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THE WORLD-FAMOUS RACING CAR "BABS"



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It was the funniest thing the rebels had seen for a long time. The flock of panic-stricken sheep swept down upon the attacking seniors, bowling them off their feet. One or two, indeed, found themselves being carried off on the backs of the scared animals. "Saved—by a flock of sheep!" chuckled Nipper, as he gazed down from the roof of the rebels' stronghold.

It's not too late to start this novel series now, boys!

MARTIAL LAW AT St. FRANK'S



By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

General Carfax, one of the Governors of St. Frank's, is a peppery old soldier, and when he comes to the school with the intention of quelling the Remove rebellion, he naturally introduces military methods. Get started on this fine long dramatic yarn now—it's full of thrills, humour and suprises.—Ed.

CHAPTER 1.

Night With the Rebels!

"HALT! Who goes there?"

The command came in gruff tones through the darkness, and a figure—overcoated, muffled and gloved—barred the way.

"Cheese it, Handy—it's only us!" said Church.

"That's not the way to answer!" retorted Edward Oswald Handforth, with a frown. "You ought to have said 'Friend,' you chump!"

"No need to be so particular," grinned Church. "How's everything? All quiet? No sign of the enemy creeping up?"

"Not yet," replied Handforth. "But I'm expecting an attack almost any minute."

"Who from?" asked McClure. "There's not much fear of an attack to-night, Handy. I expect we shall be left in peace until to-morrow."

"Don't you believe it," replied Handforth. "Those Sixth Form chaps will have another shot at us—or I'm a Dutchman! They couldn't do anything by daylight, so they'll probably try to drive us out of this stronghold in the darkness. So it's up to us to be on the alert."

The chums of Study D at St. Frank's were in a

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you will find full particulars of how to fold this week's fine Free Gift. And if you want to know all about this world-famous racer, the article on page 35 will interest you immensely.

rather curious spot. In fact, they were on the flat roof of the school stores, a big brick building at the rear of the school premises proper, and quite isolated. The great bulk of St. Frank's could be dimly seen in the near vicinity, without a light showing from any window. Handforth & Co. were leaning against the stone parapet, watching. Overhead the clouds were heavy, although no rain was falling. The air of the December night was chilly and biting.

As a matter of fact, a barring-out was in progress.

A sensational one, too, for the entire Remove had rebelled and were in possession of the school stores. There was no shortage of food! But the rebels were compelled to admit that the sleeping accommodation was not of the best. They had neither beds nor blankets—but they were schoolboys, and were not very particular in such matters. Down in the building, the majority of the mutineers were sleeping in all manner of odd corners, covered with sacking, empty sacks and so forth. The novelty of the adventure made these hardships seem light.

Handforth was the firebrand who had started the rebellion. In a way he had been perfectly justified—for he had revolted in a moment of burning indignation, as he was about to be flogged for an offence which he had not committed. To the amazement of the whole school, Handforth had rushed off with Church and McClure, and the three juniors had barred themselves in Study D.

From that initial rebellior of three juniors the whole barring-out had developed. Now the entire Remove was involved. All the fellows were supporting Handforth, and even Nipper, the captain of the Remove, was as enthusiastically in favour of "sticking it out" as any of the others.

So far the headmaster had maintained a stern dignity over the regrettable affair. But the seniors had taken matters into their own hands, and they had attempted to drive the rebels out of their stronghold. They had failed—mainly owing to the timely intervention of Willy Handforth and his stalwarts of the Third.

Now night had come—with its attendant risks.

Many of the rebels felt that an attempt would be made to drive them out under cover of darkness, and so a strict watch was being kept. Seven or eight scouts were on the roof, posted at various corners. Others were below at the barricaded windows. The whole force had been warned that it might be called upon to get into action at a moment's notice.

The roof was not entirely flat, for the central portion of it rose up in artistic slopes. But all round the edge were the leads, and picturesque stone parapets surrounded the entire roof. So while the juniors were perfectly safe up there, they also had a big advantage over any attacking force.

"What-ho, without!" observed a cheery voice, as another form loomed up out of the gloom. "Watchman, what of the night, and so forth!"

"Thought you were asleep, Archie," said Handforth severely.

"Absolutely, old top," agreed Archie Glenthorne with a nod. "I must admit that I have just partaken of forty of the best—and I am now feeling considerably braced."

"That's good," said Handforth. "You'll need to be braced, old son. There's an attack coming presently."

"The mixture as before, what?" asked Archie. "It behoves us, laddie, to tighten our girdles and to prepare for the good old battle. I trust that we have the necessary consignments of ammunition?"

"Rather!" said McClure. "Look at all the heaps of bombs."

"Good gad!" ejaculated Archie. "I mean to say! Bombs, what?"

"Our own special brand," said Church with a grin. "Filled with flour, bad eggs and other choice things!"

"Yes," said Handforth. "We found a lot of stuff that had gone mouldy, and so we used it for making bombs. We're not going to be driven out—— Hallo! What the—— By George!"

Handforth went to the parapet and stared intently.

"What is it?" asked McClure in a low voice.

"Shush!" warned Handforth, his tone betraying a sudden excitement. "They're coming! Look! Don't you see them? Creeping forms—coming up from every direction!"

"Odds marvels and miracles!" murmured Archie. "I must remark, old Cheddar, that your eyesight is of a particularly high order! I mean to say I can't exactly see——"

"There!" interrupted Handforth, pointing. "Can't you see something creeping about?"

They looked again. Sure enough, there were signs of stealthy movements on the ground, and the rebels were filled with a sudden tense excitement!



CHAPTER 2.

The Alarm.

HANDFORTH opened his mouth to let out a wild yell of warning. But the next second he received a staggering surprise, for Church and McClure flung themselves at him, and McClure's cap was pressed over his mouth.

"Quiet, Handy—quiet!" urged Church fiercely. "We only just stopped you in time!"

"Gug-gug-gug!" mumbled Handforth incoherently.

"We don't want the enemy to know that we're on the alert!" hissed McClure. "Archie and I will rush down, rouse the other fellows, and get them on the roof. See the wheeze?

Why tell the enemy that we're ready for them? We'll give them a surprise at the last second—as they rush to the attack!"

The cap was removed, and Handforth took a deep breath.

"By George!" he muttered. "That's a good idea of yours, my lad! But you needn't have acted the giddy ox! I should have thought of it in another second!"

"Why, you ass, you were just going to yell!" said McClure.

"Never mind about that!" muttered Handforth. "You chaps buzz down and give the alarm! There isn't a second to lose! They may attack at any moment now."

"Absolutely!" said Archie. "It rather seems to me, old onions, that the night is soon to become hideous!"

They hurried off on their errands, and within a couple of minutes the entire rebel encampment was astir. Fellows were awakened out of their sleep, and they were hustled up to the roof, to take their places round the parapets, ready to fling the "bombs" as soon as the enemy made a rush.

"Has anybody seen them?" asked Tommy Watson, as he came up rubbing his eyes.

"Handy says that he saw some lurking figures a minute or two ago," replied Nipper. "We can't tell much now—it's too dark. There's another big cloud gone over the moon, but it'll soon be past. Then we shall be able to see what's really happening."

Handforth nodded.

"Yes, as soon as the moon comes out the attack will develop!" he said. "I'll bet they're Sixth Form fellows—and some of the Fifth, too, perhaps. But we're ready for 'em!"

"What about the pea-shooter squad?" asked Reggie Pitt. "Is everybody ready?"

"Yes, I think so," said Nipper briskly. "But I'll just go round the roof and make sure."

"That's it," said Reggie. "We can't be too careful. These seniors may have some surprise up their sleeve, and we must be jolly alert."

Nipper went round cautiously. All the rebels had been speaking in the lowest possible tones, and it would have been difficult for any attacking force to know that the garrison was awake.

Nipper's tour was successful. At various points on the roof, groups of juniors were collected about the big piles of ammunition; they were ready to start throwing at the first alarm. At other points the pea-shooter experts were placed. Fortunately, there were many sacks of peas in the stores, so there would be no lack of ammunition; dozens of pea-shooters had been fashioned from some lengths of thin iron pipe.

"I think you must have made a mistake, Handy," murmured Church as he leaned over the parapet, staring downwards. "I can't see any sign of the enemy now. I believe you've aroused the garrison for nothing!"

"Don't you believe it," said Handforth with a frown. "I distinctly saw some moving shapes. But these clouds are so thick that—— Yes, by George! There you are! Look! Can't you see?"

He pointed, and Church and McClure caught their breath in. Sure enough, there were some dim figures moving—only ten or twelve yards away. For a brief spell the clouds had thinned, and had allowed a faint diffusion of moonlight to come through. In that brief space the juniors could see the moving forms below, but the gloom was so thick that only the faintest impression was obtained. Just moving forms—nothing else. Curiously enough, they seemed to be roaming about at random. Some had been coming towards the stores and some were moving away. There seemed to be no settled order in this attack.

"They're just scouting about for a good position, I expect," breathed Handforth. "Anyhow, they're getting nearer, and they won't be able to conceal their movements much longer. Those heavy clouds are passing over—and the moon will come right out in another minute."

McClure glanced up at the sky.

"Yes, by Jingo!" he agreed. "It's only a half-moon, but it'll be enough."

The heavy cloudbank which had been obscuring the moon was slowly but surely shifting northwards. The rest of the sky was perfectly clear—proof enough that when the moon did come out it would shine in full glory.

"Now, get ready!" muttered Handforth excitedly. "The moon's just coming out—and that'll be the signal for the attack!"

The word was passed up and down, and the garrison prepared for the big moment.

Slowly the clouds rolled away, and then, quite abruptly, the half-moon came sailing out from behind the black clouds. On the instant the vista of ground in front of the school stores was bathed in the pale, cold radiance, and those moving figures stood out prominently.

"Now!" roared Handforth, leaping up. "Let 'em have it! No good waiting——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nipper and Fullwood and several others burst into a loud roar of laughter.

"Eh?" gasped Handforth, staring. "Why, what the dickens——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look at Handy's enemy!" grinned Fullwood, pointing. "Somehow, I don't think we're in much danger, you chaps!"

All round the roof the rebels were chuckling. For the "enemy" proved to be a flock of sheep! In the full moonlight they could be distinguished without the slightest difficulty. Obviously, these sheep had wandered here by sheer chance—after escaping, probably, from a neighbouring paddock! Some of the disturbed juniors were inclined to be indignant, but the majority were heartily amused. It was just like Handforth to raise a false alarm!

"So much for your precious enemy, old man!" chuckled Nipper as he came up. "Better luck next time, perhaps."

Handforth scratched his head and grunted.

"Well, of all the frosts!" he said indignantly. "How the dickens was I to know? I saw some moving figures, and I thought they were attackers! I say, what a giddy frost!"

"You seem disappointed!" remarked Nipper.

"I am!" retorted Handforth. "I thought we were going to have a scrap!"

"Well, you never know, old son," said Nipper. "The night isn't over yet—and we shall be lucky if we get through it without any excitement."

"Lucky?" repeated Handforth. "I suppose you mean unlucky?"



CHAPTER 3.

The Prefects' Council!

FENTON, the skipper of St. Frank's, wept.

There were other prefects in that room who were weeping, too. Morrow, Wilson, Conroy major—all were similarly affected. They were in Fenton's study in the Ancient House, and the door was locked. It was a prefects' council—a most important occasion. The prefects of St. Frank's were discussing the rebellion of the Remove, and were thinking of ways and means for the suppression of it. And, apparently, these stalwart seniors had taken the rebellion greatly to heart.

For all of them were weeping copiously. Tears streamed down their cheeks, and their eyes were still welling. It was a touching scene. These strong men of the Sixth—weeping like children!

"Well?" asked Reynolds, in a muffled voice.

"It's all right—we're satisfied!" gasped Edgar Fenton desperately.

"Yes, that's enough, Reynolds!" sobbed Morrow.

Walter Reynolds nodded. He had his handkerchief clapped to his mouth and nostrils and eyes—but this was evidently a protective measure. He crossed to the window, flung it open, and then went to the door. He opened this, too, so that a draught of air was allowed to sweep through the study. The other seniors dried their eyes and breathed with relief.

"Yes, that stuff certainly seems to be effective," said Fenton, with a dubious look at a bottle on the table. "Are you sure it's corked up properly, Reynolds?"

"Yes, of course," said Reynolds. "The air will be clear in half a tick."

"And is it safe?" asked Morrow suspiciously. "No fear of any after consequences?"

"No fear whatever," replied Reynolds, with a chuckle. "You needn't be nervous, you fellows. This patent stuff of mine is absolutely harmless—guaranteed."

"By you?" asked Conroy major.

"Yes."

"I don't want to cast any doubts on you, old man, but I'd prefer a chemist's report," said Conroy, wiping his eyes. "By Jove! I'm crying yet!"

"Which only proves the effectiveness of my gas," said Reynolds calmly. "My dear chaps, the thing is bound to be a success. It will only be necessary for us to make an organised attack on the school stores, and throw these bombs, and those confounded rebels will be done. They can't fight when they're blinded with tears."

"It certainly seems to be a good idea," admitted Fenton thoughtfully. "If only we can get the rebels out of that stronghold of theirs, and scatter them into the night, they'll be completely disorganised. Unity is strength, you know—and once they're disunited they'll be nothing but a rabble."

"Exactly," said Reynolds. "And in the morning they'll come back in twos and threes—only too glad to give themselves up. I've spent a lot of time on these bombs of mine, and it's up to the Sixth to back me up. Why, unless we do something drastic, those rebels will hold out until Christmas!"

Reynolds walked over to a side table, and gazed lovingly into four wicker wastepaper baskets which were ranged there. These baskets were filled with curious-looking round objects. They were perfectly white, and some of them were rather knobbly.

Fenton walked over and joined the other prefect.

"Yes, you must have put in some work here, Reynolds, old man," he said, as he looked into the baskets. "But I want to be satisfied that these things are more or less harmless. We want to get those rebels out—but we don't want to injure them."

Reynolds laughed.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" he said. "How can these things injure them? They're only made of thin plaster, and directly they hit anything they'll burst and the gas will be released."

"Supposing they hit some of the juniors in the faces?"

"Well, they'll burst just the same!"

"I know that," frowned Fenton. "But will they cause any injuries?"

"Of course not," replied Reynolds. "Not even a graze. This is only soft plaster—it won't do any harm at all. I'll give you a demonstration, if you like."

"It might be as well," nodded Fenton.

"Good!" said Reynolds. "Carlile, just stand over on the other side of the room, will you? I want to throw one of these bombs at your face."

"I hate to disappoint you, old man, but there's nothing doing!" replied Carlile coldly. "If you want to demonstrate on anybody—demonstate on yourself! I'll throw the bomb; my aim is pretty good!"

Reynolds shrugged his shoulders.

"All right," he said, with a glare. "It's a pity you can't believe me, though! Haven't I told you that these things are harmless?"

"I'll believe it after I've seen the demonstration," replied Carlile. "But I'm not crazy enough to take your word for it, Reynolds. Man alive, aren't you famous for your recklessness?"

"Am I?" said Reynolds.

"Well, we all know it, old son," smiled Fenton. "Aren't you the chemical fiend of the Sixth? Where do you spend practically all your time? In the laboratory—making all sorts of fiendish experiments. The amazing thing is that you are still alive. We're always expecting to hear a sudden explosion, and to find that you have blown yourself to pieces."

"Idiot!" said Reynolds gruffly.

The other seniors chuckled, and Reynolds took up his stand at the end of the room. He couldn't do anything else. Since he had asked Carlile to undergo the test, and since Carlile had very sensibly refused, there was nothing for it but to satisfy these sceptics.

Reynolds was a great man in the laboratory. Chemistry was his hobby, and although he tore himself away now and again to participate in cricket or football, every other minute of his spare time was spent in the lab. His hands were so stained that they looked constantly dirty. His finger-nails were discoloured, his clothing was generally mottled, where splashes of chemical had fallen. But while Reynolds took himself very seriously, nearly all the other seniors regarded him as a joke. He wanted to prove to them that his chemical knowledge could be of practical use; and what better purpose could be served than driving these rebels out of their stronghold, and restoring St. Frank's to its normal condition?

"Ready?" asked Carlile, selecting one of the "bombs" and weighing it gingerly in his hand. "I say, Reynolds, you'd better go easy, you know. This thing is going to hurt you."

"Rats! Throw it!" said Reynolds.

"At your face?"

"Yes!" said Reynolds defiantly. "There's not one chance in a thousand that one of these bombs will hit a junior in the face; but as you fellows are so confoundedly sceptical, I'd better convince you! Go ahead! Throw it!"

"Well, it's your own doing," said Carlile. "Don't blame me if you're in the sanny for a week!"

Whizz!

Carlile took aim, and then let fly. The little plaster bomb shot across the room, and struck Reynolds fairly in the middle of the forehead. It was practically a bull's-eye. All those prefects were compelled to admire Reynolds for his determination. He held himself rigid, and the bomb burst over his face like a cloud of white powder. Then he spun round, gasping and choking, and clapped his hands frantically to his face!



CHAPTER 4.

The Sixth Goes Into Action!

"GREAT Scott! He's hurt!"

"It's not my fault!" said Carlile, in alarm. "He asked——"

"Rats! I'm not hurt!" gasped Reynolds. "It's—it's that gas! Phew! It nearly choked me for a minute! I didn't think it was quite so powerful!"

He uncovered his face, and the other prefects, crowding round, examined him anxiously. They were relieved to find that only a trace of white powder could be seen on his face. He had come to no harm whatever. Incidentally, he had proved conclusively that his bombs were safe. But it was some moments before his eyes stopped watering. The gas, at all events, had had the desired effect.

"Well, are you satisfied?" demanded Reynolds at last. "You see, this plaster is only soft, and it bursts into powder, releasing the gas. If we surround the stores, and throw these bombs from every angle, the juniors won't be able to live in that atmosphere. They'll bolt out of the place like rats from a sinking ship."

"By Jove, I believe it!" said Fenton. "Reynolds, you're a genius!"

"It's a pity you couldn't take a fellow's word," grumbled Reynolds.

Fenton walked across to the baskets, and picked up one of the plaster bombs.

"I suppose these things are safe?" he asked. "They won't burst in our hands before we can throw them?"

"No, they're strong enough to handle," replied Reynolds. "They'll only break if they're dropped, or if you knock two of them together. Of course, they need careful handling—I told you that from the first. But we know what they are, and we can be cautious."

"Congrats, old man, for your industry," smiled Fenton. "You must have spent hours and hours on this work."

Reynolds nodded.

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"Took me nearly all day," he replied "And all I get, when I demonstrate to you chaps, is a lot of scepticism. I tell you, I feel pretty strongly about this Remove rebellion. Those young rascals are bringing the name of St. Frank's into disrepute. It's time they were driven out of their fortress, and made to understand that they can't defy discipline and order."

"You're right!" said Morrow grimly. "In a way, I've a sneaking sort of sympathy for old Handforth. He's not a bad kid—as straight as a die in most things. But he's the ringleader of this rebellion, and he ought to be punished. As soon as he's dealt with, the rest of the rebels will crumple up."

"I'm not so sure about young Hamilton," frowned Fenton. "He's a tough nut to crack."

"You mean Nipper?"

"Yes," said Fenton. "He's the Remove captain, and he'll support Handforth right up to the limit. Still, if we can only gas them out of their fortress the rest ought to be easy."

"There'll be nothing in it," said Reynolds. "You trust me—and my bombs. I've proved to you what they're like, and you can take my word for it that they're perfectly harmless—the effect is only temporary. It's no good us rushing up to the stores with scaffold poles and things, in an attempt to batter down the doors. Those kids are ready with pea-shooters, and goodness knows what else. But they'll be incapacitated once the gas takes effect and they start sobbing."

"Yes, it's a first-rate scheme," said Fenton. "Most of the Sixth Form fellows are all ready, and they'll turn out at the word from me. I suppose I'd better go and give them the tip, eh?"

"Couldn't do better," said Morrow, nodding.

"We must concentrate on getting those kids out of the stores," said Fenton, as he walked towards the door. "We won't try to capture them to-night. That would be too much of a task. They're as slippery as eels, and they'd only give us a lot of trouble. Once they're out of the stores they'll be scattered all over the school grounds, and a night in the open will do them good. In the morning they'll be only too ready to trickle back and surrender. Once they've been disorganised, they'll be as meek as lambs."

When the main body of the Sixth Form heard of the programme, there was much jubilation. For the Sixth had taken the whole affair to heart, and they deemed it advisable to end this rebellion at the earliest possible moment.

Handforth was the ringleader—Handforth had defied the Head in the first place—and the Remove had backed him up. The Sixth did not take the trouble to go into the whys and wherefores of the case. The Remove had rebelled, and that was enough. The Remove had to be squashed!

It was unofficially reported that the headmaster was totally opposed to any attack on the stores. The Fifth and Sixth had made an attempt during the day to drive the rebels out. They had failed badly—indeed, they had made themselves the laughing-stock of the rest of the school—and Dr. Malcolm Stafford did not want another fiasco of that sort.

But the Sixth-Formers, at least, were very grim. These juniors had defied them—had given them a thorough beating. Well, the Sixth meant to show the juniors that they were still determined, and, with the help of Reynolds' patent bombs, it seemed most likely that the Remove would be vanquished.

The mode of procedure was to be very simple.

The seniors did not care whether the rebels were alert or not. They were simply going to rush up to the school stores from every hand, and let fly with the plaster bombs. These would naturally take the juniors completely by surprise, and would make them helpless for the time being.

Blinded by tears from that peculiar gas, and fearful, probably, of even worse consequences, they would make a rush into the open, abandoning their stronghold.

Such was the confidence of the Sixth that no attempt at secrecy was adopted. The moon was shining brightly now, and there were hardly any clouds in the sky.

Stanhope, of the West House, was particularly jubilant. He had led that previous attack on the rebels, and he felt his humiliation keenly. Now he was going to get his revenge!

There had been some talk of getting the Fifth into this attack, too—but Reynolds had declared that it would be quite unnecessary to disturb the Fifth-Formers. There wouldn't be any actual fighting. Those gas bombs would drive the rebels out, and then they would be scattered. Nothing else was necessary.

And so the enemy force approached openly—in the full moonlight. Indeed, as they drew nearer, the prefects and the other Sixth-Formers made a point of talking loudly.

"We want to make ourselves heard," declared Reynolds. "Don't you see the wheeze? All these Remove chaps will gather on the roof, ready with their ammunition—bags of flour, and similar rot—and the more there are the better. These bombs of mine will have a terrific effect. They'll create the utmost confusion."

"Yes," said Fenton. "We'll stay here for a bit—within sight of them—as though we're scheming out some plan of campaign. That will give them a chance to collect on the roof—the whole force. By Jove, we're going to give them a bit of a surprise soon!"

And the rest of the Sixth-Formers chuckled with anticipation!



The little plaster bomb shot across the room and burst on Reynolds' forehead. He became engulfed in a cloud of white powder; then, to the alarm of the other seniors, he started gasping and choking.



CHAPTER 5.

The Attack!

"I DON'T like the look of it!" said Nipper, frowning.

"Why not?" asked Handforth. "There's nothing to be scared of. Only a crowd of Sixth-Formers. They'll never drive us out of here! Why, they haven't even armed themselves with battering-rams!"

"That's why I'm worried," said Nipper. "These seniors haven't even attempted to come up stealthily. They're making as much noise as they can—and allowing us to get a full view of them. Look! They're collecting on every side. I believe the beggars have got something up their sleeve!"

"Well, we shall be ready for them!" said Fullwood grimly. "We've plenty of ammunition—and plenty of pea-shooters. As soon as they come a bit nearer we'll let fly. They needn't think that they can drive us out!"

There was a feeling of excitement in the rebel ranks, and the juniors were collecting all round the parapets, ready with their flour-bombs and pea-shooters. They were properly organised, too. There was nothing haphazard about their methods.

Such fellows as Nipper, Handforth, Reggie Pitt, Fullwood and De Valerie were the generals. Each one had a force of his own, and each force had to guard a particular section of the building. The rank and file of the juniors had agreed to take the orders of their officers, and in this way there could be no misunderstandings when the actual fighting started.

"Come on, you fatheads!" roared Handforth. "What are you waiting for?"

"Yah! You'll never drive us out!"

"We're ready for you!"

"Hurrah!"

"Long live the rebellion!"

The rebels cheered lustily, just to show the Sixth-Formers that they weren't in the least scared. Nipper and Fullwood and one or two others were watching rather anxiously. They did not quite like the look of things.

"It's my belief there's another force somewhere," said Fullwood. "The Fifth-Formers, perhaps—lying in ambush ready to come along at the moment of the attack. It's up to us to be jolly careful, you fellows!"

"They'll never drive us out!" said Russell.

The attacking force had divided itself into four sections, and they were massing all round the stores. The idea, evidently, was to make a combined assault at the same moment. In this way, the rebels would be compelled to divide their own forces, in order to protect each wall.

If the Sixth Form had been ordered by the headmaster to make this attack, the seniors would have done so protestingly. It was no part of their duty to attack rebellious juniors!

But they had decided upon this course entirely on their own—and that made a difference. They had their own quarrel with the Remove—for the Remove had defied them—and they meant to show these cheeky youngsters that they were not to be lightly ignored.

There was a little delay at the start, be-

cause numbers of sheep were found roaming about in the vicinity, and Morrow and Stanhope and a few others were obliged to "shoo" them out of the way. They didn't want to get mixed up with these sheep when the fighting actually commenced. The animals, for their part, were only too ready to get back into the neighbouring paddock.

"Well, we're all ready now," said Fenton at last. "I don't much like the idea of this business, but we'd better get it over. We'll give the signal now, and the other parties will attack at the same moment. All ready; you fellows?"

"Yes!" went up a chorus from Fenton's own crowd.

"Right!" said the school captain. "Then we'll go!"

They sent up a combined yell—which was immediately echoed by all the other attackers. Then, in sweeping ranks, the Sixth-Formers ran forward towards the stores.

"Look out!" yelled one of the rebels. "Here they come!"

"Be ready, you chaps!"

"Hurrah!"

"Pea-shooter squad—fire!" roared Handforth at the top of his voice.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Other orders were given, and the next moment the battle had commenced. From all sides came a hail of peas—hissing down from the parapet in hundreds. They struck the Sixth-Formers on the faces, on the hands, and there were many gasps. But this "fire" was not serious enough to stop the rush.

"All right—let them have it!" shouted Stanhope excitedly.

At least a dozen of those tear-gas bombs were flung. Some of them hit the walls of the stores harmlessly—others went on to the roof, and crumbled to fragments there. One, indeed, struck Handforth in the chest, and burst into a thousand atoms.

"What the dickens—— Oh, my goodness!" gasped Handforth, staggering back. "Whoa! What the—— Oh, crumbs!"

He clapped his hands to his face, his eyes streaming. He was gasping, too, for a pungent chemical odour assailed him. In a few moments he found that it was impossible for him to see, for his eyes were blinded by the rush of tears which came forth, unbidden.

Nipper caught a whiff of that gas, too, and then he understood.

"Let them have it, you chaps!" he shouted. "They're using gas bombs!"

"Good gad!"

"Gas bombs!" gasped Church. "But—but——"

"I don't suppose they're harmful," went on Nipper. "But they'll drive us out of here unless we're careful. Quick, you fellows—use those pea-shooters as you've never used pea-shooters before! Don't let them get too close!"

"Oh, my only aunt!"

"I'm crying now!" said McClure, brushing a sleeve over his eyes. "Great Scott! That stuff is like nothing on earth!"

He reeled away, having caught a full whiff of gas. In the meantime, the battle was raging with tremendous fury. Not only pea-shooters were at work, but the bags of flour were being hurled downwards upon the enemy in hundreds. As fast as the juniors could throw, so the flour bags went. The air became foggy all round the stores, and the seniors were beginning to discover that their task was not so easy as Reynolds had prophesied.

To make matters worse, Mills and Payne and one or two others had dropped a couple of their gas bombs. Struck by the stinging peas, they had become momentarily confused. First one bomb was dropped, and then another—and, finally, Parkin stumbled on a tuft of grass, and all his bombs burst round him, filling the air with acrid gas. The seniors were obliged to back away, literally dosed with their own medicine!



CHAPTER 6.

The Fight Develops!

HANDFORTH, partially recovered, was filled with indignation and anger.

"Keep it up, you fellows!" he roared. "We'll teach those beastly seniors to smother us with tear gas! So that's their dodge, is it?"

"Some of them have dropped their bombs!" said Nipper quickly. "If only we can take advantage of it, we'll have them routed. Keep using the pea-shooters, and pepper them thoroughly! We'll beat them yet!"

"Hurrah!"

Certainly the battle was not going exactly as the Sixth-Formers would have liked. Neither was it going as they had anticipated. Reynolds had declared that the rebels would be incapacitated during the first two or three moments. But, although many of those gas bombs had been flung, the defence was just as fierce as ever. Hails of peas were hissing down, peppering the Sixth-Formers in a continuous stream, stinging them painfully. Fenton and Morrow and one or two others attempted to rally the attackers, but it was a difficult task.

It was difficult because so many of those patent gas bombs had exploded in the wrong place!

Stung by the peas, some of the seniors had dropped a good portion of their ammunition—and those plaster bombs had not been constructed to be dropped! The gas, in fact, was liberated freely on the ground, and the Sixth-Formers found themselves groping blindly about, their eyes welling with tears.

The utmost confusion followed.

"If you kids will surrender, we'll let you off!" roared Reynolds. "Come out of this building, and we'll——"

"Yah! Go home!"

'Go back to bed!"

"You'll never drive us out of here, you silly seniors!"

A chorus of defiance went up, followed by another hail of peas. More of those plaster bombs were dropped, and shouts of triumph and laughter went up from the garrison as they could see the Sixth-Formers staggering about, colliding with one another.

Nipper's anxiety had left him now. The little mystery was explained. The Sixth-Formers had believed that their patent gas bombs would do the trick. There were no Fifth-Formers in support. The entire attacking force was in full view—and it was in no happy condition, either. One big effort now would complete the rout.

"They thought they'd gas us out, you chaps!" shouted Nipper, running round the roof. "Give them another dose of peas—and another dose after that! Carry on, the rebels!"

"Hurrah!"

Hiss—hiss—hiss!

The peas went whizzing across the intervening space, and the confused Sixth-Formers were treated to such a bombardment that they were completely bewildered. They hadn't bargained for anything like this!

According to Reynolds, failure had been impossible. They would make one combined rush from all sides, pelt the rebels with the tear-gas bombs, and the rout of the juniors would be complete. But, somehow, this programme wasn't exactly materialising!

Only a few of the juniors had been affected by the gas bombs, and the remainder of the rebels were still as determined as ever; it was the seniors who were getting most of the gas! So many of the bombs had dropped on the ground that the gas was rising in choking volumes, and it was blinding the seniors to such an extent that they could hardly tell where they were.

The hail of peas, too, only added to their unhappiness.

In answer to Nipper's urgent appeal, the juniors put forward a special effort. The pea-shooter experts were doing wonders.

"Hurrah! They're retreating!"

"Well done, the Remove!"

Edgar Fenton could see that the situation was desperate. It would be a first-class calamity if the Sixth was compelled to take to its heels like a rabble. It would be better to retreat in an orderly fashion, and then make a second attack, after order had been restored.

"Back, you fellows!" shouted Fenton. "And take care of those bombs, too; don't let any more of them drop! We've got to get out of range of these infernal pea-shooters!"

Amid much cheering from the juniors, the seniors turned back, and all the various units came round to the front of the building, they collected there, angry and concerned. The seniors gritted their teeth as they heard the jeers and cat-calls of the rebels.

"We can't leave the thing like this!" said Fenton, with gleaming eyes. "We started the attack, and we've got to win!"

"We'll never do it!" panted Morrow. "These confounded juniors are too strong for us!"

"Well, don't blame me!" said Reynolds, in some alarm. "If you fellows had stuck to your bombs, instead of dropping them, everything would have been all right!"

"How the dickens could we stick to them when we were pelted with peas?" demanded Carlile angrily. "I thought this affair would be a frost! It would have been a lot better if we had steered clear of the rebels altogether! Think what a laughing-stock we shall be to-morrow!"

"Well, it's your own fault——" began Reynolds, in self-defence.

"For goodness' sake don't start quarrelling amongst yourselves!" broke in Fenton. "We've got to make another attack, and the sooner we make it, the better. This time we'll approach with our heads down, until we get practically underneath the walls, then we'll fling these bombs up, and make one tremendous onslaught. It ought to do the trick."

"Give us the chance to recover ourselves first," panted Stanhope, wiping his eyes.

Many of the seniors were still suffering from smarting eyes. They had got out of the gas zone now, but something was happening which the Sixth did not even suspect.

That patent gas of Reynolds' had a peculiar property. It hung about, clinging to the ground, with the result that now it was carried by the slight breeze in swirling eddies towards the neighbouring paddock—and that paddock was filled with peacefully grazing sheep!

Slowly but surely the gas was penetrating into the ranks of the flock, and the outlying sheep were already becoming restive. Sheep are peculiar animals. If one or two members of a flock start something, the others generally follow.

And those sheep that were nearest the gas were on the point of starting something now!



CHAPTER 7.

The Stampede!

"READY?" asked Fenton gruffly.

"Is it worth making another attack?" asked Parkin. "I'm fed up with this! I don't see why we should do the Head's work for him! If he wants to drive

these rebels out, why can't he hire some farm labourers, or something?"

"Don't be an ass!" snapped Morrow. "We've taken on the job, and we've got to finish it. We shall never hear the last of the thing if we fail!"

"We can't fail!" said Reynolds, with great anxiety. "It only means one rush——"

"That's what you said before!" growled Parkin. "I don't think much of your rotten bombs, anyhow! We're getting most of the gas!"

"That's because it's heavier than air!" said Carlile bitterly. "The stuff drifts down on to us, and——"

"Oh, don't make a fuss!" interrupted Reynolds. "If you fellows had only carried out my instructions in the first place, there wouldn't have been any trouble at all. Come on! Let's get it over!"

"Hear, hear!"

But just then Morrow gave a violent start. He was staring towards the paddock. A number of sheep were coming out—at a rush.

"Hallo!" he said. "What on earth's the matter with those sheep? I say, they're coming—— Look out! The confounded things are sweeping straight towards us! Hi! Clear out of the way there, you fellows! It's a stampede!"

"Oh, great Scott!"

There was every reason for alarm. That flock of sheep had had more than a whiff of Reynolds' patent tear gas, and the unfortunate creatures, half-blinded, probably, by those fumes, were in a panic. They were running at random—galloping at full speed—and the whole flock was following the originator of the stampede.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Third-Formers came and helped us before," grinned Nipper. "But now we're being helped by a flock of sheep!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Watching in the moonlight, the rebels were hugely amused. It was the funniest thing they had seen for terms. The Sixth, realising that there was no escape from that stampeding flock, had turned and were running away in alarm. But the sheep were running faster! The air was filled with the thudding of the many feet on the ground.

The seniors, unlike the rebels, saw no humour whatever in the situation. Many of them were bowled over by the panic-stricken sheep. They thudded to the ground and sat there, dazed, while the flock swept on, creating a terrific turmoil. Indeed, one or two of the seniors found themselves being carried off on the backs of the scared animals!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Down with the Sixth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a complete rout for the seniors. By the time the sheep had all passed, about a third of the attacking force remained on the battlefield. Most of them were sitting up, dazed and bewildered. They weren't particularly hurt, but they were beyond all further fighting.

They picked themselves up, and went staggering off, amid the yells of laughter from the juniors. The rest of the Sixth-Formers were already straggling away—back towards the school. They had had enough of this farce!

In the Triangle, the routed seniors gathered—and the unfortunate Reynolds was the butt of all the others.

"So much for your precious gas!" said Morrow indignantly. "We've only made things twenty times worse!"

"Well, it was your own fault!" said Reynolds. "If you had followed my advice——"

"Rot!" interrupted Stanhope. "That gas of yours was no good, Reynolds!"

"Look here——" began Reynolds.

"And the bombs were worse!" put in Wilson. "The beastly things broke in our hands, before we could throw them! Then those sheep got a whiff of the gas, and look what's happened! Those confounded juniors are yelling still! We shall never hear the last of this fiasco!"

Reynolds was decidedly unpopular. All the seniors felt that he was directly responsible for this unhappy outcome of the attack. They had relied so much on his gas that they had taken victory for granted. Instead, they had only succeeded in making themselves ridiculous.

"It's all very well for you fellows to go on at me!" said Reynolds hotly. "It wasn't my fault! The attack wasn't organised in the right way. My gas was all right, and——"

"We've had enough of your gas!" growled Kenmore. "You're all gas—nothing else but gas!"

"Confound you, Kenmore——"

"Oh, stop it!" said Fenton, with a wry smile. "When you come to think of it, the affair was rather funny."

"Funny?" repeated two or three of the seniors, staring.

"Yes!" said Fenton dryly. "I don't know whether you fellows can appreciate humour, but how can we blame those juniors for laughing? Just imagine the picture! The whole crowd of us flying in all directions, with those sheep after us! And some of us were carried along on the crest of the wave, so to speak! Thank goodness it was night-time—so that no photos could have been snapped."

Morrow nodded.

"Well, it's a blessing that you've got a sense of humour, Fenton," he said, with a chuckle. "I rather think I have one, too. Yes, it must have seemed funny to those cheeky juniors! I don't know—but it seems to me that we'd better give them best. We'll leave them where they are—and let the Head do all the worrying."

"Hear, hear!"

"We've done all that can be expected of us, anyhow," said Stanhope. "Blow the juniors! If they like to carry this rebellion on—they can do it! I'm not going to interfere with them any more, anyhow. I'm sick and tired of the whole beastly business!"

"And so are all the rest of us!" said Wilson.

"Let's get back to bed," growled Carlile. "And if we hear Reynolds talking about any more of his patent ideas, we'll know what to do."

"By George, we shall!" said Stanhope grimly. "If he invents another gas, we'll fill his study with it, and then lock him up in there! And if it makes him unconscious for a week, all the better!"

The seniors went off to their own Houses, thoroughly fed-up with the whole business. Some of them—fellows like Fenton and Morrow and Carlile—could see the humour of it. But the others were thoroughly angry. They had been humiliated by the Remove, and they were bitter against the rebels. Nevertheless, they were all of the same opinion in one respect. There were to be no further attacks!



CHAPTER 8.

General Christopher Carfax!

D. STAFFORD looked up sharply as a tap sounded on the door of his study. He had been gazing out of the window, across the expanse of Inner Court, but he hadn't seen the morning sunshine, and was quite unappreciative of the fine morning.

"Come in!" he said curtly.

Fenton, of the Sixth, entered.

"You sent for me, sir," he said.

"Yes, Fenton, I did!" retorted the Head sternly. "It has been reported to me that the Sixth Form made an attack on the—the rebels during the night. Is this true?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the attack, I understand, failed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Yesterday, Fenton, I distinctly gave instructions that the senior boys were not to make any further attempts to dislodge these—these unruly boys," said the headmaster. "You are the captain of the Sixth Form—the captain of the whole school. What have you to say, Fenton?"

"Nothing, sir—except that we hoped to drive the rebels out, and bring this ridiculous rebellion to an end," replied Fenton quietly. "I'm sorry we failed, sir. But it was really the fault of a flock of sheep."

"Sheep?" repeated the Head.

"Yes, sir," said Fenton.

And he explained the full circumstances—although he did not think it necessary to go into many details regarding Reynolds' patent tear-gas bombs. That part of the attack was glossed over. The Head was rather an old-fashioned gentleman, and he might not have understood.

"We only acted in the best interests of the school, sir," said Fenton. "I'm sorry we failed—but we all felt that these juniors were bringing St. Frank's into unwelcome notoriety. We wanted to finish this rebellion quickly."

The Head paced up and down for a few moments.

"I quite understand, Fenton—and it is difficult for me to reproach you," he said. "But, really, there must be no further attacks on these boys. They seem to be very strongly entrenched, and an attack that fails is far worse than anything else—since it gives these wretched boys a sense of power."

"I am very sorry, sir——"

"That is all right, Fenton—now that you have explained, I will say no more about it," broke in the Head. "Have you—have you seen any of these rebellious boys this morning?"

"Yes, sir. I took a walk up there about half an hour ago," replied Fenton. "They've been rather busy during the night, it seems."

"In what way?"

"They've put a lot of stakes all round the stores, sir," replied Fenton, with a frown. "These stakes have been stuck in the ground, and the rebels must have found some wire, to, because they've made some entanglements. It'll be very difficult to get anywhere near the stores now."

"Upon my soul!" said the Head. "There is no end to the resources of these junior boys! What are we to do, Fenton?"

"I'm sure I don't know, sir," replied the school captain. "I can only suggest that you should see these boys yourself, sir, and promise them complete immunity from punishment while a full inquiry is being held."

"I will not agree!" said the Head angrily. "Never will I admit defeat in that way!"

"It wouldn't exactly be admitting defeat, sir——"

"No, Fenton!" interrupted the Head. "I won't agree to it! Handforth shall be expelled from the school! I have decided upon that definitely and absolutely. He is the ringleader of this rebellion, and he thoroughly deserves to be sent from St. Frank's. His immediate helpers shall be flogged, and the rest of the boys suitably punished. That is the only possible ending to this rebellion."

"Then I'm afraid they won't give in, sir," said Fenton, shaking his head. "They're very obstinate—and they are very faithful to Handforth, too. They believe that he is entirely innocent——"

"Nonsense!" interrupted the Head. "The case against Handforth was absolutely proved. Mr. Pycraft's evidence alone was sufficient." He stopped and glanced round as the sound of a car came to his ears. Then he looked rather startled. For a big limousine had pulled up outside his front door—and it was a strange limousine, too.

"You had better go, Fenton," said the Head hastily.

"Yes, sir," said Fenton.

He went—and the Head paced up and down his study with a new worry on his mind. This visitor, no doubt, was an anxious parent. Rumours of the rebellion had already got

abroad, and it was quite likely that numerous parents would come to St. Frank's, inquiring after the safety of their sons. The situation was becoming desperate. But Dr. Stafford was still firm in his determination not to be weak. These junior boys had defied him, and they would have to suffer.

Fenton, at the door, was just in time to see a big, red-faced gentleman get out of the limousine. He was every inch of six-foot four in height, and proportionately broad. A giant of a man. His very bearing was fiery, and his red face was adorned with a heavy white moustache—which bristled arrogantly.

He was quite a stranger to Fenton, but the captain of the Sixth knew at once that this visitor was a military man. His very bearing told that. He was a man of about sixty, but he was as upright and as vigorous as a man half his age. He turned a fierce pair of eyes upon Fenton.

"Boy!" he said, in a voice that rumbled and rolled. "Tell me where I can find your headmaster!"

"He's indoors, sir," replied Fenton. "I have just come from his study——"

"Then you will just go back!" interrupted the stranger. "You will escort me into the headmaster's presence!" He suddenly frowned, and gave Fenton a fierce glare. "You are not, by any chance, one of these rebellious young rascals who have defied the authority of the school?" he added.

"Hardly, sir," replied Fenton quietly. "I am the captain of the Sixth. The rebels are junior boys."

"And they are still defiant?"

"Yes, sir," said Fenton. "But the Head will probably tell you——"

"Yes—yes, I suppose he will!" interrupted the other. "Take me to him at once!"

The stranger thundered into the hall of the Head's house, strode down the passage, and charged into Dr. Stafford's study. He was evidently a man of violent methods. Fenton thought it advisable to withdraw. So he closed the door and retired.

Dr. Stafford eyed his visitor in some surprise. It was most unusual for a gentleman to come in like this without being announced, and the newcomer himself seemed to realise this.

"There is no time for formalities, Dr. Stafford," he boomed thunderously. "Forgive my unconventional entrance—but my name is General Christopher Carfax. You may have heard of me?"

The Head wilted somewhat under that blast.

"Why, yes, General Carfax, of course," he said. "You have recently been appointed one of the governors of this school, I believe?"

"Your information is correct!" said General Christopher Carfax, D.S.O., J.P., D.L. "Yes, sir! I am a governor of this school. I may as well inform you that I have already communicated with Sir John Brent, the chairman, and I have informed him that I am determined to bring this ridiculous rebellion to an end. I have come to St. Frank's for that purpose——"

"Really, general, I would point out that I am the headmaster, and that——"

"The circumstances are exceptional, Dr. Stafford!" broke in the general. "You have failed to bring these boys to their senses. I am not blaming you—for you are not accustomed to deal with such situations. But I am a military man—and I can handle this affair rapidly and effectively. I am here to bring these boys to their senses!"



CHAPTER 9.

The General Takes Command!

THE Head was startled. He had heard that General Carfax had been appointed to the Board of Governors, but never for a moment had he expected the gentleman to come to St. Frank's—with the avowed object of quelling the rebellion! It was, in a way, a slight upon himself, and he felt it keenly. But there was something overpoweringly masterful in General Carfax's appearance. He was such a huge bulk of a man—such a towering giant.

As a matter of fact, General Carfax had seen many years of service in India, and his temper was of the most peppery kind. He was also a man of military methods, and it wasn't long before he made the Head realise that any resistance would only make him worse.

"I appreciate your interest in the welfare of the school, sir, but I would point out that I am the headmaster here," said Dr. Stafford quietly and with dignity. "I would further point out that I am entirely responsible for the behaviour of my boys, and it is absolutely unnecessary for you to put yourself out——"

"Unnecessary?" repeated the general. "Fiddlesticks!"

"Really, sir!" protested the Head. "I fail to——"

"Forgive me if I am blunt!" interrupted the general gruffly. "Forgive me if my manner is seemingly rude. I have no intention of being rude, Dr. Stafford. None at all. But I am a man of action—a man of few words and blunt words. Been like it all my life. Too late to alter now."

"Quite so—quite so!" said the Head feebly.

"I'm a soldier, sir!" went on the general grimly. "Always have been—always shall be, by gad! Never had a mutiny in my brigade—and now that I'm in command of these confounded schoolboys, I'm not going to have them rebelling. No, sir! I have my own methods with rebels!"

"I must urge you, General Carfax, to be careful," said the Head in alarm. "You will only make matters far worse if you attempt to get these boys out by force."

"They will surrender at my command!" thundered the general.

The very room shook, and the Head backed slightly. The general's bearing was so ferocious that he became more alarmed than ever.

"I am afraid, General Carfax, that you do not appreciate that there is a big difference between soldiers and schoolboys," said the Head at length. "These schoolboys are particularly determined——"

"Young puppies!" broke in the general angrily. "Impertinent young puppies, sir! That's what they are—nothing else! I'll teach them—I'll show them something! It's discipline they need—and it's discipline they'll get! Where are these rebels? Where are they, sir? Lead me to them at once!"

But the Head had no intention of knuckling under so easily. His very authority was being taken from him by this blustering old soldier—and it wouldn't do. General Carfax was a governor, but at St. Frank's Dr. Stafford had full authority. Probably, the general did not understand that he had no right to come here giving orders.

"I would like to explain, general, that the boys of this school are under my control," said the Head quietly. "I appreciate your good intentions, and I thank you for your offer of help. But I must decline."

"You must what?" roared the general.

"I want you to understand, sir, that I cannot take dictation," went on the Head with some heat. "I have my own methods at St. Frank's, and violence is not one of them. I must urge you to leave this matter entirely in my hands——"

"Stuff and nonsense!" broke in the general testily. "I have come here to put this rebellion to an end, and you ought to thank me. I can well understand that you are incapable of dealing with such a situation. You haven't had any experience. I have. I know what discipline is—and I shall enforce it. I shall place the whole school under martial law!"

The Head stared, amazed.

"But, really!" he protested. "My dear sir! You cannot go to such lengths——"

"Cannot, eh?" broke in the general, with a fierce laugh. "We'll see about that, Dr. Stafford. You have failed to quell this rebellion, so I am here to take command. That is final. I hope you understand it. I am in control of this garrison from this minute!"

"Garrison?" faltered the Head.

"I should have said—school!" frowned the general. "What's the difference? Why quibble, sir? Where are these rebels? I understand that they have seized some building or other! And that they won't come out! Where is it? Take me there at once!"

"But if you will only listen, general——"

"At once!" thundered General Carfax.

"Really, sir, I must decline to be browbeaten in this way!" shouted the Head angrily. "I am not one of your junior officers—I am not one of your soldiers, sir! You cannot dictate to me in this fashion!"

General Carfax puffed his cheeks out, and he gazed at Dr. Stafford in amazement.

"I am a Governor of this school, sir—and I intend to have my way!" he retorted fiercely. "That is enough! If you won't tell me where these rebels are, I will find out elsewhere! Huh! Rank insubordination from an officer! Disgraceful!"

He tore the door open and strode out, while the unhappy Head, mopping his brow, sat down in his chair. He hardly knew what to do. The general was a man of action—a hot-tempered soldier. He didn't mean to be insulting, but he was ignorant, it seemed, of the Head's own supreme authority. He probably regarded Dr. Stafford as a mere under-master. He himself was a Governor—and therefore in a position to command. But this, of course, was a fallacy. The Head had been appointed by the Board of Governors, and his control was supreme. But it would be useless to tell that to General Christopher Carfax. The peppery old soldier had come to St. Frank's especially to quell the rebellion, and it seemed that nothing was going to stop him.

Outside, in Inner Court, the general ran across Wilson, of the Sixth.

"Hey, boy!" thundered the general. "I want you! Come here!"

Wilson, amazed, looked at the stranger.

"Are you speaking to me, sir?" he asked coolly.

"Yes, confound you, I am!" roared the general. "You belong to this school, eh? You are one of the boys?"

"Well, yes, sir——"

"Then take me to this building where these rebels are defying discipline!" snapped the general. "Take me there at once!"

Wilson was not accustomed to receiving orders from perfect strangers, and he was rather resentful.

"I'm sorry, sir, but I'm busy!" he said shortly.

"By gad!" boomed General Carfax. "You're busy, eh? Boy! Do you realise who I am?"

"I haven't had the honour of meeting you before," replied Wilson.

"My name is Carfax—General Christopher Carfax!" stormed the old soldier. "I am a Governor of this school—and I expect obedience. Upon my soul! Are you one of these infernal rebels? Are you refusing to obey orders? I'll have you court-martialled, sir. I'll have you drummed out of the regiment!"

"My only hat!" muttered Wilson, aghast.

He decided, on second thoughts, that it would be advisable to humour this old fellow. There was something so fiery about the general's appearance that Wilson was beginning to get rather nervous.

"I'll—I'll take you to the school stores, sir," said the prefect, rather hastily. "I didn't know that you were one of the school Governors, sir."

"Well, you know now!" said General Carfax. "The school stores, you said? So that's the place these boys have seized, is it? All right—all right! They'll soon hear something from me! Within ten minutes, young man, this rebellion will be over. Do you hear that? Over!"

"I hope so, sir," said Wilson.

"Hope so!" thundered the general. "Are you implying, boy, that I shall fail?"

"You don't know these juniors, sir," replied Wilson. "They are a defiant lot—and they don't care a snap for anybody."

"Ah, they'll care for me!" said General Carfax fiercely. "Yes, by gad! They'll care for me!"

Wilson made no reply, but he led the way towards the school stores. Now that Wilson had got over his first surprise, he was feeling amused. He had an idea that the events of the next hour were to prove very interesting!



CHAPTER 10.

Not So Easy!

"BREKKER'S ready, you chaps!" called out Reggie Pitt cheerily.

"Oh, good egg!"

"Sweet, welcome words!" said Fullwood, licking his lips. "By jingo, I'm nearly starving!"

Everything was cheerful in the rebel encampment. The luscious odour of frying bacon came up from the interior of the stores, and all those rebels who were on guard on the roof were heartily glad to hear that breakfast was ready. Fatty Little and his army of cooks had been very busy for the past hour.

"Come on—we'll go down!" said Handforth. "No sign of any attack coming—and there won't be one, either. As long as we leave one or two chaps on guard, we shall be able to have breakfast in peace——"

"Hold on!" interrupted Nipper. "There's somebody coming."

"By George!" said Handforth, shading his eyes against the sun. "So there is!"

"Up, the rebels!" roared Church. "Enemy's coming!"

In less than a minute over half the rebel force was on the roof, watching eagerly. But there had been no need for the alarm, for only two figures were approaching. One of them was evidently a stranger—a giant of a man, broad and burly in proportion to his height.

"Hallo! I wonder who he is?" murmured Nipper. "Never seen him before that I know of. Looks like an old soldier by his walk."

They all watched with interest as General Christopher Carfax came up, guided by Wilson of the Sixth. General Carfax was looking angry and hot. The very sight of this rebel stronghold aroused all his military spirit. Here was a fortress to be conquered!

But it was impossible for the general to come to really close quarters, owing to the wire entanglements which had been placed round the school stores. The general came to a halt at the boundary line, and stood there for a moment or two, without speaking. He was inspecting the position—and his expression grew fiercer and fiercer.

"Well, there they are, sir," said Wilson, with a wave of his hand. "A cheeky lot of young monkeys, if you ask me!"

"I didn't ask you—and I shan't ask you!" retorted the general. "In fact, you might as well go now, young man!"

"Just as you like, sir," said Wilson, backing away.

The general glared up at the roof of the stores.

"Who is the commander of this fort?" he demanded, in his booming voice.

"I am, sir!" replied Handforth promptly.

"Sorry, old man—but I claim that distinction!" said Nipper. "I'm commander here."

"Rot!" snapped Handforth. "If you want the ringleader, sir, I'm the chap! My name's Handforth! I started this rebellion, and these chaps backed me up!"

"Oh, indeed!" shouted the general. "Well, my name is General Carfax, and I am one of the Governors of this school!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"A Governor!"

"Great Scott!"

Something like a wave of consternation went through the rank and file of the rebels. They stared down at the general's towering figure with alarm and trepidation. Things were evidently about to move.

"You are the commander, eh?" went on the general, as he stared at Handforth. "Very well, sir! Very well! I order you to evacuate this position at once!"

"You order me to what, sir?" said Handforth, staring.

"I call for an unqualified surrender!" thundered General Carfax.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Quite a number of the rebels laughed uproariously.

"By George!" yelled Handforth. "He's telling us to surrender, you chaps! Are we going to do it?"

"Not likely!" went up a roar.

"Silence!" shouted the general, in amazement. "Good heavens! Are you boys daring to defy me? Come out of this place at once! I'm giving you an order—and you must obey!"

"Just a minute, sir!" called Nipper. "My name's Hamilton, sir, and I'm the captain of the Remove. Do you know the circumstances of this rebellion?"

"I have not come here to argue!" retorted the general. "I have come here to command—and I expect obedience!"

"We will all surrender, sir, if you give us your word that everybody is to be pardoned,"



The Head did not intend to let the General take away his authority, and he said so. "I say I will!" boomed General Carfax, thudding his great hand upon the desk. "Gad, are you rebelling, too? I'll have you court-martialled!"

said Nipper. "We shall be only too glad to resume our normal——"

"Pardoned!" broke in General Carfax, with a snort. "You young puppy! You'll all be punished! You'll all be court-martialled, and dealt with severely. As for the ringleader, he'll be drummed out of the regiment!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You don't seem to understand, sir!" said Nipper. "This isn't a regiment—it's a school. Handforth was going to be flogged for something that he didn't do. Somebody played a scandalous trick on Mr. Pycraft, the master of the Fourth Form. Handforth was blamed, and he wasn't guilty. So, instead of taking a flogging, he rebelled, and the rest of the Remove backed him up by holding a barring-out."

"Yes, and we shall keep up the barring-out until there's justice!" roared Handforth. "They want to sack me—but I won't be sacked! When the truth comes out, the Head will realise that he's made a mistake, and he'll offer me a public apology!"

"Why, you young rascal!" thundered the general. "I'll teach you better discipline than this! Yes, by gad! I'll show you that you can't defy me! I've dealt with many a grim situation in my career—and I'm not going to be defied by a parcel of schoolboys! Come out of that building at once!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors had grown accustomed to the general's bluster by this time, and they were no longer afraid of him. General Carfax was proving to be a bit of a comedian, too. The general himself didn't know this—and would have been very angry if he had been told. But it was certainly funny to see him standing there, ordering these rebels to knuckle under.

He was positively amazed when he found he was ignored. He had been so accustomed to giving orders, and having them explicitly obeyed, that this was something new for him. The general could only stand there, and stare in blank astonishment. He was being defied—his orders were being laughed at! To General Carfax, it was a shocking state of affairs. His temper, always short, now deserted him entirely. He shook his fist at the rebels.

"You young rascals!" he shouted. "I'll teach you to defy my orders! You refuse to come out, eh?"

"Yes, we do!" chorussed the rebels.

"Upon my soul!" gasped the general. "You refuse to come out, eh? All right—all right! I'm beginning to understand now! I can see why the headmaster has failed! A crowd of insubordinate young puppies! That's what you are, my lads! And I'll teach you discip-

line before I've done! I'll soon have you out of that place!"

"You won't get us out of here!" yelled Handforth defiantly.

A chorus of cheers, mingled with laughter, went up from the rebels.

They couldn't be blamed for this display of impudence. General Christopher Carfax had positively asked for it. He was using the wrong methods—and he was laying himself open to ridicule. But he didn't know it yet. He was still labouring under the delusion that he could bring this rebellion to an end within the hour.

Before very long, the general was liable to get a few further shocks!



CHAPTER 11.

The General in Full Command!

"HURRAH!"

"Three cheers for the general!"

"Hurrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The rebels cheered and roared with laughter. General Christopher Carfax had just disappeared round one of the school buildings, and his ears were burning. He could plainly hear those ironical cheers, those shouts of laughter, and he was filled with a great fury. Never in his life had he seen such insubordination! He was fully determined to deal with these rebels as they deserved!

Back in the stronghold, the Remove was tremendously amused.

"General Carfax, eh?" grinned Nipper. "So he thinks he's going to drive us out, does he? He's taken on a tall order!"

"Rather!"

"I rather think, dear old boys, that he is biting off more than he can chew," smiled Tregellis-West. "And he seems to be a bit of a character, too—he does, really!"

"We're not afraid of him!" snorted Handforth. "Blow General Carfax! Neither he nor anybody else will ever chuck us out! A free pardon for everybody—or the barring-out goes on!"

"Hurrah!"

And the rebels cheered in the certainty of their security.

In the meantime, General Carfax had arrived back at the Head's House, and he stormed indoors like a human tank. He found Dr. Stafford in his study, and he let fly the very moment he entered the doorway.

"Ah, here you are, sir!" he shouted. "I've seen these boys—yes, I've had a talk with them! Impudent puppies! Confoundedly impertinent young rascals!"

"Really, sir——"

"Mutiny in the ranks— that's what it is!" said the general hotly.

"Yes, but I must point out——"

"Rank mutiny!" roared the general, glaring. "And you, sir—you are responsible!"

"Upon my word! I cannot allow——"

"Solely and absolutely responsible!" continued the general accusingly. "Who are you, sir, but the commandant of this garrison? Who are you, sir? You have already admitted to me that you are responsible for these boys—— No, do not interrupt me! You are guilty of a grave charge! You have allowed your men to defy your discipline!"

"Really, General Carfax, I must be allowed to speak!" shouted the Head angrily. "This is not a barracks! This is not a—a garrison! Please remember that you are in a public school—and that we are dealing with schoolboys, and not soldiers!"

"It makes no difference!" retorted the general, fuming. "I am a soldier—yes! Proud of it, sir—by gad, proud of it! A soldier, sir—to the finger-tips! And a soldier isn't in the habit of beating about the bush. He's a man of action, sir—a man who puts things bluntly!"

"I can well believe that, General Carfax!" said the Head bitterly. "But I would beg to remind you that I am unaccustomed to this sort of treatment. Even Sir John Brent himself would not treat me in this—this cavalier fashion. Be good enough to remember that I am the headmaster of this college. I am not a subaltern—I am not a—a sergeant-major!"

The Head was fairly beside himself with anger, and for the first time General Carfax seemed to realise that he had upset his host. He cooled down somewhat, and laughed uproariously.

"Gad, this is good!" he bellowed. "Confoundedly good, by gad! So you thought I was trying to order you about, did you? Nothing of the sort, Dr. Cheshire——"

"My name is Dr. Stafford, sir."

"Stafford?" said the general. "Stafford? That's peculiar—I thought it was Cheshire! Anyhow, I knew it was one of these infernal counties! You mustn't mind my manner, sir—you mustn't take too much notice of it!"

"You are not the kind of man, general, to ignore!" said the Head curtly.

"No, by gad—no!" laughed the general. "That's rather good. The fact is, you don't know how to run these boys. That's your trouble, Dr.—Dr. Stafford! You don't know how to run the young puppies!"

"And yet I fancy I have had more experience than you——"

"Yes, and I'll warrant that you've had trouble with them all your life!" interrupted the general boisterously. "That's your own fault—for not being hard enough on them. Boys need stern treatment. When they won't obey you, thrash 'em! That's the only thing to do! Thrash 'em! Do you think I'm going to let these young rascals defy my orders? No, sir!"

"I would like you to understand, General Carfax, that I am not disposed to have the authority taken out of my hands in this way!" said Dr Stafford angrily. "I realise your good intentions, and I appreciate your advice. But I won't be ordered about. I

am headmaster of this school, and either I have full control, or none!"

"It seems to me you have none!" snapped the general.

"Sir!" said the Head hotly.

"No offence—no offence!" growled the old soldier. "By gad, you seem to misunderstand everything I say! Can't get a word out of my mouth without you flaring up. What's the matter with you, sir? Don't like the authority being taken away from you—eh? All right—all right! I'm not particular. You can deal with these boys if you like, but you'll take orders from me!"

"Indeed, general, I shall not!"

"And I say you will!" boomed the general, thudding his great hand upon the desk. "Remember that I am your superior officer! Gad, are you rebelling, too? I'll have you court-martialled and——"

"Upon my soul!" gasped the Head, mopping his brow. "Really, General Carfax, please calm yourself. This—this is ridiculous!"

"I quite agree!" said the general. "I have come here to put an end to this rebellion, and I am not going away until it's done. So the sooner you move, Dr. Cheshire, the better! Eh? Oh, yes, confound it—Dr. Stafford! How on earth can I keep on remembering your confounded name? This rebellion has got to stop! I'm going to suggest a certain line of action, and you must take your orders from me."

"I am very sorry, but——"

"Enough!" roared the old general. "I am not in the habit of being hindered by my officers! No, sir!"

Dr. Stafford felt weak and feeble. He was utterly flabbergasted by General Carfax's domineering tone. He hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels, but he was certainly very angry.

This interference was intolerable. General Carfax was certainly a governor of the school, but he seemed to imagine that he had more authority than the headmaster himself just because he was a governor!

It was a preposterous situation.

And yet Dr. Stafford did not see how to get rid of his unwelcome visitor. There was every indication that General Carfax would create a whole lot of trouble before St. Frank's saw the last of him!



CHAPTER 12.

Too Much For The Head!

TAP—tap!

Dr. Stafford started, and glanced towards the door.

"Come in!" he said impatiently.

The door opened, and Mr. Horace Pycraft, the master of the Fourth, came in. Mr. Pycraft was an unpleasant-looking gentleman, and he was an unpleasant-natured gentleman, too. Practically all this trouble had arisen through him, one way and another. Not that he was actually to blame. But he had accused Handforth somewhat unjustly, and Dr. Stafford had upheld him. It had really been impossible for the Head to do anything else, since he was a master.

"Well, Mr. Pycraft?" said the Head testily.

"The boys of my Form, sir, have been complaining of the quality of the coffee," said Mr. Pycraft. "They have also taken exception to the butter. It seems that the quality of the stores that have recently arrived at the school is very inferior."

"Really, Mr. Pycraft, this is no time to come to me with such complaints!" said the Head, with some show of anger. "You know well enough that the school stores are in the hands of these—these rebels. Until the school is normal again, things will necessarily be at sixes and sevens——"

"Rubbish, sir — rubbish!" interrupted General Carfax. "Sixes and sevens be hanged! The school will be normal again within the hour! I will see to it!" He turned to Mr. Pycraft, and glared at him. "As for you, sir, you can go!"

"Really, I—I——" began Mr. Pycraft.

"And you can be perfectly satisfied that I shall bring this rebellion to an end!" roared the general. "I have come here for that purpose, and I am not the kind of man to be defied!"

"No, sir—no; quite so!" said Mr. Pycraft hastily. "Exactly!"

He fled, and when General Carfax turned back towards the Headmaster, he found that the old gentleman was hot with rage.

"Am I to understand, General Carfax, that you are taking the authority out of my hands?" asked the Head furiously. "You are not content with browbeating me in my own study, but you must needs treat me as an underling in the presence of my Form-master! It is too much, sir, and I will not have it!"

"Don't get so excited!" said the general gruffly. "No offence, sir—no offence. I'm a soldier—blunt and to the point. That's all. It's a pity you can't understand me."

"I admire bluntness in its proper place, sir," said the Head quietly. "But I cannot have the authority taken out of my hands in this fashion. I beg of you to leave this school under my control."

"You have proved, Dr. Stafford, that you can't control it!" roared the general. "Oh, yes—let's have plain words. Why beat about the bush? You have allowed these boys to mutiny, and I don't believe in mutiny. I won't have it! Never have had it—never will! Discipline, sir—that's the only thing! And I am here to apply it!"

Dr. Stafford rose to his feet, now pale with emotion.

"Very well, General Carfax," he said steadily. "If you are here to apply discipline, I beg of you to go ahead with it.

I will resign control until you have finished your task."

"Splendid!" said the general, without in the least realising that he had offended—and pained—the Head. "We couldn't come to a better arrangement, sir."

"Upon my word!" panted the Head. "You amaze me, sir!"

"I'll amaze you still more after I have dealt with these rebels in a military fashion!" said General Carfax boisterously. "I'll have you know, Dr. Stafford, that I have a certain method. I'm going to put the whole school under martial law! Every boy has got to obey my orders—or else suffer the penalty!"

With that he strode out of the study, leaving the Head very weak.

Within an hour, St. Frank's was seething with a new excitement. The general's arrival had become known to all and sundry. Fellows were asking why he had arrived, and what he was going to do. They were not left long in doubt. Notices were put up in every House—proclaiming martial law at St. Frank's! Nobody could believe it at first—it was so outrageously unusual. Martial law! It seemed ridiculous.

General Carfax himself went about the school like a kind of tornado. He swept through the Ancient House and the West House; then he charged across the Triangle and had a look at the Modern House and the East House. He was taking his bearings, and he insisted upon two or three prefects going with him, to show him all the various details of the buildings. And when he came upon any of the juniors, he swept them out of his way as though they were so much chaff.

When lessons started there was very little work done.

The Fifth and Sixth tried to maintain their dignity, but all these seniors were compelled to admit that they were inwardly excited. They felt that something big was going to happen soon. The arrival of General Carfax had given a new interest to the whole situation. Besides, the Christmas vacation was looming near, and the school felt that the general would help to make the days pass quickly.

The Fourth and the Third were frankly excited. They made no pretence about it. Just before lessons started, Willy Handforth found an opportunity of having a word with Buster Boots. They were the skippers of the Third and the Fourth respectively. Willy was looking rather thoughtful.

"What about it, Buster?" he asked.

"Eh?" said Boots. "What about what?"

"Well, you've heard about the general, haven't you?" said Willy. "You've heard that he's going about the school like a commander-in-chief? I shouldn't be surprised if he gives us some orders soon."

"Well, he won't get us to do anything!" growled Buster Boots aggressively. "We're not going to take orders from anybody except our own masters. It's like his nerve to come here at all, trying to usurp the Head's position!"

"All the same, he can be dangerous," said Willy. "It's quite on the cards that he'll order us to attack the Remove, and drive them out of the stores."

"Let him order," said Boots. "If he tries any of those tricks we'll defy him, and tell him to go and eat coke! For two pins we'll join the rebellion!"

Willy chuckled.

"Sometimes, Buster, you remind me of my major," he said coolly. "You're so jolly ram-headed, so direct!"

"Look here, you cheeky young fag——"

"Keep your hair on!" said Willy. "You ought to take it as a compliment when I compare you with my major."

"A compliment!" snorted Boots. "It's an insult!"

"Take it as you like," said Willy, grinning. "But look here, I think we ought to get together, and then pass a few words on to the chaps in our Forms."

They got together, and when they separated they were both looking very innocent!



CHAPTER 13.

Martial Law!

MR. PYCRAFT rapped his desk.

"Silence!" he said unpleasantly. "The next boy who speaks will receive a hundred lines!"

The mutter of voices died down in the Fourth Form class-room, and the juniors pretended to get on with their work. Lessons had just got under way, although, of course, they were very much of a farce. It was not to be expected that work should go ahead just the same as usual. The whole school was on tenterhooks, wondering what General Carfax would do.

"There's going to be some excitement by the look of things, sir," remarked Buster Boots, as he got out his books. "They're saying that General Carfax means to make things hum."

"And high time, too!" snapped Mr. Pycraft. "Those young rascals should have been driven out of their stronghold long ago. The whole thing is ridiculous—outrageous! But they needn't think they can defy authority with impunity. They will soon be beaten, and then Handforth will be expelled as he deserves."

The Fourth uttered a low groan.

"Silence!" roared Mr. Pycraft. "How dare you make that outrageous noise!"

"Lots of the chaps think that Handforth is innocent, sir," remarked Bob Christine defiantly.

"Utter rubbish!" shouted Mr. Pycraft. "Handforth is guilty! He assaulted me,

and it is only right that he should be expelled in disgrace. As for these other boys, they will be lucky if they——"

Mr. Pycraft broke off as the door burst open, and General Carfax strode in. Desks shook and inkpots rattled as he stamped across the floor.

"Attention!" he thundered, glaring at the Fourth.

The Fourth, as one man, rose to its feet and stood at attention.

"Good!" said the general, nodding. "That's the way I like to see you move! Leave this room at once, and form up in a double line in the Triangle! Now then, quick march!"

"Really, sir——" began Mr. Pycraft protestingly.

"Well?" demanded the general, glaring at him.

"Nun-nothing, sir!" stammered Mr. Pycraft, backing away. "I—I was only going to—to mention that we were on the point of commencing lessons——"

"Bah!" roared the general. "Lessons can wait!"

"Yes, yes, of course!" stammered Mr. Pycraft.

The Fourth, with great alacrity, left the room and marched straight out into the sun-lit Triangle. This was something they hadn't expected. Better than stewing in the class-room at lessons, anyhow! And there seemed little doubt as to the general's intention.

"Now, you chaps, remember to obey orders!" said Buster Boots quickly, as he got outside. "No insubordination—no refusal to obey the general's commands! He's a hard old nut, and we'd better not defy him."

"Rather not!" chorussed the Fourth.

"If we don't obey orders he'll give us ten days C.B.!" grinned Bob Christine.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With surprising docility, the Fourth formed itself into a double line and stood smartly to attention. A minute later the Third came trooping out, with Willy at the head. And Willy, apparently, had given very similar orders to his fags. For, without any attempt to lark about, the Third Form followed the example of the Fourth and stood at attention. Then General Carfax appeared, the very embodiment of energy. He marched up and down the juniors, like a general inspecting his troops.

"Good!" he said at length, as he faced the two Forms. "That's the kind of thing I like to see—strict obedience to orders! Now, boys, we've got to get to work!"

"Hurrah!" cheered the Fourth and the Third. "Three cheers for General Carfax!"

"Hurrah!"

"General Carfax will save the situation!"

"Rather!"

"Give him another cheer, you chaps!"

"Silence!" thundered the general. "I appreciate your enthusiasm, boys, but this is no place for it. Wait until we have conquered these mutineers. Yes, that's it. We're going to attack the school stores now!"

"Hurrah!"

"When a part of a garrison mutinies, it is the duty of the other soldiers to restore order," continued the general. "I'm glad to see that you boys are loyal."

"Hurrah!"

If the general had not been so full of his present scheme, he might have noticed a note of irony in those cheers. But he was entirely unsuspicious.

"Follow me!" he ordered. "And remember this, any boys who disobey my orders will be court-martialled and punished! I'm here to restore order, and I'm not going to be content until I've done it! We're going to drive those rebels out!"

"Rather, sir!" sang out Willy Handforth. "And if you're going to lead us, there can't be any doubt as to the result! If you're going to order us to the school stores we'll go there!"

"Hear, hear!"

"General's orders—we must obey!"

"Three cheers for General Carfax!"

The Triangle resounded with the lusty cheering The Sixth and the Fifth, in their class-rooms, listened to all this in astonishment. They were amazed that the juniors should be so ready to attack their fellow juniors of the lower school. Many of the seniors had confidently predicted that the Fourth and the Third would join the rebels at the first sign of trouble. Yet here they were, only too ready to obey General Carfax's commands!

"Well, there must be something about the man," said Morrow, scratching his head as he watched through one of the windows. "Personality, I suppose. These juniors are ready to follow him anywhere!"

"Well, thank goodness they are!" said Wilson. "If only they can drive those Remove fellows out, all the better! We've had enough of this tommy-rot! But I don't believe it; you can't kid me that the Remove is going to be squashed so easily. We couldn't do, anyhow, and I'm sure that these juniors won't!"

They watched the Fourth and Third being marched away, with General Carfax at their head. Off the juniors went, enthusiastic for the battle!



CHAPTER 14.

A Surprise For The General!

"HERE they come!"

"Stand ready, you fellows!"

The rebels, excited and eager, watched the approach of the attacking force. They were ready for any emergency. The pea-shooter squads were waiting, with ammunition ready; the bomb-



The big double doors of the stores were flung wide open, and the whole attacking force swept in, cheering, shouting, and yelling with laughter. The General gazed on in amazement. He had ordered these juniors to drive out the rebels—instead, they had joined them!

throwers were well prepared. But, somehow, there was an over-abundance of grinning faces. The rebels did not seem particularly alarmed at the prospect of a big assault.

"I'm ashamed of these fags particularly," said Fullwood. "They helped us, the other day. They said that we could rely upon them at any time. And here they are—coming to the attack!"

"Shocking!" said Clive Russell solemnly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the joke?" asked Handforth, looking round.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't worry, Handy—the joke will be on the general!" chuckled Nipper. "This is going to be interesting, my sons. Look how the general is organising his forces! He's a soldier, right enough! He knows what to do!"

Some little distance away, General Carfax had brought his forces to a halt. He had ordered the Third to stand aside from the Fourth, and he stood in such a position that he could address both Forms at the same time.

"Now, boys," he was saying, "always remember one thing! There is to be no retreat! Keep on fighting until the position is won—until you are victorious!"

"Hurrah!" yelled the Fourth and Third enthusiastically.

"One party will make a frontal attack, and the other party will sweep round to the rear, and charge from that angle," went on the general. "And remember that I'm with you! I'm giving orders! Once through, you will gain the position without any trouble."

"We'll get right in, sir!" shouted Willy confidently.

"Yes, rather!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gad, that's the spirit I like!" roared the general delightedly. "The best soldiers are those who laugh as they go into battle! A fine morale, by gad—a wonderful morale!"

"Hurrah!"

"Down with the rebels!"

"Hear, hear!"

And the attacking forces cheered themselves hoarse.

General Carfax was delighted. He was overjoyed. In spite of his determination to win, he had rather expected to have some little trouble with the juniors. But, to his astonishment, they were taking his orders without question. They were ready to go to the attack with enthusiasm and vigour. The general could only conclude that it was his personality that had won them over.

"Now, boys—charge!" he bellowed. "Go straight ahead—and don't turn back until you've won the battle!"

"We won't turn back, sir—we promise you that!" shouted Buster Boots. "Not a single man of us!"

"No fear!"

"Up, the Third and the Fourth!"

"Hurrah!"

Cheering lustily, the Fourth swept on to the attack. From the rebel stronghold came an answering burst of cheering—a wild series of defiant shouts. The Third Form, under Willy, swept off towards the rear, looking every bit as grim and determined as the Fourth. The whole battle was going exactly as the general had planned.

Boots and Christine, in the lead of the Fourth, swept on towards the entanglements. The general stood watching, eager and flushed. He fully expected to see the fortress fall—to succumb under this double attack. The headmaster could do nothing,



but he, General Carfax, was an old soldier! He knew how to go about his business!

"Gad, fine! Fine!" muttered the general, as he saw the juniors sweeping on.

It was almost uncanny the way they got through the entanglements. It seemed as though they had been loosened or something, for the Fourth went clean through with hardly a check. At last they were right at the wall of the school stores—right at the very door. Above, the rebels were shouting excitedly, leaning over the parapet.

But, strangely enough, they were not throwing any of their flour-bags—they were not using their pea-shooters.

And then a wild yell went up—from scores of junior throats. The big double doors of the stores were flung wide open, and the whole attacking force swept in, cheering, shouting, and yelling with laughter. Exactly



ig double doors of the stores were flung wide open, and the whole ing force swept in, cheering, shouting, and yelling with laughter. ieneral gazed on in amazement. He had ordered these juniors to drive out the rebels—instead, they had joined them!

the same thing was happening at the rear, where the Third rushed into the building, after finding the doors conveniently opened for them.

The general, watching, gave a sudden start. He couldn't quite understand it. He had expected a heavy resistance—and a grim fight. But his attackers were getting in without the least trouble! It was certainly remarkable.

In they poured—to the last man. And then—slam, slam! The double doors closed with a series of crashing thuds, and from inside the stronghold came a confusion of cheers and laughs.

Within the space of a single minute the entire force had vanished—had gone into the rebel fortress. What was more, the doors of the rebel fortress had closed again, and by the sound of things those doors were being heavily barricaded once more. At the rear the same thing was happening. The Third had magically disappeared.

With a violent start, General Christopher Carfax came to himself. He took several paces forward and stood still, his eyes bulging. Was he mistaken, or did he see Buster Boots and Bob Christine and Len Clapson on the roof, arm-in-arm with the rebels?

Did he see Willy Handforth wringing the hand of his major? Did he see other members of the Third capering about on that roof, yelling themselves hoarse?



CHAPTER 15.

The General Wakes Up!

"HURRAH!" "Down with the rebels!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The roars of laughter that came from the stores brought General Carfax up with a jolt. But he was still bewildered; he was still unable to realise what had happened. It was all so mysterious, so unexpected. The attackers had got into the stronghold, it was true, but in no circumstances could it be said that any severe fighting was going on. Some of the attackers were thumping the rebels on the back, but it was hardly fighting.

"Good man, Willy!" Handforth was saying. "By George, what a brilliant idea!"

"Yes, it was Willy's," grinned Buster Boots.

"Oh, it was Willy's, was it?" said Handforth, with a sudden frown. "Well, perhaps it wasn't exactly brilliant, although it was pretty good."

"Cheese it, Handy!" said Church. "Don't try to rob your minor of any glory. It was a first-class stunt!"

John Busterfield Boots nodded.

"Gilt-edged!" he said. "As far as I was concerned, I really didn't think of such a thing as this. It didn't occur to me that the general might order us to attack you fellows. But Willy thought of it; he foresaw what was coming."

"And put you up to the signalling dodge, eh?" smiled Nipper.

"That's it," nodded Buster. "I wonder what the general will say now?"

"Who cares?" said Handforth. "Blow the general! It's like his nerve to come here, thinking that he can run the school! He's only made matters worse!"

"Better, you mean," said Boots cheerfully. "We fellows have been wanting to join the rebellion for a long time. Now it's a real barring-out."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hurrah for the rebellion!"

More cheers went up—and more roars of laughter.

General Carfax would have been very surprised had he known that Buster Boots had recently been in communication with the rebels. Boots, in fact, acting upon a suggestion from Willy, had gone up to the old tower, and from that elevated vantage point he had done a considerable amount of signalling. Most of the rebels were Boy Scouts, and Boots was a Boy Scout, too. So he had flagged a message to the rebel stronghold. The rebels had forthwith got busy, removing the barricades from the doors, so that they could be opened when the "enemy" attacked. It had all been arranged so very neatly—so easily, too.

"It was the best thing you fellows could have done," said Nipper. "Of course, you wouldn't have really attacked us, would you?"

"Not likely!" said Bob Christine. "We've been in sympathy with the rebellion ever since the start. If we hadn't done this we should have refused to obey the general's orders."

"And that would have meant trouble, of course," said Boots. "We should have had to rebel on our own account, and find some sort of stronghold. So Willy suggested this idea of pretending to attack and then rushing straight in."

"Brilliant!" said Fullwood admiringly. "Absolutely scintillating! You're all now safely in the stronghold, with the rest of us. And we're in a better position than ever."

"Rather!" said Handforth. "We don't care who attacks now. With a force like this we can defy a giddy regiment!"

"Hear, hear!"

There was something exquisitely humorous in the situation. The general had believed that his forces were making a genuine attack, and all the time they were determined to join the rebellion!

It was a joke that would be laughed at for terms to come.

The whole school knew of the situation in less than a minute.

One or two of the prefects had gone up to the tower to watch the supposed assault. They couldn't help grinning when they saw what had actually happened. All the attackers had vanished, and General Carfax was left standing alone on the battlefield.

"Those young beggars have joined the rebels," said Morrow, with a chuckle. "Well, I don't altogether blame them! Hang it, it's a bit too thick when a man like General Carfax comes here, ordering the kids about! I don't wonder they defied him!"

"But they defied him in a particularly tricky way," said Wilson. "Well, I'm finished with it now. I wash my hands of the whole business. There was a faint chance that we might have driven out the Remove, but I'm hanged if we can shift the Remove and the Fourth and the Third lumped together! It'll need dynamite to shift them!"

While the seniors were talking, Mr. Pycraft had rushed to the Head and had reported the new situation. Dr. Stafford listened with pursed lips.

"I am sorry to hear this, Mr. Pycraft," he said anxiously. "Dear me! It is a grave situation! You tell me that the Fourth Form and the Third Form have joined the rebellion?"

"Yes, sir," panted Mr. Pycraft. "All my boys have rushed into the stores, and they are now on the roof, cheering with those other young rascals! It is entirely the general's fault! He should never have given such orders!"

The Head was inclined to agree with Mr. Pycraft—and, inwardly, he was not feeling exactly displeased. It worried him to know that another force of juniors had revolted. But yet it pleased him when he realised what a fiasco the general had made of things. Perhaps it would prove a lesson to the fiery old soldier! It was one thing to deal with troops—and a very, very different thing to deal with schoolboys!

If the headmaster had one gleam of satisfaction, it was in the realisation that matters must now surely come to a head. With the entire junior school in revolt, the position could not be maintained for very long. Something would have to be done—but that something would not be done by Dr. Malcolm Stafford. He was firm on that point. General Carfax had come here, and he had taken the reins of authority out of the Head's hands.

The Head was grim as he looked out of the window—as he stood there, with his hands clasped behind his back.

General Carfax had come here, and he had assumed control. Well, he could get on with it!

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CHAPTER 16.

Nothing Doing!

GENERAL CHRISTOPHER CARFAX, D.S.O., J.P., D.L., came to himself with a violent start.

"By g a d!" he bellowed. "I'm hanged if the young puppies haven't joined forces with the mutineers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Three cheers for the general!"

"Hip, hip, hoorah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Those cheers went up with a will—rousing, ear-splitting cheers. But now the general could recognise the ironical note in them. From the very first these juniors had been leading him on! And he—General Carfax—hadn't realised it until now! The old soldier was staggered.

"You—you confounded young imps!" he thundered, as he went closer and shook his fists at the yelling juniors. "Come out of that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll give you five minutes to surrender!" bellowed the general. "Five minutes, and not a second more! If you're not out by then, I'll take steps to drive you out by force!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was an awful shock for the general. These juniors didn't seem to respect him in the least! They looked upon him as a joke. Never would they have treated the headmaster in this way. They might have defied Dr. Stafford, and they might have remained firm in their determination to hold out. But they would never have laughed at him. They respected the kindly old Head too much for that. But General Carfax was too rich to be missed. He was a first-class laugh.

He seemed to realise that he was only making himself ridiculous by standing there. These juniors were too excited to take any notice of him. The shock was so great that General Carfax was stunned. Never in his life had he been defied before. In all his military career he had always exacted obedience from his troops. But he made the mistake of thinking that these schoolboys were like soldiers.

They did not even consider that he had any authority over them. He was an outsider—a mere visitor. It was like his nerve to tell them what to do, and what not to do! Just because he was a governor of the school, it did not give him permission to come here and give his orders.

At last the general, with a fierce expression in his eyes, turned away. He had been tricked—beautifully and simply tricked. His whole force had vanished and had gone over to the enemy! Now that it was too late, he was beginning to realise that, if he had had his wits about him, he would have guessed that something was wrong. The Third and Fourth were junior boys, and were bound to have sympathy with the rebels. Now they were rebels themselves! They had burned their boats, and there could be no drawing back.

Stalking back towards the school, General Carfax went straight towards the Sixth Form class-room, and burst in. He found Mr. Langton, the Form-master, talking seriously to his boys on the subject of Greek history. Everybody looked round as the general came in.

"Is there anything I can do, sir?" asked Mr. Langton politely.

"No, sir—nothing!" retorted the general. "I am here to command these boys! And I had better make you understand at once that I desire no interference."

"Really, sir, I think that remark is uncalled for," said the Form-master coldly. "If there is any interference it is entirely on your side. I would remind you that this Form is at work, and——"

"Rubbish!" interrupted General Carfax. "I have more important work for them. Boys, follow me!"

The Sixth Form remained seated.

"Did you hear my order?" roared General Carfax, glaring round. "Those confounded rebels have defied me. I mean to drive them out! I am not going to be——"

"Just a minute, sir!" interrupted Fenton, rising to his feet. "I am the captain of this Form, and I have something to say."

"Impudent puppy!" snorted the general. "What is it?"

Fenton flushed. He was not accustomed to being called an impudent puppy

"Without any disrespect to you, sir, we have decided that we shall take no part whatever in this quarrel in the Lower School," said the school captain. "The Fifth Form has come to the same decision."

"Mutiny, by gad!" gasped the general, staring in amazement. "Rank mutiny! Are you telling me, boy, that you won't obey my orders?"

"That is what it amounts to, sir," replied Fenton quietly.

"You—you—you——"

"We acknowledge the authority of the headmaster, and all the other masters," continued Fenton. "But we are not children, sir, and we do not intend to be ordered about like fags!"

A murmur of approval went up from the Sixth.

"You insubordinate young jackanapes!" thundered General Carfax. "If I had you in the army, I would court-martial you and dismiss you from the service! You are unworthy——"

"Quarrelling won't make matters any better, sir," said Fenton grimly. "And I may as well tell you, at the same time, that we don't recognise this new order of things. We

don't consider ourselves under martial law!"

"Hear, hear!" said the Sixth.

General Carfax began to speak, but the words seemed to choke him. He bubbled and boiled, and then finally, with a loud snort, he turned and strode out. He did not even attempt to enter the Fifth Form class-room.

"The whole school is in a state of rebellion!" he panted, as he stood outside, mopping his brow. "Good heavens! What a state of affairs! What a shocking situation!"

The old soldier was utterly staggered. He had instituted martial law only an hour or two earlier, and it had already proved a dreadful failure. Instead of quelling the revolt, he had only caused it to spread!



CHAPTER 17.

A Dramatic Turn!

"ALL quiet!" reported Reggie Pitt cheerily. "A fine night, and nothing to report."

The "guard" was being changed. It was evening now, and on the roof of the stores it was bleak and cold. But the guards had to be on duty constantly. They were well wrapped up, however, and nobody grumbled about taking his turn.

Handforth & Co., Fullwood, Buster Boots, Nipper, and a few others were included in the new watch. They took up their positions, and the relieved guard went downstairs into the interior of the building to seek some food. The commissariat department was now being hard pressed, but Fatty Little had roped in another band of helpers, and he was doing wonders.

Fortunately, there was no lack of food.

This building, being the school stores, was stocked with every kind of food imaginable. Down in the ample cellars there were many sides of bacon, there were boxes of eggs, there were sacks and sacks of flour. There were cases of tea, cases of condensed milk, and other food products too numerous to mention. If necessary, the rebels could hold out here until Christmas, and live royally all the time.

During the afternoon the garrison had held high revels. They were jubilant over their victory, and they let the rest of the school know that they were celebrating.

But now that evening had come, with its accompanying darkness, a good deal of en-

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thusiasm had died down. There was the problem of sleeping to be faced. There were no beds here, and precious little accommodation of any sort. Not that the fellows worried. True, the advent of the Fourth and Third had made things somewhat awkward. The building was packed, and exercise was practically out of the question, except for a walk round the roof during the hours on watch.

Nipper stood leaning over the parapet, with Tommy Watson and Handforth and Fullwood. It was very quiet in this corner, and from down below came a buzz of laughter and talk.

"Well, things seem to be going on very slowly," said Nipper. "I'm rather surprised that the general hasn't made any further attempt to get us out. Not a sign of him since this morning—since the Fourth and the Third came over to us. I wonder what he's been doing all day?"

"Getting over the shock, I expect," said Fullwood dryly.

"Do you think he'll make another attack?" asked Tommy Watson.

"It's difficult to say," replied Nipper. "He won't get the Fifth and Sixth to help him—that's certain. And it's hardly likely that he'll import outsiders to drive us out. I don't quite know what to think. The chances are that the Head will come along soon, and talk about terms."

"We won't agree to any terms," growled Handforth. "No surrender—that's our motto!"

"All the same, if the Head's reasonable, we might be able to meet him," said Nipper.

"What do you mean?" demanded Handy.

"Well, we don't want to make the Head look too small, do we?" said Nipper thoughtfully. "If he comes along and suggests that we shall go back to our houses, and only gives us a nominal sort of punishment, we'd better agree. He might say that we're gated for the rest of the term, or something like that. Well, let's give in. As long as the Head promises that there won't be any expulsions or floggings, we've won the battle. That's the way I look at it, anyhow."

"Yes, that's true enough," said Fullwood. "We must allow the Head to save his face, you know. We don't want to crow over him too much. The chances are that he'll knuckle under now—particularly as General Carfax has made such a mess of things. What else can the Head do? This situation can't last much longer. It's altogether too——"

"I say," interrupted Watson, "what's that over there?"

He pointed towards the school, and the startled note in his voice brought the others round at once. Watson was pointing towards the Ancient House, and all the other juniors immediately gazed in the direction indicated.

"Looks funny!" said Fullwood, frowning. "A sort of glare."

"Yes, and it's flickering, too," said Handforth. "By George, do you think the Fifth and Sixth have joined the rebellion? Perhaps they've lighted a big bonfire in the Triangle, or something!"

"They wouldn't do that!" said Nipper, shaking his head. "If the Fifth and Sixth joined the rebellion they would do it in a dignified way. They'd just refuse to obey orders. That's all. That doesn't look like a bonfire, either—it's coming from the upper part of the Ancient House."

Nobody said anything, although their minds were filled with a curious sense of foreboding. They all stood there, watching.

Yes, there was certainly a glare—an ominous, sinister flickering of orange-coloured fire. There was no sign of it diminishing, either. On the contrary, it grew more and more pronounced, and in the reflected light from that glare great clouds of smoke could be seen rising up, and merging dimly into the night sky.

Buster Boots and Bob Christine came running along the roof from one of the other corners.

"I say," gasped Boots, "have you fellows seen——"

"Yes," said Nipper; "we're watching now!"

"What is it?" shouted Bob. "I say! I believe the school's on fire!"

Handforth gave a roar.

"That's what I thought—only I didn't like to say it!" he shouted. "By George! Is it possible? That glare seems to be coming from that part of the Ancient House where the Remove dormitories are situated? What's happening?"

As though by magic, the other rebels got to know that something unusual was afoot. They came swarming up on to the roof, crowding round the parapets, until there was scarcely room for them to move. And they were all staring towards the school, their hearts beating rapidly. All thoughts of an attack had vanished now. For one thing was growing more and more obvious with every second that passed.

That flickering glare was steadily increasing! It was getting worse and worse, and the clouds of smoke were now becoming filled with flying sparks!



CHAPTER 18.

Fire!

CLANG-clang-clang!

It was a dread sound, but one that all the watching rebels had been expecting.

"The fire bell!" panted Fullwood. "Listen! Can't you hear them shouting now? Oh, my only hat! The school's on fire!"

"Great Scott!"

"I—I was hoping that it was only a bonfire, or something—but I knew that I was fooling myself!" said Handforth. "The school's on fire! The Ancient House, too!"

"Hard luck, you chaps!" said Buster Boots.

"Odds tragedies and disasters!" ejaculated Archie Glenthorne. "I mean to say, the good old conflagration appears to be massing itself in the Remove quarters, what? Frightful destruction of the priceless old wardrobes! I trust that Phipps is dashing about hither and thither, doing the necessary rescue work."

"Never mind your silly old clothes, Archie," roared Handforth. "What about the school? Those seniors can't be trusted to put the fire out!"

"That's just what I was thinking!" shouted De Valerie. "I say, what ought we to do? Most of us are members of the school fire brigade!"

Nipper nodded.

"Keep quiet, you chaps—don't get too excited!" he said. "I rather think we ought to rush across to the school, and help!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Blow the rebellion!"

"Rather! The school's on fire, and we ought to do our bit! All hands to the pumps!"

"Yes—let's rush off!" shouted a dozen voices.

Faintly, they had heard the frantic shouts coming from the direction of the school. There had been one or two shrieks, too—evidently from members of the domestic staff. The fire, it seemed, had been suddenly discovered only a minute or two earlier.

But now there could be no doubt as to the seriousness of it. Several of the upper windows on this side of the Ancient House were lurid with fire—and the flickering light was growing more and more intense.

At first the juniors had tried to delude themselves that the fire was nothing serious, but it was no good. Great clouds of smoke were rolling up towards the night sky, and myriads of sparks were now beginning to fly—soaring upwards and drifting about in the wind. The upper floor of the Ancient House apparently was blazing like a torch, and a fire of that kind could not be easily extinguished. The Fifth and the Sixth, no doubt, would do their utmost. But this was unquestionably a case of all hands to the pumps!

St. Frank's had a very efficient fire-fighting force, mainly composed of the juniors. Fire drill was a regular institution in the old school, and a large proportion of the Removites and Fourth Formers were highly skilled in the handling of the fire-fighting apparatus. And here they were—isolated from the school—holding this mock fortress!

In that moment of peril, the juniors forgot the barring-out entirely. The school was in danger. The safety of St. Frank's was in the balance! It was a question of duty, and not for a single second did any of those youngsters hesitate. There was only one thing to be done—and that was to abandon the fortress, and to rush madly for the school, in the hope that they would not be too late to save those glorious old buildings from complete destruction.

It would be bad enough even if the Ancient House was burned down—and there seemed precious little hope of saving it now. For the fire was gaining a hold with tremendous speed.

It was incredible—horrifying.

Window after window in the upper part of the Ancient House was becoming lurid with fire, and the sparks were now soaring upwards in tens of thousands. The fire-bell was clanging continuously, and men were running about shouting frantically.

"Come on!" roared Handforth. "We can't stay here like this, you chaps! We can't look on and do nothing! Our duty is to help to save the school!"

"Hurrah!"

"Come on—everybody!"

"All you chaps who aren't in the fire brigade had better keep back!" shouted Nipper. "There'll only be confusion——"

"Rot!" yelled Bob Christine. "We shall all be needed! It doesn't matter whether we're in the fire brigade or not—everybody will be wanted!"

"Hear, hear!"

The juniors had already forgotten that they were rebels. Everything else must slide now—to save the old school from destruction. There was something dreadful in the way the fire was spreading.

So far there were no actual flames, but the glare was so intense that there could be no doubt that the interior of the building was a raging furnace. Myriads of sparks were flying about, a dense pall of smoke was beginning to drift away from the school—and now sounds could be heard from the roadway, too.

People from the village were coming up, and the excitement was spreading all over the countryside.

St. Frank's was on fire!

It was a dramatic and unexpected turn! There was something significant about it, too. Here were these scores of schoolboys, nominally members of the fire brigade, defying the school authority!

It was almost like retribution!

And the rebels were sobered—frightened. The very fact that they had rebelled might mean the destruction of the old school! For when they were most wanted, they were not there! It was an appalling thought—a thought which made them nearly frantic.

But perhaps it would not be too late. If they rushed straight away they might be in time!

Downstairs they poured, many of them hurting themselves in the resultant squash. At last the great doors of the store-house were pulled open, and the juniors went flooding out—pouring across the open space in a continuous stream.



"We'll stand by you, Handy—to the bitter end! We're not admitting defeat!" chorused Nipper, Fullwood and Pitt. Handforth turned to the General. "There you are, General," he said. "That's our answer!"

The school was on fire—and now it was a question of duty! There was something rather fine in this action on the part of the St. Frank's rebels. They forgot their barring-out—they forgot their cause altogether. St. Frank's needed them—and they were ready!



CHAPTER 19.

The Strategy of General Carfax.

In an excited mob the rebels went tearing towards the Ancient House, their hearts throbbing, their senses almost reeling. They felt guilty—and they were wild with anxiety. Would the old school be burned down because of their absence in a time of emergency?

It was a terrible thought.

Most of the juniors were frantic with worry, hoping against hope that they would still be in time to confine the fire to a small portion of the Ancient House.

"Come on!" roared Handforth. "We all know our stations—and we all know how to handle the hoses!"

"Hurrah!"

They swept round into the West Square, and stared up at the Ancient House anxiously. Until this minute the wall had obscured their view, and they had only been able to see the reflected glare. But now they had a clear view of the actual fire itself.

And the foremost juniors came to a sudden halt, startled and amazed!

"Why, what—what is it?" panted Handforth breathlessly.

"There's something funny about it!" shouted Church. "It's—it's not an ordinary fire! There's something——"

"We've been tricked!" thundered Nipper angrily.

"WHAT?"

Nipper had been the first to jump to the truth, and he was filled with a tremendous anger. He was just as angry with himself as he was with the tricksters. For he had fallen into the trap as readily as any of these other rebels. Not until this second had he suspected the truth.

"Tricked?" went up the shout.

"Yes!" said Nipper, pointing. "Look there! It's all a fake! There's no fire at all!"

"Oh, my goodness!"

"Back—back to the stronghold!" roared Nipper. "Quick, you fellows—don't waste a second! It's all a trick of General Carfax's. It's a trap to get us out of the school stores—and it's succeeded!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"We've been done!"

The juniors were so startled—so staggered—that for some moments they were incapable of action. They could only stand there, crowding into the West Square, staring up at the "fire."

At a distance it had looked very genuine, but now, at close quarters, the rebels could see that there was no fire at all. At those windows there were cleverly placed torches of "stage" fire.

They were emitting myriads of sparks and clouds of dense smoke all the time; they were roaring tremendously, and the effect was startlingly real. But there was certainly no fire. From nearly every window of the Ancient House these flares were burning—just inside, perfectly safe, but effective in the extreme!

As the realisation grew more and more solid in the minds of the rebels, they were filled with consternation.

They had fallen into the trap!

They had been lured out of their stronghold by this piece of trickery, and they had left the school stores absolutely deserted! The whole thing, from beginning to end, had been a piece of strategy on the part of General Carfax.

But not one of those juniors gave the general any credit. They were inclined to be bitterly resentful.

"It's a rotten trick—a shabby trick!" shouted Nipper fiercely. "The Head wouldn't have done a thing like that!"

"But it succeeded!" said Armstrong. "It got us out, didn't it? You've got to admit that General Carfax is pretty smart!"

"Smart!" roared Handforth indignantly. "Do you think it smart to play on our sense of duty? We came out of our stronghold because we wanted to save the school from destruction. We're mostly members of the school fire brigade, and we came because we thought we were wanted! The general knew we would do that, and—— By George! What a rotten trick!"

"So it is!" shouted Pitt. "Come on—let's get back! He's not going to triumph over us like this!"

"Not likely!"

"We'll never give in, either—he won't beat us!" shouted Handforth. "Come on, the Remove! Up the Fourth!"

"What price the Third!" yelled Willy. "Oh, my hat! What an ass I am! What a fathead! What a blockhead! We're all in the same boat—all a set of cuckoos! We ought to have suspected this trick, instead of tumbling into the trap! And now it'll be too late!"

"Don't you believe it!" yelled Handforth. "There's plenty of time! We'll get the stores back, even if we have to fight every inch of the way! Come on, the Remove!"

"Hurrah!"

At that moment, General Carfax himself appeared at one of the Ancient House windows. The flares had now been flung out to the ground, where they lay spurting fire harmlessly across the square.

"By gad!" thundered the general. "I've done you this time, you young puppies! I said I'd beat you, and I have!"

"Yah! Trickster!"

"We're not beaten yet!"

"No fear!"

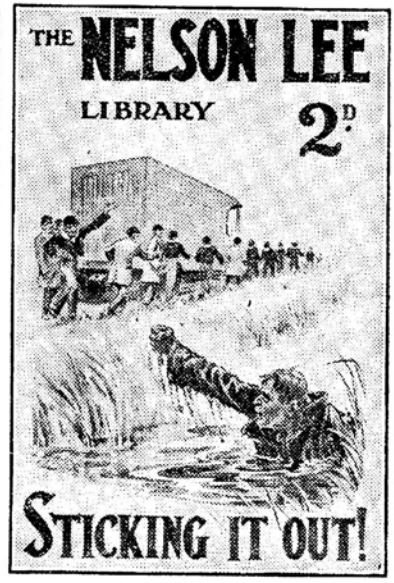
"Hurrah for the rebellion!"

"We'll show you whether we're beaten!"

The general roared and thundered in vain. The excited rebels, turning on their heels, rushed away—back to the school stores. It would not take them long to seize the building again, and they would soon be in full possession. They would show General Christopher Carfax that he couldn't play with them in this fashion!

But the rebels didn't know, as yet, the full cunning of the general's plan!

NEXT WEDNESDAY!





CHAPTER 20.

In the Hands of the Enemy!

THE rebels, still burning with indignation, ran helter-skelter back towards their stronghold. They had one cause for satisfaction, at least. Not one of them had been captured—and the general had made no attempt whatever to attack them. Indeed, it seemed strange why he should have adopted such a

scheme. It was objectless. He had got the rebels out, it was true, but they could easily get back again.

But could they?

Nipper had his doubts—and that was why he was so anxious to get back to the stores. Willy and Reggie Pitt and one or two others were fearful, too. They were beginning to suspect that the "fire" business was only a part of the general's plan. Their worst fears were soon realised.

For, as the foremost juniors came running towards the stronghold, they beheld a spectacle that caused them to check in dismay.

The stores were not deserted, as they had expected!

Scores of men were there—a large force of determined-looking, burly men! Where they had come from was a mystery, but they were probably Bannington men, imported especially for this work! General Carfax was doing his job thoroughly.

There was cleverness in his plan, too.

The stores were surrounded by a complete cordon of those men, and there were literally dozens at each door!

"Steady, young gents—steady!" shouted one of these men. "Better not come too close!"

"You rotters! Get out of the way!" roared Handforth.

"We've had orders, young gents, not to attack you in any circumstances!" went on the man urgently. "But if you attack us, it's a different thing—and we shall fight. It's up to you, young gents!"

"By Jingo!" breathed Nipper. "There's braininess for you. I didn't give old Carfax credit for it! He's a deep 'un—as clever as they make 'em, too!"

Nipper realised the full cunning of the general's scheme now. While all the rebels had been away, rushing towards that fake fire, the stronghold had been seized by a strong force of men.

But the general had not resorted to the questionable device of forcing these rebels out by an attack. On the contrary, he had given his men orders that they were not to interfere with the boys! But it would be a totally different thing if the boys attacked the men! That was where the cleverness came in. The general had placed the onus of any fight on the rebels themselves!

And, naturally, the boys rushed to the attack. What else could they do? Their fortress was in the hands of the enemy—and they had to win it back!

So within a minute a tremendous struggle was taking place all round the stores. But it was a hopeless struggle from the very start. There were scores of men—strong, determined fellows. They weren't attacking these junior schoolboys, but they were merely defending themselves. And that was a totally different thing!

There was another aspect of this new phase, too. Handforth, fighting grimly, suddenly discovered that he was being held. Not one man had grasped him, but three, and, without any beating about the bush, he was rushed away from the general fighting. In the hands of those three men he could do nothing. At first he fought gamely, but his struggles were useless.

"You rotters!" he panted. "Who put you up to this? What are you going to do? Where are you going to take me?"

"Better ask no questions, young gent!" panted one of the men. "We're only obeying orders."

"You—you traitors!" gasped Handforth. "You rotters! Why can't you leave us to settle our own quarrels?"

"You needn't worry, sir—we're not going to hurt you," said the man. "We've had orders not to 'arm a 'air of your 'ead. The general was most partickler. We've got to grab you, and that's all. You're the ringleader of this 'ere rebellion, ain't you?"

"Yes, and I'm not beaten yet!" said Handforth defiantly. "You've collared me, but it won't do the general any good! The Remove isn't whacked like that!"

Handforth was genuinely alarmed, however. He was certainly the ringleader, and it was a shock to find himself hopelessly in the hands of the enemy. Almost before he knew where he was, he found that he was being rushed round by a short cut towards the Ancient House.

'STICKING IT OUT!"

Undeterred by the advent of the peppery General Carfax, the St. Frank's rebels are still determined that they will not capitulate until the authorities promise to hold a full inquiry into the unfortunate Mr. Pycraft affair.

Edward Oswald Handforth, however, receives a great shock when his pater—a very angry-looking pater!—arrives at the school.

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Alfred Edgar's serial gets more thrilling each week. The next instalment is a real stunner!

ORDER IN ADVANCE!

At last he was forced through a rear door, and then bundled down into one of the old cellars. Into the pitch darkness he was thrust, and then the cellar door was closed and bolted.

Handforth hammered helplessly on that door. There was no escape from here! The only other exit was a grating, and this was so securely fastened that there was no chance of liberty that way.

In the meantime, the battle was still raging round the fortress. But, fiercely as the juniors fought, they found it impossible to break through that barrier of burly men.

Nipper and Fullwood and Reggie Pitt found themselves in exactly the same predicament as Handforth himself! In various parts of the battleground, quite unknown to one another, they were seized amid the general confusion.

And each of them was rushed off to that Ancient House cellar! There was something significant in the whole business.

Nipper — Handforth — Fullwood — Reggie Pitt!

Four of the most important leaders of the rebels—and all of them were being thrust down into that cellar! They were in the hands of the enemy, and the rank and file of the rebels were now practically leaderless.

Such fellows as Buster Boots and Willy Handforth, no doubt, would do their best to rally the rebel forces. But there was every chance that the whole body of juniors would "go to pieces."

The situation was desperate, indeed!

CHAPTER 21.

The General's Ultimatum!

HANDFORTH took a deep, deep breath. "Oh, crumbs!" he said. "Then you three chaps have been collared as well?"

"Yes, it's all part and parcel of a clever bit of strategy on the general's part," said Nipper bitterly. "We've fallen headlong into the trap, Handy, and things look bad. I rather think that the general has won the battle!"

"My minor isn't captured, anyhow," said Handforth, with a slight show of satisfaction. "And he's a resourceful young beggar when he likes. There's Boots, too. No reason for us to give up hope completely. Perhaps we'll win the position back, after all."

"Don't kid yourself, old man," said Fullwood. "We're done—squashed—beaten! The general isn't such a joke, after all!"

They were all in that dark cellar, dishevelled, dusty and bruised. One after another, they had been thrust down by their captors. But since their arrival no further prisoners had come. It seemed that these four were the only ones that the general required.

"It was all so simple, too," said Nipper. "First the fake fire, to draw us out of the stronghold—and then those men took possession. After that, we were collared and brought here. There's something in it, you chaps—something deep. The general himself will be down here soon, you see. Then we shall know what his plan is."

"We'll scrag him if he puts his nose into this cellar!" said Handforth fiercely. "By George! We'll slaughter him on the spot!"

"No, we can't do that!" said Nipper. "There can't be any excuse for attacking an elderly gentleman like that."

"Yes, you're right," said Handforth, nodding. "Of course, I didn't mean it—but I'm excited. We've got to respect age. But, by George, doesn't it make you wild?"

"And the worst of it is, we can't accuse General Carfax of setting these men to attack us," said Fullwood. "We did all the attacking, so how can we grumble if we're hurt a bit?"

Handforth grunted.

"What was the last you saw before you were collared?" he asked.

"Nothing but confusion," replied Nipper. "Nobody succeeded in getting back into the stronghold, and practically the whole rebel force was scattered. They're dodging about everywhere, gathering in groups and completely disorganised. There's every indication that the whole barring-out will now fall to pieces."

A booming roar sounded somewhere, and Reggie Pitt uttered a sigh.

"You were right, Nipper, old man," he said. "Here he comes—here's the general!"

Sure enough, the cellar door was unbolted, and General Christopher Carfax came stamping down the steps. The four prisoners looked up at him expectantly. He was carrying a powerful lantern and was unaccompanied, but somebody closed the cellar door behind him, and rebolted it. Evidently the general was quite satisfied that he would not be attacked by these boys.

He was looking triumphant—flushed and excited. But there was nothing vindictive in his manner. He was only an old soldier, glorying in his victory.

"Well, my fine young rebels, what now?" he demanded. "Four of you, eh? The four ringleaders! You'll be interested to know that all your companions are scattered about the school, completely disorganised. The rebellion is over!"

"Not yet, sir!" said Handforth fiercely. "We aren't beaten!"

"Come, come, young man!" said General Carfax. "It's no good adopting that defiant tone. I have already issued an ultimatum—and every one of your companions knows it. I have ordered them all to surrender!"

"But they won't, sir!" said Nipper quietly.

"No?" bellowed the general. "We'll see about that, my fine young mutineer! We'll see about that! Do you know what I've told them? Unless they all surrender within half an hour—unless they all go into their various Houses, and report to their masters, —you four boys will be sent home by car!"

"Oh, crumbs!" muttered Fullwood.

"Ah, that's given you a shock, eh?" said General Carfax.

"Those chaps won't surrender, sir!" broke in Handforth hotly.

"I rather think they will," said the general. "When they know that you four will be expelled from the school, they'll knuckle under. Yes, and I've given them an alternative, too. Rather clever, eh? I'm an old hand at strategy, don't forget—a very old hand! If all those boys surrender, as I have ordered, only you, Handforth, will be expelled. You other three will be flogged. Don't you see? But if the rebellion persists all four of you will be sent home! There's a car waiting now—ready to take you to London. Once there, you'll be distributed to your various homes, and there will be no return for you!"

"You mean that we shall be—be sacked in disgrace, sir?" panted Handforth.

"That's exactly what I mean!" said General Carfax. "I thought I would come down and let you know. Have you any message to give me? Can I tell your companions anything?"

Handforth's eyes blazed.

"Yes!" he said. "Yes, sir! Tell them that we're still defiant! Tell them that we're still determined to carry on the fight——"

"Why, you impudent young rascal——" began the general.

"No—you'd better not tell them that!" went on Handforth, with a sudden start. "I don't want to be responsible for these other fellows getting the sack. Perhaps we are done, after all. Perhaps——"

"No!" chorused the other three. "We'll stand by you, Handy—to the bitter end!"

"Good men!" said Handforth gratefully. "There you are, general—you've heard these chaps! The only message we've got for the other rebels is to tell them to carry on!"



CHAPTER 22.

Still Defiant!

FOR a moment General Carfax glared with anger, and his white moustache bristled fiercely as he pursed his lips. Then, suddenly, he chuckled.

"By gad, you've got some spirit, you boys!" he said warmly. "I like to see it—gad, I like to see it! All the same, you're a set of impudent young puppies," he added, with a frown. "Defiant to the last, eh? Well, you'll soon know that it's a every unwise thing to defy a man like me! I've got you beaten, boys, and you'd better admit it!"

"Never, sir!" shouted Handforth.

General Carfax, hardly knowing whether to be furious, or whether to be pleased, then left the cellar, rebolting the door after he had gone. He ordered one or two men to remain on guard outside.

General Carfax was a man who admired courage and high-spiritedness, and he had to admit to himself that these boys were full of genuine pluck. Rather than admit defeat, they were still determined to carry on, although all the odds were against them. Leaderless, what could the other rebels do?

As a matter of fact, the other rebels were doing quite a lot!

If General Carfax could spring surprises, so could the St. Frank's juniors. Although the chief leaders of the rebels were captured, there were others in that force who were possessed of plenty of resourcefulness.

Finding it impossible to get back into the school stores, most of the rebels had collected in the old Triangle. They had heard the report that the four ringleaders were captured, and were prisoners. They knew, also, that the general had issued an ultimatum. The rank and file were disheartened—almost ready to give in then and there.

But John Busterfield Boots and Willy Handforth had been putting their heads together, and now they were talking excitedly.

"What's the wheeze, Willy, old man?" Church asked.

"Buster and I have just been having a chat," said Willy. "We're going to pinch the Modern House. We've been chucked out of the school stores, so we'll hold the barring-out in the Modern House!"

"My only hat!"

"Could we do it?" panted Tommy Watson

"Why not?" demanded Buster Boots. "There are enough of us, aren't there? The whole Remove and the whole Fourth, and all these fags! Practically a hundred of us all told! It'll be a pity if we can't grab the Modern House, and hold it! There are beds there, too—and we shall be able to get plenty of food. The larders and cellars are sure to be well-stocked!"

"And—and we shan't knuckle under after all?" panted Armstrong.

"No fear!" roared Buster Boots.

"But, I say!" interrupted Church anxiously. "What about the general's ultimatum? We're supposed to report to our various houses within half an hour, aren't we? And if we carry on with this rebellion, Handy, Nipper, Fullwood and Pitt will be expelled!"

A silence fell upon the assembly. In their excitement at the thought of seizing the Modern House, this important fact had slipped their memories.

"By Jove, that true," admitted Willy at length. "That means that this barring-out will have been a failure. My major will get

the sack after all, and with him three other chaps."

"Yet even if we do give in, Handy still gets the sack," pointed out Boots, "and we shall be punished ourselves. No, I think the best course is for us to carry on—even if Handy and the others get the sack. If we can only force the Head or General Carfax to hold a full inquiry into that Pycraft business, the authorities will see that Handy was justified in starting this rebellion, and that Nipper and Fullwood and Pitt did quite right in supporting him."

"And then they'll get a pardon and be completely exonerated, eh?" put in Willy quickly. "You're right, Buster. The best thing we can do is to carry on with this barring-out—and everything depends upon its being a success!"

"Come on, then!" roared Boots. "We mustn't lose any time. I'll lead the Fourth into the main entrance of the Modern House now!"

"And I'll deal with the Remove!" shouted De Valerie. "You look after the Third, Willy!"

"Trust me!" said Willy Handforth.

In less than five minutes the juniors, all enthusiastic about the idea, were rushing into the Modern House.

Without compunction, the matron and the domestic servants were all ordered to leave. They were given five minutes' grace to go upstairs, fetch any few things they wanted, and to get out. The seniors were treated without any gentleness. Only two or three of them were to be found, for the others were outside, watching the proceedings—never dreaming that the rebels would still continue the barring-out.

"Hurrah! We're in!" yelled Boots.

"Long live the barring-out!"

"Hurrah!"

Doors were slammed, windows were closed, and furniture was shifted frantically; barriers and barricades were in the course of erection.

Then came shouts of alarm from outside—the roaring voice of General Carfax. He had just discovered what was afoot—and he was furious. This new development had taken him completely by surprise—it had given him a fresh shock. Just at the moment of victory, he found that his success was a hollow sham!



CHAPTER 23.

Keeping It Up!

JOHN BUSTERFIELD BOOTS gave vent to a wild whoop.

"Great Scott!" he yelled excitedly.

"What's the matter?" asked Willy Handforth, staring at him. "Just thought of something?"

"Yes," gasped Boots. "Everything's all right—except for the fact that Handforth and Nipper and Fullwood and Pitt are prisoners! They'll be sacked, as sure as a gun unless we do something! They'll be sent away from the school, and we shall have to carry on the rebellion without them! That's the only thing that's spoiling our victory!"

Willy nodded.

"Yes, poor old Ted!" he said softly. "It'll be rough luck on him to be sent away——"

"There's no need for it!" said Boots.

"What do you mean?" asked many voices.

The juniors were in the junior Common-room of the Modern House—busy with the task of barricading the windows. Other fellows were spread all over the building, working frantically at similar tasks.

"Listen!" said Boots tensely. "Do you remember that feud we had some time ago?"

"We're not likely to forget it!" said De Valerie. "You mean when the Fourth and the Remove were deadly enemies?"

"Yes," said Boots. "You know—when we had those secret societies. Well, you Ancient House chaps had your headquarters in a cellar in the Ancient House, and there was a secret passage right under the Triangle, leading into this very room!"

"Ye gods and little fishes!" gurgled Tommy Watson. "And—and you think——"

"It's no time for thinking!" broke in Boots. "We've got to act! It's a dead certainty that those four chaps are in that cellar! It's the only one in the Ancient House that would suit! All the others are used for store-rooms!"

"You're right!" said Willy, giving Boots a thump on the back. "Good man!"

"We shall have to look alive, too!" went on Boots. "The general might act at any moment, and take those chaps out. Come on—to the rescue!"

"Hurrah!"

These juniors knew exactly where that secret door was situated. True, it had been screwed up, but Boots and one or two other hefty juniors hurled themselves at the panel, and it was soon battered down.

It was Boots and Willy who went down that secret passage. They fairly tumbled down the steps, and then raced along the tunnel, until they reached the end. There was another secret panel here—but it was not even necessary to open it, for it was already stove in. And Nipper and Handforth and the others were in the act of coming through!

"By jingo!" shouted Nipper. "So you thought of the wheeze, too, did you? We were just going to escape!"

"Escape!" yelled Boots. "There's no need to, you asses! We've collared the Modern House, and we're carrying on the barring-out!"

"Hurrah!" roared Handforth enthusiastically. "That's the stuff to give 'em!"

"I say, what a shock for the general when he finds out!" said Boots happily. "The whole rebel force is complete again, and it's just as victorious as ever!"

(*Concluded on page* 42.)

An interesting nutshell history of the monster racing car

"BABS"



a model of which is presented Free with this issue.

Too Fast for Brooklands!

A HUGE racing motor-car with a baby name, "Babs," was intended to do very big things. Among the unintended big things it did was to prove too tight a fit for Brooklands track! It was altogether too fast for anything like safe driving on that famous run-way, and so "Babs" had to go elsewhere to show her paces—to the roomy Pendine Sands, where her owner, part-designer and driver—the late J. G. Parry Thomas—proceeded to break records with her.

Thomas was a superb genius among motor racing men, for he was three things in one—practical engineer, car designer and most skilful driver. "Babs" was practically the product of his own brains. Originally the car was but an indifferent performer, and as the Higham Special the speed of 160 miles per hour seemed entirely beyond her capabilities.

Entirely Rebuilt!

Before she became "Babs," the Higham Special was the property of another famous racer, Count Louis Zborowski, who drove her for all she was worth. The count was killed whilst racing in Italy, though not in his Higham Special. That machine then passed to J. G. Parry Thomas.

He turned the car inside out, entirely rebuilt some parts of it, tinkered up the engines generally, named her "Babs," and straightway announced her complete transformation from a comparative slow-coach to a real out-and-out racer, which he believed to be capable of reaching 200 miles an hour!

Though he lost his world-records of 171 and 170½ miles per hour for the kilometre and mile respectively, to Captain Malcolm Campbell (a model of whose "dark horse," the "Blue Bird," was presented with last week's NELSON LEE LIBRARY), he relied on "Babs" to beat *all* world-records, and to do things which he had found impossible with his old Leyland-Thomas car.

Totally Wrecked!

To the whole world's regret, he did not do them. "Babs" was flinging the Pendine Sands behind her at the rate of 180 miles an hour when a totally unlooked-for catastrophe occurred. Every possible contingency had been provided for, as Thomas and everyone else concerned fully believed.

But one of the driving chains snapped, and Thomas was killed instantly. The right-hand chain whirled round like a flail, and hit him. "Babs" herself was totally wrecked—and, with genuine tributes of admiration and intense sorrow, was buried in the sands where she smashed.

Other racing cars which have "crashed" have nearly always been rebuilt, for, in spite of the tremendous upheaval in the machinery which naturally results from a smash, there are parts which can be used again after a little expert tinkering.

Racing cars cost very great sums of money, so it is extremely seldom that sentiment is allowed to stand in the way of some return on the wreckage. It does not go on to the scrap heap, but into the repair-shop.

"Babs," however, was given the signal honour of interment—with which her driver, who for years had been missing death by inches, would doubtless have agreed.

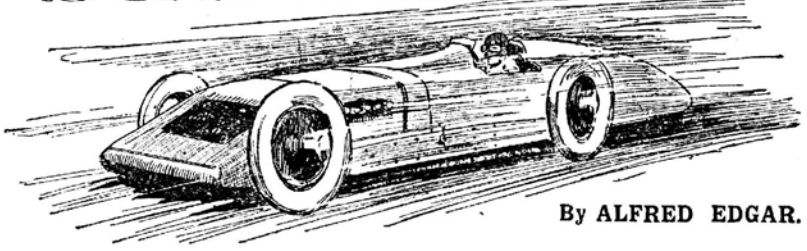
A Gallant Driver!

If ever racing-car and driver died "in harness," Parry Thomas and "Babs" did. Every motor-racing enthusiast was glad that Thomas held at least one record when he passed out—the light-car hour record, which he made with his Thomas Special, of his own designing.

Thomas had no one with him in "Babs." He preferred to play a lonely game entirely, both on and off the track. "One man is enough at a time," was his invariable reply when asked why he did not have a mechanic for company's sake whilst racing.

A noble end for a noble British car and a fearless, gallant Britisher!

SONS OF SPEED!



By ALFRED EDGAR.

Big Bill Barry's the boy for speed. Gee! He fairly makes the spectators at the Italian Grand Prix gasp as he whizzes his 'bus round the track in a neck-or-nothing attempt to beat all rivals!

HOW THIS STORY STARTED:

DICK BARRY acts as racing mechanic to his brother—

BIG BILL BARRY, who is star speedman in a team of three Kent racing cars entered for a big event in Italy. Bill is also to drive a wonderful machine designed by—

"PROFESSOR" KENT, which is being built to attain a record speed of two hundred and fifty miles an hour. Big Bill's great enemy on the racing track is a man named

MARK LYNCH, who drives Ince Eights. Kent machines and the Eights have always been rivals, and the Ince people are also building a monster racer to beat the professor's.

Just before the Kent cars should be shipped to Italy, Bill discovers that they are not fast enough, and he sets about lightening all their parts to make them immensely dangerous to drive. While the alterations are being made, Dick helps the professor to bring the engine of the giant record-breaker to perfection for its final test. This is to take place secretly in the night, and Dick arrives at the test shed an hour before the others. He discovers a mechanic, in the pay of Lynch, putting a substance in the sump of the engine, which will completely wreck the engine when it is started up. Dick tries to collar the man, but is laid out and carried to a car, where a confederate is waiting. They intend to take him on to the moors and drop him there so that, when he comes round, it will be too late for him to get back and warn the professor about the danger to the giant engine. The car surges away into the night with swiftly increasing speed, carrying with it the boy who can alone save the two-hundred-and-fifty-miles-an-hour machine from disaster!

(Now read on).

Dick Turns The Tables!

WHEN Dick came round, he found himself sprawling full length along the rear seat of the leaping car. Every bump in the road crashed his aching head against the padding, and for some moments he could not make out where he was.

He lay half on one side, staring up at the starry night sky above. For a space he could see nothing clearly, because of the mistiness in front of his eyes. After a while he discovered that his eyebrows were wet from a cut on his forehead. He dashed the blood away with his hand, and then stared at the backs of the two men in the seats in front.

The car's lights had now been switched on, and in the glow of one of the side-lamps he made out the lean, saturnine features of the mechanic he had caught in the test shed. With recognition of the man, recollection of what had passed came in a flood.

The fellow had poured carborundum into the sump of the record-breaking engine. When the professor started the machine up, it would wreck itself!

There was no way for the professor to guess what had happpened. Somehow, he must be told before he smashed the machine over which he and Dick had spent so much labour, and on which so much depended.

The thought steadied Dick. He half forgot the pain in his head, and he craned up on one elbow to look about him. In front of the car stretched the bleak, open spaces of the moors. That meant they were now a good fifteen miles from the Kent works, and if they had come that distance it must be close on half an hour since Dick had been knocked out.

He wondered what the men were going to do with him. He wasn't bound in any way. He thought about jumping from the car, but the machine was hurtling through the night

at a terrific speed, leaping and bouncing on the rough surface of the road. It was a ten-to-one chance that he would break his leg or something if he tried to jump.

Besides, it would only leave him stranded on the moors, and—— Gosh, that was what they meant to do with him! The mechanic had knocked him out, but hadn't dared to leave him in the shed, because he would have been found there and would have given the alarm the moment that he came round.

But if they dumped him on the moors, there'd be no chance at all of his getting back to the works in time, and it was certain that they would leave him where no cars passed. Few came across the rough moorland road at any time, let alone at midnight.

Dick lay there tensely, calculating the chances of attacking the driver. He realised that this would result only in running the car off the road and wrecking it; besides, there wasn't much hope of his being able to overcome two grown men.

The machine sped on. Dick found that he had been struck a glancing blow above one temple, and another towards the back of his head. He could tell that from the bumps he found there, and he realised that it must have been his cap that had saved him any worse hurt. But for the cap he might have been knocked unconscious for hours—half killed, very likely.

He realised, too, that if the men found that he had recovered his senses, they would do something to render him powerless again; probably they would tie him up when they left him on the moor. The best thing to do seemed to be to pretend he was still knocked out, and then see what happened.

By this time they were well out on the moor, and the car suddenly swung to a still rougher road, heading for a slope with a copse of stunted trees growing amidst gorse at one side and below the summit.

"This'll do—it's about five miles from anywhere!" Dick heard the mechanic yell the words to the driver, above the tearing whine of the car's gears. "Stop by those bushes!" the man added, and as he spoke he turned to look back at Dick. Instantly the boy closed his eyes and relaxed on his seat.

He could feel the man's breath on his face, then he heard him say:

"He's still out. It'll teach the young swab not to interfere!"

"Sure he's all right?" asked the driver anxiously. "We don't want to—to kill him, y'know!"

"He's all right. He's got a head as hard as a nigger's, to judge from that thick-skulled brother of his!" the mechanic snarled. "Right-ho, stop here! This'll do!"

The car slowed, then stopped with brake-shoes hissing in their drums. Between half-closed lids, Dick saw the mechanic and his companion alight, and his heart began to thump as he saw the two move round the front of the machine and stand at one side, looking towards the bushes.

"We'll dump him in there!" the mechanic said, his voice half-drowned by the sound of the still-running engine. "He'll be safe enough!"

For a moment Dick remained where he was, looking at the two. They had their backs to him, he saw. Here was his chance!

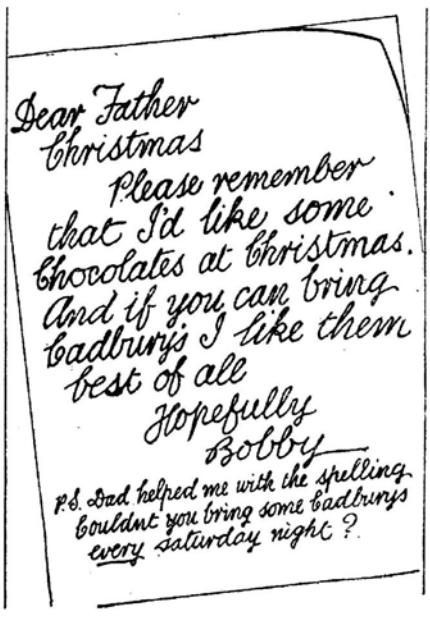
He swung his feet to the floor of the car, gritting his teeth as his head throbbed painfully. Next instant he was scrambling over into the driver's seat!

He trod on the clutch-pedal, and crashed into gear as he revved up the engine. As he sent the car forward the two men, realising Dick's intention, swung round and jumped madly towards the machine.

The car went away with a lurch and a roar, Dick loosing his right hand from the wheel and driving his fist full to the jaw of the mechanic as the fellow leaped for the foot-board. He would have gained it, but for Dick's fist. As it was, he reeled backwards, and his companion clutched thin air as he jumped for the machine.

Dick had done it! He'd tricked the rogues and had pinched their car. They'd be the ones stranded on the moor, not himself, and he'd use their machine to get back and warn the professor!

The twin headlights lit up the rough road as the car surged ahead. Where the track led to Dick didn't know. It might peter out on the moor. Somehow, he had got to get back to the main highway, and that meant taking the machine back the way it had come.



He looked behind. The men were hardly discernible in the darkness now, and were a couple of hundred yards in the rear. Dick turned his attention ahead, then he slowed the car and swung it off the road in a circle that brought him back to the track and facing the running men.

He trod on the accelerator pedal, and the car thundered towards them. The headlights picked out the mechanic; he was standing in the middle of the narrow road, shouting and waving his arms in an effort to stop Dick.

"Thinks I'll stop sooner than run him down!" the boy gasped. "He'll get it if he doesn't clear out of the way!"

He slammed the throttle wide, and the car rocked down at the man. Dick's heart almost stood still when the fellow didn't move. Then the car was on him, and, at the last possible second he leaped out of the way.

Dick had a glimpse of the other man, jumping to the side of the road and shouting viciously as he did so. Then the two were left behind, and Dick was racing back towards the Kent works.

"The professor's going to start the engine going at midnight!" he told himself, as he held the hurtling machine to the rough moorland road. "He won't wait for me to turn up. He'll think I've overslept, or something. Wonder if I'll get there in time?"

Saved by a Second!

WITH powerful headlights boring through the darkness, the car roared on to the main road across the moor, and then thundered back towards the town. Dick's head ached dully, and twice he had to slow as he struggled against the nausea that strove to overcome him.

He recovered, and as he steadied himself the second time he opened the windscreen. The fierce rush of air helped to bring him back to clear-headed coolness. After that he drove as hard as the road and the darkness would let him.

The machine was a fast touring Ince Eight, and Dick had to admit that the car was a powerful one. It was just as well, because he needed something that could shift!

Over the moor he went, with the exhaust drumming out on to the night, and his ears filled with the roar of the engine and the rush of wind. He couldn't see the speedometer, but he knew that the machine was touching a mile a minute; it leaped all over the rough surface of the road, and at times it was as much as he could do to hold it.

At last the headlights picked up the smoother surface of the main highway, and he sent the car speeding on to it. Away she went, with telegraph-poles sliding past and the brilliant beams of the headlamps silvering the wires ahead.

The bright rays shone on the black surface of the road as though it were water, limning the black trunks of trees and picking out the dusky smudge of tall hedges.

Street lights in the town slid out of the blackness ahead of him, then he was roaring between houses. He glimpsed a clock in a church tower—midnight!

He flung the car round a corner in desperate haste, skidding wildly half across the road ere he straightened the machine and sent it hurtling on again. Another corner, and yet another taken in the same mad way, then the black wall of the Kent works showed up. A moment after, and the brakes were screaming as he brought the machine to a slithering halt in front of the entrance. He leaped out.

The watchman opened the gate as Dick hammered on it.

"Professor gone in yet?" Dick gasped.

"Yes, twenty minutes ago!" the man answered. "Your brother is in as—— What's happened?" He stared aghast at Dick's face, white in the reflected light from the car's headlamps.

Dick didn't stop to answer, but thrust past the man and tore ahead. The professor had been there twenty minutes, and it was now well after midnight. Was he too late?

Through the works he went, and then he saw the test shed. Only a single light showed—the lone, powerful lamp which shone down on the dials. When a test was on, that was the only lamp alight. They'd started, then!

Dick flung himself at the door. It was unlocked, and it burst open under his weight. He glimpsed his brother by the starter switch, ready to throw it over. The professor was at the controls, one hand half lifted as he was about to signal to Bill.

"Stop!" yelled Dick. "Don't start her! One of—Lynch's men shoved carborundum—in the—sump! She'll wreck—herself! She—she'll—she——"

He clung to the edge of the door, and the test shed seemed to spin round him. He saw the professor staring at him, his grey hair gleaming in the light above. Then big Bill was coming towards him in great leaps.

He caught Dick, just as the lad slithered to the floor in a crumpled heap!

A Memory of "Babs"!

DICK didn't see the test of the record-breaking engine. He didn't know anything more until he woke up at home, in bed. He discovered that he had taut bandages round his head, that the sun was shining brightly, and that he felt pretty fit. His head certainly ached, but it might have been a lot worse.

"Hello, young 'un! How're you feeling now?" It was big Bill's voice, and the speedman bent over the bed.

"All right," Dick answered, and he grinned up at his brother. "How did I get here?"

"Oh, you conked out in the shed, so we got a doctor to you and brought you home. The doctor put those bandages on, then he

gave you a sleeping powder after you'd come round."

"I don't remember that," said Dick.

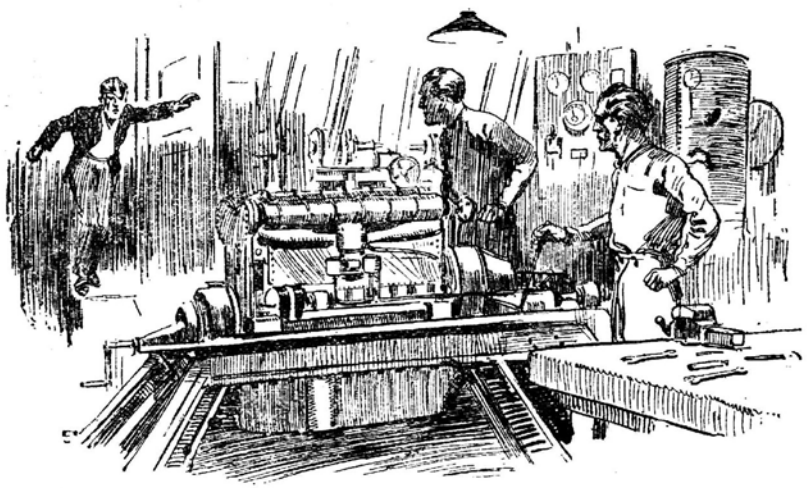
"No, I don't suppose you do. You were still a bit muzzy," said Bill. "Anyway, he gave you the stuff, and he said you'd be quite fit when you woke up!"

"I feel fine now!" Dick assured him, and he sat up. "What about the big engine?"

"Well, the professor and I cleaned the sump out. Luckily, we hadn't even turned the engine, or anything, so we got all the carborundum clean away. We made sure everything was all right, then we let her go—she did it, too!"

"Did what?"

"Twelve thousand revolutions a minute, young 'un!" exclaimed Bill, and there was



As Dick staggered into the testing shed, he saw that the professor was just about to give Bill the signal to start the monster engine. "Stop!" yelled Dick. "Don't start her. She'll wreck herself if you do!"

something like awe in his voice. "She's the fastest engine ever built. When she's put in the car, she'll do two hundred and fifty miles an hour, and do it easily. The old chap's as bucked as anything, and——"

He broke off as a knock came on the door, and the professor himself entered. He asked Dick how he was, then he grabbed his hand and shook it gently.

"We don't know, yet, what happened last night," he said. "But whatever it was, my boy, I'm in your debt!"

Dick told them what had occurred. Part of it they had guessed from finding the Ince Eight outside the gate, and they had guessed that the spy was the labour-mechanic who was missing from the works.

"I'd like to prosecute that man," the professor said "But I don't think it would do any good. It will only make a lot of difficulties, and the whole business of trying to prove his connection with the Ince people will be very unpleasant."

"Better to send their car back to them with your compliments," Bill growled. "We'll get our own back over in Italy. The best way to pay them out is to beat 'em on the track—and then rub it home with that record-breaker of yours!"

The professor smiled, and he was silent for a few moments. He turned to Dick again.

"I expect Bill has told you that last night's test was very successful. This afternoon, I am driving out to Pendine Sands. I want to decide if that course will be safe enough for the record run when the car is ready. Unfortunately, Bill can't accompany me, because he is busy with the machines for Italy. But you might like to come, Dick. The run will do you good."

Pendine Sands! The great stretch of smooth sand where the "Blue Bird" had broken all records, and where the mighty "Babs" had run. Dick had never been there, but he wanted to go.

On the way, the professor told him about the course, and the famous cars which had ran over it. It was almost the finest stretch of sand in the country, and many world's records had been broken on it. It was there that "Babs"—Parry Thomas' famous car—had shattered all records for speed.

And it was there, too, that the monster machine had killed its driver when he made a fresh effort to wrest back from the "Blue

Bird" a record that had been broken a bare month before.

Dick found it a long, deserted stretch of sand, miles in length. There was a little group of buildings by a short jetty at one end. Beyond that, nothing.

Nothing, that is, save a little memorial far along the sands, marking the spot where Thomas had died. Standing by the jetty with the professor, Dick could picture the giant white machine hurtling over the yellow stretch, the flying driving chain which had killed its driver, and the mad skid that had followed ere the car stopped.

"They buried 'Babs' in the sand, over there," said the professor, as he pointed to the spot. "Just about where Thomas died."

They walked together towards the place. The sea and sand had long since covered all sign of the disaster. All that remained was the little cross, noble in its simpleness, and gleaming in the sunlight against the tumbled, green-streaked background of the sand dunes.

Dick and the professor stood for a few moments at the foot of the cross, heads bared in tribute to the gallant racing man who had died.

Preparing For The Grand Prix!

BACK at the Kent works, the professor told Bill that he doubted if the stretch of sand at Pendino would be safe enough for the two-hundred-and-fifty-miles-an-hour car, and that they would have to find some other place for breaking the record when the car was ready.

Dick returned to the racing stable two days later, fit as ever he had been, and by this time he found the team of three machines all ready for the big Italian race. He discovered that every mechanic in the camp was scared of what would happen to the cars when they got on the track. They had been lightened until they barely turned the scale at the minimum weight which the regulations permitted.

The following day the three cars were run on to lorries, and Dick rode with his brother on the driving seat of one of them, travelling down to Dover. At the port, the lorries, with the racing machines still in them, were shipped across to Calais, and from there they started the long journey right across the Continent to Milan.

The Italian Grand Prix was being held at the Monza speedway, just a few miles from Milan, and Bill calculated that they would arrive there in time to put in two days' work before the race.

This did not mean, however, that they would get in two days' practising on the speedway. The course would be occupied during those two days by other races—motor-cycle long-distance events and small-car races. The Italian Grand Prix was the last event in the Italian motor-racing fete—the most thrilling race of the lot!

"We'll be able to get in a couple of hours in the early mornings, perhaps," Bill said, "but that's about all. It doesn't matter much, because we all know the course, and I know the engines are tuned to about as near perfection as we can ever get 'em!"

"Why didn't we come by train, instead of by road?" asked Dick. "It would have saved time."

"It would—two days," agreed Bill. "But those two days wouldn't have been any good to us, because the track would still have been in use for other races. Besides, coming by train would have meant a special van for the cars, and goodness knows what. It would have cost a lot of money—and there's no money to spare, young 'un!"

Bill stopped speaking, and stared ahead down the straight French road for a few moments, then he went on:

"Matter o' fact, the professor said that he was relying on us winning some prize-money to keep the racing stable going, apart from anything else. So we've got to do our darnedest to win, Dick. We've got to lick Lynch and his Ince Eights! Just remember that when you're working in the pit for me!"

"I won't let you down," Dick told him. "Not if I can help it!"

"I know you won't, that's why I have you as mechanic instead of any of the others," Big Bill growled. "You're a good kid."

Dick grinned. Being told that he was "a good kid" was about as near Bill ever went to praising him. For all that, he determined to do his best in the big race. Dick wouldn't be in the car with Bill, because only the driver now travels in a racing machine; one life at a time is enough to risk.

Dick would be at the replenishment pit, beside the track and near the grandstands. He would be the only one allowed to lay even a finger on the car once the race had started. During the speed-fight Bill would call at the pit for fresh fuel and oil and water, new tyres and repairs. It would be Dick's job to help him, then, and on the celerity with which Dick worked depended cutting down the time that Bill was at the pit, and, temporarily, out of the race.

Two lorry breakdowns on the road held the Kent party up and lost them more than a day, so that they arrived at the Monza speedway on the afternoon of the day before the Grand Prix. Dick and the mechanics and the drivers worked far into the night, readying the machines for the race. It was not until early on the morning of the great event that Dick really had a chance to look at the track.

He went down, sitting on the tail of Bill's machine, with the other two cars following behind. They intended to get in three or four laps just to try the cars out, after which the course would be closed until the race began.

Dick found bunting-decked stands at one side of the track, already thronging with early spectators and people who had camped

all night in the great park in which the speedway stood. From the flat stretch in front of the stands, the track swept round in a long banking built, he discovered, of bricks. Then the track vanished into the trees, reappearing at intervals until it reached another long banking, from which cars crashed towards the stands and the completion of the circuit.

The test run of the three Kent cars was to enable the drivers to get the feel of the track, rather than to see what the machines would do. Bill came in after a trial run with a big grin on his sun-burned face.

"The cars have all got the speed now," he told Dick. "It'll be a scrap, but we ought to give the Ince Eights a run for their money!"

After that, Dick was swallowed up in a whirl of preparations. The replenishment-pit was stocked up with spares, fuel tanks, water tanks—everything that the cars could possibly need in the race.

There was little enough time in which to do everything, because the race started at mid-morning. In what seemed no time at all the cars were being pushed to the starting line. Dick saw the Ince Eights go up, with Mark Lynch turning in his driving seat to look across to the Kent pit and grin in his sardonic, evil way.

"You wait! You won't be grinning when we're through with you!" Bill grunted. "Come, let's get our machine up, Dick!"

They pushed the car away from its pit to the starting line. Dick saw low-built blue Delages squatting there beside rounded blue Bugattis; he saw three blazing red Fiats, with a horde of excited Italians crowding round them, and there were two milk-white, powerful-looking Mercedes from Germany. He saw the trio of cruel-looking, vicious Ince Eights on the line, and then he was getting Bill's car into place.

There followed hectic minutes of frantic work, with marshals buzzing round and yelling excitedly. Then, with the start bare minutes away, the engines of the grouped cars began to roar, and Dick got Bill's going. He leaned over the cockpit, and Bill gripped his fist.

"Good luck, Bill. Be careful, won't you?"

"Never mind about me being careful, you keep on your toes when I come into the pit!" Bill grinned. "So-long!"

The Race!

DICK moved to the side of the track. Other mechanics grouped there, watching the start, and Dick stood in a perfect whirl of excited chatter in foreign languages.

Sudden silence followed, then the smashing bellow of the racing machines' exhausts crashed to crescendo. The straining cars roared and thundered for what seemed an age, then, ahead along the track, a gout of white smoke puffed from a little signal cannon. In the same moment an official slashed down a big red flag—and the race was on!

Away went the cars—away in a cloud of smoke and dust, with wheels threshing as the tyres spun on the road, grit and small stones slashing behind in a stinging shower. They went off in a smashing thunder of shuddering sound, screaming in gear as they raced for the first banking—splotches of colour seen sliding through the smoke-cloud they left behind.

He saw them tear round a banking, and vanish—tailed out in a long line. Then——

"Here they come!" a man gasped behind him. On to the bank at the beginning of the straight which ran past the stand there showed two hurtling, colourful shapes. Together they leaped off the banking and came screaming down the flat.

Dick strained his gaze, and then the two cars were level and rocketing past.

Bill—and Lynch! Going neck and neck, fighting for the lead!

Other cars came storming by, filling the air with noise and the acrid reek of burnt oil. And then, through the roar, Dick clearly heard a sudden gasp from the crowd, and his gaze turned instinctively towards the banking from which the cars had come.

A single machine was on it, skidding wildly. For a moment it looked as though it would hurtle into the spectators massed at the rails, then it straightened, slowed, and came limping towards the pits.

It was a Kent, with both its front wheels wobbling wildly!

"Busted front axle!" a mechanic yelled somewhere behind Dick. "I knew Bill had taken too much metal off 'em!"

Making the car lighter and faster had weakened the front axle. It had broken under the terrific strain of the very first lap of the race. The car limped towards them, and, as it came, Dick sighted a second machine coming slowly off the banking—its front wheels wobbling in the same way! It was another Kent racer!

Two of their machine were out of the race in the first lap.

Only Bill was left in it. He was fighting for the lead with the fast Ince Eight, going all out.

Supposing that Bill's front axle went, too. At that speed it would send the car somersaulting and——

The thought was in Dicks mind when he heard another gasp from the packed stands behind. Hundreds of hands pointed out across the speedway, and through the roar of the crowd there came the echoes of a distant crash.

Among the distant trees there lifted a gouting pall of blued smoke.

A car had smashed over there!

Was it Bill's?

(You'll know when you read next week's vivid instalment. Look out for it, boys!)

MARTIAL LAW AT ST. FRANK'S!

(*Continued from page 34.*)

"Just a minute!" panted Nipper. "Let's try to fake up this panel, so that the general won't be able to see how we escaped. The fastenings are broken, but we can easily put them right!"

For five minutes they worked hard, and by the end of that time it was almost impossible to detect, from inside that cellar, that anything had been interfered with. Then all the rebels sped through the tunnel and reached the Modern House in safety.

It so happened that General Carfax himself went down to the cellar only five minutes after the prisoners had escaped. He was utterly dumbfounded when he found that the cellar was empty! It was a staggering mystery.

Men had been on guard outside the door all the time, and the grating had not even been tampered with. The general suspected these men of playing him false—of letting the juniors out. But they swore that they had not done so

The general retired, beaten and disappointed. In spite of all his efforts, the rebellion was going on, and it was now worse than ever.

From the Modern House came a continuous roar of jubilation. The barricades were all up in position, and the guards were at their posts. The rebel force, to a man, was filled with determination. They had recovered the position—they were carrying on the barring-out as staunchly as ever. But they all felt, in their hearts, that it would soon be over. For the affair had got to such a pitch now that it simply could not go on much longer.

Dr. Malcolm Stafford, in the privacy of his own House, was bitter and resentful. So much for the martial law of General Christopher Carfax!

At first, indeed it had seemed that he had won the day. But again these rebels had proved themselves masters of the situation. General Carfax had only made things ten times worse! For St. Frank's was in a complete turmoil—the entire Modern House was held by the rebel forces.

It was a situation that made the headmaster haggard with worry. At times he wondered if it wouldn't be better to give way to these boys—to agree to an inquiry.

But no! Never would he admit defeat!

And in the Modern House, the rebels had precisely the same motto. Never would they admit defeat!

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's magnificent long complete yarn, which is entitled: "Sticking It Out!" And don't forget, boys, to order your copy in advance!

OUR WEEKLY POW-WOW!

This Week's Free Gift!

WELL, lads, you've now seen this week's Free Gift—you've probably got it in front of you at the moment—and I expect you're all admiring it. It *is* the "goods," isn't it?

"Babs," like our other admirable models, will be a constant reminder of the grand work and first-line courage of the men who are out to keep this country second to none on the great tracks. "Babs" accomplished such big things that it proved a trifle too swift for the Brooklands run-way. The whole history of this car shows the quick development of motor racing. Few things are more interesting than the story of the space-eating "Babs"—which you can read for yourself on page 35.

And don't forget to tell all your chums of this unique Free Gift. Don't let them miss a good thing like this: tell them now—and see how popular you'll find yourself!

Collect All Three!

And, by the way, have you yourself got all three Free Gifts which have been presented with the "Nelson Lee Library"? First came the 1,000-h.p. Sunbeam—the world's fastest car. Next was "Blue Bird," the monster racer with which Captain Malcolm Campbell hopes to beat the existing world's record land speed of 203 m.p.h. And now—"Babs"!

Thus you can be in possession of correctly coloured metal models of the world's three speediest cars! Not to be sneezed at, eh? So, if you *haven't* got all three, remember that your newsagent will always be pleased to get you any back numbers.

Live in Kent and be Content.

This is just precisely what Arthur Thornton does, and what's more, he has a real live Nelson Lee Club running at Ashford. The club is located in a cottage, and takes fifty copies of the N.L.L. each week, of which thirty are given away. The club is in its fifth year. There are two club-rooms, and a library. The club has done well in football, cricket, hockey and other sports. This is the best club yet in the south. Good luck to it!

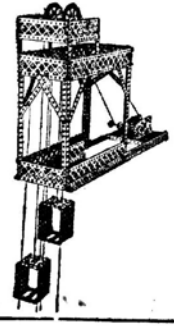
Activities at Ashington.

A group of members are starting a National Correspondence Club up north. Those interested should write to the Secretary, 96, Station Road, Ashington, Northumberland. A magazine will be run, one of the features being a debate page, which should prove of special interest.

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Frank Thompson, c/o Mrs. Pullen, 23, Thames Street, Box Hill, Victoria, **Australia,** would be glad to hear from any members in his district with the object of forming a club; also he would like to correspond with readers in England interested in cycling and stamp collecting.

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