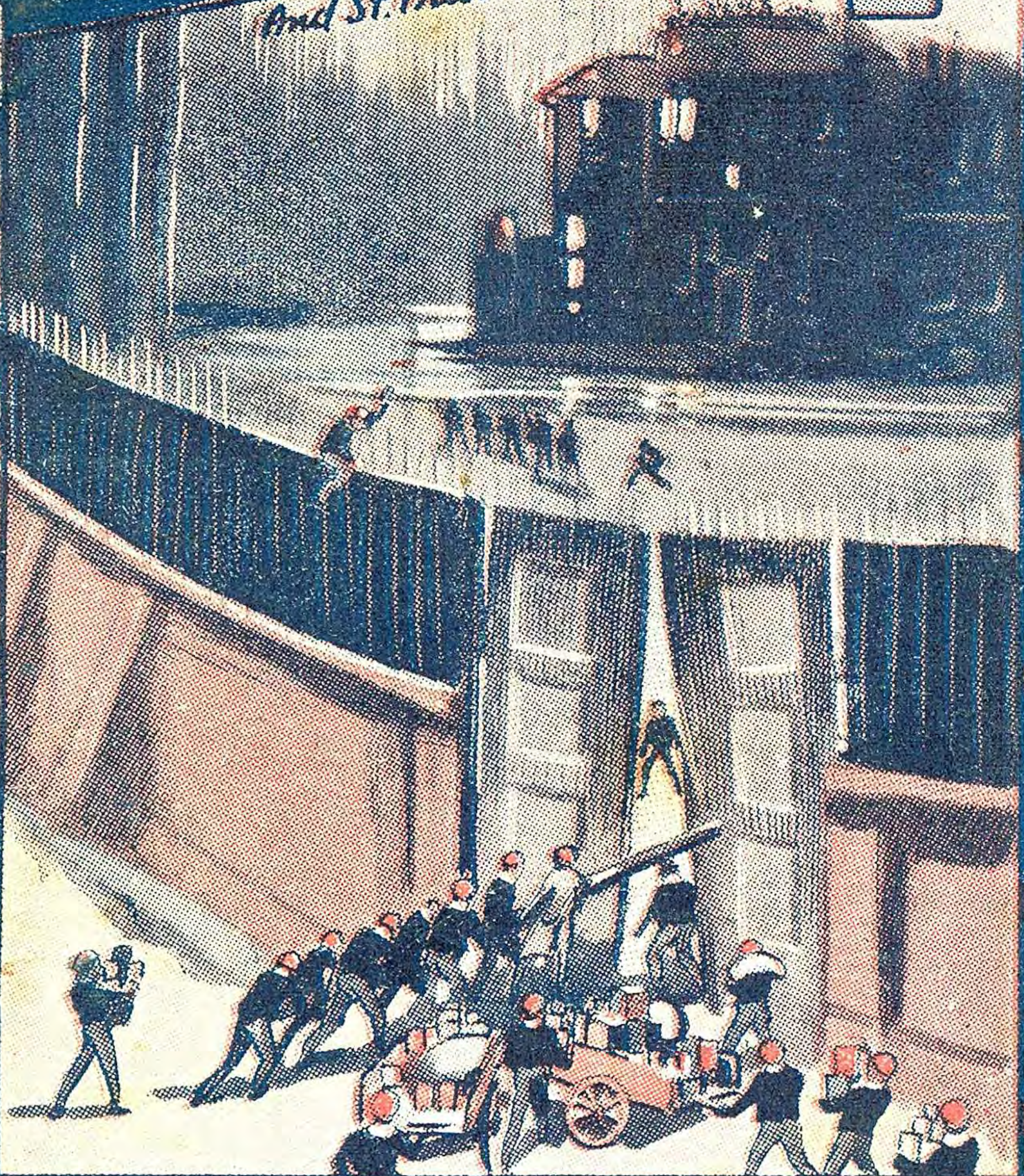


GRAND LONG "BARRING-OUT" STORY!

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THE SCHOOLBOY MUTINEERS

An Exciting Story of the Great Revolt at Moat Hollow School,
and how the Boys of St. Frank's come to the Rescue.



Every junior was loaded. And the procession which went back towards the village bridge was an extraordinary one.



A rousing story of the great rebellion at Moat Hollow School, in which Nipper leads the rebels against Grimesby Creepe, the tyrannical Head, and his worthy monitors, who for a long time past have kept the boys in rigid subjection, crushing their spirit so as to use them as a cheap form of labour. To the outside world, Creepe poses as a benevolent individual who lives only for his school, but it would be nearer the truth to say that he lives on his school and all that he can grind out of his scholars. St. Frank's being in the same neighbourhood as Moat Hollow, is keenly interested in the rebellion, and, as the following story will show, the celebrated Fourth Form takes an active part in helping to bring about the downfall of Grimesby Creepe.

THE EDITOR.

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

CHAPTER I.

AND SO THE POOR DOG HAD NONE!

FATTY LITTLE, of the Fourth Form at St. Frank's, rolled up to the counter in Mrs. Hake's little tuck-shop with a careless air.

"I'll have half-a-dozen of these beef patties, Mrs. Hake," he said, jingling some loose money in his pocket. "Oh, I don't know—make it a dozen!" he added lightly.

Mrs. Hake eyed the fat junior suspiciously.

"A dozen, Master Little?" she asked.

"That's it! And a dozen doughnuts, too," said Fatty.

He lolled against the counter, still jingling his money. And the worthy Mrs. Hake felt even more suspicious. Fatty Little was an ingenuous youth. When it came to a matter of guile, he was a mere infant—he

hadn't even passed the first elementary examination.

And Mrs. Hake knew from past experience that his present attitude of studied indifference was a certain indication of his financial paucity. The jingling of a few odd coppers was an old trick.

As a matter of fact, all Fatty possessed at the moment consisted of a bent penny, an American cent, and a foreign copper coin of such dilapidation that its origin was unknown.

He watched eagerly as Mrs. Hake placed the patties and doughnuts in two bags. He reached for them with a sigh of contentment, but Mrs. Hake held the bags well out of reach.

"That'll be three shillings, Master Little," she said calmly.

"Three shillings!"

"The patties are twopence each, and the doughnuts a penny each——"

"I know the price of 'em," interrupted Fatty hastily. "All right, Mrs. Hake. Hand over the stuff! I'll just count out the tin."

Again he tried to get the bags.

"Three shillings, please, Master Little," said the tuck-shop keeper.

Fatty flushed, and his distress was so obvious that Mrs. Hake allowed herself to smile a little grimly. Her first suspicions were justified. She waited, her smile becoming ominous.

"Oh, I say! What rot, you know!" exclaimed Fatty desperately. "I—I don't seem—— Well, the fact is—— You see——"

"Yes, Master Little?" said Mrs. Hake sweetly.

"Look here!" said Fatty, becoming indignant. "What's the idea, Mrs. Hake? I—I happen to be a bit short—till Saturday. Gimme those bags, and I'll settle up—— Hi! Hold on!" he gasped, as Mrs. Hake calmly proceeded to replace the patties and doughnuts on their dishes. "Ain't you going to let me have 'em?"

Mrs. Hake shook her head reprovingly.

"You know very well, Master Little, that you can't have anything unless you pay for it," she replied. "And Mr. Stokes has instructed me that no boys are to be allowed credit—at least, boys who can't be trusted."

Fatty blustered.

"Can't be trusted, eh?" he roared. "Great pancakes! Look here, Mrs. Hake, that's an insult! I'll jolly well take my custom somewhere else now!" he added indignantly. "That's what you get for being so jolly tight with your old grub!"

He stamped out of the tuck-shop with a fine show of loftiness. But his heart was heavy, and he gazed round the Triangle hungrily. He was always "trying it on" with Mrs. Hake, and the fact that he never succeeded had no effect upon him. They say that "hope springs eternal in the human breast." Fatty's capacity for hoping was phenomenal.

"The old cat!" he muttered moodily. "I wouldn't eat those patties and doughnuts if she gave 'em to me now! They're beastly things, anyhow!"

It was the case of the fox and the grapes over again, and the fat junior told himself that Mrs. Hake's cooking was atrocious. Then he caught sight of an elegant figure emerging from the Ancient House.

It was a half-holiday, and morning lessons were only just over—Fatty, indeed, had made a bee-line for the tuck-shop, his usual custom. Whether he had money or not, the tuck-shop always attracted him like a magnet.

"I say, Archie!" puffed Fatty, hurrying up. "Half a mo'!"

"So here we are, what?" exclaimed Archie Glenthorne, pausing, and inspecting

Fatty through his famous eye-glass. "Good gad! You look frightfully flustered, laddie! The old countenance is positively mottled!"

"Be a sport, Archie—I'm hungry!" said Fatty Little eagerly. "I'm starving! Unless I have something to eat, I shall go all faint!"

"Oddslife!"

"I can feel it coming on now!" went on Fatty. "I—I suppose you couldn't lend me five bob? Be a pal, Archie—you'll save my giddy life!"

"I mean to say, that's dashed interesting," said Archie. "Lives saved at five bob each, what? I mean, that's bally cheap, when you come to think of it. One life, five bob! I'm not so absolutely sure, old gas balloon, that your life is worth it! I mean——"

"I'm feeling all weak at the knees!" moaned Fatty.

Archie Glenthorne nodded.

"What-ho! That is, I'm not at all surprised, old porpoise," he observed genially. "I mean to say, those dashed knees of yours have a somewhat frightfully strenuous time of it, you know. No knees are actually constructed to withstand five or six hundred bally tons to the square inch."

Fatty became impatient.

"Are you going to lend me five bob?" he roared.

"Good gad! A somewhat lusty effort for a chappie on the verge of death!" ejaculated Archie, starting. "However, we won't argue. Life, as the poet bounders say, is too poisonously short. Take the backsheesh, old sportsman, and kindly stagger out of the old picture!"

Fatty Little grabbed the money almost before Archie had counted it out. He seized it with a clutch that resembled the grasp of a dying man.

"Thanks awfully!" he gasped. "Pay you back on Saturday."

He rolled away towards the gates like a human tank in action, and Archie gazed after him somewhat sadly.

"On Saturday, what?" he murmured doubtfully. "Perhaps! Or, to be more exact, perhaps absolutely not!"

CHAPTER II.

WHAT FATTY LITTLE SAW.



"B Y dumplings! Got it!"

Fatty Little sang this song of triumph as he trotted down the lane towards Bellton. The ground shook somewhat under his heavy footfall, and he clutched the five shillings with a kind of desperate glee.

"I was an ass, though!" he went on, after he had travelled another hundred yards. "Great tomatoes! I might have got ten bob if I'd asked for it—or even a giddy

quid! Archie's always rolling in tin! He carries fivers about by the dozen—and yet he never goes to the tuck-shop!"

Fatty pondered over this massive problem as he continued on his way. It was one he could never solve. How on earth any rational human being could avoid the tuck-shop when he was rolling in cash provided Fatty with an everlasting puzzle. His one dream was to possess untold wealth.

He was going to the village deliberately—just to spite Mrs. Hake! It had cost him an effort, for with food so near by, he had been compelled to gather all his strength to give it a miss. He decided to patronise Mr. Binks, who presided over the village confectioner's.

It was quite a showery March morning. There had been a lot of rain during lessons, but the sky was now fairly clear, and the sun was even attempting to shine. He appeared coyly at intervals from behind the feathery clouds.

Fatty reached the bridge which spanned the Stowe, and was about to cross it when he was attracted by an unusual sound. A hundred yards away, on his left, stood Moat Hollow—the grim old building down Edgemore Lane, facing the river.

Moat Hollow was not usually celebrated for its noise. Hardly a sound ever came from behind its high walls. Mr. Grimesby Creepe's school was considered to be quiet and well-behaved.

Fatty Little was surprised, therefore, to hear loud cheering.

"Hallo!" he murmured. "What's up?"

He walked back a few yards and hesitated. His hunger was great, but his curiosity was almost of equal greatness. It was a toss-up which he should satisfy first. Fatty Little was no Paul Pry, but he always liked to be fully acquainted with the latest news.

And he had heard such a great deal about Moat Hollow of late that any fresh development was full of interest. He knew that Tommy Watson, late of the Fourth, was a pupil in Mr. Creepe's school, and there was a hint of mystery about Tommy. He had been at Moat Hollow for some weeks, and yet he hadn't been seen.

The school, with its high walls, and its air of forbidding secrecy, had been fully commented upon in the junior common-rooms of St. Frank's, and in the studies. In the village, Mr. Creepe was regarded with high favour—but the Fourth Form scoffingly declared that it couldn't be fooled. At St. Frank's, Mr. Creepe was looked upon with suspicion.

And the juniors, in this affair, were quite shrewd—for Mr. Creepe was an utter humbug, and his school was a farce. Not that there was anything comic about it—the unfortunate pupils were drudges, completely under the schoolmaster's sway. At least, they always had been.

Fatty was therefore astonished to hear the noisy cheers.

He went down the lane, arrived opposite the big gates, and found them locked. He stood there, listening. Confused sounds came floating over the wall—shouts, cheers, and yells of laughter.

"Rummy!" murmured Fatty. "What the dickens can they be up to?"

He was more curious than ever, but it seemed that he would not be satisfied, for it was impossible to see over the high wall, and it was equally impossible for a junior of his bulk to climb it. He moved away, and remembered his original errand.

"Oh, well, it's nothing to do with me, anyhow," he told himself. "They seem to be having a high old time——"

He broke off as a thought struck him. There was a high bank on the other side of the lane, where the road rose towards the bridge. He climbed up it, and stared back. From this point of vantage he could see the upper windows of the school, and the whole top of the building. In the summer-time even this view was hidden, for the old house was surrounded by trees. But in March the branches were still stark and leafless.

"Great sizzling bloaters!" ejaculated Fatty, startled.

What he saw was enough to surprise anybody. There were two windows in view, and at each of them a number of boys were crowded. They were leaning out, waving, and generally acting in a wildly excited condition. Not only this, but there were other figures on the roof—which in one portion was flat.

The figures capering about—dancing, gesticulating, and behaving in a manner which indicated either hysteria or lunacy. The figures were shouting, too, but Fatty was too far distant to hear what was being said.

"Jolly queer!" he murmured again. "Looks like trouble to me! They can't have gone on strike, but— Looks jolly like it, though!" he added excitedly. "My hat! I shall have to tell the chaps about this."

He went off, and visited Mr. Binks. His five shillings lasted him a very short time, and when he emerged from the tuck-shop he wore a pleased, contented, dazed kind of expression. Considering what he had eaten, it was rather surprising that Mr. Binks hadn't found it necessary to summon the ambulance.

For once Fatty's appetite was satisfied. He walked up the lane to St. Frank's at peace with the world. He idly toyed with the thought of dinner. The bell would go soon after he reached the school, and by that time, he assured himself, his appetite would be at the top of its form again.

"Hallo! Where have you been?" demanded Handforth, as Fatty reeled rather than walked into the Triangle. "By George! You've been gorging again, you fat glutton! Your giddy waistcoat's nearly adrift!"

"Only a snack," said Fatty comfortably.

"How about dinner? Nearly time for the bell, isn't it?"

Edward Oswald Handforth stared.

"Dinner?" he repeated. "What you need, my lad, is a fifteen days' fast! You ought to be forcibly restrained. One of these days we shall hear an awful explosion, and you'll be missing!"

"Oh, don't rot!" said Fatty Little. "I say, heard the latest? There's a row of some sort going on at Moat Hollow. Lots of the chaps are on the roof, dancing about like mad——"

"What!" gasped Handforth.

He clutched at Fatty, and his eyes leapt with excitement.

CHAPTER III.

UNEXPECTED NEWS.



OBVIOUSLY, the leader of Study D knew something.

Fatty's news had some special significance, apparently, for Handforth grabbed the fat junior, and held on grimly. Church and McClure, who stood near by, jumped forward.

"Chaps on the roof!" said Handforth tensely.

"Yes!"

"Jumping about like mad?" repeated Church.

"Rather!"

"At Moat Hollow?" asked McClure excitedly.

"Look here, what's the game," demanded Fatty. "I'm blessed if I can see why you chaps are getting so jolly excited——"

"Tell us exactly what you saw!" interrupted Edward Oswald. "Come on! Out with it! Buck up, my lad, or I'll biff you!"

Fatty, greatly surprised, went into fuller details.

"Cheering, eh?" said Handforth, with a significant glance at his chums. "Capering about on the giddy roof! My sons, it's happened! By George, it's happened!"

"Must have happened!" said Church and McClure breathlessly.

"What's happened?" roared Fatty, staring.

"Never you mind—go and boil yourself!" said Handforth politely. "Where's Reggie Pitt? Where's Tregellis-West? We'd better tell 'em!"

They hurried towards the Ancient House, leaving Fatty Little with his curiosity re-awakened. But just as Handforth & Co. were about to enter the lobby, Reggie Pitt and Jack Grey came hurrying out. The cheerful junior skipper was looking unusually serious.

"Heard the latest?" he said quickly.

"Heard the latest?" asked Handforth in the same breath.

The juniors looked at one another in surprise.

"What, have you heard?" inquired Reggie.

"Yes, rather!" said Handforth. "We know all about it. Who told you?"

"Tubbs!"

"Tubbs?" repeated Handforth, staring. "Don't be an ass! Tubbs is at the mill, looking after that cad Kirby——"

"Here, hold on!" interrupted Reggie quietly. "You haven't heard at all, that's evident! Kirby has escaped!"

"Escaped?" gasped Handforth.

"Yes; got clean away!" said the junior captain. "It was Professor Tucker's doing—he butted into the mill unexpectedly, and Tubbs lost his nerve. Anyhow, Kirby escaped. Goodness only knows what's happening at Moat Hollow now," he added. "I expect the rebellion is squashed!"

Handforth & Co. stared at the other juniors blankly for a moment or two, and then Handforth smiled. It was a slow, knowing smile. He drew himself up as though he held the key to the puzzle.

It had startled him at first to learn that Kirby had escaped. But a moment's thought showed him that Fatty's news about Moat Hollow was closely allied to the escape of the mill prisoner. It was cause and effect.

A select few in the Fourth were in the secret. Kirby, the brutal head monitor of Moat Hollow, had been seized by the Fourth the previous evening and conveyed to the old mill on Bannington Moor. And there he had been kept a prisoner.

And Nipper—back once again among his old friends, although not actually in the school—had taken Kirby's place in Moat Hollow. His object was to help the two dozen wretched victims of Mr. Creepe. In a word, he had gone down to stir the drudges up into a rebellion—since this was the only certain way of exposing Grimesby Creepe for the tyrant and bully he was.

The actual revolt had been set for tea-time. But Kirby's escape had apparently made a great difference. Handforth's brain worked much more rapidly than usual, and he made a shrewd guess at the truth. Kirby had returned unexpectedly during the morning, and Nipper had decided to strike at once. The revolt, in fact, was now in progress! Fatty Little's news virtually confirmed this theory.

"Oh!" said Handforth slowly. "So that's it, is it?"

"That's what?" asked Pitt, looking at him curiously.

"You haven't heard the real news, of course!" said Handforth, with a condescending air. "My dear old son, the barring-out's in full swing! The Moat Hollow chaps are in it up to their necks!"

"Don't you believe it!" said Jack Grey. "In my opinion, everything's ruined!"

Kirby's escape must have taken Nipper unprepared—"

"Unprepared or not, the rebellion's an actual fact," interrupted Handforth.

"How do you know?"

"Fatty Little brought the news, and I've been putting two and two together," replied Handforth. "Oh, rats! There goes the dinner bell! I thought it would be a good idea to hop down to Moat Hollow—"

"We can leave that until after dinner," interrupted Reggie Pitt. "By Jove! I hope you're right, Handy—I hope that rebellion is a fact!"

By the time dinner was over, Reggie Pitt

Fourth hurried off to Moat Hollow to have a look at things for themselves, and to find out exactly how the situation stood.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE REBEL STRONGHOLD.



NIPPER frowned. "I hope they'll calm down soon, Tommy," he said softly. "I can't do anything with 'em at present—they're too excited. As it happens, there's not much danger, because Creepe &

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was feeling convinced. One or two other juniors had reported strange things about Moat Hollow. Something was evidently amiss there.

And long before the Junior School left the dining-hall, a new rumour was floating about. Nipper had returned. And, what was more, Nipper was in full charge of the barring-out at Moat Hollow!

There was general excitement in the Fourth, for hitherto only a few picked fellows had shared the secret. Now it became public property. And the Fourth grew very excited.

In fact, the first move was a significant one. About seventy-five per cent of the

Co. have got all their work cut out to get themselves dry. They won't bother us for hours yet."

Tommy Watson nodded.

"You think old Creepe'll fight, then?" he asked.

"He'll fight to the bitter end!" replied Nipper grimly. "That's one reason why I want to get a few defences in full working order. And we ought to get the news up to St. Frank's, too. Pitt and Handforth and the rest think the rebellion's coming off at teatime, and it seems a pity that they should be left in the dark. It's a half-holiday to-day, and we may need 'em this afternoon."

"Supposing I slip out and run up—"

"Not just yet, anyhow," interrupted Nipper. "Too risky. Besides, we can't afford to chance one of our best men. If you were caught, Tommy, it would be a disaster. No, we'll leave it over just now."

They were standing on the roof of Moat Hollow, looking down over the parapet into the neglected garden. From this high elevation Nipper and Watson could see well beyond the walls, and they had a clear view of part of the lane.

"What's the first thing to be done?" asked Watson.

"Food!" replied Nipper promptly. "We can't do a thing without food—it's the most important item of all. No army can fight without grub. So we'll go down to the store-room and see about supplies."

Tommy Watson looked dubious.

"We shan't find much," he said. "Creepe's as mean as a miser, and he never kept much stock. I believe this is his week for getting in fresh things, but they aren't delivered before Saturday."

"That's right—be cheerful!" said Nipper. He spoke lightly, but he felt that there was a great deal in what his chum said. But it was no good worrying until the exact position was made clear. The rebellion had started, and it would certainly be a hopeless failure unless food supplies were available in large quantities.

Moat Hollow was a changed place. Instead of the usual quietude, the gloomy old house rang with shouts and cheers. The boys were running over the place like rabbits in a warren. They ran aimlessly—just for the mere joy of liberty.

Under Mr. Grimesby Creepe's rule they had been crushed down and held in leash day in and day out. They had been his slaves. For this private school was no ordinary "academy for young gentlemen."

It appeared to be so outwardly, but Mr. Creepe had always been at great pains to give a false impression. Only those within the gates of Moat Hollow knew the true nature of the place, and the true nature of its owner.

Put baldly, Grimesby Creepe was a contemptible scoundrel. His school was a pretence; he extracted fees from his boys' parents and guardians and gave nothing in return. On the contrary, he made his boys work like servants, thus saving big money on wages.

The Moat Hollow boys were ill-taught, badly clothed, and grossly underfed. Liberty was a word without meaning to them, or had been until to-day. They had never been allowed a minute of freedom, even within the barred and bolted walls of the school itself.

Marched from the school-room to the dining-hall; from the dining-hall to the kitchen and scullery; from the kitchen and scullery to the dormitory. Sometimes in

batches, sometimes en masse; but always under the watchful eyes of burly monitors. This had been the lot of the two dozen wretched boys who made up Mr. Creepe's school.

There were six monitors in all—an extraordinary number, considering the small size of the school. But these monitors had acted rather in the capacity of guards and slave-drivers. It had been their duty to crush and kill any trace of spirit that a boy might have revealed.

On the top of all this drudgery the martyrs had suffered in other ways. The slightest act of insubordination—real or imaginary—Mr. Creepe had used methods of sheer torture. A birch did not satisfy him; he frequently used a horsewhip. And on exceptional occasions the schoolmaster had suspended his victim by ropes from a beam and had whipped him bareback.

Mr. Creepe was undoubtedly a ruffian. But he managed to maintain an outward air of kindly benevolence. He even performed his brutal torture with a smile on his face, and soft, purring words on his lips. And Mr. Creepe was clever in a cunning way. He had managed to earn himself a good name in the district.

He was highly respected in Bellton. Even the vicar regarded Mr. Creepe with favour. His school was supposed to be a model from which all private schools could take example. Little did the outsiders know what actually went on behind the high walls of Moat Hollow!

But Tommy Watson had known—and after days and days of fruitless effort, he had managed to communicate the truth to his old chums of St. Frank's. And Archie Glen-thorne, of all fellows, had sent an urgent letter to Nipper—then in London. And Nipper had promptly come down to investigate. These investigations had led to the present rebellion. For Nipper had soon found out that something drastic was necessary.

To merely release the boys would have been useless. For Mr. Creepe's reputation was so well built up that his word would be accepted by all. And the rebels would receive short shrift, and a total absence of sympathy from everybody in the district. The only way was to fight on—to have a regular barring-out, and to keep Mr. Creepe at bay.

CHAPTER V.

"THE CUPBOARD WAS BARE."



THE defences, so far, were of a primitive nature.

The moat, of course, was an enormous help. This stretch of water entirely surrounded the house, and a sudden rush by the enemy was therefore im-

possible. Mr. Creepe had never realised, when constructing the moat, that it would one day be used against him!

Its main object had been to keep the boys in prison—to prevent any possibility of escape. But the moat was just as useful in another way. It prevented anybody from entering!

Mr. Creepe and his henchmen were outside—beyond the moat—barred out. And as they only numbered seven, all told, there was not much likelihood of an immediate attack. Most of the boys, indeed, told themselves that Mr. Creepe would throw up the sponge. But Nipper held different views.

And a few preliminary defences were in operation.

There were three doors to Moat Hollow—the main front door, a tradesman's side door, and a private back door. Two guards were placed on duty at each of these. Jevons and White and Newton and one or two other of the sturdier boys were told off for this task.

Most of the others were still excitedly dashing about the school, working off some of their exuberance. Nipper was content to let them do so. They would be all the better for it afterwards.

The windows offered no serious problem, for most of them were barred, and needed no other protection. But those in the school-room had no such bars, and so a boy was placed on duty at each.

Later, of course, Nipper would organise thoroughly.

With Tommy Watson, he hurried from the roof and went downstairs to the kitchen quarters. There were no servants at Moat Hollow, for the boys themselves had done all the necessary household work—cleaning, cooking, and even washing. Nipper was not displeased, for the rebels had the place entirely to themselves.

The kitchen was in a state of disorder.

The rebellion had come while three or four of the boys had been engaged in the task of preparing the mid-day meal. All this had been abandoned, and everything was at sixes-and-sevens.

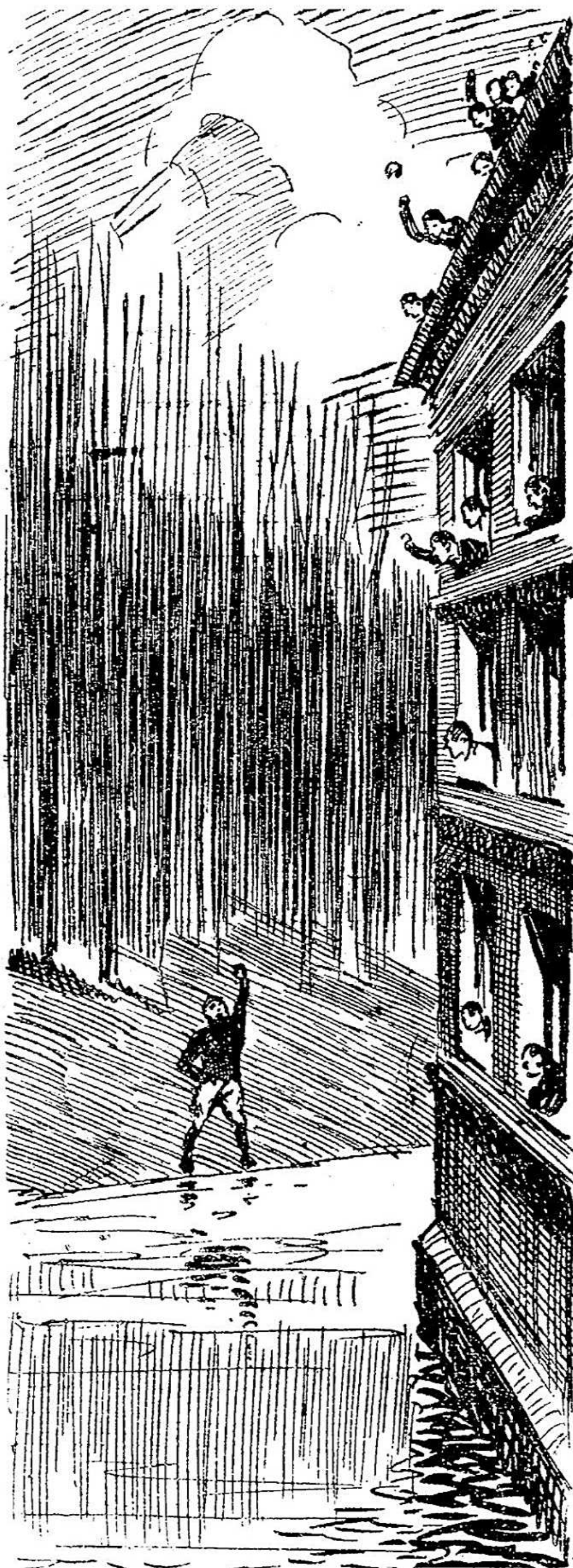
"Stew again, of course!" grunted Watson, as he sniffed at the stale air. "Always stew—always hashed-up junk! I can tell you, Nipper, I've got sick of it. The same meals every day for weeks!"

"You'll have a change now," said Nipper drily.

"Old Creepe was too mean to give us proper grub—he used to buy the cheapest meat, and stew it up with vegetables," growled Watson. "Then he'd jaw about nutrition and vitamins, and all that sort of rot! Great Scott, the man's the biggest humbug I ever came across!"

They examined the kitchen cupboards with anxious interest.

The first look was not encouraging. A pound or two of tea, a dozen or so tins of condensed milk and some bread were the only prizes. In one corner stood a sack of potatoes.



He stood there, on the edge of the moat, addressing the crowded school-room windows.

"Enough to last about three meals here!" growled Nipper. "Surely there's a big store-room somewhere, Tommy? Creepe wouldn't keep a miserable supply like this in the place—"

"Wouldn't he?" interrupted Watson. "The stuff only came in by dribs and drabs. He used to send the monitors out to buy things—said he believed in dealing with the village shopkeepers. It's quite likely he was having a big order delivered to-day— By Jove! Now I come to remember it, I heard Tarkington saying something about a van-load of stuff coming this afternoon."

Nipper made a grimace.

"That's a lot of consolation to us!" he replied. "When the van comes, Creepe'll naturally send it away—or have the stuff taken into the gymnasium. Anyhow, we shan't see it inside here."

"But what shall we do—we must have food!"

"We must!" agreed Nipper. "Don't say anything to the other chaps unless you're forced to. They're a weakly crowd, and I don't trust them too much. I'm afraid they haven't got much stamina. Something's got to be done, Tommy—but we needn't worry. we'll find a way."

But Nipper was more worried than he would admit. The barrenness of the Moat Hollow store-cupboard had shocked him. He had expected to find enough food to last a week, at the least. But there wasn't even sufficient to last the rebels until the following evening! Twenty-five hungry mouths require a large amount of foodstuff to keep them supplied.

Dinner was soon on the go.

Nipper marshalled a gang of boys into the kitchen, and set them to work. They toiled away joyously. Under the old order of things they worked no harder, and hated it. But now they seemed to revel in the whole business. Being their own masters made all the difference!

Dinner was a glorious meal.

The fare was not sumptuous, but for once the boys had as much as they wanted. Always, without exception, they had felt hungry at the conclusion of a meal. But this time they demolished the food at an amazing speed.

Nipper was content to see the food go rapidly. After all, it was no good making two bites at a cherry, and it was good to see these half-starved boys thoroughly appeasing their appetites. Fresh supplies of food would be necessary at once, so it was all to the good that the rebels should eat their fill now. They would be able to last out better.

And Nipper and Tommy Watson naturally kept together. Even Tommy felt that he was a stranger amongst these others—he had never chummed up with anybody except, perhaps, Jevons.

"Well, we've made a nice hole in the grub!" remarked Watson. "All the meat gone, half the condensed milk, and piles of

potatoes. There's not enough left for one supper!"

Nipper nodded slowly.

"Don't get the wind up," he replied. "There's one thing we must bear in mind—Reggie Pitt and Co. are expecting us to start the rebellion at tea-time. And I'm relying on the Fourth—blindly!"

Nipper's faith was not unfounded.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMBS.



MR. GRIMESBY CREEPE paced up and down, with his bushy eyebrows fiercely contracted. His short, stumpy figure, his heavy-jowled features, his untidy

hair—all indicated that Mr. Creepe was far from being himself.

He was in the school gymnasium—a kind of outbuilding beyond the limits of the broad moat.

"We must move—we must do something!" muttered Mr. Creepe grimly. "This inactivity has gone far enough. Kirby! Tarkington! Go outside and walk entirely round the house. Find out what the boys are doing, and then come back and report."

Kirby and Tarkington, Mr. Creepe's chief bullies, obeyed the order with alacrity. The schoolmaster was in no mood to brook opposition. The monitors, indeed, were only too glad to get out.

Mr. Creepe continued his pacing—a grotesque, incongruous figure. He was collarless, unshaven, and his clothing was rucked and creased in the most amazing fashion.

The four other monitors with him were looking very much the same. The explanation, of course, was simple. A few hours earlier Mr. Creepe and his myrmidons had been pitched headlong into the moat. The rebels had dealt drastically with their tormentors.

Taking refuge in the gymnasium—the only building available—the ejected and soaked tyrants had got a fire going. And then, for the space of an hour or two, they had dried their clothing.

Until this minute they had been in no fit condition to venture out into the open air. But, dressed once more, and bodily dry, Mr. Grimesby Creepe was recovering himself rapidly. He could feel the first signs of a coming cold, but this was not at all surprising. He resolved to send Kirby out for a bottle of whisky as soon as the situation was eased.

The gymnasium was warm now—for the stove was nearly red-hot. It was a fairly big stove, of the "Tortoise" variety—a round, totally enclosed affair, which stood out in the room, and capable of enormous heat.

There were few home comforts in the place, however.

Not a chair—not a table. Only disused cross-bars, vaulting-horses, and other objects appertaining to a gym. Under Mr. Creepe's regime, these things had not been used. There had been no time for his boys to indulge in healthy exercises.

But Mr. Creepe was finding the gymnasium useful now. It provided him with a haven of refuge. He had been expelled from his own school—he was barred-out by his own boys—but, mercifully, he was still within the high walls of the property.

The outside world knew nothing. In the lanes, and in the village, the country people were totally unaware of this catastrophe. And Mr. Creepe was determined to keep it secret as long as possible. He would have been astonished if he had known that the bulk of the St. Frank's Fourth was even then on its way to join in the general "fun."

But Mr. Creepe knew that speed was essential. The longer this appalling state of affairs lasted, the greater was the danger of publicity. By hook or by crook, he would have to settle the rebellion at once.

And as he paced up and down, he thought deeply.

"Please, sir—"

"Go away! Don't come interfering—" Mr. Creepe paused. "Oh, it's you, Kirby! Well, what are the boys doing? Hurry up, you idiot! Don't stand there like a fool!"

Kirby and Tarkington flushed slightly.

"All right, sir—give me a chance!" growled Kirby. "As far as we can see, the boys have quietened down. There's hardly any noise, and only one or two of the young brats can be seen at the windows. We've been all the way round, too."

"H'm! I'm glad!" grunted Mr. Creepe. "As long as they're not noisy, the situation is to our advantage. Their food will not last longer than to-night. To-morrow they will be willing to capitulate. But I don't like the idea of waiting until then," he added, frowning. "I have a mind to—"

He paused, his eyes glinting.

"Yes, it'll be the best way!" he decided.

"You're not thinking of trying to rush the house, sir?" asked Tarkington. "We'll never do it, sir—even if we had a proper bridge. There's only seven of us, and we can't fight against two dozen—"

"Hold your tongue, Tarkington!" interrupted Mr. Creepe tartly. "You need not be afraid—I shall not ask you to risk your miserable skin! This revolt will be beaten by diplomacy—not by force!"

Mr. Creepe stalked out of the gymnasium, and he walked resolutely towards the moat. His figure, in the soiled and creased clothing, was rather comic. There was nothing whatever dignified about the schoolmaster—nothing to instil the slightest respect into his unruly pupils.

A yell went up among the rebels.

"Old Creepe's coming!"

"My hat! Look at his bags!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Bully!"

A yell of derision went up—a roar of scornful contempt which nearly made Mr. Creepe pause. He wasn't used to this sort of thing. His boys had always cowed in his presence. He had been able to instil fear at a single glance.

And this note of contempt startled him. His task was going to be even more difficult than he had anticipated. In spite of being thrown into the moat, Mr. Creepe still clung to the hope that his boys feared him.

"Come, come! What's this?" he shouted. "Now, boys!"

He stood there, on the edge of the moat, addressing the crowded school-room windows. With an effort, he managed to put on a benevolent smile, and he laughed in a genial kind of way.

"Well, have you got over it yet?" he asked calmly. "My dear boys, what foolishness! Don't you realise that you have only made yourselves very absurd? Come, let this farce end! Surely, it has gone far enough!"

"Don't take any notice of him!" yelled Jevons.

"No fear!"

"Booh! Booh!"

Somebody started the booing, and the next moment Mr. Creepe turned slightly green. The hissing and booing became tumultuous, increasing to a regular cyclone of hatred and contempt.

It was not a very promising start!

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOURTH ON THE SCENE.



"HERE we are!"

"Good!"

"Absolutely, laddies!"

The Fourth had arrived at Moat Hollow. One might have been excused for assuming that an army corps had turned up, judging by the noise. The lane outside the gates of the school was packed.

"Locked, of course," said Reggie Pitt. "But that's a detail. Who's going to help me to shin up the wall? Two hefty volunteers wanted! Don't all shout at once! My kingdom for a couple of soldiers!"

"Come on—we'll hoist you up," said Jack Grey promptly. "Lend a hand, Archie!"

Archie Glenthorne started.

"Good gad!" he ejaculated, gazing at Reggie's muddy boots. "I mean to say, am I to understand that there's going to be a dashed lot of climbing business? Oh, well! Of course, under the circumstances—"

"All right, Archie—I'll do it," grinned Alf Brent.

"Laddie, the V.C. has been won for less!" said Archie gratefully. "Dash it, I'm not a particularly particular cove on occasions of this dashed kind, but I mean— Oh, well! You grasp the old trend, what?"

Archie was talking to the thin air. Reggie Pitt and his men had no time to waste on his vapourings. Others were getting exceedingly busy, too.

Handforth, for example, was utterly ruining Church and McClure's overcoats. He was climbing over his chums as though they were inanimate logs. Again and again he attempted to mount. And at last he succeeded in getting on to McClure's shoulders.

All along the wall juniors were climbing up. It was a stiff task, for the wall was exceedingly high. And the juniors had brought no special climbing apparatus with them. Their one thought had been to get to the scene. Such problems as climbing the wall could be dealt with on the spot.

At all events, within three or four minutes no less than a dozen Fourth Formers were straddling the top of the high wall—taking care to avoid the iron spikes which were supposed to protect it, but which, as a matter of fact, afforded excellent hand grip.

Reggie Pitt was one of the first to see over into the forbidden enclosure. Mr. Grimesby Creepe was in full view, flanked, on either side by a monitor. Two or three other monitors were standing outside the gymnasium door. They all looked exceedingly dilapidated.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Nipper, from the school-room window. "Look out there, my sons!"

"Eh? Look out where?" asked Watson.

He stared across the grounds, and then noticed the figures swarming at the top of the wall. This was the first indication the rebels had received of the Fourth's proximity. The din within the schoolroom had been so great that no outside sounds had penetrated.

"My only hat!" gasped Watson. "The chaps! Yes, I can see Reggie— And there's Handforth, as large as life!"

"Naturally!" said Nipper drily.

"And old Montie, too!" roared Watson. "Hurrah! The Fourth's come!"

"And we didn't expect 'em until to-night!" said Nipper. "They must have got word, somehow— Here, I say! We're a couple of asses!" he added, as a thought struck him. "Kirby!"

"Kirby?"

"Of course!" said Nipper. "Didn't he escape? The fellows must have realised at once that something was amiss and here's the result in concrete form. Give 'em a cheer!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old St. Frank's!" yelled the Moat Hollow boys.

"Hurrah!"

This time the cheer came from the Fourth.

"Stick to it, you fellows!" bellowed Handforth. "Keep it up! Don't give in! We're here!"

Mr. Creepe, caught between the two fires, as it were, received his first spasm of real fright. The worst had happened! These infernal St. Frank's boys knew the truth! This meant that the whole county would know within a few hours! And Mr. Creepe thought that the Fourth was about to invade the stronghold. Hence his sudden fright.

"Get down from that wall this instant!" he thundered, rushing up. "Do you hear me? How dare you take such liberties? I won't have this hooliganism! Get down at once!"

"Being an expert on hooliganism, Mr. Creepe, I don't see why you should make such a mistake!" called Reggie Pitt sweetly. "Are we to understand that the first act has begun? Has the curtain gone up?"

"You impudent young rascal!" shouted Mr. Creepe thickly.

"Yes, the first act is in full swing!" said Reggie. "The rebellion has begun, and this is where we start doing a few things."

"Let's rush the place!" roared Handforth excitedly. "Come on! Let's dash in and rescue all the chaps! Old Creepe's got 'em bottled up in the school, and they need help!"

"Fathead!" gasped Church.

"Eh?"

"You've got it all wrong!" said Church impatiently. "They've chucked Creepe out—they want to be bottled up!"

"Oh, by George, yes!" said Handforth, with a start. "I'd forgotten! It's a barring-out! Well, anyhow, we're going to do something! We haven't come here just to look on!" he added aggressively. "Not likely!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FOURTH GETS BUSY.



NIPPER looked very pleased with himself.

"This puts a different complexion on things, my sons," he said briskly.

"We're looking up! All we've got to do is to sing out our requirements, and Reggie Pitt and his merry men will dash off on the good work."

"Food!" said Tommy Watson.

"Exactly, my dear Watson—quite an elementary deduction," said Nipper gravely.

"As you so succinctly put it—food! Or, in sweeter terms, grub! Our kind friends of the Fourth will now oblige."

Nipper was feeling very cheerful. Mr. Creepe, it seemed, was about to receive a nasty shock. Undoubtedly, he had been relying on the rebels' inability to feed themselves. But he was destined to find that the rebels were not entirely friendless.

Food was the one thing needful. A sup-

ply of ammunition would come in handy, but this was a secondary consideration. The natural defences at Moat Hollow were so excellent that a dangerous attack was impossible. If Creepe & Co. decided to fight, they would stand no earthly chance.

Nipper placed his hands to his mouth, and took a deep breath.

"Can you hear me?" he roared lustily.

"That you, Nipper?" came back Reggie Pitt. "Yes, we can hear you! Everything O.K.? Any requirements? Shut up, Handy!" he added quickly. "Dry up, you chaps! Listen to Nipper!"

The Fourth-Formers on the wall listened.

"Success!" came Nipper's reply. "We hold the fort! But there's no grub here! Any chance of help?"

"Hear that?" said Pitt grimly. "They've got no grub!"

"All right—we'll see to that, begad!" said Tregellis-West. "I've got fifteen quid, an' that'll help. Archie is simply rollin' in cash this week, too! Sing out that everythin' is all serene!"

But Handforth was already doing it.

"Hi!" he bellowed, his voice carrying across the school grounds like a cyclone. "You want grub? All right—we'll buy up the giddy village, and bring the stuff back! Look out for us in half an hour!"

The message was heard by all the rebels. "Hurrah!"

"Good old St. Frank's!"

Mr. Creepe, a mere spectator and listener, stood in the centre of the two parties, as helpless as one of the pebbles under his feet. He was almost inarticulate with rage and alarm. He used some very questionable language under his breath.

"I say, sir, this is a bit serious!" said Kirby, hurrying up.

"Fool! Can't you make a remark less insane?" snarled Mr. Creepe. "Serious? By Heaven! It's outrageous—it's beyond all endurance! Who am I, to be treated in this way—to be flouted and ignored on my own property?"

"It's no good talking like that, sir," said Kirby truculently. "You're pretty helpless in the matter. This may be your property, but who takes any notice of that? You've got to face the facts!"

There was more than inanity in Kirby's statement.

"Yes, Kirby—yes!" muttered Mr. Creepe thickly. "Yes, yes! You are right—we've got to face the facts. And they're none too pleasant to face, either! These boys—these insufferable young hounds! Is there nothing we can do to prevent this catastrophe?"

He turned upon the St. Frank's fellows in a fine fury, and then drew his breath in sharply. The high wall was deserted—the Fourth-Formers had completely disappeared. Under Reggie Pitt's lead, they were hurrying into the village to buy up supplies.

Reggie Pitt was no believer in delay. The thing had to be done, and the sooner the better. Nipper had asked for food—and food

was going to be supplied. The Fourth took a big personal interest in this rebellion.

They would have been on the side of the rebels, in any case—but this one fact that Nipper was in charge of it overwhelmed all other considerations. To most members of the Fourth, it was a startling surprise to find Nipper on the spot at all. And their enthusiasm was unbounded. If Nipper had ever wanted any indication of his popularity, he had it here.

Mr. Creepe was stunned for a few moments.

The disappearance of the St. Frank's juniors was significant. It meant, of course, that they had gone off to buy food. And the rebels within Moat Hollow were yelling themselves hoarse with triumph.

"I'll stop this!" swore Mr. Creepe. "I'll go up to St. Frank's, and tell Dr. Stafford exactly what these young ruffians are doing! Deliberately aiding and abetting this rebellion—interfering in my affairs——"

"Steady on, sir!" interrupted Kirby. "That won't do any good. The Head of St. Frank's will hear all about it within an hour or two, without you troubling. Besides, if you went up there he might ask some awkward questions," added the monitor unpleasantly.

Mr. Creepe started.

"What do you mean, confound your impudence?" he demanded.

"Well, sir, Dr. Stafford might want to know why your boys have rebelled, and it would be a bit difficult to answer him," said Kirby, with studied insolence. "And there's another thing. These St. Frank's juniors will probably collar you in the lane and chuck you in the ditch!"

Mr. Grimesby Creepe turned pale.

"Yes, yes!" he muttered, his flabby cheeks shaking. "Perhaps you are right, Kirby—perhaps you are right!"

"I know I'm right," said Kirby coolly.

"We had better stay within these locked walls," went on the schoolmaster. "We will deal with this matter ourselves—quite privately. There are several of us, and we are not beaten. Eh, Kirby? Eh, Tarkington?"

Kirby laughed.

"I am fed up with the whole thing," he said carelessly. "And if you think we are going to fight your battles for you, Mr. Creepe, you've made a jolly big mistake. I'm going to walk out this minute!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE FAITHFUL SIX.



MR. CREEPE started back, staring blankly.

"Kirby," he shouted, "what do you mean, you young rascal? Are you rebelling against my authority, too?"

"You can put it that way if you like—please yourself," replied Kirby. "What do you say, Tark? Are you willing to stay here and fight against these kids? Is it good enough?"

"No, it isn't!" said Tarkington promptly.

"Not likely!" added the other monitors, who had come up.

Mr. Creepe was startled. They were all standing near the gymnasium, and this was the first indication that the schoolmaster had had that his monitors were perfectly ready to turn against him. He had not failed to observe the sudden dropping of the deferential "sir."

"No, it isn't half good enough!" went on Kirby sneeringly. "The best thing you can do, Mr. Creepe, is to admit yourself whacked. Take my advice, and scoot before the police get hold of you!"

Mr. Creepe nearly went purple.

"You—you—you——"

Words failed to come, and he nearly choked. That one excess of fury, however, expended itself rapidly. The cunning of his nature began to assert itself. He saw that he would have to go warily. It was bad enough to have the boys turn against him, but it would be fatal if the monitors followed their example. Then, indeed, he would be a beaten man.

"Dear, dear!" he said, speaking calmly with difficulty. "What's all this, Kirby? What's all this, Tarkington? Boys—boys! You are talking very strangely—very strangely indeed! We must pull together. It is foolish to talk of being beaten."

"You can't get away from the facts!" growled Kirby.

"No, no, of course not," agreed Mr. Creepe. "I am sorry you cannot see this matter in the same light as myself. A pity, Kirby—a thousand pities! Supposing we enter the gymnasium, and talk things over quietly?"

They all went in. It had cost Mr. Creepe much to talk so calmly. His one desire was to leap at Kirby and hurl him to the ground. But this would have been an unpardonable blunder. Mr. Creepe was beginning to realise that his position was becoming precarious in the extreme.

"Now, boys, what is all this trouble?" he asked.

"It's all very well for you to smooth it over, but we're not having any," said Kirby aggressively. "We shouldn't have minded having a shot at our own kids—we'd have enjoyed that, for the mere sake of getting our own back—but I'm hanged if I'm going to fight this St. Frank's horde!"

"Same here!" said Tarkington.

"We didn't bargain for those infernal brats!" said Roberts.

"No, no, of course not!" agreed Mr. Creepe diplomatically. "I quite see your point of view. The position, of course is

difficult. However, we must get over it—we must use our wits——"

"It's easy enough to talk, but we're done!" interrupted Kirby, with more than his usual truculence. "Look here, Mr. Creepe, what's the good? There are two dozen kids in the school, and we're barred out by the moat. There are well over two dozen St. Frank's fellows outside, obtaining food for our lot. They'll be back presently——"

"Yes, yes, I know——"

"They'll be back presently," repeated Kirby, "and the best thing we can do is to clear out before they show up. Why, can't you see that we shan't stand an earthly? They'll sweep in like a tide, and I don't want to be chucked into the moat again! It isn't worth it!"

"Rather not!" agreed the other monitors promptly.

"Those St. Frank's kids aren't like our own," added Kirby. "I've had a taste. Handforth and Pitt and Tregellis-West and that crowd—they're as strong as young horses, and they can fight like young Dempseys! It's the back exit for us, Mr. Creepe—and quick about it!"

Mr. Creepe trembled with anxiety, but tried not to show it.

"But, my boys, if you desert me it will be tragic!" he whined. "Alone, I am helpless, but with you there is just a chance that we may keep these infernal St. Frank's boys out! If only we can hold them at bay this once, I will make fresh arrangements."

"Fresh arrangements?" asked Kirby suspiciously.

"Yes, yes, of course," said the schoolmaster. "We must have help; we must bring men here—strong men who can sweep into the house and quell the rebellion at one stroke!"

The monitors looked more interested.

"Good heavens!" went on Mr. Creepe, seizing his advantage. "You don't suppose I am content to let things stand still? But I must have time, boys—I must have time. Don't desert me like this!"

"But we can't hold them all back!" growled Kirby. "It's a good idea to get some men here, I'll admit, but you can't do that until to-night, at the earliest. I don't fancy that moat again, I can tell you!"

"Only this once!" urged Mr. Creepe. "I will reward you for your loyalty," he added with an effort. "I admit the prospect is uninviting, but if we are sufficiently determined we shall conquer."

Kirby looked at the schoolmaster squarely.

"About that reward?" he asked. "How much?"

"Don't be foolish, Kirby! We will leave that till afterwards——"

"Not likely!" interrupted the head monitor. "I don't know about these others, but if you'll give me a quid down, I'll

chance it! I'll stay here and fight these St. Frank's kids until tea-time!"

"We'll all do it for a quid each!" said Tarkington promptly.

Mr. Creepe simply mouthed at his monitors, who were holding a pistol to his head so openly. The schoolmaster trembled with inward rage, but he managed to remain outwardly calm. This was beyond all endurance—only, unfortunately, it had to be endured.

"I—I have no change," said Mr. Creepe thickly. "However, your demand is—is reasonable. I cannot expect you to risk your precious skins from a sense of loyalty alone! I will pay you later."

Kirby shrugged his shoulders.

"You'll pay us now, Mr. Creepe, or we'll walk out!" he retorted. "You've got ten quid in your pocket-book—and I know it! Pay up, or we go!"

And Mr. Creepe, although his hand fairly shook, paid up. His monitors were indeed a faithful sextette.

CHAPTER X.

BUYING UP THE VILLAGE.



BELLTON was considerably startled. It was the quiet hour of the afternoon—or, at least, it should have been. It was the hour when the modest shopkeepers were in the habit of dozing behind their counters. Neighbours would come in and gossip idly about the crops, the weather, and the general poorness of business.

But this afternoon everything was different.

The little High Street fairly throbbed, and those shopkeepers who weren't invaded came to their doors to see what all the commotion was about. As far as they could see, the better part of the Fourth Form at St. Frank's had gone mad.

Crowds of juniors were piling into different shops. The biggest crowd invaded the grocer's, while Mr. Binks was nearly overwhelmed. Even the butcher's was filled up, and the little greengrocer's and the fish-shop were equally busy.

Handforth was in charge of the tuck-shop gang.

"'Afternoon, Mr. Binks!" he said gustily, as he marched into the shop. "We want to buy your giddy stock! Everything you've got—how much?"

"But, Master Handforth!" protested the confectioner. "I can't tell you all in a minute— But you are joking, surely—"

"How much?" roared Handforth, as though he expected Mr. Binks to reckon up the value of his stock in one breath. "Look here, Mr. Binks, we can't wait. We'll say five quid!"

"But Mr. Binks won't!" murmured Church, grinning.

"Five pounds?" shouted Mr. Binks excitedly. "Why, Master Handforth, you don't seem to realise—"

"All right—we'll collar the stuff, and you can send your giddy bill in!" interrupted Handforth gruffly. "We can't hang about here all the afternoon! Like your nerve to expect it! You can trust the Fourth for your miserable account, I suppose?"

Mr. Binks nearly collapsed. He was a peace-loving man, and he had often told himself that Fate was hard to locate his tuck-shop so close to a big public school. He was always having spasms of heart failure. But, as he philosophically reminded himself, if it wasn't for the school there wouldn't be any tuck-shop. He couldn't have it both ways.

Mr. Binks was accustomed to junior "rags." The whole village was indifferent to them—they were so frequent. But this rag appeared to be a much bigger one than usual.

Not that the shopkeepers grumbled. After their first gasp of dismay they found that the boys were ready with the cash, and so, what had seemed like an attempted wholesale burglary became an afternoon of roaring trade.

All the Fourth-Formers contributed, although it must be confessed that the bulk of the money came from Archie Glenthorne, Tregellis-West, the Hon. Douglas Singleton, and Hussi Ranjit Lal Khan—as these four juniors generally had an unlimited supply of cash. In this present affair they had cheerfully "whacked out" a tenner each.

Altogether over fifty pounds were spent in the village shops during a hectic half-hour. And the village was entertained by the unusual sight of the St. Frank's Fourth carrying away the spoils.

Every type of hand-cart was requisitioned, the juniors, under Reggie Pitt's instructions, refusing all offers to have the goods "sent up." Every junior was loaded. Those who had no hand-carts filled their arms. And the procession which went back towards the village bridge was an extraordinary one.

Willy & Co., of the Third, met the procession in the lane, and Willy & Co. promptly fainted, promptly recovered, and just as promptly joined in the good work. A few odd Fourth-Formers, who had caught wind of the affair, had come scurrying down from the school, too.

Pitt & Co., true to their promise, were rallying round in the most handsome manner. They were conveying enough food to Moat Hollow to last the rebels at least three days—and probably a week. It would all depend upon the way in which the goods were used. And the juniors had taken no particular care to spend the money in the most economical way.

Pitt's one great fear was that a master would meet the procession en route. He headed the throng, and kept his eyes keenly open. Archie Glenthorne, who was manfully struggling under a load of two biscuit-tins—a record for Archie—noticed the worried frown on Reggie's brow.

"It appears, laddie, that the good old grey matter is somewhat frothy," he observed. "I mean to say, overtime for the brain department, what? Dash it all, you're absolutely harassed!"

"I'm looking out for masters!" said Reggie Pitt bluntly.

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie. "Personally, old sportsman, I'm not absolutely bursting with anxiety to meet one of those frightful chappies. I mean, what with these dashed biscuit tins——"

"I'm not exactly anxious, either," said Reggie grimly. "If we're spotted we shall be stopped, and then there'll be an inquiry on the spot, and we shall be sternly forbidden to deliver the goods. I know what these masters are!"

"I say, what a frightful scheme!" said Archie. "But cheer up, old teacup! The coast is absolutely clear, and there's nothing in sight except a brace of crows. So let's dash onwards!"

And the Fourth dashed.

CHAPTER XI.

UNLOOKED-FOR ASSISTANCE.



IT was idle for Mr. Creepe to pretend that he wasn't racked with acute anxiety. He had never been so worried before. As he paced up and down the Moat Hollow grounds he felt nearly desperate.

His whole future depended upon this battle.

If only he could quell the rebellion and restore Moat Hollow to its usual condition, no great harm would be done. The village would talk; there would be a lot of gossip, but it would be a comparatively easy matter to explain everything plausibly away.

But if, on the other hand, the rebellion lasted out, and Mr. Creepe was defeated, his future plans were ruined. If once the full truth about Moat Hollow was fully known, there would only be one way to safety—flight.

And Mr. Creepe was prepared to flee rather than face an inquiry. He was prepared to

abandon all his possessions—the very school itself, which was his own freehold property.

For an inquiry, once it became official, would penetrate to the full depths of Mr. Creepe's iniquity. This indeed was the shrewdness of Nipper's plan. Nipper had decided against a quick finish. His main idea was to hold the fort for days—until the barring-out became notorious; until, indeed, an official inquiry became imperative.

There could be only one result of this—disgrace and exposure for Mr. Grimesby Creepe, and a term of hard labour, if not penal servitude itself. So it will be readily understood that Mr. Creepe was fighting for his very safety. If things became too hot, he would flee; but while there was a trace of hope he swore that he would remain. He was too mean, too miserly, to abandon his goods and his property without a fight.

Without question, Nipper's plan was a good one.

For the boys to merely walk out and broadcast their pitiful story would be worse than useless. For nobody would believe them, and they would be seized and promptly returned to Mr. Creepe. And within a few days the affair would have blown over.

Mr. Creepe was infuriated, too, by the attitude of his monitors. He had always given them a great deal of rope; he had let them do very much as they pleased, and this was the way they repaid him!

But he realised that he had been compelled to give them rope. Their very silence regarding the conditions at Moat Hollow depended upon the amount of freedom they enjoyed. Kirby and his companions had been quite content to carry on the ordinary routine. But they were by no means prepared to fight the St. Frank's Fourth for pure love of Mr. Creepe.

And the schoolmaster had been obliged to distribute pound notes. It had hurt him to the quick to part with money in this fashion, and the thing still rankled. But he managed to smile upon his monitors. Even now they would turn against him if he dared to speak his mind.

"The blackmailing young hounds!" muttered Mr. Creepe to himself. "The grasping, unprincipled young brutes! They shall pay dearly for this later! They will not triumph in the long run!"

He allowed his thoughts to dwell upon more important matters. And he didn't fool himself. With such half-hearted supporters, his position was precarious. Including himself, there were seven. How could they possibly hope to hold back the flood of juniors which would presently invade the grounds? Mr. Creepe began to regret paying the money. The monitors would be useless, in any case. He had simply thrown six pounds away. It was a thought which did little to improve his temper.

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At this point of his cogitations he came to an abrupt halt and gazed at the school. Scuffings and kickings could be heard, to the accompaniment of voices. The fence was being climbed.

"Kirby! Tarkington!" shouted Mr. Creepe hurriedly. "Quick! They are back—they are climbing the wall even now! Hurry yourselves!"

The prefects came up without enthusiasm.

"They've been jolly quick," said Kirby. "Well, the best thing we can do is to stand near the wall and chuck clods of earth!"

"An excellent idea!" approved Mr. Creepe promptly. "Indeed, Kirby, a brilliant suggestion. I will take active part in this affair!"

There was nothing dignified about the man now, although on occasion he could affect a fine air of dignity. When his very school depended upon keeping out this supply of food, he was prepared to go any length.

The rebels in the meantime were watching eagerly and excitedly from the windows. They were confident that the Fourth would win. There wasn't any question about it. The odds against Mr. Creepe were overwhelming, and if he hadn't been so desperate he would have realised it.

"It's all right," said Nipper easily. "There's a lull now, but there'll be plenty of excitement soon. As the fight starts, Creepe will find himself alone. These monitors will simply throw up the sponge at the first exchange of blows."

"We needn't worry about that mouldy crew!" said Watson, with a sniff.

Mr. Creepe's faith in Kirby & Co. was apparently misplaced. The idea of throwing clods of earth at the invaders attracted the schoolmaster. It was, indeed, about the only thing to be done since there were no other defensive methods on hand. It would take time to prepare such defences.

And then a number of heads appeared over the top of the wall.

"Be ready, boys—be ready!" urged Mr. Creepe.

Kirby raised a clod of earth and prepared to hurl it at the nearest head. But he checked himself, and the clod fell to the ground.

"Hold on!" he ejaculated. "These aren't the St. Frank's kids! That fellow is the blacksmith's son!"

"What on earth——" began Mr. Creepe.

"He's well known," went on Kirby. "They call him Lumpy Bill in the village; he's an awful brute! He and his gang hate the St. Frank's chaps like poison. They're always getting into fights! And the whole crowd's here!" added Kirby, glancing at the array of heads along the wall.

Mr. Grimesby Creepe caught his breath in, and his eyes gleamed.

"You mean——"



All along the wall juniors were climbing up.

"Give 'em ten bob each, sir, and they'll fight for hours!" said Kirby quickly. "They won't make inquiries, either; they'll be too jolly glad to fight against those St. Frank's rotters! It's your chance, sir!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE BARGAIN.



LUMPY BILL was very interested.

"Don't seem to be much 'ere," he observed, glancing along the top of the wall at some of his companions. "I thought there was a reg'lar rumpus goin' on; but it's as quiet as anythink!"

"Look at ole baggy trousers!" grinned one of the other roughs. "Lummy! You'd never think it was ole Creepe! The last time I passed him was Sunday, and he was dressed in black, with a 'igh topper an' as smart as you please!"

"Never mind about the ole bloke," said Lumpy Bill. "Just take a squint at the school. See them kids? There's bin a rumpus, arter all—but we're late! Just our bloomin' luck!"

There were a dozen villagers altogether. Most of them were hulking hobbledoys who only worked when they were forced; useless louts who made as much mischief as possible on every occasion.

During the recent election in Bannington, for example, Lumpy Bill & Co. had been prominent, bringing sheer disgrace upon the candidate they favoured by their hooliganism. Whenever there was a chance of fighting Lumpy Bill & Co. were there.

And the news that Moat Hollow was in rebellion attracted them. Lumpy Bill, the ringleader, had gathered his forces together, and they had come along to see what was "hup" with their own eyes.

"They could not have arrived at a more opportune moment."

"One moment—one moment!" exclaimed Mr. Creepe, hurrying up to the wall with quick strides. "I want to speak to you, my men!"

"Keep your 'air on, mate!" grinned Lumpy. "Getting narsty becoss we're climbing your wall, eh? Yah! We don't care for you, old scrubby chin! You can't even look arter your own school kids!"

Mr. Creepe winced. This was not a happy beginning.

"You misunderstand me," he said, swallowing hard. "I am not complaining—indeed, I want your help!"

"Lummy, Bill, 'e wants our 'elp!" said one of the others.

The roughs laughed uproariously.

"What's the idea, ole gent?" asked Lumpy Bill. "We can't 'elp you—"

"I will give you ten shillings each—cash down—if you will come in here and help me to guard this wall against the St. Frank's boys," said Mr. Creepe tensely. "They may be here at any minute!"

A surprising change came over the roughs.

"Ten bob each!" echoed one.

"Yah, 'e's kiddin'!"

"'E won't give us no ten bob!"

"Like 'is nerve—tryin' to fool us!"

"Nothing of the kind!" shouted Mr. Creepe. "I am perfectly serious. Look here!" He pulled out his pocket-book and waved some notes. "Here is the money! Ten shillings each if you will help me!"

Lumpy Bill flushed with excitement.

"Ten bob each for 'elpin' to keep them

St. Frank's kids back?" he asked. "All right, guv'nor; we're on! Open the gates, an' we'll join yer! We're on your side, sir!"

The roughs dropped down from the wall recklessly. The prospect of receiving ten shillings each was alluring. Being idle, good-for-nothing louts, they seldom handled any bigger money than a shilling or two shillings. Mr. Creepe's offer was a magnificent one in their eyes.

And they would probably have agreed to fight without any payment at all. For they hated Reggie Pitt & Co., and would have been only too willing to throw clods of earth at them.

The great gate was unlocked, opened, and Lumpy Bill and his cronies crowded in. There were fourteen of them now.

The gate was closed and relocked.

"There's bin some trouble, ain't there, sir?" asked Lumpy Bill, with new found respect. "They're sayin', down in the village, that your boys 'ave chucked you into the moat, an' pinched the blinkin' school!"

Mr. Creepe scowled.

"The village talks too much!" he snapped. "Good heavens! The way such news gets about is startling—quite startling! But never mind that now; we have other things to talk of."

"Then it's true, guv'nor?" persisted Lumpy.

"In a measure, yes," admitted Mr. Creepe, between his teeth. "The boys have—er—become somewhat unmanageable. This is one result of my lenient policy," he added sadly. "I have always treated my boys with too much kindness. It is a mistake—a grave mistake, as I now realise."

Lumpy Bill nodded.

"You can't tan these 'ere young brats too much, sir," he agreed. "The more you tans 'em, the better! Treat 'em kindly, an' they'll turn round an' bite yer!"

"Exactly!" agreed Mr. Creepe. "Very aptly put, young man! Quite so! Kindness, I have found, is a curse! And this is the result!" he added, waving towards the school. "My misguided boys have rebelled against authority, and are being assisted and egged on by those infernal young hooligans from St. Frank's."

The bargain was soon made. Each village lout received ten shillings, and for that sum he was to fight with all his strength to resist the St. Frank's onslaught when it came.

Without a moment's delay, the village youths commenced piling up clods of earth. Spades and forks were brought, and work went on at express speed. And Mr. Creepe watched grimly. This unexpected help was going to save him!

"Now, you young fools," he muttered, "you can come—you can arrive as soon as you like! But if you can spring a surprise so can I!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WARNING.



"LOOKS bad!" grunted Nipper, frowning. "It looks jolly bad, Tommy. And I don't quite see what we're going to do."

They were standing at one of the upper windows, gazing down upon the feverish activity below. There could be no mistaking the nature of the work that was being done.

"Just like Lumpy Bill to butt in," said Tommy Watson fiercely. "The interfering cad! He's always up to something rotten! His whole gang, too—fourteen strong!"

"I'm afraid Pitt and the rest will get a surprise," said Nipper.

He stood there, looking out thoughtfully. He was reckoning up the chances. There were fully thirty St. Frank's juniors coming along with the food—and there were twenty-one defenders.

"Of course, the odds are in our favour," said Watson, whose thoughts were evidently following the same train. "I don't think there's much to worry about, old son. Our chaps are bound to win."

But Nipper shook his head.

"I wish I could think so," he replied. "Twenty of these bullies down here—without counting old Creepe. The odds are not in our favour, Tommy. Not by long chalks!"

"But there are over thirty coming with the grub!"

"I'm glad you've added the last bit—coming with the grub!" said Nipper significantly.

"What do you mean?"

"Think it out," growled Nipper. "Twenty defenders, armed with clods of earth, are more than a match for thirty chaps hampered with whacking great parcels of grub! How do you think they're going to fight, with our food supplies in their arms?"

Watson whistled with sudden dismay.

"My hat, I'd forgotten the grub!" he said blankly. "Of course, they can't make any rush at all, can they? I say, this is rotten!"

"It's worse than rotten—it's vital!" replied Nipper. "And there's only one thing to be done. The commissariat department has got to be warned. If only Reggie Pitt can be told of this development, he'll adopt new tactics. We can trust him to do something smart. He's brainy!"

"Rather!" agreed Tommy Watson excitedly. "I say, I'll tell you what! I'll nip out the back, climb over the wall, and run for the village—"

"No, you won't!" interrupted Nipper. "We're not going to lose one of our best men like that! There are precious few here I can absolutely rely on! You'd look fine, being copped before you got to the wall, wouldn't you? No, Tommy, we shall have to think of something else."

The position was, indeed, urgent.

With such a strong defence force in possession, Mr. Creepe's helplessness had completely vanished. He was now in a position of strength. He could look forward, almost with certainty, to beating back the proposed invasion of Fourth-Formers.

And the food procession was even now on its way!

"We'll go up on the roof!" said Nipper abruptly. "It's higher there, and we can see the chaps as they come along. I've got it! I'll signal to them by semaphore!"

"Good idea!" said Watson quickly.

"Rush along and rig up a couple of flags," went on Nipper. "Get Jevons to help you—and be quick! We might be able to give them a clear warning in advance—and that's the main thing."

He hurried up the attic stairs, and went out on the flat roof of the school. From this high vantage point he could see the junction of the two country lanes at the corner. He could even see the bridge, and one or two cottages at the beginning of the village, on the other side of the river.

He frowned. The food-bringers would naturally be excited, and it was quite likely they wouldn't see the semaphore signals at all. Nipper shaded his hand against the sun, and caught his breath in. The procession was just coming into sight—a regular army! Nipper could distinguish hand-trucks, too. The Fourth-Formers were doing the thing properly!

"By jingo!" he murmured suddenly. "Why not?"

Another idea had occurred to his active brain. With Nipper, to think was to act. Without hesitating, he dashed down, flew into the bath-room, and tore down a small mirror from the wall. Then he raced up to the roof again.

Breathlessly, but with a steady hand, he poised the mirror and moved it with short, sharp strokes. The sun was reflected in its face, and Nipper was endeavouring to catch the eye of the procession.

He was, in fact, signalling in Morse code!

It was a far better idea than his original one, since it enabled Reggie Pitt & Co. to know the truth while they were still afar. But would the signals be seen? Nipper persevered—and the procession still came on.

It reached the bridge, and started crossing. Tommy Watson and Jevons came rushing up with a couple of hastily-made flags.

"Hallo! What the dickens—" began Watson.

"They've stopped!" muttered Nipper tensely. "They've seen the signal! Morse code, Tommy! And I've caught their eye!"

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Tommy Watson.

He and Jevons stood looking on with eager interest as Nipper continued to operate the mirror. With long and short flashes, Nipper sent his message across to the Fourth.

He could not know for certain that Pitt & Co. understood, but the very fact that the

procession was stopped hinted that all the juniors were watching the signal flashes. And when Nipper had finished he lowered the mirror and gazed searchingly.

He saw a dozen juniors raise their hands—he could just distinguish the movement in the distance. But it was enough. They had seen and understood!

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ATTACK.



KIRBY stared over the wall eagerly. "By glory," he murmured, "they're coming up in force!"

Along Edgemore Lane the procession was marching and, indeed, was within a hundred yards of the Moat Hollow wall. There had been a delay for some reason. Mr. Creepe and his defenders had been ready for some time. And now that the Fourth had arrived, the position was more acute.

The longer the delay, the less chance of success—for by this time Lumpy Bill & Co. had prepared great piles of clods, and they would have ammunition enough to last throughout a long fight.

Nipper and Watson and the Moat Hollow boys, watching anxiously from the school windows, were not a little puzzled. They could hear the oncoming army—the shouts and roars, and the general commotion.

Nipper and Watson glanced at one another. "Looks as if they didn't understand your signal, after all," muttered Tommy.

"But they must have understood," said Nipper, frowning. "They waved, and I was sure—Hullo! Here they come! By Jove, Tommy, I believe there's been some awful mistake, after all!"

Along the wall, in one small space, numbers of juniors were climbing up into view. An attack was being made in a concentrated area. But it was doomed to instant failure.

Swish! Whizz! Swish! Handforth, Church, Jack Grey, and several others, caught the chunks of soft earth with full force, and they vanished from view. Lumpy Bill & Co. roared with triumphant laughter. And they kept up the fusillade with tremendous energy.

"Go it, you chaps!" roared Kirby. "Let 'em have it!"

"All right, mate—come an' throw some clods, an' don't talk so much!" bellowed Lumpy Bill. "Got 'im! My! That was a beauty that time! We'll teach these 'ere school kids, we will!"

"Rather!"

"Swipe 'em, the young varmint!"

The Fourth, however, were by no means disheartened. Heads kept popping up over the top of the wall, and the defenders made pot-shies at them continuously. Curiously enough, however, none of the Fourth-Formers now attempted to actually climb over.

"They're whacked!" said Tommy Watson gloomily. "I don't wonder at it, either. How can they expect to climb a wall like that, with spikes all over the top, in face of those giddy chunks of earth?"

"It's a bit steep," admitted Nipper. "They must have misunderstood that signal of yours," said Jevons. "When they waved, they must have meant that they were coming straight on. They thought you were telling them that everything was all clear."

"That's what it looks like," admitted Nipper again. "All the same, I don't understand this dodging business. They keep popping up on purpose to be shied at—and they make no attempt to climb over. By Jove, they're simply drawing the enemy's fire."

"Eh?"

"It's a ruse to make Lumpy Bill & Co. exhaust their ammunition," said Nipper, with sudden interest. "Hang it all, Reggie Pitt's no fool! There's something behind this attack—something we don't know of yet!"

"I say," burst in Watson tensely, "couldn't we send out a kind of sortie? About a dozen of us, you know? Why not push the bridge across the moat and rush out—"

"Too risky!" replied Nipper. "If anything went wrong we should be dishd. The sortie might be cut off, and captured, and then where should we be? This moat is a fine defensive measure, but we want to keep on this side of it! No, we'll leave it to the Fourth!"

It really seemed as if the Fourth was a broken reed to rely upon.

The attempts to climb the wall were half-hearted—indeed, laughable. And Lumpy Bill and his companions, assisted by Kirby & Co., were thoroughly enjoying themselves. The fight was going all in their favour. It was miserably tame compared to what they had expected.

"Splendid!" murmured Mr. Creepe, looking on from a fairly safe distance. "It was foolish of me to get so alarmed. Indeed, I believe my own boys could have dealt with this attack themselves. There was no necessity for these grasping village youths. H'm! Seven pounds! A lot of money—a mere waste! Well, well, it can't be helped now!"

He looked on at the fight with even greater indifference. There was nothing in it. On the face of it, these boys could never get over the wall—and the idea of them hoisting food over was ludicrous. Mr. Creepe wondered why he had ever grown so panic-stricken.

"This is soft, sir," grinned Kirby, coming up.

"Quite so, Kirby—quite so!" agreed Mr. Creepe. "The boys will soon grow tired, and then we shall be rid of them. And a failure of this kind will have a lasting effect. They will not dare to repeat their—"

Mr. Creepe paused, and started back with a gasp.

Cra-a-sh!

A sudden stupendous crash had sounded—unexpected and terrific. And the schoolmaster was staggered to see the great double gates burst inwards as though they had never been locked at all. They swung open, and the real invasion commenced.

"Tricked!" roared Mr. Creepe. "By Heaven! They were only fooling us, Kirby! This is the real attack now!"

CHAPTER XV.

TOUCH AND GO.



"HURRAH!"

"Come on, the Fourth!"

The rebels, eager enough to help in the actual fighting, but unable to participate, yelled themselves hoarse as this new development was seen. Tommy Watson nearly cracked his voice.

"I knew it!" he yelled excitedly. "They didn't try to get over the wall at all—it was only a piece of spooof to keep these rotters engaged while the battering-ram was being prepared."

"I knew we could trust Reggie Pitt," said Nipper comfortably. "That chap's got brains enough for a dozen!"

"Hurrah!"

The fighting in the grounds was now intense. The whole front drive was swarming with fellows, and Lumpy Bill & Co. and all the monitors were suddenly discovering that their task wasn't such a soft one, after all.

The invading force was formidable.

Led by Handforth, it swept in like a flood. And it didn't sweep in empty-handed. The juniors in the forefront had smashed the lock with one terrific drive—using a tree-trunk for the purpose. As a battering-ram, that tree-trunk had served well.

And immediately behind came three hand-trucks, packed jamb-full and overflowing with boxes, parcels, and sacks. They swept in grimly, their own momentum carrying them far up the drive.

"Hurrah! Stick it!" thundered Handforth. "Come on, the Fourth! We've got to get right through with the stuff—no holding back!"

"The grub—the grub!" yelled the rebels.

"Hooray!"

Mr. Creepe urged his men on frantically.

"Stop them!" he shouted. "Seize those trucks—seize them before anything else! And then drive this infernal rabble out! Go on—go on! What am I paying you for?"

"Keep your blooming 'air on!" howled Lumpy Bill. "For two pins, mister, we'd walk out! We didn't bargain for no sich game as this 'ere!"

"Come on!" shouted Kirby. "You took the money—so give the value! We'll have

these kids outside in five minutes, if you'll put your backs into it!"

Thus encouraged, Lumpy Bill & Co. entered into the fight energetically. It raged round the trucks. The St. Frank's juniors, however, were very elusive. For some reason they didn't want to engage in actual battle. They dodged the conflict continuously, but did not actually retreat.

The battle resolved itself into a kind of dodging game, with the loaded hand-trucks forming the centre. Only Handforth showed any real desire to actually fight.

He sailed in with a will, attacking the village louts with impartial generosity. Three or four of them got him down at last, but he was soon rescued by Church and McClure and a crowd of others.

And after this came a breathing spell.

Kirby & Co. and the roughs drew off, and the Fourth-Formers waited.

"Come on—we ain't whacked yet!" roared Handforth. "We've got this stuff in here, and we mean to finish the job."

"Rather!"

"We're not afraid of this beastly gang!"

The "beastly gang" swept to the attack once more, urged by Mr. Creepe. And now the battle became serious. For the St. Frank's fellows were being beaten slowly but surely back.

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Tommy Watson. "They're losing ground—look, Nipper, old man! I say, this is frightful!"

Nipper, however, had gone. Perhaps he was organising a rescue-party of his own. It was obvious, at any rate, that something would have to be done. The presence of Lumpy Bill & Co., it seemed, had spoilt the whole programme.

"It's awful!" groaned Jevons. "What on earth can we do? Look! They're being pushed right outside—"

He broke off with a gulp. For he was witnessing a scene which nearly brought his heart into his mouth. The Fourth-Formers, resisting strongly until this moment, suddenly broke and fled.

It was a harrowing spectacle.

With Lumpy Bill & Co. in full pursuit, the St. Frank's Fourth fled helter-skelter out of the gateway. It was an ignominious exit, and it was worse than an ordinary defeat—for the food trucks were left in possession of Mr. Creepe! It was a disaster of the first magnitude.

"Don't follow—don't carry the fight into the road!" shouted Mr. Creepe urgently. "We don't want any more trouble! Close the gates—close the gates! Kirby! Tarkington! Close the gates!"

Mr. Creepe was frantic with success and excitement. The monitors, equally triumphant, rushed the gates to with a clatter and a clang. The fastenings were smashed, but this matter was soon remedied. Two of the monitors ran up with stout wooden props. And these were jammed in position.

"Splendid!" muttered Mr. Creepe, mopping his brow. "Well done boys—well done, indeed! At one time I thought we should be beaten, but all is now well."

"And we've got all this grub, sir!" grinned Tarkington.

Mr. Creepe smiled as he eyed the boxes and sacks.

"The spoils of war, eh, Tarkington?" he said pleasantly. "Eh, Kirby? Yes, indeed—the spoils of war! I shall certainly not hesitate to seize these goods and retain them for my own use."

"'Old on, gov'nor, we want a share o' that stuff!" said Lumpy Bill, wiping a smear of blood from his mouth. "We've earnt it, too!"

"Very well—very well!" said Mr. Creepe, groaning. "You shall have your share, boy. Certainly—certainly!"

From the school windows the rebels were looking on with anxious eyes and with heavy hearts. The attack had failed—the food supplies had fallen into the hands of the enemy. But had they?

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL SERENE.



REGINALD PITT was perfectly cool.

"Steady—steady!"

he said calmly.

"There's no need for all this hurry. More haste less speed, my sons! The fight's going

fine in the front, and the enemy suspects nothing."

Moat Hollow, at the rear, was quiet and deserted. At least, Mr. Creepe supposed that it was quiet and deserted. Being no artist at warfare, Mr. Creepe had never even considered the possibility of a subterfuge. He had taken it for granted that the main attack was the only one.

And yet, as a matter of fact, the smashing down of the big gates, and the subsequent fight, was a mere blind. Handforth, in charge of that big party, had had strict orders to keep the battle going as long as possible, but to attempt no real invasion.

In the meantime, the real work was proceeding. At the back of the Moat Hollow grounds there was a heavy oaken door set in the high wall. Mr. Creepe had had this boarded up, but it succumbed with ease to the determined efforts of Pitt and his merry men. The noise had been effectively drowned by the hubbub from the other attack.

Outside the rear wall, piled high, were enormous masses of foodstuffs—cases, sacks, parcels, and other packages galore. Without a minute's delay, they were started on.

In a steady and continuous procession a dozen Fourth-Formers carried the goods through into the enemy's grounds.

The look-out on duty at the back had spotted the move at once, and he had lost no time in fetching Nipper. And Nipper, glowing with enthusiasm, was now helping with a will. He was filled with admiration at the astute nature of Reggie Pitt's stratagem.

While the fake fight was proceeding in front, the food was being delivered!

Without delay, the bridge was pushed across the moat from the back door. A number of the stronger rebels joined in the carrying work. And with many hands to transfer the stuff, the whole job became light.

Everything was dumped down just inside the school—anywhere, so long as it was inside. There was no hitch. There was no trouble of any kind. Ten minutes of highly concentrated energy, and the thing was done.

Nipper gripped Reggie Pitt's hand warmly.

"Good man!" he said simply.

"That's all right," said Reggie, grinning. "This is just the first move. Good luck, old son. Rely on us right through."

They parted. There was no time for lengthy conversations. Pitt hurried his men off the scene, and the door in the wall was pulled to—although not actually secured. It didn't matter now.

Nipper was just as swift in getting his own men indoors. The drawbridge was pulled back, the rear door was fastened and bolted again, and not a sign remained of the recent activity.

"That's what I call clever!" said Nipper, as he eyed the immense piles of supplies. "Reggie, old son, go up half a dozen!"

But Reggie was hurrying round to the front of the school wall, and he was just in time to see Handforth & Co. swept out. All the Fourth-Formers crowded in the lane, muddy dishevelled, but happy.

"O.K.?" asked Handforth breathlessly.

"Everything's as happy as marriage bells!" grinned Pitt.

"Hurrah!"

That lusty cheer from the lane caused Mr. Creepe to look up sharply. He couldn't quite understand it. He had hardly expected the defeated schoolboys to cheer over their disaster.

"Remove this stuff into the gymnasium at once!" commanded Mr. Creepe, turning to his monitors. "There may be another attack—and now that the food is here, we will keep it!"

Kirby and Tarkington seized one box, and lifted it off the first truck.

"My hat!" gasped Tarkington. "It's like

lead! Hi! Look out— Mind your toes!" he roared desperately.

The case was too heavy for him. It crashed to the ground, and burst. And Mr. Creepe and his supporters were staggered to see a pile of sodden earth burst from the box.

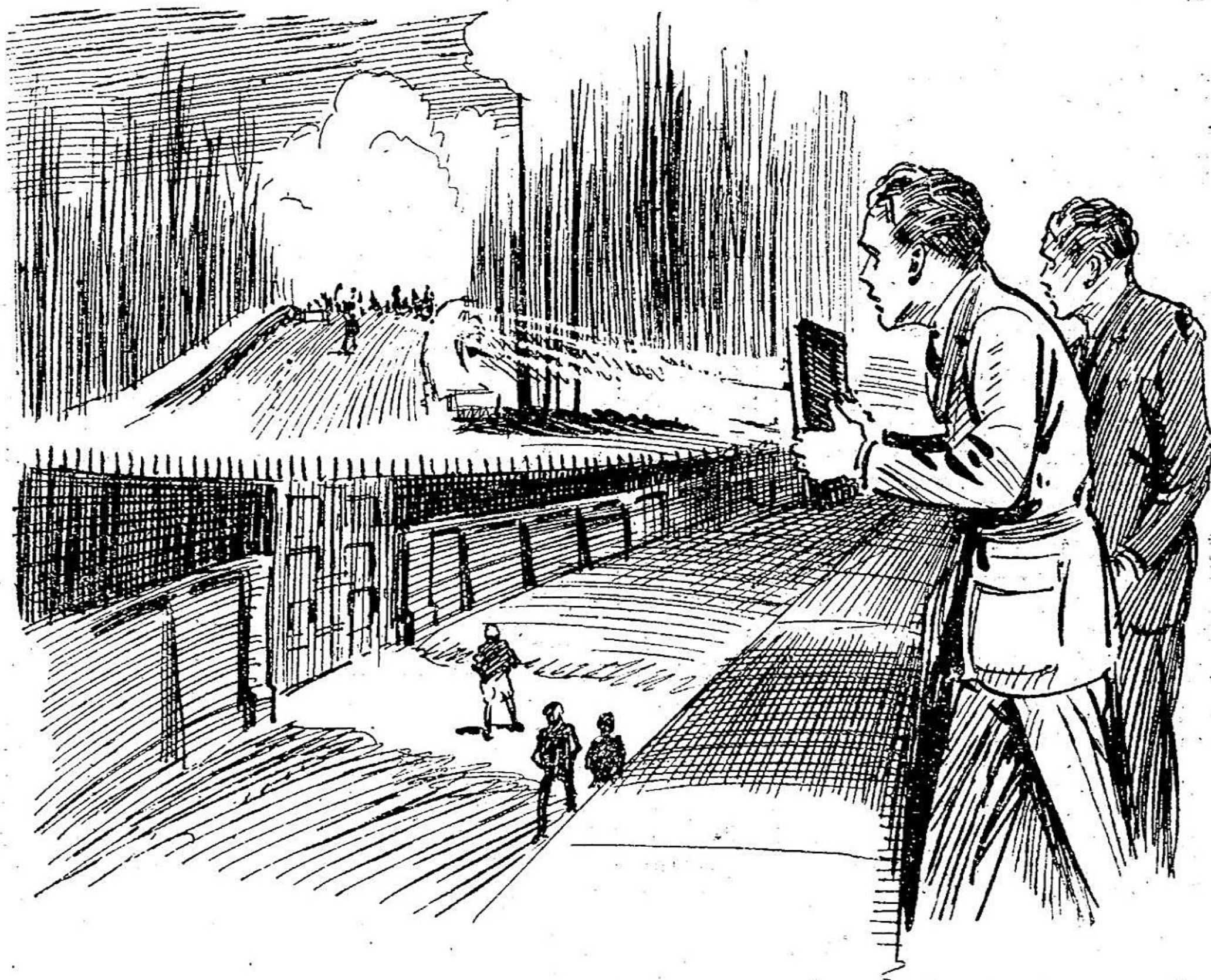
"I say, sir!" yelled Kirby. "There's—there's something queer——"

"We've been tricked!" panted Tarkington. "These boxes haven't got food in them at all—they're fakes!"

bish. In short, Reggie Pitt had received Nipper's signal in full, and he and his men had worked feverishly in order to bring about this happy state of affairs.

It had been quick work, without a minute's breathing space—but the juniors felt amply rewarded. The famous Fourth had acquitted itself with honours. They had been appealed to for help, and they had rendered it valuably.

Lumpy Bill & Co. were thoroughly disgusted, and they went off in a huff. And



"They've stopped!" muttered Nipper tensely. "They've seen the signal! Morse code, Tommy! And I've caught their eye!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a yell of laughter from the windows. Mr. Creepe, turning round, saw the rebels—flushed with excitement and joy. Something had happened! Like a physical blow, it came to Mr. Creepe that something had gone wrong!

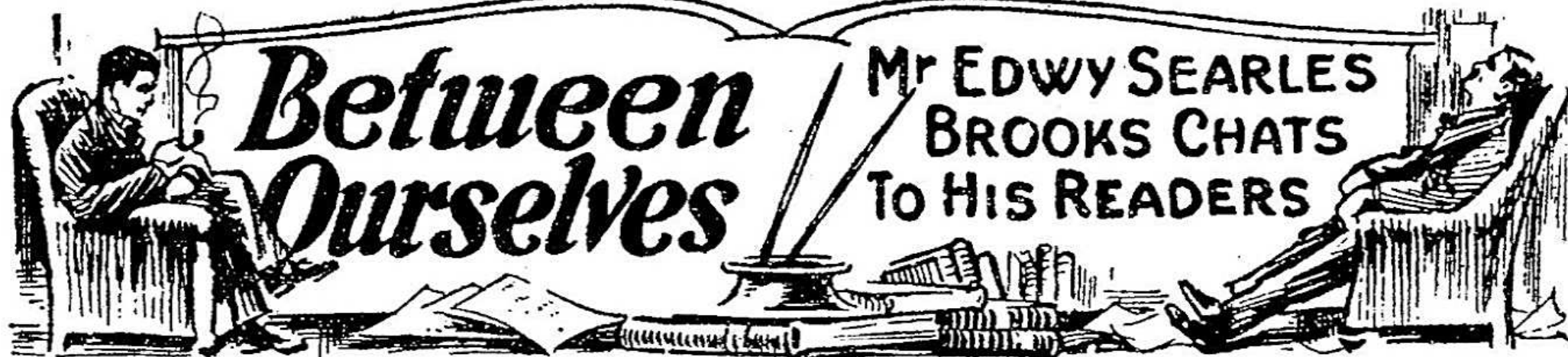
"Open the rest of those boxes!" he snarled.

But the boxes and sacks and parcels proved disappointing. Without exception, they contained nothing but earth and rub-

Mr. Grimesby Creepe and his monitors retired, beaten and subdued, into the gymnasium. And within Moat Hollow the rebels celebrated. They had food enough to last almost a week, and everything was rosy. But Nipper shrewdly guessed that Mr. Creepe would adopt new and more intensive methods.

As a matter of fact, the schoolmaster's cunning brain was even then getting to work, hatching a new scheme of attack!

THE END.



Mr EDWY SEARLES BROOKS CHATS TO HIS READERS

(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.).

Letters received: Harold Doughty (Chesterfield), W.E.M.C. (Maldon), J. H. Wright (Broadstairs), W. Houchin (Wymondham), An Old Reader (Burghead), Handforth's Admirer (Stourbridge), William A. Lester (Walsall), John L. Foote* (Wallsend-on-Tyne), J. Edgar Rhead (Shrewsbury), J. Fielding* (Walton), Lillian Hurst (Stadhampton), Harold Conlan* (Rathcar), George H. Butler (Walsall), Smith and Herbert Thompson (Bradford), Thomas Brogan (Pendleton), L. G. Fanthorpe (Ipswich), Gordon Butler (Belper), A Fickle Reader (Hereford), Alice Anderson (Southsea), Arthur Clive (Old Kent Road), J. B. Caird (Edinburgh), William George White (Nuneaton), A Professor Cyrus Zingrave Admirer (Sheffield), Stanley Craig (Cleethorpes), An Enthusiastic Reader (Chitterne), W. J. Barge, D. E. Barge, W. E. Norton, A. Norton, A. Lindon, B. Norton, S. Coles, A. Lindon, J. Millward, (Birmingham), W. Wetherall (Great Yarmouth).

There are so many splendid letters among the above collection that I am afraid I cannot give an individual reply to all who deserve one. But I needn't tell you how I appreciate your chummy, chatty letters, and all those dealing with matters of general interest I will refer to presently.

But first of all I want to say a few words about the St. Frank's League—which, of course, is still an unrealised dream. But you mustn't imagine that it will always be just a myth. Both the Editor and myself are paving the way to a real, living League in the future, and we hope that it will be

the near future. But please remember, all of you, that there's a tremendous lot of preparation to be done.

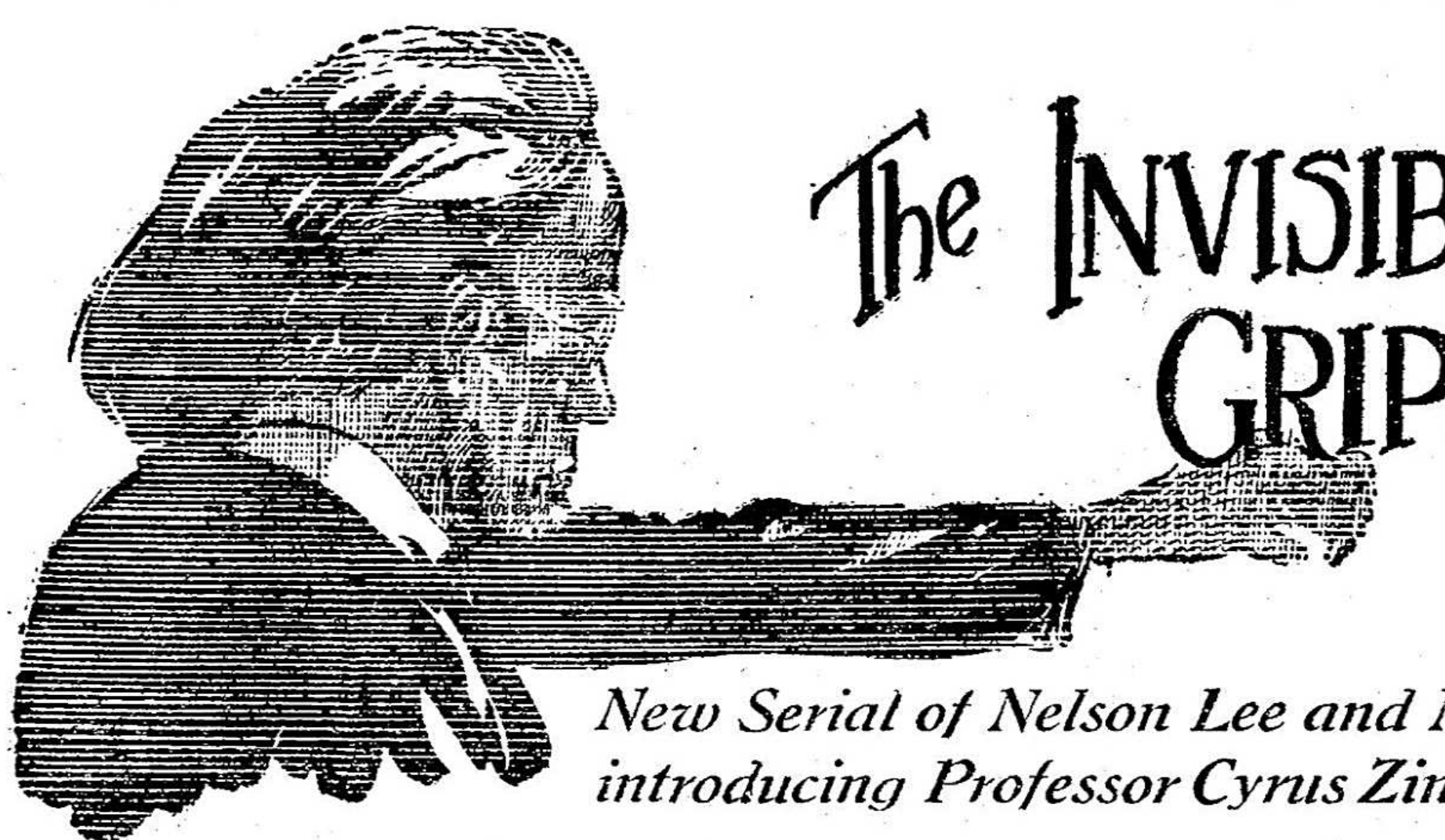
If I go into the details of it now, I shall fill up my whole space, and then I shan't have any room for other matters. But I'd just like to say a few words to some of you who have given in your names as Organising Officers. For example, Harold Doughty, in a particularly chummy letter, (thanks, Harold, old man, for your five entertaining pages) is hoping that he will be appointed. Well, Harold, you needn't hope any longer. Providing the League becomes a reality, you ARE appointed. And this applies to every other good fellow, masculine and feminine, whose services have been offered.

As I have mentioned, once before, all the names of proposed Organising Officers have been placed in a special list, with full addresses, and in this way we are getting a sturdy band of enthusiastic volunteers, spread all over the country—and even in the Colonies. So, you see, when the right time arrives, we've only got to send you the word, and you'll be able to go ahead on such business of the League as we indicate. Now, everybody, please. I shall take it as a great favour if you'll let the matter rest as it is for the time being, and trust the Editor to get a move-on at the earliest moment he can. You may be sure that either he or I will pass the word on to you the very instant we get something settled. In the meantime, of course, any other enthusiasts who care to have their names put down for Organising Officers, can drop me a line and I'll see that such names are included in the list of volunteers.

I'd like to give you quite a long reply, Harold Doughty, for you certainly deserve one. Your letter is full of interesting comments and suggestions, and I congratulate you upon your excellent composition. I'm sure you'll excuse me if I now hasten on to other readers.

Handforth's Admirer wants me to add some more Houses to St. Frank's. He

(Continued on page 30.)



The INVISIBLE GRIP!

*New Serial of Nelson Lee and Nipper
introducing Professor Cyrus Zingrave*

THREADS OF THE CASE.

Mr. Roger Langford, inventor of a machine generating powerful rays that will melt the toughest steel, has been kidnapped, and his machine stolen by Professor Zingrave. Max Kerner, a German financier, anxious to get hold of this invention, makes a raid on the professor. Nelson Lee and Nipper arrive on the scene, and a battle royal takes place against Kerner and his hirelings. The latter flee, and Nelson Lee turns his attention to Zingrave. The professor sets the house on fire with the Langford machine and while the detective rescues the inventor from the burning house, Zingrave makes his escape.

(Now read on.)

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CHIEF INSPECTOR'S CHAGRIN.

NIPPER gave a gasp of surprise.

"My stars! It's Mr. Lennard, guv'nor—Chief Inspector Lennard of the Yard!" he exclaimed, looking at the newcomer keenly. "He seems to have been through the mill with a vengeance!"

Nelson Lee, staggering under the weight of his burden, grunted assent.

"He looks in a bad way, young 'un!" he agreed, as he gently lowered the police official to the ground.

Both Lee and Nipper had recognised the chief inspector at once, and the detective lost no time in whipping his brandy-flask from his pocket, and in pouring a liberal dose of its contents down Lennard's throat. There was plenty of illumination, for the whole scene was vividly lit up by the glare from the fiercely burning cottage.

The Scotland Yard man, undoubtedly, had received some very rough treatment. He was an unusually robust and healthy individual, and hard as nails.

But now he was completely knocked out of time. He was smothered in mud from head to foot, his hat was missing, and his

features were bleeding from several rather severe cuts.

The administration of the brandy, coupled with vigorous chafing of the inspector's hands, soon had their effect, and within a couple of minutes he showed every sign of returning activity. He gave vent to a characteristic grunt, shook himself slightly, and then sat up.

"What the—— Oh! You're there, Lee, are you?" he said, looking at the detective a little dazedly. "I don't seem to remember—— What the thunder am I doing down here, anyhow?"

He broke off in a disgusted tone as he realised that he was sitting upon the ground, and he began scrambling to his feet at once—steadied by Lee and Nipper.

"You'll soon be all right, old man," said the detective gently. "I fancy you collapsed from sheer exhaustion——"

"I'm as right as rain!" cut in Lennard, with a snort. "Why the deuce I collapsed beats me! Must be getting ready to go on the retired list, by the look of things! But what's all the excitement about? Where are the crooks—and what's the meaning of this fire?"

But the look on Nelson Lee's face told him at once that something was wrong.

"You don't mean to say I'm too late?" went on the chief inspector quickly. "Zingrave hasn't slipped away again?"

"I'm afraid there's no doubt about it," said Nelson Lee, with a nod. "The cunning scoundrel arranged things in a very clever manner—"

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Lennard, in an angry tone. "This is all on account of a confounded accident in Fulham Road! A runaway lorry crashed into the leading police car, and smashed it to smithereens! The second car, which was following close behind, was unable to steer clear, and that was wrecked, too!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Nipper. "So that's why you were delayed, eh?"

"Delayed!" repeated Lennard. "It's a wonder that any of us are alive, to say nothing of delayed! You never saw such a ghastly mess in all your life. Three of my men are in hospital, but the others insisted on coming along with us—in a car we commandeered. They're round at the other side of the house, I expect, awaiting orders. I came along to see what was happening, and I must have come over faint, I suppose—like a juggins!"

Nelson Lee explained exactly what had occurred, and the chief inspector, as he listened, grew more annoyed than ever. Clearly, he and his men could have made a very excellent haul but for the unfortunate accident in Fulham Road; but it was no use worrying now, as Lee pointed out.

"The whole thing was most regrettable," said Nelson Lee; "but it is quite useless for us to make a search for Professor Zingrave and his companion now, Lennard. They made their escape while we were attending to the rescue of Mr. Langford, and by this time they are a good distance away. Moreover, they have taken Langford's machine with them!"

The chief inspector snorted.

"Of course!" he said. "But I don't blame you in the least, Lee. Obviously you couldn't leave Mr. Langford to perish while you looked after the crooks! It's a dashed nuisance, all the same. But for our being delayed we could have made a clean sweep of the lot—Zingrave and his Mephistopheles fellow, and Kerner and his gang into the bargain! And now we're dished again."

Lennard was inclined to be pessimistic, and nobody could blame him.

The trio walked over to the spot where Harry Langford was still attending to his father, and they were pleased to find that the scientist was looking little the worse for his trying experiences.

He explained, in reply to questions, exactly how he had been kidnapped from his laboratory, saying that the black-bearded

man and the red-cloaked man were responsible for the outrage, just as his housekeeper had stated. They had brought him to this house in order to force him to explain the working of his apparatus, a thing he had flatly refused to do.

"But the black-bearded criminal soon mastered the machine," he concluded. "He must be a scientist of no mean ability, Mr. Lee, for he seemed to have no trouble whatever in manipulating the apparatus. It is appalling to think that my machine is being used for such diabolical outrages as committing robberies, and I am grieved beyond measure. I wish to Heaven that I had never perfected it—"

"Nonsense, dad!" cut in Harry. "Mr. Lee and the chief inspector will soon be able to run these criminals to earth, and then you'll have nothing further to worry about. Your machine will be returned to you—"

"I hope you're right, my boy—I sincerely hope you're right!" said Mr. Langford fervently. "In one way I'm glad that Kerner hasn't got the apparatus, for he would undoubtedly have taken it out of the country without the least delay. So long as Zingrave retains it there is every hope of its recovery."

"Exactly!" nodded Nelson Lee. "And you can rest assured, Mr. Langford, that we shall do everything possible to apprehend the professor before he can do much more harm with your machine. He's a slippery customer, I know, but he'll trip sooner or later, and then we shall get our opportunity."

Nelson Lee spoke in a grim tone, and it was evident that he was fully determined to hound down Professor Cyrus Zingrave with relentless energy.

For the moment he was free; but such a condition of affairs would be impossible with the famous detective so keenly upon his trail.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NELSON LEE IS MOODY.



CHIEF DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR LENNARD gave a dubious grunt.

"I'm not so sure that Zingrave will trip, Lee," he said, with a shake of the head.

"He knows now that you're on his track, and he'll be more on his guard than ever. That confounded accident in Fulham Road is little short of a catastrophe, and I'm afraid we'll never get such an opportunity of capturing him as the one we've just lost—"

"The professor is not working alone, Lennard," cut in Lee keenly. "He is associated with a partner in his present activities, and I don't think the position is

quite so bad as you imagine. Once we have established the identity of 'Mephistopheles,' we ought to be near the end of the case."

"That's all very well," said the chief inspector, "but how the deuce are you going to do it, Lee? There's no hope of discovering the personality of that red-cloaked fiend until we get Zingrave, and goodness knows when that will be!"

Lennard, obviously, was thinking of the professor's past record, and of his amazing criminal successes. Then, of course, he had been the head of a great organisation; but it was an undoubted fact that he had managed to keep himself immune from arrest for many months.

There was nothing further to be done here at the moment, and the whole party prepared to take their departure. Lennard's men were watching the fiercely roaring flames as they licked round the doomed cottage, and a couple of fire-engines were just commencing to pump water into the burning mass of wreckage. They had been summoned by a policeman, who had seen the fire from his beat, and the brigade had acted with all their customary promptness.

Lennard went off with his plain-clothes men in their commandeered car, while Lee and Nipper accompanied Mr. Langford and his son down Putney Hill towards the station. Here they procured a taxicab, and drove off to the scientist's house Cambridge Terrace, Regent's Park.

Upon arrival, both Harry and his father again expressed their extreme gratitude to Lee and Nipper, and complimented them highly upon their achievements. Mr. Langford urged the detective to persist in his efforts to recover the machine, and to capture the two audacious criminals who had taken possession of it for their own base uses.

Lee promised to do everything possible, and a little later he and Nipper left for their own home in Gray's Inn Road.

When at last they reached their cosy consulting-room, they were both tired and hungry, and they lost no time in setting to work upon the meal which the thoughtful Mrs. Jones had provided for them.

At its conclusion Nelson Lee sat down in his favourite chair and lit his pipe, and Nipper seemed to know instinctively that his master was about to relapse into one of his "black" moods. His expression was one of thoughtful concentration, and Nipper anticipated trouble when he made an attempt at conversation.

"That accident which delayed the inspector was dashed unfortunate, guv'nor," he said. "If he'd come as arranged, we could have rounded up the whole bunch of crooks together—"

"But he didn't come, Nipper, and therefore we lost the opportunity!" cut in Lee, a little irritably. "What is the use of going over all that ground again? We must make a fresh start, that's all!"

Nipper grunted.

"Easy, isn't it, sir?" he asked. "Kerner is sure to have the wind up after what has occurred, and the professor will be doubly on his guard. I'm hanged if I see where you're going to make a fresh start! We're up against a blank wall!"

Nelson Lee smiled.

"Not exactly, young 'un," he returned. "You are forgetting the gentleman who has chosen to impersonate the Monarch of Hades! I fancy our best policy will be to devote a little attention to him—"

"But you don't know where to find him, guv'nor!" said Nipper.

"I may have an idea!" said Nelson Lee quietly.

Nipper stared.

"Great guns! Do you mean that you know his identity, sir?" he asked in astonishment.

"I may have an idea!" said Lee again, with exasperating calmness. "It is never wise to be too sure of anything in this world, Nipper—but it is quite permissible to form one's own conclusions concerning certain points. This 'Mephistopheles,' in my opinion, can only be one possible individual, and I mean to verify my theory at the first opportunity."

"What is this theory, guv'nor?" asked Nipper eagerly. "Who do you think the red-cloaked merchant is?"

Nelson Lee shook his head.

"There would be no point in discussing the subject now," he said. "The whole case is distinctly complicated, and I want to sift the various aspects of it in my own mind before taking any further action. You had better get off to bed, young 'un!"

Nipper looked a little crestfallen.

"Hang it all, sir—that's not fair!" he protested. "After all we've been through to-night, it's only right that I should be in the know, and to remain with you! Are you going out again?"

"Perhaps!" said Nelson Lee.

"Where to?" persisted Nipper.

"Merely to make a little investigation on my own account!" replied the detective blandly. "I have a fancy to put a certain theory to the test, as I intimated just now."

"Then why can't I come, guv'nor?" pleaded Nipper.

"Because I prefer to go alone!" said Nelson Lee, in a tone of finality. "Now run off to bed, Nipper, and leave me in peace!"

Nipper shrugged his shoulders helplessly, for he knew that it would be no use arguing with the detective when once his mind was made up—as it obviously was now. Now and again Lee acted in this manner, and no amount of persuasion had any effect upon him.

And so Nipper went off to bed—disappointed, but resigned. And after he was undressed and about to slip between the sheets, he heard his master leave the house and set out upon his nocturnal expedition.

Where was Nelson Lee bound for?

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LENNARD BRINGS SOME NEWS.



"GOOD MORNING, guv'nor!" greeted Nipper, entering the room and casting a keen glance at Nelson Lee. "Thank goodness you're looking bright and chirpy once more! Judging by appearances, I gather that you spent a few profitable hours last night!" It was just after five o'clock, and Nipper had only just made his appearance in the breakfast-room. He had slept like a top after his strenuous adventures the previous night, and he was vastly relieved to observe that his master was looking normal again. His thoughtful, concentrated air had completely vanished.

The detective smiled at his assistant's words, and turned a reproving face towards the youngster.

"You lazy young beggar!" he said, with mock sternness. "What time do you call this to crawl down to breakfast, eh? I've a good mind to make you go without—"

"Oh! Come off it, guv'nor!" said Nipper, with a grin. "I want to hear the big news! Did you succeed in verifying your theory, whatever that happened to be?"

"Yes."

"Good!" said Nipper, sitting down at the table and helping himself to an egg from the stand. "I suppose you're going to take me into your confidence now, aren't you? No need for all this mystery, sir, that I can see— Oh, dash!"

Nipper's sudden exclamation was caused by a thunderous knock upon the street door below, and he looked across at Nelson Lee interrogatively. It was evident that the same thought had occurred to them both simultaneously, for in some subtle manner they both recognised the imperative, impatient knock of the caller.

"I'll bet that's Lennard, guv'nor!" said Nipper quickly. "There's no mistaking the way in which he sashes on the door! He's in a pretty good paddy, too, by the sound of it!"

Nipper was right, for a few seconds later the chief inspector came hurrying into the room, wearing a dejected expression and an angry frown—to say nothing of a few strips of plaster over the cuts and scratches he had received in his motor accident.

He flopped himself down into a chair heavily, and looked at Nelson Lee disgustingly.

"More trouble!" he announced shortly. "The professor and his pal have been at it again!"

Nipper jumped.

"You mean that they've committed another crime—as soon as this?" he asked incredulously.

"Yes—a terrific burglary at Lexington's, the Piccadilly jewellers!" said the chief inspector, with a snort. "What do you

think of it, Lee? They've got nerve enough for anything!"

The detective smiled.

"I'm not at all surprised, my dear fellow!" he said quietly. "As a matter of fact, I fully anticipated that you'd have had some such news as this for us this morning!"

Lennard stared at Nelson Lee fixedly.

"You—you anticipated it?" he repeated.

"Exactly!" was the reply. "Zingrave and his companion are obviously engaged in a carefully prepared campaign, and they have equipped themselves with Mr. Langford's machine in order to make their task as simple as possible. No doubt they have planned a series of robberies—the second of which was booked to take place last night. There was nothing to prevent it that I can see—so it went forward just as originally arranged!"

The chief inspector jumped to his feet with a concerned exclamation.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "Do you mean to say that we've got to put up with this sort of thing indefinitely, Lee? Have we got to stand calmly by, and allow the professor and his partner to ransack the City—"

"No doubt that is what it would amount to if we allowed Zingrave to remain at large!" cut in Nelson Lee crisply. "But there is no need for you to become alarmed, Lennard! The professor will not have everything his own way, I can assure you!"

The Scotland Yard man gave another grunt.

"Perhaps not," he said. "But he had it all right last night, confound him! Lexington's is a sight for sore eyes, I can tell you! The window has been half-emptied of its contents, the safe has been opened in just the same way as Barlow's, and the crooks even left their signature behind them—a paper with 'Satan's Fang!' scrawled upon it! No other clues whatever—but that's quite sufficient! Mr. Lexington, the proprietor, is nearly insane with rage, and he's been raving at the police for allowing the burglary to occur! A few more affairs of this sort, and my hair will go snowy white, Lee!"

The chief inspector was decidedly cut up about what had occurred, and Nelson Lee patted him upon the arm reassuringly.

"Don't worry, old man," he said quietly. "Things are not quite so bad as you imagine—"

"Aren't they, by thunder!" interrupted Lennard, with a snort. "I can't see how they can possibly be worse! The Yard's helpless, Lee—we haven't got the remotest idea where to lay our hands upon Zingrave. He's doing precisely as he pleases, and he's making a laughing-stock of law and authority. It's—it's intolerable!"

Nelson Lee smiled indulgently.

"Impatient, as usual!" he exclaimed. "Why will you persist in looking upon the blackest side of everything, Lennard? The

position, bad as it appears, is not by any means hopeless——”

“How do you make that out?” demanded the Yard man. “Tell me where I can lay my hands upon Professor Zingrave!”

“Certainly—all in good time,” said the detective.

Lennard grabbed Nelson Lee’s arm in a firm grip.

“What?” he almost yelled. “Do you

mean to say that you know where to find him?”

“I fancy that I shall know—very soon,” said Lee. “But surely there is no necessity for you to deafen me, Lennard, nor to attempt the breaking of my arm?”

The police official took the hint, and loosened his grip at once.

“Sorry!” he muttered. “But you surprised me considerably, old man! I can’t



Nipper suddenly felt his blood run cold. For at that moment a heavy hand descended upon his shoulder in the most unexpected manner, and a hissing voice sounded in his ears!

believe that you're serious! Are you actually telling me that you know where Zingrave is?"

"No!" said the detective, with a shake of the head. "I'm merely telling you that I shall know very shortly. It is my intention to lay a little trap for our friend the professor, and to catch him red-handed."

Lennard grinned.

"Sounds good—but a bit indefinite!" he exclaimed. "When do you propose to bring about this miracle, may I ask?"

"To-night," said Nelson Lee.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

NIPPER RESUMES AN OLD DUTY.



"T O-NIGHT?" echoed the chief inspector, with another blank stare.

"Exactly," returned Lee with a nod. "I think it will be a comparatively simple matter to apprehend Zingrave to-night, Lennard. In addition, we shall also have the pleasure of capturing his red-cloaked friend."

For a few moments the Scotland Yard man remained silent, looking at Lee in a queer manner. He could see plainly enough that the detective was by no means "pulling his leg," and he found himself wondering just how these astonishing results had been brought about.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he exclaimed at last. "You're a sly dog, if ever there was one, Lee! According to what you say, you've whacked the Yard completely, but you haven't explained how you propose to accomplish all this."

"You'll know all in good time," said the detective, with another of his quiet smiles. "I have been somewhat busy since the events which took place last night, and I have formed several very definite conclusions. I can promise you that developments will take place very soon now, but beyond that I shall say nothing. I have still a good deal to do before we can take any decisive action, but you can rely upon my enlisting your co-operation at the earliest possible moment."

Nipper chuckled and glanced at Lennard.

"Just like the gov'nor—exasperating as usual!" he commented. "It's no use, inspector; you won't get another word out of him until he's ready to talk, as you ought to know well enough. I'll bet he's got the whole facts of the case at his fingertips, but he won't say a word until he's verified every point."

"That's very likely," growled Lennard irritably. "But there's one thing I want to know, at all events, Lee. Have you fathomed the identity of the Mephistopheles fellow?"

Nelson Lee nodded.

"Oh, yes!" he admitted. "I've known that for quite a while."

"The deuce you have!" ejaculated the chief inspector. "Well, who is he?"

"You'll know—to-night!" chuckled Lee. "It would serve no good purpose to tell you anything now, Lennard, because it is impossible for us to do anything whatever until the right moment arrives. Just be patient, and hold yourself in readiness to bring off the coup when the time's ripe."

Lennard shrugged his shoulders, and emitted another of his characteristic grunts—evidently realising that it was a hopeless task to get anything further out of his unofficial colleague.

He knew Nelson Lee well enough to take him at his word, and he did not deny that he was eagerly looking forward to the coming of night, with its promise of rapid developments. He had not the least idea how the detective had achieved such amazing results, but the chief inspector had an almost child-like faith in Lee's abilities, and he knew from past experience that the detective never, under any conditions, made a misleading statement.

"Well, if you won't speak—you won't, I suppose," he said resignedly, as he prepared to take his departure. "I'm just going along to Lexington's again, and I thought you'd probably like to have a look round yourself. I've got a taxi outside."

Nelson Lee was silent for a moment, and then nodded.

"Yes, I think Nipper and I will accept your invitation," he said at last. "I haven't much hope of learning a great deal from an inspection of the scene, but there's always a chance, Lennard. Zingrave and his colleague are very experienced hands in the art of committing crime, and they are not very likely to have left many traces behind them. The paper inscribed 'Satan's Fang' is a distinctly curious feature, and one that I confess is puzzling. I don't think it was left as a trade mark, as you suggested, but rather as a message to some particular individual."

The chief inspector shook his head.

"That's out of the question, surely?" he asked. "Remember that the same sort of thing occurred at Barlow's, Lee. If it was a message to some particular individual, it couldn't apply in both cases."

"Why not?" asked the detective. "It is possible that the two words have a great significance for more than one individual—"

"But Professor Zingrave is engineering the robberies, gov'nor," cut in Nipper. "It's not like him to leave a message of that sort. He used to leave his 'Green Triangle' cards all over the place—but this is different."

"It is, young 'un—very different," said Nelson Lee. "So different that it has set

me wondering deeply. But there is no need to go into that question just now. I fancy we shall receive a perfectly feasible explanation of everything to-night, and as that is the case, we may as well dismiss the matter until then."

It was quite evident that Nelson Lee, whatever his reasons, was firmly convinced that the coming night was destined to bring forth the desired results; and it was also obvious to Lennard and Nipper that the detective did not wish to enter into minute details at this stage of the proceedings.

Therefore, they did not press any further questions upon Nelson Lee as they drove towards Piccadilly in the chief inspector's taxi, but confined the conversation to the audacious robbery at Lexington's. Lennard gave all the details during the journey, telling how the robbery had been discovered, how he had been sent for, and how he had seen the putty-like substance which had once been the steel door of the safe.

"When I saw that, Lee, I knew at once that Mr. Langford's machine was responsible," he concluded. "The Satan's Fang paper confirmed it, but I needed no telling that it was Zingrave's work before I found that. There's no regular watchman at Lexington's, which is a lucky thing for him. He'd have been paralysed just the same as poor Ben Logan was if he'd been on duty at the time of the robbery. Lexington's rely chiefly upon police protection, but they employ a watchman who makes a visit to their premises about every ninety minutes. The man looks after several other business premises, and visits each in turn throughout the night. When he got to Lexington's upon his second round he found the place ransacked."

"Just so," said Lee with a nod. "Merely the result of careful planning on the part of the criminals, Lennard. There is every indication that months have been spent in making the arrangements to commit these crimes, and it is not very surprising that such a thorough job has been made of them."

When the cab arrived at Lexington's, Lee and Nipper accompanied the chief inspector into the jeweller's premises, and made an examination. But it was all to no purpose; there were no clues of any sort.

A little later the detective discovered an untenanted room in a building on the opposite side of the road, and a brief search of this resulted in his finding traces of the tripod which supported Mr. Langford's apparatus. Lee looked for these signs merely to make assurance doubly sure, and he was perfectly satisfied, despite the fact that he found nothing else whatever.

"We can do nothing more here, young 'un," he murmured to Nipper. "Zingrave has been very careful to leave no traces behind him, but he will receive a little sur-

prise very shortly. I have several little things to attend to now, and I think you had better devote your attention to the wily Mr. Max Kerner once more. I have an idea that he is up to another of his subtle schemes."

"Right-ho, guv'nor!" said Nipper readily. "I'll buzz off to Wigmore Street at once, and keep my eye on the blighter—that is, if he's still at home. Perhaps he's taken alarm after last night and bunked!"

"You'll find him there all right—never fear!" said Lee. "Kerner is determined to seize Mr. Langford's apparatus, unless I'm greatly mistaken."

Nipper nodded, and a few minutes later he was on his way to resume his old duty of shadowing the International financier.

CHAPTER XL.

THE SHADOWER SHADOWED.



THE time seemed to pass with monotonous sluggishness.

For hours and hours Nipper had been waiting outside Mr. Max Kerner's house in Wigmore Street, and he was thoroughly sick of the inactivity. But he had no thought of abandoning his post.

He had taken up his position just at the entrance of a narrow lane almost opposite to the financier's dwelling, and from here he could command a good view of Kerner's premises, without appearing in any way conspicuous.

Nelson Lee, he knew, would not have sent him to shadow this man without a very good cause, and Nipper intended to do his utmost to take back a favourable report to his master.

So far he had drawn a complete blank.

Darkness had now fallen thickly over the metropolis, and ever since Nipper's arrival he had seen no sign whatever of the man for whom he was watching. It looked as though Kerner had "skipped," after all, and this conviction began to take a firm hold on Nipper after the passage of another hour.

But he was mistaken.

For, just as he had begun to lose hope, he saw the figure of the financier striding along the street towards his house with quick, nervous strides, and Nipper became alert upon the instant.

He waited until Kerner had admitted himself with his latchkey before emerging from his place of concealment, and then Nipper quickly skipped across the road, entered the gateway of Kerner's premises, and dodged towards the fence which divided the front garden from the back.

(Continued on page iii of cover.)

(Continued from page 22.)

doesn't think two are enough. Well, of course, most Public schools have a lot more than two, I know, and I've been rather wondering if it wouldn't be a good idea to make a change at St. Frank's. Thanks for the suggestion, Handforth's Admirer. The necessary alterations could be made during the summer vacation, and thus, in the autumn, we should have a slightly different St. Frank's, with one, or perhaps two, new Houses. Then Nelson Lee could be a Housemaster again, and Nipper could be the skipper of the juniors in that House, Pitt the skipper in another, Boots in another, and Christine, say, in the fourth House. This is only just a passing idea, of course. How does it strike you?

No, J. Edgar Rhead, I'm afraid it wouldn't be possible to take the St. Frank's fellows to Mars, or any of the other planets, for the summer holidays. You're not the only one, by the way, who has mooted this scheme. I once wrote a story of this type ("In Trackless Space"—perhaps some of you remember it?) but the aerial party consisted of just five or six. It wouldn't be feasible to take half the Fourth on a trip like that!

Hallo! What's this? Your friend doesn't think you'll get a reply? Well, Lilian Hurst, I'm giving you a little paragraph, just to prove that your friend is all wrong. I've done this once or twice before, in connection with other readers, and I think it's about time these sceptics changed their minds. Don't you?

So you've induced your twin-brother to write to me, Smith-Thompson? Thanks, old son, for your photograph. I nearly had a fit when I saw it, because you're so handsome. That drawing of yours, which you sent me some time ago, doesn't do you justice at all. Thanks for your few lines, Herbert. But, I say. Are you really Smith's twin-brother?

You'll get into trouble, Fickle Reader, if you let everybody else know that you want the Magazine dropped altogether. When the longer St. Frank's yarns start—in a week or two now—the Editor will have to carve a few chunks out of the poor old Mag, but I think he'll leave the most popular items in. So if everybody isn't pleased, everybody ought to be.

Really, Mrs. Anderson, I can't possibly give you the long paragraph I'd like to, in answer to your chatty, interesting letter. Your vivid description of your vivarium, with the fat toad, Blunderbuss, and Romeo and Juliet, the frogs, and all the other creatures, interested me enormously. I think I shall have to make Willy find a friendly toad, and christen him Blunderbuss! I wonder if you'd mind? As for the

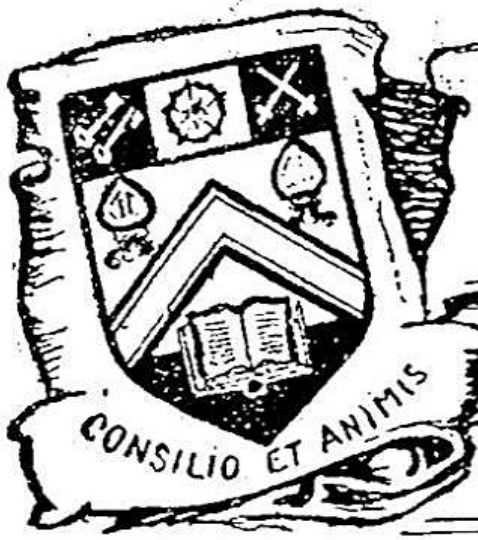
summer series, I shall certainly bring old Archie and Phipps to the fore in one or two of the stories, and I only hope that I shall keep up to the standard you evidently look for! Your letter, and many others of the same type, undoubtedly help me and encourage me to write with an inspired pen. I'll do my very best to please everybody, and I can't say more than that, can I? As for not reading your letter through, please don't think that I ever skip ANY letters. I welcome them all—and the longer they are, the better I like them. Please give my love to Babe and Ken.

Sorry, Professor Zingrave Admirer, but I'm afraid your hero is pushed rather into the background. There is an overwhelming majority in favour of the long school story, so it seems that old Professor Z. won't have much of a look in. But it's quite possible that he'll be revived again, together with a fully organised League of the Green Triangle, one of these fine days. You can never tell!

Here, cheese it, old son! (I'm talking to S. Craig). I can't possibly give you a long reply, as you ask for, and with regard to the planets, you'll find your answer somewhere above, if you haven't read it already. I'm referring to the paragraph I devoted to J. Edgar Rhead. I should judge your surname to be Scotch. But what's the idea? Are you trying to have me on a piece of toast, or is it just a riddle?

What an extraordinary amount of budding artists there are knocking about, and hiding their lights beneath bushels! Those sketches of yours, Enthusiastic Reader, are simply ripping. But I must whisper, just between ourselves, that the two originals are not quite so good as the copy. Nevertheless, they do you great credit. Some more fourpenny books from my pen, eh? I'm afraid you're very hard-hearted—you don't want to give me any rest. But there's one being printed now, I think—or being got ready for printing, anyhow. And here's another whisper (don't tell anybody else), I've just completed a yarn about Hal Brewster and Co, of the River House School, and I don't suppose it'll be long in following the other one.

Your letter was particularly pally, William A. Lester, and just the kind I like to get. You wrote to me in a friendly, confidential manner, as one chum to another. That's the idea! And the more of these letters I get, the better I like them. We don't want to be formal, do we? The whole idea is to write to me as if you've known me for years. That's how I try to make my replies, anyhow. Hallo! No more space left! I shall have to cut off the gas until next week. My hat! Isn't it a relief to all you long-suffering readers?

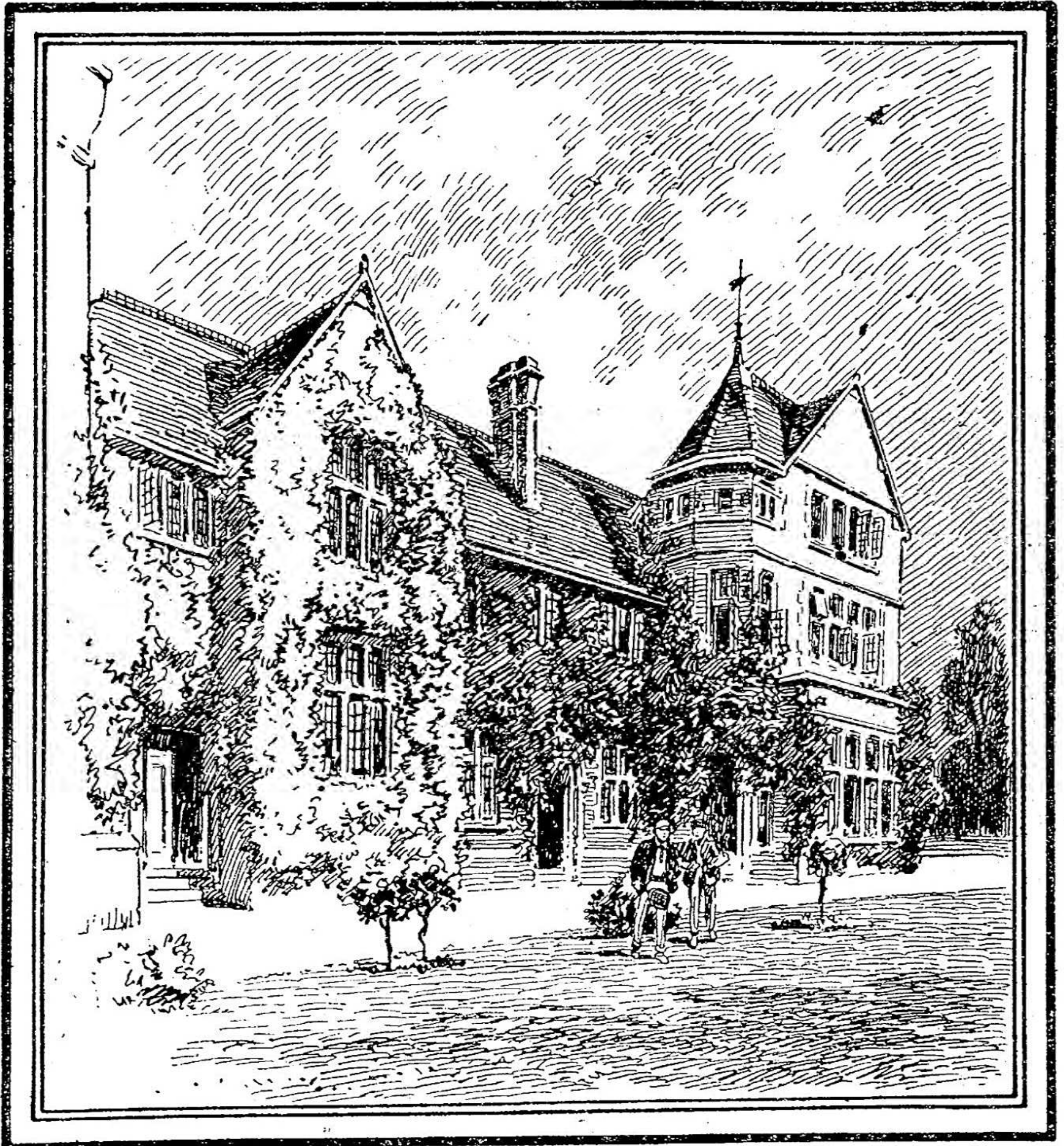


St. Frank's Magazine.

No. 68. Vol. 3.

Edited by R. Pitt.

March 14, 1925



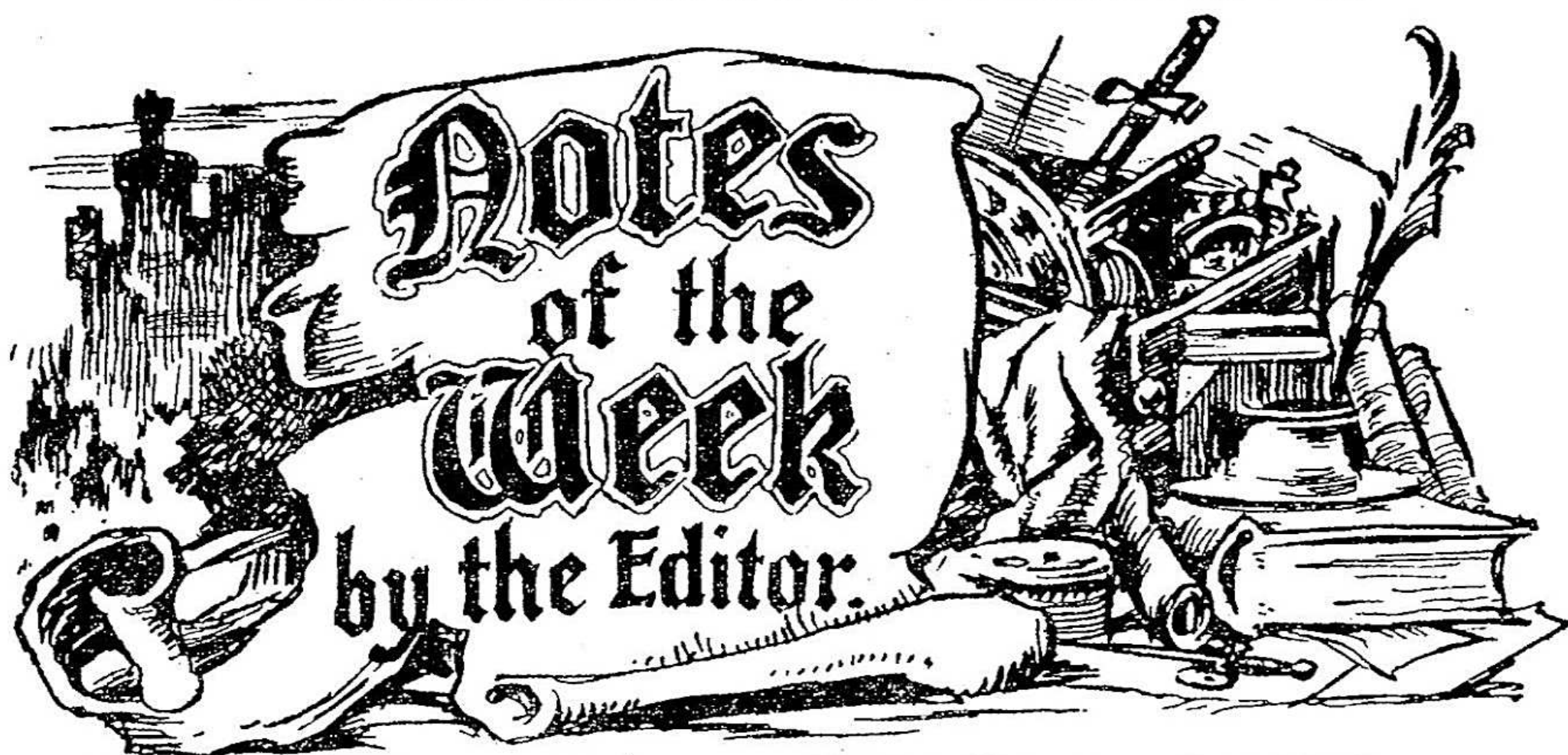
OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS SERIES OF ART SKETCHES.

No. 69. SAFFRON WALDEN SCHOOL.

One of the oldest schools in the country, Saffron Walden dates back to the year 1317. The school is healthily situated and well fitted up. The highest tone of a Public school education is given at very moderate fees. Physical training and box-

ing are compulsory, and music holds a high place in the scheme of training.

The school has several societies and two magazines, "The Yellow Book" and "Fourth Form Magazine."



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

My dear Chums,

At time of writing these notes, lively scenes are being enacted at Moat Hollow School, and as the rebellion against Grimesby Creepe is being widely discussed here at St. Frank's, I feel called upon to make some reference to it.

THE CASE AGAINST GRIMESBY CREEPE.

If the grievances endured for so long by the boys of Moat Hollow could be put right by any other method than the exceedingly drastic one they have adopted, no right-thinking person would sympathise with them in the revolt against authority. Discipline is an essential part of all school training, and it must be upheld. In the rebellion against Grimesby Creepe there is not the slightest shadow of doubt that the boys of Moat Hollow have been driven to it. They were badly treated, kept prisoners within the school walls, and exploited as a cheap form of labour to enrich this bogus schoolmaster. How long this treatment would continue depended on the boys themselves. Thanks to Nipper, they have at last realised the necessity for immediate action.

SEEING IT THROUGH WITH NIPPER.

Were it not for the supreme confidence Nipper has instilled into the boys, who, under his leadership, have risen up against their persecutors, a rebellion at Moat Hollow would have been out of the question. The rebels are now in possession of the upper floor of Moat Hollow. Their position is none too secure against a siege, unless they can obtain help from outside. And that is where we come in. By hook or by crook, we will have to smuggle in food supplies to Nipper and his supporters.

WHO'S WHO OF THE THIRD.

At last I have been able to publish the beginning of the new series of "Who's Who" and Portrait Gallery representing the Third Form. I hope you will not be disappointed because I have omitted giving height and weight figures. It is through trying to get these particulars that this feature has been delayed so long. The trouble with the Third is, that what they lack in inches and avoirdupois they possess in unlimited cheek and fertile imaginations. Naturally, they want to be thought heavier and taller than they really are, and now they know we are up to their little game, the young bounders refuse to submit to all our persuasions to be measured or weighed. But as they do not vary very much in size, it does not really matter if we do leave out their measurements.

GLIDERS, KITES, AND MODEL AEROPLANES.

Those of my chums who, from Willie Handforth upwards, are interested in the science of flying, should not miss the inspiring series of articles on this subject. Dick Goodwin is writing for us in our columns, beginning this week. Some of you who are ambitious to become one day air-mechanics or even aeroplane pilots should take this opportunity of learning the rudiments of flying. And you cannot do better than begin by making model gliders, model aeroplanes, and kites, if you want to gain some real practical experience of the problems appertaining to the conquest of the air. The making and flying of model gliders will not only teach you a great deal about the first laws governing aeroplane-flying, but it can also provide entertaining contests among your friends as to who can design and make a glider to fly the furthest. In next week's article Goodwin will describe how to make various kinds of kites.

Your sincere chum,

REGGIE PITT.



Our Exciting, Thrilling and Startling
New Yarn of Trackett Grim and his
Assistant, Splinter.

By EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH

IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN.

Mr. Theophilus Twiddle has incurred the enmity of the notorious Mah-Jongg-Tong, and Trackett Grim and Splinter are protecting him valiantly from his enemies. All three have been captured by the Tong, and shoved aboard a Chinese junk in the Thames. They are off to China, and things are looking pretty rocky for old Twiddle. The idea is to sacrifice him to Tin-Kan, the hideous Chinese idol of the Tong men. Now you can go ahead.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE CHINA SEAS.

THE day was hot and blistering, and the sun shone down with terrific heat. Trackett Grim and Splinter fairly panted for breath as they lay in their bunks, prisoners in the hands of the Mah-Jongg-Tong.

On the opposite side of the cabin was Mr. Theophilus Twiddle, their client. They were all chained down, and had been chained like this ever since leaving London, over a week ago. The junk had done the journey in record time, and was even now nearing China. With all sails set, the vessel was whizzing over the calm sea, the wind shoving her along in fine style.

"What is to be done, Mr. Grim?" moaned Mr. Twiddle.

"Have no fear!" exclaimed Trackett Grim. "Leave everything to me. I have sworn to protect you, Mr. Twiddle, and you're in no danger. I may appear to be helpless at the moment, but that's nothing. These rotten Chinks haven't got an earthly chance against me!"

They were bold words, coming appropriately from a bold man, but even Trackett Grim's lion heart was thumping like the very dickens. At any moment he expected to be hauled on deck, and slung across the jibboom. These Chinese pirates are a pretty rummy crowd.

But Trackett Grim was not in such a beastly hole as he seemed to be. With a sudden movement he yanked off his chains and leapt to the floor. Ever since the first minute of the voyage he had been cutting at his manacles with a nail file, and at last he had succeeded in getting free.

"Guv'nor!" gasped Splinter, with a sob of joy.

"Shut up, fathead!" hissed Trackett Grim. "Do you want the whole giddy gang down on us?"

At this moment the cabin door opened and a Chinaman entered. With one swoop, Trackett Grim was upon him, and they both crashed to the ground.

CHAPTER X.

JUNK AGAINST JUNK.

THE fight was soon over.

Splinter, watching with gaping eyes and staring breath, saw his amazing master biff the Chinaman right and left until he was a kind of pulp. Then Trackett Grim pushed him into his bunk and chained him up.

"Allee samee, sullender!" wailed the Chinese. "Me givee in!"

"Now see how you like being chained up like a dog in a kennel!" snorted Trackett Grim indignantly. "I'm jolly well going to seize this ship and take her back to London!"

(Continued on page 8.)

OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY

SERIES 2

No. 1. WILLY HANDFORTH.

The recognised leader of the Third, and a great fighter. He is a smaller edition of Edward Oswald, but less aggressive in appearance. He generally wears an innocent, naive expression, and is somehow irresistibly attractive. For his age, Willy is unusually capable, and his supply of cool assurance is colossal. Cheerful, generous, and sunny-tempered, he is a general favourite. But he always has his own way, and possesses an iron determination. Woe betide any fags who refuse to do his bidding!



WILLY
HANDFORTH.



FREDDY MASON.

No. 2. FREDDY MASON.

One of the lesser lights of the Third, but always ready for mischief. Rather plump, with pleasant, chubby features. Freddy thinks he is a carpenter, and he spends much of his time at the bench. Nearly all his pocket-money goes on wood and tools, and such like articles. Unfortunately, his skill is less than his confidence, and long before he has finished one article, he throws it aside, and begins on another. But as it probably pleases him, and nobody else suffers, he is allowed to have his own sweet way.

AND WHO'S WHO



THIRD FORM

No. 3. JACK OWEN (Owen Minor).

One of Willy's right-hand men—the third member of the Co., Chubby Heath being the second. He occupies the same study as Willy and Chubby, and is very useful to his leader, being cheerful, good-natured, and always ready for a scrap. Owen Minor is a pert, cheeky young customer, and is particularly keen on sports. But his main recreation is quarrelling. He fights anybody at a moment's notice, not because he dislikes them, but merely as a matter of enjoyment. His scraps are generally over after a few exchanges.



JACK OWEN
(Owen Minor).

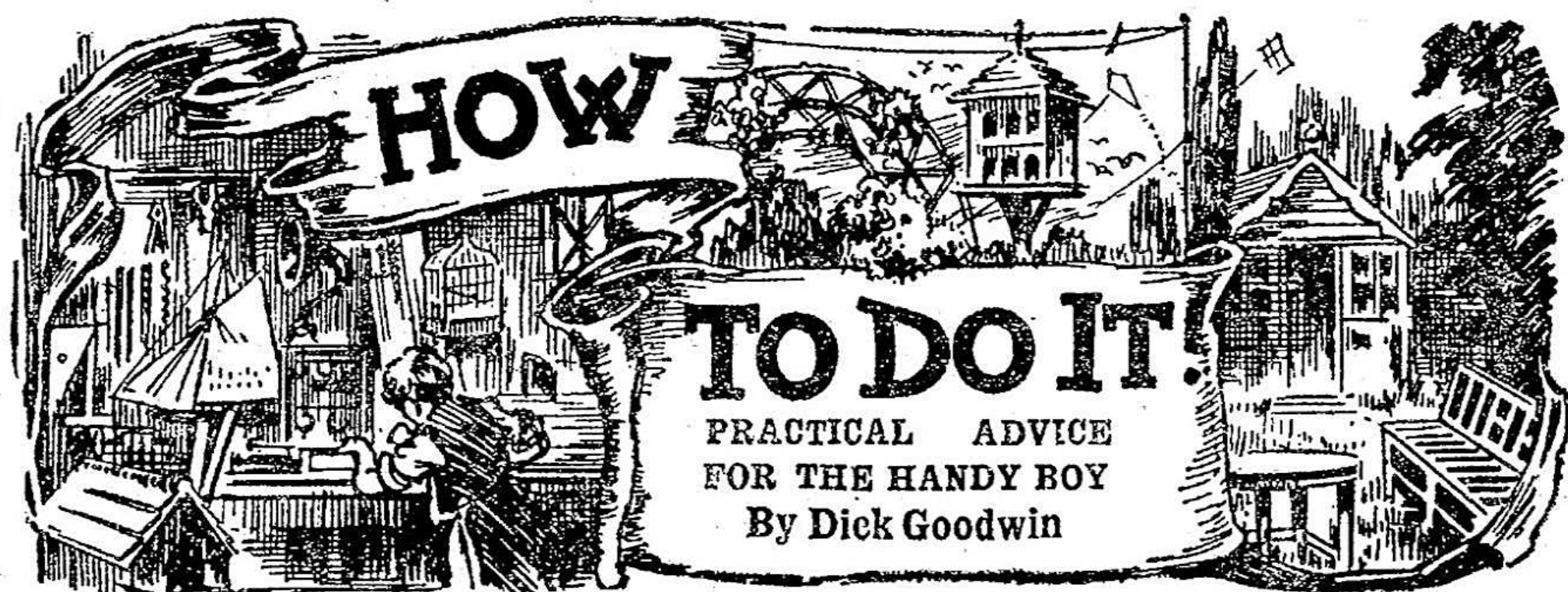
No. 4. PERCY RYDER.

Rather a handsome youngster, but inclined to be a bit sly. Stands well in the Form, but owes this to the fact that he is generally cribbing. Has the reputation of being mean, and when he gets his weekly pocket-money, he spends it all on himself, and never stands treat. If, by a miracle, another fag borrows money from him, his life is made a misery until he repays the sum. Not at all popular in the Third.



PERCY RYDER.

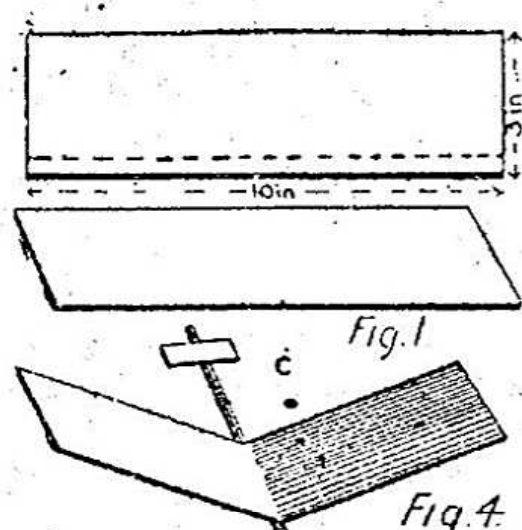
NOTE.—The ages of Third Form boys vary between twelve and fourteen.



Readers who wish to ask questions or make suggestions regarding these articles are invited to write to Dick Goodwin, c/o The Editor, The Nelson Lee Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

PAPER GLIDERS

HOW TO MAKE AND FLY THEM.



can be utilised in designing model aeroplanes. The main points to be considered in making gliders are stability, gliding angle, and straightness of flight. It should be possible to obtain a gliding angle of 1 in 10—that is, a glider should fall 1 ft. in travelling a distance of 10 ft. Several considerations are involved in obtaining this result, the principal one being balance, this will mean some amount of experimenting, as it is impossible to give exact dimensions, as so much depends on the weight of the paper, the formation of the shape, and the method of flying them.

A SIMPLE GLIDER.

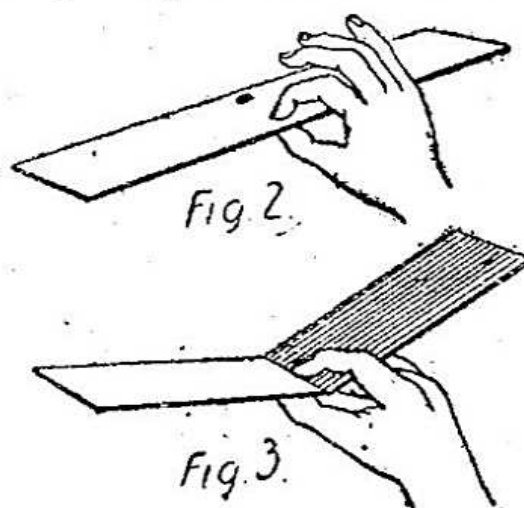
The simplest form of glider can be made from stiff glazed notepaper or foolscap, but it should not be of a heavy make. A convenient size and shape is shown at Fig. 1, the front edge being folded over about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. A small blob of sealing-wax should be dropped on the centre of the front edge, as indicated at C. The method of holding the glider is shown at Fig. 2, it is as well to hold it fairly high. The fingers should

THERE is a lot of fascination in making paper gliders that will glide long distances through the air, and a considerable amount of valuable information can be gained from noting the peculiarities of each particular form and shape which

release the paper quickly, but it should not be propelled in any way, just allowed to glide away. If the fall is abrupt, it is probable that there is too much weight on the front. The effect of bending the planes should now be noted, holding the glider as at Fig. 3, a further experiment can be made by pinning the paper to a thin piece of bamboo, or a long paper spill, but it will be necessary to fit on a tail plane, as at Fig. 4, to give the required stability.

CURVED GLIDERS.

Further experiments can be made with a shaped glider cut out as shown at Fig. 5, and

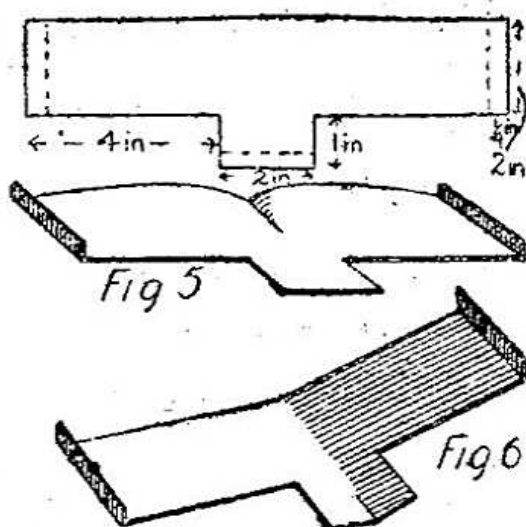


then slightly bent at the back. The necessary weight in front can be given by folding the paper and inserting, if necessary, a short length of fine wire in the fold. This model will give good results if the sides are bent slightly upwards, as at Fig. 6.

Another form of making gliders is to pin the planes to a long stick, either of bamboo or paper, as at Fig. 7. A suitable paper cylinder can be formed by wrapping some gummed paper round a long thin round rod, as at Fig. 8. If the paper is wrapped round several times, it can be cut in halves along the length, as at Fig. 9, and the plane pinned, as shown. There is room for considerable experiment in this direction.

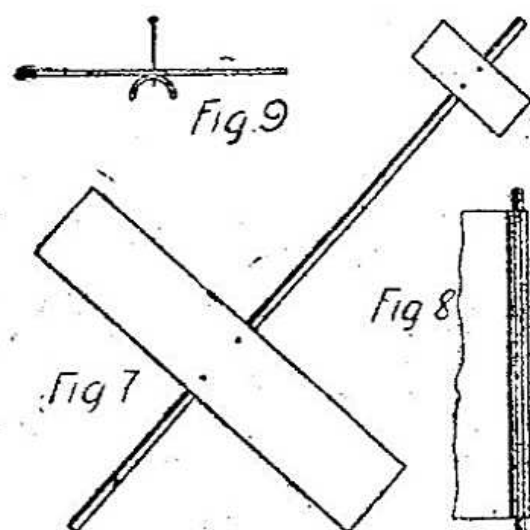
BI-PLANE GLIDERS.

A bi-plane glider forms an interesting object, a simple form is shown at Fig. 10. This glider can be made in several sizes, a suitable proportion is suggested at Fig. 11. The paper should be as stiff as possible, two-sheet Bristol board will do for the large size given in the diagram. For a smaller size, say a total length of 6 in., foolscap sized and varnished will provide a stiff material. The comparison of the straight bi-plane glider with one of similar size, but with the under plane curved as at Fig. 12, is useful for model aeroplane design. The shape can be cut as at Fig. 13, but care should be taken to make the dimensions as closely alike as possible.



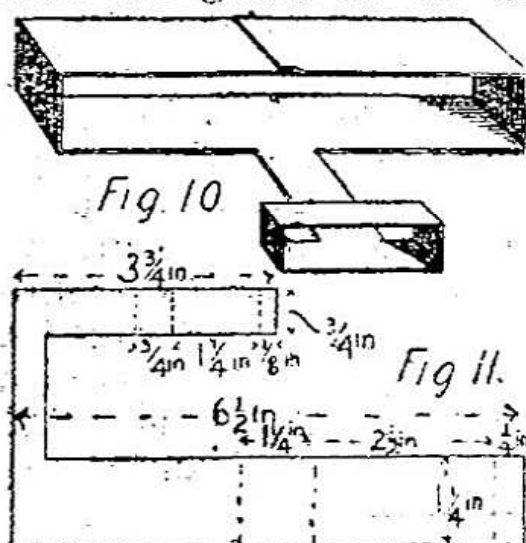
BOX FORM GLIDERS.

A combination of the box kite shape forms a reliable form of glider, and when the planes are arranged as at Fig. 14, it is surprising what good flights can be obtained. It will be found that the weight of one of these gliders is considerably more than the ordinary bi-plane form but the peculiar shape of the compartments enables the glider, when correctly adjusted, to travel good distances. The tail should be attached with bamboo strips or paper cylinders, wire can be used, but it adds too much to the weight to make it worth while.



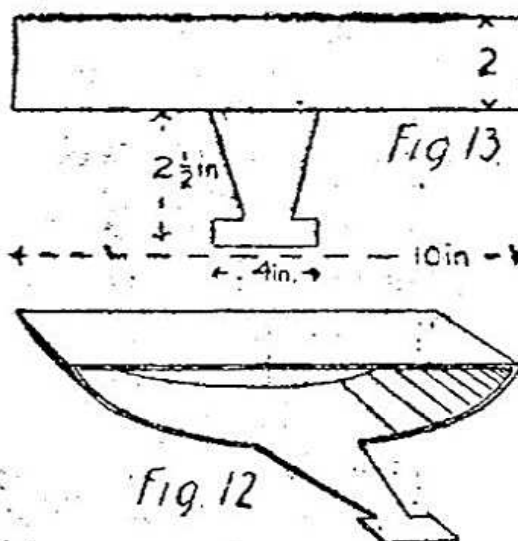
IMITATING BIRD SHAPES.

Particularly interesting gliders can be made by following the general shape of birds when cutting out the form. A good shape to commence with is shown at Fig. 15, the paper can be folded in the centre and cut out as at Fig. 16, but it is generally better to cut out the shape on an odd piece of paper first and then to mark it on the paper from which the glider is to be formed. The planes or wings should be inclined and also curved, and experiments should be carried on until a really effective glider has been made. The best form of balancing weight is formed by three lengths of fine wire soldered together at the front,



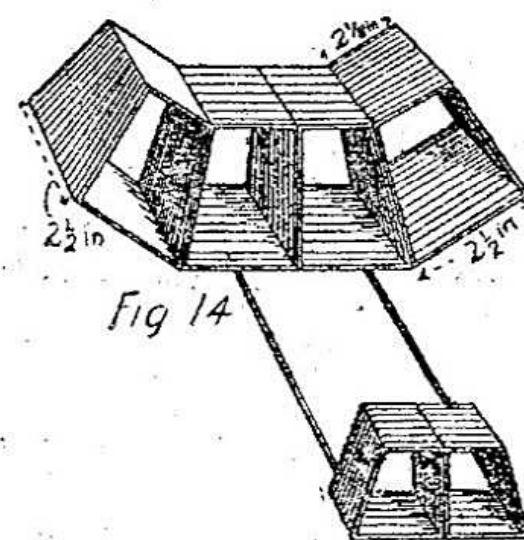
as at Fig. 17, hairpins form excellent material for this portion of the glider.

With the information gained in one particular form and size, a larger one should be made, exact in every detail, and the differences in flight should be carefully noted. It will generally be found that although two gliders of the same shape but different sizes are made, the weight or balance will have to be adjusted to get the same gliding angle.



GLIDER COMPETITIONS.

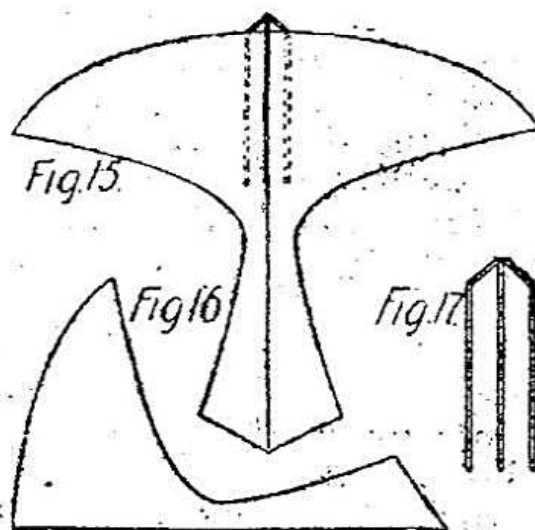
Some excellent competitions can be arranged by glider flights. One method is to provide competitors with



paper and given dimensions of a simple form, as at Fig. 5, allow them to cut and bend the paper, and then fly their model from the same spot in a room. The winner is the one who is able to get the longest flight in time and distance. Another way is for com-

petitors to provide their own model, giving certain limitations as regards size, and then to start off at a given spot. The result should be regarded from time and distance. In this connection it should be noted that straight flights are the result of careful workmanship, for it is possible to obtain long flights in a spiral flight and yet travel only a short distance from the starting point.

Gliders for outdoor flying should be made larger and stronger, and it is advisable to use split bamboo framework covered with silk, the latter can be proofed with rubber solution diluted with petrol, or a special solution can be purchased for proofing the silk.



NEXT WEEK!

KITES AND ALL ABOUT THEM.

(Continued from page 3.)

"Mr. Grim!" pleaded the helpless client. "I'm starving! I haven't eaten a thing since Tuesday week!"

"Can't bother about grub now!" said Trackett Grim curtly. "Besides, you wouldn't eat it, anyhow. This shop-suey stuff is awful, and you can't eat birds' nests and rice and all that tosh. Wait till we get home, and you can go into Lyons' and have a good feed."

A sudden thought struck the famous detective, and he released Splinter. But before he could start on Mr. Theophilus Twiddle a terrific explosion rent the air into a million pieces.

Bash!

It was like a cannon, and the cabin shook so much that Trackett Grim and Splinter wobbled like half-set jellies. Then, with one accord, they dashed up on deck and gazed overboard.

Coming up on the port quarter, and just behind the starboard bow, was a huge Chinese junk, and all its guns were blazing away like Old Harry.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHINN-WAGG-TONG.

IN the nick of time, Trackett Grim dragged Splinter aside.

He had seen a shell coming, and it shot past Splinter's ear, droning like a hornet. It crashed into the charthouse, bored through into the pilot-cabin, and went off like a rocket.

The battle was at its height, and Trackett Grim and Splinter were not even noticed in the general excitement. Their arch-

enemy, the Yellow Terror, was dancing about on the bridge, giving orders for all he was worth. Machine-guns were spluttering away, and artillery was booming.

But it was no good. The other junk came alongside, and they both biffed. The next moment swarms of yellow-faced enemies came rushing on board. And a great cry went up.

"Helpee! The Chinn-Wagg-Tong!" wailed the Mah-Jongg men. "Allee up! Fly for your giddy lives!"

And the Chinamen dropped overboard in thousands, preferring to battle with the sharks, rather than face their deadly enemy, the rival Tong. The Yellow Terror himself grabbed a broken spar and jumped for it.

Trackett Grim and Splinter, staring at the fight, were startled.

"Quick!" rapped out Grim. "Our client!"

"Great pip! I'd forgotten all about him!" gasped Splinter.

They rushed below, and when they got into the cabin they both had a shock. For Mr. Theophilus Twiddle was no longer there. He had been captured by the agents of the Chinn-Wagg-Tong!

CHAPTER XII.

AT THE MERCY OF THE SEA!

TRACKETT GRIM was staggered for a moment, but then, in a flash, he recovered all his marvellous self-possession.

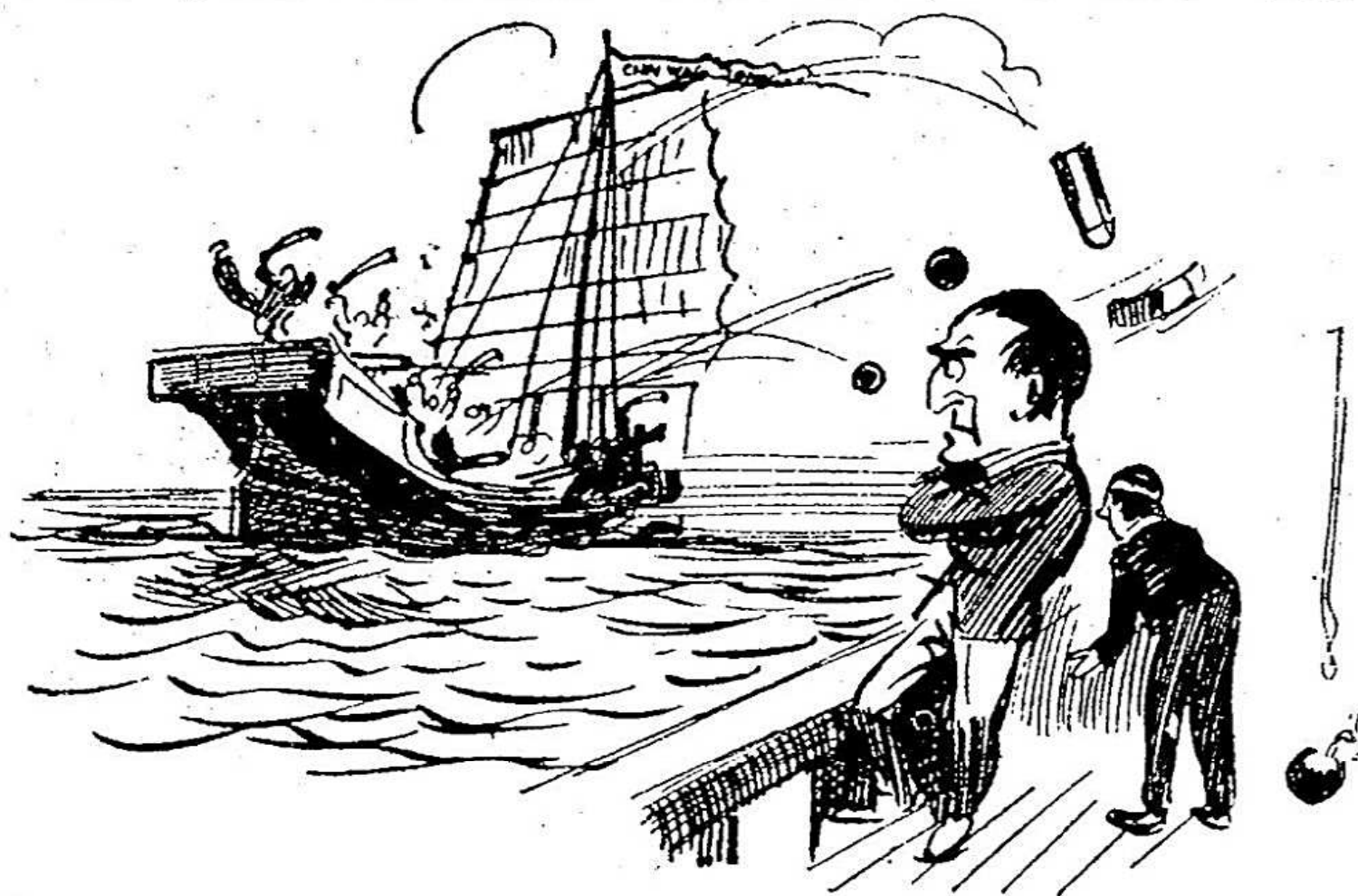
He pounced upon something which lay on the floor. It was a little ivory image—a kind of idol. And upon it, as plainly as anything, were some grubby finger-prints.

"A clue!" cried Trackett Grim triumphantly. "A clue, Splinter! We shall be able to track down the crooks!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Splinter. "But the boat's sinking!"

"Pshaw! A trifle!" scoffed Grim. "Are we to be stopped by a mere shipwreck? Mr. Twiddle has been grabbed by the Chinn-Waggers, because he entered one of their temples and kept silent all the time. All the men of the Chinn-Wagg-Tong must always address their idol when entering the temple. But old Twiddle didn't do it, and so they're going to take their revenge!"

(Continued on page iii of cover.)



Coming up on the port quarter, and just behind the starboard bow, was a huge Chinese junk, and all its guns were blazing away like Old Harry.



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.).

WILLIAM A K. (Bideford): As you think my serials are far-fetched, and that I'm a dotty chump, I'm blessed if I'm going to answer you at all!

HANDFORTH'S ADMIRER (Norbury): Yours is such a nice letter that I'd like to give you a long reply. But Reggie's pinched one of my columns this week.

LEN G. WATERMAN (S. Chingford): If you call Willy and Ena blessings, you must be off your onion! No, Buster Boots is not an American.

ARCHIBALD AUGUSTUS D'ARCH (E.C.): What's the idea of sealing your letter with a blot of blood? And why am I "lucrative"? You're off your rocker!

A BOBBED-HAIRED TOMBOY (Luton): Mind you keep your promise to pay us a visit in the summer! Yes, please DO write again, as I want to give you a long reply.

VIOLET (Burton-on-Trent): Castor oil, twice a day, for warts, isn't much good. If I could only remember it, I could tell you a much better cure. Next time!

ADA M. WOODS (Nottingham): It was about time you dried up, after all those insults, and it serves you right I've only got room for this short answer.

THE TWO I'S (Ilkeston): So I look like a squashed piece of dough with whiskers at the top! You silly fatheads, you've been looking at the wrong photo!

TRACKEM GRIM (Nottingham): No, it's not true that I have "an — ears." But why the dickens couldn't you put the word instead of the dash? Coward!

W. JOHNSON (Folkestone): All right, I'll come over and keep goal for the Milk Tin

Dribblers first chance I get. But you might find a better name for it!

S. SIRRAH (Nottingham): There isn't room enough now in the Mag. for the best stuff, let alone the girls contributing. Why, I get half of mine back!

JACK MAHONEY (Melbourne): The best cure for swelled heads is to school yourself to be modest. If I didn't do that I should get boastful in no time.

INKYOIKS (S. Australia): Although you don't deserve it, I've given everybody your messages. But I haven't delivered that one to myself. Not likely!

D. E. M. (Adelaide): What State does Jerry Dodd come from? He comes from Bathurst, and he said it was in a jolly nice state the last time he saw it.

CLEO MATHEWS (Freemantle, W. Australia): For your first letter, you've written me a peach! And that piece of poetry is not so bad, but it creaks in the joints.

MIFFY (Bolton): What's all this rot about me being centre-forward? You know jolly well I play goalie, which is better. No centre-forward can pass ME.

BERNARD BRENNER (Shoreditch): How do I know how old Nelson Lee is? Do you think I can go and find him, and ask him personal questions like that?

A. J. PARKINSON (Grimsby): That chap who wrote about Indians in the Mag., and said he could teach me something about redskins is mincemeat already!

LOYAL READER (Teddington): If my foolish ways are amusing, my son, perhaps you'll be amused when I'm fool enough to ignore your fatheaded letter!

AN OLD FRIEND (Liverpool): It's the first time I knew that an old friend started his letter, "My Dear Fathead"!

PETER PAN (Southport): First you say you don't like your age at all, and then you say that when people are your age they have a lovely time. What next?

JACK (Hulme): In your P.S. you say you're sorry I'm an ass. Oh, are you? Well, you're a blithering idiot, and if you think I'm sorry, you're wrong!

BUMPER BILL (Arnold): I haven't got the brains of a donkey, eh? I should jolly well hope not! I've got the brains that you'd like to have!

TOM MOGGY (East Finchley): I think your parents are very thoughtless. Fancy call-

ing you Tom, when your surname was Moggy! A bit thick, eh?

CYNTHIA (Gravesend): No wonder you wondered if I would wade through your letter. But you called it tosh yourself, so don't blame me!

ARC (Tilehurst): I don't know whether you call that stuff writing on the piece of paper you sent me, but, if so, send the key to decipher it.

SYLVIA (Liverpool): If Irene had her hair shingled I should have a fit. And your hope that I don't object to you calling me Ned is all in vain. I do!

INTERESTED (Peckham): So you had to close your letter because the guv'nor came up? I hope he copped you at it and gave you the sack!

A VERY CURIOUS READER (Shepton Mallet): My hat! It's the first time I've known a chap to be so candid! You're not merely curious—you're a freak!

CHARLES F. ONGLEY (Maritzburg): Your handwriting isn't so bad, in spite of your sore finger. I think Arc, just above, has got all his fingers sore.

LYNN ONGLEY (Maritzburg): What's the good of asking me if I'm going to show the Third Form? In the Gallery, you mean? If it's left to me—No!

DUMKINS & LUFFEY (Brackley): You're lumped together, see? This is what you get for sending me pins, and telling me to sit on them!

J. PRANGLE (Arundel): Yes, if I ever come to Arundel, please have that ambulance ready. But when it drives to hospital you'll be the one inside!

GEORGE RUDGE (Plymouth): What do you mean, telling me to wash myself? Do you think I'm like you, all over ink? Anyhow, that letter of yours is!

SUSAN JANE (Edinburgh): After reading a page of your letter, I had awful pains, and got billious, and chucked the rest of it in the fire. Spoofer!

M. F. A. (Glasgow): You sign yourself M.F.A. and then ask me to put your full name—Matthew Fox Anderson. Sorry, old man—there's no space left!

C. T. MITCHELL (Leyton): Of course I can tell your character by your handwriting. But what's the use? It's a nice letter, and we don't want to quarrel, do we?

GEORGE KLOSS (Bethnal Green): I've read your letter twice, and can't find anything to answer. Oh, wait a minute! Don't call me Oswald!

ARTHUR, AUB & BILL (Earlsfield): I told Pitt that you called him a feeble-minded rabbit, and the ass didn't mind a bit! Just laughed! I believe you're right!

A YORKE & C. THORPE (Willesden): Trying to wangle two separate replies, eh? Well, it hasn't worked, my beauties! And if you think you're fagged, what about me?

TED.

MY ADVENTURES WITH HIPPOPOTAMI

By LORD DORRIMORE

3.—A PERILOUS ADVENTURE.

MY third adventure with hippos was very exciting. It was in the Congo district, a part of Africa where these monsters abound. During a day's steaming on this river and its tributaries one may see several hundreds, often in herds, but now and then a single one may be met with. And my advice to would-be hippo hunters is: Go for a herd, and let lonely individuals severely alone.

For days I had watched a big bull, and I determined to get him. As we approached him something startled him, and he faced about to meet us. I got in a shot, and in a rage he charged us, and would have trampled on me but for a second shot, which checked him. One of my native bearers, scared to death, lost all power to move, and fell down in front of the big bull. The hippo opened its cavern of a mouth, gripped the "boy," and plunged into the river. I put two more shots into its carcase as it disappeared under the water, taking the native with it.

When we reached the spot the water was red with blood, but there was no sign of boy or beast. After a while, however, the hippo came up near the bank for air, and received another cartridge as it again dived.

Rather downcast, I sought the camp. The first thing I saw was the missing boy, as happy as ever he had been, and apparently enjoying my embarrassment. He told me that the brute got hold of him by the coat, which was an old one and gave way, thus releasing him, and he was carried off by the swift current out of danger. To his great delight, I gave him a good coat of my own, and he seemed to regard it as more than sufficient compensation for his perilous adventure.

This bull was a five-tonner, and its tusks were nearly a yard long. There was great rejoicing among the natives over the death of this monster, and music and dancing—and drinking—were kept up all night and into the next day.

"THE INVISIBLE GRIP!"

(Continued from page 29.)

Scrambling over this with the silence and speed of a cat, he rapidly made his way to the library window, which he knew overlooked the lawn at the rear. And, once arrived there, he took up the position he had occupied on his former visit, and applied his eyes to the aperture beneath the blind.

As he had anticipated, Kerner was within the apartment, pacing the carpet in a restless manner, and continually pausing to listen alertly. As Nipper observed these tactics, he grinned to himself contentedly, for he guessed that Kerner was momentarily expecting a visitor.

Neither was he mistaken, for within seven or eight minutes a second man joined the financier in the library. Nipper recognised him at once as one of Kerner's henchmen—a fellow named Berger—and he faced

Kerner with an eager, satisfied expression on his face.

"It's all right, boss, I've located Professor Zingrave and his mysterious pal!" he exclaimed quickly. "I had a deuce of a job, but I ran them to earth at last."

Kerner rubbed his hands together with pleasure.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Very good indeed, Berger. You have done exceedingly well! Where are this precious pair hiding, may I ask—"

Nipper, in the act of peering beneath the blind, and listening intently, suddenly felt his blood run cold.

For at that moment a heavy hand descended upon his shoulder in the most unexpected manner, and a hissing voice sounded in his ears.

Nipper twirled round upon the instant, and found himself gazing at a sinister-looking Chinaman!

(To be continued.)

"THE YELLOW TERROR!"

(Continued from page 8.)

"But where's he gone to, sir?" asked Splinter breathlessly.

Trackett Grim gazed at the little ebony idol.

"To a place called Zam-Buk-Too, in the heart of China!" he said tensely. "This idol has got the name of the shopkeeper on the base of it. We can't go wrong, Splinter! Come!"

They were only just in time, for the junk sank beneath their feet as they reached the deck. They were too late to get on the

other vessel, for it was already steaming away at full speed. Our famous pair were left alone in the Chinese Ocean, at the mercy of the sharks!

And suddenly Splinter gave a yell and vanished beneath the surface. Trackett Grim came to a standstill, and stood there staring with horror. What was it that had dragged Splinter down?

— — —

Next week Trackett Grim gets fairly on the trail, and if you want to read some real detective stuff, with tons of thrills, order your copy in advance.—E. O. H.

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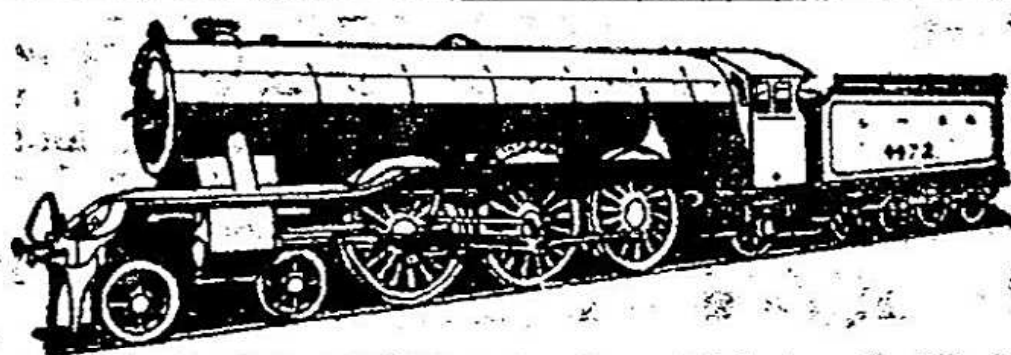
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