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HANDFORTH
In Trouble Again!

THE SCHOOLBOY HEADMASTER !

The Opening Story of a Grand New Series of Specially Written Stories
of the Boys of St. Frank's.



It was a bit of a coincidence that Willy should have performed this trick of all tricks ; for, little though he guessed it, he had actually brought the Head to his very own room.



The Schoolboy Headmaster!

**A ROLICKING STORY OF SCHOOL
LIFE AND ADVENTURE AT ST.
FRANK'S.**

Dr. Stafford, the venerable Head of St. Frank's, has accepted an invitation to join an exploration expedition to Africa, and hands over the responsibility of looking after St. Frank's to Dr. Beverley Stokes, M.A., whose arrival

at the School under circumstances that may be described as "without precedent" is the main subject of this entertaining narrative. It is the opening story of another fine series in which the New Head plays a leading part.

THE EDITOR.

The Narrative Related Throughout by Nipper.

CHAPTER I.

THE MINSTREL BOY.

"**N**OW then, you fool! Look out—
Hi! Get out of the way—"

The taxi-driver's remarks were cut short abruptly. There was no time for further abuse. The taxi swerved giddily, narrowly missed the private car, and the off-side front wheel crashed into a street refuge.

And Piccadilly Circus looked on with interest.

At least, this small section of it did. The larger portion of the celebrated traffic vortex carried on in its usual calm, peaceful, unruffled way. Buses lumbered by in all directions, taxis sped to and fro, and pedestrians thronged in myriads.

It was a warm June evening, and although daylight was still in evidence, the London Pavilion blazed out like a torch with its thousands of electric-lamps.

The taxi-driver climbed out of his seat, uttering choice and well-chosen remarks about the driving capabilities of certain individuals, and one young man in particular.

The accident was a slight one—the off-

side front wheel of the taxi being shattered. There was no other damage. And it had all been brought about by the perfectly idiotic driving of a young man who was behind the wheel of a neat two-seater.

In the most reckless fashion, he had swerved across the road, and the taxi, in spite of its effective brakes, had been unable to pull up. The driver deserved much credit for acting so promptly. And, to the cabby's chagrin, the two-seater calmly rolled off in the tide of traffic, and was lost to view down the Haymarket.

A face appeared at the taxi window—a somewhat startling face.

It was coal-black, and shiny, with an enormously large and surprisingly red mouth. Upon the head of this dusky individual there was a white, squat top-hat, set at a rakish angle.

"Hi!" said the black face. "What's the idea?"

"Talking to me?" demanded the driver, glaring.

"Yes, I am!" said the black face. "Didn't I tell you to hurry? What the dickens do you mean by sticking here, and stopping your

giddy engine? And what's the matter with your old wreck? She's all lop-sided."

The cabby murmured some more imprecations.

"I'd like to see that blamed fool who nipped off just now!" he retorted fiercely. "It wouldn't take me long to make him lop-sided, too! It's no good, young gent—you'll have to 'op out!"

"'Op out!" repeated the fare blankly.

"That's what I said."

"Then you'd better say something else!" snapped the fare. "You've got to drive us to Mount Street, so don't start any of your rot!"

"Come and drive the bloomin' taxi yourself, if you're so clever!" said the cabby, with heavy sarcasm. "This front wheel's busted up—an' 'ere comes a copper. A fine mess—an' that young swell went off afore I could see his blinkin' number!"

The remaining portion of the taxi-driver's observations shocked the black-faced fare so much that he opened the door, and leapt out. He was immediately followed by a companion—several sizes smaller than himself, and quite different in appearance.

The pair, in fact, were a remarkable duo.

He of the black face was apparently a minstrel—strayed from the seaside, perhaps. His companion was green all over, and looked for all the world like a gnome or a goblin straight out of a fairy tale. With his tight-fitting attire, long, pointed toes, and pointed hood over his head, he caused wide-spread attention.

His costume was dark green, and his face was pale green, forming a harmonious contrast. He took one look at the smashed wheel, and grinned in true goblin fashion.

"Yes, it looks a bit bent," he observed cheerfully. "It's no good, Ted—we shall have to take another taxi."

"I'm blessed if I will!" roared the minstrel, with most unreasonable vehemence. "I chartered this cab, and I'm not going to be dished. And you mind your own business, my lad!"

The goblin sighed.

"Oh, all right—go ahead!" he said resignedly. "I never knew such a chap for being pigheaded! Perhaps you expect the taxi to skid along on its axle?"

"Now then, what's all this?" demanded a policeman, in an official voice. "Ah! A nice little smash! I shall want your number——"

"Yes, and I'd like the number o' that fool what caused me to swerve!" said the taxi-driver savagely. "It's a good thing I'm insured."

The policeman regarded the minstrel and the gnome with interest.

"Were you gents in the taxi?" he asked, in a doubtful voice.

"Yes," said he of the black face.

"And what may your names be?" asked the policeman cordially.

"Handforth—Edward Oswald Handforth—they're my names!" said the minstrel.

"And this young ass is my brother, Willy. But we're in a hurry, and we can't stand here like this—we're attracting a crowd!"

"And I don't wonder at it!" said the constable. "What do you think you are—buskers, or what?"

"You fathead!" roared Handforth. "We're in fancy dress, and we're just on the way to Mount Street—to Colonel Glen-thorne's place. We're going to a fancy dress ball."

The policeman had gathered this already, for self-respecting citizens of London hardly travel about dressed like minstrels and gnomes on ordinary occasions.

It was certainly an embarrassing situation for Handforth and his minor—to say nothing of being exasperating. They were in a hurry, and this delay was provoking. Willy took it quite calmly, since he was shrewd enough to realise that there was no sense in getting excited. But Edward Oswald was becoming impatient.

"Look here, you chump!" he snorted, as the policeman continued to write in his notebook. "What do you want our names for? We didn't cause this smash—we were inside the cab!"

"Can't help that, young gent," said the constable. "Maybe you'll be required as witnesses. Won't keep you a minute. Just give me your address, and you can hop into another taxi and get away."

"What about my fare?" asked the cabby, glancing at his meter. "There's two and threepence on the clock——"

"Of all the nerve!" declared Handforth. "You nearly smash us up, and then want your giddy fare! And you haven't even taken us to our destination! You cab-drivers are the limit!"

"Oh, give it to him!" said Willy. "And add a couple of bob for a tip!"

"Now you're talking, young gent!" said the cabby approvingly.

"I don't want to have a row—I hate squabbles—and so I'll pay you!" said Handforth. "But I reckon it's a nerve on your part to expect any fare after wrecking us like this!"

"He couldn't help it," put in Willy. "And the man must have his money. Don't be mean, Ted!"

"Mean!" gasped Edward Oswald.

"Oh, all right!" said Willy, with a sigh. "Have it your own way! The chap doesn't deserve his fare, and you're only giving it to him through sheer generosity. We won't argue!"

Handforth glared.

"Doesn't deserve his fare?" he repeated. "Are you suggesting that I should swindle him? You unprincipled young rotter! I'm surprised at you—my own brother—hinting that I should owe this man a paltry two and threepence!"

"Good!" said Willy promptly. "Pay up!"

He had known from the first what would happen if he adopted that tone, having a full understanding of his major's com-

plex character. And Handforth, after another hard look—this time of suspicion—dived a hand into his trouser's pocket.

At least, he attempted to do so, and suddenly remembered that he wasn't wearing trousers. His minstrel suit, to be exact, had no pockets at all. And Handforth suddenly looked blank.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he said, in a feeble voice.

"What's wrong now?" asked Willy.

"We've come out without a giddy cent!" replied Handforth.

CHAPTER II.

PENNYLESS IN LONDON!



WILLY grinned.

"This makes the position quite interesting," he remarked calmly. "I don't want to say anything harsh, old son, but I'd just like to remark that you're about the biggest chump under the sun!"

"You talking to me?" roared Handforth.

"Well, I wasn't talking to myself!" retorted Willy. "Do you remember what happened just before we started out? Remember that little bust-up we had in the hall, just before the pater hooped us out for making a row?"

"I don't know what you're talking about"

"Of course, you don't remember me telling you that you hadn't got any money, do you?" demanded Willy. "You don't remember me advising you to buzz upstairs and get your cash?"

"My hat!" said Handy. "I—I forgot!"

"And you don't remember, either, that I wanted to bring some cash, and you stopped me?" went on Willy relentlessly. "Well, this is your funeral—not mine. You chartered the taxi, and you've got to pay for it. I hope the cell won't be too cold!"

"The cell?" repeated Handforth, starting.

"Of course, it might be a dungeon!" said Willy. "Naturally, you'll be arrested and locked up—that's only to be expected. You can't go about London swindling taxi-drivers and escape scot-free!"

By this time, the little crowd round the taxi had grown bigger, and the audience was listening to the altercation with keen enjoyment. Some of the people thought it was a free show, and both the policeman and the taxi-driver were rapidly losing their patience.

"Am I going to get my fare, or am I not?" demanded the cabby darkly.

"The prospect looks black and ominous!" said Willy.

"Because, if I ain't, this 'ere young spark with the black face is goin' to get a swipe he won't forget in a hurry!" went on the cabby threateningly. "You can't come these 'ere tricks—"

"Now then—now then!" interrupted the constable firmly. "None of that sort of talk, my lad. I've got the names and address of these young gents, and the best thing they can do is to hurry off. You needn't worry about your fare—you'll get it!"

"Oh, shall I?" said the man. "And when, I'd like to know?"

"I don't know when—and I don't care!" retorted the policeman. "But I do know that your old box of tricks is an obstruction, and the sooner we can move it, the better. You'd best slip off, young gents," he added, addressing Handforth and Willy.

"Good!" said the latter. "Come on, Ted!"

But Edward Oswald wouldn't budge.

"Not likely!" he said. "Two minutes ago, I was quite prepared to leave, and I was going to give this cabby instructions to call at my pater's place, and receive half a quid. But just now he threatened to give me a swipe. And I'd like to see him try!"

This was deliberately asking for trouble, and Willy became somewhat alarmed. He knew what his brother could do when he got excited. He dragged at the sleeve of Handforth's costume.

"Leggo!" snorted Edward Oswald. "It's no good you trying to persuade me! I'm going to biff this chap! He used insulting language, and—"

"You ain't making things better by taking on that tone," put in the policeman gruffly. "You'll have to get into another cab, young gents. This crowd's getting bigger every minute, and you're causing an obstruction. Look alive!"

"I want this rotter to apologise!" snorted Handforth.

"Why, you young swab, I'll smash your face in!" roared the cabby, losing his temper. "As for that 'ere talk about half a quid, I don't believe it! I don't suppose your father earns that much a week!"

Handforth gasped.

"By George!" he snorted. "Take that!"

Biff!

Before the taxi-driver could dodge, he received a blow on the point of his nose which sent him flying backwards. The crowd cheered. The scene was becoming quite interesting.

"Oh, my goodness!" groaned Willy.

"That's done it!"

"Now then!" snapped the policeman. "Stop that, my lad! Any more of this sort of thing and I'll have to take you in charge. And you stop it, too!" he told the driver. "There was no call for you to insult the young gents' father!"

And it was just at this moment that another taxicab halted some little distance off, owing to the block in the traffic. It contained three gaily attired individuals—Sir Montie Tregellis-West, Tommy Watson, and myself. We waited patiently for some time, wondering what the stoppage was for.

I put my head out of the window to

investigate, and my attention was suddenly acutely attracted. I heard a never-to-be forgotten voice raised in indignant tones.

"Here, leggo!" it roared. "What! You're going to arrest me? You silly fathead! I'll report you to Scotland Yard——"

I drew back into the taxi, alarmed.

"Quick!" I said. "There's Handforth just ahead—he's the cause of this delay, I expect—and the fathead's just on the point of being arrested."

"Arrested!" gasped Watson. "Handforth!"

"Yes."

"Begad!" ejaculated Sir Montie. "This is frightful—it is, really! But are you sure, Nipper? I think you must be mistaken, dear old boy."

"I'd know that voice in a million!" I retorted grimly. "Come on! Let's go and investigate."

We hustled out of our own cab, and created further interest—for Watson was attired as a sailor, Sir Montie looked a gorgeous edition of a seventh century buck, and I was dressed as a pierrot. We pushed our way through the crowd with determination.

Of course, we were all on our way to Glenthorne Lodge—Archie's pater's place. A good many St. Frank's juniors had been invited to the fancy dress ball, and we were expecting to have a great time.

It was the last day of the holidays, for on the morrow we should return to the old school for the summer term. And Colonel Glenthorne, always generosity itself, had thought it would be a good wind-up to the holidays to give Archie's friends a treat. And Archie's friends were numerous, for over half the Remove had arranged to turn up.

And now it seemed that Handforth was doomed to get into trouble before the ball started. We pushed our way to the centre of the crowd, and found a black-faced minstrel struggling with a policeman twice his size. A green gnome was looking on with interest.

"What's the trouble here?" I panted.

"Oh, good!" said the gnome. "You've just come in time, Nipper. Ted's on the point of being bunked into chokey. The bobby's just going to send for the black maria."

I grabbed at the policeman's arm.

"Hold on!" I said. "There's no need to be rough with that chap—he irresponsible. As a matter of fact, he oughtn't to be allowed out without a keeper. We'll take charge of him, if you like."

"You're welcome to him!" said the policeman promptly.

Handforth glared at me with an expression that was probably ferocious; but I couldn't see it because of the black paint. He only succeeded in looking more comic than ever.

"You mind your own business!" he

snorted. "Nobody told you to interfere! This policeman tried to arrest me, but——"

"Shameful!" I said diplomatically.

Willy was quickly obtaining some money from Tregellis-West, and it only took him a moment to slip five shillings into the cab-driver's hand. Then he told us that everything was all clear, and in less than two minutes Handforth was in our own taxi.

We had rushed him through the crowd at such a speed that he was breathless by the time we pushed him into the cab and sat on him. And we proceeded towards Glenthorne Lodge, hot and dishevelled, but triumphant.

CHAPTER III.

THE FANCY-DRESS BALL.



HANDFORTH cooled down by the time we arrived, although he was still disposed to argue. But almost the first person we saw upon entering Glenthorne Lodge was Irene Manners—absolutely radiant in a silky, fluffy costume, that suited her fair beauty to perfection.

Handforth forgot all about taxi-drivers and policemen and similar unwelcome subjects.

The rest of us were soon distributed, and we found the party to be bright and gay, with plenty of laughter and good cheer. When Colonel Glenthorne got up an affair of this nature he did it thoroughly.

Archie himself was on the spot, welcoming all the guests as they arrived, and making himself generally agreeable. And it must not be supposed that the guests mainly consisted of boys.

There were heaps of grown-ups, including such celebrities as Sir Edward Handforth, Lord Dorrimore, and even Nelson Lee. And there were quite a number of young ladies, too. Irene had brought several of her Moor View School chums. There were the Onions brothers, too, and their recently adopted sister, Tessa.

The circus was now practically a thing of the past, as far as the St. Frank's fellows were concerned. Professor Onions had taken his big show into the Midlands, and we were not likely to see any more of it in the neighbourhood of St. Frank's.

And Tessa was booked to go down to the Moor View School, and the circus girl was looking forward with keen enjoyment to the beginning of her schooldays.

Colonel Glenthorne's London house was a most palatial place, and on the present occasion it was ablaze with lights, and gay with decorations. And there was not the slightest fear that anybody would go short of food.

There was not only an elaborate supper provided for, but the whole place abounded

with buffets, where one could eat every imaginable kind of delicacy to one's heart's content.

Needless to say, Fatty Little had been haunting these spots of heavenly bliss ever since his arrival. He had, indeed, only come to the ball for the purpose of having a good feed. He regarded the dancing as an unnecessary waste of time; he looked upon the music with disdain, and he had taken extra care to choose a loose-fitting fancy dress.

The scene was splendid, indeed.

The great ball-room, with its throng of strangely assorted figures, in every conceivable kind of costume—colours of the rainbow, in myriads, and the hum of conversation, and the sound of laughter mixing with the sound of the music.

"How goes it, dear old lads?" asked Archie, coming up to a group of us who were seated on a lounge. "Everything all serene, and so forth?"

"Yes, thanks," said De Valerie. "We're doing fine!"

"There's a merchant somewhere in the offing with a large assortment of ices and drinks, and all that sort of rot," said Archie. "Don't be afraid to plunge, dear old companions. I mean to say, this is one of those occasions when we can all go the pace a bit, what?"

Handforth suddenly sat forward, staring.

"Who's the chap in Etons?" he asked bluntly.

"Eh?" said Archie. "Oh, rather! You mean the priceless chappie over in the north-east section? As a matter of absolute fact, and between you and me and ourselves, I haven't got the faintest idea."

Handforth rose to his feet.

"Etons!" he said warmly. "Of all the nerve! Actually coming here in his giddy school clothes! And not even a St. Frank's chap! He ought to be lynched!"

"Steady on, old man!" whispered Church, tugging at Handforth's sleeve. "After all, you're not the host, and it's hardly the thing to criticise. Squat down again."

"Yes, keep cool, old man!" advised McClure.

They were both dressed as minstrels, similar to Handforth—the famous trio having arranged all this beforehand. But Handforth had insisted upon being more gorgeous than his chums, since he was the leader. And he was now disporting himself like an officer with two batmen. As a matter of fact, Church and McClure had filled this position for months.

"Leggo!" said Handforth curtly. "Here's a chap at a fancy-dress ball dressed in his ordinary clobber—in common or garden Etons! He hasn't even had the decency to put on evening dress. And yet everybody else in in fancy costume!"

"Horrible!" I said, shuddering.

"What have you got to say about it, Archie?" demanded Handforth fiercely.

Archie trembled visibly.

"Of course, dear old potato, it's fairly ghastly," he admitted. "I might even remark that the scheme is pestiferous. I mean to say, at a fancy-dress ball a chappie is supposed to keep to the jolly old rules. And I can't place the blighter; never even saw him before!"

"Ask him what he means by this breach of etiquette!" commanded Handforth.

"Oh, rather!" faltered Archie. "That, of course, is to say, rather not! I wouldn't like to offend the old thingummy. Probably a ripping cove when you get to know him. And he may have come in Etons because his fancy-dress failed to turn up, or something. I mean, accidents are always likely to happen."

But Handforth would not be satisfied. He gave Archie one glance of scorn, and strode across to the spot where the boy in Etons was in the pleasurable act of consuming an ice-cream. And there was something about Handforth's attitude which hinted at coming trouble. Edward Oswald was a masterpiece for stirring up strife. He didn't mean to do it, because he was one of the easiest-going fellows under the sun—but he just couldn't help it.

We all looked at one another significantly.

"I think," I observed, "we shall be needed."

"It's a certainty!" said Church and McClure.

"Oh, but really this is dashed distressing!" said Archie with alarm. "I do hope the frightful chump doesn't start a row, or something. That would be just about the old limit."

The strange boy in Etons was sitting in a chair, completely engrossed with his ice. He was unaware of the impending danger. He did not see Handforth approaching, and getting ready to pounce.

The junior was quite good looking, in his way, fair, medium-sized, with a rather wise look about his face—a look which was decidedly misleading. It was really impossible to judge what kind of a fellow he was.

Handforth pounced upon him abruptly.

"You've got a nerve!" he said, planting himself in front of the stranger.

"Eh? Oh! Speaking to me?" ejaculated the other.

"Yes, I am."

"What's the matter? What's biting you?" demanded the unknown junior. "And I don't think I've had the pleasure of being introduced, either. Have I offended you, or something?"

He looked at Handforth rather nervously.

"You haven't offended me any more than you have offended any of the rest of the guests," replied Handforth severely. "You know this is a fancy-dress ball, I suppose?"

The junior nodded.

"Well, I gathered that that was the idea," he replied.

"Then what the dickens do you mean by

coming here in a beastly Eton suit?" asked Handforth grimly. "Unless you can give a reasonable answer, I'm going to grab you by the neck and hoof you out!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE SURPRISE PACKET.



ARCHIE GLENTHORNE bustled up genially. "Let's go into the ball-room, dear old lads," he said. "They're just starting a ripping fox-trot, and—"

"Blow the fox-trot!" said Handforth.

one to the other of us. "I didn't know it mattered so much as all that. Have I done anything very shocking?"

"Absolutely not!" said Archie hastily. "Kindly allow me to assure you, dear old cake of soap, that everything is topping. Kindly ignore this frightful chump, and carry on with the good work."

"Thanks!" said the boy in Etons.

"Oh, all right—I don't care!" growled Handforth. "All the same, I think it's a bit steep, and it shows a pretty awful disregard for your host's hospitality. What's your name?"

"Oh! My—my name?" said the stranger. "Er—Barry. William Barry. Pleased to

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"And dancing is a rather priceless exercise—"

"Bother the dancing!"

"And, dash it, I rather believe that Miss Irene is looking for a partner!" said Archie, as a kind of master-stroke.

Handforth started, and then shook his head.

"No, not this dance," he replied. "She told me she was booked up for the next three—that's why I'm here. And I want to know what this fellow means by coming here in Etons—"

"I say, I'm awfully sorry if I've offended anybody," put in the stranger, looking from

meet you. I've got an idea you chaps are from St. Frank's, eh?"

"Yes," said Church. "What's your school?"

"I've left," replied the boy vaguely. "I don't quite know where I shall go to next—unless it's St. Frank's. There's just a chance that I might go to your school. I hope so, anyhow."

"We're rather particular at St. Frank's," said Handforth. "So your name's William Barry, eh? You look it! I suppose you're a junior—lower school chap?"

"Yes," grinned Barry, nodding "Yes, of course."

He grinned, his face taking on a remarkably sunny expression, and there was a twinkle in his eyes which was very infectious. We all looked at him with interest.

"What's the joke?" I asked.

"The joke!" said Barry. "Oh, there's no joke—at least, you wouldn't see it. So you fellows are St. Frank's juniors? You don't know how pleased I am to meet you. I was hoping that I'd have the chance."

He shook hands with me, and then went round the rest of us, looking as solemn as an owl. We all introduced ourselves, much to Barry's pleasure.

"We're getting on fine!" he declared briskly. "Supposing we go along to a buffet and have a snack? I'd like to hear a few details about St. Frank's. I'm awfully interested in your school. I'd love to be in the Third with you chaps—"

"Third!" interrupted Handforth warmly.

"Aren't you in the Third?"

"No, we're not, you fatheaded chump!" said Handy. "We all belong to the Remove. Do I look like a fag?"

"Well, hardly," replied Barry lightly. "I should say you closely resemble a dark night. But we don't want to become personal, do we? Sorry if I trod on your corns just now."

"You never touched me," said Handforth tartly.

"I was speaking metaphorically," exclaimed Barry.

"You mean you were speaking out of the back of your neck!" said Handforth. "You're a queer kind of ass, anyhow! If we had you at St. Frank's, we'd knock you into shape in a couple of days. We'd turn you into a real chap, instead of a hopeless duffer!"

Barry grinned.

"Well, there's nothing like being frank," he remarked. "Don't mind me, you know. It's one of my lifelong maxims, to treat all insults as compliments. So you can go right ahead and say any old thing you like, and I'll simply smile. Smiling is a virtue!"

"You've got a bit too much to say!" retorted Handforth gruffly.

"We'll tell you anything about St. Frank's you like," I put in, fearing that the conversation was becoming too personal. "Of course, we start the new term tomorrow. I expect the term will be pretty quiet, on the whole, although there's no telling."

"I hear you're strong on cricket at St. Frank's?" asked Barry.

"Rather!" I replied. "If possible, we mean to break a few records this term. One of our best players is away—a fellow named Pitt—but I dare say we shall manage all right."

Barry nodded.

"And aren't you having a new Head?" he asked. "I believe I saw an item in the paper about Dr— Yes, Dr. Stafford,

wasn't it? He's going off on a trip, or something?"

"That's it!" said De Valerie. "Pretty rotten, if you ask me. It's a queer thing, but whenever Dr. Stafford goes away, there's trouble of some kind. We don't realise the Head's worth while he's with us. Of course, we're going to have a new Head for this term."

"What's he like?" asked Barry, with interest.

"Oh, a rotter!" replied Handforth. "An absolute beast!"

"Indeed!"

"Eh?"

"I mean, is he really a rotter?" said Barry hastily. "Then you've met him, I suppose?"

"How the dickens could we meet him when he hasn't arrived at the school yet?" demanded Handforth gruffly. "It strikes me you're a bit of a chump, my lad. The new Head is named Stokes—Dr. Beverley Stokes, if you please. By George, what a name!"

"It doesn't strike me as being particularly horrible," said Barry mildly.

"I wouldn't mind betting that he turns out to be a beast," said Handforth. "His name's enough for me; I can see him as clear as daylight. A round-shouldered old rotter with a beastly inquisitive nose, and I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he's got side-whiskers!"

"By Jove!" said Barry. "You've got a pretty wonderful imagination!"

"Of course I have!" agreed Handforth. "There's not much that I don't see!"

"So it appears," agreed Barry, with a chuckle. "In fact, you see a tremendous lot that probably doesn't exist!"

"Bally good!" said Archie approvingly. "Topping, old boy! You've got Handy's character absolutely nailed down, by gad! Personally, I imagine that Dr. Stokes will be a rather decent old bird."

"Well, it's all a matter of conjecture," I put in. "We haven't seen Dr. Stokes—we haven't had any description of him, and we don't know a single fact about him. So it's a mere waste of time to discuss the man at all. The best thing is to wait."

Barry nodded.

"I agree!" he said. "And it wouldn't surprise me a bit if you all got a big surprise."

I looked at him curiously.

"Why, do you know Dr. Beverley Stokes?" I asked.

"How on earth should I know him?" said Barry. "I'm just talking in a general sense. When a fellow makes up his mind about anybody or anything in advance, he generally gets a shock when he sees the real thing."

"Rubbish!" said Handforth. "I'll bet a quid that Dr. Stokes will be a harsh old bounder, and, what's more, I think we ought to get up a big protest against him. We'll show him as clear as daylight—on the very

first day of term—that we won't put up with any nonsense."

William Barry chuckled.

"Good!" he agreed. "That's the way to talk!"

But I couldn't help noticing that Barry had deliberately evaded a direct answer to my question.

CHAPTER V.

NOTHING LIKE BEING CANDID!



SOMEHOW, I was just a bit suspicious about William Barry.

I couldn't help feeling that he was pulling our legs. There was nothing tricky about his appearance, but there was that twinkle in his eye—and the keen, acute look on his face. He wasn't exactly like an ordinary junior. There was something—well, something different about him; but I couldn't quite give a name to it.

Although I said nothing further at the moment, I still had an idea that Barry knew something about Dr. Beverley Stokes. There was an amused, bland look on his face that deceived the others, but didn't quite fool me.

The discussion continued with vigour, a number of other fellows having joined us by this time.

"Yes," said Handforth, "we're going to show the new Head that we're firm. We've had enough of bullies and tyrants!"

"Are you supposing that Dr. Stokes will be a bully?" asked Barry.

"I'm judging by other Heads we've had," replied Handforth. "The fault was, we allowed the beasts to obtain a firm hold before putting our foot down. But there's nothing like experience to teach a fellow. And this time we're going to be firm."

"Good old Handy!" grinned Buster Boots. "And what are we going to do with the new Head if he turns out to be a tyrant? String him up in the Triangle, and use him as an Aunt Sally?"

Handforth scorned the sarcasm.

"We'll start properly by showing Dr. Stokes that he's only a temporary man!" he said firmly.

"But Dr. Stokes probably knows that already," suggested Barry.

"Fathead!" said Handforth. "Of course he knows it; but we won't allow him to forget it! And if he dares to interfere with any of the school rules, we'll raise the dickens!"

"Fine!" said Barry. "There's nothing like independence in this life. I like to hear it! A fellow of your sort ought to be the captain of the lower school."

"You mustn't take too much notice of Handforth," said Boots. "He's a marvellous chap for talking, but when it comes to action he makes a mess of everything he touches.

The most extraordinary fellow for muddling things up."

"Eh?" roared Handforth.

"But, at the same time," said Boots, "he's a fine fellow! Generous, good-hearted, and as true as a die! One of the best pals any chap could wish to have."

Handforth paused, disarmed by this eulogy.

"You—you rotter!" he breathed. "I was just going to punch your nose—and now I can't!"

"Sorry!" grinned Boots. "But the truth's the truth!"

Barry chuckled.

"Well, there's nothing like having it straight from the shoulder," he remarked. "And so you're all feeling pretty anxious about your new Headmaster? I shouldn't worry, if I were you. I don't suppose Dr. Beverley Stokes will turn things quite upside down."

"He'd better not try to turn them at all!" said De Valerie. "I can tell you, my lad, there'll be some big trouble if Dr. Stokes makes a lot of radical changes. He'll find St. Frank's too hot for him! He'd better be careful."

"Hear, hear!" said Barry heartily. "There's only one thing to do with Dr. Stokes—and that is, be firm with him! There's nothing like taking up a strong stand."

"That's the first sensible thing you've said!" declared Handforth.

"Oh, I'm not such an ass as I look," said Barry frankly. "I shall do my level best to come to St. Frank's after hearing this. I like you fellows, too—there's no nonsense about you! You just say what you think, and you put it bluntly. Good, virile stuff—straight from the shoulder! Yes, by Jove, I like you!"

"Thanks!" said Handforth sarcastically. "We're overwhelmed with joy! To be liked by you is a terrific honour!" He placed a fist near Barry's face. "But it won't do, my lad," he went on grimly. "Do you see that?"

"It's painfully apparent," replied Barry.

"Well, if there's any more of your giddy nerve, it'll be still more painfully apparent," said Handforth. "You've got a lot too much to say, kid! And you'd better ease down!"

Barry remained quite unruffled.

"Yes, I shall have to come to St. Frank's," he said calmly. "Having become acquainted with you fellows, I can't resist the temptation. So don't be a bit surprised to find me at the old school early in the new term."

"Do you really mean that?" I asked curiously.

"I do."

"And what school do you belong to now?" put in Boots.

"No school at all—it's a holiday."

"Don't try to be funny!" said Buster severely. "I must say you're a queer card!"

Now the dickens can you come to St. Frank's?"

"By train, I suppose," said Barry.

"You funny ass! I mean, how can you decide a thing like this for yourself?" snorted Boots. "Your people may squash the idea."

"They may—but they won't!" said Barry. "I don't mind telling you, in confidence, that my mind is fully made up. I am going to St. Frank's—positively!"

With a chuckle, he strolled off with his hands in his pockets, leaving us looking after him curiously. Handforth wanted to drag Barry back, but we wouldn't let him.

"That chap was telling the truth," I said thoughtfully. "But I can't quite make him out—he's a bit too deep for me. And he knows more about Dr. Stokes than he admits. He's got something up his sleeve, if you ask me."

De Valerie nodded.

"I've got that impression, too," he said. "Well, let's hope he comes into the College House."

"You're welcome to him!" sniffed Handforth. "We wouldn't own a lunatic like that in the Ancient House."

Boots nodded.

"Yes, you're rather particular about your lunatics, aren't you?" he agreed. "But it strikes me that Barry is just the type of fellow we want on our side. He's original—with plenty of confidence and coolness. We can do with his sort in the College House."

"That's what I think," said Bob Christine.

"Then you'll be disappointed!" retorted Handforth. "Because I'll make it my business to get the new chap into the Ancient House!"

"But you just said——"

"Blow what I just said!" interrupted Handy. "I'm not going to be beaten by a couple of silly Monks! Not likely! And if you chaps start arguing, I'll biff you!"

Willy put in an appearance.

"Oh, there you are, Ted!" he said. "I'm surprised at you! In fact, I'm ashamed of you!"

"Eh?"

"I'm jolly glad you're disguised—because I don't like to own you as a brother!" went on Willy, sadly. "By the way, your face is running a bit! Your dusky complexion is oozing into your giddy collar! I suppose you know that a sweet young thing is waiting for you?"

Handforth jumped.

"You—you mean——"

"But it's too late now," went on Willy, shaking his head. "Miss Irene's been very patient, but she got fed up, and is having a dance with Johnny Onions. These girls are so fickle, you know!"

Handforth rushed off, amid general grins.

And, in the meantime, William Barry had reached a quiet corridor. He hurried along it, making curious sounds. Finally he burst into Colonel Glenthorne's library, sank limply



"What the dickens do you mean by coming here in a beastly Eton suit?" asked Handforth grimly. "Unless you can give a reasonable answer, I'm going to grab you by the neck, and hoof you out!"

into a chair, and went off into an absolute yell of uncontrollable laughter.

And, considering that Colonel Glenthorne himself was in the apartment, entertaining a guest, this was quite a remarkable thing for a junior schoolboy to do!

CHAPTER VI.

THE BIG IDEA.



COLONEL GLENTHORNE paused in the act of lighting a cigar.

"Good gad!" he ejaculated. "What on earth——"

"He must have heard one of Sir Edward Handforth's latest jokes!" chuckled the finely built, bronzed man who lounged in another easy-chair. "Don't interrupt him, colonel—let him have his laugh out!"

They both regarded Barry with interest.

The bronzed man was no less a person than the famous Lord Dorrimore—the celebrated big game hunter and explorer. He took a sip of his whisky and soda, and was compelled to join in the laughter.

"Hang it all, I can't help myself!" he chuckled. "The man looks so ridiculously kiddish in that outfit! It was an absolute brain-wave to come in that costume."

Barry controlled himself at last.

"Sorry, colonel!" he gasped, wiping a tear from his eye. "In half a minute I'll tell you all about it. Do you mind pouring me out a drink, Lord Dorrimore? Thanks! You'll save my life!"

Barry sat up, took a cigar from the box on the table, and lit it. Then he took a long drink of the whisky and soda which Lord Dorrimore handed to him.

"Come, Dr. Stokes, what's the fun about?" smiled Archie's father.

Dr. Stokes! Was it possible—was it conceivable—that this mere schoolboy was the new Headmaster of St. Frank's? The very suggestion of it seemed wildly fantastic.

Yet it was equally fantastic to believe that a schoolboy would ask for a whisky and soda, and light up one of his host's cigars. Indeed, of the two possibilities, the former seemed the most feasible.

For a subtle kind of change had come over the genial William Barry.

His voice was not quite so boyish now, for when he spoke he did so on a deeper note. And his actions—the very way in which he sat in his chair, and the way in which he held his cigar—were the actions of a full-grown man.

And Lord Dorrimore's remark was significant.

He had referred to Barry's Eton suit as a costume! In other words, it was not his ordinary type of clothing at all, but a fancy dress! He had come to the ball as all the other guests had come—in a special fantastic get-up for the occasion.

"You must have been told some remarkably fine jokes, old man," said Dorrie. "What's the idea of keepin' us out like this? Perhaps if I give you another whisky——"

"No—it's all right, thanks," said Barry. "The fact is, I've been laughing at a little practical joke of my own. To be brief, I've just had a long and entertaining chat with a number of St. Frank's juniors—including your son, colonel. And, by Jupiter, the young beggars took me into their arms as one of themselves! Never had the ghost of a suspicion of my real identity!"

"I'm not at all surprised," smiled Colonel Glenthorne. "My dear son, you don't realise how preposterously youthful you look! Seeing you for the first time in that rig, I'd swear you were no older than fifteen!"

"Hear, hear!" said Dorrie. "No need to be surprised at the youngsters for failin' to tumble. But, I say, wasn't it a bit risky to play a trick like that on the boys you're goin' to control?"

"Not at all," said Barry. "Nothing could have been more opportune."

He went into fuller details concerning the conversation that had recently taken place, and his listeners roared when he described what Handforth and the other juniors had said regarding their new headmaster.

And this mere boy, this fair-haired youngster in Etons, was Dr. Beverley Stokes him-

self! He was the man who had been appointed by the St. Frank's Governors to fill Dr. Stafford's post during the latter's absence.

Actually, Dr. Beverley Stokes was just twenty-six years of age, and, being fair, with a fresh complexion, he looked even younger. He was small, too, and the adoption of Eton clothes, and a boyish manner, immediately lent him the illusion of extreme youth. And there was not the slightest doubt that Dr. Stokes was a consummate actor.

He had told no fibs about himself. His first Christian name was William, but his second name—Beverley—had always been contracted by his parents to the more simple nickname of Barry. So, in giving his name as William Barry, he was strictly within the truth.

The new Headmaster of St. Frank's had thought it rather a good joke to come to the fancy dress ball as a schoolboy. He had only done it to raise a laugh, and because he was very much of an overgrown boy himself. And he had "kidded" the St. Frank's fellows quite on the spur of the moment—never believing for an instant that they would be deceived for long.

But as soon as he had perceived that his deception was undetected, he had kept it up out of sheer love of mischief.

"Nothing pleases me better than your appointment, Dr. Stokes," said Colonel Glenthorne, after they had had their laugh. "And St. Frank's is not the only great public school that is instilling young blood into its organisation. Many of our most famous colleges are appointing youthful headmasters. I regard the new departure as a great step forward. For the young understand the young."

"Well, I'm certainly beginning to understand these Remove youngsters," chuckled Dr. Stokes. "Upon my word, I never realised what the junior youngsters were actually like! I'm enormously glad of this opportunity, because it enables me to study these fellows in their own natural atmosphere. And I like them tremendously. They're a fine set of kids! Handforth especially is a corker! Blunt—straight from the shoulder—and really delightfully candid!"

Lord Dorrimore chuckled.

"Good old Handy!" he murmured. "We've had some sport, one way and another. As straight as a string, that kid; but the most infernally obstinate beggar under the sun! And, by gad, because of that I like him all the more! You can't help being fond of him!"

"That's just what I found," agreed Dr. Stokes. "I've never had such an important appointment as this before, although for four or five years past I've held fairly responsible positions—and I've had the controlling of boys until it's second nature to me. In fact, I realise that I've lost touch with them."

"Lost touch?" repeated the colonel, questioningly.

"That's exactly what I mean," said Barry. "A schoolmaster is always liable to regard his boys as so many ciphers—necessary evils, to a certain extent. And, by very reason of his position, a master is frequently barred out from the intimacies of his pupils. No matter how he tries, he finds it enormously difficult to get on actual level terms with the boys he controls. And until this evening I hardly realised how isolated I had become. It was a sheer joy to me to be a boy again—and to be among boys."

"I see your point, of course," said Colonel Glenthorne, nodding. "And that is why I am so delighted with your appointment, Dr. Stokes. I am an Old Boy, you know, and St. Frank's is dear to my heart."

"I'd love an opportunity of studying the whole of St. Frank's in this same way—before taking command," said Dr. Stokes thoughtfully. "It would give me a wonderful insight into the inner selves of the great school. I should, as it were, be able to feel the pulse of St. Frank's, and thus be in a position to take control under the happiest conditions."

"I am afraid that's impossible," said the colonel.

"An' why?" demanded Lord Dorrmore, suddenly sitting forward and grinning. "Why impossible? Gad, Stokes, why don't you keep to that fakery, an' go down to St. Frank's, to-morrow as a new boy?"

CHAPTER VII.

POOLING ST. FRANK'S.



DR. WILLIAM BEVERLEY STOKES started.

"Go down to St. Frank's as a new boy!" he repeated, slowly. "It's an idea, Lord Dorrmore—by Jove, it's an idea! And, what's

more, it appeals to me with overwhelming force."

"Oh, but come!" protested Colonel Glenthorne, laughing. "You don't mean this, Doctor? It's impossible! Good gad, man, you couldn't do a thing like that! It's absolutely unprecedented!"

Dr. Stokes nodded.

"Precisely!" he said calmly. "That's the very reason I want to do it!"

"But, man alive——"

"I'm not the kind of man to stick to the old grooves," went on Dr. Stokes, rising to his feet, and pacing restlessly up and down. "There's something in this that appeals to me enormously. And why shouldn't it be done? What serious objection is there to such a harmless deception?"

"The fact that it might not be harmless," replied the colonel.

"But why? I can't see——"

"Well, if I know anything about public schools, I should imagine that you'll offend quite a number of your boys," said the

colonel. "It's morally certain that you'll hear all sorts of things that are never intended for the ears of a master."

Dr. Stokes chuckled.

"I've heard a few already," he said. "But I'm just as keen."

"After all, what does it matter?" asked Lord Dorrmore. "I'll warrant these St. Frank's fellows—the majority, anyway—are broad-minded enough to appreciate the joke. And, the way I see it, it isn't so much a joke as a kind of duty."

"Hardly that!" said Colonel Glenthorne, laughing. "You can't call it a duty, to fool the whole of St. Frank's!"

"I don't agree, colonel," said Dr. Stokes, coming to a halt in front of his host. "Let me make my meaning clear. If I take up my appointment at St. Frank's in the ordinary, commonplace way, I shall know absolutely nothing of the great school's feeling towards me. From the very moment of my arrival, a wide gulf will separate me from the boys—particularly from the junior boys. In almost every great college, the Lower School regards the Headmaster as some kind of ogre—some all-powerful potentate perched upon a high pedestal. He is looked upon with awe——"

"And respect," said the colonel. "Don't forget that, Dr. Stokes. And no Headmaster can hope to control his school unless he has the respect of his boys. And such a deception as you propose might rob you of that respect at the very outset."

"I don't think so," said Dorrie. "What's your idea, old man?"

"I believe that Colonel Glenthorne is mistaken," replied Dr. Stokes. "And that makes me all the more eager to apply the test. I cannot see how I shall sacrifice the school's respect by bridging that gulf. I shall disperse the awe, no doubt; but that will be for the good. By going to St. Frank's in the capacity of a schoolboy I shall get over the chasm in one stride. And afterwards I shall be able to lessen that chasm until it practically ceases to exist. I firmly believe that a mutual understanding between boys and masters is for the good of a school in general."

Colonel Glenthorne laughed.

"Well, perhaps you're right," he said. "You are certainly in a better position to judge than I am, Dr. Stokes. And I do not think there is a better school in Great Britain for the experiment than St. Frank's. It is famous for its good sportsmanship in general."

"Then it's settled!" said the young Headmaster. "I won't say a word about it, of course—to Dr. Stafford, I mean. I'll give him a surprise at the same time as the others."

"But I thought Stafford was away on holiday?" asked Dorrie.

"He will have just sufficient time to give me an official welcome, and introduce me to the school," replied Barry. "After that he's

got to hurry away—his boat sails on Thursday, I believe."

"And how long do you propose to keep up this deception?"

"Oh, only for a few hours—just the first morning of my arrival," replied Dr. Stokes. "And in that short space of time I firmly believe that I shall be able to get an inner knowledge of the boys, and of their likes and dislikes, that would take me ten years to obtain under ordinary conditions. At any rate, I mean to go through with it."

"Good man!" said Dorrie approvingly. "There's nothing like sticking to your guns! He who hesitates is lost!"

"But there's still that little point I referred to a few moments ago," said Colonel Glenthorne dubiously.

"What little point?"

"Why, about offending the boys. Do you realise that you will probably hear hundreds of things that are positively opposed to all discipline? As a boy, you can listen to such things with impunity. But as a master, you will be obliged to take action."

Dr. Stokes chuckled.

"Anything of that nature that I may hear will be spoken while I am a boy," he replied. "Therefore, as you say, colonel, I can hear them with impunity. That's correct, isn't it?"

"But what about when you become your natural self?"

"When I am my natural self I am not likely to hear anything that is opposed to discipline," replied Barry calmly. "And that is the whole matter in a nutshell."

"I confess that I cannot quite follow," said the colonel.

"Well, in other words, I shall make a point of conveniently forgetting everything that passes during my escapade," explained Dr. Stokes. "And the boys will quickly realise my attitude—and I rather fancy they will approve. In any case, I can see no danger in the undertaking. So it's a go!"

And Barry sat down again, and finished his cigar with complete enjoyment.

The more he thought of the scheme, the more he liked it. He was aware that he would be taking a certain amount of risk, but he was game enough to face the consequences.

He believed that the St. Frank's fellows would take the joke in the right spirit. Some, of course, would object; but Dr. Stokes believed that this section would be in the minority.

If the whole school condemned him for the affair, it would be an eye-opener for him, proving that all his ideas of schoolboy character were wrong. The new Head was perfectly content to take his chance.

He was a man with new ideas—a man who was quite fearless in the institution of far-reaching changes. He wouldn't be so rash as to interfere with a single one of the old school traditions. But when it came to unnecessary red tape, he would sweep it away ruthlessly.

And, above all else, Dr. Beverley Stokes was a firm believer in the policy of being on close, intimate terms with his scholars. And by going down to St. Frank's in the character of a schoolboy, there would be no doubt or question of this intimacy!

By all appearances, St. Frank's was booked for a surprising day on the morrow!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NEW BOY.



RALPH LESLIE FULLWOOD granted.

"Back again!" he said, without enthusiasm. "Same old buildings—same old Triangle—same old faces! And, by gad, the same old lessons, after to-day! Nice prospect, what?"

"Makes me sick!" said Gulliver sourly.

"Same here!" growled Bell. "But there's one change, anyhow—we've got a new Head this term! But I suppose he'll turn out to be a miserable old sinner, even worse than Stafford!"

Apparently, Fullwood & Co. were not excessively delighted at being back at St. Frank's. By the general trend of their conversation, it appeared that their love of St. Frank's was conspicuous by its absence.

Other juniors were equally despondent, but they didn't show it quite so much. They made a brave show of being cheerful, and accepted the inevitable with a good grace.

Still, others were frankly pleased to be back at the old school. I was one of these latter. Holidays are all very well, but they are apt to become monotonous after a time. And I was thinking about the cricket, the Magazine, and other responsible matters.

St. Frank's was fairly humming with life.

A few short hours earlier, the great school had been silent and uncannily still. But after the arrival of the first train from London, things had begun to awaken.

And now, by midday, two-thirds of the school had arrived, and both the Ancient House and the College House were ringing with shouts, the clatter of running footsteps, and a hundred and one other noisy sounds that would be firmly suppressed later on.

To begin with, however, the school did pretty much as it liked. Studies were put into ship-shape, baggage was carted upstairs, and seniors and juniors alike were enormously busy.

"Heard the latest?" asked Tommy Watson, as he ran into Handforth & Co., in the Ancient House.

"No. What is it?"

"There's a batch of Magazine stuff turned up from Reggie Pitt," said Watson. "It came this morning, by the first post. Nipper's got it, and he says it's good stuff. A kind of diary, you know."

"What do I care about it?" asked Handforth. "Blessed if I can see why Nipper should shove Pitt's rubbish in the Mag, just because he and Grey have gone to Africa! Nobody's got any interest in Africa!"

"But, you ass, it was all arranged before Pitt went!" said Watson. "He's going to send these despatches regularly——"

"Yes, and Nipper will try to shelve my Trackett Grim stuff!" said Handforth bitterly.

"Well, that's only to be expected," said Watson. "An editor takes every opportunity to improve his paper——"

"What?" howled Handforth.

"Great Scott!" gasped Watson. "Don't yell like that! And don't glare, either! As for your Trackett Grim stuff, there'll be plenty of room for it, in addition to Pitt's Diary—worse luck!"

"What's the argument about?" I asked, coming up.

"Oh, here you are!" said Handforth, turning on me fiercely. "The first thing you do when you get back is to push me out of the Magazine! I've never heard of such a dirty trick——"

"Hold on, hold on!" I grinned. "The trouble with you, Handy, is that you get an idea, and immediately regard it as gospel truth. As a matter of fact, I came along to tell you to get busy on your Magazine stuff at once. I shall want an extra dose from you this week."

"Oh!" said Handforth, all the wind knocked out of his sails.

"We've got to go to press to-morrow—at the latest," I went on crisply. "It'll be a tearing rush, I know, but unless we get this week's number out immediately, we shall be all behind for next week. So get a hustle on, my lad, and don't forget your Correspondence Page."

"My which?" asked Handforth, in a fierce whisper. "Fathead! Nobody knows I'm 'Uncle Edward'! If you talk in that loud voice, you'll give the game away!"

I grinned—loudly.

"Poor old Handy!" I said, as I walked away. "I always suspected that you suffered from delusions—and now I know it!"

I passed out into the Triangle, and almost the first fellow I saw was a well-set-up junior in smart Etons, and with a shiny topper set rakishly on the back of his fair head.

"Hallo!" I said, halting. "You here?"

The other nodded.

"Rather!" he replied. "Didn't I tell you I was coming?"

I looked at William Barry with considerable interest.

"You said there was a possibility of it, but you were very vague," I replied. "I certainly didn't expect to see you here to-day. Have you come for good?"

"For this term," anyway," replied Dr. Stokes, with truth. "Jolly glad to meet

you again, Nipper. You're the Remove skipper, aren't you? Any chance of me getting into the Remove Eleven?"

"I like your nerve, but you've got a bit too much of it," I replied firmly. "You'd better understand at once, my son, that new boys don't get their caps on the first day of their arrival! You'll be jolly lucky if you get a position in the reserves."

"Well, it's just as well to know," said Barry calmly. "But why shouldn't a new boy have just as much chance as an old hand. What's the idea of this red tape?"

"Red tape?" I repeated, staring.

"This favouritism," said Dr. Stokes, taking immediate advantage of the opportunity to pursue the policy he had outlined.

"Look here, Barry, I like you," I said grimly.

"Thanks!"

"I think you're the kind of chap we need at St. Frank's," I went on. "But if you start any talk about favouritism in the selection of the Junior Eleven, you're asking, in a loud voice, for a large black eye. Have I made myself plain?"

"No," said Barry. "That was left to Nature."

"Good!" grinned De Valerie, from the Ancient House steps. "Hallo, Barry! Pleased to see you, old son!"

I had turned rather red.

"And it isn't usual for new chaps to be funny, either!" I said grimly.

"Sorry!" grinned Dr. Stokes. "But about the cricket. I'm not quite satisfied that the system here is right. As far as I can see, there's plenty of room for improvement."

"Oh!" I said, nettled. "How?"

"Well, you just told me that I shall be lucky to get into the reserves. And you say that before you've even seen me handle a bat or touch a ball! I don't profess to be good, but for all you know I might be a second Jessop! That's what I mean. Why shouldn't new boys be put straight into the Junior Eleven if they're good enough?"

"They are!" I replied briefly.

Barry was rather taken aback.

"They are?" he repeated. "But you told me——"

"I spoke like that because there's not one new fellow out of a thousand good enough to play in the important fixtures," I replied. "But if you can prove to me that you're better than the weakest member of my present team—you'll be put in that weakest member's place. My policy has always been to play the best eleven men in the Junior school, irrespective of their position in the Form. A fellow can be my worst enemy, but if he's good at sports he gets his place. I bar favouritism with a fifty horse-power barrier!"

"Splendid!" exclaimed Dr. Stokes, really delighted. "You don't know how pleased I am to hear that!"

"I'm overwhelmed!" I said sarcastically.

And at this moment Handforth arrived on

the scene, and further conversation on cricket was quite out of the question. Within the first few seconds it appeared that the subject would change to boxing.

CHAPTER IX.

SHOWING HIM THE ROPES.



EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH was accompanied—much to his shame—by his young brother. He had tried his utmost to shake Willy off, but every kind of threat had failed, and Handforth had given up attempting to biff his minor on the nose. Willy was about the only fellow at St. Frank's who perfectly understood the art of evading Handy's right.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Handforth, gazing at Dr. Beverley Stokes with a kind of triumphant joy. "That Barry chap! He's come here, after all! By George! The nerve!"

"Nothing particularly nervy about it," said Willy. "A new chap has got to show himself, hasn't he?"

"I wasn't talking to you!" roared Handforth. "Clear off! Your face worries me!"

"And your face makes me feel that I shan't eat for a week!" retorted Willy. "In fact, Ted, there's something about your dial that makes funny spasms go up and down my spine!"

Handforth leapt down the steps, despairing of dealing with his minor, and planted himself in front of Barry, who was waiting with keen anticipation for what might follow.

"Have you come here as a new kid?" demanded Handforth.

"Well, yes, I suppose so," said the Head. "At least, to begin with."

"What do you mean—to begin with?"

"Well, after I've been here a time. I shan't be new, shall I?"

"Fathead!" snorted Handforth, as the crowd chuckled. "Look here! Are you trying to be funny? I want to know which House you're going into."

"Both!" replied Barry. "At least, I hope so."

"You can't belong to both Houses!" howled Handforth, exasperated.

"That's not what you said," went on Dr. Stokes, enjoying himself hugely. "You asked me which House I'm going into—and it'll be a queer thing if I don't enter the two of 'em, at one time or another."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth felt rather faint—this new fellow was too much for him.

"Are you asking for a fat ear?" he bellowed.

"My dear fellow, why get excited?" asked Barry. "The great thing is to keep cool, and avoid all exertion. A chap of your temperament is liable to pop off at any moment."

"Pop off?" repeated Handforth blankly.

"Rather!" said Barry. "You ought to be more careful! And now, to change the subject. Who's going to be a good sport and show me the ropes? I'd like to have a look round the school."

"Right you are!" said Willy promptly. "I'm your man!"

"Thanks!" said Dr. Stokes. "Then suppose we make a move?"

He linked his arm into Willy's, and they walked off across the Triangle, leaving Handforth fighting for breath. The leader of Study D suddenly charged forward, but he was grasped by half a dozen of us.

"Oh, leave him alone!" I said. "The chap's a good sort, and you don't want to get into trouble on the first day of term. If you biff Barry, the new Head might see you!"

At the time, I didn't realise how true my words were. The new Head, in fact, would have both seen and felt. And, at last, Handforth was cool enough to be released.

"I look upon the fellow with disdain," he said tartly. "And, anyhow, I wouldn't touch him with a bargepole now that my minor's walked off with him! That young brother of mine is the most revolting kid I've ever seen in my life!"

Armstrong nodded.

"Yes, Willy is a mouldy little beast!" he agreed.

Biff!

"Yow! Yaroooh!" howled Armstrong, staggering back. "What's that for?"

"For calling my minor a mouldy little beast!" roared Handforth.

"Didn't you call him a revolting kid?" hooted Armstrong.

"I can call him what I like—he's my brother!" retorted Handforth firmly. "As a matter of fact, he is a mouldy little beast, but I'm the only chap who can say it!"

And Handforth marched off, leaving the crowd grinning. But Armstrong utterly failed to see the logic of Handy's remark.

In the meantime, the mouldy little beast was busily occupied with the fellow he mistook for a new kid. Willy would have had a few well-assorted fts if he had guessed that his companion was the Headmaster in person.

Happily for the fag's peace of mind, he was unaware of this slight detail.

And it had better be admitted at once that Handforth minor had conceived a dark and sinister scheme concerning his charge. Barry had asked to be shown the ropes. He hadn't mentioned what ropes. So Willy thought it

ANSWERS

EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2:

was a good opportunity to indulge in some of his own special brand of humour.

"You're a lucky chap, you know," he said reflectively. "I wish I was a new kid! You'd be surprised at the way new kids are treated in this school! Like lords, you know!"

"Do they have a good time?" asked Dr. Stokes.

"A good time?" repeated Willy. "Why, my dear old fathead, you're simply in for a picnic! New kids are pampered up to the giddy neck here. They're provided with special studies, and goodness knows what else! By the way, would you like to see your study now?" he added carelessly.

have spoiled the joke for worlds, and so he meekly followed.

"So this is the way they treat new youngsters, eh?" he chuckled to himself. "I'm beginning to get interested."

He was decidedly more interested when Willy dodged into the porch of the Head's House, after a hasty glance up and down to assure himself that the coast was clear. Dr. Stokes became more suspicious than ever.

"This way—quick!" gasped Willy. "Don't stand there gaping, you ass! It's one of the rules that a new kid has got to get into his study without anybody seeing him. If you're spotted, you won't get the study!"



His clenched fist caught the tramp on the point of the jaw, the fellow reeled over, and crashed to the ground with a string of curses.

"Rather!" said Barry. "But do I have one to myself? I always understood that juniors took shares in a study."

Willy nodded.

"So they do," he agreed. "But new chaps have a rosy time of it—at least, to begin with. I'm going to show you into a study that'll absolutely stagger you. Come on—this way!"

Dr. Stokes had a vague suspicion that there was something a trifle too artless about Willy's behaviour. The fag was brisk and genial, and obviously anxious to make for this mysterious study. Barry wouldn't

Barry could quite believe it, but didn't say so.

They got indoors, and with an exaggerated air of confidence that did not deceive his intended victim, Willy reached the door of the Head's study, and opened it. His heart was in his mouth as he boldly flung the door wide open—and his relief was enormous when he saw that the room was empty.

"There you are—your study!" he said crisply.

Dr. Stokes stared. The first glance told him that this apartment was Dr. Stafford's own sanctum—the room that would now be his—Barry's. And the new Head gave a

sharp, intent glance at Willy. Had the fag dropped on the truth and was showing it in this way?

It was a bit of a coincidence that Willy should have performed this trick, of all tricks—for, little though he guessed it, he had actually brought the Head to his very own room!

"Well?" asked Willy. "Ain't you surprised?"

"Oh, rather!" gasped Dr. Stokes. "And—and is this my study?"

"All of it!" said Willy generously. "I don't want it—it's yours! Rather too stiff for me—I like something more homely. But new chaps are treated like lords, as I said before."

Barry was convinced that Willy was doing this as a pure jape.

And it became more entertaining than ever.

CHAPTER X.

ENJOYING HIMSELF.



DR. STOKES threw himself into the game wholeheartedly.

"My—my goodness!" he said, gazing at the study with open eyes, and speaking in an awed voice. "Fancy

them giving me a room like this! Somebody told me the studies at St. Frank's were good, but I never hoped for one like this!"

"I don't suppose you did!" agreed Willy. "As a matter of fact, you've got to thank me for this study. Another fellow might have shown you into one of those hutches in the Remove passage. But I'm more generous. I think a new chap ought to be well looked after."

"Oh, I say, that's awfully decent of you," said Barry gratefully.

"Not at all!" replied Willy, with an airy wave of his hand. "No need to thank me, old son! You're welcome to this room! If I were you, I should lay down on the couch and wait for the servant to bring lunch in!"

Dr. Stokes stared at Willy in wonder.

"But are juniors provided with servants?" he asked innocently.

"My hat! You're not green, are you?" asked Willy, inwardly bubbling with enjoyment, and believing that this joke was startlingly successful. "Are juniors provided with servants? Just wait a bit, my lad! You'll soon see! In fact, I can safely promise that you're in for a surprise!"

"That's fine!" said Barry. "And thanks awfully for all the trouble you've taken! I love this study! I'll be able to put all my own books in here, and my cricket things, and everything!"

Willy nodded.

"Yes, it's about the best study in the whole school, as a matter of fact," he said. "And I'd better warn you that you may lose it before long."

"Lose it!" said Dr. Stokes, in a pained voice.

"There's no telling!" replied Willy wisely. "Some of these masters are so jolly swift, you know. It wouldn't surprise me a bit if one of 'em came along and biffed you out! They do that sort of thing here! But as long as you've got enough cheek, you can keep this study, and defy everybody!"

A door slammed somewhere up the passage.

"And now," added Willy, "I'll buzz off! I've just remembered that I've got an appointment with two of my pals! No! Don't you come—sit on the couch and enjoy yourself! Be happy while it lasts!"

And Willy shot out of the doorway, gave a fearful glance up the corridor, and whizzed out into the Triangle at express speed. Arriving there in safety, he breathed an immense sigh of relief, and his face broke into a glorious grin.

"Well, I wish him luck!" he commented callously. "I thought I was going to be caught red-handed, but fortune always favours the brave! Poor kid! He'll probably get swished for lolling on the Head's couch!"

Willy strolled off, feeling that he had upheld the great and glorious traditions of the Third. Later, the whole Remove would hear about this jape, and would howl at it. Willy was already preparing the remarks he would utter when that occasion arose. He thought it would be rather fitting to casually observe that all the brain power of St. Frank's was to be found in the Third Form.

Meanwhile, Dr. Beverley Stokes had obediently settled himself on the couch, and was chuckling audibly over his recent experience. As Headmaster he wasn't at all incensed with Willy for the trick. It was a perfectly harmless joke, and he appreciated it as such.

Indeed, he was beginning to like the boys enormously. So far, he had found them to be straightforward and thoroughly decent. And not wishing to miss any opportunities, he sallied forth once more.

He found a group of juniors engaged in a somewhat heated argument near the fountain. Handforth minor was hovering near by, and at sight of Barry, he sidled up stealthily.

"Better not say anything about your study!" he whispered.

"Oh, why not?"

"They're a jealous lot!" replied Willy, jerking his thumb at the Removites. "Keep it dark, old man! And don't forget to march straight into your new study when the dinner-bell rings."

"Right—I will!" said Dr. Stokes, as though deceived. "Hallo! Did I hear something about cricket?"

Handforth was the centre of the crowd, and he turned.

"Yes, you did hear something about cricket," he replied. "I suppose you know what the game is?"

"Isn't it played with a ball?" asked Barry mildly. "I'm awfully glad we've got cricket here. I think it's a fine game. I'd love to have a shot at it now."

"Just like your nerve!" retorted Handforth. "I'll bet you couldn't hit a ball for more than five yards! You new chaps are all the same—you all think you can do wonders. And it takes me to knock the conceit out of you!"

"Why, can you play cricket?" asked Barry.

"Can I play it?" snapped Handforth. "If it wasn't for me, the whole Junior eleven would fall to pieces!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm most awfully sorry, but I can't quite credit that," said Dr. Stokes, shaking his head. "In fact, I don't believe you could stand up to my bowling for more than five minutes."

Handforth accepted the bait beautifully.

"Couldn't stand up to your bowling?" he sneered. "My poor, pitiful lunatic! You couldn't bowl an infant! Let me tell you that I'm a demon batsman! I don't want to boast, but facts are facts!"

"Well, I maintain that you couldn't last for five minutes against my bowling," said Dr. Stokes.

"You dithering idiot!" snorted Handforth. "Come along to Little Side, and we'll see! Here, Church, buzz indoors and get the bats and things. We'll soon make this new kid look a bigger maniac than ever! I've never seen a more soppy-looking fathead!"

Dr. Stokes was undoubtedly hearing a few frank and straightforward remarks concerning his personal appearance—remarks that would probably cause Handforth to shiver violently when he recollected them after the disclosure. But the new Head didn't mind a bit. He knew that the epithets were hurled as from one boy to another.

And he had gained his end about the cricket. He was as keen as mustard to get a bat into his hand, and to have a glorious half-hour of real freedom. As Headmaster, he might not have an opportunity of playing, and he loved cricket with all his heart and soul.

The wicket was soon set up, and Handforth decided to put the new boy's bowling to the test at once. So he seized a bat and took up his position. He intended knocking a boundary with the first ball.

"Come on! Don't waste time!" he shouted impatiently.

Barry took the ball, and the other Juniors gathered round, watching with considerable amusement. Jerry Dodd was particularly keen, he being the finest player in the Lower School. Indeed, the Remove firmly declared that Jerry was miles better than anything the Sixth could produce.

Barry took a short run, and his arm came round with an easy swing, and the ball hurtled down, perfectly pitched, and travelling at terrific speed. And there was a

demoniac twist on it that deceived Handforth completely.

"Easy!" snapped Handforth.

Whizz! Crash!

Handforth's bat swished through the air, but it met nothing, and the next second his wicket was a wreck. He gazed at it, felt a bit giddy, and then stared at Dr. Stokes, who was standing near the other wicket, calm and smiling.

"How's that?" he asked genially.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Handforth.

"No; it's your wicket that's jiggered!" corrected the "new boy."

"By jings!" said Jerry Dodd, taking a deep breath. "That was the best ball I've seen for weeks!"

The Australian junior, being such a fine cricketer himself, instantly recognised class in another. He feared that he had witnessed a fluke, but he hoped against hope that this new fellow was a dark horse.

"Come on! That wasn't a proper ball!" roared Handforth, red in the face. "I—I wasn't quite ready, you know!"

"Anything to oblige," said Barry cheerily.

CHAPTER XI.

AN AWKWARD PREDICAMENT.



SIR MONTIE TREGELIS-WEST adjusted his pince-nez and stared.

"Begad!" he said faintly. "Is it a fact, or am I dreamin', dear old boys? Do I see it, or don't I?"

"You do," I replied. "Well, I'm hanged! Just look at him! Phew! That's a boundary, I'll bet!"

We had strolled on to Little Side, mainly to see who the enthusiasts were who were already putting in some practice. And we had only just got through the gate when we paused and stared.

For Barry was at the wicket.

Handforth was bowling, and Barry was simply knocking him into every corner of the field. The new fellow, in fact, was giving a display of batting that makes a spectator surge with enthusiasm and excitement. His technique was perfect, and his judgment superb.

"The young beggar!" I said grimly. "No wonder he asked me those questions about cricket! Why, the man's a marvel! He's not far short of Jerry Dodd's form."

Dodd himself came running up to us, his face glowing with excitement.

"Have you seen him?" he asked breathlessly.

"I'm seeing him now," I replied.

"Yes, but were you here when he was bowling?"

"No."

"Then you've missed something!" panted Jerry. "I tell you, Nipper, this new chum is kinder uncanny. He bowls like a profes-

sional, and he's one of the speediest men I've ever seen! You've got to put him in the First Eleven, Nipper—"

"We'll see about that," I put in.

"By jings! There's no seeing about it—it's a cert!" shouted Jerry Dodd. "We can't afford to be without this fellow! Thank goodness he's in the Ancient House!"

We strolled a little nearer, and I stood watching.

And my enthusiasm grew and grew, for Dr. Beverley Stokes was putting up a superb exhibition. True, Handforth's bowling was not particularly deadly, and the test was not gruelling. Edward Oswald was a good, slogging batsman, and fairly handy in the field, but of very little use as a bowler.

However, my eyes were opened still more when Jerry Dodd himself took Barry in hand. Jerry, of course, was a perfect wonder at cricket. He was one of those remarkable products of the game who seem to take to every phase of it with equal success. It was generally predicted that in later years Jerry Dodd would become one of Australia's most famous players.

But Dr. Stokes treated Jerry's bowling with an ease that almost amounted to contempt. It was startling. Indeed, it was staggering. For it must be remembered that we knew Dr. Stokes merely as an obscure new boy—we hadn't any idea that he was a full-grown man—and, what is more, a man who had played with consistent success for his University.

"There's something queer about him!" declared Handforth. "He's not like an ordinary chap at all! Just look at the way he uses that bat! He must have had years of practice!"

"He's a fine cricketer!" declared Church.

"Rather!" said Handforth promptly. "Good man! Did you see that? He's absolutely in a class by himself! He's got to play in all the Remove matches from this minute onwards!"

Handforth, being a keen sportsman, forgot everything else in his enthusiasm for the new fellow's prowess. And when Barry handed his bat over to somebody else and strolled up to us, Handforth thumped him vigorously on the back. Indeed, he nearly knocked Barry flat on his face.

"Topping!" said Handforth. "You're a giddy wonder!"

"Thanks!" gasped Dr. Stokes. "But there's no need to be quite so vigorous about it. You've got a fine playing field here—almost as good as the senior side."

"Better!" said Handforth promptly.

"We don't want to discuss the respective merits of the playing fields," I put in briskly. "Barry, my son, come to my arms! Let me congratulate you heartily! You've won your cap!"

"But you told me that a new fellow has no chance of being put straight into the Junior Eleven—"

"Never mind what I told you," I interrupted. "You may be new to St. Frank's,

but, by Jove, you're not new to cricket! I'm going to play you in the first match of the term—on Saturday!"

Dr. Stokes' eyes sparkled.

"Thanks awfully!" he said. "I'm very pleased to see that you're a true sportsman, Nipper—"

"You're talking like a giddy master!" I interrupted, staring.

"Ah? Oh, sorry!" said Dr. Stokes hastily. "But the fact is I'm rather afraid I can't play for the Junior Eleven."

"Can't play?" repeated Handforth bluntly.

"No; it's impossible."

"Look here, you ass, if you're going to get offended—" I began.

"Rot!" said Barry. "What have I got to be offended about? But it just happens that I can't possibly play for the Remove. I'm awfully sorry, but there it is."

We looked at him very grimly. I had already been forming my eleven in my own mind, and had been picturing all sorts of victories with Barry in the team. And for him to refuse to accept his cap was extraordinary. As a new fellow, he ought to have been overwhelmed with pride.

But I didn't know at that time that his position in the school was such that playing for the Remove was hardly feasible. A few other Juniors had come round by now, and were listening with interest.

"Look here, you duffer," I said gruffly. "What rubbish are you talking? Why can't you play for the Remove?"

"I'm sorry, but I can't explain."

"Can't explain?"

"Not at the moment," said Barry. "Later on you'll understand."

"Oh, shall we?" snapped Handforth. "Well, we're going to understand now! What's the idea of all this fathheaded mystery? If you don't promise to play for the Remove, I'll flatten your giddy nose!"

Dr. Stokes felt that the situation was becoming delicate.

"I think I'll get indoors to attend to my things—" he began.

"Think again!" interrupted Handforth wrathfully. "Why, you lopsided rotter, you can't treat us like this! A cheeky new kid, too! Will you play for the Remove, or not?"

"I tell you it's impossible," said Barry quietly.

"All right—take that!" roared Handforth.

Biff!

Edward Oswald's fist struck Dr. Beverley Stokes in the middle of his chest, and the full force of Handforth's shoulder was behind it. Dr. Stokes nearly turned a somersault, and landed on his back with a jar that made him feel a bit dazed. But as he picked himself up he realised that his predicament was decidedly awkward.

He was a man—a man, moreover, who had been champion of his class at boxing at his 'Varsity. It was impossible to carry his deception to the point of fighting with a

junior. It would be grossly unfair. And later, when the school knew the truth about him, his action in engaging in a scrap would be condemned.

"Come on!" snorted Handforth. "You've got to fight now!"

Barry rose to his feet, and we all stood by without making any comment. The thing had gone too far for us to interfere. The new boy had been knocked down, and it was up to him to prove his calibre.

He faced Handforth with perfect calmness.

"Put up your fists!" said Handforth grimly.

"I'm sorry—but I'm not fighting," said Barry.

"Not fighting!" repeated Handforth, with amazement in his voice. "But—but I punched you! You ain't going to take that tamely, I suppose?"

Dr. Stokes made no reply, but turned on his heel and walked away—considering this move to be the best and quickest way out of a predicament that promised to become quite impossible.

And we gazed at his retreating form in amazement.

CHAPTER XII.

SHOWING HIS CALIBRE!



"FUNK!"

Somebody shouted the word after Barry in a derisive tone. He paused for a moment, then squared his shoulders and walked on.

"Stop that!" I said grimly. "I'll admit the chap's attitude is a bit startling, but there may be a reason for it. He doesn't look the kind of fellow to back out of a scrap."

"But he has backed out!" roared Handforth. "I was going to biff him right and left—"

"If you hadn't interfered, this awkward situation wouldn't have arisen!" I snapped curtly. "I don't know why it is, Handy, but you always seem to mess things up! Whenever you open your mouth, you put your foot in it!"

"Oh, do I?" roared Handforth.

"He'd need a mouth the size of an elephant's—to get his foot into it!" remarked Willy, with a grin. "Of course, you didn't mean that, but—"

"Go and boil your face!" yelled his major.

"Thanks all the same, but I'd prefer to fry yours!" replied Willy. "And don't get so excited, Ted! Only last week a fellow dropped down dead through getting red in the face! Think of the trouble we should have in carrying your remains indoors! You ought to be more considerate!"

Handforth made a rush at his minor, but

he might as well have attempted to catch a shadow.

"I'm hanged if I can understand that new fellow," I said, frowning. "Oh, do be quiet, Handy! Why on earth did Barry walk off like that? He seems such a good sort, too."

And while we were discussing him, Dr. Stokes went off absent-mindedly towards the rear of the Ancient House. He was deep in thought—indeed, worried. That little incident had upset him.

It was a possibility that he hadn't reckoned upon. He blamed himself entirely for allowing Handforth to strike him. But for that unfortunate blow, he might have been able to smooth matters out. And afterwards, when he revealed himself, the real explanation would be obvious.

And as it was, he had given the fellows the impression that he was a coward. He turned rather pink when he remembered that word which had been flung after him in such scornful tones.

"Funk!" muttered Barry. "By Jupiter, how rotten!"

He tried to assure himself that everything would be all right when he assumed his correct position. But would it? Would the Juniors realise that he had refused to fight because of his position? It was quite on the cards that they would continue to regard him as a funk.

And it was a thought that worried him intensely.

He didn't quite know which direction he took, for he was so abstracted. And it was with a start that he realised that he had inadvertently wandered to the domestic quarters of the Ancient House.

He could see some washing hanging on a line, he could see steam issuing from a window which was obviously that of the Ancient House kitchen. And Barry prepared to retrace his steps.

But just before doing so he half turned an angle of the building, and came within sight of a side door. He paused, his attention attracted by something that was obviously unusual.

A neatly dressed housemaid was standing at the door, and she was talking to a tramp in curt terms. The man was one of those cadging individuals who occasionally sneaked in for what they could catch. He was a big, burly looking ruffian, with an evil face.

"Be off with you!" the housemaid was saying. "We've got nothing for you. And my time's more valuable—"

"Ain't you got an old pair of boots, or somethink?" asked the tramp, pushing himself forward. "Come on, miss—don't be 'ard on a bloke! A nice, pretty gal like you wouldn't turn a feller off—"

"Well, I never did!" interrupted the maid indignantly. "I don't want any of your talk—you're too saucy! I'll call Mrs. Poulter—"

"Now, then, missie, don't be so bloomin' touchy!" interrupted the ruffian. "Straight, you're a pretty gal! An' if you won't give me nothink, I'll take it!"

The man uttered a coarse laugh, grabbed the startled housemaid, and kissed her. The girl gave a gasp of indignation and fear, and struggled desperately in the tramp's animal-like grip.

And it was this little scene that Dr. Stokes witnessed.

He didn't waste any time on inquiries. He could see, in a flash, that the girl was being molested, and there was obviously only one thing to be done. The Head did it.

He ran up, grasped the tramp by the arm, and swung him round.

"Stop that, you blackguard!" shouted Barry.

Crash!

His clenched fist caught the tramp on the point of his jaw, the fellow reeled over, and crashed to the ground with a string of curses.

The girl, screaming, ran indoors.

"Get off these premises—and look sharp about it!" said Dr. Stokes curtly. "And be thankful that you're not handed over to the police for assault! Now then; move yourself!"

The ruffian was staring at Dr. Stokes in a kind of dazed wonder. That blow had hurt him, and it was positively startling to see that his attacker was no more than an insignificant junior schoolboy—a slim slip of a fellow whom he could easily brain with one fist.

Dr. Stokes, in fact, had momentarily forgotten his youthful appearance. He had dropped his impersonation like a cloak, and for these few seconds he was himself—a strong, vigorous man. Small, no doubt, but none the less dangerous because of that.

"You blinkin' young cub!" snarled the tramp. "It me, would yer? All right—you arst for it, an' you'll git it! Take that, you blamed young whelp!"

Dr. Stokes saw no reason why he should accept the swinging, murderous blow that was aimed at him. He ducked neatly, side-stepped, and then nipped in as the tramp lurched forward.

Barry's knuckles tingled as they met the brute's cheek with tremendous force. The man gave a wild howl of pain and surprise. Then, quite maddened by this unexpected punishment, he fought like a wild beast.

He kicked, lashed, and kept up a terrific roar that awakened the echoes. The housemaid was at one of the windows, gazing out in a kind of startled amazement—and full of admiration for this apparent schoolboy who had come so valiantly to her rescue.

"Oh, ain't he grand?" she gasped ecstatically.

The tramp's shouting had attracted other

attention, too. Teddy Long, always on the look-out for something fresh, peered round the building inquisitively. He saw what was going on, and then raced round into the Triangle, bubbling with excitement.

"Quick!" he gasped. "That new kid's round the back—fighting like mad with a tramp!"

Handforth and Co. and Jerry Dodd and the rest of us had just arrived in the Triangle, and at first we took little notice of Teddy Long's excited information.

But Owen major came rushing up with the same story, and we knew it was true.

We went rushing round to the rear of the Ancient House, and were just in time to see the latter stage of the fight. It was all one-sided. Barry was unmarked—untouched, except for one or two bruises on his knuckles. And he didn't even notice these.

The huge tramp was rapidly become exhausted. Barry gave a marvellous display of boxing—and his pluck in tackling this huge ruffian was proved beyond question. He had refused to fight Handforth, and yet he had cheerfully set himself the task of thrashing this hooligan!

There was something rather mysterious about the new fellow!

CHAPTER XIII.

TEA IN THE HEAD'S STUDY!



CRASH!

"And that," said Barry, "is that!"

He had just delivered the final punch—a devastating blow which laid the tramp flat, and which

left him devoid of interest in the immediate happenings of the moment. In short, the tramp had received the biggest hiding of his life.

"Splendid, Barry!" I said enthusiastically. "My dear chap, you can box as well as you can play cricket!"

Dr. Stokes rubbed his knuckles tenderly. "Oh, don't make a fuss over nothing," he said lightly. "I came upon the blackguard kissing one of the housemaids by force, and I had to butt in. There wasn't anything else to be done."

The tramp was indignantly seized by eight or nine juniors, and dragged unceremoniously to the nearest wall. He was hoisted up, and pitched over it like a sack of rubbish.

And it is fairly safe to declare that the fellow made tracks away from St. Frank's as fast as his legs would carry him. And it would probably be a long time before he tried any of his tricks at another public school.

Barry refused to let us talk on the subject. But the attitude of the Remove towards him was gratifying. By that fight

he had proved his calibre, and there was no longer the slightest doubt concerning his courage.

"When you come to think of it, it was decent of him not to fight you, Handy," said Church, after Barry had gone indoors to wash himself.

"What do you mean—decent?"

"My dear chap, he didn't want to slaughter you, that's all," said Church.

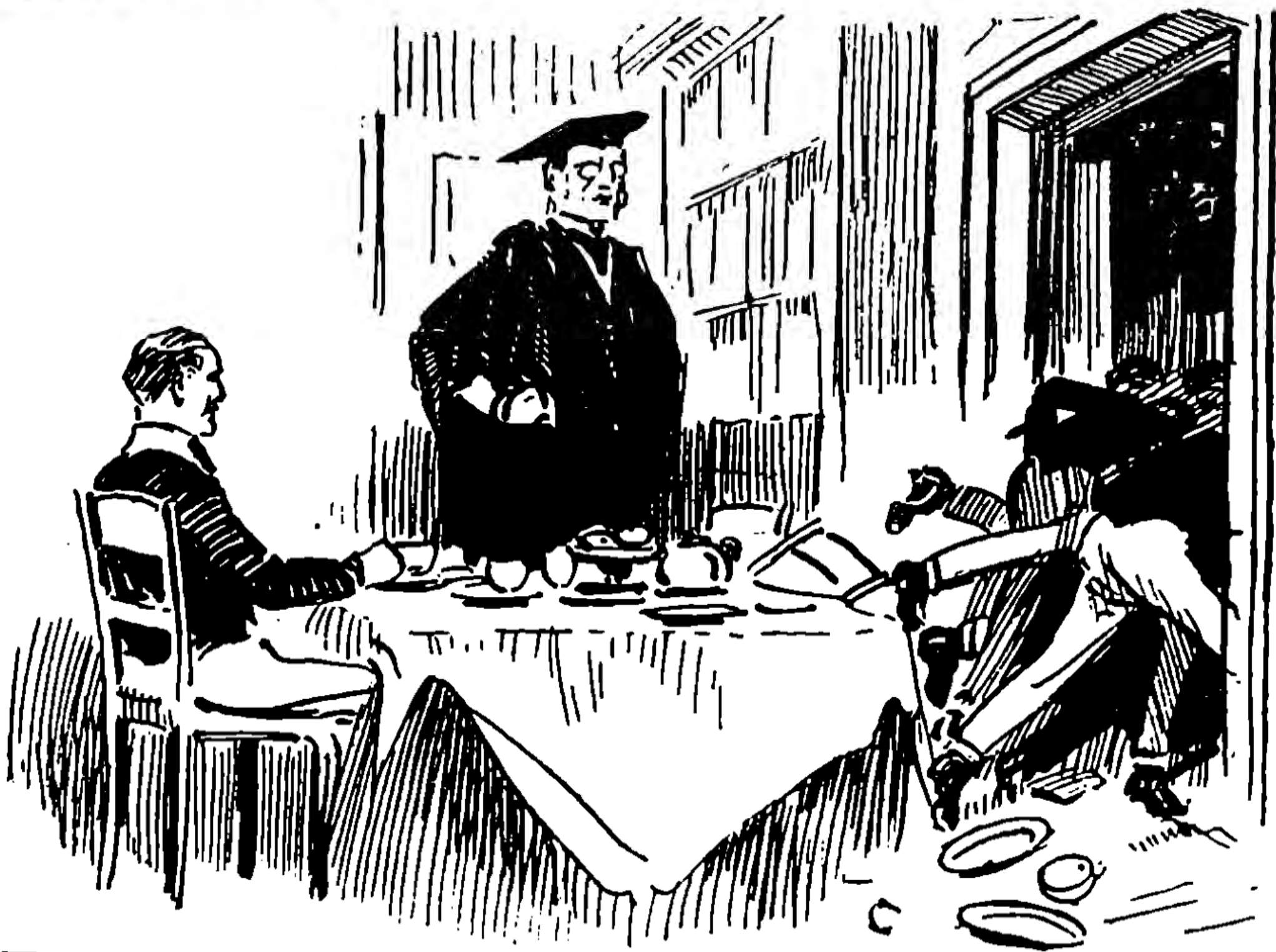
"Fathead! I could have licked him with one fist!"

"Oh, could you?" retorted Church. "After the way he settled that hulking loafer I wouldn't care to meet him without

the Fifth and the Sixth. The seniors were a bit surprised at this new junior, but they rather liked him. He was quite an unusual type.

And Barry made a hit in the College House. Buster Boots and Christine and the others were very sorry when he informed them that he would not be a Monk. They had heard about his cricketing prowess, and they waxed indignant when they declared that the Ancient House always got the best of everything.

In due course, tea-time arrived, and the Head knew that his practical joke would soon be at an end. Dr. Stafford was nearly



Cups and plates went flying, and the heroes of the Third made one swift, lightning-like dive for the door.

gloves! And you would have had your hands pretty full up, old man."

"By George, I suppose I should!" said Handforth thoughtfully. "I hadn't looked at it like that. I say, what a brick! The chap wouldn't fight me because he thought he'd lick me!"

Dr. Stokes didn't appear again for some time. The juniors had plenty to occupy them, and during the greater part of the afternoon, they were setting their studies in order, unpacking, and doing scores of things that weren't at all urgent.

And Dr. Stokes was enjoying himself again. He spent quite a lot of time with

due, and he would only stay for an hour or so—just long enough to show his locum tenens round, and introduce him to the school. After that, Dr. Stafford would catch the evening train for town, and would sail away on his holiday the next day.

Barry chuckled as he caught sight of Willy Handforth chatting with four or five of his fellow Third Formers near the gymnasium. Willy was laying down the law to his own particular set—Owen minor, Chubby Heath, Lemon, and Dicky Jones.

"Hallo, kids!" said Barry, strolling up. "Tea-time, isn't it?"

"Just about," replied Willy. "As a

matter of fact, we were just arguing about tea. I think we ought to have a special blow-out to-day, but these mean rotters want to make their tin last!"

Dr. Stokes chuckled.

"And why not?" he asked. "You never know when you might need it. I'll settle the argument by inviting the whole crowd of you to have tea with me."

"Good!" chorused the fags delightedly.

"With—with you?" repeated Willy, starting.

"Yes—in my study."

"Your study!" said Willy, with a gulp. "Oh, rather! Thanks, old man! Thanks awfully! But—but we don't feel inclined—"

"Don't we?" broke in Chubby Heath. "We've accepted the invitation, you ass. That's all right, Barry—we'll come."

Willy had a swift fight with himself. To accept this invitation would be to invite disaster; but to refuse would be to make himself look silly. And the latter was out of the question. He nodded rather feebly.

"Oh, all right!" he said. "Thanks, Barry! Jolly decent of you! But—but wouldn't it be better to have tea in the tuck shop? No need to bother about your study, you know—"

"No bother at all," said Barry promptly. "As a matter of fact, I've already given orders."

"Given orders!" said Handforth minor faintly.

"Yes—come along."

And Dr. Stokes marched off, the fags following. Willy's chums couldn't quite understand their leader's scared look. But it only needed one word from him to explain the matter.

"Fatheads!" he hissed. "Didn't I tell you that I'd taken him into the Head's study? That's where he's carting us off to—"

"Oh, my goodness!"

"And we've got to go through with it now," whispered Willy fiercely. "You fatheads have accepted, and we can't back out."

"We've got to back out!" gasped Owen minor. "Great stars! We daren't go into the Head's study with this prize duffer! We might get the sack! I'm off, anyway—"

Willy grabbed him by the arm.

"Any fellow who deserts me will have to reckon with me afterwards!" he said threateningly. "Remember! I'll slaughter you on the spot if you bunk now!"

And Willy, being champion fighter of the Third, was heeded.

The joke, which Willy had engineered with such cunning, was neatly being turned against him! But Handforth minor; for

all his shrewdness, simply believed that the new fellow was acting in ignorance.

And Willy was mildly amazed at Barry's simple trustfulness. It was astounding that he should have accepted that luxurious study as his own! Even before the fags entered the sacred apartment, Willy was turning over various forms of escape in his mind.

Barry threw open the door, and ushered his visitors in.

"Make yourself quite at home," he said cheerfully. "Go ahead, and disport yourselves over the furniture! Look upon it as your own home! Don't mind me a bit!"

"Oh, rather!" said Chubby Heath nervously. "Thanks awfully!"

Although the study was empty, save for themselves, the fags were filled with awe. It was as though the ghosts of past Headmasters hovered about, gazing with stern disapproval at these intruders.

Handforth minor's chums had yelled with laughter when he had told them of the way in which Barry had swallowed the yarn. And now they were actually his guests for tea!

"Pretty good study, eh?" said Barry, as he stood on the hearthrug. "Plenty of comfort here! Now, this is what I call doing a thing properly! In some schools, they only provide little poky box-rooms for the juniors."

Willy smiled with difficulty.

"Ye-e-es, rather!" he said weakly. "But—but it's a bit too grand, in my opinion. Why not get out of here, and—"

"Certainly not!" interrupted Barry. "This is my study, isn't it?"

He turned, and moved towards the fireplace, reaching out a hand to the electric bell push. Willy leapt a yard into the air.

"Hi!" he gasped frantically.

"My hat!" said Dr. Stokes. "What's the matter?"

"Don't—don't touch that bell, you fat-head!" hissed Willy, the cold perspiration beginning to form on his forehead.

"Nonsense!" said Barry. "I'm going to ring for tea."

He pressed the push, and Willy sank limply backwards into a chair. Unfortunately, he missed it, and crashed to the floor, and this only added to his confusion. The other fags sat round as if petrified. At any moment, they expected disaster.

A tap sounded on the door, and Willy shuddered.

"Come in!" sang out Barry cheerfully.

The door opened, and a maidservant entered, wheeling a tea waggon full up with cups and plates, piles of sandwiches, cakes, pastry, and other things dear to the hearts of Third Formers.

And Willy and Co. felt too weak for mere speech!

CHAPTER XIV.

AMAZING!



TOPPING!" said the schoolboy Headmaster, seizing the teapot, and preparing to do the honours. "Pass the sandwiches round, somebody! And don't look

so scared! What on earth's the matter with you kids?"

"Nun-nothing!" said Willy feebly.

He grasped the dish of sandwiches, and nearly upset them in his nervousness. The very fact that Handforth minor was shaky, indicated the state of mind he was in. Blessed with check that seemed unlimited, it was now clear that even Willy's assurance went to a certain length, and no further.

To be quite exact, Handforth minor was staggered.

It was clear that the new fellow had positively appropriated the Head's study in earnest! This was startling enough, but what about the other facts? How did they fit in?

It was astounding that Barry had retained possession of this sacred room during the whole afternoon; but it was little short of miraculous that the Head's servants were actually obeying his orders!

There was something uncanny about this, and Willy was too startled to think clearly.

Otherwise he might have realised that this new boy seemed to have an extraordinary amount of authority. Willy merely concluded that some terrible fluke had taken place.

"They tell me that Dr. Stafford is coming down this evening," remarked Barry, as he munched a sandwich. "He's going to introduce the new Head—Dr. Beverley Stokes. Have you kids ever wondered what the new Head will be like?"

"Blow the new Head!" said Chubby. "Let's rush over tea! I—I want to get outside——"

"No hurry," said Barry calmly.

"But there is—you don't know!" muttered Owen minor.

"I wonder why you youngsters are looking scared?" asked Barry reflectively. "Perhaps you aren't used to having tea in a Remove study? I don't mind admitting I'm very pleasantly surprised. If a Remove fellow can have a study like this, I wonder what the Headmaster can have?"

Willy gave a kind of sickly grin.

"Oh, the Head!" he said vaguely. "I—I suppose the Head manages all right, you know. I hope Dr. Stafford won't arrive just yet. I'd like to be out in the Triangle when he does. So let's hurry——"

"I expect he's here already," said Barry, glancing at the marble clock.

"Here!" yelled Chubby Heath, spilling half a cupful of tea over his trousers. "Quick! Let's get out——"

"I—I believe I can hear him coming!" said Lemon fearfully.

"Go and listen at the door, Julcy!" ordered Willy, with a gulp.

Dr. Stokes nearly gave the whole show away by roaring with laughter. He considered that this little joke of his was fully justified. Willy had asked for it, and he was getting it! But the fags hardly thought of their host at all.

They knew well enough that if Dr. Stafford arrived, there would be trouble. The Head would want to know how in the name of all that was extraordinary a gang of fags had taken charge of his study. And the resultant explanations would be awkward—and would lead to nothing less than a general, all-round swishing.

Therefore, it behoved Willy and Co. to vanish while they were still safe.

"There's no need to be so concerned about Dr. Stafford," said Barry, glancing out of the window. "As a matter of fact, his car arrived about five minutes ago, and he went indoors——"

"Help!" murmured Willy. "Then—then——"

The door opened abruptly, and Dr. Malcolm Stafford walked briskly into the apartment, obviously thinking that it would be empty. He took about two steps into the room, and then paused, startled.

"Good gracious me!" he ejaculated, in amazement.

Crash! Smash!

Cups and plates went flying, and the heroes of the Third made one swift, lightning-like dive for the door. They flashed past the Head so quickly that he had no opportunity of grasping any one of them. He just caught a fleeting glimpse, and then heard the sound of scurrying footsteps along the passage. Willy and Co., in sheer terror, had fled, leaving their victim to face the music.

"Upon my soul!" said Dr. Stafford faintly.

Some little distance down the passage, Willy Handforth came to an abrupt halt. In fact, he stopped so suddenly that the other fags bumped into him, and there was a general collision.

"Go on, fathead—don't stop!" hissed Chubby Heath desperately. "We shall be collared!"

"We're going back!" said Willy grimly.

"Go-going back!" yelled Dicky Jones.

"Yes!"

"But—but we shall get the sack!"

"Can't help that—we're going!" snapped Willy. "At least, I am. You chaps can stay here if you like—after all, it was my wheeze, so I'll take the blame. We've got to do the right thing!"

His chums stared at him, aghast.

"You—you chump!" breathed Chubby. "You've gone mad!"

"No, I haven't," replied Willy gruffly. "But there's the honour of the Third at stake! Are we going to allow that new Remove chap to accuse the Third of leaving him in the lurch? Never! Why, he'll get flogged for pinching the Head's study! And it's up to us to go along, and admit that we played a practical joke on him!"

"We!" yelled Lemon. "It was your idea——"

"All right—I'll admit it!" said Handforth minor. "I'll take all the blame, but you fellows are coming along with me for the sake of appearances. Anybody against the idea?"

Willy closed his fist suggestively, and looked round.

"Nunno! We—we'll come!" stuttered Chubby Heath.

And Willy's chums followed their volcanic little leader, feeling that an interview with the Head would be preferable to the settlement of the account which would certainly follow afterwards. When Willy Handforth liked, he could fight with devastating effect. On more than one occasion he had wiped up half the Third—until the fags were only too ready to obey his every command.

So they followed their leader along the corridor, looking like prisoners on their way to the scaffold. And just as they turned the corner they came face to face with a cheerful junior who was whistling a merry tune.

The junior was Barry.

Willy and Co. came to an abrupt halt, and stared at him as though he were a ghost!

CHAPTER XV.

A SHOCK FOR MR. CROWELL.



DR. STOKES regarded the fags with mild curiosity.

"Anything the matter?" he asked. "Have I got a smudge or something? You'll probably know me the

next time we meet——"

"Haven't—haven't you been swished?" asked Willy blankly.

"Swished? What on earth for?"

"Haven't you been sacked?" breathed Lemon.

"Sacked! Of course not!"

"Didn't the Head slaughter you for being in that study?" demanded Willy, grabbing at Barry's arm.

"But why should the Head slaughter me for being in my own study?" asked Dr. Stokes, in a tone of surprise. "The Head just sat down, and I gave him a cup of tea!"

"And—and he drank it?" howled Willy.

"What else do you expect?" said the amazing new boy. "I can give you my word he didn't have a bath in it! I just came along to see what had happened to you kids. What made you dash out like that?"

"What made us——"

Willy paused, words absolutely refusing to come. According to Barry, the Head had accepted the situation without getting wild! Handforth minor began to wonder if he was dreaming.

"Do you mean to tell me the Head didn't sock into you for appropriating his study?" he asked desperately.

"His study?" repeated Barry. "I thought you told me it was mine?"

"Oh, rather!" said Willy hastily. "But look here, you ass! You innocent, baby-faced chump! That study isn't yours at all!"

"Not mine?" said Barry mildly. "Oh, don't be silly!"

"I tell you it's not!" roared Willy. "I just played a joke on you—it's really the Head's study!"

"In that case, it must be mine!" said Dr. Stokes blandly.

"Do you want me to biff you?" hooted Willy, exasperated. "How can it be your study if it's the Head's? And why can't you tell us the truth? Do you think I believe that silly yarn?"

"Which silly yarn?"

Willy nearly broke a blood vessel.

"Why, all that rot about you giving the Head a cup of tea!" yelled Willy. "It's like your giddy nerve to pull our leg! We were just coming along to own up, and get you out of a hole!"

"Oh, were you?" said Barry. "I'm glad to hear that."

As a matter of fact, Dr. Stokes was delighted. It had rather pained him when Willy and Co. had fled so precipitately, for, being in ignorance of the actual truth, they had left him in the lurch. It was gratifying to find that their sense of schoolboy honour had brought them back to confess.

"You're glad to hear it, are you?" said Handforth minor, breathing hard. "My only hat! You've got a nerve for a new kid! And unless you tell us the truth within ten seconds, we'll biff you on the floor, and tread on you! Now, then, out with it!"

Barry grinned.

"There's nothing like being frank," he observed. "As for the truth, I've told you already. I gave Dr. Stafford a cup of tea, and he drank it, and after a little chat I strolled out——"

"And didn't the Head swish you?" asked Chubby breathlessly.

"I suppose you mean Dr. Stafford?" asked Barry. "Strictly speaking, he's not the Head at all, you know. This new man, Dr. Beverley Stokes——"

"He hasn't come yet, so don't quibble!" interrupted Willy tartly. "And your ten seconds are up, my lad. You're fibbing all the time, and we're fed up! So look out for yourself!"

"Here! Wait a minute——" gasped Dr. Stokes.

"Come on—pile in!" snapped Willy curtly.

"We've had enough of this cheeky fathead's rot! On him!"

And the other Third Formers, nothing daunted, hurled themselves at Dr. Stokes before he could dodge. The next few moments were rather interesting. Barry was tripped up neatly—by a special movement of Willy's, which he had long since perfected on various of his own chums.

The surprised Head went down on his back with a crash. Two juniors sat on his neck, two others held his feet down, and with much neatness and dispatch he was whisked over, and his jacket was turned inside out, over his head.

"Good!" panted Willy. "Now we've got him whacked!"

Dr. Stokes, bewildered and flustered, was rolled over and over along the passage, twisted this way and that, and he was finally hurled into a corner with a crash that shook the whole wall. He heard the sound of retreating footsteps, and attempted to sit up.

He was smothered with dust, his collar was unfastened, his waistcoat unbuttoned, and his necktie was missing altogether. To be exact, Dr. Stokes was very much of a wreck.

But he was still good tempered. With surprising sangfroid, he realised that the lads had maltreated him as a mere matter of course, and not through any lack of respect. They thought he was a mere Removeite, and therefore perfectly fair game.

It was rather unfortunate that Mr. Crowell, the Remove master, should sail down the passage at that particular moment. For Mr. Crowell turned the corner and came face to face with Barry just as the latter had reached his feet.

"Good gracious me!" ejaculated Mr. Crowell blankly.

He stared at Barry with growing indignation. His eyes gleamed, and his face became flushed with anger. For a new boy to be in this condition on the very first day of term was outrageous.

"Boy!" thundered Mr. Crowell. "You have been fighting!"

"Not—not exactly!" gasped Dr. Stokes. "Just a minute, and I'll explain. I'm not what you think——"

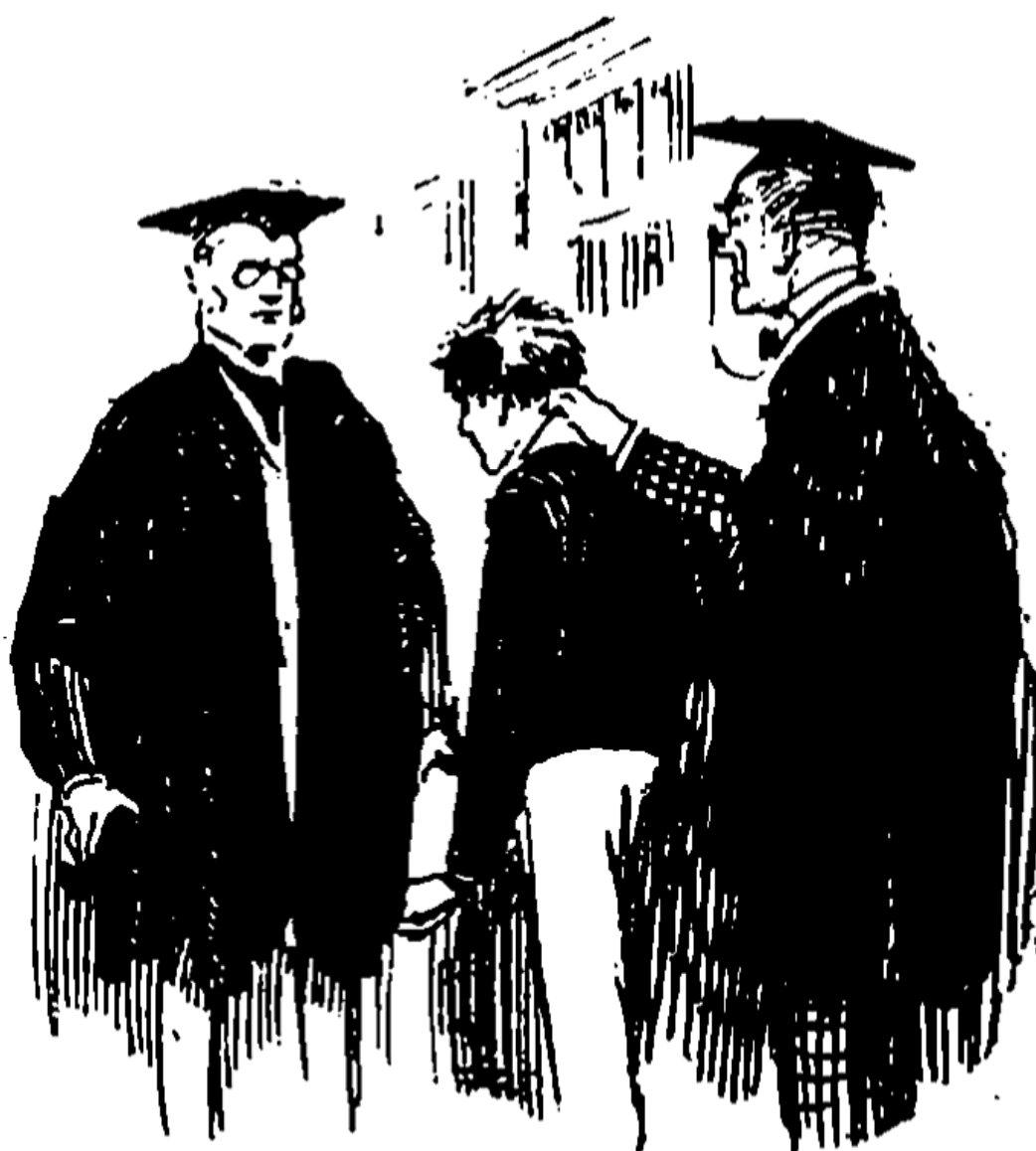
"Not another word, sir!" stormed the outraged Form-master. "You have been fighting, and don't dare to deny it! You will write me five hundred lines for this gross act of——"

"I say, old man, just a minute!" panted Barry. "I'd like to explain to you that I'm Dr. Beverley Stokes——"

"What!" barked Mr. Crowell ominously.

"Fact, I assure you!" said Barry. "I don't look very impressive at the moment, but the whole affair can be satisfactorily adjusted. I'm the new Headmaster——"

"How dare you?" shouted Mr. Crowell furiously. "I have never met with such audacity in all my career! You are Barry, sir—I have already seen you! For this piece of arrant impertinence I shall take you at



Dr. Stafford was rather astonished when the door of his study flew open, and his successor was hustled into his presence by the panting Mr. Crowell.

once to Dr. Stafford—so that he may deal with you as you deserve."

Barry couldn't help grinning—and he really wanted to save Mr. Crowell from a further shock.

"But please listen!" he said earnestly. "I've merely been playing a trick on the boys—don't you understand? I'm Dr. Beverley Stokes——"

Slap!

Mr. Crowell soundly boxed his Headmaster's ears, and Barry staggered back somewhat hurt. And before he could offer any further explanations the outraged Form-master seized him by the collar and hustled him along the passage at express speed.

And Dr. Malcolm Stafford was rather astonished when the door of his study flew open, and his successor was hustled into his presence by the panting Mr. Crowell. Dr. Stafford had already protested strongly with Barry, and the latter had promised to abandon his deception at once. So Dr. Stafford was rather unprepared for this new incident.

"Dear me!" he ejaculated, starting up. "Really, Mr. Crowell! I'm afraid you do not realise——"

"This—this boy!" stormed Mr. Crowell angrily. "This wretched youth has had the unparalleled impudence——"

"This—this is most distressing!" ejaculated the Head, pained. "My dear Dr. Stokes—I feared that there would be some disaster! Really, Mr. Crowell, if you will listen——"

"Dr. Stokes!" repeated Mr. Crowell feebly.

"Yes, sir!" retorted the Head. "This gentleman you have been so roughly handling is the new Headmaster of St. Frank's—Dr. Beverley Stokes!"

The room seemed to sway in front of Mr. Crowell's gaze, and he sank down limply into the first chair, horrified. One thought sprang out into prominence above all others. He had boxed the Head's ears!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NEW HEAD.



DR. STAFFORD was greatly shocked.

"I was afraid of this, Stokes—I was afraid that something of this nature would happen!" he exclaimed, with a worried

frown. "The situation is most embarrassing—"

"Not at all," grinned Barry. "But I agree, Dr. Stafford, that the time has arrived for me to come into my own personality. Sorry, Mr. Crowell—hope I haven't upset you very much."

The Form-master was very pale.

"My—my dear sir!" he panted. "I—I trust you will accept my apologies! I treated you most abominably! You even attempted to explain, and I foolishly ignored your words—"

"My dear old fellow, forget it!" smiled Dr. Stokes. "I asked for trouble—and I got it. How about forgetting the whole episode? I am very pleased to meet you, Mr. Crowell."

He held out his hand, and they shook warmly.

"But—but I boxed your ears!" murmured Mr. Crowell huskily.

"And probably I deserved everything I received!" grinned Dr. Stokes. "Well, gentlemen, if you will excuse me for ten minutes, I'll buzz upstairs and change. I've had my little joke, and I have discovered to my satisfaction that the boys are ripping good sports. So long! Shan't be long!"

And Barry slipped out of the study and was gone. Mr. Crowell passed a hand wearily over his brow, and wondered if he was really awake. Dr. Stafford mopped his face with a silk handkerchief.

"An extraordinary man!" he declared. "Upon my soul, a most extraordinary man! I am sure I don't know how to take him!"

Mr. Crowell rose to his feet rather shakily. "I actually found him in the junior passage, looking for all the world as though he had been in the midst of a free fight!" he exclaimed. "How was I to know, Dr. Stafford, that he was other than a mere boy? I hadn't the faintest suspicion—"

"No, no, of course not," interrupted Dr. Stafford. "Indeed, my own astonishment was just as great when I discovered that Dr. Stokes was indulging in this remarkable

masquerade. I would never credit that he could look so ridiculously young!"

"But he is young, surely?" asked the other dubiously. "It is not for me to criticise, sir, but is it really good for the school that so youthful a man should take command in your stead?"

"Let me assure you at once, Mr. Crowell, that Dr. Stokes is probably the most brilliant schoolmaster of to-day," said the Head earnestly. "He has had a remarkable career—brief, sparkling, and meteoric. He is only twenty-six, and yet he has already proved himself to be one of the most capable principals in the country. Have no fear about Dr. Stokes. And you really cannot judge him by what you have already seen."

"I trust not, sir," said Mr. Crowell fervently.

"This is the age of youth," went on Dr. Stafford, with a shake of his head. "Vast business organisations are employing young blood at the very top. And it is the same with our great schools. In quite a number of famous colleges, the old regime is dying out. Elderly men are being shelved, and the youngsters are stepping into their shoes."

"I sincerely trust we are not going to lose you for good, sir."

"Well, I think not—I hope not," smiled Dr. Stafford. "But for this term, at least, Dr. Stokes will be in full command. And I could wish for no better deputy. I am perfectly satisfied that he will uphold the fine old traditions at St. Frank's. But he is certainly an extraordinary man, Mr. Crowell—and I admit he rather takes my breath away."

Very soon afterwards the door opened, and a stranger entered—a slight, but finely built man, wearing a flowing gown. In every inch of him there was dignity and command. Only by looking closely could it be seen that Dr. Beverley Stokes, the Headmaster, was William Barry, the schoolboy.

"Good gracious!" said Mr. Crowell, involuntarily.

"Rather a change eh?" asked Dr. Stokes, even his voice sounding different. "Well, gentlemen, I have had my little spree, and now to work. I may add that everything that happened to Master William Barry is dead and forgotten. I am now Dr. Stokes—and I have this minute arrived."

The boyish expression still lingered about the new Headmaster's face, especially when he smiled, but it was now quite obvious that he was a man in every sense of the word.

And, with very little delay, the school was called together in Big Hall, and Dr. Stafford introduced the new Head to all the boys. There was a great deal of interest in the proceeding.

Every boy was anxious to see what Dr. Stokes would look like—and every boy was quite convinced that he would prove to be

an antiquated old fossil. His very name suggested wrinkles and white hair.

The school, therefore, was dumbfounded when the slight, agile form of Dr. Stokes came forward to the edge of the platform in response to Dr. Stafford's introduction.

Upon the whole the school was pleased. They rather liked the look of the new Head. There was something so open and cheery about him. Nothing forbidding—nothing to be scared at. And it was a change to have a Headmaster of this type.

I stared at Dr. Stokes hard, and gave a kind of gulp as I grabbed at Handforth's arm.

"Do—do you spot him?" I asked breathlessly.

"Eh? Who? Of course I spot him," said Handforth. "Don't be dotty! Do you think I'm blind?"

"He's Barry!" I gasped. "Can't you see? Oh, my only Sunday topper! The man's Barry—that new kid!"

"Rot!" snorted Handforth. "Now the dickens— By George!" he added, with a scared look. "I believe you're right!"

Other fellows in the Remove were also jumping at the truth, and in the Third a number of fags were feeling sick and faint. Their legs were weak beneath them, and they longed for the ground to open and swallow them.

"It's—it's Barry!" moaned Willy. "Oh, great jumping corks!"

Daylight flashed into his brain in floods. Many things that had been obscure now became startlingly clear. And Willy shuddered as he remembered how he and his fellow fags had treated the new Head in the Third Form passage. They had literally biffed Dr. Stokes until he was dazed. And Willy felt indignant through all his fears.

"What a dirty trick!" he muttered.

"Fooling us like that! And now, I suppose, he's going to drop on us like a load of bricks!"

He listened feverishly as Dr. Stokes spoke. The new Head made quite a cheery, confidential speech. He got on good terms with the school in the first two or three sentences, and his free and easy manner made him universally liked.

"Oh, and by the way," went on Dr. Stokes. "Some of you may have come across a youngster named Barry—a new boy, I understand. An infernally precocious rascal, too."

Those who were "in the know" held their breath.

"Unfortunately, this young fellow, Barry, has mysteriously disappeared," went on Dr. Stokes calmly. "But that needn't worry us, because he is not destined to be a pupil at St. Frank's, after all. It's quite possible that Barry got into one or two scrapes during the day, and if so there's not the slightest doubt that he deserved everything that fell to his lot. Upon the whole, I think we can be satisfied that Barry exists no more. I can safely assure you that he remembers nothing, and will not appear again."

And Dr. Stokes passed on to other subjects.

"I say, what a prize packet!" murmured Handforth with relief. "And after all the things I called him—after I biffed him over, too! My goodness! He's a stunner!"

Willy Handforth was holding a hand over his heart.

"Safe!" he breathed ecstatically, gazing at his chums. "Kids, this man is a brick! Absolutely and positively a brick!"

For Dr. Beverley Stokes had made it perfectly clear that his appearance as "Barry" was dead and forgotten. And after St. Frank's had got over the surprise, it settled itself down to the conviction that Dr. Beverley Stokes was something entirely new in Headmasters!

But the new Head had other surprises to spring before long!

THE END.

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MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

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



NO. 27. NIGHT ON AN AMERICAN TRAIN.

HAVING left New York, on the Pennsylvania Railroad, in the early afternoon, I was due to arrive in Chicago at about tea-time on the following day. This meant, of course, a night on the train.

In my previous article I described the beginning of the journey, and I broke off at the point where I found my sleeping-berth prepared, ready for occupation.

These sleeping-berths on the American Pullman trains are ordinary seats during the day, and become converted for the night by the nimble hands of the coloured attendants or porters, as they are always called. I had a little enjoyment, for the experience was a novelty.

The sleeping-berths are placed on both sides of the coaches, with a gangway down the centre, and each berth curtained off, so that the sleepers are comparatively private. But the arrangement does not seem quite ideal to my mind.

I was disconcerted, for example, after paying a visit to the bath-room at the end of the coach, and returning collarless, tousled, and half ready for bed. For climbing into the berth immediately above my own was a somewhat stout, elderly lady. And in the berth opposite to mine another lady—quite a young one this time—was just wrapping her kimono around her preparatory to retiring behind the curtains.

For in these American trains ladies and gentlemen occupy the same coaches, and the experience is rather disconcerting to one who is unaccustomed to it. For the privacy, after all, is of a superficial kind. Two flimsy curtains, separated by barely a couple of feet, can scarcely be called privacy.

Having sat down on my bed, I drew my legs up and closed the curtain. A tiny electric light at the head of the bed enabled me to make my final preparations without trouble—although I felt, somehow, that my movements were public.

I happen to be a fairly tall sort of fellow, and it's no easy task to move about in an American sleeping-berth. One has to per-

form all sorts of gymnastics before finally getting between the sheets; and how on earth a really fat man manages to get into bed at all is an everlasting puzzle to me.

Try to imagine the actual berth. It is about the width of a camp bedstead, and the same length. That's all right. But over your head there is the smooth, polished base of the upper berth. And when you are sitting on your bed your head is just about touching the roof!

Picture what it is like, therefore, to be compelled to undress on the bed itself, and then get between the sheets! Everything has to be done in a doubled-up, crouching attitude, and you are by no means assisted by the rocking of the train—which sometimes, on curves, sways over in a most disconcerting fashion, making balancing feats incredibly difficult.

However, I was successful at last, and felt relieved when I found myself lying comfortable in bed, listening to the rhythmic clicking of the bogie wheels over the rail-joints.

I switched off my light, and pulled up the window blind—for while you have the gangway curtain on one side of you, there is the carriage window on the other. But these windows are fixed, and cannot be opened—except for a mere inch or two for ventilation.

I didn't sleep very well on that first night of my five-day trip. Every time the train slowed down I awoke, and when it actually stopped, the dead, utter silence was almost uncanny. I was downright afraid to cough, or to even shift about in bed. Not the slightest sound came to my ears from any of the other passengers.

Raising myself at last and glancing through the window, I found that we had arrived in a big town, and the glare from many factories and iron and steel foundries convinced me that we were in Pittsburgh—which surmise proved to be correct. And it was snowing madly, a blizzard raging.

NEXT WEEK:

"THE SAMENESS OF AMERICAN CITIES."

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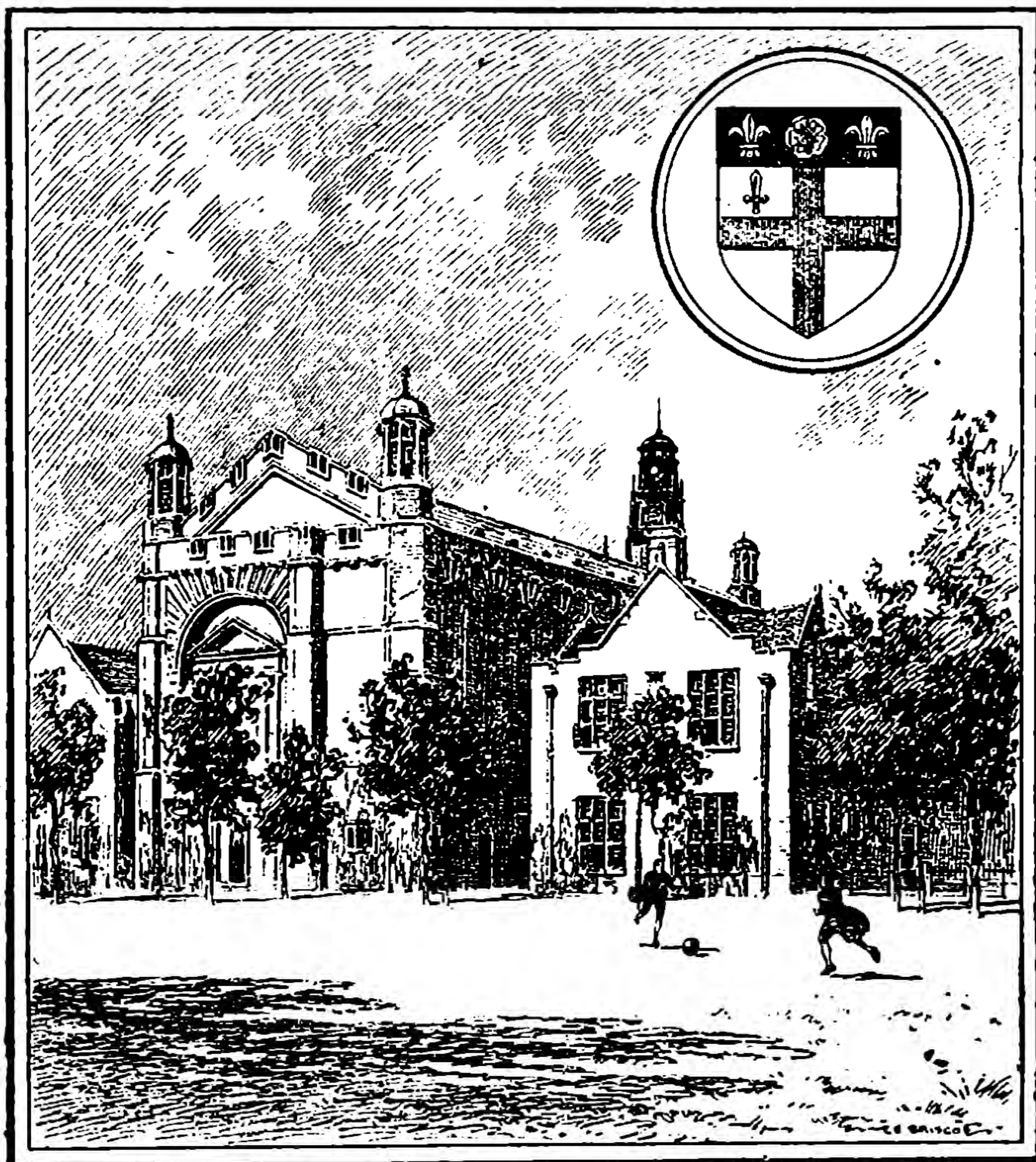


" HE CHECKED HIMSELF ! "

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

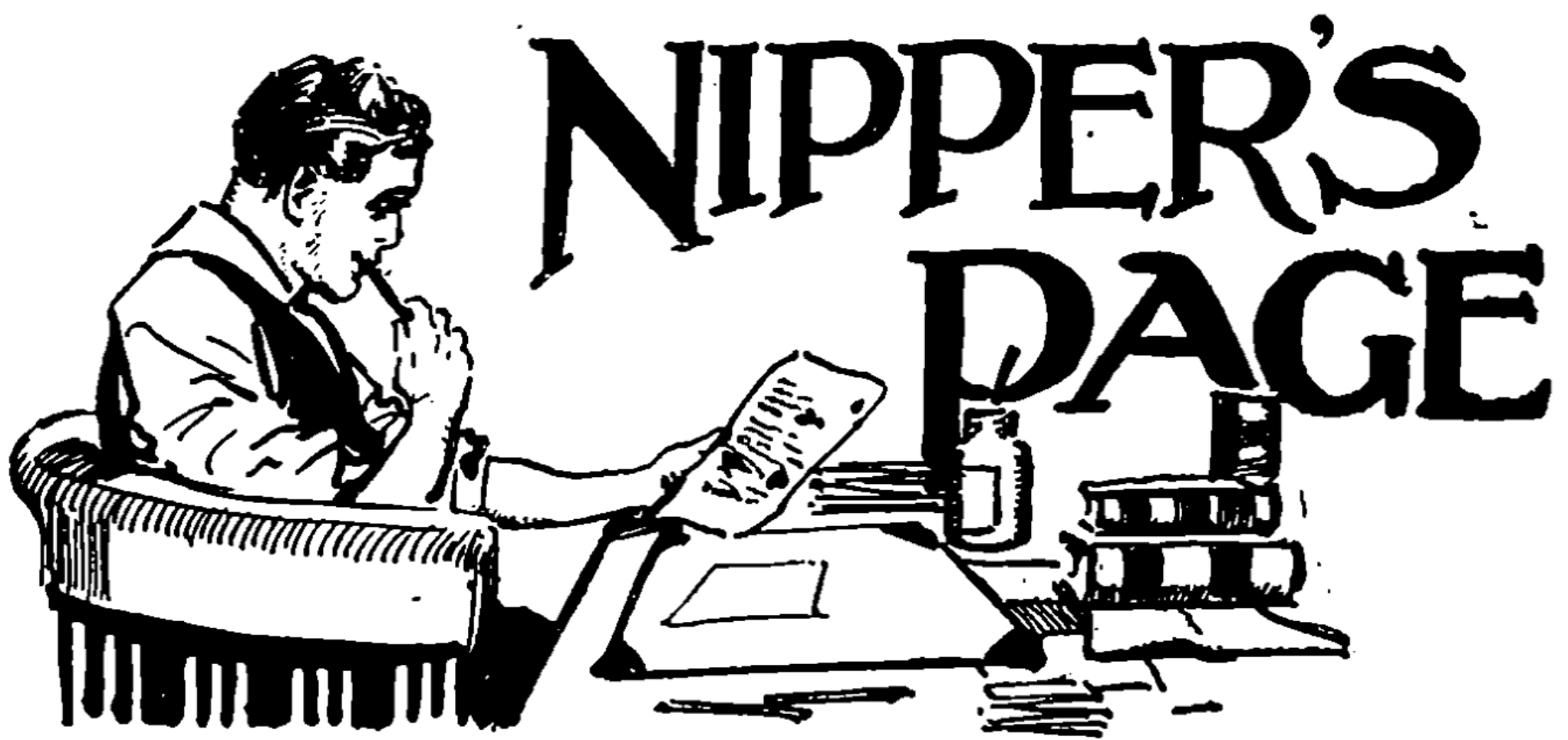
SPECIAL SERIES OF ART SKETCHES BY MR. E. E. BRISCOE.

No. 31. CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.



Founded in London by Edward VI. in 1552, Christ's Hospital was removed in 1902 to its present site at West Horsham, Sussex. Its splendid new buildings were designed by Sir Aston Webb, P.R.A., and Ingress Bell. The new School comprises sixteen boarding-houses, each of which is under the supervision of two resident House Masters. Two of the boarding-houses are occupied by the Preparatory School. The buildings, which include the dining-hall, big school-room, and chapel, were designed by the

famous architects mentioned above. These include also two blocks of classrooms, science and drawing schools, music school, swimming-bath, gymnasium, workshops, and an infirmary. There are large playgrounds surrounding the school. The distinctive uniform worn by the boys accounts for the popular description of the school as the "Blue-Coat School." The number of boys at the school is about 820. Since 1891, boys are admitted by competition or presentation, according to age.



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

My dear Chums,

It seems ages since Pitt and Grey left St. Frank's for the wilds of Africa. An expedition of this kind is never without an element of danger. Unforeseen difficulties will always arise, no matter how many precautions are taken. I was therefore much relieved when Pitt's letter arrived to say the party had safely reached Lagos in Nigeria. There is not a fellow here who will not be thrilled when he reads this letter—which I am thankful to be able to publish this week—and will not envy the good fortune of his fellow Removites who are about to set foot in a hitherto unexplored region. What lies beyond? We cannot tell. We must patiently await Pitt's next letter, which I have an idea is already on its way.

BON VOYAGE TO DR. STAFFORD.

Dr. Stafford's acceptance of Sir Crawford Grey's invitation to join the expedition is not without significance. Evidently Sir Crawford expects to make some important discoveries of exceptional interest to the Head. As to the nature of these discoveries, I have no inkling, though I do know that Sir Crawford has taken Dr. Stafford into his confidence. Albeit, we wish Dr. Stafford an enjoyable holiday and a safe return.

THE NEW HEAD.

While we shall all miss the kindly personality of Dr. Stafford this term, we extend a warm welcome to his successor, Dr. Beverley Stokes. Though widely differing from Dr. Stafford, the new Head has soon earned the popularity of the school. In an amazingly short time he has made himself at home with the fellows, and in addition to his adaptability, his active

interest in sports, of which he is no mean exponent, will go a long way in winning the respect and esteem of us all. Hats off to Dr. Stokes!

FORTHCOMING FEATURES.

Some of my chums have written to ask when I am publishing an up-to-date Portrait Gallery, a Who's Who, and a new map of St. Frank's. I admit that it is some time since any of these interesting features were published, and since then many new readers have come along, as well as a number of additions to the school. At the present time, however, it is impossible to find room for anything else in the Mag. We must bide our time, and when opportunity allows I hope to include the above features in the Mag.

CHARACTER NAMES COMPETITION.

I hope to be able to publish the result of this competition in about a fortnight from the date of this number. At time of writing, however, all the entries have not been received, but there is sufficient indication to show that the contest has evoked a great deal of enthusiasm. In consequence of this pleasing fact, I must certainly consider having another competition in the Mag.

BEGINNING NEXT WEEK!

Just one thing more, my chums, before I conclude this chat. Look out next week for a new series of comic sketches for our cover page. Entitled, "CAREERS IN CARICATURE," our artist will offer a few suggestions to assist certain notabilities of the Remove to choose a suitable calling in after life, having due regard to their known qualifications at St. Frank's. He will begin the series with Handforth.

Your faithful chum,
NIPPER.

REGGIE PITT'S AFRICAN LETTER

True to his word Reggie has sent his first dispatch from the wilds of Africa describing his adventures in company with his chum, Jack Grey, and Sir Crawford Grey, who are on an exploration expedition far from the beaten track of white men. The letter, which I have great pleasure in publishing below, has just arrived in time for this issue.—THE EDITOR.

Lagos, Nigeria.

My Dear Old Nipper,—

Well, at last I am writing you a little budget of our adventures for publication in the good old Mag. We are all as fit as fiddles, including Jack Grey and Dorrie. We are starting out on the first part of our trip in a day or two—taking the train for a place called Kano.

We're not actually in Central Africa, after all, but rather towards the North, as you'll find out, if you look at the map. Pretty hot here, but we're easily capable of standing a little of that stuff.

By the way, you'll be interested to hear that we were met by no less a person than old Umlosi—as big, as clumsy, and as bloodthirsty as ever. He's terribly disappointed to learn that we're not going off on a punitive expedition of some kind. He fancied there was going to be a lot of gore flowing.

It's a queer thing, though. You remember Umlosi's dreams? And the rummy way he talks of seeing red mists? Well, he's had 'em again. Fact, I assure you. He just shakes his head, grins, and declares that this trip of ours isn't going to be so peaceful as we imagine. I think the old ruffian's only trying to make our flesh creep.

Of course, there's very little to tell you so far.

We haven't had any adventures, and this dispatch is only a preliminary—just something to be going on with. Anything to fill the old Mag., eh? If the chaps are disappointed with this masterly effort of literature, please apologise on my behalf. I'm safe, anyhow.

Nothing to report regarding the sea trip. Smooth sea practically all the way, and both Jack and I didn't have a trace of sickness. But we've had a good look round Lagos, and find the place entertaining enough—although, of course, there's nothing wild or savage about it.

We've got to wait until we get into the interior before seeing the—well, the interior. You know what I mean. I think the plans must have been altered a bit, be-

cause we're not booked for the Congo region, but rather in the direction of the Sahara. But more of this in my next.

There are some very interesting sights to be seen in this town—the Ebute Aro Market, the Tagi Market, the Iddo Bridge, and other names that I can't remember. These native markets are quite interesting once you've got used to the peculiar sort of niffs.

Dorrie has been looking at some camels—not that any of these useful beasts are being bought here—but I understand we shall have a whole caravan of camels after we leave the rail-head and set off up-country. Camels are hefty creatures, and they can carry from two hundred to four hundred pounds, which is a pretty good load.

I don't want to make a mystery if there isn't one, but it seems to me there's something a bit rummy going on. Dorrie has been in close confab with two foreign-looking chaps in the hotel, and there's a whisper going round that the journey is to be adventurous—and even dangerous.

I've only heard this rumour just now—since writing the beginning of my dispatch—but I can't tell you whether there's any truth in it or not. I only know that Umlosi is as keen as mustard, and he gave Jack a dark hint this morning that after we get beyond Kano we shall be in the thick of it.

I don't know what "it" means, but I'm jolly sure that Umlosi hopes there will be fighting. Sorry I've got to be so vague in this letter, but it can't be helped.

I don't exactly know when you can expect another letter from me, but I'll try and get it off within a week, so that it will arrive in time for the next number. And I might send it from Kano. If so, I shall be able to give you a description of the town. I hear it's a very remarkable place, where no white men are allowed to reside.

Just hear that the mail is being closed up, so excuse rush. Good luck to everybody, in which Jack and Dorrie and all the others join.

Your affectionate chum,

REGGIE.

THE PROBLEMS OF TRACKETT GRIM



LOST IN THE PACIFIC!

A Remarkable Detective Story of London and the Bottom of the Pacific Ocean, Introducing Trackett Grim and his assistant, Splinter.

By ED. O. HANDFORTH

CHAPTER I.

THE ADMIRAL'S MISSION.

"RAINING again!" sighed Splinter.

He and his famous master, Trackett Grim, the greatest incriminator in the world, were spending the afternoon in their private sanctum. Splinter had strolled to the window. His sharp eyes noticed that little trickles of moisture were running down the glass. And with his wonderful powers of deduction, learnt from Grim, he immediately came to the conclusion that the moisture was caused by rain.

"It often rains," Grim replied, puffing clouds of smoke out of his pipe. "I have noticed that when it is very wet the rain pours down from the sky!"

Splinter nodded, his keen eyes fixed outside. The Baker's Inn Road at this time of the day was crowded. There were busy City men bustling to and fro, all sorts of shoppers, and many Americans and other visitors over here for Wembley.

"If the rain leaves off it will probably be fine," Splinter began, after a moment's thoughtful silence. "But— Great pip! Whatever are all the people staring at?"

The clever lad had suddenly noticed that, instead of walking busily along the street, people on both sides of the pavement were standing still, their gazes focused upon something that was apparently coming along the middle of the road.

The next instant Splinter saw what it was, and he gasped. At the sound, Trackett Grim threw his pipe away and strolled towards the window.

"My hat!" he gasped, stirred out of his usual calm. "It is an armoured car!"

With his wonderful skill the incriminator had once more probed out the truth.

Coming along the road at reckless speed was an armoured car full of men in naval uniform. Great six-inch guns protruded fore and aft. And there was a mast on which the Union Jack was flying.

Before Grim could utter another word the car had pulled up outside the incriminator's house, and a man dressed as an admiral leapt out and pealed at the bell.

"Great Jupiter!" cried Grim. "They are coming here!"

He was quite correct. Heavy footfalls sounded on the stairs, and an instant later the admiral dashed into Grim's sanctum.

"Yo ho! Yo ho!" he shouted, in a rollicking naval voice. "Man the boats, sir! Man the boats!"

"Exactly!" agreed Grim, filling another pipe with the utmost calm, though he knew the situation was terribly urgent. "You are from the Admiralty, and you wish to ask my assistance in some matter of national importance."

"Swab my decks!" roared the old sea dog, as admirals are always called. "How can you tell such things. But belay there! The Secret has been stolen, and our country is in danger! Only you can save us!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" retorted Grim, who had spent years in the Navy when a mere boy. "Tell me all."

"Shiver my timbers!" bellowed the admiral. "Don't I keep telling you the Secret has been stolen? It's wrapped up in a black bag," he added grimly.

"Then it's been stolen from the Admiralty," queried Grim.

"Cut my topsails, no!" thundered the admiral. "It's in submarine UC2."

"I don't see two," Grim returned quietly, glancing round the room.

"UC2 is the boat's name, cap'n," roared the old sea dog. "The Secret is in her hold, and she's vanished—vanished from the face of the Pacific Ocean!"

At once Grim mastered the situation.

"Submarines never vanish," he said curtly. "There has been foul play. Some foreign Fower has stolen the submarine, and very likely the Secret as well."

"Marvellous!" bellowed the admiral. "That is just what we thought. And

you are the only man to find it. Will you do so?"

"I will!" Grim answered, clasping the other's sea-worn hand.

A second later he was dashing down the stairs to the armoured car. He hastily snatched a yachting cap from its peg in the hall, and threw Splinter a telescope, which the lad doftly caught.

Then they were in the car.

"Where to, sir?" asked the chauffeur politely.

"The Pacific Ocean!" snapped Grim between his clenched teeth.

Once on the trail, the great incriminator was as keen as mustard. Already a plan for finding the lost submarine had formed in his quick mind. But there came a sudden check on his movements.

As the car shot through Woking at immense speed there came a terrific bang. The car rocked from side to side, and then tilted over and fell on its side.

"A puncture!" yelled the admiral.

Grim hopped out, followed by the admiral. But the other occupants of the car never moved.

So fast had they been travelling that by the time this happened they had shot through Woking and were in the open country. At least, some of it was open. The rest was shut in by big trees. They were in a part which was completely shut in.

As Grim pulled himself to his feet, he saw two strapping men in masks hurl themselves upon him from behind an oak.

"That was no puncture," gasped Grim. "We have been blown up!"

He had no time to say more before he was violently attacked by his two assailants,

both talking in a tongue that he knew to be foreign.

Grim never flinched. He simply aimed a quick right and left at the two masked men. With a couple of gasping gasps they fell prone to the ground, half stunned.

Without wasting a moment, Grim dashed back to the car. To his great relief, Splinter crawled out from under the bonnet. He was quite unharmed. But the others were still more or less unconscious.

"We shall have to leave them," Grim said, beginning to turn the car the right way up.

A few seconds sufficed to put it on its wheels, and the three who were left climbed in. Grim took the wheel, and set off once more for the Pacific.

Would he be in time to save the Empire?

CHAPTER II.

THE MISSING SUBMARINE.

BY this time night had fallen, and still the intrepid incriminator and his two companions raced through the streets of peaceful England.

Through many a tiny hamlet they dashed on their way to the coast, and many a tousled head was thrust through a window to watch them pass. But at last Dover was reached, and with five seconds to spare. Grim and his friends were able to catch the midnight mail, which always left at about twelve o'clock.

Once in his stateroom, Grim unfolded his plan to the admiral.

"I have been busy deducting all the time we have been in the car," the great incriminator explained, "and I have come to the conclusion that there is only one thing to be done. I must search the bed of the ocean for the missing submarine. As soon as we reach the Pacific I intend to dive beneath the waves. Only in this way can I hope to recover the Secret."

"A brilliant idea!" the admiral agreed. "But how can you dive without a proper suit? You would swallow a lot of water. At the very least, you would get uncomfortably wet. Haul my topsails, sir, you haven't thought of that!"

"I have," Grim replied smoothly. "I have already arranged with the captain of this boat to loan me a complete diving-suit."



"Yo ho! Yo ho!" he shouted in a rollicking naval voice. "Man the boats, sir! Man the boats!"

The rest will be simple. I have merely to search the bed of the Pacific Ocean, and I am bound to find the UC2 if she is there."

The next twenty-four hours passed very slowly to the incriminator and his young assistant. The admiral retired to his bunk, for Grim told him a good sleep would do him good.

It was five o'clock the next morning when the Pacific was sighted, and Grim immediately rushed up the companion and looked over the rail of the upper deck.

Below him he saw a number of waves tossing about, and he rightly conjectured this was the ocean he had come to search in. But he did not stop to conjecture for long.

He went aft to the captain's cabin and borrowed the best diving-suit to be had. He hastily donned the garment and gave the air-tube and the speaking tube to Splinter.

"You must blow down the air-tube, lad," he said. "And if you feel me give a tug you must immediately tell the captain to pull me up."

"I will, guv'nor," the lad said stoutly, but his eyes filled with tears, and he kissed him tenderly on his diving helmet. He was sure that Grim was risking certain death. But he knew better than to try and persuade him not to. Many times Grim had risked death. He was an expert at it. Without another word, Grim hopped over the rail into the Pacific Ocean, and Splinter stood on deck blowing into the air-tube.

Three hours passed slowly by. Splinter began to tire of his blowing, and at last he could blow no longer. He staggered back into the first mate's arms.

"Have—have you got a pump?" he managed to gasp. "I can't blow no longer!"

The brave lad had, in fact, blown away all his breath!

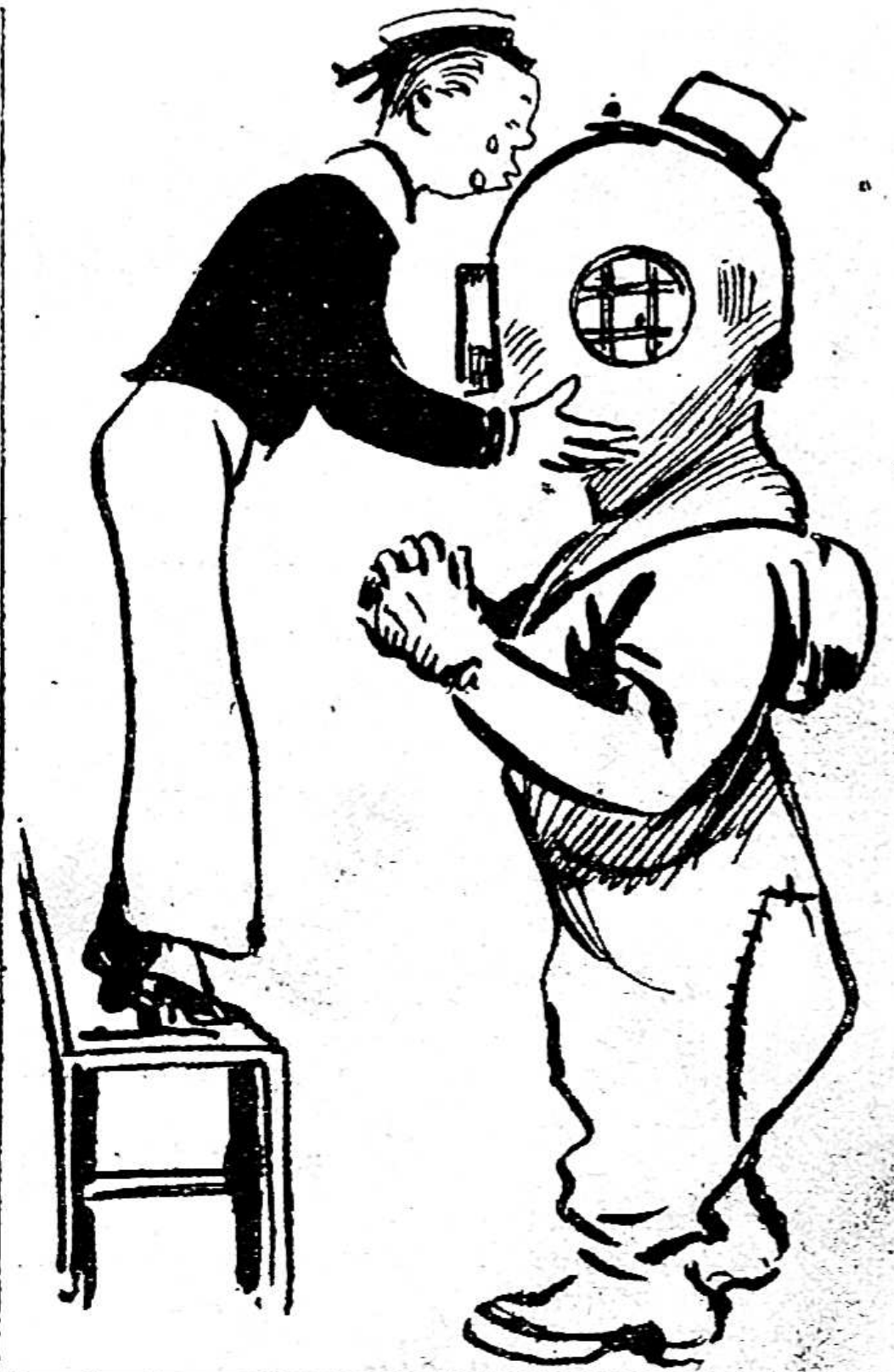
Luckily there was a bicycle pump on board, and for the rest of the day the crew took it in turns to pump air down to Grim. At meal-times food and drink were pumped down to him. But the day passed and the next night. No sign came from the famous incriminator.

Meanwhile, what was happening to Grim?

For hour after hour he tramped the bed of the Pacific. And never a sign could he see of the missing UC2. At noon he sat on a rock and munched the sandwiches that had reached him through the air-tube. Later on, darkness fell on the ocean with a mighty splash. But Grim was not to be done. He got out his electric torch and continued his search.

And just after midnight he was rewarded. Rounding a big rock, he suddenly caught sight of something dark. It was the hull of the submarine! But why was it resting on the bed of the Pacific? Why did the UC2 not rise to the surface?

The answer flashed to Grim's mind the moment he asked the questions. She could not do so! And the reason, as Grim's sharp



"I will, guv'nor!" the lad said stoutly, but his eyes filled with tears. He was sure that Grim was risking certain death.

eyes saw, was that the other half of the submarine was firmly stuck in the jaws of a gigantic whale or shark—it was too dark to see which! And the mighty fish-like animal was gradually swallowing the submarine!

In a flash Grim realised what to do. He leapt at the shark and dealt it a stunning blow on the point. The fish collapsed with a howl—and the submarine was free! At once it bobbed up to the surface of the Pacific, and Grim called up the speaking tube to be pulled up.

A few seconds later, Splinter was clasping him in his young arms, and Grim was telling the story of his wonderful achievement. The submarine was towed astern. Her crew were all alive and well, and the Secret was still in its black bag. It was never known why the shark or whale had tried to eat the submarine, but Grim shrewdly suspected it had been bribed by a foreign Power. Needless to say, the Admiralty were awfully pleased, and gave Grim the honorary rank of Engineer Commander. And the Navy were so cheered they presented him with the UC2, which now hangs up over Grim's mantelpiece in the Baker's Inn Road.



POTTED PESSIMISM

*This Week's
Joshi*

By **CUTTLE**
(The Porter)

No. 2.—THE AGE OF CRIMES.

TIMES was bad, and there was enough to make a man feel nothing else but gloomy. And why? Ask me! Because there was all sorts of crimes being committed. There was burglaries, there was hold-ups, there was murders!

I'm not saying but what murders was good, because every murder means one person less, and there was too many folks. But all the same, murder and these other crimes was bad.

And why was they? Ask me!

Some people say murders was horrid, but that was only to hide their own pleasure in reading of 'em. These people what says murders was horrid was hypocrites. They spends every copper they can rake up in buying papers, and they eats every word of the crime news as greedy as a pig gobbles his swill. Therefore, crimes was bad.

And the papers nowadays was nearly as bad. They give more space to crimes than any other news, because the people ask for it. And look at the books in the shops. Half of them was stories about murders. And the other half was about blackmail and robbery, and such like.

This proves that crime was bad—badder than what we thinks. For crime was not only bad in itself, but it makes folks happy. And anything that makes folks happy is bad. Fancy people feeling pleased because there was news about a bank being robbed! Fancy people being happy because there was news of a swindler being tried!

But that was the way of the world. Folks was always pleased to read of the misfortune of other folks. So I says that all sorts of crime was bad, because to hear of it makes everybody in a good mood. There was nothing to be joyful about in these days—for there was sadness and trouble and disaster looming ahead!



OUR OPTIMISTIC ORACLE.

*This Week's
Tonic.*

By
**BUSTER
BOOTS**

No. 2. — THREE SPEEDS — AND NO REVERSE!

SOME chaps have got bicycles with three-speed gears. Rubbish! They think they can beat the fellow with a six-gear bike. They can't! Their three-speed hub is so heavy that it makes the bike drag—and that's where you get the trouble.

In this life you only want one speed—fast. Never be slow—and don't get into reverse. It's not a bit of good sitting down looking at a job. Get busy on it, and polish it off!

I'm an optimist, and I challenge anybody to deny my statements. The one thing you need in life is a jolly good conviction of your own capabilities, and you'll get anywhere. But be careful. If you think too much of yourself, you'll find trouble.

The fathead who says "I can't!" never does a thing. But the chap who says "I'll try!" not only tries, but fairly staggers himself by what he can do. Hundreds of chaps have made a mess of an exam., just because they lacked self-confidence. And hundreds of other chaps, thinking themselves in a hopeless position, worked like the dickens on a forlorn hope. And they won.

And it's worked just the same all through life. You've got to believe in yourself, or you won't get anybody else to believe in you. Everybody hates a conceited jackass, and he'll soon get pushed aside. But everybody admires a chap with tons of self-confidence and good judgment.

And never think you've done your best. There's no such thing. You're always capable of doing better! Be an optimist, and you'll score! Be a pessimist, and you'll get a duck.

So jam in your top speed, and keep it there!



E. SOPP'S FABLES

By **EDGAR SOPP**, of the Fifth.

No. 28. THE FABLE OF THE HUNGRY YOUTH and the WELL-FILLED HAMPER

NOW it came to pass that a large and ample youth named Fatty Little did receive an intimation which caused him Boundless Joy. For it was to the effect that a hamper was awaiting him at the station, and should be removed forthwith. And Fatty did congratulate himself greatly upon his Luck, and upon the bigness of his mater's generosity. And in the fullness of his heart the fat junior gathered certain of

HIS CRONIES AROUND HIM.

And he did thereupon invite them to a merry feed in Study L, at the fixed time of five o'clock. And they, surprised by this generosity, not only thanked the fat junior, but promised to be present with Much Promptitude. And behold, when lessons were over, Fatty did wander forth into the lanes and by-ways, and did wend his way to the Station. And it must be recorded that he Licked his Lips frequently during the journey. And his hunger did increase by Leaps and Bounds, by reason of

HIS UNWONTED EXERCISE.

And great was his delight when he surveyed the big hamper which awaited him. And his patience was exhausted, for, forsooth, the sight of the hamper did make his mouth water vastly. And thereupon, within the waiting-room, he unfastened the lid and sampled the contents. And such was the extent of his sampling that the hamper was Greatly Lightened, and thus all the easier to carry. And then did Fatty shoulder his Prize

AND SALLY FORTH.

And when he did get through the village he became tempted once more, and so he set the hamper down and partook once more of the good things that Lurked Within. And, verily, they soon lurked within Fatty, and not within the hamper. And again did

he go upon his travels. And yet once again did he delve into the Good Things to fortify himself against the Last Lap. And his appetite was

SATISFIED TO THE FULL.

And he completed his journey with triumph, to be met by his guests at the gate. And great were the acclamations when they perceived the largeness of the hamper, and the seraphic expression on their host's visage. And, behold, they forthwith carried the booty to Study L, and the delight of the guests was genuine and great. And the hamper was unfastened, and the packing removed. And lo, it transpired that there was Little Else but packing left! For shavings and papers were removed, to say nothing of Empty Boxes, pots, jars, and Similar Articles. And the Startled Guests turned to their host in alarm, and spake unto him.

And it was soon apparent that the Tuck had

VANISHED FOR EVER.

And the rage of the guests burst forth with Righteous Fury, and they fell upon their host, and did rend him. It was in vain he protested. He had brought the tuck to the school, but he had brought it within the safe confines of his own Hide. And his invited guests went away not only Empty-Handed, but empty in that region which is described as Beneath the Belt. And so, much disgusted, they resolved never to believe in this Fat Youth again, for he was an Unreliable Host. It must be added that he was also a Sore Host, for he had been left prostrate and in much pain—from the blows of his companions, and from the effects of his Gorge.

MORAL: NEVER ACCEPT AN INVITATION UNLESS YOU ARE SURE OF YOUR HOST.



ADDLED ANCESTRY

Hazarded by
"HISTORICUS"

No. 2.—YE FRIGHTFUL SLACKER OF THORNY GLENNE.

NOW, in ye dayes of ye goode Kinge Alfrede, there lived in ye Castle of Thorny, in ye gleune of that name, in ye goode countie of Sussex, a righte lazic but chivalrous knighte, of ye name of Rainald Glenvere. And ye same was renowned for his milde rule over his serfs and vassals, who loved him, and served him with righte good wille.

Ye knighte was far famed as ye Slacker, for he was of ye moste dilatorie habits and customs, although forsooth, his heart was of ye golde, and also as softe as ye puttie.

Now, it caused ye populace to wonder muchlie, for ye knighte was a great dandie, and never wente abroad withoute ye goode olde suite being in ye heighte of fashione. And it was whispered among ye serfs that their lorde and master was looked after by a strange and speciale servante who was honoured by ye name of ye valet, a righte importante man, who looked after ye knighte hande and foote. Indeed, but for ye valet, it were certaine that ye master of Thorny Castle woulde have beene in ye blues.

And so ye dayes passed in ye goode times of King Alfrede, and it was ye knighte's pleasure to indulge in ye fortie winks at various times of ye daye. And ye goode people of ye countie shooke their heades withe muche sadness when it was rumoured that ye enemye had landed on ye shores. For ye knighte of Thorny Glenne were but a frightful slacker.

And then it was that ye knighte confounded ye neighbours. For when it came to ye battle, he was not onlie in ye thicke of it, but he muchly enjoyed that same.

Which proves that ye lazinesse was but a pose, and ye name of ye knighte was honoured bye goode Kinge Alfrede, who changed it to Glenthorne, and to this daye ye Glenthornes have remained slackers—but sportsmen and fighters withal.



TUBBS ON THE TUB.

*Our Weekly
Speech*

By **TUBBS**, the Page-boy.

No. 2.—THE HARD LOT OF A PAGE-BOY.

YOU needn't think as I'm one o' them there Bullshavik blokes, because I ain't. But I says straight out that things aln't as good as they oughter be, an' it's time there was a change.

You might think as bein' a pageboy at a big collidge like this 'ere is what they korr a sorft job, but I give you mi word it ain't. I've got to git up at six, wen it's oney five, same as I tolled you last week, an' then I 'ave to kleen boots, carry koles, brighten the nives, an' all sorts of other things wot I can't remember.

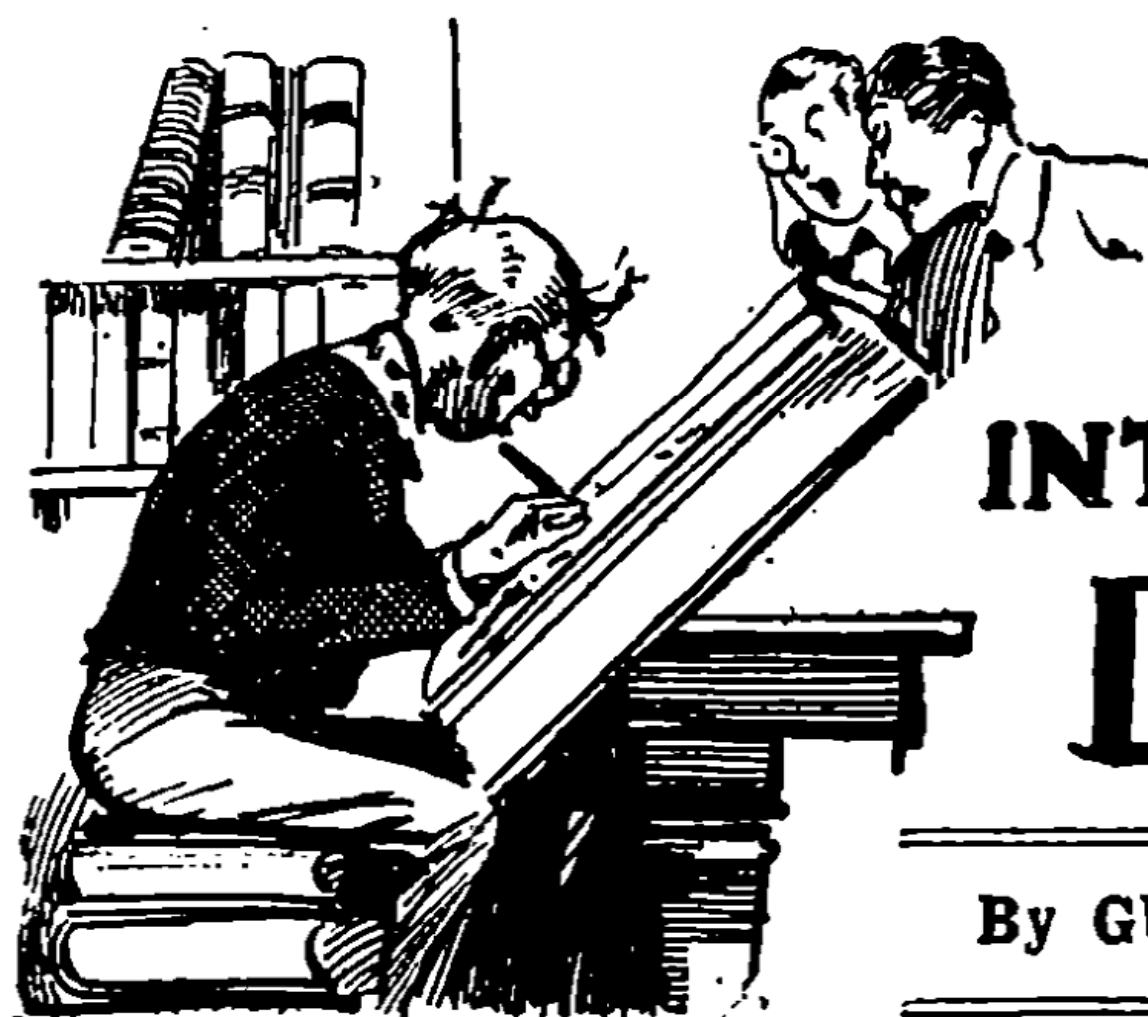
I 'ave to run herrands till mi legs is neerly worn down to stumps, an' bi the time I gits mi brekfust I'm feelin' fed up with everythink, an' reddy to chuck the job.

Mark you, I ain't complainin'. I mite 'ave a wuss job. I s'pose, an' I know I mite 'ave a better. But where is it goin' to hend? I can't go on bein' a page-boy orl mi life—though I mite blossom out into one o' them there buttlers wen I grows up.

But I don't want to be no buttler. My hambition is to leave this 'ere life o' toil an' becum somethink big in the world. Shall I tell you mi hambition? I'll wisper it in your ear—I'd like to be a detekertive.

Now, their's a life! Plenty o' danger, adventures of orl sorts, an' spyce an' pepper an' mustard! Oh, yes, you can larf! An' praps you'll say as 'ow I couldn't be a 'tec becos a 'tec needs branes. Then wot about Master 'Andforth? A regler bull in a china shop! If 'e can be a 'tec, I'll bet I can!

Wot's that? Master 'Andforth can't be one? P'raps 'e can't, an' p'raps I can't, neether. But I'm blode if I shouldn't like to 'ave a good tri, orl the same.



PEEPS INTO PEPYS' DIARY.

By GUY PEPYS of the Remove.

MONDAY. I to the Triangle this morning, where many fellows were gathered, and the Head did go by, he looking very proper. I raised my hat to him, and he to me—or perhaps the wind being boisterous, he did place a hand to his mortar-board, which I mistook for a salute. This day one upon which a spirit of mischief seemeth to abound. In the Form-room that Monday feeling did spoil all work.

TUESDAY. Much taken with Jerry Dodd and his pony, Budd, a beautiful animal, and I much like to own him. But impossible, my finances being weak, and Jerry so attached to Budd that he would never part. But I vow that some day I will be the proud owner of such a quadruped.

WEDNESDAY. Being a half-holiday, many boys abroad, taking advantage of the afternoon to enjoy themselves. Some to cricket, others to boating, cycling, and so on. But I to the river side beneath a shady tree with a book. But being invited by that bright Jewish youth, Solomon Levi, to visit his picture theatre in Bannington, we thither.

THURSDAY. This morning arrived my new suit, and I to don it, much to the envy of my fellows. But I am upset by a slight misfit of the waistcoat, which concerns me deeply. The tailor a careless fellow, who must be set to rights on such a matter. Passing along the corridor, I did perceive a youth in a crouching attitude, his ear near to a keyhole. I would have reprov'd this eavesdropper, but ere I could do so, the door suddenly opened, and he fell within with much gasping. Cries of distress issuing from the study, and I turning naught but a deaf ear. And

presently, the door opening, the nosy one was flung into the passage, proving to be Teddy Long. I do hear that this youth makes a sort of trade of discovering secrets and selling them to others. A base, scurvy fellow.

FRIDAY. I to Archie Glenthorne's study for tea. Much astonished at his furnishings, and did express my surprise. Wealth can procure luxuries, as all know, but the finding of such things in a junior study is unheard of. Much struck by the intelligence, alertness, and quiet efficiency of the man, Phipps. A perfect servant he did seem, a rare good fellow to have at hand. Glenthorne a merry fellow, he amusing me greatly. Later, in private, I had to reckon up my available funds. And to bed much relieved to find I am two shillings the better off than I had supposed.

SATURDAY. A fine, hot day, and I greatly distressed at being detained for a misdemeanour. In the morning I did offend Mr. Crowell by speaking to my neighbour. And he, being a surly youth, did give me away. But Morrow to my rescue, he allowing me to go forth. A handsome fellow, indeed. To the river, and there accepted Tom Burton's invitation to a row up the stream. With a great love for boating, I would nevertheless not cheerfully trust myself with any junior. But the Bo'sun a very capable fellow on water. All went well, except for some foul abuse flung at us by Wellborne, of the River House School. Methinks this boy not well-born but low-born—a jest I did make to Burton, much to his amusement. Well pleased with my wit. And so the week to end well, my cash lasting proper, and a new supply now in hand.

TRAVEL TALES.



By An Old
Boy

(Lord Dorrimore's
Weekly Trifle)

No. 2.—A BATTLE BETWEEN INSECTS.

I WAS once fortunate enough to witness a rather extraordinary battle — not between wild animals, or savages, or anything like that, but a grim, deadly fight for life between—insects.

I'll tell you about it.

I was in Paraguay at the time—a beautiful country in some respects, parts of it being a perfect paradise. But like many other beautiful countries, Paraguay contains things which have certainly no place in paradise.

There was a party of us exploring the region, and we had ridden under a blazing sun, and were utterly weary when we dismounted. We lay down to rest under the spreading branches of an enormous tree. Gorgeous flowers covered this giant of the forest.

I was just dropping off into a doze when a fearful scream from one of our Indian boys awakened me. On inquiry, I found that he had been bitten by a tarantula—a giant hairy spider, something like a crab.

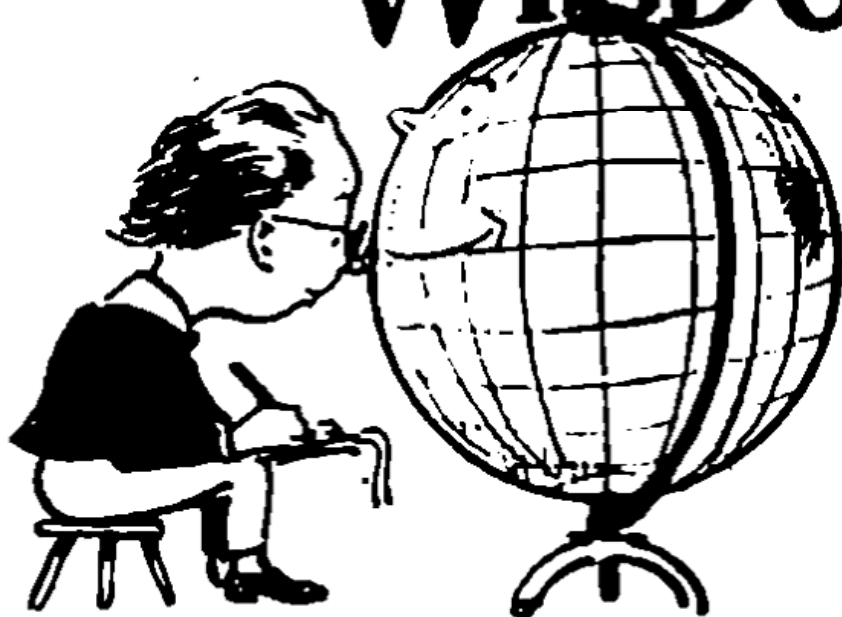
I told the Indian boy he had nothing to be afraid of, but to satisfy him I doctored the bite with some strong solution of ammonia.

The tarantula, after biting the fellow, had made for its hole. But an enormous wasp pounced down upon it, and much to our interest, the two began to fight. They went at it like demons, the spider winding its long hairy legs around the wasp and biting and snapping with its horrible mouth.

In the meantime, the wasp was trying to drive in its sting, which at last it succeeded in doing. Triumphant, it flew away—but minus five legs. The tarantula crumpled up and died. The particular wasp which performed this feat is called a tarantula killer.

The spider, I might mention, was cleared entirely away in a very few minutes by giant ants, who swarmed up in armies.

WORDY WISDOM



Tangled Tosh - By Timothy Tucker

No. 2.—THE PREHISTORIC EPOCH OF THE NEOLITHIC MAN.

THINK, comrades! The neolithic epoch! We, in this age, are apt to take things for granted; but remember the multitudinous momentousness of the past.

What is the neolithic age? You know not—your paucity of knowledge is abysmal, and you know nothing of the phantasmagoria that sheds a wondrous light upon the prehistoric phenomenalisms.

But let me expatiate voluminously on this stupendously mountainous subject, and speak of the multiplicity of marvels that characterised that period.

To simplify my language, let me refer to this stage as the Stone Age. But there were two Stone Ages—the Paleolithic Age and the Neolithic Age. And millions of years elapsed between these two ultra-marvellous epochs.

What would happen to-day if we were thrust back, by some magical misadventure of time to this existence of stone? People are too contented, too ready to go on in the same free-and-easy way. They don't pause to realise the infinitely immeasurable profundity of the enormous possibilities. And as for the readers of this magazine, they are portentously ignorant on all matters except cricket and similar pitiful enterprises.

It is my purpose to enlighten the sinister shadows of modern ignorance, and I will now enlarge with laconical expansiveness upon such animals as the Labyrinthodon, the Brontosaurus, the carnivorous Dinosaur, the Pterodactyl, and various other—

(Whoa! We can't allow language like this! Ring off!—Ed.)



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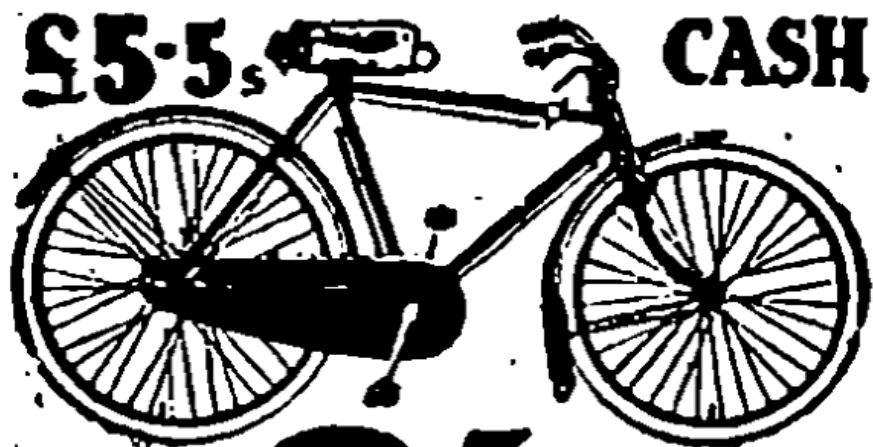
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