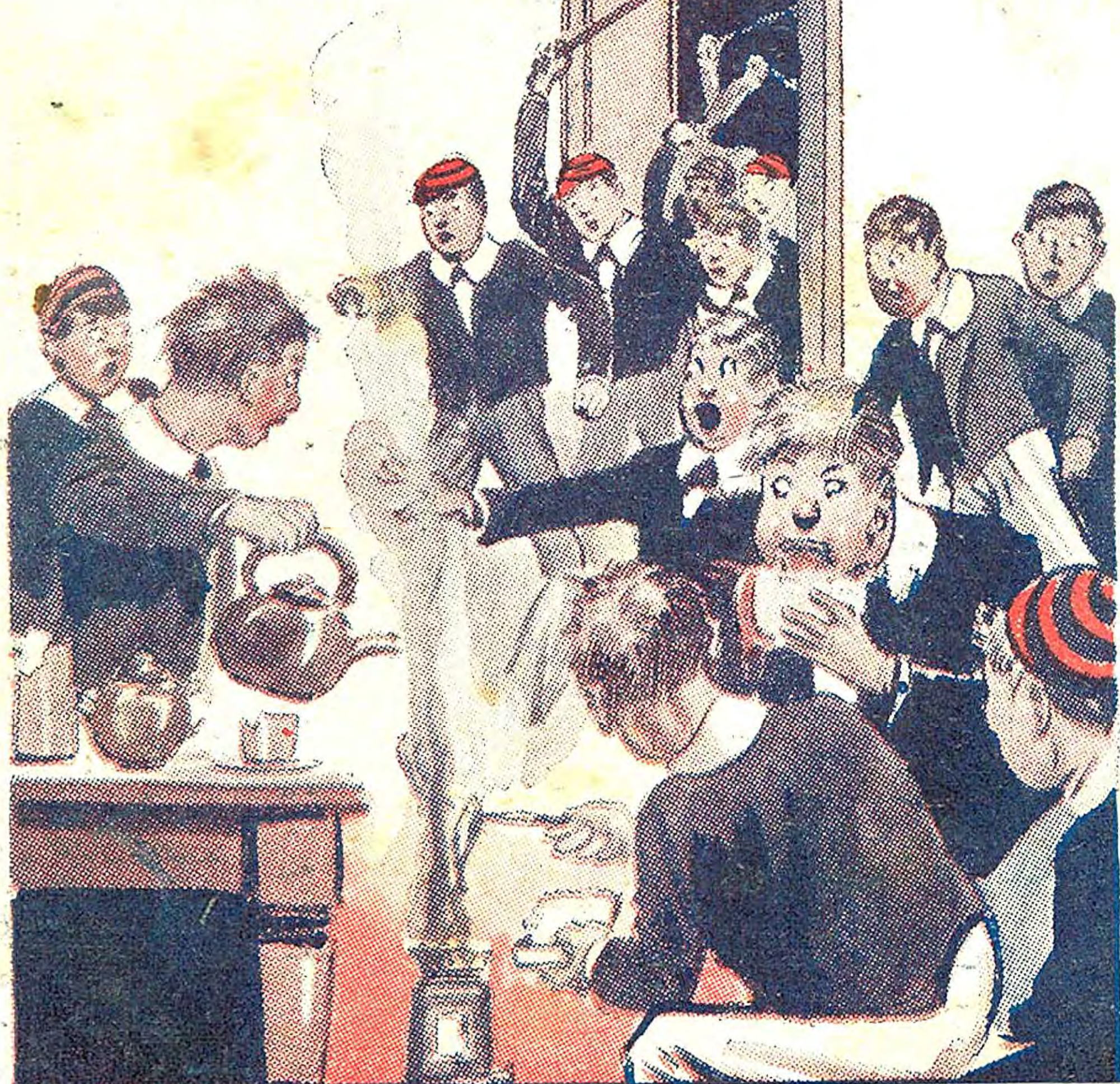


THE BATTLE OF THE FAGS!

The NELSON LEE

LIBRARY
And St Frank's
Magazine.

20



Willy Handforth burst in, followed by his picked storm-troops.

FROM THIS WEEK'S GREAT STORY:—

OUT FOR THEIR COLOURS;

or, The Fighting Fags of St. Frank's!



They placed themselves round Nipper in a small circle. Then they commenced punching him—not with any intention of knocking him out, but short, sharp jabs on the muscles of his arms, his thighs and his calves.



OUT FOR THEIR COLOURS;

—or,—

The Fighting Fags of St. Frank's!

Nipper, Dodd and Kahn, the three brilliant young cricketers of the Fourth, having lately proved themselves worthy of inclusion in the St. Frank's First Eleven in place of three seniors who have quarrelled with Fenton, the school captain, are to be given the chance of winning their colours in the match against Redcliffe, described in this week's story. But the disgruntled seniors plot to prevent these Fourth Formers from taking part in the match. The dispute between the seniors and Fenton has unfortunately developed into a feud between the Ancient and Modern Houses, and this feud has spread throughout the whole school, and a fierce battle between the rival fags of both houses is one of the lively scenes in the story you are about to read.

THE EDITOR.

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

CHAPTER I.

TRouble IN THE TRIANGLE.

DR. MALCOLM STAFFORD, the headmaster of St. Frank's, stood at the open window of his study, gazing thoughtfully out upon the old Triangle.

It was a dull May morning, rather chilly and depressing, and not at all like approaching summer. There was a high wind, too, and it was sweeping the thick foliage of the chestnut-trees boisterously.

It was quite early—before breakfast, in fact.

With a slight shiver, the Head closed the window, and still continued to look out. There was a worried frown upon his face. It grew even more worried as he observed three juniors pounce suddenly upon another of their kind, and drag him forcibly behind the gymnasium. The Head was left to imagine what was taking place beyond his gaze.

Less than a minute later, two tall Sixth-Formers left the Modern House and walked towards the cloisters. There were three Ancient House seniors on the same pathway. Instead of passing, the Sixth-Formers deliberately walked aside, and avoided the others as though they were tainted.

"A pity—a great pity!" murmured the Head.

He turned as the door opened, and Nelson Lee entered.

"Good morning, Mr. Lee," said Dr. Stafford. "I have just been looking out of the window, and I see plenty to worry me. The boys appear to be more antagonistic than ever."

"Good morning, Dr. Stafford," said Nelson Lee. "Yes, I am afraid the feeling is growing even more bitter, and I hardly know what to advise to quell the threatened eruption."

"You think, then, that there will be some grave trouble?"

"I don't like to sound pessimistic, but there is every indication that the bad feel-

ing will soon come to a head," said Lee. "We are doing everything possible to make the boys realise the futility of this animosity. But it seems to be of very little use."

The fact of the matter was the old school was in a peculiar state. Not only were the juniors against one another, but even the Fifth and Sixth had grown to hate their rivals like poison.

Purely on a question of principle, no Ancient House senior would demean himself by addressing a word to a Modern House man. It had gone so far that they wouldn't even look at one another.

And it had all started from such a small beginning!

A disagreement over the first eleven cricket—the dropping of Sinclair by Fenton. That was the original beginning. Then Carlile and Mills had refused to play unless Sinclair was reinstated.

But, instead of giving in, Fenton remained firm, and put Junior players in his team to make up the lost strength. Arguments, quarrels, and even fights had followed. And gradually the seniors had grown bitter and more bitter, until there was a feeling of deadly hatred throughout the entire school.

The Fourth Form had come into line, and this animosity was interfering with discipline, with games, with everything else. And the Head was constantly living in dread of a sudden violent upheaval.

It was hardly to be wondered at. It was practically unsafe for anybody to go about alone. There were always some rivals waiting in readiness to commit some petty act of violence. It was becoming the recognised "thing" to scalp every rival on sight.

Even at this early hour of the morning there was plenty of activity.

Following a swift, deadly scrap between two opposing parties of Fourth-Formers, Chambers, of the Fifth, emerged from the Ancient House. He was waiting for Phillips and Bryant. They had decided to go over to the playing fields before breakfast.

Chambers strolled down the steps, and paused for a moment to nod good morning to Reginald Pitt and Nipper and Jack Grey, of the Fourth.

"Looks like rain," said Chambers.

"Shouldn't be surprised," replied Nipper. "Not that it matters much to-day. There's only practice. All the same, we'd like the weather to keep fine for the Redcliffe match. We whacked them on their own ground, and we want to repeat the performance at home."

"You'll do it all right," said Chambers. "The First Eleven's in good shape now, thanks to Browne. You can't get away from it, the Fifth has shown St. Frank's what to do!"

Cuthbert Chambers strolled off, feeling that he had delivered a telling shot. He overlooked the fact that William Napoleon Browne was a new fellow that term, and that the Fifth had had nothing to do with it. If he had said that Browne had shown them the way, he would have been correct.

Chambers got as far as the fountain when he paused. He had been thinking, and had walked on unwarily. Almost before he knew it, he saw Grayson and Shaw and Hitchen in front of him. They were Fifth-Formers, too—but they happened to belong to the Modern House.

Chambers turned aside and raised his nose in the air.

"Supercilious cad!" said Grayson contemptuously.

"Ignore him!" sniffed Shaw.

"He's only a fool, anyhow!" remarked Hitchen.

If Chambers had been wise, instead of several kinds of an ass, he would have realised that a clear course of aloofness was indicated here. It was distinctly up to him to ignore these insulting remarks. But he didn't ignore them. He glared at the other Fifth-Formers angrily.

"Referring to me?" he demanded.

"Nerve!" said Shaw. "He's talking to us now—this thing! This Ancient House piece of dirt!"

PORTRAIT GALLERY AND WHO'S WHO. Third Series—Fifth Form.

NOTE.—The average age of Fifth Form boys is 17.



No. 9.—Harold Grayson.

The leader of everything unpleasant in the Fifth. A thoroughly detestable fellow, with a habit of bullying all boys much smaller than himself. A rotter, and capable of any amount of malicious mischief.

"You miserable rotters!" roared Chambers, who was inclined to be hot-tempered. "You're only insulting me because you're three to one! A fine lot of sportsmen—I don't think! What about the way you tried to keep those juniors away from the Helmford match, Grayson, you hooligan? The school's still talking about it!"

Grayson scowled. He didn't like to be reminded of that incident.

"Are we going to stand this?" he asked, turning to his companions. "The fountain's near by! Ready? On him!"

CHAPTER II.

THE HEAD'S ANXIETY.



S PLASH!

Cuthbert Chambers decorated the fountain pool exactly five seconds later. He splashed about in the water desperately, and crawled out like a drowned rat. And Grayson & Co. laughed uproariously. An admiring crowd of fags stood round, offering Chambers all sorts of unnecessary advice.

Chambers was speechless with fury. He had put on a new suit that morning, and he had come out especially to let everybody see it. Being a bit of a swanker, he could never resist these little temptations. And now the suit was not fit to be worn again.

"That's the way we treat Ancient House rubbish!" said Grayson, deliberately dusting his hands in the air. "Come on! We'd better go in and wash ourselves. We've handled that cad, and we're all dirty."

They walked off rather rapidly. In fact, they broke into a run and fled. For Browne, accompanied by six other Ancient House Fifth-Formers, were hurrying upon the scene to exact revenge. Unfortunately, they were too late.

"Alas, Brother Chambers, it appears that we are behind time," said Browne regretfully. "You are distinctly in the soup—or, to be more exact, you have just got out of it. This is a sad, sad occurrence. Brother Stevens, be good enough to place a black mark against Grayson's name."

"That's a fat lot of consolation to me!" said Chambers, with chattering teeth. "Look at my suit!"

"Pray do not ask these painful questions," said Browne. "To look at your suit, Brother Chambers, is to suffer agony. Surely you would not torture us?"

Chambers rushed indoors to change, vowing vengeance upon Grayson, the Modern House in general, and everybody connected with it.

And all this had been witnessed by both the headmaster and by Nelson Lee. They had seen the entire programme. And the Head was quite haggard with anxiety.

"What can be done, Mr. Lee?" he asked again and again. "We cannot punish these

Fifth-Form boys as though they were mere infants. Last term such an occurrence would have been unthinkable. No Fifth-Form boys would have demeaned themselves by such outrageous horse-play!"

"They would have behaved themselves in public, at all events," agreed Nelson Lee. "You see, doctor, when this sort of bitter feeling creeps into a school, it leads to many incidents which could not usually occur. The boys—seniors and juniors alike—lose all sense of proportion, and simply let themselves go, regardless of the consequences. It is largely a matter of temper. At present the temper of the entire school is on edge. The slightest thing is sufficient to precipitate a scene of violence."

"But what is the remedy?" asked Dr. Stafford.

"In our case, I am afraid there is none," replied Lee. "If it were possible to divide our school into four or five Houses, there would be no such anxiety."

"I understand. Quite so," said the Head, nodding. "I often wish, Mr. Lee, that we had four or five Houses here. Greatly as I love St. Frank's, I feel that our school is designed wrongly. Were it more like Eton or the other great public schools, it would be better."

"I am inclined to agree with you."

"The ideal, of course, would be to have a House entirely for school, and several Houses to board the boys," continued Dr. Stafford, with a sigh. "Then there could be none of these serious outbreaks of ill-feeling. If vicious rivalry of this kind ever broke out, it could be easily checked, for there would never be more than two Houses involved. And that, of course, would mean only a small section of the school. But we are talking idly. We are wasting time."

"The difficulty at St. Frank's is that the entire school is engaged in the combat," said Nelson Lee. "If the necessary spark should be applied, I fear to think what would happen."

"That's just it—that's just it!" interrupted the Head. "We are living on the top of a mine, Mr. Lee; at any moment it may blow up. Of what use is our authority when the boys get sufficiently out of hand? We have had the same trouble before, and I fear we shall have it again. Really, I must write to the Governors, and urge them to hurry on the alterations."

Nelson Lee smiled.

"Alterations?" he repeated.

"There is some talk of making certain structural improvements during the summer vacation," replied the Head. "It is proposed to cut my own House away from the other part of the school, and make several other rather serious alterations. A precaution, I fancy, in case of fire. I don't know precisely what the plans are, but the governors are giving them serious consideration. But that is not dealing with our problem."

"I am afraid we can do nothing except

leave it to the boys' own common sense," said Nelson Lee. "I shall be very surprised if they overstep the mark seriously."

But when he left Dr. Stafford, the Head was just as worried as ever.

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTERY OF THE RAJAH.



WHEN Nelson Lee got to his study, he found Nipper awaiting him.

"Morning, guv'nor!" said Nipper cheerily. "I thought I'd drop in before breakfast

to ask if there's any fresh news."

"Concerning the rajah?"

"Of course, sir!"

"There is no news at all, Nipper," replied Lee. "In fact, I've had very little time for making inquiries. I shall concentrate on the affair now, but if you are proposing that you should help me, I am afraid I must turn you down."

Nipper made a grimace.

"Then you haven't probed the mystery at all?" he asked.

"Not at all," agreed Lee. "You are thinking me a slowcoach, eh? Well, Nipper, after what happened the other night, I am convinced that caution is the watchword. We must not take any chances. Those Indians are dangerous men."

"I should think they are!" agreed Nipper. "They nearly knifed us, anyhow!"

Nipper was referring to an incident which had occurred the previous week. He and his master had gone down into the old quarry tunnels, and had found one of the caverns occupied by some strange Indians. Not only this, but there were scientific instruments there—a kind of chemical laboratory, an electrical furnace, and numerous other remarkable things.

The most interesting fact of all, however, was that one of the Indians had crept up behind them in a narrow tunnel, and had attempted to drive a knife into Nelson Lee's back.

They had escaped, and Lee was quite sure that the Indians had not discovered the identity of the two intruders. But who were these Hindu strangers? And what could they be doing in the old, disused quarry?

Nipper remembered that those caverns had been used by crooks on several occasions, and he wasn't surprised. For they provided secrecy and accommodation for any amount of underhand work. Safely installed there, a whole gang could operate without exciting the slightest suspicion.

But these mysterious Indians did not seem to be a criminal gang.

For, strangely enough, the Head's own guest was associated with them! This guest was the Rajah of Kurpana—a pure-caste

Indian of the finest blood. Goolah Kahn was the elder brother of Hussi Kahn, of the Fourth, and this alone gave him a high standing in the school. He was, furthermore, an Oxford Blue, and one of the finest amateur cricketers of his age.

According to his own statements, he was staying at St. Frank's because it was quiet, and because he was anxious to coach the school cricket. Being an Old Boy, he naturally took a great interest in St. Frank's. And he was thoroughly welcome under the Head's roof.

The Head himself had not the slightest inkling of his night activities in the mysterious cavern.

Indeed it is possible that Nelson Lee might have known nothing about it but for the sharp eyes of Handforth minor, of the Third. This keen youngster, having climbed to the topmost branch of a tree in Bellton Wood—in order to capture his pet monkey—had found himself looking down into one of the clearings.

And there, to his astonishment, he had seen several Indians entering the secret opening of a tunnel. What was more to the point, Willy had told Nipper all about it. Nipper, in turn, had lost no time in informing Lee, and investigations had resulted.

But for Willy's accidental glimpse of the Indians, Goolah Kahn's strange activities might never have been discovered.

Nelson Lee hesitated to take open action—mainly on account of the rajah's high position. A scandal of any sort would have been dangerous. Lee found it necessary to act with extreme caution. And he was not convinced that the young rajah was engaged in anything criminal.

After all, the cavern was anybody's property, and if this Indian prince cared to bring some of his countrymen over, and keep their presence a secret, it was his own concern. But an attempt had been made on Lee's life, and he now had a personal interest in the entire affair.

"I can't make it out about the rajah, sir," said Nipper. "He's such a thoroughly decent chap. It seems impossible that he can be in league with those murderers."

"If the man who attempted to stab me had been an Englishman, the case would be different," said Nelson Lee. "But I cannot help feeling that these Indians are fanatics. In what direction their fanaticism leads them I cannot say. For that man to stab me was not an attempted crime in the accepted sense. These Orientals are strange people to deal with, and killing is regarded lightly by them."

"I shouldn't regard it lightly, guv'nor, if you got done in!" said Nipper grimly. "In fact, I don't like you continuing this business at all!"

"I take it, then, that my investigations do not carry the seal of your approval?" asked Nelson Lee, with twinkling eyes.

"Oh, look here, guv'nor——"

"But I appreciate your point, Nipper, and you needn't be in the least alarmed," smiled the detective. "Now that I know the character of these men I shall act accordingly. Surely you can trust me to look after myself?"

Nipper considered the point.

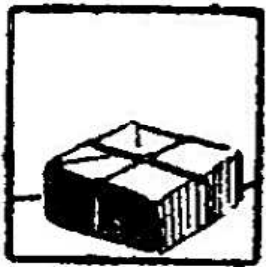
"I'm not so sure, gov'nor," he replied slowly. "You're inclined to take too many risks—and I think you ought to have me with you."

"Be off, young 'un!" said Nelson Lee, with a wave of his hand. "There goes the breakfast-bell—and if you don't hurry you'll be left out, or you'll find the dish empty."

"Then I'd better go and save my bacon, sir," said Nipper briskly.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PACKAGE.



NELSON LEE was in no hurry to go to his own breakfast. He lit his pipe, picked up his correspondence, and looked it over. There was a small package which attracted

his attention.

"Those razor-blades, possibly," he murmured.

Having looked at one or two letters, he took the parcel, snipped through the string with his scissors, and then removed the outer wrapping. There was nothing particularly strange about that little parcel; but suddenly Nelson Lee paused in his operations, and a keen expression entered his eyes.

He looked sharply at the wrappings in his hand. The outer covering was nearly off, and inside there was another wrapping—of white paper this time. He raised his hands, and sniffed. He could detect nothing suspicious. But it seemed to him that he had caught a faint, intangible whiff of some curious odour as he removed the outer wrapping.

"Fancy, I suppose," he told himself. "I'm getting suspicious of everything."

He smiled slightly, removed the white paper, and found that a small cardboard box was just inside. It was quite an ordinary-looking box, and a printed card lay on top.

It bore the name and address of a well-known firm of jewellers in the West End of London. And written across it were the words: "For your approval. If unsatisfactory, kindly return."

"Another of those trade dodges, by the look of it," muttered Lee. "At the same time, I'm not entirely satisfied—"

Again he broke off, and sniffed. Peculiar, how that intangible odour came to him—a kind of Oriental, incense-like perfume. Unquestionably, it was coming from the package.

Lee removed the lid of the cardboard box, and now found that some silken wrapping was before his eyes. He removed this wrapping, and finally a neat little silver automatic lighter was revealed.

"Nothing very harmless here!" chuckled Lee. "Undoubtedly, my suspicions were quite unfounded."

He turned the lighter over in his hand. He generally used matches, but was not averse to a good spirit-lighter if it worked properly. It was a handsome little thing, beautifully engraved, and fit for the pocket of a nobleman.

The detective was about to examine the lighter further, when he paused. For the third time he sniffed. This time his eyes shone with a keen, hard light. And he put the lighter close to his nose, and then suddenly placed it on the table.

"Oh!" he said slowly.

Leaving the table, he went to a corner of the room, and produced a pair of thick leather motoring-gloves. Donning these, he picked up the lighter again and walked to the window. Then, very cautiously, he pressed the little silver knob—but took care that the lid of the automatic lighter did not open.

He started.

Then, releasing the catch, he looked sharply at the thumb of his left-hand glove.

"Ah!" he ejaculated tensely. "Good heavens!"

Without wasting a second, he left the study, and hurried along the passages until he came to his own laboratory. Swiftly he applied tests to a tiny, infinitesimal drop of moisture which was revealed on the glove thumb.

And within five minutes he knew the truth.

"The reaction is unmistakable," he told himself. "Upon my soul, what a devilish contrivance! Poison—deadly poison!"

He turned rather pale at his narrow escape.

But for his acute sense of smell, and his natural suspicions on any object that arrived through the post unheralded, he might now have been lying twisted and contorted on the floor of his study.

With extreme care, he now made a thorough examination of the lighter.

It was a genuine article—there was nothing faked about it except in one detail. Close against the silver catch—a knob which had to be pressed in by the thumb—was an almost invisible spike. It was not revealed, indeed, until the closest scrutiny was given to it.

The action was quite simple. Upon pressing the catch, the silver knob naturally went in, but the spike, projecting, would just as naturally enter the thumb of anybody who operated the catch.

And that spike had been coated with one of the deadliest poisons known to science. One scratch, and no power on earth could

have saved Lee from death within thirty-five seconds!

The glove and the lighter he locked up in a small safe, and then returned to his study. He was looking grim.

"They won't catch me with those devices!" he murmured. "An old trick, but one that might easily have proved fatal. I can see that I must be on the alert every minute of the day—and probably of the night, too!"

He sat there, thinking of those Indians in the cavern, and of the man who had attempted to stab him in the back. He was convinced that this "present" had been sent through the post by those mysterious Orientals. And he now knew, beyond all doubt, that they were aware of the identity of the man who had penetrated their recesses.

These enemies were deadly. At all costs, it seemed, they were determined to get rid of Nelson Lee.

But did Goolah Kahn know of this base attempt upon his life? Was the Rajah of Kurpana a party to this atrocious would-be crime.

For the life of him, Nelson Lee could not bring himself to think so.

CHAPTER V.

READY FOR THE REDCLIFFE MATCH.



"LOOKS nice, doesn't it?" said Tommy Watson enthusiastically.

He and Nipper and Tregellis-West were standing in front of the notice-board in the Ancient House lobby. They were looking at the list of names for the First Eleven. It was just the same as in two previous matches—a team which had won decisively.

On the morrow the Redcliffe College First Eleven was coming over to St. Frank's, and the St. Frank's stalwarts who were to meet them were as follows: Fenton, Morrow, Wilson, Rees, Conroy major, Browne, Stevens, Hodder, Nipper, Kahn, Dodd.

"It's fine to see your name down on the list, Nipper old boy," said Sir Montie, with an approving nod. "An' this is the decidin' match, begad! If you an' Dodd an' Kahn do as well in this as you have done in the others, you'll get your colours."

"That'll be fine, won't it?" smiled Nipper. "Unless we go right off form, and I don't anticipate anything of that sort, I really believe we shall win our First Eleven caps."

"I'm a bit worried about the weather, though," said Tommy, glancing out of the open doorway. "It's fearfully dull this

afternoon, and I don't like the feel of the wind. Those clouds——"

"It's no good worrying about the weather," interrupted Nipper. "We've got to take it as it comes. Besides, the glass is going up, so it'll probably be fine by to-morrow. What about tea?"

Afternoon lessons were over now, and a fair amount of peace reigned in the school. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that all the fellows were sticking in their own Houses.

There was no disruption among any of the Ancient House fellows, or any of the Modern House boys. It was only when these two rival factors met that friction took place. But it was getting positively dangerous for any senior or junior to venture out unaccompanied.

The Modern House juniors had taken to laying ambushes, and it was only natural, perhaps, that the Ancient House should retaliate with similar devices. It must be admitted, with regret, that the Fourth Form at least was rather enjoying the feud.

In Study C, Nipper & Co. sat down to a welcome tea.

And it had only just commenced when Handforth & Co. came in. They were all looking flustered and hot. Apparently an argument had been taking place. Not that there was anything particularly unusual about this. When the redoubtable Edward Oswald Handforth was not arguing his mouth was either full, or he was asleep.

"Come in!" said Nipper crisply. "Everybody welcome! Plenty for all! Only leave me one of the doughnuts!"

"We've had tea, thanks!" said Handforth.

"Who's had tea?" asked McClure. "We hadn't started it when you got talking about the match to-morrow——"

"Well, I'd forgotten," said Handforth. "In any case, what does tea matter? There's something more important to think about than food. Look here, Nipper, I've got something to say."

"That's unusual, isn't it?" asked Nipper, in surprise.

"I suppose it is," said Handforth, taking him seriously. "But I feel it's my duty to speak. You know what happened last time? You remember the Helmford match?"

"Considering it was only last week, I ought to."

"Then what are you going to do about to-morrow's match?" demanded Handforth. "You and Dodd and Kahn are in the First Eleven, and for the honour of the Junior School we've got to see that you're well protected. I've decided to protect you."

"Thanks awfully!" said Nipper. "Tommy, get one of those medals out of the drawer. Pin it on Handy's chest——"

"Don't rot!" said Handforth, turning red. "When you were going to that Helmford

match those beasts, Carlile, Grayson, and the others, sprang on you and kept you prisoners. They tried to prevent you from playing in the match. Jealousy—that's what it was."

Nipper looked suddenly thoughtful.

"You're about right there," he agreed. "Sinclair and Carlile and Mills are the three seniors who were knocked out of the team to make places for us. They've palled up with that cad, Grayson, and they certainly tried to stop us from going to Helmford."

"And if it hadn't been for my minor, they would have succeeded!" said Handforth grimly. "My minor was jolly smart—"

"Begad!" ejaculated Sir Montie. "Dear old boys, Handy is praisin' up his minor—he is, really! Who said that the age of miracles has passed?"

"Well, you can be funny if you like!" snorted Handforth. "But what are you going to do about to-morrow? I've seen those four rotters as thick as thieves this afternoon. Mark my words—they're up to something! I'm just giving you a word of warning, Nipper, old son!"

"Thanks!" said Nipper. "But I've seen those signs myself. Not that I think there's much to worry about. Sinclair & Co. won't be able to prevent us playing in the Redcliffe match to-morrow!"

CHAPTER VI.

ON THEIR GUARD.



HANDFORTH snorted. "It's no good taking things easy like that!" he exclaimed. "Yes, thanks, Watson—I'll have that cup of tea! What was I

saying?"

"Oh, about taking things easy!"

"Yes, I noticed it!" said Nipper. "You took that cup of tea very easily. It happened to be mine!"

"Yours? Oh, that's all right; you can have the next!" said Edward Oswald. "Mark my words, Nipper—mark my words! Unless you're jolly careful you'll be kidnapped, or something, and you won't be able to go over to Redcliffe with the team."

Nipper grinned.

"I think there's one thing you're forgetting, old man," he said. "We've played Redcliffe once—away. To-morrow we play them at home—here. So we won't have to move away from the school. It's not much good Sinclair & Co. waiting on the road to kidnap us, is it?"

Handforth looked blank, and nearly dropped his tea.

"By George! I'd forgotten the match was at home!" he ejaculated. "Of course,



Then, very cautiously, Lee pressed the little silver knob—but took care that the lid of the automatic lighter did not open.

it doesn't make any difference!" he went on. "My point is just the same—"

"Rats! Your point ceases to be a point at all!" put in Church. "Didn't McClure and I try to tell you that Sinclair & Co. can't do anything? They wouldn't dare attempt any funny business in the school grounds."

"They'll make this feud an excuse for something," said Handforth darkly.

"Not unless we take risks," said Nipper. "Don't you worry, old man; we're not going to walk about, inviting attack. Thanks all the same, though. I didn't know you took so much interest in us."

"I take interest in the school!" said Handforth loftily. "This affair is above mere personalities. If you chaps do well in to-morrow's match you'll get your colours. That's a huge honour for the Fourth. If things were as they should be, I'd be playing as well—"

"You've got nothing to grumble at—you're in the Second," said Nipper. "And Second Eleven colours aren't to be sneezed at, old man."

"Not that it's any good talking," went on Handforth bitterly. "I never get my due."

And yet my minor—my minor, mark you—actually has the nerve to play for the First in the Helmford match!”

“He was only put in as a substitute at the last minute,” grinned Nipper. “And, by Jove, he did marvellously! Made twenty-three off his own bat in the first innings, and took one beautiful catch. I tell you, Fenton was a bit startled.”

“And what would I have done?” demanded Handforth. “If my minor could do that, what about me? But what’s the good? I can talk and talk till Doomsday; I shall never get anything!”

“You seem to be getting those tomato sandwiches all right!” said Watson, as Handforth helped himself to the fourth. “No, Handy, I don’t think there’s any need to worry. In any case, Montie and I will look after Nipper.”

Handforth & Co. departed, and Study C became peaceful.

There was certainly a great amount of truth in what Handforth had been saying. The disgruntled seniors—the three who had been thrown out of the team—were ready for any kind of treachery. They were so infuriated by juniors taking their places that any mean device to baulk them was only too welcome. What Sinclair & Co. wanted more than anything else was to prevent the three Fourth-Formers from getting their colours. And the morrow’s match would be the deciding factor.

Fenton, the skipper, was already planning to fill up his team, and if everything went well in the match against Redcliffe, the final decision would be made, and the present team would stand.

Fortunately, the feud at the school was not interfering with the cricket. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the last two big matches had been played away. Tomorrow’s was really the first important fixture since the beginning of the feud.

When all the fellows were round the ropes there was a possibility of trouble. But everybody was hoping that the opposing forces would choose different sides of the ground and remain aloof.

Curiously enough, the Third Form was still on friendly terms.

While the rest of the school grew more and more bitter, the Third remained serenely pally. Ancient House fags and Modern House fags fraternised freely and openly. They rather took a pride in it. As Willy Handforth had told them, it was just as well to show the school that the Third, at least, was above all this sort of nonsense.

But it must be confessed that the peace had only been maintained owing to Willy Handforth’s masterly leadership. Relations were strained to the point of snapping. Even when Modern House fags were joking with Ancient House fags there was a kind of tension in the air, and both parties were on the *qui-vive* for a break.

It was felt that the peace couldn’t last long. Sooner or later the Third was bound to drop into line. And when it did drop, there would be no question about it. For when the fags fought, they went at it with pure recklessness and vim.

If the school had only known it, the breaking-point was near at hand.

CHAPTER VII.

DISOBEYING ORDERS.



WILLY HAND-FORTH leaned against the walls of the gymnasium, and stuck his fingers into his armpits.

“That’s the idea, my sons!” he declared. “Show ’em that we don’t care. Why should we fight like a lot of Kilkenny cats? Mind you, I’m a great believer in scrapping when it’s necessary, but the thing for us to do now is to give the whole school a good example!”

The cool cheek of this remark would have startled the seniors if they could have heard it. But the knot of fags round Handforth minor grinned with appreciation. They were mixed fags.

“It’s just as well to be friendly,” said Chubby Heath, giving Tommy Tripp a jab in the ribs. “What do you say, Tommy?”

The Modern House fag glared.

“Do that again, and I’ll swipe you!” he roared.

“Oh, will you, you Modern House rotter!”

“Yes, I will, you Ancient House beast!”

Biff!

In less time than it takes to tell, Chubby Heath and Tommy Tripp were at it.

Willy Handforth sighed.

“Going to stop?” he asked, seizing Chubby Heath by one shoulder and Tommy Tripp by the other. “This is about the twentieth time to-day I’ve done this! Stop it, blow you! My hat! I’ll soon show you whether I’m to be obeyed or not!”

Biff! Crash!

The fight ceased abruptly, and the two rivals stood at arm’s-length, with Willy between them, glaring at one another, like a couple of caged tigers.

“Finished?” asked Willy curtly.

“He shouldn’t jab me in the ribs!” growled Tommy Tripp.

“The fathead!” roared Chubby. “I only did it in a friendly way!”

“He nearly caved my chest in!” snorted Tommy.

“Rats! Your chest is like iron,” said Willy. “That biff I gave you just now was enough to kill an ox, and you hardly felt it. No more of this scrapping, mind! Don’t I keep telling you that we’ve got to show the whole school a good example? Shake hands and be pals!”

The two fags shook hands, with fire and fury in their eyes.

"I won't ask you to kiss, because I don't want to make you both ill," went on Handforth minor cheerfully. "Hallo! What's Fullerton doing over there? Look at that young rotter! I'm blessed if he hasn't got hold of Dicky Jones!"

"The rotten Modern House beast!" roared Chubby Heath.

"Yah! Ancient House beast yourself!" said Tommy Tripp defiantly.

It was evident that war would soon be declared. These preliminary skirmishes were a sure sign. Underneath one of the elm-trees a certain painful incident was taking place.

"He's pushing Dicky's face into the ground!" said Juicy Lemon warmly. "It won't make it much dirtier than it usually is, but it must be a bit painful. What are you going to do, Willy? You'd better go and knock that Modern House cad's head off!"

"Who's a Modern House cad?" demanded Parry minor.

"If it comes to that, you are!" retorted Juicy.

"Look here——"

"Are you going to stop this?" thundered Willy, sweeping round like a whirlwind. "Order! I won't have this squabbling!"

The fags subsided. Willy had an extraordinary way with him. Generally he could control his fag-army without the introduction of any fisticuffs. But it was growing more and more difficult. The fags of his own house were loyal to a man, but the Modern House fags were becoming obstreperous. They were catching the fever from the higher Forms.

Willy crossed over the Triangle, grim and determined. When he arrived under the elm-tree, he found Fullerton in the act of holding Dicky Jones' head between his knees. He was forcing open Dicky's mouth, and filling it full of soil.

"What do you think he is—a flowerpot?" demanded Handforth minor curtly. "Drop that, Fullerton, you cad!"

Fullerton released Dicky Jones like a hot brick, and the unfortunate Dicky staggered away to the fountain, and rinsed his mouth out with water. But it is to be feared that he swallowed a goodly proportion of his allotted peck of dirt in one go.

Fullerton glared at Willy, and Willy glared at Fullerton.

The Modern House fag was much the bigger of the two. In fact, he ought to have been in the Fourth—he was a bully in his own way, and he only obeyed Willy because he knew that Willy could thrash him. But for a long time past he had chafed under Handforth minor's authority. And now, with the present feeling in the school, he was getting reckless.

Willy had the utmost contempt for Fullerton. He always had had. He didn't really regard him as one of his fag-army at all. If Fullerton was ever missing, Willy was rather pleased than otherwise.

"You miserable, hulking, bullying rhinoceros!" said Willy biting. "What do you mean by pushing earth into Jones' mouth?"

"The young beast cheeked me!" growled Fullerton, glowering.

"Oh, did he?" said Willy. "Well, I'm going to show you that you can't do that sort of thing with impunity! Pick up a handful of that earth, and eat it!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BREAKING-POINT.



GEORGE FULLERTON turned rather pale.

"Eat—eat a handful of earth?" he repeated blankly.

"That's what I said," retorted Willy. "It needn't be a whole handful—just a scoop of it will do. But see how you like that sort of thing! Go on! I'm waiting!"

A crowd of fags gathered round, and they watched, breathless. They were all simply dying to see the effect on Fullerton when he ate the handful of earth. It was something quite new in their experience.

And there was something novel, too, in the spectacle of Willy ordering Fullerton about, for Fullerton was half as big again, shock-headed, untidy, and sullen-looking. Willy was no match at all, if one was to judge by appearances alone.

"Are you going to keep me here all the evening?" asked Willy. "I'll give you ten seconds! There's the earth—take some!"

He pulled out his watch and consulted it. It wasn't going, but that didn't matter. Willy was rather worried about that watch. It had unaccountably stopped that morning, after he had fallen downstairs. He had only broken the glass and bent one of the hands, but the inside was all right. He knew this, because he had prodded it with a pin. But for some extraordinary reason it wouldn't go.

"One—two—three——"

Willy counted as though the seconds were being ticked off, and Fullerton turned paler than ever, bent down, and picked up a handful of earth. Undoubtedly he was going to obey orders.

"Don't do it, George!"

"Yah! Ancient House rotter!"

"Ignore him, Fullerton!"

Several of the Modern House fags, well in the rear, shouted encouraging remarks to Fullerton. They seemed to have effect, for suddenly he flushed and set his jaw.

"I'm blowed if I'll take orders from this Ancient House worm!" he bellowed. "Come on, Modern House—up!"

With one sweep, he flung the handful of earth into Willy Handforth's face. And, with Willy thus momentarily blinded, he seized his advantage. With one terrific swing, he knocked Handforth minor over, and then sat with a thud upon his head.

"Got him!" roared Fullerton. "Come on!"

The breaking-point had been reached. Within ten seconds, like a sudden explosion, a great crowd of Modern House fags were swarming round Willy and Fullerton. Unfortunately, there were not so many Ancient House Third-Formers on the spot.

Willy, with one terrific heave, managed to free himself. He was up in a flash, and he faced Fullerton with blazing eyes.

"Take that!" he roared.

Crash!

Fullerton went over backwards with a terrific howl. It was such a blow that the bullying youngster was practically knocked out. But Willy's prowess was all to no purpose. He was swept off his feet by the rush of other fags before he could strike another blow.

They pounced on him like wolves on a piece of meat. The next moment he was lifted up, swung off, and whirled round to the back of the Modern House. A crowd of Ancient House fellows followed, led by Chubby Heath, but Freeman, Dallas, and a number of other Modern Fourth-Formers barred the way, and drove them back.

In this way, the unfortunate Willy was in the hands of the enemy!

Willy, the mighty leader—the one who had held sway over the Third—was lord and master no longer. He had done wonderfully well to keep order so far, but it had been impossible to carry on.

And now he went through the mill.

At the back of the Modern House, Fullerton & Co. proceeded to exact vengeance. It was a kind of minor example of the

Spanish Inquisition. The wonder of it was that Willy Handforth came out of it alive.

First of all, he was forced to run the gauntlet, and then he was seized by the hair, and held in this position while a number of fags tore his clothes off. Somebody fetched a pail of water, swilled it on a lot of soft dust, and made a fine mixture of mud. Into this Willy was rolled with extreme care. The operators didn't seem to mind at all whether they got smothered or not. The main thing was to smother

Willy. And this was certainly accomplished in a very thorough manner.

His partial lack of clothing didn't matter much now. He was given one or two final knocks, an empty pail was upturned on his head, and then he was given a push off.

Dazed, bewildered and sagging at the knees, he wandered away, hardly knowing where he was going, or what he was doing.

But his spirit was unimpaired. And vengeance was in his heart.

CHAPTER IX.

A MYSTERIOUS OCCURRENCE.

CHUBBY HEATH clapped a hand to his head, and reeled.

"What is it?" he asked hoarsely.

Willy Handforth had just appeared in the junior quarters of the Ancient House. Chubby, finding that it was impossible to approach the enemy, had retired to the the Third Form pas-

sage, and was holding an impromptu meeting.

Willy arrived in the middle of it.

By this time he had partially recovered. The mud was caking on him and drying. And he had got rid of the pail. But he was practically unrecognisable.

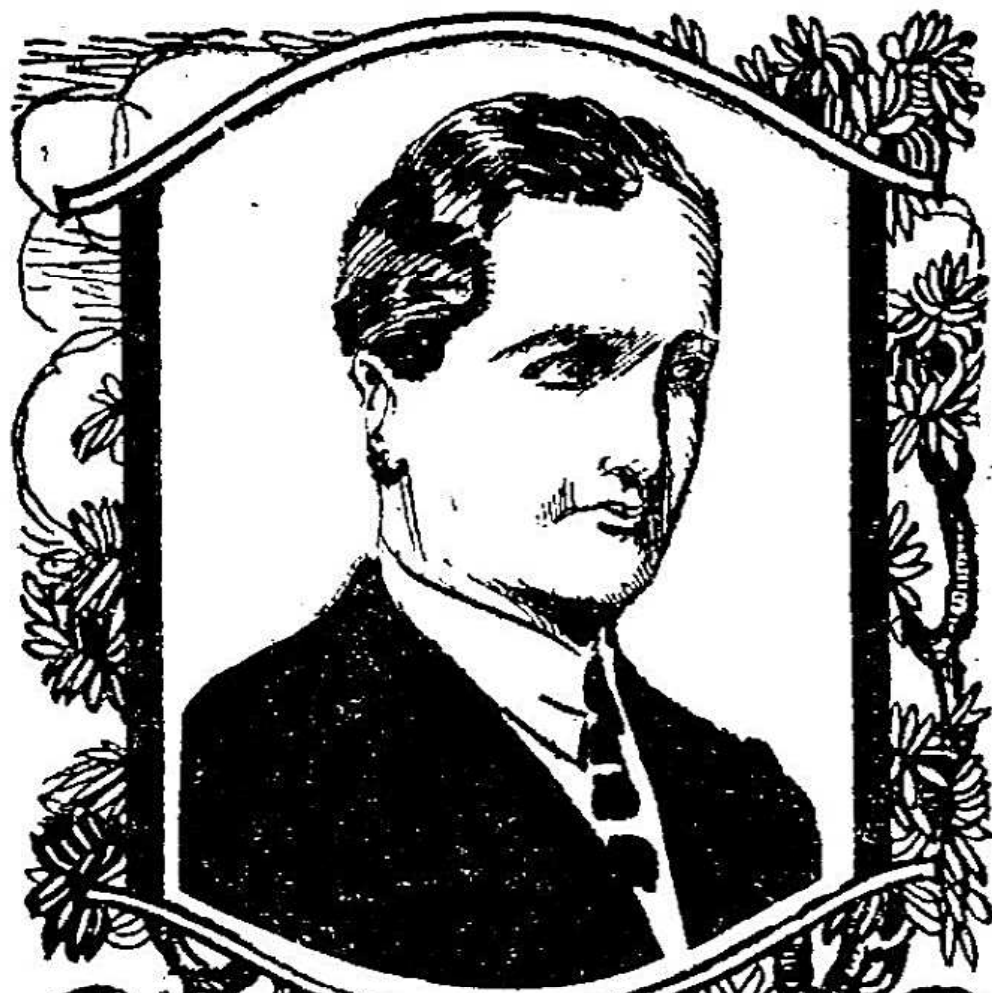
"It's all right—only me!" he said huskily.

As he spoke several flakes of dried mud fell off his face, leaving a curiously patchy effect. His eyes seemed to gaze out from miniature flower beds, and he was altogether fearful to see.

PORTRAIT GALLERY AND WHO'S WHO.

Third Series—Fifth Form.

NOTE.—The average age of Fifth Form boys is 17.



No. 10.—Arthur Phillips.

A member of Chambers & Co. He and Bryant are the inseparable pals of the one and only Cuthbert. Phillips is quite a decent fellow, and with his easy-going ways, and his prowess at sports, he is a general favourite.

"Willy!" gasped Chubby Heath.

"Don't make a fuss—those Modern House fatheads messed me about a bit," said Willy. "Not much, you know—I shall be all right in five minutes. Those idiots haven't got any idea of doing a thing properly. That's lucky for me."

"Lucky!" exclaimed Juicy. "Why, you're half killed!"

"Am I?" retorted Willy grimly. "Just wait until I've had a bath, and got into some fresh things! My sons, listen to these solemn words! Later on this evening the vengeance of the Ancient House is doomed to fall on those treacherous bounders in the Modern House! You see what's happened to me? This is absolutely nothing to what's going to happen to them!"

"Hurrah!" howled the Third Formers joyously.

"Good old Willy!"

"He's the chap for us!"

"Those Modern House rotters can go and eat coke!"

"Coke?" said Willy contemptuously. "They'll eat something a lot worse than coke later on this evening! I've already thought of four different kinds of torture!"

He went off, escorted by a number of sympathetic helpers.

And after Willy had cleaned himself there were very few marks of warfare on him. True, he had a cut under his left eye, and his nose was larger than usual, and one ear was thick, but, from a Third Form standard, he was unmarked. Such traces as Willy bore were commonplace.

And there were mysterious doings in the Third Form studies during the next hour. Fags went from one room to another, they scooted out on errands, and there was a kind of subdued excitement.

In the Modern House, Fullerton was a kind of second Nero, fiddling while Rome was burning. He was happy and elated—knowing nothing of the doom which was soon to descend upon his head.

But other strange things were happening this particular evening, too.

And they were in no way connected with the Third Form.

Nipper was in Study C at his prep., and Tommy Watson and Tregellis-West had finished theirs a little in advance. It was fairly late now, and it was quite dusk outside. Aided by the heavy clouds, the evening had drawn in unusually quickly.

Nipper finished his prep. at length, and put his books away. He went to join his chums in the commonroom. But just as he was about to switch off the electric light, a tapping sounded on the window.

He looked round suspiciously.

Approaching the window, which was open, he looked cautiously out. In these days practically everybody acted with caution. At first Nipper could see nothing. Then,

without warning, an arm shot up from beneath, and curled round his head.

"Got him!" ejaculated a tense voice.

But he was a little too previous. Nipper, who had been on the alert, wrenched himself free, and backed into the study.

"Rescue, Fourth!" he roared.

Unfortunately, at that very moment an uproar was happening in the lobby, and Nipper's voice wasn't heard. Three figures hurled themselves through the study window, and were upon Nipper before he could get through the door. He was held fast, and a hand was clapped over his mouth.

"The slippery young eel—he nearly got away!" gasped Grayson.

Struggling fiercely, Nipper was hastily carried out—through the window again. In the grasp of Grayson, Sinclair and Carlile, he was practically helpless. They were all powerful, big youths. Even Nipper could do nothing against such odds.

In the dusk, he was sneaked round the House, and carried swiftly to the comparative quietness of the space behind the gymnasium. Here Mills was waiting.

"Buck up!" said Grayson. "It'll only take a minute!"

The four seniors acted like lightning.

They placed themselves round Nipper in a small circle. And then, at the same instant, they commenced punching him—not with any intention of knocking him out, but short, sharp jabs on the muscles of his arms, his thighs, and his calves.

It was a brutal attack, and so bewildering that Nipper could only gasp and draw in his breath with agony. Every one of those punches was forceful, and by the time the seniors had done, he was weak, exhausted, and aching in every muscle.

At a given word, they vanished, and Nipper staggered drunkenly away.

CHAPTER X.

VERY SERIOUS.



NIPPER reeled across the Triangle.

He could hardly remember what had happened. He was so

bruised and exhausted that every movement was painful

to him. And his one desire was to get to some soft couch and lay down. He was hardly dishevelled at all, and to look at him casually, one would not say that he had been touched. There were no marks upon his face, and even his hair was still neatly brushed.

The four seniors had concentrated their attack upon the muscles of his arms and legs.

In the meantime, Tommy Watson and Tregellis-West had gone into Study C to find their leader, but they only found an empty room.

"He's gone," said Tommy. "That's funny—he said he was coming straight to the common-room."

"I suppose he's dropped into Pitt's study, or somethin', dear old boys," said Sir Montie. "You can see he meant to come back soon, because the light's still on. I suppose we'd better wait. He's finished his prep., because his books are put away."

"Suppose we go and look along the passage?" asked Watson.

"Anythin' you like, old boy," said Tregellis-West. "I'm perfectly willin'. Shall we start with next door?"

They went into Study D, but peace reigned there. Handforth & Co. were at prep., and for once there was silence.

"Seen Nipper?" asked Watson.

"Nipper?" said Handforth, looking up. "No, he's not here—how should I know where he is? Look here, Watson, where's Manilla?"

"Blow Manilla!" said Watson. "I can't bother about your geography! Nipper isn't in the study, and—"

"Not in the study!" gasped Handforth abruptly.

He started up with such violence that he shot the inkpot into Church's lap.

"You mean to say they've got him?" he asked tensely. "What did I tell you? I knew they'd do something—"

"You ass!" howled Church. "I'm smothered!"

"I can't help your troubles—"

"My best flannels, too!" hooted Church. "I shan't be able to get these clean for weeks! And all my geography's messed up, and I shall have to do it all again. Why the dickens can't you be more careful?"

Handforth forgot his own geography, Church's geography, and the spilled ink. He rushed out of the room, and then suddenly came to a halt. Nipper was just coming down the passage. He was coming slowly, laboriously, and there was something strange in his attitude.

"There he is!" ejaculated Tommy Watson.

They ran up, and Handforth clapped Nipper on the back.

"We've been looking for you—" he began.

"Steady!" gasped Nipper. "Mind your hands, old man!"

"What's up?" asked Handforth curiously. "Sore, or something?"

"A bit," said Nipper between his teeth. "Don't make a fuss out here—come into my study—something's happened."

His very tone quietened Handforth, and a minute later they were in Study C, and the door was closed.

"Dear old boy, what's the matter with you?" asked Sir Montie anxiously. "Begad, you're lookin' quite pale! Where have you been to? We expected you to come to the common-room."

"I'll tell you afterwards," said Nipper. "First of all I want to have a look at some-

thing. Help me off with my jacket, Tommy!"

The other juniors looked on in astonishment while Nipper removed his jacket, assisted by Watson. Except for his peculiarly strained expression, there seemed nothing wrong with him. They didn't connect his drawn face with any attack. When a fellow was attacked at St. Frank's, he generally came back a wreck.

Having removed his coat, Nipper rolled up one of his sleeves.

"I thought so!" he said bitterly.

His arm was fiery red, and looked puffy. Here and there it was beginning to discolour in an ominous fashion.

"Why, you're all over bruises!" exclaimed Watson, staring. "Have you had an accident, or something?"

"Oh, yes—I've had an accident all right!" replied Nipper. "Grayson and Sinclair and Carlile and Mills pounced on me, carried me to the back of the gym., and punched me in the muscles until I couldn't see straight. I'm like this all over."

"Begad!"

"Great pip!"

"All over!" gasped Tommy Watson.

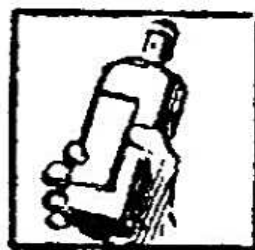
"But—but what for? The mean beasts! The cowardly curs! They know they can't stop you playing in the game to-morrow, and so they adopted this petty bullying!"

Nipper sat down wearily.

"You don't seem to appreciate the subtlety of it, old man," he said. "They punched me like this so that I shall be black and blue by to-morrow. So that I shan't be able to handle the bat, or run a yard without agony. And to-morrow we're out for our colours!"

CHAPTER XI.

A TRIPLE DISASTER.



FOR a moment or two there was a tense, ominous silence.

"Yes, to-morrow we'll be out for our colours!" repeated Nipper, with a mirthless laugh.

"What a fool I was! I never dreamed of anything like this! As a matter of fact, I didn't think those seniors were blackguardly enough! It's the meanest, most despicable piece of work I've ever come across!"

"But can't we do something?" asked Handforth thickly.

"It's no good doing anything now—except rub me with embrocation!" replied Nipper bitterly. "That won't be much good. It'll be days before my muscles are fit. And the simplicity of it, too. It's a fact, you chaps, that the simpler a thing is, the better it works!"

It was so simple, in fact, that the other juniors could hardly believe the seriousness of it. But Nipper was undoubtedly correct. In the morning he would be a mass of

bruises all over his arms, and to a large extent on his legs.

"True, with an effort, he would be able to run fairly well, and he might get used to it. But to imagine that he could bat with his usual form was sheer optimism.

When a cricketer desires to do his best for his side, his muscles must be supple, his body in a perfect state of fitness. And there was little or no chance of Nipper being in that state by 11-30 on the following day.

While the others were standing round, hardly knowing what to say, Nipper suddenly sat forward with a jerk.

"I say!" he exclaimed huskily. "Perhaps they're doing the same to Jerry Dodd! Or Hussi Kahn! I never thought of that before! For goodness sake dash into Study F and see if Jerry's all right!"

"My goodness!" gasped Watson.

He leapt to the door, but not before Handforth reached it. Edward Oswald tore it open, fled down the passage, and rushed into Study F. This was usually occupied by Tom Burton, Jerry Dodd, and Hart. But at the moment Jerry Dodd was there alone.

"Thank goodness!" gasped Handforth.

Then he gulped. The Australian junior was sitting in the easy-chair, and he had the same drawn look about his face which Nipper had come in with. He rose to his feet stiffly.

"It's all right, pards—those beastly Fifth-Formers have been having a little game," he said. "I was just taking a rest. By Jings! They put me through it!"

"You, too!" shouted Watson.

"Too?" repeated Jerry. "You—you don't mean—"

"Nipper's all over bruises!" said Watson. "He was caught—"

Jerry leapt to his feet, his eyes blazing.

"Then—then I expect Kahn is being treated in the same way!" he panted. "I thought it was only for me! They dragged me behind the gym., punched me all over the muscles, and—"

"Yes, we know!" exclaimed Handforth. "Come on—let's go and find old Hussi! Those rotters mean to make a clean sweep of the three of you! They've planned it so that you shan't play to-morrow!"

"The beasts!" panted Watson. "We may be in time to stop them getting old Hussi—let's try, anyhow!"

The Indian junior shared Study N with the Hon. Douglas Singleton. Nipper had joined in the chase by now, in spite of his pains, and the way the juniors dashed into Study N was like an avalanche.

The Hon. Douglas Singleton was there alone.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "What's this? I thought—"

"Where's Hussi?" roared Handforth.

"He went out about five minutes ago," said the Hon. Douglas. "He said he was going to take a breath of fresh air on the steps—"

"We're too late!" shouted Nipper desperately.

They pelted out, tore through the lobby, and rushed off into the Triangle. They arrived behind the gymnasium, but everything there was quiet and still. There was no sign of Hussi Kahn, and hardly anybody else was about. The wind was getting higher, and the weather prospects for the morrow seemed worse than ever.

"Not here!" gasped Nipper. "But they've gone somewhere—I'll bet they've got him! We've only to search about—"

"What's that over there?" asked Watson quickly.

"Over where?"

"Look! There's somebody near the shrubbery!"

They hurried off without Watson finishing, and the next moment they ran into Hussi Ranjit Lal Kahn. In the gloom it was impossible to see him very distinctly.

"Hussi!" shouted Handforth. "Are you all right?"

"I am exquisitely filled with preposterous pain!" replied Hussi, in agonised tones. "I have been beautifully punched upon my impossible muscles, and I am wracked with agony from feet to head!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Nipper. "All three of us!"

CHAPTER XII.

ARCHIE RALLIES ROUND.



HUSSI RANJIT LAL KAHN scarcely looked pale, but he was certainly drawn.

They had got him into Study C, and he had exactly the same tale to tell as the others. Seized unawares, he had been submitted to a brutal, tremendous punching. It had been all over within three minutes, from start to finish.

It didn't take four hulking seniors long to deal drastically with one helpless junior. The extreme simplicity of the scheme, as Nipper had said, had rendered success almost a foregone conclusion.

And the fact remained that Nipper, Jerry Dodd, and Hussi Kahn were bruised in their most vital muscles. On the morrow, just when they needed to be in tip-top form, they would be stiff and painful. To play cricket properly would be impossible.

And they would be out for their colours!

"It's no good—we can't do anything," said Nipper huskily. "We can't complain about those cads—the whole situation's rotten. We shall simply have to accept it."

"And you won't be able to play to-morrow?" asked Handforth.

"If we do play, by jingo, it'll be good-bye to the colours!" growled Jerry. "Why, pard, I couldn't hit a haystack with a cricket-ball now! As for batting, the very thought of it gives me a pain."

"Can't we do something?" asked Watson

desperately. "Look here, the best thing is to go straight to Fenton, and tell him everything."

"We shall have to tell Fenton, of course, and give him the chance of playing other men," said Nipper. "But there'll be no hope of bringing this thing home to Sinclair and his gang."

"Why not?" demanded Handforth.

"Because we haven't got any proof."

"It doesn't matter about proof—"

"Oh, yes it does," said Nipper. "It matters everything. We can't accuse four seniors of dirty work like that unless we have evidence. We were all caught single-handed, there were no witnesses, and there's only our individual word to substantiate the yarn. Naturally, Sinclair & Co. will deny everything—and probably have a perfect alibi ready. There are plenty of those Modern House chaps bitter enough to help a thing like that."

"You're right, old boy," said Montie thoughtfully. "You can tell Fenton in private, and I expect he'll believe you. But it's no good facing those cads with the charge."

"And do you mean to say we've got to let it drop?" asked Handforth, aghast. "Can't we do anything? And won't you chaps be able to play to-morrow?"

Nipper rubbed his arms tenderly.

"We'll play, I expect, but our chances are pretty well jeopardised. That's the whole idea of the thing. A little embrocation wouldn't do us any harm. Who's got some?"

"I saw some in Archie's study yesterday," said Watson. "He sprained his knee, or something, and Phipps had been doctoring him—"

"Buzz along and fetch it," said Nipper.

Watson hurried off, and a few moments later he entered Study P, at the end of the passage. This was the abode of Archibald Winston Derek Glenthorne, the languid dandy of the Fourth. Alf Brent shared it with him, but Alf was a mere detail.

"What ho!" said Archie, as Watson burst in. "Make yourself at home, dear old cucumber! Don't trouble to knock! I mean to say, I was just indulging in a few of the best—"

"Have you got some embrocation here, Archie?" asked Watson.

"Embrocation?" repeated Archie, starting up. "Oddslife! Has somebody sprained something, or something? I mean, it's a frightfully awkward business when something is sprained."

"I can't go into full details now, but it's serious," said Tommy. "Nipper and Dodd and Kahn have been bashed about by some of those Modern House seniors—so

that they can't play in the game to-morrow. And now they're gradually turning black and blue."

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie, starting up. "Black and blue! I mean to say, the good old Stephens colour! How frightfully frightful! It seems to me that this is where the Pride of the Glenthornes has got to rally round! Embrocation, what? Gad-zooks! The stuff is absolutely used!"

"Used?"

"My dashed knee, you know—"

"Have I been wasting my time here for nothing?" roared Watson.

"Kindly modulate the old vocal chords, laddie!" said Archie. "And if you'll just tickle the old bell-push, Phipps will glide silently and produce embrocation out of his dashed coat-sleeves! What I mean is, that cove is a sort of magician! You just say to him 'Embrocation,' and, oddslife, the stuff is all over the bally room!"

Watson jabbed the bell-push vigorously.

"Thanks frightfully, old bean!" said Archie. "At the same time, dash it, there's no need to push it through the wall! If you'll now gaze at the door, you might catch a glimpse of Phipps coming in, but I doubt it. The laddie usually appears like a ghost, absolutely materialising out of the absolute atmosphere! Dashed uncanny!"

"I hope he won't be long," said Watson, going to the bookcase, and opening one of the middle drawers.

"You rang, sir?"

Watson turned with a gasp. Phipps was standing in the room, and the door was closed. Tommy began to think that there was something in what Archie had said, after all. It was certainly startling, the way Phipps noiselessly entered.

"What ho!" said Archie, beaming. "What ho! Good old Phipps! Kindly shake the old sleeves, and produce some embrocation. It appears that certain brave laddies have gone absolutely black and blue, and need a considerable amount of rallying-round stuff. It is distinctly up to you, Phipps, to get busy."

"Yes, sir," said Phipps unemotionally. "If you'll just wait one minute, sir, I will be back with the necessary liniment."

"Liniment, what?" said Archie. "Oh, well, just as you like, old horse! Perhaps you're right. As far as I know, it's all the same! The main fact is to push it along at some speed."

CHAPTER XIII.

REPAIRING THE DAMAGE.



PHIPPS proved himself to be a master.

Accompanied by Archie, and carrying any amount of bottles, he visited Study C, and tended the patients. One look at their bruised muscles caused Phipps to shake his head.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

"I'm afraid they're in rather a bad way, Master Nipper," he said. "Do I understand that you wish to play cricket to-morrow?"

"Yes, if possible."

"I'll do my best, sir, but the time is exceedingly limited," said Phipps. "I may say that if you were left alone, without massage or embrocation, the handling of a cricket-bat would be quite impossible."

"My hat!" said Handforth.

"At the same time, sir, with a little patience, we may effect an improvement," proceeded Phipps. "It is possible that you will be able to play. But please do not misunderstand me, sir—I cannot guarantee any

great faith in Phipps, with every reason. His valet was a remarkable man. He was ready for anything. No matter what problem confronted him, he was capable of dealing with it at a moment's notice.

And after he had been treating Nipper for five minutes, all those who watched were quite convinced that Phipps was a past master.

"How on earth do you know how to do this?" asked Handforth.

"At one time," sir, I was valet to a gentleman who was exceedingly keen on amateur boxing," explained Phipps as he worked. "I found it necessary to restore



They pounced on him like wolves on a piece of meat. The next moment he was lifted up, swung off, and whirled round to the back of the Modern House.

wonderful results. You will be stiff, you will be sore, and I am very much afraid that your muscles will be in poor condition."

"Cheerful, isn't he?" asked Handforth tartly.

"It's just as well to know the truth," said Nipper.

"I thought it would be better to let you know the worst at once, sir," explained Phipps. "If I am able to effect better results than I have outlined, nobody will be more pleased than myself. Will you kindly hold yourself quite still, Master Nipper?"

"Go ahead!" said Nipper.

Phipps went ahead, and the work of restoring the injured warriors began. Archie looked on with a beaming smile. He had

him in the earliest space of time. One does learn things, sir, in this life."

"The man's a marvel!" declared Watson admiringly.

In the meantime, a little celebration was going on in a senior study in the Modern House. Guy Sinclair was the host, and Grayson, Carlile, and Mills were the guests.

"Well, we've done it," said Carlile, as he lit another cigarette. "I think we gave Nipper the worst—but the others copped it, too. By the morning they'll be so thundering stiff that they won't be able to walk. I'll bet they'll be in bed all day."

"Oh, rather!" said Grayson. "I know what it is to get punches like that, on the

muscles. As for holding a bat, it won't even be possible. You can take it for granted that they'll be out of the Redcliffe match."

"I hope the young beggars won't sneak!" said Mills uneasily.

Sinclair laughed.

"Let them sneak!" he exclaimed. "They can't prove anything. They can only accuse us, and we can deny it. Who's going to take their word against ours? But you needn't worry—they won't be idiotic enough to say anything about it. We're safe, and the good work's done."

"And it's quite possible," said Carlile, "that Fenton will shove us back in the team after these kids have failed. He hasn't got anybody else, anyhow, so there's no choice."

"We'll wait and see," said Sinclair. "The main thing is to pay those confounded juniors. They had a good dose to-night, and if they're able to walk to-morrow, I shall be surprised. If they turn out for the cricket match, I'll fall down dead!"

And the four seniors laughed in unison, and continued the celebration.

They might not have been so happy if they had seen the wonderful results which followed Phipps' expert handling. By the time he had finished with Nipper, Nipper was feeling a new man again. He could hardly believe that Phipps' treatment had wrought the miracle.

"Please don't imagine, sir, that you will be yourself by to-morrow," warned Phipps. "I have done my best, but it will require at least three days to effect a full cure. However, I think you will be able to play to-morrow—although I fear you will not touch your best form."

Nipper's eyes shone.

"We're going to play—that's the main thing!" he exclaimed. "Good old Phipps! You're a living marvel!"

Archie Glenthorne beamed.

"Absolutely!" he agreed. "Phipps, laddie, you have my permission to burn those mauve socks—and what's more, dash it, help yourself to a fiver out of my bureau-drawer!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Phipps calmly.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE AVENGING ARMY.



WILLY HANDFORTH looked at his watch keenly, and then he frowned.

"Oh, blow!" he exclaimed. "I forgot the rotten thing wasn't going! What's the time, Chubby?"

Chubby Heath looked at his own watch.

"Half-past seven," he said promptly.

"Half-past piffle!" snorted Willy. "The clock struck eight, hours ago! What's the good of a rotten turnip like that?"

"Well, it goes!" said Chubby. "That's more than yours does."

"Buzz outside, and look at the time, and don't argue," said Handforth minor. "I believe it's nearly half-past eight—and that's the time for our big move. And while you're about it, see where Juicy is. He said he was going off to the tuck-shop, but that was all spoof—he hasn't got any money."

"Yes, he has," said Chubby. "You gave him a shilling this morning."

Willy Handforth started.

"But that was to get some grub for my ferret!" he exclaimed. "No wonder Juicy didn't want to meet me at dinner-time! I'll have a word with him when he comes in. Blessed if I thought he was a burglar!"

Chubby left the little study, and came hurrying back in about a minute.

"Twenty-five past eight!" he announced breathlessly.

At this second the school clock solemnly chimed the half-hour.

"What do you mean—twenty-five past?" snorted Willy. "What do you call that? It's half-past! Who gave you the time?"

"I happened to meet your major in the lobby——"

"What's the good of asking my major anything?" asked Willy contemptuously. "You know he's always wrong! I'm not sure, but I think he knows the A B C. And it isn't quite certain that he can even tell the time!"

Chubby grinned.

"Well, I thought his watch was right," he replied.

"You shouldn't think!" said Willy severely. "You should know! Chaps who go through life like that never get anywhere! Supposing I'd had to catch a train?"

"All the chaps are gathering outside," remarked Chubby, changing the subject. "You know what you told 'em—half-past to the tick! I say, Willy, are you really going to do this?"

"Do what?"

"Raid the Modern House."

"Am I really going to do it?" said Willy, staring. "You young ass! See this cut on my cheek?"

"Yes."

"See this lump on my nose?"

"Yes."

"See this thick ear——"

"My hat, if you're going to mention every one of 'em, you'll take half an hour," said Chubby.

"And yet you ask me if I'm going to raid the Modern House!" exclaimed Willy. "With these wounds all over me, you calmly stand there and ask if I want revenge! Chubby, my son, by the time we've finished with Fullerton and that crowd, they'll wonder when they'll be able to walk again!"

Willy marched out with a grim expression on his face. He had never been more determined in all his life. For a couple of hours he had been planning this affair. The rupture in the Third had pained him. He

had thought that the fags were one solid body—an example to the school. But now that the Modern House contingent had broken away, in keeping with the other Forms, Willy was going to be relentless.

When he waged warfare, he didn't do it by halves. There was nothing paltry about Willy. Fullerton & Co., although they didn't know it now, would have been far better advised had they remained faithful to Willy's banner. They were soon to learn the cost of their folly.

Outside, Willy hurried round to the side of the building, and there, sure enough, were many lurking figures. It was practically dark, and the forms could only be seen with difficulty. They were all fags, and they were not looking particularly happy.

They knew the desperate nature of their errand, and felt very much like fresh troops who were to go over the top for the first time. Sheer disaster lay ahead. The raiding party might succeed in their mission, but to escape unscathed was an impossibility.

"All here?" asked Willy crisply.

"I think so," said Juicy Lemon, hurrying up. "Young Kerrigan was missing just now, but I think he's appeared——"

"I'll call the list of names!" said Willy. "We can't have any absentees. By the way, Juicy, what about that grub for my ferret? I gave you a bob——"

"The fact is, I—I——"

"You spent it on ginger-pop and jam-tarts?" interrupted Willy severely. "Yes, I know all about it! Don't let it happen again, my son! If you want some tuck on the cheap, go to Mrs. Hake and get it on tick—in my name! She won't trust you!"

Willy went round the collection of fags, calling each name. And he found that every one was present—all had answered the call of their leader. The entire Ancient House contingent of fags stood on the spot. Even the prospect of annihilation did not keep them from duty.

CHAPTER XV.

THE INVADERS.



"MARCH!"

Willy gave the order briskly.

The Triangle was practically deserted, except for the fags, so there was no-body to witness this some-

what astonishing scene. In double file, all the Ancient House fags marched grimly and firmly towards the Modern House—into the heart of the enemy's country.

Every fag was armed with a cricket stump, and every fag had received certain orders. The success of the raid depended upon the first fierce rush. And after the work in hand was completed, the invaders had received orders to make a dash—every man for himself.

Willy's band were more staunch than ever

now that the Modern House section had broken away. They were not going merely because Willy had ordered them to. His authoritative manner rallied the faint-hearted, of course, but they were all eager to trounce the Modern House fags for breaking the solemn pact.

Reaching the Modern House, Willy led the way straight in. He entered at the double, and the double line of warriors went rushing after him. Nobody seemed to be about, and this was all to the good. If they could only get to the Third Form quarters without being seen, there was a possibility of escaping without suffering the penalty for their onslaught.

They reached the Third Form passage, and charged down it.

There were no fag studies in the Modern House. Strictly speaking, there were none in the Ancient House. The little rooms that Willy & Co. used had originally been dis-used box-rooms, and Willy and his chums had turned them to their own use.

In the Modern House the Third-Formers were compelled to use their own class-room, and a somewhat draughty apartment which was honoured by the name of Common-room. As Willy had frequently complained, the fags were not provided for in the lavish manner that they should have been.

The invaders divided themselves into two main parties.

One swept into the class-room, and the other swept into the Common-room. And after that the excitement began.

It so happened that Fullerton and his immediate circle were in the Common-room celebrating their victory over Willy. They had clubbed together and had bought a feed. This feed was just on the point of commencing when the invaders swept in.

Tommy Tripp was trying to make an oil-stove go, and although he was getting a large amount of smoke out of it, it didn't seem to be much good for cooking purposes. But Tommy was nothing if not persevering.

It tickled his fancy to partake of a roasted sardine, and he was holding the unfortunate fish over the oil-stove impaled on the end of a penholder. The sardine was black all over, and now and again greasy blobs of fat dropped into the stove to increase the general haze.

Jimmy Hook, on the other hand, considered that a sandwich would suit him best. Jimmy's ideas of sandwiches were grotesque. He had taken two slabs of bread-and-butter—smuggled out of Hall at tea-time—and upon these he was placing a layer of cucumber to start with. On the top of this he added some tomato sauce, and finally spread a thick layer of marmalade over the entire vegetarian background.

He slapped these two slabs together with such force that a squirt of marmalade hit

Fullerton in the eye. And incidentally one or two blobs fell down Jimmy Hook's waistcoat. But he nonchalantly rubbed these off with his sleeve, and took the first bite.

It was at this very moment that the invasion happened.

There was a scuffle out in the corridor, a kind of thunderous measure of footsteps, and then the door was flung open. Willy Handforth burst in, followed by his picked storm-troops.

"Here they are!" he announced exultantly. "Come on, my sons!"

Fullerton started back, Tommy Tripp dropped his sardine into the oil-stove, and Jimmy Hook nearly choked. In one gulp he swallowed a huge mouthful of stale bread, cucumber, tomato sauce, and marmalade. And he was so startled that he flung the rest of his sandwich in the air.

"Those Ancient House rotters!" gasped Fullerton.

Jimmy's sandwich, parting in mid-air, fell. One half of it landed on Fullerton's head, and two blobs of marmalade smeared down his face. But he couldn't give any attention to these unhappy details. Willy Handforth was leaping at him.

Crash!

Willy's right took Fullerton fairly on the nose, and Fullerton staggered back, howling. Unfortunately, he stood on the other half of Jimmy's sandwich, which did duty as a roller skate.

His foot slithered away from him; he skidded across the room, and went down on his back with a frightful crash. The back of his head nearly made a hole through the floor.

With one sweep Willy grabbed the coal-box and emptied the contents of it in Fullerton's face. Fortunately—for Fullerton—the coal-box was nearly empty, containing odd bits of rubbish which the fags had thrown away—caramel papers, disused chewing-gum, orange peel, and so forth.

In the meantime Willy's army were making the fur fly.

Cricket-stumps were rising and falling, and howls were tearing the air in anguish. So far the raid was an entire success.

CHAPTER XVI.

HONOUR SATISFIED.



IN the class-room the fight was waxing even more furious.

The Modern House fags were outnumbered by about two to one, so Willy's men had everything their own way. They had come here for the express purpose of punishing the traitors as swiftly and as effectively as possible.

And they were doing it.

Every invader, by the way, was armed with a bottle of ink. At one period or other of the proceedings these ink-bottles were opened, and the contents were flung over the vanquished.

The cricket-stumps were used with deadly effect, although in many cases these were abandoned for bare fists after the first minute or two. And the noise was simply terrific.

Willy & Co. were suffering practically no hurts; they had everything their own way, and were relentlessly reducing the enemy to impotence. By this time Fullerton was mere human wreckage.

And just when the fags were thinking about making their masterly retreat, Mr. Pycraft appeared on the scene. Mr. Pycraft was the weedy, unpopular master of the Modern Fourth. From his study he heard the battle, and he had sallied out to make immediate investigations. It was one of Mr. Pycraft's recreations to visit his wrath upon all and sundry at the slightest provocation.

He was about the only master who had taken sides in this present feudal warfare. He was distinctly antagonistic towards the Ancient House. To his boys he openly referred to the Ancient House fellows as young hooligans, and indeed, he did much to foment lad feeling.

"What is this?" shouted Mr. Pycraft, aghast, as he rushed down the passage. "Good gracious me! Has everybody gone mad? Boys—boys! Cease this appalling disturbance at once!"

Mr. Pycraft suddenly halted, and stared.

"Handforth minor!" he shouted, in a perfect crescendo. "Boy! What are you doing in this House?"

"Only smashing up these young rotters, sir!" said Willy breathlessly.

"You're doing what?"

"Sorry, sir—can't stop!" said Willy.

"Don't make a fuss over a mere rag! We've just been having some fun, that's all!"

"Fun!" echoed Mr. Pycraft, in horror.

He took one look into the Common-room and clung to the door for support. Willy Handforth's fun was apparently of a peculiar variety. The Common-room looked like a front-line trench after a shelling from the enemy. In every portion of the room forms were lying, torn, battered, and disordered. Moans were coming from some of them, and the amount of ink which was strewn about was simply remarkable.

It must not be supposed that Willy & Co. had committed any violent assault. They had "paid out" these fags as they deserved, but nobody was hurt beyond a bruise, a black eye, or a thick ear. These things were all within the rules of honourable warfare.

But to Mr. Pycraft it seemed as though murder had been committed.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "This is terrible! You will be severely punished for this—"

"Oh, stow it, sir!" interrupted Willy. "This is nothing to what they did to me! We're only having our revenge. In any case, I can't stop now; I think I can hear some of those Fourth-Formers."

Willy dodged off with alacrity.

"Handforth minor!" roared Mr. Pycraft. "Stop!"

"Yes, sir!" called Willy, over his shoulder.

He tore on, making a last effort to escape. He knew there would be trouble with Mr. Stokes later on, for Mr. Pycraft would certainly report this affair. But Mr. Beverley Stokes was a sportsman, and Willy knew exactly how to wangle him. Once clear of Mr. Pycraft's own clutches there was not much to fear.

But as many of the Ancient House fags had feared, entry had been much easier than exit. The tremendous commotion from the Third Form quarters had attracted general attention. A large number of Fourth-Formers were in the passage, and to successfully run the gauntlet was out of the question.

Practically all the fags were caught in a trap.

"Ancient House rotters!" went up the cry.

"Fags, too!"

"Young Handforth and his blessed gang!"

And Willy Handforth & Co. were seized, treated with extreme roughness, and hurled out of the College House like so many sacks of straw. They were simply pitched out into the Triangle on their necks. And it was a bruised and battered, but happy crowd of fags which returned to the Ancient House. They collected on their side of the Triangle and exchanged thrilling stories.

"Well, anyway, we smashed 'em!" said Willy contentedly. "That'll teach those rotters a lesson! And we'll do it again to-morrow—only better!"

"Better let us recover first," said Chubby Heath.

"Hear, hear!"

"Those beggars have had enough to last 'em three or four days!"

"Oh, well, we'll talk about it later," said Willy. "The best thing we can do is to get indoors and make ourselves presentable. Then, when old Pycraft comes across with his report, we shall be looking normal. Leave everything to me, my lads."

They all trooped indoors, and hurried upstairs.

The trouble in the Third marked the completion of the rivalry at St. Frank's.

The entire Ancient House was now bitterly opposed to the entire Modern House—and vice-versa.

With the inclusion of the Third, the feud had become general. And everybody felt that the comparative peace could not last much longer.

CHAPTER XVII.

NIPPER BECOMES ANXIOUS.



SIR MONTIE TREGELLIS - WEST adjusted his pince-nez, and regarded Nipper critically.

"Well, dear old boy," he inquired, "how are you feelin'? It's nearly bedtime, an' Phipps is due here to give you a final rub down. I hope you are goin' strong, dear old boy?"

Nipper moved his arms cautiously.

"They're still jolly sore, but all the same, I never expected to be like this!" he declared. "Good old Phipps! If I play in that match to-morrow it'll be his doing!"

"Begad! You're right, Nipper!"

Montie was very pleased with Nipper's progress. And Jerry Dodd and Hussi Kahn were in just as satisfactory condition. The expert Phipps had wrought something which was very much like a miracle to the astonished juniors.

They had fully believed that no play would be possible on the morrow; that they would have to resign their places; and forgo their chance of winning their First Eleven caps.

But Phipps had changed all that.

And the perpetrators of the outrage, over in the Modern House, continued to congratulate themselves upon their success. The four seniors were convinced that their victims would be as helpless as logs when they woke up the next morning.

Nipper was so far recovered by bedtime, or shortly before bedtime, that he went along to Nelson Lee's study to have a few words with his guv'nor. He was still anxious about that Indian mystery, and he wanted to satisfy himself that Nelson Lee would not go off on any dangerous expedition.

But Nelson Lee was not in his study.

And when Nipper made inquiries, he could find no sign of the detective at all. Somebody said that Lee had gone away earlier in the afternoon, and that he hadn't been seen since.

"I can't quite make it out either," said Morrow, of the Sixth. "Mr. Lee told me he'd look in my study this evening, and glance at some chemical apparatus I've got there."

"Didn't he come?" asked Nipper.

"Not a sign of him!" replied Morrow. "That's what struck me as being queer, because Mr. Lee never fails to keep a promise. I expect he went out somewhere, and was detained."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Nipper.

He went off, and his anxiety was increasing.

He had now obtained proof that Nelson Lee had gone out in the afternoon or early evening with the expectancy of being in the school at night. Nelson Lee would not have made such a promise to Morrow otherwise. Why had he kept away? What was the business which had unexpectedly detained him?

Although Nipper was by no means an alarmist, he couldn't help his mind running on those Indians in the cavern. There was something grim about his thoughts. He pictured the tunnel again—the Indian who had attempted to stab Lee in the back. If a thing could happen like that once, it could happen again!

Nipper's anxiety would have been treblefold if he had known about that little package which had arrived for Nelson Lee by the morning post. Fortunately for his peace of mind, he was in ignorance of that.

But, in order to make quite sure, he decided on a bold move. He made his way to the head-master's study and tapped on the door.

"Come in!" came the Head's deep voice.

Nipper entered, and Dr. Stafford regarded him over the top of his glasses.

"Good evening, Hamilton," he exclaimed. "This is an unexpected pleasure! Is there anything I can do? It seems to me that you are looking rather anxious about something."

"Can you tell me where Mr. Lee is, sir?" asked Nipper.

"Well, I'm afraid not."

"He promised Morrow that he'd see him this evening, sir, and I rather expected to see the guv'nor, too," said Nipper. "I was

wondering if he had gone out, and had been unexpectedly detained."

"As a matter of fact, that is precisely the case," smiled the Head.

"Mr. Lee has been detained?" asked Nipper quickly.

"Yes, Hamilton—although there is no necessity to use that startled tone," said the Head. "There is a telegram here from Mr. Lee, which, I will admit, rather took me by surprise. He had given me no intimation of his journey, and I certainly did not anticipate that he might be absent from the school for two or three days."

"Two or three days, sir?" ejaculated Nipper.

"Here is the telegram. Read it for yourself."

Nipper took it, and read the words eagerly:

"Unexpectedly detained in London. Important business. Will return to-morrow if possible, but do not expect me until I arrive.—NELSON LEE."

Nipper returned the wire and smiled.

"That's just like the guv'nor, sir," he said. "He'll never commit himself to anything in a telegram. He may be back to-morrow, or he may not show up for a week."

"And in the meantime we must not worry, eh?" smiled Dr. Stafford. "Well, well! We know Mr. Lee's little ways. Good-night, Hamilton—good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!" said Nipper.

He went out with his mind at rest.

PORTRAIT GALLERY AND WHO'S WHO. Third Series—Fifth Form.

NOTE.—The average age of Fifth Form boys is 17.



No. 11.—George Hodder.

Another of the "learned" men. Hodder rather fancies himself when it comes to classics, and he is very good at Latin. In fact, lots of fellows are friendly with him because they can learn so much after a short chat!

CHAPTER XVIII.

DOUBTS.



P HIPPS permitted himself to elevate his eyebrows.

"Splendid, sir! Indeed, much better than I expected!" he exclaimed, the even note of his voice rising slightly. "I really believe, Master Nipper,

that the morning will find you comparatively fit."

"Phipps, old son, you're superhuman!" said Nipper frankly.

"Not at all, sir—merely versed in this particular subject," said Phipps. "There is nothing astonishing in this result. It is largely a matter of applying the correct treatment. Had you permitted yourself to go unattended, you would have been helpless for the morning. Any kind of movement would have been agonising."

"Absolutely," agreed Archie Glenthorne, who was standing by. "That's what those frightful blighters intended."

"Undoubtedly, sir," agreed Phipps.

"What-ho! But you, Phipps, have been rallying round like the good old fairy in the dashed pantomime," said Archie, beaming. "And how about the other lads? What of Jerry Dodd? All is well with our Australian companion?"

"He is progressing splendidly, sir."

"And good old Hussi?"

"The same, sir."

"Then, Phipps, I shall sleep to-night!" said Archie peacefully.

"We're all terribly relieved to hear that," said Handforth. "Of course, you don't sleep at all usually? It's only a rumour!"

Archie adjusted his monocle, and surveyed Handforth from head to foot. They were in Study C, and the bell was expected to go at any moment. Reggie Pitt and Jack Grey were on the scene, too.

"It seems to me, old stick-in-the-mud, that you are attempting to be dashed personal," said Archie. "I mean to say, when it comes to a matter of sleep— Well, there it is! Sleep, don't you know! The good old joy of life! Without sleep a chappie would positively stagger, and wilt away like a snowflake before the summer's sun."

"If you go on like that, Archie, you'll be writing poetry soon!" grinned Reggie Pitt. "But I must say that I agree with you. Sleep is the thing—healthy, good old sleep! You buzz off to bed, Nipper, and see that you get your full allowance!"

Reggie was deeply concerned about the outrage. Although he was captain of the Second Eleven, and was fully occupied with his own cricket affairs, he took a great amount of interest in Nipper and Dodd and Kahn.

Reggie was not at all jealous of these three juniors, who were in the First. He was a good cricketer himself, but a better captain, and under his able leadership the Second Eleven had been doing great things.

Match after match had been won, and the Second Eleven was improving with every day that passed.

When Nipper lay in bed that night he didn't sleep, however. For at least an hour after the others had gone off into slumber, he looked into the darkness of the dormitory, and his mind was active.

He was thinking of many things—the coming match, the physical condition of Jerry



Dazed, bewildered, and sagging at the knees, Willy wandered away, hardly knowing where he was going or what he was doing.

Dodd, Hussi Kahn, and himself—their possibilities of doing well and winning their caps; but, most important of all, he was thinking of Nelson Lee.

Now that he came to think things over, he wasn't as satisfied as he had been about that telegram. In the first place, why had his guv'nor gone to London? Of course, it was quite on the cards that the detective had made an unexpected trip to the Metropolis to make inquiries at the India Office or something of that kind.

But it struck Nipper as rather strange that Lee should have gone without having a word with him first. There was no conceit in that thought. Nelson Lee and Nipper had a thorough understanding between them.

And there was such a bond of affection between the two that Lee seldom went on a journey without at least bidding his young assistant good-bye. To go off without a word was unusual, and Lee only did that sort of thing when he was called away at a moment's notice.

There was nothing to indicate that such had been the case this time.

And why was Nelson Lee so indefinite? That telegram would cause the Head no anxiety. If Nelson Lee didn't show up for a whole week, Dr. Stafford would not worry.

Besides, wasn't it rather queer that Lee hadn't sent a message to Nipper himself? Nipper knew all about that business of the tunnel and the mysterious Hindoos. Surely

he would have sent Nipper something—especially after their conversation in the morning?

To tell the truth, doubts began to creep into Nipper's mind.

And a startling thought occurred to him. Was that telegram genuine? Had Nelson Lee sent it, or was it a mere fake? This was the thought which caused Nipper to worry more than ever.

It was so easy to send a wire in somebody else's name. Anybody could do it. And when the message was so indefinite there was all the more reason to doubt its authenticity.

"Well, it's no good worrying now," Nipper told himself finally. "If I don't get any sleep, I shall be fit for nothing to-morrow. But, by Jove, I'll make a move of some kind to-morrow if there's nothing further from the guv'nor!"

And with this decision he had to be content.

CHAPTER XIX.

BEFORE THE MATCH.



GUY SINCLAIR turned out of bed with a happy smile.

"About time, too!" said Carlile, who had come into Sinclair's bed-room to shake him up. "The Redcliffe match to-day, you know—and those three rotten juniors are going to get their colours!"

The two seniors grinned joyously.

"They've got plenty of colours—black and blue!" said Sinclair brilliantly. "Have you heard anything yet?"

"Haven't been down," said Carlile.

"Well, you can take it from me that the young beggars won't be able to get out at all!" chuckled Sinclair as he went across to the washstand. "They'll be so sore that they won't be able to move an inch. It only shows, Carlile, old man, that it's just as well to take plenty of precautions."

Carlile nodded.

"Ripping morning!" he observed as he went to the window. "Everybody thought it was going to rain, but the clouds have cleared off, and the sun's shining like the deuce. Hot, too. I'll bet it'll be sweltering by noon. I see they're practising already!"

Carlile looked idly across to the playing fields. Then suddenly his nonchalant air vanished. He gave a violent start. An expression of startled amazement entered his eyes.

"Why, what on earth—I say, Sinclair!" he ejaculated hoarsely. "Come here—quick! Quick!" he added, with a gasp.

Sinclair turned with a wet face, amazed by the other's tone.

"What's the matter?" he asked, running across.

"Look out there!" shouted Carlile.

"Where? I can't see anything. Those chaps on big side?" asked Sinclair. "What on earth are you—"

"Can't you see who they are?" roared Carlile. "Nipper! Dodd! Kahn! They're at practice! Don't you recognise them?"

Sinclair shook the water from his eyes, and stared.

"Great Scott!" he panted. "I believe you're right."

"I don't believe anything about it—I know I'm right!" exclaimed the other. "What does it mean? I thought they were going to be helpless? And there's Nipper batting just the same as usual! And Dodd's bowling! And that beastly little Indian kid is jumping about like a jack-in-the-box!"

At that moment Grayson sauntered in, smiling.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he announced. "Morning! Coming down to see the fun? Coming down to see the heroes crawl into sight—"

"You infernal fool!" snapped Sinclair. "This is the way they're crawling! You and your ideas!" he added contemptuously.

Grayson went over to the window, and then turned pale.

"But—but it's impossible!" he said hoarsely, all his good humour vanishing. "I tell you, it's impossible! After the way we smashed them about they must be smothered with bruises! It's just bravado—nothing else! The young fools are in agony!"

The seniors, alarmed and disappointed beyond measure, continued to watch the juniors practising. And they were compelled to admit that there was nothing particularly awkward in their movements.

On Big Side, the Fourth trio were trying to get their muscles into trim. It was agony for Dodd to bowl, and the bat felt like a ton weight in Nipper's grip. But gradually the pain wore off.

"I think we shall be all right," said Nipper, at length. "I say, Phipps is marvellous! He ought to be a specialist!"

"By jings, he is!" said Jerry enthusiastically.

"But for him we should have been as helpless as logs," went on Nipper. "Of course, we can't do our best—and it's up to us to tell Fenton. We'll leave it to him whether we figure in the Eleven."

As it happened, Edgar Fenton, the popular captain of St. Frank's appeared in sight at that moment with Morrow. They had been attracted to the cricket-field just to have a look at the wicket. Not that it really wanted looking at—for it was in perfect condition.

Nipper and Dodd and Kahn went over from the practice-ground and faced the two seniors.

"I'm not sure whether we ought to play to-day, Fenton," said Nipper. "We didn't tell you anything last night—didn't want to worry you. But at one time it seemed

that we shouldn't be able to turn out at all."

"What's this—a joke?" asked Fenton, staring.

Nipper briefly explained the circumstances and both Fenton and Morrow looked grave and concerned. This was serious news, indeed. Fenton had been growing to rely more and more upon the three junior members of his team. They had proved themselves to be a tower of strength to the side.

"It sounds like a wild invention—but I know you better than that, Hamilton," said Fenton. "I'd better have a look at your bruises, and decide. It'll be no good me having you in the team if you're crocked. Redcliffe is a hot team. We beat them on their own ground, but we had a certain amount of luck."

They went into the pavilion, and here, in privacy, the three juniors displayed their bruises. On their upper arms there were many discolourations—but, owing to Phipps' expert treatment, these discolourations were nothing compared to what they would have been.

"Well, upon my word!" said Fenton grimly. "What do you think of that, Morrow? Can you imagine anything more despicably blackguardly?"

CHAPTER XX.

FENTON DECIDES.



MORROW looked angry. "Blackguardly?" he repeated. "Those infernal cads ought to be kicked out of the school! Fancy attempting to crock three of our men like this! They can't play in that condition! Their muscles must be as stiff as the deuce!"

"How do you feel?" asked Fenton anxiously.

"Pretty rotten, but we'll stick it," said Nipper.

"I don't think I can bowl, Fenton, but I'll try," put in Jerry Dodd. "But it's possible that I can bat. And we may be better by eleven o'clock. Phipps is going to give us a final massage directly after breakfast."

"How do you feel about it yourselves?" asked Fenton. "I'm putting it to you frankly, because I want a straight answer. If I keep you in the team do you think you'll make a mess of things?"

"Well, no," said Nipper. "I feel fairly confident."

"You realise, of course, that your colours depend upon this match?" asked Fenton. "If you fail I shall have to make up the team without you. Still, we needn't go into that now. I may possibly give you another chance in view of these bruises. But we've got to beat Redcliffe—that's the chief point

to-day. Can you help, or will you be a hindrance?"

"By jingo, we'll do the utmost we can," said Jerry promptly.

"You may expectantly believe that we shall put up a disgracefully excellent performance," put in Hussi Kahn. "Our muscles are flexibly stiff, but we can bear the pain with disgusting fortitude. We will be cheerful and unhappy to play."

"Well, if I keep you in the team, I shall expect you to put up a good fight," said Fenton. "I don't know who to play as substitute if you fail, so my hand is more or less forced. I'll decide later on—after I've had a talk with Phipps."

And soon after breakfast Fenton's decision was made.

The Fourth-Form trio was to play. And the Fourth Form, when it heard the news, cheered vigorously. At least, the Ancient House fellows did. Over in the Modern House the fellows were probably pleased, but they didn't make a song about it. In the school's present frame of mind, no Modern House juniors would think of cheering a rival.

The three most unhappy fellows in St. Frank's were undoubtedly Sinclair, Carlile, and Mills. They had been hoping that their own chances of returning to the team would be increased. They had not realised that the slim chances they had had were now practically dead. Fenton wanted sportsmen in his Eleven—not hooligans.

And it galled them to see Nipper and the other two juniors walking about just as usual.

As for Grayson, he simply gritted his teeth when Nipper gazed at him across the Triangle, and gave him a happy smile. Grayson turned on his heel, and strode away. As the originator of the plot, his own feelings were bitter. And he was not made any the happier by the fact that Sinclair, Carlile, and Mills addressed many insulting and pointed remarks at him.

It was shortly after eleven before the Redcliffe team arrived. Sanders, the skipper, was looking merry and bright. He had got his team into much better shape, so he said, and he had come over with the firm determination of avenging the previous defeat.

"You playing the same team?" he asked Fenton.

"Yes."

"Those juniors as well?"

"Exactly the same team," said Fenton.

"Well, I've got three new men with me," said Sanders contentedly. "I'm not going to make any prophesies—but I can tell you they're mustard. Oh, by the way, I thought I'd better mention it. I've made up my mind to bat first."

"Splendid!" said Fenton. "If you don't mind, though, I think we'll toss for it. It's quite the usual thing over here."

Sanders grinned.

"That's all right—I'm going to win," he replied.

But when they tossed, he lost, and made a rueful face.

"That's what comes of being too sure!" chuckled Fenton. "Sorry, Sanders, but we're going in with the express purpose of setting you an impossible task."

They laughed at this banter—for, after all, neither skipper was given to boasting or making prophesies. It is always risky to be a prophet in cricket!

The weather, however, certainly made Fenton feel happy. It was simply glorious, and so unexpected, too. Everybody had predicted a wet day—and, as usual, everybody was wrong.

At 11.30 the Redcliffe men took the field, and Fenton and Morrow sallied out of the pavilion to open the St. Frank's batting.

CHAPTER XXI.

EARLY DISASTERS.



THE match started very quietly.

The empty playing-fields, the deserted appearance of the whole scene, and the shimmering heat of the early summer's day made the players reserve their energies. Somehow, it was difficult to do anything sensational without any spectators looking on.

The Redcliffe bowling was better than it had been, and Fenton and Morrow opened their scores very cautiously. For the first ten minutes, indeed, the cricket was inexpressibly dull.

In three overs only two runs were scored, and the bowlers had never given the batsmen an opening for a drive. But at the beginning of the fourth over Fenton began to find his form.

He was getting better and better as a batsman. Although essentially a bowler, he was so steady with the willow that the school was beginning to look to him for a good, solid innings.

But this morning the school looked in vain.

Misfortune overtook Fenton. In attempting an on-drive he misjudged the leather, and it slipped under his bat, and removed one of the stumps. Fenton was out for 3!

Following this, Wilson took Fenton's place, and did exactly the same thing as his captain, and was dismissed for 3 also. Then William Napoleon Browne came along and helped Morrow to put up a stand.

With the score at 25, however, Morrow gave an easy catch to mid-on, and mid-on made no mistake about it. 25 for three was not particularly startling.

And worse was to follow.

Rees made a dreadful hash of things by putting his leg before the wicket after he had been batting for only three minutes, and

with his score still standing at the beautiful figure of 0.

Nipper came out after that, and Fenton watched him anxiously. Fenton was more than ever keen upon his junior men doing well now. On a perfect wicket, the best men of his side were being cheaply dismissed! It was one of those things which nobody can properly understand.

In the Helmford match Nipper had made his century, and he already had a reputation of being a superb bat. So great things were expected now. Fenton remembered Nipper's bruises, but he dismissed the thought. Nipper would rise to the occasion.

And Fenton was not entirely disappointed.

Nipper and Browne got the hang of the Redcliffe bowling in a masterly manner, and proceeded to knock up some runs quickly. There was a perfect understanding between them, and they were particularly good when it came to snatching singles. Slowly but surely the score rose, until the figures read 50—4.

The figures were getting better. But just when Nipper was getting beautifully set, and he had made 22, he gave the ghost of a chance to third slip. And third slip, more by luck than anything else, accepted it. The ball came past like a bullet. But third slip's hand shot out, and he miraculously held the leather.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

"Oh, good catch!"

Even Fenton clapped vigorously. It was one of the smartest catches he had seen in the season. Third slip was shaking his hand, and blowing his fingers painfully. And he was compelled to retire for some minutes to have a split finger attended to.

"Hard lines—you were doing fine," said Fenton, as Nipper came in.

"And I thought that was going to be a boundary, too," said Nipper ruefully.

"It would have been," exclaimed Fenton. "What on earth did that slip man want to get in the way like that for?"

"Those fellows are always in the way!" said Nipper gloomily.

Stevens did not distinguish himself in the least. He made 4 runs in twenty minutes, but was then bowled. And the score stood at 73—6. There was not much prospect of St. Frank's putting up a big total.

Unhappily, a collapse followed.

Jerry Dodd and Hussi Kahn both failed—owing solely, there can be no doubt, to their stiff muscles. It was impossible for them to handle the bat flexibly, and Dodd was out for 12, and Kahn only made 7. Browne himself succumbed with adding hardly any to his score.

At five minutes before the luncheon interval the last wicket fell. It was a dramatic failure on the part of St. Frank's. With everything in their favour, and with the knowledge that they had beaten Redcliffe before, they could make no more than 99.

Fenton was thoroughly upset.

The poor performance of his three junior players preyed upon him. He had expected them to do big things. He almost forgot the handicap they were suffering from.

"Of course, you needn't expect to get your caps now," he said gruffly. "This was the real test to-day—and you failed. I'm afraid I shall have to make up my team without you juniors in it."

"The game isn't over yet, Fenton," said Nipper quietly. "Still, your word goes, and it's up to us to accept it."

And it seemed that the three Fourth-Formers were doomed to fail at the last hurdle—just when their colours were within sight.

CHAPTER XXII.

A STIFF TASK.



EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH started.

"What's that—ninety-nine all out?" he ejaculated. "What rot! Why, Nipper was going to make a

century on his own!"

"It's no good going on like that, Handy—there are the figures," said Church. "Ninety-nine all out! My hat! That's a rotten score, if you like! Ninety-nine all out!"

He repeated it in a mechanical kind of way. And plenty of other fellows were doing the same thing. Coming out after lessons, the school had confidently expected to find that the First had put up a big total. Many fellows had declared that no more than two wickets would be down.

And here they discovered the whole side dismissed for less than a century!

It was a shock for the school, and seemed to spell complete disaster.

Everybody was talking gloomily about defeat, and, for the first time since early morning, Carlile & Co. were happy. Their scheme had worked, after all! For the juniors had done badly, and everybody was already saying that they would never get their colours.

There was just a possibility that Nipper would be given his cap, but Jerry Dodd and Hussi Kahn were hopelessly out of it. And the Fourth Form was particularly depressed.

The feud showed no signs of breaking out into a storm. Fortunately, the spectators sorted themselves out into Ancient House groups and Modern House groups. And as long as the rival parties did not clash, there was very little chance of disturbances.

And the interest in the match was so great that nobody wanted to precipitate any unpleasantness. When play started after lunch, there was a tension in the air—for everything now depended upon the way in which the St. Frank's bowlers dealt with Redcliffe.

With only a century to get to win, the visitors apparently had an exceedingly easy

task. Many fellows declared that the game wouldn't be worth watching. But the majority were struck by the grim, determined expressions on the faces of the First Eleven as they took the field.

But Fenton and his men hadn't given up hope!

The St. Frank's bowlers, however, soon found that the visitors were taking full advantage of the excellent batsmen's wicket. Sanders and another Redcliffe man opened the innings, and made no mistake about it.

Although Browne was giving of his best, and was well supported by Fenton, they seemed to make no impression on the enemy. The first wicket partnership was a big success, and Sanders and his companion proceeded to put up a stubborn stand.

"Well, of course, there's nothing more to be said!" snorted Handforth, as he stood looking on. "Fancy letting those two chaps knock up the runs at such a rate! Disgusting!"

"Our bowlers are doing their best!" growled Church. "It's no good grumbling at 'em. We don't like to admit it, but these Redcliffe chaps are fine batsmen. They're up to every trick."

"And we're going to lose by about seven wickets!" growled Handforth.

Undoubtedly, the Redcliffe pair were making sure of things to begin with, and after the first half-hour they opened their shoulders, and hit powerfully. The runs came with disturbing rapidity.

In well under the hour the 40 had been passed, and it was not until the score stood at 46 that the partnership was broken.

"Thank goodness!" said Nipper fervently. "I thought they were going on for ever. Forty-six for one! Not much hope now!"

But two more wickets fell a few minutes later, with another three runs added. The Saints began to hope again.

But they were previous, for there followed another stand. Redcliffe were doing splendidly.

"Oh, we shall never win now!" growled Nipper. "Fifty-nine for three! And the score's mounting all the time! At this rate we shall be wiped up!"

"There may be a collapse," said Jerry Dodd hopefully.

"Not much chance of it now," replied Nipper, shaking his head.

Round the field, the spectators were equally glum.

"They're going to whack us by eight wickets, at least!" declared Handforth.

"Fathead! How can they?" asked Church. "Three wickets are down already! Your arithmetic is a bit rocky, old man!"

"Don't quibble about a wicket or so!" roared Handforth, exasperated. "The game's lost, so what's the good of standing here, looking on? I'm fed up! I've never seen such a fiasco! It's all the fault of our chaps for making such a rotten score. Ninety-nine, all out! Horrible!"

And Edward Oswald folded his arms, and

glared at the field as though it had done him some personal injury.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FIGHTING SPIRIT.



CHURCH couldn't help grinning. "I'm blessed if I can understand you, Handy," he chuckled. "At one time you're a marvellous optimist, and at another

you're about the biggest pessimist under the sun. I've never known such a fellow for extremes."

"He can't help it," said McClure. "Leave him alone."

Handforth sniffed.

"You can say what you like—we're going to lose this match!" he exclaimed firmly. "In fact, it's lost already! I'm no pessimist, but I know a side when it's whacked! And the First Eleven's whacked!"

"Well, that's practically a foregone conclusion," admitted McClure. "It's rotten luck, especially as we beat Redcliffe on their own ground last time. Still, we can't always win. A game's a game, and if the First Eleven loses this match it will have to—"

"What rot!" interrupted Handforth, glaring.

"Eh?"

"Who's talking about St. Frank's losing?" demanded Edward Oswald.

"You're a fine supporter, Arnold McClure! Things may look bad, but we're going to wipe Redcliffe up! You mark my words!"

McClure stared blankly.

"Why, you ass, you just said the game was lost already!" he exclaimed indignantly.

"I'm blessed if I know what you're talking about—you don't even know yourself! You say one thing one minute, and then contradict it the next!"

Handforth turned his shoulder to his chums, and stared moodily at the cricket. As a matter of fact, he didn't know what to think. He was hoping that the game

would turn out well, yet something told him that it was too late to expect victory.

But a change came over the game a minute or two later—a change which caused the crowds to watch with breathless excitement.

In one way, it was the fault of Sanders. He suffered from the fatal malady of over-confidence. But he certainly had a good excuse, for, according to all the rules of the game, the match was won. It is never safe, however, to take anything for granted in cricket.

When the next man was dismissed the score stood at the comfortable figure of 75—4. With only 25 runs to get for victory, and six wickets in hand, the game was merely a joke.

And Sanders fully regarded it as such.

"There's no reason why we shouldn't show these St. Frank's chaps some fireworks," he said to his men in the pavilion. "You can get these 25 runs on your heads. The game's ours."

"Easy enough!" said the others.

"So hit as briskly as you like," advised Sanders. "I'd like to see those runs knocked off at lightning speed. We shall win by several wickets, and then possibly carry on for another hour—just to show St. Frank's how cricket really ought to be played."

The others grinned, and the next man went in with the firm intention of letting off the fireworks that Sanders had suggested. He gave the tip to his partner, too.

The small task before them made them reckless, and Sanders wasn't feeling quite so happy when the new man was magnificently caught in the deep from his very first hit. He had meant that stroke to be a six, too.

"That was a good catch," said Fenton, turning to Morrow. "Dodd, too! I wonder if he'd be any good at bowling?"

"I'd try him, if I were you," said Morrow. "That stiffness is wearing off now."

"All right, Arthur—a bit later on," said the skipper.

Quite a number of fellows were leaving

PORTRAIT GALLERY AND WHO'S WHO.

Third Series—Fifth Form.

NOTE.—The average age of Fifth Form boys is 17.



No. 12.—Stephen Parry.

A somewhat indolent senior, and the bane of Mr. Pagett's existence. Parry always chooses the line of least resistance, and is consequently at the bottom of his Form. In all other respects, he is quite a good sort.

the pavilion and the field generally. The game didn't seem worth watching, for the end was bound to come very soon now.

"Seventy-five for five," grunted Handforth disgustedly. "It makes me sick to look at it. Our chaps ought to be boiled in oil for only making 99!"

"Don't keep harping on it, old man," sighed Church. "It's getting a bit stale, you know—My only hat! Hold it, Nipper—hold it! Oh, good man! Well caught!"

"Out!"

victory, but the rapid falling of the last one or two wickets gave the spectators a faint feeling of hope.

"Is it possible?" muttered Fenton, to himself. "Is it possible?"

A buzz went round the Fourth when Jerry Dodd took the ball, and removed his sweater. And a roar went up from every corner of the field when Jerry sent down his first delivery. It was a terror, and the batsman only just escaped disaster.

Jerry Dodd was evidently out for mischief!



Armed with cricket stumps, the Ancient House fags marched grimly and firmly towards the Modern House.

Nipper had accepted a difficult catch, and he did not fail to hold it. Interest in the game was revived—particularly as the St. Frank's players were fighting desperately—using every ounce of their skill and cunning. They bore none of the signs of a beaten team.

Seventy-seven—six!

It was looking a little bit better, although still comparatively hopeless. Those fellows who were walking away came back again, and looked on. Somehow, there was an air of tension in the atmosphere. Only a moderate stand would give Redcliffe a

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN EXCITING FINISH.



"WE'RE going to win!" roared Handforth excitedly. "What

did I tell you all along? Just you wait! Jerry's going to do the hat trick now! He'll take three wickets in succession, and then we shall be as safe as houses!"

"Oh, dry up!" said Church. "We're looking at cricket—not watching miracles!"

"All right—wait!" said Handforth tensely. There was nothing else to do. But the much-hoped-for "miracle" did not come off. The batsman calmly sent Jerry to the boundary for 4. And it was evident that he meant to bat recklessly. With only 19 runs to win the game, Sanders had instructed his batsmen to go all out.

With four wickets in hand, Sanders felt that he could easily afford to take the apparently flimsy risk. But his policy was as bad as his judgment.

Nineteen runs to get!

And at this breathless state of the game, William Napoleon Browne came out with true dramatic effect. It was a new over,

The yell which went up seemed to crack the atmosphere. Only two more wickets to fall! And there were nineteen runs to get! Unexpectedly, St. Frank's had a fine chance of winning the game.

And Fenton did not lose sight of the fact that his junior men were partly responsible for the position. When Browne prepared to take his next run, the crowd stood silent and tense.

The leather left his fingers, the batsman hesitated, jumped out, and swiped wildly. Slap! With the batsman out of his crease, the wicket-keeper deftly caught the ball, and slammed it into the wicket. The bails went flying.

STORIES OF SPORT, SCHOOL AND ADVENTURE

THE Boys' Friend Library

No. 761. THE ROTTER OF THE ROVERS.

A Splendid Story of the Footer Field, introducing DIOR DARE. By RANDOLPH RYLE.

No. 762. THAT TERRIBLE TERM!

A Rollicking Summer Story of Schoolboy Fun and Adventure. By SIDNEY DREW.

No. 763. DON DARREL ON THE TURF.

A Magnificent Yarn of Racing and Adventure on the Turf. By VICTOR NELSON.

No. 764. THE CADDIES OF ST. CUTHBERT'S.

A Novel and Exciting Sports Story of a Boy Golfer's Career. By A. S. HARDY.

THE Sexton Blake Library

No. 379. LIMITED LIABILITY.

A Story of Detective Work, introducing Sexton Blake and Tinker.

No. 380. BY ORDER OF THE KING.

A Magnificent Tale of Mystery and Detective Adventure in England and ABYSSINIA.

No. 381. THE MYSTERY OF THE POT-BANK.

A Romance of the Potteries and the Peak District

No. 382. THE TRAINER'S SECRET.

A Fascinating Story of the DERBY, featuring Sexton Blake and Tinker.

THE SCHOOL-BOYS' OWN LIBRARY

No. 3. THE GREYFRIARS BUSINESS MAN.

A Mirth-provoking Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

No. 4. THE FIGHTING FORM OF ST. FRANK'S.

A Ripping Yarn of School Life at St. Frank's, featuring Willy Handforth the Boy who Wouldn't be Bullied. By EDW. SEARLES BROOKS.

NOW ON SALE!

PRICE FOURPENCE EACH!

and Browne had the bowling. He put every trick he knew into that delivery, for he was on his mettle. The batsman raised his willow, misjudged the leather by a fraction, and his middle stump flew out of the ground.

"Out!" shrieked the crowd.

The excitement grew into a veritable storm. But the noise might have been heard in Bannington itself a few minutes later when Browne sent down the second ball of the over.

The batsman guarded his wicket, but he returned the ball neatly into William Napoleon's waiting palm.

"Out!"

"S that?" gasped the wicket-keeper.

"Out!" replied the umpire promptly.

A perfect roar of cheering went up, and Handforth seized Church's cap and flung it into the air. And Church was so excited that he didn't notice it.

"The hat trick!" bellowed Handforth.

"What did I tell you?"

"Looks more like the cap trick to me," said McClure breathlessly. "Besides, you said that Jerry Dodd was going to do the hat trick."

"What does it matter who does it?" demanded Handforth. "There's only one wicket to fall—and we've won the giddy game!"

But even now it seemed that victory was about to be torn from the First Eleven's grasp. Extraordinarily enough, a last wicket stand followed Browne's magnificent feat.

The new man was the last hope of his side. And he came out with the laudable determination to save the game. He and his partner were ultra-cautious, and they stole runs slowly.

A silence settled over the spectators, and the noisy excitement died down. This was hardly what they had bargained for. A last wicket stand! And the score rose slowly but surely.

At 86 a boundary was hit, bringing up the total to 90. Only 10 runs to get, and Redcliffe would win! Jerry Dodd and Browne were still bowling, and they were grim.

But the batsman who had scored the boundary was encouraged. Two balls later he did the same thing, and took the score to 94. The tension was acute.

And yet again! Clack! From one of Jerry's deliveries, the leather hissed over

the turf out of reach of the fieldsmen, and up went another 4. Groans arose from every side of the field.

One to draw—2 for game! In spite of everything, Redcliffe was snatching victory.

A pin might have been heard to drop as Jerry bowled again. Round swung the bat, and the ball was sent spinning away. It was winging off for another boundary. The game was over— But Nipper performed the apparently impossible. He was running—skimming like mad across the turf. With outstretched fingers, he reached for the leather, his fingers touched it, and gripped.

Over he rolled, but he held the ball, and flung it high.

"Out!"

"Oh, good catch!"

"Hurrah!"

It was the finest catch of the match, and St. Frank's had won the game by 1 run! And even the most exacting spectator could hardly wish for a more exciting finish than that!

THE END.

NEXT WEEK!

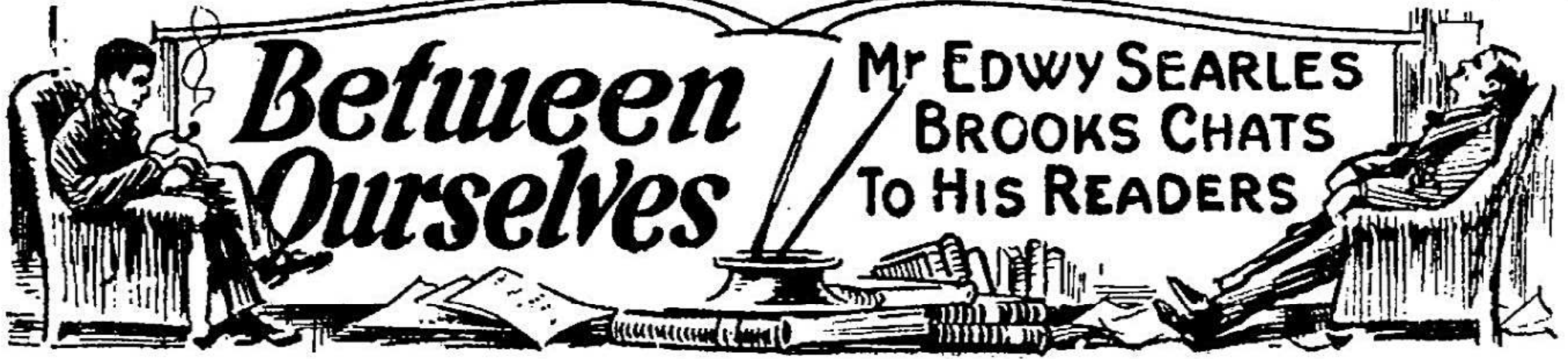
THE THREE SUBSTITUTES;

or,

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR!

Another long, absorbing story of the Great Cricketing Series and how the growing feud between the Ancient and Modern Houses threatens to interfere with the home match against Yexford.

Also, more about the mysterious Goolah Kahn, the Rajah of Kurpana, and the strange disappearance of NELSON LEE.



(NOTE.—If any readers write to me, I shall be pleased to comment upon such remarks as are likely to interest the majority. If you have any suggestions—send them along. If you have any grumbles—make them to me! All letters should be addressed to EDWY SEARLES BROOKS, c/o The Editor, THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Remember, my aim is to please as many of you as I possibly can. So it's up to you to let me know your likes and dislikes.—E.S.B.).

It may be some weeks yet—just possibly, even longer—but you can take my word for it that the League is NOT a myth.

Thanks for your nice letter, Cissie Snell. No, I haven't forgotten Tessa Love, although I must confess I've neglected her somewhat. One can't bring every character into the limelight at once, you know. You ask me if you can write again. Why? Don't you know that I always welcome any letters, long or short, and the more criticisms you can include, the better. That's what this feature is for—for all of you to let me know your likes and dislikes at first hand. By all means write again.

I say, "Westcliff Reader," what's the idea? You write me about five lines—quite nice lines, by the way—and in a postscript you ask me to say what I think of you! You'll have to write me a longer letter before I can form any opinion.

Here, what next? It's you I'm addressing, J. Cook. You begin your letter "Dear Edwy," and then express the hope that I shan't mind you addressing me by my nickname! Nickname!! Let me tell you, my son, that "Edwy" was allotted to me at the time of my christening. There's no spoof about my name at all—it's not merely a nom-de-plume. And if you look up history, you'll find that there was once a king of England called "Edwy the Fair." But as he died fairly young on the battlefield, I hope there are no other points of resemblance between us. Lots of people tell me that I shall soon have grey hair, and that I've already got one foot in the grave, but I ignore these optimists. They say I'm working too hard, and that I should ease down. But what the dickens can I do, when you all keep worrying me for more St. Frank's stories?

"I'm only joking, of course. The fact is, the harder I work, the better I feel. It's a funny thing, but you'll generally find in this life that if you slack about and

Letters received: R. Gridsell (Carlesbury, N.Z.), A. H. Goodwin (Newcastle, N.S.W.), "Bill" (Tinwald), John Warner (Gisborne, N.Z.), W. Anema (Beaconsfield, S.A.), E. Hash (address unknown), Cissie Snell (South Woodford), W. Gibbs (Nantyglo, Mon.), "A Westcliff Reader" (Southend-on-Sea), "Regular Reader" (Yorks), J. Cook (E.14), William Slade (E.16), Dudley Lister (Yorks), E. Minific (Weston-super-Mare), "An N.L.L. Enthusiast" (Nr. Leicester), "Reader" (Peckham), Michael Burke (Ireland), A. Anderson (Scotland), D. S. Clark (Surrey), Grahame Watting (S.W.17), W. F. Dickinson (Liverpool), Ronald Appleby (Newport, Mon.), S. L. Lampon (Herts.), H. Lennarel (Suffolk), "ARDNJNXYZ" (Wolverhampton), Stanley Opie-Bice (Surrey), Higgie (Lancs.), Maurice Garvarten (Glasgow), Cyril W. Mitchell (Halifax), William J. Scholes (Canada), G. S. (Southampton), L. W. Penny (Southampton), W. Sayer (Kent), H. Bateman (Bradford), "Old Friend" (N.B.), Sinclair R. Dobie (Eastbourne), G. Burgess (Selsey), A. M. Schofield (Cheshire), W. H. Edmunds (Essex), S. E. Bate, Jr. (Lancs.), "An Enthusiastic Reader" (Hither Green).

First of all, a whisper about the St. Frank's League. The Editor and I have been putting our heads together a good deal lately (no, there weren't any splinters), and as far as I can officially say at present, it won't be so very long before the League becomes a reality. Don't be impatient—just wait for the Editor to give the word.

do nothing, you'll feel listless and fed up. It's when you're working hard on your job, and putting your full attention to it, that you get the best out of life. Don't think I'm indulging in a little lecture—not a bit of it. I'm just stating a fact.

Talking about work, in a few weeks "The Boys' Realm" will commence a special series of holiday camp stories, all about the St. Frank's juniors. So you can't accuse me of being lazy, can you—especially as the stories in Our Paper are now longer than ever?

Thanks for your very entertaining letter, Dudley Lister. I'll excuse the pencil because it was so well written. Yes, the list of stories you mentioned were all perpetrated by yours truly. Why do you ask? Is there something wrong with them? I understand that before becoming acquainted with Our Paper you always looked upon it as a "ghastly blood"—and then changed your mind after reading one issue. I wonder how many other fellows are walking about with the same lamentable impression?

You pick me up on a question concerning Buster Boots, E. Minific. According to the Portrait Gallery, Boots is skipper of the Modern House football. But when he first came to St. Frank's, you inform me, he disliked football. My dear chap, that's nothing. Lots of fellows develop in a very surprising way after being at school for some time. They change their habits, and alter their ways. Several of my characters are entirely different now from when they were first introduced. Look at Reggie Pitt, for example. Who would ever have thought that he would one day become Form Captain?

It's rather a coincidence that you should write to me concerning the seniors, "Peckham Reader." You inform me that in your opinion there was one thing wrong with Our Paper—not enough about the seniors. Well, what about it now? Just lately we've had the Fifth and Sixth fairly in the limelight, and even your desire concerning Jerry Dodd has been fulfilled. And, mind you, these stories were written long before your letter reached me!

So you want the summer stories to be about an uninhabited island in the Pacific, Michael Burke? Well, I think I might as well let everybody into the secret now—not that it's much of a secret. At one time I thought about British Guiana or the Amazon as the scene for our summer holiday stories. But after a lot of thought, and after a good deal of planning, I have decided that a coral island in the Pacific

will be more to the liking of general readers. But these summer stories won't be of the usual type—wrecked on a desert island, and so forth. No, I've got something quite different in store. But we shall have the atmosphere of the South Seas, the coral lagoon, savages, and all the rest of it. I'm not going to give you even a hint of the central idea of the series, for that might spoil your interest. But I'm going to do my very utmost to make these holiday stories the best I've ever written.

Glad you've got that copy of Our Paper, W. F. Dickinson. You wish me to thank Miss Eveline Stephenson as soon as possible, so I take the first opportunity of doing so. I hope she sees these few lines. No, I don't think I had the impression that you were a man, but I certainly thought you were rather older than 14. Let me congratulate you upon your handwriting. I expect you to get full marks for it, don't you?

Very nice of you to send me that design, S. L. Lampon. I'm not at all sure whether I can make use of it, but I'll try. And when you ask me for a "nice long reply" (in printed letters, and underlined) I hardly know what to say. There's not much in your letter to reply to. But if you write again and give me some questions to answer, I'll do my best.

There's really no need for me to send you those back numbers you require, Stanley Opie-Bice. They are quite recent issues, and if you order them from the nearest newsagent, you'll certainly get them. I'm not the publishing department, remember. Of course, if you can't get the issues—and I don't think there's any fear in that direction—let me know.

Sorry that you are disappointed about the heights and weights, Higgle. You see, in the present form of the Portrait Gallery, there isn't room for all that sort of thing. I don't think it matters much, anyhow. The Third and the Fifth are not quite so important as the Fourth. Besides, there's always plenty of time in the future. I hope your nose has quite recovered by this time, and that it has now resumed its normal manly shape.

You must have taken a lot of trouble over those sketches of Pine Grove Camp, William J. Scholes. Thanks for the particulars. Although you are not an artist, you have at least managed to give me some very graphic impressions of your life in camp, and I trust your hope—that you will

go into camp again—will one day come true.

You ask me a few questions about the Paramount Studios, in Hollywood, G. S. I saw all sorts of famous people acting before the camera during that interesting visit, but I knew better than to engage any of them in conversation. When these stars are acting they are oblivious of all surroundings, but woe betide the onlooker who butts in! When I was watching Miss Gloria Swanson, she was absolutely detached, and went calmly ahead with her work as though she were in her drawing-room—taking absolutely no notice of camera men, assistants and spectators. And this, mind you, despite the fact that a big spectacular scene, with hundreds of "extras" was being "shot" near by. The noise from this was considerable, but Miss Swanson appeared to notice nothing. In this spectacular scene, let me add, I saw George K. Arthur, being ducked in a pool until he was nearly exhausted—and Bull Montana took an active hand in this affair. I can assure you, these film actors earn every penny of their money!

What's the meaning of this? Here's the beginning of a letter from H. Bateman: "28, High Street, Thornton, Bradford. Dear Sir,—Should above address be published together with answer in full in your replies, it would convince over a dozen friends who have been regular readers for several years that at last their grumblings and disappointments are being noted." Well, there's the address in full—now about the answer in full. What are these grumblings and disappointments? In the main, you apparently want the school stories to occupy the whole book. Well, aren't you satisfied with the present state of affairs? In response to thousands of requests, the St. Frank's story is now much longer, and I don't see how the Editor can do much else. As for introducing boxing tournaments between other schools and St. Frank's, I think you ought to leave this to me, H. Bateman. And if you write again, will you please explain what you mean by your phrase, "a continuance of present methods."

I've read your short story, "Old Friend," and if you want it back, I'll return it. As you are only thirteen, I have made allowances. The story shows a slight amount of promise, but the central idea is crudely developed. If you ever become an author, you'll need to put in a few years of practice. As I mentioned in one of my other chats, an apprenticeship is always hard to serve—and I think the apprenticeship for story writing is the hardest of all. It is a path that is strewn with disappointments

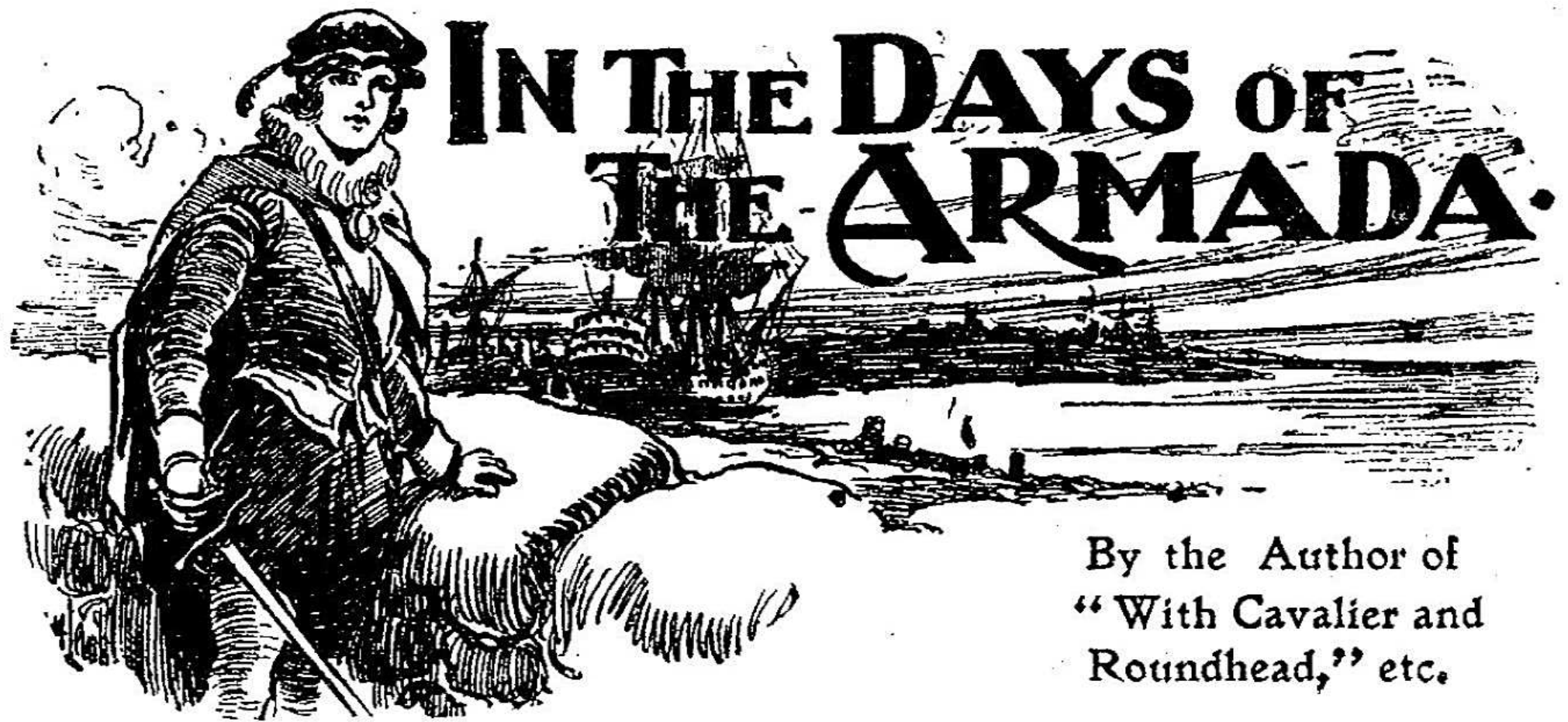
and sorrows. If you win through, all well and good—but if you fail, the most precious years have gone, and you find yourself without a vocation, and it's too late to start all over again. You ought to think twice before launching out.

Yours is one of those chatty, cheerful letters that I hardly know how to answer, Sinclair R. Dobie. It's such a nice letter in fact, that I can't just acknowledge it among the others. When you write to me again, never mind about making your letter as long as the first one—although I shouldn't mind a bit if it ran longer! You are quite wrong in assuming that I might not read all the way through it. The longer they are, the better I like them. With regard to your special request, I'll see what can be done.

One reader made some remark about the slight fog we had in April, in London. Now, everybody will be ready to admit that fog is most unusual in the month of April—but it appears to be an impression in America that we have fogs all the year round. For example, I was reading one of the New York newspapers a week or two ago—an issue dated Feb 15th, 1925. I feel like quoting a few words from an article, just to show how the American newspapers spread false impressions about London—although I don't suppose for a minute they do it maliciously. It seems to be the general idea over there: "London has always been cursed by fogs and murky air, which not only shut off the precious actinic rays, but most of the others. Naturally, the children playing in the half-twilight of its gloomy streets are particularly subject to rickets. This season the fogs have been worse than ever before." Now, isn't that too bad? As all Londoners will know, we have only had a week or two of fog during the whole winter season—and then only in patches. And it is a well known fact that we never get the old-fashioned "London particular" as we used to in the old days. But, somehow, the Americans always insist that London is choked with fog, winter, spring, summer, and autumn alike! To them a fogless London is unthinkable. I KNOW, because I have talked with so many of them. Indeed, in America, "fog" is merely another word for "London"! And it is particularly exasperating because as I am writing this, the April day is filled with sunshine, and the air is so clear that I can see for miles out of my window.

Mr. Brooks will deal with another batch of readers' letters next week yours may be among them!—

**A STIRRING TALE OF A BRITISH BOY'S EXPLOITS WHEN SIR FRANCIS DRAKE
SAILED THE HIGH SEAS.**



By the Author of
"With Cavalier and
Roundhead," etc.

CHAPTER I.

**IN WHICH A FOREIGN STRANGER COMES
TO TEMPLETON.**

IT was a dreary March afternoon in the year 1587; to be precise, it was the 16th day of the month, for the date was one that the young master of Templeton had good cause to keep in memory. There was a strange hush in the air, and a damp, heavy mist was sinking from the leaden skies. Already the wide stretch of the Devonshire moor had been blotted out, and the huge granite tors that peeped here and there from the fog had a weird and ghostly appearance.

A stranger must have been hopelessly lost, but to Giles Montford the trackless moorland was alike in sunshine or darkness. He was striding homeward as the bird flies, taking rock and stream, sedge and bracken, as they came in his path. His face was as moody as the lowering clouds, possibly because he had been vainly hunting the crafty otter since breakfast-time. A gun rested across one shoulder, and his boots were wet and muddy; at his heels lagged a couple of shaggy hounds.

He was a sturdy type of an English lad, and looked to be older than his sixteen years and six months. His strong and stout build made him seem shorter than he really was. Large grey eyes and light hair, with a tendency to curl, well became his clean-cut and handsome features.

It needed no very keen student of character to tell that Giles Montford was stolid and thoughtful by nature, slow to

speaking or acting, and yet one who would prove stubborn and formidable when roused to a defence of his convictions. Certainly he had inherited neither traits nor looks from his Spanish mother—a fact which was freely commented upon by the few who were his intimates.

To-day the lad had some perplexing matter on his mind, and by pondering over it he so lost account of time that he was surprised when the neighing of horses and the quacking of ducks sounded close by through the fog.

Hurrying forward, he crossed the orchard, turned an angle of the stables, and found himself close to the house.

Templeton was not a stately pile, nor yet an insignificant one. The house was long, low, and two-storied, and was surrounded by a small-sized park. Its weather-stained stones and projecting eaves and gables told of a lengthy antiquity, but here and there were improving touches of a modern builder. The stables and other out-buildings were to a large extent new.

"What luck, Master Giles?"

The speaker had suddenly appeared from behind the granaries. He was a man of about forty, clean-shaven, shrewd, and honest-looking, and attired in buff clothes and wide-topped boots. He had the air and carriage of a soldier, and such Stephen Trent had been in past time, when he fought the Spaniards in the Low Countries. Now he was the right-hand man and devoted servitor of the young master of Templeton.

"A long tramp and nothing to show for

it," Giles replied. "I am afraid it was my own fault. I was thinking of other matters and paid little heed to the hounds. Ah, whose horse is that yonder, my good Stephen?"

"You are wanted in the house," answered Stephen Trent. "A visitor hath been there since noonday, waiting your return, and he will have naught to say to anyone. Ah, but he can eat and drink! You should have seen Master Tomewell's eyes open."

"Who is it?" exclaimed Giles, in a tone of surprise. "What does he want?"

"He wants you, Master Giles. Who else? As for the rest—well, wait till you see him. Though he wears the hood of his cloak like a monk's cowl, I would wager a score of crowns I have crossed swords with more than one of his countrymen!"

"What do you mean, man?"

Stephen Trent spat on the ground, winked one eye, and put his finger to his nose.

"I see no cause for jesting," muttered Giles. "Whoever the visitor may be, it is poor hospitality not to put his horse away."

"He tied the beast yonder with his own hands," said Stephen, "and bade the servants not to meddle."

With increasing amazement Giles walked swiftly towards the house. Stephen turned the other way, calling the dogs after him, and as soon as he was beyond observation his face clouded.

"If I were master here," he muttered, "I would pitch that rascal out, neck and crop. He comes on no good errand, I'll warrant. Ay, I smell trouble in the air!"

The horse, which was tied to a post at one side of the drive, told Giles nothing. It was a handsome and blooded animal, but showed traces of having been urged hard and long; it was copiously bespattered with mud.

The lad hurried on, and entered the house. In the hall, before a blazing fire of logs, he found two men sitting half a dozen feet apart. The one was muffled in a cloak of dark green cloth, and but little of him could be seen. The other was Hereward Tomewell, tutor and steward to Giles; he was fifty years of age, and wore the black gown of an Oxford scholar and a man of learning. His kindly face indicated a flexible disposition, and a mind that was apt to stray from worldly affairs to the pursuit of science and letters.

Both men rose when Giles entered.

"Here is a visitor to see you, Master Montford," said the tutor, rubbing his hands nervously, and looking from one to the other. "I fear he is weary of long waiting; yet all that lay in my power to do—"

"No apologies, I pray you, my good sir," interrupted the stranger. "Your treatment hath been more than warranted by my intrusion."

He spoke in fair English, but with a foreign accent, and as he made a courtly bow to Giles he threw his cloak back from his head and shoulders. Now, seen by the glow of the fire, he proved clearly to be a Spaniard.

His handsome, olive-tinted face was that of a man in the prime of life, and under its hauteur it was stamped with ill-concealed dissipation and viciousness. The ends of his moustache were twisted jauntily upward, and from his lace collar to his polished boots he was clad in black velvet. More than one weapon peeped from his belt.

Master Tomewell could not repress an audible gasp at the discovery, and his hands clasped and unclasped more nervously than ever. Giles flushed a deeper red, and something like anger shone in his eyes.

Meanwhile the stranger had been scrutinising the lad with growing wonder and suspicion.

"My errand is with the master of Templeton," he said.

"He stands before you, sir," Giles curtly replied.

"You?"

There was disbelief and amazement in the question.

"This is Master Montford," broke in the tutor. "I can vouch for that, I assure you."

"The son of Francis Montford and Ina Gonzales?" demanded the Spaniard, still incredulous.

"You have rightly named my parents, sir," Giles exclaimed imperiously. "If your errand concerns me, I am ready to listen. Proceed."

The stranger shrugged his shoulders and made an inaudible remark that sounded like an oath.

"So be it," he muttered; "but what brings me here must needs be private."

"That is impossible, sir," Giles replied firmly. "I have no secrets from my trusty friend and adviser, Master Tomewell."

The Spaniard's eyes flashed, and as quickly he became all smiles and courtesy.

"I was bidden to make the request," he said, "and your refusal is surely the right of one in his own house. This letter"—drawing a packet from his bosom—"will explain my visit. I pray you read it, and return me an answer. There are urgent reasons why I must haste on my way."

Giles took the packet curiously. It was a folded sheet of parchment, sealed, and tied with green silk. He first glanced at the address:

"To Master Giles Montford, of Templeton, Devonshire. By the service of Francisco de Rica."

Then he broke the wax and the thread, held the open letter to the firelight, and

calmly read the contents, which were as follows, and written in perfect English:

"My dear Nephew,—
But lately did I learn of the death of your inestimable father, whom I met but once, and that many years ago. The blood of one of the oldest and proudest families of Spain flows in your veins and mine.

"I long not only to see you, but to have you with me always. Doubtless England—and especially at this time—is unfriendly and distasteful to you, for I learn that you are living in solitude. I feel sure that your heart is loyal to the interests and faith of that land which was the birthplace of your mother, my beloved sister.

"In sunny Spain your happiness shall be my constant care, and there many a chance of glory and fame await you.

"A trusty messenger brings you this, and he will safely conduct you to me. You are old enough to choose your future without hindrance or influence from others. I dare not, in these troubled times, commit more to paper, nor could I safely put foot on English soil. May the memory of your mother plead with you, and send you to cheer the loneliness of your affectionate uncle,

"DON FERDINAND GONZALES."

Giles fiercely crushed the parchment in one hand; then, as though ashamed of the impulse, he straightened it out, and handed it silently to Master Tomewell. The latter held it close to his eyes with trembling hands, which shook still more as he read on.

The Spaniard—or Francisco de Rica, to call him rightly—folded his arms and looked intently into the fire. Giles stared thoughtfully in the same direction; only a tightening of his lips and the hot flush on his cheeks told how deeply he was stirred.

Hereward Tomewell dropped the letter, and stooped awkwardly to pick it up.

"A most amazing thing—truly amazing!"



"You will have the pleasure of seeing the inside of an English prison unless you quickly leave this house!" cried Giles.

he gasped. "I really had forgotten that you had an uncle, my boy. He writes like a scholar, too. Well, well, the ties of kinship are strong. It would ill become me to stir up dissension, and yet—Ah, I have it! Invite Don Ferdinand to England. There is room in plenty for him here at Templeton, and perchance we may induce him to turn Protestant."

Here the Spaniard gave such a fierce snort that Master Tomewell tumbled back into a chair, terrified by his now obvious blunder.

"Have you no better advice?" exclaimed Giles. "Can you suggest no more suitable reply to my uncle's letter?"

"Not—not at present," stammered the tutor. "This is a matter which requires long consideration and study. If you will permit me to retire to the privacy of my room—"

"No; the answer must be immediate!" interrupted Giles, in a tone that was hoarse with indignation and rage. "How dare my uncle thus insult me? Ay, I mean it! The letter, softly worded though it may be, is yet a bitter insult. I am a loyal Englishman to the backbone, and at such a time, when

I have just determined to draw sword against Spain, this Don Ferdinand invites me to turn traitor and come over to the enemy.

"I deny the relationship," the lad went on, with increasing passion. "Does Don Ferdinand think that I am ignorant of the truth? My uncle Ralph told me all, many a time. Why, my own mother and her father had such a hatred of Spain that they came to England and turned Protestants. And then Don Ferdinand followed them, and tried to steal his sister. Yes; I know it all. And so do you, Master Tomewell. Am I not right?"

"It is true," admitted the tutor; "but surely there is no need for angry words. Doubtless your uncle means well, and it will be but a simple courtesy to write him a polite letter. Clearly he is a scholar, and a gentleman."

Meanwhile De Rica had been fuming and twitching, and biting hard at his under lip. Now he glanced out of the window, and noted that the night was falling.

"Already I have overstayed my time," he muttered, "and must be off at once. What answer shall I bear to your uncle, young hot-head? Do I have the pleasure of your company?"

"You will have the pleasure of seeing the inside of an English prison unless you quickly leave this house!" cried Giles. "Where is Don Ferdinand now? In England? I would wager as much."

At this De Rica's swarthy face paled.

"Don Ferdinand is in Spain!" he asserted sharply.

"Then join him at once!" cried Giles. "Tell him that I am an Englishman, and not a traitor! Tell him I hate all Spaniards, and would shed my last drop of blood to keep them off English soil. That is my reply. Now, off with you!"

"You will repent this!" said De Rica, showing his white teeth in a scowl of hatred. "Remember that I am a Spaniard, young braggart! We shall meet again!"

"I shall give you one minute to leave this house," replied Giles, "and then, if you are not gone, my servants shall pitch you out. Be thankful that I do not detain you as a prisoner. It is clearly my duty to hand you over to Sir Richard Edgecumbe. What think you, Master Tomewell?"

"No, no; that would be a sad breach of honour," protested the tutor. "Let him go in peace."

By this time De Rica had muffled himself in his cloak, and was at the door. He opened it and passed out. Giles followed to the threshold, and stood watching.

The spaniard mounted and rode away at a trot. As he passed the stables, a clod of earth struck the horse on the flank. The animal tore off at a furious gallop, and the jolting figure of Francisco De Rica vanished in the dark and foggy night.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH MASTER GILES IS PROPERLY INTRODUCED.

A DIGRESSION—and it shall be as brief as possible—must needs be made here, so that the reader may know something of the times in which this story is laid, and of the persons who are to play a part in its thrilling adventures, surprises and incidents.

The family of Montford was an old and loyal one, dating back to the Norman conquest, and early in the sixteenth century its only surviving branch was represented by Thomas Montford. He resided at Templeton, then in possession of the family for two hundred years, and being a reckless and dissolute man he pretty well exhausted his resources, and mortgaged the property heavily.

Thomas Montford died in 1560—three years after his wife—and left two sons, aged seventeen and nineteen. The property was entailed, and passed accordingly to Francis, the elder son. Ralph, the younger, had always been of a roving disposition, and now he disappeared from England, not to be heard of again for some years.

With ultimate ruin staring him in the face, Francis managed to subsist on the heavily encumbered property until a chance came to retrieve the fortunes of the family. In London, where he spent much of his time, he met and married Ina Gonzales, the daughter of Don Sebastian Gonzales.

The marriage of Francis and Ina took place in 1569, and a part of the don's fortune lifted the incumbrances from Templeton. Ina preferred to live in London, however, and there Giles was born to the couple in 1571.

But the climate of England was too rigorous for the transplanted Spaniards. Don Sebastian died in 1573, and was followed a few months later by his daughter. Ina willed her fortune to her husband in trust for Giles, who was then two years old.

Francis was almost heart-broken by his loss, and, leaving the child in the care of its old nurse in London, he rushed off to the Continent to seek relief in travel. At the end of a year he came home, repaired and partly rebuilt Templeton, and settled down to the quiet life and pursuits of an English country gentleman. Occasionally he went up to London to see little Giles, who was still with the nurse.

Just six months after Francis returned to England, a severe cold, contracted by exposure on a hunting trip, carried him off in three days' time. His last hours were cheered by the unexpected arrival of his brother Ralph, bronzed and toughened by his years of wanderings in foreign lands.

Ralph solemnly promised to be a second father to little Giles, and a faithful guardian of the child's fortune, and Francis died with the conviction that his son's welfare could be in no better hands. Ralph was now in

affluent circumstances, for he had control of Don Sebastian's money, and of Templeton and its revenues.

Giles was but three years and a half old when his father died, and this readily accounted for the fact that his childish memories began with his life at Templeton and the companionship of his Uncle Ralph. The big, strong, bearded man was always kind and affectionate to the little fellow, and, indeed, he could not have treated him better had he been his own father.

One terrible day in March, 1585, word came to Templeton that Ralph Montford had been killed by highwaymen on a lonely heath in the suburbs of London. He was brought home and buried; his accounts were found to be in perfect shape, and Sir Richard Edgecumbe, a near neighbour, was appointed guardian in his stead.

During those next two years—which end the March afternoon that began our story—the young master of Templeton had one perplexing question constantly on his mind. Each day brought nearer the time when he would be ready to go up to the University of Oxford to complete his studies. This was Hereward Tomewell's pet plan, and Giles had tacitly assented to it. Yet his secret ambition was to be a soldier, and not a week passed but some stirring news or event added fuel to the flame that was burning in the lad's heart.

And now for a few words about England at that time. Nearly thirty years previous to the reign of Elizabeth there had been a strange turning about of religion. Under Mary—the previous queen—the Protestants had been bitterly persecuted; under Elizabeth the Catholics were the ones to suffer and to lose their power.

For a long time Mary, Queen of Scots, had been held a prisoner in England for attempting to seize the throne. But at last Elizabeth ordered her execution, and the unfortunate queen was beheaded on the 8th of February, 1587.

As the Queen of Scots was a Catholic, this gave the King of Spain, Philip the Second, a sufficient pretext for what he had long contemplated. He at once prepared for a great invasion of England, ostensibly to restore the Catholic religion, and to avenge the death of a Catholic queen. His real reasons were as follows: Because the English had stirred up a rebellion among the Dutch subjects of Spain, because they had aided them in their struggle for liberty, and because English ships had been recently entering Spanish ports and seizing galleons laden with rich treasure.

So this brings our story to that dreary March afternoon when the Spanish envoy of Don Ferdinand Gonzales presented his letter to the young master of Templeton. It was a daring deed, for Francisco De Rica must have known that he carried his life in his hands—that he was a hated foe on an enemy's soil. Perhaps the letter was not

the only warrant for his presence in England. We shall see later.

Even as the Spaniard rode away in the foggy night, men were drilling and arming all over England, Catholics were fleeing from arrest, ships were being provisioned and manned, messengers were speeding Londonward with tidings from Spain, and in the very harbour of Plymouth itself Sir Francis Drake's vast fleet lay anchored off the Hoe.

Those were stirring times to live in. North and south, east and west, spread the martial flame that fired men's souls, and in Spain the bigoted and crafty Philip dreamed dreams of the Great Armada, and of the jewels of conquest and glory it should add to his crown.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH GILES RUNS BLINDLY INTO PERIL.

FOR a minute or two after the Spaniard had disappeared, Giles stood in the doorway. He knew that the clod which scared the visitor's horse was thrown by Stephen Trent, and he had half a mind to rebuke the trusty fellow for an act that smacked of insubordination. He called Stephen by name, but got no reply. Then he fancied that he heard the muffled clatter of hoofs somewhere beyond the stables, and, putting his hand to his ear, listened keenly.

But the indistinct noise quickly died away, and, after lingering a little longer, Giles went into the house and closed the door. Hereward Tomewell was sitting by the fire, shaking his head dismally and muttering to himself.

"Has the Spaniard gone, Master Giles?" he said. "He was a surly fellow, and yet you provoked him by fiery speech. Ah, what a world this would be if every one followed the pursuit of learning. I fear me troubled times are coming upon our country. What did I say to anger this foreigner? You heard how insolently he broke me off, and yet I had only fair words for Don Ferdinand."

By this time Giles had recovered his composure, and was cool and unruffled. He was even a little ashamed of his outburst of passion—something that was of rare occurrence with him.

"No more of Don Ferdinand, if you please, Master Tomewell," he said quietly. "My Spanish uncle does not desire me so much as my fortune, and I assure you he shall have neither. And now I want a word with you on other matters."

"Doubtless concerning your going up to Oxford," suggested the tutor, in a tone of pleasant anticipation. "The time is drawing near."

"I am not going to Oxford," Giles answered firmly.

Hereward Tomewell sat bolt upright, with a look of pained and incredulous surprise in his eyes.

"Not going to Oxford?" he drawled. "Surely you do not mean it, lad?"

"I certainly do, Master Tomewell," replied Giles. "At this time England has need of soldiers rather than scholars, and though I fear my choice will grieve you. I intend to fight for my country. Spain will hurl all her force against us, and every man who can fight will be wanted to repel the invaders."

"But your guardian—what will he say to this?"

"I met Sir Richard riding toward Plymouth this morning," replied Giles. "He had news of the vast preparations being made in Spain, and of another matter, concerning Sir Francis Drake, which I dare not even tell you. Sir Richard approves my wish, and has promised to put me under Drake as a gentleman-volunteer. I am to carry him an answer this evening."

Hereward Tomewell's face clouded as he saw his cherished hope slipping away from him.

"It were unseemly to say aught against Sir Richard Edgecumbe," he replied, "yet I think him a rash adviser. Ponder well before you take this step, Master Giles. To the scholar bent on acquiring knowledge life has far sweeter pleasures than you will find among brawling soldiers, and in scenes of bloodshed and strife."

"I differ from you," Giles answered curtly. "Your wise teaching has already equipped me with more knowledge than English youths of my age and position usually carry in their heads, and for that I am duly thankful. So I pray you say no more, good Master Tomewell. I am firmly resolved."

On the few occasions when Giles had stubbornly insisted on a disputed point the tutor had invariably been worsted, and he knew now that he could more easily move a mountain than the lad's determination.

So, with a dismal shake of his head, and the aspect of a broken-hearted man, Master Tomewell sadly departed to the privacy of his own room. That grief had no power to impair his appetite was evident a few moments later, when a servant passed through the hall with a platter of savoury dishes and two bottles of Templeton's famous beverage.

Giles dined in solitary state, and wasted but little time at the meal. He donned his cloak and boots, buckled on his sword, and hurried off to the stables. Stephen Trent was not there, and he learned from one of the servants that the old soldier had been seen to saddle a horse and ride away in the direction taken by the Spaniard.

Giles was at no loss to know what this meant, and while he was saddling his favourite steed a little reflection satisfied him that Stephen Trent was more to be commended than blamed.

"It is just as well that De Rica should

be followed," he thought, "for it is hardly possible that the rascal came to England for one sole purpose of delivering the letter. In these times Catholic spies are abroad, and the Spaniard's real mission may have been for that purpose. He will fare ill if he runs foul of Trent."

The blinding fog offered no hindrance to horse or rider. After spurring along the Plymouth road for nearly a mile, Giles turned into a more rugged track on the right, and in a short time he pulled up his steed at Admiral Hard's—a waterside landing between Stonehouse and Devonport, whence a ferry-boat, maintained by the Edgecumbes, plied to and fro across the Sound.

The evening was yet early, and ferryman and boat were there. Giles walked his horse on board, and inquired if any passengers had lately crossed.

"Sir Richard was the last, young master," replied the man, "and that was at noon-day. There is little travel on the water in such weather."

"My business is with Sir Richard," said Giles, "and I wished to be sure that he was at home. A silver crown for a speedy passage, Wexford."

"Ay, ay, sir!" exclaimed the ferryman, rousing to sudden activity.

He summoned his sturdy son from a nearby cottage, and each bent to one of the heavy oars. The long, broad craft moved slowly across the misty Sound, through an opaque gloom that was occasionally relieved by the hull of some great vessel towering out of the fog.

In less than half an hour the boat had grounded on the farther shore, and as soon as lad and horse were out, Wexford and his son pulled off again into the mist, each gladdened by a silver crown.

Giles stood on the beach until the splash and creaking of the oars had died away. He was oppressed by a feeling of uneasiness for which he could not account, and which vexed him with himself.

"It must be with the weather," he muttered. "Such damp and fog would give anyone the blues. And yet I never minded a storm on the moors. Well, here goes for Edgecumbe Hall."

He had one foot in the stirrup when a dull sound reached his ears, and made him drop back to the ground. The noise came from some distance to the left, and was evidently caused by the grating of a boat on the beach.

Giles listened, but heard no more. He was puzzled and alarmed, for all the land in the neighbourhood belonged to the private park of Mount Edgecumbe, and it was a very suspicious circumstance, to say the least, that a boat should touch here at this hour of the night. Indeed, boats were forbidden to land at any time.

In a brief space of time the lad thought of poachers, robbers, and various other unpleasant solutions to the mystery. Then he quickly made up his mind what to do. He walked his horse partly up the road that led through heavy timber to the house, and tied the bridle to a sapling. Slipping back to the beach, he advanced noiselessly along the water's edge in the direction of the sound he had heard.

The fog was exceedingly dense, and the danger of running suddenly into an enemy, or of betraying his presence by a false step, made Giles extra cautious. For a time he

realise until he crept round a large rock, and stumbled head-first over the bow of a small row-boat that lay two-thirds out of water. The sand broke his fall, and he instantly scrambled to his feet, alarmed for the possible consequences of his recklessness.

Before he could retreat, or even draw his sword, two dark figures rose from the fog less than twenty feet away, and made savagely at him. There was a snarl of passion, the flash and thrust of a blade at close quarters, and Giles went backward over the end of the boat.



Giles saw the opportunity, and by a dexterous stroke he disarmed his antagonist, and sent his sword spinning over the sand.

got along well enough as he picked his way over sand and pebbles, around jutting ledges of rock, and through little thickets of scrub and grass.

Then a blind stride landed him in a drift of shells, and his feet made three loud, crunching sounds before he could find soft sand again. With a fast-beating heart he stood still and listened. Hearing nothing, he ventured to push forward. He was now fifty or sixty yards from the ferry-landing, and he knew that where the mysterious boat had landed could not be much farther ahead.

How near it actually was he did not

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH SIMON BAILLIE GOES POACHER HUNTING.

THAT Giles was not run through the body was due to an odd circumstance. Under his cloak he wore a jacket of rich material, linked over his breast by a double row of broad silver buttons. One of these buttons received the full brunt of the would-be assassin's sword-point, and withstood it beautifully.

The result was that the blade bent nearly double, and snapped in two. The force of the blow sent the lad reeling backward,

while his assailant staggered a few paces in the opposite direction, shaking the stinging hand that held half of the broken weapon.

As quickly as he fell Giles realised how he had been sayed, and he felt none the worse for the blow save a momentary loss of breath, and a sharp pain across his ribs. He was fully awake to his danger, and lost no time in getting to his feet. Then he discovered that his back was slightly wrenched, and as this disability made escape by flight almost hopeless, he hurriedly took his stand in front of the rock, which towered several feet above his head and whipped out his sword. It was a fairly good position, since he had the boat in front of him, and the rock at his back. By this time the lad's foe-man had dropped the broken blade, and taken his fellow-ruffian's sword. Now he came hotly on to renew the attack, muttering fiercely under his breath. He and his companion were muffled in hooded cloaks, and Giles felt sure of the identity of at least one of them.

At this critical juncture our young hero had no time to wonder what had brought the men to the grounds of Mount Edgecombe. He knew that his life depended on the knowledge taught him by Stephen Trent, and he kept a cool head and a steady hand.

Not a word was spoken on either side. The determined ruffian advanced to the gunwale of the boat and made a furious lunge at Giles. The lad warded off the blow, and steel clashed on steel. For several minutes there was a rapid interchange and parrying of thrusts, and each showed himself an expert swordsman.

Then the stranger, who was evidently in haste to finish the business, lost temper at the baffling delay. He made several wild lunges, regardless of the fact that he was exposing his guard. Giles saw the opportunity, and by a dexterous stroke he disarmed his antagonist, and sent his sword spinning over the sand.

With a furious curse the man fell back, and recovered his weapon. He was coming on again when his companion drew a pistol, and exclaimed in Spanish:

"Let me attend to this spy. You are wasting precious time with your trifling."

"No, no," cried the other, in a frightened tone, "the report will spoil all. You don't know who may be lurking near. This must be settled with the sword, and I promise you it shall be done speedily."

Giles gave a start of surprise at the voice of the latter speaker, and suspicion became certainty in his mind.

"I know you, Senor de Rica," he shouted, on the passionate impulse of the moment. "Is this the way you return to Spain?"

The recognition was mutual, and a frightful oath testified to De Rica's alarm at the discovery. He and his companion whispered together for a few seconds, and then the latter picked up a heavy billet of wood that had been washed on the beach.

They advanced quickly and savagely, and as Giles saw himself thus outmatched he uttered an involuntary cry for help. To his amazement he heard an instant answer from some distance away. The Spaniards heard it also, but it seemed to encourage instead of frighten them. Standing side by side against the boat they struck and thrust at the lad.

Giles had all he could do to parry De Rica's blade, and he was thus at the mercy of his other foe. It so chanced, however, that the ruffian's first blow missed entirely, while at the second attempt he struck the top of the rock, and shattered his club to fragments.

One of the pieces grazed the lad's head, and he believed that he was hit.

"Help! Help!" he shouted loudly.

"Hold out, lad; I'm coming," rang out a husky voice close by.

At this De Rica gave a snarl of consternation and rage, and tried desperately to run Giles through the chest.

"We're betrayed," he muttered.

"Then we must fly at once," cried his companion. "Kill your man, if you can."

Springing quickly around De Rica, he took hold of the boat and gave it a mighty shove that slid the craft into the water. This left Giles and his antagonist at close quarters, and their blades flashed fire as they parried and lunged furiously.

A shout close at hand, and a warning cry from the second Spaniard, brought the contest to a sudden end. Out of the fog loomed the tall figure of Stephen Trent, gasping for breath, and dripping wet.

The man at the boat drew his pistol, and snapped it twice in vain; evidently the powder was damp. Then he jerked De Rica toward the water, and snatched his sword out of his hand.

"To the oars, quick!" he cried, "and look out for the lad."

As he spoke he wheeled round with outstretched blade, and rushed at Trent, who was now within six feet, and unarmed.

Giles paid no further attention to De Rica. As he saw Stephen Trent meet the attack and topple backward, evidently run through and through, he sprang forward and drove his sword fairly between the assassin's shoulder.

The Spaniard gave a sharp cry and reeled under the severe injury. But he quickly recovered himself and made a dive for the beach. He splashed through the shallow water to the boat, which De Rica had by this time pulled out from shore, and tumbled hastily over the gunwale. De Rica bent to the oars, and the craft and its occupants swiftly vanished in the fog.

Giles expected to find Stephen Trent dead, and he was delighted when the trusty fellow rose slowly to his feet. Blood was dripping down his left sleeve.

"Don't worry, Master Giles," he said. "The Spaniard only pricked me-through the

fleshy part of the arm. Got away, did they?"

"One of the rascals is as good as dead," exclaimed Giles. "I'll wager the tip of my sword came out between his ribs. The fellow clung to life like a cat. But how did you get here, my good Stephen, and in such a condition?"

"It's a queer tale," Trent replied. "Twice this night I've been as nigh to death as— Hold on, lad; some one coming," he added sharply.

"And from two directions," muttered Giles, drawing his sword.

Both up and down the beach footsteps were audible, and an instant later a man stalked out of the fog, and up to the spot where Giles and his companion stood. He carried a lantern, and as he held it above his head the murky glare shone an individual of peculiarly repulsive and grotesque appearance.

He was a little wiry man of between fifty and sixty, with a countenance expressive of greed and cruelty. One leg was off below the knee, and its place was supplied by a wooden member. He lacked an eye, and the lobe of one ear, and a livid scar stretched like a half-moon across his chin. Such was Simon Baillie, the steward of Mount Edgecumbe, and for that snug post he was indebted to the father of the present Sir Richard Edgecumbe, whose life he had saved during Wyatt's rebellion.

"These are pretty goings on," exclaimed Simon Baillie, in tones that betrayed as much fear as anger. "What brought you here at this time of night, Stephen Trent? And you, Master Montford?"

"A civil question brings a civil answer, my friend," replied Stephen Trent. "Wait a bit till we see who comes yonder."

"Where? What do you mean?" muttered the steward, whose hearing was not of the best. His wrinkled face turned suddenly pale.

The new arrivals were now visible through the fog a few feet away—a pair of tall, heavily set men. They halted a few seconds in evident perplexity. The one, who was muffled in a cloak, moved a few paces back, and his companion came quickly up to the group.

"Sir Richard!" exclaimed Giles in amazement, as the lantern shone on the handsome and commanding features of the soldierly master of Mount Edgecumbe.

Sir Richard was no less amazed as he recognised the group.

"There has been fighting here," he said sternly. "And bloodshed," he added, observing a trail of red stains on the sand. "What does this mean?"

Next week's instalment of this thrilling tale will describe how Giles is enlisted on a secret mission!

CRICKET AND RACING SPECIAL!

Have you seen this week's issue of the BOYS' REALM? It's now on sale, price 2d. everywhere, and it's a Cricket and Racing Special! There are Six Ripping Sports Stories—all of which you can start in this number—and among them you'll find two specially attractive yarns in the following:

"WHIP AND SPUR!"

A Fine Tale of the Turf.

By **JOHN GABRIEL.**

"Boy Bayley, Professional!"

A Great County Cricket Yarn.

By **RICHARD RANDOLPH.**

Don't Miss This Whacking Number!



Est. 38 Yrs

FACTORY TO RIDER

Carriage Paid. Fifteen Days' Free Trial
£4 19s. 6d. Cash or 2/6 Weekly.
Prompt Delivery. Second-hand Cycles
CHEAP. Accessories at popular
prices. Write for **Free Lists** and
Special Offer of Sample Bicycle.

Mead CYCLE CO. Inc.
Dept. B601
SPARKBROOK - BIRMINGHAM.

YOURS for 6d. ONLY



Chain
FREE

This handsome, full-sized
Gent.'s Lever Watch sent
upon receipt of 6d. After
approval send 1/- more, the
balance is then payable by
6 monthly instalments
of 2/- each. Guaranteed 5
years. Chain offered Free with
every Watch. Wrist Watches
etc., on same terms. Cash
returned if dissatisfied. Send
1/- now to Simpson's, Ltd.,
(Dept. 1194), 94, Queen's
Road, Brighton, Sussex.



2/6 A WEEK
OR CASH
£4 15/-

The Best Cycle in the British Empire, "JUNO," sent on 14 DAYS' FREE APPROVAL, CARRIAGE PAID and GUARANTEED FOR EVER. Money refunded if dissatisfied. Art List FREE. Write NOW! (Dept U2),
JUNO CYCLE CO.,
168 & 248, Bishopsgate,
London, E.C.2.
Proprietors: — Metropolitan
Machinists Co., Ltd.

JUNO



HEIGHT COUNTS

in winning success. Let the Girvan System increase your height. Send P.C. for particulars and our £100 guarantee to Enquiry Dept. A.M.P., 17, Stroud Green Rd., London, N.4.

Vest Pocket Folder, Pckt. Stamp Mounts, 50 Dif. Stamps—free to applicants for Blue Label Appros No. 6 sending post.—B.L. Coryn, 10, Wave Crest, Whitstable

Stop Stammering! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars FREE.—**FRANK B. HUGHES**, 7, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

YOURS for 6d. ONLY



This handsome, full-sized Gent's Lever Watch sent upon receipt of 6d. After approval send 1/- more, the balance is then payable by 6 monthly instalments of 2/- each. Guaranteed 5 years. Chain offered Free with every Watch. Wrist Watches, etc., on same terms. Cash returned if dissatisfied. Send 1/- now to **Simpson's, Ltd.**, (Dept. 1194), 94, Queen's Road, Brighton, Sussex.

Chain
FREE

COLLECTOR'S ACCESSORIES FREE. Also the "Great" (62) packet Tweezers, Titles, etc. Request approvals.—**LISBURN & TOWNSEND**, London Road Liverpool



MY GREAT OFFER

Write for my Free Bargain Lists of the best Coventry male cycles. Sent on 14 days' approval carriage paid. Thousand of testimonials.

2/6
FROM
WEEKLY

O'Brien THE WORLD'S LARGEST CYCLE DEALER
115 COVENTRY

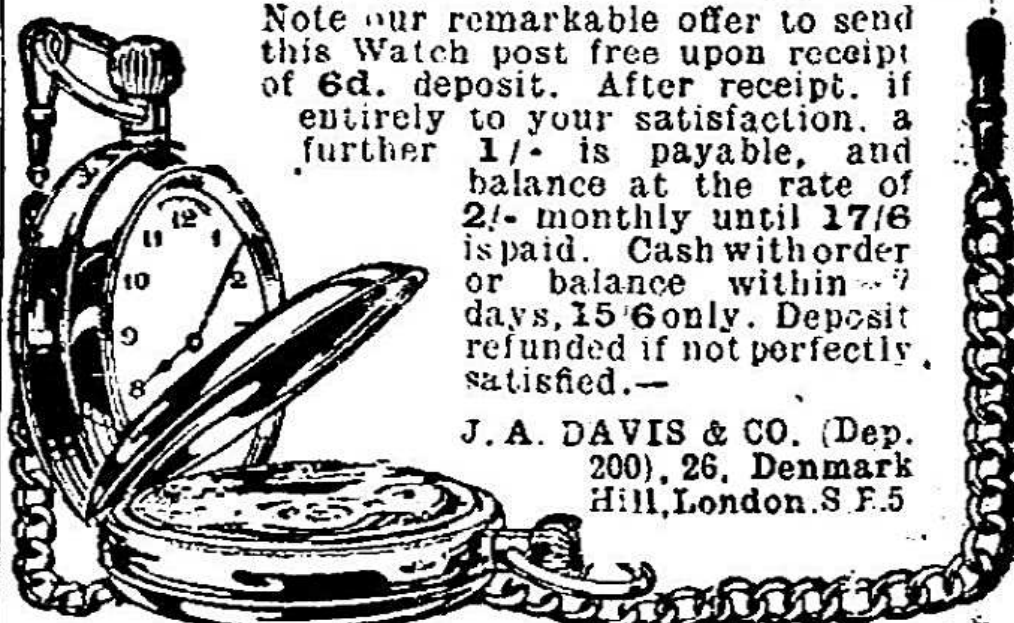
YOURS for 6^d.

Our World-famous Gent's Full-size **KEYLESS LEVER POCKET WATCH.** Deposit.

Highly polished cases, accurate timekeeper, patent recoil click. Soundly constructed.

Official 10 Years' Warranty with each Watch.

FREE A Solid Silver English Hall-marked Double Gurb Albert given FREE to every purchaser



Note our remarkable offer to send this Watch post free upon receipt of 6d. deposit. After receipt, if entirely to your satisfaction, a further 1/- is payable, and balance at the rate of 2/- monthly until 17/6 is paid. Cash with order or balance within 7 days, 15/6 only. Deposit refunded if not perfectly satisfied.—

J. A. DAVIS & CO. (Dep. 200), 26, Denmark Hill, London S.E.5

BLUSHING SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, SHYNESS, TIMIDITY.

Simple 7-day Permanent Home Cure for either sex. Write at once and get full particulars quite FREE privately.—**U.J.D.**, 12, All Saints Rd., ST. ANNE'S-ON-SEA.



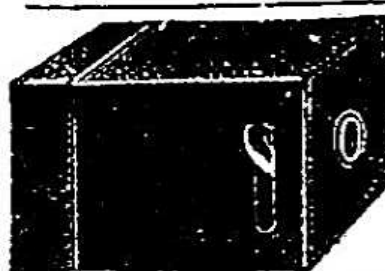
15 DAYS' TRIAL

Sent Packed FREE & Carriage PAID. £4 19s. 6d. Cash or 2/6 Weekly. Immediate delivery. Big Bargains in Second-hand Cycles. Accessories at popular prices. Write for Free List & Special Offer of Sample Cycle.

Mead CYCLE CO. Inc.
Dept. B601
SPARKBROOK BIRMINGHAM.

Height Increased **5/-** Complete In 30 Days. Course.

No Appliances. No Drugs. No Dieting. The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS. Send stamp for particulars and testimonials.—**Melvin Strong, Ltd.** (Dept. S), 10, Ludgate Hill, London, Eng.



THAT'S ME! A Photo Recalls Happy Times. Camera takes Photo on Standard Plates 3 1/2" x 2 1/2". Complete with Plate, Printing Paper, Chemicals & Instructions. Post 2/- only. Novelty Lists Free **SYMAX** (opp. Aston Station), 261, Lichfield Rd., ASTON, B'HAM

BE SURE TO MENTION "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY" WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH ADVERTISERS.