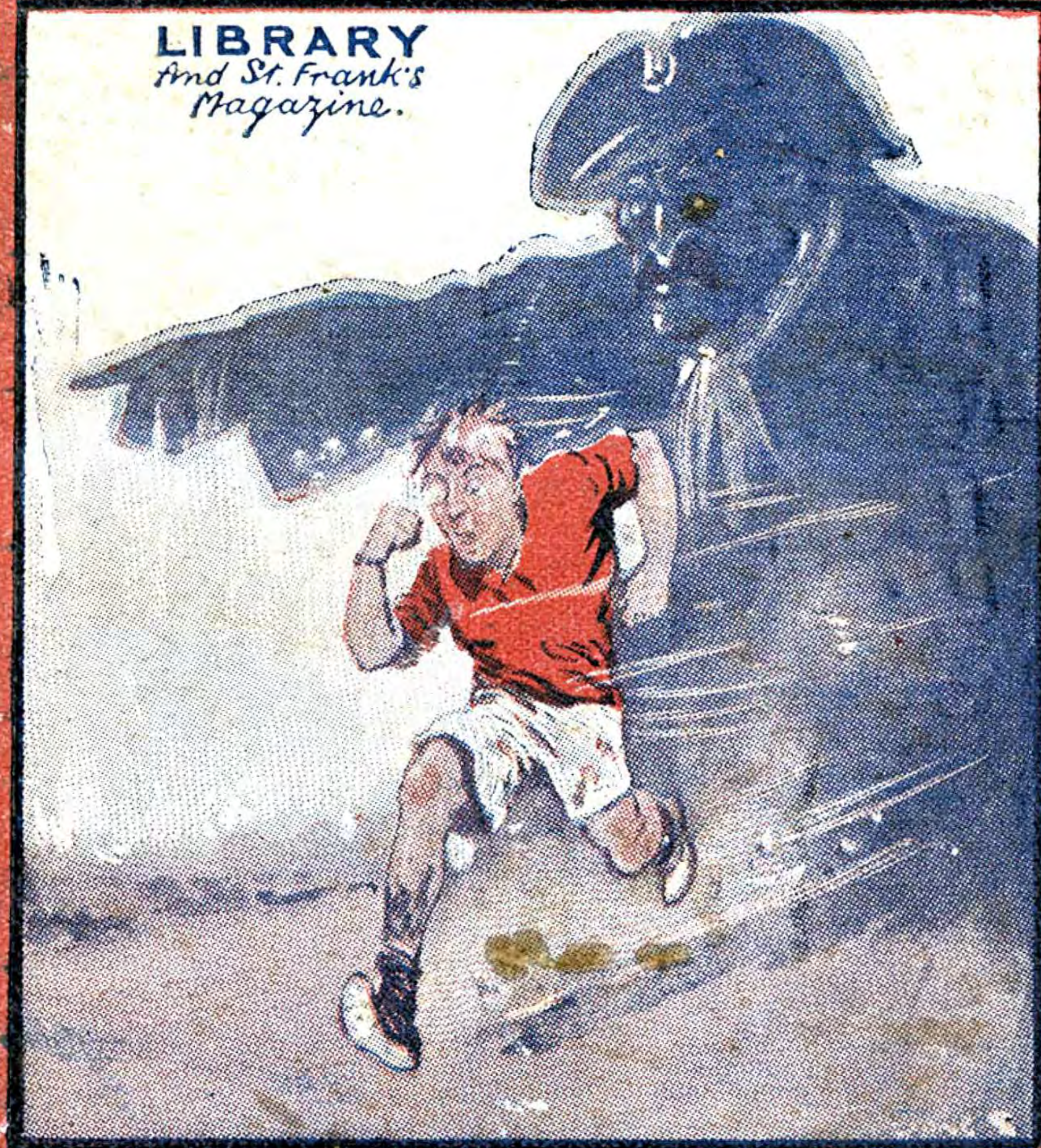


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ARCHIE'S AWFUL ANCESTOR!

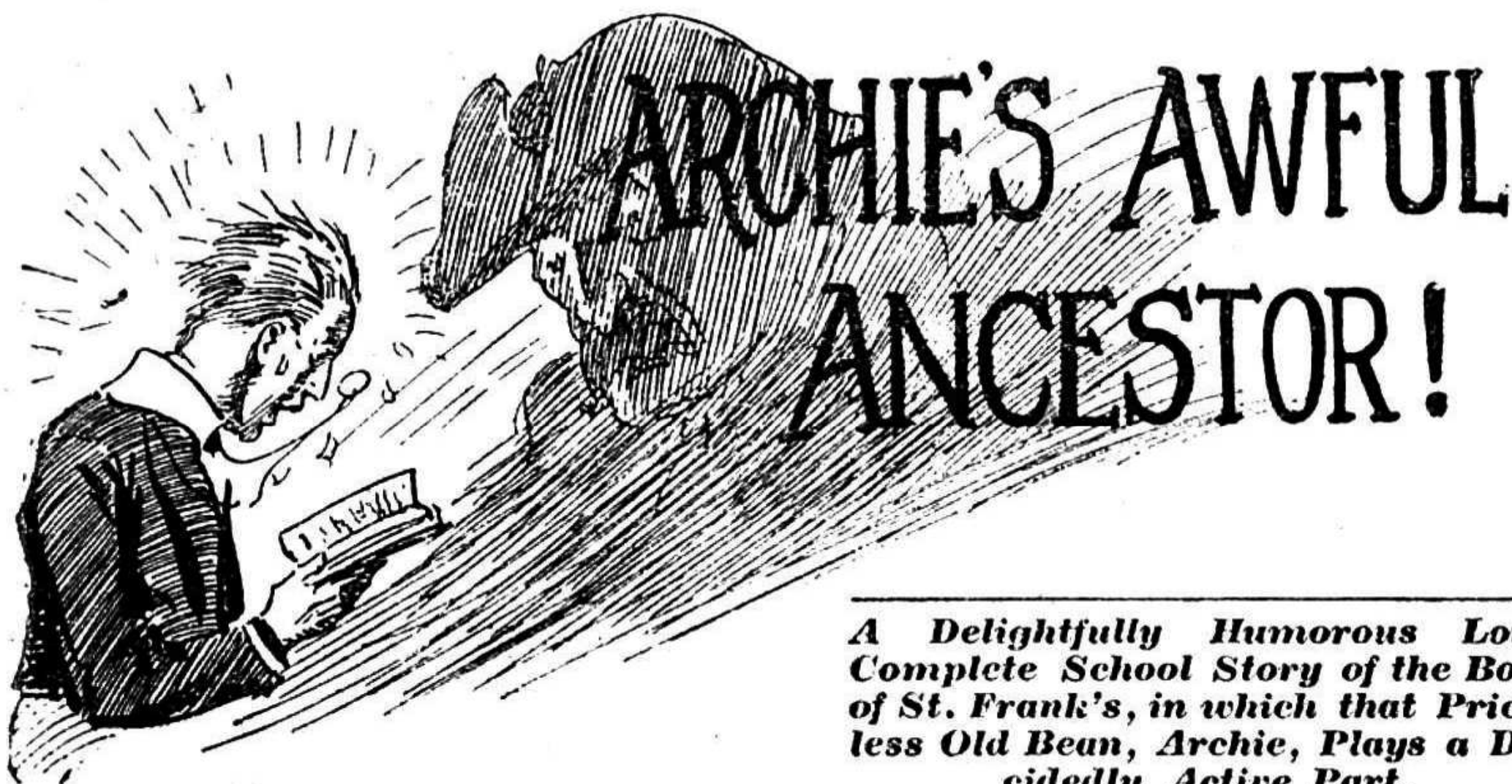
A Laughable Long Complete School Story of the Genial Ass at St. Frank's

THE MAN FROM HEADQUARTERS!

This Week's Thrilling Story of JIM THE PENMAN, introducing the famous detective NELSON LEE, and his clever assistant, NIPPER.



Archie sailed upwards in a really beautiful arc, and shot over the hedge without having time to bid the bull "Good-morning."



A Delightfully Humorous Long Complete School Story of the Boys of St. Frank's, in which that Priceless Old Bean, Archie, Plays a Decidedly Active Part.

In response to a great number of requests, we are taking the opportunity of the next few weeks before Christmas of presenting complete stories written around certain favourite characters at St. Frank's. We begin this week with the laughable adventures of the languorous Archie, who, haunted by some dread fear, astonishes his schoolfellows by a sudden mania for violent forms of physical exertion. What is the cause of this extraordinary change in Archie? How did he overcome that tired feeling? Was it some specific remedy, some form of tonic or treatment that one sees advertised for tired folk? These questions, dear reader, must be answered in their proper place, which is in the narrative below.

THE EDITOR.

By Edwy Searles Brooks

CHAPTER I.

ARCHIE'S BIRTHDAY.

TAP—tap!

Archie Glenthorne, of the Fourth Form at St. Frank's, sat up in bed and blinked. He was attired in startling orange and black pyjamas, and this sudden vision rising from the white sheets would have probably startled the rest of the Fourth if they had been present.

But Archie was alone—having, in fact, a bed-room entirely to himself. This was one of the little privileges which the swell of the Ancient House enjoyed.

"What-ho!" he observed languidly. "A knock from without! Kindly enter, laddie, and cease this frightful disturbance!"

The door noiselessly opened, and Phipps glided in. Phipps was carrying a tray, and superbly trained as the man was, he nearly faltered in his stride, as he caught sight of the vision in the bed.

"Good-morning, sir," he said respectfully. "Your tea, sir."

"Oh, rather!" remarked Archie, with a yawn. "Tea, what? The good old livener, as it were. Kindly proceed to whizz round and administer the brew to the young master. In other words, Phipps, this is absolutely the stuff to give them!"

Phipps rallied round, but it was noticeable that his manner had become slightly cold. This was rather curious, because Phipps had been feeling in a particularly bright humour this morning.

While Archie sipped the tea, the valet crossed to the window, pulled up the blind, and generally busied himself with numerous little tasks about the room. The full daylight of the November morning was now flooding into the room, and Archie was shown up startlingly.

"It appears, Phipps, that the old humour is somewhat reticent this morning," observed Archie, after a while. "I mean to say, you're not absolutely deafening me with your chatty conversation. I trust nothing is amiss, old chestnut."

"Nothing personally, sir, thank you."

"No frightful deaths in the family, or anything of that sort or order?"

"No, sir."

"Then be good enough to explain the reason for the somewhat black and sultry look," said Archie. "Dash it all, Phipps, you're absolutely giving me the cold optic."

"If I might venture to suggest, sir, the pyjamas," said Phipps reluctantly. "There has been a slight change since last night —"

"Oh, the good old sleeping rags?" interrupted Archie brightly. "The fact is, laddie, I thought the whole thing out last night before dropping into the good old comatose state. And it struck the young master that the green pyjamas were somewhat too quiet. What do you say, Phipps?"

"I am sorry, Master Archibald, but I warned you particularly against this suit," said Phipps icily. "The colour scheme is quite contradictory to all good taste. However, if you insist—"

"Positively, Phipps," said Archie, feeling for his monocle, and failing to find it. "This, dash it, is getting somewhat near the edge. I mean, a chappie can't absolutely shove himself into his own particular garments without all this dashed bother. And this, if my memory is correct, happens to be my birthday."

"Yes, sir," said Phipps.

He was still distant, for Archie had shown no signs of relenting. And while the elegant junior dressed there was a tense silence in the room. Phipps was always cold if his young master neglected his advice.

Archie, however, could be firm at times, and he had worn the yellow and black pyjamas in special honour of his birthday—and certainly wasn't going to be dictated to by his valet.

He went downstairs in a thoughtful mood. In his heart he knew well enough that he would have to knuckle under sooner or later. And he was trying to think of some method whereby he could do so gracefully. He hated to think of Phipps being triumphant.

Archie was especially elegant this morning. Being his birthday, he had donned a brand new suit, a special silk shirt, and a wonderful necktie of silver stripes with a black background.

He reached the junior passage in safety, and was rather disappointed because nobody had yet wished him many happy returns of the day. The occasion appeared to be of no importance among the other fellows.

Curious sounds hit upon his ear as he drew near the region of Study D. Archie paused cautiously. On several occasions he had met with disaster in this particular neighbourhood. Indeed, he had grown to look upon this section of the passage as a spot fraught with sinister perils.

However, as the sounds simmered down he continued his walk, quickening his pace,

in order to cover the dangerous ground without delay. It was rather a pity he hesitated, for just as he drew opposite the door of Study D, the portal flew open, and something came hurtling out.

Crash!

Archie received the whirling mass fairly in the centre, and the manner in which he sat down in the passage would have caused tremendous amusement if there had been any witnesses. The thud was heard all over the Ancient House, but nobody took any particular notice. Such thuds as these were too common to be heeded.

Dimly, Archie wondered if the world had come to an end. He couldn't be quite sure. All he knew was that something massive was attempting to bend his ribs in, that another object was pressing his face with unnecessary violence against the floor, and that a particularly hard football boot was whirling about in the vicinity of his gaze.

"Fathead!" gasped the mass. "What's the idea of getting in my way like that? I'm going to slaughter you for this!"

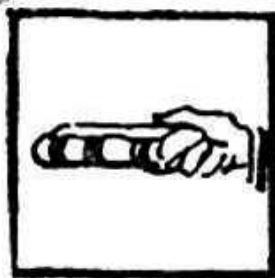
Archie was doubly dazed now. He sat up in a kind of trance. There was nothing particularly staggering in being biffed over opposite Study D. But to find that Edward Oswald Handforth was the ejected one positively took Archie's breath completely away.

But it was the cold truth. For once in a way, Church and McClure had arisen in their might, and had calmly and deliberately chucked their leader out. It was just Archie's luck that he happened to be in the way.

As a commencement to his birthday it was hardly a good omen.

CHAPTER II.

A PRESENT FROM WILLY.



HANDFORTH dusted himself down vigorously.

"On the whole, I'll let you off that biffing," he said graciously. "If you hadn't been in the way I might have copped a fearful cropper. I always knew you were soft, Archie, but this is the first time I've really tested you thoroughly. You can stop there if you like—you look quite graceful in that position."

At the moment Archie was lying flat on his back, having insufficient strength to rise. One attempt had been enough, and he was now recovering his breath. Besides, he felt that it would be safer to keep low.

"Kindly dash off and yell for Phipps!" he said feebly. "I'm absolutely dithery at the back of the spine. In fact, dash you, I believe that sundry bones are not only broken, but positively shattered."

"Rats!" said Handforth gruffly. "There's nothing the matter with you,

Idiot! On second thoughts you'd better clear off. I want the passage clear in a couple of jiffs. There's going to be murder done."

"It strikes me, old tomato, that the dread task has already been accomplished," breathed Archie. "Stand by with the lifeline, for I am about to expire. This is one of my last breaths!"

"Good!" said Handforth callously. "I heard somebody saying it's your birthday to-day. If you stop here much longer, you'll have a good one. You'll have Church and McClure on your chest both at once!"

During the past few moments, Handforth had removed his waistcoat, his collar and tie, and he was just finishing the task of rolling up his sleeves. Apparently he meant business.

"Now!" he said firmly.

He charged into Study D, and found Church and McClure forming a kind of flank just against the table. They were both stripped for action, as it were, and Handforth paused. There was something about Church and McClure that he didn't quite like. Occasionally, they would defend themselves with valiant vigour, but as a rule they soon succumbed.

But just now they looked really dangerous.

"Look here, old man, chuck it!" said Church hoarsely. "If you come for us, we'll chuck you out a second time. And after that we'll roll you along the passage, and kick you down the Ancient House steps!"

"By George!" said Handforth, taking a deep breath.

He didn't quite know what to do. He had completely forgotten the origin of the argument—after all, that was a matter of minor importance. He only knew that Church and McClure had defied him. But, somehow, instead of his chums littering up the passage, they had turned upon him with extraordinary violence. And Handforth was nonplussed.

But there was only one thing to be done. Insubordination was too awful to be stood. Church and McClure had hurled him out, and Church and McClure had to bear the consequences.

Handforth sailed in like a destroyer going into action. And Archie Glen-thorne only just retired from the danger zone in the nick of time. On this occasion Handforth came out with double force, and nearly bored his way through the opposite wall.

He was just sitting up with a silly, bewildered look on his face, when his minor came sauntering along the passage. Willy had a peculiar way of sauntering. In the first place, he turned the corner in a kind of cartwheel, his feet appearing first. After that he came down the corridor something after the fashion of a crab, shuffling sideways and dragging his feet along in a

manner that would have made his mother weep.

He really didn't notice his major until he suddenly sat down upon him. For even Willy didn't possess eyes in the back of his head, and he certainly had no idea that the passage was obstructed.

"Hallo! What's the idea of squatting out here and looking soppy?" he asked, as he leapt to his feet. "My hat! That's a lovely black eye you've got! And I shouldn't be surprised if that bump on your head develops quite nicely during the next hour."

"You clear off!" said Church from the doorway. "We're just going to pick Handy up and finish the job. The rotter tried to read his latest serial to us, and we jibbed. We can stand a few things, but Handy's serials are too horrible for words."

Willy grinned

"Good old Ted!" he said cheerfully. "There's nothing like a taste of your own medicine to put you in order. All right, my sons—carry on the good work! While you're about it you might as well take him along to the fountain and give him a ducking. I can't stop now—I've got an important appointment."

"You—you little rotter," panted Handforth desperately. "You're my brother, aren't you?"

"I can't help a misfortune like that," said Willy tartly. "There's no need to remind me of these things."

"You're a Handforth, and it's up to us to stand together in this crisis!" roared Edward Oswald, struggling to his feet, and leaning against the wall for support.

"What's the good of talking about standing together—you can't stand anyhow!" retorted Willy. "It's high time that Church and McClure put you in your place. I'm glad to see it. I owe you one for the way you pushed my face into the flower-bed last week."

Willy drove his hands into his pockets and marched off, whistling—totally indifferent to the ultimate fate of his major. His destination proved to be Archie Glen-thorne's study.

The hero of the Third couldn't be bothered with door handles. He entered the study by the simple process of kicking the door open, and he had only got two paces inside the room when he paused.

"What, another one?" he asked in surprise. "Here I come, as cheerful as a lark with a birthday present to you, and all you can do is to lie on the couch and gasp like a dying fish."

Willy spoke disgustedly. Archie Glen-thorne was certainly a pitiable-looking object. He had collapsed upon the lounge, and was slowly recovering. But at the moment his strength had entirely deserted him.

CHAPTER III.

ALL ALIVE AND KICKING.



WILLY approached the couch significantly. "It's all right, Archie—you needn't explain," he said. "I've just remembered what's happening out in the passage. I'll bet my brace buttons that you caught one of Ted's specials."

Archie opened his eyes.

"As a matter of fact, old caterpillar, I rather think I caught about half a dozen of Ted's specials in one go," he said feebly. "To be absolutely exact, I caught the frightful bounder all at once. He struck me in the midriff before I could remove the good old carcase. And this, laddie, is the result. You observe Archie, on his birthday morn, literally a chunk of wreckage for the rest of the day."

"Don't you believe it," said Willy. "All you've got to do is to jump up, dash about a bit, and you'll feel as right as ninepence."

"But, you frightful slice of lemon, I haven't the slightest inclination to feel like ninepence!" replied Archie faintly. "Kindly trickle forth and relieve me of your disturbing presence. Be good enough to retire into the undergrowth."

"Well, that's a nice way to greet me when I've brought you a birthday present," said Willy indignantly. "Here it is—all wrapped up, and waiting to give you a surprise. You won't credit what a sacrifice I've made for the sake of your giddy birthday."

Willy produced from his pocket a small cardboard box. When he had started out from his own quarters, the box had been quite whole, but owing to various misadventures on the way there were one or two gaps apparent. Willy placed the box on Archie's chest, and the shock Archie by the hand.

"Just a little token of my regard," he said cheerfully. "Many happy returns of the day. I hope your declining years will be peaceful and tranquil, because I shouldn't like to think of you coming to a sticky end."

"A thousand thanks, old walnut," said Archie dreamily. "Dashed good of you to remember me like this. One day I shall rally round and return the good old compliment. But at the moment I shall take it as an act of grace if you will kindly slither into the offing."

"Right you are—anything to oblige," said Willy readily.

He slithered into the offing by the simple process of diving out of the window. Archie

closed his eyes and slept. This was quite an easy matter for him. On the average, he dropped off to sleep about twenty-five times during the day.

This morning, too, he was feeling particularly worn out. First of all, Phipps had upset him. Then Handforth had upset him even more literally. And it would take Archie a long time to recover.

He dreamed that he was walking down Bannington High Street in a new lounge suit with black and gold stripes. Phipps appeared in the middle of the road with a tea-tray, and it was just at this point that Archie awoke with a sudden start. Something cold had landed on his neck.

"Good gad!" he gasped sleepily.

He opened his eyes, and found himself staring straight into the face of a repulsive black object which had paused on his shirt front. The thing was a beetle, and its feelers were moving about energetically.

"Oddslife!" breathed Archie faintly. "I mean, what about it? This is absolutely——"

The cold object on his neck moved, and commenced investigating the region immediately behind Archie's ear. He made one wild grab, and seized a cold, clammy article which wriggled in his fingers. The unfortunate Archie felt a shiver pass down his spine, and his gaze became fixed and glassy.

The beetle on his chest was bad enough, but to find a green frog in his fingers was more than he had bargained for. And he was only just awake. Full realisation dawned upon him.

Archie leapt off the couch with one clean swing, and if any of the other fellows had been present they would have rubbed their eyes with amazement. In all his life Archie had never moved so rapidly before.

He landed on his feet, and several small objects dropped from him in a shower. The beetle whizzed under the table for safety, and a couple of spiders became so entangled in the carpet that they made no attempt to escape. There was a snail, too, to say nothing of a couple of centipedes.

"Help!" howled Archie, his voice shattering the stillness of the room. "Phipps! S.O.S., and all that sort of stuff! Phipps, old scout, kindly whiz round and save the young master's life!"

With one leap, Archie bounded through the window, and Reggie Pitt and Jack Grey paused on the Ancient House steps and rubbed their eyes. Pitt turned to his chum dazedly.

"Did you see it?" he asked.

"That streak that went into the shrubbery?" said Jack. "Yes, I saw it. I believe it was Archie shooting along at about

fifty miles an hour! Either he's gone mad, or else we've seen double!"

Archie, in the meantime, seemed to have one set idea in his mind. He ran round the playing-fields twice, and didn't come to a halt until all his breath had gone. He had a horrible conviction that a third centipede had dropped down his back, but he couldn't be quite sure.

The futility of running about dawned upon him, and he decided that his only safe course was to strip, and get into new attire. He never quite remembered how he got indoors, but he found Phipps ready to wait

"If you could dispense with those pyjamas, sir—" began Phipps.

"Oh, rather! The pyjamas, what?" said Archie. "I take it they offend the old eyesight department. A poisonous wrench, Phipps, but you deserve anything this morning. The pyjamas, laddie, shall be forthwith thrust into the limbo of the past."

"Thank you, sir," said Phipps gently.

The old, placid look returned to his face, and he lost no time in seizing the black and gold atrocities and placing them well beyond Archie's reach.

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upon him. Phipps came to the rescue manfully.

By the time Archie was dressed again, he was feeling more easy in mind, but the unusual exercise had left him limp and shaky.

"Good old Phipps!" he murmured gratefully. "I mean to say, what should I do without you, old darling? What, as it were, should I do without you bustling about and making life peaceful?"

"I always try to serve you well, Master Archie," said Phipps.

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie. "And anything that I can do, Phipps, you've only got to warble the good old syllable. I'm in your debt, old chunk. You've given the young master fresh hope in life."

CHAPTER IV.

ONE ANCESTOR TOO MANY.



MORNING lessons were unusually quiet.

For one thing, Archie Glenthorne was exceptionally languid, and for another, Handforth and Co. were not on speaking terms. There were none of the usual ructions from their particular corner.

Mr. Crowell, who presided over the Ancient Fourth, easily guessed that there had been trouble. But it was apparently reversed on this occasion. While Church and McClure were unmarked, Handforth not

only had a black eye, but several other trophies of battle. And he was also strangely subdued.

Mr. Crowell said nothing. Privately, he thought it was just as well, perhaps, for Handforth to be the victim for once. It was these little reverses that kept the leader of Study D in his proper place.

As soon as lessons were over, Archie tottered to his study, assisted by Alf Brent.

"Rest, old companion, is the only thing that I require," murmured Archie, as he leaned on his study mate's arm. "After that foul experience of this morning I can feel the old tissues absolutely quivering at the roots. The process of restoration will be long and tedious, but forty of the best will work sundry wonders."

"It's only your imagination, old man," grinned Alf. "Handy didn't hurt you much, and as for that rushing round, the exercise was just what you needed. This is your birthday—why not turn over a new leaf and show the chaps that you can whack 'em to smithereens at athletics?"

"A somewhat juicy scheme, but I rather think I'll let it flow past," replied Archie. "I don't mind admitting I feel absolutely shop-soiled. When it comes to athletics, I'm about as much use as an umbrella during a tornado. What I mean is, I couldn't stay the pace, old dear."

Alf grinned, and allowed Archie to dispose himself at full length upon the lounge. They both noticed a neat parcel lying on the table, and Alf picked it up curiously.

"Hallo, it's for you," he said. "A book, by the look of it. Another birthday present, I expect— Yes, here we are. 'From Two Friends in the Fourth, Wishing You Many Happy Returns of the Day.' Modest chaps—they don't even give their names."

Archie beamed.

"Jolly decent of the dear lads to remember the occaish," he observed. "Slice it open, Alf, and let us gaze into the mysteries of the interior. I trust the book will prove to be jolly and cheerful and all that sort of thing."

"Probably a volume on fashions," he added, as he removed the wrapper. "Well, I'm blessed!"

The book which emerged was not exactly a new publication. It was leather bound, old and worn, with faded covers. When Alf opened it, he saw that the paper was discoloured with age. He turned it over and looked at the back. And he grinned when he read the inscription: "Glimpses Into British Ancestry."

"Somebody's pulling your leg, I expect," chuckled Alf. "Take a look at it, Archie, and while away the time. I can't stop—

I've got to turn out on Little Side for practice. I hope it keeps you awake."

He went out of the study with a chuckle, leaving Archie turning over the leaves of the book with languid interest. Lying on that couch, with nothing particular to do, was just Archie's mark. He didn't feel quite so sleepy as usual, so he examined the pages with mild attention.

"What-ho! The good old families of Britain, what?" he observed. "Dashed interesting, and all this and that, but scarcely the book to enliven a dull half-hour. I mean— What-ho! In other words, hallo, hallo! The good old Glenthorne regiment appears to be in full force."

Archie had arrived at a chapter entitled "The Fighting Glenthornes—Some Remarkable Records of their Line."

"Good!" murmured Archie. "In fact, not merely good, but positively top-hole! Let us delve into the dim and distant past of the family. Dash it, I didn't even know the volume existed. I shall have to send it along to the pater after I have taken a few dips."

Archie was particularly interested, because the chapter concerning his own family dealt with matters which he had never previously heard of. Yet Archie had boasted that he knew his family tree to its very roots.

The Glenthornes were an ancient line—one of the most celebrated in the land. For hundreds of years there had been fighting men in the Glenthorne family. Not a single generation had passed without some of the family distinguishing themselves on the battlefield. The Glenthornes were a fighting clan.

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie, sitting up.

His languor had gone. He was clutching the book, and reading it feverishly. There were facts here that he had never hitherto dreamed of. There were facts, indeed, which filled him with a kind of horror.

From the tiniest of infants Archie had always been proudly informed that there was no skeleton in the Glenthorne cupboard. Right into the dim ages of the distant past the family had a clean, unsullied record. There were no wicked and sinister Glenthornes who had besmirched the family escutcheon. And Archie had always been placidly happy.

But as he read this book his equanimity slowly oozed away. For it seemed that the Glenthornes possessed one ancestor, at least, who could very well have been dispensed with. By all accounts he was a swashbuckling gentleman who had not only marred the good old name, but had actually ended his lurid career on the gallows.

The shock for Archie was so great that he felt absolutely weak at the joints.

CHAPTER V.

A SOMEWHAT POISONOUS POSITION.



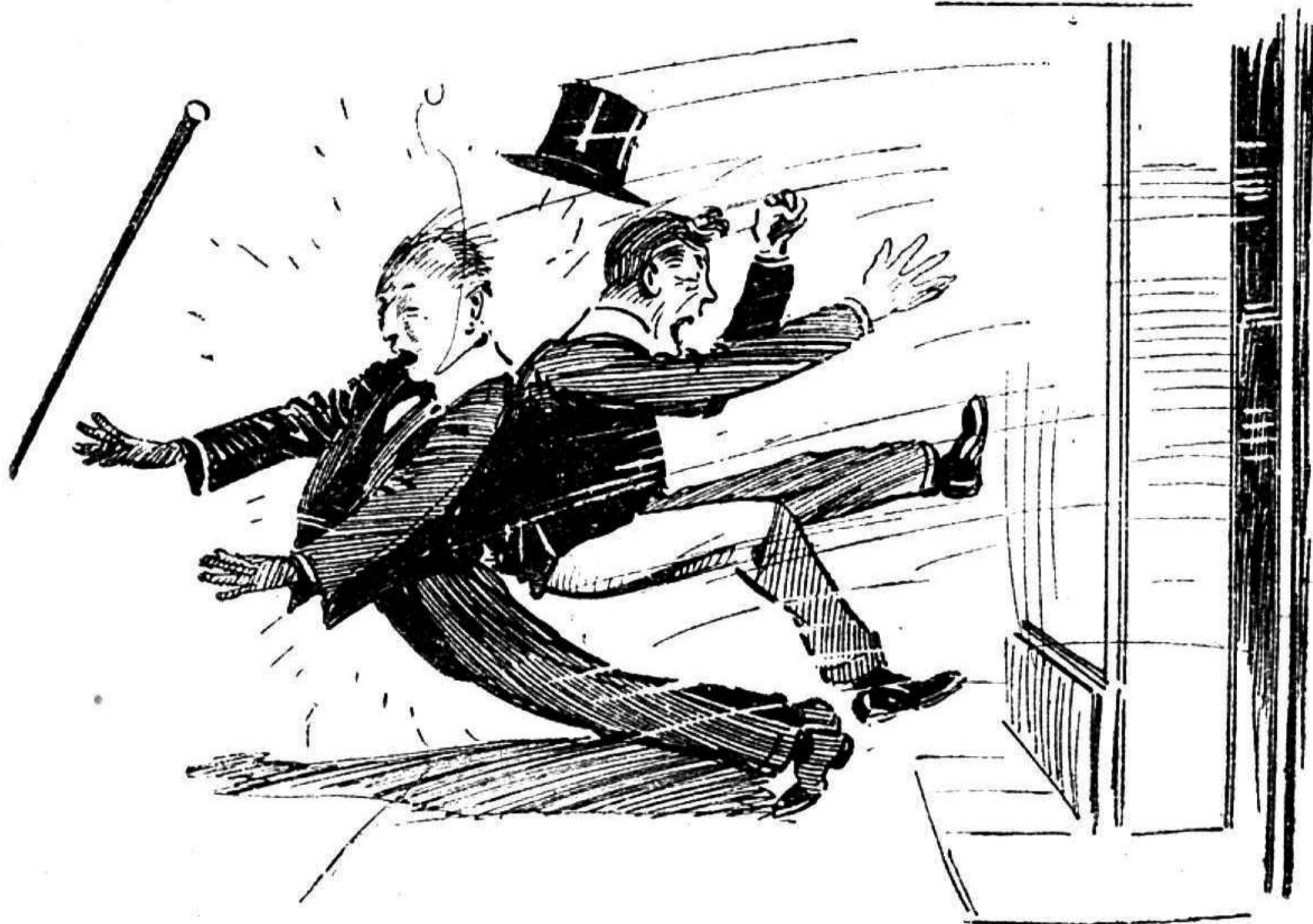
IT was at least five minutes before Archie found sufficient strength to examine the book more closely. He was so startled that he had gone slightly pale, and there was a dazed expression in his eyes.

It occurred to him that the book might be a cheap, sensational volume, written by some obscure nobody who didn't count. But a glance at the title-page killed this faint hope.

late to do that now—he knew the worst, and nothing could ever make him forget it.

"I shall absolutely tick the pater off in dashed brisk terms about this!" Archie told himself. "I mean to say, the old boy positively keeps this sort of stuff to himself. I'm not absolutely sure that he hasn't told a few whoppers! The family isn't so dashed unsullied as the pater has always maintained. Tyburn Tree, what? Oddslife! It's bad enough for a chappie's ancestor to have his head lopped off, but Tyburn Tree is positively a bit over the edge!"

Archie was greatly shocked. One might read with composure of an ancestor who had earned the king's displeasure, and



Crash!

Archie received the whirling mass fairly in the centre, and the manner in which he sat down in the passage would have caused tremendous amusement, if there had been any witnesses.

Archie knew quite a deal about such subjects, for he had taken a great interest in his ancestors, and the family histories of other great houses. And the man who had written this book was not only a titled professor of arts, but an historian whose name was famous throughout the country. It was absolutely impossible to doubt the truth of this family history.

Again, Archie turned to that dreadful chapter, and he read the pages through with a sort of fascinated fear. He felt that he wanted to burn the whole thing at once, and drive the information completely out of his mind. But it was too

ended his days with dramatic swiftness in front of a chopping block in the Tower of London. Some of the most noble families in the land regarded that sort of thing with a kind of pride.

But Tyburn Tree, as far as Archie recollected, was a sinister spot where notorious criminals had paid the penalty for their misdeeds. In fact, the book plainly and boldly stated that one General Jasper Glenthorne had been several kinds of a murderer before ornamenting Tyburn Tree with his carcase.

"It appears that General Jasper was absolutely one of the lads!" murmured

Archie sadly. "One of those dashing bounders who went about slicing other chappies into chunks with his sword."

Archie turned the pages over, and dipped into the account once more:

"There are clear indications that General Jasper Glenthorne was a scoundrel of the worst type," the account stated. "It is doubtful, indeed, if he had any real title to his commission. From a mere youth he had gone from crime to crime, establishing a notorious reputation for himself which made him feared from London to York."

"Jasper Glenthorne was an habitual drunkard before the age of twenty, and if there is anything to be said in his favour, it can be stated that he was no coward. He fought valiantly in many battles, and led his men with outstanding courage. As a soldier, he undoubtedly upheld the fine traditions of the Glenthorne family. But in every other pursuit he was unquestionably a drunken, brawling scallywag. Petty theft was not beneath him; and at least three murders can be traced to his hand."

"Jasper Glenthorne, however, paid for his crimes in full. He was hanged on Tyburn Tree amid the jeers of a great throng of spectators. But even during the brief minute before his execution, the rascal made a bold attempt to stir the popular imagination—in the hope, no doubt that his life might be spared."

"In a brief, impassioned speech, he cried out that he was in no way to blame for his actions. For he was the third son of the tenth generation, and was thus predestined to commit the deeds that had so marred his manhood. He was hanged side by side with a notorious highwayman whose name has since escaped into obscurity."

Archie shook his head dully.

"Good gad!" he breathed. "Hanged next to a highwayman, what? I mean to say, this is absolutely frightful! If the chaps get to hear about this I shall be biffed out of the good old school, or something! What a perfectly ghastly ancestor for any cove to dig up!"

And this was Archie's birthday, too! His happiness had gone. He felt that no power on earth could make him light-hearted after this. He, Archibald Winston Derek Glenthorne, was the descendent of a shocking bounder who had swung from Tyburn Tree!

And Archie took these things seriously. He had enormous pride in his family, and he felt that his parents had served him scurvily by keeping this terrible ancestor a secret. The news coming in this way from the cold pages of a book knocked the elegant junior all in a heap.

Archie was no snob—he was just as free and easy in the company of the lower orders as he was in the company of the

titled few. But his pride in his family name was tremendous. He felt that he had a grievance. This ancestor of his might, at least, have remained in decent obscurity—instead of bobbing up in this unfortunate fashion.

"With regard to Jasper Glenthorne's statement on the scaffold, there seems to be some justification for it," went on the chapter. "Jasper was undoubtedly the third son of the tenth generation from Rupert of Glenthorne, a feudal lord whose history is so obscure that any detailed account of his life is quite out of the question. It is known, however, that Rupert of Glenthorne was a murderous scoundrel, with characteristics almost identical to those of Jasper. And this Rupert had met a violent death—swearing just before his last breath, that the third son of the tenth generation would always meet with a disgraceful end after a brief life of villainy."

"It is a curious fact that both Rupert and Jasper were aged thirty-five when they were executed—each spending twenty years of drunken, scoundrelly living. For it seems that they were both harmless, innocent youths until the age of fifteen."

"The Glenthorne legend—now almost forgotten in obscurity—declares that the third son of each tenth generation will live a blameless life until the age of fifteen, and thereafter develop the vile habits and characteristics of Rupert. This fate, so the legend goes, can only be averted by hard work and strenuous exercise from the age of fifteen onwards. The slightest lapse into slack methods will inevitably mean the degeneration and ultimate destruction of the unhappy victim."

"In the case of General Jasper the legend appears to have come true—although this may have been a pure coincidence. It will be interesting to watch the future development of the Glenthorne family. In this present year of 1864 they are already in their eighth generation from Jasper. Therefore, in the natural order of things the third son of the tenth generation may possibly be born into the world in the early years of the next century—at approximately the year 1908 or 1909. If such a son is born to the then reigning Glenthorne he may possibly reveal the lazy, languid, indolent habits of Rupert and Jasper. If, however, this mythical youth pulls himself together at the age of fifteen, there will be a chance of breaking the spell."

"Legends have a quaint way of justifying themselves, and the records of Jasper Glenthorne certainly indicate that the Glenthorne legend is no fable."

The book suddenly dropped from Archie's hand. A fixed and glassy expression had come into his eyes. 1909! The year he was born! And his pater was the tenth—

"Good gad!" breathed Archie hoarsely. "And I'm the third son, dash it! I'm the chappie who's absolutely going to commit sundry murders, and finish up on the good old gallows! What a perfectly mouldy prospect!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE ORDER OF THE BOOT.



ARCHIE GLEN-THORNE didn't move for five solid minutes.

The awful truth was sinking in. It didn't matter which way he looked at it; he couldn't get away from the one devastating fact—he was unquestionably the third son of the tenth generation.

"Mythical youth, what?" he murmured, referring to the book. "What absolute rot! There's no myth about me, by gad! But, of course, this foul effusion was penned sixty years ago. Oddslife! The chappie was pretty clever to mention my birthday sundry years before the pater himself was born! I mean to say, it's absolutely uncanny."

It was so remarkable, in fact, that Archie was depely impressed. He was moved to the core. Nothing before in all his life had stirred him to such depths as these.

There was no getting away from the thing—there it was, in black and white. The book had been printed for sixty years, and these facts about his frightful ancestor were enough to make him tremble. And the prophecy regarding his own birth was more or less uncanny.

Not only this, but Archie dimly realised that the whole business was coming true. He didn't fool himself. He knew as well as anybody that he was languid, and that his habits were indolent. And he was just fifteen! From this date onwards he would now degenerate into a drunkard, a criminal, and probably a murderer.

"A swashbuckler, by gad!" said Archie, horrified. "One of those fearful johnnies who go about tickling the populace with the point of a sword! Dash it all, I'm going to be one of the lads of the village!"

He paused, and his monocle dropped from his eye.

"But what about the good old spell?" he went on, hope dawning in his eyes. "There may be a chance——"

He seized the volume again, and read it feverishly.

"Hard work and strenuous exercise from the age of fifteen!" he murmured, with a hollow groan.

He shuddered slightly. The hard work was bad enough, but the very idea of strenuous exercise shook him to the backbone. He sat there on the lounge, at the parting of the ways, so to speak.

To-day was his day of destiny!

The choice had to be taken one way or the other. Either he continued his indolent

habits and ultimately turned into a murderer—or he would work hard and give the legend the lie. Archie was usually a slow-coach when it came to thinking, but on this occasion his decision was swift.

"Work!" he murmured dreamily. "After all, why not? I mean, other chappies work like anything, and absolutely grow plump on the good old stuff. A somewhat fly-blown prospect, but the old tissues are stirring themselves in readiness for the ordeal!"

He continued to ruminate sadly

"Exercise, what?" he went on. "Football, running, and all that sort of stuff. What I mean is, why shouldn't it be done? These other coves in the Fourth appear to swim in it, so to speak. Yes, by gad, this is absolutely where I shed the old life and whizz like the dickens into the new!"

Archie rose to his feet with a gleam of determination in his eye. When he liked he could be very obstinate, and just at the moment he had made up his mind more firmly than he had ever done in his life before.

He took the book and carefully locked it away in the bureau. Then he turned, jammed his monocle in his eye, and took it out again. He looked at it, tore it off its cord, and hurled it into the fire.

"Monocles," he observed, "are an emblem of the dashed idle class! From now onwards I become a chunk of good old energy. I shall have to inform Phipps that he must rally round——"

Archie paused, and the startled expression returned to his eyes. Phipps! A fellow who really meant to work in earnest couldn't possibly retain a valet in the household with any sincerity. In his present frame of mind, even Phipps became a mere trifle.

Archie shrugged his shoulders and jabbed the bell.

"Oh, so there you are, old fruity one!" exclaimed Archie, as Phipps noiselessly entered a moment or two later. "Dash it all, Phipps, you slither into the young master's presence like a chunk of butter whizzing across a hot frying-pan."

"Yes, sir," said Phipps. "Thank you, sir!"

Archie coughed.

"Laddie, the young master has somewhat foul tidings," he exclaimed. "In other words, from this minute onwards you are at liberty to dash off in search of another post. I don't wish to be blunt, Phipps, old bird, but the fact is I'm giving you the order of the boot."

Even the imperturbable Phipps was startled.

"You—you mean you are dismissing me, sir?" he asked, staring.

"Absolutely and positively," replied Archie firmly. "As a matter of fact, absolutely and positively with knobs on! Henceforth, the young master will rally round and do the good old doings."

CHAPTER VII.

ARCHIE, THE FOOTBALLER.



PHIPPS recovered himself with an effort. "I am sorry if I have failed to discharge my duties in a manner that is pleasing to you—" he began.

"Absolutely not!" interrupted Archie hastily. "Kindly be good enough to remove any such fungus from the old mind. I am a chappie of few words, Phipps, and I have made up my mind to put my shoulder to the wheel and work. From this minute onwards, laddie, I fend for myself."

"Then you are not displeased with me in any way, sir?"

"Good gad, no!" said Archie. "Displeased? My dear old slitherer, what a perfectly preposterous wheeze! I intend to give you a gilt-edged reference and three months' wages instead of notice. So you can slide off, pack the old grip, and go upon your travels. And may the young master's blessing always be with you!"

Phipps was calm now, but by no means satisfied. He was suspicious. Something rather extraordinary must have occurred to change Archie so dramatically as this. Such a decision was totally opposed to the elegant junior's nature.

"May I ask why you have decided upon this course, sir?" he ventured.

"Oh, rather!" said Archie. "May you ask, what? Certainly, old darling! Ask as much as you like—but I'm afraid I shall close the old shutters at that point. In other words, I must insist upon remaining silent. I have decided upon this—this decision, and there it is. There, Phipps, it is. So now we're all happy, what?"

"Scarcely happy, sir," said Phipps. "I am very greatly worried. I do not like to think of deserting you—"

"Deserting me?" repeated Archie. "Nothing of the sort, old tulip! As a matter of fact, I am wondering why the dickens I have kept you so long! After all, the other coves get on without a valet, so why shouldn't I? From this minute, laddie, I have done with slacking and everything of that sort or order."

Archie's tone was well-known to Phipps. It was quite useless to argue. And the valet bowed, retired silently, and walked down the passage with slow footsteps and with a sad expression in his eyes. Phipps was quite fond of Archie, and this sudden parting was a bit of a blow to him.

At the corner of the corridor he ran into John Busterfield Boots and Bob Christine of the Modern House. Both the Fourth-Formers were grinning widely, and they seized Phipps in a confidential manner.

"How's Archie?" asked Boots cheerfully.

"I regret to say, Master Boots, that Master Archibald is not quite himself this

afternoon," replied Phipps. "He has developed a most unaccountable energy, and has even dismissed me from his service—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Bob Christine.

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Boots, fairly yelling with laughter.

Phipps regarded the pair coldly. He couldn't see any reason for this unseemly merriment. But the two Moderns drew him aside and talked to him breathlessly for a few minutes.

When Phipps continued his journey up the passage the sad expression had gone from his eyes, and the old calm, serene look had returned.

In the meantime, Archie was preparing for the new order of things. He was beginning to realise that hard work and active exercise were just what he wanted. He had been slacking too long. And it was just as well to start the new life with a good heart. There could be no turning back now.

The swell of the Ancient House walked out into the Triangle, and his step was so brisk that Willy Handforth and several other fags paused in the middle of their game and looked at Archie in amazement. The fags were playing leap frog, and it was rather unfortunate that Willy should jerk himself upright just as Chubby Heath was leaping at him.

There was a sudden crash, and the pair collapsed to the ground. Archie passed on, dimly aware of fearful commotion behind him. He didn't realise that he was the sole cause of the trouble.

He reached Little Side, and found the juniors hard at practice. It was half-holiday, and as there was no fixture for to-day, Reginald Pitt, like a good skipper, was putting his men through their paces.

"What-ho!" said Archie breezily. "So here we are, what?"

"Who told this image to blow up?" demanded Handforth glaringly. "Clear off, you dummy! You'll frighten the ball!"

"Oh, come!" said Archie stiffly. "That is, come! I've just trickled along to join in the old fray. Football, what? Absolutely the good old stuff, if you grasp what I mean. Kindly allow me to push the old leather to and fro. I've come here to join the forces."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The footballers crowded round, grinning.

"What ails the fair youth?" asked Pitt, pushing through the others. "We don't wish to be impolite, Archibald, but certainly not! Be good enough to get on the other side of the ropes!"

Archie shook his head.

"You fail to appreciate the posish," he said calmly. "Here I am, as it were, all bustling with energy and bristling with vim. The old tissues are as lively as an electric battery. This is where we start the good old programme. I've come here to play football."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth-Formers fairly yelled with merriment.

"What," said Archie, "is the bright scheme? I mean to say, all this cackling and face stretching. Dash it all, here I am on the spot and you refuse to take me seriously. Give me the good old football and I'll soon kick a couple of wickets!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Reggie Pitt wiped his eyes.

"Look here, is this a joke, or do you really mean to take up footer practice?" he asked.

"Honest Injun! Absolutely and honour bright, and all that sort of material!" said Archie. "The old life has gone by the board, and henceforth the new life starts. This, in fact, is where I begin my earthly existence!"

CHAPTER VIII.

RISING EARLY IN THE MORNING.



IF Archie had deliberately intended surprising the natives, he couldn't have chosen any better method. But, as a matter of fact, he took himself quite seriously, and didn't realise that he was causing surprise.

His ideas of football were vague and obscure. He knew that goals were scored, and he had an inkling that eleven fellows formed a side.

"A dashed ridic. number, but there you are!" he observed. "I mean, while these chappies who make the rules were about it, they might have made it a round dozen, what? It always strikes me that there's one cove missing!"

"It wouldn't matter to any team if you were missing, anyhow!" said Handforth bluntly. "My hat! I don't believe you know the difference between a goalpost and a touchline!"

"Oh, come!" protested Archie. "A touchline is the good old rope you touch as you stand round looking at the game——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Archie!" grinned Pitt. "Never mind, we'll make something of you, even yet. If you really want to practice, we'll give you plenty of it."

Reggie winked at the others, and they appreciated the joke. The idea was to run Archie off his feet until he begged to be excused. But somehow the joke didn't pan out properly.

Archie entered into the game with enormous energy, and instead of calling a halt, he was quite disappointed when tea-time arrived. He was just getting warmed up to it, and was feeling perfectly fit. A bit puffed, perhaps, but nothing to worry about.

He had surprised himself. He had felt certain that he would be a physical wreck

by tea-time—and yet he was feeling hungry and healthy. As for the other juniors, they couldn't make him out at all.

But later on in the evening a change took place.

For some unaccountable reason juniors would grin as they passed Archie Glen-thorne. Several times he asked what the joke was, but could never get any satisfactory reply.

And he was too full of his own affairs to press the matter. He felt that he was doing well, and if he only kept up the pace there would be little or no possibility of sharing the fate of General Jasper.

Strangely enough, the loss of Phipps didn't affect Archie half as much as he had believed it would. It wasn't particularly difficult to look after himself—now that it came to the actual point.

Archie went to bed thoroughly tired out, and he had taken care to borrow an alarm-clock. It was his intention to be up bright and early, so that he could start the day well. The ordinary slack methods were over for ever.

Alf Brent was rather dazed. For he had learned, just before going up to bed, that Archie intended setting off for a ten-mile run before breakfast. Archie usually grumbled if he had to walk ten yards—and yet he spoke of a ten-mile run as though it were a mere detail!

It was exactly six o'clock in the morning when the alarm-clock went off and awoke Archie from his healthy slumbers. As he occupied a room to himself, the clock didn't disturb any of the other juniors. Archie sat up in bed and gazed at the dull, drab light of the November morning.

"What-ho!" he murmured. "It appears that something has gone wrong with the works. Phipps will soon trickle in——"

Archie started, full remembrance coming back to him. A slight pang assailed him as he realised that Phipps had gone. Phipps would never again glide in with a cup of tea.

Then Archie thought of General Jasper hanging on Tyburn Tree, and he leapt out of bed like a young lion going in search of its breakfast. He donned his dressing-gown, and was soon enjoying a vigorous wash.

"Why, oddslife, this early-rising stuff is absolutely topping!" he told himself, as he applied the towel. "I mean to say, when it comes to the actual doings, the whole thing becomes easy. And now for the glad rags and the good old morning run!"

Archie returned to his bed-room and felt a thrill of joy pass through him as he searched the wardrobe and a chest of drawers. At last he was able to please his own whim; he was no longer compelled to obey the strict injunctions of Phipps.

Archie, it must be confessed, had a weakness for colours. He always appeared in public tastefully attired—but this was due to the restraining influence of his valet

Left to his own devices, Archie was inclined to run riot. And after constant supervision, it was only natural that he let himself go a bit this morning.

From an obscure drawer he dug out a glaring red sweater—one which he had purchased in a weak moment, and which Phipps had condemned at the first glance. Archie gave a kind of chirrup of triumph as he donned it.

"What-ho!" he observed, as he surveyed himself in the mirror. "Absolutely priceless, what? Phipps was a decent cove, but he had absolutely no taste. This is the stuff to make the birds sing!"

He was distinctly pleased with himself, particularly as he was wearing check Norfolk knickers and brown brogue shoes. As a costume for cross-country running it was hardly ideal, but Archie didn't know this.

He sallied out full of enthusiasm, comforted by the thought that he was going the right way to work to break the spell. And as he crossed the Triangle, looking like a walking pillar-box, a curtain moved slightly in one of the upper windows.

Behind that curtain Phipps was peeping, for Phipps was not so far away as Archie believed. The valet closed his eyes in pain, and swayed slightly as he clutched at the blind.

"Oh, Master Archie!" he murmured sadly.

Phipps tottered back to bed and roundly abused himself for not having destroyed the sweater at the time of its arrival. He felt that he was personally to blame for this tragedy.

In the meantime, Archie was starting off on his ten-mile run, as happy as a lark in his new-found energy.

CHAPTER IX.

DAMSELS IN DISTRESS.



TEN miles is a long way, even for a fellow in Archie's present state of grim determination.

He soon found it out. He covered five miles with tranquil ease, and then turned

back happy and radiant with perfect health.

But by the time he got within two miles of St. Frank's he was feeling, in his own words, somewhat dithery. His muscles were aching, his feet felt twice their normal size, and the skin was rubbed from both his heels. Considering the weight of his shoes, there was nothing surprising in this.

But there was some compensation in the thought that he would soon be home. Besides, it was nearly breakfast time, and

his appetite was stupendous. Archie hadn't felt so hungry for years.

And although he was fagged out, he was satisfied in the knowledge that a ten-mile run was humanly possible. Hitherto he had looked upon such an effort as a task for supermen only.

"So here we are, and all that sort of thing!" he murmured, as he caught sight of the Ancient House tower above the tree-tops. "Bally good! I mean to say, we've done dashed well on the whole. Stout work, laddie!"

Archie had cut across the fields from the Edgemore lane, intending to enter St. Frank's by way of the playing-fields. He was just passing a meadow, and he paused as he caught sight of the two girlish figures in the centre of it.

"What-ho!" he breathed. "Fair damsels from the Moor View School! I rather think it's up to me to do a few greetings, and so forth. I trust the running garb will pass muster."

The two young ladies were Doris Berkeley and Marjorie Temple. Archie recognised them at once, for he had rather a soft spot for Marjorie. At all events, she was certainly his favourite.

They were hurrying, having apparently run to the village before breakfast, and were now making all speed to get back in time. This was probably why they were taking the short cut across the meadows, instead of using the lane.

Archie was about to give voice to a hail when he started. On the other side of the meadow a formidable-looking bull was inspecting the girls with no favourable eye. His majesty was, in fact, sauntering forward to take a closer look, and he was lashing his tail about with energy.

"We'd better get a hustle on," said Doris, glancing over her shoulder. "That bull's spotted your red hat, and he looks a bit peevish. I'm not at all anxious to sail skywards."

"Oh, we'd better hurry!" said Marjorie quickly.

"It'll be a toss-up whether we escape in time," grinned Doris; "and it'll be a toss-up if we don't! Come on—show some speed! We've got to do a real good bunk!"

The two girls started running, which perhaps was an unwise proceeding. For Mr. Bull regarded this move with disfavour, and he came lumbering across the meadow at high speed.

"Good gad!" gasped Archie. "They'll never do it! Hi, there! Tally-ho, and so forth! Run for your lives, and what not!"

The girls heard the shout and glanced round. The bull heard it, too, and he positively started as he caught sight of that red jersey. Marjorie's hat had upset him slightly, but Archie's jersey put him completely out of temper. In fact, he saw red.

And Archie, in his excitement, had run

right into the meadow with the idea of distracting the bull. He certainly succeeded. The bull was so distracted that he forgot all about the girls on the spot. He gave his full attention to this newcomer.

Here was something worth charging at. It was like the cheek of this red thing to invade the meadow as though he owned it. The bull had rooted objections to such objects wandering into his domain. He lashed his tail, put his head down, and sailed in.

"Gadzooks!" murmured Archie dazedly.

He was under no misapprehension regarding the bull's intentions. The animal was coming straight for him like an animated tank. The ground positively thundered as his hoofs thudded on the turf.

"I think," said Archie, "this is one of those occasions where a chappie is required to shift the old pins somewhat speedily."

He gave one glance at the girls, and saw that they were safely at the further gate. Then he turned and ran for the hedge. It was about a hundred yards distant, but to Archie it seemed a couple of miles away. And he was startled to discover that there wasn't a single gap. Nothing but a high, impenetrable barrier loomed before him.

This was curious, because he had always noted the remarkable number of gaps in the hedge when passing down the lane. But just when he wanted one with great urgency, the gaps were conspicuous by their absence.

As it happened, Archie didn't need a gap at all.

He moved quickly, but the bull moved a bit quicker. And just as Archie was preparing to make a wild leap at the hedge, he was saved the trouble. For the bull caught him up, and the next few moments were full of interest.

Archie felt something strike him in the rear, and even in the excitement of the moment he knew that the worst had happened. He sailed upwards in a really beautiful arc, and shot over the hedge without having had time to bid the bull "Good-morning."

In fact, his exit was nothing if not hurried.

CHAPTER X, SOMEWHAT BEERY.



ARCHIE GLENTHORNE was in a kind of a trance.

During the last few moments extraordinary things had happened. As he took his departure from the meadow, via the atmosphere, he realised with a feeling of gratitude that the bull's horns were comparatively little developed. This was indeed something to be thankful for. If the bull had been a really perfect

animal he would have possessed a pair of perfect horns, and Archie's fate would have been sealed.

As it was, he just received one terrific bump, and was tossed completely out of reach of the animal, so that the latter was even denied the joy of attempting to gore his victim. Archie prayed that the ground would be fairly soft.

And then, remarkably enough, Archie had an idea that he was in the middle of a brewery. He didn't hit the ground at all. He found himself buried in something soft, spongy, and decidedly hot. It was almost like plunging into a bath.

And he was suffocated by the fumes of malt, or hops, or whatever beer is made of.

Expecting to hit the ground with a bump, this dramatic sequel was a huge surprise.

Archie forced his way to the surface, gasping.

"Water!" he gurgled. "Good gad and oddslife! Where am I? What's all this ghastly whiff of beer?"

He looked about him dazedly. His head and shoulders were emerging from a brown sea of some wet substance which looked like malt. And to his amazement he found that he was in the middle of a big motor truck. The atmosphere was thick with beery fumes.

Archie didn't quite appreciate it, but he was very lucky.

He couldn't have been tossed at a better moment. Just at the second of his elevation over the hedge the lorry had lumbered past, with the result that Archie dived head-first into it. If he had appeared ten seconds earlier he would certainly have been run over.

The lorry was on its way from a local brewery to Holt's Farm, as a matter of fact, taking a load of grain-waste, or whatever it happens to be called. At all events, it was a load of used brewing material, all hot from the beer manufactory.

As a bed it had a few disadvantages, but these were easily outweighed by its merits. Instead of Archie coming a frightful cropper, he merely plunged into a soft, yielding mass of comfortable sponginess.

The lorry driver was quite unaware of the passenger he had taken on. Enclosed in his cab, he hadn't noticed any difference. The lane was rather rutty, and an extra jolt meant nothing.

Archie struggled out of the clinging mass, and leapt over the back to the ground. He took a shower of grain with him, and stood there swaying slightly. The fumes were still overpowering.

He expected to find himself soaked through, but he was hardly touched. And after a good shaking, he looked and felt himself again. True there was a dull ache in the rear, but this was a trifle compared to what it might have been.

"This," said Archie, "is not in the pro-

gramme. I sallied forth to indulge in the good old exercise, but I'm dashed if I bargained for the rough stuff! By gad! I smell just the like the whiff that oozes out of the tap-room at the White Hart!"

He had the lane to himself. The lorry had gone, and there was no sign of the girls. On the other side of the hedge he could hear the bull snorting disgustedly, but that was all.

He walked on, fully appreciating the wonderful luck which had preserved him. And then Marjorie and Doris came running round the bend.

"Why, he isn't hurt at all!" panted Doris. "Oh, Archie, we thought we'd just be in time to pick up your pieces!"

"Frightfully sorry, old cheese, but there don't happen to be any," exclaimed Archie. "Oh, sorrow! I should have said, dear old girl! The fact is, the upper floor is somewhat disturbed."

"But—but how did you escape injury?" breathed Marjorie, in astonishment. "You were tossed right over the hedge—and you must have come down with terrible force."

"Oh, rather!" said Archie. "That is to say, decidedly not! You see, old sunflower, just as I was whizzing out of the undergrowth—"

He paused, for Doris was looking at him queerly.

"Have you been drinking, Archie?" asked Doris in a cold voice.

"Drinking?" repeated Archie. "Good gad! You don't suspect— Oh, the beery niff, what? Absolutely! Did you ever strike anything more absolutely poisonous?"

"You simply reek of beer!" said Doris. "I believe you've been having a bath in it. Your jersey's all damp—"

Archie explained as briefly as he could, which means that he took about ten minutes over it. The two girls were so relieved that they became highly amused.

"What a pity we didn't see you!" said Doris regretfully. "It would have been worth quids! My only hat! Just imagine you shooting down into the vanload of beery stuff! You ought to think yourself lucky."

"I do," replied Archie. "In fact, I'm so dashed lucky that I can't quite realise I'm all here in one solid chunk. You see, I was just out for a ten-mile run before breakfast."

"You!" said Marjorie, staring. "Whatever is the matter, Archie? I didn't know you could run ten miles—before breakfast or any other time! And thanks awfully for coming to our rescue like that. Oh, Doris,

we'd almost forgotten to tell Archie how grateful we are!"

"Kindly refrain from any further chat!" said Archie firmly. "I rather think we'd better go our various ways, and continue the discuss under more favourable circs. I don't absolutely know, but I suspect that breakfast-time has not only come, but absolutely gone!"

"My goodness, yes!" said Doris. "We shall be hungry all the morning! Come on, Marjorie—let's fly!"

They bade Archie a hurried farewell, and ran off. They were still dumbfounded at the fact that the slacker of the Fourth should be out before breakfast, just home from a ten-mile run. They didn't pretend to understand. It was a complete mystery.

Archie entered the Triangle wearily. He was footsore, he was aching, and he was badly bruised. At any ordinary time a tenth of these physical hurts would have prostrated him.

But in his newly-found energy he scarcely noticed any discomfort whatever. It was just an example of the mind conquering the body. Archie was grim and determined, and his will-power was of the strongest.

He entered the Ancient House, and came face to face with Mr. Horace Pycraft, the master of the Modern Fourth. And Mr. Horace Pycraft was not looking exactly genial.

CHAPTER XI.

NO LUCK FOR MR. PYCRAFT.



"GOOD gracious!" said Mr. Pycraft.

He adjusted his pincenez, and gazed at Archie with severe disapproval. Mr. Pycraft had no actual authority over the

Ancient House fellows, but this made no difference to a man of his stamp.

He was a weedy-looking individual, and he possessed a peculiarly caustic tongue. It was one of Mr. Pycraft's favourite amusements to be sarcastic at the expense of his victims.

In the Modern House he was detested by all and sundry. Buster Boots and Co. were continually grumbling because, in their opinion, the Ancient House fellows had the best of it.

Mr. Pycraft was a toady, too—he was always willing to excuse minor faults in those boys who were rich, or who were the sons of titled parents. Mr. Pycraft had tried it on with Archie several times; but Archie, being a sensible fellow, and without a trace of snobbishness in his nature, had rebuffed the Form-master in no uncertain manner. Consequently, Mr. Pycraft had given up the attempt, and had a particular "down" on Archie.

ANSWERS
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"Indeed!" he exclaimed raspingly. "What is the meaning of this, sir? What is the explanation of this extraordinary attire? Good heavens! I have never seen such a colour in all my life!"

Archie raised his eyebrows.

"No?" he said. "That's dashed rummy, old dear. I mean to say, all the bally pillar-boxes are this colour——"

"Are you daring to be impertinent, boy?" snapped Mr. Pycraft.

"Absolutely!" replied Archie. "That is, of course, absolutely not!" he added hastily. "But, dash it, when it comes to a matter of colour, I rather thought this sweater was somewhat juicy!"

"How dare you use such ridiculous expressions?" said Mr. Pycraft. "Go indoors at once and change! I suppose you know you are late for breakfast? If I had my way, you would be deprived——"

Mr. Pycraft suddenly paused, and his nostrils dilated. He was like a hound who had suddenly struck the trail. He sniffed sharply, and took two paces forward, and his spectacles nearly dropped off his nose.

"Good heavens!" he gasped. "You reek of beer!"

"Oh, rather!" said Archie. "Pretty foul and all that, but there you are! Not that beer is absolutely poisonous——"

"Boy, you have been drinking!" thundered Mr. Pycraft.

"Good gad! Have I? I mean——"

"Drinking!" said Mr. Pycraft shrilly. "So this is what you do before breakfast! You go out, and you come back soaked in liquor, and smelling like a brewery!"

Archie Glenthorne nodded.

"Rather pricelessly put, old tortoise," he said cheerfully. "And I must agree with you that this brewery smell is somewhat troublesome for the old nostril department. I mean, the sooner I stagger upstairs and shed the offensive——"

"This—this is beyond all understanding!" gasped Mr. Pycraft. "You have the utter audacity to come back to the school in a condition bordering upon intoxication! Do not deny it, Glenthorne! I can see it in your face!"

"That's dashed queer!" said Archie, in surprise. "As a matter of fact, the old features didn't penetrate very deeply into the beer material. However, you know best, Mr. Pycraft. What I mean is, you can see my face, and I can't. If you will kindly allow me to slide past on the star-board side——"

"Halt!" roared Mr. Pycraft sharply.

"Oddslife!" ejaculated Archie, startled. "Hardly necessary, what? I mean, these dashed syren sounds——"

"Boys—boys!" interrupted Mr. Pycraft, as a number of Fourth Formers gathered round. "I call upon you to witness this—this young rascal's condition! He is soaked



"You're a Handforth, and it is up to us to stand together in this crisis!" roared Edward Oswald, struggling to his feet, and leaning against the wall for support.

in beer, and I intend to take him to the Headmaster at once."

The juniors crowded round.

"Phew! He whiffs like a pub!" ejaculated Handforth. "What the dickens have you been up to, Archie? You wouldn't drink beer, I'll bet! There must be some other explanation of this——"

"Thanks muchly, old cucumber," said Archie gracefully. "As a matter of fact, I can offer a somewhat fruity explanation——"

"I want no explanations!" snapped Mr. Pycraft. "It is useless to tell me any lies! I shall take you to Dr. Stafford immediately!"

"Well, of course, you know best," said Archie. "But, dash it all, isn't this a bit thick? Isn't it somewhat murky? I mean, I'm an Ancient House chap, sir. You have your burrow on the other side——"

"My burrow!" shouted Mr. Pycraft thickly.

"That is, your kennel—or, to be exact, the habitation where you reside," explained Archie. "Kindly remember, old rabbit, that you have absolutely no authority over me. I was going to tell you everything——"

"You are drunk, boy!" interrupted Mr. Pycraft shrilly. "Otherwise you would never have the audacity to refer to me as a rabbit——"

"Dash it all, that doesn't say I'm drunk, sir," protested Archie. "I was just going to— What-ho! Hail, old scout, and all that sort of thing! Greetings and so forth!"

Mr. Beverley Stokes had just appeared—and although this wasn't quite the correct way for a junior to address his House-master, Mr. Stokes only grinned. He was a free-and-easy gentleman himself.

"What's the trouble, Archie?" he said cheerily. "Great Scott! Who told you to dress yourself like a pot of red paint? And what's this full-blooded smell of beer?"

Mr. Pycraft fairly danced.

"That, sir, is emanating from this wretched boy!" he said triumphantly. "Glenthorne has been drinking! As you have yourself discovered, he positively reeks of liquor from head to foot!"

CHAPTER XII.

A SHOCK FOR MR. CROWELL.



MR. STOKES remained quite calm.

"Come along, Archie, what have you got to say?" he asked smoothly. "This smell of beer is too prominent to be

genuine. It seems to me that you've been having a swim in it!"

"Nearly, sir," replied Archie. "The fact is, I was tossed."

"Tossed?"

"Tossed!" said Archie firmly. "Absolutely tossed! A frightfully poisonous business, but there you are! A dashed hefty bull caught me in the stern-sheets, so to speak, and absolutely pushed me over the hedge into a travelling brewery!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The boy's mad!" shouted Mr. Pycraft angrily.

But Archie soon proved that he was perfectly sane. And when he had given an explanation, the crowd of fellows yelled with laughter. Even Mr. Stokes grinned and chuckled. Mr. Pycraft gritted his teeth with vexation. He realised that he had only made himself ridiculous.

"You'd better go upstairs and get those things off," said Mr. Stokes crisply. "And you can thank your stars you're practically unhurt. Why, you might have been killed! I had no idea you were such a reckless young beggar, Archie!"

"No, sir," said Archie. "I should say, yes, sir. The fact is, I wasn't absolutely reckless. You see, after a ten-mile trot—"

"A ten mile trot?" grinned Mr. Stokes. "Have you got any more fairy tales like that?"

"It's true enough, sir!" chuckled Reggie Pitt. "Since yesterday, Archie has become

as lively as a cricket. We shan't be able to hold him back by the end of the week."

Archie escaped at last, and went upstairs to his bed-room. As he undressed, he was aware of the fact that his aches were becoming worse. The unaccustomed exercise was having effect. For a brief second, Archie wondered if it was worth the candle.

Then he pulled himself together. He pictured his awful ancestor hanging on Tyburn Tree, and swinging in the breeze. Archie knew there was no Tyburn Tree nowadays, but at the same time he had no real desire to appear in the star rôle at a future execution. And unless he hustled about unceasingly he would drift into General Jasper's habits, and come to a messy finish, according to the legend. Being the third son of the tenth generation, he couldn't afford to take any chances.

"This," said Archie, "is where I've got to pull myself together, and hoist up the old slacks, and continue the good work!"

He continued it by attiring himself in highly coloured raiment. He fairly let himself go, and the result was startling.

Archie had relied on Phipps for so long that he was almost dangerous when he was left to his own devices. He not only donned a silk shirt with a green background and orange stripes, but he wore a necktie of royal blue—which clashed horribly. He added to the offence by appearing in purple socks and patent-leather shoes. Considering that he was in Etons, the whole general effect was appalling. He wasn't quite satisfied that he looked tasteful, but he had always fancied these colours, and he thought it rather a good opportunity to wear them all at once.

He went downstairs briskly. He forgot his aches, and completely neglected his customary saunter. He was hungry, and he succeeded in capturing his breakfast after everybody else had finished.

Then, feeling refreshed, he went out into the Triangle for a breath of fresh air before lessons. And Phipps, happening to glance out of his window, suffered from another attack of heart failure. He nearly rushed out, on the spur of the moment, to his young master's side.

Phipps, indeed, almost turned pale. Archie's colour scheme was so horrible that the valet's appetite was spoilt for the rest of the day.

As for the juniors, Archie was still surprising them.

His energy was boundless. He had changed as completely as any human being could change. It had been no gradual process, but a sudden, swift transformation.

One thing was clearly proved, at all events. Archie was able to fend for himself, and to take part in any amount of strenuous work and exercise. There was nothing delicate about him.

In the Form-room Mr. Crowell received a shock.

Archie, instead of idling over his work in the ordinary way, proved to be the most industrious junior in the whole room. For when Archie decided upon a certain course, he didn't adopt any half-measures. It was characteristic of him to go the whole hog or nothing.

And, to his own surprise, he was finding that hard work agreed with him. He took much greater interest in his lessons, and performed them with signal success.

After Mr. Crowell had got over the shock, he was frankly delighted. He had never hoped for such an awakening. He made a point of detaining Archie after the Form had been dismissed.

"My boy, you have worked splendidly," said Mr. Crowell. "I am glad to realise that you have at last made up your mind to make up for lost time. I am very pleased with you, Glenthorne."

"Thanks awfully, sir!" said Archie. "I feel priceless bucked. The fact is, I have decided to dash about a bit, and exercise the old grey matter to a somewhat frightful extent. Between you and me, sir, I want you to give me some extra work to do."

Mr. Crowell held firmly to the table.

"Some extra work, Glenthorne?" he repeated huskily. "Yes—yes, of course! Certainly! I will help you all I can. But tell me, Glenthorne, are you feeling quite well?"

"Rather, sir! I am braced like the dickens!"

"You find that this unwonted energy agrees with you?"

"Absolutely, sir!" replied Archie. "From now onwards, sir, I am going to show all the chappies what energy really is. I mean to say, I'm the lad who invented the stuff!"

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE NECK.



EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH grunted miserably.

"Eh?" said Church. "Speaking to me, old man?"

He looked at his leader eagerly, but Handforth only gave him a cold stare in reply, and said nothing. Church glanced at McClure, and they both sighed.

"It's no good," said McClure. "He won't speak to us—he hasn't spoken to us all day!"

"Just because we biffed him out of the study!" said Church indignantly. "It isn't fair! You ain't playing the game, Handy! Haven't you biffed us out of the study often enough—and haven't we been pals within an hour? There's no need to get sulky like this—"

"Who's sulky?" demanded Handforth darkly.

"You are!"

"If you talk to me like that, Walter Church, I'll—"

Handforth pulled himself up short, and closed his mouth with a snap. He had resolved to have nothing more to do with his chums as long as they lived.

The mighty Handforth wasn't exactly sulky, but he was obstinate. He was just as miserable as his chums were, but he hated the idea of condoning their terrible offence.

He, Edward Oswald Handforth, had been thrown out of Study D by Church and McClure not once, but twice. And a thing like that couldn't very well be overlooked.

Now that it was all over and done with, Church and McClure were sorry. They had said so, too. And Handforth was just melting. Before very long he would succumb altogether, and the celebrated trio would be as chummy as ever. This sort of thing had happened before.

It wasn't very often that Church and McClure turned on their leader and smote him. As a general rule they accepted his biffs as a matter of course. It saved a lot of trouble to do this, and they knew well enough that Handy's swift punches were mostly impulsive.

He wasn't a bully. He didn't believe in hitting a fellow for the sake of hitting. Handforth was just a blunt, reckless, blundering ass, and it was only occasionally that he overstepped the mark. When he did so, Church and McClure always put him in his place swiftly and dramatically. They were ready to prove, in fact, that they wouldn't stand too much.

They were very fond of Handy; for, after all, Edward Oswald was a lovable kind of chap. His generosity was so abundant that less conscientious chums would have imposed upon him right and left. Church and McClure were staunch, and now that the excitement of yesterday's affray had completely died down, they were very anxious for a reconciliation.

"I say, Handy, old man, let's forget it!" muttered Church, as they paused outside the door of Study D. "This giddy silence is getting on my nerves! I was thinking about—"

"Don't talk to me!" interrupted Handforth gruffly. "And if you fellows follow me into this study I'll walk out again! It's no good trying to get round me—I've made up my mind!"

A brisk footstep sounded in the passage, and Archie appeared, striding along like a trained athlete.

"Hallo! Hallo!" he said cheerfully. "What's all the blackness about? Good gad! I can almost hear the thunder! You don't mean to say you chappies are still quarrelling?"

McClure sighed.

"We're not quarrelling!" he growled. "But

Handy's got the sulks—he won't speak to us to-day. I hate upsets, too. We might as well be dead."

Archie clapped Handforth on the back.

"Now, then, old bird, dash about a bit and restore the good old smile," he said. "I mean, this sort of thing is absolutely potty. In fact, it's even worse than that."

"Who told you to butt in?" growled Handforth.

"The point appears to have escaped you, old dear," said Archie gently. "I wouldn't dream of being a butter. I never butt. But, dash it, allow the old brow to clear, and——"

"I'm fed up!" broke in Handforth. "These chaps ain't my chums at all! And if you start interfering, I'll biff you on the nose! I'm not in the mood for any messing about!"

"But, I mean, look here, old comrade——"

"Another word, and you'll get it!" interrupted Handforth, breathing hard. "You'd better look out—I'm dangerous! One more word, my son, and I'll slosh you into the middle of next week!"

Archie drew himself up.

"If it comes to that, you may be a good slosher, but when you talk about the future in this way——"

Bill!

Handforth was exasperated. In his usual impulsive way, he hit out before Archie could dodge, and the elegant junior received a punch on the nose that shook him to the backbone. He staggered back, and Church and McClure braced themselves up, and looked on with interest.

"You asked for it!" growled Handforth, glaring.

"Absolutely!" gasped Archie. "But, dash you, you didn't ask for this, did you?"

Crash!

Archie's right shot out, and his knuckles caught Handforth fairly and squarely in the middle of Handforth's rugged face. It was really a beautiful, well-timed blow. All the weight of Archie's shoulders went behind it, and Handforth simply sagged at the knees and crumpled into a heap.

"And that," said Archie, "is that!"

He dusted his hands carelessly in the air, turned on his heel, and walked away. Edward Oswald Handforth sat up and gave a bleary look round. This was undoubtedly one of his unlucky weeks.

CHAPTER XIV.

BECOMING A NUISANCE.



BY the end of the week, Archie was a general nuisance.

He didn't mean to be. And, as a matter of fact, he was enjoying himself enormously. He had never before realised that life had such a spice in

it. He was practising his football energetically, and Pitt was astonished at the rapid progress Archie was making.

When it came to fighting, the transformed junior could put up an excellent show. In the course of three days he had knocked Handforth down, he had given Fullwood a sound thrashing, and at least two other juniors were suffering from thick ears and swollen noses. Archie was becoming a terror.

He haunted the gymnasium in his spare moments, and whenever somebody else wanted the crossbar, or any other implement of exercise, Archie was certain to be on it.

It was hopeless for any other junior to expect to be down first in the morning. No matter who raced down in advance of the others, Archie Glenthorne was certain to be knocking about somewhere—running round the Triangle, or doing dumb-bell exercises in the gym, or kicking a football about on Little Side.

In the evening, his energy was as boundless as ever.

When he wasn't studying his books, he was bustling about in the common-room, inviting other juniors to fight, or attempting to promote a boxing-match. The old Archie had gone, and a new fellow had come in his place.

"This sort of thing is getting serious," said Reggie Pitt, on Saturday evening. "Something ought to be done about it. I believe in a chap being brisk, but Archie is becoming a terror."

"It won't last long," said Jack Grey.

"That's what the chaps were saying on Thursday," put in Tommy Watson. "And Archie's been getting worse ever since! There's no telling what he'll be up to next! What do you think he suggested this evening?"

"Goodness knows!"

"A walk to Caistowe, and then a climb over the cliffs!" said Watson. "I pointed out to him that it was pouring with rain, but he didn't mind a bit. He calmly said that the rain would make it more interesting."

Alf Brent grinned.

"I've given him up!" he said. "Our study's like a factory nowadays! He's talking about getting a great fret-saw and spending his spare time in making bits of furniture! He even went so far as to suggest a lathe—talked about making himself a motor-bike!"

"He's hopeless!" declared Pitt. "I'm not sure that I didn't like him better in his old form. At least, we could be sure of him then. But now he's——"

"What ho!" said Archie briskly, as he bustled up. "What about a good old blow on the river? Who's game? Don't all shout at once, laddies, but take it gently. The old tissues are becoming flabby, and exercise is what the doctor has ordered!"

"It's raining, fathead!" said Brent. "And it's dark!"

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "I mean to say, darkness makes the whole thing more interesting, what? As for the rain, no healthy chappie need be afraid of a certain amount of wetness. Later on we'll organise a competition in the gymnasium, what? Feats of strength, and all that sort of stuff."

"Go away and read a book!" snorted Watson.

"Or try forty of the best," suggested Alf.

"Sleep," said Archie, "is a necessary evil. No chappie should take more than six hours. Why, dash it, I'm training myself to do with four! It's all a matter of will power, you know. All you have to do is to——"

"Take him away and smother him!" interrupted Pitt. "I believe in energy, but this fathead's got a couple of electric dynamos in him, or something! It's a pity Phipps ever left!"

Archie Glenthorne shook his head.

"Phipps?" he repeated. "Good gad! I go all hot and bothered when I think of him. What I mean is, how the dickens did I ever employ the old lad? I mean, what was there for him to do? I'm beginning to realise that Phipps was a leech—a bally barnacle! One of those poisonous parasites who stick to a chappie for what they can get! Mind you, Phipps was a dashed good sort in his own way, but I've done with valets and all that sort of thing."

Archie marched off, and the other fellows looked after him gravely.

"It's no good—he's getting worse!" said Brent, in a desperate kind of voice. "What's he going to be like next week? Our study won't be worth living in! Even Mr. Crowell's getting fed up with him! In the class-room he works about twice as fast as any other fellow."

The others groaned.

"Don't we know it?" growled Watson. "The fathead has set this pace, and now Mr. Crowell expects us all to work twice as hard! I tell you, it's getting unbearable!"

"We shall have to sit on him!" said Pitt firmly.

"That's a fat lot of good!" said Brent. "You could squash him from morning till night, and he'd bob up more energetic than ever! This is what comes of those Modern House chaps trying to be funny!"

"Who's talking about us?" asked Buster Boots, strolling up. "We just came in to see how Archie's getting on——"

"Didn't you meet him in the passage?" asked Pitt. "Didn't you have a couple of fights with him in the lobby? What the dickens do you mean by spoofing him up over that rotten book on ancestry?"

Buster Boots and Bob Christine grinned.

"Well, it was a good joke, wasn't it?" asked Boots blandly. "It cost us a couple

of quid to have those faked pages printed and bound into the volume! And it took us two weeks to concoct that special chapter! Still, the dodge worked didn't it?"

"Worked?" groaned Reggie Pitt. "Ye gods and little fishes! It's worked so well that Archie is making everybody work harder! We shall have to get up a public meeting to have him suppressed! He still thinks that rotten legend is authentic."

"Then we'd better tell him the cold, dreadful truth," said Boots.

But somebody else was on the job already.

CHAPTER XV.

BLOWING THE GAFF.



TEDDY LONG was full of hope.

He had been hovering near Reggie Pitt and the other juniors while they were discussing Archie—until his acute ears had over-

heard the truth about that book on ancestry. For days the sneak of the Fourth had attempted in vain to get at the root of the mystery. And now, by sheer chance, he had hit upon it. He seized his opportunity in a flash.

He found Archie Glenthorne in his study. Archie was listening to his gramophone, and practising a few dance steps—having decided that dancing was a good form of exercise. He paused as Teddy Long appeared, and frowned severely.

"Kindly skate forth, you dashed caterpillar!" he said. "I absolutely object to you crawling about in this study."

"Look here, Archie—keep your hair on!" burst out Teddy. "I've got some news for you—wonderful news! It's worth quids and quids to you. When I've let out the secret, you'll thank me with tears in your eyes!"

"You can take your frightful fairy tales elsewhere," said Archie stiffly. "I won't listen to your poisonous tongue——"

"Ten quid!" said Teddy eagerly. "I'll tell you the secret for ten quid!"

"That's frightfully generous, old snail, but there's nothing doing," said Archie. "Be good enough to retire into your hole, because I'm going to shove on another record! A dashed gallop, in fact! These fox-trots are too frightfully slow for an energetic bloke like me!"

"Seven quid!" said Teddy, without quite as much hope.

"Gadzooks! Are you going, or shall I——"

"A fiver!" said Long, with a gulp. "Look here, I'll tell you for five quid! You've been spoofed, Archie! All this work of yours wasn't necessary. If you give me a fiver, I'll explain——"

"Of course, this sort of thing is a frightful nuisance, but it's got to be done," inter-

rupted Archie, as he patiently removed his jacket. "I rather think the window will be the better exit. If you are quite ready, you worm, I'll proceed to hurl you forth!"

Teddy Long dodged.

"Two quid!" he panted, hope dying out.

"Absolutely not!"

"A quid, then!"

"I won't hear a dashed word from your fearful lips!" declared Archie. "It's no good, old bean—you can talk from now until —"

"Ten bob!" gasped Long.

"I've already told you——"

"Five bob!"

"Oddslife! This is becoming too poisonous for words!" snapped Archie. "Once and for all, I won't——"

"Sixpence!" bleated Teddy feebly.

"Not a red cent!" declared Archie. "I don't want to hear your rotten secrets, and I won't allow you to remain in this study another jiff. You'll slide forth into the offing——"

"You—you rotter!" roared Teddy indignantly. "I've dropped down to a tanner, and now you won't listen! Yah! Mean beast! I'll jolly well tell you all the same!"

Long wasn't going to be done. He couldn't keep a secret to save his life, and now that all hope of extracting money had gone, he sought a certain amount of satisfaction by resorting to jeering. He dodged behind the furniture, and kept a wary eye on Archie.

"You fathead!" he taunted. "Fancy being spoofed by that rotten book on ancestry! There's no legend! You haven't got an ancestor like that chap in the book! It's all spoof——"

"Spoof?" repeated Archie, coming to a dead halt in the middle of the room.

"Of course it's spoof," yelled Long. "It was a joke of Buster Boots. He and Bob Christine faked up that book—just to make you work a bit! Yah! They put the wind up you, didn't they? And you won't even pay me a quid for giving you a warning!"

Archie looked at Teddy Long dazedly.

"You're a frightful liar, and all that sort of thing, but for once you sound truthful!" he said. "Do you mean to tell me that that dashed book isn't genuine?"

"The book's genuine—but that chapter about the Glenthorne legend was specially printed and shoved in," jeered Long. "And you sucked it all in like a mug! Look here, you might give me five bob, anyway——"

Archie's brain was in a whirl. Something told him that Teddy Long was speaking the truth. Even Long didn't usually speak with such vehemence and confidence. Archie pointed to the door.

"Go!" he said hoarsely. "Be good enough to fade away."

"Look here, let's have ten bob——"

"I wish to be alone!" murmured Archie unsteadily. "Take this, dash you, and retire into the backwoods! Never let me see your face again. It worries me dizzy!"

Archie took something from his pocket, and Teddy Long snatched it. He gave a gasp of joy when he found that it was a pound note. Long simply shot out of the study, and Archie tottered feebly into the nearest chair.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SAME OLD ARCHIE.



J O H N BUSTERFIELD
BOOTS strode into Study P with Bob Christine, Reggie Pitt, and several other juniors at his heels.

Archie Glenthorne looked up dully. He was sitting in a chair in a dejected attitude. Life seemed to have lost its spice. He waved a hand with none of his recent energy.

"Come in, laddies—take a chair or two!" he invited. "Don't mind me! Take the good old lounge, if you like!"

"Somebody's been telling him!" exclaimed Pitt shrewdly. "The cat's out of the bag! Who's peached, Archie?"

"If you are referring to Teddy Long——"

"We might have guessed!" said Boots disgustedly. "Just like that little worm to get here first! Well, Archie, what do you think of it? Not a bad joke, eh?"

Archie rose slowly to his feet.

"Joke?" he repeated stiffly. "Am I to understand, you perfectly twisted chunk of refuse, that I've been spoofed? Do you assure me that the Glenthorne legend is a dashed fake?"

"Bob and I thought of it in our spare time!" grinned Buster. "If you examine that volume a bit more closely, you'll find that the binding has been taken to pieces, and the Glenthorne chapter fitted in."

"Good gad!" breathed Archie faintly.

"It was an awful trouble, faking up the paper to match," chuckled Bob Christine. "I think we did it pretty well, don't you? Good old Archie! You rose to the occasion like a man!"

"Like a couple of giants, you mean!" said Pitt.

Archie Glenthorne looked round him slowly.

"Am I to take it, you blighters, that there's no such thing as that legend?" he asked. "Am I to understand that we Glenthornes never possessed an ancestor named General Jasper?"

"Never!" grinned Boots.

"And isn't it true about Tyburn Tree?"

"Not a word of it," grinned Boots. "Your family record is as clean as a sardine tin after Fatty Little's licked it out."

There's not a single smudge on the fair name of Glenthorne!"

Archie felt rather tottery.

"Then—then all this poisonous expenditure of energy was absolutely unnecessary?" he asked. "I mean to say, I'm not the third son of the tenth generation, what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're the third son of Colonel Glenthorne—and that's all that mattered to us!" said Bob Christine blandly. "I don't know anything about the tenth generation. You needn't worry, Archie — you won't come to a nasty end, even if you do slack about a bit. We just wanted to see if the trick would work. We were curious to know if you could find some vim."

"We are curious no longer!" said Reggie Pitt firmly.

Archie sank slowly into a chair, and waved a weak hand towards the door.

"Kindly leave me to wrestle with this foul thing alone!" he murmured. "Good gad! I feel all dithery about the spine! The tissues are absolutely exhausted! That tired feeling is upon me!"

The crowd of juniors surged out of the study, yelling with laughter. It wasn't taking Archie long to get back into his old form! As soon as he knew that his future was safe, his newly-found energy deserted him.

He found himself alone in the study, and he felt that he couldn't have moved to save his life. His strength was on the ebb. And then, suddenly, a thought struck him. It was a thought that struck him absolutely sideways.

"Phipps!" he shouted, in a kind of despairing anguish. "Phipps! Laddie, hear the young master's cry, and rally round in this hour of need!"

It seemed that the age of miracles had not yet passed.

The door opened without a sound. Phipps, as calm and imperturbable as ever, glided into the room, and stood at attention. In his hands there reposed a tray, and on the tray there was a tea-pot.



"Good Heavens!" gasped Mr. Pycraft. "You reek of beer!"

"I thought you would care for a cup, sir," said Phipps respectfully.

Archie sat up like a jack-in-the-box.

"Phipps!" he breathed. "Oddslife! Not—not really——"

"Shall I pour it out, sir?" asked Phipps evenly.

Archie sank back and closed his eyes.

"The good old brew, what?" he murmured. "Phipps, old darling, this is just like a wonderful vision! The stuff that strengthens, what? Yes, kindly pour me out a good old dose!"

Archie sipped the tea with a light of joy in his eyes.

"Any orders this evening, sir?" asked Phipps, as though nothing unusual had happened. "If there is any special——"

"No, Phipps — absolutely not!" sighed Archie. "The young master desires to close his eyes and indulge in forty of the best and brightest. I live again, old bird! Archie is once more himself!"

And the swell of the Ancient House closed his eyes, and Phipps glided silently out of the study.

THE END.

By Your



Editor.

My dear Readers,

In the current issue of the Mag, the Editor refers to a forthcoming new series of articles on how to make simple articles of utility, etc. The desire to make things is inherent in most boys, and I think that a feature of this kind in the Mag. will make an instant appeal to readers. These articles will appear on two pages, and will tell you how to fit up a workshop, how to use various tools, and how to make some particular object. These articles will begin with an easy and inexpensive method of binding your copies of Nelson Lee. This will be followed the week after with an article on how to make a convenient book-shelf for your Nelson Lee Library volumes.

NEXT WEEK'S STORIES.

Another laughable, long complete story of St. Frank's, entitled, "THE SECRET OF THE OLD MILL!" will appear next week.

And the Nelson Lee story, featuring Jim the Penman, called, "THE SCOTLAND YARD MAN'S ORDEAL!" will be published in the same issue. In addition to these two fine long stories, there will, of course, be the Mag., packed with many good things.

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KICK OFF THIS WEEK!



THE MAN FROM HEADQUARTERS!

A Brilliant Complete Detective Story of Nelson Lee and Nipper, and their Adventures Against Jim the Penman

CHAPTER I.

A VISITOR FOR THE JUDGE.

MR. JUSTICE DORRINGTON frowned with annoyance. He was one of the most famous High Court judges in the kingdom, and had only recently returned home from a hard and trying day at the Central Criminal Court.

Now, after settling down to a quiet hour in the snug library of his town house in Berkeley Street, Piccadilly, he found his privacy invaded by the entrance of his butler, who bore a visitor's card upon the usual salver.

"Well, what is it, Jenkins?" asked the judge irritably. "Another infernal caller?"

"I'm afraid so, sir!" murmured the butler apologetically, handing the card to his master as he spoke. "Shall I tell the gentleman that you're too busy to see him?"

Mr. Justice Dorrington took the card impatiently from the salver, and cast a disapproving glance at it. But the neatly printed inscription upon the pasteboard seemed to arrest his attention, and he studied it more intently.

"'Detective-inspector Allen, Criminal Investigation Department, New Scotland Yard,'" he read, with a puzzled look in his eyes. "What the deuce can this police official want with me, I wonder? But you'd better show him in, Jenkins," he added to the servant. "The matter is important, I suppose—otherwise I shouldn't be bothered in this way!"

The butler withdrew, and a few seconds later he returned with the visitor—a somewhat tall, alert-looking individual, with a slight moustache and a brisk, business-

like manner. He was dressed in a smart blue-serge suit, and he walked into the room with quick, energetic strides.

"Sorry to intrude in such an apparently unwarrantable manner, sir," he exclaimed, when Jenkins had once more closed the door, "but I've been sent along here from headquarters by the Chief Commissioner at the Yard. He detailed me for the duty of coming to warn you against a very notorious criminal—Douglas James Sutcliffe!"

The judge looked at him with a quick glance.

"Jim the Penman, eh?" he queried.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what about him?" asked Dorrington curiously. "The scoundrel is at large, I understand, but I don't quite see —"

"Sutcliffe, according to information which the chief has received, has threatened to 'get' you, sir—as a revenge for the heavy sentence you passed upon him five years ago!" explained Detective-inspector Allen crisply. "He's a dangerous man, and he's got a knack of carrying out whatever he undertakes to do! The Commissioner thought you'd better be warned—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Mr. Justice Dorrington, in a sceptical tone. "I'm not afraid of the criminals who threaten me with revenge, inspector. It is quite a common occurrence, you know, for a judge to be subjected to threats of this kind—but they invariably come to nothing. Usually they are uttered in moments of anger, and mean less than nothing, as a matter of fact. A few years of prison life causes the criminals to cool off in a remarkable manner, and they usually forget all about their rashly made threats."

Detective-inspector Allen smiled.

"In the majority of cases that is quite true, sir," he replied. "But with Jim the Penman it is different. He did not make his threats in a heated moment. He has embarked upon a veritable campaign of revenge, and already he has attempted to deal with some of those who were responsible for his heavy 'stretch' in Portmoor. Mr. Nelson Lee has been victimised, and so has Sir Rodney Marshall—as you no doubt read in the newspapers. I can assure you that your danger is very real, indeed, and the chief strongly advises you to accept advice and protection."

Mr. Justice Dorrington was becoming impressed, and he looked at the inspector keenly. He remembered reading of Sutcliffe's activities against the famous detective of Gray's Inn Road, and of his audacious kidnapping of Sir Rodney Marshall, the man who had prosecuted Jim on behalf of the Crown at the time of his trial.

The judge rose to his feet.

"Well, inspector, I must admit that your words seem to carry some weight," he confessed reluctantly. "But I don't like the idea of being terrorised by a blackguard of Sutcliffe's type! It goes against the grain to knuckle under, as it were—"

"There is no question of knuckling under, sir," cut in Allen quickly. "It is merely that we are advising you to take reasonable precautions against anything which Sutcliffe might attempt. We know for a fact that he means to work some stunt or other against you, and it's up to us to frustrate him. They say to be forewarned is to be forearmed—and that's the exact position now."

Mr. Justice Dorrington nodded.

"Well, well, perhaps there's something in what you say, inspector," he said, at last. "But, personally, I feel that it would be just as well to ignore Sutcliffe entirely. However, it would be churlish of me to refuse the help you offer in the circumstances, and I am quite willing to place myself in your hands. What do you advise?"

Detective-inspector Allen cast a keen glance round the room.

"Jim the Penman's chief line is forgery, of course," he said, nodding towards the judge's desk. "His first consideration, when he comes here, will be to grab those cheque-books of yours! I advise you to place them in a bag, sir, in readiness to take away with you! There's another point," he added, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "You've got a daughter, haven't you, sir?"

The judge nodded.

"Yes, I have," he said. "But surely—"

"Sutcliffe wouldn't be averse to kidnapping her, sir, if he thought it would further his plans," cut in the inspector shrewdly. "I suppose your daughter is in the house—and safe?"

Mr. Justice Dorrington uttered a startled exclamation.

"Good gracious! You don't think that Sybil is in danger, inspector?" he gasped. "My daughter is very, very dear to me, and I'd do anything rather than allow her to be subjected to a moment's annoyance. Your suggestion is appalling, and I will send for Miss Sybil at once!"

He touched the bell as he spoke, now obviously in a state of real apprehension. The judge's daughter, as he had said, was the apple of his eye, and the very thought of her being attacked and carried off by Jim the Penman made Dorrington go hot and cold by turns. The inspector observed his emotion, and nodded again.

"Perhaps it would be as well, sir, if you and your daughter left London for a short time?" he suggested. "Your absence would effectually prevent Sutcliffe from doing either of you any injury, and it would leave us fellows a clear field for laying our trap for him here. Haven't you got a country place near Romford, sir—"

"Yes, yes—perhaps it would be as well if I took my daughter there at once," agreed the judge, who now seemed to be really alarmed. "This infernal criminal is a nuisance, but I cannot bear the thought of Miss Sybil being exposed to the possibility of kidnapping— Ah, Jenkins," he broke off, as the butler appeared. "Just tell Miss Sybil to come here, will you?"

When the girl arrived, her father explained the position to her. She was frankly incredulous, and insisted that there would be no danger whatever in her remaining in London. But her father had taken Detective-inspector Allen's warning very much to heart, and he was adamant.

He decided, then and there, to leave at once for Romford, and the Scotland Yard man seemed to be greatly relieved. Immediately he learned of the judge's decision, he begged leave to use the telephone, saying that he wanted to communicate with headquarters, and to make arrangements for the rounding-up of Jim the Penman.

Meanwhile, Mr. Justice Dorrington and Sybil made themselves ready for their journey—the judge acting on Allen's advice, and packing his cheque-books into his bag.

A few minutes later Dorrington's great touring-car was at the door, and both he and his daughter were pleasantly surprised when they learned that Detective-inspector Allen intended to accompany them. He explained that his orders were to see that no harm came to either the judge or his daughter, and it was necessary for him to travel with them.

Jim the Penman, apparently, was booked for a severe disappointment. For, if he really intended to "work the stunt" which Allen had referred to, he would find the birds flown.

And Mr. Justice Dorrington chuckled gleefully when he thought of the unpleasant

surprise which lay in store for Mr. Douglas James Sutcliffe.

CHAPTER II.

A STARTLING THEORY.



CHIEF DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR LENNARD emitted a characteristic grunt.

"We've got no news, Lee!" he growled, in an irritable tone. "The river on both sides of Cuxley Bridge was

amazing quickness, and it is ridiculous to attribute it to anything else. He took the one possible chance of liberty which offered, and he acted with such rapidity that he succeeded in getting clean away before you and your men had a chance to stop him. Jim the Penman is smart, and it's no use pretending otherwise."

Nipper nodded.

"Smart isn't the word for him, guv'nor!" he commented. "Jim is the slickest bird in the whole of London, and I'll bet that he'll soon get busy again!"



With one blow of his fist he sent the judge reeling to the floor, at the same time grasping Sybil by the arm with more force than politeness.

searched with tremendous thoroughness, but there was no sign of Jim the Penman. How in thunder he managed to give us the slip beats me. The man seems to be possessed of uncanny powers—"

"No, no, Lennard—nothing of the sort!" said Nelson Lee, with a smile. "Sutcliffe is a man with exceedingly keen wits, and he has trained himself to make the fullest possible use of them. His disappearance at Cuxley Bridge was merely due to his

The trio were holding their little discussion in Nelson Lee's consulting-room at Gray's Inn Road. The chief inspector had called in—as he frequently did—for a little chat with his famous unofficial colleague, and the conversation had very naturally turned upon the subject of Jim the Penman's sensational escape from custody shortly before.

Sutcliffe had kidnapped Sir Rodney Marshall, and had taken him in an unconscious

condition to Brighton—with the intention of making him sign a cheque for £10,000. But Nelson Lee, in the guise of a bank messenger, had frustrated the scheme, and had brought Lennard and his men upon the scene. They had promptly arrested Jim the Penman, and had started off to London with him in a police car.

Jim, however, had dived out of the car as it was passing over Cuxley Bridge, and had succeeded in getting clean away. A search had resulted in no trace of him being discovered, and an examination of the river had brought to light no sign of his body. The only conclusion which could be arrived at, therefore, was that he had scrambled out of the river with extraordinary swiftness, and had disappeared into the well-wooded country which bordered the river.

But for two or three days nothing had been heard of him. If he was still in the land of the living he was keeping remarkably quiet; but Nelson Lee was convinced that his activities would soon recommence.

"You're right, young 'un," he said, in reply to Nipper's remark. "Jim will undoubtedly soon get busy again. He has made up his mind to have his revenge upon all those who were responsible for his imprisonment—and he will carry out his purpose."

The chief inspector looked at Lee keenly.

"You really believe that?" he asked.

"I do," declared the detective. "I believe it so whole-heartedly that I intend to telephone to Mr. Justice Dorrington at once, and warn him of its possible danger. Dorrington, you will remember, was the judge who sentenced Jim to ten years in Portmoor—and I fancy he will be the next victim on Sutcliffe's list!"

Lennard grinned.

"I don't suppose old Dorrington will so much as thank you, Lee!" he observed. "He's not the sort to be intimidated by threats, because he's used to 'em! But there's no harm in warning him. When are you going to do it?"

For answer, Nelson Lee took the receiver off the telephone, and gave the judge's number, which he had previously looked up. In a few seconds he was talking to Jenkins, the butler, who gravely informed him that his master had just left for Romford, accompanied by his daughter and the man from Headquarters. Lee received the news in some surprise, and lost no time in relating the facts to Lennard.

"It seems that I have been forestalled by one of your own men," concluded the detective. "This man from Headquarters—Detective-Inspector Allen—was sent by the Chief Commissioner—"

"Allen!" said Lennard, with a frown. "We haven't got a man in the C.I.D. named Allen at all, Lee! There must be some mistake—the servant you spoke to must have got the name wrong."

Nelson Lee shook his head.

"No, Lennard—he said Allen right enough," he returned. "Are you quite sure that Allen is not one of the Yard men?"

"Sure!" snorted the chief inspector. "Why, hang it all, I ought to know my own men, I suppose? There's no Allen among 'em— Good gosh!"

Thud!

Nelson Lee brought his fist down with a resounding thump upon the table, and caused Lennard to utter his startled exclamation. He looked at the detective in surprise, and saw that Lee was wearing an expression of extreme grimness.

"There can be only one explanation of this, Lennard!" he said crisply. "The facts are altogether too significant to ignore. You have said that Detective-Inspector Allen is not attached to the Yard—and yet he presented himself at Mr. Justice Dorrington's house, and stated that he had been sent from Headquarters! What does that suggest to you?"

Lennard stared.

"That he's an impostor, I suppose—" he began.

"Precisely!" agreed Nelson Lee. "An impostor, Lennard! We know that Jim the Penman is an artist at disguise and impersonation, and we also know that he has sworn to get even with the judge! Therefore, it is a simple matter to place two and two together, and arrive at one certain conclusion!"

Nipper started excitedly.

"You mean that this Detective-Inspector Allen is Jim the Penman, guv'nor?" he queried tensely.

"Exactly, young 'un!" said Lee. "It is quite obvious, to my mind! What is more, it is equally certain that Jim has succeeded in getting both Mr. Justice Dorrington and his daughter into his clutches, and is on his way to Romford with them at this moment!"

Chief Detective-Inspector Lennard and Nipper stared at the detective in amazement, scarcely able to credit such a startling theory.

It seemed incredible that such a state of affairs could actually exist; but almost anything was possible to a man of Jim the Penman's audacity and nerve, as Lee was quite aware.

CHAPTER III.

JIM HOLDS THE TRUMPS!



MR. JUSTICE DORRINGTON climbed out of his motor-car, and turned to assist his daughter to alight.

"Here we are, my dear!" he exclaimed, as he handed Sybil out of the vehicle. "Quite a pleasant little run!"

Sybil smiled happily.

"Oh, I enjoyed it immensely, dad!" she exclaimed. "And I'm going to enjoy being here under such queer conditions even more! Why, we've brought no servants, and there's only old Willis and his wife here! That means that I shall have to do the cooking—and I'm looking forward to it!"

"Who are the Willis's?" inquired Detective-Inspector Allen. "Caretakers?"

"Yes," replied the judge, "an old couple who have lived here practically all their lives. We shall be able to manage all right, for we've got the chauffeur to run into Romford for anything we might want."

Allen nodded, and followed his host and hostess into the library of the old mansion—a rambling building, which stood near the main road about a couple of miles out of the old market town of Romford.

The judge and his daughter had not been expected, of course; but Willis and his wife, after they had got over their preliminary fluster, busied themselves in making the new arrivals as comfortable as possible. A cheerful fire was soon crackling in the library grate, and the three travellers clustered round it, warming themselves at the welcome blaze.

Detective-Inspector Allen, after a few moments, walked to the French window and opened it. He saw that it gave upon a lawn, bordered by a gravel path, and the man from Headquarters walked along it until he came to a gate which admitted him to the drive, upon which stood the motor-car. Allen seemed to be keen to take in the geography of the place, and when he returned to the library he was smiling contentedly.

Mr. Justice Dorrington and Sybil were still by the fire, and they looked at the inspector queerly as he walked to the door, and turned the key in the lock.

"What is the matter?" asked the judge. "Surely you do not suspect Jim the Penman to follow us here, inspector?"

Allen chuckled.

"No, sir—there's no need for him to follow you," he returned. "As a matter of fact, he travelled down here with you!"

"What?" exclaimed Dorrington and the girl in chorus.

"Allow me to make the position clear," said the man from Headquarters pleasantly. "Perhaps you will understand the situation better, my dear judge, if I remove my moustache!"

As he spoke, "Detective-Inspector Allen" whipped the hair from his upper lip, and Dorrington stared at him in amazement. In a flash he recognised the well-known features of the man before him, and he gave vent to a startled cry.

"Jim the Penman!" he exclaimed, in a choking voice. "You—you have tricked me from the commencement, you scoundrel! By Heaven! I will have you arrested——"

"You will do nothing except what you're

ordered to do!" snapped Sutcliffe, in a hard, rasping tone—totally different to that which he had previously used. "I am master of the situation here at the moment, and you may as well know that I'm out for revenge. You, Dorrington, were responsible for sending me to Portmoor Prison, and I swore to get even with you! Well, my time has come! I've got you and your daughter here—completely in my power—and it is my intention to take the girl and hold her prisoner—unless you comply with my terms!"

Mr. Justice Dorrington swayed, and clutched the mantelpiece for support. The shock of the revelation had almost bowled him over, and he could do nothing but stare stupidly at the calm figure of the criminal before him. Sybil, wild-eyed and trembling, stood by her father's side, gazing at Sutcliffe apprehensively.

"Terms!" repeated the judge. "What are your terms, you—you——"

"They're very simple, my lord!" said Jim, with a smile. "You will remember that I advised you to bring your cheque-book here, I have no doubt, and my terms are that you immediately draw a cheque for the sum of £20,000—made payable to 'bearer.' Further, I shall require your word of honour that you will take no steps to stop payment of the cheque——"

"No, no; don't do it, dad—don't do anything of the sort!" interrupted Sybil quickly. "Don't make terms with such a vile wretch as Sutcliffe——"

"I have no option, my dear!" said the judge. "I would rather lose every farthing I possess than allow you to be taken away and imprisoned. This criminal, as he says, holds the upper hand, and there is nothing for me to do but give him the cheque."

He began taking his cheque-book and fountain-pen from the bag as he spoke, and Jim nodded approvingly. He had got his way much easier than he had anticipated, and he congratulated himself upon the astuteness of his scheme.

But an unpleasant surprise was in store for Sutcliffe—a surprise which was destined to upset all his plans.

Just as Mr. Justice Dorrington was in the act of writing upon the cheque-form, there came a loud knocking at the hall door of the house, and Jim the Penman set his lips grimly.

In a flash he realised that, by some means or other, the police had discovered his plot, and were even now at the door! But Sutcliffe did not lose his nerve for a single instant. Even in such a predicament as this, Jim saw no reason to abandon his purpose, and he acted with amazing swiftness.

With one blow of his fist he sent the judge reeling to the floor, at the same time grasping Sybil by the arm with more force than politeness. He literally dragged her towards the French window, opened it

quickly, and passed out into the darkness of the night.

Even if Jim the Penman had not got the fortune for which he had made his bid, he had got the girl—and he intended to use her to force her father's hand.

With Sybil held a prisoner, he could compel the judge to surrender his entire fortune—and Sutcliffe swore that he would make him pay to the uttermost penny!

CHAPTER IV.

TOO LATE!



NELSON LEE fumed.

"Why doesn't somebody open the door?" he muttered impatiently, taking hold of the knocker and giving another series of blows upon it. "We know the judge has arrived—for his car is here."

Chief Detective-inspector Lennard glanced at the door, and grunted.

"Looks queer—all this delay," he declared. "If something doesn't happen soon we'll break in—"

"There's somebody coming along the hall now!" cut in Nipper eagerly. "I can hear footsteps!"

The trio had just arrived from London in Nelson Lee's racer. They had hurried off at once after the famous detective had arrived at his startling conclusion regarding Jim the Penman's activities, and they had covered the distance from London in almost record time. Now they were outside the front door of Mr. Justice Dorrington's house—eagerly awaiting admittance.

The delay, as Lennard had remarked, looked somewhat suspicious; but it was merely due to the activities of Willis and his wife. The old couple had departed to the kitchen regions, far at the back of the premises, in order to prepare a meal for their master, and it was some time before Willis became aware of the thudding upon the door.

He did so at last, however, and he left his work and hurried to open it, wondering what new surprise lay in store for him. He pulled back the heavy catch with shaking fingers, and drew the door open, and found himself staring at the three newcomers.

Nelson Lee looked at him quickly.

"Where can we find the judge and his daughter?" he asked, without wasting time on preliminaries. "It is imperative that we see them at once—"

"They're in the library, sir," said Willis, "along with a gentleman who came down with them from London."

"Very well," said Lee. "Please conduct us to the library immediately!"

He entered the hall as he spoke, and he was closely followed by Lennard and Nipper. Willis looked at them curiously for a moment

and then, evidently realising that their business was important, he turned and led the way to the library door.

"This is the room, sir," said Willis, knocking upon the panel as he spoke, and grasping the door-knob. "You'll find the master and Miss Sybil in here. What names shall I give— Well, bother me! The door's locked, sir!"

"Locked!" repeated the Chief Inspector. "By thunder, this means that we're too late, Lee—"

Nelson Lee held up his hand for silence, and placed his ear closer to the oaken door.

"I thought I heard a groan," he explained, listening intently. "Yes, there it is again, Lennard! Can't you hear it?"

Both Lennard and Nipper remained quiet, and they—as well as the detective—distinctly heard the sounds of groaning proceeding from the interior of the library. There was no mistaking the sounds, and Nelson Lee glanced at the Scotland Yard man tensely.

"Come on, Lennard!" he said. "We'll force this door at once! It is impossible for us to stand here doing nothing! It looks as if Jim has done his work more rapidly than we anticipated!"

Together Nelson Lee and Lennard flung themselves against the door, and the lock gave way under the impact, so suddenly that the Chief Inspector was precipitated into the room before he could check himself. Lee only just managed to retain his balance; but he sprang lightly over Lennard's sprawling figure and darted to the spot where Mr. Justice Dorrington lay groaning on the carpet.

The judge was partially stunned, but he managed to turn round as Lee bent down beside him, seeming to know that rescuers had come. He struggled up on one elbow and pointed to the French window—croaking out a few words as he did so.

"Jim the Penman has gone off with my daughter!" he gasped faintly. "Go after him, and bring her back! For Heaven's sake, bring her back—"

"Great Scott!" yelled Nipper excitedly, as the sound of a purring motor-car engine floated through the open window. "He's started the judge's car, guv'nor!"

Nelson Lee made no reply, but rose to his feet and streaked for the French window, with Nipper in his wake. The Chief Inspector, who by this time had managed to pick himself up, dashed after them, and the trio pelted along the gravel path, passed through the dividing gate, and emerged upon the drive.

They were in time to see Dorrington's car turning into the roadway, with Sutcliffe at the wheel. There was no sign of the girl, and in all probability she had been bundled into the tonneau—no doubt bound and helpless.

"The rotter!" said Nipper angrily. "But he needn't think he can get away on that old 'bus! Our racer can do twice the speed of

that old thing, and we'll overtake him in no time!"

Lee was already making for his powerful racer, and he flung himself into the driving seat with a grim look of determination in his eyes. He placed his foot on the self-starter, and depressed sharply, expecting to hear the engine roar into life.

But nothing happened.

"What's the matter, guv'nor?" asked Nipper anxiously. "Won't she start?"

"No, Nipper—thanks to Jim!" said the detective, in a tone of suppressed anger. "The fellow thinks of everything! I fancy he's done some quick tinkering with the engine—hoping to delay us sufficiently to enable him to get clear away!"

Lee whipped out his electric torch, raised the bonnet of the engine, and peered beneath. And the cause of the engine's non-starting instantly became apparent.

"All six high-tension wires wrenched from the plugs!" groaned Nipper, with a sinking sensation in his chest. "Confound Sutcliffe! This'll mean ten minutes' delay!"

But he was wrong, for Nelson Lee had all the wires replaced inside of four minutes. And the very instant the last one was fixed the bonnet was slammed down, and Lee and Nipper jumped aboard the car—where Lennard was already seated.

This time the engine purred musically at the first touch of the starter, and as the detective depressed the throttle a trifle it hummed into roaring activity. The great car gave a sudden lurch as the clutch was slipped home, and a second later the vehicle shot out of the drive, and turned into the main road.

The chase had started, and if it was humanly possible, Nelson Lee intended to overtake Jim the Penman before he could make good his escape.

CHAPTER V.

SYBIL'S BRAVERY.



DOUGLAS JAMES SUTCLIFFE sat at the wheel of the judge's car with a feeling of satisfaction in his breast.

His plans had not run so smoothly as he had anticipated; but, in spite of the intervention of the police, he had managed to retain his advantage. He had got Sybil Dorrington a secure prisoner in the car, and he had disabled the racing car sufficiently for any effective pursuit to be impossible. Jim reckoned to be a good many miles away before the racer—which he knew to be Nelson Lee's—could possibly get on his trail.

His fair captive, he reflected, would serve as a lever to induce her father to part with whatever sum Jim liked to demand; but for once the astute Sutcliffe had commenced to count his chickens before they were hatched.

He was reckoning without Sybil—and she, as it happened, was far from idle. Society butterfly as she was, she was nevertheless a girl of spirit and pluck, and she soon realised that her roughly-applied bonds would be comparatively easy to slip out of. And once she was free, perhaps she could take a hand in the proceedings!

Jim had done his work so hurriedly that he had had no proper time to examine the bonds, and Sybil was very thankful for this. For, once she had freed one hand, the rest was child's play. Within three minutes she was free, and she crouched in the tonneau of the car, wondering how she could turn the tables on the desperado who had kidnapped her.

One of her slim hands suddenly came in contact with something cold and heavy upon the floor of the car, and she grasped it eagerly. It was a heavy brass tyre-inflator, and the girl estimated that it would make a very effective club.

She was doubly anxious to escape from Jim on account of her father's anxiety, and with a gleam of determination in her eyes she suddenly stood up in the car, and raised the "club" above her head. Then she addressed herself to Sutcliffe, who started in surprise at the nearness of her voice.

"Stop the car at once!" she ordered, in as stern a voice as she could manage. "Do you hear? Stop at once, or I'll stun you with this pump! I mean what I say—"

"Sit down and don't talk rot!" cut in Jim disdainfully, taking the girl's threat to be merely bluff. "I'm not going to stop—"

She was as good as her word, and she brought the inflator down with a sideway motion which was a little more effective than she anticipated. For the inflator caught Jim a terrific blow on the side of the head. He partly rose to turn, and the next moment fell, reeling out of the car!

Sybil gave a little scream, and made a wild grab at the steering-wheel. She was only just in time to prevent the car from swerving off the road, but she did it. And a moment later she had scrambled into the driving seat, and had taken out the clutch. Then, with a sigh of relief, she applied the brakes and brought the car to a standstill.

Three minutes later Nelson Lee's car was alongside, and its occupants were greatly relieved to find the girl unhurt, and really astounded when they heard her story. She was overwhelmed with compliments then and there.

A search for Jim the Penman brought forth no result whatever. Evidently he had not been injured by his fall from the car, and he had promptly vanished into the darkness, realising that Nelson Lee was close upon him.

Sutcliffe had played a losing game this time, but Lee knew that he would soon reappear.

THE END.



(NOTE.—If any readers care to write to me, I shall be pleased to comment upon any remarks that are likely to interest the majority. If you have any grumbles—make them to me! If you have any suggestions—send them along! Remember, my aim is to please as many of you as I possibly can. All letters should be addressed to me personally, c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. —E.S.B.).

A.C., of Islington, raises an interesting little point in a postscript to his letter. You say you are seventeen, A.C., and you consider that I shall secretly set you down as a big baby because you read my stories. But why should I? I've got a letter before me from a proud young father (L.O.W., of Scarthoe, Grimsby) who declares that his mother reads the Old Paper. And I don't think these good people can be called big babies, do you? By the way, this Grimsby father has been reading my stories regularly for over eight years, and he solemnly declares that he intends to bring his baby up to read "the good old paper," as he terms it.

I needn't tell you, L.O.W., that I am very proud of your loyalty. Your adherence to the St. Frank's stories is apparently passing from generation to generation. So why should A.C. consider himself a baby? I take it as a great compliment that my stories are read by all classes of mature years, in addition to the general youthful reader.

All right, H. Bailey, of Middlesborough. Don't worry about the Christmas number. I think I shall provide you with something of the kind you particularly like. In fact—and this is just a whisper for your private ear—there will really be two Christmas numbers this year. I hope you'll like them.

Bobs L. Ealy asks me to write a special story about Archie Glenthorne and his "slippery English," as she aptly terms it. As a matter of fact, Bobs, I wrote a special Archie story some weeks before I got your

letter—and it appears in this very number. There must have been some kind of telepathy at work, as far as I can see. Let's know if you like the yarn, please.

Roland Wiggins, of Forest Gate, wants me to publish an art plate of the Fourth Form football team. One or two other readers have made requests of a similar nature. Well, Roland, and all the rest of you, I must point out that this sort of thing is quite outside my own sphere. I can only advise you to write to the Editor. He's a jolly good chap, and I've no doubt he'll do everything he possibly can to please you.

Quite a number of readers have expressed their approval of my yarns by asking for more and more. Some want the Old Paper increased in size, and these enthusiasts would have no objection if the price was raised to 3d. Others want a double number once a month, and quite a few would like our little journal to come out twice weekly! One cheerful young gentleman, in fact, strongly advocates a daily issue!

But I'm afraid all these suggestions are impracticable. In any case, it's not in my power to increase the size of the paper, or to issue it just when I please. As far as I can see, my only immediate means of pleasing these enthusiasts is to get down to work as hard as I can, and produce one or two extra long stories for publication in the Boys' Friend 4d. Library. I can't actually promise, but I'll do my best.

Don't forget to write to me if you want advice on any little problem or difficulty. I shall be delighted to help you over any little stile that may beset your path. But I'm not a walking encyclopedia, remember—so please confine your requests to reasonable limits. The closer we can get together, the greater friends we shall be. And that's just the keynote of our little paper—the entire staff, including myself, want to feel that we and our readers are the best of pals.



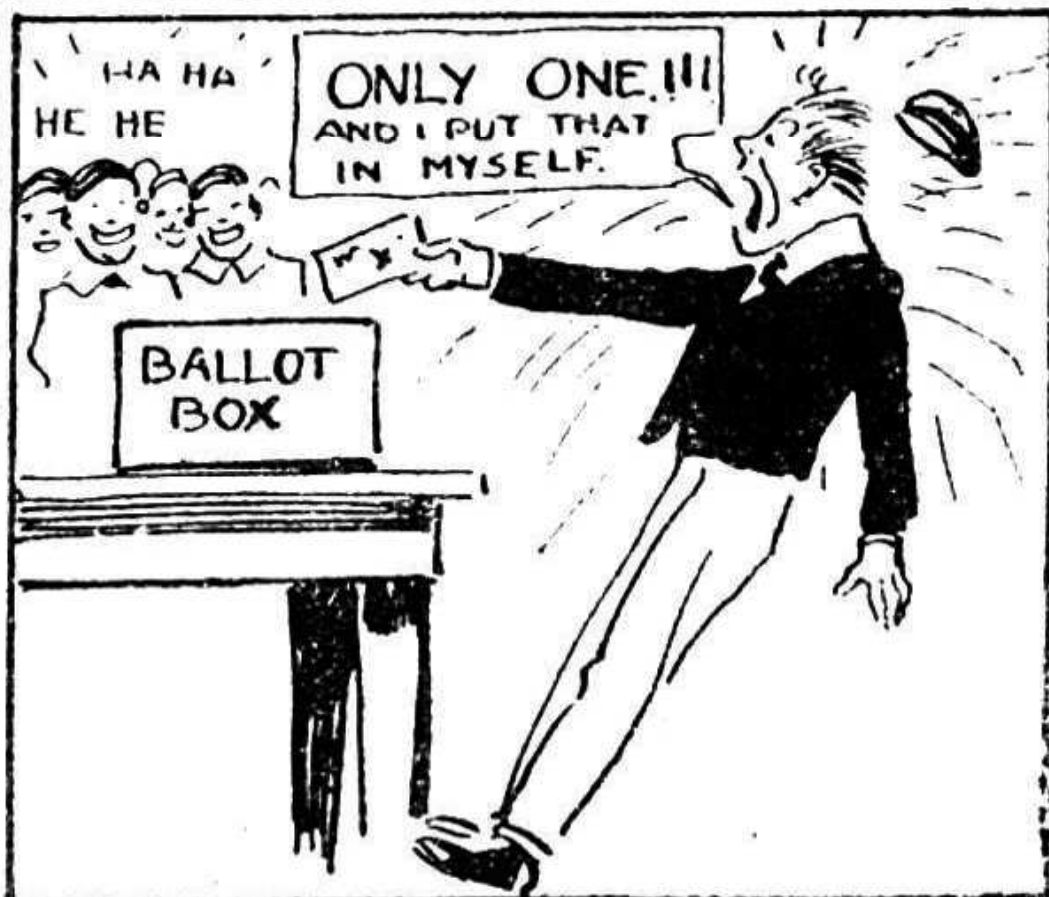
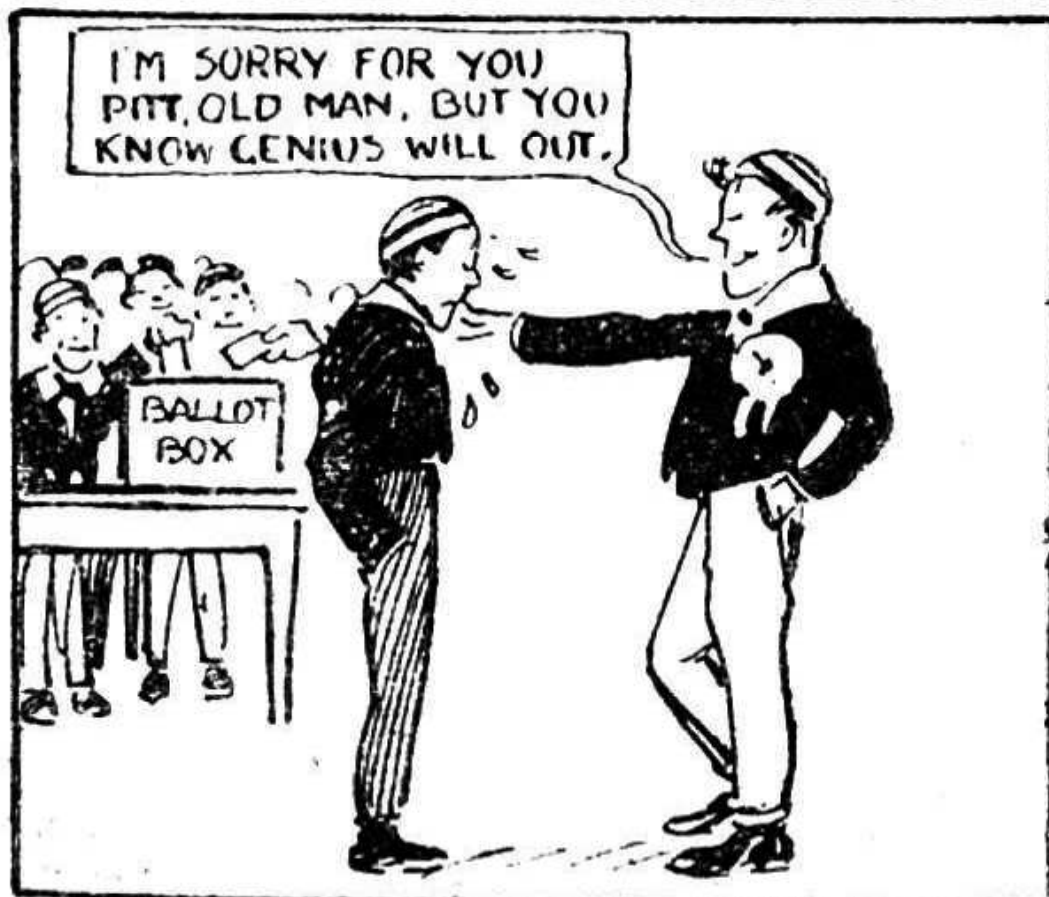
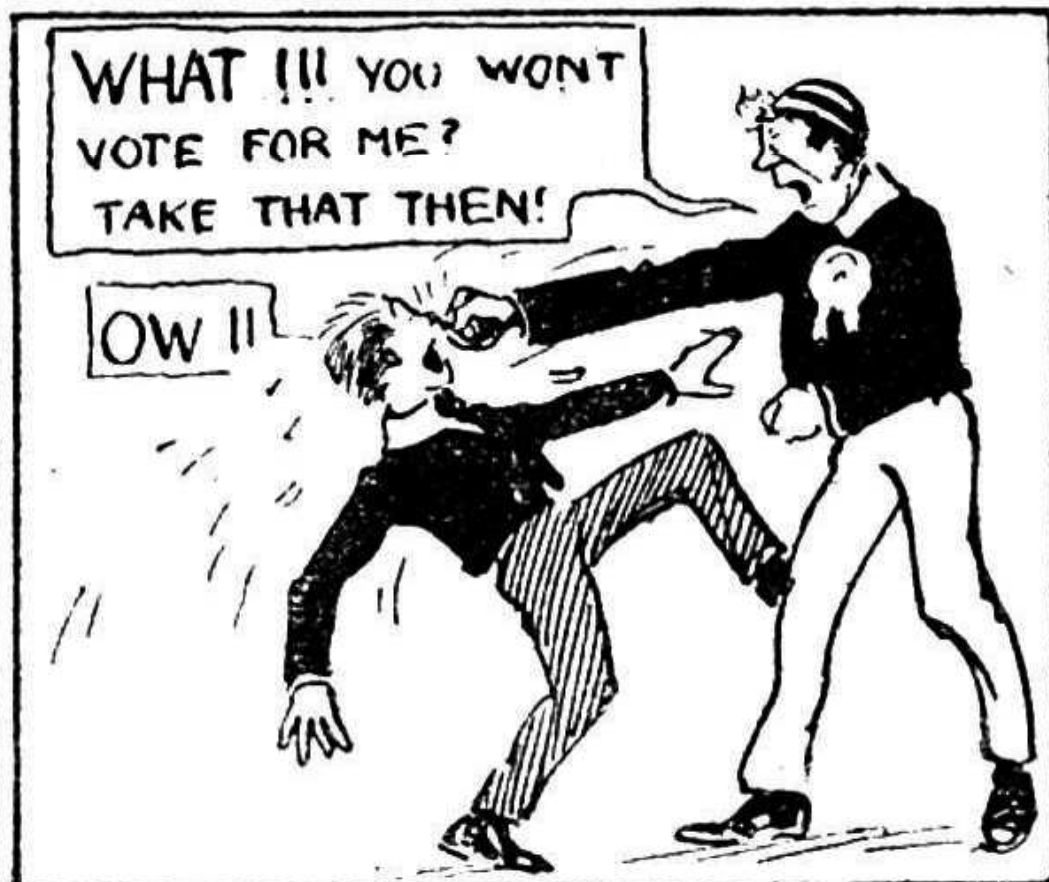
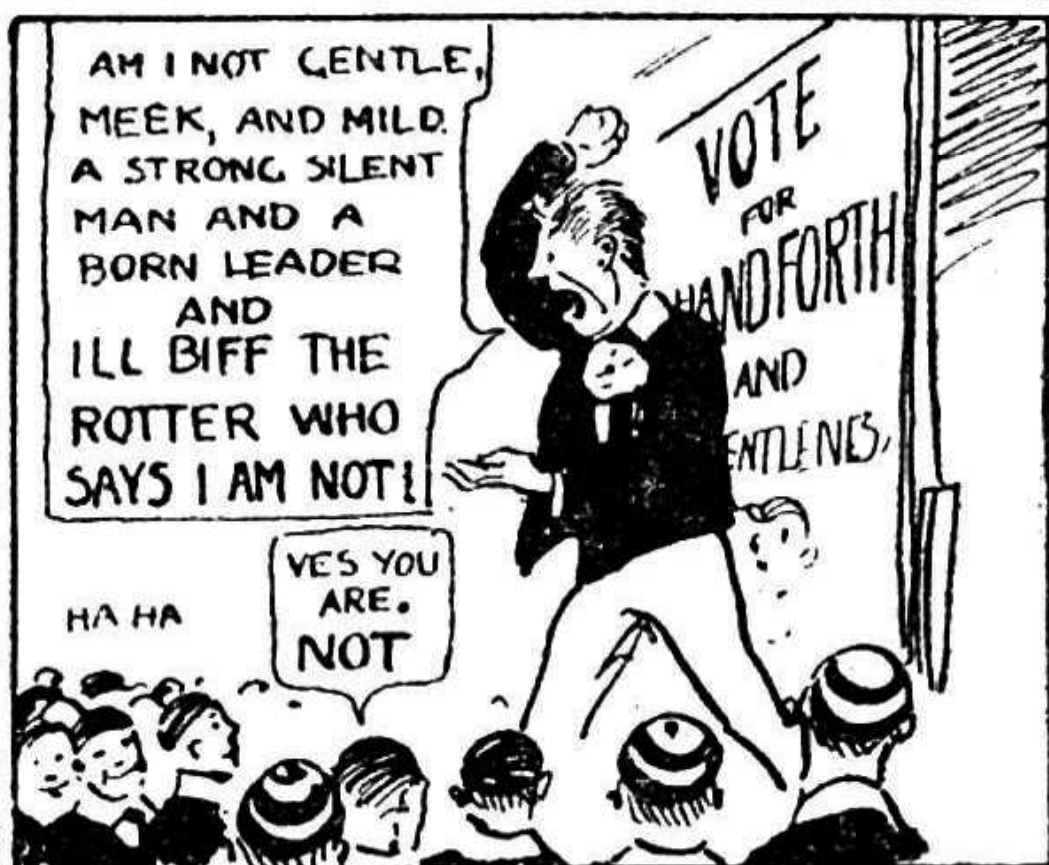
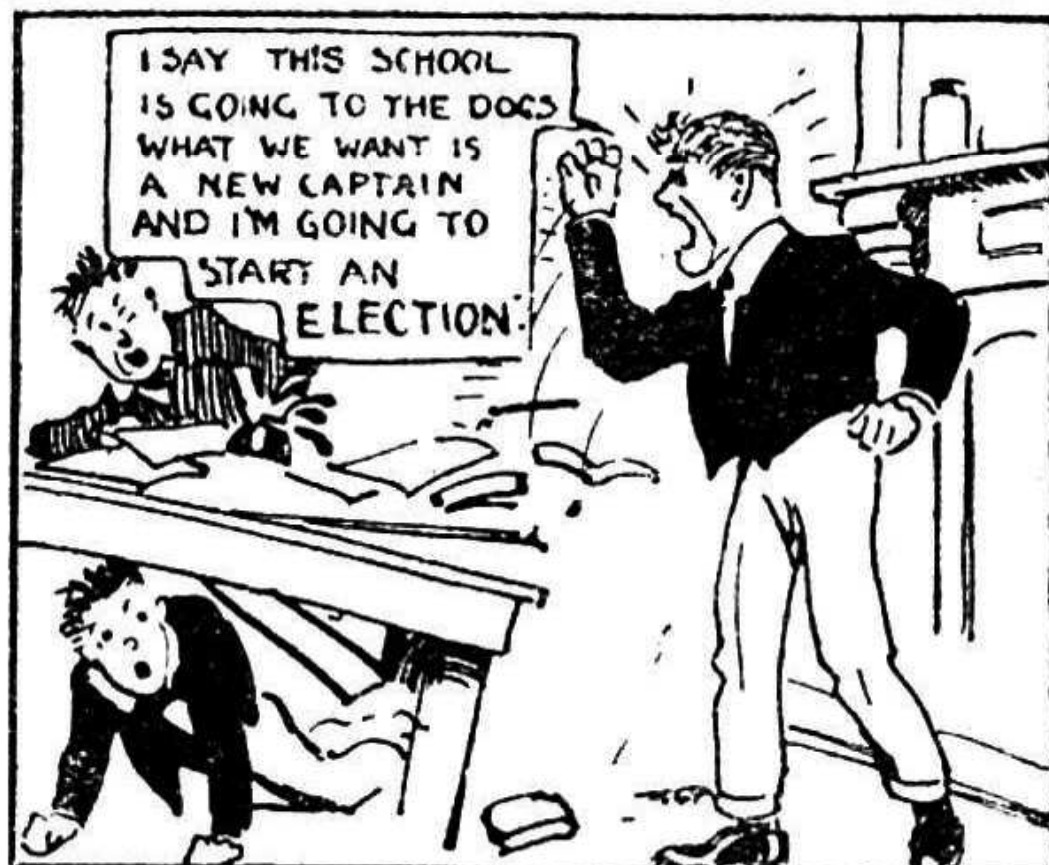
St. Frank's Magazine.

No. 51. Vol. 2.

Edited by Pitt.

November 15, 1924.

ADVENTURES OF E. O. HANDFORTH - ELECTIONEERING



OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

No. 53.—FELSTED SCHOOL.



The leading public school in Essex, Felsted, was founded and endowed by Richard Lord Riche in 1564. In 1852 it was reconstituted, and since 1876 it has been administered under a scheme of the Endowed Schools' Commissioners.

The boys number about 280, and they are divided into four houses, each of which is in charge of a Housemaster, the boarding arrangements being under the direct control of the Headmaster. In addition to the School House, there is a detached boarding-house, containing forty-three boys, opened in 1900.

New science laboratories were opened in 1899, and a biological laboratory in 1901. An engineering workshop and an enlarged carpentering workshop were opened in 1901. The new hall was added in 1910.

In front of the School House are some thirty acres of playing-fields, and here have been erected a gymnasium, fives courts, and a covered swimming-bath. A further twelve acres has been acquired recently.

A junior house, quite separate from the School House, was opened in 1895, accommodating fifty boys.



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

My dear Chums,

With such unconscious humorists as Archie and Handforth, St. Frank's can never really be dull, even upon these long and otherwise dreary November days. This week it has been Archie's turn to keep the school convulsed with laughter. The perpetrators of the joke must congratulate themselves on having succeeded where other more serious-minded individuals have failed. To have converted Archie, even temporarily, from habits of languid ease to that of all forms of violent exercise is not far short of the miraculous. The pride of the Glenthornes may have suffered much indignity when the truth was revealed. Except for that, Archie will have benefited considerably in physical fitness by his spartan activities, and we hope that, having once experienced the delights of physical exertion, he will, like Oliver Twist, want more. Knowing Archie's tendency to follow a line of least resistance, I fear that he will soon lapse into his old ways again. It is a pity that a young fellow, showing such promise as he did this week, should allow his muscles to grow flabby and his brain to soften in sleep and idleness. But as a leopard cannot change his spots, so the Genial Ass can never be anything else but what he is.

EXIT CARTER.

St. Frank's allows a fair amount of rope even towards the acknowledged rotter—or Fullwood and Co., Teddy Long and a few others would not be here now. They have sailed near the edge on many occasions, but they have never gone so far as to play the traitor against the old school. Such a dastardly plot as Carter planned in order to revile the name of St. Frank's at a time when we were celebrating our return to popular favour was the act of a traitor of the foulest kind. There was nothing even

to be gained by it, except the satiation of a malicious spite against the school. The punishment of expulsion was never more deserved, and no one will be sorry to know that we have now seen the last of this wretched youth.

OUR ADVERT COLUMN.

I think it is quite obvious to most readers to which individual we owe this brilliant suggestion for bucking up trade within St. Frank's. The fact that the enterprising junior's name appears twice as an advertiser shows that he means business. I would like to warn readers that all goods advertised in "OUR ADVERT. COLUMN" are intended only for sale or barter within the school. I note that Teddy Long is not slow to take advantage of this feature to raise a ten-bob loan. Of course, if there is any junior mug enough to send money, he mustn't expect to see it back for a Long time—if ever.

THE ST. FRANK'S ANNUAL.

Several inquiries have been received from readers asking when we are going to bring out a St. Frank's Annual. I am afraid it is too late to produce one this winter, but perhaps next year we might consider it. One reader says that he is sure that a St. Frank's Annual would sell like hot cakes. I have no doubt it would if we ever produced one. But, at present, we are devoting all our time and attention to the Mag.

HOW TO MAKE IT.

I hope to start shortly in the Mag. a new feature on how to make all kinds of useful and inexpensive articles. A certain junior who is exceptionally clever at this kind of work has promised to write me a series of articles on how to construct simple models of various things at a low cost. More particulars will be given next week.

Your old chum,
REGGIE PITT.

OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY. *And WHO'S WHO.*

No. 29.—TEDDY LONG.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Squat and dumpy, with a slight inclination to tubbiness. Podgy features, with snub nose and small, watery eyes. Generally has a water-mark round his neck, and is untidy and slovenly by nature. Eyes, weak hazel. Hair, medium brown. Height, 4 ft. 8 ins. Weight, 8 st. 13 lb. Birthday, July 12th.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

The laziest boy in the Fourth, and also the biggest funk. Slovenly, careless and grubby. Makes a fine art of spying and sneaking, and is recognised as the most utter little worm in the Lower School. Is a bare-faced liar, his lies generally landing him in well-deserved hot water.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

Cares nothing for sports. Spends his time trying to borrow money, eluding work, and spying on his Form fellows. Hobby: Listening at keyholes.

No. 30.—WALTER SKELTON.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Medium figure, with no particular characteristic qualities. Undistinguished features. Pale, pasty complexion, owing to lack of exercise. Eyes, brown. Hair, sandy. Height, 5 ft. 1 in. Weight, 9 st. 2 lb. Birthday March 27th.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

Studious and thoughtful, with strong inclinations to be cranky and extreme. Is always influenced by such fellows as Timothy Tucker, being something of a visionary. Quiet and inoffensive. Not exactly a funk, but never fights.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

Doesn't know a football from a cricket stump. Devotes his time to scientific research and chemical experiments. Always has his fingers badly stained with chemicals.



TEDDY LONG.



WALTER SKELTON.

THE FOURTH At ST. FRANK'S.



No. 31.—EUGENE ELLMORE.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Slim, bony, and round-shouldered almost to the point of being humped. Peculiarly striking countenance, having deep-set eyes, high forehead, and prominent cheek-bones. Decidedly Roman nose, and well-shaped mouth. Eyes, dreamy grey. Hair, dark, thin and wispy in front, but plentiful at back. Height, 5 ft. 2 ins. Weight, 8 st. 8 lb. Birthday, August 7th.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

Studious and absent-minded. In-offensive to a degree. Wears spectacles. Keeps mostly to himself, his only chum being Skelton. Has strong vegetarian leanings.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

Spends all his time with books. Is a mine of information on nearly all subjects, being crammed with general knowledge. Is only happy when reading or writing. Contributes serious articles to the "St. Frank's Magazine."



E. ELLMORE.

No. 32.—ARTHUR HUBBARD.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Medium-sized and well-built. Plain, good-natured features of no special distinction. Eyes, dark blue. Hair, chestnut. Height, 5 ft. Weight, 9 st. 4 lb. Birthday, September 19th.

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:

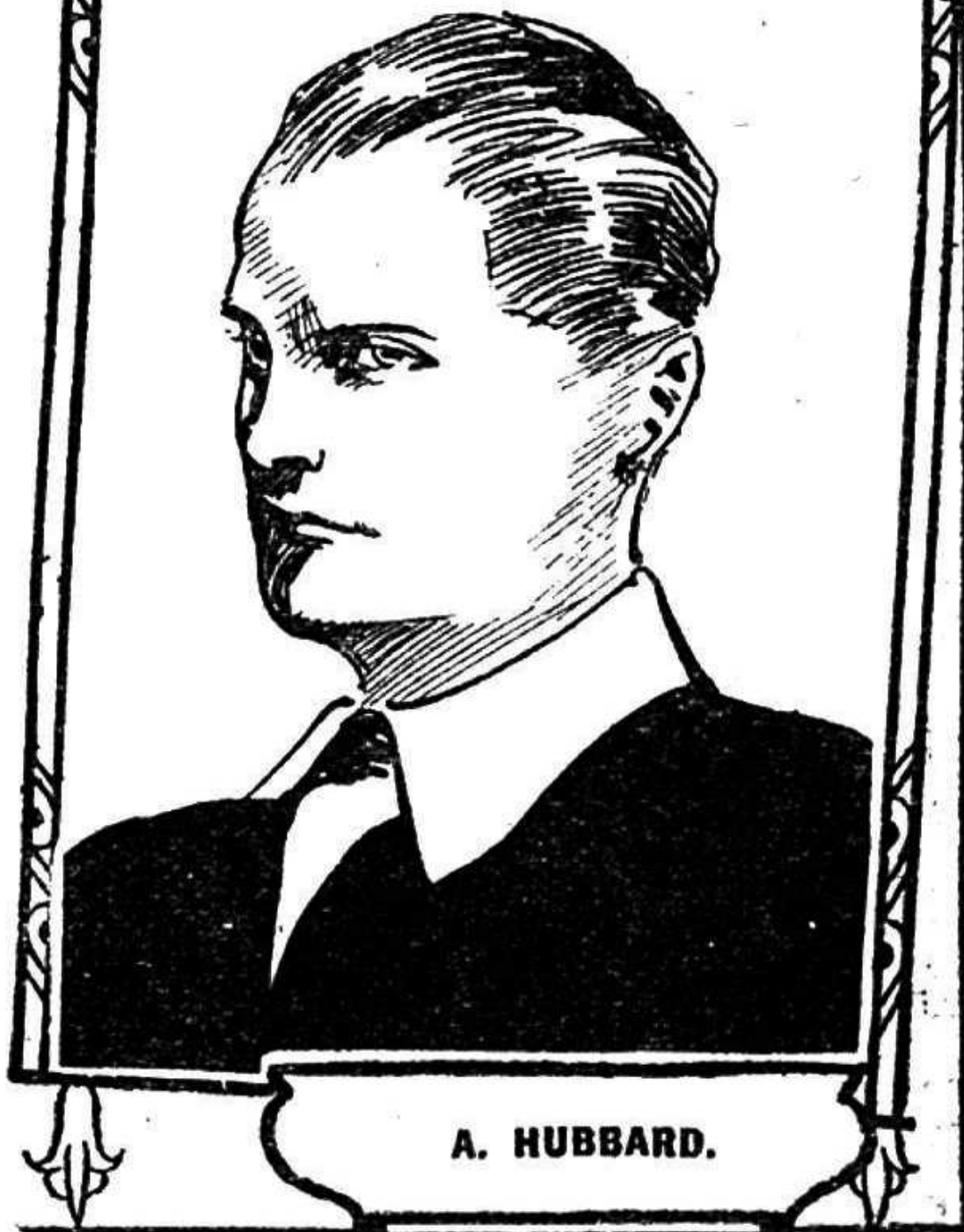
Rather weak-willed, and capable of being easily swayed. Affected by popular opinion rather than by his own judgment. A bit of a snob.

SPORTS & RECREATIONS:

Plays football and cricket occasionally as a reserve, and is painstaking at sports practice. Hobbies: Cycling, stamp collecting and keeping Teddy Long in order.

NOTE.—The ages of Fourth Form boys vary between fourteen and sixteen, but for obvious reasons no more definite information on this point can be given.

NEXT WEEK: Johnny Onions, Frederick Marriott, Bertie Onions, Robert Canham.



A. HUBBARD.

OUR ADVERT. COLUMN

FOR SALE! Second-hand Kodak. Only been used two or three years. In splendid condition, except for one cracked lens. Price ten shillings, or will exchange for good bicycle pump or acetylene headlamp. Apply Len Clapson, Study 10, Modern House.

STAMPS! STAMPS! STAMPS! Just arrived! The finest batch of unused foreign and Colonial stamps in the school. Special bargains! Staggering reductions! All collectors had better seize this opportunity while it lasts, for it may never occur again. Prices ranging from twopence to seven-and-six. A few extra special beauties at fifteen bob. **SOLOMON LEVI'S MART AND EXCHANGE**, Study O, Ancient House.

WANTED! A loan of ten shillings. Any kind fellow who doesn't know what to do with an odd currency-note, please come forward and assist a genuine case of distress. Apply Edward Long, Study B. Ancient House.

WHITE RABBITS! Two beauties. Owner compelled to sell owing to humanitarian reasons. Rabbit-hutch leaking, and no funds to repair it. All inquiries should be addressed to Willy Handforth, Third Form passage. Owner might consider exchange of rabbits for twelve doughnuts and two of Mrs. Hake's special beef-pies. No stale junk accepted!

JUST ARRIVED FROM LONDON! A wonderful consignment of silver pencils. Beautifully engraved, and all fitted with patent propelling leads and double-jointed pocket-clips. The lot to be cleared at 9d. each. Worth four times as much! Come to-day, or they'll all be gone. **SOLOMON LEVI'S MART AND EXCHANGE**, Study O, Ancient House.

URGENTLY WANTED! W. Church will give one shilling to anybody who comes forward with an ointment which will cure black eyes and bruises in general within twenty-four hours. Particularly urgent at time of going to press. W. Church, Study D, Ancient House.

LOST, STOLEN, OR STRAYED! Somewhere in the Triangle or on the playing-fields! Last Wednesday afternoon—a steel chain, containing two trunk-keys. Owner unable to open his trunks, which contain necessary articles of food. Finder will be rewarded with large pot of raspberry-jam. Bring the keys to Percy Bray, Study 6, Modern House.

TRAVEL TALES.



By An Old
Boy

(Lord Dorrimore's
Weekly Trifle)

No. 22.—A BATTLE ROYAL.

IT was once my good fortune in India to witness a fight between a buffalo and a tiger. There was a big herd in the vicinity, and also a man-eating tiger. About noon, the buffalo herd came down to drink, a mass of them, some of them giants.

A peacock's shrill note rang out, announcing the tiger, and we made for a tamarind-tree. The tiger appeared. Rearing himself up against our tree, he tore at the bark with his claws, growling fiercely. Then he sheered off, and with a mighty roar went to the river for a drink. Next he lay flat on the ground, his head between his paws, his eyes glaring at the buffaloes, and his tail swishing.

One of the buffaloes—the leader—advanced with lowered head, pawing the ground angrily and roaring loudly. Before long, the tiger sprang as if shot from a gun. The buffalo jumped aside, though wounded by the tiger's paw. Then he turned and caught the tiger on his horns, tossing him right up into the air. Making a second leap, the tiger landed plump on the buffalo's body, and dug its claws into its shoulders. But the buffalo shook him off, so that he hung only to the buffalo's shoulder and dangled at his side. With a blow of its fore feet, the buffalo sent the tiger sprawling, and then began trampling upon him. The tiger's head was jerked upwards by one of the trampling blows, and he seized one of the buffalo's feet in his jaws and crunched it like an apple. Then the tiger fell dead.

That buffalo must have weighed a thousand pounds. Yet it was quite as alert and nimble as the tiger.



THE SIGN OF THE SCARLET SHADOW!

*A Startling New Serial
of Mystery and Thrilling
Adventure, introducing
Trackett Grim and Splinter.*

By
EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH

HAVE A LOOK AT THIS FIRST.

Trackett Grim and Splinter are investigating a deep mystery at Quiver Castle. I've forgotten what happened in the first two or three instalments, and I'm blown if I'm going to turn them up now. Anyhow, it doesn't matter. Don't be so curious! All you want to know is that Trackett Grim and Splinter are locked in a room at the Castle, and that Standon Quiver, the villainous nephew of Sir Makeham Quiver, has put a lot of poison gas into the atmosphere. The famous incriminator and his assistant have been fighting madly for breath since last week. **NOW YOU CAN GO AHEAD WITH THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL TREAT.**

CHAPTER IX.

THE RESCUE OF SIR MAKEHAM.

FIGHTING for breath, Trackett Grim and Splinter staggered about all over the room. They were gradually turning yellow, and their breath became short and sharp. Their lungs felt like bursting, and speech was absolutely impossible.

"Courage!" panted Trackett Grim bravely. "Leave it to me, Splinter, and we'll soon get out of this! It takes more than a puff of poison gas to beat me!"

"Rather, sir!" agreed Splinter promptly.

Reeling about as though they had had a few drinks, the celebrated pair fought for life. And then suddenly Trackett Grim uttered a cry of joy. He had spotted a picture on the wall—looming through the yellow poison gas dimly and vaguely. It stood out with sharply defined clearness.

"Ah! The picture!" yelled Grim. "That's the spook one that was used as a spy-hole! We can escape, Splinter!"

Trackett Grim dashed at the picture, and

dived clean through it. It was only made of canvas, and he landed in a secret passage on the other side. Splinter came tearing after him.

A moment later they were out in the open air, and the throbbing of a motor-car struck their ears. They could hear it purring away almost noiselessly. And Trackett Grim stiffened.

"Just in time!" he said tensely. "We shall be able to save Sir Makeham even now! But we've got to hustle, Splinter, or we shall be too late! We shan't even be able to collect our fees!"

They sped through the darkness towards the throbbing sound. And just at that moment a motor-car went tearing down the drive, with headlights blazing. Trackett Grim and Splinter caught sight of Sir Makeham Quiver, strapped on to the luggage grid, a prisoner. His nephew was at the wheel, and the car was going at seventy miles an hour!

Trackett Grim was as cool as an ice block.

"There's one chance!" he hissed.

The car roared by. And as it did so, Grim gave a leap like a panther. He soared up, and landed upon Standon Quiver's shoulders. Splinter, not to be outdone, leapt at the same instant, and caught hold of the luggage grid. He was jerked away swiftly, but managed to keep his hold.

And away through the night rushed the car, with Trackett Grim holding on to the desperate miscreant. With one hand he handcuffed the rotter, and with the other he blew his police-whistle. And at that very moment both the front tyres burst like cannons, and the motor-car, with all its occupants, skidded off the road, and went hurtling down to the sea beach, a hundred feet below the cliff tops!

(This amazing story will be concluded next week. Look out for "In Quest of Gold," a marvellous tale of adventure, featuring Claude Courage and Bob Brave.—AUTHOR.)



IN REPLY to YOURS

Correspondence Answered by
Edward Oswald Handforth

(NOTE.—Readers of THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY can write to me and I will reply on this page. But don't expect an answer for several weeks—perhaps five or six. Address your letters or postcards to E. O. HANDFORTH, c/o the Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.—E.O.H.)

CICILY (N. 19): Hope your mother has given you the "All Clear" signal by now. Don't you believe that about my height—I'm taller by now. My hat! I've just seen your P.S.! You're lucky to get an answer at all!

IRENE (Hampton): Don't you worry for Church and McClure and Willy—they may get a few biffs from me, but how about the cash I'm always whacking out? Besides, biffs do them good! Quite right; you can't beat T.G. and S.!

EDWARD, "PRINCE OF WALES" (Northenden): It's a good thing you asked me to excuse your writing; but it's like your cheek to blame an American pen! I'll bet you're trying to spoof me, you prize duffer!

W. H. BURTON (Sheffield): All right, old son, I've done as you asked about Fullwood and Carter. They're still sore! Carter's gone now—and good riddance to bad rubbish. Thanks for calling me your friend.

R. D. HOWARD (Stoke Newington): Your riddles are not indecipherable, but I haven't got time to elucidate them with any degree of punctilious exactitude. If you can't understand these words, use a dictionary.

IRIS (N.1): Your sister Nora seems such a nice girl that I can't believe she ever gets out of hand. But if she does, talk to her kindly. Never biff her. Biffing is bad form. Thanks muchly for your nice remarks.

LESLIE DYER (Ottery St. Mary): Dr. Stafford was the Head at the time you

mention. Reggie Pitt is top of the Form, although it's my place, really. But Mr. Crowell can't see straight. Ena is just over fourteen.

KATHLEEN MOORE (Cork): I've just read your letter through, and your last line is enough. No answer for you, Kathy. You hope to see no more T.G. stories!!***!! All right—just for that I'll keep on writing 'em!

ARTHUR R. WILLIAMS (Amlwch): Church and McClure and I have just been trying to pronounce the name of your town, but Mr. Stokes came in and thought we were using bad words. So we rang off!

"DINGO" DRAKE (Sydney, New South Wales): So I'm pie-faced, am I? And I'm the silliest ass that was ever given a pair of legs to walk upon? The next time I'm in Australia I'll jolly well give you a licking, my lad!

"AUSSIE" (Adelaide, Australia): No amount of praise will give me swelled head—and I don't wear Stetsons, anyhow. My hat! Is it hard work to answer these letters? Yes, IT IS! Dodd hails from Bathurst, N.S.W.

RAY ELPHICK (Dubbo, New South Wales): What funny names your Australian towns have got! When did you last go to Narramine? And how do you like Mudgee? I suppose you buy the Old Paper in Wellington? Good luck, old man.

NORMAN HUXHAM (Bredasdorp, South Africa): I always thought you South African chaps were polite, but when you write especially to tell me to boil my face in oil, I'm shocked. I hope they're not all like you!

WINNIE I. (Witwatersrand, Transvaal, S.A.): Ah, you're the right sort of South African! I told that Cape Province chap off (just above), but I dare say he's a decent fellow, really. Many thanks for your loyalty and praise.

FRANK MAURICE (Durban, South Africa): Thanks for your riddles. I haven't got space to publish the answers here. I'm awfully sorry about your finger. Hope you stuck it together all right, and that it's now O.K.

CLEEVE SCULTHORPE (Vancouver Island, B.C.): What about that photograph you said you enclosed? It wasn't there. It doesn't matter to me whether you're a lord or not. What do I care? Who's Erchia Eedgr?

"ERCHIA EEDGR" (Errington, Vancouver I., B.C.): Who wrote that short story for the "Mag."—you or Cleeve? I'd like to know, as I've handed it to Pitt. It's like your cheek to put me in a story, by the way.

W. I. GREIG (Errington, B.C.): What's this conspiracy? I believe you and Cleeve and Erchia all escaped from the same home! I hope you've been recaptured by this time, and put under proper restraint.

DAGG (Co. Donegal): Don't worry about the Portrait Gallery. Later on we shall have a "St. Frank's History" feature, giving important facts about all the chief events that have happened to most of us, when we came, and so on.

TRACKEM GRIM (Nottingham): Don't call me Nunky! I don't like it! If you were Trackett Grim's twin brother you'd be a clever chap. So it's obvious to me that you're no relation at all.

W. A. H. HOUCHIN (Wymondham, Norfolk): Glad you like the Portrait Gallery. Yes, the Moor View girls will appear in it later. Sorry I can't give you the long answer you want. Too many other chaps to answer!

"HELEN OF TROY" (Willesden): If I answered all your questions, I should want the whole giddy "Mag." Still, thanks for asking them—you must be a keen sort of fellow. Oh, sorry! You're a girl, I suppose?

"CLEOPATRA" (Willesden): I don't roam at all, but thanks all the same for wishing me success. You didn't think I knew shorthand, did you? It only took Fenton two ticks to read that P.S. of yours for me.

"YOULA" (Margate): Yes, my teeth are all white and even. I use Church's tooth-paste every morning, but his tube's nearly done, so I shall have to try McClure's. The Moor View girls WILL appear. I'll bet you're a girl.

A. G. (Castleford): You're the kind of chap we'd like to have at St. Frank's—loyal to the backbone! Thanks, A. G., for your sincere wishes. St. Frank's is O.K. now, thank goodness, and Reggie has proved his worth.

"A NELSON LEE-ITE" (Nottingham): Don't mind me! My T. G. yarns are perfect trash! Go it! There's nothing like being frank, Ada. Yes, Ena likes being at the Moor View School—and so she ought! Congrats on that drawing!

GUESS (Portslade): All right—I'll guess! Judging by your letter, you must be a

dotty fathead. You call me ass, and say there's no hope for me. Well, I know there jolly well is!

QUICK MESSENGER (Margate): You must be a novelty. I've never seen a quick messenger yet. But how can I blame them? Instead of showing speed, they go along with their noses in the Old Paper. Good luck to 'em!

CONTENTED (Andover, Hants): How can I tell you the population of Bellton, Caistowe, and Bannington? Do you expect me to go about counting everybody? All details like this will be published later on—with a map.

EILEEN CLARISSA DELIA (Harrow): The fellows you mention are still here. Glad you like Pitt so much. He deserves it. Although he's usurped my place, I think he's one of the best. No jealousy about me.

CONNIE (Norbury): It's very nice of you to call yourself "Handforth's Admirer" at the top of your postcard, but I've put you down as Connie, in case Irene sees this issue of the Mag. I wouldn't like her to know.

FRED MANNERS (Aldershot): Sorry, old son, but I'm afraid you'll have to wait a month or two for that book you want, and then you'll have several, one after the other. Please be a bit patient.

DICK KELLY (W.2): Thanks for getting three new readers. If everybody was like you the Old Paper would get better and better still. The more readers we have the greater the improvements. So buck up, everybody!

TED.

NEXT WEEK!
More "Replies."

How to make a Gramophone.

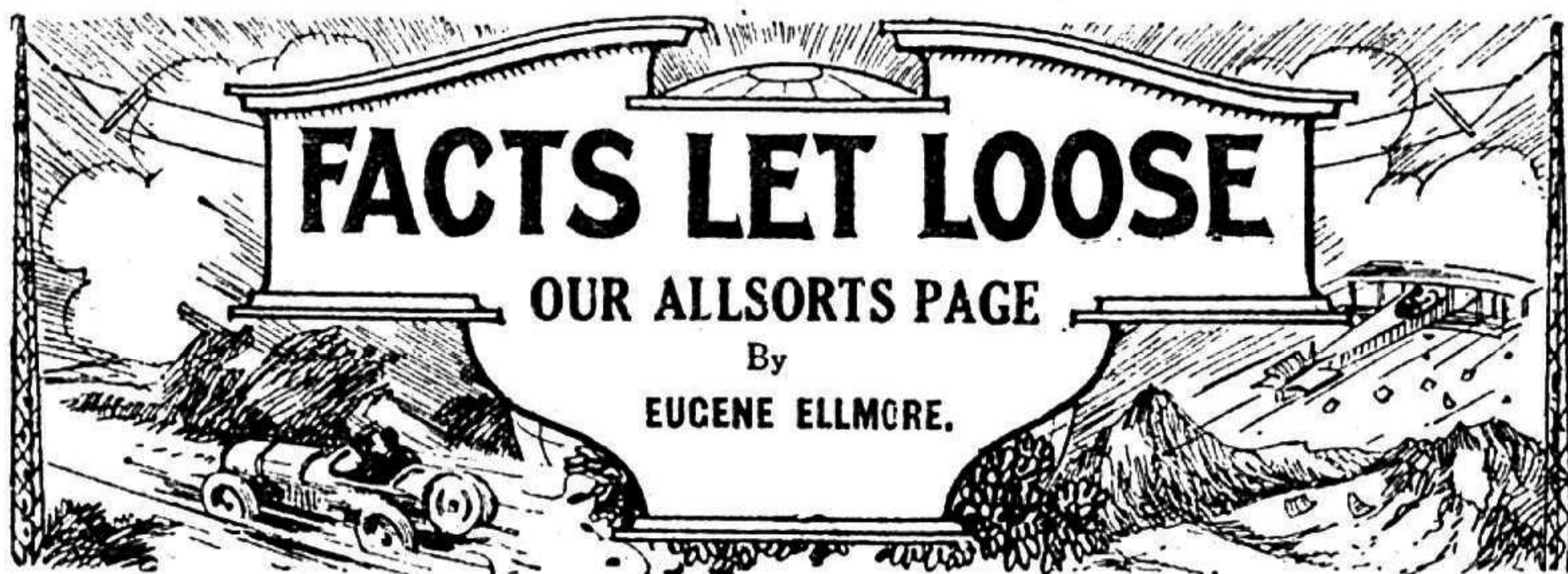
By Hubert Jarrow.

In a Hole—and Out.

By Lord Dorrimore.

Concluding Instalment of
Trackett Grim Serial.

Facts let Loose, etc.



THE CITY OF LONDON.

It is difficult to realise that the City was mainly a residential area so recently as the beginning of the nineteenth century. Washington Irving, writing about that time, referred to Little Britain as "the heart's core of the City, the stronghold of John Bullism," and to its houses—"the fronts of which are magnificently enriched with old oaken carvings." He alluded also to "the spacious and lordly mansions of Aldersgate Street." Of course, both these areas are now covered with business premises.

The sleeping population of the City at present is only 13,709, of which 6,722 are males and 6,987 females. But the day population is about 500,000. Over a million persons enter and leave the City daily, and 100,000 vehicles.

In 1801 there were 17,738 inhabited houses in the City, but in 1851 they had decreased to 14,580. Uninhabited houses, including shops, offices, warehouses, etc., premises devoted wholly to business, increased from 600 to 1,453. By 1881 the inhabited houses had been reduced to 6,507, and the uninhabited houses had gone up to 4,755. The resident population of the City in 1881 was only two-fifths of what it was in 1851.

A further decrease of inhabited houses to 2,784 was noted in 1911, and a decline of inhabitants from 50,653 in 1881 to 19,657. Commercial progress, railway expansion, etc., carried all before them, even famous institutions like Christ's Hospital (the Bluecoat School) being pushed out, their sites having grown so valuable.

In 1800, and for years afterwards, rich traders, merchant princes, City magnates, continued to reside within the City, and it was the usual thing for a tradesman to live over his shop. If the depopulation of the City continues at the present rate, there will soon be no private inhabitants, that is, no real residents at all.

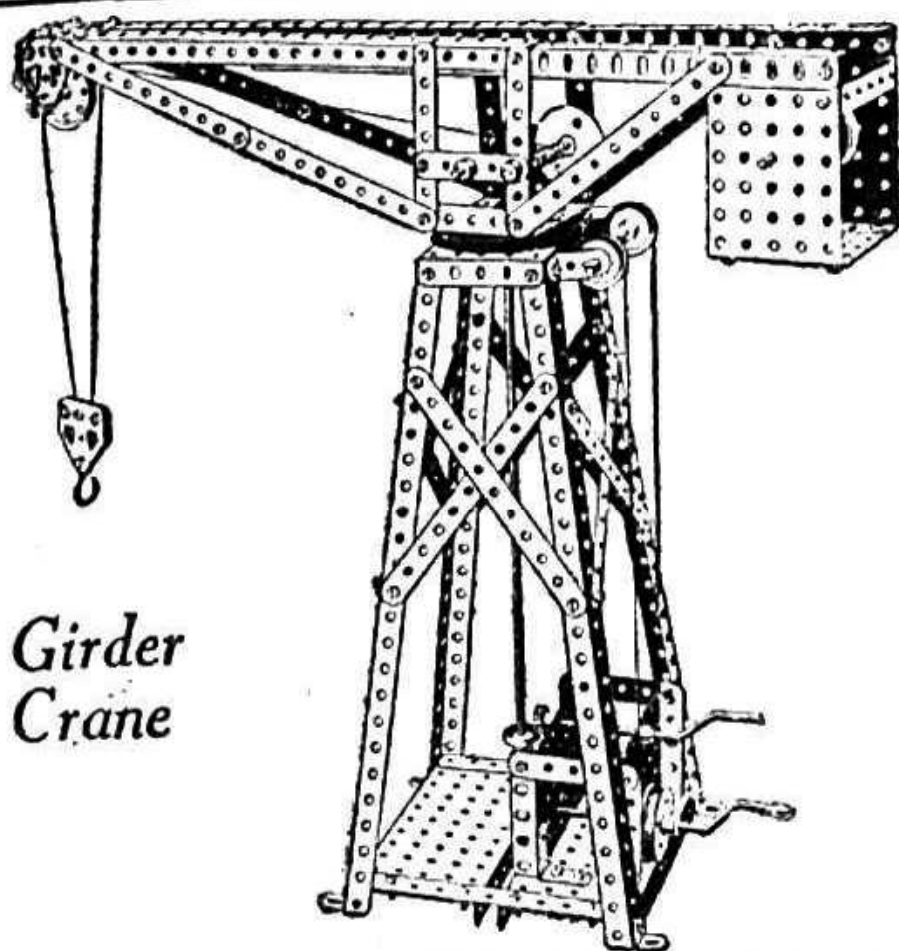
OLD COVENT GARDEN.

Covent Garden Market, which now has hundreds of salesmen and thousands of porters, and which has been condemned by a committee of inquiry as too small and inadequate to the demands of its trade, had only twenty-three salesmen in 1679, and these were assessed at two shillings and one shilling. It began by a sort of accident. When Bedford House was demolished, the market folk—evidently stall-holders or costers—were pushed off the pavement into the centre of the square, and gradually they took possession of the whole garden. Bedford House, of course, belonged to the Duke of Bedford, and thus he became the owner of Covent Garden Market, which he held until recently, when it was sold to Sir J. Beecham.

Quaint old customs survive at Covent Garden. One is that of whip-minding. Carters who have to leave their horses and carts to attend to various matters of business give their whips in charge of women, and this whip-minding descends from mother to daughter, and is kept in the same families.

Pea-shelling is another old custom. During the pea season the shellers—mostly very stout women—begin work early in the morning and go on till late afternoon. And so busily do they ply their fingers that, at the price of threepence a quart, some of them earn fifteen shillings a day.

Covent Garden used to be classed with Billingsgate in the matter of bad language. Wycherley makes one of his characters say: "Come, come, do not blaspheme this masquerading age, like an ill-bred City dame whose husband is half-broke by living in Covent Garden." But only a year or two ago a Covent Garden salesman said to the Bow Street magistrate: "If we were to use bad language in the market, we should very soon have a week's notice to leave."

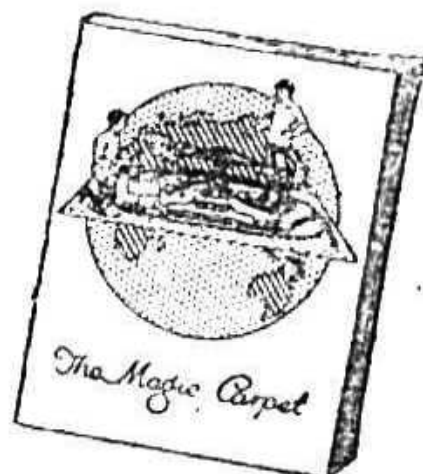


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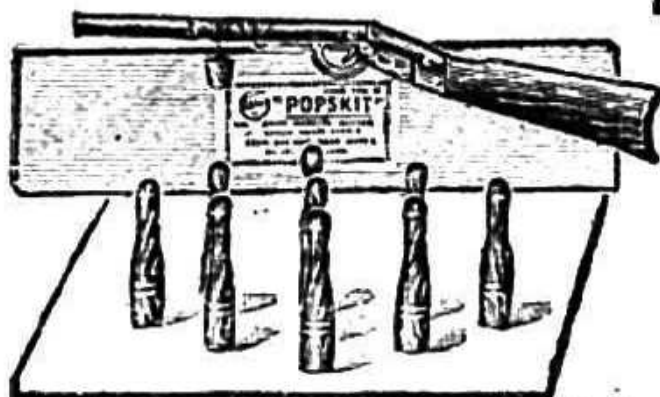
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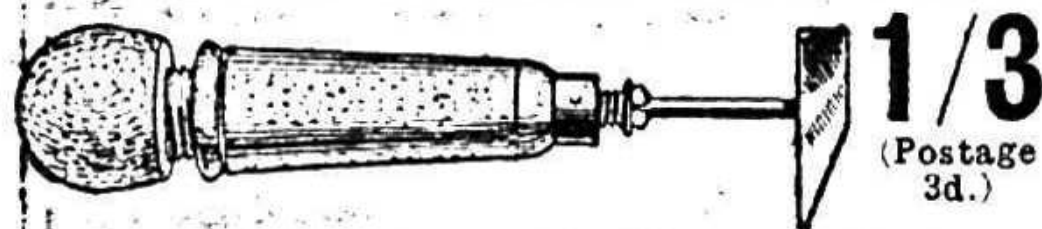
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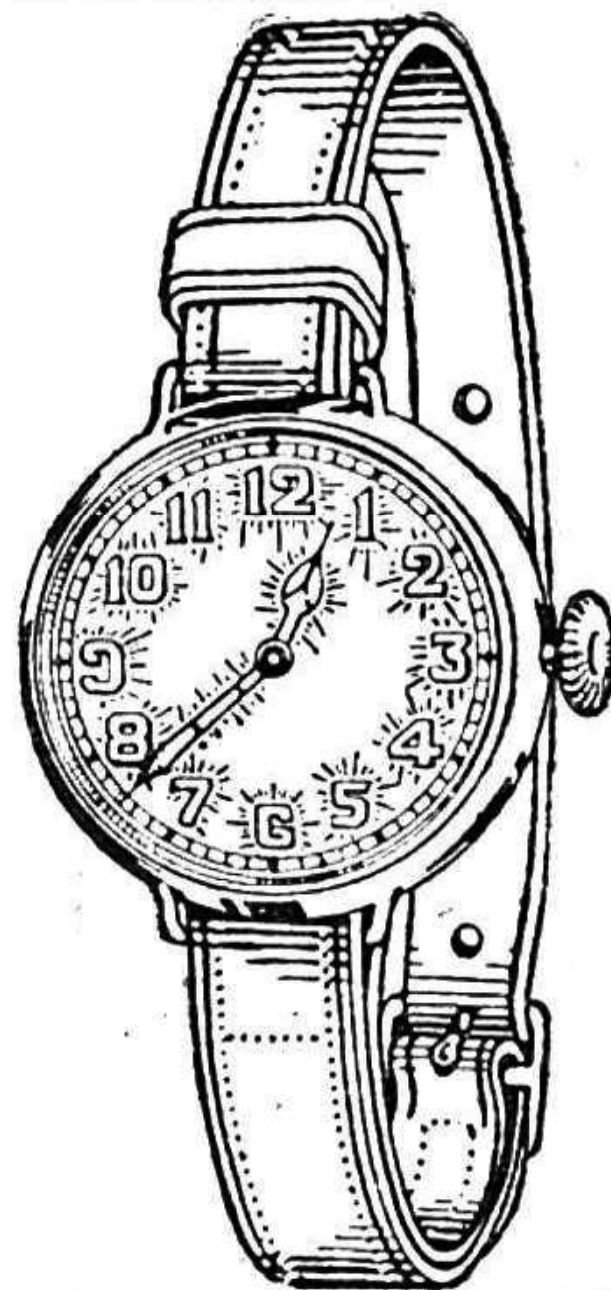
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