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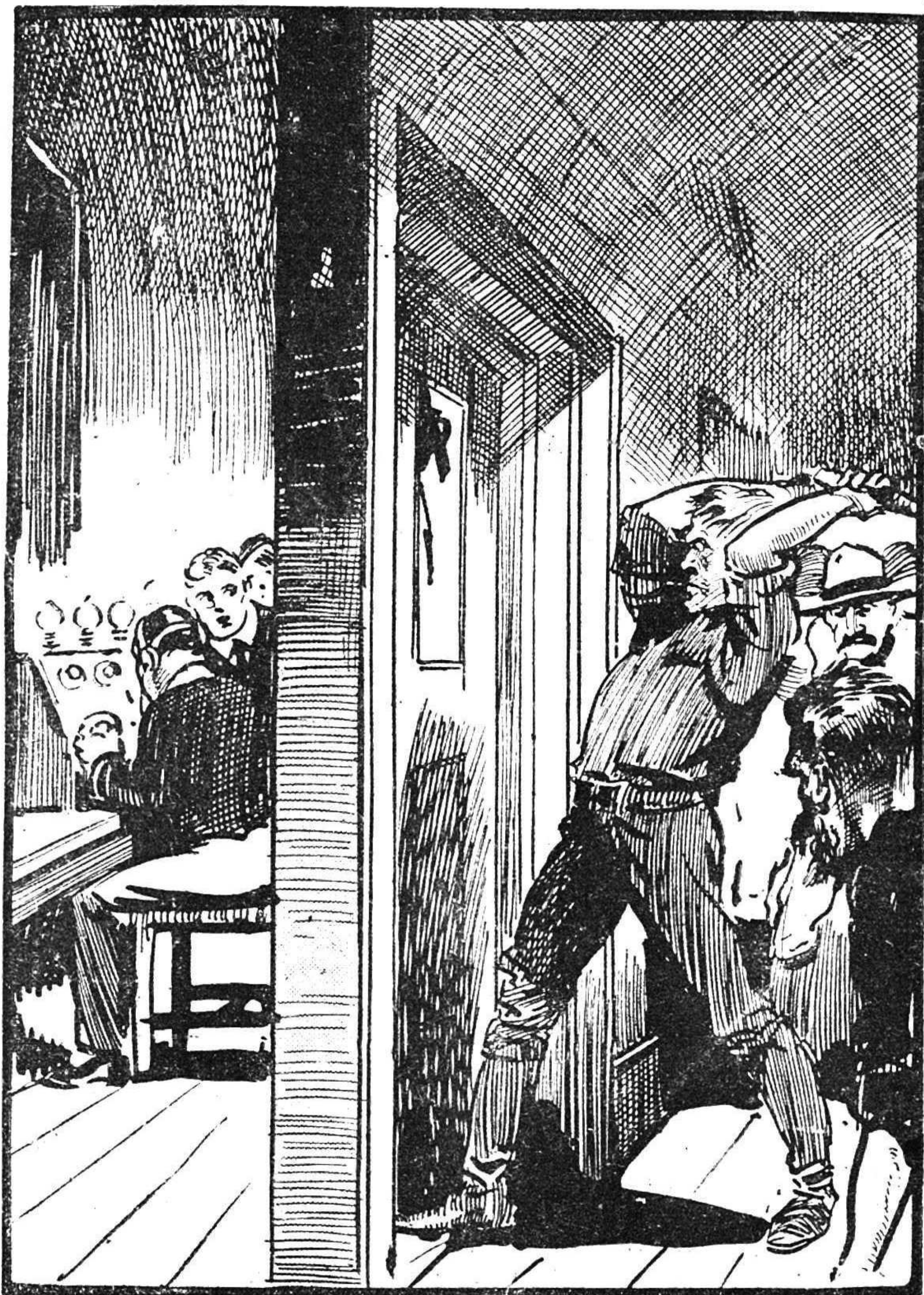
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With his brother hanging limply on his back, Johnny Onions, foot by foot, made his way across that yawning chasm.



The final scenes in the last desperate struggle for the honour of the school are described this week in :—

**FIGHTING FOR
ST. FRANK'S!**



Grimly I sat at the wireless instrument straining my ears for an answer to my frantic calls for help, for the mob were at that moment pounding at the door of the tower, and would at any second burst through.



GRAND CONCLUDING STORY
OF THE GREAT REBELLION AT
ST. FRANK'S.

The whole school has now joined the Remove to defend themselves against the violence of Cyclone Smith's unruly mob of foreign workmen who, infuriated by their recent defeat on Willard's Island, are massing together in a desperate attack on the ancient St. Frank's buildings. Mr. Smith is powerless to stop these hooligans, and should the boys fall

into their hands, the consequences will be very serious, for there is no knowing to what lengths these men will go to satiate their thirst for vengeance. The Boys of St. Frank's are fighting for their lives, and for the preservation of their fine old school from complete destruction at the hands of these ruffians. With every succeeding chapter this magnificent story rises in breathless excitement until the climax is reached, bringing the story and series to a brilliant conclusion.

THE EDITOR.

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

CHAPTER I.

ST. FRANK'S IN PERIL!

"**H**OLD him—quick!"
"Steady, Brewster, old man!"
A dozen hands went out to grasp Hal Brewster as he swayed drunkenly, and nearly fell. He was nearly on the point of exhaustion—hot, smothered in dust, and streaming with grimy perspiration. His collar had gone, and there was an ugly gash on his right temple, with blood still spreading down the side of his face.

"Good heavens! He's hard hit!" exclaimed Reggie Pitt sharply. "Quick! Bring him along to the fountain! Poor old chap! He's just about finished, by the look of it!"

Only a minute earlier, Hal Brewster, the leader of the River House School juniors, had come staggering into the old Triangle at St. Frank's, and his very appearance had alarmed the crowds of fellows who were swarming excitedly in the big, open space.

Brewster was carried swiftly to the fountain, and some of the crystal water was splashed over his face, and Pitt filled his cap, and compelled the exhausted junior to drink. He revived rapidly, and cast a frantic glance towards the gates. He pointed a quivering finger.

"Close them!" he panted huskily. "Close the gates!"

"What on earth——"

"The rioters!" gasped Brewster, desperately. "They're coming up here from the

village—hundreds of them! They're devils—absolute devils! They mean to destroy the school!"

"Oh, my goodness!"

"They wouldn't dare—those curs wouldn't come up here!"

"They're on the way, I tell you!" shouted Brewster fiercely. "Two or three hundred of them—and most of them drunk! They've nearly smashed Bellton to atoms!"

"You're hurt, old man," said Bob Christine. "That cut——"

"It's nothing—a stone hit me!" panted Brewster. "Oh, why can't you do as I say? Those fiends will be here in a minute, and then it'll be too late! We've got to fight like mad to keep them out!"

I looked at Brewster grimly, and knew well enough that he was speaking the truth. Most of the other fellows were sceptical—they could hardly believe that the situation was as desperate as the River House fellow made out. It seemed impossible that the rioters should dare to turn their attention to St. Frank's.

It was a sunny April afternoon, with an almost cloudless sky, and with Spring in the air. It seemed hardly credible that such wild scenes of violence should have developed in this peaceful setting so abruptly—all within the last hour or so, in fact.

But it was the truth.

The afternoon had been the most dramatic within the memory of the whole district.

The barring out of the St. Frank's Remove had come to an end, with the juniors completely victorious—for William K. Smith had agreed to every one of our demands.

But the multi-millionaire had waited until too late.

Recently, we had been fighting him tooth and nail, and his final bid for victory had been launched that very afternoon. He had set his hordes of men upon the Remove's stronghold—Willard's Island. And to Mr. Smith's consternation, the men had got out of hand.

They refused to obey orders, and gave vent to their evil passions for destruction. And with lightning-like rapidity the trouble had developed. Once out of control, the men behaved like maniacs.

They were a motley crew, these workmen of the William K. Smith Manufacturing Company. About a thousand strong, they were composed of Mexicans, negroes, half-breeds, and the dregs of humanity in general. Smith had imported them because they served his purpose—and now he was reaping the reward.

All his vast scheme for setting up a great factory in the district seemed about to collapse. For after this dreadful riot, it was very doubtful if he would be allowed to carry on.

And the riot had only just started. Heaven alone knew how it would end, or to what lengths the drunken men would go. With all control over them at an end, the ruffians were committing every kind of robbery and violence imaginable.

At first, the fury of the men had been directed against the Remove, for Mr. Smith had preached the gospel of hatred among his men for weeks past. But the feeling of animosity had spread rapidly. And these inflamed men were now at enmity with the whole countryside, and they were absolutely reckless and careless of what the consequences might be.

They were devoid of reason—all sense of proportion had vanished, and their one thought was for plunder and destruction. The village had suffered badly. All the public-houses had been seized and ransacked, and raw spirits distributed until the men were like fiends.

The shops, too, had been plundered, and the peaceful inhabitants had fled in terror. And now, according to Hal Brewster, the rioters were on their way to St. Frank's to commit further violence.

And yet these men were not the ruffians who had actually been set against the Remove. There was another great band of Smith's workmen on Willard's Island, bent upon smashing into the old stone building which dominated the little isle. These brutes believed that the Remove were still besieged, and were planning all sorts of horrors for the juniors when they were dragged out.

But the Remove, realising the peril, had escaped before the danger was too acute—vanishing quietly by means of an underground tunnel. That building on Willard's Island was now empty, although the rioters were unaware of this.

I had suspected, from the first, that the infuriated men would turn their attention on the school—but I had hardly believed that the danger would come from these other men—these men who had taken no actual part in the Willard's Island battle.

But it seemed that the whole army of scum had caught the fever, and St. Frank's was in peril even before I had anticipated. The position was fraught with the utmost danger, although the majority of the fellows did not suspect it.

And St. Frank's was in no case to resist.

Nelson Lee was absent, Mr. Pagett and Mr. Suncliffe had resigned, and had also gone, and Mr. Crowell was on a brief holiday. And the Headmaster, Mr. Ponsonby Small, was merely a tool of William K. Smith's, and was skulking somewhere in sheer terror—scared out of his wits by all this turmoil that Smith had created. He wasn't even in the school.

It was only this afternoon that the Fifth Form and the Third had revolted in support of the Remove. And the Remove itself had only just returned. So the disorganisation was about complete.

"There's only one thing to do!" shouted somebody. "We'll clear out while we've got the chance!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We can't fight against these heelligans!"

"Yes, let's all run for safety!"

"You cowards!" I shouted angrily. "Are you willing to give in without making a fight for it? We've got to defend St. Frank's—and do our best to save it from these maddened ruffians! If we clear out, they'll ransack the school, and burn it to the ground!"

"Nipper's right!" shouted Fenton, of the Sixth. "I am glad to see that somebody has a proper sense of loyalty to St. Frank's! Listen to me, all of you! Anybody who turns tail and runs away stamps himself as a coward!"

The captain of St. Frank's was standing on the steps of the Ancient House, and the whole Triangle was filled with seniors and juniors. In fact, the whole school was within hearing—either in the Triangle itself, or at the windows of the Ancient House and the College House. In addition, the forty odd boys of the River House School were there, as eager and excited as any of the others.

"Good old Fenton!"

"Speech—speech!"

"This is a time when we've got to stick together!" shouted Fenton, his voice carrying to all. "I'm not saying anything about the recent junior rebellion. It's over now,

anyhow, and the whole school is together again. This riot of Smith's men means danger to St. Frank's, and we've got to all stand together."

"Hear, hear!"

"It was the juniors who caused it!" shouted Kenmore of the Sixth.

"Nonsense!" retorted Fenton. "The Remove may have been wrong in revolting, but knowing all the circumstances, who's going to blame them?"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Fenton!"

"This trouble would never have arisen if Smith had acted like a man, instead of a lunatic!" went on Fenton angrily. "The Remove was prepared to return to discipline days and days ago, and I, for one, don't blame them for holding out. They were justified! This present situation is entirely the result of Smith's insane desire for power."

Fenton was cheered to the echo.

"But now that the affair is over, there's something worse on our hands," he continued grimly. "These fine workmen of Smith's have proved to be a deadly menace to the whole countryside—an army of wild ruffians who are not only capable of robbery and destruction, but even murder! And are we going to run away from St. Frank's, and leave the whole school to their mercy?"

"No!" roared a hundred voices.

"We'll fight—we'll fight for St. Frank's!"

"Hurrah!"

"We'll defend the school to the last brick!"

Fenton's bold speech had due effect. Not only the school, but the River House boys were affected by the same spirit, and were just as determined to give battle—even though St. Frank's was only a temporary haven for them.

I stood looking at Fenton with gleaming eyes. His ringing speech pleased me more than I could say. I might have been able to influence the Remove, but the seniors would have taken little notice of me.

But Fenton was different. He was the captain of St. Frank's, and the most popular senior in the whole school. The entire crowd yelled their enthusiasm, and pledged themselves to fight desperately in order to save the fine old place from the destructive hands of these maddened ruffians.

And so, within a couple of minutes, all was bustle.

The gates were clanged to, and locked, and the walls were lined with seniors, ready to swarm forward to the attack if the rioters attempted to climb into the Triangle.

Another crowd of fellows had rushed in-doors, with Mr. Clifford, the sports master, in command. Every available hose-pipe in the school was prepared for action. This was a suggestion of mine, and one that Mr. Clifford had instantly approved. The Remove had good reason to know how valuable these hose-pipes could be as weapons of

defence. And, more than anything else, they could be relied upon to cool the excitement of any mob.

And from outside we could hear the shouting and yelling of the approaching rioters. From one of the upper windows Bellton lane could be seen. And it was literally swarming with half-drunken men, armed with great clubs and similar weapons—many, indeed, carrying pickaxes.

They were shouting madly, and behaving like so many savages from a heathen land of cannibals. And these men—these besotted ruffians—were swarming along with the one purpose of destroying St. Frank's!

The situation was desperate, indeed!

CHAPTER II.

THE FURY OF THE MOB!



BOOM!

A dull, reverberating explosion rang out on Willard's Island, and there instantly followed a shattering crash, and a great cloud of dense, acrid smoke. And a number of the rioters who had approached too closely were sent hurtling back by the force of the tremendous blast.

We heard that boom at St. Frank's, and I instantly knew what it portended. For I had long suspected that the roughs would use dynamite against the Remove's stronghold on the island.

Every other method of getting into the place had failed.

While the Remove itself had been in possession, Smith's men had been hurling stones, and using battering-rams against the doors. But they had met with no success. And they believed the Remove to be hiding inside that building, fearful of their fate.

The old place was indeed a fortress. It had been built to represent an ancient castle, with towers and battlements, and buttressed walls. The windows were mere slits, through which no man could pass. And the two doors were great things of solid oak, and iron-studded. Nothing short of a charge of dynamite would conquer them.

And it was dynamite which had done so.

For almost an hour resistance from within the building had ceased—causing the rioters to believe that the Remove had run out of ammunition, and that now they merely awaited the end. And when the smoke cleared away after that explosion, a yell of absolute savagery went up.

It was horrible to hear—and it would have gone ill with the Remove if they had still been in possession. That great oaken door now lay in a thousand shattered fragments.

And it spoke volumes for the solidity of the building itself that the stone walls were only slightly scarred. But if any of the

fellows had been within that room, the devastating explosion, the force of which had been mostly inwards, would have killed many. It only proved how utterly reckless of life these barbarians were.

At last they had beaten down the defences! At last the fortress was theirs for the taking! And a great crowd of the men surged forward, shouting thickly with triumph. They intended dragging the boys out, beating them until they were black and blue, and then hurling them into the river. If this programme had been carried out, half the Remove would certainly have perished. For Smith's men were in a mood for wholesale murder.

It wasn't as if they were an ordinary crowd of working men. They were foreigners—the majority being savage, uneducated half-breeds, negroes, and such. They had never been trained to control their evil passions, and now that they were able to give them free play, they revelled in the prospect. And the raw drink that was in them destroyed all sense of proportion.

There were fully three hundred men on the island, and they made the air ring with a perfect pandemonium of sounds as they swept into the building. They were to take revenge—revenge for the death of two of their comrades!

For at the commencement of the grim hostilities, a number of the infuriated fools had attempted to use a heavy motor-tractor. The thing had dived into the river, carrying two wretches with it. They had only themselves to thank for this horrible death, for the thing they had attempted was madness itself.

But their companions laid the blame at the door of the Remove, and this was another reason why their fury was so intense.

With wild cries they rushed about inside the building, seeking the juniors. They were so sure that the boys were there that the deserted appearance of the place at first deceived them. They believed that the juniors were hiding—skulking away in the corners.

But this was not so.

After the first mad sweep through the place, the search became more definite.

Every nook and cranny was entered. Even the cellars were thoroughly examined. But all to no purpose. There was a secret door in one of the cellars, leading into that underground passage. But it had been closed by the last junior to leave, revealing no indication as to how the juniors had so miraculously disappeared.

"They've gone—they've gone!" shouted one of the rioters madly.

"Fool! They can't be gone—we've had the place surrounded!" roared another. "The young cubs are hiding somewhere!"

But a second search, and a third search, were equally as futile. It seemed a staggering mystery to the disappointed rioters.

And after the first shock of the discovery, their fury increased.

The boys had eluded them!

Once before this same thing had happened—when the Remove had held Mr. Smith's power-station. After the enemy had broken in, the place had been found empty. And now the Remove had fooled them again!

Angry before, they were now mad with passionate hatred and rage. They were ready for any devilry. Nothing was too horrible for them to commit in their present frame of mind.

Shouting, cursing, the men crowded out into the open again. There was confusion for a time, for everybody was yelling at once, and nobody could understand the meaning of this strange riddle. And then enlightenment came.

One of Smith's men was seen to be on the towing-path, shouting to the dense crowd on the island. And at last he managed to impart his information. The boys had escaped. They were now at St. Frank's! They had been seen marching across the playing-fields into the Triangle!

The result of this news was instantaneous.

With further shouts and curses, the men swore that they would go to St. Frank's and take their vengeance there.

"We'll burn the school down!"

"We'll take these English pigs and have our revenge!"

A roar of approval went up, and within a very few minutes the entire motley crowd was getting into the boats and ploughing across to the other bank. And by the time they arrived they had heard fresh information.

Their companions were already making for the school! Indeed, a large crowd of the rioters were already arrived, and were being resisted. This was an absolute incentive to the ruffians. They yelled with further enthusiasm, and dashed off in a wild mob.

And so the whole force of Smith's men—practically a thousand in number—were preparing to make one tremendous onslaught upon St. Frank's. For the full fury of their rage was now directed against the school. The position, indeed, seemed absolutely hopeless from the point of view of the boys. There was no way in which they could defend themselves against this fearful danger.

In the meantime, a few of the isolated rioters had heard what was in the wind, and these, too, made their way to the school. A crowd of the Bannington unemployed, recovering after a fierce encounter with the ruffians, determined to go to the rescue. So the whole fury of the battle was concentrating at St. Frank's. The events of the next few hours promised to be desperate.

For when the new contingent arrived, they would let their companions know how they had been fooled on Willard's Island, and this would add to the general feeling of rage.

At St. Frank's everything possible was being done.

The police had been telephoned for, and it was learned that Inspector Jameson, of Bannington, was on his way with every available officer. But as the force numbered only twenty-five strong, they were not likely to make much difference. The police didn't quite realise how serious matters were.

And they couldn't be blamed.

Such an event as this had never before occurred in the district. Indeed, a riot of such terrible magnitude was almost unknown in the whole country. A few rumours had reached Bannington people, but it was generally believed that they were wild exaggerations.

And so the unfortunate village of Bellton, and St. Frank's, found themselves practically cut off, and the only help that was on the way consisted of a few sceptical policemen.

But they were not sceptical for long!

The force, with Inspector Jameson at their head, arrived by one of the local trains. As soon as they were seen coming down the village High Street, exclamations of relief and enthusiasm were heard. Somehow, the sight of these uniforms was reassuring.

The police found Bellton in a pitiful state.

Hundreds of windows were broken in the High Street, and several of the shops looked as though a tornado had passed over them. Goods were strewn everywhere, and the destruction had been about as complete as possible.

Crowds of men were standing about—the disorganised remnants of the unemployed force that had marched from Bannington, earlier in the afternoon, with the idea of asking Mr. William K. Smith for work.

They joined forces with the police, and marched up towards the school. So far the police still believed that the danger had been exaggerated. For they had seen no active sign of any desperate rioting.

The damage in the village was serious, not irreparable. But as soon as the police came near to St. Frank's, they had their eyes opened. Hundreds of men were swarming round the walls, climbing over, fighting, yelling, and acting like cannibals.

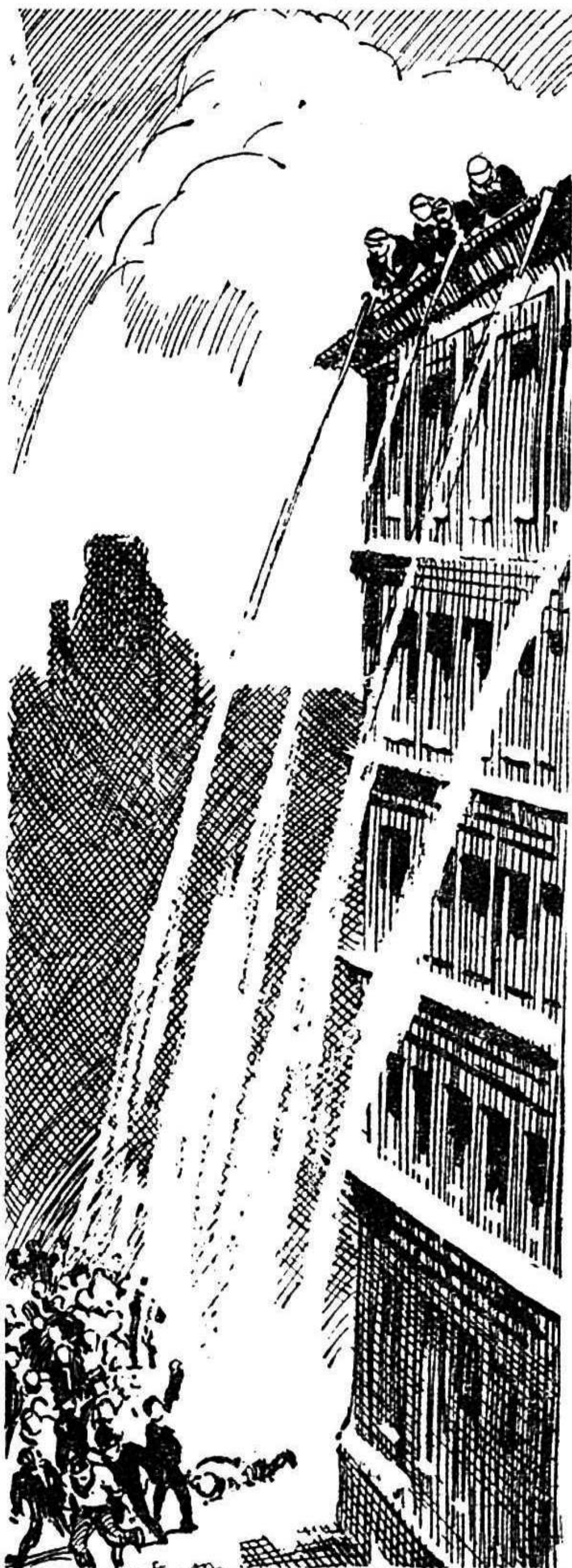
"Good heavens!" ejaculated Inspector Jameson, pausing. "This is perfectly dreadful! It's high time we arrived!"

"Shall we go on, sir?" asked a sergeant.

"Go on? Of course we'll go on!" retorted Jameson. "I've no doubt these fools will scatter as soon as they see us. Keep your heads, men, and use your truncheons if necessary."

Truncheons were got ready, and after a few more brief commands from the inspector, the valiant force of police rushed forward. They did not even get into the Triangle.

There were scores of the rioters still out-



Those columns of water struck the crowds with such tremendous force that men were knocked flying like ninepins—drenched, shivering, and blinded by the terrific power of the jets.

side in the lane, and as soon as they saw the police they turned, and a grim, intensive battle commenced. From within the school, juniors at the windows could see what was going on, and for a time the cheering was loud.

But the police had taken on a hopeless task.

These drunken rioters were by no means dismayed at the sight of the uniforms. They were too far gone for that. Indeed, it almost seemed as if they welcomed the arrival of the police, for here was somebody to fight against.

The battle did not last long.

Fully a hundred men hurled themselves

to maintain their formation. But this proved to be impossible. The infuriated rioters were not only throwing stones, but heavy clubs, and even pickaxes.

In order to save their lives, the police had to fairly take to their heels, carrying their injured with them. Nearly fifty per cent of the officers were casualties, and Inspector Jameson himself was among them. He had received a violent blow on the head which had narrowly missed killing him.

And the rioters, freshly inflamed by this victory against the police, turned the full force of their attention upon St. Frank's.

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at the plucky policemen, and it was rather a miracle that the officers escaped with their lives. For the rioters not only used pickaxes, but they hurled stones, and two men emptied their revolvers into the ranks of the police.

It was a dreadful affair—in spite of its short duration.

Three policemen were shot. Not fatally injured, but quite incapacitated from further fighting. Others fought gamely with their truncheons, and a number of the rioters were laid out. But their places were instantly taken by others. And, after a brief spell, the police were forced to retreat. They attempted to do so in order, so as

Their one object was to destroy the school!

CHAPTER III.

DEFENDING THE SCHOOL.



"HERE they come!"

"Be ready now—let them have it!"

These shouts came from the upper windows of the Ancient House. Half the Remove was there, watching. They could do little else, for there was no means by which they could actively take part in the defence.

It was now the turn of the seniors. The Fifth and the Sixth, in fact, were having a taste of what the Remove had been up against during the past week or two. But now the fighting was much more acute and dangerous.

The seniors had done their best to keep the enemy outside the school gates. But it had been soon apparent that this was an idle dream. Stone-throwing had commenced almost from the first, and other dangerous missiles had been hurled. It had been practically impossible to come to grips.

And so, at last, the seniors had rushed for safety into the school buildings, and all doors had been slammed and locked. Every window with a shutter was closely barred.

And not only the upper windows, but the roof was alive with grim, determined fellows, who were set upon fighting to the last rather than give in tamely to these hooligans.

"It's no good—we'll never hold them back!" said Armstrong desperately. "We ought to have cleared out at first. It's no good trying to fight against hopeless odds!"

"Don't growl—we've got to fight!" snapped Handforth.

He had wanted to rush down into the full force of the battle, using nothing but his bare fists. But this would have been nothing short of suicide, and he had been forcibly held back.

The defeat of the police was a serious blow, although it had been expected. Everybody had seen how the brief conflict had gone, and it was generally believed in the school that several of the policemen had been killed.

"Why on earth can't they do something better than this?" shouted Chambers indignantly. "There ought to be hundreds of policemen on the job! We ought to have the Guards out! That's the only way to deal with a riot like this! We'll be murdered before any help can come!"

"Be reasonable, old man," said Bryant, who was rather white with apprehension. "This thing has happened so suddenly! An hour ago there was no sign of it, and the police were here pretty quickly, I think."

"But they know the position now all right," said Chambers grimly.

"Yes, and you can be sure they'll wire for help," put in Phillips. "But it's no good expecting too much. Even if they appeal to the Army, no force could get here under two hours. There's no military force nearer than twenty or thirty miles."

"And, in the meantime, we're going to be smashed, I suppose?" growled Chambers. "And St. Frank's will be blown up, or something! I'm beginning to think we ought to have cleared out in time."

There were many others who thought this, for it really did seem that all hope of defending the school was futile. But

then a different complexion was put on the affair, and hopes were revived.

For, by now, the rioters were swarming in the Triangle in hundreds, and doing everything in their power to smash their way into the school. Equal numbers were surging round the Ancient House and the College House.

Stones were flung at the windows, and crash after crash sounded as the glass splintered into fragments. Dozens of windows were shattered during the first two minutes.

And then came the order for firing.

The "firing" consisted of turning on the full force of a dozen hose-pipes. Both the Ancient House and the College House were swarming on the roofs, and the hoses had been carried up to this advantageous position.

And at a word the hoses got into action.

Simultaneously, all the available fire-fighting apparatus of the school was brought into play. A dozen streams of water hissed downwards with devastating force.

The crowds of men in the Triangle were hurling bricks and stones, and becoming more and more maddened every moment. And then, with a terrific swishing of spray, the water struck them.

The effect was immediate.

Those columns of water struck the crowds with such tremendous force that men were knocked flying like ninepins—drenched, shivering, and blinded by the terrific power of the jets.

"Hurrah! They're retreating!"

"Give it to 'em!"

"They're falling back! The brutes are beaten!"

A perfect roar of shouts went up, and the excitement was at fever heat. Under that drenching deluge of water the rioters were racing for safety—speeding away in every direction, more than half-sobered.

The main body of the men fell back, and for a brief time there was a lull. But not every quarter of the school could be defended by the hoses. And a party of three or four rioters, isolated from the rest, succeeded in smashing through one of the windows.

They entered the junior Common-room, in fact, which was empty and deserted. And here they charged through, intending to get to the front of the house, and fling wide the door, so that their companions could sweep in.

The four men came out into the lobby and met Handforth, who was just dashing along, intent upon finding another hose. Handforth came to an abrupt halt, and stared.

"You hounds!" he roared furiously.

And, without another word, he rushed in and hit out right and left. His attack was so abrupt that the men were taken by surprise. One brute went down from a terrific upper-cut that nearly knocked Handforth's knuckles out of joint.

Crash!

Handforth's right swung round in turn, and another man reeled over, cursing foully. But by this time the others had recovered, and they rushed at Handforth with murderous intent.

"Help! Remove to the rescue!"

Church and McClure, following Handforth up, were staggered to see him fighting against these four rioters. They instinctively roared for assistance, knowing what the result would be if none came.

"They've broken inside! Help!"

"This way, Remove!"

Over a dozen fellows heard the frantic cries, and Pitt and Grey and Archie and a few more came sweeping downstairs. In next to no time the lobby was a furious battle-ground.

The four men, easily able to murder Handforth, now found their hands too full. They were not only beaten down, but sent crashing to the floor, and swarmed on until they were nearly suffocated.

"Rope them up!" panted Pitt quickly.

A couple of fellows dashed off for ropes, and when these were obtained, the prisoners were bound hand and foot and dragged along to one of the cellars.

They were cast down unceremoniously, and locked in.

"And that's what we're going to do to every one of them we collar!" shouted Handforth. "I'll tell you what! Let's form ourselves into raiding parties, you chaps!"

"Raiding parties?" gasped Church.

"Yes!" said Handy. "We'll provide ourselves with ropes, and then make a dash out now and again, and grab a prisoner! The more we can collar, the better! Every prisoner means one less to fight against!"

"Hurrah!"

The idea caught on, and the first raiding-party, under Handforth, dashed off to the common-room in order to get through the window, and collect one or two captives. But the enterprise came to nothing.

For Handforth and his crowd had only just entered the common-room when they came face to face with two of the ruffians. Handforth gave a terrific yell, and charged forward.

"Come on—grab 'em!" he roared.

One of the men snapped out a revolver, and levelled it.

"Stand back, you whelps!" he snarled. "Back, or I fire!"

"Go and eat coke!" yelled Handforth.

And he charged forward recklessly.

Crack!

A bullet whistled past his ear, and he pulled himself up with such a jerk that he nearly fell over backwards. He was pale to the lips with sudden apprehension. One of the pluckiest fellows in the school, this murderous revolver firing was too much.

Handforth knew that he had escaped death by a mere inch.

"You—you beasts!" he panted huskily.

"Back, the whole crowd of you!" snarled the man. "I mean it!"

"Handy!" begged Church. "Come back, for goodness' sake!"

But all the fight was momentarily knocked out of Handforth, and there was no fear of him rushing in again. But he was watching his man like a cat watches a mouse.

And the half-drunken brute, seeing the white, scared faces of the juniors, uttered a contemptuous laugh, and lowered his revolver.

Crash!

With one bound, Handforth simply hurled himself in. A swinging upper-cut caught the ruffian before he could even raise his revolver. He went down with a thudding jar that shook the room, and he lay there senseless.

"Now the other one!" shouted Handforth. "Grab him!"

The second man fled—diving through the window with one bound that carried him clean out into the Triangle. And so the raid resulted in one prisoner—and a desperate one at that.

But there were no further attempts. It was too risky. Handforth had covered himself with glory by getting his man in face of death itself, but he was not prepared to take the risk again.

And outside, the battle had come to a brief lull.

The main force of the mob had fallen back, more than half its number soaked to the skin. But, instead of being deterred, the ruffians were all the more determined to destroy the school.

This resistance was more than they had bargained for. And they crowded back, discussing ways and means. A few other prisoners had been taken, in the College House and other parts of the school. But the enemy force was still a terribly formidable army.

Yet none had succeeded in invading the school so far—and that was something to be thankful for. But even the seniors were convinced that the battle couldn't last for long. Sooner or later the rioters would make a breach in the defence—and once inside the school, all hope would be gone.

The only chance was to keep these fiends at bay until adequate help arrived. And there was no telling how long this would be in coming. For what adequate help was there?

The police had failed, and the men of the district would not risk their lives by attempting to defeat these insane savages. For a great many of them were armed, and a fight of that description would mean death to dozens.

So it seemed a forlorn hope, indeed, to expect help.

This would come by late evening, no doubt—but it would be too late. Help, in order to be effective, must arrive within the hour. And that seemed completely impossible. When these rioters got inside the school—as

it seemed certain they would—the destruction would leap on at a breakneck pace. The brutes would simply make a shambles of the whole school.

For every vestige of control had gone long since. The men had no thoughts for the consequences. They were bent upon every murderous act that they could put their hands to. And it would go hard with any hapless fellows who chanced to meet the full force of the enemy onslaught.

Another desperate charge was made, but this, again, was beaten off by the hose pipes. The streams of water struck the attackers like something solid, and they fell back, beaten and impotent.

St. Frank's was safe so far—but how long could the defence be kept up?

CHAPTER IV. IN DESPERATE STRAITS!



MR. WILLIAM K. SMITH stood at the door of the loft in the old barn—that famous building at the rear of the school which was known to the juniors as Fort

Resolute.

Mr. Smith had actually fled there from a party of his own men—fearing that they would include him in their rage, and perhaps murder him in cold blood. They were quite capable of it.

He had sought the safety of the loft in a kind of desperation, and now stood there, at the upper door, gazing out towards St. Frank's. His face was almost grey with anxiety, and there were lines appearing that had never been visible before. The millionaire's arrogance was gone.

"The fools—the hopeless fools!" he muttered, again and again.

And yet, even in this extremity, Mr. Smith would not admit that he was the cause of all this catastrophe. He blamed the Remove—he blamed his own men—he blamed everybody but himself.

It was the Remove's fault for resisting his attacks for so long—it was the men's fault for losing their heads and allowing the riot to start. But it was not Mr. Smith's fault for giving his men drink, inflaming them, and setting them against a mere handful of boys!

Yet that was the actual truth of the matter.

The very beginning of the riot could be traced back to that one apparently insignificant fact. Before setting his men to the task of conquering Willard's Island, William K. Smith had seen they were all filled with drink. He had believed that they would fight with greater determination. But he had overlooked the fact that the drink would probably deprive the men of reason.

And from that one circumstance, the

entire riot had resulted. The spirit of destruction had spread throughout the entire force of a thousand. And now, of course, with reason gone, it was too late to think of regaining control.

The only means of doing that lay in force—a strong, relentless body of soldiers, for choice, who would charge the hooligans with fixed bayonets. Nothing short of this would bring them to their senses.

Smith, as he stood at the loft door, could see the roofs of St. Frank's swarming with fellows; he could see the hose pipes in action, but the rioters in the Triangle were invisible to him.

He could guess, however, that they were being held at bay. He hoped that the efforts of the schoolboys would succeed. Not that he had any anxious thought for them. His concern was entirely for himself.

The consequences would be bad enough for him as it was. He could see the ruination of all his ambitious schemes. But if any of these boys were injured, or killed, it might mean not merely ruination to his enterprise, but imprisonment for himself!

And while Mr. Smith was looking on, a figure appeared from a neighbouring hedge, and came into the open. It was the insignificant, weedy figure of Mr. Ponsonby Small—the man who was supposed to be in command of St. Frank's, but who was actually frightened out of his wits.

He had been afraid to go near the school, and for some time he had been hiding in a ditch. Then he had caught sight of Mr. Smith, and he emerged, fearful of being seen, and he scuttled like a rabbit for the barn.

"Well, a fine looking object, I must say!" snapped Smith curtly, as his tool crawled up into the loft. "Say, you'd best quit! I get sick when I look at you!"

"For Heaven's sake, Mr. Smith, what are we to do?" breathed the other, his voice a mere husky whisper. "What are we to do? Those—those men will wreck the school!"

"You can think yourself lucky that you're out of it!" retorted Smith. "Take my advice, and get clear of this outfit as soon as you can. I'm quitting within the hour!"

Mr. Small recovered some of his composure.

"You—you are going?" he asked, in amazement.

"You bet your life I'm going!"

"But—but, Mr. Smith!" gasped the Head. "You cannot go and leave the situation in this terrible state! It would be cowardly—absolutely cowardly! You have brought about this terrible disaster, and you now talk about going and leaving the boys to their fate!"

Mr. Smith swore fiercely.

"Better be quiet!" he snarled. "I'm dangerous just now!"

"After all you have done, Mr. Smith, I should imagine that you will be anxious to

undo this horror!" exclaimed Small, the other's attitude strengthening him. "Good gracious! This is your doing——"

"My doing?" shouted the millionaire thickly.

"Do—do you deny it?" panted Mr. Small.

"You raving fool! Of course I deny it!" exclaimed Cyclone Smith. "These men started the riot against my orders——"

"Yes, yes, I know that!" interrupted the Head. "But you cannot possibly maintain that you are not responsible! And you should be doing everything possible to get your men into control! It is your duty, Mr. Smith! And yet I find you here, doing nothing whatever!"

Mr. Smith stared at the other with growing rage and amazement. He had never believed Small capable of such vituperation. He failed to see that it was his own weakness that was giving Mr. Small strength.

"Get out of here!" he snarled harshly.

"I hold you responsible——"

With one blow Cyclone Smith knocked the unfortunate Head half way across the loft. And Mr. Small, with every ounce of speech knocked out of him, remained there, more frightened than ever. But he had done his best, and he had succeeded to a certain extent. For Smith descended from the loft, and went off in a forlorn attempt to do something to control his men.

In the meantime, the rioters were making plans.

A number of them—the most murderous brutes of the lot—had collected together on the edge of the playing-fields, and well out of range of the streams of water. They were still more than half intoxicated, for most of these men had brought drink with them.

"We'll burn the place down!" said one of the men, with an oath.

"Sure! And roast the whole blamed bunch!"

"Yes, but we've got to get inside!" put in one of the others. "And these cursed hose pipes keep us away! There's only one thing to do—and that is to get some dynamite! We blew open the door of that place on the island, and we'll use the same methods here!"

This conversation was carried on to the accompaniment of foul language, and the course was quickly decided upon. The rioters made up their minds to burn the school down, and to force an entry by means of dynamite. Once the main door of the Ancient House was open, they could sweep in in defiance of the hoses.

And so a number of the ruffians rushed off for some blasting charges.

They returned with a box of dynamite, fuses, and everything necessary. And then the plan was carried a step further. While two or three hundred of the savages made a determined rush for the other side of the school, a small party of others went and placed the dynamite charge in position—fixed the fuse, and set fire to it.

They had been seen, and their object anticipated.

Mr. Clifford was on the roof in an excellent position to see, and he had noticed the sudden rush of that small party to the Ancient House doorway. He had seen the strange looking box they carried, and it had only taken him a moment to realise the truth.

"Quick! Here, Pitt!" he shouted, beckoning to Reggie. "Rush downstairs like mad, and see if there is anybody in the lobby. If so, get them out. And go like the wind!"

"Yes, sir!" exclaimed Pitt. "Are they using dynamite?"

"Yes!" retorted Mr. Clifford. "Hurry!"

Mr. Clifford's very tone had told Pitt what the trouble was. And even before he had gone, the sports master set about directing the hoses over the Ancient House doorway—hoping that he might be able to extinguish the fuse.

But there was a small stone porch over the doorway, and it was impossible to direct the water straight upon the doorstep. And the fuse spluttered aggressively, untouched.

All Mr. Clifford's efforts were in vain, and he turned rather pale as he realised what the result of this breach would be. Once that door was down the rioters would sweep in in a flood. And then, indeed, the situation would be desperate.

"Morrow!" he called. "Get a score of seniors ready!"

"Yes, sir!" said Morrow promptly.

"Unless I'm mistaken, the door will be blown down in a few moments," continued the sports master curtly. "Take your men, and rush some barricades across the stairs, and the lower passage. Take every step possible to hold these ruffians, even if they get inside!"

"Right, sir!" said Morrow, hurrying away.

"But don't go near the lobby until after the explosion!" shouted Mr. Clifford, after him.

And while this was going on, Reggie Pitt had flown downstairs, and it was clear that Mr. Clifford's instructions were wise. For Handforth and several other fellows were having an argument in the lobby—perilously near to the barred and bolted floor.

"Out of this—sharp!" roared Pitt.

"Go away!" said Handforth. "I'm planning something!"

"Scoot upstairs, here!" shouted Pitt, who was halfway up the staircase. "Don't argue! They're going to blow the door down!"

"What!"

The group of juniors stared at the door blankly. Even Handforth himself was startled, but he didn't move.

"They've set the explosive, and lit the fuse!" exclaimed Pitt frantically. "You silly idiots! Move yourselves!"

"Absolutely!" gasped Archie Glenthorne, who was one of the group. "I'm a peaceful chappie, by gad, and I prefer to walk upstairs! I mean to say, it's a frightful

thing when a cove is absolutely pushed up by a blast of bally old dynamite!"

And Archie mounted the stairs four at a time, displaying an energy that had never before been suspected. He was plucky enough, but he had rooted objections to being blown sky high.

Handforth remained there, glaring at the door—after all the other juniors had fled.

"The nerve of it!" he said fiercely. "It's like their cheek to blow the door down! Look here! I'll tell you what! We'll dash out, and make a raid, and then pull the dynamite charge away by sheer force and drop it into the fountain!"

force, and both the juniors were peppered by odd scraps of dust and fragments.

Pitt was the first to stagger to his feet, and all he could see was a cloud of dense, acrid smoke and a vast amount of dust. He dragged Handforth back by sheer force, just as the daylight was beginning to appear through the haze.

"It's down!" he muttered tensely.

"The door's broken to bits!" said Handforth. "I—I say, old man, you saved my life, you know. I—I didn't realise——"

"That's all right—you wouldn't!" interrupted Reggie. "We had a pretty narrow squeak, old son. Let's bunk upstairs by the



Boom!

There was a dull, deafening explosion, and a rush of air that contained debris of all descriptions.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Pitt. "He's as mad as ever!"

And Reggie, without another word, leapt down the stairs in one jump, hurled himself at Handforth, and sent the latter shooting down the passage. They both crashed in a dishevelled heap on the floor at the end. And at the same second the whole school seemed to go to pieces.

Boom!

There was a dull, deafening explosion, and a rush of air that contained debris of all descriptions. Handforth and Pitt had not had time to pick themselves up—which was fortunate.

For two or three particles of the splintered door shot over their heads with terrific

back way while we've got the chance. There's trouble coming now—oceans of it!"

CHAPTER V.

THE S.O.S. BY WIRELESS!



A ROAR of gloating triumph went up from the rioters when the smoke cleared away from the big porch of the Ancient House. Just before the explosion had

taken place there had been nothing there but a heavy solid oaken door, which defied every rush.

But the constant playing of the hosepipes made any determined effort impossible. But now the appearance of the porch was very different. Instead of that door, there was a great, gaping hole.

The door had gone, to say nothing of a part of the stonework. The whole porch was badly wrecked, and it was rather fortunate that the destruction was not spread over a greater area.

Something like consternation reigned on the roof.

"They've done it!" I exclaimed grimly. "They've blown the door down, Mr. Clifford!"

"Yes, I know it," said the sports' master. "We've got to concentrate these streams of water on the porch. Not that it'll be any good. One rush will carry the brutes through."

"But they'll be drenched!" put in Jack Grey.

"Yes, and that will make them all the more violent once they are inside," remarked Mr. Clifford. "I'm hanged if I know which is the best course to adopt—to try and keep them away, or not!"

It was useless remaining up there, so I sped swiftly for the doorway which led straight on to the attic stairs. This part of the Ancient House roof was quite flat, and if the worst came to the worst we could make a last stand on the roof itself.

I had seen that the hundreds of rioters below were now concentrating their entire attentions on the Ancient House. The other buildings had been completely abandoned.

For the Ancient House door was down, and in a direct way was opened into the school. The brutes were able to swarm in. And once inside, they would be able to have practically their own way. The College House could wait until later.

These men had two objects in view—to drive the boys out by sheer force, and with as much violence as possible, and then to destroy the school itself. The lust for blood was on them, and more than anything else they wanted to be at grips with the juniors who had defied them so long.

I shot downstairs, and arrived at the head of the lobby stairs, to find a scene of great activity. Barricades were being hastily manufactured; a large number of seniors working like madmen at the task.

Anything available was being used for the purpose—bedsteads, chests of drawers, tables, chairs, wardrobes, anything, in fact, that could be jammed into place so as to form an impassable barrier.

It was the same down in the passage, where Reggie Pitt and Handforth, instead of going upstairs by the back way, as they had proposed, had joined a number of seniors, who were intent upon barricading the end of the hall.

And here a similar scene to that on the stairs was being enacted. Every kind of article of furniture was being used. And

such was the determination of the workers that the barricade assumed formidable proportions within a few minutes.

"And now the hosepipes!" exclaimed Morrow grimly. "Handforth, you'll do! There's a fire-hydrant just round the corner. Uncoil the hose, and bring it here as quick as you can! Then stand by to turn the tap as soon as I yell!"

"Right!" said Handforth promptly.

There was another fire-hydrant on the landing, and the hose belonging to this was also uncoiled and held in readiness. The rioters may have smashed down the door, but even now they wouldn't gain free admittance.

The brutes were delayed step by step. They were finding that St. Frank's was being defended to the last limit. The fellows were in no mood to allow these destructive beasts full liberties.

Outside, the men were wild with excitement and triumph. The success of that dynamite charge had fired them for further devilry. They were quite abandoned now. They gave no thought to the consequences. Their one and only aim was to destroy—destroy—destroy!

Fully a couple of hundred men got ready; and then, with fiendish yells, they tore forward, with heads down and arms held up to protect themselves against the continuous cascades of water from the hosepipes above.

It was like a desperate charge to gain a strongly held position on the battlefield. But here the attackers knew they could come to no real harm. It was a soaking at the most. And as most of these savages were soaked already, they didn't care.

They came splashing through the flooded Triangle, and charged in at the Ancient House doorway in a vast, surging mob. They roared with exultant triumph as they crowded like sardines into the lobby.

The rush was so great that it was like a riot at a football match, after a fence has given way. The foremost men were hurled forward against their own strength, pushed on by those who came behind, until, indeed, the lobby was a jammed, packed mass of cursing humanity.

But it was difficult to recognise this mob as humanity. It was more like a collection of wild beasts. They were pushed forward until they were almost upon the barricade, and the foremost men screamed with alarm as they were hurled forward and jammed.

In their wild, insane excitement, the invaders were likely to do grave injury to themselves. But they had had no thought for resistance when they dashed in. They believed that the school was open to them.

"Hold back—hold back!" shrieked one of the men, with a string of curses. "These young whelps have barred the way!"

"Now!" shouted Morrow loudly. "The tap! Turn it!"

Handforth, at the hydrant, heard the command, and in a moment he was twirling the little red wheel. There was a splutter,

a fierce, roaring hiss, and then the hose in Morrow's hand became alive.

A fierce jet of water shot out, and played with devastating effect upon the packed men in the lobby. The nozzle of the hose was pushed through the legs of a table that formed a part of the barricade, and it was only a few feet away from the foremost invaders.

Shrieks, curses, and wild yells filled the air as the hose played full into the faces of the maddened brutes. They had got more than they bargained for. And at the same moment another hose started playing from the stairs.

A stampede started—a wild, infuriated stampede.

Blinded, dazed, half stunned by that fearful force of water, the men staggered drunkenly out of the lobby, until the bulk of the force had reached the open air again. They left several men lying on the floor—crushed almost senseless by the fearful jam. For in the panic these men had trampled one another under foot without the slightest compunction.

"We've beaten them; they've gone back!" shouted Morrow excitedly.

"Hurrah!"

"We'll show the rotters; we'll teach 'em!" roared a dozen voices.

For the moment the position was held, and the defenders were excited and triumphant. But it would never do to assume that this was an augury of victory. These rioters were so mad that they had not seized their best opportunities. Sooner or later they would calm down a bit, and would then find a way in.

And it was idle to hope for a return to sanity when calmness came. This thing had gone so far now that even with the men cooled, they would be more fiercely determined than ever to wreak their destructive will upon the old school.

It could not be said that we were allowing them free entry, however. In order to gain admittance, the invaders were compelled to fight every inch of the way. And my heart went as heavy as lead as I realised the almost utter hopelessness of our position.

This riot had only been going half an hour. It seemed ages to us; but so much had happened in a little time that the minutes were crowded. And it would take hours and hours to obtain assistance. At least, assistance that would be worthy of the name.

And during that time what could happen—and what could not happen? I felt within me that nothing could save St. Frank's from complete and absolute destruction.

For once fairly inside and in full possession, the invaders would set fire to the school in a dozen different places, and within a brief space of time St. Frank's would be blazing like a gigantic bonfire—beyond all hope of saving.

And then in that moment I turned icily

cold. Reggie Pitt was standing close to me, and we were a little way from the rear of the stairway barricade. The imminent danger of invasion was over, and we had been taking a breather.

Pitt looked at me anxiously.

"What's the matter, old son?" he asked, gripping my arm. "You've gone as white as a sheet! And you're trembling, too——"

"Reggie," I breathed hoarsely, "I've—I've just thought of something!"

"Oddslife!" put in Archie Glen-thorne. "I must say, laddie, that your thought must have been of a fairly poisonous order. I mean to say, you're not only white about the gills, but absolutely dithery!"

I looked at them in a dazed kind of way.

"Upstairs—to the tower!" I gasped.

"Quick! Come with me!"

"The tower!" echoed Pitt. "Why, what on earth——"

I didn't wait for him to question me further. The idea that had occurred to me was so staggering that it had left me all trembling—as a sudden inspiration sometimes will.

It was a chance, a mere forlorn hope. But it had gripped me in such an intense way that I dared not wait a second. I knew that the very safety of St. Frank's depended upon mere moments. And now, when the whole sky seemed as black as ink with disaster, I detected a faint gleam of brightness.

Upstairs to the old tower of the Ancient House I ran, with Pitt, Archie, and one or two other fellows following—caught, vaguely, in the fever of my excitement. I noticed that Bertie Onions was one of the newcomers, in addition to Kingswood. The two River House boys felt that something was in the wind.

The tower was reached by means of a stone staircase, and was, indeed, practically cut off from the rest of the school. I tore in, bursting open the heavy oaken door, and my eyes glittered as I saw Archie Glen-thorne's famous wireless broadcasting set.

Originally, this had been fitted up on Willard's Island, and before the trouble with Mr. Smith, we had quite a lot of fun with it. More recently it had been set up in the tower, and was, to the best of my knowledge, in full working order.

"Wireless!" shouted Kingswood, staring.

"But—but——"

"What do you mean to do, Nipper?" shouted Pitt.

"Send out a call for help!" I said tensely.

"But who'll pick it up?" asked Reggie, the excited look of hope dying out of his eyes. "It's no good, old man, nobody will be listening-in as early as this, and even if they are, they can't come to the rescue!"

I sat down at the instrument and swiftly tested it.

"It wasn't the wireless I thought of," I rapped out. "I remembered this an hour ago, but dismissed it as no good,

Something else struck me, something that I ought to have called to mind at the first. If I hadn't been a fool, I should have remembered."

"But, laddie, remembered what?" asked Archie mildly.

"The Terriers!"

"Gadzooks! The which?"

"Terriers!" repeated Pitt. "You—you mean the Territorials? Why, hang it all—Great jumping kangaroos!" he gasped, flushing with suddenly renewed excitement. "You—you mean the camp on Bannington Moor?"

"Yes!" I snapped.

And then Reggie fully remembered. The day before we had heard of a big camp of local Territorials. They were under canvas on a bare part of the moor—isolated from all roads and villages. In all probability, they knew nothing about our plight, and were doubtless in ignorance of the whole riot. Isolated as these Territorials were, they could have heard nothing.

And they had wireless. We knew this, because some of the fellows had picked up messages that had been sent. And if matters had been normal, we might have had quite a lot of fun.

The idea that struck me was obvious to all the fellows. If we could only wireless our plight to that camp of Territorials—a force numbering well over five hundred—our peril would be at an end.

For these soldiers, fully armed, would be more than a match for six times their number of rabble. They would deal with these rioters in next to no time, once they were on the scene.

It was small wonder therefore that my excitement was intense. Now that I had remembered, I wondered why on earth I hadn't thought of the Territorials before, and accused myself of rank carelessness. Pitt did the same. But, after all, there was no blame attached to us. Under the circumstances, it was rather remarkable that we thought of it at all.

A brief test proved to me that the instruments were in perfect order. And then I spoke into the microphone clearly and precisely.

"St. Frank's College calling!" I exclaimed. "If this is picked up by the Territorials, encamped on Bannington Moor, please carry a message to your commanding officer. The school is besieged by murderous rioters. We are in danger of being driven out, and the school burnt to the ground. For Heaven's sake send help! This is no joke, but absolutely reality! If you hear this, Territorials, come to our help!"

I paused, and we all waited grimly, tensely, in case there was an answer. We knew that the Territorials had a broadcasting set of their own. With my headphones over my ears, I listened.

"Well?" asked Pitt breathlessly.

"Nothing—nothing!" I muttered.

"Repeat the message; keep on repeating it!" exclaimed Onions.

I did so, and was just beginning, when Kingswood dashed to the door, glanced out, and turned a white, scared face towards us.

"They're in!" he gasped. "There's a whole crowd coming up these stairs!"

CHAPTER VI.

TO SAVE HIS BROTHER!



TURNING, I pointed to the door.

"Slam it!" I shouted. "Lock it! This is our only chance! Keep the brutes out at all costs! I must keep on until

I get a reply!"

The other fellows knew the peril as well as I did. If once the rioters got in the tower room, we should meet with short shrift—and I could see the wireless set being dashed to smithereens.

Without taking any notice of the others, I turned back to the microphone, and repeated my message, tensely, frantically. I made it as clear as daylight that this was no foolish, practical joke, but grim, ghastly reality.

And still there came no reply.

I was sick with disappointment, for I had hoped for this much. It was clear that the Territorials were not using their wireless, and had not even picked up the message. Otherwise they would have assuredly replied.

But although I was convinced that my efforts were futile, I kept on. The door had been slammed to, locked, and bolted. And outside we could hear the cursing and shouting of the rioters, and the room was filled with the crashing blows of heavy clubs on the door.

We in that tower were in ignorance of what was happening in the main parts of the school. We feared that all the rioters had got in. But, as a matter of fact, the disturbance was caused by a bare twenty—a crowd of men who had forced an entrance at a rear window.

It was a freak of misfortune that had caused them to choose this tower to wreak their vengeance upon. Perhaps they heard voices, and had decided to deal with us summarily. It was as well for us, perhaps, that we did not know the real intention of the men.

They were a drunken crowd, and had come up here with the express object of throwing us from the windows! And that, of

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course, would have meant instant death for us all. But it served as an indication of the abandoned temper of the rioters.

Downstairs, a large number of seniors were determined to entrap these invaders, and make them prisoners.

And the men on the stairs were equally determined to smash down the door and carry out their murderous plan.

Grimly I sat at the wireless instrument, straining my ears for an answer to my frantic calls for help, for the mob were at that moment pounding on the door of the tower, and would at any second burst through.

And then, with a frightful crashing of blows, the door burst open. And a surge of men swept in, horrifying us. One glance at their faces was enough for me. I read murder in those ghastly, bloodshot eyes.

"Only four or five of 'em!" snarled the leading man. "Now we've got 'em!"

I flung the headphones from me, and swung back to defend myself. And the men came forward with a blind rush. Archie stood his ground firmly, lashed out, and caught one of the foremost ruffians a terrific blow on the jaw.

The man reeled over sideways and crashed to the floor. As he did so, there was a hissing burst of fire and smoke. That trivial incident probably saved our lives.

For it caused a brief delay, during which the ruffians were held in check. Otherwise, we should have been seized, and pitched out of the window in a few brief, horrifying moments.

The man ripped his coat from him, and flung it aside, blazing. He had fallen on a box of matches, exploding them. And his coat was now blazing up. It alighted in a big wooden box at the end of the room. By some evil chance this thing had happened, for that box was filled with paper and shavings—packing that had been used for conveying the wireless set.

On the instant, great leaping flames swept up, and the murderous brutes were stayed. And then rescue came—half the Sixth charging to the attack. Pandemonium took place on the stairs and outside the room. One by one the invaders were dragged back, and made captive.

But the men in the tower-room were still fighting. We were battling for our lives, and had no time whatever to quell that fire in the corner. I hardly knew what happened, for I had received a blow that dazed me.

I only know that I found myself staggering down the stairs, and that shouts of "Fire!" were being raised. And when I fully recovered my senses I discovered that the men were all prisoners, and had been taken away, cursing and raving like maniacs.

I had been dimly conscious of a thunderous noise of falling brickwork, and when I went and looked at the tower stairway I found that it was completely blocked. I

turned to Reggie Pitt, who was attempting to dab my head with a wet handkerchief.

"What happened?" I muttered dully.

"Goodness knows!" replied Pitt. "But we've had a narrow escape. We'd only just got down when the whole place seemed to collapse. Something must have been dislodged by those brutes when they were smashing at the door. A keystone or something, and that caused the upper archway to collapse. It's serious, too, because nobody can get to the fire!"

I was recovering rapidly.

"That won't matter," I replied. "It's all stone up there—the fire will just consume everything in the room, including Archie's wireless. It was no good, you see—we got no answer—"

"Where's Onions—where's Onions?" shouted Kingswood wildly, tearing up at this moment.

"Onions?" I repeated, staring.

"Yes—Bertie!" panted Kingswood, pale and shaken. "He was with us, you know, but I can't find him!"

We looked at that blocked stairway, and thought of the fire that was raging in the tower-room. If Onions had been caught, there was no hope for him. For there was no way out of the tower—there was not even a rope by which he could lower himself from the window. And any attempt to move this mass of fallen stonework would probably result in a more general collapse, involving destruction to the would-be rescuers.

"Onions must have got out with the rest of the fellows," I panted. "I didn't see him—I was half-dazed—"

"But he isn't here—he didn't come out!" sobbed Kingswood frantically.

"Let's get on to the roof!" I shouted. "If Onions is in the tower, he'll get to the window, and we can see!"

Without another word, we rushed up on to the roof, and we nearly ran full tilt into Johnny Onions, the elder brother of the River House boy who was presumably trapped.

The Onions brothers had not been at the River House long, and they were rather a quaint pair. Sons of a circus proprietor, Bertie was a bit of a clown, and Johnny an accomplished acrobat. But just at the moment Johnny was pale, and shivering with agitation.

"What's happened in the tower?" he demanded. "I just saw my brother at the window—and smoke is rolling out in volumes!"

Without replying, I stared at the tower—which lay some distance away, across a stretch of blank, open space that could not be passed. Indeed, at one point, the ground lay far below, with no roof or building intervening. There was no way of getting at the tower from up here.

Smoke was pouring out of the tower windows. And at that very moment a figure appeared—fighting against the dense masses.

In that instant I recognised Bertie Onions. He waved his arms feebly, and then, even as I watched, he fell back, and vanished.

"He's in there—he's trapped!" shouted Kingswood wildly.

"Trapped!" exclaimed Johnny, clutching me.

"The stairway's blocked!" I panted. "We can't get at the room from inside, Onions! He's—he's a prisoner in there——"

I choked, for further words would not come. I gazed at Johnny with horror, for it was this fellow's brother that was doomed to the most horrible death imaginable. Caught in that isolated tower-room, he had no means of escape. Indeed, I had seen him stagger back, probably unconscious.

"But the stairway can't be blocked—it can't be!" shouted Onions, his anguish terrible to witness. "I'll go there——"

"No, it's useless!" I gasped, grasping his shoulder. "Don't, Onions! You'll only make things worse! The stairway's—— Why, what on earth—— Quick! Stop him! Stop him!"

For one awful second I thought he had gone insane with grief, and was going to fling himself from the roof to the ground. For the schoolboy acrobat had suddenly caught in his breath, and made one swift leap at the parapet.

And instead of going over, he poised himself there, and then ran as nimbly as a cat along the edge, with death yawning on one side of him, until he came to a high stack of ornamental chimneys.

I nearly turned sick with apprehension as I watched him.

Like a squirrel, he leapt up that great chimney, gaining a handhold and foothold in tiny crevices that were almost invisible. And by now I had seen his object. And my heart throbbed with admiration—and fear. Admiration for the fellow's sterling courage, and fear for his safety. It seemed absolutely certain to me that he was going to join his brother in death.

From the top of that chimney-stack a number of telephone wires were stretched straight across to the tower—a bunch of wires that one frequently sees in such places. And it was obviously the intention of Onions to swing himself over to the tower, and thus get in the window to the rescue of his brother.

But the thing seemed impossible—a madness in itself.

Even if he got safely across, he would find himself on the top of the tower, with no reasonable means of getting inside. And smoke was now pouring out of the windows and completely enveloping the tower roof.

Hundreds of eyes watched Onions as he set about his perilous task. Hundreds of eyes expecting to see him go hurtling down to death as the wire broke. But, in reality, the wire was stout enough.

Both the roof of the Ancient House and the roof of the College House swarmed with fellows, and they all gazed at the desperate

River House junior. Even some of the rioters, far below, forgot their rage in this sudden diversion, and they stood staring upwards.

And to everybody's amazement, Onions did not swing along the wire, hand over hand, but nimbly leapt upwards and balanced himself, standing! He was using the telephone wire as a tightrope!

And with his arms outstretched to balance himself, he crossed that improvised slack wire—for, under his weight, it stretched ominously. A gasp of sheer relief went up from a hundred throats as Onions reached the roof of the tower and momentarily vanished amid the smoke.

Then he was seen to be swarming down one of the ornamental pillars. We had a glimpse of him, and then he swung himself, with one plunge, into the burning room.

"Hurrah!"

A rousing cheer went up—a kind of hoarse, husky sound. For even now it was recognised that the danger was only half over. There was a tense period of waiting. And at last Johnny Onions appeared again.

And now it was seen that he was climbing out of the window backwards, with his brother on his back. At first we believed that Bertie was clinging there, but as the breeze blew the smoke away, we saw that this was not the case. Bertie was unconscious, and his wrists were tightly bound by a handkerchief. He was thus hanging limp from his brother, but quite safe as long as the bonds held round his wrists.

And Johnny was climbing steadily upwards on that pillar—inch by inch, edging his way up from niche to niche. It was a feat that could only have been accomplished by an expert acrobat.

How he gained the roof nobody knew—perhaps Johnny himself could not have explained. But he did reach it, and then a chorus of startled gasps went up when it was seen that he was returning exactly as he had gone—crossing the wire in an upright position.

He was walking the tightrope, with certain death yawning beneath him if he slipped, or if the wire gave way. There was an absolute hush as Johnny Onions proceeded, his feet steady, his balance perfect. And from below came the dull, confused sounds of the rioters.

Foot by foot, Johnny made his way across that gulf. And as he reached the firm security of the chimney-stack the spell was broken, and cheer after cheer roared out.

CHAPTER VII.

TOUCH AND GO!

"HURRAH!"

"Well done, Onions!"

"Oh, good man!"

A hundred shouts were raised as the plucky junior came along the parapet, and leapt lightly down to the flat leads. He



was surrounded, and his burden was gently disengaged and attended to.

Water was at hand in plenty, to say nothing of bandages. At first it was thought that Bertie Onions was badly burned, for he was blackened with smoke, and quite still. But a short examination proved that he was hardly scorched. Except for two nasty burns on his right hand, there was not much wrong with him. He had sunk into unconsciousness from the fumes.

And the fresh air and plenty of cold water soon had due effect. And he was shortly opening his eyes and recovering. Johnny Onions was the hero of the hour—particularly among the River House boys.

And the excitement over this affair had been so intense that we had failed to notice what was happening in the remainder of the school. But now we turned our attention to the peril.

In spite of the efforts to keep the rioters out, several parties of them had succeeded in getting in. By sheer force and brute strength one of the barricades in the lobby had been torn down—even in face of the devastating deluge of water from the hose.

It was the lower barricade, where Morrow was in charge.

A surging body of men had rushed in, and they were so maddened and infuriated with this resistance that they had braved everything for a tense five minutes while the barricade was being torn to atoms and strewn over the lobby.

And at last, just when the defenders were beginning to believe that they were still victorious, the barricade gave way under a terrific charge from the men in the rear.

About six of the rioters were seriously hurt in that terrific onslaught, being crushed down and trampled on by those behind. But these men were in such a maddened mood that they hardly knew what damage they were doing, even to themselves. And now a great army of the savages poured in.

Two hundred, at least, swept into the Ancient House, and spread throughout the lower floor like a flood. They invaded every room, and in their newly-found triumph they lost no time in commencing destruction.

Studies were entered, furniture was smashed to atoms in ruthless, malicious fashion.

Men with pickaxes swept from room to room, destroying all before them. And it was absolutely impossible to prevent this. A party of seniors tried to go down to the attack, but they were beaten back.

Indeed, they were lucky to escape. For the rioters, at the first sight of the boys, commenced hurling smashed pieces of furniture with all their strength. The seniors retired hurriedly, abandoning a hose-pipe that they had dragged up. And they fled, with more than one casualty.

The rioters reached the Remove common-room, and the Third Form class-room. These two apartments were turned into rubbish heaps. Desks were torn and smashed and splintered.



"Stand out of the way!" roared Willy. "If you don't, I'll drop it!"

And the heaps of broken woodwork and other debris were piled up in the centre of each room. The invaders lit paper, and attempted to start fires. But in every case they failed.

The reason for this was apparent.

The desks were made of hard, seasoned wood, and paper alone was not sufficient to set them blazing. The paper simply blazed, smouldered, and then died down. It was the same in the studies.

But it was obvious that this was only a temporary difficulty. These men would soon find better means of starting a conflagration. And at this period it was touch and go for the safety of the school.

The men were overrunning the entire Ancient House by now, and adventures of all kinds were taking place. Parties of fellows were cut off, and had to fight their way to freedom.

Battles were taking place in all sorts of odd corners; but, fortunately, in every case the boys managed to get away from their brutal antagonists before any fatal injuries were caused.

And gradually the defenders were being driven to the upper floors, and all efforts to stay the destruction below were becoming futile. Even the first floor was now cleared, and was in the hands of the rioters.

"It's all up, you chaps!" said Armstrong anxiously. "We're beaten—we can't do another thing! Goodness only knows how this affair will end! We're trapped like rats in a hole!"

"Don't growl!" said Handforth sharply.

"It's true, isn't it?" wailed Teddy Long. "They're going to set fire to the school, and there'll be no means of escape for us! We're all trapped up here—without any way of getting down!"

"He's right—we're in horrible danger!" said Gulliver.

"Oh, why did we stay here at all?" sobbed

Bell. "We ought to have bunked while we had the chance! It was madness to come into the school! Now we're all doomed!"

"Stop that snivelling, confound you!" roared Handforth. "If these rotters do start a fire, we'll find a way of escape!"

But even as he said the words, he realised that there was no sincerity in them. For even Handforth, valiant fighter though he was, felt that the climax was not far off.

And the fears of the weaker juniors were justified.

Driven up to the higher floors of the building, there was absolutely no way of getting down. For any attempt to descend would be fraught with the direst peril. It would mean walking into the hands of these murderous invaders, to be beaten and probably killed.

And to remain meant being trapped. If once a disastrous fire started, there would be absolutely no hope. For with the lower parts of the school in flames, there could be no escape by rushing downstairs. And the only alternative would be to leap from the windows.

This, in itself, would mean risk to life and limb—and the absolute certainty of falling into the hands of the waiting rioters below. Whichever way the position was looked at, it was horrible.

And then came the real danger.

The moment had arrived when it was a matter of seconds whether the school was destroyed, or remained intact. For a party of the rioters, sweeping through the domestic quarters of the Ancient House—now completely deserted by all the servants came across several great drums of oil. They fell upon this prize with wild shouts of triumph.

"Now we'll smoke the young whelps out!" roared one of the men. "Bring some of these oil-drums to those rooms where the furniture's all piled up! Gosh! We'll have a fire going in less than a minute!"

A crowd of the men swiftly carried two of the drums into the Third-Form classroom. Oil was poured in cascades over that great mass of debris which filled the centre of the apartment. The grimy, perspiring men ran round like so many demons, shouting, laughing, and capering.

"Stand back!" roared one of them.

He struck a match, lit a half-sheet of newspaper, and hurled it at the pile in the centre of the floor.

At the same second he flung himself to the door, and swept through. There was a roaring burst of flame, and in a flash the great pile was flaring like a gigantic torch. The flames leaped out through the open window in one flaring mass—visible to crowds of fellows in the College House.

"The school's on fire!"

"Oh, it's all up now!"

Shouts rang out, in alarm and dismay.

"This is about the end!" exclaimed Buster Boots hoarsely. "By George! Look at it!"

In another five minutes the whole lower part of the Ancient House will be a furnace!"

"And then it'll spread across to here, and by nightfall there'll be nothing but a heap of ruins!" said Christine huskily. "Oh, the fiends! The destructive devils!"

A few moments later a similar burst of flame appeared from the window of the junior common-room in the Ancient House. Here, too, oil had been poured upon the wreckage, and set fire to.

The situation was desperate, indeed.

For it was now merely a matter of seconds. Once these two rooms got fairly alight, the blaze would spread to the rest of the school, and every remaining hope of saving the situation would be gone.

Outside, beyond the gates, William K. Smith was watching.

He had been there for some time, fearful to venture in, lest he was seized by the rioters, and murdered on the spot. But when he saw those flames leaping out of the windows he was turned sick with apprehension.

"By Heaven!" he muttered. "This is the finish!"

And, indeed, it seemed that such was the case. For the flames were gaining a firm hold.

A sound caused Mr. Smith to turn, and then his eyes brightened for a moment. He turned back, and looked into the Triangle. Few rioters were to be seen, for by this time the majority had swarmed into the school.

And Cyclone Smith leapt into activity!

CHAPTER VIII.

FIGHTING THE FLAMES!



THESE was a chance—a bare chance.

Smith, in turning, had seen a fairly large crowd of local men coming up the lane, armed with sticks and clubs, and everything that they could lay hands on to use as a weapon.

There were fifty men strong. Some of them were the braver spirits of the unemployed, others were farm-labourers, and sturdy villagers who wanted to do their bit against the common enemy.

Joe Catchpole, one of Farmer Holt's men, was in the lead, and Cyclone Smith ran down the road, urging the men to hurry. More than anything else, Smith wanted to save the school from destruction. The consequences for him would be bad enough, in any case, but if St. Frank's were destroyed by his maddened employees, the charge against him would be trebly intensified.

"They've fired the school!" he shouted desperately. "If you boys rush in now you you might be able to save it! Come with me! We've got to act now, or not at all!"

Joe Catchpole flared into anger.

"Ay, ye may well be anxious!" he shouted. "This is your doing, Mr. Smith! Ye're at the bottom of all this trouble——"

"Never mind that, man!" snapped Smith. "There's no time to waste!"

"I'll own ye're right!" growled Catchpole fiercely. "Holy smoke! The man's right! The school's afire."

He had caught sight of the flames and smoke leaping out of the windows, and it galvanised him into activity. Roaring out encouragement to the others, Catchpole rushed into the Triangle, followed by the whole crowd.

But even now they scarcely knew what to do, and it was Mr. Smith who pointed out the way. He had already seen a fire hydrant against one of the walls. And Smith was cupping his hands to his mouth, and shouting up to the fellows on the roof.

"Throw the hose down!" he roared. "Two, if you can! Quick, or you'll be roasted alive!"

"He's right!" panted Mr. Clifford. "It's the only chance, boys! If Smith saves the situation, he'll have done something to make amends! That's right! Throw him that hose! The other one, too!"

Already some of the men in the Triangle were fighting. A number of the rioters had swarmed to the attack, but the situation was not lost yet. The two hosepipes tumbled to the ground, and were instantly seized. And desperate fingers attached them to the hydrant.

A rousing cheer went up as two tremendous streams of water rushed out from the nozzles. Rushing close, the rescuers directed the play of water into the windows of the burning rooms.

Clouds of steam arose, almost obliterating the whole building, and the sight was an impressive one. It looked far more perilous than it actually was. For it seemed to the watching juniors that the whole lower part of the school was an inferno.

As a matter of fact, the water had been turned on the fire in the nick of time.

Another five minutes and the blaze would have gained such a hold that a dozen hoses would have been necessary to quell it. As it was, the worst of the fire was confined to the Third-Form room and the Remove common-room. Both these apartments were burnt out, and literally gutted.

The great volumes of water poured upon the flames put them out before the damage became irreparable. But, after all, what was the use of it? A temporary stoppage, but nothing more.

For Smith's ruffians were now in full command of the school, and within the next ten minutes would probably start fires in a score of different places. Unless these brutes were driven out by sheer force practically at once, no power on earth could avert the full disaster.

Just for the moment the situation had been saved—but only for the moment.

And it seemed really futile to attempt any further defence. For there was no hope of any kind—no chance that rescue would come. For it would need a great force of armed men to quell the rioters.

And they must come at once.

I was sick at heart, and more disappointed than I could express. I had done the best I could. I had sent out my wireless appeal for help, but it was obvious that my efforts had been all in vain.

And, in the fierce, continuous excitement of the battle, nobody had a real chance of realising the full proportions of this threatened catastrophe. Even as it was, the school was so badly damaged that an army of workmen would be required to put it in order.

But, as things looked at present, a new school itself would be wanted. And the very thought of this noble old pile going up in smoke and flames made me pale with worry. Somehow, St. Frank's had never seemed so dear as it seemed just now—when it was threatened with annihilation.

To describe exactly what took place all over the school at this period is a task quite beyond my powers, for the situation had resolved itself into a hundred different incidents, all happening at the same moment.

There were one or two outstanding occurrences that made all the difference between safety and destruction. Thus, even such an unimportant person as Willy Handforth was instrumental in saving the school.

The order had gone forth from Mr. Clifford, and Mr. Stockdale, and all the prefects, that the boys were to collect on the roof—this being the safest spot of all.

It was the same in the College House, for this, too, had now been penetrated, and was overrun by the destructive invaders. At last the resistance had been beaten, and Smith's men were in full command.

But it chanced that Willy Handforth and Chubby Heath were in rather a tight corner. The two fags, in all the confusion, had dashed downstairs on a rather extraordinary mission, considering the acuteness of the peril.

They had decided, in fact, to obtain a snack! As Willy had said, he saw no reason why they should go hungry, just because they were in danger. Willy had remembered that he had tasted no food since breakfast-time, and it occurred to him that there was no telling when he would have another square meal.

"We'll buzz down to the kitchen, and grab a tin of biscuits, or something," he said to Chubby. "Might as well do that as waste our time here. What's the good of being hungry?"

"I couldn't eat a thing!" panted Heath. "Fancy thinking of food now! Food! And the giddy school about to be blown sky high!"

"Rats!" said Handforth minor. "What's the good of an army with empty stomachs? We'll be able to fight ten times as good

with grub inside us. Come on! It'll only take us three minutes!"

And so the two fags nipped down the back stairs, and entered the kitchen. But they had hardly got inside the door when they heard the coarse voices of a number of invaders. In a second Willy dragged his companion into a handy cupboard, and slammed the door.

"We'll be murdered now!" said Chubby fearfully.

"Dry up—funk!" hissed Willy.

"You wait!" threatened Heath fiercely. "I'm a funk, am I? I'll jolly well smash your head for that to-morrow!"

"How can you, if you're murdered?" asked Willy.

The two fags kept quite still, and they could hear the sounds of the men beyond. And it was clear that something big was going on. Finally, there came a kind of hissing sound, and a chorus of coarse laughs from the men. And then, to the dismay of the fags, the door of their cupboard was suddenly flung open.

"This," said Willy, "is where we vanish!"

His thoughts worked like lightning. He knew it was no good waiting to be seized. So he ducked with astonishing speed, and wriggled past two of the men, with Chubby Heath in his wake. The pair of them made a bee-line for the doorway leading to the back stairs before they could even be touched.

"Grab those young guys!" bellowed one of the men.

"Yah! Try and do it!" jeered Willy.

And even as he fled he caught sight of something out of the corner of his eye. On the second, he came to an abrupt halt, and Chubby Heath collided violently with his back.

What Willy had seen was startling.

On the kitchen table stood a wooden box, and a string of something was attached to it, with one end trailing. And the end of this string was hissing and spluttering with fire.

"A bomb!" roared Willy. "They're going to blow us up!"

And this, indeed, was the actual truth. These men had brought in a powerful blasting charge, and had already fired the fuse. If that charge went off, not only the kitchen would be wrecked, but this part of the school would be blown to atoms.

Any other junior would probably have run for his life—Chubby Heath was certainly prepared to do so. But Willy Handforth was made of different stuff. As in all his actions, he was quick as thought.

He made one dive for the table, grabbed at the box, and clung to it like grim death.

"Stand out of the way!" he roared. "If you don't, I'll drop it!"

The startled men fled precipitately, cursing wildly in their terror. For it was indeed terrifying to see this junior with that death-dealing box in his grasp, and with the

fuse trailing, and sparks hissing from it in myriads.

"Let it go—let it go!" screamed Chubby. "You'll be blown to bits!"

"Fathead! Don't get excited!" snapped Willy. "Come on!"

Without being hindered, they reached the back stairs, and Chubby went up them faster than he had ever gone in his life. Willy followed, sure-footed and nimble, with that deadly thing in his grasp. He couldn't put the fuse out—he knew it. To stamp on it would be useless. But there were still a few moments before any explosion could take place.

And Handforth minor kept his head.

He reached the landing, with Chubby just in front of him, white-faced and trembling.

"Bath-room!" snapped Willy. "Turn the taps on!"

And then Chubby understood, and raced away like a hare. Willy came after him, and suddenly ran into a crowd of Remove fellows who were hastening to the roof in obedience to orders.

"Clear out of the way!" yelled Willy. "Dynamite!"

"Great Scott!" gasped Armstrong, backing hastily.

"It's a bomb!" hissed Willy. "Clear out—it's just going off!"

He was down the passage like a streak, and the fuse was now burning perilously near to the charge. Willy reached the bath-room, swung aside, and found the taps were full on, and Chubby was crouching back, with his hands shielding his eyes.

"You'll be too late!" he panted hoarsely.

"Rot!" said Willy. "We're safe now!"

His coolness in the face of such terrible danger was startling. It was only a matter of seconds before the terrible thing would explode in his arms, shattering him to atoms. Without the least sign of panic, he lowered the deadly bomb into the bath, and allowed the flowing water to sweep over the burning fuse. Then he carefully immersed the whole contrivance in the water.

"Well, that's that!" he said, with a sigh of relief, and turning slightly pale, now that the tension was over. "My hat! I thought we were goners that time, Chubby! Oh, glory! I feel all faint!"

And Willy leaned against the bath, suffering from acute reaction. But his plucky action had saved a part of the school from an explosion that would have created terrible local havoc.

Chubby Heath gazed into the bath rather fearfully.

"Is—is it safe now?" he asked, in a husky voice.

"Don't be a fathead!" said Willy. "Of course it's safe. Who ever heard of a bomb exploding after it's been soaked? It was a pretty close thing, but a miss is as good as a mile."

"And we've saved the school!" said Chubby thankfully.

"We?" repeated Willy. "Oh, well, I suppose you did turn the taps on, so I'll allow you part of the credit. You'd pinch it, anyway! But what's the good? We've stopped one explosion, but there'll probably be a dozen others within a minute or two."

"Oh, my goodness! I—I'd forgotten that!"

"Then it won't be long before you're reminded of it!" retorted Willy. "My son, you can take it from your Uncle William that St. Frank's is doomed to destruction!"

CHAPTER IX. IN THE BALANCE!



DURING these tense minutes the safety of St. Frank's was in the balance.

It seemed impossible that any help could come—at least, any adequate help.

My wireless messages had been futile, and had almost led to the sacrifice of several lives.

And now the radio was destroyed, and perhaps this was just as well, for the suspense of waiting for a reply that never came was terrible. Everybody was convinced, by now, that there would be no rescue.

The destruction or the saving of the school rested with the boys themselves. And one thought on this subject was sufficient. There were two or three hundred boys, it is true, and they were grim and desperate. But what could they do against a maddened, inflamed mob of a thousand? A thousand besotted half-breeds and Mexicans and negroes who had been practically brought up to the law of violence! The position indeed looked hopeless.

Those two fires in the Ancient House had been quelled, owing to the timely action of Joe Catchpole and the other local men. The explosion in the domestic quarters had been prevented by Willy Handforth's pluck. During these minutes of tense touch and go, a score of other conflagrations were on the point of being started. The situation had got to the point when rescue must come in force, or not at all.

The rioters were in full possession of the school, and were preparing for wholesale destruction. But they didn't have everything their own way. The defenders were still game.

Even while Joe Catchpole and his men were extinguishing those fires—even while Willy Handforth was rushing up the stairs with that bomb—Buster Boots and Co. were fighting a desperate, forlorn battle in the College House. All these things happened at one and the same time.

I am trying to give a picture of the ter-

rible position, and it's rather difficult, for so many things took place, in various parts of the school, during these dramatic minutes.

Everything that I have described occurred within the brief period of two or three minutes—when a few seconds might mean the difference between annihilation and safety.

John Busterfield Boots and Bob Christine and a crowd of other Monks were valiantly defending the main College House staircase. The rioters were below, surging in hundreds, determined to make their way upstairs—in order to set fire to the bedrooms and dormitories.

But for the moment they were checked.

There had been no time to throw up a barricade. But the Monks were crowding the top of the staircase, using every method in their power to stay the advance. More than anything else, the rioters wanted to get to grips with these juniors. Their lust for revenge was stronger than ever.

It was the Remove they had fought against during the past week or so—it was the Remove who had defied them. And now the Remove was still in defiance, although the odds were all against them. Smith's men knew that victory was practically theirs, and they fought grimly.

Once at grips with these boys, and it would go hard with the Monks. In their present mood, these men would stop at nothing. Any act of atrocious violence was possible. For the men would not stop short at mere brutality. They wanted to take a revenge that would involve injury and even death to their youthful victims.

And Christine and Co. knew it. They had been ordered to escape to the roof, but were making a last defence before rushing to temporary safety. And there were some exciting moments.

"We're winning!" yelled Clapson excitedly. "Joe Catchpole and a whole crowd of men are putting out those fires in the Ancient House!"

"Hurrah!"

"Stick to it, you chaps!" roared Buster.

"We mustn't let the Ancient House chaps beat us!"

"No fear!"

And the Monks were more determined than ever to resist the invaders. Their shouts, however, only drove the rioters to further excesses. A great crowd of the half-drunken ruffians came sweeping up the stairs, determined to rush these juniors off their feet. The men were beginning to realise that the boys would do them no actual harm.

But, at the moment, the juniors held the advantage—for they were dealing with an upward rush, and were thus able to press their attack downwards, whilst the attackers were exposed to the full force of the juniors' onslaught.

Swish! Whizz! Crash!

All sorts of missiles hurtled downwards into that struggling mob of cursing men. Pillows, cricket stumps, football boots, chairs, and even a small table or two. For the juniors themselves were getting reckless.

And the enemy was not quite so safe, after all.

Three or four men went hurtling downwards into the arms of their companions, struck by the pieces of furniture. And the onslaught wavered, and seemed for a moment to hesitate.

"Now!" roared Buster. "Let 'em have it!"

A huge assortment of other articles hurtled downwards, and this time the attack broke up. The hooligans tumbled down the stairs in a disordered crowd, and sorted themselves out in the lobby.

"Hurrah! They're beaten!"

But this was premature. The juniors found that they had been using a two-edged sword, so to speak. For the cricket stumps, chairs, etc., that they had been hurling, were flung back with destructive force.

One or two juniors were hit, and rather badly knocked about. And they were forced to give way slightly. But they had lost none of their grim determination. Instinctively, they felt that the safety of the College House depended upon their resistance.

These men, without reasoning, and in their excited fury, were determined to get upstairs. Instead of wreaking their destruction below, they wanted to exact their vengeance on the boys.

And just then, when matters were still very uncertain, somebody came tearing along the upper corridor.

"Quick, you chaps!" he shouted desperately. "Scoot!"

"Scoot!" shouted Christine. "What for?"

"They're swarming up the back stairs!" gasped the other. "Unless you get on to the roof at once, you'll be trapped! And once in the hands of these devils, they'll murder you!"

Christine and the others glanced down the long corridor. They heard crashings and smashings and the wild shouting of excited men. Christine looked at Buster Boots, and nodded.

"Time for us to go!" he said grimly. "Still, we've done our bit—we delayed the beasts for five minutes, anyhow!"

Before Boots could reply, a huge crowd of men broke into view at the end of the corridor. And seeing the juniors there, they rushed forward with shouts of triumph. The men in the lobby below knew that something was wrong, and they instantly took advantage of it. With shouts of rage and triumph, they made another rush at the stairs.

To hesitate was fatal.

Just a few seconds' delay, and the Monks would be caught between the two forces of men, and then their plight would have been ghastly. For in their wild mood these ruffians would have committed awful bloodshed.

"This way!" roared Buster Boots loudly.

There was a passage just near the head of the stairs, and the crowd of juniors swarmed along it, with both sets of invaders in full pursuit. But the boys had the advantage of knowing their ground.

They swung round a corner, and then leapt up the stairs to the third floor, finally emerging upon the roof, and slamming the heavy, weatherproof door. They were just in time to cut off the pursuers.

"Well, we did as much as we could," panted Christine. "But it's all up now!"

The juniors, indeed, hardly realised their own peril. They had fled to the roof in their extremity—and the roof, indeed, was full to almost overflowing with seniors as well. Everybody had done his best. The Fifth and Sixth had fought gallantly, but in vain.

And now the whole roof of the school was packed with its inhabitants. Safe there, for the time being, from the fury of the mob, their security did not promise to be lasting. For if the school was set ablaze—as seemed certain—the boys would be trapped in the most horrible way.

And the crisis was at hand!

In both Houses the rioters were in absolute occupation. Ordinary destruction was not good enough for them. The mere smashing of furniture and windows and pictures offered too tame an amusement.

These savages were preparing a dozen fires, and within a very few minutes now the school would be blazing from every corner. And any help that came later might save the boys from deadly peril, but could not possibly save the school.

"It's the finish this time, old man," said Reggie Pitt, as he stood on the Ancient House roof. "The brutes have got into the College House, and the next thing will be a blaze. Our only hope is for the Bannington Fire Brigade to get on the scene."

"Mr. Clifford said he tried to ring 'n, but the wire was cut, or something," I exclaimed huskily. "Reggie, we're in a terrible fix!"

He made no reply, and we stood there waiting dumbly for the end. Everything within human power had been done—and, when summed up, we saw that we had only caused a brief delay. The final scene of destruction was apparently inevitable.

Most of the other fellows were silent, too. They were pale and drawn, inwardly fearing, but outwardly courageous. And a motley crowd they looked! Dirty, ragged, collarless, many of them bleeding, and quite a number of the fags in tears.

The seniors moved restlessly up and down, but they knew, as well as anybody else,

that the final effort had been made. And down in the Triangle Joe Catchpole and his crowd were beaten, too.

During these past dramatic minutes, the rioters had been fighting with the local men, and the latter had been unable to stand against such numbers. They were compelled to retire—many of them battered about horribly.

And after all the recent commotion, a kind of peace appeared to have descended upon the school. But this was all false. And the comparative silence was grimly sinister and significant.

It was the lull before the final outburst of the storm!

The hordes of rioters, instead of surrounding the school, and attempting to get inside, were now within the doors of St. Frank's—making preparations for the final destruction of the historic old pile.

We could hear a subdued kind of hum from below us—from the scores of broken windows between the roof and the ground. And we knew the cause. The rioters were moving about like hornets in a nest. And it was just the same in the College House. Soon, we knew, these brutal hooligans would come rushing out, their fatal work accomplished.

Archie Glenthorne was standing by my side, and I noticed that he had put a hand to one of his ears, and was listening intently. A slow flush crept into his face, and his monocle, which he was still wearing, dropped from his eye and dangled on its cord.

"Gadzooks!" he murmured. "Music, what?"

"Music?" I repeated, staring.

"Absolutely!" replied Archie. "I realise, dear old gargoyle, that the ear department is playing a foul trick on me, but there you are. I suppose it's like a chappie who hears a bally harp twanging just before he goes down for the third time! I mean to say, death, as it were, is lurking round the old corner, waiting to bludgeon us!"

"Archie, you're hopeless!" said Reggie quietly. "Even at a time like this you can't speak plain English. And as for your hearing——"

He paused, a rather startled expression crept into his eyes.

"Listen!" he gasped. "I can hear it, too! There—there's a drum and fife band! Can't you hear——"

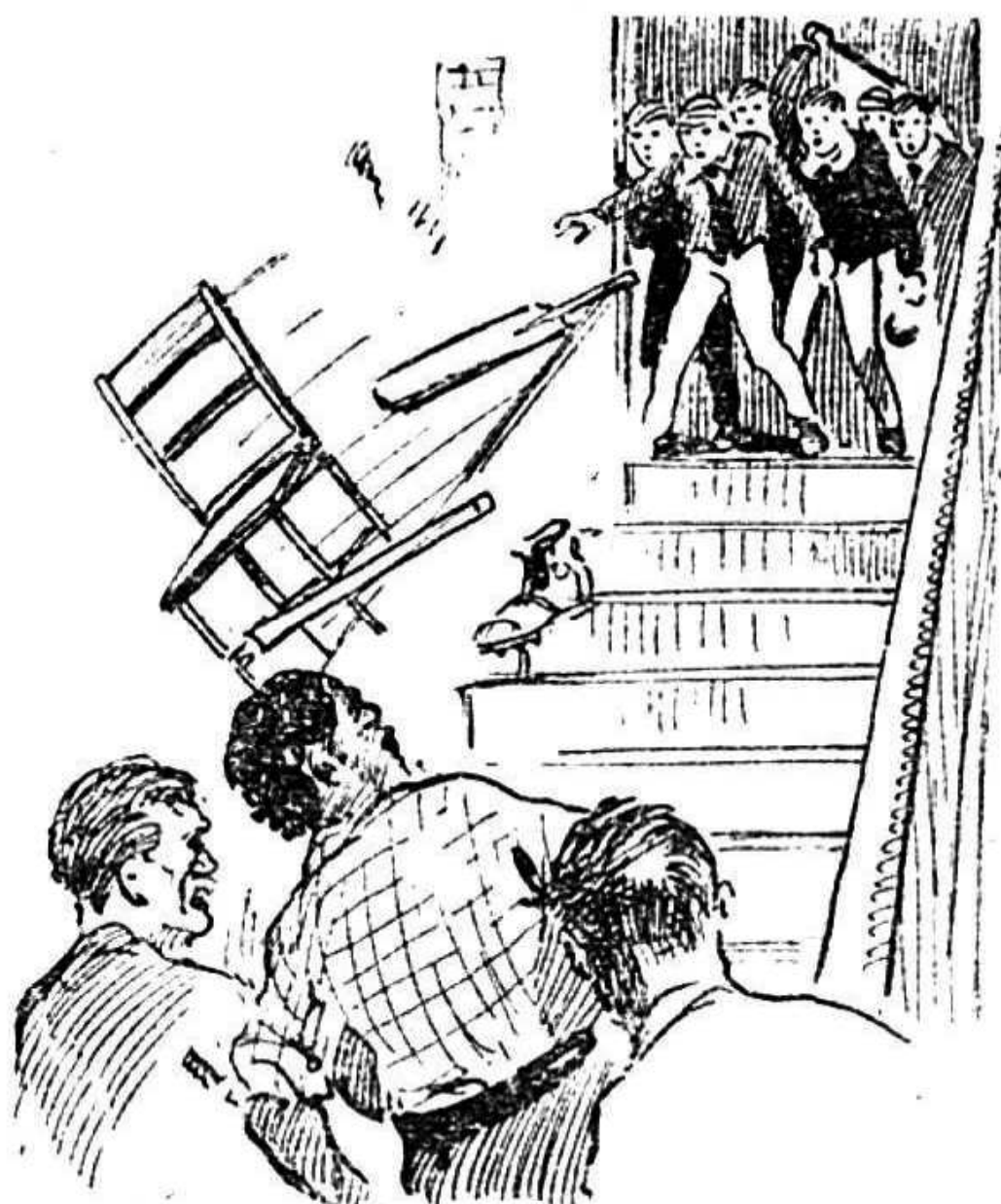
"Wait—wait!" I hissed tensely.

We strained our ears, and, sure enough, we distinctly heard the music—faint and far away above that subdued din from below, but nevertheless a reality. And then I caught sight of Handforth leaping perilously on to the parapet, with death yawning below him.

"Soldiers!" he shouted wildly.

There was a mad rush for the parapet on that side of the building.

"He's right—he's right!" panted Tommy



All sorts of missiles hurtled down into that struggling mass of cursing men.

Watson, grabbing my sleeve. "Look. Nipper! Hundreds of them! They're—they're the Territorials! They must have heard that message, after all!"

I seemed to choke, and could make no reply. And through a kind of blur I saw column after column of khaki-clad figures marching swiftly along the lane towards St. Frank's.

They came along in an endless line, and by this time the whole school was cheering with a frantic enthusiasm that might have been heard in Bannington itself.

CHAPTER X.

THE FLIGHT OF CYCLONE SMITH!



PANDEMONIUM reigned. The very sight of those hundreds of Territorials filled the besieged defenders with untold relief and excitement. They shouted, they raved,

they cheered, and Bedlam seemed to be let loose.

It was rather a wonder that a number of fellows were not sent hurtling to the ground in the general scramble for the parapet. And the cheering had now become one continuous yell.

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo, Terriers!"

"You're just in time!"

Indeed, it was a matter of doubt, even

now. Smoke was beginning to issue from more than one window, and a kind of panic had set in among the invaders. A number of the rioters near the windows were startled and frightened out of their wits by the sight of soldiers marching into the Triangle.

Infantry—sturdy looking fellows with fixed bayonets! Officers on horseback! And the whole force swept into the Triangle with a cool, calm air that was shattering to the strongest nerves. There was something terribly grim about the swift way in which the military surrounded the school.

Orders were rapped out by the officers, and parties of men set off in all directions. The Territorials took command of the situation with extraordinary speed and precision.

This was mainly due to Colonel Barton, D.S.O., who was in command. He was a man who had seen active service on three fronts, and who took in this present situation almost at a glance.

And Colonel Barton was an old St. Frank's boy, too, and he afterwards explained that my wireless message had been taken to him a few minutes after it had been received.

At first he had thought it a fake—a joke. He had gone to the instrument himself, and had listened in—and had been convinced. His love for the old school was great, and so he had embarked upon this mission with an interest that would have been lacking had he been educated at another school.

And one glimpse of St. Frank's was enough for the colonel.

The broken windows, the litter of debris in the Triangle, the shattered door of the Ancient House, the crowded roofs, the smoke curling from more than one window, the sight of evil faces at a hundred different points. All these things told Colonel Barton that the one thing necessary in this present situation was speed.

And he rapped out his orders like a machine-gun.

And then, for the first time that day, the boys tasted the nectar of victory. It was a sheer, unadulterated joy to see the sobered rioters come rushing out in swarms, like rabbits from a warren, only to find themselves face to face with a grim cordon of soldiers with fixed bayonets.

"Hurrah!"

"It's all right now—we're saved!"

"Three cheers for the Terriers!"

About half the school went off its head with sheer delight and excitement. They were singing, shouting and dancing. Crowds of Removites performed war dances on the roof, and even the Fifth and Sixth forgot themselves so much that they joined in.

And, all the time, the rout went on below.

There were only about five hundred Territorials, but half this number would have been sufficient to reduce the rioters to subjection. One or two men, certainly, offered resistance. They produced revolvers, and fired wildly at the military—fortunately without doing any grievous hurt.

These men were knocked to the ground senseless by rifle-butts, and were considerably lucky to escape so lightly. The majority of the others were mad with terror and mortification.

One sight of steel was enough for them.

Their insane lust for destruction left them like a cloak, and instead of being a dangerous mob they became a mere rabble of abject curs. The military had no difficulty in dealing with the hundreds and hundreds of prisoners.

The Triangle became filled with them, and they were surrounded by soldiers with weapons held ready to use. And these startled rioters knew only too well that if they attempted any break for freedom, they would be fired upon and shot down like the curs they were.

Within ten minutes the victory was complete.

The last of the rioters had been driven out, and more than one fire was extinguished before it could develop. And the imprisoned boys came rushing down, to cheer their rescuers at closer quarters.

Discipline, of course, was out of the question. To even attempt to control the school at such a time would have been foolish. And the sounds of victory continued until most of the fellows were almost voiceless.

The rioters were marched off in columns, under close guard. And Colonel Barton had given orders that they were to be taken into Cyclone City, and interned. The colonel had taken the law into his own hands, and was dealing with the situation with masterly skill.

In a very short time Cyclone City became a prisoners' camp, with soldiers on duty in hundreds. Under no circumstances were these ruffians to be allowed any further liberty.

At St. Frank's the relief was so great that most of the fellows felt weak and faint after the tense excitements of the afternoon. It seemed impossible that so much could have happened in such a short space of time.

And there was one figure that was lost sight of in the general excitement. This was the figure of Mr. William K. Smith—the one man who was wholly responsible for the dreadful scenes, and who now realised that he had reached the end of his tether.

After that one brief appearance in the Triangle, when he had urged Joe Catchpole and the other men to put out the fires, Mr. Smith had vanished. As a matter of fact, he had got safely out of the way behind one of the thick hedges near the old monastery ruins.

At first he had viewed the arrival of the military with grateful satisfaction. But then, as he still lurked in the little shrubbery, he became grim and fiercely bitter.

After all, these boys had won!

For it was absolutely impossible for Smith to continue his activities now. The story of this riot and the attempt to burn St. Frank's

down, would be talked of throughout the country. An echo of it would probably reach America, and the name of William K. Smith would be none too pleasantly associated with the affair.

And there was a question of responsibility. Smith was quite keen enough to realise that he would be held liable for all this disturbance and danger to life. And the consequences might be grave indeed. So he almost wished now that the school had been destroyed. He was so intensely worried and mortified that he hardly knew which way to think, or which way to turn. The one certain fact which continually came home to him was that in this enterprise he was a beaten man.

And it was the Remove whom he had to thank.

So he determined to get away from the scene as quickly as possible. In fact, he made up his mind rapidly on the whole matter. His private yacht was lying at Caistowe, and he would get on board and sail at once for France. There, in Paris, he would be safe from any British law, and he would be able to direct operations for the clearing away of his material. For Mr. Smith fully realised that he would now never be permitted to develop his scheme. It must be abandoned—and would be set down as his one and only business loss.

In all the excitement and confusion he had little fear of being stopped or questioned. So he made his way by a roundabout route to the River House School, arriving in the dusk.

He heard the clatter and roar of a fire-engine, and smiled rather grimly to himself. It was rather humorous that the fire brigade should arrive when all the danger was past, and there was nothing to be done.

At the River House he met one of his chief men.

"We've been wondering where you were, Mr. Smith," said the other, looking relieved. "Say, what do you make of it? Looks pretty bad, I guess!"

"Bad?" replied Smith. "We've finished around here, Gimble. I'm quitting now—before there's any more trouble!"

"But what about the school—"

"It's all right—the soldiers have come," interrupted Smith. "I'll leave you here in charge, and you'll be hearing from me to-morrow. That's all. No questions, Gimble—I've got to show some speed!"

He hurried to the side of the building, and found his big limousine there. But there was no driver. This individual had been taking part in the rioting apparently. At least, he was absent.

And Smith was rather pleased, for he wanted to be alone. He leapt into the driver's seat, started the engine, and drove smoothly out into the road. A moment later he was in full flight away from the scenes of his defeat.

CHAPTER XI.

PEACE AT LAST!



BELLTON VILLAGE was seething with excitement and talk.

The news had rapidly spread from the school, and everybody in the district knew that the riot was quelled, and that the normal safety of the peaceful countryside was now restored.

Shopkeepers and villagers of all types stood out in the road, talking about the dramatic events. The loud drone of an electric horn sounded, and Smith came rushing by in his big car.

There were menacing looks from all, for the car was instantly recognised, and it was believed that Smith was inside. Nobody took the trouble to look at the driver.

The big limousine shot through the High Street, and Smith drove so recklessly that he nearly collided with a racing car that came at some speed from the direction of Bannington. He was so intent upon averting a mishap that he had no time to glance at the car's occupants.

So he sped on towards Caistowe unaware of the fact that the man behind the wheel of the other car was Nelson Lee. Smith had failed to detect the keen, searching glance that Lee had bestowed upon him.

And he was also unaware of the fact that the other car came to a sudden stop. Without a moment's waste of time, Nelson Lee commenced backing his racer in the narrow street, with the intention of turning.

"What's the idea, Lee?" asked the man who was sitting beside him.

"That was Smith—I want him!" replied Lee curtly.

"Smith!" exclaimed the other. "The deuce it was! I rather fancy I want him, too! Do you think he's bolting?"

"Looks uncommonly like it, Lennard," replied the famous detective. "I don't quite know the position at St. Frank's now, but there's no question that Smith is in an infernal hurry. We can't do better than cut him off, and take him back with us."

By this time the car had turned, and Nelson Lee stepped on the accelerator, and the racer fairly hummed over the country lane. While doing so, Nelson Lee was very thoughtful. He had an idea that Smith would guess that a chase was taking place, and he might act drastically in his desperation.

A side lane was reached, and Lee turned the racer into it so abruptly that Chief Detective-inspector Lennard, of Scotland Yard, was nearly thrown out. The Yard man was compelled to cling on for dear life.

For Nelson Lee now drove with utter recklessness—at least, so it seemed. The low, throbbing car fairly shot over the ground. Lennard clutched at Nelson Lee's sleeve.

"Steady, old man!" he gasped. "What on earth—"

"It's all right—I know what I'm doing!" snapped Lee.

For fully ten minutes the racing car leapt along under Nelson Lee's guiding hand. And then at length it came out upon the Caistowe Road almost within a stone's throw of the outskirts of the town.

And only just in time.

For as Nelson Lee's car blocked the lane, the loud, warning note of an electric horn sounded. Nelson Lee made no effort to move. He had succeeded in his ruse, and he was satisfied. He had cut off the millionaire, and Smith had no alternative but to jam his brakes on, and stop.

The big limousine came to a halt, with shrieking brakes and locked wheels. Only by skilful driving did Smith avert a serious collision. At the last second he turned his own automobile towards the ditch, and there it came to a halt.

Nelson Lee stepped over to it, looking very grim.

"Sorry, Mr. Smith, but I thought it better to take no chances," said the detective. "Allow me to introduce Chief Inspector Lennard, of Scotland Yard."

William K. Smith got to the ground, and he glared.

"What's this, anyway?" he demanded harshly. "A hold-up?"

"It's not exactly a hold-up, Mr. Smith," said the inspector. "I take it that you are Mr. William Karl Smith?"

"I am."

"I hold a warrant for your arrest——"

"My arrest!" shouted the German-American thickly.

"That is what I said."

"But why? You—you infernal fool!" roared Smith. "Why? On what charge?"

"On a charge of jeopardising the peace," snapped Lennard. "I have no doubt, Mr. Smith, that the charge will be somewhat altered later—and you can be quite sure that it will be a more serious one. At the present, I want you to regard yourself as my prisoner."

"You can go to blazes before I'll do that!" raved Smith.

"Come, come!" said the inspector sharply. "That won't do, Mr. Smith. I'm sure you don't want me to use any violence. It'll be better all round if you accept the situation, and remain calm. By the way, I'd like your gun, if you don't mind."

With a quick action, a deftness born of long practice, the Scotland Yard man relieved Mr. William K. Smith of his revolver, and dropped it carelessly into his own pocket.

"Now, sir, if you please," he said persuasively.

His calm attitude had a chilling effect upon Smith, and his rage soon died down. He realised at last that he was beaten, and that there was no alternative but to accept the position. Yet he was mortified beyond all measure. He, the great William K. Smith—

the financial wizard of two continents—was under arrest!

It was the biggest blow of all, and he took it hardly. But there was nothing else to be done, and so he climbed back into his own car, and took his seat in the front. Lennard himself got behind the wheel.

They went off together straight to Bannington, where Mr. Smith would be detained at the police-station until other arrangements could be made—and until Lennard had paid a visit to the scene of the riot, and had made a few preliminary investigations.

Lee, in his racer, drove straight off to the school.

He had been in London at the commencement of the afternoon's hostilities, but had received an urgent telephone message from Mr. Stockdale—the housemaster of the College House having got this through before the riot reached its height, and before the wires were cut.

When Nelson Lee drove his car into the Triangle he found an extraordinary state of affairs. It was still twilight, and the whole school could be seen with distinctness.

"Upon my soul!" ejaculated Nelson Lee softly.

He had been prepared to see some damage, but this was far more than he had bargained for. Hardly a single window in the school remained intact. Shattered glass lay everywhere. The Ancient House doorway was a wreck, and even the bricks and masonry had crumbled down.

And there was a curious smell of burning in the air—a stale smell, which told of a recently extinguished fire. And the Triangle itself was crowded with unkempt, grubby fellows. Seniors and juniors were going about in a battered condition, many of them collarless and without jackets.

And there was an immediate rush as soon as Lee was recognised.

"Guv'nor!" I shouted joyously, as I ran up.

"Hurrah! It's Mr. Lee!"

"Well, boys, things seem to be in a bad state——" began Nelson Lee.

"You ought to have been here an hour ago, sir!" shouted Handforth. "If it hadn't been for the Territorials, we should have been roasted alive, and the school would have been burnt to the ground! And we've won! In spite of Mr. Smith and his rotten crowd, we've beaten him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"It has been a costly affair, by all appearances," said Nelson Lee gravely. "Who is in charge here?"

"Mr. Stockdale, sir," I replied.

"And Mr. Ponsonby Small?"

"I think he must have scooted, sir," I replied. "We haven't seen anything of him for hours. He'd better stay away, too—because if he shows up now he'll be mobbed!"

In a very short time Nelson Lee had taken command of the school, and was discussing

matters with Colonel Barton and Mr. Stockdale. A short investigation of the damage had left Nelson Lee shocked.

Many rooms were burnt out, and in a great many others everything had been wrecked and ruined. It was practically impossible for the place to be inhabited. An army of workmen would be required to set things right.

And then the sound of wild cheering from outside caused Nelson Lee to go to the window. He and his companions were in the Head's study, and they were just in time to see Dr. Malcolm Stafford alighting from a freshly arrived car. With him was Sir John Brent, the chairman of the Board of Governors.

The old Head could not have arrived at a more opportune moment. His reception was startling. Seniors and juniors seemed to go mad with enthusiasm and delight, and the thunderous cheers left Dr. Stafford under no misapprehension regarding his great popularity.

Nelson Lee had communicated with him before leaving London, and the Head had lost no time in seeking out Sir John, and they had come down together.

And although Dr. Stafford was shocked beyond measure at the havoc, he was, at the same time, relieved to find that the damage was not greater.

For, after all, the rioters had done only superficial harm. Smashed windows, wrecked furniture, and so forth. All this could be remedied in ten days or a fortnight—providing the boys were absent.

And so a fresh surprise was sprung on the school.

It was only a short time to the Easter holidays, anyhow. And the announcement was made that all boys were to leave for their respective homes at the earliest possible moment—as many as possible that very evening.

And the school was gratified by the knowledge that Dr. Stafford had come back to stay, that Mr. Ponsonby Small was a mere memory, and that St. Frank's would be its normal self by the beginning of the new term.

And so, after all the excitements, peace had come at last.

And a few days later, when the fellows were in their various homes, they learned that Mr. William K. Smith had definitely abandoned his enterprise, and that Cyclone City was to be effaced as rapidly as possible.

So it seemed that St. Frank's and the surrounding countryside would rapidly assume its old peaceful appearance. And everybody decided to enjoy the Easter holidays to the full.

But if the Remove believed that the new terms were to be devoid of interest and excitement—well, the Remove was mistaken!

For, actually, excitement was to abound—but of a very different character to the recent variety. The new adventures were not entirely unconnected with a great circus, and when I whisper that many prominent Remove fellows were closely connected with this circus, I think I have hinted enough!

THE END.

Editorial Announcement

My dear Readers,

The Easter holidays are with us and the boys of St. Frank's, after a most exciting term, have only just been able to set off to their various homes to enjoy a short spell of holiday-making before the summer term begins. They would in the ordinary way have broken up a fortnight ago. The stirring events of the last few weeks kept them prisoners at the Old School. Now that victory is theirs, St. Frank's is safe and Karl Schmidt is in the care of the police, they will enjoy their well-deserved holiday all the more. The damage done to the school by Schmidt's foreign invaders will be repaired while the boys are away, and they will return after the holidays to find everything restored more or less to its former peacefulness. Dr. Stafford and all the other masters will be back, and the Remove will be among the first to welcome the old order of things, including the restoration of their studies

and other privileges which Mr. Small had denied them.

OUR COMING NEW SERIES.

Meanwhile, we will follow next week the holiday adventures of Handforth and Co. Archie, and a few other favourites in a special Easter story, "THE SCHOOLBOY CIRCUS OWNERS!" Excitement you will find in plenty in this coming story, and in addition some excruciatingly funny situations. It is going to be the beginning of a splendid new series, in which the famous Juniors will for the first time run a circus. With such fellows as Handforth, the Onions brothers, Fatty Little, Pitt, etc, they ought to make a huge success of it. Anyhow if they don't, Buster Boots will want to know why, for I hear that he is to advertize the show.

Your sincere friend,

NIPPER.



MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

By the Author of our St Frank's Stories.



No. 19. NEW YORK BARBER-SHOPS

THEY don't call these establishments hairdressers' in New York, but just plain "barber shops." The first thing that one notices, with something of a shock, is that there is practically no privacy. Somehow, when a man goes to have a shave and a hair-cut in London, he rather likes the idea of undergoing the idea in comparative seclusion.

But in New York there is no seclusion at all.

The majority of the barber-shops are open to full public view, the elaborate chairs being actually in the shop windows! Passing down any street, and gazing in any barber's window, the public is edified by the spectacle of gentlemen being shaved and trimmed, as though on exhibition.

Most of these places are extremely elaborate, with fearsome-looking chairs, which remind one of a dentist's parlour. I have nothing to say against the chairs at all—on the contrary, they are extremely comfortable. For these costly articles are mechanical to an almost uncanny degree. You climb into the chair, the barber touches various levers, and swings you down to any position he desires. You just lie there at full length, and the operator can swerve you into any position he desires.

In America, the shaving is not the simple matter it is on this side of the water. The average customer immediately removes his collar and tie before taking his seat in the chair. And after this he allows his face to be swathed in hot towels until he looks for all the world like a patient in the operating-room of a hospital.

The shave itself is a long, elaborate business, with more hot towels to finish with, and probably a face massage.

My first experience of an American barber-shop was an illuminating one. I went in for a simple hair-cut, and came out, over half an hour later, minus two dollars and fifty cents—about ten shillings. The barber cut my hair very adroitly, and then suggested that, as my scalp was somewhat dry, a shampoo would be advisable. I naturally

assumed that the shampoo would be of the ordinary simple kind.

Apparently it wasn't. Having smothered my head with sweet-scented preparations, I was then covered in lather, and finally wheeled, chair and all, to a huge wash-basin, where my head was placed under a warm shower-bath. The barber insisted upon electrical hair-brushing, and a few other things that I hadn't even heard of before, and by this time I was beginning to dimly realise that the bill was mounting up. For in New York you have to pay dearly for service.

The normal price of a hair-cut in New York averages between fifty and seventy-five cents—two or three shillings. And if you have even the smallest spray this is charged for extra. And a tip, of course, is an absolute essential. One would hardly dare to leave an American barber-shop without tipping the operator.

On the average, therefore, a hair-cut and a shave in America costs something near four shillings. They certainly take longer over the job than our English barbers do, and seem to do a great deal more. But the result, after all, is very much the same. Personally, I prefer the speedy British barber to any American I ever visited.

They are experts at time-saving in America—at least, they think they are—and it is quite a usual custom to have one's boots cleaned while lolling in the barber's chair, coloured gentlemen always being in attendance for this purpose. But the time monopolised by these simultaneous operations is so long that they could probably be done separately—and perhaps twice over—in the same period in sleepy, slow-going old London!

ANOTHER OF THESE INTERESTING ARTICLES NEXT WEEK

Entitled:

THE HIGHEST SKY-SCRAPER IN THE WORLD.

No. 21. Vol. 1.

Edited by Nipper.

April 19, 1924.



St. Frank's Magazine



FAMILIAR PHRASES FROM FICTION *As Seen By Our Artist*



"HE STRODE ALONG WITH HIS HEAD IN THE AIR!"

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

No. 23. King Edward VI School (Stratford-upon-Avon)



King Edward VI School, known also as the Grammar School, in Stratford-on-Avon, belonged to the ancient Guild of the Holy Cross, which dates back to the time of Edward I. The school, which adjoins the Chapel and Guildhall, was built originally by Robert de Stratford in 1296, and later rebuilt by Sir Hugh Clopton in the fifteenth century. It was endowed by Thomas Jolyffe, a priest of the Guild, towards the end of the fifteenth century. In the reign of

Edward VI., after the Guilds were suppressed, certain lands were restored to Stratford-on-Avon, provided an annual payment was made to the school. It is interesting to learn that plays were performed at the Guildhall by strolling players during the sixteenth century, when John Shakespeare, father of the poet, was High Bailiff. This leads us to suppose that it was highly probable the great dramatist himself went to school here.



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

My dear Chums,

Following the great sensation caused by the Handforth Number of the Mag., I said that I would endeavour to persuade Archie to edit the Old Paper for one number. So many stirring events have taken place at St. Frank's lately that I had almost forgotten all about the Archie Number, and I have not the slightest doubt that Archie has done the same. In fact, I am fairly certain that it has completely escaped his memory. For Archie is one of those fellows who can as conveniently forget as remember some things. But since we do not lack a number of well meaning prompters, who make it their business not to allow us to forget things we have said in a rash moment, we cannot excuse ourselves by blaming our memories.

The Archie Number.

The morning's post has brought quite a hurricane of reminders concerning the proposed Archie Number of the Mag. A few of these correspondents appear to be quite angry with the Genial Ass, calling him a slacker, and alluding to his weakness for forty winks in not very complimentary terms. On the whole, though, it would be unfair to say that Archie has been slacking. Although he has not been so prolific in his literary output as Handy, he has written quite a number of stories for the Mag. this year. As to when we may expect his special number of the Mag., I think I can safely say that it will not be more than a week or two after the Easter Number.

A Novel Competition.

I advertised in last week's issue a forth-

coming announcement of a simple and attractive competition for readers of the Mag. This, of course, includes the very large number of my chums outside the school, to whom the boys of St. Frank's are like old friends, thanks to the accounts of our adventures in the NELSON LEE LIBRARY. The competition will be a test of your skill in being able to recognise a number of St. Frank's characters, who will figure in a story specially written for the Mag., in which numbers will be given instead of names. The story will appear serially in four parts, introducing six characters with each part, making twenty-four characters altogether, each character being represented by a number. You will know them by the way they talk, and certain clues given in the story.

I am offering a prize of a guinea to the reader who sends in the correct, or most nearly correct, names of the characters depicted in the story. In the event of two or more readers tying, the prize will be divided accordingly.

The first instalment of the Competition Story will appear next week in our Easter Number.

Our First Competition.

This will be the first competition to appear in the Mag., and I hope it will be the forerunner of many more to follow. But that will depend very much on you, my chums. It is up to you to make it a huge success, to show me that you are all enthusiastic about it, and this can only be done by everyone having a shot at it. Although you may not win a prize at first, by entering you will be helping to make the competition popular.

Yours to a cinder,

NIPPER.



Correspondence Answered by Uncle Edward

SUFFERER.—It's no good writing about your beastly corns. What do you think I am—a doctor? I refuse to give you any advice on the subject. The best thing you can do is to soak your feet for five hours in hot water, until the corns are thoroughly soft, and then rub them off with sandpaper. If you can't get sandpaper, a piece of hearthstone will serve the purpose.

ENTHUSIASTIC READER.—I am glad that you are looking out for the publication of the Trackett Grim stories in book form. If any stories deserve to be immortalised, these famous detective masterpieces do. But I cannot agree with your suggestion that the Trackett Grim volumes would come in handy for the purpose of propping up an uneven table; and it is equally ridiculous to propose that the leaves should remain uncut.

ANXIOUS.—You say that you've dropped the bulb of your electric light while cleaning it in the study, and now it won't light? Your query as to whether the lamp is broken is ridiculous. If the glass isn't cracked, the lamp must be all right. The inside wires are of little importance.

FERRY DODD.—Yes, the cricket season is nearly here. I can understand your desire to obtain a few tips on batting, and suggest that you ask Handforth, of Study D, to put you through a few paces. As everybody knows, Handforth is the best cricketer in the Remove. I don't want to boast, but I've studied the game in every phase, and you can't do better than come to me.

CIGARETTE SMOKER.—You rotter! If I knew who you were, I'd punch your face. Cigarette smoking is all right for men, but rotten for boys. I can't tell you which is the best brand, and refer you to Study A, where the subject is known in all its details.

WILLY H.—If you keep writing me letters like this I'll burn them. I refuse to reply to your next tissue of insults, and

I won't break my word. If I ever catch you using my Trackett Grim stories to make pen-wipers with, I'll twist your ears and black your eyes, and give you two thick ears.

VICTIM.—You have my sympathy. So you've been bullied by a chap twice your size. If you tell me his name in confidence, I'll see that he gets punished. Any fellow who blacks the eyes and twists the ears of a boy smaller than himself is nothing more or less than an unmitigated cad.

GRIFFITH.—I'm sorry to hear that you are constantly troubled with punctures in your bicycle, and that a rash has broken out on your neck. The best thing you can do is to apply rubber solution. Rub it in well, and stick a patch on the affected part. And you can't beat a soothing ointment for the other complaint, and if this fails, buy a new outer cover.

SCHOLAR.—I am absolutely amazed at your ignorance regarding the West Indies. Of course they don't speak English there! Everybody knows the language of the country is the Hindu tongue.

COMPETITION FIEND.—Glad to hear that you like competitions in the paper. As a matter of fact, there's one being prepared now. But as it's a dead secret, I mustn't even mention that it's coming along. You'll never find me giving secrets away. I'm the most tactful journalist on the staff.

EDGAR SOPP.—I am surprised at you for taking exception to my remarks concerning your rotten Fables in my previous replies. After all, I only called them "sheer drivel" and "tripe." And if you are unreasonable enough to get wild about perfectly fair criticism like that, I've nothing more to say. The very fact that the majority of readers like your tosh is an eloquent indication to me that my own intellect is very different from the average.

UNCLE EDWARD.

THE PROBLEMS OF TRACKETT GRIM



HARE-LIPPED SYDNEY, THE STEPNEY STEEPLE-JACK!

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

BY

ED. O. HANDFORTH.

A COMMISSION FROM THE YARD.

SIR COPPEM SHARP paced Trackett Grim's consulting-room at Baker's Inn Road with short, brisk strides.

"I have come to place an extremely important case in your hands, Mr. Grim," he exclaimed, halting in front of the great criminal detective's chair dramatically. "A case which—if you succeed in solving it—will enhance your reputation a thousandfold! Do you hear me, Mr. Grim—a thousandfold!"

Trackett Grim nodded absently, and gazed at the uniformed official from the Criminal Investigation Department through half-closed eyelids.

"Exactly, Sir Coppem! I understand!" he murmured. "What is more, I gather that you are referring to the nefarious machinations of Hare-Lipped Sydney, the Stepney Steeplejack! Am I right?"

Sir Coppem Sharp started back with a low cry, and stared at Trackett Grim with goggling eyeballs.

"Great pip!" he gasped. "This—this is marvellous, Mr. Grim! Are you a thought-reader? How—how did you guess that I came to seek your help in the apprehension of Hare-Lipped Sydney?"

Trackett Grim smiled.

"Just a little deduction on my part, Sir Coppem—nothing more!" he said lightly. "You must remember that I am a super-detective, and that—as such—I am a somewhat extensive reader of the newspapers.

"Just lately they have been full of the exploits of Hare-Lipped Sydney, and some of the reports, I must say, have been anything but complimentary concerning the efficiency of the Yard! Hence my inference regarding your visit!"

Sir Coppem Sharp growled angrily.

"Exactly, Mr. Grim—exactly!" he snorted, resuming his agitated pacing once more. "These confounded reports are turning my hair white! I wouldn't mind so much if there was foundation for them, but there isn't! My men have traced no less than twenty-seven burglaries to Hare-Lipped Sydney, but he is too artful to be caught!

His house has been searched dozens of times, but we have never been able to find the slightest trace of stolen property there! The man is a fiend—a wizard—and he baffles us at every turn!"

Trackett Grim nodded.

"You mean that you cannot prove the scoundrel's guilt—although you know him to be the author of these burglaries?" he suggested.

"Precisely, Mr. Grim!" said Sir Coppem quickly. "You have bashed the nail on the head first pop! We know that Hare-Lipped Sydney follows his trade as a steeplejack by day, and that he prowls forth as a burglar by night! But we cannot prove our suspicions—we cannot collar him with the goods! He is so terrifically smart that he diddles us every time! He is a veritable master of his craft, and he has beaten all our best men to a frazzle!"

Sir Coppem Sharp roared out his words in a thunderous tone, and Trackett Grim recoiled before the onslaught. Then he nodded and rose to his feet.

"I gather that you want me to take up the case, and apprehend this double-dyed villain, eh, Sir Coppem?" he queried.

"Of course, you fathead!" snapped Sir Coppem. "That is the purpose of my visit! There is a reward out already for the capture of Hare-Lipped Sydney, Mr. Grim, and if you succeed in running him to earth, and proving his guilt, I will double it! Bring him to me, dead or alive, and I will hand you a cheque for ten thousand pounds on the spot!"

"Ah! A nice little sum!" commented Trackett Grim, with a smile. "Have your cheque ready by 3 a.m., Sir Coppem—for at that hour I shall call at the Yard to claim it! What is more, I shall bring with me Hare-Lipped Sydney, together with all the property he has pinched!"

HARE-LIPPED SYDNEY AT WORK.

Midnight boomed from Big Ben and stirred the echoes throughout the silent, sleeping metropolis.

But there were three individuals, at least, who were very wide awake.

Hare-Lipped Sydney, bent upon another of his nocturnal jaunts, was stealing softly towards a certain jeweller's in the Hay-market, and upon his trail stole the master detective, Trackett Grim. Close behind the celebrated criminologist crept Splinter, his faithful assistant—who had taken it upon himself to follow his master, in direct contradiction to orders.

Trackett Grim had had a long, weary vigil—for after Sir Coppem Sharp had departed, the great criminal detective had disguised himself as a workman, and had journeyed to Stepney, followed by Splinter. Here Trackett Grim had watched Hare-Lipped Sydney conclude his day's work on the repairing of a tremendous chimney-stack, and had followed him to his home.

After waiting outside all the evening, Trackett Grim had had the satisfaction of seeing Hare-Lipped Sydney sally forth shortly before midnight, and make his way

westwards—obviously bent upon one of his nefarious burgling expeditions.

And the great criminal investigator intended to keep his promise to Sir Coppem Sharp, or die in the attempt.

Along Pall-Mall he trailed his man, and watched him furtively turn into the Hay-market. The great thoroughfare was silent and deserted, and not a light showed anywhere. This state of affairs suited Hare-Lipped Sydney down to the ground, and he gave a chuckle of delight as he halted outside the well-filled window of a wealthy jeweller's shop. Trackett Grim darted into the shadow of a near-by doorway, and prepared to watch.

He saw the criminal look up and down the road, and then boldly take a diamond-glass-cutter from his pocket, and cut a chunk of glass from the window-pane. This done, he gently pushed the severed portion of glass inwards, and rapidly snatched a double handful of rings, bracelets, necklaces, and watch-chains. Then he turned and streaked off down the road again with

the speed of a greyhound—stuffing his ill-gotten gains into his pockets as he ran.

So quickly had he executed his robbery that no alarm had been given, and Hare-Lipped Sydney congratulated himself upon his cunning. But Trackett Grim, the famous sleuth, was very close behind him—a fact which would have made the criminal quake like a jelly had he been aware of it.

Hare-Lipped Sydney continued to run until he was well clear of the vicinity of his crime, but then he slowed down to a fast walk. And he kept on walking until he reached the dingy neighbourhood of Stepney, where he lived.

But, somewhat to his shadower's surprise, the burglar made no attempt to go to his home. Instead, he headed straight for the factory where he had been working all day, and Trackett Grim wondered greatly. But he set his massive intellect to solve the problem, and very soon his eyes were gleaming like two red-hot coals. He congratulated himself very heartily upon his astute-



Hare-Lipped Sydney streaked off down the road, stuffing his ill-gotten gains into his pockets as he ran.

ness in acting as he had done, for he now knew that he was on the right track.

Hare-Lipped Sydney, without once looking back, made his way direct to the great chimney-stack, and commenced climbing the iron ladder which had been erected from the base to the summit for the use of the steeple-jacks. And Trackett Grim, after allowing his quarry to mount about half-way up, began the ascent without hesitation.

Down below the faithful Splinter was watching, wondering exactly what to do. He had followed the pair all the way from the Haymarket, and he now came to a quick decision. After giving one anxious glance at the two rapidly disappearing figures on the ladder, he dashed towards the base of the chimney-stack, evidently bent upon executing an idea of his own.

Meanwhile, Hare-Lipped Sydney was nearing the top of the high stack, and a few seconds later he was standing on the parapet, unperturbed and calm. Then he lay down upon his stomach on the stonework, and leaned over the gaping interior of the chimney.

At this instant Trackett Grim reached the top of the ladder, and he cautiously projected his head upwards until he could see exactly what Hare-Lipped Sydney was doing. As he did so he gave a little gasp of surprise, but took care not to betray his presence.

For some moments he continued to watch, his face wearing an expression of satisfied contentment. Then he mounted to the parapet, judging the time to be ripe for his presence to be made known.

"Ha! This time you are caught, you scoundrel!" he exclaimed suddenly. "You are hiding your stolen property behind a loose brick! You have chosen the top of this chimney as a receptacle for your



Both men lost their balance at the same moment, and went hurtling downwards—the criminal outside the chimney, and the detective down the centre of the gaping shaft!

pinched property in order to baffle the police! But you cannot baffle me, my beauty! I have caught you red-handed!"

THE FIGHT ON THE PARAPET!

Hare-Lipped Sydney uttered a snarl of fury, and turned on the detective like a wild beast.

"Trackett Grim!" he bellowed angrily. "Great Scott! You—you here—on my track! By heavens! I can see it all! You have been instructed to capture me because Scotland Yard failed! But you will fail also, you interfering idiot! Do you think I will surrender to you? Do you think I will

consent to be arrested tamely? No! I am going to throw you down to the ground, where your mangled remains will be found in the morning!"

As he spoke, the furious criminal hurled himself at Trackett Grim, and the two were soon engaged in a deathly battle—a battle which had to be fought on the narrow parapet at the summit of the towering chimney-stack! The combat was taking place four hundred feet above the ground—so high that the clouds were almost upon them!

But Trackett Grim was undaunted. He withstood the scoundrel's first onslaught as firmly as a rock, and then grappled with him with his usual bravery. Hitting out right and left, swaying and stumbling, the two men fought on the dangerous ledge—fought for supremacy—fought, literally, for their lives.

Such a battle could not last long, in the very nature of things. Hare-Lipped Sydney, snarling and cursing, lunged out wildly, but he could not get the better of his nimble opponent. Trackett Grim gave a trifle more than he received every time, and within a few moments it became evident to the criminal that his number was up.

And he became desperate.

"If I've got to fall to my death, I ain't going alone!" he bellowed furiously. "We'll go together, Trackett Grim!"

As he spoke, he thrust his clenched fist forcibly into the detective's face, and Trackett Grim, not to be outdone, served Hare-Lipped Sydney in the same fashion. Both men lost their balance at the same instant, and went hurtling downwards—the criminal outside the chimney, and Trackett Grim down the centre of the gaping shaft!

It seemed to Trackett Grim that he was rushing through space for about an hour. Then his fall was arrested by a net—a strong, tightly stretched net which was spread at the base of the shaft. He landed in the centre of it, unharmed, and the first thing he saw was Splinter's smiling face.

His assistant, anticipating the inevitable result of his master's rash encounter with the crook, had taken precautions, and he had saved Trackett Grim's life.

Half an hour later, on the stroke of three o'clock, a taxi drove up to Scotland Yard, and Trackett Grim and Splinter stepped out—leaving a gruesome object in the vehicle. In his hand the great criminal detective was carried a heavy sack, and he emptied the contents upon Sir Coppem Sharp's desk, with a triumphant smile.

"The proceeds of Hare-Lipped Sydney's twenty-eight robberies, Sir Coppem!" he said quietly. "The twenty-seven you mentioned to me, and another he committed to-night! The dead body of the dastardly crook is in my cab outside, and I have just called to deliver the stolen property and collect my cheque!"

Sir Coppem Sharp uttered a bellow of joy.

"Good heavens above!" he gasped. "You—you have succeeded! Upon my soul! This is amazing—astounding! Here is your cheque, Mr. Grim—you have earned it twice over! Tell me, how did you accomplish this wonderful achievement?"

Trackett Grim, assisted by Splinter, did so between them, and when they had finished Sir Coppem Sharp could scarcely contain his admiration. The idea of Hare-Lipped Sydney secreting his ill-gotten gains beneath a loose brick at the summit of the chimney-stack never entered his mind, and he complimented Trackett Grim with great heartiness.

No one without such a massive intellect as the great criminal detective could have accomplished such a stupendous coup, and once again Trackett Grim had proved himself to be the super-investigator of the universe.

He had succeeded single-handed where all the detectives in London had failed—but he would have lost his life if Splinter had not spread the net to break his terrific fall.

But this was a mere detail; the main thing was the apprehension of Hare-Lipped Sydney, the Stepney Steeplejack!

THE END.

We are glad to report that Buster Boots is making good progress, after his nasty experience last week. We understand that he had an argument with Ernest Lawrence, of Study T, in the College House. Poor old Buster! He's a bit of a firebrand himself, but although he's been at St. Frank's for quite a long time, he didn't know that Lawrence used to be a professional boxer. But Buster knows it now! We live and learn!

Congratulations to Cecil de Valerie! After his recent long illness, at the beginning of which he nearly pegged out through brain fever, he has returned to the fold with a giant's strength. His brain now

appears to be about twice its former horsepower. We don't want to make insinuations, but it seems to us that it wouldn't be a bad idea if Handforth had brain fever, if it has such good results as this! He needs something, anyhow!

Wilson, of the Sixth, has just gone in for a portable typewriter. Judging by the notice he pinned on the Board on Thursday, it appears that he would have done better to stick to his ordinary handwriting. Hands were made before typewriters! However, in time, Wilson's typewriting may possibly become a trifle more legible than his ordinary fist!



E. Sopp's Fables

By
Edgar Sopp of the Fifth

No. 20. The Fable of the Fancy Socks and the Obstinate Dandy.

ONE fine day it happened that a Dandified Youth was strolling leisurely along the High Street of the local town. And it chanced that his eye lit upon something in a shop-window which attracted him greatly. The shop was one of Those Establishments which are known throughout the land as Gents' Outfitters. Now, the Dandified Youth, who answered to the name of Archie, paused in his tracks, and staggered slightly. He was, in fact, Almost Overcome by the gorgeousness of what he saw, and for a Few Moments he fought for breath as he gazed at a Pair of

SOCKS WITH RED AND YELLOW STRIPES.

And for a while he tarried, passing Up and Down, and viewing the Brilliantly Coloured socks from every Possible Angle. Now it happened that Archie could not be trusted in the choice of his own Wearing Apparel. It was for this reason that he employed a Faithful Servitor known as Phipps. But Phipps was not with his Young Master at the moment, and there is Much Truth in the Old Adage that When the Cat is Away the Mice will Play. Thus it came to pass that Archie finally Made Up his mind and

TOOK THE PLUNGE.

And he was so fascinated by the Foot Coverings that he insisted upon Donning them then and there, and he even Went to the Length of hitching up his trousers somewhat, in order that the Full Brilliance should be displayed. And behold, he emerged upon the Unsuspecting High Street, taking the Peaceful Citizens unaware. And it is rumoured that various Kindly Souls absolutely wilted at the sight, and

PERISHED IN THEIR TRACKS.

And Archie was Supremely Happy, for he Little Realised the Dreadful Nature of his crime. Neither was he aware of the fact that His Ankles were not only loud, but they literally Screamed Out for attention. And thus it was that the Dandified Youth

arrived back at St. Frank's, and wended his way to his Own Study, where Phipps awaited him with Large and Sundry Supplies of the Good Old Brew. In other words,

TEA WAS ABOUT TO BE SERVED.

And Phipps, being a man of Great Courage and Intrepid Fortitude, merely staggered at the sight of the socks, and Saved Himself from swooning by a Sheer Effort of will. But Archie did not fail to Observe the Drawn, Haggard Expression on the face of his Faithful Servitor, and he thereupon inquired unto His Health, asking why Phipps looked so Frightfully Pipped. And Phipps found his voice, after searching for it for Some Time in vain. And he Respectfully Suggested that the socks were Somewhat Noisy, and

NOT IN THE BEST OF TASTE.

And Archie drew himself up with dignity, declaring that Phipps was Bally Personal, and that the Young Master would wear what he Dashed Well liked. And so a breach appeared, and widened until a vast and illimitable gulf Opened Up between the pair. If Phipps referred to the socks once That Day, he referred to them a Hundred Times—until, in all truth, Archie became so Fed up with the subject that he Dismissed his Servitor from his sight. And he obstinately told himself that No Power on earth would make him

THROW UP THE SPONGE.

And, lo, Phipps wandered Sadly Away, those Terrible Socks still in his vision, and he Thought Deeply and impressively, trying to obtain some solution to this Fearful Problem. And in his wanderings he chanced to Come Upon an Extremely Youthful individual of Much Cheer, who was known as Willy. And Willy paused, and spake, asking what ailed the valet, and suggesting that he might be able to Do Something. Thereupon Phipps poured forth his Tale of Woe, and Willy proceeded to grin and to chuckle and to laugh. And he promised Phipps that All Would be Well

ON THE MORROW.

And Phipps went away unconvinced, and Willy sped to his Own Quarters, and there he made Mysterious Preparations. And it came to pass that the morrow was bright and sunny, and Archie was awakened by a voice Calling in his Ear with considerable gusto. And, behold, he Sat Up in bed and gasped. For there, standing before him, was Willy. But Willy was Changed. It appeared to the amazed Archie that his Young Companion was entirely and Absolutely Smothered

WITH RED AND YELLOW STRIPES.

And Archie Blinked, and obtained the assistance of His Monocle, although this only Aggravated the Offence. And it was brought home to him how Utterly Utter red and yellow stripes Actually Looked. Now, the most astonishing part of this experience was that Willy disclaimed All Knowledge of his appearance, blandly remarking that Archie must be Colour Blind. In other words, Willy Cunningly Suggested that he was perfectly Normal in aspect, and that it was only Archie's Distorted Vision which saw the Gaudy Stripes—this being the result of Gazing so Steadfastly at

THOSE HORRIBLE SOCKS.

And Archie awoke to a Full Sense of his crime, and begged Willy, with tears in His Eyes and with a break in His Voice, to convey the socks elsewhere, and to quietly and mercifully Destroy Them. And Willy did as he Was Told; and, lo, when Archie Appeared in Public, his ankles were encased in Quiet Coverings that gladdened the heart of Phipps mightily. And from that day onwards, No More was heard of the Distressing Incident. And Phipps Breathed Again.

MORAL: WHEN DEALING WITH OBSTINACY THERE'S NOTHING IN THE WORLD TO BEAT A LITTLE TACT.

Ulysses Spencer Adams has been heard to remark that he is sure surprised at the present exhibition of pep and snappiness in the Remove. He had always thought we British fellows to be so doggone slow. We beg to remind Ulysses that the Easter holidays are near at hand. During the first week of the new term he will probably find that the Remove's pep has ceased to exist. There is a world of difference between the last week of term and the first week of term! You bettcha!



PAINFUL PARODIES

PERPETRATED
By

Clarence Fellowe

A JOVIAL MONK AM I!

A jovial Monk am I,
And live in Study Q,
The Ancient House I'd like to souse
And make the Fossils blue.
But I take life free and easy,
Because the fellows over there
Are becoming crock'd and wheezy,
Just like a Ford that's had some wear.

A successful jape makes the Fossils gape,
And it won't be long when they line the tape;
So what care I, and I'll tell you why
We're doing the fatheads in the eye.

The Fossils are so slow,
I'd like to have you know;
They walk about without a doubt
As though they owned the show.
But they'll soon be weak and groggy
Because we Monks are getting wise.
And the day looks dark and foggy
For all these fossillated guys.

They're a worn-out lot, and no pep they've got
And they're going to catch it good and hot;
And with Buster Boots, I "hae no doots,"
We'll soon grab victory by the roots!



Hints For Inside Men!

How to Keep Fit.

Before I go on to the question of inside play, as I promised to do at last week's pow, I just want to comment on a highly entertaining letter I have received from a young friend in Hayward's Heath, whom we will call by his initials "G. S." This letter is one—and perhaps the best—of the many I received in response to my call for an essay on training for footer. As many of you are doubtless in similar circumstances to this very bright young member of our class, I think you might do worse than follow his scheme of training, which I outline here.

G. S. indulges in a few muscle-stretching exercises upon rising, and after breakfast rides his bicycle to school, which is about two miles from his home. At lunch-time he rides back home, and after lunch to school again. In the evening, after school, he spends the greater part of his time in practising shooting and dribbling with a small rubber ball, and eventually goes to bed early. This strikes me as being a very sensible and a not too strenuous method of keeping fit, and I thank G. S. very sincerely for his letter.

A Query from Sherbourne.

Another letter is that which comes from H. C., of Sherbourne, who wishes to know

if the referee is correct in blowing his whistle for half-time before a corner-kick is taken.

As this, too, is a question that has doubtless exercised your own mind at some time or other, I make no apology for giving it publicity in this week's notes. Yes, the referee is perfectly within his rights. He may stop a game during any part of the play excepting for one reason, and that's when a penalty kick is about to be taken. I hope this clears up the point.

Now for the real business of pow-wow.

Think of the Team!

I shall have much more to say on this subject of inside men than I can possibly put down in the small space at my disposal this week, and, therefore, to-day I shall only deal with the inside men's duties as a whole. As I have told you before, the real key to the forward line is the centre-forward, who, by his own methods, decides the style of attack his forwards shall adopt.

Obviously it is the duty of the insides and the outsides to play up to the centre-forward, and this is a fact that should never be lost sight of. The great thing to remember—and not only by forwards, but by every individual member of the team—is that you are working together as a whole, and not to show off individual brilliance.

I mention this because I have noticed a

(Continued on next page)

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tendency on the part of pretty dribblers to indulge in their favourite passion, to the exclusion of the centre-forward and every other man on the field.

Keep Pretty Stunts for Practice.

It is not very necessary for me to tell you that this policy, besides being contrary to all the rules of good sportsmanship, is not likely to help your team, so if you are a fancy pattern merchant please reserve it for practice, and only indulge in it in the field of play when it is absolutely essential—as it sometimes is. Your first duty is to act as a forrager for your centre-forward, and to see that your outside men are kept well supplied. Make everything subservient to that consideration.

Look After Your Wingers!

You are the link between the centre and the wingers, and as such, of course, most of the hard work of the attacking force will devolve on you. If your centre is one of those men who prefer to keep well up in order to turn opportunities to account, your work is harder, of course, for you have to fill the gap which otherwise he would occupy. In any case, your job is to look after him, and by looking after him I mean that you must try your hardest to make those openings which the good centre is always on the look-out for, and which so often result in goals.

But, in looking after the centre, don't forget the winger, whom, I have noticed, is all too often neglected. Remember, he is as much a part of the attacking line as yourself, and that very frequently, by the immunity of his position, he is in better circumstances to get the ball nearer the goal than any man in the side.

'Ware Offside Traps!

Don't forget, either, that you have half-backs, whose duty is it to assist in the work of the attacking line as well as to fall back and help the back division when it becomes necessary. There is a tendency, I have observed to forget the half-back in the excitement of an attack, and he is not used as frequently as he should be. A good half will keep up with the attack and will place himself in the most suitable position to receive passes. If you are ever doubtful about passing to one of your own forwards, who might be in an offside position, and cannot hold the ball yourself, remember that your half is behind you and you can pass back to him.

Next week, I hope to have more to say to you about the inside men's duties. Meantime, as we have come to the end of our pow-wow, let me wish you a hearty good-day.

By the way, have you written to me yet?

THE FAGS' UNION

A Suggestion

By Willy Handforth

IT'S about time somebody said something about fagging. There's no question that it's shameful the way some of the chaps are treated. These 6th form fellows are all together too big for their boots, and goodness knows their boots are big enough. Conroy major trod on my foot the other day, and I thought I'd lost it. His foot looked like a barge capsizing a rowing-boat.

But about fagging—that's what I started writing about. The fags don't seem to have any say at all, and this is wrong. Of course, they say enough among themselves, and if all the threats were carried out that the fags utter, half the 6th would have been hung on gibbets by this time. But the worst of it is, the fags haven't any voice when single. I don't mean they'll have a voice when they're married, because they're less likely to have one than ever then; but single in the sense of being alone. A crowd of fags can make a big row, but one fag by himself is like a voice howling in the wilderness.

And when a fag gets in the clutches of a 6th former, he's got to do what he's told, or else get rapped on the head with a ruler, or have his ears boxed, or get a terrific biff in a spot lower down, that needn't be mentioned. In fact, fags have a rotten time of it, and it's about time somebody spoke. I've said this before, but all the better. When you're making a complaint you've got to say it about a thousand times, or you won't be heard.

And why shouldn't we start a Fag's Union? Other workers have unions, so why shouldn't we have one? And we ought to have wages, too; not much, but something to make the work more genial.

And we ought to have a six-hour day, and certain hours of work, and we ought to be paid for overtime for extra labour. It's too jolly thick when a senior holds a party, and his fag has to be dodging about the whole giddy evening. Under present conditions, a fag can't call his soul his own, and it's as much as he can do to find time to breathe.

That's why I suggest a Fag's Union; and, what's more, I'm going to get up a partition to the Head about it. You see! Once I start on a thing I stick to it. There'll be more heard of this union before long!

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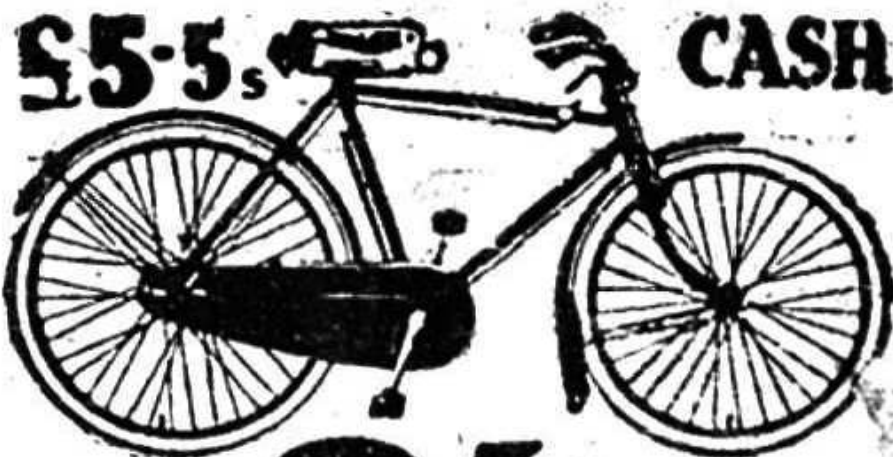
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