

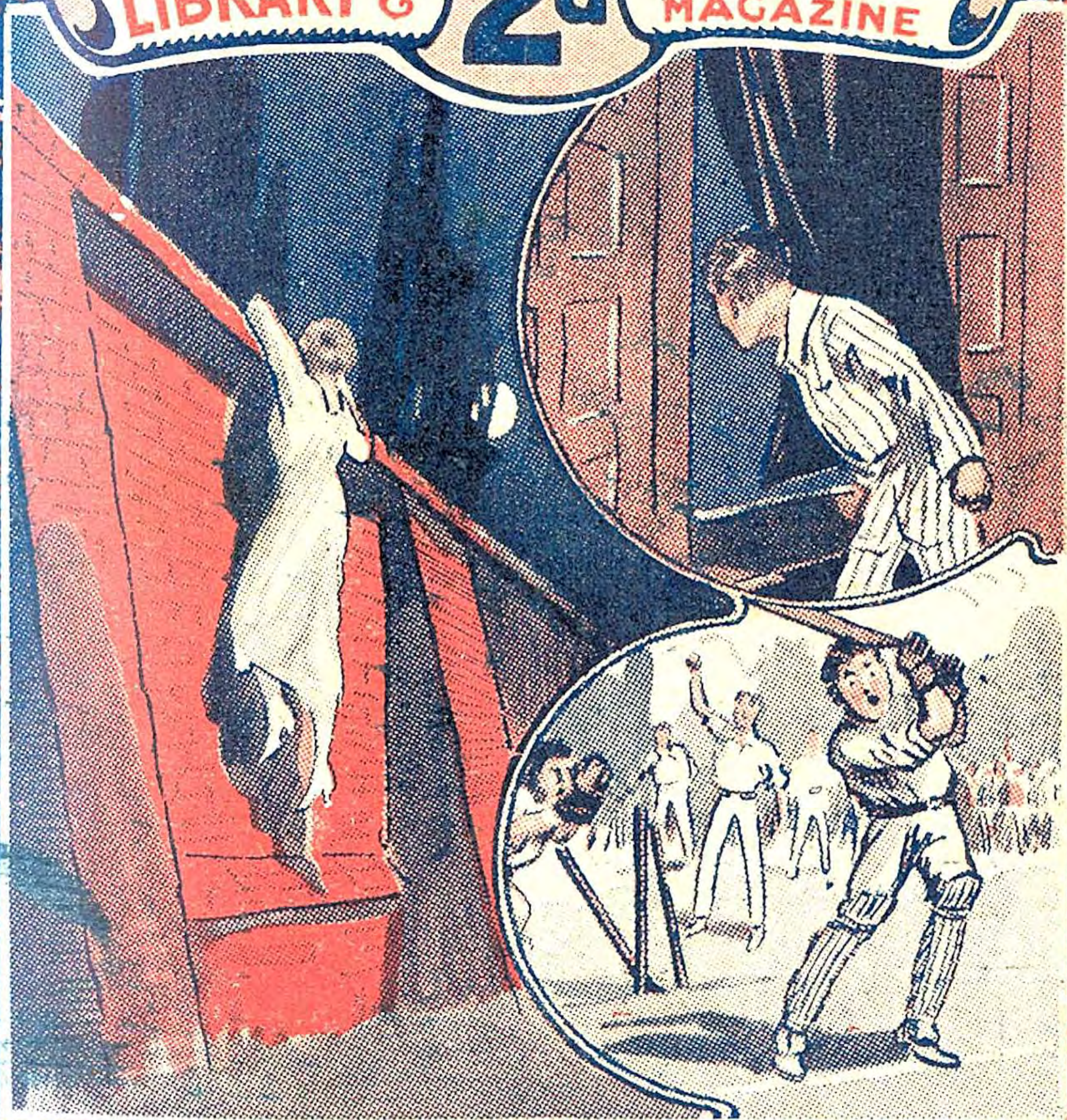
THE NEW HEAD OF ST. FRANK'S !

The Nelson Lee

LIBRARY &

2d

St FRANK'S
MAGAZINE



DON'T MISS THIS WEEK'S CLEVER STORY OF THE
AMAZING NEW HEAD OF ST. FRANK'S:—

ONE OF THE BOYS!



Mrs. Stokes attempted to rush down the stairs, but the Head seized her, pulled her back, and literally carried her away up the corridor—taking no notice of her protests.

ONE OF THE BOYS!



Dr. Beverley Stokes, M.A. has come to St. Frank's as a temporary headmaster in place of Dr. Stafford, who has departed on a holiday to Africa, having joined Sir Crawford Grey's expedition. As a headmaster, Dr. Stokes is entirely different from what one would expect. He is young and has much of the spirit of the schoolboy in his nature. Indeed, he mixes freely with the boys, takes a great interest in their sports, proving himself to be as proficient in this respect as his undoubted reputation as a scholar.

His unconventional arrival at St. Frank's as a boy himself, described last week, has given him a keen insight and sympathetic understanding of the boys over whom he is to rule. He is acclaimed by St. Frank's as an ideal headmaster. A further interesting account of Dr. Stokes, introducing his charming young wife, is revealed in the story we publish this week.

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

TEA IN STUDY D.

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH slowly rose to his feet.

"I'm keeping quite calm," he said deliberately, "and I'm asking you plainly, Walter Church, are you going out to the tuck shop for a tin of sardines, or are you not?"

"I'm not!" retorted Church bluntly.

"By George!" snorted Handforth. "Mutiny! Rebellion in my own giddy study! Why, you—"

"I'm fed up with being ordered about!" broke in Church indignantly. "McClure's fed up, too! You ask me to go, in a proper way, and I'll go! But I'm blessed if I'll be ordered like a slave!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured McClure, into his teacup.

"What's that?" roared Handforth, turning on him.

"Nun-nothing!" spluttered McClure, nearly choking himself.

"As for you—I'll give you just ten seconds!" thundered Handforth, whirling back to the rebellious Church. "Understand? Ten seconds! If you don't obey my instructions by the time I've counted ten—"

"You could have counted twenty by this time!" said Church tartly.

"One—two—three—four—" counted Handforth, instinctively clenching his fists and preparing for battle. "Five—six—"

Just for an instant, Church shot a rapid glance at the door. Obviously, he was swiftly reckoning up his chances. Then an obstinate look crept into his eye, and his jaw became set. He stood his ground.

"Ten!" roared Handforth. "And take that!"

He lunged forward over the table, aiming at Church's face. But he might have known that Church wouldn't be there to receive such an obvious thrust. Handforth tripped over the edge of the table, and lost his balance.

"Good!" said Church sourly. "Why not do it again?"

Handforth picked himself up, rushed at Church, and the pair grappled. A scene of this kind was a mere everyday event in Study D, in the Ancient House at St. Frank's. Nobody else ever took any notice.

In the present instance the whole trouble was caused by Handforth being in an unusually aggressive mood. He had brusquely commanded Church to go to Mrs. Hake's tuck shop and buy a tin of sardines.

And Church had taken exception to Handforth's tone. Hence the squabble.

"I'll show you!" panted Handforth grimly. "You'd defy me, would you? All right, my son! See how that feels!"

Biff!

Unfortunately for Handforth's plan, his own fist smote the thin air, and Church landed a really beautiful slish on the very point of Handforth's rugged nose. And at precisely the same instant a tap sounded on the door, and the Headmaster strolled in.

"Oh, my hat!" said McClure blankly.

Dr. Beverley Stokes, M.A., looked on with interest.

"Cave!" gasped Church. "Steady, you ass——"

"I'm going to smash you into pulp!" hooted Handforth, unaware of the Head's presence. "Just wait until I grab you——"

"Idiot!" hissed Church. "You'll get the sack——"

"Don't mind me!" interrupted Dr. Stokes cheerfully. "Just having a little friendly argument, eh? I don't quite approve of these tea-fights, but boys will be boys, I suppose."

Handforth twirled round, his jaw sagging.

"Oh, by George!" he stammered. "I—I didn't know you were here, sir."

"A perfectly natural oversight, considering that your sturdy back was turned towards me," said the Head, nodding. "Upon the whole, boys, I think perhaps we'd better stop the little battle. It's so unnecessary to punch one another about like that."

"Yeh—yes sir," said Handforth feebly.

The three chums felt terribly embarrassed. Handforth, in fact, was inwardly indignant. It was all very well for Dr. Stokes to be a sport, but this sudden arrival in a fellow's study was a bit thick.

Dr. Beverley Stokes was no ordinary Headmaster.

St. Frank's had learned that on the very first day of his arrival. As a matter of fact, he had only been in the school for two days, and already he was the most talked-of personage within the grey walls. Seniors and juniors alike were still discussing the Head to the exclusion of all other topics.

Dr. Stafford was away on holiday, having gone for a long sea trip, and the school had not been entirely pleased. But the new Head had turned out to be such a novelty that St. Frank's was more than satisfied now.

For one thing, Dr. Beverley Stokes was a young man—being, in fact, no more than twenty-six. Even so, he had a brilliant career behind him—brief but scintillating. He had proved himself to be a born leader of boys—a man who could control them more by instinct than by iron discipline.

He was a cheerful, fresh complexioned man of rather slight proportions, but he lacked nothing in the way of dignity. When necessary, Dr. Stokes could be as firm and as unbending as Dr. Stafford himself.

But he was a novelty—and the school hadn't yet got used to him.

It was, for example, an unprecedented thing for a Headmaster to walk calmly into a junior study and gaze with equanimity upon an exhibition of fistic prowess. It was almost unheard of for a Headmaster to walk into a junior study at all.

But it was characteristic of Dr. Stokes.

He loved to be on intimate terms with all his boys—with the juniors just as much as the seniors. During his brief spell at the school he had proved this to the hilt—and the school wasn't yet certain whether it liked it or not.

Unquestionably, the practice would have been exceedingly unpopular if Dr. Stokes had lacked tact. But the youthful Head was quickly revealing the fact that his tact was equal to his cheeriness.

"We—we were just having a little practice, sir," stammered Church. "We—we didn't know you were coming in——"

"That's all right, young 'un," smiled Dr. Stokes. "I can assure you that if I had received a slight warning, I would not have butted in at such an inopportune moment. By the way, you were practising upon Handforth's nose in a most realistic fashion."

"Yes, sir," said Church, with a gulp.

"However, the least said, the soonest mended," proceeded Dr. Stokes. "What's all this? Sandwiches, eh? Anything good inside them? They look appetising on the exterior."

The Head regarded the table with approval.

"Ham, sir," said McClure. "We got it from Mrs. Hake's, you know—a jolly good ham, too. Hallo! Kettle's boiling! I'll just make a fresh brew of tea."

"Good man!" said the Head approvingly. "I couldn't have come at a better moment. Got a spare cup for me?"

He sat down in an empty chair, selected a sandwich, and bit into it with keen relish.

CHAPTER II.

A LAD AMONG THE LADS.



IT is no exaggeration to say that Handforth and Co. were staggered.

It had been surprising enough for the Head to overlook the fighting so tranquilly, but to seat himself at the table and ask for a cup of tea—Well, the chums of Study D hardly had any breath left.

Dr. Stokes ceased his munching for a moment.

"Anything wrong?" he asked, looking round. "You fellows seem to be dumb, all at once. My dear kids, don't let me interrupt the feast! Pile in, and tell me all about the days' doings."

"Yes, sir—rather, sir!" said Handforth, turning red.

He and Church sat down, and McClure nervously made a fresh pot of tea. They had to be educated into the Head's new ways. So far, they were like fish out of water.

Very tentatively they started on the sandwiches, and McClure shakily poured out a cup of tea for the Head. He put an extra lot of cream into it, and out of courtesy to the distinguished visitor he was about to add three lumps of sugar when Dr. Stokes held his hand.

"One's enough, thanks," he said. "That's it. Fine! Remember that for the next time, my son! I'm afraid you boys eat too much sugar—it doesn't do you any good. Another sandwich, Church, old man. You don't want the whole dishful, I suppose?"

"No, sir," gasped Church, passing them over hastily.

The meal continued, and Dr. Stokes suddenly laughed.

"I've got an idea that you fellows are a bit uncomfortable," he said. "Perhaps I ought not to have come in like this. But don't look upon me as your Headmaster now—I'm not. We're all off duty, and we're just friends together. Understand? So drop all this reserve, and come out of your little shells!"

And, inch by inch, Handforth and Co. did so. They were finding that Dr. Stokes was a real sportsman. He wasn't doing this merely for the sake of effect—but because he really liked schoolboy society.

"We're getting on all right now, eh?" he said, at length. "Don't be a bit surprised if I drop in for tea some other evening."

"We'll be jolly glad to honour you, sir," said Handforth enthusiastically.

"Rubbish!" said Dr. Stokes. "That's just what I don't want you to do. When I'm in a junior study, I'm one of the boys. And if you happen to, have nothing but stale bread and butter on the menu, owing to shortage of funds, so much the better!"

"I say, sir, you're so jolly different from all the other masters," said Church. "Mr. Lee's about the only master at St. Frank's who's pally with the chaps—but even he's a lot different to you."

Dr. Stokes laughed.

"It's just as well we're not all alike," he said lightly. "And now, what's the programme? Don't let me interfere with any of your plans, but if there's nothing special on hand—"

"We were going out to Little Side, for cricket practice, sir," said McClure.

"Topping!" exclaimed the Head. "I'll come with you, if I may. In fact, I'll have a shot at the nets myself. I'll tell you what, Handy, old man, I'll wager you can't bowl me out in a dozen tries!"

"I'll bet I can!" snorted Handforth. "I

—I mean— Sorry, sir!" he added, turning red.

"Splendid!" chuckled the Head. "For a second you almost came completely out of your shell! And don't be sorry—it's a bad sign! Do we go at once, or is it the usual thing to wash up first?"

"Oh, we'll go right off, sir," said Handforth promptly.

He hurriedly opened the door, half expecting to see the Head pull a tea-cloth out of his pocket in preparation for the dish-washing. But no such thing happened. But as soon as the juniors were out in the passage, the Head startled them by walking serenely along arm-in-arm with Handforth and Church. Other fellows in the corridor stared, open-mouthed.

Even a prefect thought too much of his dignity to jeopardise it by walking arm-in-arm—in public—with juniors. And yet here was the Head himself acting like a Removite!

"He—he must be dotty!" panted Armstrong, aghast.

But that was just where he was mistaken, for Dr. Stokes was proving himself to be exceedingly sensible. He was losing none of his dignity by being on such friendly terms with the boys.

At first, perhaps, his extraordinary attitude might create comment and criticism—but after the school had got accustomed to his ways, they would probably learn to admire him, and respect him all the more. The Head was hoping for this, at all events.

He was a kind of pioneer, and as such he was destined to have a bit of a rough passage to begin with. For the criticism would be general—juniors, seniors, and the masters themselves indulging in it. And it went without saying that the more conservative inhabitants of the great establishment would look upon the new Head's behaviour askance.

But Dr. Stokes didn't care—and therein he proved his courage and determination.

"Oh, half a minute," said McClure, who was just behind the other three. "We were going to lug Archie out—"

"Never mind Archie now," interrupted Handforth.

"Archie?" repeated the Head. "Now, let me see— Ah, yes! You mean Glen-thorne, don't you? We had rather a fine time at his father's fancy dress ball in London, didn't we? Let's dig Archie out, by all means."

Dr. Stokes wouldn't be denied, and as they were just passing Archie's study, they all paused, and the Head tapped. There was no response, and Handforth and Co. grinned.

"What's the joke?" asked Dr. Stokes.

"Nothing, sir—but I expect Archie's having a nap," said Church.

"Then I'm afraid his nap will come to a sudden and tragic termination," said the Head, turning the handle and opening the

door. "By Jupiter! What a picture of peace and innocence!"

He grinned as he paused there, gazing at the reclining figure of Archie Glenthorne. The genial ass of St. Frank's was lying full length on the lounge, his eyes closed, an expression of serene contentment on his face, and with complete oblivion to his surroundings.

"Scandalous!" said Dr. Stokes severely. "At this time of the day, too! I don't think we can allow this to continue—eh, you fellows?"

"It's pretty terrible, sir," grinned Handforth.

The Head strode to the lounge, yanked Archie unceremoniously into a sitting posture, and slapped him heartily on the back.

"Cricket!" said the Head cheerfully. "Brace up, my lad! This is where we go outside for some manly exercise."

Archie blinked, gasped, and opened his eyes.

"Oddslife!" he murmured. "This, dash it, is absolutely frayed at the edge! A chappie simply can't have forty of the best without you blighters oozing into the old apartment—What ho! I—er—that is—I should say—Good gad!"

Archie started to his feet, aghast.

"Frightfully sorry, sir!" he stuttered. "The—the fact is I didn't know you were here—"

"All the same if you did," put in the Head genially. "My dear Archie, don't look so startled. Pull yourself together, and come along with us. Exercise will do you a lot more good than sleep."

"What priceless piss—I—I should say, oh, rather, sir!" exclaimed Archie hastily. "Exercise, what? Just a few spasms of the good old tissue-restoring stuff? A fruity scheme, sir."

Still bewildered, Archie passed out of the study with the others, and in a very short time they were all on Little Side—where the Head joined in cricket practice with sheer boyish delight. There was nothing put on about it—he was genuine to the backbone.

As Archie expressed it, the Head was absolutely a lad among the lads.

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW ARRIVAL.



"**H** EARD the latest?" asked Chubby Heath excitedly. Willy Handforth sniffed.

"If there's any news floating about, you can bet I heard it years before you did!" he replied tartly. "Like your nerve to come here, asking if I've heard the latest! I'm alive!"

"And what am I?" demanded Heath warmly.

"Dead!" said Willy. "That is, you're dead neck upwards!"

"Smart, ain't you?" sneered Chubby Heath. "Come along to Little Side, and have a look at the Head. He's slogging away at the nets like a giddy Trojan! Never saw anything like it!"

"That's stale!" said the leader of the Third. "I've been watching the Head for ten minutes past. And, by Jingo, he can use a bat, too! In many ways, Dr. Stokes is a surprise packet!"

The other lag nodded feelingly.

"There's no word to describe him properly!" he agreed. "Remember how we spoofed him yesterday? Remember how we mauled him about? Remember how he overlooked everything—"

"What do you take me for?" interrupted Willy sourly. "Do you think my memory doesn't last for more than one day? The Head's a stunner! I knew it from the very first. Didn't I tell you that he'd give St. Frank's a few jolts?"

"But—but he's such a regular sportsman!" said Chubby, his voice swelling with admiration. "He's not like a master at all—he's a real pal! Goes about arm-in-arm with Remove chaps, laughs and grins like one of ourselves, and calls us 'old boy,' and all that sort of thing."

Willy nodded.

"Exactly," he agreed. "In fact, we might almost say that he's nearly human. Most Headmasters are beasts. They can't help it—they're born like that. Some of 'em are decent beasts, but taking the tribe as a whole, they're a pretty mouldy crowd. That's where Dr. Stokes scores. He's different. As I just said, he's the nearest approach to a human being that any master can be."

Chubby Heath grinned.

"Oh, come off it!" he protested. "What about Mr. Lee? He's a jolly good sort—"

"You can't count Nelson Lee," broke in Willy. "He's a detective. This schoolmaster stuff is only a kind of side line. I think perhaps we'd better go along to Little Side and—"

Willy paused, and regarded the gates with interest. He and Chubby were leaning against one of the old chestnut trees in the Triangle, and they had a full view of the imposing stone gateway. And an extremely neat two-seater had just purred into the school grounds. It was quite a pretty little car, but Willy hardly glanced at it.

"My hat!" he said softly. "She's nice-looking, isn't she?"

His attention was fixed upon the driver—a singularly pretty girl of about twenty-two. She had just brought the car to a halt, and was looking round inquiringly.

Chubby quite misunderstood his chum's remark.

"Not so bad," he replied critically. "Personally, I like the look of disc wheels—"

"Who's talking about wheels?" snapped Willy.

"You are! You said something about the car—"

"Rats! I'm talking about that girl!" said Handforth minor. "I say, isn't she a stunner? I'm not much of a judge of girls as a rule, but this one's a ripper! Let's see who she is."

The Triangle was practically deserted, for most of the juniors were on the playing

he's gone—went yesterday. We've got a new Head now—one of the best, too!"

"A regular brick, miss!" said Chubby Heath enthusiastically.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said the girl, her eyes lighting up with pleasure. "You—you are talking about Dr. Stokes, aren't you?"

"Rather, miss," replied Willy, nodding.

"Did you come here to see Dr. Stokes?"

The young lady laughed with quiet amusement.

"Well, yes, I suppose so," she replied, her brown eyes twinkling.

"In that case, miss, you'd better come along with us to Little Side," said Willy briskly. "The Head's with a crowd of

BOOKS OF SPORT, SCHOOL AND ADVENTURE

Sixty-four Pages Crammed with Enjoyment!

The Boys' Friend Library

No. 717. BROTHER PRO'S.

A Brilliant Yarn of the Cricket Field, introducing Smith of Rocklandshire. By Richard Randolph.

No. 718. FIGHTING DAL BROUGHTON.

A Superb Tale of the Modern Boxing Ring. By Alfred Edgar.

No. 719. THE GOLDEN BUDDHA!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Story of Adventure Abroad. By Maurice Everard.

No. 720. VOLCANO ISLAND!

A New and Original Yarn of Fun and Adventure, introducing the Famous Comrades, Jack, Sam and Pete. By S. Clarke Hook.

The Sexton Blake Library

No. 335. THE LOOT OF THE NANA SAHIB.

Another Splendid Tale of the Adventures of GUNGA DASS.

No. 336. THE BOARDING-HOUSE MYSTERY.

A Story of Dazzling Mystery, Thrilling Adventure, and Clever Deduction. By the Author of "The Farrowshot Park Affair," etc., etc.

No. 337. AN AMATEUR IN CRIME; or, Saved by Sexton Blake.

A Romance of London Adventure, Mystery, and Clever Detective Work. By the Author of "In Double Disguise," etc., etc.

No. 338. THE BRIKHAM MANOR MYSTERY.

An Absorbing Tale of Mystery, telling how Sexton Blake unravelled one of the most intricate crime problems of his career. By the Author of "The Mystery of Rodney's Cove," etc., etc.

Now on Sale!

Price Fourpence Each!

fields. Willy approached the two-seater, and politely raised his cap. The new arrival rewarded him with a smile. And there was no doubt that Willy's judgment was sound. This girl was not only pretty and dainty, but attired with exquisitely nice taste.

"Anything I can do, miss?" asked Willy obligingly.

The girl smiled again, although Willy didn't know why.

"Yes, if you don't mind," she replied. "I'd like you to direct me to the Headmaster's House."

"That's it, miss—over there," said Willy, pointing. "But if you want Dr. Stafford,

Remove chaps, playing cricket. Of course, if it's private, I'll run and fetch Dr. Stokes straight away—"

"No, it doesn't matter," said the girl, jumping lightly out of the car. "Thank you so much for showing me the way. Before long I shan't need any directing. I shall soon know my way about."

This remark rather puzzled the two lags, but they said nothing. And as they walked, one on either side of their fair companion, she looked over the school buildings with an approving, appreciative eye.

"What a perfectly delightful place!" she said. "I've always been told that St. Frank's was famous for its architectural

beauty, but it's simply wonderful! I'm surprised you don't have hosts of artists here, sketching the buildings from every angle."

Willy gave one glance at the school.

"Well, of course, opinions differ, miss," he said. "Personally, I can't see much to brag about. The Ancient House isn't so bad, but the College House is a horrible botch!"

The visitor laughed.

"I'm afraid I don't agree with you," she said, as they passed through the gateway into Little Side. "Oh, here we are! Yes! There's Barry, at the wicket now! Oh, how glorious!"

She clapped her hands delightedly as Dr. Stokes swung his shoulders round, and sent the leather soaring towards the boundary. Chubby Herth and Willy Handforth exchanged significant glances.

"Barry!" whispered Willy. "Did you hear that? Oh, my hat! I'll bet a penny she's the Head's best girl! I thought as much—I knew there'd be a catch somewhere!"

Willy was rather indignant. The Head was a sport, and it was perfectly ridiculous to suddenly discover that he was in love! Dr. Stokes dropped several points in Willy's estimation.

The Head happened to glance round, and he caught sight of the vision of feminine charm. He stared, stood quite still for a moment, and then dropped his hat. He came hurrying forward, eagerness itself.

Crowds of juniors stood looking on—the majority catching sight of the young lady for the first time. Willy and Chubby stood back respectfully. And they watched with interest.

"Well, Joyce, this is wonderful!" exclaimed the Head, as he hurried up. "I didn't expect you for another two hours! Why on earth didn't you send me a wire, you silly?"

To the utter astonishment of the entire crowd, Dr. Stokes took the girl into his arms, and kissed her with affection and warmth. She broke away, laughing, setting her hat straight.

"Barry!" she protested.

"Oh, what does it matter?" he grinned. "Come on—there's no time like the present! I'll introduce you to all these youngsters."

The fellows stood looking on, rather dumb-founded. It was perfectly obvious to them that the Head was in love. But most of the juniors considered it a bit thick that he should have his fiancée down on the very second day. Others were congratulating Dr. Stokes on having such charming taste.

"Just a minute, you fellows," sang out the Head, waving his hand. "I'd like to introduce you all to the First Lady of St. Frank's. I've not the slightest doubt that we'll all get on famously!"

The fellows came round in crowds, every cap removed.

"Let me present Mrs. Stokes," said the Head simply.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST LADY OF ST. FRANK'S.



MRS. STOKES!

It was like a bomb-shell. Even the affectionate nature of their greeting had not made the juniors suspect that the Head and this young lady

were man and wife.

Here was a fresh surprise for the school!

So Dr. Beverley Stokes was married—and, what was more, it was fairly evident that Mrs. Stokes had come to stay. Otherwise the Head would hardly have introduced her as "the First Lady of St. Frank's."

The juniors regarded her with an entirely new interest. Even Willy allowed Dr. Stokes to go up in his estimation. If the Head was married, it was all right. In fact, there might be certain advantages. The wife of a headmaster was always liable to chip in when it came to a case of corporal punishment.

Archie Glenthorne was the first to bow, and he did this very gracefully.

"I say, this is frightfully ripping!" he exclaimed genially. "Awfully pleased to meet you, Mrs. Stokes! Congrats, and all that. I mean to say, it's perfectly jolly, what?"

"Glad you think so, Archie," grinned Dr. Stokes. "Well, I'm afraid I'll have to run off now. I'll probably see you later, some of you."

He waved his hand, and accompanied Mrs. Stokes back into the Triangle. And as soon as they had vanished, a perfect babel of voices broke out. Even the seniors talked excitedly.

"By George! Married!" said Handforth. "Well, I must say she's a stunning-looking girl! She seems altogether too young, you know—not a month more than eighteen or nineteen!"

I shook my head.

"I'd give her a year or two more than that," I said. "Anyhow, you're right about her being a ripping girl. Upon the whole, we ought to congratulate ourselves. It's about time the Head's House had a proper mistress. It doesn't seem right unless there are a few ladies about."

On the whole, the majority of the fellows agreed with my view. And during the next two or three days Mrs. Stokes sprang into unanimous popularity.

She was always so bright and cheerful; she had a smile and a cheery word for everybody. And, somehow, everything seemed to be changed. Taking complete

command of the Head's house, Mrs. Stokes made herself liked by all and sundry. There was not even a trace of jealousy in the domestic quarters. Mrs. Poulter, the Ancient House matron, seemed to regard the Head's wife as a kind of pupil, and she took her under her wing.

And there was a noticeable change among the fellows.

The juniors, especially, would fly at her command, and think it an honour if she asked them to go on any errand. And there was a marked smartening up all round.

Even the slovenly juniors, such as Teddy

him, and if he suddenly appeared, there would be no rush for cover. There would be no whisper of "Cave!"

As a rule, the juniors had always felt restrained and awkward in the presence of the Headmaster. At the approach of Dr. Stafford they had been wont to cease all their usual caperings, not because they feared the old Head, but because they held him in awe.

Everything was totally different now.

The approach of Dr. Stokes was regarded as an event. The juniors were even eager for the Head to join them. He was such a sport, such a companion. And any fellow



"This won't do, young men!" she said, shaking her head. "I suppose I ought to report you for being late."

Long and Somerton, always appeared now with clean collars and well brushed clothing. And there seemed to be an air of light-hearted cheeriness throughout the school.

This was not entirely due to the Head's wife.

Dr. Stokes himself was greatly responsible for the change. Everything was more or less altered since he had taken command.

He was different from any other principal who had ever ruled over the old school. And he had already proved that his policy of good fellowship and intimacy was worth while.

He never ceased springing his surprises; but now the fellows were getting used to

who dared to say a word against him, no matter how trivial, was booked for a severe ragging.

And with this changed feeling in the school there had been a distinct brightening of spirits in general. Even Mr. Crowell and Mr. Suncliffe and the other masters were taking the example of the Head as a pattern, and were more friendly and companionable with the boys.

Most important of all, Dr. Stokes had sacrificed not one iota of dignity by his policy of intimacy.

Indeed, if anything, he commanded more respect from the boys than ever Dr. Stafford had done. It was looked upon as a law—

as hard and fast as the laws of the Medes and the Persians—that the Head was to be treated absolutely on the square. He was square with the boys, and they took it as a point of honour to be the same with him.

If occasion demanded, Dr. Stokes could change instantly. In one or two instances Fullwood or Merrell, or others of their clique, had attempted to be facetious at Dr. Stokes' expense.

But they had regretted their temerity.

For, at the slightest sign of this sort of thing, the Head had completely altered. He had delivered no punishments, he had spoken no harsh words, but he had made the offenders look and feel so unutterably foolish that they had hoped for the ground to open up and swallow them.

When Dr. Stokes chose, he could be extraordinarily caustic. And by bringing ridicule down upon the heads of these would-be humorists, he punished them in a manner that hurt them most. For the average schoolboy fears public ridicule more than anything else.

The youthful Head, in fact, had proved his contention to the hilt.

Before coming to St. Frank's, he had declared that he would make himself "one of the boys" without losing an atom of his dignity as headmaster. And he had not only done this, but the great majority of the fellows had complete respect for their chief.

It was not at all unusual for Dr. Stokes to drop into the prefect's room for a chat on general subjects. He would enter into arguments with the seniors just as though he had been one of themselves.

On other occasions he would stroll into one of the junior common-rooms, talk about cricket or play a game of draughts with Handforth, or somebody else.

More than once he had collected a bunch of fellows together in the Triangle, and had marched them into Mrs. Hake's tuck shop, treated them all to ginger-pop, and so forth.

And on such occasions as these the Head dropped his judicial authority and became a boy in spirit. Although his ways were getting so well known, the juniors were still talking about him.

Handforth and Co., hurrying up Bellton Lane from the village one evening, were rather anxious about the time, for they feared they would be late for locking up. It was Handy's fault, really, because he had insisted upon arguing with the station-master over a parcel that ought to have arrived the previous day.

"Oh, it doesn't matter much!" said Church. "Even if the Head spots us, he'll just laugh and—"

"Don't you believe it!" interrupted Handforth. "The Head's a fine chap, but he's as hard as nails on discipline. If we're late and he spots us climbing over the wall it'll mean a swishing."

"You're right!" agreed McClure. "That's

what I like about the Head, too. If anybody breaks a rule he's just as firm as a rock. That's why he's so popular. The chaps are getting to know that they can't mess him about, just because he's free and easy."

They reached the gates, only to find them locked, and there was nothing else for it but to scramble over the wall and trust to luck.

It was a dull evening, but there was plenty of daylight left, and the job was risky.

Handforth and Co. leapt over swiftly, and landed in the Triangle immediately in front of Mrs. Stokes, who stood quite still, and looked at them severely, but with a twinkle in her eyes. She was looking particularly charming in a silken evening gown.

"This won't do, young men!" she said, shaking her head. "I suppose I ought to report you for being late."

"Yes, Mrs. Stokes," said Handforth and Co. meekly.

A step sounded, and the Head strolled into view from behind the shrubbery. Mrs. Stokes at once changed.

"Thank you very much, boys," she said warmly. "But you really needn't have troubled to all climb over the wall like that! Perhaps I didn't lose my handkerchief in the lane, after all."

Handforth and Co. understood.

Mrs. Stokes had said nothing untruthful, but it was clear that she feared that the Head had seen the delinquents scrambling over the wall. And so she had instantly invented a natural explanation of their suspicious conduct. And the Head said nothing on the matter, but merely chatted with the chums of Study D about the weather.

"I say, isn't she fine?" whispered Church, as they passed indoors soon afterwards. "Absolutely got us out of that hole like a good 'un! And I was expecting a swishing, too!"

Handforth glanced back at Mrs. Stokes with admiration.

"She's as fine a sportsman as the Head!" he declared.

And he couldn't have given Mrs. Stokes higher praise than that.

CHAPTER V.

ROUGH ON THE FIRST ELEVEN.



"LOOK out for dust, Archie," said Brent with a chuckle.

"Better get right on the edge of the road. There's a charabanc coming."

"How absolutely fearful!"

said Archie Glenthorne.

The two study chums were cycling home from Bannington, after having spent a very enjoyable half-holiday at Glenthorne Manor. It was evening now, and the weather had

Improved considerably. The sky was clear, and the midsummer air was alive with the hum of evening insects.

And the Bannington roads were very dusty. And a charabanc, after all, is a vehicle that has no particular regard for other users of the road. It distributes dust in dense clouds, and with perfectly lavish generosity.

So Archie Glenthorne and Alf Brent not only drew to the side of the road, but cycled into a handy gateway, so as to be well clear of the nuisance. And, having dismounted, they watched the charabanc go by.

"Hallo!" said Alf. "It's the First Eleven!"

The occupants of the big motor-coach were, indeed, Edgar Fenton and his merry men. The St. Frank's Senior Eleven were on their way back from Helmsford.

"Who won?" yelled Brent, as the charabanc went by.

"Helmsford!" shouted Morrow, of the Sixth. "We lost by two wickets. Rough luck, because——"

The rest of his sentence was drowned by the noise of the vehicle, but Archie and Alf had heard enough.

"Oh, well, I expected it!" said Brent. "The Helmsford College Senior Eleven is about the toughest proposition of the term, I believe, and the First did jolly well to put up such a good fight."

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie. "By the way, dear old soul, don't we see the return match on Saturday?"

"Yes—weather permitting," replied Alf.

It was mid-week now, and there had been quite a deal of talk at St. Frank's regarding these two highly important fixtures. The whole school had regarded defeat as certain away, but there was general optimism for the home match.

The First Eleven were gaining strength, and by Saturday Fenton hoped to have his men in even better fettle. So the defeat of to-day would almost certainly be wiped out on Saturday.

This was the general trend of talk in the motor-coach itself, as it rolled swiftly on its way towards Belton.

"There's nothing to worry about," declared Fenton. "Rees did splendidly to-day. He's improving his bowling every match we play, and by the end of the week he ought to be at the top of his form."

"Good old Wales!" grinned Wilson.

Rees, the Welsh senior, chuckled.

"As a matter of fact, I'm rather pleased with myself," he admitted. "It's the first time I've taken two wickets for no runs—and in one over, too. If I can only do the hat trick on Saturday——"

"We don't expect you to do the hat trick, and it's no good discussing it," interrupted Fenton. "You're a fast bowler, Rees, and during the past week or so you've gained some speed, too. I'm relying on you for

Saturday for good, steady work—not for sensations."

"Don't worry—there won't be any!" said Rees. "I'm not mug enough to expect I shall do anything startling. But I'm feeling in the pink, and I'll do my darndest."

"Spoken like a true Briton!" said Morrow.

"And you're another man I'm relying on," exclaimed Fenton. "Your batting has developed magnificently just lately, Morrow, and if you show to-day's form on Saturday, you'll get your century."

Fenton was not speaking without good cause. Morrow had put up a wonderful performance, batting for an hour and a quarter with sound judgment, fine technique, and all-round skill.

Towards the end of the innings he had opened his shoulders, and let drive boundary after boundary—only to be caught out at the very height of his best form. It had been the first error of judgment he had made, and he had paid the penalty.

But he was a tower of strength to the First Eleven, and on the St. Frank's ground, before a St. Frank's crowd, he would have more confidence. Fenton was looking forward to a big performance from Morrow.

The motor-coach was just entering Belton Village. And Morrow and Rees, in the rear seat, were sitting carelessly on the edge of the coachwork, discussing several points of the match.

The charabanc was romping along at a fair speed—for the road was quite clear, with no other traffic of any kind in sight. But just as the lumbering vehicle was approaching the first cottage, a rather startling incident occurred.

The driver was pointing out a curiously shaped cloud to two of the seniors who were on the front seat with him, and his attention was momentarily distracted from the road.

"Rummiest looking cloud I ever see!" declared the driver.

"Hi! Mind that child—— Look out!" roared Conroy major.

"What the blazes——" gasped the driver.

He brought his attention to the road with a jerk, and turned pale. The colour fled from his sunburnt face with startling swiftness, and he instinctively jammed both feet down—one on the clutch-pedal and the other on the brake.

For, during that short moment of distraction, a toddling little child of about three had run straight out from the open door of a cottage. Without looking to either right or left, the infant ran into the centre of the road—full in the path of the charging juggernaut.

"Good heavens!" shouted Fenton hoarsely.

It had all happened in a flash. It seemed that nothing on earth could save the helpless child from being crushed beneath the wheels of the charabanc—for it was utterly impossible to pull up in such a short space.

A dreadful scream sounded from the cottage door, and a woman stood there,

horrified. At the same instant the driver gave his steering-wheel one mighty wrench, whirling it round madly.

The swerve was giddy and totally unexpected.

The great vehicle swung round, and charged blindly into the hedge, the nearside front wheel missing the child by a bare foot as it tore by. And Morrow and Rees, sitting so precariously on the coachwork, had absolutely no chance of saving themselves.

That abrupt swerve caused the pair to lose their balance, and they toppled over backwards and crashed on to the hard road with stunning force.

CHAPTER VI.

A JOB FOR MRS. STOKES.



YOU hit the kid—I felt it!” shouted Conroy major, fearfully.

The charabanc had come to a sudden jarring halt, the front part half-buried in the hedge. And in a moment

Conroy and Fenton and the driver leapt down, all their thoughts for the child.

Indeed, they knew nothing of that other disaster at the rear.

“Thank Heaven—it’s safe!” muttered the driver faintly.

He held on to the dash-board for support.

For the man had really believed that the infant lay a mangled corpse beneath the coach. Instead of this, the child was standing near by, looking up at the charabanc with complacent interest.

And the mother rushed across the road, whipped up the baby, and fled indoors. She probably knew that the blame had been entirely hers—for allowing such a mite to wander out unguarded.

“Phew! That was too narrow to be nice!” breathed Fenton.

“Blowed if I know how I missed the kid!” said the driver, recovering rapidly. “My! But I could do with half a pint now, to put me right! It’s a pity these ’ere young nippers can’t be looked after—”

“Here, I say—quick!” shouted one of the other seniors, his voice shrill with alarm. “Two of our chaps are on the road!”

Fenton turned, and looked back quickly. He wasn’t alarmed, for so far he hadn’t the faintest idea that two of his men had been flung out at the moment of the swerve. Indeed, nobody had known until now, for Morrow and Rees had been at the extreme rear—and all the others had stared ahead.

“What on earth—” began Fenton, aghast.

To his utter dismay, he beheld two twisted forms lying on the hard road, a few feet behind the rear of the charabanc, and a little to the side. Their white flannels were torn and begrimed—and, most horrifying of all, they were in a tangled heap, and quite still.

“What’s happened?” shouted Fenton fiercely.

“Goodness knows!” gasped one of the others. “I happened to glance back, and—and—”

“I know!” muttered Fenton, as he leapt forward. “Morrow and Rees! They were sitting on the edge! That swerve, you know—”

“Good heavens, they must have killed themselves!” said Conroy, as white as a sheet.

The child was completely forgotten, and all the seniors and the driver gathered round the inert forms of the two seniors. And this shock had come just when they had been congratulating themselves that disaster had been avoided!

Morrow was the first victim to be picked up. He was apparently lifeless, his face waxen, and the pallor accentuated by a stream of blood pouring from an ugly gash on his forehead.

“He’s dead!” breathed Conroy, horrified.

“No, he’s not; but he’s had a horrible smash on the head!” said Fenton, his voice husky and unsteady. “He must have twisted as he fell, and hit the road face downwards!”

Tenderly Morrow was lifted up, and carried on to the grass. And there lay Rees, moaning painfully, no injury being apparent at first. Then it was seen that his right hand was smothered in dust and blood.

“It’s all right—I’m not hurt much!” he gasped.

“But your hand’s torn to ribbons!” said Fenton.

“I caught it on those infernal flints!” muttered Rees. “Morrow hit the ground with his head—I believe he’s killed! Don’t bother about me! Fetch a doctor, somebody— Oh! Oh!”

They had commenced picking him up—using a little more vigour than they had applied to Morrow. And Rees fairly groaned with agony, and his face twisted with the suffering.

“It’s—it’s my chest!” he panted. “I—I can’t make out—”

He didn’t get any further, for the words died on his lips, and he lay there, still moaning. It was now obvious that he was hurt much more seriously than the seniors had at first supposed.

And they were startled beyond measure. It was all the more stunning because the accident had been unknown to them until it was all over. It was little short of bewildering to find the two seniors in such sore straits.

Fenton recovered his wits quickly.

“It’s no good—we can’t leave them here!” he said sharply. “The only thing to do is to lift them into the coach, and rush them to Dr. Brett’s surgery. It’s the quickest and easiest.”

The others agreed.

Morrow was laid tenderly on one of the long, cushioned seats, and he was still un-

conscious—although now, to the general relief, a touch of colour had crept back into his cheeks.

Rees, half-delirious, was lifted up and placed on another seat. And the other seniors, agitated and shaky, climbed on board, and the charabanc moved forward.

By this time Archie Glenthorne and Alf Brent had cycled up, and had become aware of the truth. They had had a few words with one of the seniors while the coach was being backed out of the hedge.

"I say, you youngsters, rush on ahead, and have the doctor all ready," shouted Fenton. "And tell him it's urgent!"

"Absolutely!" panted Archie crisply.

It was surprising and refreshing to see the way in which Archie Glenthorne made his bicycle leap under him. Always regarded as a lazy slacker, he now proved that when it came to an emergency he was ready for it. Even Alf Brent had difficulty in keeping pace.

The two juniors fairly flung themselves off their machines outside Dr. Brett's house, and they rushed up the garden and hammered at the door urgently.

It was opened by a maidservant.

"The doctor—quick!" shouted Brent. "There's been an accident——"

"Oh, my!" said the startled girl.

"Kindly inform Dr. Brett——"

"The doctor ain't in!" gasped the maidservant. "He went out an hour ago, and he won't be back just yet——"

"Not in!" broke in Archie. "Oh, I say, that's perfectly frightful! What on earth shall we do, Alf, old darling?"

"Look here," said Alf, turning swiftly to the girl. "As soon as Dr. Brett comes in, send him up to the school as fast as he can travel! Two of our fellows have been badly hurt, and there isn't a second to be lost! Promise, won't you?"

The girl promised at once, and the two juniors turned back to the road just as the charabanc was slowing up.

"It's no good—the doctor's out!" shouted Alf. "You'd better take 'em on to the school. Mr. Lee is a marvel at surgery, and he can give first aid until Dr. Brett turns up."

"Good man!" said Fenton. "Yes, we'd better do that."

Under the circumstances, there was nothing else for it.

It was disappointing and alarming to discover that the medical man was not available. The condition of the two injured seniors was apparently grave. Morrow, particularly, was causing apprehension.

He showed no signs of returning consciousness, and that awful wound on his head looked twenty times as serious on account of the bleeding. Rees was conscious, but suffering much agony.

They had both been patched up in a temporary kind of way, all available handkerchiefs having been used as bandages. And

the whole party was greatly relieved when St. Frank's was reached.

As luck would have it, Mrs. Stokes was crossing the Triangle when Archie Glenthorne and Alf Brent tore madly through the gateway on their machines—having come on in advance to inform the Head and Nelson Lee, and have everything in readiness.

Mrs. Stokes listened anxiously while Archie told her what had occurred, Alf having rushed indoors to find Nelson Lee. The story quickly got about, and the Triangle was soon crowded with excited, anxious fellows. The news of the accident had caused something of a sensation.

Prompt measures were taken. Nelson Lee gave swift, crisp orders, and beds were instantly got ready in the school sanatorium. Hot water was placed handy, lint, bandages, and everything essential to first aid.

And the Head's wife proved herself to be a wonder. Without hesitation she appointed herself nurse, and made a great many of the preparations herself—and later, when the patients arrived, she tended them with her own hands.

All sorts of rumours got about concerning the accident, and half the school was convinced that Morrow would die without recovering consciousness. And crowds collected, waiting for news.

In the sanatorium, Nelson Lee made a careful examination, and Fenton and one or two other seniors who had been admitted stood by, anxious and gravely troubled.

"Is there any hope, sir?" ventured Fenton, at last.

His patience was at the breaking point, and now that the two injured seniors were being carefully tended and bandaged, he could not refrain from asking the question.

"Hope?" repeated Nelson Lee, with a slight smile. "My dear Fenton, you have apparently gained a totally wrong impression. Both Morrow and Rees are only superficially hurt."

"You—you mean they'll recover, sir?"

"Within a week they'll be out and about," replied Nelson Lee. "Morrow is suffering from a badly twisted wrist and slight concussion. His skull is quite unfractured, and the wound is only skin deep. Rees, I am afraid, has a smashed rib, but his injured hand will soon mend."

This was good news, indeed. And it was corroborated by Dr. Brett when the latter turned up soon afterwards. Dr. Brett took a light view of the patients' condition, and declared that there was nothing to worry about.

And so the sensation turned out to be a comparatively mild affair, after all. But it was generally acknowledged that both Morrow and Rees were extremely lucky to have escaped serious injury.

And now that the anxiety was over, Edgar Fenton had fresh worry and trouble to concern him. In the first excitement he

had had no time to consider the inevitable outcome of this accident.

But he thought of it now—and almost groaned with vexation.

CHAPTER VII.

EDGAR FENTON'S DILEMMA.



THE next day both Morrow and Rees were greatly improved. Morrow had recovered consciousness, and was now fairly comfortable. Indeed, he was already talking about being out in three days.

His sprained wrist had swollen to an enormous size, and it would be some little time before he could use his right arm again. But he was cheerful enough, and mending splendidly.

Rees was not bandaged so much, but his broken rib rendered him quite helpless. And the two patients received many visits from friends during the course of the day.

And Mrs. Stokes earned universal praise by her devotion to duty. It became known that she had spent the whole of the previous evening, and the best part of the night, by Morrow's bedside, waiting for the unfortunate senior to recover consciousness.

The Head's wife had been popular before, but this evidence of her sportsmanship endeared her to the hearts of the entire school. Seniors as well as juniors were now her slaves.

And the Head himself was all concern and anxiety. He spent over an hour with the patients that morning, cheering them up, and doing his utmost to make them feel happy.

But there was one fellow who needed the Head's cheery companionship more than anybody else—and this fellow was Fenton, of the Sixth. For the senior Sports Skipper of St. Frank's was in the deepest depths of despondency.

"You look worried, old man," remarked the Head, as he happened to pass Fenton in the Triangle. "Thinking about your friends in the sanny?"

"Yes, sir."

"My dear man, set your mind at rest," smiled Dr. Stokes. "Both Morrow and Rees are quite comfortable and—"

"Yes, I know, sir—but I'm not thinking about them in that way," interrupted Fenton. "As a matter of fact, I'm infernally selfish, and I suppose I ought to be kicked. Goodness knows, they couldn't help the accident, and it's just a matter of rotten luck."

Dr. Stokes looked at the school captain curiously.

"What do you mean about being selfish?" he asked.

"Why, sir, I'm not worried about Morrow and Rees because they're laid up, but because I'm deprived of their services,"

growled Fenton. "Of all the ghastly luck! My best men! Both of them down at the same time, and both useless for the next two or three weeks!"

The Head nodded sympathetically.

"Oh!" he said slowly, comprehending. "Cricket, eh?"

"Yes, sir," admitted Fenton.

"Oh, well, I suppose cricket is about as important as most other things," smiled Dr. Stokes, nodding. "Come along, you fellows, join in the discussion."

Wilson and Carlile and Mills—all of the Sixth—had strolled up, wondering what the conversation was about. They were all looking glum. The Head burst into a laugh.

"Come, come, this won't do!" he said briskly. "I can't have you going about with these long faces!"

"But you don't seem to understand, sir," said Fenton miserably. "Morrow's my star batsman, and I can't replace him. As for Rees, he was just developing into the hottest bowler we've ever turned out. And now, at one blow, they're lost to us."

"But only temporarily," said the Head. "They'll both be fit again in a week or two—"

"But there's the Helmford match on Saturday, sir," put in Carlile.

"Oh! The Helmford match?" repeated Dr. Stokes. "You played Helmford College yesterday, didn't you? And so the return fixture is arranged for Saturday, eh? I can appreciate your position. H'm! It's a bit of a twister, isn't it?"

Fenton nodded with deep gloom.

"There's only one thing for it, sir—we shall be whacked!" he declared. "Helmford are particularly hot this season, and they haven't been beaten yet. They've got a clean sheet of wins. And we were going to pull them off their high perch on Saturday, and make them sing small."

"And now, of course, it's impossible," added Mills gloomily. "I wish you could have heard some of the Helmford fellows boasting yesterday, sir! They're a decent crowd, on the whole, but it made my blood boil when some of the bragging chaps started their talk. Helmford is certain of a win on Saturday, and we were going to make them eat their own words."

"It may not be too late, even now," said the Head.

"Oh, yes, it is, sir," replied Fenton quickly. "With our two stars helpless, we shall just about be wiped out of existence on our own ground. It'll be the biggest licking in First Eleven history."

Dr. Stokes laughed aloud.

"What's the idea of this?" he demanded boisterously. "Good gracious, you're losing the match before you start it! What's the matter? Where's your determination? Make up your minds to win, and go straight forward with that intention! Look upon defeat as impossible! It's the will you want, you duffers—the will!"

Fenton smiled ruefully.

"That auto-suggestion stuff sounds all right, in theory, sir, but it doesn't work out in practice," he said. "We can make up our minds firmly enough, but it's a good howler we need—not the determination to win. Without efficient players, we can't hope to make much of a show. And I've got no substitutes for those two fellows. Of course, I can find a couple of reserves, but that's not the same thing."

The Head nodded.

"Oh, well, I suppose I shall have to leave you to fight your own battles," he said. "But if any brilliant idea comes to me, I'll pass it over free gratis. Perhaps there's a solution, after all."

Dr. Stokes nodded cheerily, and strolled off towards Little Side. And Fenton and his men stood in a group, grave and glum. With the departure of the Head, all cheer had gone too.

"He's a good sort—a regular topholer!" remarked Carlile. "But what's the good? We're booked for a licking on Saturday, and there's no sense in blinking the fact."

"Of course, I'll try and whip my men into shape as much as I can," said Fenton grimly. "It's no good sitting still, anyhow. There's no telling—somebody might perform a miracle on Saturday, and turn the tide. But we can't expect to do much unless we're well prepared—unless we make up our minds to do our durndest."

And Fenton at once hustled the others off to collect the entire First Eleven for practice. The senior skipper had suddenly realised that inactivity was worse than useless.

Indeed, it seemed very much as though the Head's little hint about determination had taken root.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HEAD'S STAGGERING PROPOSAL.



LACK!

It was a beautiful hit, and Jerry Dodd was just as pleased as Handforth. Jerry knew exactly how much trickiness he had put into that ball, and

it delighted him to see the way Handforth judged it to absolute perfection, and sent the leather hurtling boundarywards.

"By jings! That was a good 'un!" he shouted enthusiastically.

"Not so bad," agreed Handforth, carelessly leaning on his bat. "Nothing to me, of course—I take everything that comes! I'm set now, and nothing on earth can shift me!"

"Good man!" I grinned. "You're improving, Handy."

I wasn't facetious, either. The leader of Study D had always been a boisterous, slogging batsman. His chief fault was his recklessness. He would slog away at anything and everything, taking all balls in the

same way, and hitting with every ounce of his power.

As a rule, he lasted for a comfortable fifteen or twenty runs, and he would generally mount these up rapidly. His innings, accordingly, were nearly always swift, sensational, and spectacular—proving of great interest to the onlookers. But Handforth wasn't a stayer. In nearly every match he was either clean bowled or caught out.

"How do you like this one?" asked Jerry Dodd.

He took his short, easy run, and delivered a lightning ball with the speed of a bullet. Handforth's bat whirled down, and away went the leather skywards. He was caught, but that didn't worry him a bit—this was only practice, anyhow. And, somehow, Handforth never really considered himself out until he saw his wicket in a state of wreckage.

"Easy!" he said, with a sniff. "Any more?"

Jerry sent down another ball, and this looked so simple and soft that Handforth fairly opened his shoulders. Swish! His bat swept down, and there was a crash just behind him. He stared at his wicket blankly. The middle stump, for some reason, was missing.

"Who did that?" he demanded wrathfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That ball was a regular snorter!" I grinned. "I think I'll have a shot now, Handy——"

"Hold on! What about me?" asked the Head, strolling up.

We had observed that Dr. Stokes was watching, but we had hardly expected him to join in. He took the bat from Handforth and handled it lovingly. For the Head was an enthusiastic cricketer.

Little Side was quite crowded with fellows, and everybody watched with great interest. The Head's habit of joining in the junior sports was well known by now, and nobody thought anything of it. But Dr. Stokes always livened things up when he came along.

"Come on, Jerry—get me out first ball!" sang out the Head.

"Right, sir!" grinned the Australian junior.

Whizz—crash!

Jerry obligingly shattered the Head's wicket. Dr. Stokes glanced round at it and chuckled. And the onlookers, who had been a bit scared, were relieved.

"By jingo, you're hot!" shouted the Head. "I thought I had that ball judged to a fraction! Supposing we have another try?"

Dr. Stokes was at the wicket for ten minutes, and he sampled my bowling as well as Jerry's. He had put up an excellent show, but he found the bowling exceedingly tricky and difficult.

After that he stood looking on, and was greatly impressed by the exhibition of cricket that the juniors provided. The Head

was particularly pleased with Jerry Dodd's batting. The Australian junior was perfect—his poise was something to wonder at; his judgment almost unique.

"That boy's a living wonder!" declared the Head firmly.

"I know it, sir. Hasn't he played in professional matches?" I said. "I don't know what the Junior Eleven would do without him! He's ten times better than any other man in the team!"

Dr. Stokes shook his head.

"Rubbish!" he replied. "When it comes to batting, Nipper, your own form is not far short of Dodd's. You're not such a good bowler, I'll admit, but with the bat you're a mountain of strength."

"Thanks, sir!" I smiled. "I didn't know I was so good!"

"There's Handforth, too," went on the Head. "I like his dashing style. A fellow of his type might easily score a century—although he's somewhat reckless. Upon my word, Nipper, you've got a fine team here!"

"I'm glad you think so, sir," I replied, gratified. "Oh, here comes Christine. He's the skipper of the College House team, sir. Just wait until you see Christine bowling."

The Head didn't have to wait long.

Bob Christine got to work against Jerry Dodd; and for all Jerry's extraordinary prowess, he dealt very cautiously with Bob's bowling. For Christine had improved amazingly since the previous season. His form this term was quite remarkable, and he had developed into a bowler of the very finest quality.

"Splendid!" declared the Head. "I shall be exceedingly interested in the next match. And it's a bit of a shame I'm not a boy myself; I'd like to join in, confound it!"

He waited a few minutes longer, and then went off in the direction of Big Side, where Fenton was working his own men grimly and energetically. The First Eleven was putting in some vigorous practice.

Fenton was still looking despondent. And now that Dr. Stokes was taking a close look at the senior cricket, he was not altogether surprised. There was nothing particularly impressive in the display.

"I'm taking your advice, sir," said Fenton, as he raised his cap to the Head. "I'm working my men full speed, and we'll do our very utmost to win on Saturday."

"That's the style," said Dr. Stokes, nodding. "I'll be frank, Fenton, and tell you at once that I'm not overwhelmed with admiration. Your men need more vim in their work. They're too sluggish."

"I'm doing the best I can, sir," said Fenton.

Dr. Stokes turned, and looked away towards Little Side. He was just in time to see Jerry Dodd send a ball whizzing to the boundary.

"Look here, old man, I've got an idea," said the Head confidentially. "You're short of first-class players, aren't you? Without Morrow and Rees you expect to lose on Saturday, eh?"

"I'm afraid it's a certainty, sir."

"Nonsense!" said Dr. Stokes briskly. "Man alive, you're talking about defeat—and we've got enough talent in the school to knock Helmford sideways!"

Fenton and two or three other seniors looked surprised.

"How do you mean, sir?" asked Carlile.

The Head pointed towards Little Side.

"That's what I mean," he replied briefly.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TEST.



FENTON stared for a moment, and then uttered an exclamation.

"You—you don't mean the juniors, sir?" he asked incredulously.

"Of course I mean the juniors!"

"But it's impossible, sir!" burst out Fenton. "We couldn't think of it! It's—it's unheard of! We couldn't play any junior boys in a senior match! It wouldn't be right! We couldn't do it!"

"No?" said the Head calmly. "Is there any particular law against that sort of thing? Would it be a criminal offence?"

Fenton was rather red with vehemence.

"Of course not, sir!" he growled. "But—but— Well, it simply isn't done, that's all. In the whole history of St. Frank's a junior has never been included in the senior sports."

"Then isn't it time we made a bit of a change?" smiled Dr. Stokes.

All the seniors looked at him aghast.

"You're not really serious, sir, are you?" asked Conroy major.

"I was never more so," replied the Head. "I'm sorry, old man, but I don't quite appreciate all this old-fashioned adherence to worn-out tradition. These junior boys are expert cricketers, they've got no important fixture for Saturday, and you talk about refusing their aid. Frankly, I don't understand such nonsense!"

"Nonsense, sir?" protested Fenton indignantly.

"Certainly it's nonsense!"

"But—but the Senior School is as widely separated from the Junior School as the poles!" burst out Fenton, nearly shouting in his excitement. "You—you don't seem to understand, sir—"

"Thank you, Fenton!" smiled the Head.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY PRICE 2s

"I'm sorry, sir; I didn't mean to be rude!" said the school captain, calmed by Dr. Stokes' tone. "Oh, but—but it would be unprecedented for us to include juniors in the team. And the news would get about, and every other school would laugh at us."

"Very possibly; and after that they would admire you," retorted the Head. "I'll warrant there are plenty of schools that would be only too willing to follow an example. They're too much bound up with these traditions to break free of their own accord. Don't imagine for a moment that I've come to St. Frank's with the intention of making radical alterations. But in a

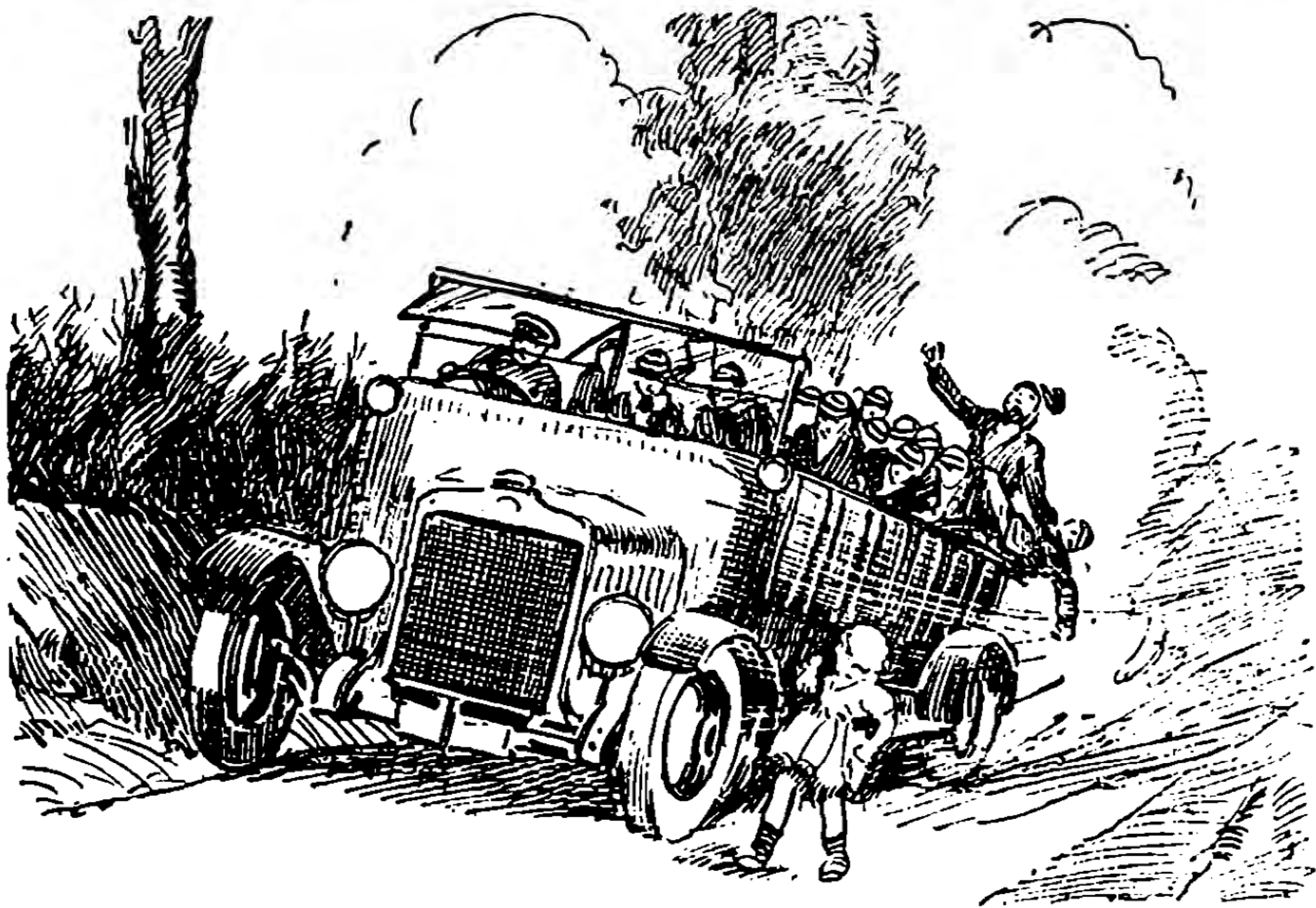
the Remove fellows belong to St. Frank's just as much as you do."

"I admit that, sir, but there's one point you've completely overlooked," said Fenton. "The juniors may be pretty smart at their own cricket, but it doesn't come up to the senior standard."

"Sorry, but I don't agree," said the Head.

"Of course, you've been watching them, sir, but you can't judge by that," put in Carlile. "On their own ground, and playing amongst themselves, they can do some pretty good things. But against us they'd fall to bits."

"They'd be useless in the Helmford match, sir," said Fenton.



The great vehicle swung round, and charged blindly into the hedge, the near side front wheel missing the child by a bare foot as it tore by.

simple matter of this sort my mind is made up. You've got an important match for Saturday, your team is weakened through injuries, and that weakness could be remedied by including some juniors. Why in the name of all that's reasonable can't you see it?"

Fenton took a deep breath.

"I do see it, sir; but I simply daren't do a thing of that sort," he confessed. "After all, it's only in a case of emergency——"

"Precisely!" said the Head. "I wouldn't propose including junior boys in the First Eleven as a permanency. But always remember one thing, Fenton. St. Frank's will be playing this game on Saturday, and

"I can only say that you're a couple of prejudiced mules!" said Dr. Stokes candidly. "I've been watching the juniors, and I've been watching you. And I suggest that you drop Stevens and Frinton, and substitute four members of the Remove—Nipper, Dodd, Handforth and Christine. Do that, and you'll stand a fine chance of winning."

Fenton looked very uncomfortable, and so did the others. Frinton, indeed, was indignant, although he said nothing. Stevens was fortunately absent at the moment. But the Head's judgment was remarkably sound, for he had placed his fingers on the two weakest men in the First Eleven.

And he had made his suggestion seriously.

Which was decidedly awkward for Fenton. He would have to turn down the Head's idea, of course, but it was a ticklish business. You can't treat a headmaster as you can treat anybody else.

"I'm afraid you're wrong, sir," said the school captain at last. "If we played those four juniors we should come a bigger cropper than ever. And we should be ridiculed up hill and down dale."

"In other words, you reject my brilliant suggestion?"

"Well, sir, I—I— That is—"

"Come on; out with it! Yes or no?"

"Well, yes, sir, I do reject it," said Fenton gruffly.

"At least, we know where we stand," smiled Dr. Stokes, in no way put out. "But there's fortunately a way of putting this matter to the test."

"How, sir?"

"You've got your complete eleven on the spot, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, the juniors are all on Little Side, so we have our two teams. My proposal is that you should play the Junior Eleven at once and settle the point, one way or the other."

"But there isn't time, sir," said Fenton weakly.

"Plenty!" declared Dr. Stokes, glancing at his watch. "I'll give you all an extra hour to-night; the daylight will last quite satisfactorily. Now, Fenton, are you game?"

Fenton laughed.

"Of course I'm game, sir," he replied. "But I'm afraid you'll get a bit of a shock. We can wipe out these juniors in less than half an hour. They don't stand a dog's chance!"

"And yet a moment ago you said there wouldn't be time!" chuckled the Head.

"Well, we'll see. Have the match in the ordinary regulation way, and if the juniors prove sound—if they put up a thoroughly good fight—I shall expect you to choose the best junior players for Saturday's match."

Fenton nodded at once.

"If the juniors put up any show at all, sir, I promise that they'll be given the chance you want," he replied grimly. "The final decision regarding the Helmford match will rest upon the result of this test."

Fenton walked briskly away, and the Head smiled placidly. He had got his own way, and he felt confident of the result. Somehow he had an idea that the seniors would be the shocked party.

It was still quite early in the evening, and there were two good hours before supper. And as the month was June, daylight would last right up until bedtime—indeed, until ten o'clock, if necessary.

Fenton approached me just as I was setting my field for a scratch House match—Bob Christine and I having just fixed it up.

"Hold on a minute, you fellows," said Fenton, feeling a perfect fool. "You haven't started yet, have you?"

"Just going to," I replied.

"Well, drop this game of yours, and select your strongest eleven," said Fenton. "We'll give you a game—seniors versus juniors."

I gave a kind of gulp, and stared.

"What's the joke?" I got out at last.

"You young idiot! I'm serious!" snapped Fenton. "The Head's got an idea that some of you kids are smarter than the First! So we're going to play a match with you straight off—and if you last longer than half-an-hour, I'll give you each a putty medal!"

"We're going to play the First?" yelled Handforth.

"Yes—and if you prove yourselves better than the seniors, I'll play the pick of you in Saturday's match against Helmford," replied Fenton. "It's the Head's idea, of course, but I'm game to carry it out."

I grabbed at Fenton's arm.

"Honour bright?" I demanded tensely.

"Honour bright!" he replied, without in the least realising that he had irrevocably committed himself. For Fenton was suffering from the delusion that the Junior Eleven was a kind of children's party.

CHAPTER X.

HONOUR BRIGHT!



"IMPOSSIBLE!" said Bob Christine, staring.

"My dear chap, it's a fact!" I said crisply. "We're playing the First Eleven right away—only a scratch affair, of course, but it's our chance! By Jove, we're going to grab it with both hands, and even our giddy toe-nails! So brace yourself up!"

The juniors could scarcely credit the information. And this wasn't very surprising, for it was an unheard of thing for the lordly, high and mighty First Eleven to even cast a glance in the direction of the lowly juniors.

"It's the Head's doing, of course," said Christine, when he had found some breath. "By jimminy! What a sport he is! What a downright corker to have for a Headmaster!"

"And so say all of us!" declared Handforth, nodding.

If Dr. Stokes had been deliberately aiming for popularity in the Junior School, he could not have gone a better way to work. But he hadn't even thought of gaining popularity; he had made the suggestion because it struck him as being the most common-sense way out of a difficulty.

The news spread like wildfire, and before the match started, half the school was on the spot, and the other half was on the way. For this was an affair that interested every

type of fellow, from the highest to the lowest.

And the very unusual nature of it was startling, too. Nobody believed the story at first, and there were some who wouldn't be convinced until they saw the two elevens actually on Big Side. For it was a staggering blow at all convention to play a game of this kind.

Fenton and I gravely tossed up, just as though it were a serious match. And so it was—from our point of view. The seniors preferred to regard it with much laughter, and they were expecting some comic entertainment.

Fenton won the toss, and elected to bat first. So the Junior Eleven took the field, and the game started—the Head himself and Mr. Clifford acting as umpires. Round the ropes of Big Side an almost record crowd had collected, and the interest was at fever pitch.

"Oh, well, I suppose it's the best thing to show these kids up," said Carlile condescendingly. "If we had refused to meet 'em, everybody would have said that we were afraid. It's far better to have the farce, and knock the kids into the middle of next week."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Stevens. "We'll make the juniors look so jolly silly that they'll remember the incident for years!"

And the two Sixth Formers chuckled with great amusement.

Fenton himself came out to bat, with Wilson as a partner. It was the School Captain's cheerful intention to run up a score of about fifty, with Wilson's help, and then declare.

Then he would wipe out the juniors in one continuous succession—getting them all out for a score of fifteen or twenty. By arranging the match in this way, the ridicule that would be heaped upon the Junior Eleven would keep it in its proper place for all time. And it would also be a little hint to the Head that his advice wasn't always sound.

Unhappily for Fenton, events didn't quite pan out as he expected.

For example, the first ball of the match was sent down by Jerry Dodd, and Wilson's wicket, for some extraordinary reason, flew to pieces. Wilson didn't see the ball go by, and nobody else saw it. But there was no question that the wicket was shattered.

"Great Scott!" said Wilson blankly.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Jerry!"

Wilson glanced across at Fenton, and Fenton felt exceedingly annoyed. This was absurd. A fluke, of course, but it gave the juniors a standing they didn't deserve. The first ball of the match, too!

Carlile came out, after informing Wilson that he was a careless idiot. And Wilson, in the pavilion, was busily explaining to a

group of his friends exactly how the fluke had happened.

But Carlile was very careful. It occurred to him that it was just possible that Jerry Dodd's bowling was tricky. So Carlile dealt with the first one very gingerly. He dealt with the second one even more gingerly, and the third ball found him decidedly nervous.

To be exact, he discovered, to his complete astonishment, that the Australian junior was as hot as mustard. His bowling was not merely dangerous, but terrifying.

The first over was a horrible failure, for not a single run was gained, and Fenton looked quite upset. It was little short of disgraceful that the game should start with a maiden over when they were only playing these absurd juniors!

Christine had the bowling now, and he proceeded to shake Fenton up pretty considerably. It is true that Fenton sent the leather to the boundary with a beautiful cut, and immediately afterwards he scored a perfect three. But it was a dreadful shock for the Sixth when Jerry Dodd, at the beginning of the next over, got the senior skipper out.

He sent down a ball that looked perfectly easy, Fenton swung his bat round and sent the leather away with a superb "clack." But it rose, dangerously, and fell neatly into Tregellis-West's hands.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

The cheers from the juniors were positively disgusting. Fenton had never felt so small as he did at that moment. He had scored nine! And so it went on.

By the time two other seniors had been dismissed, Fenton came to the conclusion that it wouldn't be wise for him to declare. The juniors were on their mettle, and the seniors were careless. The result was a foregone conclusion.

It was just a case of over-confidence succumbing to highly efficient skill. The Junior Eleven knew the nature of its task, and every member was on tip-toe to do his utmost.

And the result, while being deliriously glorious from the Remove's point of view, was little short of disastrous to the Upper School. For the First Eleven was completely dismissed for thirty-nine runs!

The Head said nothing. But he wore a tranquil smile, and Fenton didn't dare go near him. He decided that there was only one chance of recovering the game. And that was to wipe out the juniors for an insignificant score. But Fenton's confidence was not quite so supreme now.

Jerry Dodd and I opened the innings, and in less than five minutes Fenton's hopes were dashed to the ground. For we were getting runs at an alarming rate—knocking

the senior bowling into every corner of the field.

By the end of the third over we were firmly set, and the score had already mounted to thirty-five! Five minutes later saw the First Eleven score beaten, and the juniors had won!

But the match didn't stop there. This was really a test, and so we kept on. I made a slight miscalculation, and was run out, and Handforth took my place.

As a general rule I hadn't got much faith in Edward Oswald, for his recklessness was a byword. But on this occasion he couldn't do wrong. He swiped away with supreme confidence at everything, and proceeded to send the seniors leather-hunting with a vengeance.

It was the Headmaster himself who brought the farce to an end. He called to Fenton, and asked him point-blank whether the test had been a failure or a success. And Fenton was obliged to climb down.

"I was wrong, sir," he said frankly. "I hadn't the faintest idea that these youngsters were so wonderful! Nipper and Dodd are particularly fine, and Christine is a glorious bowler."

"Good man!" said the Head heartily. "I was sure you wouldn't disappoint me. Fenton. There's nothing like being candid. I daresay you're a bit surprised at this result, eh?"

"I'm staggered, sir."

"Well, I'm not," smiled the Head. "Of course, it wouldn't do to take this test as any real criterion. You fellows started the game with the insuperable handicap of swelled heads. And the juniors started with a full realisation of the task before them. They've simply wiped you up, Fenton."

"By Jove, they have, sir," said Fenton ruefully.

"I have no doubt the result would be very different in another match—a carefully organised game," went on the Head. "The juniors would almost certainly lose, for then you'd be on your mettle. But I'll warrant they would lose honourably. Well, have you decided?"

"Yes, sir," replied Fenton, turning round and beckoning to me. "Nipper, I want you to forgive me for being such an arrogant duffer. I was going to teach you a lesson, but you've taught me one instead!"

"Nothing of the sort," I smiled. "We've simply come to a better understanding—that's all."

"I gave you my word of honour before we started this game, and I'll keep it," went on the school skipper. "But don't think I don't want to—I shall be only too delighted if you and Dodd and Christine and Handforth will play for the First Eleven on Saturday."

"Thanks!" I said delightedly. "Will we play? You can put our names down as certain starters!"

CHAPTER XI.

FATTY IN CLOVER.



THE next day nobody could talk of anything else but the sensational defeat of the Senior Eleven, and the still more sensational inclusion of four juniors in the senior team chosen to play against Helmford College.

The Head was given all the credit—as he deserved.

His unconventionality was the talk of the school. And with the juniors, especially, he was a greater hero than ever before. Nobody could say a word against Dr. Stokes. He had given the juniors the greatest chance they had ever had—and the juniors were grateful.

The Sixth, on the other hand, was rather shocked.

Fenton's decision to include four Removites in the First Eleven were received with hot criticism in many quarters. It was regarded as a dangerous experiment.

There were plenty of seniors ready and willing enough to explain away the sensational defeat, and to prophesy that the juniors would only bring ridicule and defeat upon the whole school in the Helmford match.

But Fenton remained firm. He had given his word, and, what was more, he was convinced in his own mind that his eleven was strengthened. And everybody was eager for the morrow, when the big match would be held.

Fortunately, the weather continued fine, and every available minute was spent in practice. The juniors were keen upon nothing else but dashing off to Little Side at every opportunity.

Of course, there were some who weren't interested—Fatty Little, for example. He was no cricketer, although he enjoyed watching a game if the conditions were satisfactory. Just at present, he had no desire to go to Little Side.

It was teatime, and Fatty had met with atrocious luck. He was stony, he was hungry, and he had been unable to plant himself in any other study. As a last desperate resort, he was thinking about rushing indoors to partake of tea in Hall.

He had approached everybody for a loan, but he hadn't met with the slightest success. He caught sight of Willy Handforth, who was looking unusually glum. It was, of course, extremely undignified to ask a lag for a loan, but Fatty was desperate. He sidled up to Willy in a confidential way.

"Just the very chap I want to see!" he said warmly. "Look here, Handforth, minor, lend me five bob until to-morrow."

Willy nodded.

"Only five bob?" he said. "My dear chap, you can have all I've got!"

"Thanks awfully!" said Fatty eagerly. "In fact, you can go through my pockets!" invited Willy obligingly. "And if you can find any cash, you're welcome to it! I've searched about twenty times, and I can't find any!"

Fatty Little's face became dismayed. "Do you mean to say you're broke?" he demanded wrathfully.

"Not only broke, but splintered!" replied Willy sadly. "I haven't seen silver for so long that I forget what it looks like! And I'm so hungry that I could cheerfully eat a railway-station sandwich!"

Fatty Little groaned.

"You rotter!" he said indignantly. "And I thought you were going to whack out five bob!"

"Sorry, but we're both in the same boat!" said Handforth minor. "I lent my last bob to Chubby Heath—in a thoughtless moment. So, although we're starving hungry, we've got to go tealess!"

Willy didn't observe that Mrs. Stokes was walking by at that moment. She was looking as fresh and attractive as ever, in white from head to foot. She paused, and smiled at the two juniors.

"That's too bad!" she said.

"Eh? So sorry, Mrs. Stokes!" said Willy, dragging the cap off his head with such haste that he nearly tore out a handful of hair. "We didn't know you were there."

"Haven't you boys had any tea?" asked Mrs. Stokes.

"No; we—that is— Not that it matters—"

"It matters a great deal!" interrupted the Head's wife. "Come along with me, and we'll have tea together. I am sure that Dr. Stokes will be quite pleased."

And she carried off Fatty Little and Handforth minor with her usual abundance of light-hearted cheer. The two juniors were too startled to protest. They didn't quite realise what was happening until they were actually being ushered into the Head's own drawing-room. And they paused, rather scared, when they observed the Head himself lounging full length on the couch.

"Hallo! Visitors?" said Dr. Stokes, turning his head, and waving a welcome hand. "Fine! Squat down, boys, and make yourselves at home. You'd better give cook the tip, Joyce, and have some special plates of sandwiches and things prepared."

Within five minutes, Fatty Little and Willy were thoroughly comfortable. It was really impossible to be stiff and formal with the Head and his wife. They were so friendly and companionable that the juniors lost all their initial nervousness.

And tea was a great success.

CHAPTER XII.

THE JEALOUSY OF TEDDY LONG.



FATTY LITTLE was in his element.

He took the Head at his word, and simply piled into the good things in a way that even surprised Willy. Dr. Stokes

said nothing, but his eyes twinkled as he observed the eatables vanishing like magic.

"Steady on, you glutton!" whispered Willy, giving Fatty a nudge.

"Eh? Want another sandwich?" asked Fatty.

He reached for a plate of cucumber sandwiches, and Willy took one. Fatty took three, to be on the safe side. And Willy gave him another jab—this time so vigorously that Fatty nearly choked.

"Here, what's the idea?" he spluttered. "Don't keep digging me like that, you young fathead—"

"Shut up!" hissed Willy, as red as a beetroot.

He was enormously relieved to observe that the Head and Mrs. Stokes were quite unconscious of the slight altercation. At least, they seemed to be.

And when the two visitors departed, they were well filled, and highly pleased with themselves. Just outside, in the corridor, they ran into Teddy Long, who was full of his usual curiosity.

"Where have you chaps been?" he demanded inquisitively.

"Oh, just having tea with the Head!" replied Willy, in a careless way.

"Liar!" said Teddy Long.

Biff!

The sneak of the Remove sat down on the corridor floor with a fearful thud. He had thought it quite easy to be blunt with a mere fag. But the mere fag didn't agree.

"Serve you right!" said Fatty Little. "It's a fact—we have had tea with the Head! And with Mrs. Stokes, too!"

Teddy Long scrambled up, holding his nose.

"You—you dangerous rotter!" he wailed. "I don't believe either of you! I—I mean— Yes, I do!" he added hastily.

"Cucumber sandwiches!" said Fatty dreamily. "Thin bread and butter, toasted scones, crumpets, almond cake—cream puffs, sponge sandwich—yes, and piles and piles of everything!"

"You—you had all those things?" asked Teddy eagerly.

"The Head treats distinguished visitors with the correct amount of consideration," replied Willy. "Well, so long, Fatty. I shan't be able to eat another thing for hours!"

Teddy Long was left alone, and he was green with jealousy. He didn't see any reason why he shouldn't share the good things, too. So he wandered out into the

Triangle, and walked aimlessly about for a time, hoping that an invitation to tea would result.

Unfortunately, it didn't, and Teddy became impatient.

So, at length, he ventured indoors, and cautiously made his way towards the Head's private quarters. He hesitated for a few moments before the big baize door which separated the junior quarters from the forbidden spaces beyond.

That green baize door was regarded as an impassable barrier. Not even a senior dared go beyond it without express permission. For on the other side lay the Headmaster's own private house.

But Teddy was reckless with the thought of that enticing tea in his mind. He cautiously opened the door a few inches, and peeped round. He could see the hall, with the old oak staircase leading upwards. Everything was quiet and still.

Teddy ventured through, already inventing a glib excuse, in case he should be caught. He was too obtuse to realise that there was no hope of getting an invitation by such methods as these. And once through the doorway, he felt very nervous.

He was just about to escape while there was yet time, when he heard a sound from upstairs—the sudden closing of a door, and a kind of scuffle. Desperately, Teddy crouched into one of the dim corners.

He could see upstairs with ease, for it was fairly bright there, while he remained in deep shadow. If the Head came downstairs, there was no chance of the intruder being spotted. All the same, Long was very nervous.

He caught a glimpse of somebody moving upstairs, and saw a vision of white. It was Mrs. Stokes. But there was something different about her. Her pretty face was no longer serene and smiling, but wore a strained, anxious expression.

And almost immediately afterwards the Head came hurrying up—grim, angry, and totally unlike himself. Teddy Long, in fact, was peeping at a private scene which was not intended for any strange eyes.

"Joyce! Haven't I told you—"

Only a few words came to the crouching junior's ears. Mrs. Stokes answered in a frightened kind of way, but her voice was too low for Teddy Long to understand anything.

"But, good heavens, it's madness!" said the Head fiercely. "I absolutely forbid—"

Again Teddy lost the rest of the sentence, but he saw something that nearly startled him out of his wits. Mrs. Stokes attempted to rush down the stairs, but the Head seized her, pulled her back, and literally carried her away up the corridor—taking no notice of her protests.

A faint little scream came to his ears, and a door slammed with violence. Then there was complete silence. Teddy Long

shot out of his hiding-place like a rabbit, reached the green baize door, and bolted through. He didn't stop running until he was in the Ancient House lobby.

"My goodness!" he muttered breathlessly.

Until this minute, all his thoughts had been for his own safety. But now that he was well clear of any possible danger, he remembered the little scene he had witnessed with vivid intensity. In fact, he remembered it so vividly that the scene took on quite another aspect.

And Teddy, being the most contemptible tale-bearer in the whole Junior School, felt that it was impossible to keep such a thing to himself. Another fellow, realising that he had witnessed something entirely private, would probably have kept it to himself—if only to conceal the fact that he had been where he was not allowed.

But Teddy Long had no such scruples. He didn't dismiss the affair as a trifle. It became magnified in his mind until he was bubbling and sizzling with the importance of it.

Out in the Triangle, he caught sight of Archie Glenthorne and Alf Brent chatting with Handforth and Co. and De Valerie. And Teddy Long ran up, his face flushed and his eyes gleaming.

"I say, the Head's not what he seems!" he burst out.

"Don't come bothering now!" snapped Handforth. "Oh, so a new batch of stuff has arrived from Reggie Pitt?" he went on, turning to De Valerie. "This makes the second, doesn't it?"

"Yes, and Nipper's shoving it straight in the Magazine," said De Valerie. "Interesting stuff, too. Pitt describes a journey on a tiny African railway, and some of it's pretty funny! Confound you, Long, what on earth are you doing? Leave my sleeve alone—"

"But listen!" panted Teddy. "The Head's a beast!"

"He's a what?" said Handforth grimly.

"Look here, don't you start punching me!" said Long shrilly. "It's the truth, I tell you. I've just seen it!"

"Seen what?" asked Church.

"I was in the Head's hall—"

"Spying, eh?" put in Handforth, gruffly.

"Nun-no! I—I just happened to go there for something!" gasped Long. "Anyhow, I saw the Head beating his wife in a horribly brutal way! She was screaming like anything—"

"You awful little liar!" snorted Handforth, seizing Long by the scruff of his neck and shaking him. "I've never heard such rotten fibs in all my life!"

"It's true!" howled Teddy. "Mrs. Stokes tried to escape, but the Head dragged her back by her hair, and lifted her in his arms, kicking and struggling. Then he bashed her about, and— Yow! Yaroo! Ow, you—you violent rotter—"

"You're going to admit you're a liar, or I'll slaughter you!" said Handforth thickly. "Go on—admit it!"

"And we'll help you, old man," said De Valerie, his voice quivering with indignation. "If we let this worm spread a yarn like that there'll be trouble. We've got to squash it at once."

The juniors regarded Teddy Long's story as a pure invention. They didn't even suspect that it had a foundation of truth. For, after all, the scene that Long had witnessed was an extraordinary one—considering the affectionate relations that existed between the Head and his wife in public.

But Long was known to be a liar, and the whole yarn was discredited.

And he was forced to admit that he was a despicable cur and a fibbing young beast. He was compelled to acknowledge that he had heard nothing and seen nothing.

"And now apologise to the Head!" said Handforth grimly.

"I—I'm sorry!" wailed Long. "I—I beg the Head's pardon! I beg Mrs. Stokes' pardon, too!"

"I don't like to hear Mrs. Stokes' name on your lying lips!" snorted Handforth. "And, look here, my lad! If I find out you've breathed a word of this to anybody else, I'll bill you until you won't be able to locate your giddy features!"

"And if you set about any more scandalous stories of this kind I'll make you into pulp!" added De Valerie.

"Absolutely!" said Archie Glenthorne, nodding. "Allow me to remark, Long, that I regard you as a horrible growth upon the landscape. Dash it all, you're nothing but a chunk of poisonous fungus!"

And Teddy Long, having learned his character, crept away thoroughly scared. For once in his career he kept something to himself. For after what had just happened he dared not breath a word of what he had seen to another living soul.

So he kept it to himself—which was just as well.

Curiously enough, another mysterious incident occurred that very night. And it was I who was concerned in it. Thoroughly excited about the morrow, the Remove had not settled down to sleep until half an hour after its usual time.

But at last the dormitory lay quiet and still. I was still awake, thinking of the forthcoming match. There was rather a stiff wind, and one of the blinds kept flapping. So I slipped out of bed to adjust it, and to take a look at the sky at the same time. I didn't like this breeze, which had so suddenly sprang up—it hinted at rain.

But when I glanced out of the window the



Swish! Handy's bat swept down, and there was a crash just behind him. He stared at his wicket blankly. The middle stump, for some reason, was missing.

sky was perfectly clear and there was no prospect of a sudden change. I was about to draw my head in, relieved, when I caught sight of a figure crossing the Triangle.

There was nothing startling in this, because most of the masters were still up and about, and it was only just dark, anyhow. But there was something stealthy and mysterious about the figure's movements. I gazed with greater concentration.

And I realised, with a start, that the figure was that of a girl. Indeed, I recognised her as Mrs. Stokes. To my astonishment, she reached the private gate, found it locked, and then turned her attention to the wall.

And I stared in dim surprise as Mrs. Stokes nimbly climbed up, reached the top of the wall, and dropped over on the other side.

That was all—but it was enough.

What singular reason could have, driven the Head's wife to leave the school premises in such a stealthy, extraordinary way? I returned to my bed, vaguely uncomfortable. Mrs. Stokes was so frank, so cheerful and delightfully friendly.

It didn't seem to fit in with her character, this nocturnal climb over the school wall. Obviously, she had gone out unknown to the Head, or she would never have employed such methods.

I tried to convince myself that I had made a mistake, that the figure had been that of a maidservant, off, probably, to

meet a local rustic for a moonlight stroll. But this wasn't feasible. Moreover, I had positively recognised Mrs. Stokes.

I finally went off to sleep with that same vague sensation of uncomfortable trouble.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GREAT DAY.



SATURDAY afternoon! The great hour had arrived. Dinner was over, and the playing-fields were already becoming crowded with seniors and juniors. The sun blazed

down with midsummer heat, and a more perfect day for cricket could hardly be imagined.

The Helmford Senior Eleven had not yet arrived, but were expected at any moment. Big Side was deserted, except for Fenton and Mr. Clifford and two of the gardeners. These latter were toiling away at a heavy roller, giving a final touch to the playing-pitch.

Usually, the juniors took only a comparatively small interest in senior affairs. A First Eleven match was not looked upon as an affair of very great importance.

But to-day all this was changed.

The inclusion of four juniors in the team—for the first time in St. Frank's history—gave the match a universal interest. Juniors as well as seniors were crowding round the ropes eager to secure the best positions.

"Well, I hope everything turns out all right," said Fenton, with a shade of anxiety. "Nipper assures me that his men are in fine condition, but I shan't be comfortable until the match is well under way."

"You needn't worry," said Mr. Clifford, the sportsmaster. "Personally, I heartily agree with the Head's idea, and I think this experiment will prove a big success."

"Let's hope you're right, sir," said one of the others.

A sudden commotion from the Triangle hinted that the Helmford men had arrived. And this turned out to be true. Fenton hurried off to welcome the visitors, and presently they came along in a cluster, carrying their cricket bags, and looking very impressive in their white clothes and gaily-striped blue and red blazers.

"I hear you've had a bit of bad luck since Wednesday?" remarked Lewis, the Helmford captain. "Somebody was telling me that two of your chaps were injured in a motor smash, or something?"

"Yes—Morrow and Rees," replied Fenton. "Pretty serious, too; they're both laid up in the school hospital."

"Phew! Hard lines, old man!" said Lewis sympathetically.

At the same time, there was a slight gleam of satisfaction in his eye. He knew

well enough that Morrow was one of the most expert batsmen in the St. Frank's eleven, whilst Rees had given plenty of proof of his remarkable bowling prowess.

And it was easy enough to read Lewis' mind. With two such stalwarts out of the team, Helmford's task became an easy one. The visitors were determined to win, and thus maintain their unbroken record. So this piece of news was interesting.

"Yes, it's a bit rough," said Fenton, nodding. "Still, we'll give you a good match, Lewis."

"Who are you playing instead?"

"Two fellows named Dodd and Hamilton," replied Fenton. "Hamilton is usually known here as Nipper—"

"Nipper!" said Lewis sharply. "But isn't he a junior?"

"Yes—Remove."

"But, great Scott, man, what on earth—" Lewis paused, staring in sheer astonishment. "You don't mean to seriously tell me that you're playing a junior in this match?"

"As a matter of fact—four!"

"Four juniors?" shouted the Helmford captain.

"There's no need to get excited about it," said Fenton gruffly. "I've made use of the best material that I've got, and, as I said before, we'll give you a good match."

Lewis shrugged his shoulders, and winked at his companions.

"Oh, well, it's your funeral, of course!" he said, with a slight sneer in his tone that annoyed Fenton. "I didn't think you were quite so weak that you had to drag juniors into the game. I'm not quite sure that our fellows will like it."

"In that case," said Fenton sharply, "they'll have to lump it!"

"And you mustn't be annoyed with us if we grin a little at the end of the match," went on Lewis.

"At the end of the match you can grin as much as you like—if you feel inclined to," retorted Fenton. "But don't be too sure about that grin, Lewis. You may feel more like kicking somebody."

Lewis laughed outright, and the other members of his team chuckled openly and loudly. Even with the First Eleven at full strength, they had boasted of a victory. But with four juniors in the team, the game would become a mere farce.

Fenton was furious, although he concealed this. And now he was heartily glad that the juniors were playing. For in his heart he felt convinced that they would put up a good showing—and he hoped against hope that he wasn't wrong. How fine it would be to see these self-confident visitors humbled by members of the Junior Eleven!

And while the final preparations were being made the Head arrived with his wife. Mrs. Stokes tripped daintily over the grass, and she looked particularly nice in pink

georgette, with a pink hat and pink parasol to match.

I looked at her rather sharply I'm afraid, that incident of the previous night instantly occurring to me. And I couldn't help noticing that Mrs. Stokes was slightly changed. Her eyes were heavy, telling of a sleepless night, and there was a drawn look on her face that she attempted to conceal by continually smiling. I don't suppose anybody else noticed an atom of change—but I had been looking for it.

Teddy Long, however, observed one trifling thing which set his tongue wagging. There was a slight discolouration on Mrs. Stokes' left arm. Indeed, it looked suspiciously like a bruise.

"There you are! What did I tell you?" whispered Teddy, grabbing at Handforth's arm. "See that bruise on Mrs. Stokes—"

"By George!" said Handforth, turning swiftly.

With one heave he floored Teddy Long, and then held him down.

"At it again?" he muttered thickly. "What did I tell you yesterday, you little rotter? Breathe another word about Mrs. Stokes and I'll drive your face into the ground!"

Teddy Long gave his solemn assurance that he wouldn't breathe another syllable—and he didn't. Talking about Mrs. Stokes was altogether too risky.

CHAPTER XIV.

A TOUGH PROPOSITION.



"O H, well hit!"

A roar of shouts went up as Lewis sent the first ball of the over soaring away for a boundary. It was a line beginning to the match, and

Lewis looked upon it as a happy sign.

Helmford were batting first, and St. Frank's were in the field.

Fenton himself was bowling, the other bowler being Mills, of the College House. All the junior members of the Eleven were fielding. But this, of course, was only to be expected.

I had half hoped that Fenton would give Jerry Dodd a trial at bowling, but there seemed to be no indication of this. And the match proceeded with lively interest.

Helmford, in fact, put up a fine show.

The bowling was fair, and the pitch in excellent condition for run-getting. Fenton was a better batsman than a bowler, and he was well aware of his own shortcomings.

The visitors liked his bowling, too, for they were getting runs freely.

After the third over, therefore, Fenton retired and took up his position in the slips, the new bowler being Wilson. But Lewis seemed to like Wilson's bowling even better

than Fenton's, for he knocked off three boundaries in succession.

It was excellent cricket to watch, for there is nothing more exhilarating than to see the score mounting up rapidly. But when it's the score of the opposition, enthusiasm is not inclined to burst out very much.

"I say, this is rotten!" growled De Valerio. "They're simply doing as they jolly well like! They're making our bowling look horribly weak!"

"That's because it is horribly weak!" said Tommy Watson bluntly.

"Boy, you said it!" nodded Adams. "Aw, gee! This is sure a punk game, anyway! Say, put a real game against this—a game of baseball—and cricket looks two cents!"

"And you'll look two farthings if you take on that tone, my lad!" said John Bustersfield Boots aggressively. "Cricket's the finest game in the world! We've got some pretty dud players in the First Eleven, but that's not our fault. Why the dickens doesn't Fenton use Nipper, or Dodd, or one of the others?"

"Better go and ask him!" suggested Watson.

"Oh, say! Steady, Nipper!" shouted Ulysses. "Gee whizz! I guess you'll do it——"

He broke off, and there was a tense silence elsewhere, too. Lewis had just sent the leather skywards, and it was descending near the boundary. And I was racing like mad to the spot, my eyes turned upwards, watching that tiny little speck in the sky.

It was an almost impossible catch, and I knew it. The batsmen were running, confident of three. And the crowds of spectators watched with tense anxiety.

I almost gave up hope, for it seemed that the race was futile. But I would, at least, be able to return the leather in time to save the fourth run.



26

A WEEK
OR CASH
£4 15/-

Get the best cycle in the British Empire — a **JUNO**, sent on approval, carriage paid. Guaranteed by our 46 years' reputation. Money refunded if dissatisfied. Art List Free. Write Now. (Dept. U2), **METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS CO., LTD.**, 168 & 248, Bishopsgate, London, E.C.2.

JUNO

The ball came shooting down, and at the last second I made a leap upwards and outwards. The red leather touched my fingers, I gripped it, and held fast. Stumbling forward, I just managed to keep my balance. And then, with a gasp of triumph, I sent the ball victoriously skywards.

"Out!" roared the crowd delightedly.

"Well, I'm hanged!" said Lewis, staring.

He carried his bat in rather glumly, for he had set his heart upon making a century, but had been caught out before his score had reached forty. And, what was more humiliating than anything, he had been caught by one of the juniors he had so openly sneered at.

"Good man, Nipper!" shouted Fenton delightedly. "That was wonderful!"

"I say, Fenton," I said, approaching him. "Why don't you give Dodd a chance at the bowling? He's a demon, you know."

"Thanks all the same—but I'm skipper!" said Fenton coldly.

I made no further remark, but retired. And presently the game was in full swing again. And the Helmford score kept mounting up. It was a very difficult matter to get these batsmen out. They were fine cricketers, and were playing splendidly.

It wasn't the bowling that was mainly at fault. On the whole, it was quite up to the average. But it really needed something above the average to dismiss these keen Helmford seniors.

Two of them were clean bowled in succession, but it took nearly an hour to do it. And after that the batsmen seemed to get set, and every effort of Fenton was unavailing.

Fenton himself was fielding near the pavilion, and while the field was changing at the conclusion of an over, the Headmaster slipped down and approached Fenton.

"Just a minute, old man!" said Dr. Stokes.

Fenton turned.

"Try Dodd!" said the Head briefly. "Christine, too!"

He turned, and went back to his place, and Fenton bit his lip. It was the same advice that I had given him. He could ignore mine, but it would hardly be good policy to ignore the Head's.

The senior skipper considered the matter during the next over, and he wasn't very gratified to see three boundaries knocked one after the other. Certainly, it was high time that something drastic was done.

Fenton would have given Jerry Dodd a trial before now, only he was afraid of adverse comment from the seniors. He knew well enough that there would be a storm if he put a junior on to bowl. But he reflected that even a junior couldn't do much worse than the others.

Indeed, the senior bowlers were so incapable of dismissing their opponents that Fenton felt himself fully justified in trying any methods. He would let the crowd think what it liked.

So, when the over came to an end, Fenton signed to Jerry, and a perfect yell went up from the juniors when they saw what was in the wind. Jerry himself obeyed the summons with alacrity.

"I'm giving you a chance," said Fenton. "Do the best you can, Dodd. If you don't make good, the Upper School will rag me to death. So bear that in mind."

"I won't disgrace you," said the Australian junior.

And while the Remove was cheering lustily, the Fifth and Sixth were looking on with mixed feelings. Some of them declared that Jerry was a smart kid, and might wake things up a bit. Others were equally as positive that the runs would now mount up at lightning speed.

As for the Helmford players and their supporters—for a charabanc full of other Helmford fellows had come—they were openly amused. Things were indeed easy when a junior was given the bowling!

The game was watched with intense interest as Jerry seized the leather, and prepared to deliver the first ball of the next over. The Helmford batsman was one who had caused enormous trouble, and his individual score was already well over the half-century. He was one of the best men in the visiting eleven.

He waited, with a grin on his face, until Jerry took his short, easy run. There was something very deceptive about Dodd's delivery. To see him take his run, one would imagine that he was a slow bowler.

Whizz!

The Australian junior's arm curved over, and the leather sped down the pitch, curled round the batsman's willow, and tore the middle stump neatly out of the ground!

"Hurrah!"

"How's that?"

The Lower School went fairly wild with delight, and even the seniors broke into cheers. Junior or not, Jerry had succeeded in dismissing the best Helmford batsman with his very first ball!

The visitors were not looking quite so confident now. The next man came out, and the second ball of the over was delivered. The batsman never saw it. All he knew was that the bails went flying, and the leg stump sagged outwards drunkenly.

"Out!" howled the crowd excitedly.

"Oh, well played, Jerry!"

"Hurrah!"

The seniors were now every bit as jubilant as the juniors, and Jerry Dodd was probably the coolest St. Frank's fellow within a mile. But inwardly he was bubbling with excitement. He had got his chance—and he was showing Fenton that he ought to have had it long ago! Fenton himself could hardly believe his eyes.

The next man came out, and the visitors watched him with keen, tense anxiety. The thing was getting too ridiculous for words. A mere junior to dismiss two batsmen right off the reel!

The new man faced the bowler, and he was obviously nervous. The fate of his predecessors was not calculated to give him confidence. It was becoming as clear as daylight that this junior bowler was a perfect terror. The speed of his delivery, once the ball had left his hand, was startling.

There was dead silence as the third ball of the over was sent down. The batsman took no chances. He hit the leather squarely. It shot back over the pitch, and Jerry Dodd's hand whipped out like lightning. Smack!

The leather was in his grasp—and he had performed the hat trick!

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE JUNIORS.



WELL caught, sir!"
"Oh, splendid!"
"Good old Dodd—well played!"

The spectators nearly went wild with delight, and the Helmford fellows were utterly dismayed. Jerry Dodd's remarkable feat looked very much like the beginning of the rot, and there was very little hope that the Helmford "tail" would mend matters.

Three men out in one over, and not a run scored! It was a record for a professional to be proud of, and yet this performance had been put up by one of the scorned juniors! Edgar Fenton was hot and flushed with sheer joy.

And further satisfaction was in store.

The rest of the over was quiet, for the next batsman to come out took absolutely no chances. But Fenton immediately put me on to bowl at the other end—and his decision was greeted with a cheer. Dodd's success had made the whole school realise that if this match was saved, it would be because of the junior members of the team.

I was lucky enough to clean bowl my man with the second ball of the over. After that the innings was practically over. The last remnants of the Helmford Eleven were dismissed in a succession, with only three more runs having been scored.

And during the interval Lewis and his men were very quiet. They had scored 172 all told which was a mere trifle compared to the figure that Lewis had had in his mind. He had had visions of reaching a comfortable four hundred, and then declaring.

St. Frank's now went in to bat, and Fenton himself opened the innings with Carlile. The Helmford bowlers were excellent, and runs were rather slow to begin with.

However, the score crept up until it reached 21, and then Fenton was neatly stumped. It was unlucky, because he was just getting set. Bob Christine came out to take his place.

The juniors gave him a hearty cheer—to be followed at once by a groan. For Christine



"Here, what's the idea?" spluttered Fatty. "Don't keep digging me like that, you young fathead—"

was unlucky. He was clean bowled with the first ball for a duck. This was a bad beginning for the junior contingent.

And the result was immediately seen, for Fenton put Mills in. And Mills made a pretty fifteen, and was then caught. The score was mounting rather too slowly for the general liking.

I came out next, and my appearance was greeted enthusiastically. The very novelty of juniors batting against a senior team was entertaining enough. And I was watched with keen interest.

I soon settled down, and as soon as I had taken the measure of the bowling, I let fly with grim determination. And I thrilled with joy as I hit my first boundary.

After that, I settled down to steady run-getting, and the spectators were tremendously interested. The bowling was changed more than once, but nothing seemed to affect me now. I just launched out at everything, and the score raced up agreeably.

My partner was foolish enough to get himself run out, by a sheer miscalculation on his part. And a roar of laughter went up as Handforth came out to join me. Edward Oswald wasn't very pleased to hear that laugh. He couldn't see anything funny in his appearance.

He had a brief and glorious innings.

With his usual spectacular dash, he started the aggressive at once, and slogged away at the bowling with a vengeance. Three boundaries in succession he hit, and then followed up with some fine virile batting that evoked enormous enthusiasm.

He couldn't last, of course—he never did. After fifteen minutes, and when he had increased the score by 39, he was neatly caught in the slips, the victim of a faulty hit. But Handforth didn't care. He walked back to the pavilion amid thunderous applause, having provided first-class entertainment. And he was satisfied.

Another senior came out, and went back within three minutes. And then, to my inward satisfaction, Jerry Dodd appeared. And I was hoping for great things from Jerry. The Australian boy was a demon bowler, but he was every bit as good with the bat.

And he proved it.

At first, he was slow and steady. But whenever he got the bowling he revealed faultless technique, and as soon as he had settled down, he gave a display that was to be long remembered.

In the meantime, I was scoring steadily, and between the two of us, we put up a showing that not only delighted the junior onlookers, but caused the seniors to rub their eyes.

By the end of another twenty minutes, the Helmford captain was getting desperate. All his efforts were in vain. He changed his bowlers repeatedly, but nothing seemed to bring any alteration. Jerry and I were fixed for good, apparently.

We made a stand, and this fact alone made Lewis writhe. He remembered how he had sneered at the junior members of the Eleven—and here were two of them actually making the best stand of the game!

Jerry and I were supremely satisfied now, and we felt that we could afford to be a little reckless. The St. Frank's total was already 155, and the match looked a certainty.

Jerry was hitting with enormous power, and the cunning way in which he placed the ball out of reach of the fieldsmen was an eloquent indication of his supreme cleverness.

No matter how Lewis changed the field, Jerry Dodd was always ready. He changed his tactics repeatedly, and dealt with every ball as though they were being delivered by children. In fact, his performance was one that ranked as the best that St. Frank's had seen that season.

I wasn't doing so badly, either.

And it was a boundary hit of mine that took the score to 175. And that was the end of the match. St. Frank's had won by seven wickets. It was Helmford's first defeat of the season—and a clean and complete licking.

"Well?" smiled Dr. Stokes, as he came on to the field.

"By Jove, sir, that advice of yours was wonderful!" said Fenton frankly. "Thanks awfully, sir, for making the suggestion."

The Head laughed.

"I rather think you should thank these wonderful juniors," he replied. "Come now, Fenton, you've got to admit that your estimation of the Junior Eleven was somewhat at fault."

The School Captain nodded quickly.

"I do admit it, sir—willingly!" he replied handsomely. "As for Dodd, I'd like to play him in every First Eleven fixture—and I certainly will do it whenever he's available! And Nipper, too—I never dreamed they were so splendid! My judgment was completely wrong, sir."

"I am very pleased to hear you say that, Fenton—for I like nothing better than perfect candour," said Dr. Stokes. "And this match has delighted me particularly because the juniors have shown their true worth so excellently. Well done, the Remove!"

And the Remove did not fail to celebrate.

The Helmford players were sent back home thoroughly humbled, and for the rest of that evening the Remove gave itself over to feasting and riotous living.

Naturally enough, I was as pleased as punch, but, on the whole, I think the most delighted person in the whole of St. Frank's was Dr. Beverley Stokes himself.

He had only been at the old school a brief time, but he had already endeared himself to the hearts of all. And Mrs. Stokes was every bit as popular.

It was for this reason, perhaps, that the events of the next few weeks were to prove so engrossing. I had already received a slight hint of some mystery, and so had Teddy Long. And in the near future this mystery was destined to develop in the most extraordinary way.

THE END.

*More extraordinary revelations concerning
Mrs. Stokes will be revealed in NEXT
WEEK'S story of this absorbing series :—*

"THE MYSTERY OF THE HEAD'S WIFE!"



MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

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



No. 28. THE SAMENESS OF AMERICAN CITIES.

WHEN the train got to Pittsburg, on my trip across the American continent, it was at dead of night, and a tremendous blizzard was raging. Snow was sweeping down in millions of flakes, and everything was white.

As I mentioned last week, I was in bed at the time, and I felt thankful for it, too. And I must have fallen asleep soon afterwards, because I don't remember anything else until daylight. And by that time we were well on our way through the State of Ohio, and on towards Indiana and Chicago—Chicago being the end of the first lap, as it were.

It was a bit of a wrestle, getting dressed in the confined space of my sleeping berth. But I managed somehow, and then went along to the bath-room to wash and shave. It may be imagined that shaving is a ticklish business on a rapidly moving train, but I found no difficulties whatever.

Breakfast in the dining car was of much greater interest to me, and after a good meal, I settled myself down to watching the passing scenery. There's no need for me to go into hosts of details about the dining car—because the sumptuous saloons on our own trains are almost identical to the American.

Ohio did not impress me—neither, for that matter, did Indiana.

It was Sunday, and perhaps things were unusually quiet. At all events, every town we passed through was apparently dead. Just one or two people moving leisurely about, but otherwise these towns were astonishingly quiet and uninteresting.

There was no trace of snow now—we had left that wintry weather well behind us. According to schedule, we were due to reach Chicago at about tea-time, but as the train was already two hours late, the majority of the passengers were pessimistic—especially those who were anxious to catch hasty connections.

I was comfortable enough, because my connection was the California Limited, on the Santa Fé Railway—and that celebrated train always departs from Chicago at 8 p.m. daily.

What impressed me most about Ohio and Indiana were the towns we passed through—that is, the numerous small towns. The

majority of them are as alike as peas in a pod. There is nothing distinctive about these American cities—nothing to distinctly differentiate one from another.

On the whole, the country was flat, and at regular intervals the train would pass clean slap through a town—right along the main street, in most cases. Naturally, the speed was reduced to a mere crawl, and the huge bell on the engine was clanging away with a monotonous din.

And the few people in the streets stood idly about, watching the great train pass through. And, as I have already mentioned, one town was a replica of the next. And they were by no means handsome, either.

The natives of these places are very proud of their "old home town," and one cannot blame them for that. But it puzzled me to see precisely what there was to be proud of.

Stone buildings were few and far between, and each town simply consisted of a main street, with numbers of cross streets. Most buildings were wooden—frame houses, and flat-top stores. And some of these places were little better than mere hamlets—although they were called "Something City" or other.

I was quite disappointed, for I had always pictured Indiana as a very different country to this. And there was no trace here of the much vaunted American up-to-dateness. There was no hustle—no signs of ultra-rapid progress.

In fact, I can safely say that my impression was correct, and that these towns were dead, as we understand the word. Many a British country village is a good deal more up-to-date in some respects—and a thousand per cent more picturesque.

I was glad enough when the journey was nearing its end, and Chicago loomed in sight. The train was still very late, and dusk was descending, so I couldn't see a great deal of the scenery.

But we were just about to arrive in the great metropolis of the Middle West, and I was very keen to catch even a glimpse of it.

NEXT WEEK: "On the California Limited."

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

No. 32. THE HIGH SCHOOL, NOTTINGHAM



The High School was founded in 1513 by Dame Agnes Mellers, the present school being built about one hundred years ago. It is a day school, and is the largest and best known for a large area, having 600 boys or more. The chief games played are "rugger," cricket and fives. There are many flourishing societies belonging to the school, and an O.T.C., numbering 200 cadets, has also been organised. The gun you see in the sketch at the front of the school was presented in

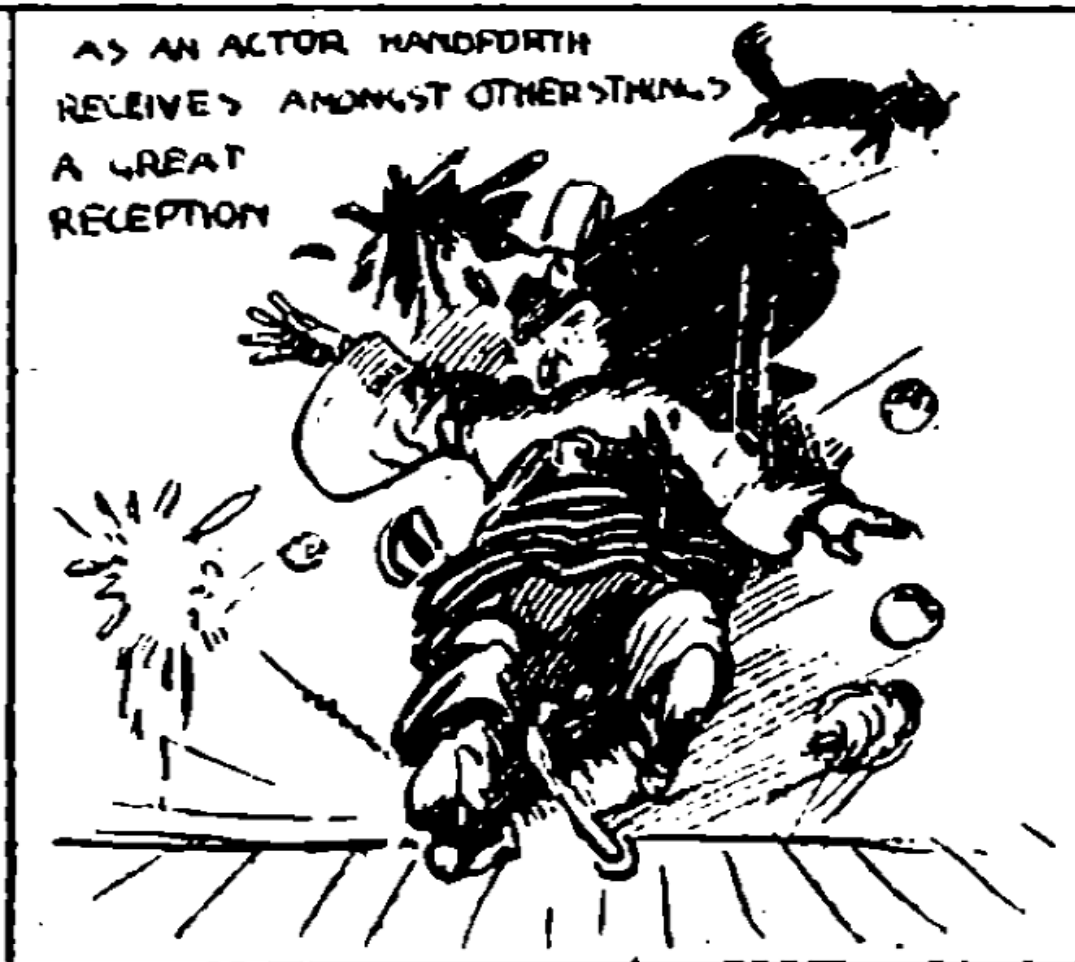
honour of two V.C.s who are old boys of the school. One of them was the famous Captain Albert Ball, and the other, the Rev. T. B. Hardy. Just inside the gates is a memorial to the old boys who fell in the war. This is a bronze statue of an officer leading his men, and is designed by an old boy. I am much indebted for the above information to a reader, to whom I have great pleasure in presenting the original sketch.



St. Frank's Magazine



CAREERS IN CARICATURE. No. I.—E. O. HANDFORTH.



To avoid the pitfall of ever becoming round pegs in square holes, our artist offers a few suggestions and warnings in this series of drawings of what might happen if various well-known individuals at St. Frank's attempted to realise some of their ambitions in life.—THE EDITOR.



NIPPER'S PAGE



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

My dear Chums,

Pitt's second letter from Africa, which I am publishing on the next page, is addressed again from Lagos, in Nigeria. Apparently the party is being held up for a few days. This, however, has given Pitt and Grey a chance to look round Lagos, some impressions of which you will read in the letter. It is more than probable that some definite news of Sir Crawford Grey's plans will be contained in Pitt's next communication, which I hope to receive in time for inclusion in our next issue. I cannot help thinking that there is something odd about the last few lines in the letter. I wonder what Reggie means by there being something unusual and mysterious in the wind?

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Quite a record number of letters to Uncle Edward have reached this office during the week. A large proportion of this correspondence is from girl readers. Naturally, Handy is very pleased, but somewhat perplexed how to do justice to all of his fair inquirers in the limited space accorded him in one issue. So I hope his correspondents will not be offended if he has to cut down his replies to just a line or two. Undoubtedly this feature has caught on!

THE STING-RAY.

Lord Dorrie's account this week of this terror of the high seas seems almost unbelievable. Yet I can assure my chums that Dorrie is not romancing. These articles he is writing are taken from his own experiences, every word of which can be borne out by other travellers. Some day he hopes to put them into book form. Such a book would be numbered as one of the most thrilling travel books of our time.

ABOUT OUR COVER PAGE.

To assist various members of the Remove from avoiding the tragedy of ever becoming round pegs in square holes, our amiable artist makes a few suggestions for careers they might follow successfully according to what he thinks is their natural bent as revealed at St. Frank's. These entertaining series of sketches, which I have called "Careers in Caricature," will appear on our cover week by week. This week our artist has begun with a few suggestions for Edward Oswald, to be followed next week by some inspiring hints for Archie.

SPORT AND THE LOOKER-ON.

While I agree with Pepys in some of his remarks concerning the value of spectators to players in a match, I strongly challenge his statement that most players do not play for the sake of the game, but to be admired for their skill. In cricket and in footer, a player must often sacrifice the gratification of his personal vanity for the consideration of his side. To run a man out in cricket for the sake of an extra run, or to hug the ball when it should be passed in footer, are examples where a selfish player may let down his side, and cannot be too strongly denounced. But Pepys admits that he is not a participator in sports, and therefore cannot be expected to understand the players' point of view.

COMPETITION RESULT.

I regret that it will be impossible to publish the result of the Character Names Competition next week as originally intended, as the adjudication is taking longer than I anticipated. But the result should appear without fail the week after next.

Your old pal,

NIPPER.

REGGIE PITT'S AFRICAN .. LETTER ..

Following upon the heels of his first letter, Reggie's dispatch from Lagos, in Nigeria, has been received. And in consequence of a few days' delay in Lagos, Pitt has been able to give us an interesting pen-picture of this African native town, which appears below.—THE EDITOR.

Lagos, NIGERIA.

My Dear Old Nipper,

Still here, as you see by the heading. I don't give any definite address, because we're living on board the yacht, as the Lagos hotels are very conspicuous by their absence. In my last letter I mentioned that my next communication would probably be from Kano. But we haven't even started yet, and we may be here for another three or four days.

So I'm taking the opportunity to send you another dispatch, so that it will be in time for the Magazine.

There's a tidal lagoon here, and it's picturesque in some ways, although the water is a bit muddy and there's a lot of green slime and frothy stuff floating on the surface. And from the deck of this ship (I am writing down in the cabin, while Jack is snoring away like the dickens) the city of Lagos is clearly visible.

And quite imposing looking, too, with the commercial buildings of the European population. But it's a bit deceptive. When the stranger goes ashore, he finds that Lagos itself is mainly a native city—a great town of black people.

The European section is just a line of buildings which runs along the shores of the lagoon—with the native city snuggling behind. I think it'll be interesting if I give you a few details of the place—not the European quarter, but the native town of Lagos.

Jack and I went for quite a long jaunt yesterday, and had a most interesting time. Hot as blazes, of course, but that's only to be expected in this climate.

We only found it necessary to stroll along the main street, and then walk up one of the narrow side turnings. And instantly we found ourselves among the most interesting and curious scenes. Narrow, irregular streets, lined with ramshackle native huts which made us fairly grin.

By what I can see, these blacks have no eye for architectural beauty, and most of their dwellings are built up of every kind of oddments that it's possible to think of. Nothing too disreputable, and nothing too ramshackle.

Most of the native huts are built with walls of mud, and some of them are thatched, but a great many others appear to be constructed of old planks, corrugated iron, empty crates and sugar boxes, sack-ing, and canvas—and, in fact, any sort of junk that can be commandeered.

These wretched dwellings—wretched from our point of view, although probably good enough from the natives'—are huddled together in endless profusion, and of all shapes. There's practically no paint, and everything is frightfully untidy. But this, in a way, adds to the quaintness and picturesque nature of the scenes.

But the people are far more interesting than their dwellings. The town seems to be always crowded, and there's any amount of life and colour in these burning hot, dusty streets. The cotton-clad throng is far from idle, too, for everybody seems busy on his or her particular job. Trading of every description is in full evidence.

And there's such a lot of Oriental colour and life about these scenes, too. Jack and I have been tremendously interested. Dorrie, of course, has been pretty busy with Umlool and Sir Crawford, and rest of the party. I think we shall soon be making a move.

But to get back to my description of Lagos. You'd be surprised at the perfect physique of most of these natives, and the grace with which they wear their cotton clothing.

I could go on like this for pages, but one of the stewards has just given me the tip that the mail's going ashore in a few minutes. So I shall have to close up, and tell you more in my next—when I hope to give some definite news about our trip up country, and a few other things. I have still got an idea that there's something unusual—and even mysterious—in the wind. But, for the moment—'nuff said.

Kindest regards to everybody, and hoping that you are all bright and chirpy. Jack and I are top-hole.

Your affectionate chum,

REGGIE.

The Adventures of TRACKETT GRIM



THE CASE OF THE DOPED RACE-HORSE!

Another Thrilling 'Tec Story

By

E. O. HANDFORTH

"HERE we are," observed Trackett Grim, the world-famous in-criminator, as he slowed down the expensive car which he was driving. "We are here at last."

"I believe you are right, guv'nor," replied his brilliant young assistant, Splinter.

Grim directed his magnificent car through a pair of large gates and swept up the drive of a real old-fashioned country house. When he had finished sweeping up the drive he drew the car to a standstill in front of a stately, graceful mansion. It was a very stately mansion and belonged to a tremendously rich man. There were no less than three front doors, all painted in different colours. There were hundreds of windows. And though it was still afternoon thousands of electric lights blazed inside.

The place in fact was Cashbag Court, the wonderful country residence of Sir Pompus Cashbag. And Sir Pompus had made a huge fortune during the War out of second-hand sardine tins. It was Friday afternoon, and Grim had been invited to spend a weekend here. As he pulled up the car in front of the three stately portals, a dozen chauffeurs dashed up and held the car's bonnet. Splinter and Grim alighted, and the car was taken away. The two were escorted inside by a row of bowing flunkies with powdered hair and yellow liveries.

"My eye," said Splinter. "Sir Pompus must be a very rich man!"

"Quite right!" Grim replied, pleased at the lad's quick intelligence.

In the great hall everything was of the most costly magnificence. The stairs were made of silver and the walls were papered in gold. Even the bannisters were studded with diamonds. Grim and his assistant were about to ascend, when a loud voice caused them to turn.

"Yoicks! Tally ho! Yo! Ho!" it shouted, and in rode a man dressed as a huntsman. He rode right up the steps into

the hall, and had a long horn in his right hand. At his heels were a pack of blood-hounds.

"Yoicks!" roared Sir Pompus, for it was he. "Welcome to Cashbag Court, my dear Grim. However did you find the way here?"

"We simply followed the road," Grim said modestly.

"Wonderful!" Sir Pompus gasped. "Hi, Groom. Take away my horse and hounds, and have supper ready in ten minutes."

The fine old sportsman leapt off his horse and led Grim and Splinter to the fire-place.

"I am so glad you could both come," he said. "I am a very lonely man. I live entirely by myself except for my horses and dogs and menials."

Grim wiped away a tear with the back of his hand. His heart was touched.

"But I won't worry you with my troubles," Sir Pompus went on. "Perhaps you would like to see the stables. I have a wonderful horse, called Bloater Paste, which is a cert. for the Anchovy Stakes to-morrow."

Conversing pleasantly Sir Pompus led out his guests to the stables which adjoined the house. Next them was a red-brick cottage in which lived his own jockey, Marcus Jibb.

In a loose box stood the lovely horse, Bloater Paste, with a pretty red silk bow tied round its neck. It was splendidly kept. Its black coat shone with brilliantine, its brown eyes sparkled, its hair had just been bobbed, and its hoofs were carefully manicured.

"If Bloater Paste doesn't win the Anchovy Stakes," Grim said, after looking at the horse, "some other animal will!"

"He will win," Sir Pompus replied. "That is unless he is tampered with."

"Tampered with!" gasped Grim. "Do you mean interfered with?"

"I do," said Sir Pompus confidentially. "My friend, Lord Penniless, is a great enemy

of mine. He is running a horse called Toothpick, which is second favourite to mine. If Bloater Paste could not run he would stand to make a million pounds, and he's badly in need of money. That is why I am sure he will prevent my horse from getting to the starting post."

"My dear sir," Grim said smoothly. "You are letting your imagination run away with you. Such a trick would be almost wicked."

"Alas, sir," said the old man. "Sometimes I fear Lord Penniless is almost wicked. He wears white spats and a single monocle as well."

"Tut, tut, Sir Pompus," Grim said, trying to pass the matter off with a laugh, and no more was said at the moment.

But in reality Grim was not nearly so sure that everything was quite satisfactory. Sitting up in his bed-room that night with Splinter he was thinking over the strange story Sir Pompus had told him.

"As I see it," Grim said suddenly, "this rascal, Lord Penniless, would have a lot to win if he could spoil Bloater Paste's chance. But I am sure that Sir Pompus is making a great mistake in his lordship's character, and I do not suppose for a moment he will resort to foul play. Why—great pancakes!—what on earth is that?"

"It's someone hitting a door!" cried Splinter.

He was right. The wonderful training he had received from his master stood the lad in good stead. And craning their necks out of the window, the incriminator and his assistant saw two figures silhouetted in the brilliant moonlight.

One of them was a small man. The other—as Grim's keen eyes immediately saw—wore a monocle and white spats! And the two were standing in front of the stable-door, the taller man beating upon it with a crowbar!

"Great snakes," whispered the incriminator with a sudden inspiration. "I believe that is Lord Penniless! Splinter, we must investigate!"

Without another word he jumped through the open window with Splinter at his heels. They ran towards the stable, carefully concealing themselves as they ran. They were not a moment too soon. Penniless had now broken down the stable-door, and he and his accomplice were entering the stables. As he entered the Earl picked up a large bucket which had been standing by his side on the ground.

Grim and the lad followed the two. Lord Penniless went straight up to Bloater Paste, who was fast asleep in his bunk. Grim could tell he was asleep because of his snores. Lord Penniless crept to the side of Bloater Paste and poked him in the ribs. The racehorse woke with a start.

"It's all right," said his lordship, tilting his bucket, "I've brought your breakfast. Drink it up, old bean!"

The horse showed no surprise, but drank up the contents of the bucket. Then with a contented sigh he sank back on to his mattress, and in a second was fast asleep again. Lord Penniless and his assistant, leaving the bucket on the ground, hastily crept from the stable.

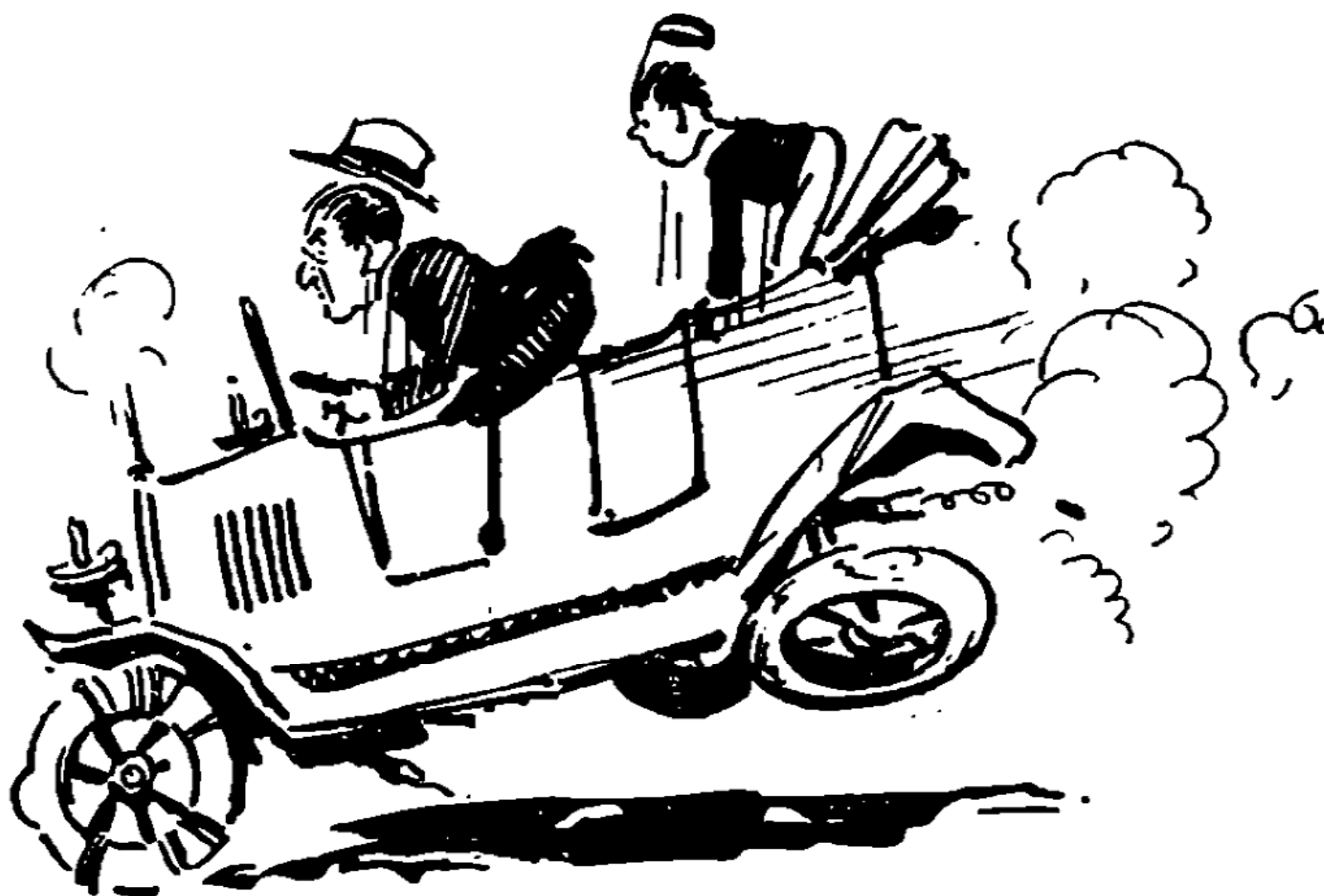
Grim and Splinter had watched the proceedings spellbound.

"What can it mean?" asked the lad.

"It is quite clear," Grim returned. "And, as I thought, Lord Penniless is a real friend of Sir Pompus. He evidently suspected that the horse was not being given enough food by his groom, so he kindly brought over this refreshment. A very kindly thought. But let us follow them!"

The two men skirted the stables and reached the red cottage where Jibb lived. They halted a moment and talked in inaudible whispers which Grim was able to overhear by crawling up to them on all fours.

"You ring the bell," said Penniless, "and I will give him



He drew the car gracefully to a standstill.

the lozenge. He will never suspect."

"Right-o," replied the confederate, and pulled the bell push. There was no sound, so he pushed the bell pull. At once a loud ring sounded. It seemed an age before footsteps were heard and the door was suddenly unbolted. On the threshold appeared Jibb in pink pyjamas. Lord Penniless did not wait for him to speak. Something red and shiny gleamed in his right hand.

"I have brought your cough cure from the chemist," said his Lordship, handing over the lozenge.

Jibb looked surprised, but he took the lozenge eagerly.

Next morning it was reported that Jibb had been murdered.

At once Grim, followed by the others, ran off to the jockey's cottage.

In a chair in his bed-room sat Jibb.

"I've been murdered, sir," he gasped. "Poisoned by that villain Lord Penniless." And he related what had happened the night before. Then he collapsed in a heap.

At that moment two more grooms came rushing in.

"Sir Pompus!" cried the foremost. "Bloater Paste has been doped. He will never run in the Anchovy Stakes to-day!"

At once Grim dashed off to the stables. And there lay the beautiful horse covered with an eiderdown. He was not dead, but his hair was ruffled and his coat did not shine nearly so brightly as usual. But unfortunately he was dumb and could not tell what had happened. Nevertheless, Grim was not daunted. Remembering his suspicions of last night he put two and two together.

"I see it all, Splinter," he observed. "As I thought, there has been an accident. Ah! What is in that bucket?"

Grim's eyes fell on the pail Lord Penniless had left in the stable. Taking out a magnifying glass the incriminator examined the fluid that remained in the bottom of the bucket.

"Great Scott!" he cried. "Ginger beer! Bloater Paste is inebriated!"

At once the solution occurred to Grim's sharp mind. The ginger beer had been too much for the animal. It had gone to his head! He felt a touch on his arm. Sir Pompus had come to his side.

"What is to be done?" he asked, great tears falling from his eyes. "My racehorse is doped and my jockey is drugged. How can I win this afternoon's race?"



"It's all right!" said his lordship. "I've brought your breakfast. Drink it up, old bean!"

At once Grim saw there was only one way.

"Bloater Paste must be made to recover," he snapped. "We must get the terrible fumes of the vile stuff he has taken out of his head. I myself will walk him round and round the yard. I guarantee he will be fit by this afternoon."

"But who will ride?" asked Sir Pompus. "Splinter!" cried the incriminator.

"They're off!" yelled the huge crowd as the race for the famous Anchovy Stakes started.

Splinter had borrowed a suit of jockey's clothes, and Bloater Paste had now quite recovered and was wearing a special white bow round his glossy neck.

What a race it was! Round and round the course, which was square, rode the horses at lightning pace. But when the fourth lap was reached only two horses were leading. They were Bloater Paste and Toothpick. It was obvious that whichever reached the post first would win.

And twenty yards from the winning-post a terrible thing happened.

Splinter, who had been riding perfectly, suddenly fell off over his horse's head. He crashed down on to the turf! A groan went up from all the horse's backers, followed by a cheer from those who had put their shirts on Toothpick.

"It's all U.P.!" said Sir Pompus. "My million is lost!"

But no. For Bloater Paste without altering his stride bent down his noble head and picked up Splinter in his teeth! A second later he flashed by the post—a winner by a short nose!

It had been a wonderful race, but Grim was not quite satisfied. After tea he went round to try and find Lord Penniless and his accomplice. But they were not to be found. So Grim was never able to have them arrested.



POTTED PESSIMISM

*This Week's
Josh*

By **CUTTLE**
(The Porter)

No. 3.—A BAD OUTLOOK FOR THE FRUIT CROPS.

SOME folks was saying that the fruit crops will be bad this year, because there's been so much cold and wet, and little sunshine. Other folks says as the fruit crops will be good. But I says good fruit crops was bad. Why was they bad? Ask me. Because when the crops was good, and the trees was loaded down with fruit, it don't pay to have it picked, and it was left on the ground to rot, or was given to the pigs.

It was only a little bit of it what finds its way to the market; but the growers gets as much for that little bit as they would for four times as much. And why? Ask me. Because when the supply was short the prices goes up. Those two chaps, Supply and Demand, was beggars to beat. You can't pull 'em down or squash 'em. They reign, and rule, and what they says goes.

So good fruit crops was bad, and bad fruit crops was good. Bad fruit crops was good for them as grows 'em, and them as sells 'em, because they gets just as much for 'em as they would for good crops. But was they good for common folks like me? Ask me. They was always a-telling on us to eat more fruit if we want to keep fit and well, and then when we goes to buy a apple they wants twopence or threepence for it. Shameful, I calls it. Was it any wonder that boys was keen to steal apples out of orchards? Ask me.

What I want to know was why apple and plum and pear and cherry trees couldn't be grown along the roadsides, instead of oaks and ashes and elms. There'd be a chance then for a poor fellow to get a bit of fruit. But there! I expect folks would be fighting for the stuff before it was ripe, and we shouldn't be no better off than we are now. Things was queer, and no error.



OUR OPTIMISTIC ORACLE.

*This Week's
Tonic.*

By
**BUSTER
BOOTS**

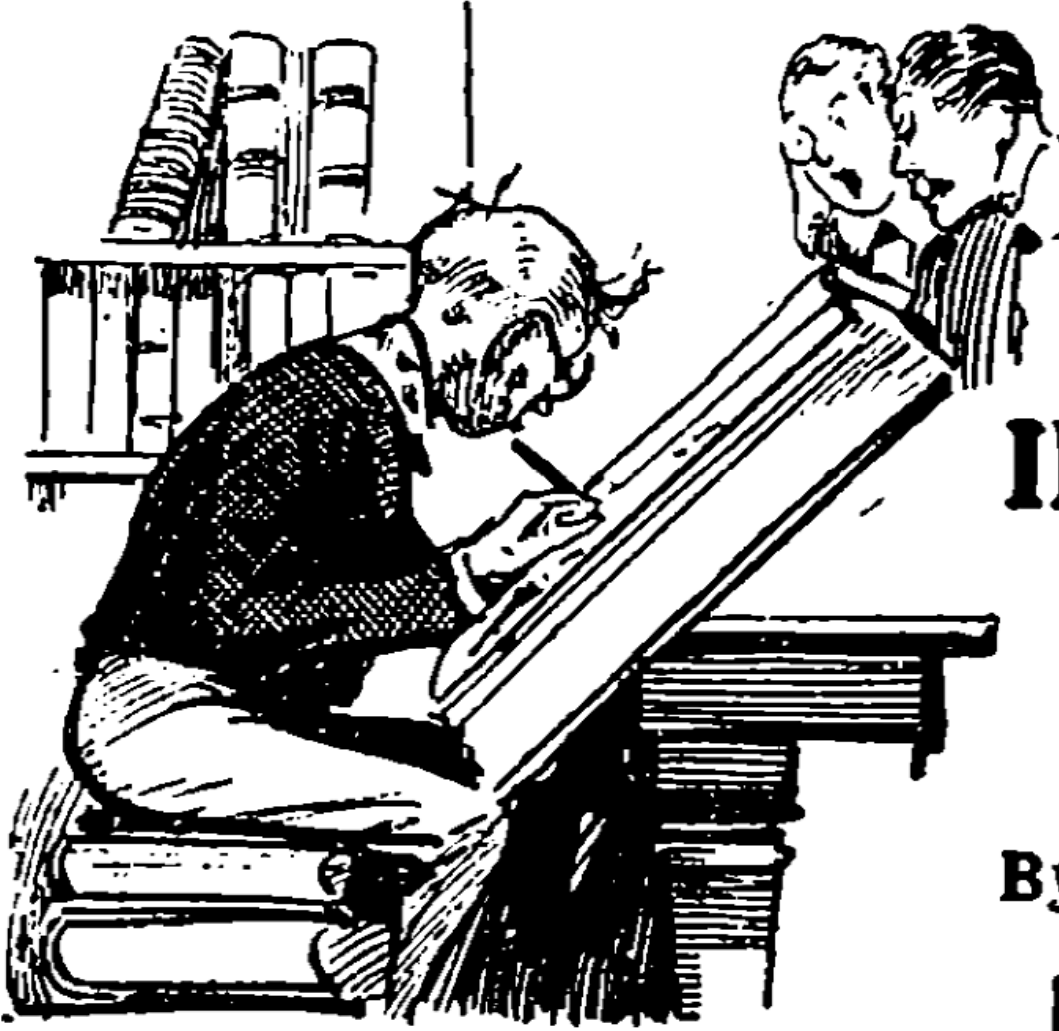
No. 3.—KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE SPOT.

A CHAP who wants to win a race has got to be an optimist. But it's no good being an optimist unless he's a live wire, too. He's got to fix his eye on a certain mark, and keep it there. He must take a long view, and not be looking at his feet all the time. A ploughman who wants to drive a straight furrow doesn't look chiefly at his plough or his horses; his eye's on a certain spot at the other side of the field, where he has placed something that he's got to aim at. It's by keeping his eye on that that he gets his furrow straight—though, of course, he has to keep a firm grip of the plough. A fellow who is aiming at the bull's-eye will never hit it if he lets his eyes wander all round the place; he's got to see only one thing—that bull's eye.

So it is with everything in life. You've got to settle your mind on one job, stick to it like glue—and do it! Last week I was talking about a chap believing in himself, and making the best of himself, and going for his goal all the time at top speed. But if he hasn't got a goal before his eyes, a thing to make for, aim at, and reach, what good's he going to do? All his running and striving and panting will amount to nothing unless he's pushing the right goods. He's got to keep his eye on the ball, so that at the right moment he can kick it into the goal.

So don't fool away your time, and fritter away your energies, by trying to do fifty things at once. Stick to one thing at a time, and master it. That's my motto. You can't ride two horses at once. If you try, you'll come a cropper. You may come a cropper in riding one, but you certainly will if you try to ride two at once.

What I say to you chaps is this—
"Go! Go fast! Keep on going! But know where you're going, or you'll never get there. Keep your eye on that spot!"



PEEPS INTO PEPYS' DIARY.

By GUY PEPYS of the Remove.

MONDAY.—Oft-times have I noted that a listlessness and languor pervadeth the Form-room on Mondays, and the boys—myself included—greatly disinclined to application to lessons. In the cool of the evening, I to the river, where I did bathe and disport myself enjoyably. But my pleasure marred by a stray goat, which wretched creature did devour my shirt before I could send him about his business. To the school, but half dressed, and feeling most improper, but did fortunately meet no person of importance, and so to don a new shirt, much relieved. But troubled ere dropping off to sleep, the shirt costing a good seven shillings.

TUESDAY.—Did visit Mrs. Hake's tuckshop for the first time. A clean, wholesome place. And she a motherly soul, but shrewd withal, and not to be taken in. I fear me she did not look on me as a profitable customer, though I spent with her a whole shilling, to me a considerable sum.

WEDNESDAY.—Mr. Clifford, the sports master, did address me very civilly, and ask me why sports had for me no interest. Whereupon I replied that I was greatly interested in sports, but passively so, as a looker-on. And did express to him my opinion that if there were no lookers-on there would be no players, for that most of the players did play, not for the love of the game, but to be admired for their skill therein. So that spectators did play a most useful part in bringing out the best of the players. But for kicking a ball about a field, and getting mauled and battered, or hitting a ball with a bat or a racket, such did not appeal to me, though I could with joy see all these done by others. Mr. Clifford looked at me fixedly and laughed queerly. He seemed to think me a case for the asylum. For

what would he do if all boys were such as I?

THURSDAY.—Greatly amused by the airs of Sir Montie and Archie touching their clothes. The set of a tie, or the pattern of a waistcoat, to them momentous things. At the other extreme the Duke of Somerton amused me no less. For he cares not what he does wear or how he doth look. A more careless fellow in this regard I never did see. For myself, though I have little dandified notions of my own on clothes, I say nothing in extremes. Nothing extreme is a good motto. But had I to choose one extreme or the other, I would choose Somerton's. For verily I can conceive of no more evil case than to be a slave to one's clothes, and those who make them.

FRIDAY.—Much taken with Dick Goodwin, the honest Lancashire lad, who engaged me in conversation. His queer downright language very attractive. He did assure me that I was "a gradely fellow," and that St. Frank's was a "champion" college. Rain in the evening, and I in the study, taking my ease. Much affrighted by uncouth forms bursting through my window, but relieved to discover them to be some exuberant revellers from the College House, in search of a rag. Handforth and Co. did turn up, and thereupon much violent horseplay—in which none of my properties became damaged, thanks be to Heaven.

SATURDAY.—My new waistcoat now back from the tailor altered. So that it doth not now offend me. Concerned to find my pocket-money nearly all gone, and I nearing that condition which is described throughout the school as "on the rocks." Thankful that I am not conscious of any immediate pressing need. So happy and content with my lot. But none the less looking forward hopefully to a replenishment of my resources. Thus another good week endeth.



ADDLED ANCESTRY

Hazarded by
"HISTORICUS"

No. 3.—YO HO AND YE SKULL AND
CROSSBONES.

NOW, in ye dayes when pirates roamed ye Spanish maine, ye goode shippe Mayde of Devon was bearing away towards ye tighte little islande of Jamaica, her skipper being a man who feared naughte.

For he was Captaine Thomas Burton, knowe as ye terror of ye buccaneers, owing to ye facte that ye bluddthirstie pirates hadde never yette conquered ye great skipper.

Great was ye stir when ye honest looke-out sent down ye lustie hall from ye crow's-neste that ye pirate flecte was coming up on ye larboard bow. And before an hour had spedde, ye battle was joined, and ye guns roared and ye bludde flowed richly.

And for ye first time Captain Burton was captured by ye enemy and carried before ye pirate chief, a righte scurvy blackgarde, forsoothe. And ye brave skipper watched grimlie as many members of his faithfulle crewe were taken to ye side and compelled to walk ye planke.

Then didde Captain Burton prove that he was a brainie ladde, for he didde challenge ye pirate chief to a fight for life with cutlasses. And ye pirate chief, being a manne of much conceit, accepted ye challenge, and ye greate combatte began. But it ended with much speede, for Captain Burton loste no time in letting ye daylight into ye pirate's mldriffe.

And thus it was that ye famous skipper became ruler of ye pirate flecte, and he sailed ye Spanish maine under ye skull and crossbones. But insteade of plundering and robbing and murdering ye honeste sailors, he sette about capturing all ye odde pirates who happened to be stille at large.

So, within ye months, ye Spanish Maine was cleared of ye pirate pests, and made safe for ye honeste shipping. And throughout ye centuries ye descendants of ye brave Captain Burton have roamed ye seas, and to this day it is stille easy to tell a Burton by ye cutte of his jibbe.



TUBBS ON THE TUB.

Our Weekly
Speech

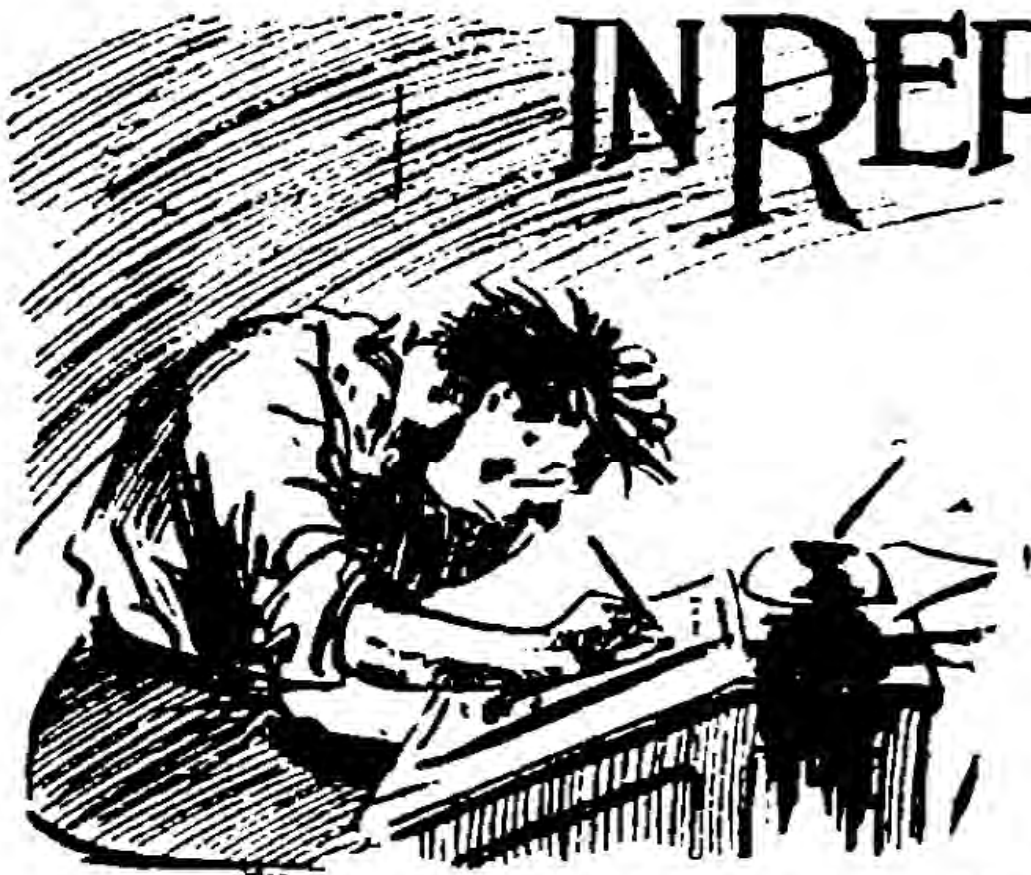
By TUBBS, the Page-boy.

No. 3.—TIPS AND TIPPING.

SOME young gents is easy to please, and some young gents ain't. Some gives tips like they enjoys a-doin' of it, an' some fair chucks the money at a chap, as you might say. It ain't easy to please everybody. There's that there Master 'Andforth, for example. Why, 'e'll give me a swipe on my ear as soon as look at me, an' all for nothink, as you might say. Then next time I see 'im, he'll tip me sixpence or a shillin'. Oh, yes, I do get a few tips—enough to go to the pictures now an' then, an' get a bit in Mrs. Hake's tuckshop.

Now, there's Master Archie. 'E's what I calls a gentleman—a real gentleman. Why, 'e's got 'is own valet to put 'im to bed an' dress 'im, an' feed 'im, an' nurse 'im up. Why, 'e things nothink of chuckin' me over 'arf-a-crown if I do some little thing for 'im—an' you bet I'm allus a-doing some little thing.

Now, about this 'ere tippin'. There's folks what says as it ain't right, an' ought to be put down. I ain't one o' them. If tips come my way, I take 'em, not 'arf! Wouldn't you? But I never lets people see as I expects tips. I should scorn to do such a thing as that. If people likes to give tips, why shouldn't they, I'd like to know? It's their way of showin' as they're pleased, an' givin' a little encouragement to them as serves 'em. An' you can take it from me that servants wants a little encouragement as well as other folks. But, mind you, I do think as them swanker sort o' chaps is fat'cads, what throws money about in tippin' when they can't afford it. What I say is, that there's reason in all things, an' if people would be reasonable about givin' tips, an' about expectin' an' takin' tips, things would be a 'eap better.



IN REPLY to YOURS

Correspondence Answered by UNCLE EDWARD

(NOTE.—Readers of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY can write to me, and I will reply on this page. Three weeks or a month should be allowed for print-and publishing "replies" after they have been received. Address your letters, or postcards to UNCLE EDWARD, c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C.4.—UNCLE EDWARD.)

A. J., IRELAND: Of course Study D is the most quiet apartment in the Remove passage. Everybody knows that. And what do you mean by your opening words? You speak as though I'm not always in my right senses! And I don't take any salts at all, you insulting rotter! I'm full of health and manly vigour because I always take plenty of good exercise.

SO WORRIED, "RIGHT HERE," CORNWALL: I have read your letter three times, and I have come to the conclusion that you are off your silly rocker. In the first place, there's no need to call me "darling," and I'm not loving, either. You say my brain must be full of "it." Full of what? And what's that reference to water at the bottom of your letter, with a cross against it? As for your questions, they are easily answered. The moon isn't made of cheese, as even a silly fag ought to know—or even a five-year-old infant. And flies die in the winter-time, so they naturally go to dust. Finally, I can't understand what you mean by wishing me a merry Christmas in May. But all lunatics have delusions like this.

DOLLY DAYDREAM, ROCKFERRY: Yes, you have guessed the truth about me, but please keep it secret, and don't tell any of your chums that I'm Handforth. Of course, I'm a brainy chap, and I should have been in the Fifth long ago, but for the injustice of all schoolmasters, and the difficulties of exams. You're not the first one who

has thought me nice, but it's ripping of you to say so. Haven't I always said I ought to be the Captain of the Remove? Thanks for thinking so, too. I'm not so sure about being Skipper of St. Frank's—the Sixth might kick, you know. My hair is a beautiful rich chestnut, and very curly. Jealous chaps say it's tousled, but that's all piffle. My eyes are steel grey, like all famous detectives. Glad to hear that you are fair, with blue eyes, and it stands to reason you're pretty. I'm awfully bucked about what you say concerning the Trackett Grim stories. If I couldn't tell the difference between an elephant and a pillar box I ought to go and see an eye specialist. I am surprised that you like my minor, because he's a young beast, and doesn't deserve any praise. All right, I'll ask Nipper about letting you hear more about the Moor View girls.

HANDY'S ADMIRER, HOMERTON: Thanks for your letter, Winnie. At first I nearly decided to chuck your letter in the waste-paper basket, and ignore it. It's like your nerve—and you a girl, too!—to refer to Irene Manners as a "silly girl." I shan't answer your question about my sister—because nice girls never biff noses. I should like to know who makes fun of the Trackett Grim stories—and I'd soon deal with them! Of course, these yarns are sensible! And they never contain ridiculous incidents. Considering you read them, you ought to know this. Nipper's real name is Richard Hamilton, and Mr. Nelson Lee is his guardian.

JACK RICKETTS, HAYLE: I can't answer the first part of your letter about me getting married to Irene Manners when I grow up, because she takes the "Mag.," and might see it. But I might as well tell you I've thought of the same idea, too. But don't say a word! You chump! I've always gone in for boxing! Don't Church and McClure know it? Thanks awfully for your wonderful appreciation of the Trackett Grim stories—but I can't quite like that question mark after the word "splendid." I suppose you thought you hadn't spelt the word right.

IRENE H., BINGLEY: Sorry, but I don't keep rabbits, and I wouldn't keep them,

anyway. Somehow, I don't think your letter was quite serious.

SMIKE, BINGLEY: I shouldn't be surprised if you're a friend of "Irene H." Anyhow, your inquiry is just as dotty. How the dickens should I know how to make face cream? All you need is a quarter of a pound of lard, a small bottle of scent, and a tin of vaseline. Mix the ingredients together well, boil them for half-an-hour, and if you haven't got face cream after this, don't blame me.

F. HUTTON, DEVIZES: I'm not surprised you like the Trackett Grim stories, but why you should think them funny is extraordinary. And it's like your nerve to say I make mistakes! As for your riddle, as sugar is over 4d. a pound, I can't possibly work out the answer. Sorry. Better luck next time.

DICK CHESTER, EASTBOURNE: Sorry, but I don't know the silly idiot with fists like hams you refer to. There's nobody of that sort in Study D, and he hasn't got two chums. The only fellows besides myself in Study D are Church and McClure. You must be thinking of another school. Regarding the Trackett Grim stories, I could quite cheerfully see you go mad.

CONSTANT READER: That's the style! I'm awfully bucked to hear how you like the Mag., and naturally you'll never give up THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY. Yes, I do know the author of the Trackett Grim thrillers, but modesty prevents me saying he's handsome. A chap doesn't like to brag about his own looks. I don't know what you mean about the public getting a shock if I ever wrote stories of a higher quality. How can I, when mine are the highest already? I can't help thinking you're a fathead. Oh, awfully sorry! I've just seen by your P.S. that you're a girl. Under the circumstances, perhaps you're not a fathead.

D.M., DERBY: Thanks for your Merry letter. There's a joke there, but nobody else will see it except you and I. I'm very flattered by what you say, particularly because you're a girl. But why do you think Willy and I are comical? Willy is really a young ass, and I'm quite a serious chap. You needn't worry about Irene and Co.—they'll be in most of the stories in future, and pretty prominently, too. I don't know which girl Nipper likes best, but I'll ask him—though I can't guarantee he'll reply, because he's a modest chap where girls are concerned.

CHARLES PRICE, LEEDS: Got your two letters a few days ago. Where do you find your notepaper? Of course I can fight Ernest Lawrence, of the College

House, and I'll bet he wouldn't knock me out in two rounds, as you suggest. In fact, I'd probably lick him, though I'll admit he sent me to sleep once. Your question—When shall I go up into the Fifth?—is a sore one with me. If there was any justice in this world, I should have been in the Sixth by now. But, somehow, masters seem to have a grudge against me, and for no earthly reason they give me rotten marks at exams. I've got an idea those stories of yours are just spoof, and I'll bet they're awful, anyhow.

BEN WORMALD, LEEDS: A good idea of yours to save postage by shoving your letter in Charlie's envelope—and it looks as if you've pinched some of his paper too. If either Church or McClure threatened to give me a black eye, I'd biff him sideways, and put him in his place.

L. C. COX, COUTHMOOR, BERKS: Don't be silly. How can one fellow lend another fellow some of his brains? You say you would like to praise my Trackett Grim stories. Well, why don't you? Everybody else does. Of course I'm good at batting—and I think you're good at telling whoppers. You can't make me believe you scored five centuries this season, and took four wickets for six runs. It's possible, of course, but I believe you're pulling my leg—or trying to. Nobody's ever succeeded yet.

INTERESTED, FINSBURY PARK: I'm not going to marry anybody until I grow up, so don't be so jolly dotty—talking about coming to my wedding!

S.W., BLUNTISHAM, HANTS: Bravo! You've done jolly well in three months, and I like your remarks about the wonderful detective stories you mention. As this is a private reply to you alone, I won't add that you mean the Trackett Grim yarns. With regard to your wish that the Mag. should be varied, this has already been granted, so you ought to be pleased. Now for your questions. Singleton's study is N, and the selfish beggar has the whole room to himself. Clarence Fellowe is in Study I, and his study mates are Skelton and Ellmore. Jarrow shares Study J with Armstrong and Griffith. Alf Brent is with Archie Glenthorne in an extra study at the end of the Remove passage, and Fatty Little is in Study L with the Trotwood twins. And they're all in the Ancient House.

(NOTE.—I've got lots of other letters to answer, but Nipper won't give me any more space this week, so blame him if you haven't had your reply. I'll deal with a big batch next week, so look out).

UNCLE EDWARD.

TRAVEL TALES.



By An Old Boy

(Lord Dorrimore's Weekly Trifle)

No. 3.—A FIGHT WITH A DEVIL-FISH.

AS a sportsman, I've had some exciting adventures and some hair-breath escapes on land. But for real sport give me the sea. Hunting lions and tigers is tame work compared with catching sting-rays, or sea-bats. This is the real devil-fish, and the most deadly creature in the ocean. Out in the Caribbean, in my yacht the Wanderer, I once saw a native boatman killed by a lightning stroke of a sting-ray's spiked whip tail. It touched him in the arm, and he fell like a log, his arm paralysed. In three minutes the poor fellow was dead.

I had a narrow escape myself once. We hooked a big fellow weighing about three-quarters of a ton, and we managed to stun him and then get a rope through his nostrils, and haul him up to the side of the boat. But when we tried to get him in, he woke up, and began to thrash and churn the water, darting and swinging his terrible whip-like tail in all directions, hitting the side of the boat with it, and sending it inboard.

To escape the tail, where the poison is, we had to move as far out of reach as possible, and in moving we shifted the balance of the boat, and caused it to swing as if on a pivot. The ray whirled us round and round in giddy circles. Four revolver shots were sent through its head; it was stabbed in twenty places with a hunter's knife, and then whacked across the head with a heavy piece of wood. All this merely disabled him.

In the end, after landing him, we had to lay a tree-trunk across his hindquarters and cut his whip off. I never saw anything so full of vitality. It's almost impossible to kill them. The tenacity of life of these ugly brutes is amazing.

Oh, yes! Life at sea has its thrilling aspects no less than life on land.

WORDY WISDOM



Tangled Tosh - By Timothy Tucker

No. 3.—THE DETERIORATION OF CIVILISATION.

WHAT of civilisation? Is there such a thing in these heterogeneous days of irrespective irresponsibility and gargantuan ignorance? After all, my friends, civilisation is but a comparative illusion of illimitable depth. By this I mean that civilisation does not exist.

You, in your self-satisfied state of simplicity and obscurantism, fondly believe that we are all living in an age of millenniumistic progress. Give your mind to this problem of Brobdingnagian proportions!

It may not be generally realised, but the discrepancies in our so-called civilisation are not manifestly multiferous and immutably numerous. That is no hallucination, but incontestable fact.

In the limbo of the forgotten past there were barbaric and heathenistic dances which would be looked upon with irrevocable horror in these days. But what is the fox-trot but a recrudescence of the heathen trait? What is the jazz but a reverberatory resurrection of bygone cannibalistic capers?

And let me give a word of warning about football and cricket and tennis, and such-like retrogressive backslidings. Let me sound the clarion call of caution against all games of a pre-civilised era. They can do nothing but monumental harm and tremendous damage.

There is no doubt that civilisation has been degenerating for centuries, although in microphotographically insignificant spasms. But, my friends, at this same rate of deterioration, in fifty thousand million years from now we shall be—

(Safely out of your way, thank goodness!

—E.D.)

NOTE THIS!

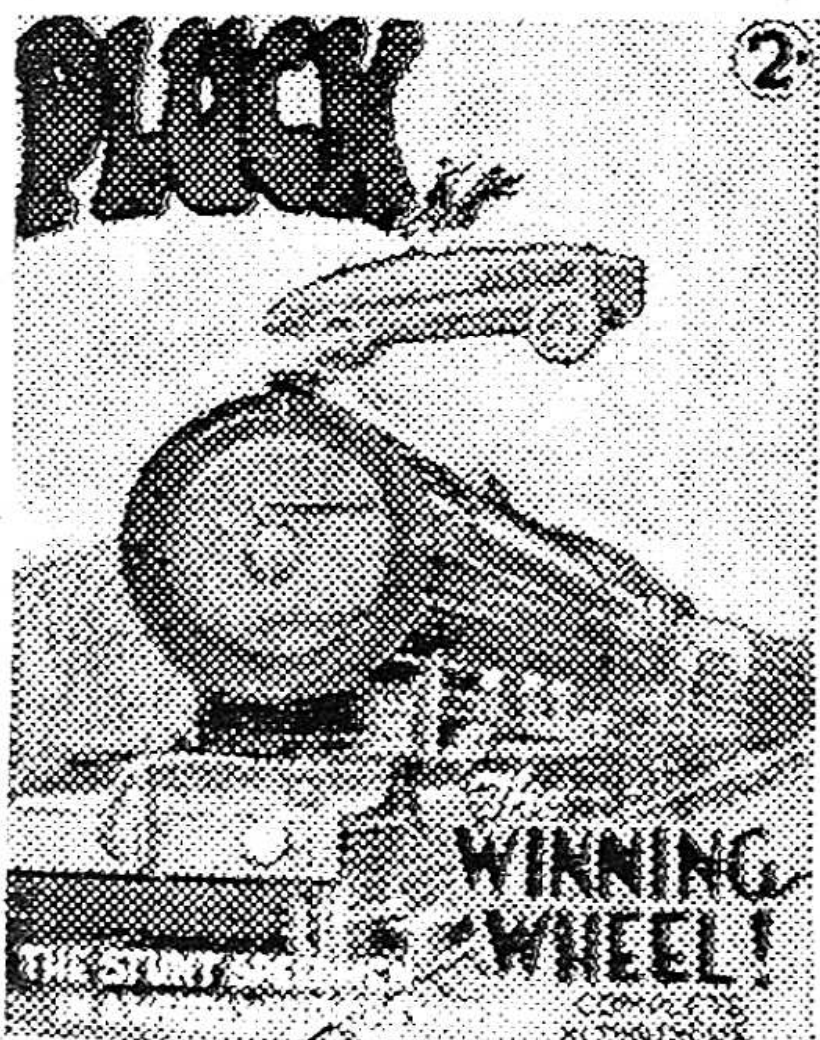
You'll find the first story of John S. Margerison's great new Sporting Series—

"BRITAIN'S CHAMPIONSHIP CHASERS!"

in this week's Extra-Special number of that famous Sports-story paper, the

BOYS' REALM

Now On Sale—Price 2d.



Meet the Stunt Speedman in a 12,000-word complete story in this week's **PLUCK**. This fine paper is packed tight with school, sport and adventure stories—get a copy to-day.

Every Tuesday—2d.

1,000,000 FOUR-FOLD HAIR-BEAUTY GIFTS.

"HARLENE-HAIR-DRILL" FOR ALL

To every Man and Woman who appreciates the pleasure, yes, and the value of possessing a head of Healthy, Abundant Hair, this page with its special Gift Offer is of the Greatest Importance.

If your Hair is Dull, Lifeless and Impoverished, there is a Four-fold Gift—the famous "Harlene-Hair-Drill" Outfit—ready to bring your Hair back to Rich, Radiant Health.

Why should you worry about the condition of your Hair, when such a splendid Gift Outfit is ready for your acceptance?

THE FOUNDATION OF BEAUTIFUL HAIR FREE TO YOU



This is the **FREE** Four-Fold Gift Outfit which you are asked to accept. It is comprised of all the necessities for a complete Hair-growing campaign. Post the coupon **NOW**.

Each Free Gift contains the following:—

1. A Trial Bottle of "Harlene," the ideal liquid food and natural growth-promoting tonic for the hair.
2. A Packet of "Cremex" Shampoo. This is an antiseptic purifier which thoroughly cleanses the hair and scalp of all scurf, etc.
3. A Bottle of "Uzon" Brilliantine, which gives the final touch of beauty to the hair.
4. A Copy of the "Hair-Drill" Manual—the most clearly written treatise on the toilet ever produced.

After a Free Trial you will be able to obtain further supplies of "Harlene" at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d. and 4s. 9d. per bottle; "Uzon" Brilliantine at 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. per bottle; "Cremex" Shampoo Powders at 1s. 6d. per box of seven shampoos (single packets 3d. each); and "Astol" for Grey Hair at 3s. and 5s. per bottle, from Chemists and Stores all over the world.

"HARLENE" FREE GIFT FORM.

Detach and post to **EDWARDS' HARLENE, Ltd., 20, 22, 24 & 26, Lamb's Conduit Street, London, W.C.1.**

Dear Sirs,—Please send me your free "Harlene" Four-Fold Hair Growing Outfit as described. I enclose 4d. in stamps for postage and packing of parcel to my address.

Nelson Lee, 21/6/24.

NOTE TO READER.

Write your full name and address clearly on a plain piece of paper, pin this coupon to it, and post as directed above. (Mark envelope "Sample Dept.")

N.B.—If your hair is **GREY**, enclose extra 2d. stamp—6d. in all—and a **FREE** bottle of "Astol" for Grey Hair will also be sent you.



2/6 Weekly

is all you pay for our No. 400A Mead "Marvel"—the finest cycle ever offered on such exceptionally easy terms. Brilliantly plated; richly enamelled, lined in colours. Sent packed free carriage paid on

15 DAYS' FREE TRIAL.

Fully warranted. Money refunded if dissatisfied. Old machines exchanged. Big bargains in factory soiled mounts. Tyres and accessories 33 1/3 per cent below shop prices. Write TO-DAY for testimonials and illustrated art catalogue.

Mead

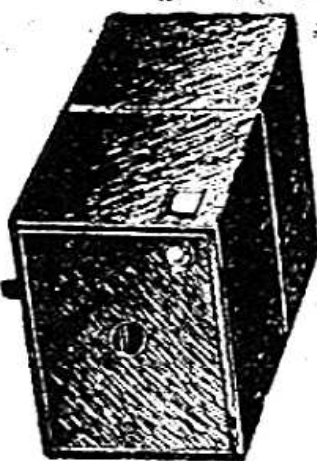
Cycle Company (Inc.),
(Dept. B797) Birmingham

500 BRITISH MADE CAMERAS

Complete with Optically Ground Convex Lens assuring clearly defined photos (size 2 1/2 x 1 3/4). Shutter and Brilliant View Finder. Also best quality Plate, Developing and Fixing Chemicals, Sensitized Paper and Printing Frame. Complete Camera and Outfit. Catalogue 1,000 Big Bargains, post free.

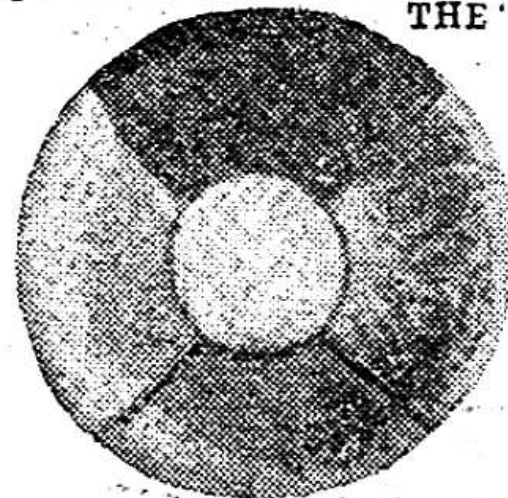
THE LEEDS BARGAIN CO.
(U.J.) 31, Kendal Lane Leeds.

Sale Price
1/3
Post 3d.



THE "HELIFANT" GAMES BALL.

(provisionally patented)
The finest air ball ever invented. Stronger than any leather football. Hand finished. Pure rubber outer casing. Easily the best bouncer. Built to stand rough use. A boy's best pal. PRICES: 1/6, 2/6, 4/9, post free from sole makers.—The Blackpool Rubber Novelties Co., 27, Clifton Street, Blackpool.



Height Increased **5/-** Complete
In 30 Days. Course.

No Appliances. No Drugs. No Dieting. The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS. Send stamp for particulars and testimonials.—Melvin Strong, Ltd. (Dept. S), 10 Ludgate Hill, London, Eng.



6-8 DAY JEWELLED LEVER WATCH

Offered to "Nelson Lee Library" Readers on our Unbeatable Bargain Terms.

READ OUR BRIEF DESCRIPTION. Gent.'s full-size Keyless 8-day Lever Watch, heavy nickel-silver finished case. Jewelled interchangeable lever movement, with visible escapement of highest workmanship (3 prize medals). All latest improvements, including safety catch to prevent overwinding. Each watch carefully adjusted to keep accurate time. Only wants winding once a week. A high-class serviceable watch, fully guaranteed 10 years.

OUR UNEQUALLED TERMS.

We send this handsome watch post paid upon receipt of 6d. only. After receiving watch, if satisfied, you send 3/- more and the balance by instalments of 4/- a month, until only 30/- is paid. Price, full cash with order (or within 7 days of receipt), 27/6 only. Cash returned willingly if not absolutely satisfied and watch is returned within 7 days. Send P.O. or Stamps now to:—



FREE
CHAIN
GIVEN
WITH
EVERY
WATCH

SIMPSON'S (BRIGHTON)
Ltd. (Dept. 388),
94, Queen's Road,
BRIGHTON, Sussex.



HEIGHT COUNTS

in winning success. Let the Girvan System increase your height. Send P.C. for particulars of our £100 guarantee to Enquiry Dept. A.M.P., 17, Stroud Green Road, London, N. 4.

LADS WANTED NOW FOR AUSTRALIA

Aged 14 to 19. Good health and character. Assisted passages. Advice how to go and what to do on arrival FREE from CHURCH ARMY. Write or call for full particulars of opportunities awaiting you.—Church Army, 25, Cockspur Street, S.W.1.

MY GREAT OFFER

I supply the finest Coventry-built cycles from £5-5-0 cash or 2/- weekly. Any cycle sent on 14 days' approval, packed free and carriage paid, on receipt of small deposit. Write for free bargain lists now.



The **O'Brien** World's Largest Cycle Dealer, Dept. 24, COVENTRY

Be sure and mention "The Nelson Lee Library" when communicating with advertisers.