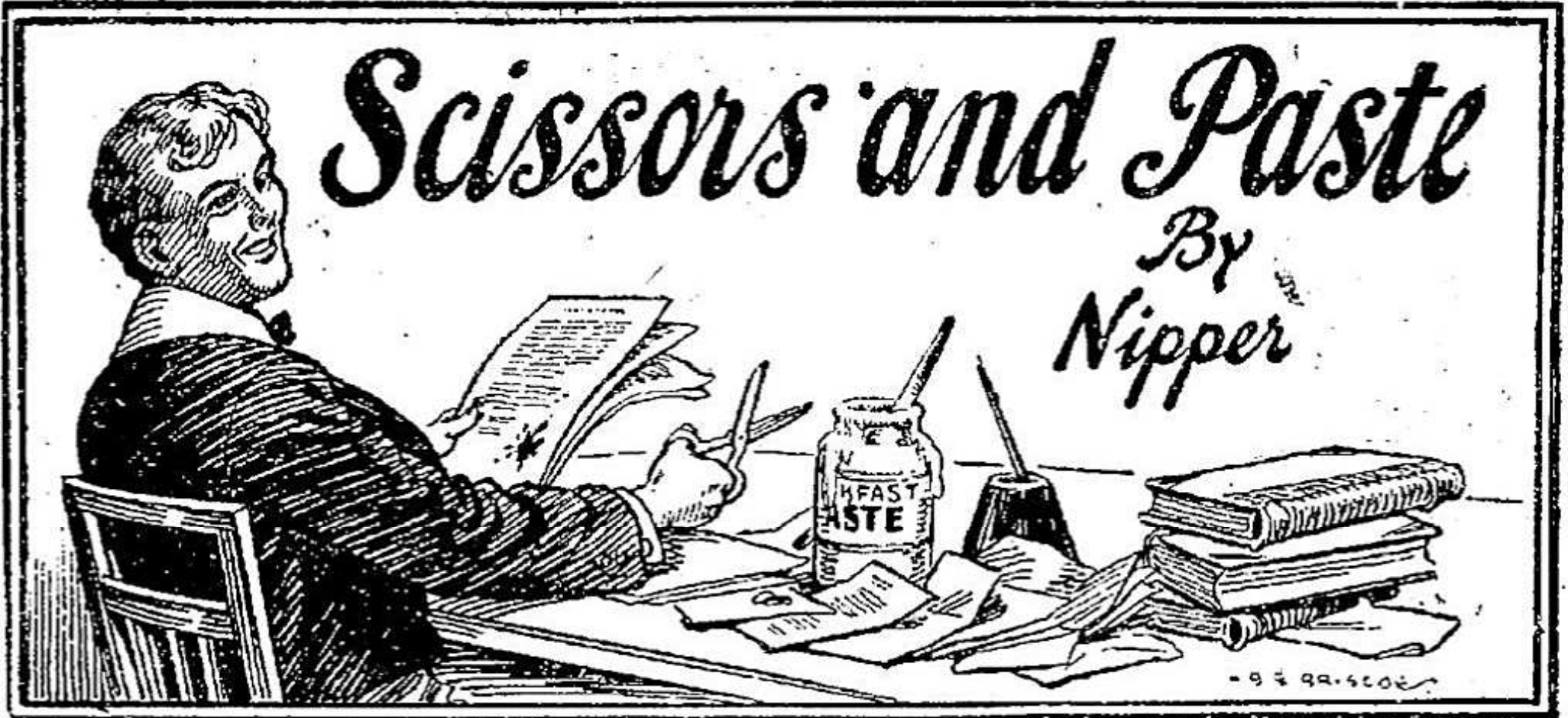
No. 22. BOSTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL.



Boston Grammar School was founded in 1327 by the Guilds, but the building shown in the sketch was erected in 1567. About the courtyard are science laboratories, lecture-rooms, etc. The laboratories are said to be the best equipped in the county. Other buildings include manual workshops and drawing-rooms. Accommodation is provided for just over 200 boys, who are divided into three houses. The school was sup-

pressed in 1547 by the Council of Edward VI., when the possessions of the Guilds were seized. In 1554 Philip and Mary gave the endowment to the Corporation on trust. The school motto is "Floreat Bostona," which is also the title of the school song.

(I am indebted to a reader for the above particulars, and I have accordingly presented him with the original sketch of his school, signed by the artist.—Ed.)



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

My Dear Chums,—With the approach of Easter, the longer evenings, and finer weather, one's thoughts naturally respond to the call of the open air. Bikes that have remained idle for months in their sheds, rusting for want of use, are brought out into the sunlight to be overhauled. The fortunate possessors of motor-bikes find their enthusiasm for the road returning as they set to, trying to make the sparking-plug spark at the right moment. Somehow, one can spend hours dismantling a bike on a sunny morning, wrestling with nuts, chains, and gears, rubbing, cleaning, and polishing. No one ever thinks of doing it on a wet day, when he can't ride the old jigger.

HANDY'S MOTOR-BIKE TRIP.

I hear that our friend Handforth intends to take his Study chums for a motor-bike trip this Easter. An acquaintance of his is lending the leader of Study D a motor-bike and side-car, which is alleged to fulfil every requirement as regards speed. You will observe that I stated the owner of the motor-bike to be an acquaintance of Handy's. Had he known our reckless Removeite as well as we know him, he would certainly have thought twice about entrusting his machine to such a hopeless ass. Neither Church nor McClure seem very keen on this proposed trip, but since they are spending the Easter holidays with their leader, they cannot very well get out of it. Whichever of them survives has promised to write an account of the trip for the "Mag." As it is sure to be amusing, I hope you will all look out for Handy's Easter adventures on a motor-bike, which will appear in our Easter number.

HOW WILL YOU SPEND EASTER?

There are many ways of spending Easter other than speeding along the open high-

way. We are not all road-hogs, and in these days motoring on a fine Bank Holiday or week-end is no joke, when it means following a procession—crawling at fifteen miles an hour for the best part of a journey. Some of you will probably find greater enjoyment on the river, sailing or sculling. Then there are those who like to explore the countryside on foot. To my mind, this is one of the best ways of spending a short holiday. It is inexpensive, and you can easily get off the beaten track and enjoy roaming over hills and valleys or through shady woods, where the motorist cannot go. I shall be pleased to hear how you, my chums, spend your Easter holidays, and what adventures come your way. The most interesting accounts I may publish in the "Mag." for the benefit of your fellow-readers.

THE POSITION AT ST. FRANK'S.

Most schools will be breaking up for the Easter holidays this week. St. Frank's, unfortunately, is faced with the dreadful possibility of breaking up altogether. In another week we shall know the worst, for whatever happens, the struggle cannot go on over the holidays. Mr. Smith knows this, and it is certain that Cyclone Smith will make one more desperate attempt to end the war. In the ordinary course of events, our Easter number would be coming out next week. But since the school will not be able to go on holiday until Mr. Smith has surrendered, I have postponed the Easter number for one week. By that time, I hope we shall be able to return to our homes jubilant with victory against one of the greatest enemies St. Frank's has ever known.

"Long Live St. Frank's and the Good Old 'Mag!'" is the battle-cry for the coming struggle, and the earnest wish of

Your faithful chum,

NIPPER.



Correspondence Answered by Uncle Edward

IRENE MANNERS: I was delighted to receive your letter of criticism regarding the Magazine, and nothing gives me greater pleasure than to give some brief replies to the points you raise. Upon the whole, I heartily agree with your judgment, and, in fact, I think you are jolly sensible in everything you say. Knowing you personally, as I do, I couldn't imagine you being anything else. As a rule, girls are a bit funny in their ideas, but you are a great and wonderful exception to this rule, and if I had space, I would reply to you at some length. But this page is conducted for the benefit of general readers, and so I can only give the very briefest possible answers. I am sure you will understand my difficulty, and forgive me if I seem at all short. Your first criticism is not quite in keeping with my own ideas, and I am very sorry about this. Your liking for the E. Sopp's Fables seems unaccountable to me, because I have always regarded these contributions as sheer drivel. But since getting your letter, I have read several of them over again, and I must now admit that I can see a trace of real humour in them. After all, if you think they are funny, there's no doubt that they must be funny. In future I shall read the Fable regularly, and enjoy it all the more because I know that you are reading it, too. I must apologise for being compelled to cut this reply short, for I have a host of other letters to deal with for this issue. I am extremely gratified by what you say regarding the last Trackett Grim story. I don't quite follow you when you say that the plots sometimes appear to be just a tiny bit far-fetched, for I have always considered that these particular stories are planned out with masterly skill. I happen to know the author personally, and although he is a very modest chap, he naturally feels proud of himself for being the creator of this astounding character. You can't tell how gratified I am that you like my yarns so much. Space com-

pels me to make this reply very short and snappy, so I will now turn to the other points in your charming letter. Yes, I quite agree with you that the articles by Willy Handforth are very cheeky, but when you say that Willy is beautifully refreshing in his frankness, I feel compelled to put you right on this matter. Unfortunately, I happen to know this contributor fairly well, and, of course, he knows me. ~~But~~ as this page is conducted by "Uncle Edward," it would hardly be wise for me to reveal my identity. I would like to tell you that my young brother is the cheekiest kid in the whole school, and if I were the Editor of this Magazine I would kick him out of the office as soon as ever he dared to put his nose inside the door. You can't have any idea how full of nerve that young fathead is. And now I will turn to your query regarding the other contributions. Yes, the Painful Parodies may stop for a bit, but they will appear at different intervals. They're rotten, of course, as you know. The wonderful Trackett Grim stories will always appear. I hope this curtailed reply will be sufficient, and I must now postpone my complete answer to your letter till next week, when I may not have quite such a big batch of other replies to attend to. Again, please let me thank you for your lovely letter.

TIMOTHY ARMSTRONG: Your question is silly. I shan't bother to answer it.

WILSON OF THE SIXTH: Sorry, but space limited. Glad to hear you like the Mag. so much, and I'll reply to your appreciation another time.

BUSTER BOOTS: No space left, so can't reply.

ARCHIE GLENTHORNE: How do I know what tie to wear with a mauve suit?

FATTY LITTLE: Your letter is disgusting. You're a glutton.

(Thirty-five other replies held over until next week—no space here.)

UNCLE EDWARD.



HUNCH-BACKED HIRAM, THE HOUNDSDITCH HUSTLER!

Being the Amazing Adventures of Trackett Grim, the Wonder Detective.

BY

ED. O. HANDFORTH.

AN IMPORTANT VISITOR.

TRACKETT GRIM, attired in an old silk dressing-gown, sat in his huge arm-chair, and puffed at his blackened briar fiercely.

He seemed to be quite oblivious of the fact that he was filling his consulting-room at Baker's Inn Road with choking, poisonous fumes; but Splinter was painfully aware of it. He knew, to his cost, that the famous criminal detective smoked a variety of tobacco which was so strong and rank that it had to be specially grown for him.

Splinter looked at his master in some alarm.

"What is the matter, sir?" he asked, holding his throat and choking breathlessly. "Are—are you trying to suffocate the pair of us?"

"It is nothing, Splinter—nothing!" said Trackett Grim, with a wave of his hand. "This inactivity is causing my mighty brain to become stagnated, and I am merely stimulating it by means of tobacco! We have had no cases to investigate for four and a half hours, and I am becoming prostrated with inertia. Ah! A knock at the door, my lad! Scoot off and admit the client!"

Splinter returned almost at once, bearing a card. Trackett Grim snatched it out of his assistant's grasp with one hand, while with the other he took his pipe from his lips, and laid it upon the table. Then he gave a nod of satisfaction.

"Mr. Hunt M. Quick, Chief Customs Officer, Croydon Aerodrome," he read briskly. "An important personage, Splinter! No doubt he has sought this interview for the purpose of soliciting my aid in a matter of vital consequence—"

"Exactly, Mr. Grim—you have summed up the matter in a nutshell!" said Mr. Hunt M. Quick, entering the consulting-room with a rush. "By George! I am in a terrible predicament! I am in a most ghastly mess, in fact!"

Trackett Grim nodded, and stared at the newcomer keenly.

"Your business is connected with a very decided flaw in your Croydon searching system, eh?" he said hoarsely. "Precious stones are being smuggled through?"

Mr. Hunt M. Quick looked at the celebrated criminal detective with starting eyes.

"Yes, you are right, Mr. Grim!" he gasped. "But how the thump did you know? Your perceptive powers are staggering—truly stupendous!"

Trackett Grim smiled.

"Quite a simple deduction on my part, my dear sir!" he said modestly. "As a matter of fact, the information is jotted down upon the back of your card: 'Consult Trackett Grim regarding diamond leakage!'"

Mr. Quick nodded.

"Yes—yes! I had forgotten!" he exclaimed. "But no matter. I want you to investigate on behalf of the Customs authorities, Mr. Grim. Scotland Yard informs me that a large number of stolen diamonds are being smuggled into this country from Kimberley, and they affirm that the stones are being brought direct by the air liners. I have instituted the most vigorous search of all passengers and luggage arriving at Croydon, but I cannot trace the thief. It is a rotten position for me, Mr. Grim, and I stand in imminent danger of getting the order of the boot! Will you help me—will you undertake to find the miscreants who are carrying on this nefarious traffic?"

Trackett Grim nodded, and peeled off his dressing-gown.

"Splinter and I will accompany you to Croydon at once, Mr. Quick!" he said crisply. "You have brought me a problem at a moment when I was suffering from acute ennui, and the stimulating effect to my intellect has been enormous! Your troubles are all over—for you can bet your shirt that I will apprehend the diamond smugglers without a second's delay!"

THE ARRIVAL OF MR. LOTTA LIVESTOCK.

Mr. Hunt M. Quick jumped from Trackett Grim's racing car as it pulled up at the Croydon Aerodrome a few minutes later. As he did so an official rushed up to him and thrust a piece of flimsy paper into his hand.

The Customs officer read it at a glance, and then turned a pale face to the famous incriminator—who alighted from his car at the same second.

"Great pip, Mr. Grim!" he gasped frantically. "This is a wireless message from Kimberley! It says that £50,000 worth of diamonds have been stolen, and are now on their way across! They will arrive on the next air liner—which is due at any moment!"

Trackett Grim nodded in a satisfied manner.

"Good business, Mr. Quick!" he muttered. "We can get to work sooner than I anticipated! Come—take me to a spot from where I can obtain a good view of the machine when it arrives."

Mr. Quick nodded, and escorted Trackett Grim and Splinter to a large enclosure. Aeroplanes were to be seen in all directions—some of them being prepared for immediate departure for all parts of the world.

The giant air liner from Kimberley hove in sight almost at once, and it rushed earth-

wards at an appalling speed. But it landed a few seconds later with scarcely a bump, and instantly Trackett Grim and Splinter took up their position so that they could see everything clearly.

The great criminal detective's super-keen gaze soon spotted a hunch-backed individual climbing from the saloon of the plane, and his eyes glinted strangely as he turned to Mr. Hunt M. Quick.

"Tell me—have you seen that merchant before?" he asked rapidly, indicating the hunch-backed man with a nod.

The Customs officer nodded in return.

"Yes, Mr. Grim," he replied. "That gentleman is Mr. Lotta Livestock, the famous animal importer of London. He is a regular traveller on the air liner, and pays enormous sums in freight charges to the company for bringing his priceless specimens to England."

Trackett Grim listened absently, and watched the various passengers disembarking. Several of them, after having their luggage inspected by the Customs, had already departed in taxicabs, and the detective's eyes burned flamingly as he saw Mr. Lotta Livestock superintending the removal of his own baggage from the aeroplane.

The chief item was a cage containing two monkeys, and this—after passing through the hands of the Customs people—was hoisted into a taxi in readiness for departure.

Trackett Grim at this moment hurried off, and disappeared among the motley crowd which thronged the air station, with Splinter close at his heels.

Two minutes later Mr. Lotta Livestock entered the taxi, and leaned out of the window, curtly ordering the driver to take him to his residence in Houndsditch. The cab gave a jerk, and was soon speeding away on its long journey to the metropolis.

Strangely enough, Splinter was comfortably seated upon the luggage grid at the rear of the vehicle, but there was no sign of Trackett Grim.

TRACKETT GRIM SCORES.

The taxi, after speeding along for what seemed an endless time, turned off Westminster Bridge and swung into Whitehall, en route for its destination. But instead of proceeding into Trafalgar Square, the cab suddenly swerved across the road to the right.

This obviously did not suit Mr. Lotta Livestock, for he leaned out of the window and commenced yelling at the driver in a frantic manner, waving his arms furiously at the same time.



Splinter returned almost at once, bearing a card. Trackett Grim snatched it out of his assistant's grasp.

"You blithering dunderhead!" he raved angrily. "Houndsditch I told you—not Scotland Yard!"

The cabman grinned.

"It's all right, guv'nor—I've got a little call to make 'ere!" he said.

Mr. Lotta Livestock snorted.

"Call he hanged!" he fumed. "I won't allow it—do you hear? Drive me to Houndsditch at once, confound you!"

But the taxi-driver took no notice of him, and piloted his vehicle straight to the entrance to the famous police headquarters, against the steps of which he brought it to a standstill. Then the cabman hopped from his seat, and walked round to open the door for his "fare" to alight.

As he did so Mr. Lotta Livestock gave vent to a bellow of fury, and his eyes almost dropped from their sockets as he beheld the man who had driven him from Croydon.

"Trackett Grim!" he roared, in a voice of thunder. "What does this mean, eh?"

"I'll explain all that in the presence of Sir Coppem Sharp!" said the great detective curtly. "Follow me to his office at once!"

Trackett Grim instructed a couple of constables to bring the luggage off the cab, and within ten seconds he took his prisoner before the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, with Splinter bringing up the rear. Sir Coppem was a sharp-featured man with iron-grey hair and a neat uniform, and he possessed a pair of eyes which glued themselves to everything they touched.

"Here is your prisoner, Sir Coppem!" said Trackett Grim dramatically—"the man who has been smuggling diamonds from Kimberley! I have caught him with the goods! He is masquerading as Mr. Lotta Livestock, but he is really the criminal known as Hunch-backed Hiram, the Houndsditch Hustler! I recognised him instantly!"

Sir Coppem Sharp staggered back.

"Great pip! This is a good day's work, Mr. Grim!" he exclaimed delightedly. "You have accomplished wonders, and you are deserving of the greatest praise! Tell me—where are the diamonds hidden?"

For answer Trackett Grim turned to the monkey cage, and pointed. The cage contained two monkeys—one of them obviously a wild thing. The other appeared to be strangely tame, and Trackett Grim, without hesitation, opened the door and grasped the creature firmly.

A second later he had pulled off the monkey's outer skin, and revealed the astounding fact that the interior was fitted with hundreds of tiny pockets—each containing a valuable diamond! The animal had



The detective's eyes burned flamingly as he saw Mr. Lotta Livestock superintending the removal of his own baggage from the aeroplane.

been doped, and had then been encased in the false skin, thus making the creature into a living safe deposit!

For weeks the smuggling had been going on, unsuspected and undetected. But Trackett Grim, by his extraordinary methods and uncanny powers, had discovered the dodge in a trice. Now he had brought Hunch-backed Hiram to book, thus ending his diamond-smuggling career for ever.

The case was a tremendous feather in Trackett Grim's cap, and a few days later he received a ring—set with a terrific diamond—from the grateful mine-owners in Kimberley. It bore the inscription: "To the King of Detectives, from a Few of his Grateful Subjects."

And Trackett Grim prizes the ring above all his other possessions; but this, no doubt, is on account of the fact that it is worth about twenty thousand quid!

THE END.

We wish to express our admiration for the unknown hero who startled the school in Big Hall last week. It was very plucky of him to shout, "Yes, we have no bananas," when the vegetarian crank from London addressed the school on the subject of fruit as a daily item of diet.



E. Sopp's Fables

By
Edgar Sopp of the Fifth

No. 19. The Fable of the Black Eye, the Impo., and the Letter.

IT chanced that a certain Youth named Armstrong was not all that his name Implied, for his arm was not so strong as it might have been. And this Youth was foolish enough to make certain Sarcastic and Personal remarks concerning the features of a war-like citizen who went by the name of Handforth. And, behold, Handforth was more aptly named, since he forthwith proceeded to Hand Forth a vast and Greatly Assorted collection of punches. And Armstrong thereupon beheld

STARS IN COUNTLESS MYRIADS.

And he was not only smote hip and thigh, but in various other portions of his anatomy, even including the Left Eye, and the offside ear. And in the midst of the Gory Battle it befel that the Housemaster appeared upon the scene. And it came to pass that Handforth was commanded to write no less than five hundred lines for the offence of fighting, Armstrong being let off, having Obviously been punished more than enough. And, lo, Handforth waxed wrath when he learned that he would Have To stay in for the whole afternoon, and write his lines instead of joining

THE MERRY THRONG WITHOUT.

And Armstrong, in the bitterness of his soul, and Suffering Greatly from his hurts, wandered into his own Sanctum, and there proceeded to evolve a Plot of the most Fiendish Malice. In his opinion, the infliction of a mere impo. was all too light for the warlike Handforth, Armstrong considering that something with boiling oil in it would not even Meet the Case. However, his plan was sufficiently Drastic. It happened that Armstrong had recently discovered the secret of manufacturing

A WONDROUS INK.

And this Ink, it must be recorded, had properties of the Most Remarkable character. For, lo, when used in the Ordinary Way it

was in no wise different from the Common or Garden blue-black of popular favour. But, behold, after the lapse of One Brief Hour, the writing left by this ink became faded, and Even Died out from the paper altogether, leaving nothing but a blank. And Armstrong prepared himself with a pot of

THIS NEFARIOUS FLUID.

And forthwith he hied himself to that apartment which was known throughout the land as the Form-room. And here did he make a Villainous Substitution, placing the pot of Dud Ink in Handforth's desk, and removing the Perfectly Honest blue-black which reposed there. And it came to pass that Handforth wandered sadly into the Form-room shortly afterwards, and Sat Heavily down to perform

HIS UNCONGENIAL TASK.

And as he commenced writing his Five Hundred Lines a Face appeared at the Window, and Armstrong chuckled softly to himself, and murmured some remark to the effect that it served the Rotter Right. And, all unconscious of the Plot, Handforth wrote his lines Steadily and with care. He was Fortunate Enough to possess the Curious Sensation which is known far and wide as

THAT KRUSCHEN FEELING.

And so he gingered up his work; and, behold, the five hundred lines were completed in Record Time. And, with joy in his heart, Handforth folded up the many pages of paper, placed them in his Desk, and sallied forth to enjoy the liberty which he had So Richly earned. He chanced upon a fellow-countryman named Griffiths, who it appeared, was searching for Armstrong, these two being Pals. He made inquiries of Handforth, who could give him no satisfaction, and Griffiths was Greatly Upset. He had failed in his quest, and it transpired that he was in the Dickens of a Hurry. So he dashed into the Form-room, and dipped

the first pen he saw in the first Inkpot. And he quickly wrote to Armstrong

A MESSAGE OF MUCH IMPORT.

And this he left in a place of Much Prominence in the lobby, so that Armstrong should see it when he chanced to Wander By. And after tea was over, Handforth went proudly to the Housemaster's study, and handed in his lines with full and Complete Confidence. And his consternation was complete when the Housemaster turned to him and Angrily demanded to know what the Idea Was. For, behold, every page of the im-po.

WAS ABSOLUTELY BLANK.

And Handforth was submitted to a severe Dressing Down; he was caned for impertinence, and the im-po. was forthwith doubled. And Handforth went out bewildered, and He Emerged under the sky, and went forth raging into the Wilderness, just to Blow off Steam. But all his attempts at a solution were futile, and he made his Head Ache in trying to elucidate the mystery—although, forsooth, this youth Was Famed as

A GREAT ELUCIDATOR.

And, later on that evening, Griffiths returned, looking Pleased and Happy. He sought out Armstrong, and asked him why, in the name of all that was Potty, he hadn't come. And Armstrong wanted to know what He Meant, and was informed that a message Had Been left for him. And, lo, Armstrong remembered some Puzzled Fellows in the lobby discoursing upon a Blank Sheet of paper and a blank envelope, which Had Been found in a prominent position. And as Armstrong heard of this, he Changed Colour, and turned

A KIND OF SICKLY GREEN.

And it transpired that Griffiths had left a pressing invitation to a Most Gorgeous feed in Bannington, at the home of a mutual friend, with a Free Seat at the Pictures to follow. And Armstrong learned how his chum had written that message in the Class-room, and he recognised His Own handiwork, for Griffiths had used the Vanishing Ink! Thus did his mean and paltry trick Recoil upon his own head, for it had Cost Him no less than the Best Feed of the term, and an Evening at the Cinema!

MORAL: MEAN TRICKS ARE LIABLE TO COME BACK HOME TO ROOST!

A BELLOW— FROM FELLOWE

From Clarence, the Sage—
To Balance the Page.

Dear Editor,

I'd like to say a few things before my inspiration wings. Some chaps have said my rhymes are all behind the times, and just because of this I've given them a miss. But don't think that I've stopped them because for once or twice I've dropped them. It's absolutely not a fact that I'm getting badly whacked. I wish to make a strong protest, and, if you like, I'll stand a test.

It's nothing else but rot, and lots of chaps are off their dot, to say that I am drying up, and what I need is tying up. If readers do not like my verses, there's no need for all these curses.

I am writing this to mention that it is my strict intention to get at work without delay upon some lively parodies gay. I'll turn them in quite promptly now, so don't start kicking up a row. For other chaps it is so easy to say that all my rhymes are wheezy, but if they tried to write the things, they'd find some snags and p'raps some stings. For rhyming is a rotten game, and words won't always come the same.

But still I want to see my verses in the "Mag.," because I rather like the dear old rag. And after this you can promise all your readers that instead of silly yarns that feed us they'll have some parodies so smart that they'll learn 'em all by heart. Please don't think that I am boasting, but having just received this roasting, it's up to me to put things right, and put an end to all this blight.

That's all I've got to say, so now I'll shove my pen away, and finish up these lines so mellow, and conclude,

Yours truly,

CLARENCE FELLOWE.

LOOK NEXT WEEK

for announcement of a

NOVEL COMPETITION IN THE MAG!

It is something absolutely new.



The Best Styles for Centres.

BEFORE I start on this week's pow-wow, I should like to express my thanks to all those readers who have written to the editor expressing their appreciation of this feature, and who hope that it will continue to grace the Mag. for some time to come. I am doing my best to make it bright and as interesting as possible, and it is my earnest desire to help you.

I sincerely hope that you are following out the instructions I give you here in your play. Of course, you understand that all I tell you here is purely theoretical, and if you study it from now to Doomsday without striving to put it into practice in your games, it will do you no earthly amount of good. Practise makes perfect they say, and only by indulging in an much practise as you can get, can you hope to become proficient.

The Real Centre.

Very well, then. That's that, to use an expression which is not mine, but which seems to fit in very well here. And now, having broken the ice again, we'll pick up the thread of instruction where we left it last week and resume our discussion upon centre-forwards. I told you then that there were two styles of centre-forward play, and explained one at length. This week we'll deal with the other.

That other is the centre-forward who makes it his duty to mix with his forwards and help to make openings for them, as well as to turn to account openings made for him by them. In junior football this style of forward is usually much more effective than the forward who keeps well up the field and just outside all the time. Except for goal-scoring purposes, that other centre is, to all intents and purposes, not a member of the attacking line at all, and

lends very little assistance in the real work of the game. He is, as I said last week, purely and simply a goal-scoring machine.

Brains as well as Brawn.

The first-named centre-forward has obviously advantages over his brother who prefers the lying-up style. He holds the line together, actively directs the attack, and by feeding his inside men, encourages them to feed him. He is cleverer, too, to my way of thinking, and if you will study the comparison between him and the other centre-forward for a moment you will agree with me. He **MUST** be cleverer, for he has so much more work to do, and to do it skilfully he must use his brains every bit as much as his feet.

For instance, it will often fall to his lot during the course of a game to draw the opposition on himself so that he might pass the ball to another man who is better placed to score than himself. Success or failure depends upon his efforts to part with the ball at the right moments; he must be an expert dribbler, and a quick snatcher of passes, and must use judgment in distributing the ball.

I have noticed one danger, however, that this type of centre-forward is all too liable to fall into. That is, that on occasions he is rather prone to indulge in too much fancy work, which, while unnecessary, is dangerous. The whole tendency of modern football is to cut out the fancy-pattern stunts and bang straight for goal every time, and the forward who does this is more likely to meet with success than the man who holds on to the leather for an unduly long period simply to indulge in his favourite passion for pretty dribbling and swerving. And a man who is a good dribbler and knows it, is often tempted to do this.

Watch your Passing.

Get that out of your mind. Dribbling is necessary to the game, of course, but cut it down to a minimum, and only indulge in it when it is absolutely necessary.

Watch your passing. There is more in passing than I have ever mentioned or can mention here—things which will only come to you with experience and practice. Watch particularly the man to whom you intend to pass, and before putting the ball over to him make sure that he is in a good position to receive it. It is no earthly good passing to a man who is marked and who might be robbed immediately upon receiving your pass.

If, however, you see that the man to whom you intend to pass is marked, you must draw his opponent to yourself, as I explained. The best way to do this is to attract his attention by dribbling the leather towards him, and, having distracted his attention, at the right moment slip the

ball nearly to your next man. This sounds easier on paper than it will probably prove in practice, I know, and everything depends, as I have just said, upon your judgment and timing. You must teach your forward to back you up in this method of attack by placing themselves in such positions that they will always be ready to make use of the openings you make for them.

And this closes my immediate remarks on centre-forwards, though I shall have something more to say about them later on. Next week I hope to deal with the duties of the inside man, and to give a few hints to inside forwards who attend these pow-wows, that may be valuable to them in their games. Meantime, if any of you have any questions you would like to ask, or any knotty sporting problems you would like me to clear up for you, don't forget that I am always at your service, and that a letter addressed to the Editor of this paper will always find me.

Schoolboy Adventure on a Desert Island!

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THE YOUNG MASTER

An Appreciation

∴ By JAMES PHIPPS ∴

IT'S very good of you I'm sure, sir, to ask me to write a word or two for the St. Frank's Magazine. I am pleased to be able to oblige. But I have never had much practice in the matter of writing.

I have had many years in the service of various gentlemen, and the number of things they would ask you to do was amazing. I have stuck stamps on letters, rolled the lawn and practically everything else one time or another except nurse the baby.

And that in addition to my ordinary duties, sir. But I have never before been called upon to put pen to paper. So I hope you will excuse me if my phrases are not those to which you are accustomed.

As to the young master, I may say he has given me every satisfaction. Every satisfaction, sir. He had caused me many a moment of anxiety, but never, you will understand, any real trouble.

Of course young gents have their ways. All of them have their ways. You must humour them. You must be firm but respectful, sir, and the same has always been my rule since I first became a gentleman's gentleman.

As young gents go the young master is very fair, sir. Very fair. He has his little peccoliarities. But so have we all if you will allow me to say so.

I might observe that the one thing which has caused me most trouble in the past is the young master's habit of over-sleeping. If I may take the liberty of calling him so, I should characterise Master Archie as a heavy sleeper. No offence of course, sir.

But he does like to lie abed in a manner that to my way of thinking is too much for a young gentleman. Not that I mind the trouble of waking him. But so much sleep I consider militates against the healthy functioning of the body.

Not that I am a medical man to say so of course, sir. But I have had considerable experience of these matters one way and another.

I consider too that the young master would be better advised to take up more

pastimes requiring physical exercise. Football, cricket, swimming and the like if I may be so bold as to remark.

We gentlemen from below stairs see more than what some people would imagine, sir, and it has been remarked more than once in my hearing that Master Archie would be all the better for a bit more sporting exercise.

But it is not my place to criticise. On the whole I regard the young master as very fair. Very fair, sir. His temper is even and his nature frank and cheerful.

He gives very little trouble and his manners are excellent in every respect. He is generous too, with his money and many a little extra have I enjoyed at his expense if you'll pardon my mentioning it.

I am glad to see too that he does not throw his money about. It is a great temptation to a young gentleman who has more cash than he knows what to do with. A great temptation to spend it ill-advisedly.

But I must say the young master, generous though he is, takes a certain amount of care over his allowance. Quite as it should be, sir. And I say this, having had some considerable experience amongst the wealthy and leisured classes. The English Aristocracy was my meaning.

A great source of satisfaction to me is the care the young master takes with his clothes. He takes a real interest in them. And though he is quite an expert in sartorial affairs he often takes my advice.

I like to see a young gentleman take an interest in his clothes. It is a disgrace the way in which some of them go about the school.

Trousers baggy at the knees. Pockets bulging, and very often rents in the cloth and buttons missing.

I must say the young master has always treated his suits with the respect they merit, and his taste is excellent.

In conclusion perhaps I may say that I hope I shall never have to leave the service of the young master. It will be a privilege and a pleasure to remain with him throughout the course of his life. I could not on the whole, sir, wish for a better master.

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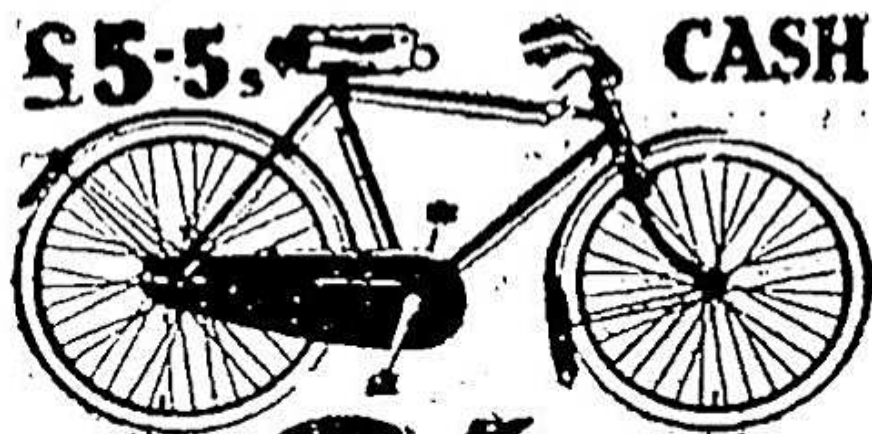
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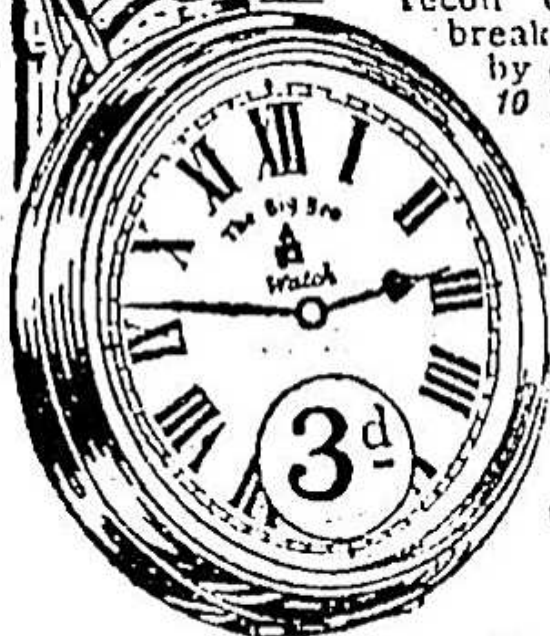
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